

**TERMS & CONDITIONS
AND GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING**

**OFFICER CADETSHIPS (AIR CORPS)
IN THE DEFENCE FORCES 2023**

IMPORTANT NOTE

A person who wishes to apply for this competition should read this document carefully prior to completing the application form. An application should only be submitted if the applicant is satisfied that they fulfil all of the governing conditions detailed in this document.

The acceptance by the Chief of Staff - Defence Forces, of an application form from a person desiring to be a Defence Force Officer should not be regarded as an admission by the Chief of Staff that such a person satisfies all or any of these conditions or that they are not disqualified by law from becoming an officer of the Defence Forces.

Everything contained in these conditions, notes and annexes is subject to the overriding authority of the governing statutes, regulations and schemes, including the Defence Act, 1954 (as amended and extended) and statutory provisions made, or to be made, thereunder, and any other relevant provisions, agreements, legislation, public service policy, circulars and/or instructions and any errors which may appear herein are subject to correction at any time.

In addition, all terms and conditions outlined in this document are subject to change under the Defence Forces conciliation and arbitration scheme and public service agreements as may be concluded from time to time.

Appointments are open to all eligible candidates, on an equal basis, regardless of their gender identity.

Exceptions to the governing conditions cannot be made in individual circumstances.

Candidates, when completing their application form, will be required to confirm that they have not:

- *knowingly or recklessly provided false information*
- *canvassed any person with or without inducements*
- *impersonated a candidate at any stage of the process*
- *interfered with or compromised the process in any way*

CANVASSING WILL DISQUALIFY

NOTE FOR FUTURE COMPETITIONS

These conditions apply for the 2023 Cadetship Competition only and are due for review in advance of any future competition.

This document is divided into two sections. Section 1 details the governing conditions, rules and qualifications required for the award of Cadetships in the Defence Forces. Section 2 contains general information on the various Cadetships on offer, together with details of pay and conditions of Cadets and Officers.

Cadetships may be available in the following:

AIR CORPS (Pilots)

Subject to the specific criteria being fulfilled as outlined below, applications may be made by the following:

GRADUATES

SCHOOL LEAVERS/NON-GRADUATES

SERVING PERSONNEL

SECTION 1

CONDITIONS GOVERNING THE AWARD OF CADETSHIPS IN THE PERMANENT DEFENCE FORCE

1. GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS

To qualify for the award of a Cadetship, a candidate shall:

- a. at the time of application be-
 - (i) a citizen of the State,

or

be any other person who has a lawful entitlement to reside and work within the State for the period of enlistment required for the course of training as a cadet and, if subsequently commissioned as an officer, for the additional period of time that is required for the purpose of any such appointment.
 - (ii) Be of good character and satisfy any security clearance requirement.
- b. Be 18 years of age or above and under 26 years of age on 1 September 2023. Where a candidate at the time of application, has not reached 18 years of age, the prior consent of the candidate's parents or guardian, or other person in loco parentis, will be required.

2. MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

School Leaver/Non-Graduate Candidates

Must possess a minimum of Grade H5 in 3 Higher Level papers **and** Grade O6 in 3 Ordinary level papers **or** Grade H7 in 3 Higher level papers.

Candidates must have obtained these grades in a single sitting of the Leaving Certificate examination for CAO computation purposes.

AND

A candidate's educational qualifications must include a minimum of:

- (i) Grade O3 in Mathematics in an Ordinary Level paper or Grade H6 in a Higher Level Paper

and

Grade O6 at Ordinary Level or H7 at Higher level in the following subjects:
- (ii) Irish. NUI matriculation exemptions apply.

- (iii) English. Candidates whose first language is not English must satisfy the English language requirements in accordance with NUI Matriculations Regulations.

Subject to meeting the criteria to have obtained a minimum of Grade H5 in 3 Higher Level papers **and** Grade O6 in 3 Ordinary level papers **or** Grade H7 in 3 Higher level papers, a candidate may use the results of another sitting of the Leaving Certificate for the minimum educational requirements in (i) to (iii) above.

Graduate Candidates must have successfully completed a bachelor's degree programme at Level 8 of the National Framework of Qualifications.

PLEASE NOTE:

- **Leaving Certificate Applied does not qualify for the Cadetship competitions.**
- **Where applicable, applications for Cadetships are invited from persons who have applied to sit for examinations in the competition year, which would enable them to satisfy the Minimum Educational Qualifications criteria, as specified above. Original documentary evidence that a candidate meets the minimum educational qualifications, as outlined above, must be presented to the relevant Interview Board Secretary. Applicants will be notified of a date via email when this evidence must be provided by.**
- **Candidates must provide documentary proof from the National University of Ireland, at Stage 1 of the selection procedure, for any educational exemptions. Further information is available on www.nui.ie**
- **In order to be eligible to apply for a Cadetship, holders of European and International qualifications must satisfy the Matriculation Registration requirements as outlined in the current "NUI Matriculation Regulations available on www.nui.ie**

3. MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL STANDARDS

Candidates must be in good mental and bodily health and free from any physical defect, abnormality, physiological condition or history of serious illness likely to interfere with the efficient performance of their duties.

