



# **Command Assessment Program (CAP) Preparation Guide**

**Version 3.0  
03 June 2022**

Fellow Army Leaders,

The Army's Command Assessment Program (CAP) marks a bold step toward ensuring that our most talented leaders are selected for command and other key billets. The Chief of Staff of the Army clearly articulated that the CAP is how we select our future commanders, command sergeants major, and other key leaders. CAP currently consists of the following programs: the Colonels Command Assessment Program (CCAP), the Battalion Commander Assessment Program (BCAP), the Acquisition Leader Assessment Program (ALAP), the Medical Command Assessment Program (MCAP), the Colonel & Division Chaplain Assessment Program (CCHAP/DCHAP), and the Sergeant Major Assessment Program (SMAP). Additional programs are under development.

This guide assists candidates for all populations to prepare for the CAP and helps units integrate activities into their broad leader development program. The CAP measures attributes and competencies articulated in the Army Leadership Requirements Model found in ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession* and enables the Army to hold leaders accountable to our leadership doctrine. All CAP events are conducted with clear standards. The physical fitness, written communication, and verbal communication assessments are conducted with full transparency. However, a few events are opaque to preserve the long-term integrity of the assessments so the CAP continues to identify the most talented leaders for our Army. For participating leaders, we encourage you to prepare for the CAP. We designed this preparation guide to help you achieve that end. Your invitation to the CAP indicates that you have the ability to achieve strong results as a leader. CAP assists the Army in understanding **how** you achieve those results. While your record of evaluations will not be considered at CAP, that record remains the most heavily weighted component of the CAP system. Your scored past performance, which got you invited to CAP, gets added to several other scored events to produce the order of merit list (OML) for the Chief of Staff of the Army's approval. However, your past performance as calculated from the CSL board is different than that calculated on a promotion board. In many cases, the CSL board has the ability to consider additional information that was added to your file after the promotion board.

CSL selection and participation in the CAP as a part of that selection is an important milestone for leaders. We understand the importance of the CAP and that each candidate has individual circumstances that impact the decision to participate. Over the past three years, we have handled a number of cases requiring individual accommodations for candidates who are injured, wounded, pregnant, pending or recovering from surgery, or have individual life circumstances that impact the timing of taking command or key leader positions. We encourage candidates to communicate those circumstances with your HRC assignment manager and your identified CAP sponsor and, if necessary, request exceptions to policy. Early and accurate communication with your assignment officer and your CAP sponsor is essential to ensure we can consider your individual situation.

As a foundation, you should arrive at CAP well-rested, clear-headed, focused, physically fit, and ready to perform your best on a series of events that span four days. The CAP is designed to allow you to showcase your many strengths. The only person you are competing against is yourself. Regardless of the outcome from your participation in the CAP, you will emerge a more insightful, self-aware, and well-informed leader.

You should mentally prepare yourself to receive feedback. There are ample opportunities for developmental feedback. Candidates with high self-awareness and a willingness to receive feedback, benefit the most from the CAP. You will also have the

opportunity to volunteer for confidential executive coaching to assist you in your professional development.

We recommend that Army leaders develop their units and all Soldiers and Civilians, including CAP candidates, to assume leadership positions through their traditional leader development programs by modeling a positive, high standards command climate. We recommend against providing unit level, CAP-specific preparation or rehearsal events, as this effort may inadvertently steer candidates in the wrong direction. Instead, focus on the Army Leadership Requirements Model in ADP 6-22. This guide has some suggested activities to incorporate into unit leader development programs.

**The secret to success at the CAP is to lead in accordance with the Army's leadership doctrine throughout your career.** Please take the time to review this guide to assist in your preparation. If you have any additional questions, do not hesitate to contact the Army Talent Management Task Force. If you have difficulty with getting information specific to your situation, you may contact COL Bob O'Brien, [robert.a.obrien12.mil@army.mil](mailto:robert.a.obrien12.mil@army.mil) or COL Townley Hedrick, [townley.r.hedrick.mil@army.mil](mailto:townley.r.hedrick.mil@army.mil).

Talent Wins!



Brett Funck  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army  
Director, Army Talent Management Task Force

