

Signal Direct Commission Program

Frequently Asked Questions

as of 5 February 2024

1. What regulations governs the Direct Commission Program?

A: [AD 2019-27](#)

2. Who is the POC for the Signal Direct Commission Program?

A: The Office Chief of Signal (OCoS) at USARMYFtEisenhowerSignalSchlListOCOS-OD@army.mil

3. Where to get a copy of the Signal Direct Commission application?

A: The application and other information about the program is located at <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-1237442>

4. Where to send the completed application?

A: Send the application to The Office Chief of Signal at USARMYFtEisenhowerSignalSchlListOCOS-OD@army.mil

5. How is the application structured?

A: Combine all the requested files/documents/items into one PDF document in the order listed on the application.

6. What is required in the application?

A: You will be required to provide the following:

1. Completed [Direct Commission Application](#)
2. [Cover Letter](#)
3. [Resume](#) (Civilian Style - be specific, identify hardware/software/application/protocol used)
4. 3 [Letters of Recommendation](#) (Military from an appropriate 26A/26B, Civilian from an IT specialist)
5. [Official transcripts](#) of undergraduate and graduate degrees conferred with date
6. [Current Military Service Documentation](#), if applicable (STP w/o photo, DA 1506 (USNG/USAR))
7. [Prior Military Service Documentation](#), if applicable (DD-214, DA 1506 (USNG/USAR))
8. Information Technology Industry Certifications with future expiration date (i.e. AWS, Azure, CCNA, etc)

7. How long is the process?

A: The Direct Commission process can take from 6 months to 1 year to complete. Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS) and obtaining a security clearance may slow down the process.

Constructive Service Credit

8. What is a Constructive Service Credit (CSC)?

A: The CSC is used to determine ONLY the entry grade or rank a candidate will obtain when direct appointed into the Regular Army, National Guard, or Reserves. The CSC calculates your Information

Technology (IT) experience after your baccalaureate or advance degree is conferred. For every year of IT experience, you are award 1 year to determine your rank.

Reference: [10 U.S.C. § 533, para \(c\)](#); [AD 2019-27, para 8](#); and [DoDI 1312.03, para 3.4](#)

9. What is an Entry Grade or Rank?

A: The rank you will enter as an officer into the Regular Army, National Guard, or Reserves is determined based on years of Information Technology (IT) experience comparable to a contemporary officer who began commissioned service immediately after obtaining a baccalaureate degree.

10. Reference: [AD 2019-27, para 5](#); [DoDI 1312.03, para 3.4](#); and [AR 135-155, Table 2-1](#).

11. What is the purpose of the Entry Grade or Constructive Service Credit (CSC)?

A: The CSC is used to determine the officers' initial grade as a regular officer; rank in grade; and service in grade for promotion eligibility.

Reference: [10 U.S.C. § 533, para \(c\)](#)

12. How to determine how many years of experience for each rank?

A: To determine the rank a candidate will obtain upon entry in the Service, the Constructive Service Credit (CSC) calculates prior commissioned service and the total number of years of Information Technology (IT) experience after a baccalaureate or advance degree is conferred. Each rank requires a certain number of years of IT experience.

Reference: [AR 135-155, Table 2-1](#)

13. How is Entry Grade or Constructive Service Credit (CSC) calculated?

A: Comparing a contemporary officer who began commissioned service immediately after obtaining a baccalaureate degree. The CSC information is not used to determine your pay, nor does it count towards years completed for retirement.

A: For candidates assessing into 25A, your CSC is calculated after your Bachelors, or advance degree is conferred.

A: For candidates assessing into FA26, your CSC is calculated after your Bachelor's, or advance degree is conferred. The candidate will require 4 years of Information Technology (IT) experience to qualify, because FA26 billets starts at Captain (CPT) and 4 years of IT experience is required for CPT.

Reference: [AD 2019-27, para 5, 6, 7](#); [AR 135-155, Table 2-1](#); and [DoDI 1312.03, para 3.4](#)

14. Why does the Signal use a degree/education as the determining factor to start the calculations for the Constructive Service Credit (CSC)?

A: FA26 officers require a degree for acceptance into the program. Also, FA26 billets starts at CPT and the rank is determined based on Information Technology (IT) experience after a bachelor or advance degree is conferred.

Reference: [AR 135-100, para 3-16.d](#). and [DA PAM 600-3, para 3.c.\(1\)](#)

15. Why can't experience before or during school be used as part of the Constructive Service Credit (CSC) calculations?

A: DoDI 1312.03 dated December 28, 2018, para 3.4.b(7) states that "Creditable experience cannot predate the receipt of a degree or certificate; experience gained in a volunteer or student status will not be credited."

Reference: [DoDI 1312.03 dated December 28, 2018, para 3.4.b\(7\)](#)

16. What year group (YG) will I be assigned?

A: The year group (YG) is based upon the date the DA71 was signed.

Retirement

17. Will the years awarded during the Constructive Service Credit be calculated towards my retirement?

A: NO. refer to question 12 for further details.

