



**Study Note 2014-01**

**Identification and Accessioning  
of Individuals for Officer Candidate School:  
Developing Realistic Job Previews**

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**United States Army Research Institute  
for the Behavioral and Social Sciences**

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14. ABSTRACT ( <i>Maximum 200 words</i> ):  The U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences has been conducting research on the "Identification and Accessioning of Individuals for Officer Candidate School," or AccessOCS, to (a) identify and describe OCS applicants in terms of motivations, backgrounds, and incentives; (b) consolidate information on the OCS selection and application process, and (c) develop recommendations for improving the OCS accessions process. Phase I of the project aimed to identify application and accessioning issues related to the OCS selection process (Oliver, Ardison, Russell, & Babin, 2010). The purpose of AccessOCS Phase II was to develop and evaluate a tool, a realistic job preview (RJP), designed to address some of the issues candidates and stakeholders reported in the accessioning process. Separate RJPs were developed for in-service and enlistment-option candidates. OCS candidates ( $n = 142$ ) completed a survey to evaluate the RJPs. The final RJPs provide a tool for recruiting OCS candidates. Evaluations of the RJPs were generally positive, with 89% of candidates indicating that the RJP would have been useful to them before they applied to OCS, and 86% of candidates saying they would refer someone else to the RJP.					
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**July 2014**

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# IDENTIFICATION AND ACCESSIONING OF INDIVIDUALS FOR OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL: DEVELOPING REALISTIC JOB PREVIEWS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Research Requirement:

In 2008, the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences initiated a large research program to improve accessioning and selection of candidates for the Officer Candidate School (OCS). One effort, called *SelectOCS*, concerned the development and validation of a tool for selecting OCS candidates that would be likely to perform well as junior officers and stay in the Army beyond their active duty service obligations. A counterpart project, “Identification and Accessioning of Individuals for Officer Candidate School,” or *AccessOCS*, used qualitative methods (Oliver, Ardison, Russell, & Babin, 2010) to (a) identify and describe OCS applicants in terms of motivations, backgrounds, and incentives; (b) consolidate information on the OCS selection and application process, and (c) develop recommendations for improving the OCS accessioning process. The *AccessOCS* research approach was to conduct focus groups and one-on-one interviews with stakeholders to learn about the OCS accessioning process from several vantage points. Content analysis of the interviews and focus groups suggested several potential improvements to the application and accessioning process.

The purpose of the current effort, *AccessOCS Phase II*, was to develop realistic job previews (RJPs) that would provide OCS applicants with useful information in a single, but comprehensive document to facilitate the accessioning process. Two RJPs were developed, one for each avenue into OCS: the in-service option and the college enlistment-option.<sup>1</sup> The RJPs were intended to address issues raised by stakeholders (including officer candidates, cadre and Company Commanders in OCS, as well as recruiters and policy-level government officials) in the earlier project (Oliver et al., 2010). RJPs are also intended to allow better self-selection of applicants and ultimately result in a better fit between officer candidates and Army officer positions.

### Procedure:

The research team developed the substantive content for the two RJPs based on interviews with stakeholders during Phase I and other information gathered during *AccessOCS* Phase I. The two RJPs addressed issues that Oliver et al. (2010) uncovered that were specific to the in-service and enlistment-option groups and issues that were common to both groups. In turn, we evaluated the effectiveness of the RJP on the degree to which the content improved candidates’ understanding of OCS processes and procedures related to OCS.

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<sup>1</sup> In-service option candidates enter OCS from active duty Army enlisted ranks. Enlistment-option candidates enter OCS from the civilian world or with prior service.

## Findings:

To evaluate the RJPs, the research team asked 142 officer candidates to read an RJP and complete a survey about it. Fifty candidates had entered through the enlistment-option after graduating from college. Forty-five candidates were in-service candidates who came to OCS from the enlisted ranks of the Army. Another 47 candidates were a mixture of in-service and enlistment option officer candidates who were currently waiting for an assignment to a training company.

Candidates were asked to consider the various topics in the OCS curriculum and to rate how important it is to have information about each topic when applying to OCS. All of the OCS topics appeared to be important for candidates in all three groups; for each topic, more than 70% of each group stated that it was somewhat or very important to have information on the topic prior to OCS.

Candidates were also asked to evaluate their own knowledge of each topic. Of the three groups, enlistment-option candidates reported the lowest levels of understanding for all topics. Several topic areas (e.g., typical challenges faced at OCS and how to overcome them, OCS curriculum and graduation requirements) were not well understood by any group prior to OCS, confirming the need for improved information about OCS.

At the conclusion of the survey, we asked candidates questions about their general evaluations of the RJP, as well as their opinions about the format, suggestions for its use, and any comments they wanted to share. These general evaluations were almost universally positive, with 90% of all participants recommending continuing development of the RJP, 89% stating the RJP would have been useful before applying to OCS, and 86% saying they would refer someone else to the RJP.

## Utilization and Dissemination of Findings:

The RJPs are ready-to-use recruitment and application tools for OCS. OCS candidates were asked where they would like to see the RJPs be made available. Seventy percent or more of candidates in all groups thought the RJP should be available at Army Recruiting Offices, at the Army Recruiting website, and on the OCS Homepage.

The Commandant of OCS was briefed on several occasions over the course of the project. Other stakeholders and interested parties were also briefed on the project. We presented the project at the Joint Service Accessions Research and Best Practices Symposium (Young, 2011), and on June 1, 2011, preliminary findings were briefed to the USAREC HQ Deputy G3 and his staff.

IDENTIFICATION AND ACCESSIONING OF INDIVIDUALS FOR OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL: DEVELOPING REALISTIC JOB PREVIEWS

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# IDENTIFICATION AND ACCESSIONING OF INDIVIDUALS FOR OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL: DEVELOPING REALISTIC JOB PREVIEWS

## Background

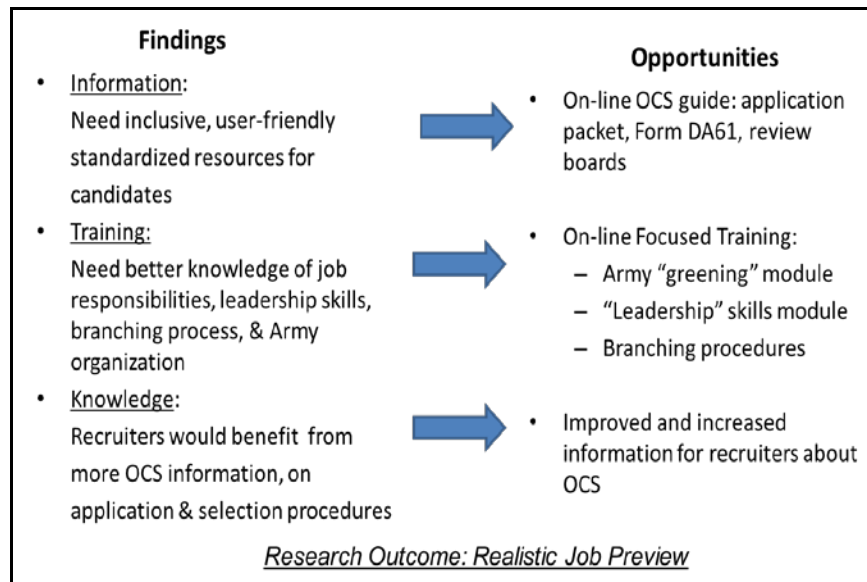
The Army's Officer Candidate School (OCS) needs to commission officers who are likely to perform well as junior officers, fit well in the Army's culture, demonstrate leadership potential for higher ranks, and stay beyond their initial Active Duty Service Obligation (ADSO). Toward that end, the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) initiated two research projects. One project, "Measures for Selecting Soldiers for the Officer Candidate School," or *SelectOCS*, was designed to identify a test battery that will help the Army select OCS applicants with all of these qualities—high leadership potential, good Army fit, and high likelihood of staying in the Army. The *SelectOCS* project spanned four years (2008-2012) and included three phases. Phases I and II of that project are complete (Russell & Tremble, 2009; Russell, Allen, & Babin, 2011), and Phase III is nearing completion (Allen, Bynum, Erk, Babin, & Young, in preparation).

While *SelectOCS* was an empirical data collection project, its counterpart project, "Identification and Accessioning of Individuals for Officer Candidate School," or *AccessOCS*, used qualitative methods to accomplish its research objectives (Oliver, Ardison, Russell, & Babin, 2010). The specific objectives of Phase I of *AccessOCS* were to (a) identify and describe OCS applicants in terms of motivations, backgrounds, and incentives; (b) consolidate information on the OCS selection and application process; and (c) develop recommendations for improving the OCS accessions process.

*AccessOCS* Phase I used a qualitative approach which involved conducting focus groups and one-on-one interviews with stakeholders to learn about the OCS accessioning process from several vantage points. Stakeholders included OCS candidates; OCS instructors, cadre, and Company Commanders; second lieutenants who recently graduated from OCS; captains who graduated from OCS; recruiters; and policy-level government officials (e.g., staff from the Army's office of Accession Policy). Initial coordination for access to recruiting subject matter experts was done with guidance and support from the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) Deputy Director of Recruiting Operations. On June 1, 2011, preliminary findings were briefed to the USAREC HQ Deputy G3 and his staff. Additionally, findings were briefed to the OCS Commandant on multiple occasions.

Content analysis of the interviews and focus groups suggested several potential improvements to the application and accessioning process. Multiple stakeholders indicated that OCS applicants need more information about OCS and that recruiters could make use of accessible information (e.g. documentation on the OCS website) to a greater extent. In particular, OCS candidates, as well as lieutenants and captains who had been commissioned through OCS, indicated that they would have liked to have had better access to realistic information about the OCS application process and OCS itself prior to applying (Oliver et al., 2010). Stakeholders wanted better information about the application process, what to expect at OCS, and how branching decisions (i.e., the process of assigning candidates to officer jobs in the Army) were made. Some *AccessOCS* subject matter experts suggested that potential applicants who might

perform well in OCS and as officers may drop out of the application process due to frustration with the process and lack of information about the process. Also, Oliver and colleagues (2010) found that OCS candidates who came to OCS through two different avenues—the in-service option and the enlistment-option<sup>2</sup>—had some common concerns as well as different perspectives on particular issues. For example, some in-service candidates were dissatisfied because they were unaware of the OCS career branching policies and thus didn't get the branch that matched the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) they had as an enlisted Soldier. Participants also suggested that in-service candidates need more information about making the transition from being an enlisted Soldier to being an officer, while enlistment-option candidates need to learn more about the Army generally, given their lack of previous experience. Figure 1 summarizes relevant findings from *AccessOCS* Phase I.



**Figure 1.** Key findings from *AccessOCS* Phase I

## Purpose

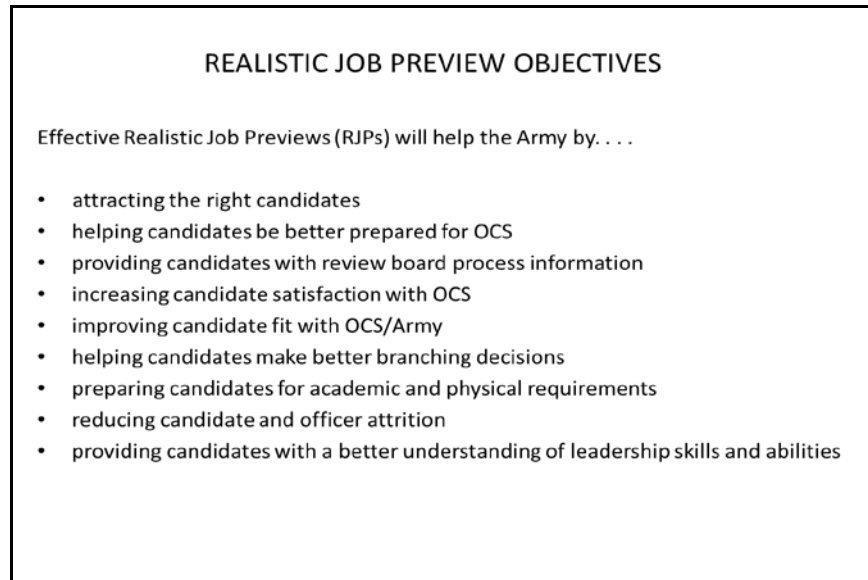
The purpose of the current effort (Phase II of *AccessOCS*) was to address the need for more information identified in Phase I by developing two realistic job previews (RJPs). An RJP is a term that refers to materials providing an applicant with information about a job to which they are applying. The general purpose of an RJP is to provide information related to aspects of the job, including the hurdles and challenges as well as the rewards and gratifications of a job. The objective of an RJP is to (a) bring expectations of the applicant in line with the environment of the hiring organization as well as (b) provide information on the environment such that unsuitable applicants self-select themselves out of the applicant pool.

