



# Officer Application Guide



## I. USING THE OFFICER APPLICATION GUIDE

The Officer Application Guide (OAG) is designed to provide specific information on the application process for officer program applicants. This guide is crafted to reinforce, **not replace or supersede**, policy related to program eligibility requirements. The guide includes a repertoire of application best practices gathered from the experience of Coast Guard Recruiting Command (CG RC) officer program coordinators, recruiters, and Coast Guard ESOs.

The application guide is intended to provide the tools, resources, and references necessary for an officer applicant to cultivate the best application package possible. CG RC Officer Programs are listed below:

### Coast Guard Active Duty Programs

- Officer Candidate School (Temporary and Reserve Commission)
- Eight Direct Commission Officer (DCO) programs, including:
  - Direct Commission Aviator (DCA)
  - Direct Commission Cyber Officer (DCCO)
  - Direct Commission Engineer (DCE)
  - Direct Commission Health Service Officer (DCHSO)
  - Direct Commission Intelligence Officer (DCIO)
  - Direct Commission Lawyer (DCL)
  - Direct Commission Physician Assistant (DCPA)
  - Direct Commission Selected School (DCSS)
  - Maritime Academy Graduate Program (MARGRAD)
  - Prior Trained Military Officer (PTMO)

### Coast Guard Reserve Programs


- Selected Reserve Direct Commission (SRDC)
- Direct Commission Lawyer Selected Reserve (DCL-SELRES)
- Direct Commission Physician Assistant Selected Reserve (DCPA-SELRES)

### Coast Guard Scholarship Programs

- College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative – Scholarship (CSPI-Scholarship)
- College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative – Student Loan Repayment Program (CSPI-SLRP)
- Wilks Flight Initiative (guaranteed flight school program) (WiFi)



The first part of the application guide is written directly to the applicant working to complete an officer application. Specific notes to the applicant, recruiter, Recruiter in Charge (RIC), and Education Service Officers (ESOs) are included and noted with the CG RC logo.

 Best practices are noted with the Coast Guard racing stripe. The application process is discussed first, followed by the selection and post-selection processes.

## II. REFERENCES

### **Manuals and Instructions:**

Coast Guard Recruiting Command (CG RC) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)  
Coast Guard Recruiting Manual, COMDTINST M1100.2 (series)  
Officer Accessions, Evaluations and Promotions Manual, COMDTINST M1000.3 (series)  
College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI) COMDTINST 1100.1 (series)  
Coast Guard Weight and Body Fat Standards Program Manual, COMDTINST M1020.8 (series)  
The Coast Guard Correspondence Manual, COMDTINST M5216.4 (series)  
Reserve Policy Manual, COMDTINST M1001.28 (series)  
Coast Guard Medical Manual, COMDTINST M6000.1 (series)

### **Note on types of Coast Guard commissions:**

Temporary Regular: Commission granted for active duty Coast Guard applicants that are an E-5 or above with four or more years of active duty service, two of which must be in the Coast Guard. An officer with a Temporary Regular commission may rescind their commission at the end of their obligated service to either get out of the military or revert back to the enlisted/warrant rank they were prior to commissioning.

Reserve: All DCO and OCS applicants that do not meet the Temporary Regular requirements receive a Reserve commission. This means they will be hired into the Coast Guard Reserve on a 3-year Extended Active Duty contract. SRDC, DCL-SELRES, and DCPA-SELRES applicants will receive a Reserve commission and serve in a reserve capacity.

### **Officer Accession Training Guides:** (Available for selected officer candidates)

Officer Candidate School Pre-Reporting Guide -

<https://www.forcecom.uscg.mil/Portals/3/Documents/LDC/Reporting%20Guides/OCS%20Pre-Reporting%20Guide.pdf?ver=2018-06-09-080012-993>

[OCS Pre-Reporting Guide.pdf \(uscg.mil\)](#)

Direct Commissioning Officer Course Pre-Reporting Guide –

[https://www.forcecom.uscg.mil/Portals/3/Documents/LDC/Reporting%20Guides/DCO%20Pre-Reporting%20Guide%20APR\\_2019.pdf?ver=2019-04-22-092954-580](https://www.forcecom.uscg.mil/Portals/3/Documents/LDC/Reporting%20Guides/DCO%20Pre-Reporting%20Guide%20APR_2019.pdf?ver=2019-04-22-092954-580)

### III. SUMMARY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Step One – Plan Your Path: Learn about the Coast Guard and the Active Duty and Reserve officer programs available at [www.GoCoastGuard.com](http://www.GoCoastGuard.com). Using the Active Duty and Reserve Careers sections of this web page, determine your program(s) of interest and compliance with eligibility criteria.

Step Two – Determine Application Deadline: Contact your recruiter for the deadlines associated with the application programs of interest. It takes several months to complete all the steps in the application process. Applicants must connect with their recruiting office **at least** three months in advance of the application deadline to get started.

Step Three – Contact the Recruiter: All applicants must work with their local Recruiting Office, regardless of whether the applicant is a current Coast Guard member, a civilian, or a member of another branch of the Armed Forces. The closest Recruiting Office can be found on the Coast Guard Recruiting website at: <http://www.gocoastguard.com/about-us/find-recruiter>.

Step Four – Recruiter Screening: The recruiter will conduct a screening to ensure you are eligible. The screening process will validate that you meet the specific set of criteria (academic, financial, character, dependency, etc.) for the relevant program.

Step Five – Complete the Application Package: Obtain from your recruiter and complete a CGRC-1131 Officer Program Application and the checklist associated with your program of interest. Complete the application form and assemble the required and optional documents that will be a part of your final application package. *Remember, you own your application, and it is YOUR responsibility to ensure it is completed.* This step is discussed in detail in Section IV.

