



Department of Defense DIRECTIVE

NUMBER 1304.26

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Incorporating Change 1, March 4, 1994

ASD(P&R)

SUBJECT: Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction

- References:
- (a) Title 10, United States Code
 - (b) DoD Instruction 1205.1, "Implementation of the Universal Military Training and Service Act with Respect to Medical and Dental Registrants," September 2, 1960
 - (c) Title 32, United States Code
 - (d) Compact of Free Association between the United States and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Government of the Marshall Islands, 99 Stat. 1770 (1986) (reprinted as amended at 48 U.S.C.A. 1681 note)
 - (e) [DoD Directive 1145.1](#), "Qualitative Distribution of Military Manpower," January 22, 1986
 - (f) [DoD Directive 6130.3](#), "Physical Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction," March 31, 1986

1. PURPOSE

This Directive:

1.1. Establishes basic entrance qualification standards for enlistment, appointment, and induction into the Armed Forces in accordance with Section 113 of reference (a) and delegates the authority to specify certain of those standards to the Secretaries of the Military Departments.

1.2. Establishes the age, citizenship, education, aptitude, physical fitness, dependency status, moral character, and other disqualifying conditions that are causes for rejection for military service. Other standards may be prescribed in the event of mobilization or national emergency.

1.3. Sets standards designed to ensure that individuals under consideration for enlistment, appointment, or induction are able to perform military duties successfully, and to select those who are the most trainable and adaptable to Service life.

2. APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE

This Directive applies to:

2.1. The Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Military Departments. The term "Military Services," as used herein, refers to the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard (by agreement with the Secretary of Transportation when it is not operating as a Military Service in the Navy) and their National Guard and Reserve components.

2.2. Applicants for initial enlistment into the Regular Armed Forces and the Reserve components.

2.3. Applicants for appointment as commissioned or warrant officers in the Active and Reserve components.

2.4. Applicants for reenlistment following release from active duty into subsequent Active or Reserve components (including the Army National Guard of the United States and the Air National Guard of the United States) after a period of more than 6 months has elapsed since discharge.

2.5. Applicants for the Scholarship or Advanced Course Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), and all other Armed Forces special officer personnel procurement programs, including the Military Service Academies.

2.6. All individuals being inducted into the Armed Forces.

3. DEFINITION

Reserve Components. Includes the Army National Guard of the United States, the Army Reserve, the Naval Reserve, the Marine Corps Reserve, the Air National Guard of the United States, the Air Force Reserve, and the Coast Guard Reserve.

4. POLICY

It is DoD policy to:

4.1. Encourage to the maximum extent practical the use of common entrance qualification standards.

4.2. Avoid inconsistencies and inequities based on gender, race, religion, or ethnicity in the application of these standards by the Military Services.

4.3. Judge the suitability of persons to serve in the Armed Forces on the basis of their adaptability, potential to perform, and conduct.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness shall:

5.1.1. Review, coordinate, approve, and issue modifications to the standards in enclosure 1.

5.1.2. Ensure that the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command assists the Services in implementing these standards.

5.2. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs shall act as an advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (ASD(P&R)) on the physical and medical aspects of these standards.

5.3. The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs) shall act as an advisor to the ASD(P&R) on the Reserve enlistment and appointment standards.

5.4. The Secretaries of the Military Departments:

5.4.1. Shall ensure conformance with this Directive.

5.4.2. Shall recommend to the ASD(P&R) suggested changes to this Directive.

5.4.3. Shall review all standards on an annual basis.

5.4.4. Shall establish procedures to grant waivers to the standards in individual cases for appropriate reasons.

5.4.5. Shall establish other standards as necessary to implement this Directive.

5.4.6. May issue generalized exceptions to these standards as permitted by law, with approval from the ASD(P&R).

6. PROCEDURES

The standards in enclosure 1 shall be used to determine the entrance qualifications for all individuals being enlisted, appointed, or inducted into any component of the Military Services.

7. EFFECTIVE DATE AND IMPLEMENTATION

This Directive is effective February 28, 1994. Forward one copy of the implementing documents to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness within 30 days of the signature date.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Aspin". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "J" and a cursive "Aspin".

Enclosures - 1

E1. Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction

E1. ENCLOSURE 1

QUALIFICATION STANDARDS FOR ENLISTMENT, APPOINTMENT, AND INDUCTION

E1.1. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

E1.1.1. Entrance Considerations. Accession of qualified individuals shall be a priority when processing applicants for the Military Services.

E1.1.2. Eligibility. Eligibility shall be determined by the applicant's ability to meet all requirements of this Directive, to include obtaining waivers. Applicants shall not be enlisted, appointed, or inducted unless fully qualified

E1.2. BASIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

E1.2.1. Age

E1.2.1.1. For service in the Active and Reserve components, the minimum age for enlistment is 17 years and the maximum age is 35 years. (See 10 U.S.C., 510, reference (a).) The maximum age for a prior service enlistee is determined by adding the individual's years of prior service to 35. The Secretaries of the Military Departments concerned shall establish age standards for enlistment in the Reserve components (10 U.S.C., 510, reference (a)).