The following are the minimum physical requirements:

a. Height and Weight

An Air Corps candidate's height will be determined at Stage 2, the Assessment Stage of the competition.

Min. height 157.48cm

Max. height 187.96cm and complying with paragraph e. below.

An Air Corps candidate's weight will be determined at Stage 2, the Assessment Stage of the competition. Weight and chest measurements must be in keeping with height and age.

Min weight 50kg

Max weight 100kg

Note: Students must remain within this weight band during flight training.

b. Vision

Colour vision must be normal trichromates as determined by an aviation medical examiner.

Both eyes must be free from disfiguring or incapacitating abnormality and free from acute or chronic disease. There must be no evidence of squint or latent squint.

The eligibility of applicants who have had previous incisional or laser treatment to correct visual acuity will be determined at the Medical Examination. Please see *Annex C* for further information.

Vision not less than the current EASA Class 1 standard as determined by an EASA ophthalmologist in addition to the military induction standard as determined by a medical officer.

c. Dental

Candidates must be free from any serious periodontal disease and possess teeth to a specific standard, which is not less than the equivalent of eleven over eleven natural teeth functionally opposed. In certain circumstances, artificial teeth may be acceptable.

d. Hearing

A good standard of unaided hearing is essential. Candidates will be required to undergo an audiometric test at which:

(1) The sum of the hearing threshold at 1,2,3, 4 and 6 kHz should not exceed the age and gender related warning levels contained in the "Guidelines on Hearing Checks and Audiometry Regulations 2007", issued by the Health and Safety Authority.

(2) Candidates under 25 years of age must be able to hear all measured pure tones up to and including 8 kHz at 20dB in each ear. Candidates aged 25 and older must be able to hear all measured pure tones up to and including 8 kHz at 25dB in each ear. Candidates must also be free from acute or chronic ear disorders.

Candidates are advised to avoid all sources of loud noise or music for a period of 48 hours prior to this audiometric test, as exposure to such noise may adversely affect the results of the test.

e. Special Conditions Air Corps (Pilots):

Candidates for the Air Corps must be within the following limits.

Functional Reach	Min	Max
Back of scapula to distal margin of flexed thumb	736mm	920mm
Sitting eye height Seat to ectocanthus of eye	730mm	896mm
Buttock knee length Rear of buttock to front of patella	545mm	690mm
Sitting knee height Base of heel to top of knee	490mm	653mm
Weight N.B. Students must remain within this weight band during flight training	50kg	100 kgs

N.B. Candidates must satisfy these various medical and physical standards and requirements in order to remain in the Competition. In addition, successful Candidates will be required to undertake compulsory random drug testing throughout their career in the Defence Forces in accordance with Defence Force Regulation A7.

4. APPLICATION FOR CADETSHIP

Candidates must apply online to www.military.ie Candidates wishing to undertake the assessments through Irish must make this request known to the Defence Forces Recruitment Section at recruitment@defenceforce.ie

All correspondence with candidates will be done by e-mail for the duration of the competition. Candidates should ensure the e-mail address given is accurate and correct.

Each application is acknowledged automatically by the system within 24 hours. If an acknowledgement is not received within 48 hours of applying, candidates should immediately contact the Defence Forces Recruitment Section at 045 492553 or at recruitment@defenceforces.ie

Likewise, if an applicant's email address should change, the onus is on the applicant to make contact with the Defence Forces Recruitment Section immediately advising them of the change of email.

Serving members of the PDF will be required to include their Service Number on the application form.

All Candidates who are invited to attend for the Assessment Phase of the competition, as outlined under Selection Procedure below, will be required to bring valid identification, i.e. Passport or Driving Licence as proof of identity.

In addition, graduate candidates and candidates who have sat their Leaving Certificate examination prior to 2023 will be required to bring original documentary evidence that they meet the minimum educational qualifications, as outlined above.

Candidates called to Stage 4 - the Interview - will be required to bring their long form Birth Certificate (Photocopies are not acceptable).

5. SELECTION PROCEDURE - AIR CORPS

The following competencies have been identified as being essential for an Air Corps (Pilot) Cadet. These competencies will be assessed throughout the various stages of the competition.

Competency	What the candidate will have to display
Planning and Organising	The ability to plan, prioritise and organise people and other resources.
Decision Making and Problem Solving	An ability to carefully analyse problems, in order to generate appropriate solutions. A preparedness to stand by a decision and to accept responsibility for its consequences.
Information Handling	The aptitude for absorbing information; to be able to identify relevant information.
Working with Others	An aptitude for working within a team environment; to be supportive of others.

