



# **USAFA Cadet Standards**

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

- **Q: Am I pilot qualified the day of my rated/flying exam with the Flight Surgeon?**

A: No, although you should have a good idea of any potential obstacles to qualification. Your exam information must be carefully entered into the AF's Physical Examination Processing Program and you may have further tests, exams, or consultations to complete. Once every requirement is complete and the data entered into PEPP is cross-checked multiple times, then your exam package gets forwarded to the certification authority for disposition. Disposition usually takes 6-8 weeks after being sent to the certification authority in San Antonio.

- **Q: Do I have to have a completed physical and waiver in order to submit AFSC preferences to USAFA/A1?**

A: No. Submission of your job preferences is independent of your medical qualification, but if you have already been medically disqualified or advised that disqualification is likely, you should carefully consider whether to submit preferences for AFSCs for which you know you will not be medically qualified. After the personnel specialists assemble the AFSC match list, the list is scrubbed by medical standards authorities for disqualifying medical conditions and individuals reassigned to jobs for which they are medically qualified as required. Every attempt is made by the personnel specialists to honor the wishes expressed on your AFSC preference list depending on job availability, but cadets can maximize their chances of obtaining their top job preferences by ensuring that they consider their likelihood of medical qualification before submitting preferences. For this reason, scheduling of the grad physical well before AFSC preferences are solicited is strongly recommended to allow early consultation with a Cadet Standards flight surgeon regarding potential obstacles to medical qualification for the career you seek.

- **Q: What if I need a waiver for my rated/flying physical?**

A: If you do not meet flying/special duty medical standards, then you will need a waiver to be medically acceptable/qualified. The Cadet Standards team will guide you through the items necessary for your waiver request. Once all of the required items have been completed, a waiver will be submitted to the certification authority for disposition. You do not need to formally request one yourself. Your primary task is to get any additional required evaluations done quickly.

- **Q: How long does it take from the day I was seen until I know that I am qualified for my chosen AFSC?**

A: This is a question with many variables that mostly depend on you. The sooner you complete the tasks assigned to you by the provider (i.e. labs, xrays, MRIs, neuropsych), the sooner your exam can be submitted for certification. However, other variables may be outside of your control. Issues such as injuries/surgeries will need to be fully healed and cleared by orthopedics or other appropriate specialists before we can submit your physical. Corneal refractive surgery requires 3-6 months of demonstrated recovery before certification can proceed. Other conditions such as mental health diagnoses or recovery from sinus surgery may require at least 1-2 years of demonstrated stability after full recovery before waiver can be considered. You should leave the Cadet Standards Clinic with a good idea of certification/waiver potential and any foreseeable delays that may be associated with processing your case.



- **Q: How do I know when my waiver decision is complete or my exam has been certified?**

A: Medical certification is posted in CAMIS under graduation medical status, but cadets who have been medically disqualified for specific AFSCs will first be notified in person by their AOC.

- **Q: I didn't pass the color vision test (Cone Contrast Test). Can I re-take it?**

A: Short answer: probably not. The Cone Contrast Test (CCT) has been proven a highly accurate and repeatable means of color vision testing, unlike previous color vision tests that would have been administered to you at the time of your DoDMERB examination or before. The current CCT protocol actually administers three tests in one sitting before declaring a test a failure. In addition, any failures to pass the CCT are immediately subject to validation testing with two alternative tests of color vision. If those validation tests confirm the findings of the CCT, which is almost always the case, then current AF policy does not allow for repeat CCT testing. Because some degree of color vision deficiency affects up to 8-10% of males, color vision test failures represent one of the most common (and often unexpected) reasons for medical disqualification for rated and special operational duty career fields. Failure to pass the CCT is often difficult for cadets to comprehend because they've never been made aware of any color vision perception deficiency. Individuals born with a color vision deficiency have never known true color vision and commonly remain unaware of the defect until it is detected on formal testing, unless they have a severe deficiency. However, the absence of normal color vision represents a significant risk to safe military operations and mission completion, and the AF does not permit aeromedical waivers for color vision except for some assignments to Missile Operations Duty. Color vision deficiency also has not typically resulted in ETP approval for most rated/special operational duty career fields. However, cross-commissioning into Navy, Marine Corps, or Army aviation remains a possibility at this time because the other military services still accept pseudoisochromatic plate (PIP) tests for color vision in addition to the CCT.

- **Q: Should I report injuries and illnesses that occur AFTER I completed my grad physical?**

A: For cadets pursuing rated/special operational duty AFSC qualification, the answer is "maybe". Truly minor injuries for which full recovery is anticipated without surgical intervention, such as sprains and strains, will not be a problem for medical qualification for these career fields. Certainly minor illnesses like viral upper respiratory infections and urinary tract infections or STDs do not merit notification to the Cadet Standards Clinic. But concussions associated with loss of consciousness, amnesia, or prolonged (>30d) recovery will require aeromedical waiver and should absolutely be reported to avoid trouble upon arrival to your gaining training base. Waiver approval for head injuries is virtually assured, but if you arrive at your gaining base with a condition for which waiver was not previously accomplished, you will be recycled to a later training class start date. If you are contemplating elective surgery for any condition (e.g. sinus surgery, cosmetic surgery, varicose vein treatment), please come see one of the Cadet Standards Clinic flight surgeons before deciding to proceed. Some surgeries may disqualify you outright or for a lengthy period of time, so we'd like the opportunity to advise you appropriately to prevent you from encountering difficulties with medical clearance at a later date. Bottom line: if in doubt about any condition occurring subsequent to your grad physical, feel free to call Cadet Standards at 333-0533 or stop by to discuss. We're trying to keep you out of trouble, not cause trouble.