Step Six – Submit Application Package: submit your application and supporting documents to your recruiter by the Application Deadline.

Step Seven – Medical/Physical Screening: Meeting accession height and weight standards and passing a commissioning physical are required as part of the eligibility screening process. Your recruiter will assist with coordinating the physical exam. If you are currently serving in the military, your physical must be completed with a military treatment facility (MTF). All civilian applicants will receive their physical through the local Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS).

Step Eight – Interview: Once your application package is complete, and your recruiter has ascertained program eligibility, the recruiter will schedule you for an interview with three Coast Guard officers who will provide a recommendation on your potential to become a Coast Guard officer. Recruiters coordinate interview boards with local unit commands.


Step Nine – RO Review: Your recruiter will conduct a final review of your application for completeness, incorporate the results of the interview, and electronically submit the application to CG RC.

#### IV. COMPLETING THE OFFICER APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION DETAILS

The Coast Guard is unique among the armed services in that we entrust officer recruiting to our enlisted recruiting workforce. Recruiters, therefore, are exhorted to consider the development of an officer package with an applicant as an unparalleled opportunity to have a profound and lasting impact on a potential future member of the officer corps and future leadership of the Coast Guard. Although applicants are responsible for ensuring the quality and completeness of their application package, recruiters and RICs guide and assist eligible applicants throughout the process to ensure a superior package and well-prepared applicant.


As the applicant, your personal level of responsibility in the process cannot be over-stated. Officers in the Coast Guard are expected to take initiative, conduct research, identify courses of action, implement solutions, and achieve positive results. The expectations placed on you as the applicant during the application process are much the same, to: invest wholly in this process, research and increase your personal understanding of the Coast Guard, get feedback, fulfill all tasks required to the best of your ability, **be timely, and meet deadlines.**

**The components of the Application Package:** Obtain and complete a CGRC-1131 Officer Program Application, and the checklist associated with your program of interest. Complete the application form and assemble the required and optional documents that will be a part of your final application package.

 *Remember, you own your application, and it is YOUR responsibility to ensure it is completed. Typically, this takes dedicated effort over several months.*

- A. **General:** The application should be a culmination of the applicant's years of education, experience, and activities. Consider the separate pieces and required documents as part of a unified whole that fully illuminates the spectrum of who you are, your achievements, potential, personal ethos, and character. The time and care you invest will be apparent to the recruiter, your Interview Board, CG RC, and to those who ultimately consider you for a commissioning opportunity when the selection panel convenes.

The panel documents required in the application are listed in your program-specific checklist provided by your recruiter. Advice on best practices to follow to ensure the highest quality application possible is included to assist you in the development of these documents.

 **Please do not use card stock or heavy paper for application documents.** Use electronic submission (pdf) or standard 8" x 11" white paper **only.**


- B. **Common Package Components for Panel (each explained in more detail below):**

- Program Specific Checklist
- Officer Program Application (CGRC-1131)
- Interview Form (CG-5527, CG-5527A, or CG-5527L)

- Resume
  - Personal Narrative
  - Command Endorsement (Coast Guard members only)
  - Letters of Recommendation
  - Academic Transcript(s)
  - Diploma(s) or Letter from Degree Granting Institution
  - Test Scores (Not required for all programs)
  - Enlisted Evaluation Summary, Officer Evaluation Reports, FITREPS, etc. (military only)
  - Personal Awards
1. **Program Specific Checklist:** Every item on the checklist should be initialed as completed/included, or noted as not applicable (N/A). Checklists are written for two categories of applicants: 1) Civilian or Other Military Service; and, 2) current Coast Guard Members serving on active duty or in the Selected Reserve. Current Coast Guard Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) members apply utilizing the Civilian or Other Military Service Checklist. CG RC recognizes that there are civilian or other military service applicants who simultaneously seek and are accepted for enlistment into the Coast Guard. Officer applicants who enlist and graduate basic training *before* the posted application deadline must utilize the Coast Guard Member Checklist. Officer applicants who enlist and graduate basic training *after* the posted application deadline must utilize the Civilian or Other Military Service Checklist.
  2. **Officer Program Application – CGRC-1131:** Complete ALL blanks on page 1 and 2 of the application. If a section does not apply, enter “N/A.” College GPAs should be entered with exactly two digits after the decimal. For example, a 3.4, a 3.402, and a 3.406 GPA would all be recorded as 3.40.
  3. **Interview Form:** The results of the Interview Board are recorded on the CG-5527, CG-5527L (for DCL applicants), or CG-5527A (for DCA applicants). This is the only form you will not be required to produce, and the only form you are not allowed to view. It will contain the results of an in-person interview that the recruiter will arrange with three Coast Guard officers. Additional information on the interview board is contained in Section V.
  4. **Resume:** The resume can be considered a roadmap to the application; you should use it to highlight items the selection panel can expect to see documented in greater detail throughout your application. You should take care, however, to ensure that this document does not become overly redundant to the narrative and vice versa. As you craft your resume, consider the professional, academic, and extracurricular experiences that have enhanced your leadership abilities. Consider the training and other skills that you have developed that make you a compelling choice for selection. In addition to professional experience, volunteer work and internships in which you have participated make a strong statement about who you are, your character, and your capabilities. A well-constructed resume is a compelling tool to **concisely** show

the **impact** you have had. The resume is also a good place to include a list of awards and recognitions you have received as you are limited to five actual copies of awards as part of your package.

**Resume Format:** The resume should be a professional looking document, no more than two pages, utilizing a standard 12-point font. Use of bullets or a numbering system is your choice.