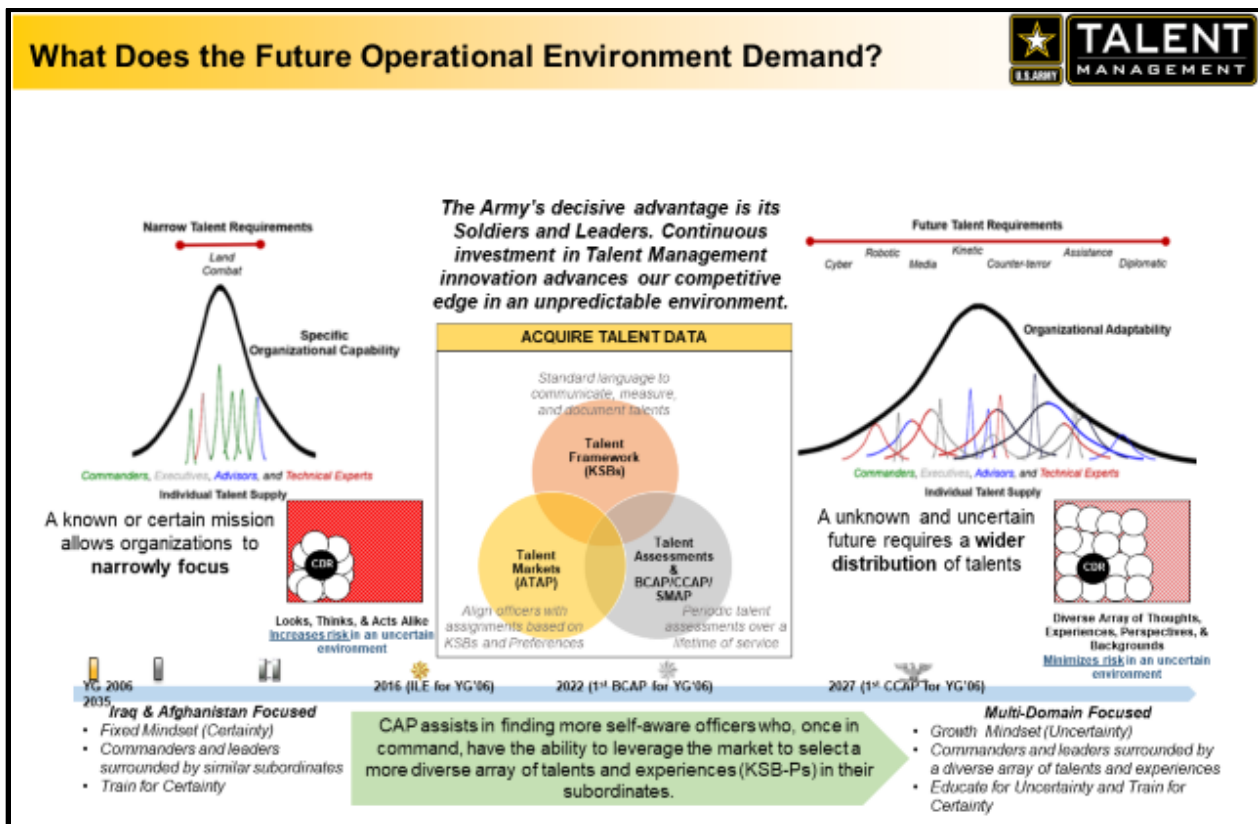
## Table of Contents

Why the Command Assessment Program? .....	5
Methodology.....	6
World-class, Fair, Consistent, and Safe.....	6
The Three-Phase Centralized Selection List (CSL) System.....	7
Army Comprehensive Talent Interview (ACTI).....	7
Growth and Development.....	8
Building a Culture of Assessments.....	9
Benefits of the CAP.....	9
How to Prepare.....	10
Lead in accordance with Army doctrine over time.....	10
LTC/GS-14, COL/GS-15, and SGM/CSM Assessments.....	10
Peer / Subordinate Assessment.....	10
Written Communication.....	11
Physical Fitness Assessment.....	13
Army Comprehensive Talent Interview (ACTI).....	13
Suggested References.....	15
Written Communication Rubric.....	17
Verbal Communication Rubric.....	19
STAR Method and Examples of Behavior-based Interview Questions.....	20
Army Leadership Requirements Model.....	21
Counterproductive Leadership.....	22

## Why the Command Assessment Program?

The Army adopted the Centralized Selection List (CSL) process in 1975 to address the challenge of selecting the best officers to command our battalion- and brigade-level formations. It was designed to ensure fairness and meritocracy during these critical personnel decisions. The CSL process is a good system that served the Army well for decades. However, CSL board members make a momentous decision when casting their vote about an individual on behalf of the Army with very little information in an average time of less than two minutes. With the rise of great power competitors that are eroding our economic and technological advantages, good is no longer good enough. We must ensure that we select the *best* leaders for our most significant leadership positions and, since the path to senior leadership commonly passes through battalion and brigade-level CSL positions, select leaders who also possess strong strategic potential.

The information age talent management system the Army is developing enables us to move beyond the narrowly focused mission set of the last two decades. Understanding People's individual talents allows us to build teams of commanders, executives, advisors, and technical experts that have a wider diversity of talents to better enable commanders and leaders to understand complex and vague problems. Predictive assessments, like those conducted at the CAP, provide each person a better opportunity to understand his/her own unique talents, as well as giving the Army more options to consider for employing its People.



## Methodology

CAP provides additional, relevant information for the Army to make the best possible selection decisions for command, primary general staff, command sergeant major, and strategic leader positions. Woven throughout execution of the CAP is a process designed to create a holistic picture of a candidate's leadership readiness and potential, while collecting this information in a bias-reduced manner. The CAP uses a multitude of objective assessments to measure cognitive and non-cognitive abilities, written and verbal communications, physical fitness, leadership effectiveness, and counterproductive leadership frequency. The culminating assessment is the Army Comprehensive Talent Interview (ACTI), wherein senior Army leaders fuse together additional, relevant information to decide if a CAP candidate is *Ready* or *Not Yet Ready* for the selected position.

### World-class, fair, consistent, and safe.

The standard for the CAP is a world-class, fair, consistent, and safe event and epitomizes professionalism and prioritizes the candidate experience from initial contact with the welcome letter through departure from Fort Knox.

First, it is **world-class** (but not gold-plated). The VCSA validates the conduct of every assessment and all aspects of the CAP candidate environment prior to execution, making it the best assessment and selection program of its size. For example, sponsor teams are assigned to every cohort to ensure candidates are informed in a timely manner of when and where to be for all events, and to assist with any issues that might detract from a candidate's experience. This allows all candidates to focus solely on putting their best foot forward and showcasing their many talents.

Second, it is **fair**. The experience and assessments will neither advantage nor disadvantage any candidate based on their past experiences or current assignment. This is because all assessments are based on foundational Army leadership requirements found in the Army's doctrine. Examples of ensuring fairness includes authorizing OCONUS candidates to arrive early to acclimate, providing different reference articles for the argumentative essay, wearing business casual attire for all events except for the ACFT and Height/Weight assessment, and changing the questions used for the Army Comprehensive Talent Interview (ACTI) to ensure that later cohorts do not gain advantage over early cohorts.

