

ATTENTION

- Before completing the application, contact your component Academic Program POC to ensure you meet all component specific requirements and timelines. A list of Academic Program Component Points of Contact can be found at <http://dhsconnect.dhs.gov/org/comp/mgmt/dhshr/emp/Pages/Academic-POC.aspx> or by clicking [AP POCs](#).
- Each component has its own internal submission deadlines and requirements. It is critical that you communicate with your component POC to ensure each criterion is met.
- The completed DHS application must be submitted to your component POC. Applications submitted directly to DHS Academic Programs will not be accepted. DHS Academic Programs only accepts submissions from the component POC offices.
- Read the following "Instruction" pages carefully.

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Instructions: Department of War Service School Application

Description

Graduate Academic Programs (GAP) foster employee development by using educational curricula at respected academic institutions across the country to cultivate creative homeland security strategic analysis and decision-making skills and preparing future leaders at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). These programs are offered at high-quality, fully-accredited degree granting institutions. For information on specific programs, please visit the [Academic Programs](#) page on DHS Connect.

Funding

Tuition and fees are funded through arrangements between DHS and the Department of War (DOW). Travel or moving costs, lodging, per diem, and other incidental expenses associated with the one-time move of the student from his/her permanent duty location to the location of the DOW school, and the one-time move of the student back to his/her permanent duty station at the completion of his/her course of study are the responsibility of the applicant's Component. These expenses should be considered by the applicant and their supervisor/Component leadership prior to applying, as participation may require a move, travel, and per diem being paid. Participants will be required to sign a Continuing Service Agreement if selected to participate to attend a school. The federal service obligation for the DOW Senior Service Schools is 30 months. Travel and per diem expenses associated with class trips are paid by the DOW.

Education

Applicants must have earned at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. Consideration is given to those who already have a master's degree. An official transcript from the institution awarding the highest degree must be included. The official transcript should be sent to the applicant's home so that it can be attached to the application. An official transcript is needed for each application being submitted. Applicants must have a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.5 on their most recent transcript. Any individual who has completed a degree under a Department of Homeland Security Graduate Academic Program within the last three years is not eligible to apply.

Eligibility

Employment Status/Grade

- Full-time, permanent federal employees who have been with DHS for at least 1 (one) year at the time the application is due are eligible to apply. Any individual who has completed a degree under a Department of Homeland Security Graduate Academic Program within the last three years is not eligible to apply.
- Employees must have achieved at least a "Meets Expectations" or equivalent on their most recent review, and must be in good standing.
- Applicants must have the required security clearance to participate, minimum Secret level. Security clearance must be current at the time of nomination and remain current throughout the academic year. A Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI) may be required for certain schools, electives, and/or briefings.
- Applicants must meet the grade requirement for the school in which they are applying.
- GS-13s may apply to the following programs: Army Command and Staff College, Army School of Advanced Military Studies, Joint Forces Staff College, Marine Corps University - Command and Staff College, U.S. Air Force Command and General Staff College, U.S. Naval War College - Naval Command and Staff College.



Application Process

Step One: Completion of Application

Individual must complete application electronically. Do not copy and paste essays into the application. Upon completion, applicant shall sign the document, and obtain direct supervisor signature. Unofficial transcripts are required. Ensure any PII is redacted from your transcript. Properly secure, and password protect PII when submitted. Be prepared to provide an Official Transcript to the school following initial acceptance. Application package is not considered complete unless all items are contained in the package. Applicants may apply to multiple schools; however, applicants must complete an application for each school as well as letters of recommendations for each school. Please check with your Component Academic Program POC for internal Component deadline. Please visit the [Academic Programs](#) page on DHS Connect for a list of [Component Points of Contact](#).

Step Two: Component Prescreening

Component will prescreen applications based upon their established criteria. Components will submit approved applications to the DHS Chief Learning Officer via email to academicprograms@hq.dhs.gov. Only approved applications by eligible individuals will be reviewed for nomination, by the top of the Management Directorate.



