



Her Majesty's Armed Forces Application Form Guidance Notes

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

INTRODUCTION

- This booklet contains essential information about joining the Armed Forces.
- Please read it fully in conjunction with the brochures that you have been given and any media you have seen showing the areas of the Armed Forces in which you are interested.
- The guidance notes are designed to help you fill in the application form and are based on the appropriate service rules and regulations.

QUESTIONS

- If you have any questions about the guidance notes or the application form please ask your Armed Forces Careers Adviser (AFCA) in your local Armed Forces Careers Office, Regimental or Corps Headquarters, Reserve Forces or Territorial Army Centre. Extensive information is also available on the Armed Forces websites at www.royalnavy.mod.uk www.armyjobs.mod.uk www.raf.mod.uk/careers/

CAUTIONARY STATEMENTS

- All applications are subject to Ministry of Defence approval. The Armed Forces cannot guarantee that your application to serve in the Armed Forces will be accepted. The Armed Forces can refuse an application without giving any reason.
- You may cancel the application process at any time up to entry in your chosen Service.
- Please **do not** give notice or terminate your current job until you have been given a written offer of entry. The type of employment and your date of entry will be given at this time.

- Applicants must bear in mind that by joining the Armed Forces it may lead to you serving in an armed conflict in any part of the world with the associated risks and responsibilities involved.
- You may also have to take life in the act of protecting life.
- The Armed Forces respect the value of every individual's unique contribution, irrespective of his/her gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin or religious beliefs and without reference to social background or sexual orientation.
- In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the Ministry of Defence will collect, use, protect and retain the information on the application form in connection with all matters relating to our personnel administration and policies.

CONDITIONS OF STANDARDS AND BEHAVIOUR

Before filling in the application form you should understand the Standards and Behaviour that will be expected of you during service with the Armed Forces.

Commitment

In joining the Armed Forces, you will be entering a disciplined organisation that has different requirements from civilian life. There will be times when the requirements of the Service take priority over personal needs; for example, you will be liable for duty at any time of the day or night, seven days a week. In addition, you may be required to serve in any part of the world.

Discipline

Behaviour that does not amount to a crime as a civilian can be a disciplinary matter in the Armed Forces and will carry appropriate penalties. For instance, you can be disciplined for disobeying an order, being untidily dressed, being late for work or taking unauthorised absence from your place of duty.

Integrity

Dishonesty of any kind is unacceptable and can damage morale and trust.

Alcohol

Drunkenness is an offence under the Service Discipline Acts and is taken very seriously by the Armed Forces. Those who persistently offend may be administratively discharged.

Standards of Behaviour

In the Service environment where men and women may live in close proximity, particularly high standards of behaviour are demanded. Where restrictions are placed on sexual activity, any breach may lead to administrative or disciplinary action.

Bullying

Ill-treatment and bullying are unacceptable. Disciplinary action will be taken against offenders.

Sexual and Racial Discrimination

Any form of sexual or racial harassment or discrimination will not be tolerated and disciplinary action will be taken against offenders. The Armed Forces respect the value of every individual's unique contribution, irrespective of gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin or religious belief and without reference to social background or sexual orientation. Your application will be rejected if you are (or have been) a member or supporter of – or associated with – any group or organisation whose purpose includes provocation to racial hatred and violence.

Equality and Diversity

The Armed Forces diversity policy is to treat all personnel fairly, irrespective of gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin or religious belief and without reference to social background or sexual orientation. The policy goes further than mere elimination of unlawful discrimination. It recognises and values individuals from diverse backgrounds, who bring fresh ideas, perceptions, skills and attributes. This enables the Armed Forces to recruit from the widest possible base, helping us to achieve and sustain our manning needs, and to maintain operational capability.

Conclusion

If for any reason, you anticipate that it will be difficult for you to meet the required standards; you should consult your local Armed Forces Careers Adviser who will be able to advise you on whether a service career is the right choice for you.

APPLICATION FORM AFCO FORM 4 GUIDANCE NOTES

Armed Forces Careers Adviser

- For the purpose of simplicity, the term Armed Forces Careers Adviser (AFCA) is being used throughout this form. All three services have different names for those people (generally recruiting personnel) who deal with potential entrants into the Services.

