



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

JAN 16 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR CHAIR, DEFENSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MILITARY
PERSONNEL TESTING

SUBJECT: Terms of Reference – Defense Advisory Committee on Military Personnel Testing

I am establishing the terms of reference (ToR) for the Defense Advisory Committee on Military Personnel Testing (DAC-MPT). My objectives for this committee are outlined in the attached ToR. As the Sponsor of the DAC-MPT, I direct that all tasks for this committee be coordinated through my office. However, proposals for tasks may come from key stakeholders across the Department.

The DAC-MPT is subject to 5 U.S.C., Chapter 10 (commonly known as “the Federal Advisory Committee Act”). All advice and recommendations generated by it will be thoroughly discussed and deliberated on by the DAC-MPT at a properly noticed and open meeting, unless the meeting can be closed in accordance with one or more of the exemptions found in 5 U.S.C. § 552b(c).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashish Vazirani", is positioned above the typed name.

Ashish S. Vazirani
Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of
Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Attachment:
As stated

cc:
General Counsel of the Department of Defense
Advisory Committee Management Officer
for the Department of Defense
Group Federal Officer for the Office of the Under
Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Defense Advisory Committee on Military Personnel Testing

This Terms of Reference (ToR) establishes the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) objectives and priorities for the Defense Advisory Committee on Military Personnel Testing (DAC-MPT).

Mission Statement: Consistent with 5 U.S.C., Chapter 10 (commonly known as “the Federal Advisory Committee Act” or “FACA”), and in accordance with Department of Defense (DoD) policy and procedures, the DAC-MPT will not duplicate work performed by DoD or any other DoD Federal advisory committee or subcommittee. The DAC-MPT is tasked to provide independent advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary of Defense, through the USD(P&R), on matters and policies related to the military personnel testing for selection and classification.

The DAC-MPT will focus on issues related to the research, development, implementation, and maintenance of enlisted and officer accession tests and career exploration programs. Technical issues to be addressed will include, but are not limited to, processes and policies related to administration and security of testing and theoretical development of constructs, measurement precision, validity, reliability, equating, efficiency, fairness, and other operational and policy considerations.

Issue Statement: The Military Departments and Military Services conduct a whole person assessment of each candidate who applies for admission into the officer commissioning program or enlistment into the Armed Forces. This holistic process reviews several factors including citizenship, age, previous education, dependency status, aptitude, medical and physical conditions, drug and alcohol abuse, and conduct. Specific qualification standards are codified in Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1304.26, “Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction.” Eligibility qualification testing is a critical component of the whole person assessment. This process must be continuously evaluated, ensuring use of valid, reliable, and fair criteria and measures. Senior leaders must have access to, and benefit from, independent and external perspectives from the leading experts in test development and personnel assessment techniques. The committee provides the optimum pathway to generate recommendations to ensure the military’s primary means for testing are valid, reliable, and fair.

Objectives and Scope: The DAC-MPT provides the Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary of Defense, through the USD(P&R) as the sponsor, with independent assessments, external perspectives, and recommendations on policies and processes utilized by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD(P&R)) and Military Departments and their Military Services to assess candidates to the Active, Reserve, and National Guard Components. The committee reviews and examines policies and processes relating to both cognitive and non-cognitive test assessment methodologies, policies, and standards. The committee focuses on:

- Administration and security of testing;
- Theoretical development of constructs;

- Measurement precision;
- Measurement equivalency;
- Validity of measurement for outcome of interest;
- Measurement fairness;
- Other applicable psychometric properties at the item and test level; and
- Operational and policy considerations relating to standards.

Therefore, I direct the DAC-MPT to examine the accession testing practices based on the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council for Measurement in Education, 2014) and industry best practices on the methodologies and approaches used to develop, administer, and make high stakes decisions based on the applicable accession tests. This includes methodologies used for selecting candidates, matching them to occupational specialties, and providing career exploration tools.

During the first year after date of the ToR, the DAC-MPT will:

- Review the Department's current military accession testing capabilities to select, classify, and provide career exploration information to the accession population; identify gaps based on best practices from academia and private industry; and recommend changes leveraging private sector best practices. DAC-MPT members will provide recommendations on the effectiveness of using tests assessing fluid intelligence and non-cognitive assessments (which were implemented into the operational testing environment in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024) and continue to advise on any missing constructs and potential new measures.
- Review the Department's approach and methodology to develop, administer, and make decisions based on applicable accession instruments; and recommend modernization techniques to ensure all instruments are reliable, valid, and fair to all demographic populations and used for appropriate accession decisions. Recommendations must leverage the latest theory and standards used within the realm of test development and uniform guidelines for employee selection. Based on current accession testing program priorities, current test elements, and the date of the current test norms (e.g., Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) norms are based on data collected in 1997), DAC-MPT members will advise on the methodology for monitoring the need for norming and scaling and, as applicable, potential methodologies for establishing norms and scales. Further, DAC-MPT will continue their review of the methodology, path forward, and impact of allowing the use of calculators on the quantitative portions of the ASVAB. Finally, DAC-MPT members will continue to advise on any other methodological issues that may be identified during the first year of this ToR.

- The DAC-MPT members will provide their comments and recommendations regarding the coverage, psychometric properties, and effectiveness of the accession instruments during the meetings held in the first year of this ToR.