Third, it is **consistent**. The CAP experience and assessments are all conducted to the same standard and under the same conditions from the very first cohort to the last. For example, all standard cadre-candidate interactions are scripted to ensure consistency. The physical fitness assessment is administered and executed under the same conditions for all candidates and uses the same graders. Additionally, these graders conduct hundreds of rehearsals to ensure tight calibration including cross-checking video recordings of all assessed events.

Lastly, considering the recent global pandemic, it is **safe**. The cadre employ the latest best practices from the CDC and Army Public Health to implement and enforce mitigation measures against COVID-19 transmission, ensuring that cadre, candidates, and their families will be safe. CAP 22 was executed with zero transmission cases at the height of the pandemic and CAP 23 concluded with an extremely limited number of transmission cases due to following these best practices.

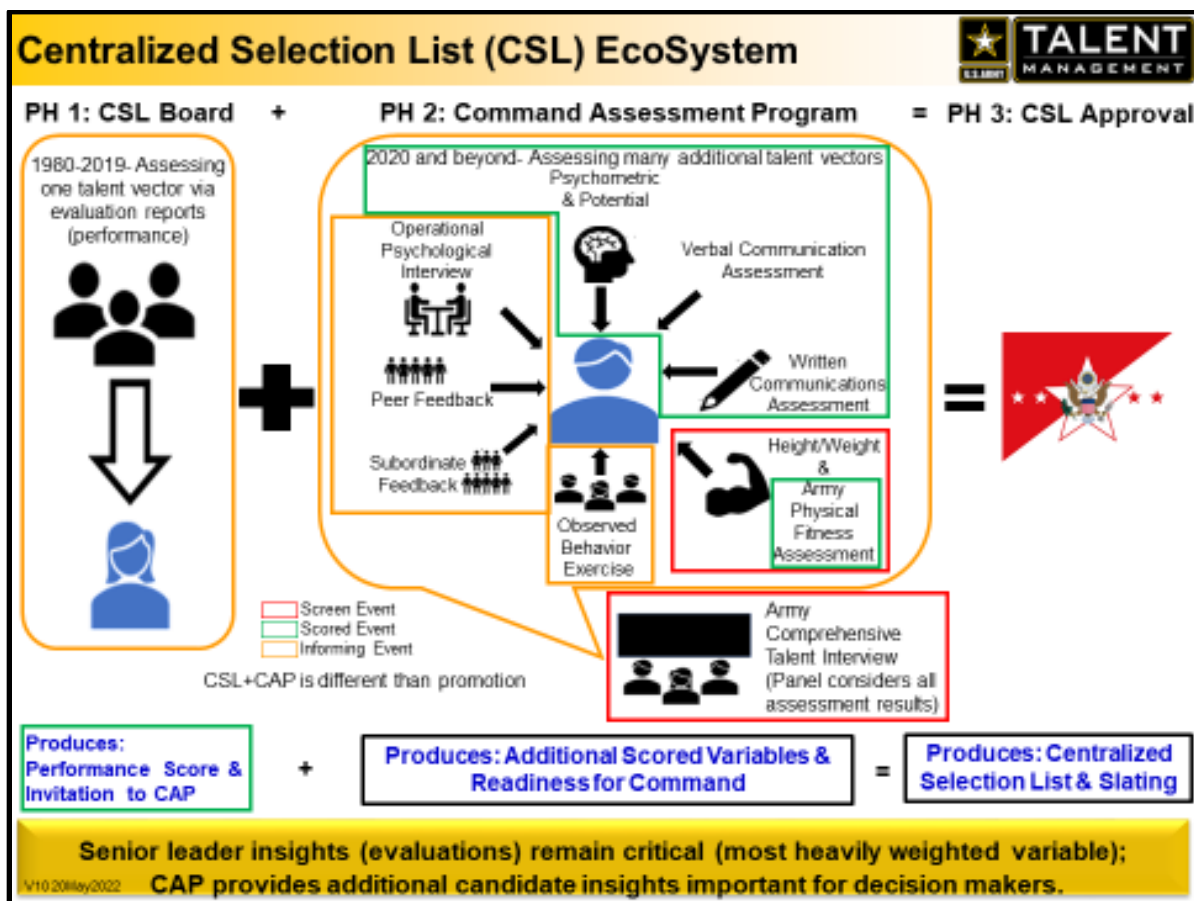
## The Three-Phase CSL System.

Selection to fill these critical assignments occurs in three phases:

1. The Centralized Selection List (CSL) Board determines an invitation score which generates an invitation to the Command Assessment Program (CAP). This invitation score represents the vote of the chain of command and the candidate's record of past performance.

2. The CAP objectively assesses and recommends candidates to fill these critical positions and produces additional scored variables that get added to a candidate's performance score.

3. The Chief of Staff, Army (CSA), or the appropriate principal official for ALAP and SMAP, reviews the combined performance score and CAP scored results, validates the order of merit list (OML), then selects the leaders who have earned command or key billet positions and will be slated into those positions.



## Army Comprehensive Talent Interview (ACTI).

The last assessment at the CAP is the ACTI, where a panel of senior Army leaders interviews all CAP candidates and considers the CAP assessment data. Because performance data found in candidate evaluation reports and record brief is already used during the CSL board to create the CAP invite list, this information is not made available for reuse at the CAP –

only assessments executed at the CAP and the peer-subordinate assessments are used. The panel members are responsible for two things: they score a candidate's verbal communication talents using the rubric found in this guide and each panel member makes an independent determination of whether the candidate is *Ready* or *Not Yet Ready* for a CSL or key billet position.

