

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

## CONGRESSIONAL ACADEMY NOMINATION GUIDELINES

### ACADEMY PROCEDURE AND TIMELINE

U.S. Senators and Representatives can make nominations toward one vacancy per year at each of the four Service Academies: U.S. Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs), U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (Kings Point), U.S. Military Academy (West Point), and U.S. Naval Academy (Annapolis).

If you are interested in the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, you need to apply directly to the Academy by writing to: U.S. Coast Guard Academy, Admissions Office, New London, Connecticut 06320-4195. You can also contact LTJG Aaron Parker, the Admissions Officer for Wisconsin, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, at (860) 701-6321. A Congressional nomination is not required.

In order to qualify for entrance into a Service Academy, you must:

- be a United States citizen;
- unmarried;
- not be pregnant;
- have no legal obligation to support children or other dependents;
- be at least 17 years old but not have passed your 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday as of July 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of admission to the Air Force, Navy, or West Point Academy; applicants to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy must not have passed their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

You are encouraged to seek a nomination from your two U.S. Senators, your Congressional Representative and the Vice President of the United States beginning in the spring of your junior year in high school. You can obtain more information about the Vice President's process at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/2010\\_Academies\\_Application.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/2010_Academies_Application.pdf).

One final option for which you may be eligible is a service-related nomination. The President may select for appointment children of: members of the Armed Forces who are currently on active duty, are retired from active duty, or Medal of Honor winners. Attached is a sample letter for this type of nomination.

At the same time, it is also best to contact each Academy you are interested in so you can open a candidate file and begin the application process. You should keep in mind that each Congressional office has its own application form and packet of instructions. You should start this process early in order to meet all deadlines.

A complete application generally consists of the application form, an official high school transcript, proof of a set of ACT and/or SAT scores, short essay of 200 words or less about why you want to attend an Academy, list of outside activities and honors (i.e. sports, community outreach) and three letters of recommendation from a non-relative (family member). Each Congressional office has been assigned a separate code for the ACT and SAT. You should contact your Congressional offices prior to taking the test to obtain these codes so a copy of the official scores will be mailed directly to those offices. One set of ACT or SAT scores are required by the application deadline. If you retake the test and want to update your scores, the Senators' offices prefer to receive these scores prior to the interviews.

For Senators Kohl and Feingold, the deadline for completed applications is always the third Friday in October. Any applications that are incomplete or received after the third Friday in October

deadline will not be considered for a nomination. As we learned a few years ago, mail delivery problems in Washington, D.C. may cause delays, so you are strongly encouraged to contact the Academies and Congressional offices to which you are applying to ensure your application has been received and is complete. In addition, please do not mail your applications to the Members' Washington, DC offices unless instructed to do so. This will delay their receipt to the Academy Coordinators who are generally in Wisconsin. This responsibility belongs to the applicants.

As you consider applying, an option most of the Academies (Air Force, Military and Navy) offer is the summer seminar program offered the summer before you enter your senior year in high school. It provides an opportunity to visit the Academy for one week during the summer. These programs are very competitive. There is no Congressional nomination required. Here are the links to the web pages for the Academy summer seminar programs:

U.S. Air Force Academy

[http://www.academyadmissions.com/#Page/Summer\\_Seminar/](http://www.academyadmissions.com/#Page/Summer_Seminar/)

U.S. Naval Academy

<http://www.usna.edu/Admissions/nass.htm>

U.S. Military Academy

<http://admissions.usma.edu/moreinfo/summer.cfm>

### INTERVIEW PROCESS

Interviews for qualified applicants with the Senators' offices generally take place between November and early December. The Senators' offices try to notify applicants as to whether they have received a nomination by the end of December at the latest. Although this is the timeline for Senators Kohl and Feingold, the Congressional offices may have different deadlines and may conduct their interviews sometime between November and January. It is extremely important that you know these deadlines and closely track them. An offer of appointment will be sent directly to the applicant from the Academy sometime between February and May, but offers of appointment could be extended until right before Induction Day in late June.