NOTE: Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Step Three: Graduate Education Nomination Committee Review

Approved applications from Components will be reviewed based on nomination criteria. Components will announce nomination results to all applicants within three business days upon notification from the Chief Learning Officer. Nomination by the Graduate Education Nomination Committee does not guarantee participation in the program. Each school reserves the final decision to select a nominee for participation. Number of nominations is based upon billets available and may include alternates for each program. Number of available billets varies by school and Academic Year (AY.)

Step Four: Program Review

Each school will review nominees based upon school's acceptance criteria. Applicants should not contact the school directly. Selection notifications will be made to the Component point of contact by the DHS Chief Learning Officer as received from the individual school. Components will notify individuals of their selection. Selection notifications are sometimes made by the school directly to the nominee.

Nomination Criteria

Applications will be pre-screened by each Component based upon their set criteria (contact Component representative for details). Graduate Education Nomination Committee will review and rank applicants in each of the following areas (based on a 100-point scale):

Academic Credentials

Undergraduate and graduate academic performance will be used to determine ability to succeed in the program. Applicants must have a minimum GPA of 2.5 on their most recent transcript. An unofficial transcript from the institution awarding the highest degree must be included for each application being submitted.

Biography

Academic, professional, and personal achievements will be assessed. Applicant shall submit a biography that includes significant positions held (most recent first), agency/firm and major responsibilities. Gaps in employment history should be explained.



Essay #1

Essay is assessed based on depth, breadth, and level of experience; as well as organization of essay and communication skills. Punctuation and grammar will be taken into account. Greater value is placed on strategic and policy level examples of experience over tactical or operational examples. Essay is to be written at a master's level and shall exemplify the applicant's ability to evaluate and synthesize material/experience.

Essay #2

Applicants must demonstrate an understanding of how their participation in the program will enhance their ability to fulfill the Department's mission; specifically, how the knowledge gained through the program will impact their ability to assist their Component in achieving the DHS mission. Essay should discuss how the elements of the program itself will enhance the individual and organization. This essay is assessed based on depth, breadth, and synthesis of information; as well as organization of essay and communication skills.

Letters of Recommendation

Two letters of recommendation are required. The first is from the direct supervisor or Agency/Component leadership and is based upon the last page of this application. The second letter may be from a colleague or Component leadership, and should attest to applicant's dedication, conscientiousness, and communication skills. LOR should fit the school in which you are applying to.



NOTE: LOR are limited to one page.

Potential for Graduate Study

The entire application is reviewed to assess overall the individual's potential to succeed in the program of study they are applying to; and to apply the knowledge gained upon return to duty. The application will be reviewed for completeness; organization; ability to write at a master's level; and general communication skills. To score high in this area, the applicant must clearly demonstrate an understanding of the program they are applying to, and how it applies to the mission of the Department.

*There is an optional essay if applicant wishes to provide information addressing concerns that may arise during the review process based on prior academic or work performance, or other issues the applicant feels may impact the rating of their application. The optional essay is not weighted and will only be considered during committee discussions as general information.

SF-182

Completion of an SF-182 will only occur if you are selected for a DOW Senior Service School program.

Signatures

Applicants are required to e-sign the document and then forward application to their first line supervisors. First-line supervisors will e-sign their approval for the individual to move forward in the nomination process. First-line supervisors by signing, understand that any travel/per diem costs to attend a DOW SSS will be at the cost of the Component. A final e-signature is required from the applicants Component Approving Authority, must be a member of the Senior Executive Service (i.e. Second-Line supervisor, Component Head, ERB Chair, Training and Development Officer). This official is supporting the applicants request to be considered for a DOW SSS, as well as understanding any and all travel/per diem costs to attend a DOW SSS are at the expense of the Component. This travel/per diem costs does not include tuition or any trips that the applicant will take while in a student status are part of the official course, those costs are all covered by the school.



