

Military Acceptance of GED® Credential

Prepared by GED Testing Service® (November 2009)



Acceptance of GED Credential, by Military Branch

Military officials who assisted in the creation of this document noted the Three-Tier System often in their comments. An explanation of that system, as provided by military officials, is below.

The Department of Defense (DOD) education enlistment criteria, known as the Three-Tier System, is used to select applicants with the greatest likelihood of completing their initial military service obligation. The DOD separates potential enlistees into separate "tiers" based upon their education credentials. DODI 1145.01 states "the education credential accession benchmark is 90 percent high school diploma graduates (Tier 1)...the remaining 10 percent shall be primarily alternate high school credential holders (Tier 2); non-graduates (Tier 3) may be enlisted as permitted by United States Code."

1. Is the GED credential considered equivalent to a high school diploma for purposes of enlistment into the military?

Branch	Response	Other Comments
Army	No, the GED credential is Tier 2 and the high school diploma is Tier 1.	Reported their answers were the same as the Navy's, except for question 5.
Navy	No, the GED credential is Tier 2 and the high school diploma is Tier 1.	The GED credential is accepted as Tier 2 status by the Navy for recruiting purposes.
Marine Corps	Yes and no. The GED credential is accepted for purposes of enlistment into the Marine Corps, but it is not equivalent to a high school diploma.	The Commandant of the Marine Corps mandates that 95 percent of Marine Corps enlistees will be Tier 1.
Coast Guard	The GED credential is considered as Tier 2. A high school diploma is Tier 1.	
Air Force	No. There are three categories of education for enlistment in the USAF: Tier 1—High school graduate or higher; Tier 2— Alternate high school credential holder (GED credential, youth challenge, home school); and Tier 3—Non-high school graduate (the USAF limits Tier 2 enlistments to 1 percent of total)	

2. Some branches allow people to enlist if they apply with a GED credential plus additional qualifications. What additional qualifications, if any, are required and accepted for enlistment into the military for an individual with a GED credential? (e.g., 10 hours college coursework, pre-bootcamp training, etc.)

Branch	Response	Other Comments
Army	The GED credential holder who is applying to the Army must score a 50 or higher on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT).	Reported their answers were the same as the Navy's, except for question 5.
Navy	The GED credential holder who is applying to the Navy must score a 50 or higher on the AFQT.	Additional requirements are attached to Tier 2 applicants: Individual (1) must have Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) AFQT scores of 50 or higher; (2) must spend a minimum of 90 calendar days in delayed entry program (DEP); and (3) must complete DEP PQS prior to shipping to Recruit Training Command (RTC).
Marine Corps	There are no additional qualifications required for a Tier 2 enlistee into the Marine Corps, if he/she has been allowed to enlist in the Marine Corps with a GED credential.	
Coast Guard	The Coast Guard Recruiting Manual sets minimum standards for applicants. A Tier 2 applicant must score a 47 or higher on the AFQT, whereas a Tier 1 applicant needs to score a 36 or higher. Any AFQT score below 45 requires a waiver. The average AFQT score for 2009 for accepted enlistees was 70.4.	
Air Force	The USAF requires a GED credential holder to score a 65 or higher on the AFQT score portion of the ASVAB. Tier 1 applicants require a minimum score of 36 AFQT on the ASVAB.	

3. Rumors have circulated in the past about lower pay for soldiers who enlist with a GED credential, compared with those who enlist with a traditional high school diploma. What disadvantages or penalties exist, if any, for enlistees who enter the military service with a GED credential instead of a traditional high school diploma (e.g., lower pay, slower rate of promotion, ceiling for promotions, etc.)?

Branch	Response	Other Comments
Army	There are no penalties for those who are enlisted with a GED credential; it is equal for all once they are enlisted.	Reported their answers were the same as the Navy's, except for question 5.
Navy	There are no penalties for those who are enlisted with a GED credential; it is equal for all once they are enlisted.	Rumors about disadvantages for recruits with GED credentials versus high school diplomas is just that—rumors. Once accepted as a Navy recruit, an individual has to rely on his/her own capabilities to learn, develop, and advance in

		the chosen military career path.
Marine Corps	There are no disadvantages or penalties for a Tier 2 enlistee who is allowed to join the Marine Corps. A Tier 2 enlistee is afforded the same opportunities in pay, promotions, and benefits as a Tier 1 enlistee.	
Coast Guard	There are no differences once an applicant is accepted.	
Air Force	None.	

4. Recruiters are reporting that some military branches no longer accept applicants with a GED credential, but that enlistment may re-open for these individuals in the future. This is based on some pre-determined balance of enlistees with a traditional high school diploma versus a GED credential. What caps or limits currently exist on the number of persons with a GED credential who can enlist in the military (e.g., 30 percent of annual enlistees may have GED credential)?

Branch	Response	Other Comments
Army	Non-Tier 1 education holders are limited to no more than 5 percent of the total accessions.	Reported their answers were the same as the Navy's, except for question 5.
Navy	Non-Tier 1 education holders are limited to no more than 5 percent of the total accessions.	Although there is no official directive, there may be some Naval Recruiting Districts (NRD) that are not accepting Tier 2 applicants at present. The reason may be attributed to current economic conditions, which most likely resulted in a particular NRD meeting or even exceeding its recruiting goal. However, if such is the case, recruiters have the flexibility to review individual applicants based on their ASVAB AFQT performance. Requests for reconsideration may be made on behalf of applicants with high scores, submitted through official channels.
Marine Corps	The DOD limits each service branch to a 10 percent Tier 2 enlistment rate annually. The Marine Corps maintains a policy of allowing 5 percent of enlistees to be Tier 2 or below annually. In addition, an abundance of qualified Tier 1 enlistees, as currently exists, would drop the percentage of Tier 2 enlistees.	
Coast Guard	The current limit for enlisting people with a GED credential is 50 total. In 2009, only 25 people holding a GED credential were admitted into the Coast Guard.	
Air Force	The USAF limits GED credential holder enlistments to 1 percent for each fiscal year, based on the total number of accessions for that year.	

5. Some branches offer interested adults the opportunity to prepare for the GED Tests in conjunction with enlistment in the service. When these adults pass the tests and earn their credential, they can move directly into the service. Please indicate which branches below offer this type of program.

Branch	Response	Other Comments
Army	The Army does have a pilot GED program at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina.	
Navy	There are no GED Test preparation programs for applicants.	The Navy has no structured or official program for civilians to prepare for GED Tests.
Marine Corps	The Marine Corps has no such program.	
Coast Guard	No such programs are offered.	
Air Force	USAF recruiting personnel are not permitted to assist individuals in obtaining their GED credential, only to advise them to contact the nearest state education official. Therefore, we cannot work with an applicant until they obtain their GED credential.	