<sup>2</sup> In-service option candidates enter OCS from active duty Army enlisted ranks. Enlistment-option candidates enter OCS from the civilian world or with prior service.

Incorporating RJP into the application process yields positive outcomes for organizations. Meta-analyses of RJP research suggest that organizations that employ RJP tend to have lower turnover (Phillips, 1998; Premack & Wanous, 1985; Wanous, Poland, Premack, & Davis, 1992). Positive relationships have also been found between RJP and employee job satisfaction ( $r = .33$ ), organizational commitment ( $r = .33$ ), and intentions to remain ( $r = .24$ ).

Various theories exist for why RJP might work to reduce turnover and improve attitudes. A prominent one is the theory of self-selection, where turnover is reduced by encouraging applicants to self-select out of applying for a job that does not match their needs (Wanous, 1980; Wanous et al., 1992). A second theory proposes that an RJP conveys trust and honesty on the part of the organization, which purportedly causes the organization to appear more attractive, leading to reduced turnover. In addition, RJP are proposed to reduce role ambiguity (Horner, Mobley, & Meglino, 1979) and to adjust wants and expectations to make them more compatible with those encountered on the job (Hom, Griffeth, Palich, & Bracker, 1999; Meglino, DeNisi, Youngblood, & DeNisi, 1988). A field study of exposure to RJP in the Army found such exposure increased satisfaction and reduced role ambiguity and turnover, especially for individuals higher in intelligence and commitment (Meglino et al., 1988). A fourth theory is that RJP reduce inflated expectations and make the initiation process easier for applicants (Rosenthal & Hall, 2006). We concluded that RJP developed for OCS could help to improve candidate satisfaction, increase commitment to the Army, and improve retention of commissioned officers. Finally, RJP could align expectations of candidates with their actual experience in OCS.

In summary, it is thought that RJP would reduce turnover by increasing self-selection intentions, increasing organizational attractiveness by establishing trust and honesty, reducing role ambiguity, and establishing realistic expectations. Each of these psychological processes is theorized to reduce turnover in officer candidates and new officers. We surmised that RJP would help the Army attract and retain OCS candidates. Specific objectives for the RJP are listed in Figure 2. With those objectives in mind, the research team developed information and materials encompassing the informational elements thought to be critical to an understanding of OCS components (e.g., curriculum and selection criteria, description of leadership and Army knowledge requirements, and information about officer branches and branching procedures).



**Figure 2.** Objectives for RJP development.

### **Method**

The research team (a) developed the substantive content for two RJPs in text form (in-service and enlistment-option), (b) evaluated the RJPs on the degree to which the content improved candidate knowledge and understanding of OCS processes and procedures, and (c) forwarded recommendations for mode of presentation of the RJPs (e.g., paper, on-line) to OCS. The two RJPs addressed issues that Oliver et al. (2010) uncovered that were both common and specific to the in-service and enlistment-option groups.

RJP development and evaluation involved three steps.

1. Develop RJP Content
2. Conduct Focus Groups and Interviews on RJP Content
3. Collect User Feedback via Pilot Test

#### ***Develop RJP Content***

The first step in developing the RJPs was to review information gathered in *AccessOCS* Phase 1. The first draft of the RJPs was based on the major areas candidates indicated that they needed more information, including:

- Army officer attributes and duties
- General history and overview of OCS
- Army organizational structure (e.g., brigade, battalion, company) and command level of each part of the hierarchy (e.g., COL, LTC, CPT)
- OCS application procedures
- OCS curriculum
- The Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT)

- Branch assignment process
- OCS graduation requirements
- Career path as an officer after OCS
- Advice on how to succeed in OCS from current candidates, cadre, and Company Commanders
- Suggested readings to prepare for OCS
- Resources for more information

The mock-ups went through several cycles of reviews and revisions by HumRRO and ARI staff.

### ***Conduct Focus Groups and Interviews on RJP Content***

The research team conducted focus groups and interviews on the draft versions of the RJPs at Fort Benning. The interview protocol appears in Appendix B. We also prepared a structured interview for Company Commanders and cadre which appears in Appendix C. HumRRO and ARI conducted interviews with candidates, Company Commanders, and cadre. Additionally, we observed field exercises for the purpose of obtaining additional substance for the portion of the RJP related to successful performance as a leader.

#### ***Candidate Focus Groups***

To gain a better understanding of the OCS curriculum and events candidates must pass, we observed candidates in two companies undertaking specific portions of the OCS curriculum (Supply and Training Management, and Call for Fire). We also interviewed candidates from another company during breaks in their field exercises. We conducted a total of 16 interviews during the field exercises using the structured interview questions appearing in Appendix B.

#### ***Interviews with Company Commanders and Cadre***

The research team met with OCS Company Commanders and cadre from three companies to evaluate the draft RJPs for both the enlistment- and in-service option OCS applicants. We gathered information on the accuracy of the information in the mockup, as well as information on the perceived weaknesses of, and unique obstacles experienced by each population of candidates (see Appendix C for the complete protocol). These obstacles included (a) lack of freedom during the early stages of OCS, (b) challenges of passing the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) and maintaining physical fitness, (c) the possibility of being recycled, or sent back to the beginning of an OCS class because of physical fitness problems, injury, conduct, or poor academic progress, and (d) potentially having to wait for a long time at Headquarters and Headquarter Company (HHC)<sup>3</sup> to get assigned to a training company (to begin the OCS program). We incorporated this information into the revised RJPs.

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<sup>3</sup> HHC is a holding company for officer candidates not currently assigned to a company at OCS. Candidates can be placed in HHC for a number of reasons. One reason is because the candidate has been “recycled” (i.e., removed from his/her company for multiple reasons, such as failure to complete or pass certain OCS requirements, significant injury that prevents a candidate from completing physical fitness training (PT), and violating OCS policy). Another reason is that there may not yet be training seats available in a company. A candidate’s time in HHC can vary.

### ***Field Exercise Observation***

The research team also observed candidates perform field exercises at Fort Benning. During the observation, we identified some aspects of successful performance with the cadre which allowed us to gather their opinions on the performance areas where candidates were typically strong or weak (e.g., mission planning, mission execution, tactics). This information was included in the RJP in the section on the types of behaviors/actions an OCS applicant should be prepared to demonstrate at OCS in order to perform successfully in OCS.

### ***Collect User Feedback via Pilot Test***

Finally, a pilot test of the RJPs was conducted with officer candidates. The pilot test was a one-hour session in which Candidates were given 30 minutes to review the RJP appropriate to their service option (see Appendix D for enlistment-option RJP, and Appendix E for the in-service RJP). Following the 30-minute review session, candidates completed a survey related to the RJP. The survey questions appear in Appendix F.<sup>4</sup> These questions were adapted from a survey conducted by ARI to evaluate an RJP developed for the Army's Special Forces (Brooks & Evans, 1996). The questions aimed to determine (a) whether candidates had a good understanding of the major components of OCS prior to applying, (b) the extent to which the RJPs provided candidates with information regarding the major components of OCS, (c) the degree to which it was important for candidates to have information regarding the major components of OCS prior to applying, (d) the degree to which the information in the RJP would have met candidates' needs for information prior to applying to OCS, and (e) whether applicants to OCS would need more information on major components of OCS even after reading the RJP materials. Finally, the survey asked candidates to provide their opinions of whether development of the RJPs should continue, where the RJPs should be made available (e.g., online or on paper at a recruiting office), and whether the candidates would recommend the RJPs to others applying to OCS.

## **Results**

The survey was administered to 142 candidates. Fifty candidates had entered OCS through the enlistment-option program, while 45 candidates were in-service candidates who came to OCS from the enlisted ranks of the Army. Another 47 candidates who were in the HHC awaiting assignment to a training company represented both the in-service and enlistment options. Of the candidates in the HHC group, 23 were enlistment-option and 23 were in-service option (1 did not indicate entry status). It was necessary to sample these three populations, (i.e., enlistment-option, in-service option and HHC candidates), as those candidates currently assigned to HHC face an additional set of challenges (e.g., not currently making progress in OCS) and are likely to have far higher levels of frustration. Therefore, we analyzed results for candidates in HHC separately from those of enlistment-option and in-service candidates who were actively participating in OCS. Table 1 reports characteristics of the three groups of candidates who participated in the pilot test.

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<sup>4</sup> The same survey was used for evaluation of the in-service RJP and the enlistment-option RJP.

Table 1. *Characteristics of Pilot Study Participants*

	Enlistment- option ( <i>n</i> = 50)	In-service ( <i>n</i> = 45)	HHC ( <i>n</i> = 47)
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
<i>Current Army Status</i>			
Regular Army	30 (60.0%)	40 (88.9%)	43 (91.5%)
National Guard	4 (8.0%)	1 (2.2%)	1 (2.1%)
Army Reserve	16 (32.0%)	3 (6.7%)	3 (6.4%)
Other	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.2%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Current week of OCS training</i>			
4	49 (98.0%)	23 (51.1%)	0 (0.0%)
10	1 (2.0%)	21 (46.7%)	0 (0.0%)
NA – Currently in HHC	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	47 (100.0%)
Missing/No response	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.2%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Status when applying for OCS</i>			
Enlisted Army Soldier	0 (0.0%)	35 (77.8%)	20 (42.6%)
Current enlisted member from another Service (e.g., Air Force, Marines)	1 (2.0%)	2 (4.4%)	1 (2.1%)
Civilian with no prior military service	48 (96.0%)	1 (2.2%)	23 (48.9%)
Civilian with prior military service	1 (2.0%)	7 (15.6%)	3 (6.4%)
Civilian who was previously enrolled in ROTC or West Point	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Sources used to obtain information before applying for OCS*</i>			
Army recruiters	41 (82.0%)	10 (22.2%)	24 (51.1%)
People in chain of command	5 (10.0%)	21 (46.7%)	16 (34.0%)
Written information provided by a recruiter	9 (18.0%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (17.0%)
Army Recruiting (GoArmy.com)	25 (50.0%)	7 (15.6%)	18 (38.3%)
OCS Homepage (www.benning.army.mil)	22 (44.0%)	33 (73.3%)	28 (59.6%)
US Army Homepage (www.army.mil)	10 (20.0%)	3 (6.7%)	7 (14.9%)
Facebook	4 (8.0%)	1 (2.2%)	2 (4.3%)
Army Knowledge Online (www.us.army.mil/)	8 (16.0%)	5 (11.1%)	10 (21.3%)
OCS Foundation (www.armyocs.com/)	13 (26.0%)	20 (44.4%)	22 (46.8%)
Other	14 (28.0%)	11 (24.4%)	13 (27.7%)
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Years of enlisted military service completed	.52 (1.93)	6.38 (3.08)	2.55 (2.92)

Note. \*Percentages for use of sources do not add to 100% because candidates were asked to “select all that apply”. Percentages reflect the proportion of each group of candidates selecting the response option.

