

THE NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS

The Nomination

To be considered for an appointment to a service academy, an applicant must have a nomination from an authorized nominating source. Title 10, U.S. Code, establishes two nomination categories--congressional and military service-connected. Applicants who meet eligibility requirements may apply for and receive nominations in both categories.

Members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives may nominate applicants who meet the eligibility requirements established by law. Senators nominate from applicants in their entire state. Representatives nominate from applicants domiciled in their congressional districts (as constituted at the time of their election). Applicants may apply for and receive nominations from both their United States senators and from their representative. Applicants may also apply to the vice president of the United States who can nominate applicants at large.

Applicants should apply to the service academy of their choice in the spring of their junior year in high school and request a nomination from the appropriate nomination source shortly thereafter.

Who is Eligible?

Each applicant for a nomination must meet the following eligibility requirements as of 1 July of the year of admission to a service academy:

Age: Be at least 17 years old, but not have passed the 22nd birthday.

Citizenship: Must be a U.S. citizen.

Marital Status: Be unmarried, not pregnant, and have no legal obligation to support children or other dependents.

General Admissions Standards

Before nominating an applicant, Members of Congress should carefully evaluate each applicant's overall qualifications, including the legal domicile, to confirm that the applicant is domiciled within the boundaries of the representative's congressional district. The three academies consider evidence of character, scholarship, leadership, physical aptitude, medical fitness, goals and motivation in determining each nominee's "whole-person" evaluation.

Character

Absolutely critical in the course of evaluating a candidate is a positive determination of the candidate's character. Absence of good moral character is cause for disqualification. Candidates are considered to have good moral character unless evidence exists to suggest otherwise.

Scholarship

Each element of a candidate's academic record is carefully evaluated by a service academy's admissions board. The elements evaluated include a complete high school record (and college record, when applicable), class standing and either the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or the American College Testing (ACT) scores. All strengths and weaknesses in a candidate's academic background are taken into account.

Applicants are encouraged to take required examinations as early as possible in the testing cycle. This may help them to qualify for an earlier appointment, and it also gives them a chance to retake the tests in an effort to improve their scores. Information concerning SAT and ACT tests is available to applicants at the counseling office in their high schools, or online at <http://www.collegeboard.org/>.

Leadership

Participation and achievement in organized athletics, student body and class government, clubs and class extracurricular activities, scouting, boys/girls state, church or other community-related activities demonstrate evidence of leadership potential. Candidates who have found it necessary to work to provide family support are considered to have demonstrated desirable leadership potential.

Physical Aptitude

Measuring strength, endurance, agility and coordination, the Army's and Navy's physical aptitude examination (PAE) and the Air Force's candidate fitness test (CFT) are designed to determine each candidate's readiness to undertake the rigorous athletic and physical education program at the academies. Each academy has its own test requirements. Results of the examination are evaluated, assigned a numerical score and included in the whole-person evaluation by West Point. The Air Force and the Naval academies evaluate the results on a pass/fail basis.

Medical Fitness

Candidates who meet minimum scholastic standards will be scheduled to take a service academy qualifying medical examination at a military or civilian contract facility near the candidate's home. Although medical qualification standards vary for each of the academies, only one exam is required. However, different tests may be necessary depending upon the academy. Scheduling and evaluation of the exam is accomplished by the Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board (DODMERB). Candidates who have questions about their medical exam results should direct them to:

DODMERB
8034 Edgerton Drive, Suite 132
USAF Academy, CO 80840-2200
Phone: (719) 333-3562

Medical scheduling and evaluation are time-consuming processes, especially if consultation, retesting or corrective action is required. The process may take from six weeks to four months.

Motivation

Motivation is an intangible quality and difficult to evaluate. However, motivation is most frequently the factor that determines an appointee's success or failure at a service academy. An attempt to measure motivation may be made through observation of the candidate's interest level in attending an academy and serving as an officer in the armed forces. Motivation may be measured through an evaluation of correspondence and personal contacts.

Whole-Person Evaluation

All of the preceding factors are part of the "whole person" evaluation used by each of the academies. The qualities are required of an individual in order to meet the challenges of the academy programs and, following graduation, as commissioned officers.

Applicant Evaluation

Each academy uses a questionnaire to make an initial assessment of an applicant's potential for appointment. The results of this evaluation are provided by each academy to Members of Congress to assist them in screening their applicants. An eligible applicant should write or call the appropriate academy or complete an application request card, and forward it to the appropriate academy.

Soon after the applicant returns the questionnaire, the admissions office will reply to the applicant with an evaluation of the applicant's demonstrated ability to meet admissions standards. Applicants who meet the standards are declared candidates; those who do not meet the standards at that point may later submit additional test scores or information to the academy for re-evaluation. The applicant must provide the following information: academic standardized test scores (ACT, SAT), rank in class and grade point average, social security number and participation in high school extracurricular activities.