

U. S. S E N A T O R

David Vitter



Frequently Asked Questions About Service Academy Nominations U.S. Senator David Vitter

1) What is a nomination?

In order for a non-military candidate to be considered for an appointment to a Service Academy, you must have a nomination from an authorized nominating source. Title 10, U.S. Code, establishes two nomination categories. The first, usually referred to as a “congressional nomination,” includes the nomination of the Vice President and Members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives. The second, referred to as “service-connected” or “military affiliated” nominations, includes the selections of the President and nominations of the appropriate service (i.e. Secretary of the Army for nominations to the U.S. Military Academy).

2) What are the basic eligibility requirements?

Each applicant for a nomination must meet the following eligibility requirements as of July 1st of the year of admission to an academy:

- Citizenship: US citizenship, or having obtained it by graduation
- Residency: Louisiana
- Congressional nomination: United States Air Force Academy, United States Naval Academy, United States Merchant Marine Academy and United States Military Academy
- Age: by July 1 of entering year, at least 17, but not older than 23
- Marital Status or Dependency: unmarried, not pregnant, no legal obligation to support children
- Academic: Must complete SAT-1 or ACT examinations. You must be in your senior year of high school or older to complete a Congressional Nomination Application.
- Must pass academy physical requirements and medical examination
- Must be of strong moral character

3) What if I cannot complete an application online?

In the event of extenuating circumstances and you are unable to fill out an application online, the office is willing to work with you and provide you a hard copy of the application.

4) How do I receive Senator Vitter’s Academy Nomination Application?

The Academy Nomination Application is an on-line application that will be made available to candidates in the fall of their senior year of high school. You should express your interest in applying for a nomination through Senator Vitter’s website at www.vitter.senate.gov. You should continue to monitor the website for announcements regarding the availability of the on-line module during the

latter part of the summer. If you are unable to complete the packet on-line, you may request that a hardcopy be sent to you.

5) When do I begin the process of applying for a nomination?

The Senator can only nominate students who are going to be at least 17 years old by July 1 of the year entering an Academy and no older than 23. However, we recommend that students begin familiarizing themselves with the various academies and their respective requirements early in their high school years.

6) What must be included in my nomination file?

A complete nomination file consists of the following items: Please do not send copies of certificates or commendations as only the required documents will be considered:

- 1) Online Application Form
- 2) Extra-Curricular Activities
- 3) Nomination Questionnaire (Essay)
- 4) Letters of Recommendation (minimum of three, maximum of five)
- 5) SAT or ACT scores
- 6) Official Transcripts
- 7) A current headshot photo of yourself (a recent school photo is suggested)

7) What is the deadline for completing a nomination file?

The deadline for submitting the completed application or returning materials to the Academy Coordinator will be announced in the fall but is normally in early November of your senior year. Complete Applications MUST be submitted by the deadline in order to be considered for a nomination.

8) What happens after I have completed my nomination file?

Qualified applicants who meet the basic eligibility requirements and complete a nomination file by the deadline will be invited to meet with Senator Vitter's Service Academy Nomination Board. The interview is a mandatory component of the nomination process.

9) Why does Senator Vitter use a nominating board?

This board evaluates applicants and recommends candidates for nomination. This well-qualified, non-partisan board will ensure a fair and impartial process. Board members are graduates of West Point, Annapolis, Merchant Marine, or the Air Force Academy.

10) What criteria does the board use in selecting candidates?

The selection of Senator Vitter's nominees are made competitively on the basis of a composite of academic factors and leadership potential, extra-curricular activities, physical fitness, character, and recommendations. The following criteria are used in this process:

- School records, class rank, and grade point average.
- Extra-curricular activities.
- College Board scores. Normally, a competitive candidate will have SAT scores above 500 on verbal and 550 on math, or ACT scores above 25 on English and 28 on math. Only scores received prior to the interview can be considered for your application. Please contact the Admissions Office of the respective academies for their requirements.
- Each nominee should stand in the upper fifth of his or her class. The higher one's College Board scores and the higher one's class standing, the greater the chance for a nomination, assuming qualifications in the remaining areas of consideration are equal.
- Motivation. One of the most important considerations in the selection of a nominee is motivation: the candidate's personal desire to attend an academy. It is also the most difficult to measure. One way to measure motivation is to observe the diligence by which the candidate completes his or her file. Students should demonstrate responsibility and not rely on parents or

others to contact the Senator's office for clarification or questions about the overall process. For this reason, **Senator Vitter will consider no candidate whose file is received after the established deadline.**

- Recommendations and References.
- Interview. No one will be nominated without completing an interview with Senator Vitter's Service Academy Review Board. These interviews will be conducted in late November or early December, and the Review Board will use these interviews in their assessments and recommendations to Senator Vitter.

11) What is Senator Vitter's "method of nomination?"