18. How many years will need to be completed for retirement eligibility?

A: 20 years of service. Prior service will be counted towards retirement. Those who require an Active Federal Service (AFS) waiver, may require completing more than 20 years in order to keep the officer rank after retirement. See question 18 for more information.

19. Is there a requirement for Regular Army Commissioned officers to complete 10 years of commissioned service in order to retire and keep the rank?

A: Yes, 10 USCS § 7311(a) states "the Secretary of the Army may, upon the officer's request, retire a regular or reserve commissioned officer of the Army who has at least 20 years of service computed under section 7326 of this title [[10 USCS § 7326](#)], at least 10 years of which have been active service as a commissioned officer."

Reference: [10 USCS § 7311](#)

20. Will I need to remain three (3) years in the grade of Major (MAJ) to voluntarily retire in the highest grade served satisfactorily from active service?

A: Yes. Previously, majors only needed six months' time in grade for voluntary retirement. Subparagraph (b)(1) of 10 USC 1370 now states that in order to be eligible for voluntary retirement in a grade above captain an officer must have served for a period of not less than three years.

Reference: [10 USCS § 1370](#)

Pay

21. How is military pay determined?

A: Per [DoD 7000.14-R, Volume 7A, Chapter 1, para 3.1](#), the pay of Military Service members is prescribed by law. Current basic pay rates are contained in Tables 1-7, 1-8, 1-9, 1-10, and on the Basic Pay tables on DFAS.MIL. Members are entitled to receive pay according to their pay grades and years of service if they are: On active duty in a pay status and not prohibited by law from receiving such pay.

Reference: [DoD 7000.14-R, Volume 7A, Chapter 1, para 3.1](#)

A: AR 637-1, states, Soldiers are paid per DoD FMR Volume 7A. Also, see AR 612 – 201.

Reference: [37 U.S.C. Chapter 3](#); [DoD 7000.14-R, Volume 7A, Chapter 1, para 3.1](#); and [AR 637-1, para 3-1](#).

22. What will be my starting pay?

A: For candidates without prior time in service (TIS) your pay will begin with less than 2yrs of service based on your assessed rank. All others will be based on how much prior TIS you have completed and your assessed rank. Use the Military Pay Chart to determine your pay.

Link: [DFAS Military Pay Chart](#)

Reference: [DoD 7000.14-R, Volume 7A, Chapter 1, para 3.1](#)

23. Will my pay be based on the years calculated in the Constructive Service Credit (CSC)?

A: NO. [10 U.S.C. § 533, para \(c\)](#), states that Constructive service credited an officer under subsection (b) shall be used only for determining the officer's—

- (1) initial grade as a regular officer.
- (2) rank in grade; and
- (3) service in grade for promotion eligibility.

Reference: [10 U.S.C. § 533, para \(c\)](#),

Promotion, Training Requirements and Unit Assignment

24. For Regular Army officers, are Warrant Officer Evaluation Reports (OER) presented to the Regular Officer Promotion board?

A: Awaiting a response from HRC.

25. Does the Officer Promotion board When do I report to Direct Commission Course (DCC)?

A: Once the MEPS, security clearance is granted or validate, and Unqualified Resignation is complete. Enlisted and Warrant Officers require UQR. The DCC is a 5-week course at Fort Moore (formerly Fort Benning).

26. Will I be required to pass the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) when I first join the Army?

A: Our office is researching the requirements with TRADOC and DAHQ DMPM.

27. Does Warrant Officers attend the Direct Commission Course (DCC)?

A: NO, Warrant Officer do not attend the DCC course at Fort Moore (formerly Fort Benning) because WOCS is a commission source.

Reference: [AR 350-1, para 3-33.b](#).

28. What do between the completion of DCC and reporting to Fort Eisenhower?

A: The candidate orders will give guidance on the reporting dates and locations.

A: Regular Army candidates, you will need to report to Fort Eisenhower immediately after DCC and then you will be placed on Permissive TDY (PTDY) orders or request regular leave (absence request). If you do not report to Fort Eisenhower immediately after DCC you will be charged regular leave (absence request).

29. When do I report to my first Signal Training?

A: For Regular Army candidates, the candidate will be assigned to the next available Signal training after the completion of the Direct Commission Course (DCC) at Fort Moore.

A: For ARNG and USAR candidates, your units will determine the appropriate time to schedule you into the course based on your gaining unit available funding.

30. How is my first unit assignment determined?

A: The Signal School Command makes the final decision for unit assignments.

31. When do I report to my unit?

A: Upon the completion of all required training at Fort Moore (formerly Fort Benning). Lieutenants require SBOLC, Captains require SCCC, and FA26 require will complete the required Signal training based on their rank and the appropriate 26A or 26B Course. In addition, eligible candidate can apply for the Constructive Course Credit in lieu of attending the FA26 course. Contact USARMYFtEisenhowerSignalSchlListOCOS-OD@army.mil for the application.

32. Does AGR retain their status within the US Army Reserves?

A: No, as a Reservist, you will become a regular Reservist and then you will have to reapply for AGR.

Application and Direct Commission Process

33. Where can I obtain a copy of an official transcript?

A: At a cost, copies can be requested through <https://www.parchment.com>.

