

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Service Academy Nomination Procedure and Basic Fact Sheet for 2016 Admission

An appointment to the U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy, or U.S. Merchant Marine Academy is a distinct and rare honor. Acceptance of an academy appointment requires at least a nine-year service obligation, including four years at an academy and five years of active duty service.

Eligibility. To be eligible for appointment, you must be an American citizen, at least 17 years old and not yet 23 years old on July 1 of the year you enter an academy (25 years old for United States Merchant Marine Academy). Further, you must not be married or pregnant, and you must not have any legal obligation to support children or other dependents. To apply for a nomination through my office, you must also be a legal resident of Michigan and reside in the First Congressional District. If you are not certain that your legal domicile is in the First District of Michigan, call my office and request an address verification.

Nomination. The nomination process is very competitive. I urge you to apply for a nomination from me as well as the Senators from our state who can nominate qualified applicants to the four service academies. If you are interested in attending the U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, and U.S. Air Force Academy, you may also qualify for nomination through other sources, including

- President Barack H. Obama, who nominates children of career military personnel, deceased or disabled veterans, military or civilian personnel in missing status, and Medal of Honor recipients;
- Vice President Joseph R. Biden, who nominates five individuals from across the United States per year; and
- The Secretary of the Army, Navy, or Air Force, who nominates members of regular military, reserve components, and participants in the ROTC.

Further information regarding application procedures for these nominations is available through each academy's website, listed below. Applying for more than one nomination could increase your chances of securing a nomination. More than one nomination, however, is not required to gain an appointment. If someone else nominates you, please notify me so that I may allow other candidates the opportunity for nomination.

Evaluation Criteria. The academies consider evidence of character, scholarship, leadership, physical aptitude, medical fitness, personal goals, and motivation in performing each nominee's "whole-person" evaluation. These are also the criteria I use to determine nominations. Specific criteria in the "whole person" evaluation include character, scholarship, leadership, physical aptitude, medical fitness, and motivation.

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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 SAT or ACT scores. All strengths and weaknesses in a candidate's academic background are taken into account.

Leadership. Participation and achievement in organized athletics, student body and class government, clubs and class extracurricular activities, scouting, boys or girls state, and 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 academies' fitness tests are designed to determine each candidate's readiness to undertake the rigorous athletic and physical education program at one of 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, Naval, and Merchant Marine academies evaluate the results on a pass-or-fail basis.

Medical Fitness. A candidate who meets 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 among the academies, only one exam is required. Different tests may be necessary, however, depending upon the academy. Scheduling and evaluation of the exam are arranged 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, Colorado 80840-2200
(719) 333-3562

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

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Motivation. Motivation is an intangible quality and difficult to evaluate; however, since it is most frequently the factor that determines an appointee's success or failure at a service academy, I make every effort to gauge a candidate's 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 may also be measured through an evaluation of correspondence, personal contacts, and care with which application materials are prepared.

Applicant Evaluation by Service Academies

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. Soon after the applicant returns the questionnaire, the admissions office will provide the applicant with an evaluation of the applicant's demonstrated ability to meet admissions standards. An applicant who meets the standards is declared a candidate; 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-I), rank in class and grade point average, Social Security number, and participation in high school extracurricular activities. Be sure to complete a pre-candidate questionnaire for each academy in which you are interested.

Service Academy websites are:

Military Academy <http://www.usma.edu>

Naval Academy <http://www.usna.edu>

Air Force Academy <http://www.usafa.edu>

Merchant Marine Academy <http://www.usmma.edu>

Contact Information

Address correspondence regarding your application for a nomination to

Congressman Dan Benishek, M.D.
500 S. Stephenson Ave., Ste. 500
Iron Mountain, MI 49801
(906) 828-2115

Deadline October 16, 2015 is the deadline for applications.