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SUBJ/FISCAL YEAR 2026 SEAMAN TO ADMIRAL-21 PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT//

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NARR/REF A IS OPNAVINST 1420.1B, ENLISTED TO OFFICER COMMISSIONING PROGRAMS

APPLICATION ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL.

REF B IS NAVADMIN 177/17, NUCLEAR TRAINED SAILOR APPLICATIONS TO OFFICER COMMISSIONING PROGRAMS.

REF C IS PROGRAM AUTHORIZATION 150A, SEAMAN TO ADMIRAL-21 NUCLEAR OPTION COMMISSIONING PROGRAM.

REF D IS COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 1130.8M, NAVY RECRUITING MANUAL.//

RMKS/1. This NAVADMIN solicits applications and provides guidance for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Seaman to Admiral-21 (STA-21) Commissioning Program. STA-21 is a full-time undergraduate education and commissioning program open to enlisted personnel of all pay grades and ratings who meet the eligibility requirements specified in reference (a).

2. Applicants stationed outside the United States at any time between 1 February 2024 and 30 June 2025 or those who were deployed at any time between 1 February 2024 and 30 June 2025 may apply without a valid Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or American College Test (ACT), if they meet the requirements detailed in paragraph (8h) of this NAVADMIN. The SAT or ACT application requirement is also waived for all STA-21 Nuclear option (STA-21(N)) applicants; however, the SAT or ACT is strongly encouraged for STA-21(N) applicants who wish to strengthen their academic record.

Supplemental information for applicant submission is provided in paragraphs (8g) and (8h) of this NAVADMIN.

3. The deadline for submission of applications for the FY26 STA-21 Program is 1 July 2025, and application packages must be postmarked on or before this date. It is recommended that applications be submitted prior

to the deadline as early submission allows timely feedback to the Sailor regarding missing or illegible documents.

Additional documentation must be postmarked on or before 24 July 2025; any submissions after this date will not be accepted. The selection board is scheduled to convene in August 2025 and selectees will be announced via NAVADMIN message.

4. The core program and the following target options are open for application for the FY26 selection board: Surface Warfare Officer (SWO), SWO Engineering Duty Option SWO (ED), Nuclear (Surface and Submarine), Special Warfare, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Naval Flight Officer, Aviator, Civil Engineering Corps, Nurse Corps, and Information Professional.

5. The following target options have zero select opportunities for FY26: Human Resources, Intelligence, Information Warfare, Medical Corps, Supply Corps, Oceanography Officer (OCEANO), and SWO (OCEANO).

6. The Nuclear (Surface and Submarine) target option is now open to Sailors who are serving in the Fleet and hold an active nuclear Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) (N1XO, N1XS, N2XO, N2XS) and to those Sailors who are in the nuclear training pipeline with the N91T NEC. Applicants holding a nuclear NEC must receive a conditional release from the Nuclear Enlisted Community Manager (OPNAV N133D), in line with reference (b), if applying for an option outside the nuclear community. All applicants for STA-21(N) must be able to begin their first day of class in the first semester of their coursework prior to reaching eight years of service. See paragraph (9) of this NAVADMIN for additional requirements for non-nuclear trained Sailors applying for the Nuclear (Surface and Submarine) target options. Reference (c) provides specific information and all other requirements to apply for the STA-21(N) program.

7. The following additional information is relevant to FY26 STA-21 (non-Nuclear option) applications:

a. If a Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA) was not performed within the last year, the Commanding Officer (CO) will provide an affirmative statement in their endorsement certifying the applicant is within Navy PFA height and weight requirements.

b. See paragraph (8h) of this NAVADMIN for standardized test score requirements. Candidates are advised to verify school admission requirements, as the STA-21(N) SAT or ACT waiver does not supersede university admission requirements.

c. The Joint Service Transcript (JST), in line with reference (a), enclosure (1), chapter 8, paragraph 6.b(9), does not need to be submitted with this application. A future revision of reference (a) will remove this requirement.

d. The applicant's photograph, in line with reference (a), is no longer required for this application. A future revision of reference (a) will remove this requirement.

8. The following information addresses lessons learned from the FY25 STA-21 (non-Nuclear option) selection process and board. This information is provided to preclude common errors:

a. Of the 476 applications received for FY25, 455 were board eligible.