Only the candidates who meet all requirements set forth by each Academy will be interviewed. A selection committee or board will assist the Senators' offices in interviewing and screening applicants. The purpose of the interview is to accurately and impartially evaluate, conduct comparative analysis, and advise the Senators on each candidate's potential as a commissioned officer in the Armed Forces. The committees are made up of, but are not limited to, retired military personnel, business representatives, community activists, educators and Academy graduates.

This is a key element of the process. Each committee generally consists of 2 or 3 members and each interview should last 15-20 minutes. Applicants should be aware that the Congressional offices might conduct their interviews differently. The selection committees are looking for these qualities in the applicants:

1) Academic Record:

- High school transcripts and college transcripts (if applicable) as well as scholastic scores.
- A solid college preparatory program in high school is strongly recommended.

2) Leadership Qualities:

- Participation in athletics, class government, religious and community activities,



and work experience.

- 3) Motivation:
  - Candidate's personal and independent initiative in attending an Academy and serving as an officer in the Armed Forces.
- 4) Confidence and Self-expression:
  - This can be gauged through a candidate's answers during the interviews.

In addition to these qualities, the Academies also consider the following:

- 1) Good Moral Character
- 2) Physical Aptitude:
  - Each Academy has its own test requirements to determine each candidate's readiness to undertake the rigorous athletic and physical education program. They measure strength, endurance, agility and coordination.
- 3) Medical Fitness:
  - Those candidates who meet the basic scholastic standards will be scheduled to take the Academy's qualifying medical exam. The exam is scheduled and evaluated by the Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board (DODMERB). If you are concerned about any medical condition, you should discuss it with an Academy representative.

### NOMINATION METHODS

There are three types of nominations and Members of Congress may use any of these methods at their discretion. Each office submits a list of 10 nominees to each Academy per vacancy.

- 1) Competitive: Most offices use this method including Senators Kohl and Feingold. A list is provided to each Academy in alphabetical or random order and the Academy chooses the best candidate.
- 2) Principal with Competing Alternates: This method provides for the designation of a principal nominee and the other nine unranked nominees are submitted to the Academy for evaluation and compete as alternates. If the principal is fully qualified, he or she will be appointed to fill the vacancy.
- 3) Principal with Numbered Alternates: Here, the principal nominee is designated and the Member ranks the alternate nominees in order of preference. If fully qualified, the principal nominee receives the appointment to fill the vacancy. If the principal nominee is not qualified, then the first alternate is considered for the appointment and so on down the list for the remaining 2-9.

### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NOMINATION AND OFFER OF APPOINTMENT

Candidates who the Academies feel are exceptionally qualified are often offered a *letter of assurance*. The Academy is expressing a strong interest in offering an appointment if the candidate remains qualified scholastically, medically, physically, and pursues a nomination through the normal channels. If you receive a letter of assurance (LOA), you still must receive a Congressional nomination.

A *nomination* is your introduction to the academy for consideration and you receive this from the President, Vice President and/or a Member of Congress. It does not mean you have been accepted or offered an appointment at the academy. Each U.S. Senator and Representative may have a maximum of five cadets or midshipmen charged to their office at each Academy at one time. You only need one nomination per academy. In addition to those nominees selected to fill the Members' vacancies, it is possible that one or more additional nominee(s) may be successful in gaining appointments under the qualified alternate or additional appointment categories. These appointments are charged against the Academies, not the Member of Congress. Each Member is charged for one nominee per vacancy no matter how many candidates are selected each year.

An *offer of appointment* is a formal request from the Academy for you to attend – a letter of acceptance. Candidates who are offered appointments are identified after careful evaluation by each Academy and the process is very competitive. This is your goal during this entire process.