AFCO Form 4

- The items in brown italics e.g. *page 1* refer to the Application Form **AFCO Form 4**.

How to Enter Dates

- When entering dates in the application form, please use the format requested. If you can't remember the exact day (for example for periods spent living abroad), use '01' as the default – e.g. 01/07/2008.

SECTION 1 - PERSONAL DETAILS

1. Surname/Last Name/Family Name *page 1*

- If the name that you use is different from the name on your birth certificate, then the official supporting documents (deed poll etc), showing the change of name, will need to be given to your AFCA before you can proceed to the entry stage.
- If there are any changes to your name during the application period, please inform your AFCA as soon as possible.

2. Date of birth *page 1*

- Please take your original Birth Certificate with you on your next visit to your AFCA.
- The minimum and maximum ages for service are as follows:

	Age on Application		Age on Entry to Service	
	Lowest	Lowest	Highest (under the age stated)	
Royal Navy	15 years, 9 months	16	37 (higher in some employments)	
Royal Marines	15 years, 9 months	16	33 (higher in some employments)	
Regular Army Soldier	15 years, 7 months	16	33 (higher in some employments)	
Regular Army Officer	15 years, 7 months	16	29 (higher in some professions)	
RMA Sandhurst	15 years, 7 months	17 years, 9 months	29	
Royal Air Force	15 years, 9 months		30 (higher in some employments)	
RAF Regiment Gunner	15 years, 9 months		30	
Reserve Forces and TA	17 years	Dependent on service and specialisation		
TA Officer			36	
TA Soldier			44	
Welbeck - The Defence Sixth Form College - Officer only	14 years	15 years	17 years, 6 months	
Scholarships and Bursaries	Different age limits apply. Please ask your AFCA for details.			

3. Service of Interest and Aspirations *page 1*

- The majority of careers, jobs, trades or branches within the Armed Forces are open to both males and females. However, the following are NOT open to females, although females from other branches or cap badges may be attached to such units.
- Royal Marine Commando (Royal Navy)
- Royal Navy Submarine Service (Royal Navy)
- Royal Navy Diver (Royal Navy)
- Household Cavalry (Army)
- Royal Armoured Corps (Army)
- Infantry (Army)
- RAF Regiment (Royal Air Force)
- Your Armed Forces Careers Adviser (AFCA) will discuss your choice of job or career with you in detail as part of the application process, including the options of financial support in the Sixth Form, Further and Higher education. Don't worry if at this stage, you are unable to complete these questions fully. You do not have to choose a specific career, job, trade or branch until much further on in the application process.

4. Nationality and Residency *page 2*

For entry into the Armed Forces, you must meet the following requirements:

- You must be a British, Commonwealth, British Protected Citizen or an Irish National OR hold Dual nationality with one of the fore-mentioned.
- You must normally have resided in the UK* or Ireland for a period of 5 years immediately prior to making an application. If you have not achieved this, do not worry as it will depend on where you have lived and the length of time out of the country. Your AFCA will be able to advise you on the detail but it may affect the career or job you are applying for. However, some jobs carry a 10-year rule rather than 5 years. If relevant, please complete the periods out of UK or Ireland as accurately as possible.

*The United Kingdom (UK) includes England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and for these purposes the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

- If you have a Passport please take it with the completed Application Form to your AFCA.

SECTION 2 - PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Medical Criteria

5. Initial Medical and Physical Criteria *page 2*

- The Armed Forces require anyone who enters to be medically fit to serve worldwide.
- New entrants to the Armed Forces undergo intensive training, which is both physically and mentally demanding. The Armed Forces medical authorities have to be aware of your medical history and of any conditions that may affect your performance as a serviceman or servicewoman. Applicants who do not meet the required medical standards may be rejected.
- Your medical history is confidential and will not be given to anyone not authorised to hold this information.