### *Meeting Candidates’ Information Needs*

To better understand candidates’ information needs, the survey listed major components of OCS and asked candidates to indicate how important it was to have information on each topic when they were considering OCS. All of the identified topics appear to be important for candidates in all three groups; for each topic, more than 70% of each group stated that it was “somewhat important” or “very important” (i.e., a rating of 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5) to have information on the topic prior to OCS (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Importance, Understanding, and RJP's Coverage of OCS Components*

OCS component		Importance of	Had a good	Booklet would	After reading the
		having information on the topic prior to OCS	understanding of the topic prior to OCS	have met information needs on the topic prior to OCS	booklet, applicants would need more information about the topic
		<i>n</i> (%) selecting somewhat or very important	<i>n</i> (%) selecting strongly agree or agree	<i>n</i> (%) selecting to a great or very great extent	<i>n</i> (%) selecting strongly agree or agree
Duties and responsibilities of an Army Officer	EO	42 (84.0%)	28 (56.0%)	17 (34.0%)	31 (62.0%)
	IS	34 (75.6%)	37 (82.2%)	9 (20.0%)	27 (60.0%)
	HHC	39 (83.0%)	33 (70.2%)	15 (31.9%)	26 (55.3%)
Application process for OCS	EO	39 (78.0%)	25 (50.0%)	27 (54.0%)	30 (60.0%)
	IS	40 (88.9%)	28 (62.2%)	17 (37.8%)	33 (73.3%)
	HHC	42 (89.4%)	28 (59.6%)	24 (51.1%)	26 (55.3%)
Structure of the curriculum and training in OCS	EO	41 (82.0%)	11 (22.0%)	30 (60.0%)	25 (50.0%)
	IS	40 (88.9%)	15 (33.3%)	22 (48.9%)	29 (64.4%)
	HHC	38 (80.9%)	14 (29.8%)	19 (40.4%)	31 (66%)
How OCs are assigned to branches	EO	38 (76.0%)	24 (48.0%)	31 (62.0%)	19 (38.0%)
	IS	33 (73.3%)	23 (51.1%)	20 (44.4%)	21 (46.7%)
	HHC	38 (80.9%)	32 (68.1%)	26 (55.3%)	19 (40.4%)
OCS graduation requirements	EO	41 (82.0%)	8 (16.0%)	29 (58.0%)	33 (66.0%)
	IS	39 (86.7%)	16 (35.6%)	22 (48.9%)	30 (66.7%)
	HHC	38 (80.9%)	13 (27.7%)	25 (53.2%)	28 (59.6%)
Training and career path for Army officers after OCS	EO	42 (84.0%)	17 (34.0%)	26 (52.0%)	23 (46.0%)
	IS	33 (73.3%)	31 (68.9%)	14 (31.1%)	18 (40.0%)
	HHC	33 (70.2%)	30 (63.8%)	20 (42.6%)	24 (51.1%)
Challenges and obstacles that OCs typically experience in OCS	EO	43 (86.0%)	8 (16.0%)	21 (42.0%)	38 (76.0%)
	IS	39 (86.7%)	14 (31.1%)	18 (40.0%)	32 (71.1%)
	HHC	37 (78.7%)	10 (21.3%)	15 (31.9%)	36 (76.6%)
How to overcome challenges and obstacles that OCs typically experience in OCS	EO	36 (72.0%)	10 (20.0%)	17 (34.0%)	36 (72.0%)
	IS	37 (82.2%)	19 (42.2%)	14 (31.1%)	26 (57.8%)
	HHC	38 (80.9%)	13 (27.7%)	12 (25.5%)	30 (63.8%)

Note. EO = Enlistment-option candidate group. IS = In-service option candidate group. HHC = Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

To examine how well these important information needs were met when the candidates were considering OCS, we asked candidates to rate their understanding of each topic prior to OCS. Of the three groups, enlistment-option candidates reported the lowest levels of understanding for all topics. The best understood topic for enlistment-option candidates was knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of Army officers, but 50% or fewer reported a “good” understanding of the remaining topics. In-service candidates reported having a good understanding of Army officer duties, responsibilities, and career paths, which is not surprising considering their previous Army experience. HHC candidates also reported having a good



understanding about Army officer roles and careers, as well as about how candidates are assigned to branches. Several topic areas (e.g., typical challenges faced at OCS and how to overcome them, OCS curriculum and graduation requirements) were not well understood by any group prior to OCS, confirming the need for improved information about OCS.

To explore how well the RJP would have met the candidates' specific information needs prior to OCS, we asked candidates to rate the extent to which the booklet would have met their needs for each topic when they were considering OCS. Results indicate that the RJP was more likely to meet the needs of enlistment-option candidates in all of the topic areas. This is likely to be related to the finding that the enlistment-option group reported lower levels of understanding prior to OCS than did the other two groups. Enlistment-option and HHC candidates tended to be especially satisfied with the RJP's coverage of how officer candidates (OCs) are assigned to branches, while the RJP's information about OCS training, curriculum, and graduation met the in-service candidates' information needs better than its coverage of other topics. For every topic, more than 80% of OCs felt that the booklet would have met their information needs at least to a slight extent. The RJP did an especially good job of meeting information needs for certain topics, particularly topics that were not well understood by candidates prior to OCS. For example, the structure of the curriculum and training at OCS and graduation requirements were not well understood by any group prior to OCS, but more than 40% of candidates in each group stated that the RJP would have met their needs in those areas to a great or very great extent.

To identify content areas that may have insufficient coverage in the RJP, we asked candidates whether potential OCS applicants would need additional information about each topic even after reading the RJP. Across all groups, candidates believed that potential applicants would need more information about the challenges they may face at OCS as well as information about how to overcome those obstacles. This finding was confirmed when we examined differences between candidates' importance ratings of topics and their ratings of the RJP's coverage of those topics. For all three groups, we found the largest discrepancies between a topic's importance ratings and the RJP's ability to meet the information needs on that topic for the content areas of challenges and overcoming them. That is, candidates believed it was important to have information about common obstacles at OCS and how to deal with them, but they tended to say that the RJP did not provide enough information about these topics.

Because it is possible that important topics were omitted from the RJP, we asked candidates whether all important topics were covered. Sixty percent of in-service OCs, 53% of HHC candidates, and 50% of enlistment-option candidates agreed or strongly agreed that the RJP covered all important topics. We asked those who disagreed or strongly disagreed to list additional topics that should be covered. Their open-ended responses are summarized in Table 3. The most common suggestion from enlistment-option candidates was to add more information about delays that can occur at OCS. Candidates who commented on delays noted that they would have liked to have had more information about current backlogs at OCS, recycling, and daily life at HHC. One of the most common suggestions from the HHC and in-service groups was to include information about the use of the APFT for entering an OCS class. For example, some candidates stated that before they arrived at OCS, they were unaware of the APFT scores required to class up (i.e., be assigned to a class). Also noted by some candidates in all groups were graduation requirements and standards that had been altered (October 24, 2011) in light of some policy changes.

Table 3. *Suggestions for Additional Topics to Include in the RJP*

Category of response	Enlistment- option ( <i>n</i> = 17)	In-service ( <i>n</i> = 7)	HHC ( <i>n</i> = 14)
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
Packing list (e.g., detailed list of what candidates should bring to OCS)	3 (17.6%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (14.3%)
The use of PT scores and classing up (e.g., APFT cutoff scores of recent classes)	8 (47.1%)	3 (42.9%)	9 (64.3%)
Delays before or during OCS (e.g., backlogs, holdovers, recycling rules and rates) and what to expect while at HHC	11 (64.7%)	2 (28.6%)	8 (57.1%)
Long-term consequences of failing at OCS (e.g., path for those who recycle too many times)	3 (17.6%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (21.4%)
Graduation requirements (e.g., specific pass/fail cutoffs, changing requirements while at OCS)	1 (5.9%)	3 (42.9%)	6 (42.9%)

*Note.* We asked respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed that all important topics are covered to list topics for inclusion. The numbers in the table indicate the number of disagreeing respondents who provided a particular type of response. Some OCs suggested topics in more than one category.

The survey asked candidates several broad questions about the information provided in the RJP to get an understanding of their general assessment of the RJP’s content (see Table 4). HHC candidates were less likely than candidates in the other two groups to believe that the RJP provided an accurate picture of OCS and that it provided enough information about challenges and how to deal with those challenges. This is understandable, given the HHC candidates likely had to face unexpected obstacles that led them to HHC. However, even when including the HHC group, more than 40% of candidates stated that, at least to some extent, the RJP gave an accurate representation of OCS and provided enough information about challenges and overcoming them. More than 70% of candidates in all groups stated that the RJP answered important questions and would have been useful prior to OCS, at least to some extent. Although 38% of the candidates said that the RJP did not provide them with any new information, it is noteworthy that the rest of the candidates actually believed they learned something new from the RJP, considering they had all been at OCS for at least 4 weeks, and some for as long as 10 weeks.

### *Overall Evaluation of RJP*

At the conclusion of the pilot test we asked candidates several questions about their general evaluations of the RJP, as well as their opinions about the format, suggestions for its use, and any comments they wanted to share. Overall evaluations were universally positive, with 90% of all participants recommending continued development of the RJP, 89% stating the RJP would have been useful before applying to OCS, and 86% saying they would refer someone else to the RJP. The enlistment-option and in-service groups reacted more positively to these questions than did the HHC group (see Table 5), but this is not unexpected due to the likely increased frustrations and negative feelings experienced by the HHC group.

Table 4. *Evaluation of Information in RJP*

		Not at all	To a slight extent	To some extent	To a great extent	To a very great extent
		<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
To what extent did the booklet... provide new information about OCS?	EO	19 (38.0%)	11 (22.0%)	14 (28.0%)	5 (10.0%)	1 (2.0%)
	IS	14 (31.1%)	13 (28.9%)	11 (24.4%)	6 (13.3%)	1 (2.2%)
	HHC	21 (44.7%)	5 (10.6%)	12 (25.5%)	9 (19.1%)	0 (0.0%)
provide information that would have been useful prior to joining OCS?	EO	3 (6.0%)	5 (10.0%)	19 (38.0%)	16 (32.0%)	7 (14.0%)
	IS	3 (6.7%)	9 (20.0%)	17 (37.8%)	7 (15.6%)	9 (20.0%)
	HHC	6 (12.8%)	7 (14.9%)	9 (19.1%)	15 (31.9%)	10 (21.3%)
answer important questions about OCS? <sup>a</sup>	EO	3 (6.0%)	9 (18.0%)	17 (34.0%)	13 (26.0%)	6 (12.0%)
	IS	5 (11.1%)	11 (24.4%)	16 (35.6%)	8 (17.8%)	5 (11.1%)
	HHC	9 (19.1%)	8 (17.0%)	16 (34.0%)	11 (23.4%)	3 (6.4%)
provide information about the challenges faced in OCS?	EO	5 (10.0%)	9 (18.0%)	14 (28.0%)	19 (38.0%)	3 (6.0%)
	IS	6 (13.3%)	9 (20.0%)	15 (33.3%)	11 (24.4%)	4 (8.9%)
	HHC	11 (23.4%)	9 (19.1%)	13 (27.7%)	11 (23.4%)	3 (6.4%)
provide information about how to overcome those challenges?	EO	12 (24.0%)	14 (28.0%)	18 (36.0%)	5 (10.0%)	1 (2.0%)
	IS	9 (20.0%)	12 (26.7%)	18 (40.0%)	3 (6.7%)	3 (6.7%)
	HHC	18 (38.3%)	8 (17.0%)	13 (27.7%)	5 (10.6%)	3 (6.4%)
provide an accurate representation of OCS? <sup>b</sup>	EO	7 (14.0%)	11 (22.0%)	19 (38.0%)	10 (20.0%)	3 (6.0%)
	IS	4 (8.9%)	14 (31.1%)	20 (44.4%)	4 (8.9%)	3 (6.7%)
	HHC	13 (27.7%)	11 (23.4%)	12 (25.5%)	8 (17.0%)	2 (4.3%)

Note. EO = Enlistment-option candidate group. IS = In-service option candidate group. <sup>a</sup>Two EO candidates did not respond to this item. <sup>b</sup>One candidate in the HHC did not respond to this item.

When we asked OCs to recommend a format for the RJP, the most popular answer in all three groups was to make it available online as a downloadable document. Nearly all (97%) candidates said that the RJP booklet was easy to read in the present format. We also asked OCs where they thought the RJP should be made available: seventy percent or more of candidates in all groups thought the RJP should be available at Army Recruiting Offices, at the Army Recruiting website, and on the OCS Homepage. (Note that the addresses for these websites are shown in Table 5).

Last, we gave candidates an opportunity to provide comments, positive or negative, about the RJP. Categories describing OCs' open-ended comments are listed in Table 6. Twenty percent of all participants provided positive comments about the RJP, including complimentary statements about its usefulness, organization, readability, and content. The most common category of comments for enlistment-option and in-service candidates was related to updates needed in the RJP. Candidates identified a misplaced photo/text that was subsequently revised. Several OCs also noted that OCS graduation standards are always changing, which will be difficult to keep up-to-date in the RJP. The most common response from the HHC group was that the RJP needed more information about setbacks such as recycling and life at HHC.