A total of 79 Sailors were selected to participate in the FY25 STA-21 Program.

b. Each year, application packages are not considered due to non-qualifying SAT or ACT scores, missing the CO's endorsement or recommendations, recent Non-Judicial Punishment, missing PFA cycles, missing or illegible documents, and not meeting program age or Navy PFA height and weight requirements.

c. Minimum eligibility requirements must be met before submitting an application. Applications should be mailed only when fully completed.

d. The CO's endorsement is extremely important, especially their ranking of the applicant among their peers. The endorsement should contain specifics about the individual's academic potential, commitment, leadership, service above self, and potential as a Naval officer. CO comments should specify the primary option to which the individual is applying and address how the individual meets the qualifications for that option. For junior Sailors with only schoolhouse evaluations, the CO must address this issue in their endorsement.

e. An interview board and nomination review board will be conducted in line with reference (a). Officer interview boards will consist of three officers, and the applicant's CO may not be a board member and should not submit an interview appraisal sheet. It is recommended that officers of the applicant's designator of choice, if available, be asked to participate in the interview and nomination review board to assess the applicant for their community.

Officer appraisals provide important insight into the applicant.

The appraisal from the board should be a frank and honest assessment of the applicant's leadership and academic potential. The CO's personal interview should be conducted only after the application is complete and the officer interview board has submitted their appraisals. The full picture of an applicant's academic and officer potential can only be determined by reviewing the SAT or ACT scores (if required), high school or college transcripts, and a completed application package. Appraisal forms should be typed in 10 or 12- point font.

f. The STA-21 applicant's personal statement should address why the Sailor wants to become an officer, how the Sailor's selection would improve the Navy, and why the Sailor is applying for a specific option. Sailors must also address any hardships or unique experiences that shaped their character.

Junior Sailors should provide information on high school experiences, as high school transcripts rarely provide in-depth information on involvement in sports, clubs, volunteer hours, work, etc. Additionally, applicants should address any anomalies in the package (e.g., poor high school grades, college grades, service school grades, or poor evaluation performance). This explanation should include details of the situation, how the applicant has overcome these issues, and why the applicant will be successful in the future.

g. The application is a reflection of the applicant; therefore it is important that the applicant review their package in its entirety before submission. Check for misspelled words and improper grammar. Ensure all high school and college transcripts are enclosed. Applicants must submit results from the last PFA completed including overall score. Applicants who have not taken the PFA within the past year and meet the exception

criteria, in line with reference (a), must have a CO's endorsement, including a statement verifying the applicant is currently within Navy PFA height and weight standards.

h. Qualifying SAT or ACT scores are required for all non- nuclear officer candidates, except as noted in paragraph (1) of this NAVADMIN. Qualifying SAT or ACT scores are not required for all nuclear officer candidates; however, the SAT or ACT is strongly encouraged for STA-21(N) applicants who wish to strengthen their academic record. Applications can still be submitted pending receipt of SAT or ACT scores or with a command statement indicating non-availability for overseas locations and deployed units. The SAT or ACT scores submitted can be from exams taken between 1 July 2020 and 1 July 2025. Applicants without SAT or ACT scores and who meet the exception criteria must ensure their high school cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) (minimum 2.5 GPA) is dated within the last five years or have a minimum 2.5 cumulative college GPA on a 4.0 scale with 12 or more semester hours.

i. It is recommended the command retain a copy of the entire application package. The command portion of the application (such as command endorsement and interview appraisal sheets) should not be shared with the applicant.

9. FY26 STA-21(N) applicants should be aware of the following application requirement modifications that are only relevant for Sailors applying to the nuclear option. These modifications have been made in an effort to reduce administrative requirements for applicants and will be incorporated into a future revision of reference (a). All waivers will be adjudicated on a case-by-case basis. All waivers must be clearly identified and formally endorsed by the Sailor's CO as part of the Sailor's STA-21(N) application.

a. JST transcripts are not required for STA-21(N) applicants.

b. Applicants are required to apply to three STA-21(N) program-approved universities prior to the STA-21(N) application deadline. If an applicant's desired university is not accepting applications prior to the STA-21(N) application deadline, the applicant shall include both documentation for those applications already submitted and notice of their intention to apply to their preferred university in their STA-21(N) application package.

c. The following universities have zero select opportunities for FY26: Columbia University and Southern University and A&M College.