Application Submission

Applications must be submitted in electronic (PDF) format. Please only submit the “application” portion of the document. Applications must be submitted to your Component Academic POC by the deadline established for your Component. Applications must be saved using the following format:



NOTE: LastName_FirstName_Component_School

Unofficial Transcripts, REDACTED TO REMOVE ALL PII, must be included with your submission. Be prepared to provide an Official Transcript to the school following initial acceptance.

For program information or application questions, please contact your

Component Academic Program POC



SAMPLE FORMAT FOR LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION



Homeland
Security

Department of War Senior Service Schools
Graduate Education Application

Please provide this sheet to your direct supervisor or Component leader who will be writing your Letter of Recommendation.

To: Supervisors and Component Leaders

From: Learning, Education, and Development Strategy, Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer

RE: Letter of Recommendation for Department of War Service School Applicant

Participation in the Department of War Senior Service Schools requires a significant investment in time and resources for both the applicant and the Department. You are being asked to write a letter of recommendation for an applicant.

As part of their application package, individuals must include a letter from their direct supervisor or Component leadership that indicates an understanding of how their participation in a master's program will benefit DHS; and how the knowledge gained through participation will be implemented upon their return to duty. The letter should address the following questions:

1. How does this opportunity link to the applicant's career growth within the Department of Homeland Security?
2. How will your organization benefit from the knowledge the applicant will gain as part of this opportunity?



Department of War Senior Service School Application

Part 1: Applicant's Information

Name (First, Middle, Last)									
Grade/Step									
Current Job Title									
Parent Agency (Select One)									
☐ DHS HQ		☐ FLETC		☐ CBP		☐ USCG CIVILIAN		☐ TSA	
☐ CISA		☐ USCIS		☐ ICE		☐ FEMA		☐ USSS	
Office/Directorate									
Date of Service to DHS						Date of Current Position			
Security Clearance (Select One)									
☐ Suitability			☐ Secret			☐ Top Secret			
Work Address									
Street									
City						State		Zip	
Work Phone									
Work E-Mail									
First Line Supervisor Name									
Second Line Supervisor Name									

Which program are you applying to? *(Select Only One)***DOW Senior Service School**

Air War College (AWC)

Army War College (USAWC)

National Defense University (NDU), Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy (NDU-ES)

National Defense University (NDU), College of International Security Affairs (CISA)

National Intelligence College (NIC), NDU

National Defense University (NDU), National War College (NWC)

U.S. Marine Corps University (USMCU), Marine Corps War College (MCWC)

U.S. Naval War College (USNWC), College of Naval Warfare (CNW)

National Defense University (NDU), College of Information and Cyberspace (CIC)

Inter-American Defense College (IADC)

Other DOW Schools

Army Command and General Staff College (ACGS), Command and General Staff School *

Army Command and General Staff College (ACGS), School of Advance Military Studies *

Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC) *

U.S. Marine Corps University (USMCU), Command and Staff College *

U.S. Naval War College (NWC), College of Naval Command and Staff (CNC&S) *

U.S. Army War College, Distance Education Program *

*GS-13 may apply

Academic Information: Highest Degree Awarded *(Select One)*

Bachelor's

Master's

Doctorate



Part 2: Biography

Please provide a biography that highlights your education and career history. Your response is limited to **the next two pages**. Formatting will not copy into the form; point size 10. Attachments are not accepted.





Part 3: Essay Questions

Essay questions are a significant part of the application review. Your response must be written by you personally and may not be written, edited or translated by anyone other than yourself. Each essay is evaluated on the depth, breadth and level of experience, as well as activities and accomplishments of the applicant. Essays are also judged on organization and communication skills, including punctuation and grammar, to determine if the applicant demonstrates a graduate student level of writing. Evaluation criteria are outlined at the beginning of this application. Formatting will not copy into this form.

