

QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED BY OCS APPLICANTS

1. What will my rank be while attending the Officer Candidate School?

You will be promoted to the rank of Officer Candidate, E-5, if you are currently below that rank, and will be paid as an E-5 while you are in OCS. If a SFC becomes a Candidate, then that soldier will continue at the pay grade of E-7. If an AGR soldier becomes a Candidate, then the pay grade depends on the slot to which assigned. An AGR Candidate in an E-4 slot will continue at the pay grade of E-4. While enrolled in OCS, you will wear OCS insignia in place of your enlisted rank and will be referred to as "Candidate." **Note: Your attachment orders will be effective after your first OCS drill. Your promotion orders will be effective just prior to attending Phase 1. You will be paid as an E-5 at that point until completion of OCS.**

2. Do I have to attend monthly training assemblies (IDTs) with my own unit?

No. You will be attached to the OCS Company, 199th Regiment (Leadership) effective after your first OCS Drill and will appear on the 199th LR's DA Form 1379 for pay purposes. The March Phase 0 drill is in lieu of (ILO) your regular/parent unit's drill and you will be paid by your parent unit for that drill. OCS will provide split training certificates upon request.

3. What type of commission will I receive?

You will receive a USAR commission. You will be commissioned into the Louisiana Army National Guard and will receive Federal Recognition as such in the form of a concurrent commission in the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR).

4. Will I have to go on active duty when I graduate?

No. You will serve in the Army National Guard. However, you must attend your Basic Officer Leadership Course II (BOLC II) and Basic Officer Leadership Course III (BOLC III) for your designated branch within 18 months of commissioning (one six month extension may be granted). BOLC II is 6 weeks of Infantry training and BOLC III is from 3 1/2 months to 6 months of branch training, depending on the particular branch.

5. May I request to serve on active duty?

Yes, provided you apply, accepted by the U.S Army, and released from the LAARNG.

6. In what branch would I be commissioned?

Your designated branch will depend on the unit and position that you are assigned to upon graduation. You will be advised of your branch choices within your BN. Considerations are also made for the needs of the State, your stated preferences, and geographical considerations. To be considered for a Unit assignment outside of your BN, you must receive a letter of acceptance

from a gaining Unit. That letter of acceptance must accompany your written request through your chain of command to LANG-J1-PO. If your request is approved, LANG-J1-PO will notify the OCS academy, your losing Unit, and your gaining Unit of this action. Your request must be initiated and completed prior to departure for Phase III.

7. What happens to me if I drop out or fail out of OCS?

You will return to your original status and rank with your unit. You will be counseled by several members of the chain of command, return all items issued by OCS, and contact your parent unit chain of command.

8. What happens if I have to miss drill?

We require that you attend all monthly training assemblies. However, if you have an emergency in your immediate family or if you are sick and under a doctor's care, you may be excused. This must be cleared through the OCS Senior TAC and Company Commander IAW the Academy SOP.

9. How much time is required for preparation?

If you study as much as one-half hour for every hour of training, you should pass without any difficulty. However, you must plan to study. You will also be required to prepare yourself, your equipment and communicate with your candidate chain of command and project teams prior to drills.

10. Is the Officer Candidate School demanding and stressful?

Yes. The purpose of OCS is to commission the future officers in the USAR and the Army National Guard. The OCS staff must assess the leadership potential of the candidates in a stressful yet professional environment. This includes physical and mental stress in garrison and field situations. While OCS is demanding, any candidate who applies himself and possesses the motivation and determination to become an officer has an excellent chance to graduate and receive a commission. Experience has shown that the vast majority of the candidates who do not complete the program withdraw voluntarily due to personal reasons that are not related to the OCS curriculum.

11. Can I complete a condensed version of OCS?

Yes. Besides the Traditional OCS class that begins in March of one year and graduated in August of the following year, you may be considered for an Accelerated OCS (AOCS). Accelerated classes are intense and physically challenging. In addition to the basic requirements for attendance through Traditional OCS, you must have a minimum of 90 college hours to request AOCS. We offer 3 AOCS during the fiscal year. A course begins and ends during the Winter, Summer and Fall. These courses last for approx 2 months straight through. Example: The Phase 1, 2 and 3 for the Winter course begins in JAN 2009 and graduates in MAR 2009.

12. Are there any additional monetary incentives for attending OCS?

Yes. If you are eligible for Chapter 1606 or Chapter 30 Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) basic benefits, you can qualify for the MGIB Kicker program. OCS candidates enrolled in Phase II or Phase III (after completing the first Annual Training period, Phase I) become eligible to sign a Kicker contract for benefits of up to \$350.00 a month for a maximum of 36 months. Just extend for the number of months and years that will give you a total of six years under contract. The \$350.00 amount is in addition to the MGIB basic payments and is not subject to Federal and State income tax withholdings. Even if you are currently receiving an enlistment kicker, your kicker payments will be increased to the \$350.00 amount. To continue to receive the kicker after commissioning, just sign an Officer Service Agreement (DA Form 5447-R) equal to the number of months remaining on your six-year obligation that entitled you to MGIB Kicker benefits. AOCS graduates must sign an Officer Service Agreement and complete a MGIB Kicker contract with their unit within 90 days after completing OCS to receive Kicker benefits.

Currently, if you commission in a critical skill Area of Concentration (AOC) in an MTO&E Unit, you may elect to receive an officer accession bonus of \$10,000. This officer bonus is for newly commissioned officers who agree to serve six years in an active drilling status. The contract is completed upon graduation from OCS and the bonus is payable in either a lump-sum upon completion of Basic Officer Leadership Courses II & III or 50% after the completion of BOLC III and the remaining 50% at the completion of your third year as a commissioned Officer. Commissions in Units considered “Critical UIC’s” receive lump sum payment. Commissions in other MTO&E Units receive the 50%-50% bonus payout. Additionally, you must commission in a primary slot.

13. Will I have the opportunity to attend any additional training schools like Airborne School?

Yes. The top three OCS graduates each year are offered the opportunity to attend the Basic Airborne Course (BAC) after completing their Basic Officer Leadership Courses II & III. If for some reason any of the top three graduates cannot attend the school, the graduates next in line on an order of merit list for that graduating class will have the opportunity to attend BAC.

14. If I attend OCS, can I keep my Extension/Enlistment Bonus?

Yes, but you must serve 12 months of the new enlistment period before accepting your commission. Those 12 months can be in your unit or at OCS as an Officer Candidate. Another option is to complete OCS but delay accepting your commission until you have served the required 12 months of your new contract. Taking your commission earlier will trigger recoupment.

15. Do I lose my student loan repayment benefit after commissioning?

No. While in OCS and after commissioning, you will continue to receive student loan repayment program (SLRP) benefits. Also, Tuition Exemption, Tuition Assistance (TA) and Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) benefits are not changed by accepting a commission.