

AUG 23 2023



READINESS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

**MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS
VICE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF**

SUBJECT: Integrating Climate Security Learning Outcomes in Professional Military Education

The 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS) recognizes that changes in global climate are already transforming the context in which the Department operates. Climate change is a threat multiplier that affects geostrategic, operational, and tactical environments – making contested logistics more challenging, our equipment and installations more vulnerable, and our operations more complicated. Department of Defense (DoD) senior leaders and warfighters must be prepared to address and overcome these challenges.

In 2022, in support of NDS priorities, the Climate Literacy Sub-Working Group gathered information from the Military Departments and the Joint Staff on existing curricula addressing both climate change and national/international security, grand strategy, foreign policy, joint warfighting, and other defense- and security-related topics. Data call results indicate some climate security-related education is underway in professional military education (PME) and Joint PME, but with significant variability in these programs' treatment of climate security, their articulation of learning outcomes, course context and material, and accessibility. To ensure all military and civilian personnel enrolled in these schools have a commensurate understanding of climate change as a force shaping the strategic threat environment, greater consistency in learning outcomes across these programs is necessary.

Therefore, for Academic Year (AY) 2023-2024, all intermediate- and senior-level PME programs will consider adjusting their existing climate security instruction with the attached recommended climate security learning outcomes, alongside the expectation that curricula will achieve those outcomes for AY 2024-2025. The Military Departments and Joint Staff will review their education programs and ensure leaders are aware of the recommended learning outcomes and will work with their institutions to determine how best to leverage existing climate change instruction. At the September 2023 PME Faculty Workshop, attendees will discuss any updates to current curricula, and/or new course offerings, needed to achieve climate security learning outcomes.

Questions regarding this guidance or its implementation should be directed to osd.pentagon.ousd-p-r.mbx.fet-climate@mail.mil.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shawn G. Skelly".

Shawn G. Skelly

Attachment:
As Stated

PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES ON CLIMATE SECURITY

I. GUIDANCE

The National Defense Strategy recognizes that climate change will complicate DoD basing and access; challenge readiness, installations, and capabilities; create new corridors of strategic competition; increase demands on the Joint Force for disaster response, defense support of civil authorities, and stabilization activities abroad; contribute to evolving population patterns in areas of operation due to environmental displacement and human migration; and affect security relationships with many U.S. Allies and partners. DoD must cultivate the talents of its workforce and senior leadership, including through education and training, to develop the knowledge, skills, and capabilities needed to continue executing the Department's mission in the new strategic environment that will result from a changing global climate. Climate literacy is addressed as Topic 2 in the Department's Climate Adaptation Plan.¹

Therefore, the Department is committed to integrating climate security topics into all its education efforts, from skill-specific military education to graduate-level professional military education (PME) in the war colleges. The Military Departments and Joint Staff will review their intermediate- and senior-level PME programs and will work with the leaders of those programs to include the recommended climate security learning outcomes in a way that takes best advantage of existing curricula while maximizing faculty expertise.

II. OUTCOMES

Intermediate-Level Education

Outcomes: Graduates of intermediate-level education will (1) understand how climate change affects strategic, operational, and tactical environments; (2) understand the basic elements of climate change science; (3) know where to access the best available, validated, and actionable climate information about climate change; (4) communicate effectively about the national security implications of climate change; and (5) recognize when and how to apply climate considerations when making national security decisions or when providing best military advice, in ways appropriate for their mission, function, and role.

Learning outcomes for intermediate-level students shall provide the building blocks for understanding the strategic implications of climate change on the character of future warfare, as well as a basic ability to understand and use authoritative climate data and information.

Each institution has the latitude to develop an approach to incorporate the outcomes that are best suited for its specific program(s). For example, some content will be common across all curricula, but institutions may choose to place greater emphasis on service-specific topics in some cases. Courses that serve would-be logisticians might emphasize concepts related to contested logistics and energy demand reduction, whereas courses catering to installations managers might focus on exposure to climate hazards, disaster risk reduction, and resilience. Strategy-oriented programs may spend more time integrating the ways in which climate change can lead to environmental insecurity, affect the long-term geopolitical world order, and impact

¹ Department of Defense Climate Adaptation Plan: <https://www.sustainability.gov/pdfs/dod-2021-cap.pdf>

the human terrain of regions around the world, shaping the behavior of both U.S. Allies and partners, as well as potential adversaries.

Senior-Level Education

Outcomes: In accordance with policy and operational directives from the National Defense Strategy, Defense Planning Guidance, Executive Orders, and Secretary of Defense Climate Adaptation Plan, graduates of senior-level PME programs will (1) understand how climate change affects the geostrategic environment for the United States, Allies, and partners to include risk assessments, adaptation, mitigation, and the energy transition; (2) how potential adversaries leverage climate change in their bilateral/multilateral engagements with other countries in competition with the United States; (3) communicate effectively about the national security implications of climate change, including how it influences DoD operational and planning efforts; and (4) recognize when and how to apply the best available, validated, and actionable climate information when making decisions, in ways appropriate for their mission, function, and role.

As with intermediate-level PME, each institution has the latitude to incorporate these outcomes via an approach best suited for their specific program(s).