During the second year after the date of ToR, the DAC-MPT will:

- Assess and recommend applicable changes to program elements required for effective program operations. These elements may include statutory and regulatory requirements, DoD guidance and issuances, system capabilities, staffing requirements, and fiscal resource requirements that may impact the Department’s ability to accurately assess military workforce capabilities at the point of accession. DAC-MPT members will advise on potential impacts to the above specified program elements (e.g., staffing, system capabilities, and fiscal resources) from the changes to 10 U.S.C. § 520(a), as amended by section 542 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2024 (Public Law 118–31), which modified the limit on accessing persons who are in the lower mental category¹ and directed establishment of a future Service member preparatory course (FSPC)² when the Service exceeds the 10 percent Category IV accession threshold. DAC-MPT members will also advise on impact to these program elements from any other applicable changes to policy, process, or assessment techniques/measures used at the time of accessions.
- Assess and provide prioritization of actionable, germane recommendations on how to enhance the testing capabilities, policies, practices, systems, resources, and applicable law to ensure DoD is utilizing accurate, precise, and legally defensible practices to select, classify, and provide career exploration counseling. Recommendations should address technical issues related, but not limited, to policies and processes for administration and security of testing, theoretical development of constructs, measurement precision, validity, equating, efficiency, fairness, other applicable psychometric properties, and operational and policy considerations.
- DAC-MPT members will provide their comments and recommendations regarding programmatic impacts and requirements during the second year of this ToR. Depending on the significance of the recommendation impact it may be provided earlier in the completion of the ToR.
- As issues are identified and it becomes applicable, DAC-MPT will continue to provide comments and recommendations regarding the coverage, psychometric properties, and effectiveness of the accession instruments during the meetings held in the second year of this ToR.
- DAC-MPT members will prioritize their recommendations in the second year of the ToR.

¹ Limit on individuals accessed with score on the Armed Forces Qualification Test at or above the 10th percentile and below the 31st percentile (i.e., “Category IV” enlistees) from 20 percent to 4 percent per FY.

² The Secretary must establish a statutory version of the FSPC if the Military Service exceeds 10 percent of CAT IV accessions (per section 546 of the NDAA for FY 2024).

Methodology: The DAC-MPT assessment will be conducted in compliance with the FACA. Its assessment should focus on current policies, procedures, processes, standards, and future enhancement efforts under consideration by OUSD(P&R) and the Military Departments and their Military Services. To complete the assessments:

1. The DAC-MPT is authorized to access, consistent with law and DoD policies, the documents and records that the committee deems needed to complete its task.
2. The DAC-MPT may review the results of past and recent examinations, analyses, and reports in relation to the accession testing programs, to include reports generated by OUSD(P&R) and the Military Departments and their Military Services.
3. The DAC-MPT may receive information, briefings, and updates, and conduct interviews as appropriate.
4. The DAC-MPT may seek input from other sources with pertinent knowledge or experience as appropriate.

Deliverables: The DAC-MPT will discuss and deliberate on its recommendations through open discussion in a noticed and public meeting, unless the meeting can be closed in accordance with one or more of the exemptions found at 5 U.S.C. § 552b(c). The DAC-MPT Chair provides official recommendations, in the form of a letter, within 90 days, after the conclusion of every session to the USD(P&R), through the Director, Accession Policy. The Director, Accession Policy in coordination with Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy will provide routine updates to the USD(P&R) on the actionable status of recommendations. The letter is also included in the Chair certified meeting minutes. The DAC-MPT also provides a biennial report summarizing and prioritizing critical advice and recommendations provided within the last 2 years. Suggested prioritization of recommendations is deliberated by the DAC-MPT members in an open meeting prior to submission.

Support: In support of this ToR and the work conducted in response to it, the DAC-MPT has my full support to meet with DoD experts. The DAC-MPT staff, on behalf of the DAC-MPT, may request the Office of the Secretary of Defense and DoD Component heads to furnish any requested information, assistance, or access to personnel in a timely manner to the DAC-MPT. All requests shall be consistent with applicable laws; applicable security classifications; DoDI 5105.04, "Department of Defense Federal Advisory Committee Management Program;" and this ToR. As Special Government Employees of a DoD Federal advisory committee, the DAC-MPT members will not be given any access to DoD networks, to include DoD email systems.

Material provided to the DAC-MPT becomes a permanent part of the DAC-MPT's records. All data/information provided is subject to public inspection unless the originating Component office properly marks the data/information with the appropriate classification and the exemption categories found at 5 U.S.C. § 552(b), before the data/information is released to the DAC-MPT. The DAC-MPT has physical storage capability and electronic storage and communications capability on unclassified networks to support receipt of material. The DAC-MPT does not advise on classified issues.

The DAC-MPT will operate in conformity with, and pursuant to, its charter; the FACA; 5 U.S.C. § 552b(c); other applicable Federal statutes and regulations; and DoD policies and procedures. The DAC-MPT members do not have the authority to make decisions or provide recommendations on behalf of the DAC-MPT nor report directly to any Federal representative. Members of the DAC-MPT are subject to certain Federal ethics laws, including 18 U.S.C. § 208, governing conflicts of interest, and the Standards of Ethical Conduct regulations in 5 CFR Part 2635.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support to this critical undertaking to inform subsequent decisions on how the Department addresses matters and policies related to the military personnel testing for selection and classification.

Point of Contact: DAC-MPT Designated Federal Officer, Dr. Sofiya Velgach.
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