

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE  
Lexington, Virginia

GENERAL ORDER)  
NUMBER 83)

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**ROTC Program Policy**

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this order is to outline requirements pertaining to ROTC program selection, participation, enrollment, separation, disenrollment, and affiliation in order to assist and inform future/current VMI cadets. ROTC program disqualification criteria is also addressed.

2. **Overview:** All VMI cadets must participate and/or enroll in ROTC and complete eight progressive semesters of ROTC courses in order to fulfill VMI graduation requirements. Beyond simply participating/enrolling in ROTC to graduate from VMI, cadets are strongly encouraged to leverage ROTC programs to pursue a commission in one of the branches of the Armed Forces. That said, commissioning is not a requirement to graduate from VMI. Cadets who desire to pursue a commission should recognize that each service-specific ROTC program (i.e. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force) has unique requirements and criteria that must be met. Cadets must also recognize that commissioning opportunities are greater in some services than the others.

3. **Contracts and Commissioning.** In order to be commissioned as an officer in the Armed Forces following graduation from VMI, cadets must first satisfy the contracting and commissioning requirements dictated by the service-specific ROTC programs and the U.S. Department of Defense.

A. Requirements: Commissioning requirements include medical considerations, as well as high standards and expectations for academics, physical fitness, leadership, and personal conduct. The general criteria to commission are:

- 1) Remain “in good standing” while meeting VMI graduation requirements;
- 2) Meet and maintain the service-specific ROTC minimum Grade Point Average;
- 3) Meet all service-specific ROTC and DoD medical requirements;
- 4) Meet service-specific ROTC height/weight and body fat requirements;
- 5) Pass the service-specific ROTC physical fitness test(s);
- 6) Meet eligibility requirements for a SECRET clearance;
- 7) Successfully complete service-specific ROTC summer training programs; and
- 8) Be a U.S. Citizen.

- B. Questions: Cadets with questions pertaining to commissioning requirements or contracting eligibility should consult the service-specific ROTC website as well as ROTC staff members.

4. **ROTC program selection for New Cadets**: There are three ROTC programs at VMI: Army (AROTC), Navy/Marine Corps (NROTC), and Air Force (AFROTC). Each prospective VMI cadet is required to select one of these service-specific ROTC programs for participation / enrollment on VMI Matriculation Day. Therefore, all prospective cadets are strongly encouraged to consult each of the service-specific ROTC websites and/or confer with members of the ROTC staffs prior to VMI Matriculation Day in order to make the best and most informed ROTC program selection decision.

- A. Enrollment. ROTC Program Directors have participation/enrollment authority over all prospective cadets. Directors also have the authority to disapprove participation/enrollment requests on a case-by-case basis if for any reason they deem that a prospective cadet is unqualified and/or unsuitable for the ROTC program.
- B. Categories. New Cadets are grouped into two broad ROTC categories on VMI Matriculation Day:
  - 1) New Cadets on ROTC Contract: New Cadets who hold an ROTC contract (i.e. ROTC scholarship) shall be enrolled in the service-specific ROTC program in which they hold the contract. ROTC classes and training will be in accordance with their service-specific ROTC program. These New Cadets must meet all service-specific ROTC contracting and commissioning requirements during their cadetship.
  - 2) New Cadets not on ROTC Contract: Generally speaking, New Cadets who are not on an ROTC contract may choose to participate/enroll in the service-specific ROTC program of their choice. It is important to note that a prospective cadet's selection decision is simply a *request* to participate/enroll in an ROTC program. The participation/enrollment decision shall be at the discretion of the ROTC program Directors. ROTC classes and training for New Cadets will be in accordance with their chosen service-specific ROTC program. Because ROTC scholarships often become available during the academic year, New Cadets who are interested in pursuing a commission may compete for an ROTC contract by meeting service-specific ROTC contracting and commissioning requirements.

5. **ROTC program re-affiliation for New Cadets**: New Cadets may change affiliation from one service-specific ROTC program to another during their Fourth Class (freshman) year. However, the optimum time for New Cadets seeking ROTC re-affiliation is the period between the end of the second semester, Fourth Class year and the beginning of the first semester, Third Class (sophomore) year.

- A. Coordination. New Cadets seeking ROTC re-affiliation must first coordinate with the affected ROTC programs. Of note, ROTC re-affiliation is not guaranteed and will be at the discretion of the gaining/losing ROTC program staffs.

- B. New Cadets on ROTC Contract. New Cadets who hold ROTC scholarships are discouraged from seeking ROTC re-affiliation as they will incur the loss of their scholarships in the process.
- C. New Cadets not on ROTC Contract. ROTC re-affiliation is most appropriate for New Cadets not on ROTC contract who are interested in pursuing a commission in another branch of service. Following the completion of their first two semesters, New Cadets who fail to meet minimum ROTC standards, or who are not—or no longer interested in—pursuing a commission shall be required to enroll in the Army ROTC program at the completion of their second semester, Fourth Class year. From that point on, their ROTC classes and training as upperclassmen will be in accordance with the Army ROTC program.

