

Step's Education Requirements Lead to Changes in Promotion Points Worksheet

By Jonathan (Jay) Koester - NCO Journal

February 16, 2016



The Select, Train, Educate, Promote (STEP) system took effect Jan. 1, and Command Sgt. Maj. David Davenport, command sergeant major of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, said NCOs have noticed the new education requirements and are filling Army schoolhouses.

"Right now, we have a backlog of Soldiers needing school, and they're our priority," Davenport said. "But if we don't get our Soldiers to school on time, and if they're not prepared to go to school, what we're going to have is a promotion backlog, not an education backlog."

Davenport said STEP's requirements that NCOs be completely up to date on their formal education before they can be promoted will help the Army and noncommissioned officers.

"Before STEP, we didn't value education," Davenport said. "We thought that just because you did something over and over, that certified you in that core competency. Knowing the standard from doctrine and knowing the standard from something that has been handed down over time are two different things.

"Through formal education, we make sure that noncommissioned officers are certified in their core competencies before being promoted," Davenport said.

Requiring the proper education before promotion should help noncommissioned officers step smoothly into the roles and responsibilities they are assigned, said Sgt. Maj. Michael Haycraft, chief of the enlisted promotions branch at Human Resources Command.

"STEP is important to the Army because it allows us to train and prepare these Soldiers and these NCOs — these leaders — before we put them in the position," Haycraft said. "In the past, we would put them in a position before we actually had a chance to get them through school and get them the education they needed. Now, this will better prepare them for the added responsibility of that promotion.

"The biggest misconception is that a lot of NCOs think it's going to have a negative impact on them. However, I disagree," Haycraft said. "Based on us preparing them upfront, it makes them ready to have that added responsibility and take that promotion. Whereas in the past, we would throw them in the position, promote them, and then get them to school hopefully in the next year, sometimes later. The Army didn't receive the added advantage of having a school-trained leader in that position."

Senior NCOs will first notice STEP requirements with coming promotion boards, Haycraft said. There will be a master sergeant promotion board in March, but STEP won't take effect for senior NCOs until June.

"In June, we're having a sergeant first class promotion board. With that one, the results will come out, and they will be the first ones that the STEP process will be applied to," Haycraft said.

But for junior NCOs, STEP took effect Jan 1. And with STEP's implementation comes changes to the Promotion Points Worksheet for those being promoted to sergeants and staff sergeants. Accumulating points, up to a max of 800 points, is how junior NCOs get promoted. How many points Soldiers need to get promoted depends on the military occupational specialties.

Because of STEP's education requirements, Soldiers will no longer receive promotion points for the Basic Leader Course or Advanced Leader Course. Those courses are now required for promotion.

"We took away promotion points for school, but we added in points to APFT," Haycraft said. "We're trying to promote health and wellness more. We added points to weapons qualification. If you get commandant's list, or you get honor graduate or the distinguished leader award in one of your Noncommissioned Officer Education System courses, we give points for that. We added points for language proficiency. We're trying to put it back in the Soldiers' hands and give them the motivation to go out there and do great things and better themselves. We doubled the points in civilian education to try to promote the young Soldiers and NCOs to become critical and creative thinkers."

To take a closer look at the Promotion Points Worksheet, or to find answers to commonly asked questions about the worksheet or STEP, Haycraft pointed NCOs to the Human Resources Command website.

"I think the biggest thing I'd like to have NCOs understand is ... our website, if they have any questions at all about STEP, go to the Enlisted Promotions website," Haycraft said. "Any questions they have should be answered on that website. It has all the current policies. It has points of contact for us if they have questions they can't find the answers to."

More information:

- Human Resources Command, Enlisted Promotions: <https://www.hrc.army.mil/TAGD/Enlisted%20Promotions>
(<https://www.hrc.army.mil/TAGD/Enlisted%20Promotions>)
- HRC's Personnel Information Systems Directorate: <https://www.hrc.army.mil/PERSINSD/Tools%20and%20Applications%20Directory>
(<https://www.hrc.army.mil/PERSINSD/Tools%20and%20Applications%20Directory>)
- eMILPO: <https://emilpo.ahrs.army.mil/> (<https://emilpo.ahrs.army.mil/>)
- Command Sgt. Maj. David Davenport's blog: <http://www.tradocnews.org/category/straight-from-the-csm/>
(<http://www.tradocnews.org/category/straight-from-the-csm/>)