Crucial to the execution of the ACTI are the bias mitigation measures implemented to ensure a fair and consistent interview. The bias mitigation measures are based on decades of research and practice throughout academia, industry, and the military. This includes the use of a screen between the candidate and panel, creating a "double blind" interview where the candidate cannot see the panel members and the panel members cannot see the candidate. This focuses the panel on listening to the candidate's verbal communication and leadership experiences and prevents them from making decisions based on tabs, badges, combat patches, appearance, etc. Additionally, information presented is anonymized – no names or units. – All panel members receive bias mitigation training prior to panel operations and conduct a daily refresher. Finally, panel members use rubrics to further increase the consistency and reliability of their decisions.

### Growth and Development.

The guidance from the CSA is clear about the CAP; it should be a redemptive process that allows a leader to identify "holes in their swing" then return in subsequent years, if eligible, to compete having had an opportunity to develop from the experience. For example, a large percentage of leaders determined NYRFC during previous CAPs were determined RFC in a second attempt.

While the primary purpose of the CAP is to assess and make recommendations, the Army has gradually built developmental opportunities into CAP that do not compromise the long-term integrity of the assessments. The CAP provides candidates a chance for self-reflection during preparation for, execution, and following the experience. Using a guided self-reflection worksheet, candidates participate in a developmental out-brief with a trained operational psychologist who provides the candidate with a holistic review of their leadership strengths and developmental needs using the information gathered at the CAP. Candidates are allowed to take detailed notes during this out-brief. Candidates are also offered the opportunity for confidential, professional coaching post CAP. The CAP will not provide any data to the coaches – most of them are not certified to handle data from the assessments. However, candidates may pass on any information they have received and have the opportunity to take the Emotional Quotient Inventory 2.0, or EQI-2.0, providing assessment data similar to some of the CAP assessments. Lastly, a candidate who is determined *Not Yet Ready* will be notified in person. **The first general officer in a candidate's chain of command may request additional information to assist in follow-on mentoring.**

The Army continues seeking potential developmental opportunities. However, in keeping with the primary purpose of using the CAP for predictive assessment and not compromising the long-term integrity of the instruments, candidates are not provided specific, granular performance feedback. This includes the peer and subordinate assessment (e.g., comments, number of assessors, number of yes/no recommendations) to maintain the anonymity of assessors and protect their input, the Command Assessment Program Strategic Assessment (CAPSA) (the SMAP equivalent is the Sergeant Major Assessment Battery, or SGM-AB), and the psychometrics. This does not prevent candidates from receiving relevant, useful insights



gained from these assessments. Candidates should approach the feedback opportunities ready to receive that feedback and ask questions about **how to apply** that feedback.

### Building a Culture of Assessments.

The CAP events are predictive assessments in the broader context of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Army Talent Management System. The Army is implementing a talent maximization structure inculcating a culture of assessments throughout a leader's career. While the initial CAP cohorts' first experience with assessments is the CAP, TRADOC is leading efforts through Project Athena to build a culture of assessments at professional military education (PME) venues. Project Athena assessments give leaders an opportunity to complete assessments and receive feedback, with the primary purpose being self-development. Assessment ratings enable leaders to develop the competencies and attributes of the Army Leadership Requirements Model - the areas the CAP assesses. For example, officers commissioned this year complete assessments at the Basic Officer Leader's Course (BOLC), the Captain's Career Course (CCC), and the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) before competing at the CAP over a decade and a half later. Enlisted Soldiers becoming Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs) this year will complete assessments at the Basic Leaders Course (BLC), Advanced Leaders Course (ALC), Senior Leaders Course (SLC), Master Leaders Course (MLC) and the Sergeants Major Course (SMC) before competing at the Sergeants Major Assessment Program approximately 20-27 ½ years later. This will provide our NCO corps five opportunities to leverage their strengths and improve on their leader development needs prior to CAP. In addition, the Army is currently conducting the 1SG Talent Alignment Assessment (TAA) to select NCOs for leadership positions.

### **Benefits of the CAP**

Implementation of the CAP is yielding several benefits for the Army. The CAP selects leaders with proven leadership qualities for command and key billets. The data from the CAP reveals selected leaders are more cognitively capable, more effective in both written and verbal communication, more physically fit, and possess fewer counterproductive and ineffective leadership traits.

Because the CAP assesses readiness for command and potential, it ensures those leaders on the path to strategic leadership possess the requisite talents to be both successful field grade and strategic leaders.

Candidates participating in the CAP become more self-aware. In fact, the most important insight gained thus far from the CAP is that self-awareness is strongly correlated with both increased leader effectiveness and less frequent exhibition of counterproductive leadership behavior. While the CAP is designed as a predictive assessment program (as opposed to a developmental program), several CAP events provide opportunities to reflect deeply on past experiences and grow in substantial ways. Additionally, the developmental out-brief provides feedback tailored for each candidate to engender further reflection and self-improvement. The data collected during the CAP allows the Army to improve the management and development of its leader cohorts. This data is analyzed to identify cohort-wide or specific branch trends driving changes to programs of instruction (POIs) at professional military education venues. For example, the School for Command Preparation (SCP) uses select information from an officer's CAP performance to create tailored developmental opportunities for leaders attending the Pre-Command Courses (PCCs).

The CAP is driving positive behaviors amongst our leaders and formations. The inclusion of the peer and subordinate assessments influences leaders to follow the Army's leadership doctrine (ADP 6-22) while striving to treat all with dignity and respect. The Army now sees trends in training individual leaders and units on integral components of effective leadership, including verbal and written communication skills. In short, achieving results is no longer the only thing that matters for CSL selection. **How leaders achieve those results has risen in importance.**

## **How to Prepare**

Candidates experience multiple assessments at the CAP. Preparation, though not required, may assist a leader to perform to his or her highest potential. Both individual leaders and units can create development plans, ideally as part of the overall leader development plan, to improve candidate performance at the CAP.

