

**USCG Academy Application and Supplemental Forms
Supporting Statement
for
1625-0004**

A. Justification

1. Explain circumstances that make collection of information necessary.

The appointment of permanent commissioned officers in the regular Coast Guard from the United States Coast Guard Academy (USCGA) is authorized by 14 USC 211. The authority to operate the USCGA is contained in 14 USC 181. The regulation and administration of the USCGA is the responsibility of the Superintendent, subject to the direction of the Commandant of the Coast Guard under the general supervision of the Secretary of Homeland Security. One of the Superintendent's responsibilities is to ensure that qualified individuals from the public at large have every opportunity to compete for a cadet appointment. The USCGA Application and Supplemental Forms (High School or College Transcript, English Instructor Evaluation, Math Instructor Evaluation, Coach or P.E. Instructor Evaluation, and Physical Fitness Examination Scoring Form) ensure the collection of information necessary to select the best applicants.

2. Indicate how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose information is to be used.

These forms enable men and women between 17 and 22 years old to apply for an appointment as Cadet, U.S. Coast Guard at the USCGA. The application is traditionally made available annually from mid-August to February 1st to the general public through the USCGA Admissions website at www.uscga.edu/apply. The 2012-13 application will be made available from August 31st to February 1st. Without this application, the public would have no method of applying for an appointment to the USCGA since information collected from these forms is not available through any other source.

Successful respondents who meet all the application and selection criteria receive an appointment as Cadet, U.S. Coast Guard and orders to attend the USCGA for four years. Cadets attend the USCGA with appropriate military pay/benefits and at no further financial burden to them. They are obligated to serve in the Coast Guard for five years upon graduation from the USCGA.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent the collection of information involves the use of automated or other collection techniques.

The USCGA application and supplemental forms (except for the High School or College Transcript) are completed online by the applicant and imported by the USCGA. Data from the application is imported directly into our applicant database, eliminating the need for scanning or manual entry. The application may be printed for board review and archive storage.

The USCGA supplemental forms (except for the High School or College Transcript) are completed online by various school officials and downloaded by the USCGA. At this time, the High School or College Transcript request form cannot be made fully electronic because a certified/original transcript must be mailed to the USCGA from the high school or college. The receipt of these transcript forms and a limited amount of data from them is manually entered into our applicant database.

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4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

This information is not available from any source except the individual, their high school, and individual academic instructors. Additionally, the USCGA is the only entity authorized to obtain this information from the public for admissions selection to the USCGA. The application is designed for efficient operation and reduces the amount of information (e.g., Name, SSN) that must be entered repeatedly.

5. Does collection of information impact small businesses?

This information collection does not have an impact on small businesses or other small entities.

6. Describe the consequences to Federal program or policy activities if collection is not conducted.

If the USCGA were not allowed to collect this information it could no longer receive applications or review applicants for cadet appointments. The USCGA would be unable to enroll new classes and the Coast Guard's officer corps would be dangerously reduced.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner.

This information collection is conducted in manner consistent with the guidelines in 5CFR 1320.5(d)(2).

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, soliciting comments on the information collection.

A 60-day Notice was published in the *Federal Register* to obtain public comment on this collection (see [USCG-2011-0902]; October 7, 2011; 76 FR 62426). Additionally, a 30-day Notice was published in the *Federal Register* to obtain public comment on this collection (December 16, 2011; 76 FR 78286). The Coast Guard has not received any comments on this information collection.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents.

There is no offer of monetary or material value for this information collection.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

The information obtained from the USCGA application and supplemental forms falls under the Privacy Act/Freedom of Information Regulations; applicants are informed of this in writing.

This information collection is covered by a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) and System of Records Notice (SORN).

- Privacy Impact Assessment for the United States Coast Guard Academy Information System (ACADIS) dated January 26, 2010 (copy submitted with request).
- Privacy Act of 1974; United States Coast Guard--014 Military Pay and Personnel System

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of Records Notice (DHS/USCG-014) [December 19, 2008; Docket No. DHS-2008-0108; Federal Register Vol. 73, No. 235, Pages 77743-77747] (copy submitted with request).

- Privacy Act of 1974; United States Coast Guard--027 Recruiting Files System of Records Notice (DHS/USCG-027) [August 10, 2011; Docket No. DHS-2011-0062; Federal Register Vol. 76, No. 154, Pages 49494-49497] (copy submitted with request).

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.

Applicants are asked to provide short answers (one paragraph in length) to the following questions to ensure compliance with current Coast Guard and USCGA accession policies:

Have you ever been detained, arrested, summoned into court or participated in a diversion or probation program? If yes, please briefly explain.

Criminal history may prohibit an applicant from attending the USCGA based on the Coast Guard Personnel Manual, so this question is necessary to confirm eligibility and learn more about the applicant's background.

Do you have any tattoos, brandings, or body piercings? If yes, please briefly describe.

Some tattoos, brandings, or body piercings, depending upon location and subject, may prohibit an applicant from attending the USCGA based on the Coast Guard Personnel Manual, so this question is necessary to confirm eligibility.

Will you or did you receive any special accommodations - such as extended or unlimited time - when taking the SAT Reasoning or ACT exam? If yes, please briefly explain.

The USCGA requires at least one set of SAT Reasoning or ACT scores from an exam administered without any special accommodations based on the USCGA Applicant Handbook, so this question is necessary to confirm eligibility and determine the applicant's academic readiness to succeed at the USCGA.