34. Where to send transcripts from Parchment.com and other agencies?

A: Recommend sending a copy to yourself and then email the OCoS-OD group email at USARMYFtEisenhowerSignalSchlListOCOS-OD@army.mil that way you have a copy is the government network restricts access to the sites.

35. What is the requirement for a Letter of Recommendation?

A: Provide three (3) letters of recommendation and at least one of the letters of recommendation must be obtained from a 26A, 26B, or 25A based on your desired branch of interest. Civilians can obtain from an IT Specialist. For military personnel if you desire a waiver, preferable at least one (1) of the Letters of Recommendation should come from an O-6 (Colonel (COL)) or higher.

36. Can a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) write a Letter of Recommendation?

A: No, our office will not accept a Letter of Recommendation from an NCO.

37. Is a bachelor's degree required for FA26 in the Direct Commission Program

A: Yes, the candidate is required to have a bachelor's degree. That is because FA26 are required to have a degree per [DA PAM 600-3, para 3.c.\(1\)](#).

38. Is a bachelor's degree required for 25A in the Direct Commission Program

A: NO, you are authorized Degree Completion with the Direct Commission Program. Please be advised you will be assessed as a Second Lieutenant (2LT) because your rank is determined from years of Information Technology (IT) experience demonstrated after a bachelor's or advance degree is conferred. 25As billets begin at 2LT and FA26 billets begin at Captain (CPT). 2LT requires 0-3 years 11 months of IT experience and CPT requires 4-10 years 5 months of IT experience after the degree is conferred.

39. Can an Airforce, Marine, or Navy individual apply to the Army Direct Commission Program?

A. No. The program is not open to inter-service commissioning.

Reference: [AD 2019-27, para 3.b.](#)

40. Can an Army National Guard, Army Reserve, or Regular Army commission into a different component?

A. No. The program is not open to inter-component commission.

Reference: [AD 2019-27, para 3.b.](#)

41. What happens after the board is convened?

A: The approval memos are generated and staff which Department of the Army Headquarters (DAHQ) being the final authority to sign the memos. This process takes from 1 to 2 months to complete.

42. Is there a requirement for Regular Army to be able to complete 10 years of Commission Service before completing 20 years of Active Federal Service (AFS).

A: Yes, the candidate is required to complete 10 years of commissioned service before 20 years.

Reference: [Title 10 Code 7311](#) and [AD 2019-27, para 11.b.](#)

43. Is there a waiver for Active Federal Service (AFS)?

A: Yes, however, it only applies to Regular Army candidates. AFS waivers are endorsed for ONLY candidates with IT experience with Cloud, Data, 5G, Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence, Software Defined Networking and Zero Trust. Awaiting leadership decision on the cutoff year for acceptance.

44. What document are required for an Active Federal Service (AFS) waiver?

A: You will be required to provide the following:

1. ACFT
2. Official Transcripts
3. Resume
4. 3 Letters of Recommendation (can use the same from the application)
5. DD214, if applicable
6. DD 4859 Signed (OCOS-OD will generate)

45. Is there a waiver for Age-in-Grade (AIG)?

A: Yes, however, it only applies to Army National and United States Army Reserves. All the grades/ranks have a minimum and maximum age limitation based on the rank.

Reference: [AR 135-100, Table 1-1.](#)

46. What documents are required for an Age-in-Grade (AIG) waiver?

A: You will be required to provide the following:

1. STP, DD214, or a valid document with your date of birth
2. Resume
3. 3 Letters of Recommendation (can use the same one from the application)

47. Is there a Moral waiver requirement?

A: Yes, if you were convicted, arrested, has a reprimand, those situations will require a Moral waiver.

48. What happens if waivers are required while going through MEPS?

A: MEPS personnel will manage and process all medical waivers.

49. Can I obtain the waiver(s) prior to submitting the Direct Commission packet?

A: Yes and No. Yes you can obtain a waiver for Active Federal Service (AFS) prior to submitting a Direct Commission application, because you have knowledge in how many years of service you have.

A: Yes, you can obtain Moral waivers prior to submitting a packet, because you have knowledge and information of the incident.

A: No, you cannot obtain a waiver for Age in Grade (AIG) prior to submitting your Direct Commission application because we first need to determine what grade/rank you will be assessed into and then determine if you are within the limitation of the assessed grade/rank.

50. Can I attend the board before a waiver is adjudicated?

A: No, All waivers that are in the Office Chief of Signal control must be adjudicated prior to receiving an invitation for an board interview.

51. What happens if the waiver is not adjudicated prior to the convening of the board?

A: You will be notified that you will not receive an invitation to attend the board and asked if you would like your packet presented in the following board.

52. Does Warrant Officer commission service counts towards the ten years of commissioned officer service required under 10 U.S.C § 7311?

A: YES, Retirement as a Regular Commissioned Officer. A regular commissioned officer, who previously served as a WO, may count all "good time" (See 10 U.S.C. § 972(b) – Members: effect of time lost) spent as a commissioned warrant officer (CW2 and above) towards the 10-year minimum commissioned time for purposes of calculating retirement eligibility under 10 U.S.C. § 7311.