

# **Navigating the Service Academy & ROTC Application Processes**

**Session E7**

**3:15pm to 4:30pm**

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# Service Academies



U.S. Military Academy  
West Point, New York  
Founded 1802



U.S. Naval Academy  
Annapolis, Maryland  
Founded 1845



U.S. Air Force Academy  
Colorado Springs, Colorado  
Founded 1954



# Service Academies



U.S. Coast Guard Academy  
New London, Connecticut  
Founded 1876



U.S. Merchant Marine Academy  
Kings Point, New York  
Founded 1943

# Who Thrives as a Cadet/Midshipman?

Highly Motivated

Leader of Character

Gives 110%

Adventurous

Selfless

Hard Working

Proactive

Academically, Physically, Mentally Strong

Desire To Be Your Best





# How is Life Different at a Service Academy?

## Education and Training

- All students earn BS degrees
  - STEM focused, even for Humanities/Liberal Arts majors
- Challenging course loads (ex. 18-21 credits a semester)
- Every student is a scholar athlete
- Train most of the year (including two-thirds of the summer)
- Military discipline and structure with leadership development
- End Goal: Serve the country as a military officer



# Timeline

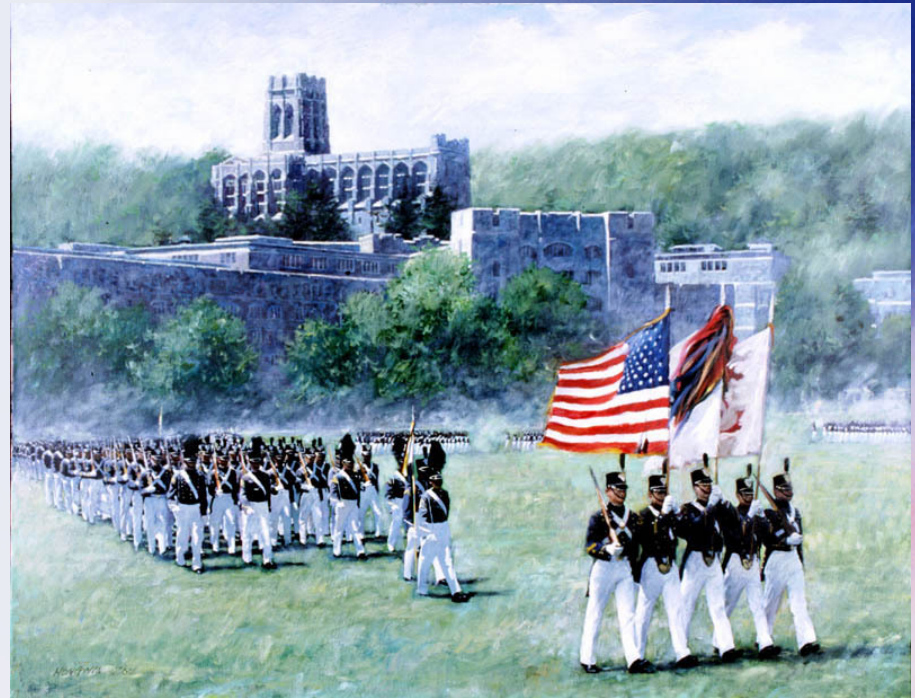


Graphic from "The Service Academy Application Process"



# Terminology

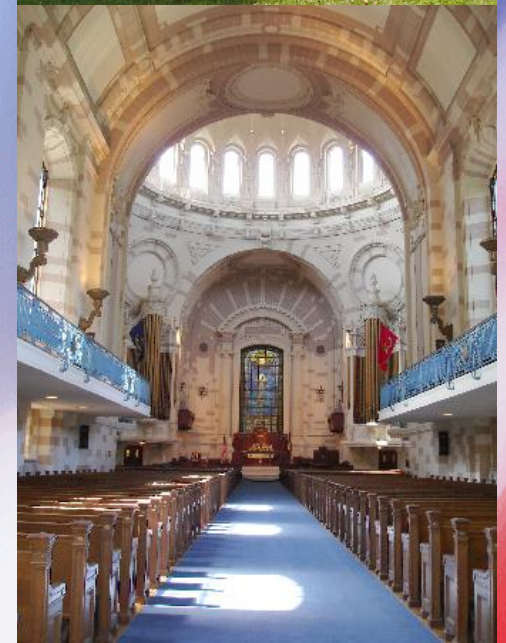
- Pre-Candidate
- Candidate
- Nomination
- Appointment
- Cadet/Midshipman
- CFA/PFE
- DoDMERB
- Service Obligation
- Commission



# Qualifications

- Basic/Legal Requirements
  - ☑ 17-22 years old\*
  - ☑ U.S. Citizen
  - ☑ No Legal Dependents
  - ☑ Unmarried