E1.2.1.2. Age limitations for appointment as a commissioned or warrant officer normally depend on the Service concerned. In prescribing the age qualification for appointment as a Reserve officer, the Secretary of the Military Department concerned may not prescribe a maximum standard of less than 47 years for the initial appointment of a person who will serve as a medical, dental, or nurse officer in a specialty designated by the Secretary concerned as critically needed in wartime. (See DoD Instruction 1205.1 (reference (b)).)

E1.2.1.3. By law (10 U.S.C., 532, reference (a)), persons appointed as commissioned officers must be able to complete 20 years of active commissioned service before their 55th birthday to receive a Regular commission. The Secretary of the Military Department concerned may defer the retirement for certain health profession officers on a case-by-case basis (10 U.S.C., 1251, reference (a)).

E1.2.2. Citizenship

E1.2.2.1. To be eligible for enlistment in the Regular Army or Air Force, an individual must be an American citizen, or lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence (10 U.S.C., 3253 and 8253, reference (a)). There is no equivalent statute limiting enlistment in the Regular Navy and Marine Corps, but they usually apply the same citizenship requirements as those required for the Army and Air Force.

E1.2.2.2. To be eligible for enlistment in the Reserve components, an individual must be a citizen of the United States or lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence (10 U.S.C., 510, reference (a)).

E1.2.2.3. To be eligible for appointment as a commissioned or warrant officer, U.S. citizenship is required except for Reserve appointment where an individual must be lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence (Sections 532 and 591 of reference (a)). For regular appointment, when tendered, U.S. citizenship is required. Law requires National Guard officers to be U.S. citizens (32 U.S.C., 313, reference (c)).

E1.2.2.4. Citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia or the Republic of the Marshall Islands also are eligible for enlistment in the Active and Reserve components. (See the Compact of Free Association (reference (d)).)

E1.2.3. Education

E1.2.3.1. Possession of a high school diploma is desirable, although not mandatory, for enlistment in any component of the Military Services. Section 520 of reference (a) states, "A person who is not a high school graduate may not be accepted for enlistment in the Armed Forces unless the score of that person on the Armed Forces Qualification Test is at or above the thirty first percentile; however, a person may not be denied enlistment in the Armed Forces solely because of his not having a high school diploma if his enlistment is needed to meet established strength requirements." Alternative credential holders (i.e., General Education Development certificates and certificates of attendance and completion) and nongraduates may be assigned lower enlistment priority based on their first-term attrition rates.

E1.2.3.2. Educational requirements for appointment as a commissioned or warrant officer are determined by each Military Service. Generally, a bachelors degree is a required prerequisite for a commission or appointment. In addition, special occupations (e.g., physician, chaplain) may require additional vocational credentials, which are determined by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned.

E1.2.4. Aptitude

E1.2.4.1. Overall aptitude requirements for enlistment and induction are based on applicant scores on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) derived from the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery. Applicant scores are grouped into percentile categories. Persons who score in AFQT Category V (percentiles 1-9) are, by law (10 U.S.C., 520 and DoD Directive 1145.1 (references (a) and (e))), ineligible to enlist. By law (10 U.S.C., 520, reference (a)), the number of persons who enlist during any fiscal year who score in AFQT Category IV (percentiles 10 to 30) may not exceed 20 percent of the total number of persons enlisted. The Secretary of Defense delegates to the Secretaries of the Military Departments the authority to specify more restrictive aptitude standards for enlistment.

E1.2.4.2. Generally, for officers and warrant officers, no single test or instrument is used as an aptitude requirement for appointment.

E1.2.5. Physical Fitness

E1.2.5.1. DoD Directive 6130.3 (reference (f)) establishes the standards for entrance under the authority of 10 U.S.C. (reference (a)).

E1.2.5.2. The pre-accession screening process should be structured to identify individuals with any medical condition that disqualifies an applicant for military service. Specifically, each applicant shall be independently evaluated by an authorized physician or a physician at a Military Entrance Processing Station to ensure the applicant is:

E1.2.5.2.1. Free of contagious or infectious diseases;

E1.2.5.2.2. Free of medical conditions or physical defects that would require excessive time lost from duty or would likely result in separation from the Service for medical unfitness;

E1.2.5.2.3. Medically capable of satisfactorily completing required training;

E1.2.5.2.4. Medically adaptable to the military environment;

E1.2.5.2.5. Medically capable of performing duties without aggravation of existing physical defects or medical conditions.

E1.2.6. Dependency Status

E1.2.6.1. Title 10 U.S.C. (reference (a)) does not specifically address eligibility requirements for single parents.

E1.2.6.2. The Military Services may not enlist married individuals with more than two dependents under the age of 18 or unmarried individuals with custody of any dependents under the age of 18. However, the Secretary of the Military Department concerned may grant a waiver for particularly promising entrants.

E1.2.6.3. The Military Services shall specify the circumstances under which individuals who have dependents may become commissioned officers or warrant officers; variations in policy are affected by the commissioning source (e.g., Service Academy vs. ROTC or Officer Candidate School; ROTC scholarship status, etc.).

