



# || USPHS Commissioned Corps



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

### UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES (USU) PROGRAM

#### What is USUHS?

- A. The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) is located on the grounds of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland – a suburb of Washington, D.C. – and is the nation’s only federal school of medicine. The university’s close proximity to the National Institutes of Health, the National Library of Medicine and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center make it a unique location for medical education and research.

USU was established by Congress in 1972 to provide career medical officers to serve the nation. More than 5,000 physicians have graduated since USU opened its doors in 1976, many of them in top medical leadership positions around the world.

#### What are the physical requirements?

- A. The Army, Navy, Air Force, and United States Public Health Services have different physical readiness requirements on which you will be tested twice yearly, and the minimum effort is age dependent. You will have to conform to the weight standard for each service and will have to do a minimum number of sit-ups and push-ups. You will also have to run a 1.5-2 mile course in a specified time.

#### Will I be pulled out of medical school to be deployed or go to war?



- A. No. As a medical student, you do not have the skills needed to support combat operations used in a war. The services need you to complete medical school and get a license to practice medicine so that you can serve as a licensed physician. If you are selected to continue in your residency, you will also not be pulled out to go to war because we need your services as a specialist, not as a general medical officer. If you are not selected to continue in your residency, you will receive supplemental training ranging from two weeks to six months to prepare you for your role in the operational setting.

## **What are the eligibility requirements for USU?**

- A. You must be a U.S. citizen and have no felony convictions. Professionally, an MCAT >496, and a GPA >3.0 (while in undergraduate studies, or while in a post baccalaureate institution or graduate studies) are the minimum standard for USU. The mean MCAT for matriculants is between 508 and 509 and the mean GPA is >3.6.

## **Do you have to have military experience to be accepted at USU??**

- A. No. Approximately 30-40% of our students have some form of prior military experience as an officer or enlisted person. The majority of the students listed as having prior military service actually are students who have just graduated from the three service academies or ROTC units.

## **How good are the military residencies??**

- A. All military residencies (Army/Navy/Air Force) are reviewed by the same national accrediting body that surveys the civilian training programs. Military residencies are very competitive with university-based residencies, and military residency graduates have among the highest first time pass rates on specialty board certification exams.

## **How does military pay compare to civilian pay?**

- A. Military pay is a matter of public record. If you are interested in pay tables, you can find them on [www.dfas.mil](http://www.dfas.mil) or [militarypay.defense.gov](http://militarypay.defense.gov). Doctors in the military start out with much higher pay as interns and residents than their civilian counterparts. Students enrolled at USU do not pay any tuition and are paid as officers with full officer benefits as well. During internship and residency and all of the payback time, a military doctor accumulates time in service toward retirement, in addition to time in grade for promotion and pay increases. After specialization, doctors are paid special bonuses based on the relative discrepancy between civilian and military pay and the needs of the service. Fully trained doctors who have completed their payback time usually make about \$200K- \$300K, have full medical and dental benefits, 30 days paid vacation per



year, and pay no malpractice insurance.

## Does the School of Medicine value diversity?

- A. Yes. The Nation's Armed Forces and Public Health Beneficiaries represent all demographics of America, and their physicians need to embody that same diversity of socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. The School of Medicine does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual preference, color, creed, religion, national origin, marital status, or state of residence. The Admissions Committee takes all aspects of a potential student's educational journey into account when making admissions decisions-- a diverse student body holds tremendous educational value for all future military and public health medical officers.

## What are the benefits of being an officer at USU?

- A. USU officers:
- Receive tuition-free education; unique curriculum; outstanding faculty and world-class research.
  - Receive Serve on active duty as commissioned officers in grade O-1 (i.e., Ensign in the Public Health Service) with full pay and allowances for that grade.
  - Receive a non-taxable basic housing allowance (BAH) based on whether a student has dependents, the amount of the service member's rent or mortgage payment and the location of the member's primary duty station.
  - Are authorized 30 days of leave per year. Because of curriculum requirements, leave can be taken only during official school breaks, such as winter recess, spring break and summer leave periods.
  - Are eligible for low-cost life insurance and are provided comprehensive medical and dental care at no charge.
  - May use commissary (military supermarket) and post exchange (military department store) facilities where costs are considerably lower than their civilian counterparts.
    - Certain legal services, such as advice on income tax matters and executing personal wills, are free.