

SECTION IA - *The Nomination and Appointment Process*

The Nomination

All appointments to the service academies are made by the President. 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, Annotated establishes two nomination categories. The first, usually referred to as “congressional nominations,” includes the nominations of the Vice-President and Members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives. The second, referred to as “service-connected” or “military-affiliated” nominations, includes the selections of the President and nominations of the appropriate service (e.g., Secretary of the Navy for nominations to the Naval Academy).

Applicants should apply to all nomination sources for which they are eligible. Congressional nominations account for approximately three-fourths of all appointments. Therefore, Members of Congress should not exclude from their nomination process those applicants who may also hold service connected nominations.

Congressional Nominations

Members of Congress 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 from the country at large as well as U.S. citizens living abroad.

Service-Affiliated Nominations

An unlimited number of presidential nominations are available for children and legally adopted children of career officer and enlisted personnel of the armed forces, active or reserve, including the Coast Guard. One hundred candidates may be appointed with these nominations each year. A parent in the Reserves must be serving as a member of a reserve component and be credited with at least eight years of service or must be entitled to retired pay except that he or she is not yet sixty years old. Otherwise, the parent must currently be on active duty (other than for training) and have served continuously for at least eight years or have retired with pay or have been granted retired or retainer pay. The President may also appoint the children of Medal of Honor winners.

Students may also be appointed to the service academies based on nominations as children of military personnel who were killed in action; died from wounds, injuries or disease while on active duty; sustained 100 percent disability from such wounds, injuries, or disease as certified by the Department of Veterans Affairs; or who are currently prisoners of war (POW) or missing in action (MIA). The children of civilians in POW or MIA status are also eligible. Legally adopted children are eligible.

The Secretary of the appropriate service may nominate for appointment enlisted members of the regular and the reserve components of the appropriate service, members of the service’s own Reserve Officer Training Corps and Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs, and the Junior Reserve Officer Training programs of the other services which have been designated as Honor Units with Distinction.

Qualified Alternates

If the annual quota of midshipmen/cadets is not filled, the Secretary may select up to 150 candidates who received congressional nominations but were not selected. These candidates must be fully qualified.

Additional Appointments

If the annual quota of midshipmen/cadets is still not filled, the Secretary may nominate candidates who competed for the nomination and are fully qualified. At least three-fourths of these candidates must have received a congressional nomination.

Who is Eligible?

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

Age: Be at least 17 years old, but not have passed the 23rd 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.

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 rank and either the SAT-I or the American College Testing (ACT) scores. All strengths and weaknesses in a candidate's academic background are taken into account.

SAT-I test scores are available to Members of Congress directly from the testing agency approximately 30 days after an applicant has been tested. However, for Members of Congress to receive them, the applicant must request that the agency forward the test results to the Congressional offices. The applicant may do this at the time he or she registers for the test. It is each Member's responsibility to coordinate with an applicant on the receipt of test scores. Members of Congress may expedite the process by obtaining a SAT-I code number from the testing agency and providing this code number to applicants. Members may obtain SAT-I code numbers by calling (609) 771-7600. To obtain ACT test scores, the applicant uses Code 7000 on the test application form. The applicant will then be furnished an additional copy of the test scores to send to his or her Members of Congress. To register for the SAT-I and ACT, students should check with their school counselor or visit the appropriate web site (www.sat.org and www.act.org) for details of test dates and registration requirements. Candidates will normally enhance their competitiveness by taking both the SAT and the ACT more than once. Non-standard, un-timed tests are not acceptable. The admissions offices of the academies stand ready to assist in evaluating test results.

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 candidate fitness assessment (CFA) is designed to determine each candidate's readiness to undertake the rigorous athletic and physical education program at the academies. Each academy includes the results of the test in their whole-person evaluation. The Naval Academy generally evaluates the CFA on a pass/fail basis, but gives due consideration to scores that are exceptionally high or low. The test may be taken as many times as necessary.

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. Additional tests may be necessary and may vary 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
Website: <https://dodmerb.tricare.osd.mil>

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

Motivation

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 is an intangible quality and difficult to evaluate; however, since it most frequently the factor that determines an appointee's success or failure at a service academy, the effort must be made.

Whole-Person Evaluation

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