Essay #1: Instructions

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is comprised of eight (8) operational Components plus Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) and more than fifteen (15) support Components, each with its own distinct function in achieving the Department's missions. Please describe a time when you took on a leadership role and worked across Components, or across departments within your own Component, to complete a project.

Type your essay on the next page.



Essay #1

Your response is limited to space below. Formatting will not copy into the form; point size 10. Attachments are not accepted.



Essay #2: Instructions

The Self-Assessment Essay is a statement specifying: (1) your reasons for seeking graduate education in homeland security; (2) the ways your background and experience flow logically toward such an endeavor; and (3) what you believe will be your future contributions to "homeland security." From this information, combining relevance, motivation, drive, and potential, your "Future Contributions" to the field of homeland security will be assessed. When writing your essay, you may consider the following categories. While they do not represent "topics" to adopt for the essay, they may serve as examples of items or issues which could be incorporated in your essay:

- The contribution your background and educational experiences have made to your success in public safety, public administration, or homeland security.
- Your current position, opportunities, challenges, and successes in improving the quality of life of the citizens of your jurisdiction.
- The value of a graduate degree in homeland security to you and your organization, agency, jurisdiction, or state.
- Your assessment of your career path and the progression of your positions as well as the contributions you expect to make over the next five to ten years in the fields of public safety, public administration, or homeland security.
- What you consider to be the greatest challenges faced by your jurisdiction in the next decade and the ways you will be able to assist in meeting those challenges.
- An example or several examples of the homeland security-related topics you consider most critical in your jurisdiction and your plans to study those topics within the graduate curriculum.

Type your essay on pages 9 and 10.



Essay #2

Your response is limited to the next two pages. Formatting will not copy into the form; point size 10. Attachments are not accepted.





Optional Essay

If you have concerns about your prior academic background or work experience; or additional information you want the committee to consider, you may address them in the **optional** essay.



NOTE: This is **not** mandatory and will **only** be used as general information when reviewing your application.

Type your essay on the next page.



Optional Essay

Your response is limited to space below. Formatting will not copy into the form; point size 10. Attachments are not accepted.



Part 4: Letter of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation should be addressed to the Graduate Education Nomination Committee and identify the benefits of the agency for the applicant to apply to a specific school. Generic letters of recommendation are not recommended. Both letters should be submitted with the application on component letterhead and signed.

Letter of Recommendation #1

The first letter of recommendation should be written by your supervisor or Component leadership that indicates how the organization will benefit from your participation in the program. Please provide them as the last pages of the application package as a reference.

Letter of Recommendation #2

This letter should be written by someone within Component leadership not within the applicant's direct chain-of-command, and attest to the applicant's dedication, conscientiousness and communication skills.

Part 5: Worldwide Travel Qualification

Core curriculum travel is rigorous and may include local, domestic or international travel to industrial complexes such as factories, power plants, rail and ship yards, depots, oil drilling platforms and border locations. Students must be mobile and able to participate in travel as a condition for admission. I understand the requirements of worldwide travel as associated with the program to which I am applying.

Applicant Signature

Part 6: Authorization to Release Education Records

By signing this statement and enrolling in a course, I acknowledge and agree that my education records, including copies of my transcripts, grade reports and/or student evaluations may be disclosed to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for inclusion in my personnel records and considered during my annual performance review. No further release to any other party is authorized without my expressed written consent. This release remains in effect until I am no longer employed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Applicant Signature

Privacy Act Statement

AUTHORITY: The Homeland Security Act Of 2002, Pub. L. 107-296, Sec 1331; 5 U.S.C. Chapter 41-Training.

PRINCIPAL PURPOSE: The purpose is to enable individuals to provide the necessary information for enrollment in a specific college, course, or program, and for other administrative processing associated with applying to the Department of War Senior Service School.