 *A Coast Guard member's Employee Summary Sheet (ESS), PDR, and Member Information Report are not authorized items for inclusion in the application. The only way the panel will know of significant awards, qualifications, and certifications is if they are documented in the member's resume, personal narrative, or added in the awards section of the application.*

#### Suggested Components of your Resume:

##### Work & Professional Experience

- Include primary titles of the positions you have had. Highlight (bullets are helpful) key tasks and responsibilities associated with each position/job listed in your work experience.
- Represent what you have done quantitatively, e.g., “Supervised sales team of 30 people covering 4 States,” or “Responsible for \$50,000 inventory.”
- Show the **impact** of what you have done in quick, concise bullets or sub-bullets, e.g., “Reduced Company overhead by 5%”, “Increased sales by 90%, or “Led human resources training for 50 company personnel, reduced internal complaints by 5 per year.” Collateral and secondary duties and the impact of those duties should also be covered. Internships are a valuable aspect of professional experience, and are important to capture in this document.

Leadership - Many applicants naturally capture leadership roles in their work and professional experience. College students may find that leadership is best captured in a stand-alone section that coincides with extracurricular activities.

- Include roles and dates: “Battalion Commander for Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, 2012- 2014”, “Genesis Club Secretary, 2015- 2019”, etc.
- Quantify the experience: “Supervised 3 companies of 100 cadets each, responsible for execution of unit operations & exercises, and training/fitness plan.” or “Organized club activities, oversaw member enrollment and yearly budget, facilitated 15% increase in membership during tenure.”

Volunteerism - Volunteer work is evidence of leadership and effort that the applicant has pursued that is **not required** of them, and proof of their investment in their community and others.



- List organizations in which you participated.
- Include roles, e.g., “Driver for Meals on Wheels of San Francisco” or “Led construction team for Habitat for Humanity, Bangor, ME.”
- Include dates, e.g., Marine Corps Marathon Volunteer, 2015-2017.
- Include quantitative information: Provide an estimate of the number of hours contributed if possible, i.e., “20 hours/month, total 100 hours.” Demonstrate the impact: “Mentored 30 children ages 7-9 in Math and Science.”

Academics and Training - Include a listing of academic pursuits (degrees, courses beyond degrees, etc.) and relevant training that you have pursued.

Licenses/Certifications - It is recommended to include list of licenses or certifications, e.g., EMT, diver, counselor, certified electrician, sequel server, etc. For Coast Guard members, it is especially impactful if the achieved certifications or qualifications are out of rating; e.g., qualified as a Boarding Officer or Instructor as a Storekeeper.

Languages, Training, and Other Skills - List languages that you are proficient in, and other skills or training that are not germane to all applicants, e.g., proficient in CAD, trained in Six Sigma, etc.

5. **Personal Narrative:** This is your single, greatest opportunity to communicate directly to the officers who will determine whether or not to select you for commissioning. The narrative is **your** story told in **your** voice with **your** words. This is your opportunity to author a concise, deliberate, and impactful message articulating **why you want to be an officer in the Coast Guard**, how your character, experience, and capabilities align with Service needs, what you hope to accomplish through your officer experience, and what you have overcome to become the person you are. The selection panel knows that applicants try to deliver “what they think we want to hear”; therefore, you should try to set yourself apart from a party line. Communicate your underlying motivation and do your absolute best to be authentic and sincere.

Format:

**Non-Coast Guard applicants:** The narrative is limited to two pages, single-spaced, standard 12-point font (such as Times New Roman).


**Coast Guard applicants:** The narrative should be in Coast Guard standard memorandum format, addressed to “Panel President, Officer Selection Panel” through their commanding officer, and is limited to two single-spaced pages.

Contents Overview: Here are some ideas to keep in mind as you craft your narrative (this is not in a recommended order of appearance):

- Address **why** you want to be a Coast Guard officer.
- Detail what you can uniquely contribute to the Coast Guard and what truly sets you apart from others.



- Think about how you impact people and how they have impacted you.
- What have you done for others? How have you been a servant leader? Brainstorming on this topic may inspire you to recount a story that illustrates your ability to be a mentor to others.
- Concentrate on a few most valued strengths. This will ensure your essay is more focused. Resist the temptation to simply list your strengths.
- What is an example or situation where your strengths have had a tremendous impact on a project, a team, a mission?
- Share an example of something that you have done in your job (or your assignment, if you are a Coast Guard member) that was above and beyond what was expected or required of you, and what the **impact** was on your co-workers, unit, or organization.
- Show readers what motivates you and what inspires you.
- Show readers why you want to be an officer in the Coast Guard; this is especially critical for applicants from other military services to address.
- Talk about your future in the Coast Guard in terms of goals and traits that will be actualized as an officer.
- Discuss challenges you have experienced, how you overcame them, what you learned, and how you changed. Oftentimes this becomes the most compelling part of your narrative, and shows your ability to persevere.
- Think: what have I overcome that may illustrate my character or capabilities?
- Ask yourself: What mistakes have I made that I have learned from, and that have made me stronger in some way?

 *Key thought: With the above topics, a best practice is to “show, don’t tell.” Use experiences and examples to reinforce your points, rather than listing events and accomplishments.*

**Editing: Simple errors ruin credibility.** It is essential to edit this document! You must evaluate the spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence organization, and structure of your narrative. An essential element to being an officer is the ability to communicate through writing. If you don’t take the time to edit your narrative, and the selection panel finds errors, it is likely that the panel’s opinion of you will be affected. Seek assistance from others in checking the document for errors and logical flow.