**Lead in accordance with Army doctrine over time.** The single-most influential thing that leaders can do to be successful at CAP is to be a productive and effective leader. This means more than just achieving strong results through leadership. **How leaders achieve those results in all jobs is important.** Candidates who arrive at CAP with a reputation for being highly effective while leading in a productive manner tend to be highly successful at CAP. This is more than just how candidates behave in the months prior to CAP. A career of productive and effective leadership is readily apparent to the voting panel. Similarly, those who consistently lead using counterproductive or ineffective methods may have difficulty. The voting panels understand that there will be instances in which leaders have made tough decisions and they can clearly see the long-term trend of each leader's style. ADP 6-22 is a candidate's best reference to understand productive and effective leadership.

**LTC/GS-14, COL/GS-15, and SGM/CSM Assessments.** Practice taking timed, conceptual assessments to improve your ability to focus on one task. Develop your ability to concentrate on a specific mental task and resist temptations to think about other things, such as checking your phone or a challenge you are experiencing at work. Additionally, review Chapter 10, "Strategic Leadership," ADP 6-22. Ensure you are engaging in balanced nutrition. At the CAP, make sure you are well rested and hydrated before and during each assessment.

**Peer/Subordinate Assessment.** Peers and subordinates have the ability to communicate to the voting panel how candidates lead and achieve results. It is normal for candidates to have some negative feedback on these reports. Panel members understand that leaders must make tough decisions and those instances stand out as anomalies in the vast majority of these assessments. The CAP uses three different instruments to collect peer and subordinate assessments. The **Army Commander Evaluation Tool (ACET)** is the instrument for the BCAP, CCAP, MCAP, DCHAP, and CCHAP populations. The ACET is slightly different for each population. It is tailored to the unique demands and challenges of battalion- and brigade-level leadership. The **Army Leader Assessment Tool (ALAT)** is the instrument for the Acquisition Corps in the BCAP and CCAP populations competing for primary general staff and key billet positions. The **Enlisted Leader Assessment Tool (ELAT)** is the instrument for the SMAP population. These instruments provide an opportunity for peers and subordinates to assess you based on past observable leadership behaviors. These instruments also provide a more complete understanding of your capabilities relative to the demands of command and key positions from those who have unique insight into your leadership effectiveness. These behaviors are grouped by leader attributes and competencies found in FM 6-22, *Leader Development*, and on the OER and NCOER support forms. You will also complete a self-

assessment. While these instruments – the ACET, ALAT, and ELAT – focus on capturing positive aspects of your leadership. They also assess the frequency with which you may engage in counterproductive leadership. We recommend:

#### Leaders

- Read FM 6-22. Reflect and assess your leadership in comparison to the Army leadership requirements model. Think of experiences over the past several years that give insight into your strengths and developmental needs—maybe a critical decision, an important task you led or were a part of, or a significant personal interaction.
- Sincerely ask your peers and subordinates to candidly tell you about your leadership strengths and developmental needs. Use the leadership requirements model to facilitate the conversation. Do not seek out peers and subordinates whom you perceive will provide positive feedback. Cast your net widely so you can receive tough, useful feedback. This can help identify strengths and developmental needs which went unnoticed or which you have been reluctant to acknowledge. One technique is to ask subordinates at the end of a counseling session what you can do to improve your performance. It might invite a conversation identifying you are not communicating effectively.
- Initiate a Social Awareness & Influence Assessment (SAIA) at this link: <https://aeas.army.mil/program/TokenAccess.aspx?code=107311xFF2FBB> (if the link does not work, copy and paste it into the internet browser). The SAIA provides an opportunity to assess your self-awareness and ability to influence others. Social awareness is the process leaders follow to perceive, analyze, and evaluate social interactions. Self-awareness entails monitoring yourself, others, and situations. Influence is how leaders shape what others think and do. Leaders use influence to energize others and accomplish tasks through others. Both self-awareness and influence are essential skills for leaders to master. The assessment takes approximately ten minutes to complete. This assessment is for self-development only and your report is confidential. You own this feedback and can share it with whomever you think may assist with your development (e.g., a coach, counselor, trusted peer, etc.). You are not required to share this feedback with anyone.

#### Units

- Create a unit-level LPD that incorporates the leadership requirements model and counterproductive leadership. Potential strategies and plans are in Chapter 2, “Program Development,” FM 6-22.
- Work with units across your installation to combine efforts and provide unbiased feedback and assessment of your officers.
- Set up an anonymous, developmental peer and subordinate feedback system in your unit and have leaders take it at least yearly and following major training events. Ensure the chain of command does not have access to this data – for the program to be effective, all must know that the data will only be seen and given directly to the subjects by a confidential facilitator.

Written Communication. The written communication assessment is critical to ensure leaders can concisely and effectively communicate intent, orders, guidance, and feedback.

Written exercises assess, for all CAP populations, your ability to formulate a response to a specific writing task, to support and structure your response effectively, and to communicate your meaning to others. For BCAP, including all O-5/GS-14 special populations, the assessment also measures your ability to craft an argument. For CCAP, including all O-6/GS-15 special populations, the assessment measures your ability to craft an argument and your capacity for strategic thinking. We recommend the following preparation:

### Leaders

- Read professional journal articles across a variety of disciplines. Identify best practices in organizing and communicating an effective argument. Seek out arguments that challenge your current thinking and think carefully about those arguments' construction. What was/wasn't persuasive? How did the author organize his or her evidence and analysis? What techniques did the author use to help you follow his or her logic? How is the article structured? Consider developing reverse outlines for the articles you read to help you pay attention to their specific elements.
- Read the published written exercise rubrics carefully. After studying each of the rubric criterion, practice identifying each of the moves in the professional articles you read (taking note that the rubrics are designed for specific writing assessments; not all articles, for instance, may be strategic in nature or present a distinct argument).
- Consider all job-related writing, including emails, to be practice for the written communication assessment. Assess your job-related writing using the written communication scoring rubrics in this guide.
- Practice sustained reading and writing tasks. In a single sitting, read a professional journal article and compose a response. As you read, take notes on the central thesis and lines of argument, paying careful attention to how the author uses evidence to make his or her argument. Practice identifying claims and conclusions and consider how they develop from the author's use of evidence. Then, take 45 minutes to write your response: select one of the claims or conclusions you've identified and explain in detail why it is persuasive (or why it isn't). What evidence was particularly effective? How did that evidence connect to the claim or conclusion you identified? How would you have made the same argument differently? How would you argue against the author?