Communication	Clear, concise and effective communication skills.
Leadership and Supervising	The ability and motivation to take responsibility for others; to co-ordinate and to delegate to others.
Personal Motivation and Discipline	A commitment to the Air Corps as a career. An ability to act on own initiative.
High Stress Tolerance	The ability to think and act under pressure, to be emotionally stable.
Resilience	Calmness when faced with conflicting demands and when working under pressure.
Physical Capacity	To meet the standards set for the Air Corps Cadet.
Technical Aptitude	The ability to absorb technical knowledge, a preference for the technical sphere of career development.
Maturity	Common sense for his/her age, the social maturity to sustain studies and absence from home.

Candidates, if selected, will be required to attend for the various stages of the selection procedure on the dates and times as notified by email. Candidates who fail to attend for any stage of the selection procedure will be disqualified from participation in any further stages of that competition.

Stage 1 – Online Psychometric Testing

Stage 1 of the selection procedure involves tests that measure a range of skills and qualities that are necessary in the job. These tests provide a consistent and suitable way of screening candidates at the initial stage of the selection campaign. These tests are designed to identify the most suitable people to go forward to the next stage of the Cadetship Competition. The tests have been designed so that they are fair to all applicants and are objectively scored. Candidates will be required to complete an unsupervised psychometric test.

Candidates will be supplied with psychometric test familiarisation material in order to introduce them to the format of the tests.

Candidates will be required to complete the unsupervised online psychometric test within the timeframe specified by the Defence Forces. Candidates should pay particular attention to ensuring that the contact details specified on their application are correct.

Candidates, who have attained the requisite score in the unsupervised online psychometric test at Stage 1, will be required to attend for a subsequent supervised online psychometric test at Stage 2.

Note: If a candidate fails to meet the minimum standard at Stage 1, they will not be permitted to proceed to the next stage of the competition.

Stage 2 – Military and Aviation Assessments

Air Corps candidates who have attained the requisite score at Stage 1 of the competition, will be required to attend for Military and Aviation Assessments as part of the Competition.

The Military Assessment will consist of the following:

- **Physical Fitness Test:** In order to qualify for a Cadetship, candidates will be required to pass a physical fitness test, which is designed to assess their potential to undergo the rigours of military training. Candidates must attain the minimum standard laid down in order to proceed in the competition. A candidate must complete this test as part of their Air Corps Cadetship application; this test is not valid for any other Cadetship applications or other DF competitions. (See Annex 'D' for details of the test and suggested training programme).
- **Group Assessment:** Candidates will be required to participate in a group assessment.

The Aviation Assessment will consist of the following:

- **Supervised Psychometric Test and Aviation Skills Test:** If a candidate's performance at a supervised test is outside the expected scoring range from their unsupervised test, at Stage 1, they may be excluded from subsequent stages of the selection process.
- **Psychomotor and Cognitive Testing:** Candidates will be required to complete both psychomotor and cognitive testing.
- **The Realistic Job Preview:** This will involve candidates interacting with Cadets and Officers of the Air Corps.

Note: If a candidate fails to meet the minimum standards of any part of the Aviation or Military Assessments they will NOT be permitted to proceed to the next stage of the competition.

Personality Questionnaire.

Candidates will also be required to complete a personality questionnaire during the Stage 2 Aviation Assessment phase, for subsequent psychological review.

Stage 3 – Simulator Assessment

Air Corps candidates who have attained the requisite score at Stage 2 of the competition, will be required to attend and pass Stage 3.

Simulator Assessment: This will involve candidates undertaking further aviation assessments in an aircraft simulator. Previous simulator experience is NOT required.

Note: Stage 3 may be conducted on the same day as Stage 4

Note: If a candidate fails to meet the minimum required standards during simulator assessment they will NOT be permitted to proceed to the next stage of the competition.

Stage 4 - The Interview

Successful candidates will be required to attend Stage 4 of the competition.

Psychological Interview:

This will involve an interview with a psychologist based on data gathered during Stages 1 and 2.

The Final Interview

Following the psychological interview successful candidates will be invited to attend a competency based interview where they will be required to demonstrate competency in a selection of the following areas:

- Maturity
- Working with Others
- Leadership and Supervising
- Personal Motivation and Discipline
- Planning and Organising
- Communication
- Resilience
- Technical Aptitude
- Decision Making and Problem Solving

In the competency based interview, candidates will be asked to give examples from their own experiences of life, school, university hobbies, work, pastimes, etc., to demonstrate evidence in several of the above areas. Candidates who fail any of the competencies at Final Interview will be deemed unsuccessful in the competition.

Feedback is available upon request. All requests for feedback must be received within 3 months of issuance of the individuals result.

6. BONUS MARKS.

Candidates who are members of the Defence Forces and who satisfy the requirements at paragraph 7(a) or 7(b) of these conditions will receive a % bonus mark of the total marks at the final interview. These bonus marks are as follows:

Serving NCO in the Permanent Defence Force	8%
Serving Private in the Permanent Defence Force	6%
Serving Officer or NCO in the Reserve Defence Force	3%
Serving Private in the Reserve Defence Force	2%

The process of awarding bonus marks may be subject to review in advance of future Cadet Competitions.