d. Interviews (command and nominative boards) are not required for STA-21(N) applicants, nor are they required to submit officer interview sheets.

e. Non-nuclear trained Sailors are welcome to apply to STA- 21(N) , but must submit a Electronic Personnel Action Request (NAVPERS 1306/7) , to their community manager requesting conditional release from their community, in line with their community practices. They must include in their application package the approved conditional release letter received from their community manager. Application packages must be screened by the Nuclear Accessions Director of Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) and the finalized nuclear field eligibility worksheet must be included in the application package. If applicants have any questions about this process, contact OPNAV N133D at bullnuke@navy.mil. Non-nuclear trained Sailors must meet the requirements of nuclear field duty as specified in Chapter 5 of reference (d). Those requirements not

met for nuclear field duty require a waiver with NRC concurrence. These requirements include, but are not limited to, Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, foreign citizenship, and security clearance.

f. CO Letter of Recommendation. A CO's letter of recommendation must be included in an applicant's package. It is encouraged that the CO's letter endorse a Sailor based upon their mental aptitude, leadership, and ability to manage adversity. COs are encouraged to provide supplemental context into their ranking methodology and ranking philosophy. Commands with "one of one" Sailors are reviewed with the same regard as commands with multiple Sailors applying. COs should rank their STA-21(N) applicants in a separate group than non-nuclear STA-21 applicants within their command.

g. STA-21(N) applicants are not required to submit the personal statement listed in paragraph (8f) and instead must submit three personal statements, each not to exceed 300 words, in response to the following questions:

(1) What actions have you taken to prepare for the STA-21(N) program, and how do these actions set you apart from other applicants? (Provide specific endeavors/activities that make you competitive.)

(2) How do you assess your readiness to academically manage a technically rigorous and compressed college level course load? (Highlight academic success, but also explain any previous academic shortfalls and provide evidence that you've overcome them.)

(3) STA-21(N) is an education and commissioning opportunity that will challenge you morally, mentally, and physically. How do you assess your resiliency in successfully navigating the adversity and mental stresses expected in this program? (Explain your Warrior Ethos and provide any personal challenges or shortcomings that have made you more resilient.)

10. The following lessons learned are provided to STA-21(N) applicants based on the FY25 STA-21(N) selection process and board. This information is provided to ensure applicants highlight their accomplishments and present a competitive package.

a. The most competitive applicants have strong academic performance in high school, college, or the nuclear training pipeline. If an applicant does not have a history of strong academic performance, they should provide evidence of improved technical rigor and academic readiness through some other means, such as SAT or ACT scores, or additional college level courses in technical subjects (e.g., calculus, physics, etc.). Strong performance in the Fleet or advanced qualifications are not a substitute for academic performance; Fleet Sailors without an exceptional academic record are strongly encouraged to take the SAT or ACT in order to demonstrate their academic aptitude and potential.

b. Sailors are encouraged to be forthright in addressing reasons for poor academic performance or disenrollment from an academic institution. This is best accomplished with an explanation of lessons learned or actions taken to address their weaknesses since the event occurred.

c. Letters of recommendation are encouraged and should provide further evidence of a Sailor's ability to complete a rigorous technical degree or other efforts a Sailor has taken to strengthen their application.

11. The preferred method of delivery for applications is through mail. If mail delivery is not possible, contact the Naval Service Training Command STA-21 Program Office (N92 STA-21) at grlk_sta21@us.navy.mil for alternative delivery methods. Mail completed applications to:

Naval Service Training Command
ATTN: N92 STA-21
320A Dewey Ave Building 3, Room 106
Great Lakes, IL 60088-2845

12. For questions, specific details, eligibility criteria, application requirements, and selection procedures, Sailors should refer to reference (a), contact your command career counselor, or visit the STA-21 website at: <https://www.netc.navy.mil/Commands/Naval-Service-Training-Command/STA-21/STA-21-program/> for the most up-to-date information.

13. The point of contact for STA-21 is Naval Service Training Command, N92 STA-21, (847) 688-5454 ext. 242 or 243/DSN 792 or grlk_sta21@us.navy.mil.
The point of contact for the STA-21(N) Program Office is the Nuclear Enlisted Community Manager, OPNAV N133D, (703) 604-5491/DSN 664 or bullnuke@navy.mil.

14. Released by Vice Admiral Richard J. Cheeseman Jr., N1.//

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