

FEDERAL SERVICE ACADEMY APPLICATION INFORMATION BECOMING 3Q'ed (Triple Qualified)

General Overview of Academies

- Highly selective and academically rigorous
- A unique college experience with a military lifestyle
- Five year active duty service commitment upon graduation
- Remarkable opportunities afforded to students
- Very challenging mentally and physically

Five Service Academies

- United States Air Force Academy www.usafa.af.mil
- United States Coast Guard Academy www.uscga.edu
- United States Merchant Marine Academy www.usmma.edu
- United States Military Academy www.usma.edu
- United States Naval Academy www.usna.edu/homepage.php

Admissions Tips

- The Academies all develop a Whole Person Score (WPS); the standard breakdown is based on Academics-60%, Leadership-30%, and Physical Fitness-10%.
- The goal is to become qualified academically, medically, and physically (QQQ) otherwise known as triple qualified or 3Q'ed.
- Essays and Candidate Statements are time consuming but critical. Self-exploration takes time so plan these out. It is very important that you do not wait until the last minute. You may be asked to expound on your statement and having deeper reflection on these subjects will be naturally conveyed if the statement is truly personal. The word or character count restriction for some of these submissions will require a concise and articulate message from start to finish. These statements need to be well-structured, clear, and relevant to the question. Have your statements reviewed by someone with strong communication skills, an English teacher and your School Counselor perhaps. Process your statements through several drafts. Go beyond the word count maximum with the idea of refining your statements.
- Historical Essay and Candidate Statement Questions
 - *What are some of the other challenges you will encounter and how are you preparing yourself to meet these challenges?*
 - *Discuss your short and long term goals, both professionally and personally.*
 - *Explain why you want to attend the United States _____ Academy and serve on active duty as an Army Officer.*
 - *What are the most important qualities in becoming a successful cadet and a successful officer?*

- *The academies are committed to the idea that respect for others and an understanding of diversity are important leadership traits. Why will you be successful in working with leaders, peers, and subordinates of a gender, color, ethnicity, and /or religion different from your own?*
- *What led initial interest in the service and how the _____ Academy will help you achieve your long range goals?*
- *Describe a personal experience you have had which you feel has contributed to your own character development and integrity.*
- It is very important to consider who you use for recommendation letters of support for your application. Recommendation letters for nominations to the service academies or a civilian university can be from the same individuals but each letter should be tailored to each use. This can be accomplished if you inform the author when requesting that the specific reference to a “Military Academy” or “University” be held to the last portion of the letter allowing for minimal editing of their letter on their part. The qualities to be referenced for a Service Academy are the same desired traits any university is looking for. Provide the author of your recommendation letter with your guidance to help them express your attributes in terms the Service Academy will value.
 - Experience of exhibited leadership
 - An assessment woven into their letter of your ability to be successful in the following areas: scholarship, leadership, and athletics
 - Provide listing of challenging accomplishments as reference of your success in scholarship, leadership, and athletics
 - Highlight any activity that requires commitment to a significant regular practice or service
- People applicants typically ask for recommendation letters
 - Teacher - most recent math and English teachers (required for USNA)
 - Principal, Dean
 - Coach
 - School Counselor
 - Military Member Officer (ROTC or Academy is a plus)
 - Scout Leader
 - Employer
- Keep in mind, they are looking at each candidate as a potential employee. You are being considered for a career. You are being looked at with a critical eye toward determining if you are capable of completing the rigor of the service academy and if you will likely be successful in commissioning into military service. You have to convince them that you unwaveringly want to commission as an officer and you desire a career in the Armed Forces. Support your statement of the desire with solid reasoning and convincing purpose that meets the ethos of the academies.
- Candidates for Air Force, West Point, and Naval Academies will be interviewed. The Coast Guard and Merchant Marine Academies conduct optional interviews.

Regional Admissions Liaison Officers

- USAFA
<https://www.academyadmissions.com/admissions/outreach-programs/find-your-admissions-liaison-officer/>
- USCG
<https://www.uscga.edu/admissions/>
- USMMA
<https://www.usmma.edu/admissions/admissions-officers>
- USMA
<https://www.usma.edu/admissions/sitepages/contact.aspx>
- USNA
<https://www.usna.edu/Admissions/BGO.php>

Academics, Leadership, Physical Fitness

Academics - The following academic considerations are weighed:

- GPA
- ACT with writing or SAT with essay
- Rigor of courses taken
- Class rank; will take national percentage from superscored ACT or SAT if no class rank is available
- Letters of recommendation from most recent English and math teachers
- Most candidates have at least a 28 ACT or a 1200 SAT; the math sections are weighed more heavily than verbal; tests will be superscored
- The United States Naval Academy focuses on math and science sections scores (ACT), math scores (SAT) more so than other test segments
- Strong math sequence. Calculus is strongly recommended.
- The United States Military Academy looks beyond the math and science scores but they are still critical components to showing an aptitude toward engineering.
- All USMA and USNA cadets will take a basic engineering track of study regardless of the major selected at the start of the second year.
- Chemistry and Physics must have been taken while in high school.
- Letter grades of As and Bs and honors level course work is desirable.
- Class rank tends to be valued more highly than GPA. Typically, 85% of cadets rank in the top 20% of their class
- Academic honors are important. (National Merit Scholars, National Honor Society, etc.)
 - **ACT/SAT Test Prep**
<https://www.march2success.com/>
March 2 Success is a free, no obligation tool to help anyone improve their test scores in the areas of English, math and science. March 2 Success provides materials needed to help improve scores on standardized tests such as the ACT,

SAT, and ASVAB. Students are provided with customized lesson plans designed to help them focus on areas of need, allowing them to skip what they already know.