6. **ROTC programs for Non-U.S. Resident International Cadets:** Foreign students on study abroad at VMI may participate in ROTC classes. Each ROTC department will determine if those students can also participate in physical training, labs, and Field Training Exercises (FTXs) based on existing service regulations. When foreign students are unable to participate in an ROTC activity, they will revert to the Commandant's control during ROTC training times.

7. **ROTC programs for upperclassmen on ROTC Contract:** A VMI upperclassman is any Third Class, Second Class (junior) or First Class (senior) cadet. All upperclassmen on an ROTC scholarship or who have signed an ROTC contract to commission following VMI graduation shall participate in all ROTC classes, laboratories, and training events, to include Physical Training Time (PTT), Field Training Exercises (FTX), and ROTC control times. Exceptions to this policy may arise when/if contracted upperclassmen are NCAA athletes or on a VMI permit.

8. **ROTC programs for upperclassmen not on ROTC Contract:** All upperclassmen not on ROTC contract are strongly encouraged to compete for ROTC scholarships. Scholarship and commissioning opportunities will differ between service-specific ROTC programs. Therefore, upperclassmen with questions pertaining to ROTC scholarship requirements or contracting eligibility should consult the service-specific ROTC websites as well as confer with ROTC staff members. Regardless of the ROTC program, Third Class cadets not on ROTC contract are required to participate in all ROTC classes, laboratories, and training events, to include Physical Training Time (PTT), Field Training Exercises (FTX), and ROTC control times. Exceptions to this policy may arise when/if the Third Class cadet is also a NCAA athlete or on a VMI permit. Second and First Class cadets not on ROTC contract will participate in ROTC classes, labs, and training events in accordance with service-specific ROTC program guidance.

- A. Navy/Marine Corps ROTC: There are many opportunities for Third Class cadets to compete for an ROTC scholarship or an ROTC (Advanced Standing) contract. Unfortunately, there are very few opportunities for Second Class cadets; there are none for First Class cadets. For this reason, upperclassmen pursuing a commission who have not been awarded an ROTC scholarship or ROTC contract by the end of the second semester, Third Class year have the following choices:

- 1) Second and First Class cadets may voluntarily change their ROTC affiliation to the Army ROTC program. See paragraph 9 for details.
  - 2) Second and First Class cadets may pursue a commission through one of the following non-ROTC programs: U.S. Marine Corps Platoon Leaders Class (PLC), U.S. Navy Officer Candidate School (OCS), and the U.S. Coast Guard Direct Commission Selected School (DCSS) program.
  - 3) Second and First Class cadets who are contracted with—or actively pursuing a commission through—non-ROTC programs may participate in ROTC classes and laboratories. They are prohibited from participating in ROTC physical training events, field training exercises, and control times unless they have signed a hold-harmless agreement, or have been approved to participate in ROTC training by the Professor of Naval Science. Without this approval, these non-ROTC cadets shall revert to the Commandant for training.
- B. Air Force ROTC: There are many opportunities for Third Class cadets to compete for an ROTC scholarship or an ROTC contract. However, ROTC contracts for Second Class and First Class cadets require headquarters approval, are the exception, and are very competitive. For this reason, upperclassmen pursuing a commission who have not been awarded an ROTC scholarship or ROTC contract by the end of the second semester, Third Class year will be encouraged to change their ROTC affiliation to the Army ROTC program. See paragraph 9 for details.
- C. Army ROTC: There are many opportunities for Third, Second, and First Class cadets to compete for an ROTC scholarship or an ROTC contract. The Army ROTC program can accept upperclassmen from the other ROTC programs who are actively pursuing a commission at any time prior to the end of the first semester, First Class year. See paragraph 9 for details.

**9. ROTC program re-affiliation for upperclassmen not on ROTC Contract; pursuing a commission:** Upperclassmen not on ROTC contract who are pursuing a commission may change service affiliation from one service-specific ROTC program to another with certain restrictions that are unique to the individual ROTC programs. Upperclassmen pursuing a commission are encouraged to re-affiliate in another ROTC program if it offers them more (or better) opportunities to commission than their current ROTC program. However, upperclassmen may also be required to re-affiliate in another ROTC program if they fail to satisfy a particular service's requirements to commission and/or participate in the ROTC program. Regardless of the circumstances, upperclassmen pursuing a commission and seeking to change service affiliation from one service-specific ROTC program to another must first coordinate with the affected ROTC programs. Ultimately, the admission decision is up to the Directors of the individual ROTC units.

- A. Navy/Marine Corps ROTC: The optimum time for upperclassmen to join the Naval ROTC (NROTC) unit from another ROTC program is the period between the second semester, Fourth Class year and the first semester, Third Class year. This same period is

the last ROTC program re-affiliation opportunity for upperclassmen who are interested in pursuing a commission in the Marine Corps. With few exceptions, the last ROTC program re-affiliation opportunity for upperclassmen who are interested in pursuing a commission in the Navy is the period between the first and second semesters, Third Class year.

