



The Air Force's Personnel Center



SkillBridge Program

**AFPC/DPPSA
Business Process Owner
Voluntary Education
12 June 2025**



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SkillBridge Application Changes

HOT! HOT! HOT!

- **Effective 26 Jun 25, SkillBridge applications will no longer route through local Education and Training Sections (E&TS) for review**
- **E&TS will continue to provide general advisement for the program per DAFI 36-2670;**
 - **Ensuring applications are compliant with SkillBridge and Military Leave policies is the responsibility of the supervisor and approving commander**
 - **Education Services Specialists (ESS) did not receive manpower for application reviews and are not responsible for reviewing or quality control**
 - **Allows ESS to focus on core functions in manpower constrained environment, i.e. advising members on Voluntary Education programs & higher education goals**
 - **Applications are fully automated to minimize administrative burden for all reviewers and will continue to be developed as needed**



SkillBridge Application Changes

- **E&TS personnel will continue to provide monthly briefings and general advisement**
- **E&TS will no longer be required to perform the following:**
 - **SkillBridge initial counseling prior to application submission**
 - **Verification of SkillBridge eligibility**
 - **Application review and coordination**
- **E&TS personnel will have view capabilities of SkillBridge applications only**
 - **May provide advisement to members, supervisors and commanders for specific questions about applications**
 - **Supervisors and commanders will have minimal edit capabilities for corrections to applications, however it's ultimately the member's responsibility for updates**
- **SkillBridge applications will now route from member to supervisor directly to the approving commander. The member can add an additional reviewer in the application**
 - **Commanders may designate additional reviewer specific to internal approval process**



SkillBridge Application Changes

- **Members will complete SkillBridge Virtual Training in AFVEC before accessing the SkillBridge application**
- **The member will research the DoD and AFVEC Skillbridge websites for available opportunities and submit their application for the selected program**
- **A completed SkillBridge application will include the following:**
 - **Applicant information and civilian email address**
 - **Supervisor and commander contact information**
 - **Program details, training location, and provider contact information**
 - **Training acceptance letter or company agreement**
 - **Personalized DoD training plan from the provider with required training days**
 - **Projected timelines (PTDY SkillBridge, PTDY relo (if eligible) and Terminal Leave)**



SkillBridge Application Changes

- **Once the SkillBridge application is submitted, the supervisor will receive an email with a link to review the SkillBridge application. Note: At the same time, the commander receives an email for situational awareness**
- **Supervisor responsibilities:**
 - **Discuss applicant transition goals and review application for policy adherence**
 - **Verify applicant's expected DOS and all training dates, PTDY, and Terminal Leave are within 180 days of the DOS**
 - **Acknowledge backfills are not permitted for members participating in SkillBridge**
 - **Advise applicants they may be recalled due to changing mission requirements, misconduct, lack of training progression, or if the member reenlists/extends**
 - **Provide a recommendation to the commander to include mission impacts**
 - **Conduct regular contacts with SkillBridge participants and training provider**
 - **Maintain a copy of the SkillBridge approval (Memorandum of Participation) for leave documentation and ensure a copy is provided to the commander**



SkillBridge Application Changes

- **Additional Reviewer (if included) – provides additional oversight and internal coordination to the approving commander**
- **Commander Responsibilities**
 - **Review SkillBridge application for policy adherence**
 - **Maintain accountability for SkillBridge participants**
 - **Acknowledge backfills are not permitted for members participating in SkillBridge**
 - **Consider mission impacts if the applicant is approved for SkillBridge**
 - **Evaluate training length, expected outcomes and identified skill gaps**
 - **Consider alternatives to full-time SkillBridge programs to balance mission needs such as reduced training timelines, part-time training vs full-time training, and/or local or online training opportunities**



Exceptions to Policy

- **All ETPS are submitted via AFVEC by the member with detailed memo explaining the extenuating circumstance and indorsed by the CC**
- **Members who are in an approved training program but requesting to switch to a different training program may submit an Exception to Policy (ETP) if circumstances were not within their control**
- **Members meeting full Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) do not have an official separation date and must submit an ETP to establish an expected date**
 - **ETP is submitted in AFVEC for approval/disapproval; members will utilize the MEB ETP template memorandum provided in AFVEC Resources**
 - **Members must establish estimated training timelines within 180 days from MEB notification date, documented by the Form Letter 4 (FL-4); medical codes must be redacted, and FL-4 must be uploaded as supporting documentation**
 - **MEB applicants must remain in the local area and be available for MEB requirements**



SkillBridge Program Description

- **The DoD SkillBridge program is an opportunity for transitioning members to gain real-world civilian work experience through specific industry training, apprenticeships, or internships during their last 180 days of military service**
 - **Participation is contingent upon a high likelihood of post-service employment following the completion of training**
 - **Members participating in SkillBridge continue to receiving military compensation and benefits while on active duty**
 - **SkillBridge training must be completed with a DoD-authorized SkillBridge provider with a current MOU and in good standing throughout the entire training period**



SkillBridge Approval Authority

- **THIS IS A COMMANDER'S PROGRAM** - Approval authority is the 1st field grade commander in Service member's chain of command authorized to impose non-judicial punishment under Article 15 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)
 - **This authority may not be delegated**
- **SKILLBRIDGE IS NOT AN ENTITLEMENT** - Approval to include length of training **MUST** be based on mission requirements and contingent on strong justification to warrant a manpower gap
 - Training length should align with skill gaps (members with justified need) and the minimal training time needed to gain post-service employment
- Proposed SkillBridge plans should be adjusted based on mission/manning to include shortened training timelines, part-time training vs full-time training, and/or local or online training opportunities
- A backfill **WILL NOT** be provided until the participant's approved separation date