Answers to these eligibility questions will not prohibit an applicant from applying, but may place their application in a "Hold" status pending the receipt of additional information verifying their eligibility to attend the USCGA.

Applicants are asked to provide personal statements (one page in length) to the following prompts to learn more about their background and unique life experiences:

The Coast Guard Academy's mission is to develop leaders of character. Describe examples of your leadership experience from the past three years in which you have significantly influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time.

Leadership training is paramount in the education of future Coast Guard officers at the USCGA, so past leadership experience or exposure may make an applicant more competitive for appointment.

Describe your experience facing or witnessing discrimination or unfair treatment. Tell us how you responded, what you learned from those experiences, and how you believe they prepared you to contribute to the Coast Guard Academy community.

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Respect is one of the Coast Guard's and USCGA's core values, so applicants who have been exposed to and matured from issues in this arena may be more competitive for appointment. The USCGA believes an applicant's reaction to facing or witnessing discrimination or unfair treatment is one of the best indicators to determine their potential to respect others and contribute to the climate of inclusion present at the USCGA.

These topics are very similar to essay questions that the other service academies and civilian colleges ask their applicants to determine fit for their individual institutions; these personal statements assist the USCGA in selecting the most qualified applicants for appointment. Applicants are informed in writing that information submitted in their application, including their personal statements, is protected under the Privacy Act.

Evaluators are asked to rate the applicant, against their peers, in several academic and personal categories to assist the USCGA in selecting the applicants who are best prepared to become successful cadets in both the academic and military training environment at the USCGA. Evaluators are informed in writing that this information is protected under the Privacy Act and have the option to mark "Not Observed" if they are not able to rate the applicant in any category.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

Number of respondents, frequency, hour burden as follows:

Online Application (OA)	4.00 hrs x 2500 = 10000
High School Transcript (HST)	1.30 hrs x 2000 = 2600
College Transcript (CT)	0.30 hrs x 500 = 150
English Instructor Eval (EIE)	1.25 hrs x 2000 = 2500
Math Instructor Eval (MIE)	1.25 hrs x 2000 = 2500
Coach/PE Instructor Eval (PE)	1.25 hrs x 2000 = 2500
Physical Fitness Exam (PFE)	2.00 hrs x 2000 = <u>4000</u>
Total number of hours = 24250	

Cost figured at \$7.25 per hour per student and \$25.00 per hour per teacher filling out forms on personal time.

OA	(4.00 hrs x \$7.25) x 2500 = \$ 72,500.00
HST	(0.05 hrs x \$7.25 + 1.25 hrs x \$25.00) x 2000 = \$ 63,225.00
CT	(0.05 hrs x \$7.25 + 0.25 hrs x \$25.00) x 500 = \$ 3,306.25
EIE	(0.05 hrs x \$7.25 + 1.20 hrs x \$25.00) x 2000 = \$ 60,725.00
MIE	(0.05 hrs x \$7.25 + 1.20 hrs x \$25.00) x 2000 = \$ 60,725.00
PE	(0.05 hrs x \$7.25 + 1.20 hrs x \$25.00) x 2000 = \$ 60,725.00
PFE	(1.00 hrs x \$7.25 + 1.00 hrs x \$25.00) x 2000 = <u>\$ 64,500.00</u>
Total hours value = \$385,706.25	

Note: Approximately 2,500 respondents submit the online application annually, but only 2,000 will complete the application process by submitting all required supplemental forms. These forms can only be submitted after the online application is submitted.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers.

Postage, Envelopes, and Printing (HST or CT) = \$1.00 x 2500 = \$2,500

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal Government.

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Development/Management of online application by contractor =	\$25,000
USCGA staff members to input/transfer data = 2 x \$14.00/hr x 400 hrs =	\$11,200
USCGA faculty/staff members to review data = 2 x \$50/hr x 1000 hrs =	\$100,000
Printing of application for review/storage = 36,000 sheets x \$0.01/sheet =	\$ 360
Total Cost =	\$136,560

15. Explain the reasons for any changes or adjustments reported in items 13 or 14.

There is no change to the information being collected from respondents. The use of e-forms, which the respondents are not required to print or return via mail to the USCGA, is a change which has decreased the total annual cost and hour burden to respondents and record keepers.

The estimate of annualized cost to the respondents and Federal Government has increased only because the previously reported estimate did not include the time required for academic instructors to write unique letters of recommendation for the EIE, MIE, or PE, the PFE administrator's time, or the time required for USCGA faculty/staff members to review submitted data. The updated average estimated hour burdens will be displayed on the instructions screen for the recommendation system along with the required Privacy Act Statement and OMB number.

The estimate of the hour burden for respondents completing the OA has increased since the previously reported estimate did not include the time required to complete four personal statements. The updated average estimated hour burden will be displayed on the log-in screen for the OA along with the required Privacy Act Statement and OMB number.

Overall, this collection of forms is easier for the respondents to complete and record keepers to process compared to the previous collection due to the technology employed within the e-forms.

16. Outline plans for tabulation and publication.

This information collection will not be published for statistical purposes.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons.

The expiration date for OMB approval of this information collection will be displayed on both the log-in screen for the OA (for applicants) and on the instructions screen for the recommendation system (for evaluators) for review prior to any information being provided to the USCGA.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions," of OMB Form 83-I.

USCG does not request an exception to the certification of this information collection.