**Table 5. Overall Evaluation of RJP Booklet and Suggestions for Use**

	Enlistment-	
	option (n = 50)	In-service (n = 45)
	n (%)	n (%)
Would you recommend continuing the development of the booklet? <sup>a</sup>		
Yes	48 (96.0%)	44 (97.8%)
No	2 (4.0%)	1 (2.2%)
Would it have been useful to have had this booklet before applying to OCS? <sup>b</sup>		
Yes	45 (90.0%)	41 (91.1%)
No	5 (10.0%)	3 (6.7%)
Would you refer someone else applying to OCS to the booklet? <sup>c</sup>		
Yes	42 (84.0%)	42 (93.3%)
No	6 (12.0%)	3 (6.7%)
Where should the booklet be made available?		
At an Army Recruiting Office	45 (90.0%)	37 (82.2%)
Army Recruiting (GoArmy.com)	40 (80.0%)	34 (75.6%)
MEPS	24 (48.0%)	23 (51.1%)
OCS Homepage (www.benning.army.mil)	39 (78.0%)	36 (80.0%)
US Army Homepage (www.army.mil)	29 (58.0%)	32 (71.1%)
Facebook	26 (52.0%)	28 (62.2%)
Army Knowledge Online (www.us.army.mil/)	22 (44.0%)	31 (68.9%)
OCS Foundation (www.armyocs.com/)	29 (58.0%)	25 (55.6%)
Other	4 (8.0%)	8 (17.8%)
What would be the best format for presentation of this booklet?		
Online in a downloadable format (e.g., pdf document, Powerpoint)	33 (66.0%)	35 (77.8%)
Online in a web format (e.g., pages linked using HTML)	19 (38.0%)	18 (40.0%)
Paper	22 (44.0%)	15 (33.3%)
Smart phone application	9 (18.0%)	13 (28.9%)
Other	1 (2.0%)	1 (2.2%)
Is the booklet easy to read?		
Yes	48 (96.0%)	44 (97.8%)
No	2 (4.0%)	1 (2.2%)

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>One candidate in HHC did not respond to this item. <sup>b</sup>One IS candidate did not respond to this item. <sup>c</sup>Two EO candidates did not respond to this item.

## Conclusions

To ensure effectiveness of the RJP, the research team conducted a pilot study evaluation survey. The survey was administered to enlistment-option candidates, in-service candidates, and candidates currently waiting for their assignment to a company. We provided a list of major components of OCS and asked candidates to indicate how important it was to have information on each topic when they were considering OCS. All of the identified topics appear to be important for candidates in all three groups; for each topic, more than 70% of each group stated that it was somewhat or very important to have information on the topic prior to OCS.

**Table 6. *Open-ended Comments about RJP***

Category of response	Enlistment- option ( <i>n</i> = 50)	In-service ( <i>n</i> = 45)	HHC ( <i>n</i> = 47)
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
Positive feedback (e.g., well-organized, covers everything an OC needs to know, would have been helpful prior to OCS)	10 (20.0%)	9 (20.0%)	10 (21.3%)
Updates or corrections needed (e.g., ascots are not the correct colors, graduation standards are not up-to-date)	12 (24.0%)	11 (24.4%)	10 (21.3%)
Not enough detail in general (e.g., needs more information in most sections, booklet is too short)	5 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (10.6%)
More information about delays, classing up, HHC, or recycling	10 (20.0%)	7 (15.6%)	14 (29.8%)
More information about applying to and preparing for OCS (e.g., packing list)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.2%)	5 (10.6%)

*Note.* Some OCs suggested topics in more than one category.

Of the three groups, enlistment-option candidates reported the lowest levels of understanding for all topics. Several topic areas (e.g., typical challenges faced at OCS and how to overcome them, OCS curriculum and graduation requirements) were not well understood by any group prior to OCS, confirming the need for improved information about OCS. The structure of the curriculum and training at OCS and graduation requirements were not well understood by any group prior to OCS, but a large number of candidates in each group stated that the RJP would have met their needs in those areas. Across all groups, candidates believed that potential applicants would need more information about the challenges they may face at OCS as well as information about how to overcome those obstacles. Officer candidates in HHC were less likely than candidates in the other two groups to believe that the RJP provided an accurate picture of OCS and that it provided enough information about challenges and how to deal with those challenges. However, even when including the HHC group, many candidates stated that the RJP gave an accurate representation of OCS and provided enough information about challenges and overcoming them. Overall evaluations of the RJP were positive, with nearly all pilot study participants recommending continued development of the RJP, stating the RJP would have been useful before applying to OCS, and saying they would refer someone else to the RJP.

In summary, the RJPs were generally effective in that they were reported to meet candidate needs for information. However, OCS should not limit its efforts at improving information for new candidates to the RJPs. The RJPs should be complemented by additional information for all candidates on classing into OCS, and any potential delays that may occur during this procedure.

## Next Steps

### *Updating RJP Content*

Regardless of the medium in which the RJP's are posted, OCS should institute a review and update procedure for the RJP's to ensure that the information presented in both the in-service and enlistment-option RJP's is accurate and up-to-date. The RJP's should be viewed as living documents that need to change with new policies or procedures.

We recommend that OCS review and adjust RJP content annually to ensure consistency with policy and procedure. We also recommend that OCS, with support from ARI, survey applicants and or new officer candidates every year or two to ensure that the RJP is meeting their informational needs. The RJP survey included in this report could be administered to future classes for this purpose.

Ideally, future versions of the RJP's would be interactive. In an interactive environment, potential applicants could post questions and answer survey questions about the RJP. OCS could keep tabs on user requests and feedback to learn how to tailor the RJP to better meet user needs. An interactive environment would also allow inclusion of short videos depicting OCS candidates in exercises or classes and enhance the realism of the realistic job preview.

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## Appendix A

### Informed Consent for Focus Groups

#### **Title: Identification and Accessioning of Individuals for OCS II**

**Purpose of the research study:** The purpose of this study is to develop tools and information aids that will help potential applicants learn about OCS and will help standardize the evaluation of leadership performance in OCS.

**What you will be asked to do in this study:** You will be asked to participate in a short, informal focus group or interview. You will be asked a number of questions relating to topics about the OCS selection and application process, characteristics of successful officers, performance in OCS, policies regarding OCS selection, etc.

**Location:** This study will be conducted at Ft. Benning, Ga.

**Voluntary participation:** Your participation is voluntary; there is no penalty for not participating. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without bias. If you choose not to participate, you are requested to sit quietly until the research has been completed. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

**Time required:** Up to 2 hours.

**Risks:** All discussions will focus topics related to processes of OCS recruitment and application. We will not ask for any personal information. We do not anticipate any risks during this session.

**Benefits:** Your responses will help develop recommendations to improve the application, recruitment, and accessioning process to OCS. It will also help to devise measures for selection of candidates who are likely to perform well as junior officers, fit well in the Army's culture, demonstrate leadership potential for higher ranks, and pursue a long term Army career.

**Compensation:** No compensation is provided for your participation.

**Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:** You should send your questions to ARI\_RES@conus.army.mil. Reference project name: Identification and Accessioning of Individuals for OCS.

**Whom to contact about your rights in the study:** Contact ARI\_RES@conus.army.mil. Reference project name: Identification and Accessioning of Individuals for OCS. **If responding to any of the written or oral questions becomes unpleasant for you, you can withdraw from the session at any time. If you feel you'd like to confer with someone confidentially after this discussion, please go to the Military OneSource web site (<https://www.militaryonesource.com>) or call the 1-800-342-9647 number.**

**Informed Consent**

**Title: Identification and Accessioning of Individuals for OCS**

**If you agree to participate in this study, please sign and date below.**

**Agreement:** I have read the procedures described above.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am at least 18 years of age (check)

\_\_\_\_\_ I voluntarily agree to participate in the study (check)

**Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### RJP Focus Group Questions for OCS Candidates

*Note to Focus Group Facilitator: please hand out enough copies of the RJP booklets to the appropriate audiences (e.g., give the in-service booklet to the in-service option OCs). The “Introduction” should be put into a cover page and attached to the front of the booklets to allow OCs to gain familiarity with the purpose of the focus group.*

#### Introduction:

The Officer Candidate School (OCS) needs to commission officers who are likely to perform well as junior officers, fit well in the Army’s culture, demonstrate leadership potential for higher ranks, and stay beyond their initial Active Duty Service Obligation (ADSO). In response, the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) initiated a study to develop recommendations for improving the OCS accessions process. To accomplish this, focus groups and one-on-one interviews with stakeholders, including OCs and company cadre, were held to gather data about the accessioning process at OCS. Key findings from these focus groups indicated that potential applicants need better information about the OCS application process, curriculum, and key events (such as branch assignments) to facilitate better self-selection into OCS.

Toward that end, the following draft booklet was developed. Currently, we are working on gathering information for the content of this booklet. At later stages we will examine possible modes of presentation (paper, on-line, video, etc.), as well as methods of distribution (recruiters, OCS website, etc.).

We are very interested in your feedback on this draft product. As current OCs, your experience with the process of learning about, deciding on, applying for, and being selected into OCS is a valuable source of information for this project. Your input will enable us to develop a product to ensure that OCS and the Army recruit and retain candidates who are highly motivated and highly informed about the path to becoming an officer.

Thank you!

#### **OCS Candidate Questions**

##### *Overall Evaluation of Content*

- General
  - Prior to OCS, which topics did you have the least information on? The most information?
  - Prior to OCS, which topics did you best understand? Least understand?
  - How adequate was the information you had about OCS to make the decision to apply?
  - What major topic areas are not covered in this booklet?
  - What additional challenges should applicants be aware of?

- Which areas in the current booklet are most deficient?
- Does this booklet provide a realistic, balanced picture of what OCs can expect? If not, what should be added or changed?
- Uses
  - In your opinion, is the booklet more valuable for some OCS applicants than for others? Explain.
  - How do you think the booklet might be most effectively used?
- During OCS
  - What frustrations have you experienced before or during OCS?
  - What advice would you give to others to help them overcome these frustrations?
- After OCS
  - What current questions do you have about your career after OCS that could be addressed in the booklet?
- Format
  - Are there any formatting changes that would make the booklet easier to read and understand?
  - Are there any additional figures, tables, or photos that would be helpful?

*Section-Specific Questions on RJP Content*

*(questions below will address each of the following areas currently included in the RJP)*

- What is OCS?
- Why Choose OCS?
- Curriculum
- Graduation Requirements
- Branch Assignments
- Basic Combat Training/Physical Fitness
- How to Apply
- Beyond OCS
- Common Frustrations & Misperceptions
- General Information/FAQs
  - Is the coverage on this topic comprehensive enough? What additional information would be useful for current applicants? What other information on this topic do potential applicants need to make an informed decision about applying for OCS?
  - Is all of the information accurate? If not, what should be changed?
  - Does the information in this section address concerns or questions you had before OCS? What other concerns or questions did you have about these topics that are not addressed in this section?
  - What are your reactions to the images, tables, and figures in this section? Are there too few or too many? Are any confusing? Do any appear out-of-date? What additional tables or figures would improve understanding?
  - How well did you understand this topic before applying to OCS? What information would have given you a better understanding of the topic? What

information on this topic do you wish you would have had before applying for or arriving at OCS?

- When you were considering OCS, how important was it to you to have information on this topic?
- What were some misperceptions on this topic you had before coming to OCS?
- What unanswered questions do you still have about this topic?

Conclusion:

Thank you for your time and participation. Please turn in the RJP booklets to us along with any comments you may have written down in response to the questions.

## Appendix C

### RJP Focus Group Questions for Instructor-Writers<sup>1</sup>

*Note to Focus Group Facilitator: please hand out enough copies of the RJP booklets to the Instructor Writers. The “Introduction” should be put into a cover page and attached to the front of the booklets to allow the Instructor Writers to gain familiarity with the purpose of the focus group.*

#### Introduction:

The Officer Candidate School (OCS) needs to commission officers who are likely to perform well as junior officers, fit well in the Army’s culture, demonstrate leadership potential for higher ranks, and stay beyond their initial Active Duty Service Obligation (ADSO). In response, the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) initiated a study to develop recommendations for improving the OCS accessions process. To accomplish this, focus groups and one-on-one interviews with stakeholders, including OCs and company cadre, were held to gather data about the accessioning process at OCS. Key findings from these focus groups indicated that potential applicants need better information about the OCS application process, curriculum, and key events (such as branch assignments) to facilitate better self-selection into OCS.

