



New Army Instructor Badges a Key Step to Professionalize NCOES Instructors

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The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's Institute for NCO Professional Development (INCOPD) knows the Army will lean heavily on noncommissioned officers to train, lead and mentor tomorrow's Soldiers as part of NCO 2020, the leader development strategy that was initiated last year.

To help recognize the professionalism of its NCO educators, the Army will begin awarding Army Instructor Badges this summer to bolster the standing of the NCO instructors who teach the courses in the Noncommissioned Officer Education System, said Dr. Liston Bailey, Chief of the INCOPD Learning Innovations and Initiatives Division.

The badge — which will be awarded in Basic, Senior and Master levels — is the culmination of a nearly three-year process that seeks to professionalize Army instructors and enhance their standing, Bailey said.

"A lot of times today an assignment as an instructor is viewed as not adding to a Soldier's career enhance-

ment," Bailey said. "It's not as highly regarded as, say, a drill sergeant, detachment chief, or some other kinds of assignments that are out there for NCOs. So we want to change those perceptions."

The path to being awarded the badge is stringent, Bailey said. NCOs must be counseled into the instructor development program by their NCO academy commandant and meet TRADOC's baseline instructor evaluation and certification requirements. Time on the podium is then accrued for each level. For example, a Soldier vying for the Basic Army Instructor Badge must serve 80 hours as a primary instructor. In addition, Soldiers are evaluated twice as part of the application process. The evaluations, which must be 30 days apart, are based on a new instructor observation rubric.

Upon successful completion of all requirements, the PSB or orders issuing authority at the Soldier's respective NCO academy can award the badge. NCO

Academy commandants are responsible for reviewing Soldier's award application packets for the instructor badges prior to submission.

"Instructors have always been there to train, educate and develop subordinates," Bailey said. "NCOs continue to care for the Soldiers, maintain standards and lead. But what this program does is provide additional credibility for instructors at the noncommissioned officer academies and within NCOES. The Instructor development program that INCOPD has created will not change the nature of their duties. However, it will give them additional tools, tactics and procedures, so that they become more effective in the classroom. The instructor development program will also support classroom facilitator competencies that are in line with the Army Learning Model.

In another change, serving as an instructor will also earn junior NCOs promotion points. Soldiers competing for advancement to sergeant and staff sergeant positions can earn 15 promotion points by serving in instructor roles.

The new promotion-points policy gives junior Soldiers an incentive for serving as an educator and supports the NCO Professional Development System by exposing the Army's future leaders to adult learning principles, learning methods and strategies, Bailey said. The expertise Soldiers acquire as instructors will give unit commanders key assets with regard to training and education.

"NCOPDS will be a holistic NCO development model for 2020," Bailey said. "So you'll get instructors who are trained, have advanced facilitator skills, and who understand adult learning principles. Once they complete their tour at an NCOA, they can go back to the unit and they've got this badge. So that says to the commander, 'Hey, I've got a resource now. I've got an NCO who has these skills and attributes, and I can leverage that talent within my team or unit in the future.'"

Bailey added that the notion that the Army Instructor Badge is an offshoot of the SHARP program is a misconception. "We never conceived this badge to be a part of SHARP in any way," Bailey said. "As part of our training we talk about professional credibility. We talk about ethics and professional standards as far as being an instructor and leading Soldiers within in the classroom. So from that angle, yes, we try to emphasize ethics and military bearing."

He also said criticism that the badge is an unnecessary decoration or that it is part of an overabundance of badges, tabs and pins is erroneous and unwarranted. "It's about more than just issuing badges to instructors," Bailey said. "It's about developing competencies as far as being able to effectively facilitate Soldier learning, and training in the classroom. The people who say those kinds of things are short-sighted or they don't have

enough information. What we're trying to do is to improve and move NCOES into the future."

The Army Instructor Badge is expected to be in Army clothing sales stores by June. NCOs with questions about the badge are encouraged to consult TRADOC Regulation 600-21 or contact INCOPD. But, Bailey says, NCO academy commandants may be the best resource for Soldiers.

"NCO academy commandants will get on a quarterly basis the most current information about this program," Bailey said. "The way we envision this program, is as a commandant-centric program that should be used to develop their NCO instructors and to improve what's happening at the NCO academies."

Closer look: Army Instructor Badge requirements

The three levels of the Army Instructor Badge authorized for award are the Basic Army Instructor Badge (BAIB), Senior Army Instructor Badge (SAIB) and the Master Army Instructor Badge (MAIB). Soldiers who are assigned to a noncommissioned officer academy and serve in an instructor position after June 7, 2013, are eligible to be awarded the AIB. Requirements for each badge are as follows:

- BAIB — Soldiers must meet the instructor requirements outlined in AR 614-200. They must complete the requirements of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command regulation 600-21. They also must complete 80 hours of instruction as a primary instructor and must meet evaluation requirements after two separate evaluations 30 days apart.
- SAIB — Soldiers must meet the instructor requirements outlined in AR 614-200. They must complete the requirements of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command regulation 600-21 and complete the following prerequisites — the small group instructor training course/intermediate facilitation skills course and the systems approach to training basic course/foundation training developer course. They also must complete 400 hours of instruction as a primary instructor after being awarded the BAIB and must meet evaluation requirements after two separate evaluations 30 days apart.
- MAIB — Soldiers must meet the instructor requirements outlined in AR 614-200. They must complete the requirements of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command regulation 600-21 and complete all courses required for the SAIB along with the following prerequisites — advanced facilitator skills course or the faculty development program-1 and the evaluating instructors workshop. They also must complete 400 hours of instruction as a primary instructor after being awarded the SAIB and must meet evaluation requirements and master instructor board requirements outlined in TRADOC regulation 600-21.

The Army Instructor Badges are awarded promotion points as follows:

- Basic Army Instructor Badge: 15 points
 - Senior Army Instructor Badge: 15 points
 - Master Army Instructor Badge: 20 points
- Promotion points are not cumulative for the AIB.

Award of a higher level AIB will increase a promotion score by the difference between the badges. There is no difference in promotion points between the BAIB and SAIB. For example, a Soldier who earns the MAIB will earn 20 promotion points, not 50 (BAIB, 15 + SAIB, 15 + MAIB, 20 = 20 points.) ■



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