



FACT SHEET

U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

The United States Air Force Academy offers a four-year program of instruction and experience designed to provide cadets the knowledge and character essential for leadership, and the motivation to serve as Air Force career officers. Each cadet graduates with a bachelor of science degree and a commission as a second lieutenant in the Air Force.



Course of Study

Cadets are exposed to a balanced curriculum that provides a general and professional foundation essential to a career Air Force officer. Special needs of future Air Force officers are met by professionally oriented courses, including human physiology, computer science, economics, military history, astronautics, law and political science.

The core curriculum includes courses in science, engineering, social sciences and humanities. Cadets take additional elective courses to complete requirements for one of 25 major areas of study. About 60 percent of the cadets complete majors in science and engineering; the other 40 percent graduate in the social sciences and humanities. Some of the most popular majors include management, astronautical engineering, international affairs and political science, history, behavioral science, civil engineering, aeronautical engineering, electrical engineering and engineering mechanics.

Faculty Composition

The majority of the academy's nearly 600 faculty members are Air Force officers. They are selected primarily from career-officer volunteers who have established outstanding records of performance and dedication. Each has at least a master's degree and more than 35 percent have doctorates.

In addition to imparting knowledge, each faculty member must assist with the development of

character and qualities of leadership essential to future Air Force career officers and the motivation of service to country. To provide greater contributions by a diverse faculty, the academy has several distinguished civilian professors and associate professors who serve one or more years. Officers from other services are members of the faculty as well, and a small number of officers from allied countries teach in the foreign language, history and political science departments. Distinguished civilian and military lecturers also share their expertise with the cadets during the academic year.

Athletic Program

The academy's athletic program is designed to improve physical fitness, teach athletic skills and develop leadership qualities. To achieve its goals, the academy offers some of the most extensive physical education, intramural sports and intercollegiate athletic programs in the nation. Cadets take at least three different physical education courses each year.

Military Education and Training

An aerospace-oriented military education, training and leadership program begins with basic cadet training and continues throughout the four years. Seniors are responsible for the leadership of the cadet wing, while juniors and sophomores perform lower-level leadership and instructional tasks. Cadets are projected into as many active leadership roles as possible to prepare them to be effective Air Force officers.

Fundamental concepts of military organization -- drill, ethics, honor, Air Force heritage and physical training -- are emphasized the first summer during basic cadet training. Freshmen then study the military role in U.S. society as well as the mission and organization of the Air Force. Sophomores receive instruction in communicative skills, and juniors study the combat and operational aspects of the Air Force. Military studies for the senior class focus on military thought.

The academy offers courses in flying, navigation, soaring and parachuting, building from basic skills to instructor duties. Cadets may fly light aircraft with the Cadet Flying Team. Those not qualified for flight training must enroll in a basic aviation course. Astronomy and advanced navigation courses also are available. Students bound for pilot training enroll in the flight screening program at the academy and fly the DA-20 Katana aircraft.

Summer training for cadets is divided into three, three-week training periods. There are a variety of programs available, and each cadet is required to complete two training periods each summer with leave during the other period. All new cadets take six weeks of basic cadet training in their first summer.

Combat survival training is a required three-week program during cadets' second summer. For other second-summer training periods, cadets have options such as working with young airmen

in an operational unit at an Air Force installation, airborne parachute training, soaring or basic free-fall parachute training.

During their last two summers, all cadets are offered leadership training as supervisors or instructors in summer programs, such as basic cadet training, survival training, freefall parachuting and soaring.

Extracurricular activities also are an integral part of the education program. The cadet ski club, drum and bugle corps, cadet chorale and forensics are a few of the programs available.

Nominations

Nominations to the academy may be obtained through a congressional sponsor or by meeting eligibility criteria in other categories of competition established by law. For information on admission procedures, write to HQ USAFA/RRS; 2304 Cadet Drive, Suite 200; USAF Academy, CO 80840-5025.

History

In 1948 a board of leading civilian and military educators was appointed to plan the curriculum for an academy that would meet the needs of the newly established Air Force. The board determined that Air Force requirements could not be met by expanding the other service academies and recommended an Air Force academy be established without delay.

In 1949, then Secretary of the Air Force W. Stuart Symington appointed a commission to assist in selecting a site and on April 1, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower authorized creation of the United States Air Force Academy. After considering 580 sites in 45 states, the commission narrowed the choice to three locations. The summer of 1954, Secretary of the Air Force Harold Talbott selected a site near Colorado Springs, Colo. Colorado contributed \$1 million toward purchase of the property.

In July 1955, the first academy class entered interim facilities at Lowry Air Force Base, Denver, while construction began. It was sufficiently completed for occupancy by the cadet wing in late August 1958. Initial construction cost was \$142 million.

Women entered the academy on June 28, 1976, as members of the class of 1980.

Point of Contact

[United States Air Force Academy](#), Public Affairs Office; 2304 Cadet Drive, Suite 320; USAF Academy, Colo. 80840-5016; DSN 333-2990 or (719) 333-2990.

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