ROUTINE USES: Data will be used to compile student databases, class placements, statistical data, and for other routine administrative purposes. Information will be shared with Academic Program personnel in the DHS Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, the Component where the applicant resides, and the Department of War Senior Service School. In exceptional cases, information may also be shared in accordance with the routine uses described in DHS/ALL-003 Department of Homeland Security Training Records.

MANDATORY OR VOLUNTARY DISCLOSURE: Disclosure is voluntary; however, failure to provide the requested information may prevent enrollment.



Part 8: Applicant Signature

The information on this application is correct and was completed by me without assistance in editing or translating. I understand that nomination by the Graduate Education Nomination Committee does not guarantee acceptance into any program and that the school to which I am applying will make the final selection decision.

If chosen, I will be transitioned to student status and will not be available to perform my regular duties for the duration of the program. I understand that I will be required to attend the DHS DOW orientation, either virtually or in-person prior to the start of the AY. During that time, any evaluations or performance reports done by the program may be sent to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to be included in my personnel record. My supervisor and I have discussed how the skills and knowledge gained while in this program will be implemented upon my return to duty. We have discussed possible areas of study and research topics as they apply to the mission of my Component and DHS as a whole.

Further, I understand that participating in this program requires a considerable investment of time and I am prepared to put forth the effort required to successfully complete this program. If selected for the program, I will be required to submit a Continuing Service Agreement for a 30-month period, which will be based upon completion of the program. I will adhere to the school's leave policies while in the program, submitting any absence for accounting in my Component's time reporting system.

Applicant Signature

Part 9: First Line Supervisor Signature

I understand that this application is for a full-time academic program and that if selected, the applicant will be unavailable for his/her regular duties for up to 11 months. The applicant and I have reviewed the program information and how the knowledge gained may be applied upon his/her return to duty. I have reviewed the Worldwide Travel Requirement statement signed by the applicant and feel this applicant is qualified.

I have reviewed the eligibility criteria for this program, and feel this applicant is eligible based on their grade/band, duties and last performance review. Further, I understand that while attending the program, travel, lodging, per diem and other incidental expenses are the responsibility of the applicant's Component and/or this office specifically, with the exception that travel and per diem expenses associated with class trips are paid by DOW. I understand that the applicant, if selected, shall sign a Continuing Service Agreement with a 30-month federal service commitment.

First Line Supervisor Signature

Part 10: Component Approving Authority Signature (Second Line Supervisor)

I understand that this application is for a full-time academic program and that if selected, the applicant will be unavailable for his/her regular duties for up to 11 months. The supervisor and I have reviewed the program information and how the knowledge gained may be applied upon his/her return to duty. Based on my discussion with the Supervisor, I feel this applicant is eligible based on their grade/band, duties and last performance review.

Further, I understand that while attending the program, travel, lodging, per diem and other incidental expenses are the responsibility of the applicant's Component and/or this office specifically. I understand that the applicant, if selected, shall sign a Continuing Service Agreement with a 30-month federal service commitment.

Component Approving Authority Signature



Application Checklist

Your application is not complete without the following:

- ☐ All fields completed
- ☐ Biography (no attachments accepted)
- ☐ Unofficial transcript(s) Redacted, DO NOT INCLUDE PII
- ☐ All essays written (no attachments accepted)
- ☐ Letter of recommendation #1
- ☐ Letter of recommendation #2
- ☐ Email Confirmation from your SSO confirming your level of clearance, date granted, investigation type and compartments accessed for TS-SCI.
- ☐ Applicant signature in all required places
- ☐ Supervisor signature
- ☐ Saved using **LastName_FirstName_Component_School** format

Component Review and Approval

Component Academic POC has reviewed this application for eligibility and completion. The following recommendation is submitted:

- ☐ This application is approved for review by the Graduate Education Nomination Committee
- ☐ This application is *not* approved for review by the Graduate Education Nomination Committee

Component Academic Program POC Signature