### Units

- Provide feedback on job-related writing, including emails and memoranda. Identify effective writing as well as writing that needs development and describe, constructively, why you find specific elements of others' writing to be effective or ineffective. As possible, include suggestions for improvement or models of effectiveness.
  - Conduct a professional writing LPD session. Assign a strong writer from your unit to select a professional article to read. Align the topic to your leader development program.
  - Provide 45 minutes to your leaders to read, and then provide them with the relevant CAP written exercise rubric (included below). As a group, discuss each of the rubric categories; where does the article succeed or fall short against each criterion? Through this discussion, ensure a

- common understanding of the rubric and what the elements look like in practice. Schedule small-group follow-on sessions for leaders who have difficulty identifying rubric criterion (evidence, structure) in the article.
- OR, practice composing a persuasive argument as a group. After reading the article, identify a different argument one could make on the same topic, using the evidence in the article. As a group, choose one or two arguments. For each, develop a thesis, lines of argumentation, and then discuss potential evidence and analysis that would support the thesis. Develop an outline that uses the discussion points. Schedule small-group follow on sessions for leaders who struggle to compose an outline or assemble evidence to support a thesis.
  - Repeat regularly.

Physical Fitness Assessment. Physical fitness is the cornerstone of combat readiness and represents an essential element of command and leadership. The APFT served as the physical fitness assessment at BCAP21, CAP22, and CAP23. The Secretary of the Army has approved the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) for use as the physical assessment instrument for CAP24. Candidates will be required to take the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) in accordance with Army Directive 2022-05. Candidates are expected to take the full six event ACFT unless they are on a permanent or temporary profile. Guidance for those on profile is outlined in respective population CAP MILPERs. Graders adhere to ACFT event grading standards and go through rigorous validation and calibration procedures to ensure they are grading events fairly and consistently. Graders video every candidate's performance on each event to check consistency and give candidates the opportunity to fairly challenge the results of failing an event. The CAP24 ACFT is "For Record" and is a scored event that counts toward a candidate's order of merit score. Based on this, we recommend:

#### Leaders

- Accurately assess where you are physically and set challenging goals.
- When training, ensure you complete each ACFT event to published standard.
- Work with an experienced ACFT grader who will correct your form and periodically film your events so you can check your form.
- Set monthly goals and check your progress with full diagnostic ACFTs.

#### Units

- Train your graders on the movement/range of motion standards articulated in ATP 7-22.01: [Holistic Health and Fitness \(H2F\) Testing](#), or <https://www.army.mil/acft/>.
- Ensure graders enforce these standards during the execution of the ACFT so the CAP candidates have an accurate assessment on their current level of fitness.
- Video record the events and visually instruct leaders on correct form (as required) to meet standards.

The Army Comprehensive Talent Interview (ACTI). The ACTI is a structured, behavior-based interview conducted by a panel of senior Army leaders. A behavior-based interview uses past behavior to project how someone will behave in the future; this contrasts with hypotheticals not necessarily grounded in past behavior. The interview is double blind, meaning neither you

nor the panel members see each other. Additionally, information the panel sees is anonymous – they only see your roster number. The panel will know nothing about your branch, past experiences, former units, evaluation pattern, etc. The interview process and questions are consistent for all candidates to ensure a fair experience. The panel assesses your verbal communication using the rubric included in this guide. The double blind interview technique focuses the panel on your verbal communication skills. Your non-verbal communication is not assessed. You will have thirty seconds to formulate a response, after the panel moderator or panel member asks a question. At the conclusion of the thirty seconds, the person who asked the question will restate the question and await your response. After reviewing the CAP assessment results and the interview, each voting panel member makes an independent determination on whether you are *Ready* or *Not Yet Ready*. To help prepare for the verbal communication assessment that is part of the ACTI, we recommend:

### Leaders

- Review the verbal communication rubric provided with this guide.
- Practice interviewing and answering behavior-based questions with another person. Use the rubric to assess whether you provide a complete and concise answer (argument). If helpful, you may use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) provided with this guide to ensure you provide a complete response. Note, the STAR method is not required to provide an excellent response. Record your practice interviews so you can watch and self-assess. Focusing solely on your verbal communication, replicating the CAP experience, either erect a screen or conduct the interview via phone or an online platform with the video off.
- Ask for feedback on your verbal communication skills. Provide the rubric to colleagues and ask them to comment on your strengths and developmental needs for verbal communication.
- Create a plan to work on your development needs. Periodically ask those same colleagues (and others) for feedback on your progress. Review Chapter 7, “Learning and Development Activities”, FM 6-22 which gives specific suggestions on how to improve your communication skills (paragraphs 7-33 through 7-39).

### Units

- Develop an interview training plan.
  - Conduct mock interviews for leaders using behavior-based questions that explore leadership experiences (Note: The ACTI is not a knowledge-based quiz of doctrine or tactics).
  - Score the interviews using the verbal communication rubric in this guide.
  - Record these mock interviews and provide them to your leaders so they can compare how the panel scored the interview versus their own self-assessment.
  - Go beyond scoring the interview’s verbal communication by discussing the leadership lessons available from the interview conversation.
- Provide feedback on verbal communication regularly using standard meetings and interactions. Use the rubric to articulate strengths and development needs.
- Integrate behavior-based interviewing techniques for your assignment marketplace interviews.