\*USMMA – 25 years old
- Academic
  - ☑ Above Average HS/College Record
  - ☑ Strong Performance on ACT or SAT
- Extracurricular & Character
  - ☑ Active in High School/Local Community
  - ☑ Music/Athletics/Other
  - ☑ Leadership
- Medical & Physical Fitness
  - ☑ Medically Qualified by DoDMERB; or  
Medical Waiver from Academy
  - ☑ Good Performance on CFA or PFE





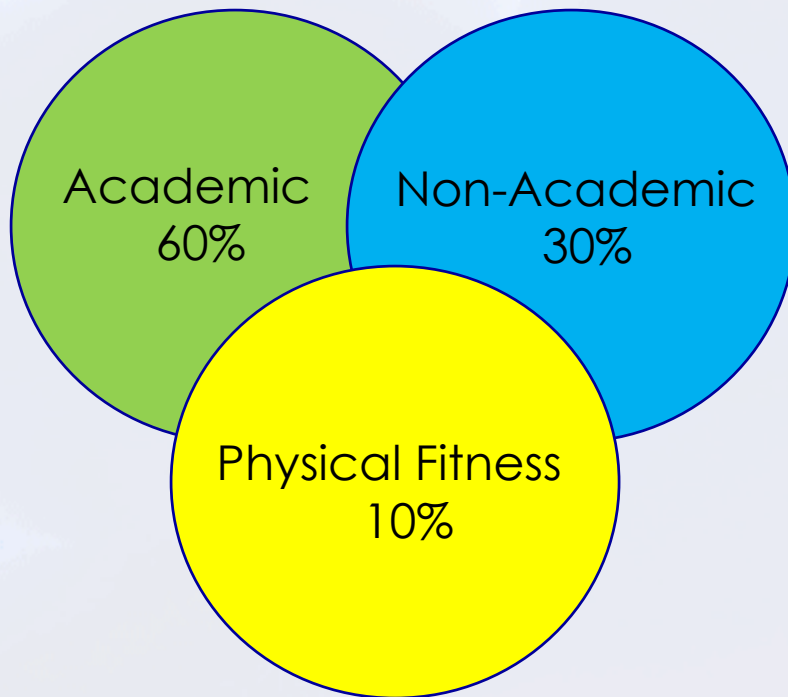
# Academic Requirements

- English 4 Years
- **Mathematics** 4 Years  
(Pre-Calculus)
- **Laboratory Science** 3 Years  
(Biology, Chemistry, Physics)
- Social Science 3 Years\*
- Foreign Language 2 Years\*
- **Technology** 1 Year\*

\* Varies by Academy



# Evaluation Process



Note: U.S. Coast Guard Academy completes holistic review of all complete applications.

## Academic (60%)

- ☒ High School Rank
- ☒ SAT or ACT (Optional Writing)
- ☒ High School Curriculum

## Non-Academic (30%)

- ☒ Extracurricular Activities
- ☒ Demonstrated Leadership
- ☒ Instructor Evaluations
- ☒ Essays and Writing Samples
- ☒ Letters of Recommendation
- ☒ Academy Interview

## Physical Fitness (10%)

- ☒ Candidate Fitness Assessment
- ☒ Athletic Participation



# Class Profiles (2017 Cycle)

CGPA (out of 4.0), ACT Composite,  
SAT CR/M, Acceptance Rate

- Air Force 3.85, 30, 661/673, 14.8%
- Army 3.70, 29, 627/645, 9.0%
- Coast Guard 3.73, 29, 651/668, 18.7%
- Merchant Marine 3.60, 28, 630/638, 22.2%
- Navy 3.89, 31, 675/675, 8.4%

(Rates comparable to Penn, Duke, Pomona, Johns Hopkins, Rice...)

# Nominations

## Congressional

- Members of Congress are authorized five (5) spots per Service Academy at any one time; normally one per year
- Member may nominate up to ten (10) candidates per Service Academy vacancy
- Vice President is also authorized five (5) at large spots per Service Academy

## Non-Congressional

- President may nominate children of military members, 100% disabled veterans, and Medal of Honor recipients
- Service Secretary may nominate enlisted members
- ROTC/JROTC members may be nominated by school
- Academy Superintendents may also nominate at large

**Apply to all eligible sources. Check for deadlines-most are early.**

Note: U.S. Coast Guard Academy does not require a nomination.