7. PROVISIONS FOR CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE DEFENCE FORCES

The following personnel of the Defence Forces will be eligible for the award of additional marks as specified in paragraph 6 of these conditions:

- a. Members of the Permanent Defence Force who are serving on the date of commencement of interviews by the Final Interview Board.

Note: Before entering upon the prescribed course of Cadet training successful candidates who are Non-Commissioned Officers of the Permanent Defence Force will revert to the rank of Private Three Star.

- b. Members of the Army Reserve or the Naval Service Reserve who have been on the effective strength of their Units from 1 January, of the year previous to the competition year, and who continue to remain on such effective strength up to the date of commencement of interviews by the Final Interview Board, and—who have Completed a course(s) of training or instruction amounting to a minimum total period of fourteen days, as prescribed in paragraph 40 of Defence Force Regulations R.5.

Note: Successful candidates who are members of the Army Reserve (AR) or Naval Service Reserve (NSR) must, before entering upon the prescribed course of Cadet training, tender the resignation of their commissions if they are Officers or be discharged from the AR or NSR if they are Non-Commissioned personnel.

8. EMPLOYEE VETTING BY AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA.

Candidates who are invited to attend before an Interview Board will be required to complete and sign a Garda Vetting Application Form. This will, pursuant to the Data Protection Act 2018, authorise An Garda Síochána to furnish to the Military Authorities, a statement that there are no convictions recorded against the candidate or, if applicable, a statement of convictions.

9. MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

A panel will be formed from Candidates who are successful at interview. Candidates on this panel will be required to undergo and pass a detailed medical examination, which includes an audiometric test and pulmonary function tests, blood tests, an electrocardiograph and full ophthalmology review.

Candidates who do not pass the medical examination owing to a medical condition that, in the opinion of the Examining Medical Officer, is capable of being remedied by treatment, may be afforded the opportunity of having the condition rectified **within one week of their examination**. Such candidates will be required to submit medical evidence indicating that the condition has been remedied. They may be required to undergo further medical examination, by another Medical Officer. Medical fitness will not be confirmed until the results of all tests are available to the Medical Officer.

10. AWARD OF CADETSHIPS

The Minister for Defence, whose decision is final, awards Cadetships to successful candidates. The award of Cadetships will also be subject to successful candidates passing a pre-enlistment medical examination that is in addition to the detailed medical examination as outlined at paragraph 9.

A candidate who is awarded a Cadetship must report for enlistment at the required time and place. Failure to report for enlistment will result in the Cadetship being forfeited. The closing date for inducting applicants from the 2023 Cadetship competition will be confirmed at a later date.

11. EXPENSES

Candidates, other than a member of the Permanent Defence Force, are liable for all expenses incurred in connection with their participation in the Cadetship competition and on reporting for enlistment.

12. TERMS OF ENLISTMENT

Candidates to whom Cadetships have been awarded, except for candidates who are already serving in the Permanent Defence Force, are enlisted as a Private for such periods as are necessary to complete the prescribed course of Cadetship training.

13. OVERSEAS SERVICE

Under the terms of the Defence Amendment Act 2006, all Defence Forces personnel, if selected, are expected to serve overseas from time to time.

14. WITHDRAWAL OF CADETSHIP

A Cadetship will be withdrawn from a Cadet if:

- a. on completion of the prescribed course of training, they do not qualify for nomination by the Chief of Staff for appointment to be an officer and are not permitted to repeat any of the stages of the course or to extend the period of training; or
- b. they fail to show satisfactory progress at any time during the course of training or fail to develop the qualities requisite for the satisfactory completion of the course or if their conduct or service is unsatisfactory; or
- c. as a result of examination by a Medical Board, appointed by the Director, Medical Branch, they are, at any time, found to be in a medical category lower than that prescribed; or
- d. at their own written request; or
- e. in the interests of the service.

A Cadet from whom a Cadetship has been withdrawn (except as a result of c. and e. above) may, if they were a member of the Defence Forces before being awarded the Cadetship, be permitted to revert to their previous service engagement and rank, or be discharged from the Defence Forces.

In relation to the above, a Cadet who holds honorary membership of the Association may seek advice and support from the Representative Association of Commissioned Officers (RACO).

SECTION 2

CADETSHIPS IN THE DEFENCE FORCES

15. THE ROLES OF THE PERMANENT DEFENCE FORCE

- To provide for the military defence of the State from armed aggression;
- To participate in multi-national peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations in accordance with Government direction and legislative provision;
- To aid the civil power – meaning in practice to assist, when requested, An Garda Síochána, who have primary responsibility for law and order, including the protection of the internal security of the State;
- To contribute to maritime security encompassing the delivery of a fishery protection service and the operation of the State’s Fishery Monitoring Centre and, in co-operation with other agencies with responsibilities in the maritime domain, to contribute to a shared common maritime operational picture;
- To participate in the Joint Taskforce on Drugs interdiction;
- To contribute to national resilience through the provision of specified defence aid to the civil authority (ATCA) supports to lead agencies in response to major emergencies, including cyber security emergencies, and in the maintenance of essential services, as set out in MOUs and SLAs agreed by the Department of Defence;
- To provide a Ministerial air transport service (MATS);
- To provide ceremonial services on behalf of Government;
- To provide a range of other supports to government departments and agencies in line with MOUs and SLAs agreed by the Department of Defence e.g. search and rescue and air ambulance services;
- To contribute to Ireland’s economic wellbeing through engagement with industry, research and development and job initiatives, in support of government policy;
- To fulfil any other tasks that Government may assign from time to time.