### COORDINATION OF NOMINATIONS

The goal of the Congressional offices is to see as many qualified Wisconsinites nominated as possible. We are blessed in Wisconsin with some of the best-educated and most motivated young people in the country. Therefore, the Congressional offices coordinate their nominations to a certain extent. For example, Senators Kohl and Feingold work closely to coordinate nominations to reduce the number of duplicate nominations. This means that if you receive a nomination from one office, you may not receive one from another office. Every office tries to nominate the candidates to their first choice. It is extremely important that you rank your preference of the Academies in the same order when submitting your application to each office. In addition, you should only rank those Academies from which you will accept a nomination.

We also want to make all candidates aware of two recent reports about the military academies. If you are interested in attending one of the academies, we want you to be aware of these findings. You can find the reports:

Headquarters USAF Religious Climate Review Report on the USAFA website -  
[www.af.mil/pdf/HQ\\_Review\\_Group\\_Report.pdf](http://www.af.mil/pdf/HQ_Review_Group_Report.pdf)

DOD Inspector General Service Academy Sexual Assault and Leadership Survey -  
[www.dodig.mil/Inspections/IPO/evalreports.htm](http://www.dodig.mil/Inspections/IPO/evalreports.htm)

Thank you for your interest in the opportunities offered by our U.S. Service Academies. We look forward to you participating in the nomination process. Our very best wishes to you in your pursuit of a higher education. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the following academy coordinators:

Office of Senator Herb Kohl  
Joylynn Gilles  
14 W Mifflin St, Suite 207  
Madison, WI 53703  
(608) 264-5338

Office of Senator Russ Feingold  
Michelle Murray  
1600 Aspen Commons, Room 100  
Middleton, WI 53562  
(608) 828-1200



# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4904

Rev 2/26/09

## USEFUL WEB PAGE ADDRESSES

### Academies

U.S. Air Force Academy Summer Seminar [http:// www.academyadmissions.com/](http://www.academyadmissions.com/)  
[http://www.academyadmissions.com/#Page/Summer\\_Seminar](http://www.academyadmissions.com/#Page/Summer_Seminar)

U.S. Coast Guard Academy\*\* <http://www.cga.edu/>  
\*\*There is no Congressional nomination to the Coast Guard Academy and you apply directly to them.  
Applications should be submitted on their website.\*\*

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

U.S. Naval Academy <http://www.usna.edu/>  
Summer Seminar <http://www.usna.edu/Admissions/nass.htm>  
Catalog <http://www.usna.edu/Catalog/>

U.S. Military Academy at West Point <http://www.usma.edu/>  
Summer Seminar <http://admissions.usma.edu/MoreInfo/summer.cfm>

### Wisconsin Congressional Delegation

Senator Herb Kohl <http://www.senate.gov/~kohl/>

Senator Russ Feingold <http://feingold.senate.gov>

1<sup>st</sup> CD - Congressman Paul Ryan <http://www.house.gov/ryan/>

2<sup>nd</sup> CD - Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin <http://tammybaldwin.house.gov/>

3<sup>rd</sup> CD - Congressman Ron Kind <http://www.house.gov/kind/>

4<sup>th</sup> CD - Congresswoman Gwen Moore <http://www.house.gov/gwenmoore/>

5<sup>th</sup> CD - Congressman James Sensenbrenner <http://www.house.gov/sensenbrenner/>

6<sup>th</sup> CD - Congressman Tom Petri <http://www.house.gov/petri/>

7<sup>th</sup> CD - Congressman David Obey <http://www.house.gov/obey/>

8<sup>th</sup> CD - Congressman Steve Kagen <http://kagen.house.gov/>

### Other Web Pages

Vice President of the United States link was not posted on website

ACT <http://www.act.org/>

SAT <http://www.collegeboard.com/>

**ACADEMY ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS****AIR FORCE ACADEMY**

Students must rank in the 25% of their high school class, but most successful candidates rank in the upper 10%.