*Recruiters can also review the narrative, but it is not their job to be an editor.*

**Authentication:** You must sign your narrative. It is **your** official communication to the selection panel. Your signature lends a layer of authenticity to the words and distinguishes a personal narrative from a plain essay.

6. **Command Endorsement** (Coast Guard members only): Applicants currently in the Coast Guard (except for CSPI students applying for WiFi) who are applying to officer programs are required to receive their **current** commanding officer’s

endorsement. Coast Guard applicants in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) apply as civilians, and do not receive a CO's endorsement.

The Commanding Officer's endorsement is valid only for a specific officer program panel season and must be renewed for each subsequent season or if the CO is no longer your current commanding officer.

Format: The CO's endorsement should be consistent with the "new-page endorsement" as described in the Coast Guard Correspondence Manual, COMDTINST M5216.4 (series), and substantiate as the first endorsement to your Coast Guard memorandum to CG RC (your narrative). **There is a 2-page limit on the endorsement.**

Who: Your **current** commanding officer, i.e., the first commissioned commanding officer in the chain of command at your permanent unit, shall sign the endorsement. For the purposes of a valid CO's endorsement, the officer who is your CO **as of the application deadline** will be considered the **current** commanding officer. Endorsements from commissioned officers with delegated authority, for example as commanding officer of military or enlisted personnel, do not satisfy this provision.

Example: For an applicant assigned to a small boat station with an E-8 officer in charge, the first commissioned commanding officer in the chain of command is typically the Sector Commander. Therefore, the Sector Commander shall sign the endorsement. A Coast Guard Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) having command of a unit is a commissioned officer (for example, the CO of a 175' cutter) and is considered sufficient for CO endorsement purposes.

Contents: The CO's endorsement must include the following at a minimum:

- An evaluation of the applicant's potential value to the Coast Guard as a commissioned officer.
- Any outstanding professional or other qualifications the applicant may possess.
- An evaluation of the applicant compared to others the commanding officer has personally known who have completed the specific officer program.
- A statement certifying that the command conducted a review of the member's Personnel Data Record and that the applicant meets the character standards for eligibility in Coast Guard Recruiting Manual, COMDTINST M1100.2 (series).
- A statement about the applicant's ability and willingness to meet their financial obligations.

 **Best Practices:**

- *Applicants who are members of units with an Officer in Charge (OIC) may have only had limited contact with their Commanding Officer, the Sector Commander. As a result, a recommendation is to have the unit OIC (and the member's chain of*

command, e.g., direct supervisors, LPO, EO, XPO, etc.) prepare and draft the CO's recommendation for the Commanding Officer's review and signature. In this way, the endorsement content is often more compelling and specific to the applicant.

- Many COs also meet with the applicant to discuss their goals, intentions, and expectations for becoming an officer. This contact is helpful in formulating a compelling endorsement, especially for units wherein the personnel are geographically dispersed.
- Coast Guard members should always coordinate with their chain of command for the CO's endorsement. In some locations, ESOs assist with the routing of this document.
- It is very useful for the CO to provide a qualified statement on the weight of their endorsement, if earned, e.g., "PO Taylor has earned my highest recommendation for the Direct Commission Engineer Program."


7. **Letters of Recommendation:** Letters of recommendation are critical as they provide a solid assessment of skills, character traits, and capabilities from others inside and outside of the Coast Guard. Letters should:


- Reinforce & validate positive traits and character
- Provide unique insight into leadership skills, how you influence others and are perceived by others
- Validate professional experience and capabilities
- Be as specific as possible. Examples of work, effort, and impact are most worthwhile.
- Be signed from a single author (required)

**Non-Coast Guard applicants:** May submit a maximum of three letters of recommendation of no more than two pages each.


**Coast Guard applicants:** Coast Guard members (active duty and SELRES) can submit a maximum of two letters of no more than two pages each in addition to the required command endorsement.

Selection of Writers: The most impactful writers are ones who have supervised you and have been personally accountable for your work. Letters of recommendation from family members should be avoided.

 *Does rank matter? Do not sacrifice authenticity for rank. For example, if you are seeking a letter of recommendation from a Congressman or Congresswoman but have never actually worked for them or in their office, then the letter lacks actual personal knowledge and accountability, and is much less worthwhile than a letter from a current or past supervisor.*

 *Diversify. There are no specific requirements as to who may write your letter of recommendations regardless if the author is civilian or military. You should select individuals who will write letters that illuminate different aspects of your capabilities and potential. Choosing two professors, for example, may result in a one-dimensional assessment that adds little value to the overall application. Selecting a current supervisor, a field-related past supervisor, and a project manager from a volunteer activity would provide a robust spectrum of information about you.*

Recency: Letters are more compelling when written recently. For example, even for past supervisors, a recent date implies that you remain in touch and the supervisor remains invested in you.

 *What to tell writers: It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the letter writers understand for what they are recommending the applicant. The applicants should educate them about the Coast Guard (missions, jobs, ethos, etc.), about Coast Guard officers, the specific program to which they are applying, and the applicant's goals and ambitions within the Service. It is obvious when applicants provide little information to the individuals who write their letters of recommendation; details on the Coast Guard and the panel for which the applicant has applied are often misstated. Again, this is something that may affect credibility with the selection panel.*

Editing Letters: Consider yourself the editor for your letters of recommendation. If the grammar or spelling is incorrect, ask your recommender to rewrite the appropriate section; they will appreciate your diligence!

Format: There is no prescribed format for letters of recommendation. However, you should ensure that your letters of recommendation are signed, dated, and include contact information for the author. Following this guidance provides assurance to your recruiter, interview board members, CG RC, and members of the selection panel(s) that the individuals who provided their personal recommendation are more than happy to communicate further and continue to risk their reputation on your behalf.