6. The following initial medical examinations will take place:

- Royal Navy, Royal Marine and Royal Air Force: Your examination will take place locally and be arranged by your AFCA.
- Army: Your examination will take place at a selection centre in most cases. For that reason, the Army uses an additional questionnaire (RG Form 8) that is initiated by you and completed by your doctor (the process may vary between the Regular and Territorial entry which your AFCA will explain). This helps to avoid any unnecessary travel away from home.
- RN, RM and RAF Reserve Forces: The AFCA will notify you about your examination.

7. Basic medical requirements:

Medical conditions that preclude entry:

- The conditions in the table below make a person permanently unsuitable, except where specifically time limited, for entry into the Armed Forces.
- Note: This table is for general guidance only. Many conditions that are compatible with civilian employment and sport may be considered incompatible with military service. If you have a recurrent medical condition that is not mentioned below, or if you are unclear about the impact of your medical history, you should seek further advice from your AFCA.
- Please note that Armed Forces Careers Advisers and their office staff are not medically qualified and that all final decisions regarding medical suitability for entry are only made by appropriately appointed medical staff.

Eye disorders	Eye disease, e.g. glaucoma, keratoconus, retinitis pigmentosa. Double vision. Visual field defects. Corneal grafts or recurrent corneal ulcers. Cataract or cataract surgery. Detached retina. Vision only in one eye. Squint surgery in the previous six months. Laser eye surgery in the previous 12 months.
Ear, nose and throat disorders	Ongoing ear, nose, throat or sinus disease. Deafness. Presence of grommets. Current perforated eardrum. Certain surgical procedures.
Heart and cardiovascular disorders	Heart disease. Certain congenital heart conditions e.g. repair of tetralogy of fallot, coarctation of the aorta. Certain heart valve abnormalities. High blood pressure. Raynaud's disease.
Respiratory disorders	Asthma, wheeze or asthma symptoms or treatment within the past four years. Lung disease including chronic bronchitis, emphysema, bronchiectasis, cystic fibrosis. Active tuberculosis.
Abdominal and digestive disorders, including diet	Ongoing abdominal, digestive or liver disease. Crohn's disease. Ulcerative colitis. Loss of spleen (splenectomy). Chronic hepatitis. Untreated hernia. Requirement for specific dietary restriction.
Neurological disorders	Ongoing nervous system disease. Epilepsy or more than one seizure/fit after the age of five (although benign Rolandic epilepsy is acceptable). Single seizure/fit within the last ten years. Multiple sclerosis. Complications following head injury. Hydrocephalus (with or without shunt). Severe or recurrent headache (including migraine).
Endocrine disorders	Diabetes. Adrenal disorders. Pituitary disorders. Certain thyroid diseases.
Skin disorders	Chronic eczema or dermatitis. Severe psoriasis. Severe acne.
Female reproductive disorders	Chronic breast pain. Chronic pelvic pain or inflammatory disease. Endometriosis.
Male reproductive disorders	Current cancer of the testicle or prostate gland. Chronic scrotal pain.

Musculoskeletal disorders	Any abnormality that interferes with the ability to undertake military training. Spinal abnormalities. Certain spinal operations. Recurrent back pain or sciatica. Joint disease, pain or limitation of joint movement. Hypermobility (laxity) of the joints. Bone or joint operations within the last 12 months. Anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction (subject to single Service policy). Recurrent joint dislocations. Severe deformity following fractures. Loss of a limb. Foot abnormalities (e.g. club foot or hammer toe). Complete loss of either big toe. Complete loss of either thumb. Arthritis and similar conditions. Fractures within the last 12 months, except fractures of the digits / clavicles.
Blood disorders	Certain blood diseases, such as G6PDD, sickle cell disease, congenital spherocytosis, haemoglobinopathy. Any bleeding disorder or abnormality of blood clotting.
Infections	Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Carriers of hepatitis viruses.
Malignancy (cancer)	Most cancers are considered to place an applicant below the medical entry standard. Exceptions: some cancers in childhood or early adult life that have been successfully treated and are regarded as cured.
Allergic disorders	Severe allergic reactions and/or anaphylaxis. A need to carry adrenaline injections (EPIPEN, etc). Nut and peanut allergy. Egg allergy. Latex allergy. Vaccine allergy (including tetanus allergy). Gluten sensitivity (Coeliac disease).
Conditions resulting from exposure to extremes of temperature	Heat illness. Frostbite and non-freezing cold injury.
Psychiatric disorders	Ongoing psychiatric illness. Psychosis. Schizophrenia. Obsessive-compulsive disorder. Autism. Personality disorder. More than one episode of deliberate self-harm of any type. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Alcohol, drug or substance dependence. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) unless free of symptoms and not requiring treatment for at least three years. Anorexia and bulimia.
Kidney disorders	Ongoing kidney disease. Polycystic kidney disease and kidney stones. Donation of kidney in the past six months.
Other	Transplanted organs.