			MEAN
SAT-I	Verbal Aptitude Scores	600-670	642
	Math Aptitude Scores	630-690	663
ACT	English Score	26-30	29.0
	Math Score	27-30	29.7
	Reading Score	26-32	30.0
	Science Reasoning Score	26-29	29.1

Those who score below 590 verbal and 620 math on SAT; and below 27 math/science and 26 English/reading on ACT normally will not be competitive for an appointment.

Class of 2012	Applicant Files Started	9,001	
	Applicant Candidates	6,591	
	Qualified Applicants	2,066	
	Applicants Admitted	1,348 (women 21.5%)	

**MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY**

Candidates should be in the top 40% of their class or have compensating SAT-I or ACT test scores and above-average math and science grades to be considered minimally qualified.

SAT-I	MIN Verbal Aptitude Scores	510	
	MIN Math Aptitude Scores	560	
	MIN Composite Score	>1070 (ave 1250)	
	Ave Composite Score	1246 (628 verbal, 618 math)	

\*\* Achieving a total score of 1070 without a minimum of 500 Verbal and 560 Math does not meet the Academy's minimum requirements. Each year, the student population is about 950 and the plebe class size is 275.

ACT	MIN English Score	21	
	MIN Math Score	24	
	MIN Composite Score	23	

**MILITARY ACADEMY**

Approximately 68% of the entering class came from the top 20% of their high school class.

SAT-I	MEAN Verbal Aptitude Scores	626	
	MEAN Math Aptitude Scores	648	
ACT	MEAN English Score	28	MEAN Science Score 27
	MEAN Math Score	28	MEAN Reading Score 30
Class of 2012	Applicant Files Started	10,133	
	Applicants Nominated	3,481	
	Qualified Applicants	1,944	
	Applicants Admitted	1,292 (1,097 men, 195 women)	

**NAVAL ACADEMY**

For the Class of 2012, almost all of them were ranked in the top two fifths of their high school class.

SAT-I	MIN Verbal Aptitude Scores	600-699	
	MIN Math Aptitude Scores	600-699	
ACT	MIN English Score	26-30	
	MIN Math Score	26-30	
Class of 2012	Applicant Files Started	10,960	
	Applicants Nominated	3,838	
	Qualified Applicants	2,196	
	Offers of Appointment	1,537	
	Applicants Admitted	1,261 (21.0% (261) women)	

## PRESIDENTIAL OR MILITARY NOMINATIONS

Use this format for any of these categories: Presidential, Children of Deceased or Disabled Veterans, Military or Civilian Personnel in a Missing Status, or Children of Medal of Honor Recipients.

Date:

### Air Force

Director of Admissions  
HQ USAFA/RRS,  
2304 Cadet Dr., Suite 200  
USAF Academy CO 80840-5025

### Navy

U.S. Naval Academy  
Office of Admissions  
117 Decatur Rd  
Annapolis, MD 214025019

### Army

U.S. Military Academy  
Director of Admission  
646 Swift Rd  
West Point, NY 10996-1905

Dear Sir:

I wish to attend \_\_\_\_\_ Academy and to serve in the United States \_\_\_\_\_. I request a nomination under the (name of appropriate category) for the class that enters the Academy in June 20\_\_.

My pertinent data is:

Name (print name exactly as it appears on the birth certificate, or if legally changed, attach a copy of the court order):

Social Security Number:

Permanent address (street, city, county, state, zip code):

Temporary address (if applicable):

Permanent phone number and area code:

Temporary phone number and area code (if applicable):

Date and place of birth (spell out month):

If member of military, include rank, regular or reserve component, branch of service and organizational address including PSC Box Number:

If previous candidate, indicate year:

Information on parents:

Name, rank, social security number, component and branch of service:

If your parent is on active duty, attach a statement of service dated and signed by current personnel officer specifying all periods of active duty and any breaks therein. If your parent is retired or deceased, attach a copy of the retirement orders or casualty report; include Veterans Administration (VA) claim number and VA office where the case is filed, if appropriate; include brief statement with date and circumstances of Medal of Honor award, if appropriate.