8. **Academic Transcript(s)**: You are required to submit **ALL** official transcripts from every post-high school educational institution you attended. This includes transcripts that substantiate any transfer credits that may have been awarded. Transcripts are critical as they provide verification of the education experience. These transcripts must be mailed directly from the registrar's office to the recruiting office. Online transcripts (e-transcripts) are also acceptable if they are conveyed in a secure manner that ensures they are considered "official" by your educational institution.
9. **Diploma(s)**: You are not expected to provide your original degree (associate degree or higher) for inclusion in the application package. However, you must bring the original degree to your recruiter, and have them verify its existence. The recruiter will create a "certified true" copy of that degree for inclusion in the application, and return

the original to you. You must ensure that you provide **all** of the degrees that you have earned as **all** must be included in your package.

**Letter from Degree-Granting Institution:** If you have not yet completed a degree (or subsequent degree, if applicable), you must submit an official letter from an Academic Advisor or the Registrar's Office of the degree granting institution verifying when the degree will be conferred, the major, cumulative GPA, and cumulative credit hours. The letter/memo must come from the institution that will grant the degree that qualifies you for the program for which you are applying.

10. **Test Scores:** If your program requires a qualifying test score, documentation of those scores must be verified by your recruiter and will be one of the items included in your package for eligibility determination.

Tests: If you need an ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) score, the recruiter will schedule this at the nearest MEPS. Alternate qualifying tests are the ACT or SAT. The ASTB is required for a WiFi application.



*When scores are added together to compute a composite score, the score components must be from tests taken the same day.*

For programs that require test scores, **minimum** qualifying scores are as follows:

ASVAB: 109 GT (General Technical) score: sum of Arithmetic Reasoning (AR) and Verbal (VE) scores, taken after 1 July 2004)

ASVAB: 110 GT (if taken before 1 July 2004)


SAT: 1000 (Combined score Math and Verbal, taken prior to 1 April 1995)

SAT I: 1100 (Combined score Math and Verbal, taken from 1 April 1995 to 31 March 2005)

SAT: 1100 (Combination of Critical Reading and Math, taken after 31 March 2005)


ACT: 23 (Composite)

ASTB: 4 AQR /5 PFAR

 *Coast Guard members may seek to retake their ASVAB through their ESO.*

11. **Personal Awards:** You have a unique opportunity to include copies, pictures, and other two-dimensional proof of awards you have achieved throughout your life, **up to the maximum of five**. Applicants often overlook the value of including awards, and may provide only one or two. Like letters of recommendation, not leveraging all five


award pages is a missed opportunity to present yourself positively to the selection panel.


 *Including a copy of the award write-up for the pertinent award is most impactful; however, if you don't have this, a picture of the medal or trophy may also be worthwhile. Again, think of this as an opportunity to provide further evidence to substantiate your achievements.*

Awards are limited to one award per page, one page per award. A picture of a ribbon bar is not acceptable as it represents multiple awards.

Examples of awards include:

- Official Military awards (letters of appreciation, letters of commendation, achievement medals, etc.)
- Community Service awards
- Athletic awards (avoid high school awards if possible)
- Nomination/selection as a student body council member/president
- Academic awards (avoid high school awards if possible)
- Letters of Appreciation (not recommendations)
- Employee awards, e.g., pictures of trophies for “highest sales in Quarter 4” for a retail employee or realtor substantiate
- Newspaper write up/article for an achievement/service rendered, etc.

 *If a picture does not readily portray what the award is for, applicants can reduce the size of the image and include a brief description of the award on the same page.*

 *If an article or award includes a photo of a person, please cover the photo or portion of the photo with people in it. Any visible person cannot be viewed by the panel.*

Examples of what is NOT an acceptable award include:

- Military Ribbon Bars with more than one award
- Write ups of a personal achievement without actual documented award
- Additional letters of recommendation
- Pictures of objects with your name on them and no context
- Professional performance evaluations
- Pictures of you with an award (please just include the award in the photo)

**12. Enlisted Evaluations/FITREPS/Officer Evaluation Reports (military only):** Your formal evaluations are an important piece to demonstrating performance in the military. Coast Guard members must provide their most up-to-date Enlisted Evaluation Summary (EES), showing all evaluations for their entire career. Service members from other branches must provide all evaluations for the 36 months prior to the panel's convening date.




*Note: Coast Guard member stipulations regarding performance. Coast Guard members are eligible for commissioning unless, during the 36 months prior to the commissioning program's selection panel convening date, they received a mark of unsatisfactory in conduct, have a record of civil arrest, court martial conviction, been awarded non-judicial punishment (NJP), are involved in an alcohol incident, drug misuse, experience indebtedness, or have an entry of derogatory information in their record.*

- 13. Program-Specific Documents:** Many programs have additional special requirements for application contents and documents that are explained in the program information section and applicable checklist. The relevant officer program application checklist will account for the individual program differences.



## V. THE INTERVIEW BOARD

Once your application package is complete and your recruiter has ensured program eligibility, the recruiter will work with local units to schedule you for an interview with Coast Guard officers who will provide a recommendation on your potential to become a Coast Guard officer.

 *Remember: The interview results form is the only document you will not be required to produce, or allowed to see.*

The interview is an official report of your personal contact with Coast Guard officers and provides the means to assess leadership potential, communication skills, and maturity. Reports that provide unbiased, specific information are critical to the selection process.