Temporary conditions

The following conditions require the selection procedure and/or entry to be temporarily put on hold until you are fully recovered, discharged from hospital follow-up, and fit to undergo arduous training:

- Pregnancy
- Waiting list for an operation
- Temporary illness or injury

At the discretion of Service medical authorities, your application may be rejected, due to other medical reasons. If none of the conditions above apply, tick the **yes** box of the application form at paragraph 2.1. *page 2*

8. Height and Weight

Minimum weight and height requirements for individual Services:

- Royal Navy and Royal Marines: The minimum height is 151.5cm. The minimum weight requirement is 60kg.
- Army (Soldier entry only): The minimum height requirement is 148cm (except for driver trades, when the minimum height is 158cm). Your Body Mass Index (BMI) and waist circumference will be measured during the selection process and you will be told if you are within the criteria.
- Royal Air Force: Only certain trades have a minimum height requirement. This will be indicated to you if necessary.

9. Eye Sight

The minimum standards for both uncorrected and corrected vision are determined by service medical staff and are dependent on the proposed employment and branch/trade group. Spectacle or contact lens correction must not be greater than -7 dioptries or +8 dioptries in any meridian. Impaired colour perception (colour blindness) is not a bar to service, but may limit your career choices. You will need to have a copy with you of any acuity prescription from your optician when you go for your medical examination.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 *page 2*

10. If you have civilian or military offences against your name, whether Spent or Unspent, then please read the accompanying form MOD Form 493 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 before you answer any questions on the subject. This explains whether you have to give the details of any convictions. You may be prevented from entering or re-entering the Armed Forces if you have committed certain offences or have undergone certain types of sentence. Additionally having an 'unspent' conviction does not necessarily mean that you will be unable to join the Armed Forces. Your AFCA will be able to help to clarify your particular situation.

For certain career paths, jobs or branches you will have to undergo a **Security Check (SC)**. You will have to declare any Spent convictions for these checks. *see also Note 27*

You are required to complete the certificate on page 4 of the **MOD Form 493 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**, and, if applicable, you should provide the following information:

- Offence or allegation (including date and place)
- Name of court and date of hearing
- Final or interim result or sentence/fine

At all times during the application process you are requested to keep the AFCA informed of any changes to your circumstances as regards offences, including if you are awaiting a court appearance for a criminal offence, or in any capacity (including jury service) other than as a witness, until the outcome of the hearing is known. This may cause a delay to the application process.

11. Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 – Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Check

There is a statutory requirement for applicants who seek to join certain branches or specialisations (those that work with children or vulnerable adults) to undergo suitability checks by the Criminal Records Bureau. These checks include the disclosure of your criminal record. If appropriate, a Suitability Certificate will be issued. Your AFCA will advise you when and how this certificate is to be obtained.

Social History *page 2*

12. Tattoos

Tattoos that are offensive, obscene or excessive in size or number will be a bar to entry or re-entry. Tattoos should not be visible on the head and neck and may be a bar to entry when on the hand. If you have any you may be asked to complete a form describing your tattoos. They will be seen during your medical examination.

13. Body piercing

For health and safety reasons, you will be asked to remove certain items of body piercing jewellery before undergoing physical activity as part of the application and selection process. You will not be allowed to attempt the physical activities if you do not remove the body piercing jewellery when requested. Once you have joined the Armed Forces, you will be advised by Service authorities of the rules for wearing body jewellery when on and off duty.