Sincerely, (sign the letter below)



## My March Into the Military Academy

It took me three years of interviews and fitness tests to get into West Point. It was totally worth it.

BY MICHAEL ROBINSON

**W**HEN I APPLIED TO COLleges, I didn't have the usual lists of "reach" and "safety" schools. I had only one school in mind: the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Getting into West Point—or the Naval Academy, the Coast Guard Academy or the Air Force Academy—is a bit like running an obstacle course. In addition to the usual progression of the SAT, essays and teacher recommendations, the process requires three steps. First is a thorough physical, with the results reviewed by a government review board. Next is a six-event physical-fitness test. Finally, candidates must be nominated by a member of Congress or the vice president. And for the students who are admitted, the commitment extends well beyond four years. Although I'm receiving my education free of charge, when I graduate I will be commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and remain on active military duty until at least 2014, with a three-year reserve commitment after that.

If you want to go to a service academy, start the process early. You want your congressional office to know you well before your senior year. Apply to as many nominating sources as you can—not only your representative, but also both of your senators. Each can nominate 10 candidates per year to each military academy; only one of the 10 is admitted. At your interviews, the most important thing is to be confident in your desire to be a military officer. In my interviews—usually with staffers, but the Congress members sometimes do attend—I was asked questions about world events, my high-school accomplishments and my desire to serve. Politics

didn't seem to matter much. I've heard of parents joining campaigns to try to help grease the nominating wheels, but since officials are staking their reputation on whether you'll graduate, they're more concerned with your abilities than whether your parents are Republicans or Demo-



**EYES ON THE PRIZE:** I never considered alternatives. West Point was what I wanted, and I would do whatever it took.

crats. For the physical-fitness test, candidates are assessed in six events: a kneeling basketball throw, a shuttle run (which measures agility), push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups and a one-mile run. I spent endless hours with my father practicing the basketball throw (it's all in the technique), went to the high-school track to practice the shuttle run (my

weakest event) and did thousands of push-ups, sit-ups and pull-ups. The practice paid off, and I scored relatively well. Throughout the process, remember how competitive it is, and don't be discouraged if you're not given a nomination or offered a seat. It took me two attempts to get into West Point. When I applied as a high-school senior, I wasn't given a seat, and instead received a scholarship to spend a year at Valley Forge Military Academy in Pennsylvania. My route wasn't unusual: many of my classmates spent a year after high school at a civilian prep school or at the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School. Some of my friends say they would have simply enrolled in the ROTC program at a civilian college rather than wait an extra year to reapply. While that's a respectable alternative, I never considered it. I knew West Point was

what I wanted, and I was willing to do whatever it took.

After three years of paperwork, in March 2005 I received my admission. I had finally made it. New cadets report in June, just a few weeks after graduating from high school. Over the summer, freshmen (or "plebes") go through Cadet Basic Training (or "Beast Barracks") to begin their acclimation to a military lifestyle. Plebe year is the hardest year you'll have at West Point. Plebes get up around 6 and perform duties such as taking out trash, delivering newspapers and cleaning bathrooms. We have to memorize information (for example, the number of days until the Army-Navy game or menus for the next three meals) as a form of mental development. We cannot talk to other plebes outside our rooms; we must greet all upperclassmen, and we rarely leave campus on weekends. While it is difficult, it's worth it. I remain in awe of this place. Walking to class, I realize I'm walking the same ground that Eisenhower, Patton, MacArthur, Lee and Grant walked

before me. In my plebe year I was elected class historian, and the following spring I helped design our class crest, which will be emblazoned on our class rings. I try to never lose sight of where I am and what I did to get here. Most important, I always remember that I'm working not just toward a degree, but toward the privilege of leading the soldiers of the U.S. Army.

ROBINSON is a second-year cadet at West Point.

### Submit

your own essay for use  
in our My Turn  
Online column at  
[MyTurn.Newsweek.com](http://MyTurn.Newsweek.com)  
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