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Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Service Academy Nominations

How many service academies are there?

Three reside within the Department of Defense:

- The U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY
- The U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, MD
- The U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, CO

One resides within the Department of Transportation:

- The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY

One resides within the Department of Homeland Security

- The U.S. Coast Guard Academy at New London, CT

All of the service academies require a congressional nomination except for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

What is a nomination?

To be considered for an appointment to a service academy, an applicant must meet the eligibility requirements established by law and be nominated from an authorized person including a member of the United States Senate or the House of Representatives. In addition, a candidate may apply directly to the Vice-President of the United States, who can nominate applicants from any part of the nation. Students whose parents are service connected may also apply for a Presidential nomination.

What are the basic eligibility requirements?

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

- You must be at least 17 years old, but not have passed your 23rd birthday.
- You must be a U.S. citizen.
- You must be unmarried, not pregnant, and without legal obligation to support children or other dependents.
- You must reside within the boundaries of the 1st Congressional District of Arkansas.
- You must possess good moral character. It is assumed good moral character exists unless there is evidence to demonstrate otherwise.

When do I apply for a Congressional or Senate nomination?

You begin the process in the spring of your junior year with each service academy. In the fall of your senior year, submit Congressman Crawford's application for a nomination by November 1st. See the Congressman's website, www.crawford.house.gov to locate this application. Check with Senator Boozman and Senator Cotton's offices for their respective deadlines. The most successful candidates apply to all available nominating sources: Congressman, Senators, Vice-President and President. See academy catalogues for deadlines and criteria for the Vice-Presidential and Presidential nominations. The Presidential nominations are for military service connected families, but it is also highly recommended to apply for a Presidential and Congressional nomination, as the President only awards approximately 100 nominations nationwide. Candidates may be considered for both, and it is advantageous to seek the Congressional nomination in addition to the Presidential nomination when a candidate qualifies for a Presidential nomination

How do I open an admissions file with the academies?

All applicants must directly contact the academies they are interested in attending to open an admissions file. Admission requirements are located on each academy's website.

U.S. Military Academy www.usma.edu U.S. Naval Academy www.usna.edu
U.S. Air Force Academy www.usafa.af.mil U.S. Coast Guard Academy www.cga.edu
U.S. Merchant Marine Academy www.usmma.edu

What is a Letter of Assurance?

A Letter of Assurance (LOA) is a letter sent to the candidate from the academy's admissions office offering a conditional appointment to the academy provided the candidate successfully completes the application process, the medical review by the Department of Defense, and the physical fitness assessment and receives a nomination from their Congressman or Senators. Letters of Assurance are conditional and subject to review throughout the entire application process.

Candidates receive Letters of Assurance based upon outstanding ACT/SAT scores early in the process, and other information the candidate has submitted to the Admissions Office. It is highly recommended candidates prepare well for ACT/SAT tests and take them "early and often."

What happens after I have completed my nomination application file?

Applicants who meet the basic eligibility requirements and complete a nomination application by November 1st will be invited to meet with Congressman Crawford's service academy nomination board. It is highly recommended the candidate's application to the academy admission offices also be completed prior to interviews, which are usually scheduled during the first two weeks of December, depending on the Congressman's schedule.

Why does Congressman Crawford use a nominating board?

These board members all have military backgrounds and are all professionals working in their local communities. This well-qualified, non-partisan board will ensure a fair and impartial interview process as they evaluate applicants and recommend candidates for nominations.

What criteria does the board use in selecting candidates?

Nominations are based on a "whole person" evaluation. Factors such as academic achievements, extra-curricular activities, leadership skills, physical aptitude, character and motivation are taken into consideration and compared with other applicants.

Are the requirements the same for all of the service academies?

No. Although many of the qualifications are similar, each academy operates under its own admissions guidelines. Refer to the service academy websites below and explore each ones specific requirements. I recommend that you contact the area representative for your academy of interest. The contact names and information is usually located on each respective website. They will be able to provide for you valuable insight on preparing your application to the academy.

Can I have family members submit letters of recommendation?