14. Drug and Substance Misuse

The short, medium and long-term effects of the misuse of either illegal drugs or substances or legally obtained drugs or substances can have a damaging impact on mental and physical fitness and health. Drug or Substance misuse constitutes a direct threat to the operational effectiveness of the Armed Forces; the security and safety of Service personnel; and, potentially, the security and safety of the civilians whom they protect. Illegal misuse of drugs or substances by Service personnel also damages the reputation and standing of the Armed Forces. For all of these reasons, the misuse of drugs or substances is not tolerated within the Armed Forces. The Armed Forces recognise, however, that drug or substance misuse is increasingly common in civilian life, particularly among the young, and that you may have misused drugs or substances yourself in the past. This will not necessarily prevent you from enlisting, as all applications are considered individually. Acceptance into the Services will depend on the frequency of use and the class and type of drug or substance that has been misused. Criminal convictions for trafficking or supply of any class of drug or substance will bar entry.

Once you have joined the Armed Forces, you are required to stay clear of drugs or substances at all times and also to avoid association with drug or substance misusers and suppliers. Once you have been enlisted, you will be liable by law to random compulsory drug testing throughout your Service career. If these tests show that you have misused drugs or substances, it is Armed Forces policy that, with very few exceptions, you will be discharged.

15. Financial commitments – Debt and Bankruptcy

You may be ineligible to join the Armed Forces if you have financial commitments, debts or loans that you would have difficulty in repaying or lead to financial hardship if you entered the services. Look carefully at the appropriate rates of pay so that you are able to work out your particular situation. The AFCA will ask you about this and will help you work through any queries.

A person who is declared bankrupt (and as a result does not have a working bank account) or is insolvent may be ineligible to join the Armed Forces. Your AFCA will be able to assess your situation.

16. Care Order

If you are currently under a Care Order then we will have to seek permission of the local authority for you to join the Armed Forces.

17. Dependants

The Armed Forces (including the Volunteer and Reserve Forces) often require you to serve away from home for extended periods. The Service you are applying for needs to be sure that your domestic arrangements will not prevent you from doing this. If you are married, or have children or family members who are dependent on you for money or help or both, then certain conditions of service apply. Your AFCA will provide you with the appropriate information.

18. Religion or Belief

The Armed Forces encourage enlistment by people of many differing religions and beliefs. However, it must be clear that you may be required to use aggression and/or to take life during your career or job in the Armed Forces. There are also certain rules and regulations that state what type of clothing or dress is compatible or not with operations and for your health and safety. Other considerations may be the handling of certain types of food (as a chef) or the receiving of certain types of medical treatment.

19. Driving Licence.

If you have penalty points or a disqualification then there may be a restriction on the career path or job you wish to choose. Your AFCA will provide you with the appropriate information.

Please ensure that you produce both the photo card and paper counterpart when you show your licence to the AFCA.

SECTION 3 - EDUCATION DETAILS *pages 3 & 4 and Army Supplementary Forms*

20. Educational Achievements

The Armed Forces collect details of your education aspirations, achievements and other qualifications so that:

- We are able to advise on the most suitable job or career stream open to you.
- To assist in your future personal development.

It is therefore essential that you give as much detail as possible including that, which might not be relevant to your initial job aspiration as that might change.

Please take any original certificates or diplomas with you when you take the completed Application Form to your AFCA. If you are unable to produce the original education certificates then evidence from the relevant educational establishment will be required.

21. Spoken languages *Army Supplementary Forms*

If you speak a language that you have not listed as a qualification then please indicate here. For example you may speak a language, other than English, at home. Use the following ability levels Basic, Conversational, Fluent:

SECTION 4 – CURRENT OR PREVIOUS MILITARY SERVICE OR APPLICATIONS *page 4*

22. We require to know of any service you may have had for the following reasons:

- UK details, including any university unit and Adult Cadet Instructor - to avoid duplication of service numbers.
- Overseas service - to ensure that you do not have any outstanding commitments to serve in that particular country.

SECTION 5 - REFEREES *pages 4 to 5 and Supplementary Forms*

Please read carefully the appropriate Single Service requirements.