The Defence Forces have a proud record of participation in Peacekeeping Missions and members of the Defence Forces are currently serving with approximately fourteen missions throughout the world.

16. THE AIR CORPS PILOT

The Air Corps is the military air component of the Defence Forces. The Air Corps is tasked with a multitude of operational missions, operating both at home and abroad in support of the State. Tasks include the Emergency Aeromedical Service, maritime patrols, the Ministerial Air Transport Service, Garda air support, inter-hospital air ambulance, Special Forces support, fire-fighting, flood and snow relief, and Army and Naval Service support. Support of these daily operational outputs is achieved through a diverse range of specialised and intensive continuous training, with standards in all areas of training matched to or exceeding international best practice.

The current Air Corps fleet consists of eight Pilatus PC-9M fixed-wing training / light-strike aircraft, six AW139 medium-utility helicopters, a Learjet 45 ministerial transport aircraft, three Pilatus PC-12 ISR aircraft, one Pilatus PC-12 logistics aircraft, two Casa CN-235MPA maritime patrol aircraft, and two Airbus EC-135P2 light-utility helicopters. Contracts have also been signed for the acquisition of three Airbus Military C-295 aircraft. The Air Corps also operates two Airbus EC-135T2 helicopters and one BN Defender in support of An Garda Síochána.

THE AIR CORPS CADET

The Air Corps Cadet will undergo a course of cadet training of approximately 19 months duration divided into four stages. Each stage must be successfully completed before the student can progress to the next stage. A Cadet who fails to qualify for advancement from a stage of training may be required to repeat a specific stage of training conducted within the normal training cycle.

Air Corps Cadets will complete Stage 1 and 2 of the standard Cadet Course in the Cadet School, Military College, DFTC, Curragh Camp. This element of the course is approximately 10 months duration. During this time the Cadet is instructed in weapons handling (to instructor level), tactics (conventional, internal security and counter-insurgency), arms and foot drill, Map Reading, communications skills, first aid, basic military engineering, human resource management, communications skills and military law.

Upon successful completion of stages 1 and 2 in the Cadet School, the Air Corps Cadet will return to Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnell and be posted to the Flying Training School (FTS), Air Corps College (ACC) to undertake Stage 3: Military Aviation Cadet Training. This element of the course will see the Air Corps Cadet complete Aeronautical Ground School.

Upon successful completion of Stage 3, the Air Corps Cadet will progress to Stage 4: Command Leadership and Organisational Studies. During this stage the Cadet will learn to practically apply military and aviation knowledge. Upon successful completion of Stage 4, the Air Corps Cadet will be commissioned as an officer in the Permanent Defence Forces as outlined below in paragraph 16. Stages 3 and 4 will take approximately 9 months to complete.

The purpose of Cadet training is to develop character and leadership skills and instil a sense of duty and responsibility in the Cadets. To benefit from that training, which is conducted in an environment of strict discipline, the Cadet needs mental acuity and physical agility. During the term of the Cadetship the character of the Cadet is trained and moulded with the object of developing their powers of leadership, initiative and general ability.

Note that additional training in the Cadet School may be required subject to the exigencies of the service.

This is applicable for the 2023 Competition only and is subject to review in advance of future competitions.

17. APPOINTMENT TO COMMISSIONED RANK

A Graduate Cadet who satisfactorily completes the prescribed course of military training and who passes such examinations and tests as may be laid down will be eligible for appointment as a commissioned officer in the Air Corps rank of Lieutenant (Lt).

A non-Graduate Cadet who and satisfactorily completes the prescribed course of military training and who passes such examinations and tests as may be laid down will

be eligible for appointment as a commissioned officer in the Air Corps rank of Second Lieutenant (2/Lt) .

On being commissioned as a Lt or 2/Lt, on completion of Stage 4 Young Officers will be posted to the Air Corps, Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnell, Dublin 22 to commence flight training. This course will consist of elementary, basic and advanced flying. It should be noted that, subject to the exigencies of the service, young officers may undertake some or all of their flight training abroad in a recognised military flight training school. This period of training will take approximately 12 to 15 months. In the event that a Young Officer fails to successfully complete their training as an Air Corps Pilot they will be posted to an appointment in the Air Corps Administration and Logistics stream and will no longer receive flying pay.

18. THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION/UNDERTAKINGS/FEES

Tuition and examination fees in respect of Cadets/Officers attending 3rd Level Institution will be met from public funds. Textbooks, instruments etc., will be made available without charge but will remain the property of the Minister for Defence. During attendance at college, Cadets/Officers will normally be accommodated in Military Barracks and will be in receipt of normal pay and allowances.

Prior to commencing flight training, individuals are required to complete a written undertaking, that in the event of their resignation or voluntary retirement from the Permanent Defence Force, before the expiration of the time specified by the Minister (twelve years from the successful completion of the Wings Course), they will refund the amount set by the Minister in respect of the cost of flying training. This amount includes the total pay and allowances paid while undergoing pilot training, costs of tuition and training, costs of the use of aircraft and equipment during training and all other charges arising from training as an aircraft pilot¹.

Young Officers who do not complete Flying Training and are subsequently posted to the Air Corps Administration and Logistics stream who are considered suitable may, subject to the exigencies of the service and the requirements of the Defence Forces, be assigned to a course of study leading to a degree at National University of Ireland, Galway or a course of study leading to a degree at some other third level College of Education, as approved by the Director of Defence Forces Training & Education and by the General Officer Commanding the Air Corps. This USAC Scheme will only apply to non-graduate cadets

Commissioned Officers who undertake certain courses at public expense will be required to subscribe to an undertaking (or undertakings), copies of which are available on request, that, on being granted permission to retire from the Permanent Defence Force at any time after they have commenced the course and before they have served in the Defence Forces for a minimum number of years reckoned from the date of completion of their flight training, they will refund the cost of such training to the Minister for Defence including the cost of pay and allowances paid to them during the period of attendance at the course.

¹ This represents a substantial undertaking in financial terms and will involve a formal communication with an officer designated by the Director of J7 who will give an outline of the amount of monies due to the Minister.

Payment of the amount involved, including the cost of any pay and allowances paid to them during the attendance at the course, must be made in full and up-front i.e. before the actual date of their retirement. However, in every case, the granting of permission to a Commissioned Officer to retire or resign from the Defence Forces is a matter for the appropriate authority in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Defence Act.

19. PAY, ALLOWANCES & PRSI

- a. Pay and Allowances, see Annex A.

It should be noted that the payment including the rate of payment of these allowances are subject to review and adjustment on an ongoing basis under Government policy.

- b. On enlistment to the PDF (see paragraph 12) Cadets are liable to pay PRSI contributions at the Class H rate. On appointment as an Officer (see paragraph 17, they pay PRSI at the Class A rate. In both cases, they are covered for the range of benefits under the Social Insurance code, including the State Pension (Contributory) subject to meeting the qualified criteria under the Social Welfare Acts – see paragraph 20 and Annex B.
- c. Method of Pay
Cadets and Officers are paid on a monthly basis by means of electronic funds transfer to a designated financial institution.

20. RETIREMENT BENEFITS

This should be read in conjunction with **Paragraph 19 (Pay, Allowances and PRSI)** and **Annex A and B**.

Members of the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) may qualify for retirement benefits (also called *superannuation benefits*), provided they meet certain terms and conditions. The superannuation arrangements for members of the PDF are *defined benefit* pension schemes.

The main benefits are:

- **a retirement pension,**
- **a retirement lump sum (gratuity) or death in service lump sum, and**
- **spouses'/civil partner's and children's contributory pensions.**

Pension contributions are payable by the scheme members from their Defence Forces salary towards their retirement and dependents benefits.

In general, Cadets joining the PDF and who are commissioned as Officers may, subject to certain conditions, qualify for payment of retirement benefits from age 50 (*minimum pension age*).

As indicated in **Paragraph 23** below, the mandatory retirement age for Officers varies depending on retiring rank.

Membership of the relevant pension scheme is compulsory. The specific pension scheme that applies to *new entrant* PDF personnel depends primarily on whether the person is joining the Public Service for the first time.

- **Single Public Service Pension Scheme**

In general, anyone joining pensionable public service employment on or after 1 January 2013 is a member of the **Single Public Service Pension Scheme**. This scheme applies to all military personnel who join the PDF from **1 January 2013 onwards** as first-time new entrants to the public service. Those arrangements are provided under the *Public Service (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012* ('the Single Scheme').

Annex B below summarises the Single Scheme pension terms for new entrants joining the PDF, with no previous public service employment history, from 1 January 2013 onwards.

Note: In some limited circumstances, different pension terms may apply for personnel who join the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) from 1 January 2013 onwards who are not first-time new entrants to the Public Service and/or have previously been in the public service. Specific details are available on request from the Department of Defence.

21. ANNUAL LEAVE

Annual leave to the extent of 31 days may be granted to Cadets and Junior Officers. Senior Officers (Commandant and higher ranks) may be granted 43 days leave in accordance with the provisions of Defence Force Regulation (DFR) A.11.

It should be noted that this annual leave provision is currently calculated on a 7 day basis. Leave entitlements may be subject to review and adjustment.