Leadership

Activities are measured with a balance of **quantity versus quality**. The number of years of participation in each of the activities is also recorded. More is not always better.

Participation with a leadership role is desirable. The Service Academy application process is structured; the online template may or may not provide a complete listing of activities. Activities related to leadership role include civic or church organizations, hospitals, and school clubs. Any and all leadership roles can be included in addition to the extracurricular activities within the template format. The following activity list includes some of the recognized (template) programs:

- Boys/Girls State Delegate
- Class President or Student Body President
- School Publication Staff (yearbook, Artisan)
- School Paper Editor, Co-Editor or Staff
- Yearbook Editor or Co-Editor
- Debate
- Drama
- Scouting Participant
- Eagle Scout (men) or Gold Award (women)
- Team Captain
- Service Organization Leadership

Examples of strong character are valuable.

Physical Fitness

- The Candidate Fitness Assessment (CFA) is made up of timed pushups, shuttle run, sit ups, mile run, pull ups, and basketball throw. The CFA can be taken more than once but the most recent score will often be used.
- Each Academy has different rules and requirements as to the events that are measured and who may administer the CFA.
- **Participation in varsity sports is very important.** Being on a team sport is particularly helpful. Leadership positions within team sports hold great value. The following are included:
 - Varsity Athletics (school related)
 - Non-Varsity Athletics (school related)
 - Letter Winner (school related)
 - Competitive league (elite teams, church league, club teams - sport, music, etc.)
 - Individual Athletics (mountain biking, triathlon, rock climbing, racket sports)
 - Individual Competitions (running clubs, timed road races)

- All candidates must be cleared medically by the Department of Defense Examination Review Board (DoDMERB). Competitive candidates will be required to be examined by physicians that are contracted by DoDMERB. Waivers may be granted for certain medical conditions as the discretion of the Academies on a case by case basis. Candidates are classified as qualified, remedial or disqualified.

Nominations

- Four of the five Academies require a nomination. (The Coast Guard does not.) Securing a nomination does not guarantee admission. Sources include:
 - - Congressional - Congressman or Senator; applicants must apply directly; limited number of nominations
 - Vice Presidential - application completed online; Typically, nominations given after Congressional nominations are complete
 - Presidential - for children of active duty and certain retired armed services members
 - Other - ROTC and other military specific nominations: generally not open to the public
 - Securing a Nomination from a Member of Congress (MOC) requires a completion of that member's application.

Interview Tips

Each candidate is interviewed by a team of four or five people who are members of the MOCs Selection Board. Most of the Selection Board members attended a service academy or participated in ROTC. The interview will last approximately 20-25 minutes. Each board member will have reviewed your application packet. Do not bring scrapbooks, news clippings or other materials with you to the interview.

- Consider the following when preparing for an interview:
 - Dress professionally (white shirt, tie and blazer or suit for men; blouse and skirt or pants for females)
 - Bring a notepad and pen for notes. Be prepared with intelligent questions.
 - Bring five copies of your most recent transcripts/report cards, best ACT/SAT scores, and resume
 - Greet your interviewer(s) with a warm smile and a firm handshake
 - Pass out copies of your updated transcripts, etc., before the interview starts
 - As most interviewers will be former/active military, show respect with regular use of "Yes sir/ma'am, No sir/ma'am"
 - Make eye contact with the person you are addressing
 - Speak clearly and use proper English; avoid slang
 - Answer with honest and deliberate statements

- Answer the question being asked
 - Give pertinent examples that highlight your accomplishments
 - Tell them you want to be a commissioned officer
 - Relax and smile; just be yourself
- Common Service Academy questions include:
 - Why do you want to attend a Service Academy
 - Which Service Academy do you want to attend and why? Be prepared to articulate compelling reasons for your interests
 - What do you expect to receive from an Academy education?
 - Why are you a good candidate for the Service Academies? Also elaborate on real life examples and highlight your achievements
 - How have you prepared for the hard work, sacrifices, demands, and life at a Service Academy?
 - What does honor mean to you? Have real life examples ready
 - What are your professional goals? Keep in mind, a Service Academy education prepares you for a career of service to your country.
 - Be prepared to discuss your failures and what you learned from them
 - What do you think the most pressing issue is for Service Academies today?
 - Make sure you are prepared to answer any possible question about something in your application file. Do so in a manner that reflects positively for you with the committee.
 - Example: You listed a club participation in the Ping Pong Club. Maybe you initially joined it because your friends were in it and it filled a time void while you were waiting for another club to start but when asked what the Ping Pong Club was about you might answer, *“Ping Pong Club was started as a fun, non-challenging activity that allowed for classmate outreach. There are many students who may feel they don’t fit in at school and a fun, not-competitive activity that anyone can play provided a vehicle for a cross section for junior and senior class leaders to reach out and invite less involved students to join, bridging the gap between social groups within the school.”*
 - You never know when you might get a question that seems to be irrelevant to a service academy nomination but ends up being used to show off qualities of a service academy candidate that are desirable.