Toward that end, the following draft booklet was developed. Currently, we are working on gathering information for the content of this booklet. At later stages we will examine possible modes of presentation (paper, on-line, video, etc.), as well as methods of distribution (recruiters, OCS website, etc.).

We are very interested in your feedback on this draft product. As current OCS Instructor-Writers, your experience with the OCS curriculum, program, and candidates is a valuable source of information for this project. Your input will enable us to develop a product to ensure that OCS and the Army recruit and retain candidates who are highly motivated and highly informed about the path to becoming an officer.

Thank you!

#### **Questions**

##### *Overall Evaluation of Content*

- General
  - What major topic areas are not covered in this booklet?
  - What additional challenges should applicants be aware of?
  - Which areas in the current booklet are most deficient?

---

<sup>1</sup> Cadre refers to all of the officers and instructors who run a training company. Instructor-writers are cadre members. They are usually enlisted personnel.

- Does this booklet provide a realistic, balanced picture of what OCs can expect? If not, what should be added or changed?
- Do you feel that this tool will improve self-selection of candidates into OCS? How so? If not, what could be changed to achieve this?
- What are some personal characteristics that define excellent candidates?
- What do you think excellent applicants would want to read in the manual that would make OCS attractive to them and make them want to apply?
- Are there any additional resources that you think applicants should be guided toward?
- Uses
  - In your opinion, is the booklet more valuable for some OCS applicants than for others? Explain.
  - How do you think the booklet might be most effectively used?
- During OCS
  - What frustrations/difficulties have you observed OCs having during the program?
  - What advice would you give OCs to help them overcome these frustrations?
  - What do you think should be included in the section “Advice from Company Commanders”?
  - Are there any additional topic areas regarding how to be successful at OCS that you think should be included?
- Format
  - Are there any formatting changes that would make the booklet easier to read and understand?
  - Are there any additional figures, tables, or photos that would be helpful?

*Section-Specific Questions on RJP Content*

*(questions below will address each of the following areas currently included in the RJP)*

- What is OCS?
- Why Choose OCS?
- Curriculum
- Graduation Requirements
- Branch Assignments
- Basic Combat Training/Physical Fitness
- How to Apply
- Beyond OCS
- Common Frustrations & Misperceptions
- General Information/FAQs
  - Is the coverage on this topic comprehensive enough? What additional information would be useful for current applicants? What other information on this topic do potential applicants need to make an informed decision about applying for OCS?
  - Is all of the information accurate? If not, what should be changed?

- Does the information in this section address concerns or questions you typically observe candidates to have? What other concerns or questions do you frequently hear about these topics that are not addressed in this section?
- What are your reactions to the images, tables, and figures in this section? Are there too few or too many? Are any confusing? Do any appear out-of-date? What additional tables or figures would improve understanding?
- What information on this topic do you wish OCs had before applying for or arriving at OCS?
- How important is it that applicants have information on this topic?
- What are some common misperceptions on this topic that applicants/OCs have?

Specific Questions:

- What are your impressions of the description of an officer? Does it accurately portray the position?
- Should extended descriptions of any of the curriculum/activities be included?
- Do you have advice for OCs on how to choose a branch?
- For Enlistment Option: Is there adequate information to prepare candidates for BCT?

Conclusion:

Thank you for your time and participation. Please turn in the RJP booklets to us along with any comments you may have written down in response to the questions.



## Appendix D

### Pilot Test Survey of RJPs

#### Review of the “Thinking about Officer Candidate School?” Booklet

This survey asks about the materials you reviewed in the “Thinking about Officer Candidate School?” booklet. Please read the directions for each question and mark the appropriate answer.

1. Which “Thinking about Officer Candidate School?” booklet did you review?
  - Enlistment-option
  - In-service option
  
2. What is your current Army status?
  - Regular Army
  - Army National Guard
  - Army Reserve
  - Other (please specify):\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What week of OCS training are you currently in?
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7
  - 8
  - 9
  - 10
  - 11
  - 12
  - N/A – I am currently in HHC.
  
4. When applying for OCS, which of the following best described you?
  - An enlisted Army Soldier
  - A current enlisted member from another Service (e.g., Air Force, Marines)
  - A civilian with no prior military service
  - A civilian with prior military service
  - A civilian who was previously enrolled in ROTC or West Point

5. Please circle the number of years/months of enlisted military service you have completed. Circle '00' in both "months" and "years" if you have NO prior military service.

Years	
0	0
1	1
2	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
	7
	8
	9

Months	
0	0
1	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
	7
	8
	9

6. Prior to OCS, I had a good understanding of...

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
the duties and responsibilities of an Army Officer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the application process for OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the structure of the curriculum and training in OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how Officer Candidates get assigned to branches.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the OCS graduation requirements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the training and career path for Army officers after OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the challenges and obstacles that Officer Candidates typically experience in OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. We are trying to determine where OCS applicants obtain information to make a decision about applying for OCS. Did you use any of the following sources? (select all that apply)

- Army recruiters
- People in your chain of command
- Written information provided by a recruiter
- Army Recruiting (GoArmy.com)
- OCS Homepage ([www.benning.army.mil](http://www.benning.army.mil))
- US Army Homepage ([www.army.mil](http://www.army.mil))
- Facebook
- Army Knowledge Online ([www.us.army.mil/](http://www.us.army.mil/))
- OCS Foundation ([www.armyocs.com/](http://www.armyocs.com/))
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

8. To what extent did the “Thinking about Officer Candidate School?” booklet...

	<b>Not at All</b>	<b>To a Slight Extent</b>	<b>To Some Extent</b>	<b>To a Great Extent</b>	<b>To a Very Great Extent</b>
provide you with new information about OCS?	○	○	○	○	○
provide you with information that would have been useful prior to joining OCS?	○	○	○	○	○
answer important questions about OCS?	○	○	○	○	○
provide you with information about the challenges you will face in OCS?	○	○	○	○	○
provide you with information about how to overcome those challenges?	○	○	○	○	○
provide an accurate representation of OCS?	○	○	○	○	○

9. When you were considering OCS, how important was it to you to have information about...

	<b>Not at all Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Unimportant</b>	<b>Neither Important nor Unimportant</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>
the duties and responsibilities of an Army Officer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the application process for OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the structure of the curriculum and training in OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how Officer Candidates get assigned to branches.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the OCS graduation requirements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the training and career path for Army officers after OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the challenges and obstacles that Officer Candidates typically experience in OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how to overcome the challenges and obstacles that Officer Candidates typically experience in OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. When you were considering OCS, to what extent would the “*Thinking about Officer Candidate School?*” booklet have met your needs for information about...

	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>To a Slight Extent</b>	<b>To Some Extent</b>	<b>To a Great Extent</b>	<b>To a Very Great Extent</b>
the duties and responsibilities of an Army Officer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the application process for OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the structure of the curriculum and training in OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how Officer Candidates get assigned to branches.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the OCS graduation requirements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the training and career path for Army officers after OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the challenges and obstacles that Officer Candidates typically experience in OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how to overcome the challenges and obstacles that Officer Candidates typically experience in OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Even after reading the *Thinking about Officer Candidate School?* booklet, potential OCS applicants would need more specific information about the following topics:

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
the duties and responsibilities of an Army Officer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the application process for OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the structure of the curriculum and training in OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how Officer Candidates get assigned to branches.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the OCS graduation requirements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the training and career path for Army officers after OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the challenges and obstacles that Officer Candidates typically experience in OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how to overcome the challenges and obstacles that Officer Candidates typically experience in OCS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. After reading the *“Thinking about Officer Candidate School?”* booklet, I feel that all important topics were covered.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

12a. If you responded “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree” to Question 12, please list which additional topics should be covered.

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12. Would you recommend continuing the development of the *“Thinking about Officer Candidate School?”* booklet?

- Yes
- No

13. In your opinion where should the “*Thinking about Officer Candidate School?*” booklet be made available? (select all that apply)

- At an Army Recruiting Office
- Army Recruiting (GoArmy.com)
- MEPS
- OCS Homepage ([www.benning.army.mil](http://www.benning.army.mil))
- US Army Homepage ([www.army.mil](http://www.army.mil))
- Facebook
- Army Knowledge Online ([www.us.army.mil/](http://www.us.army.mil/))
- OCS Foundation ([www.armyocs.com/](http://www.armyocs.com/))
- Other (please specify):\_\_\_\_\_

14. What do you think would be the best format for presentation of this booklet?

- Online in a downloadable format (e.g., pdf document, Powerpoint)
- Online in a web format (e.g., pages linked using HTML)
- Paper
- Smart phone application
- Other (please specify):\_\_\_\_\_

15. Would it have been useful to have had this booklet before applying to OCS?

- Yes
- No

16. Would you refer someone else applying to OCS to the “*Thinking about Officer Candidate School?*” booklet?

- Yes
- No

17. Is the “*Thinking about Officer Candidate School?*” booklet easy to read?

- Yes
- No

18. Please provide any comments (negative or positive) that you may have on the booklet below.

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Appendix E

Enlistment-option RJP

THINKING ABOUT



OFFICER  
CANDIDATE  
SCHOOL?

A GUIDE FOR ENLISTMENT-OPTION  
CANDIDATES



## THIS GUIDE IS DESIGNED TO:

- ◇ Help you decide if OCS is right for you by providing:
  - ◇ information on being an Army officer
  - ◇ the curriculum and training in OCS
  - ◇ the challenge of completing OCS
  - ◇ how to apply to OCS

## THIS GUIDE IS INTENDED FOR:

- ◇ Civilians interested in joining the Army as a commissioned officer (Enlistment-Option applicants)

<b>What is an Army Officer?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>What is OCS?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Army Organizational Structure</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>How Do I Apply to OCS?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Basic Combat Training</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>OCS Curriculum</b>	<b>8-9</b>
<b>The Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT)</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Branch Assignment Process</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Graduation Requirements</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Beyond OCS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Advice on How to Succeed in OCS</b>	<b>14-15</b>
<b>Suggested Readings</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Resources for More Information</b>	<b>16</b>



## WHAT IS AN ARMY OFFICER?

### **A Leader of Character:**

- lives by the Army Values of honor, integrity, courage, loyalty, respect, selfless service, and duty; displays empathy
- takes care of Soldiers by giving them the training, equipment, and support they need to keep them alive in combat and accomplish the mission
- lives by the Warrior Ethos; shows unrelenting and consistent determination to do what is right and to do it with pride

### **A Leader with Presence:**

- projects a commanding presence and a professional image of authority (military bearing)
- is physically fit
- demonstrates composure and outward calm through steady control over emotion; is resilient; has the ability to quickly recover from setbacks, adversity, and stress while maintaining a mission and organizational focus

### **A Leader with Intellectual Capacity:**

- anticipates and adapts to uncertain or changing situations
- displays good judgment
- recognizes and respects diversity

The duties of the Army officer are multifaceted. Each major duty of an officer is dedicated to fulfilling the mission of the U.S. Army. These duties include:

#### Leads

***Leads others*** : inspires, encourages, and guides others toward mission accomplishment

***Extends influence beyond the Chain of Command*** : keeps people informed of action and results

***Leads by example*** : removes or fights through obstacles to accomplish the mission

***Communicates*** : reflects on new information before expressing views

#### Develops

***Creates a positive environment*** : shows others how to accomplish tasks while remaining focused

***Prepares self*** : removes emotions from decision making

***Develop others*** : provides realistic, mission-oriented training

#### Achieves

***Gets results*** : considers contingencies and their consequences



## WHAT IS THE OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL(OCS)?

The Army's Officer Candidate School (OCS) is located at Ft. Benning, Georgia. Historically, OCS has been used as a resource to bolster and increase the size of the officer corps in the U.S. Army during times of war or international conflict. When the U.S. was in need of officers, OCS was employed to commission officers quickly in support of the Army's need for leadership in a large combat force. This was the case for World War II, the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam War, and the global war on terror.

OCS has continued to provide the Army with a flexible source of qualified commissioned officers. OCS has been, and remains, a critical factor in the Army's ability to supplement and grow a pool of high quality leaders who demonstrate strong capabilities for junior and eventually senior officer ranks and make the Army a career.

Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq) and Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) necessitated the need for more officers in the US Army. New officers were commissioned with the expectation that they would be deployed to either one of these theaters. As the mission for both of these operations becomes less demanding, the number of officers needed by the Army is expected to decrease. In response, the Army is decreasing the number of officers it commissions each year, making the application process more competitive.

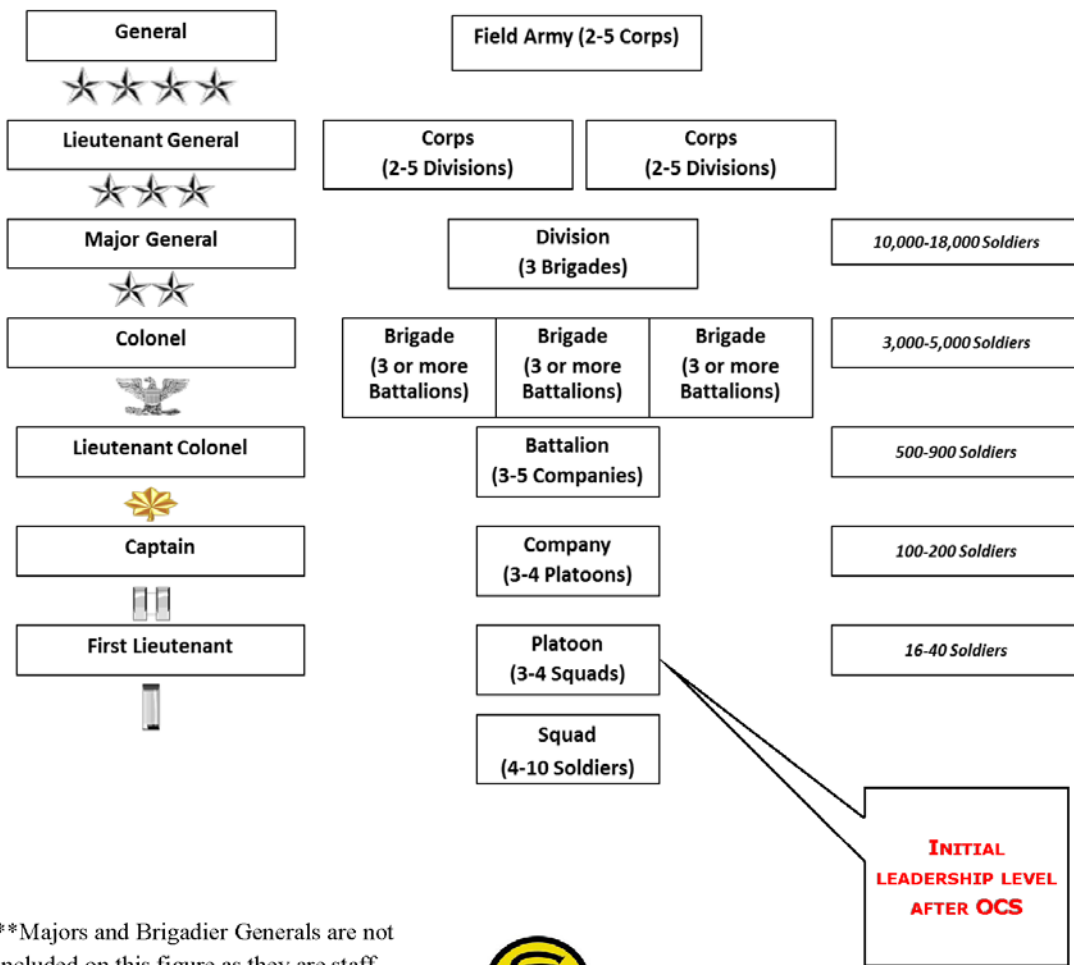
The Army commissions officer candidates for OCS from two main sources: In-Service candidates and Enlistment-Option candidates. In-Service candidates are current Soldiers in the Army who are selected for OCS participation. Enlistment-Option candidates are civilians who complete 10 weeks of Basic Combat Training (BCT) and 12 weeks of OCS before becoming second lieutenants. Candidates also include Reserve and National Guard Soldiers; however, these populations have separate requirements and should consult their recruiters for more information.



# ARMY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Army's organizational structure is a hierarchy.\*\* At each level, a higher level officer is in command, and the number of Soldiers that he or she is in charge of increases. Candidates in OCS are commissioned as second lieutenants in the Army and assume responsibility for platoons, which are comprised of 3-4 squads, or roughly 12-40 Soldiers.

## Command Level



\*\*Majors and Brigadier Generals are not included on this figure as they are staff positions, not command positions.

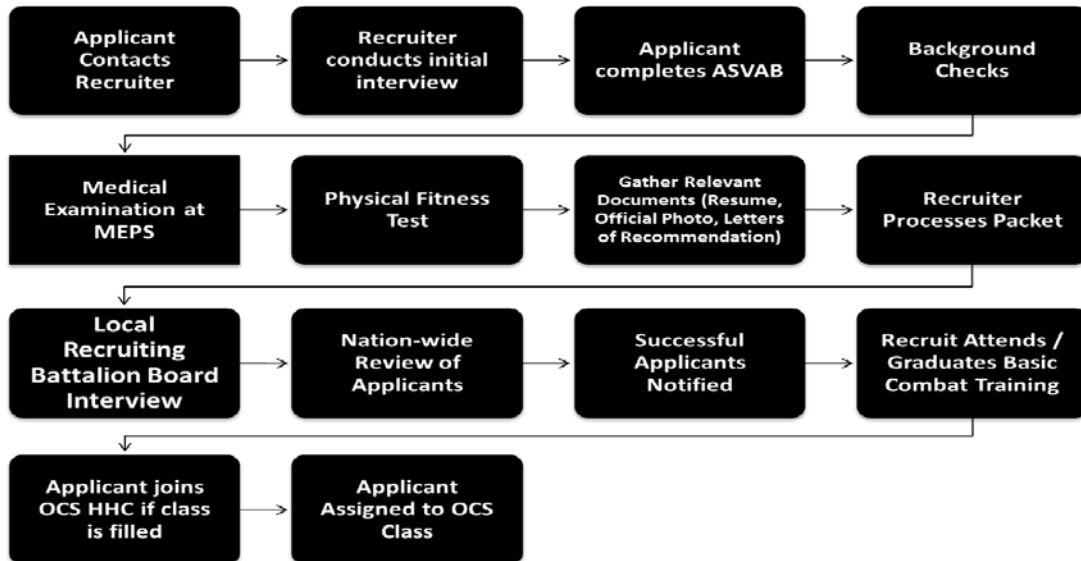


# HOW DO I APPLY TO OCS?

Eligibility Requirements: Enlistment-Option Candidates (*current as of October, 2011*)

- Be a United States citizen.
- Be at least 18 but less than 28 years of age at the time of enrollment.
- Have a 4-year Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university.
- Achieve a General Technical Aptitude Test (GT) score of 110 or higher on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB).
- Exceed the minimum Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) score (240) and meet the Army height and weight standards.
- Have a medical examination within 9 months of the date of the application at a Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS).
- Be of good moral character. Have no convictions by civil or military courts.
- Be able to obtain a Secret security clearance or higher (Top Secret for Military Intelligence).

Enlistment-Option applicants are recruited and selected by the U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC). All applicants complete an application packet. A central element of the packet is a 4-page application form, DA Form 61, which asks detailed questions about the candidate's demographics, educational history, military service, special training, and civilian employment history. You will complete this form in cooperation with your recruiter.



# BASIC COMBAT TRAINING

After being accepted into OCS, Enlistment-Option candidates must attend Basic Combat Training (BCT). BCT is a 9 week course and includes an additional 1.5 weeks of orientation. BCT is required for everyone wishing to join the military. BCT has three phases: Red, White, and Blue. The phases of BCT training include:

## ***PHASE I Red Phase or Patriot Phase (Weeks 1-3)***

- Recruits arrive for general orientation and are issued haircuts and Army uniforms.
- Basic Tactical training begins followed by Nuclear Biological and Chemical Defense, Landmine Defense and rappelling at the confidence tower.
- Recruits learn about Army heritage and the Seven Army Core Values.
- Recruits undergo the Army Physical Fitness Test to help determine their physical aptitude. This test is routinely administered to Soldiers throughout their enlistment periods to ensure their top physical condition.
- This phase focuses on starting the soldierization process.

## ***PHASE II White Phase or Gunfighter Phase (Weeks 4-6)***

- Recruits go through Marksmanship and combat training and learn to rappel at the Warrior Tower.
- This training teaches vital Soldier skills and instills them with more confidence.

## ***PHASE III Blue Phase (Weeks 7-9)***

- After becoming familiar with the use of automatic weapons and hand grenades in U.S. Weapons training, recruits put their training to the test as they negotiate the Night Infiltration Course.
- Participate in Field Training Exercise.
- After passing all their tests and challenges, they congregate for Rites of Passage, graduation ceremony.

Additional details for all three phases are provided on the [Ft. Benning](#) website.

Preparation for BCT is essential to avoid injury. The Army produces an [interactive physical training](#) guide for recruits to use to prepare for BCT.



# OCS CURRICULUM

Each week of the OCS program addresses a different aspect of officership. The curriculum is broken into 6-week intervals. During the first 6-week period, Officer Candidates are in the Basic Officer candidate phase. During this phase, the OCS instructors (OCS staff responsible for training) instruct candidates in individual skills, doctrine, and theory to help the candidates learn their profession of officership. This process is called “immersion” and is essential for transitioning into the life of an Army officer. This phase is much like basic training. During immersion, candidates are restricted to training and the barracks with rare exception. This enables them to devote as much time and energy as possible to their studies.

## **Weeks 1-3** focus on individual skills.

- Initial Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT)
- Bolton Confidence Course
- Combat Water Survival Test (CWST)
- Directorate of Training (DOT): 29 hours of instruction; topics include Leadership and Justice, Ethics, and Call for Fire.

## **Weeks 4-6** transition into doctrine and theory.

- Bush Hill Terrain Walk
- Leadership Reaction Course (LRC)
- 7 mile Conditioning Foot March, 4 mile timed Release Run, Combatives, 5 mile timed Release Run
- Intermediate Officer Candidate Review (SOCR)
- DOT: 75 hours of instruction; topics include Troop Leading Procedures, Army Operations, Military Intelligence, Military History (American Revolution-Civil War)
- Branch ceremony

**Phase I:  
Basic Officer Candidate Phase**

During the first 6-week period, candidates wear black neck ascots in order to identify themselves as Basic Officer Candidates.





# OCS CURRICULUM

In the Intermediate and Senior Phases, candidates continue to learn and demonstrate leadership, professionalism, and officership in field, garrison, and social environments. During these phases, there is increased responsibility for the candidates. Company Command begins to transition to candidates, with the instructors being available for questions. The candidates receive advanced leadership instruction and participate in senior leader seminars and social events during this phase. The Senior Phase is the “refining” phase of OCS and involves preparation for the officer environment. Candidates are given increasing levels of responsibility during this phase. It is also during this phase that candidates transition to the white ascots.

<p><b>Weeks 7-9</b> focus on field applications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership Evaluations</li> <li>• Land Navigation</li> <li>• Field Leadership Exercises</li> <li>• 7 and 10 mile tactical foot marches</li> <li>• 18 days of field training (number differs by Company)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Phase II: Intermediate Phase</b></p>
<p><b>Weeks 10-12</b> focus on officership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recovery from Field Leadership Exercises I and II</li> <li>• Infantry Branch Run/Armor Branch Run/Graduation Run</li> <li>• Military History (World War I-post Vietnam)</li> <li>• Senior Leader Seminars</li> <li>• Transitioning to become Commissioned Officers; Graduation Social, Graduation Formal, Graduation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Phase III: Senior Phase</b></p>

One term frequently used in OCS is “recycled.” This means a candidate is removed from his/her company and must join the Headquarters Company (HHC). This can happen for multiple reasons, such as failure to complete or pass certain OCS requirements, significant injury that prevents a candidate from completing physical fitness training (PT), and violating OCS policy. Consult the [OCS Standard Operating Procedures \(SOPs\)](#) for more information on recycling and how it will affect your progress through OCS. The SOPs detail the responsibilities and duties of candidates during training in OCS. The SOPs are designed to assist candidates in their day-to-day duties and activities.