22. SICK LEAVE

Sick Leave may be granted in accordance with the provisions of Defence Force Regulation A.12 (Medical Treatment) and Defence Forces Regulation S.3 (Pay and Allowances). Sick Leave entitlements may be subject to review and adjustment.

23. PROMOTION AND RETIREMENT

Subject to the terms of Defence Forces Regulations, Officers are eligible for consideration for promotion through the commissioned ranks. The age for retirement of Officers ranges from 47 years of age (Second Lieutenant/Ensign) to 63 years of age (Lieutenant General), depending on rank and is subject to review.

Rank	Retirement Age
Second Lieutenant/ Lieutenant	47
Captain	54
Commandant	58
Lieutenant Colonel	58
Colonel	60
Brigadier General	61
Major General	62
Lieutenant General	63

24. UNIFORMS AND ACCOMMODATION

A Cadet is issued uniforms and accessories. Commissioned Officers receive a grant, in accordance with the scales laid down, to assist towards the cost of providing themselves with uniform and equipment. An allowance is currently paid to a Commissioned Officer towards the purpose of replenishing their kit.

It should be noted that the allowance provided for on commissioning, shall be paid on the basis of a submission by the officer of certified receipts up to but not exceeding the value of the initial allowance to the Finance Branch, Department of Defence, Renmore, Galway. The initial allowance is exempt from taxation, while the replenishment allowance paid in subsequent years is subject to taxation under the taxation arrangements in place at the time, currently 40% is taxable and 60% not taxable.

A Cadet is entitled to accommodation and meals without charge subject to the terms of Defence Forces Regulations. Single Living-In Commissioned Officers, are provided with official accommodation, in respect of which a deduction may be made from pay.

25. MEDICAL ATTENDANCE AND HOSPITAL TREATMENT

Primary health care i.e. medical attendance at and treatment by a doctor or primary care medical team in the Defence Forces, including e.g. physiotherapy, routine dental treatment etc., some limited in-house secondary care and the provision of medication prescribed by a Medical Officer, are provided without charge, subject to any limitations as required by law.

In accordance with Defence Force Administrative Instructions, cadets who develop a medical condition preventing them from continuing or completing their cadetship, may be referred by the Defence Forces Medical Officer or the attending doctor for secondary treatment as a private patient to a consultant or for private treatment in hospital, subject to financial sanction and any other limitations as required by law. The medical service provided to members of the Defence Forces is by nature an

occupational medical service and as such, services such as cosmetic surgery (where such does not arise from occupational injury), etc. are not provided.

26. PAY AND ALLOWANCE - BENEFIT IN KIND

The tax status and taxation of any benefit, payment or allowance paid to members of the Defence Forces is a matter between the individual taxpayer and the Revenue Commissioners and must be disclosed by the individual to the Revenue Commissioners. The Department will not be liable for the financial impact, positive or negative, of any change in the tax status of any current payment, allowance or benefit paid or made available to members of the Defence Forces, or any determination of their tax status, as may be directed by the Revenue Commissioners from time to time.

**Annex 'A' to Terms and Conditions and General Information regarding Cadetships
in the Defence Forces 2023**

Army, Air Corps & Naval Service

Pay and Allowances etc.

1. In line with Department of Finance instructions of 23 December 2010, starting pay will be at the minimum of the scale. The rate of remuneration may, be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.
2. The following pay-scale applies to Cadets with effect from 1 March 2023.

Officers Pay: Rate 1 – Cadets	Rates of Pay wef. 1 March 2023
Point	Personal Pension Contribution (PPC) scale Full PRSI (Class H)
1 st	€21,880
2 nd	€24,399
3 rd	€27,611
4 th	€30,503
5 th	€34,407

Where enlisted personnel take up a cadetship and where the 1st point of the scale is lower than the current value of the soldier pay plus any continuous allowances then the cadet will be placed on an off-point rate. On commissioning the officer will be placed on the appropriate point of that pay scale or will continue on the off-point rate, whichever is greater. This off-point rate will continue to be paid until incremental progression allows for convergence with the established pay scale rates.

3. On enlistment to the Permanent Defence Force, Cadets are liable to pay PRSI contributions at the Class H rate. On appointment as an Officer (see paragraph 17), they are liable for the Class A PRSI rate. In both cases, they are covered for the range of benefits under the Social Insurance code, including the State Pension (Contributory) – see also paragraph 20 and Annex B.
4. In general, persons commissioned as Officers following completion of a Cadetship under this competition, will qualify for the following rates of pay and allowances:

Air Corps Officer Pay Rate1 wef. 1 March 2023

Rank	Service	Basic Salary (Rate 1)	Military Service Allowance	Total Pay
2nd Lieutenant	On appointment	€35,222	€5,901	€41,123
	After 1 year in Rank	€39,054	€5,901	€44,955
Lieutenant	On appointment	€40,505	€5,901	€46,406
	After 1 year	€41,169	€5,901	€47,070
	After 2 years	€42,563	€5,901	€48,464
	After 3 years	€43,983	€5,901	€49,884
	After 4 years	€45,546	€5,901	€51,447
	After 5 years	€46,977	€5,901	€52,878
	After 6 years	€48,407	€5,901	€54,308
	After 7 years	€49,224	€5,901	€55,125
	After 8 years	€50,412	€5,901	€56,313
After 9 years	€51,607	€5,901	€57,508	

Military Service Allowance

In addition to basic pay, Military Service Allowance is payable to Officers holding the commissioned ranks of Second Lieutenant/Lieutenant Air Corps.