## **SUGGESTED REFERENCES**

### **Links**

ADP 6-22, [\*Army Leadership and the Profession\*](#)

FM 6-22, [\*Leader Development\*](#)

Center for Army Profession and Leadership (CAPL), <https://capl.army.mil> and [\*Interactive Leader Development Guide \(army.mil\)\*](#)

### **Articles**

"Reinventing the Leader Selection Process"  
<https://hbr.org/2020/11/reinventing-the-leader-selection-process>

"Battalion Commanders Are the Seed Corn of the Army"  
<https://warontherocks.com/2019/12/battalion-commanders-are-the-seed-corn-of-the-army/>

"The Army's NFL Combine: The Battalion Commander Assessment Program"  
<https://mwi.usma.edu/armys-nfl-combine-battalion-commander-assessment-program/>

### **Podcasts**

"The Battalion Commander Assessment Program Results Explained"  
<https://fromthegreennotebook.com/2021/01/21/season-2-ep-4-major-general-jp-mcgee-the-battalion-commander-assessment-program-results-explained/>

"The CAP Experience: Feedback, Reflection, and Army Coaching"  
<https://talent.army.mil/podcast/episode-2/>

### **Videos**

Battalion Commander Assessment Program (8 minutes):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TY8yRyhIYS4>

Inaugural Battalion Commander Assessment Program Results (3 minutes):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMYfdnPTOJU>

Paving the Way: The BCAP Experience (4 minutes)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svX\\_eFzrUS8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svX_eFzrUS8)

BCAP Documentary (30 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUWncCpSQF0>

### **Articles from BCAP Candidates**

"What I Learned from the Army's New Battalion Commander Assessment Program"  
<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2020/02/10/what-i-learned-from-the-armys-new-battalion-commander-assessment-program/>

"I Took Part in the Army's New Battalion Commander Assessment Program: Here's What I Learned"

<https://mwi.usma.edu/took-part-armys-new-battalion-commander-assessment-program-heres-learned/>

"The Hidden Benefit of the Army's New Commander Assessment Program"

<https://fromthegreennotebook.com/2020/11/10/the-hidden-benefit-of-the-armys-new-commander-assessment-program/>



## WRITTEN COMMUNICATION RUBRIC (Officer & Civilian CAP)

The Army assesses your written communication abilities during the CAP. Part of the written communication assessment will involve constructing an essay in response to a specific writing task. Graders assess essays using the relevant rubric outlined below. The CAP will not release specific scores and weights for this assessment.

### **Substance:**

- A. Does the essay advance a compelling and clear thesis that answers the prompt?
- B. Does the essay effectively incorporate evidence, logic, and reasoning that supports its claims?
- C. Overall, does the essay demonstrate insight and/or originality?
- D. (**CCAP only**) Does the essay demonstrate comprehension of strategic issues and clear, effective deployment of strategic thinking?

### **Organization:**

- A. Does the essay employ an organizational pattern/structure that is coherent and systematically developed?
- B. Are transitions between arguments/elements/paragraphs of the essay evident?
- C. Does the essay end with a conclusion/statement that reinforces the thesis?

### **Style and Mechanics:**

- A. Does the essay demonstrate economy and clarity of language?
- B. Does the essay demonstrate facility with conventional writing with respect to grammar and mechanics, to include spelling, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, etc.?

## WRITTEN COMMUNICATION RUBRIC (SMAP)

### **Substance:**

- A. Does the essay answer the prompt in a clear, effective, and compelling way?
- B. Does the essay effectively incorporate evidence, logic, and reasoning that supports its claims?
- C. Overall, does the essay demonstrate insight and/or originality?

### **Organization:**

- A. Does the essay employ an organizational pattern/structure that is coherent and systematically developed?
- B. Do the essay's transitions between elements, paragraphs, and ideas provide appropriate emphasis and control over meaning?

### **Style and Mechanics:**

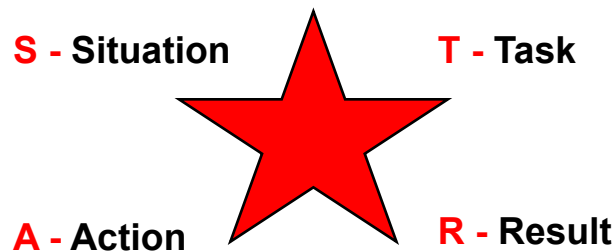
- A. Does the essay demonstrate economy and clarity of language?
- B. Does the essay demonstrate facility with conventional writing with respect to grammar and mechanics, to include spelling, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, etc.?

## VERBAL COMMUNICATION RUBRIC

The CAP includes the Army Comprehensive Talent Interview (ACTI), where a panel of senior Army leaders interviews candidates. The panel assesses a leader's verbal communication skills and overall readiness for command. Panel members will use the following rubric to assess each candidate's verbal communication. The CAP will not release specific scores and weights for this assessment.