# THE ARMY PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST (APFT)



Fitness level is important in creating a perception of command presence, as well as to engender respect from your fellow OCS candidates.

## Physical Fitness in OCS

Physical fitness (PT) is essential to performance in OCS and throughout an officer's career. If injured and unable to maintain fitness levels, an OC

may have to

*"PT is something everyone can improve -- it's the easiest thing to improve."*

*"If you can't perform PT well with your Soldiers, you will not be looked up to by your subordinates."*

join the HHC at OCS and recycle into a new company when he or she is healed. This can add significant time to the commissioning program.

## Current APFT Standards

The current APFT is comprised of a combination of the number of push-ups completed in a 2-minute period, sit-ups completed in a 2-minute period, and a 2-mile run. There are different standards for males and females. Scores are based on performance in the three events. A perfect score on the current APFT is 300, with 100 points awarded per event.

## Changes to the APFT in OCS

The Army is transitioning to a new Physical Fitness Test. The updated test will have two parts: a Physical Readiness Test (PRT) and a Combat Readiness Test (CRT).

There will no longer be gender-specific scoring for the tests. The age-groups for points will be realigned to match the American College of Sports Medicine categories.

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## What is a Branch?

A branch is a technical specialty area in which new officers are commissioned. A brief description of the branches that are available to candidates can be found [here](#).

## How are Branches Selected?

Officer Candidates select their branches during week six of OCS at a branching ceremony. At this time, candidates are ranked on an Order of Merit List (OML). The OML ranking at this time is determined by points earned during academic and physical fitness activities throughout the first six weeks of OCS. The OML is based on the sum of the points, and candidates are ranked based on their total points.

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## Academic

- ◇ Achieve above 70% on eight academic tests

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- ◇ Meet Army height and weight standards
- ◇ Pass three APFTs—initial, midcycle, and final
- ◇ Complete 3, 4, and 5 mile runs within standard
- ◇ Pass the last graduation run (4 miles) in formation with the Company
- ◇ Complete two 5-mile, two 7-mile, and one 10-mile foot marches

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- ◇ Pass day/night land navigation test
- ◇ Pass 51% of evaluated leadership positions, both in garrison (on post at Ft. Benning) and in the field exercises



<sup>1</sup> As of October, 2011

# BEYOND OCS

## Army Training After OCS

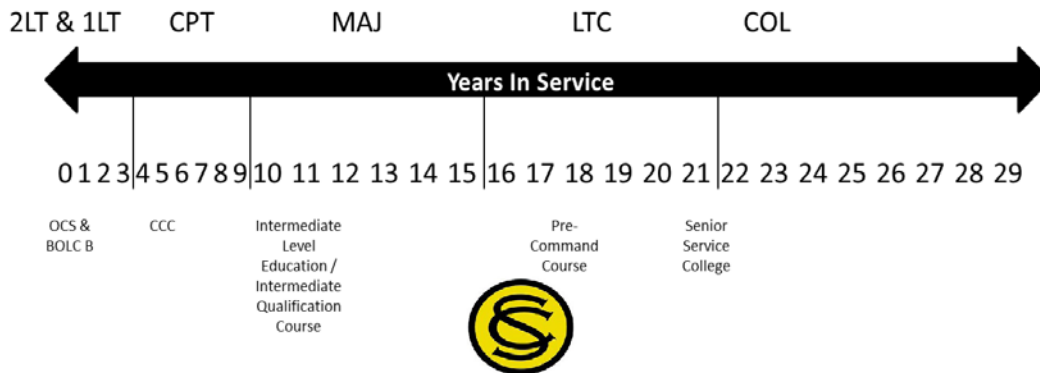
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The next formal step in an officer's education is the Captain's Career Course (CCC). While CCC is open to senior first lieutenants and Army captains with 4-6 years of military experience, currently almost all participants are captains. Like BOLC B, CCC is branch-specific and varies in length and substance.

## Army Positions After BOLC B and CCC

Upon graduation from BOLC B and CCC, students transition to their next duty assignment as a company commander, battalion staff officer, brigade staff officer, or other similar positions. Career progression through the years of service typically follows the path below and includes the appropriate education at each level.



## ADVICE ON HOW TO SUCCEED IN OCS

- **Recruiters**

Don't assume that your Army recruiter has experience with the application process for OCS. You will need to be self-motivated and take the initiative to ensure that each requirement of your application process is met.

*"You need to do it on your own."*

*"Take initiative to get information. Contact OCS for more information if necessary."*

- **The Delay between the Application Process and Being Assigned to OCS:**

Enlistment-Option candidates stated that the time delay between completing the recruitment process and being assigned to a seat in OCS can be substantial. These candidates recommended maintaining contact with the recruiter and making use of the [OCS.com](http://OCS.com) website to have your questions answered.

*"Seats for OCS can take some time to become available; Keep in touch with your recruiter during the application process."*

*"Use the OCS.com website and ask the moderators" (all the moderators are at least 2LTs)*

- **The Importance of Physical Fitness to Performing Well in OCS.**

Instructors repeatedly stressed the importance of the APFT and of physical fitness in general to performing well in OCS. They stated that it is important to demonstrate a high degree of physical fitness at OCS because a leader must set the standard, not just conform to it. Enlistment-Option candidates recommended researching the APFT and putting together a training program to prepare for OCS. Instructors stated that PT is the only thing that applicants can improve before arriving in OCS, so they should arrive in the best shape possible.

*"Get off the couch and get in shape. Expect to be physically challenged. If you can't max the PT test, you can do better. If you can max the PT test, you can still do better."*

*"Show up in great shape; the PT test should be easy."*



- **How to Excel at OCS**

Enlistment-Option candidates stated the importance of the willingness to take on the leadership roles at OCS. Candidates stated that the OCS environment is a good place to learn to fail in order to learn to succeed. Enlistment-Option candidates also suggested that applicants be prepared to engage instructors for information when possible.

*"It is on you, the candidate, to mentally and physically prepare yourself for the course. You are not entitled to anything in OCS, other than training and basic Soldier needs. If you fail, it's because you failed to meet the standards."*

Instructors stated the importance of Enlistment-Option candidates using OCS as an opportunity to develop their leadership style. Furthermore, they stated that it is important for Enlistment-Option candidates to come prepared to give 100% at all times, especially as the Army is decreasing its officer accessions in the next few years due to the draw down of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.



## SUGGESTED READINGS

*Gates of Fire: An Epic Novel of the Battle of Thermopylae* (1999). Author: Steven Presfield.  
*Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (1992). Author: Stephen Ambrose.  
*Once an Eagle* (1968). Author: Anton Myrer.  
*One Bullet Away: The Making of a Marine Officer.* (2005). Author: Nathaniel Flick.  
*A Rumor of War.* (1977). Author: Philip Caputo.  
*Platoon Leader.* (1985). Author: James McDonough.  
*The Killing Zone: My Life in the Vietnam War.* (1978). Author: Frederick Downs.

## RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

GoArmy.com\OCS (Recruiting information): <http://www.goarmy.com/ocs.html>

Official Army OCS Homepage (Ft. Benning): <https://www.benning.army.mil/infantry/199th/ocs/>

Official Homepage of the U.S. Army (links to information about education, housing family programs, etc.): <http://www.army.mil>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Fort-Benning-OCS/264918697484>

OCS SOPs: <http://www.benning.army.mil/infantry/199th/OCS/content/PDF/SOP1SEP10Final.pdf>

DA Form 61: <http://armypubs.army.mil/eforms/pdf/A61.PDF>





Appendix F

In-service RJP

THINKING ABOUT



OFFICER  
CANDIDATE  
SCHOOL?

A GUIDE FOR IN-SERVICE  
CANDIDATES



## THIS GUIDE IS DESIGNED TO:

- ◇ Help you decide if OCS is right for you by providing:
  - ◇ information on being an Army officer
  - ◇ the curriculum and training in OCS
  - ◇ the challenge of completing OCS
  - ◇ how to apply to OCS

## THIS GUIDE IS INTENDED FOR:

- ◇ Army Soldiers and NCOs interested in becoming commissioned officers (In-Service applicants)

<b>What is an Army Officer?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>What is OCS?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>How Do I Apply to OCS?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>OCS Curriculum</b>	<b>6-7</b>
<b>The Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT)</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Branch Assignment Process</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Graduation Requirements</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Beyond OCS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Comparison of NCO Responsibilities to Early Career Officer Responsibilities</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Advice on How to Succeed in OCS</b>	<b>13-14</b>
<b>Suggested Readings</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Resources for More Information</b>	<b>15</b>



## WHAT IS AN ARMY OFFICER?

### **A Leader of Character:**

- lives by the Army Values of honor, integrity, courage, loyalty, respect, selfless service, and duty; displays empathy
- takes care of Soldiers by giving them the training, equipment, and support they need to keep them alive in combat and accomplish the mission
- lives by the Warrior Ethos; shows unrelenting and consistent determination to do what is right and to do it with pride.

### **A Leader with Presence:**

- projects a commanding presence and a professional image of authority (military bearing)
- is physically fit
- demonstrates composure and outward calm through steady control over emotion; is resilient; has the ability to quickly recover from setbacks, adversity, and stress while maintaining a mission and organizational focus.

### **A Leader with Intellectual Capacity:**

- anticipates and adapts to uncertain or changing situations
- displays good judgment
- recognizes and respects diversity

The duties of the Army officer are multifaceted. Each major duty of an officer is dedicated to fulfilling the mission of the U.S. Army. These duties include:

### **Leads**

***Leads others*** : inspires, encourages, and guides others toward mission accomplishment

***Extends influence beyond the Chain of Command*** : keeps people informed of action and results

***Leads by example*** : removes or fights through obstacles to accomplish the mission.

***Communicates*** : reflects on new information before expressing views

### **Develops**

***Creates a positive environment*** : shows others how to accomplish tasks while remaining focused

***Prepares self*** : removes emotions from decision making

***Develop others*** : provides realistic, mission-oriented training

### **Achieves**

***Gets results*** : considers contingencies and their consequences



## WHAT IS THE OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL(OCS)?

The Army's Officer Candidate School (OCS) is located at Ft. Benning, Georgia. Historically, OCS has been used as a resource to bolster and increase the size of the officer corps in the U.S. Army during times of war or international conflict. When the U.S. was in need of officers, OCS was employed to commission officers quickly in support of the Army's need for leadership in a large combat force. This was the case for World War II, the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam War, and the global war on terror.

OCS has continued to provide the Army with a flexible source of qualified commissioned officers. OCS has been, and remains, a critical factor in the Army's ability to supplement and grow a pool of high quality leaders who demonstrate strong capabilities for junior and eventually senior officer ranks and make the Army a career.

Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq) and Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) necessitated the need for more officers in the US Army. New officers were commissioned with the expectation that they would be deployed to either one of these theaters. As the mission for both of these operations becomes less demanding, the number of officers needed by the Army is expected to decrease. In response, the Army is decreasing the number of officers it commissions each year, making the application process more competitive.

The Army commissions officer candidates for OCS from two main sources: In-Service candidates and Enlistment-Option candidates. In-Service candidates are current Soldiers in the Army who are selected for OCS participation. Enlistment-Option candidates are civilians who complete 10 weeks of Basic Combat Training (BCT) and 12 weeks of OCS before becoming second lieutenants. Candidates also include Reserve and National Guard Soldiers; however, these populations have separate requirements and should consult their recruiters for more information.