- A. General: The interview will be documented on the Officer Programs Applicant Interview Form, CG-5527. Aviation-specific interviews will be documented on the CG-5527A, and legal-specific interviews will be documented on the CG-5527L.
- B. Purpose. The purpose of the interview is to assess an applicant's potential to serve as a commissioned officer. The interview examines the applicant's leadership potential, communication skills, performance, and personal and professional qualities through a formal, non-biased, in-person contact. The interview board articulates their assessment of the applicant. The insight the interview board provides to the selection panel is invaluable to the selection process, as the selection panel members will not have any contact with the applicants and must base their decisions entirely on the content of the applications.
- C. Specific Program Representation: At least one board member must be an active duty Coast Guard officer. Interview boards should be composed with applicant and program in mind. When interviewing for OCS, the board should contain, if practical, an OCS graduate; for an IDPL commission, will contain at least one reserve officer; for a direct commission program, will contain a specialist in the same field. A board considering an applicant for the Direct Commission Lawyer program must contain at least one Coast Guard attorney. A board interviewing female or minority applicants should contain, if practical, a female or respective minority member. A board considering licensed officers in the Merchant Marine or Maritime Academy graduates should include, if practical, one officer who is a Maritime Academy graduate or one with merchant marine safety experience.
- D. Period of Validity: Interviews are valid for two years from the date the interview was conducted.
- E. "Not Recommended" by Interview Board: If you are "not recommended" by a Coast Guard interview board, you are not eligible for further consideration by that selection panel. You may re-interview during the next selection cycle if you remain otherwise eligible. If you are not recommended by two interview boards, you will be permanently disqualified and ineligible to reapply.

- F. Interview Board Responsibility/Purpose: The purpose of the interview board is not to examine or evaluate the applicant's eligibility for commissioning. The interview is concerned with the applicant's potential to be a successful commissioned officer in the Coast Guard, in context of the specialty needs of the program through which they are competing. The senior board member is responsible for ensuring the members of the board are aware of their responsibilities and have reviewed the applicable policies of the interview board process.
- G. Recruiter Responsibility: It is the recruiter's responsibility to ensure that the applicant meets commissioning eligibility standards prior to convening the interview board.
- H. Timing: The interview will be scheduled once the recruiter has confirmed your eligibility and your application is finished.
- I. Interview Completion: The interview shall occur prior to the CG RC application deadline. However, with the understanding that the interview requires extensive coordination that balances schedules of three officer board members, recruiters, board coordinators, and the applicant, interviews may occur after the recruiting office deadline on a case by case basis.

Note: If the interview write-up will not be complete by the CG RC application deadline, the recruiter must submit the names and contact information of the panel members (email, telephone number, and unit) and the date the panel was completed on an Interview Status Sheet in lieu of the interview report by the deadline. This must be included with the package submission.

- J. Preparation: Proper preparation is vital to an effective interview for both the board members and the applicant.
- Board Members:
    - Must review the guidance provided in Articles 1.B.8. of Officer Accessions, Evaluations, and Promotions, COMDTINST M1000.3 (series).
    - Must familiarize themselves with the applicant's background before the interview convenes.
    - Senior Board Member: Should ensure all members understand their duties, responsibilities, and objectives to provide a fair evaluation of the applicant's potential to be a Coast Guard officer based on their interaction with that applicant.
- K. Application Documents Presented to the Interview Board: The documents available before and during the interview should be limited to the resume, narrative, letters of recommendation (including CO's endorsement), transcripts, degrees, awards, evaluations, and other specific documents required for the specialized programs. Commissioning physical results, waivers, and accession documents and forms will not be reviewed or seen by the interview board.

L. Policy: Officers assigned to an interview board must have at least 12 months of Coast Guard service. This may be in an enlisted capacity.

- Warrant Officers are not allowed to be members of interview boards.
- The senior member of any interview board must be a Lieutenant Commander (O-4) or higher.
- An applicant cannot be commissioned at a rank senior to any interview board member. All members must be equal or senior to the grade for which they are considering the applicant. For example, if an applicant is applying to the DCL program, the minimum appointed grade they may receive is O-3/LT; therefore, all interview boards must be O-3/LT or higher to interview the applicant.
- At least one board member must be an active duty Coast Guard officer.

M. Chain of Command: Members of an applicant's direct chain of command shall not sit on an Interview Board for that applicant. Likewise, individuals who have personal or professional knowledge of the applicant, who feel they are unable to remain unbiased due to their knowledge of the applicant, should not sit on the interview board.

N. Conducting the Interview: Guidance for Board Members: Board members shall emulate the core values of the service when performing the interview. All questions should be designed and posed to engender responses that reveal the applicant's traits, abilities, judgment, character, and potential in context of the demands and expectations of Coast Guard officers. Additionally, board members should bear in mind that many applicants have never had any contact with Coast Guard officers, and their interaction may become the applicant's formative impression of "what Coast Guard officers are really like." While the interview is official, board members should seek to establish a climate where the applicant feels that they are part of an inclusive environment.

**General Best Practices for Board Members**: In writing the board report, board members should:

- Provide a **frank** assessment of the applicant.
- Provide a **clear** recommendation for the panel to assess the applicant.
- Not perceive it as their job to "sell" an applicant to the panel, but understand that they must provide thoughtful, substantive comments that support their evaluation and recommendation.
- Not consider it their job to evaluate the eligibility of the applicant; this is the responsibility of the recruiter and CG RC. You are evaluating the applicant's potential to serve as an officer.
- Ensure consistency between assigned marks and comments; high numeric markings should be well supported by ample, complete, and descriptive comments.
- What about all 7s? If you give someone all 7s, the expectation is that their demeanor, achievements, communication ability, and personal qualities impressed the board to the point where they felt, based on their experience, that the applicant was an absolute "must select", for the program. The board must justify why;

associated comments are expected to be robust.