<b>Key Behaviors</b>	<b>Ineffective</b>	<b>Somewhat Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Exceptional</b>
<i>*Clearly communicates thoughts and ideas to others</i>	Thoughts and ideas lack coherence to each other and are disorganized or random; difficult to follow answer or train of thought.	Thoughts and ideas are listed or ordered without clear structure; wandering at times.	Thoughts and ideas are connected.	Thoughts and ideas flow logically from one to another; building cohesive answers.
<i>*Uses logic, relevant facts, and examples in dialogue; expresses well-organized ideas</i>	Rationale for positions or courses of action are unclear, disorganized, or missing; points, decisions, and conclusions left unsupported.	Argument for positions or courses of action lack sufficient detail, relevance, or feasibility; points and conclusions supported with examples, which may or may not be pertinent.	Singular or limited argument made to support position or course of action; points and conclusions often supported with relevant examples, analogies, vignettes, etc.	Builds sound arguments for position or course of action; points and conclusions enhanced and/or clarified by germane examples, analogies, vignettes, etc.
<i>*Avoids miscommunication; verifies shared understanding</i>	Follow-up responses negate or contradict prior statements or arguments.	Follow-up responses repeat previous statements or arguments; misses opportunities to clarify and extend shared understanding.	Follow-up responses provide new insights and further clarity to earlier points.	Follow-up responses extend shared understanding by expounding upon previous statements and reframing ideas to better reach diverse audiences.
<i>*Communicates articulately and with confidence</i>	Verbal disfluencies and/or use of fillers (e.g., hmm, ah, huh, er, etc.) render the message ineffective. Speaks hesitantly or stutters, insecure in delivery of answer.	Verbal disfluencies and/or use of fillers (e.g., hmm, ah, huh, er, etc.) limit understanding and/or credibility. Stumbles in delivery.	Speaks with confidence and composure; message is understandable.	Articulate; speaks with confidence and enthusiasm, maintaining listener interest.

### STAR Method



**Situation** – Briefly describe the specific **Situation** you experienced. Seek relatively recent situations.

**Task** – Briefly describe the **Task** you needed to accomplish. It should be work-related.

**Action** – Describe the **Action** you took. If it was a team environment, it is important to describe your specific role and actions - describe what you, not the team, did.

**Result** – Describe the **Results**. How does the story end? Did you accomplish the goal?

### Examples of Behavior-based Interview Questions

1. Describe a situation where your initial assumptions about a task turned out to be wrong.
2. Tell us about a leadership decision where you had to consider serious risks.
3. Describe a situation where you were in a leadership position and had to put your views aside to help your team complete an assignment.
4. Give us an example where your listening skills proved important to an outcome.
5. Most assignments are fast paced. Provide an example of when you were in a leadership position and managed to “get everything done” in a very busy time.
6. Tell us about a time when you set a goal to improve your professional performance.
7. Describe a time when were in a leadership position and you developed and implemented a vision.
8. Tell us what you have done recently to stay on top of professional trends and issues.

ARMY LEADERSHIP REQUIREMENTS MODEL, FM 6-22, *Leader Development*



## Counterproductive Leadership

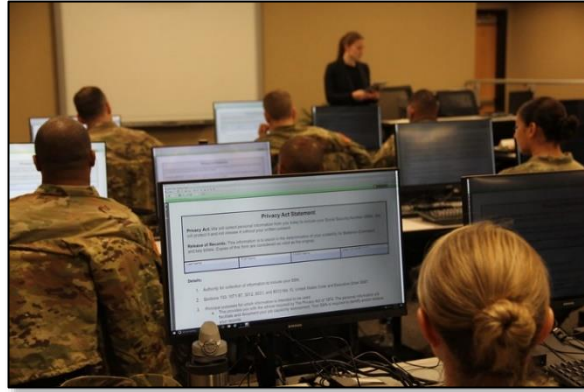
ADP 6-22 defines counterproductive leadership as “the demonstration of leader behaviors that violate one or more of the Army's core leader competencies or Army Values, preventing a climate conducive to mission accomplishment” and states that it generally leaves organizations in a worse condition than when the leader arrived and has a long-term effect on morale and readiness. All leaders are susceptible to demonstrating counterproductive leadership, and so it is a continuum based on frequency. All leaders can have a bad day, and so it is not about whether someone has a bad day, but whether every day with that leader is a bad day.

There are multiple categories of behaviors that are counterproductive, some of which would fall into the “toxic” leadership classification, while others may be more benign but have the same effect and would fall into an “ineffective” leadership classification. The categories include:

- Abusive. Includes behaviors that involve a leader exceeding the boundaries of their authority by being abusive, cruel, or degrading others. Specific examples include, but are not limited to, bullying, berating others for mistakes, creating conflict, ridiculing others, domineering, showing little or no respect to others, insulting or belittling individuals, condescending or talking down to others, or retaliating for perceived slights or disagreements.
- Self-serving. Includes behaviors that result from self-centered motivations on the part of the leader, where they act in ways that seek primarily to accomplish their own goals and needs before those of others. Specific examples include, but are not limited to, displaying arrogance, lacking concern or empathy for others, taking credit for others' work, insisting on having their way, distorting information to favor own ideas, exaggerating accomplishments or abilities, putting own work and accomplishments ahead of others and the mission, displaying narcissistic tendencies, or exhibiting a sense of entitlement.
- Erratic. Includes behaviors related to poor self-control or volatility that drive the leader to act erratically or unpredictably. Specific examples include, but are not limited to, blaming others, deflecting responsibility, losing temper at the slightest provocation, behaving inconsistently in words and actions, insecurity, or being unapproachable.
- Incompetence. Includes ineffective leadership behaviors that result from a lack of experience or willful neglect. Specific examples include, but are not limited to, unengaged leadership, being passive or reactionary, neglecting leadership responsibilities, displaying poor judgment, poorly motivating others, withholding encouragement, failing to clearly communicate expectations, or refusing to listen to subordinates.
- Corrupt. Includes behaviors that violate explicit Army standards, regulations, or policies. Specific examples include, but are not limited to, dishonesty, misusing government resources or time, creating a hostile work environment, EEO/SHARP violations, or violating UCMJ.



CAP ACFT Hand Release Push-up Event



CAP Computer-based Assessment Session



CAP Candidate View of ACTI



CAP Panel Members