

OpJAGAF 2018-4, 28 June 2018, ACCESSIONS

TOPIC

Applicability of accession medical standards to enlisted members selected for the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC).

TEXT OF THE DECISION

This opinion is in response to an inquiry regarding whether accession or retention medical standards should apply to AFROTC cadets who, prior to becoming cadets, are enlisted members. For the reasons set forth below, accession standards apply.

BACKGROUND

Confusion arose regarding which medical standards should apply to AFROTC cadets and members in the Nurse Enlisted Commissioning Program (NECP) due to the seemingly conflicting guidance in DoD and Air Force issuances. AFROTCI 36-2011, *Cadet Operations*,¹ indicates for commissioning purposes, medical examinations are valid for 24 months from the date of examination as annotated on the DD Form 2808, *Report of Medical Examination*,² and Enlisted Commissioning Program cadets must be enlisted within 24 months of the date on their Air Force Form 422, *Physical Profile Serial Report*.³ The AFROTCI also refers to AFI 36-2013, *Officer Training School (OTS) and Enlisted Commissioning Programs (ECPS)*,⁴ for physical requirements for students in this program.⁵ Accession medical standards apply to AFROTC cadets.⁶

The medical community currently applies retention standards, as retention medical standards apply for enlisted members in the AFROTC and NECP programs, treating them as inter-service transfers. Accordingly, you have asked for clarification on the correct medical standards to apply for enlisted members who apply to become AFROTC cadets.

GUIDANCE

DoDI 6130.03, paragraph 4.c. states it is DoD policy to ensure individuals *under consideration* for appointment, enlistment, or induction into the Military Services are medically fit to serve. (*emphasis added*) DoDI 6130.03 also lists the individuals to whom the accession standards would apply. AFI 48-123, *Medical Examinations and Standards*,⁷ paragraph 4.2, does the same, although the language and order differs slightly. Both instructions apply to applicants for appointment as commissioned officers in the Active and Reserve Components, as well as applicants for the Service

¹ AFROTCI 36-2011, *Cadet Operations*, 1 July 2015

² *Id.*, at paragraph 5.6.3.1.

³ *Id.*, at paragraph 5.6.

⁴ AFI 36-2013, *Officer Training School (OTS) and Enlisted Commissioning Programs (ECPS)*,⁴ 23 October 2008, Incorporating Change 1, 22 December 2014

⁵ AFROTCI 36-2011, at paragraph 5.10.1.1.

⁶ DoDI 6130.03, *Medical Standards for Appointment, Enlistment, or Induction in the Military Services*, 28 April 2010, Incorporating Change 1, 13 September 2011, Enclosure 2, paragraph 2.

⁷ AFI 48-123, *Medical Examinations and Standards*, 5 November 2013.

academies, Reserve Officer Training Corps, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, and all other DoD Component special officer procurement programs.⁸

DoDI 1215.08, *Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC)*, discusses medical examinations. As provided in paragraph 3.10.a:

Thorough and complete medical examinations, in accordance with DoD Instruction 6130.03, will be conducted before enrollment in the scholarship program or at the time of, or immediately before, enrollment in the advanced courses of a Military Department ROTC program. Following medical qualification, these contracted cadets and midshipmen will maintain health and physical standards in accordance with DoD Instruction 6130.03 while in the scholarship program and in contract status.

The Air Force has established a number of enlisted commissioning programs, such as AFROTC, Airman Education and Commissioning Program, NECP, AFROTC Airman Scholarship and Commissioning Program, AFROTC Professional Officer Course Early Release Program, Leaders Encouraging Airmen Development, and Scholarships for Outstanding Airmen to ROTC.⁹ Regular Air Force (RegAF) Airmen must separate from the RegAF in accordance with AFI 36-3208, *Administrative Separation of Airmen*,¹⁰ to accept the scholarships and enroll in an AFROTC program.¹¹ NECP students must also pass the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses prior to commissioning and accessing into the Nurse Corps.¹²

DISCUSSION

AFROTCI 36-2011 provides a DoD Medical Examination Review Board physical is required for scholarship activations, and lists criteria to determine whether the individual in question meets or does not meet medical accession standards based on DoDI 6130.03 and AFI 48-123.¹³ Accession physicals remain valid until, and may be used for, commissioning unless there is a change in medical status or a specialized examination is required for an AFSC (i.e., for pilots). AFI 48-123, Chapter 7, discusses retention standards when transferring to the Air Reserve Component (ARC); however, this section relates to a RegAF member transferring to the ARC. AFI 48-123, Chapter 6, Flying and Special Operational Duty, states pilots of fighter, rotary wing, fixed wing, and remotely-piloted aircraft transferring from a sister service to an equivalent weapon system in the Air Force are considered trained assets.¹⁴

⁸ Other individuals to whom accession standards apply include: applicants for enlistment in the Military Services; applicants for enlistment in the Reserve Components; applicants for reenlistment in the Regular and Reserve Components; cadets and midshipmen at the U.S. Service academies; and individuals on the Temporary Disability Retired List who have been found fit upon reevaluation and wish to return to active duty. See DoDI 6130.03, paragraph 4.1; AFI 48-123, paragraph 4.2.

⁹ See AFI 36-2013, Chapter 2.

¹⁰ AFI 36-3208, *Administrative Separation of Airmen*, 9 July 2004, Incorporating Through Change 7, 2 July 2013.

¹¹ See AFI 36-2013, at paragraph 2.9; AFI 36-2011, *Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Program (AFROTC) Program*, 24 April 2018, paragraph 2.3.3.1.

¹² AFI 36-2013, paragraph 2.5.3.7.1.

¹³ AFROTCI 36-2011, paragraph 5.2.

¹⁴ See AFI 48-123, paragraph 6.21.

Additionally, retention standards under AFI 48-123, Chapter 5, apply to personnel already serving as RegAF members.¹⁵ The same paragraph states for accessions and enlistments, the accession medical standards in Chapter 4 apply. Although a RegAF enlisted member who applies for an ECP is “already serving,” that enlisted member is still required to separate to enroll in a commissioning program. The member is then a cadet, i.e., an applicant for a commission, and must meet accession standards.

The intent of the DoDI and complementary AFI provisions addressing accession standards apply to individuals who have not completed all the prerequisites for military service. AFROTC cadets and NECP students who have not commissioned have not completed all the prerequisites for military service. Accordingly, accession medical standards apply to these individuals.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing, and consistent with our opinion in OpJAGAF 2018-2, it is our conclusion accession medical standards apply to AFROTC cadets and NECP students until they are commissioned, at which time retention medical standards apply.

¹⁵ *Id.*