- Comments fashioned on “performance/action results and impact” are encouraged.
- What about “White Space?” The presence of white space does not necessarily reflect the quality of the applicant or the comments. Panel members are directed to focus on the quality of the write up and not how much is written.
- **Requirement:** The applicant shall **never** see the completed CG-5527/5527A/5527L.

O. Disposition of the 5527/5527A/5527L: The report, once complete, shall be returned to the recruiter and/or interview board coordinator in a timely manner.

P. Preparing for and Conducting the Interview: Guidance for Applicants. The interview is often an intimidating experience. Applicants should have a positive attitude! This is a chance for applicants to convey why they want to be a commissioned officer, and what they have to offer the Coast Guard. This is an exciting opportunity! Here are some tips to assist applicants:

- **Relax; but not too much!** It is likely that the interviewers will attempt to put the applicant at ease so they are not as nervous and can have a real conversation. However, applicants should take care to be professional and not relax their demeanor to the point of being too casual.
- **Be Honest.** If an applicant doesn’t understand a question- they should ask for clarity. If they don’t have a great answer, or need a few moments to think about their response- they should just ask for that. The interviewers will appreciate the care and effort.
- **Everybody has weaknesses.** Applicants may be asked to talk about their weaknesses. They should use this as an opportunity to show that they are really capable of understanding their own deficiencies, and the proactive measures that they can take (and already have taken) to improve.
- **Dress like you mean it.** Applicants should wear a suit or business attire or uniform.
- **Be Passionate.** The Coast Guard needs people who are passionate about its missions and people. Applicants must believe in what they are saying and why they are applying for this opportunity.
- **Know the Job You Are Applying For.** It is not expected that applicants have detailed knowledge about the Coast Guard or specifics about career paths. However, it is important to have a basic understanding of the service applicants are applying to and what careers that are available to them.

Q. Disqualification: If an applicant is not recommended by an interview board, the recruiting office shall submit the application to CG RC. CG RC shall formally disqualify the applicant. Once the applicant’s data has been recorded by CG RC for tracking purposes, CG RC will notify the applicant by letter of the disqualification. An applicant may re-interview for the next panel if he/she remains otherwise eligible.

- R. CG-5527 Reports Addressing Multiple Programs: It is acceptable for an interview to be conducted that assesses an applicant for multiple programs, e.g., DCE and OCS, OCS and CSPI. This is a good use of limited resources. However, extra care should be taken to ensure the interview board composition reflects all programs for which the applicant is applying to ensure the accuracy of the assessment.

## VI. AFTER SUBMITTING YOUR PACKAGE TO THE RECRUITER

Your recruiter will conduct a final review of your application for completeness, incorporate the results of the interview, provide comments, and submit the application to the RIC who will also review the package, provide comments, and submit the application to CG RC.

A. Recruiter and RIC Comments: Recruiters often have substantial contact with applicants throughout the process, and have developed additional insight on their motivation and personal attributes that may not be captured elsewhere in the application package. As a result, an optional comments section is provided on the application to ensure recruiters receive the opportunity to provide their impression of the applicant to the selection panel. Selection panels have specifically voiced the value of this insight through their feedback to CG RC. You should keep this in mind, and be especially cognizant of the fact that your recruiter is a direct representative of the Service, and is also a member of your application process.

- Recruiter and RIC comments may include an assessment of the applicant's:
  - Professionalism and attention to detail,
  - Demeanor,
  - Knowledge of the Coast Guard (demonstrated research for those outside the Coast Guard),
  - Willingness to learn, follow directions, seek input, and engage for feedback.
  - The recruiter may provide examples of character or behavior that indicate the recruiter would or would not be honored to serve WITH or FOR you, if selected. Comments may be negative or positive. Comments shall not include information related to the applicant's medical situation or pending waivers.



Recruiters are not required to provide comments. If provided, comments should be specific and relate to the Recruiter's experience with the applicant.



*Multiple Applications: A separate application is needed when you apply to multiple programs. This is due to the fact that each program has specific requirements, and the contents of the application that are reviewed by the selection Panel have distinct nuances.*



*Multiple Applications: An applicant who has applied to multiple programs and has been selected (for one or all of the programs) will be withdrawn from the other programs once they have accepted selection to one program.*

B. Recruiter in Charge Review: The recruiter, followed by the RIC, shall review, approve and sign every officer package prior to submission to CG RC. This review is for completeness, final verification of eligibility, and to ensure the package does not contain damaged documents that should be replaced, or extraneous/irrelevant notes. During the validation, the recruiting staff will also ensure all forms in the package are aligned ready to be read (portrait or landscape as appropriate) and in black and white only.

C. Residual Copy: The recruiter will make a residual file copy to be retained at the recruiting office before forwarding the original application package to CG RC if the applicant is selected as a Primary or Alternate candidate. Applicants should ensure they have a copy. **The CG-5527, Officer Program Interview Form, and the recruiter comments will not be included in the applicant copy.**

D. Submission to CG RC: The recruiting office will scan all the documents in the package and forward the application package to CG RC following the naming convention and file formatting found in the program-specific checklist.

\*\*\*\*Incomplete application packages should not be sent to CG RC\*\*\*\*

**Application Discrepancies:** The CG RC review often reveals discrepancies that require correction. CG RC will communicate any issues or questions that require resolution back to the recruiter, and the recruiter will contact the applicant. Applicants should be prepared to respond promptly to ensure that they have a flawless application for the selection panel.