E1.2.7. Moral Character. Persons entering the Armed Forces should be of good moral character. The underlying purpose of moral character enlistment standards is to minimize entrance of persons who are likely to become disciplinary cases or security risks or who disrupt good order, morale, and discipline. The Military Services also have a responsibility to parents who expect that their sons and daughters will not be placed into close association with persons who have committed serious offenses or whose records show ingrained delinquency behavior patterns. The Military Services are responsible for the defense of the nation and should not be viewed as a source of rehabilitation for those who have not subscribed to the legal and moral standards of society at large. Moral standards of acceptability for service are designed to disqualify the following kinds of persons:

E1.2.7.1. Individuals under any form of judicial restraint (bond, probation, imprisonment, or parole).

E1.2.7.2. Those with significant criminal records. Section 504 of reference (a) states that, "no person...who has been convicted of a felony, may be enlisted in an Armed Force. However, the Secretary concerned may authorize exceptions in meritorious cases, for the enlistment of...persons convicted of felonies."

E1.2.7.2.1. Persons convicted of felonies may request a waiver to permit their enlistment. The waiver procedure is not automatic, and approval is based on each individual case. One of the considerations in determining whether a waiver will be granted is the individual's ability to adjust successfully to civilian life for a period of time following his or her release from judicial control.

E1.2.7.2.2. In processing waiver requests, the Military Services shall require information about the "who, what, when, where, and why" of the offense in question; and a number of letters of recommendation attesting to the applicant's character or suitability for enlistment. Such letters must be from responsible community leaders such as school officials, ministers, and law enforcement officials.

E1.2.7.3. Those who have been previously separated from the Military Services under conditions other than honorable or for the good of the Service.

E1.2.7.4. Those who have exhibited antisocial behavior or other traits of character that would render them unfit to associate with military personnel.

E1.2.8. Provisions Related to Homosexual Conduct

E1.2.8.1. *A person's sexual orientation is considered a personal and private matter, and is not a bar to service entry* or continued service unless manifested by homosexual conduct *in the manner described in subparagraph E1.2.8.2., below.* Applicants for enlistment, appointment, or induction shall not be asked or *required to reveal whether they are heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual.* Applicants also will not be asked or required to reveal whether they have engaged in homosexual conduct, unless independent evidence is received indicating that an applicant engaged in such conduct or unless the applicant volunteers a statement that he or she is a homosexual or bisexual, or words to that effect.

E1.2.8.2. *Homosexual conduct is grounds for barring entry into the Armed Forces, except as otherwise provided in this section.* Homosexual conduct is a homosexual act, a statement by the applicant that demonstrates a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts, or a homosexual marriage or attempted marriage. Propensity to engage in homosexual acts means more than an abstract preference or desire to engage in homosexual acts; it indicates a likelihood that a person engages in or will engage in homosexual acts.

E1.2.8.2.1. An applicant shall be rejected for entry into the Armed Forces if, in the course of the accession process, evidence is received demonstrating that the applicant engaged in, attempted to engage in, or solicited another to engage in a homosexual act or acts, unless there is a further determination that:

E1.2.8.2.1.1. Such acts are a departure from the applicant's usual and customary behavior;

E1.2.8.2.1.2. Such acts, under all the circumstances, are unlikely to recur;

E1.2.8.2.1.3. Such acts were not accomplished by use of force, coercion, or intimidation, and;

E1.2.8.2.1.4. The applicant does not have a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts.

Such a determination will be made in the course of the normal accession process. A homosexual act means:

E1.2.8.2.1.4.1. Any bodily contact, actively undertaken or passively permitted, between members of the same sex for the purpose of satisfying sexual desires, and

E1.2.8.2.1.4.2. Any bodily contact that a reasonable person would understand to demonstrate a propensity or intent to engage in an act described in subparagraph E1.2.8.2.1.4.1., above.

E1.2.8.2.2. An applicant shall be rejected for entry if he or she makes a statement that he or she is a homosexual or bisexual, or words to that effect, unless there is a further determination that the applicant has demonstrated that he or she is not a person who engages in, attempts to engage in, has a propensity to engage in, or intends to engage in homosexual acts. Such a determination will be made in the course of the normal accession process.

E1.2.8.2.3. An applicant shall be rejected for entry if, in the course of the accession process, evidence is received demonstrating that an applicant has married or attempted to marry a person known to be of the same biological sex (as evidenced by the external anatomy of the persons involved).

E1.2.8.3. *Applicants will be informed of separation policy (Section 654 of 10 U.S.C. (reference (a))). Failure to receive such information shall not constitute a defense in any administrative or disciplinary proceeding.*

E1.2.8.4. *Nothing in these procedures requires rejection for* entry into the Armed Forces when the relevant Military Service Command authority determines:

E1.2.8.4.1. That an applicant or inductee made a statement, engaged in acts, or married or attempted to marry a person of the same sex for the purpose of avoiding military service; and

E1.2.8.4.2. Rejection of the applicant or inductee would not be in the best interest of the Armed Forces.