

Virtual Coffee Talk U.S. Service Academies

Topics will include:

- An overview of the Five United States Service Academies.
- The Service Academy Decision-Why you should or should not apply to a Service Academy?
- Eligibility and Qualifications for Service Academies
- The application, nomination, and appointment (acceptance) process for each Service Academy.
- The Official Service Academy Preparatory Schools and Programs
- Final Steps in the Process
- What Happens after Appointment (Acceptance)
- Final Thoughts and Tips
- Websites and resources

United States Service Academies

United States Military Academy (West Point, New York)

United States Naval Academy (Annapolis, Maryland)

United States Coast Guard Academy (New London, Connecticut)

United States Merchant Marine Academy (King's Point, New York)

United States Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, Colorado)

ordered by date of founding

The Service Academy Decision

Why attend a service academy?

- A strong desire to serve in the Armed Services or Merchant Marine
- An excellent College Education (ranked among the best and most elite nationally)
- Excellent Career Opportunity
- A commitment to become a Commissioned Officer & leader in the Armed Services
- Salary* as a student (US Merchant Marine Academy - financial aid, no pay as a midshipman)

Why not to attend a service academy?

- Just for a full cost of attendance scholarship with pay, and guaranteed job after graduation without a strong and sincere desire for military leadership, service, and commitment.
- Potential applicants must understand the demanding workload, regimented lifestyle, restricted social life, and extended service and military obligation that the Service Academy Decision requires!

Basic Eligibility Requirements



- **United States Citizen**
- **Be of good moral character**
- **Be between the ages 17 and not past their 23rd birthday on 1 July of the year they would enter the academy (22 for Coast Guard and 25 for Merchant Marine)**
- **Unmarried, not pregnant, and no incurred obligations of parenthood**
- **Meet the physical, security, suitability, and character requirements necessary for commission in the U.S. Armed Services and Reserves**

Basic Qualifications

- **Excellent academic record**
- **High test scores (SAT/ACT)** (No test accommodations permitted)
- **Physical fitness and athletic prowess**
- **Quality extracurricular/community activity**
- **Demonstrated peer leadership**
- **Congressional or other nomination*** (except Coast Guard Academy)

Statistics for Appointed Cadets & Midshipmen

95% of accepted students have at least a 3.0

30% have weighted GPA exceeding 4.0

70% are in the top 20% of their classes

10% were valedictorians or salutatorians

60% were members of a national honor society

80% earned a varsity letter

60% were captains of an athletic team

69% held student office

The Admissions Process

Open preliminary application

Contact your regional admissions team member

Complete all items on your Candidate Portal

Arrange for all necessary documents, such as recommendations and transcripts, to be submitted

Arrange for your Candidate Fitness Assessment

Complete medical clearance process (DoDMERB)

Apply for nominations* except Coast Guard Academy

A group of six individuals in various military and academy uniforms standing in a row. From left to right: a man in a white naval officer's uniform, a woman in a light blue short-sleeved uniform shirt, a woman in a dark blue dress with gold stripes on the sleeves, a woman in a dark blue uniform, a man in a tan military uniform, and a man in a dark blue short-sleeved uniform shirt.

Your Academy Admissions Team

Each academy has local part-time representatives that are part of the admissions team:

- West Point: Field Force Representative**
- Navy: Blue & Gold Officer**
- Coast Guard: Academy Admissions Partner**
- Merchant Marine: Local Admission Field Representative**
- Air Force: Academy Liaison Officer (ALO)**