E. Selection Panel: The selection panel consists of Coast Guard officers who review the packages and make selection determinations. Selection decisions are based on the merits of each applicant and their relative suitability for commissioning in the Coast Guard compared to the requirements for the particular commissioning program for which the applicants are competing.

F. Guidance: Panels are governed by the following:

- A Coast Guard Captain (O-6) as president,
- A precept describing any pertinent service specialty needs that should be considered,
- The prescribed number of vacancies the panel may populate (primary and alternate selection numbers).

**Who:** Each panel consists of a different set of Coast Guard officers who are independent of CG RC (meaning, these individuals are not members of the CG RC staff). The panel members themselves represent a variety of ranks, specialties, and commissioning sources, e.g., OCS, DCO, Academy, SRDC, etc. This results in a holistic evaluation of applicants.

G. Selection Panel Results: Upon conclusion of a panel, the members issue a report itemizing their primary and alternate selections, including the appointed rank/grade if applicable. Appointment ranks made by the selection panel are final and not open for negotiation. Applicants will receive notification from their recruiter regarding selection status: Primary, Alternate, or Non-Select. Typically, notifications will occur within 4 to 6 weeks from the start date of the panel for CSPI, CSPI-SLRP, WiFi, and OCS panels. DCO and SRDC panel notifications are typically 8 to 12 weeks after panel convening date.



- **Primary Selectees:** Primary selectees are given the opportunity to accept or decline the selection.
- **Alternate Selectees:** Alternate selectees are informed they may receive the opportunity for a Coast Guard commission if a primary selectee either does not accept their appointment or becomes ineligible.

H. Officer Training: Selected applicants will attend Coast Guard Officer Candidate School (OCS), Direct Commission Officer School (DCO), or Reserve Officer Candidate Indoctrination (ROCI) within three to nine months of the panel convening date. CG RC will notify selected candidates of their assigned course date. CSPI selected applicants will follow a different schedule depending on their enlistment status and educational situation.

I. Health & Physical Readiness Standards: Applicants selected to OCS, DCO, or ROCI should be prepared to pass the physical fitness standards listed below by program.

**Officer Candidate School Standards:**

The following are the MINIMUM standards for the Physical Fitness Test:

- Cadence Push-ups (Men) 30
- Cadence Push-ups (Women) 20
- Curl-ups (Men/Women) 60
- 1.5 Mile Run (Men) 10:59
- 1.5 Mile Run (Women) 12:49
- 12 Minute Lap Swim (Men 20-29) 18.5 lengths
- 12 Minute Lap Swim (Men 30-39) 17 lengths
- 12 Minute Lap Swim (Women 20-29) 17.5 lengths
- 12 Minute Lap Swim (Women 30-39) 15.5 lengths

You will also be required to complete a 12-minute lap swim and basic swim assessment to gauge your swimming ability. The MINIMUM requirements of both assessments are listed below.

**Basic Swim:**

- Back float - 60 seconds
- Prone float (holding breath) - 10 seconds
- Treading Water (no hands) - 60 seconds
- Elementary backstroke - 10 yards
- Front Crawl - 25 yards
- Unassisted swim (any stroke) - 75 yards
- 1-meter front dive, remain submerged and swim 15 yards underwater without breaking the surface

If you are not a strong swimmer, now is the time to contact your local swimming facility or fitness club to strengthen your abilities. You will be required to complete an arduous survival swim course while at OCS. Again, do not overestimate your abilities.

Failure to meet minimum standards will result in your placement in a remedial physical fitness program or removal from Officer Candidate School. Additionally, failure to achieve one point on any portion of the three part battery will result in immediate removal from Officer Candidate School.

**DCO and ROCI Standards:**

You will be given a physical fitness test at the beginning of the program after successfully completing an initial medical screening. This assessment will gauge your individual physical fitness level and determine your eligibility to continue in the program.

The initial physical fitness test consists of three parts:

- Push-ups (1-minute limit)
- Curl-ups/sit-ups (1-minute limit)
- 1.5 mile run

The minimum standards are required to graduate DCO School. Failure to meet minimum standards may result in your placement in a remedial physical fitness program, developing a personal fitness plan, or removal from school.

**Fitness Test Standards-**

<b>Males</b>	<b>Push- ups</b>	<b>Sit-ups</b>	<b>1.5-Mile Run</b>	<b>12-Minute Swim</b>
Under 30	29	38	12:51	500 YDS
30 to 39	24	35	13:36	450 YDS
40 to 49	18	29	14:29	400 YDS
50 to 59	13	25	15:26	350 YDS
60+	10	22	16:43	300 YDS

<b>Females</b>	<b>Push- ups</b>	<b>Sit-ups</b>	<b>1.5-Mile Run</b>	<b>12-Minute Swim</b>
Under 30	15	32	15:26	400 YDS
30 to 39	11	25	15:57	350 YDS
40 to 49	9	20	16:58	300 YDS
50 to 59	9	16	17:55	250 YDS
60+	9	15	18:44	200 YDS

Note: 12-minute swim is an alternative if the student is unable to run. The swim test is conducted with approval from Coast Guard Academy Medical and OA&T Chief.

## **Swim Proficiency Exam:**

The requirements for the swimming proficiency test are listed below:

- Back float - 60 seconds
- Prone float (holding breath) - 10 seconds
- Treading Water (no hands) - 60 seconds
- Elementary backstroke - 10 yards
- Front Crawl - 25 yards
- Unassisted swim (any stroke) - 75 yards
- 1-meter front dive, remain submerged and swim 15 yards underwater without breaking the surface

If you are not a strong swimmer, now is the time to contact your local swimming facility or fitness club to strengthen your abilities.