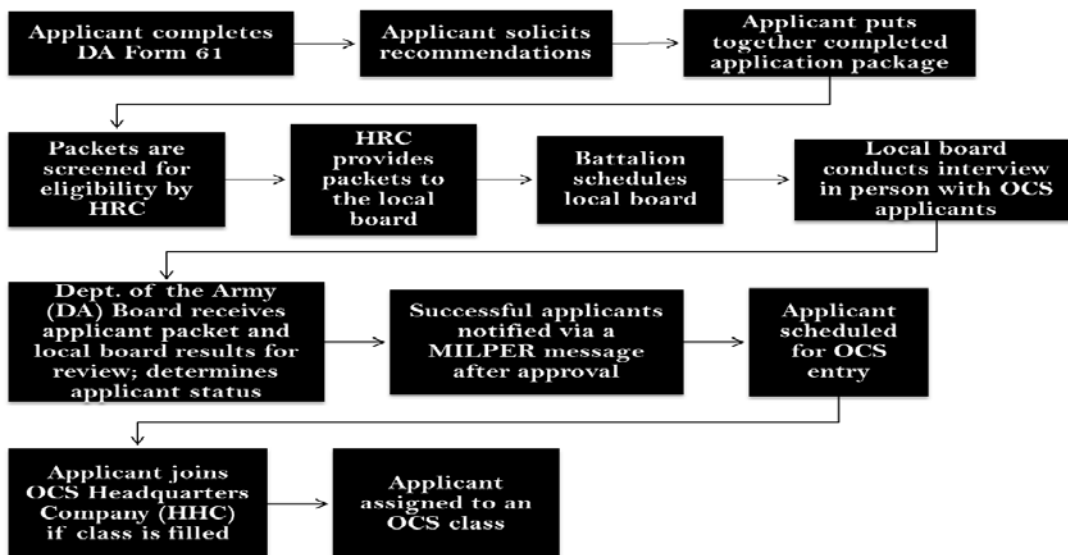


# HOW DO I APPLY TO OCS?

Eligibility Requirements: In-Service Candidates (*current as of October, 2011*)

- Be a United States citizen.
- Be at least 18 but less than 35 years of age at the time of enrollment.
- Have a 4-year Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university.
- Achieve a General Technical Aptitude Test (GT) score of 110 or higher on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB).
- Pass the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) and meet the Army height and weight standards.
- Have a medical examination within 9 months of the date of the application at a MEPS.
- Be of good moral character. Have no convictions by civil or military courts.
- Have a Secret security clearance or higher (no waivers).
- Have accumulated no more than 10 years of active Federal service when appointed as a commissioned officer (no waivers).
- Have completed advanced individual training (AIT).
- Be recommended by Commander O-5 or above (no waivers).

The In-Service accessions program is overseen and run by the U.S. Army Human Resources Command (HRC). All applicants complete an application packet. A central element of the packet is a 4-page application form, DA Form 61, which asks detailed questions about the candidate's demographics, educational history, military service, special training, and civilian employment history. It also has sections that must be completed and signed by officers recommending an In-Service applicant for OCS.



# OCS CURRICULUM

Each week of the OCS program addresses a different aspect of officership. The curriculum is broken into 6-week intervals. During the first 6-week period, Officer Candidates are in the Basic Officer candidate phase. During this phase, the OCS instructors (OCS staff responsible for training) instruct candidates in individual skills, doctrine, and theory to help the candidates learn their profession of officership. This process is called “immersion” and is essential for transitioning into the life of an Army officer. This phase is much like basic training. During immersion, candidates are restricted to training and the barracks with rare exceptions. This enables them to devote as much time and energy as possible to their studies.

## **Weeks 1-3** focus on individual skills.

- Initial Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT)
- Bolton Confidence Course
- Combat Water Survival Test (CWST)
- Directorate of Training (DOT): 29 hours of instruction; topics include Leadership and Justice, Ethics, and Call for Fire.

## **Weeks 4-6** transition into doctrine and theory.

- Bush Hill Terrain Walk
- Leadership Reaction Course (LRC)
- 7 mile Conditioning Foot March, 4 mile timed Release Run, Combatives, 5 mile timed Release Run
- Intermediate Officer Candidate Review (SOCR)
- DOT: 75 hours of instruction; topics include Troop Leading Procedures, Army Operations, Military Intelligence, Military History (American Revolution-Civil War)
- Branch ceremony

**Phase I:  
Basic Officer Candidate Phase**

During the first 6-week period, candidates wear black neck ascots in order to identify themselves as Basic Officer Candidates.



# OCS CURRICULUM

In the Senior Phase, candidates continue to learn and demonstrate leadership, professionalism, and officership in field, garrison, and social environments. During this phase, there is increased responsibility for the candidates. Company Command begins to transition to candidates, with the instructors being available for questions. The candidates receive advanced leadership instruction and participate in senior leader seminars and social events during this phase. The Senior Phase is the “refining” phase of OCS and involves preparation for the officer environment. Candidates are given increasing levels of responsibility during this phase. It is also during this phase that candidates transition to the white ascots.

<p><b>Weeks 7-9</b> focus on field applications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership Evaluations</li> <li>• Land Navigation</li> <li>• Field Leadership Exercises</li> <li>• 7 and 10 mile tactical foot marches</li> <li>• 18 days of field training (number differs by Company)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Phase II: Intermediate Phase</b></p>
<p><b>Weeks 10-12</b> focus on officership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recovery from Field Leadership Exercises I and II</li> <li>• Infantry Branch Run/Armor Branch Run/Graduation Run</li> <li>• Military History (World War I-post Vietnam)</li> <li>• Senior Leader Seminars</li> <li>• Transitioning to become Commissioned Officers; Graduation Social, Graduation Formal, Graduation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Phase III: Senior Phase</b></p>

One term frequently used in OCS is “recycled.” This means a candidate is removed from his/her company and must join the Headquarters Company (HHC). This can happen for multiple reasons, such as failure to complete or pass certain OCS requirements, significant injury that prevents a candidate from completing physical fitness training (PT), and violating OCS policy. Consult the OCS Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for more information on recycling and how it will affect your progress through OCS. The SOPs detail the responsibilities and duties of candidates during training in OCS. The SOPs are designed to assist candidates in their day-to-day duties and activities.



# THE ARMY PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST (APFT)



Fitness level is important in creating a perception of command presence, as well as to engender respect from your fellow OCS candidates.

## Physical Fitness in OCS

Physical fitness is essential to performance in OCS and throughout an officer's career. If injured and unable to maintain fitness levels, a candidate may have to join

the HHC at OCS and recycle into a new company when he or she is healed. This can add significant time to the commissioning program.

*"PT is something everyone can improve -- it's the easiest thing to improve."*

*"If you can't perform PT well with your Soldiers, you will not be looked up to by your subordinates."*

## Current APFT Standards

The current APFT is comprised of a combination of the number of push-ups completed in a 2-minute period, sit-ups completed in a 2-minute period, and a 2-mile run. There are different standards for males and females. Scores are based on performance in the three events. A perfect score on the current APFT is 300, with 100 points awarded per event.

## Changes to the APFT in OCS

The Army is transitioning to a new Physical Fitness Test. The updated test will have two parts: a Physical Readiness Test (PRT) and a Combat Readiness Test (CRT).

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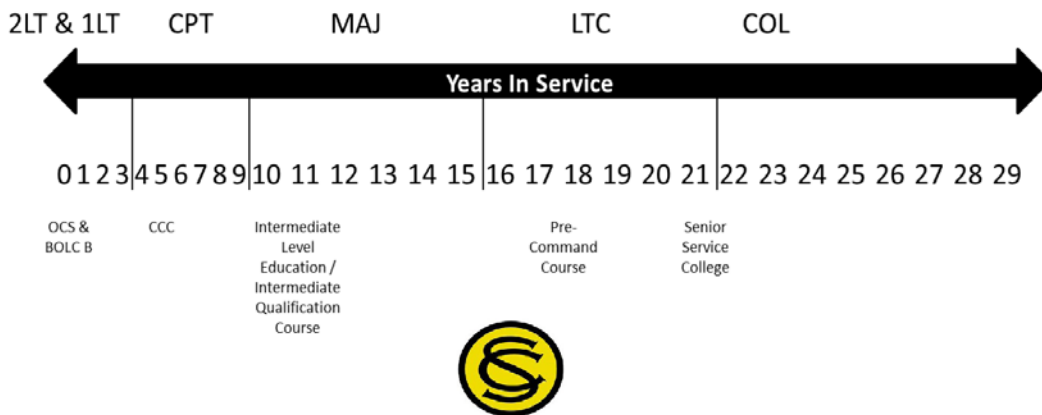
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Upon graduation from BOLC B and CCC, students transition to their next duty assignment as a company commander, battalion staff officer, brigade staff officer, or other similar positions. Career progression through the years of service typically follows the path below and includes the appropriate education at each level.



# Comparison of NCO Responsibilities to Early Career Officer Responsibilities

Your first leadership position as an officer after commissioning will be as a platoon leader. Transitioning from the role of an NCO into the role of an early career officer, such as a platoon leader, can be challenging for some In-Service candidates. However, it is important to point out the differences in the roles so you can begin preparing for the transition to a different type of Army service.

Some sample job duties of a platoon leader include:

- working with senior NCOs (typically, a platoon sergeant) to accomplish the oversight, training, and management of your platoon.
- responsibility, accountability, and maintenance for all equipment (e.g., tanks, trucks).
- responsibility for planning and executing training of over 40 Soldiers, with as many as 10-12 NCOs of various ranks.

The roles and responsibilities of platoon leaders and NCOs are different.

Platoon Leader	NCO
◇ Sets the Standard	◇ Enforces the Standard
◇ Makes Decisions	◇ Enforces Decisions
◇ Listens and Consults with NCOs	◇ Implements Platoon Leader's Decisions
◇ Plans for the Mission	◇ Handles day-to-day Operations
◇ Conducts Collective Training of Squad	◇ Conducts Individual Training

In-Service OCS graduates should not expect all skills learned as an NCO to transfer to the initial platoon leader assignment. New platoon leaders should expect to make mistakes; the sign of a good officer is how quickly they learn from these mistakes.



## ADVICE ON HOW TO SUCCEED IN OCS

- **Lack of Support from Senior NCOs for Applications to OCS**

Some In-Service candidates believed that many NCOs were concerned about losing good Soldiers to the officer ranks. They believed that the NCOs in their units were not supportive of their decision to apply to OCS and discouraged them from applying.

Instructors from OCS indicated that In-Service applicants must take initiative and pursue the application process themselves. In-Service applicants need to plan to apply to OCS on their own time. Instructors recommended that In-Service applicants talk to an officer or company commander to try to get support for their application; these officers can enable In-Service applicants to get to the OCS selection board.

*"No one is going to help you with the packet; carve out your own time, be persistent, be proactive, be self-motivated."*

*"An officer may help you get to the board, but you need to take initiative to do the packet for yourself. Don't expect anyone to do it for you. It's your responsibility to make it happen."*

- **Preparing for OCS**

Many In-Service candidates said they felt unprepared for the challenges of OCS.

Candidates recommended that applicants figure out their weaknesses, such as physical fitness or military bearing, and work on developing them before OCS. OCS is demanding; candidates should remember that every point on the OML must be earned.

*"Come ready to work."*

Additionally, In-Service candidates recommended getting one's personal affairs in order before OCS, as there is very little time outside of training to attend to personal matters.



- **Adjusting to Life as an Officer**

Some In-Service candidates expressed a concern about the difficulty of transitioning from an MOS-based technical expert into a leadership role.

Instructors from OCS stated that the purpose of OCS is to show growth and improvement in abilities to lead in order to learn what needs to be done to accomplish the mission. In-Service candidates

recommended applicants retain the positive qualities that they learned as an NCO, including their strong work ethic. However, In-Service candidates must learn to delegate and follow-up without micromanaging. Additionally, In-Service candidates should use the feedback they receive from instructors in order to develop themselves as future leaders.

*“Just like an NCO, an officer is a leader. However, when you adjust to life as an officer, remember that your role is now to command, to see the big picture, and to make the final decision.”*

*“Even if you don't get the branch you want, you will be a better leader because you are going to understand more positions and broaden your skills.”*

*“Branch allocations depend on the needs of the Army.”*

- **Transitioning to a Different Branch Outside of Previous MOS**

In-Service candidates are branched via the OML. There is no guarantee that an In-Service candidate will be able to choose their preferred branch.

OCS instructors recommend that In-Service candidates seize the opportunity to broaden their skills and to challenge themselves in a new area.



## SUGGESTED READINGS

*Gates of Fire: An Epic Novel of the Battle of Thermopylae* (1999). Author: Steven Presfield.  
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## RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

GoArmy.com\OCS (Recruiting information): <http://www.goarmy.com/ocs.html>

Official Army OCS Homepage (Ft. Benning): <https://www.benning.army.mil/infantry/199th/ocs/>

Official Homepage of the U.S. Army (links to information about education, housing family programs, etc.): <http://www.army.mil>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Fort-Benning-OCS/264918697484>

OCS SOPs: <http://www.benning.army.mil/infantry/199th/OCS/content/PDF/SOP1SEP10Final.pdf>

DA Form 61: <http://armypubs.army.mil/eforms/pdf/A61.PDF>