23. **RN and RAF.** Please nominate TWO referees. The first referee should be:

- Either your head teacher or tutor (if you are currently in full-time education or within 12 months of having left that school, college or university);
- Or your current employer (or most recent employer if you are not currently employed).

The second referee should be a personal referee. They must have known you for at least 12 months and have had contact with you within the last six months. They must have some standing in the community. They must **not** be related to you, nor had a close personal relationship or any financial arrangement with you. They may be the Officer Commanding (if you are a serving member of the Reserve Forces) or the County Cadet Commandant (if serving in a Cadet unit).

24. Army Officer.

All applicants are required to nominate referees in order to assist in confirming your identity and character, as well as for academic and work records. We will approach your Head Teacher or Tutor, and Employer (if appropriate), as referees.

Additionally give the details of **two** further referees (other than relatives or persons connected with your school, college or university, Territorial Army, UOTC or employer) who have known you for at least **one** year and who may be approached for references. You must ask the referees their permission before giving their names here.

25. Army Soldier.

All applicants are required to nominate at least one referee in order to assist in confirming your identity and character. Dependant on your choice of entry and career or job you may be asked to nominate further referees. You must ask the referees their permission before giving their names here.

Please nominate your initial referee as follows:

- **Either** your head teacher or tutor (if you are currently in full-time education or within 12 months of having left that school, college or university);
- **Or** your current employer (or most recent employer if you are not currently employed).

If neither of the above is possible, the referee can be a personal referee. They must have known you for at least 12 months and have had contact with you within the last six months. They must have some standing in the community such as a doctor, magistrate, teacher, Member of Parliament, priest, and civil servant. They must not be related to you, nor had a close personal relationship or any financial arrangement with you.

In all cases you may have, as an additional referee, the Officer Commanding (if you are a serving member of the Reserve Forces) or the County Cadet Commandant (if serving in a Cadet unit).

HM GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT ON VETTING POLICY

26. National Security

In the interests of national security, safeguarding parliamentary democracy and maintaining the proper security of the Government's essential activities, it is the policy of HM Government that no one should be employed in the Armed Forces who is, or has been, involved in or associated with any of the following activities:

- espionage;
- terrorism;
- sabotage; or
- actions intended to overthrow or undermine parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means;

or is, or has recently been:

- a member of any organisation that has advocated such activities;
- associated with any such organisation (or any of its members) in such a way as to raise reasonable doubts about his or her reliability;
- susceptible to pressure or improper influence, for example because of current or past conduct;
- guilty of dishonesty or lack of integrity that throws doubt on their reliability; or
- shown to demonstrate behaviour or is subject to circumstances that may otherwise indicate unreliability.

27. MOD Form 1109 – Security Check (SC)/Counter-Terrorist Check (CTC) questionnaire

You should be aware that during the recruiting and selection process, all applicants for the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, all officer applicants for the Army and certain soldier applicants for the Army (depending on the job applied for) will be asked to complete a security questionnaire, the MOD Form 1109. It is government policy that (for certain jobs) a Security Check and/or a Counter-Terrorist Check is carried out on applicants to confirm their identity, suitability and trustworthiness.

DATA PROTECTION ACT - YOUR RIGHTS AND HOW WE PROTECT THEM

When it comes to the information we hold about you, your rights are set out clearly in the law. The Data Protection Act 1998 also provides that people who record and use personal data must be open about how it is used, and that they must obey the eight Data Protection Principles, which are listed below. In some instances, the law exempts us from these principles. This is normally where obeying the principles would damage the fight against crime, or be against the national interest in some way.

- Process it fairly and lawfully.
- Process it for specific purposes and not in any manner incompatible with those purposes.
- Only process information that is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
- Ensure that the information is accurate and up to date.
- Ensure that the information is not kept longer than is necessary.
- Ensure that the information is treated in accordance with your rights.
- Take care of your personal information.
- Ensure that your personal information is not transferred outside the European Economic Area unless there are suitable safeguards in the countries to which it needs to be sent.

If you want to know more about the Data Protection Act 1998, you can either write to the following address:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House, Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Or you can visit their website at www.ico.gov.uk