# Medical Qualification

- Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board (DoDMERB)
- Candidate completes local examination
- DoDMERB results:
  - 👍 Meets Standard
  - 👉 Remedial
  - 👎 Does Not Meet Standards
- Medical Waivers Granted by Academy



**Starting the process early is key-25% of applicants are medically DQ'd**

# Common Medical Disqualifiers

- Asthma since age 13
- Orthopedic Repairs
- Braces/Dental Issues
- Vision: 20/400; not correctable to 20/20
- Prescription Meds
- Sleepwalking
- Eating Disorders
- Color Vision Deficiencies (USCGA/USMMA/USNA)
- ADD/ADHD, Learning Disabilities, Dysgraphia





# Initial/Basic Orientation Program

- Training begins in late June/early July  
“Beast, BCT, Indoc, Plebe Summer, Swab Summer”
  - Seven Weeks until mid/late August
  - Transition from individuals into a team
  - Physical, mental, emotional challenges
  - Survival and small arms training
  - Leadership and teamwork emphasis
  - Recognition as a cadet/midshipman



# Summer Career Orientation

Air Force/Army

Aviation; Career  
Exploration



Coast Guard/MMA/Navy

Life at Sea;  
Career  
Exploration



Army

Tactical training in a  
field environment





# Preparatory Programs

## Sponsored

- Service Academy pays tuition and enlists candidate; military pay and benefits
- Strong candidates who need extra academic help
- High probability of appointment to next class if academic/conduct/fitness conditions are achieved
- Can be in the citizenship process

## Self Prep

- Voluntary enrollment in private preparatory school
- Must reapply and follow same application review process as other candidates applying to Academy
- Scholarships are available; excellent path to many other commissioning sources
- Must obtain new nomination for appointment

**USAFA:** (USAFA Prep); **USMA** (USMAPS/West Point Prep); **USNA** (NAPS)

**USCGA:** Georgia Military College, Marion Military Institute & NAPS

**USMMA:** Marion Military Institute & New Mexico Military Institute

# Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)

- Reserve Officer Training Corps - a P/T program for F/T college students at civilian colleges
- Army, Navy/Marines and Air Force offer it at colleges throughout the U.S.
- Generally a 4 year program
- Academic classes (electives) on military topics
- Leadership labs (run by cadets)
- Athletic training
- Career exposure
- Scholarship & career opportunities similar to the academies



Same End Goal



# Senior Military Colleges (ROTC+)

- Primarily public 4 year colleges with pro-military environment
- Active Corps of Cadets Program (military dorms, daily PT, leadership and service emphasis)
- Not all cadets will earn a commission
- Apply to Corps with college application
- Virginia Tech
- Texas A&M
- Norwich University
- University of North Georgia
- The Citadel
- Virginia Military Institute



# Academy Summer Opportunities

- Summer Seminar/Summer Leadership Experience/AIM: High school juniors apply in early winter. 1 week orientation to STEM fields and Academy life. Highly competitive
- Athletic Camps: Available to middle and high school students (numerous sports). Open to the public
- USNA STEM Camps: Available to middle and high school students to explore STEM fields. Competitive
- Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) Camps: Available to 16+ year olds. Career exposure to engineering opportunities and mentoring. Competitive





# Academy Admissions Tips

- Admissions is a lengthy process – start preparing early! Sophomore or junior year is ideal
- Candidates evaluated on the “whole person” concept
- Integrity, character, moral background important (alcohol/drug use, arrests a problem)
- Candidates need have a solid CGPA and strong test scores (SAT or ACT) for direct admission. Essay/Writing portion not required
- Every student is a scholar athlete. Usually no athletics = no admission
- You must be medically and physically qualified (tests for both)
- Unique life experiences, language/travel, hardships, diversity (ethnicity, geographic, socioeconomic) important
- Most academies require a liaison officer interview(s)
- You must have a congressional nomination except Coast Guard Academy



# Final Points

- DEMONSTRATING INTEREST is HUGE
- FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION SKILLS: Every interaction with your liaison, academy, or congressional office is an interview
- Apply to EVERY nominating source
- Again, start preparing early (summer programs, learn about the military, prepare academically, build your resume, etc.)
- Mock interviews are helpful
- Plan ahead to finish ahead of deadlines - there may be complications with medical exams or injuries that prevent students from meeting accession requirements
- Each school has its own level of competitiveness
  - CGA is extremely difficult, USAFA & USNA very challenging, MMA and USMA are slightly easier

*HAVE ALTERNATIVE PLANS (ROTC, PREP SCHOOL, REAPPLY)*



# Resources

- USAFA: [www.usafa.edu](http://www.usafa.edu)
- USCGA: [www.uscga.edu](http://www.uscga.edu)
- USMA: [www.westpoint.edu](http://www.westpoint.edu)
- USMMA: [www.usmma.edu](http://www.usmma.edu)
- USNA: [www.usna.edu](http://www.usna.edu)
- Regional Academy Admissions Officers  
(Active duty junior officers based at the academies)
- Local Area Representatives  
(Field Rep, BGO, ALO, Admissions Partner)



# Questions?

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Thanks to Donna White and Kalith Smith for sharing their  
“The Service Academy Application Process” presentation



**THANK YOU**  
**for attending this session!**

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