No. All recommendations must come from outside your immediate or extended family. Typical recommendations are from principals and teachers. Especially teachers of Math and Science

Counselors	Clergy	Employer
Scout Leaders	Coaches	Others of your choosing

Letters of recommendation must be submitted with the application prior to the deadline.

When will I be notified if I received Congressman Crawford’s nomination to a service academy?

The Congressman will notify students by letter before Christmas if they have received a nomination.

Will I automatically be selected by the academy after I receive a nomination?

No. You will be placed among a select group of nominees, and the academy of your choice will make the final decision. If selected, you will receive a letter of appointment directly from the academy.

What if I choose more than one academy? Will I be limited to a single nomination?

No. You can be nominated to multiple academies depending on how well you have competed among this year's pool of candidates. It is also possible to win multiple appointments. It is recommended to apply to at least two academies and it is also recommended to apply to the Merchant Marine and Coast Guard Academies in addition to the Air Force, Naval and Military Academies.

When will I know if I have been offered an appointment by a service academy?

Academies will begin to notify candidates of their admissions status in February. All offers of appointment are generally sent out by May 1st. The academies will award appointments after the candidate file is reviewed and the candidate is determined “fully qualified”. Academies review files weekly, so it is in the candidate’s best interest to have their file at the admissions offices completed by early January if the ACT/SAT scores are where the candidate wants them. As these scores weigh heavily in the appointment process, it is recommended to take ACT/SAT tests early and often.

The 60%, 20%, 20% rule

ACADEMICS – 60%

Receiving an “offer of appointment” is a **60/20/20** effort, with **60%** being **academics**. Students should start taking the ACT/SAT college entrance exams **early and often**. Students should work hard to improve scores. It is recommended to take both the ACT and SAT as some students perform better on one over the other. Academies are interested in high math scores because the academies are engineering schools, and all who graduate will receive a Bachelor of Science degree, regardless of one’s major. We recommend taking the prep classes that are offered to students to improve scores.

The academies are also very concerned with **rank in class and GPA**. They like to see AP classes. Students need a thorough understanding of Algebra and Algebra II, not just good grades in algebra. In the senior year, academies are looking to ensure that students are maintaining a challenging core curriculum and not just coasting.

LEADERSHIP – 20%

The second score is **20% leadership**. Academies are looking for organized team **athletics**, which can be football, baseball, basketball, track and field, wrestling, swimming, etc. Students can also attend **Boys State/Girls State** in the summer of their junior year. Contact American Legion or a high school counselor to get a recommendation for Boys State/Girls State. Academies also give leadership points for Eagle Scout, captain of sports teams, class officer, or any other leadership position a student has held.

The academies have **Summer Seminars** for students to attend to see if they are interested in attending an academy, and for the academies to get a look at potential candidates. **Registration for Summer Seminar starts in January and February of the student's junior year for the following summer.** If a student is unable to attend summer seminar, we recommend a **candidate visit** to the school. Contact the academy admissions office to request.

FITNESS, ACADEMY OFFICIAL INTERVIEW & PERSONAL ESSAY – 20%

The other score **20% is a composite of the fitness assessment, the interview the students will do with the Academy Liaison Officers and a personal essay.** The fitness (CFA or Candidate Fitness Assessment) is in the schools' manual. They can start in high school getting prepared for it. Athletics is a main part of your time at the academy. Each academy requires participation in a minimum of one sport. It is wise not to get injuries (especially concussions) during team sports or fitness training in high school because all candidates will take a Department of Defense Medical Review Board exam, otherwise known as DoDmerb exam. During the application process, if DoDmerb requests information from a student's doctor, do all possible to ensure the requested documents are submitted as timely as possible.

The liaison officers are looking for candidates that want to serve their country by joining the military. Most candidates apply to the academies, but also seek ROTC scholarships as back-ups. The liaison officers will want to see a strong commitment to serve our country.

The personal essay on the academy application is very important and we recommend interested candidates write it and get an English teacher to review it prior to submitting it to the academy. If accepted, this essay will remain in the student file the entire four years while attending the academy.

Please contact Sherrie Mitchell at Congressman Crawford's office with any additional questions. (870) 203-0540 or Sherrie.Mitchell@mail.house.gov