Connect with your Admissions Team

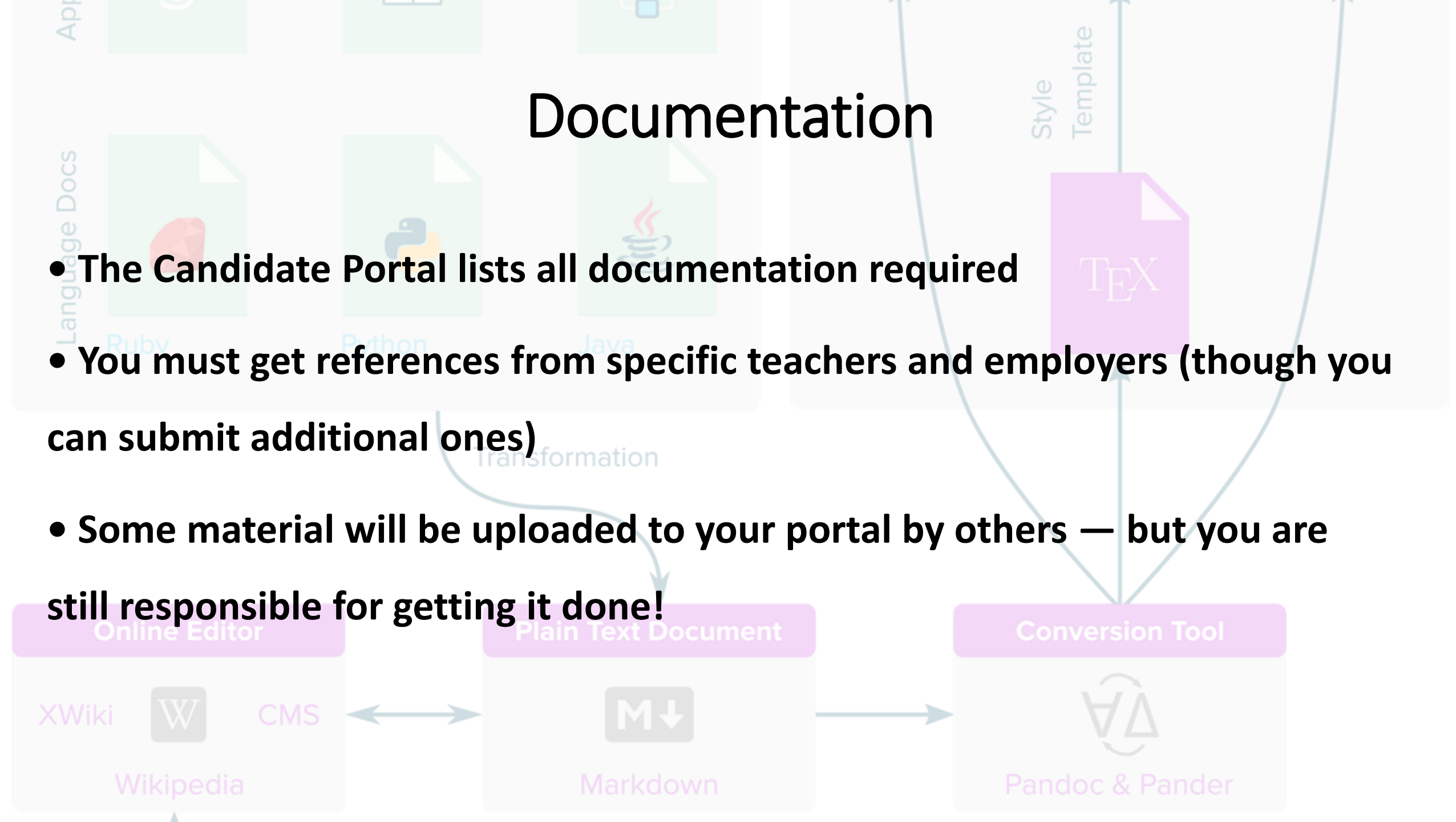
- 1. Find your local representative through the academy websites.**
- 2. Get in touch with them early and work with them — they're very important.**
- 3. There are also regional directors of admissions who work at the academies. Contact them when the local representative won't do.**
- 4. If applicable, contact academy diversity offices or athletic departments for more assistance.**

The Candidate Portal

- **The primary communications tool throughout the admissions process is your Candidate Portal.**
- **You get access to your Candidate Portal when you pass the initial evaluation/assessment.**
- **Everything on your portal must be complete for you to be admitted!**
- **Depending on your situation, additional items may show up.**
- **Check your portal regularly — at least once a week!**

Documentation

- The Candidate Portal lists all documentation required
- You must get references from specific teachers and employers (though you can submit additional ones)
- Some material will be uploaded to your portal by others — but you are still responsible for getting it done!



Candidate Fitness Assessment (CFA)

How the CFA Works

- All candidates must take the CFA (the same one can be used for multiple academies).
- The CFA can be administered by PE teachers, among others.
- Candidates must make their own arrangements, including location (a school gym is appropriate)
- Prepare, prepare, prepare — even if you're very fit!
- The test is pass/fail for each one

What's on the CFA?

- Basketball throw
- Pull-ups (women may do flexed arm hang instead)
- Shuttle run
- Modified sit-ups (crunches)
- Push-ups
- One mile run
- Maximums and averages are provided for each event.
- There are minimums for each one, but you aren't told what they are!