The preferred method of nomination is the competitive nomination. This process allows Senator Vitter to nominate up to 10 qualified candidates for each available opening. The academy itself will make the final selection.

12) How do I open an admissions file with the academies?

All applicants must directly contact the academies they are interested in attending to open an admissions file. Please refer to the Service Academy Contact Information listed below for further information. You will not be considered for a nomination if you do not have an open application with the academy you wish to attend.

13) How many academies are there?

There are five:

Three reside within the Department of Defense:

- The U.S. Military Academy at West Point
- The U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis
- The U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs

Two reside within the Department of Transportation:

- The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point
- The U.S. Coast Guard Academy at New London

14) Are the requirements the same for all of the service academies?

No. Although many of the qualifications are similar, each academy operates under its own admissions guidelines. Refer to the Service Academy Contact Information for the academy of your choice and contact them directly for an academy catalog. Each academy will outline its particular admissions qualifications. You may also discuss this matter with the member(s) of the Service Academy Board who represents your academy choice(s). Senator Vitter's nominating board does not represent the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. It is not necessary to seek a nomination to the Coast Guard Academy. U.S.C.G.A. accepts candidates based on their own testing criteria. For this reason, Senator Vitter does not interview or issue nominations for the Coast Guard Academy.

15) Can family members submit letters of recommendation?

There is a limit of five letters of recommendation, with a required minimum of three. Typical recommendations are from those listed below. Recommendations from family members are generally discouraged, but will be accepted in exceptional circumstances:

- Teachers
- Counselors
- Employer
- Coaches
- Clergy

Scout Leaders

The list above is an example of those individuals who are qualified to submit recommendations on your behalf. Please call Senator Vitter's office if you have any questions regarding this particular requirement.

16) Should letters of recommendation or other items be sent separately to Senator Vitter's office?

No. It is vitally important that you read and understand all instructions provided to you when you begin your online Academy Nomination Application. While there may be times that a particular document, such as a sealed high school transcript, may be required to be sent directly to the Metairie office, all other required items are to be uploaded to your online application. Materials that are mailed to the office WILL be returned to you. This includes letters of recommendations that may be sent by the letter's author. The Senator's office is not responsible for ensuring that documents are included in your file. When asking people to provide a letter of recommendation for you, please make sure they understand that the letter is to be given directly to you for submission to your online application. These letters should NOT be sealed. If your school has a policy of only issuing sealed letters, you should notify the Academy Nomination Coordinator in advance for permission to mail these to the office. Many candidates choose to have their ACT and SAT scores sent directly to the office and it is the Senator's policy to accept these on your behalf. Again, other materials, such as letters of recommendation that are sent directly to the Senator's office WILL be returned to you. Please do not provide any additional materials not specified on the application, such as news clippings or copies of awards, as these will not be considered. This policy maintains a spirit of fairness for all candidates.

17) When will I receive my nomination?

Nominations must be delivered to the academies by January 31. You will be notified some time thereafter.

18) Will I automatically be selected by the academy after I receive a nomination?

No. You will be placed among a select group of nominees, and the academy of your choice will make the final decision. If selected, you will receive a letter of appointment directly from the academy.

19) What if I choose more than one academy? Will I be limited to a single nomination?

No. You can be nominated to multiple academies depending on how well you compete among this year's pool of candidates. It is also possible to win multiple appointments.

20) When will I know if I have been offered an appointment by an academy?

Some Academies will begin to notify candidates of their admissions as early as January. All offers of appointment are generally sent out by May.

Please do not hesitate to contact Senator Vitter's office with additional questions.

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Service Academy Contact Information

United States Military Academy (USMA)
Director of Admissions
United States Military Academy
606 Thayer Road
West Point, NY 10996-9902
Director of Admissions (845) 938-4041
Toll Free Number (800) 822-2769
Website: <http://www.usma.edu>

United States Naval Academy (USNA)
Candidate Guidance Office
United States Naval Academy
117 Decatur Rd.
Annapolis, MD 21402-5018
Candidate Guidance Office (410) 293-4361
Toll Free Number (800) 638-9156
Website: <http://www.usna.edu>

United States Air Force Academy (USAFA)
USAFA/RRS
2304 Cadet Drive, Suite 200
USAF Academy, Colorado 80840-5025
Toll Free Number (800) 443-9266
Website: <http://www.usafa.af.mil>

United States Merchant Marine Academy
(USMMA)
Director of Admissions
U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
Kings Point, New York 11024-1699
Toll Free Number (800) 732-6267
Website: <http://www.usmma.edu>

United States Coast Guard Academy (USCGA)
Director of Admissions
15 Mohegan Ave
New London, CT 06320-4195
Toll Free Number (800) 883-USCG
Website: <http://www.cga.edu/>

*It is not necessary to seek a nomination to attend the Coast Guard Academy. U.S.C.G.A. accepts candidates based on their own testing criteria.