



# Department of Defense **INSTRUCTION**

**NUMBER** 1215.17

January 29, 2014

Incorporating Change 1, Effective May 5, 2020

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USD(P&R)

**SUBJECT:** Educational Requirements for Appointment to a Grade Above First Lieutenant or Lieutenant (Junior Grade) in a Reserve Component

References: See Enclosure 1

1. **PURPOSE.** In accordance with the authority in DoD Directive 5124.02 (Reference (a)), this instruction reissues DoD Instruction (DoDI) 1215.17 (Reference (b)) to establish policy and assign responsibilities for determining which educational institutions' baccalaureate degrees satisfy the educational requirement for appointment of Reserve Component officers and other persons to a grade above First Lieutenant or Lieutenant (Junior Grade) in a Reserve Component.

2. **APPLICABILITY.** This instruction applies to OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DoD.

3. **POLICY.** It is DoD policy that:

a. Pursuant to section 12205 of Title 10, United States Code (Reference (c)), Reserve Component officers and other persons are required to have at least a baccalaureate degree from a qualifying educational institution before being federally recognized in or appointed to:

(1) A grade above First Lieutenant in the Army Reserve, Air Force Reserve, or Marine Corps Reserve.

(2) A grade above Lieutenant (Junior Grade) in the Navy Reserve.

(3) A grade above First Lieutenant as a member of the Army National Guard or Air National Guard.

b. Exempt from this policy is any officer or other person who is appointed to or recognized in:

(1) A higher grade for service in a health profession for which a baccalaureate degree is not a condition of original appointment or assignment.

(2) The Navy Reserve or Marine Corps Reserve as a limited duty officer.

(3) The Navy Reserve for service under the Naval Aviation Cadet Program or the Seaman to Admiral Program.

(4) A higher grade if appointed to, or federally recognized in, the grade of captain or, in the case of the Navy, lieutenant before October 1, 1995.

(5) The grade of captain or major in the Alaska Army National Guard, who resides permanently at a location in Alaska that is more than 50 miles from each of the cities of Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau, Alaska, by paved road, and who is serving in a scout unit or a scout supporting unit.

c. The Secretary concerned may grant the following waivers:

(1) The Secretary of the Army may waive the applicability of paragraph 3a to any officer whose original appointment in the Army as a Reserve officer is through the Army Officer Candidate School Program.

(2) The Secretary of the Navy may waive the applicability of paragraph 3a to any officer whose original appointment in the Marine Corps as a Reserve officer is through the Marine Corps Meritorious Commissioning Program.

(3) Any waiver will be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the individual circumstances of the officer involved, and may continue in effect for no more than 2 years after the waiver is granted. The Secretary concerned may provide for such a waiver to be effective before the date of the waiver, as appropriate in an individual case.

d. An unaccredited institution seeking to be designated a qualifying educational institution for purposes of this instruction may request that designation if it meets the criteria established in this instruction.

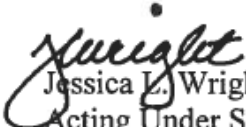
4. RESPONSIBILITIES: See Enclosure 2.

5. PROCEDURES: See Enclosure 3.

6. RELEASABILITY. **Cleared for public release.** This instruction is available on the Directives Division Website at <https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/>.

7. SUMMARY OF CHANGE 1. The change to this issuance updates references and organizational titles and removes expiration language in accordance with current Chief Management Officer of the Department of Defense direction.

8. EFFECTIVE DATE. This instruction is effective January 29, 2014.

  
Jessica L. Wright  
Acting Under Secretary of Defense  
for Personnel and Readiness

Enclosures

1. References
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Glossary

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ENCLOSURE 1

REFERENCES

- (a) DoD Directive 5124.02, “Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)),” June 23, 2008
- (b) DoD Instruction 1215.17, “Educational Requirements for Appointment of Reserve Component Officers to a Grade Above First Lieutenant or Lieutenant (Junior Grade),” September 12, 2002 (hereby cancelled)
- (c) Title 10, United States Code

ENCLOSURE 2

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS (USD(P&R)). The USD(P&R) develops and implements this instruction.

2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS (ASD(M&RA)). Under the authority, direction, and control of the USD(P&R), the ASD(M&RA):

a. Establishes and publishes in the Federal Register requirements and procedures for an unaccredited educational institution to apply for DoD designation as a qualifying educational institution for purposes of this instruction.

b. Provides, as necessary, to the Secretaries of the Military Departments a list of those unaccredited educational institutions that have been designated by the DoD as a qualifying educational institution. This list will include the year or years for which unaccredited educational institutions are designated as qualifying educational institutions.

c. Processes requests from the Military Departments for exceptions to policies and procedures established in this instruction.

3. SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS. The Secretaries of the Military Departments establish procedures to:

a. Ensure that Reserve Component officers and other persons selected for appointment, who are required to hold a baccalaureate degree in accordance with section 3 above the signature of this instruction, were awarded that degree from a qualifying educational institution.

b. Process requests from unaccredited educational institutions seeking designation as a qualifying educational institution for the purposes of this instruction.

ENCLOSURE 3

PROCEDURES

1. DESIGNATION AS A QUALIFYING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

a. An unaccredited educational institution may obtain designation as a qualifying educational institution for a specific Reserve Component officer or other person who graduated from that educational institution by providing certification from registrars at three accredited educational institutions that maintain Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs that their educational institutions would accept at least 90 percent of the credit hours earned by that officer at the unaccredited educational institution, as of the year of his or her graduation.

b. For an unaccredited educational institution to be designated as a qualifying educational institution for a specific year, that educational institution must provide the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs certification from the registrars at three different accredited educational institutions that maintain ROTC programs listing the major field(s) of study in which that educational institution would accept at least 90 percent of the credit hours earned by a student who was awarded a baccalaureate degree in that major field of study at the unaccredited educational institution, as of the year for which designation is sought.

c. A degree from an unaccredited educational institution that the Secretary concerned recognized as a qualifying educational institution to satisfy the educational requirements of section 12205 of Reference (c) will not have been awarded more than 8 years before the date the officer is to be appointed or federally recognized in the grade of:

(1) Captain in the Army Reserve, Army National Guard, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, or Marine Corps Reserve.

(2) Lieutenant in the Navy Reserve.

2. APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION

a. An unaccredited educational institution will submit the required documents no later than January 1 of the year for which they seek to be designated as a qualifying educational institution. Send the required documents to:

Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs  
Attn: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Personnel  
1500 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1500

b. Applications containing the required documents may also be submitted to the Secretary of the Military Department concerned by the unaccredited educational institutions requesting designation as a qualifying educational institution for prior school years. Requests to the Secretary of the Military Department concerned may be submitted at any time.

GLOSSARY

PART I. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASD(M&RA) Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

DoDI DoD instruction

ROTC Reserve Officers' Training Corps

USD(P&R) Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

PART II. DEFINITIONS

These terms and their definitions are for the purpose of this instruction.

accredited educational institution. An educational institution accredited by an agency that is on the list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies published by the Secretary of Education. Accredited institutions are maintained by the Department of Education at:  
<http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>

qualifying educational institution. An educational institution that is accredited, or an unaccredited educational institution that the Secretary of Defense or Secretary concerned designates in accordance with paragraphs 1a or 1b of Enclosure 3 of this instruction.

unaccredited educational institution. An educational institution not accredited by an agency that is on the list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies published by the Secretary of Education.

scout or scout supporting unit. Units in the 209th Infantry Group of the Alaska Army National Guard.