Medical Clearance (DoDMERB)

- **All candidates must go through a comprehensive medical evaluation administered by the Department of Defense Medical Evaluation Review Board (DoDMERB)**
- **Academies don't schedule your evaluation until they've decided you're competitive**
- **You are notified through your candidate portal**
- **Results are provided on the candidate portal & the DoDMERB website**

Medical Clearance Process & Outcomes

Outcomes:

- – Qualified
- – Disqualified
- – Remedial
- Remedial means more tests/documentation needed
- Disqualified means the academy will automatically consider you for a waiver
- The academies can waive a disqualification and admit you anyway
- Each academy makes its own decision
- You are automatically considered for a waiver; you don't have to ask for it
- Even if you're Qualified, you must notify DoDMERB if your health changes

Medical Red Flags

How to Manage the Process

- Medical “red flags” aren’t necessarily disqualifying.
- If you have one, get your medical records organized and if possible arrange for your own pre-tests.
- Time is of the essence! Respond quickly to all inquiries.

Medical Red Flags (Examples)

- Asthma, seasonal allergies, inhaler use
- Learning disabilities/ADHD
- Vision (glasses OK for the most part)
- Hearing loss outside acceptable range without use of aid
- Surgery, concussions, head injuries
- Conditions requiring regular medication

Other Medical Issues

- **Drug and alcohol use (minor use not disqualifying; lying about this is a very bad idea)**
- **Tattoos, brands, piercings, body modifications (each branch of service has a set standard policy)**
- **Height and weight (each service has minimum and maximum requirements, and they vary)**

The Nominations Process

- **You will need a nomination* and an appointment to enroll into an academy. *except for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.**
- **There are multiple sources of nominations; apply to every one for which you're eligible.**
- **While a nomination is an absolute requirement for admission, it's not as terrifying as it seems.**

Sources of Nominations

Everyone Can Apply To:

- **Your House Member of Congress (or delegate in certain US territories)**
- **Both Senators in your state**
- **The Vice President* (sign up on the V-P's website; the academies actually make the choices)**

*Not for the Merchant Marine Academy

Limited to Eligible Applicants:

- **Presidential nominations**
 - Children of wounded, killed, or missing veterans
 - Children of active duty or retired military personnel
 - Children of Medal of Honor winners
- **Current members of the military or the reserves**
- **JROTC/ROTC Honor Units with Distinction**

Nomination

The background of the slide is a photograph of the United States Capitol building in Washington, D.C. The building is a large, white, neoclassical structure with a prominent central dome. It is surrounded by a green lawn and some trees. The sky is a pale, overcast blue.

- **Most members of Congress award 10 “nominations” to each academy per year**
- **They actually have only 1-2 nomination “allotments” that can be filled for each academy**
- **Everyone on the list, however, is considered to have been “nominated”**
- **If you don’t “win your district,” you are considered for additional nominations automatically**

Congressional Nominations

- **Locate “Service Academy Nominations” on the website for your member of Congress and both senators for your state**
- **Download and review all forms and instructions**
- **Each member runs the process differently**
- **The process is run by staff members. You may or may not actually meet the Congress member**
- **Watch your deadlines!**

Normal steps in the process

- **SAT/ACT scores (Congressional offices have numbers, just like colleges)**
- **Essays (one or more)**
- **Interview by a board**
- **Selection/nomination**
- **Your senators and members of Congress coordinate to avoid duplication — you’ll only get one nomination even if more than one wants to nominate you!**

Applicants interested in a nomination should contact one of the following offices

- U.S. Senator Rick Scott <https://www.rickscott.senate.gov/>
- U.S. Senator Marco Rubio <http://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/>
- Vice President Kamala Harris <https://www.whitehouse.gov/service-academy-nominations/>
- The U.S. Representative from the student's home district (most likely one of the following)
 - District 18 Congressman Brian Mast <https://mast.house.gov/>
 - District 21 Congressman Ted Deutch <http://teddeutch.house.gov>
 - District 22 Congresswoman Lois Frankel <http://frankel.house.gov>
 - District 20 Congressman Alcee Hastings <http://www.alceehastings.house.gov/>

Service Academy Timeline

It is recommended that students interested in applying to a Service Academy begin the application process; take the ACT and SAT; and reach out to their Congressional Representatives in early Spring of their Junior year.