- B. Air Force ROTC: The optimum time for upperclassmen to join AFROTC from another ROTC program is the period between the second semester, Fourth Class year and the first semester, Third Class year. With few exceptions, the last ROTC program re-affiliation opportunity for upperclassmen pursuing a commission in the Air Force is the period between the first and second semesters, Third Class year.
- C. Army ROTC: Upperclassmen pursuing a commission may join AROTC from another ROTC program at any time in their cadetship prior to the end of the first semester, First Class year.

**10. ROTC program re-affiliation for upperclassmen not on ROTC Contract; not pursuing a commission:** ROTC program re-affiliation policies pertaining to upperclassmen not on an ROTC contract who do not meet ROTC program requirements and/or are not interested in pursuing a commission are detailed below:

- A. Navy/Marine Corps ROTC: Third Class cadets not on ROTC contract who do not satisfy the NROTC requirements to remain in the program or who decide they are no longer interested in pursuing a commission shall be administratively separated from the NROTC program and enrolled in the Army ROTC program at the end of the affected semester. From that point on, these cadets will be required to take Army ROTC classes and perform all training events in accordance with the Army ROTC program. Given the same circumstances, Second and First Class cadets shall change their ROTC affiliation to the Army ROTC program unless they receive specific authorization from the Professor of Naval Science to continue taking NROTC classes. If granted, they will not participate in NROTC control times, Field Training Exercises, and PTT. Instead, they will revert to the Commandant for that training and will be required to register for the Leadership and Career Development courses (LS-350/351/450/451), which are mandatory for their non-commissioning curriculum.
- B. Air Force ROTC: Third Class cadets not on ROTC contract who do not satisfy the AFROTC requirements to remain in the program or who decide they are no longer interested in pursuing a commission shall be disenrolled from the AFROTC program and enrolled in the Army ROTC program at the end of the affected semester. From that point on, these cadets will be required to take Army ROTC classes and perform all training events in accordance with the Army ROTC program. Given the same circumstances, Second and First Class cadets shall change their ROTC affiliation to the Army ROTC program unless they receive specific authorization from the Professor of Aerospace Science to continue taking AFROTC classes. If granted, they will not participate in AFROTC control times, Field Training Exercises, and PTT. Instead, they will revert to the Commandant for that training and will be required to register for the Leadership and

Career Development courses (LS-350/351/450/451), which are mandatory for their non-commissioning curriculum.

- C. Army ROTC: Third Class cadets not on ROTC contract who decide they are no longer interested in pursuing a commission shall be required to take Army ROTC classes and perform all training events in accordance with the Army ROTC program. Given the same circumstances, Second and First Class cadets may continue taking AROTC classes but they will not participate in AROTC control times, Field Training Exercises, and PTT unless specifically authorized by the Professor of Military Science. Instead, they will revert to the Commandant for that training and will be required to register for the Leadership and Career Development courses (LS-350/351/450/451), which are mandatory for their non-commissioning curriculum.

**11. ROTC program disenrollment policy:** All cadets who are separated or disenrolled from one ROTC program will be required to re-affiliate with another ROTC program in order to meet all VMI graduation requirements. See paragraphs 9 and 10 for details. Common reasons for ROTC Program separation or disenrollment include academic deficiencies, repeated failures to maintain minimum GPAs, medical disqualifications, failure to pass a service-specific examination, not being selected for the Advanced Course or enrollment allocation, failure to meet administrative requirements, and failure to satisfactorily complete physical training requirements.

**12. ROTC program disqualification policy:** In some circumstances, cadets may be separated or disenrolled from one ROTC program for reasons that would render them inadmissible in the other two ROTC programs. Any cadet who is inadmissible and/or unable to enroll in another ROTC program cannot meet VMI academic requirements and would therefore be expected to resign his/her VMI cadetship or face expulsion from VMI. One of the most common reasons for ROTC program disqualification is illegal drug use.

- A. Drugs: Cadets who have a positive drug test in the urinalysis programs administered by the ROTC programs are at risk of being separated, disenrolled, and disqualified for enrollment in any of the ROTC programs. All branches of the Armed Forces are authorized to conduct urinalysis testing on cadets who are enrolled in their programs. This is a separate and distinct program from the urinalysis testing performed by VMI in accordance with General Order # 53, *VMI Drug Testing Policy*. Results of the service tests are subject to federal Privacy Act restrictions and cannot be shared with VMI state officials. However, they can be shared with the leadership of other ROTC departments as they are federal employees.

**13. Tracking Status (VMI):**

- A. On Contract: All cadets who are contracted to commission (any source) in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force will be tracked by VMI using the codes, “MSC,” “NSC,” “MCC,” and “ASC,” respectively.
- B. Pursuing a Contract: Upperclassmen who are pursuing a contract to commission (any source) in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force will be tracked by VMI using

the codes, “MSX,” “NSX,” “MCX,” and “ASX,” respectively. This code also applies to all New Cadets not on an ROTC contract.

- C. Not Pursuing a Contract: Upperclassmen who are not pursuing a contract to commission (any source) shall be enrolled in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force ROTC programs and tracked by VMI as “MS,” “NS,” “MC,” and “AS,” respectively.

FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Chief of Staff

OPR: Registrar and PAS/PMS/PNS