Approval Considerations

- Regular leave, PTDY for Relocation, and Terminal Leave used in conjunction with SkillBridge must occur within 180 days from separation or retirement
- Ideally, SkillBridge trainings are 120 days or less
 - In FY24, 39% of applications were >120 days (Slide 15)
- Prioritize Service members who fall in target “at-risk” populations:
 - Ending a first-term enlistment or first commitment of service
 - Involuntarily separating due to Force Management
 - Rapid separation from active duty, such as medical separation
 - Voluntary or involuntary early separation (and expected general or honorable discharge), such as hardship discharge, or members with short transition timelines due to deployments



SkillBridge Application

- **All SkillBridge approvals/disapprovals must be accomplished in Air Force Virtual Education Center (AFVEC)**
- **Eligible Service members can submit their SkillBridge application in AFVEC up to 1 year from their approved Date of Separation**
- **The SkillBridge application will route to supervisor and commander with an option for an additional reviewer**
- **When a SkillBridge application is approved in AFVEC, a Memorandum of Participation (MoP) is generated**
 - **Members will provide a copy of approved SkillBridge MoP to their supervisor, commander, and SkillBridge program provider**
 - **Members will upload the approved SkillBridge MoP in LeaveWeb as the source document for PTDY request/s**



SkillBridge Eligibility

- **Service members must meet the following eligibility criteria:**
 - **Complete at least 180 days of service in the Armed Forces**
 - **Complete the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) mandated requirements**
 - **Member and commander confirms TAP will be completed within mandated timelines.**
 - **Expect to be discharged...**
 - **From service within 180 days of starting participation in SkillBridge program**
 - **With an anticipated honorable or under honorable conditions character of service**
- **Members cannot separate/retire in a PTDY or Regular Leave status and are encouraged to maximize their Terminal Leave**
- **AGR personnel are eligible if they are activated for at least 180 days and are projected to discharge from their component upon expiration of their activation orders**
- **AGRs transitioning to another status such as Traditional Reserve, Individual Mobilization Augmentee, or Air Reserve Technician are ineligible**



Guard and Reserve Eligibility

- **The member's AGR orders must cover the duration of the approved SkillBridge training program and will not be extended**
- **A member should not be placed on activation orders for the purpose of participating in SkillBridge, as this is a violation of DoDI1322.29, Enclosure 3, 1.b.**
 - **Military Departments will not spend DoD appropriations for JTEST-AI [SkillBridge]**
- **In Mar 25, Reserve AGR members applications were automated in AFVEC and in Apr 25, Reserve AGRs have required training lengths based on rank**
 - **AGRs applications are not processed by active-duty Education & Training Sections**
 - **Automation includes new NAF additional review requirements**
 - **AFRC/A1KA is the POC for procedure questions and final application review**
- **Guard AGRs as of May 25 will follow the Active-Duty SkillBridge Virtual Training, eligibility activation, and application processes in AFVEC**



Unauthorized Uses

- **DAF members will not participate with a provider when:**
 - **There is a conflict of interest and/or the employer or business with which the member has a pre-existing relationship**
 - **The training partner does business with DoD and inherently involves representation back to DoD**
 - **The training program involves federally illegal or controlled substances, regardless of whether the substance may be lawfully bought, sold, or used pursuant to local or state laws**
 - **Activities are prejudicial to good order and discipline, service discrediting, or that conflict with or violate other standards, or guidance, of the DoD or the Military Departments members**



Unauthorized Uses

- **Appropriated funds are not authorized for SkillBridge**
- **SkillBridge participation in a paid, temporary duty status**
 - **Payment for per diem or travel expenses is not authorized even for off-installation SkillBridge Programs**
 - **Exception: SkillBridge training providers may offer gifts, as outlined in 5 CFR 2635.204, when the gift/s are based on the employment relationship**
- **Use of a government-owned vehicle to transport Airmen to a SkillBridge Program**
- **Compensation, wages, pay, training stipends or any other form of financial compensation from the SkillBridge provider for participation in any career skills or training program**



Other Considerations

- **Members are eligible for only one SkillBridge Program during their transition period**
- **Members who reenlist/extend or cancel separation or retirement will immediately withdraw from their training programs and return to duty**
- **Members are not authorized to extend their enlistment or service commitment to participate in SkillBridge**
- **In situations beyond the member's control, verified early terminations may request an exception to policy for SkillBridge participation consideration**
 - **i.e., Members who are meeting a Medical Evaluation Board who do not yet have an established date of separation**



Other Considerations

- **SkillBridge programs will be provided at minimal or no cost**
- **Members may voluntarily elect to participate in a SkillBridge Program that charges application, registration, or other minimal fees using their personal funds**
- **Members may use Department of Veterans Affairs educational benefits for On-the-Job/apprenticeship programs and vocational/technical training programs, if the program is VA-approved and a DoD Authorized SkillBridge Provider**



Participant Responsibilities

- **Complete TAP requirements and finalize all out-processing requirements**
- **Report accountability with immediate military supervision during SkillBridge training**
- **As required, comply with military training requirements and maintain military standards**
- **If there are unresolvable issues with the training provider, notify Education Center and leadership and return to duty or adjust leave status**
- **Complete the mandatory online Exit Survey upon completion or termination of SkillBridge training**



Resources and References

- **DoD SkillBridge**
 - <https://skillbridge.osd.mil/>
- **AFVEC SkillBridge**
 - <https://afvec.us.af.mil/afvec/skillbridge/search>
- **DoDI 13229.29**
 - **Job Training, Employment Skills Training, Apprenticeships, and Internships (JTEST-AI) for Eligible Service Members**
- **DAFI 36-2670, 6.10**
 - **SkillBridge Program**
- **DAFI 36-3003, Table 4.3, Rule 23**
 - **Military Leave Program**



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