Service Academy Application Deadlines:

U.S. Military Academy Application deadline:
February 28, 2020

U.S. Naval Academy Applications opened on
April 1, 2019 Applications deadline: January
31, 2020

U.S. Air Force Academy Pre-Candidate
Questionnaire deadline: December 31, 2019
Candidate Kit Documents deadline: January
31, 2020

U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Application
deadline: February 1, 2020 SAT/ACT scores
deadline: March 1, 2020

U.S. Coast Guard Academy Application
deadline: January 15, 2020

General Timeline for applying to a Service Academy

- **January- June: Begin application process including application form, sat/act exams, and contacting Congressional Representatives during spring of Junior Year.**
- **June- January: Congressional Nominations will be sent to the Service Academies with a deadline of around January 31.**
- **December- February: Applications are due, exact dates vary depending on the specific Service Academy.**
- **January- March: Appointments are received and must be accepted or denied, dates vary based on Service Academy.**

Recruited Athletes

- Athletes must meet all other requirements, including nominations
- Everyone gets free tuition and room & board; there are no special benefits
- If the Athletic Department wants you, they will serve as your advocates and coaches through the process
- Check the recruiting section on the sports page for each academy for details on how to apply

Service Academy Preparatory Schools

- **The vast majority cadets and midshipmen who reach the Service Academies via the preparatory school route, attend each service academy's own prep. school.**
- **No application. Selected candidates originate from the qualified nominated applicant pool not receiving an appointment for each specific Academy.**
- **Free tuition if selected.**
- **Programs last 10 months.**
- **Students must enlist in the Reserves at the lowest enlisted rank, and will receive salary at that rank.**
- **Overall, each prep. school graduates 100-200 qualified candidates for appointment the following year to each of their respective service academy.**

U.S. Service Academy Preparatory Schools

- **U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School (USMAPS)**
- **The Naval Academy Preparatory School (NAPS)**
- **Air Force Academy Preparatory School**
- **The U.S. Coast Guard utilizes three outside military preparatory schools through the Coast Guard Academy Scholars Program (CGAS). CGAS identifies high potential candidates for this preparatory program.**
- **The Merchant Marine Academy Prep. Schools are New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI) or Marion Military Institute (MMI)**

Final Steps

- **Check your candidate portal frequently to make sure all lights are green! New items are sometimes added by the academies. Acceptances and rejection will be on the portal.**
- **Visit the academy if at all possible. Some allow overnight visits in the dorms**
- **If you get a Letter of Assurance (LOA) or Letter of Encouragement (LOE), it's a great sign, but not a guarantee. If you don't get one, don't worry. Most don't.**
- **Acceptances begin in November (few), with most in February. Waiting list offers can come only weeks before reporting in!**
- **If you don't get in, there's always next year. Some candidates have tried two or three times before being successful — plus, enthusiasm and desire help!**

After Appointment (Acceptance)

- **Security Clearance**: “Secret” clearance required of all cadets and midshipmen. Keep your SF 86; you’ll have to update it every time your clearance changes or need to be renewed
- **Shoes and Boots** (they need to be broken in, so you get them before the rest of your uniform)
- **Money Issues**: Bank account, direct deposit authorization, and initial deposit to your cadet account (all cadets except Merchant Marine get a salary)
- **Travel Arrangements/Packing List** (pack exactly what they tell you; no more and no less)
- **Reporting-in day is very stressful** — there are YouTube videos that demystify the process a bit
- **Keep up your physical fitness regimen** — but be careful not to get injured or have an accident!

Final Thoughts and Tips

- Start early — the earlier, the better!
- Be sure to complete nomination application process with each eligible representative or nominator.
- Make certain a service academy education and military service obligation is what you want, not what your parents or others want for you.
- Develop great time management and study habits early.
- Don't worry if extracurricular activities aren't military in nature, but be certain to demonstrate leadership, initiative, and commitment.
- Organize your application. (You won't believe how much paperwork there is.)
- Talk to academy alumni and stay in touch with your academy admission team officer.
- Send thank you notes to your nominators and admission team members.

Websites

Military Academy <https://www.westpoint.edu/>

Naval Academy <https://www.usna.edu/>

Coast Guard Academy <https://www.uscga.edu/>

Merchant Marine Academy <https://www.usmma.edu/>

Air Force Academy <https://www.usafa.edu/>

Today's Military - Service Academy Page

<https://www.todaysmilitary.com/education-training/military-schools>



Thank you!

Please see your school counselor for more information and be certain to review this link on our Park Vista Website.

http://pvchs.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_1933561/File/School%20Counseling/College%20Information/military%20academies.pdf