Flying Pay

An Officer or Cadet of the Air Corps who is engaged in flying duties is also paid flying pay, which varies in accordance with his/her rank and service. The current rate is €1,420 per annum for a trainee pilot, rising to €18,983 after 12 years' service.

It should be noted that the payment including the rate of payment of these allowances are subject to review and adjustment on an ongoing basis in accordance with changes applicable as per Government policy.

Annex 'B' to Terms and Conditions and General Information regarding Cadetships in the Defence Forces 2023

Air Corps

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Introduction

- (a) In general, anyone joining pensionable public service employment on or after 1 January 2013 is a member of the Single Scheme. This Scheme applies to all military personnel who join the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) from 1 January 2013 onwards as first-time new entrants to the Public Service.

The Single Scheme also applies if you are a former pensionable public servant who re-joins the Public Service in a pensionable position on or after 1 January 2013, with a break of more than 26 weeks between public service employments.

Note: In some limited circumstances, different pension terms may apply for personnel who join the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) from 1 January 2013 onwards who are not first-time new entrants to the Public Service and/or have previously been in the public service. Specific details are available on request from the Department of Defence.

Single Scheme – summary of main elements for PDF members

- It is a *defined benefit* scheme based on *Career-Average Earnings*.
- Retirement benefits – pension and lump sum – are primarily based on % of *pensionable earnings* throughout your public service career as a Single Scheme member.
- PDF members pay a 7.5% employee contribution from salary towards their Single Scheme benefits, as well as an *Additional Superannuation Contribution* (ASC) – see **Notes 1 and 2 below**.
- Each year, you build up money amounts on a *fast accrual* basis towards your Single Scheme retirement benefits. The total of these amounts at retirement, with some adjustments for increases in inflation, determines what your retirement benefits will be.
- Single Scheme retirement benefits are payable immediately on retirement from the PDF only if you serve to the *minimum pension age* of 50, and have the *vesting period of 2 years*².
- If you finish employment with the PDF before age 50 and have the vesting period, payment of your retirement benefits is normally *deferred* to the

² The *vesting period* for the Single Scheme is 2 years, the minimum length of time you must pay employee contributions into the scheme before becoming eligible for retirement benefits.

qualifying age for *Contributory State Pension (CSP)*³ from the Department of Social Protection.

- Retirement pension (but not lump sum) is *integrated* with the Social Insurance system – see paragraph (b) below.
- There is no cap on the length of time over which members can build pension benefits under the Single Scheme.
- Transferring retirement benefits to Single Scheme from other employments:
 - The option for a member of the Single Scheme to transfer-in benefits from private sector pension schemes is generally available, subject to certain terms and conditions.
 - If, before joining the Single Scheme, you hold deferred retirement benefits from previous employments under a ‘pre-2013’ Public Service pension scheme, you cannot transfer those benefits to the Single Scheme. Those benefits remain to be administered under your earlier pre-2013 pension scheme.
 - If you hold deferred benefits under the Single Scheme from an earlier Single Scheme employment, you do not need to arrange for their “transfer” because it is the same Single Scheme in place across the Public Service.
- There is provision for immediate retirement benefits if compulsorily retired on medical grounds, and for death in service benefits (dependents pensions and death lump sum).
- Following retirement, increases to Single Scheme pension are linked to inflation.

(b) Integration of retirement pension with the Social Insurance system:

New entrants to the Public Service on or after 6 April 1995, including Commissioned Officers in the PDF, are insurable for full PRSI. For this reason, public service retirement (or spouse's / civil partner's) pensions are subject to **integration** with the State Social Insurance system in accordance with standard Public Service arrangements.

This means that a person's entitlement to the range of Social Insurance benefits (including the Contributory State Pension) is taken into account when calculating the amount of retirement pension payable. In an integrated pension scheme, the Contributory State Pension (CSP) is regarded as part of the employee's total pension package. Under standard Public Service arrangements, this integration of retirement pension with the Social Insurance system applies from the time the retirement (or spouse's / civil partner's) pension commences payment.

³ The current qualifying age for all State Pensions is 66.

This means the retirement pension is adjusted (reduced) from the start by a Social Insurance State Pension *offset*⁴⁴, regardless of whether the person has reached Contributory State Pension age. Integration applies to retirement pension and also to employee contributions, but not to retirement lump sum.

A Contributory State Pension becomes payable upon reaching the qualifying age. The *Public Service (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012* (the 2012 Act), does not provide for the payment of a ‘supplementary retirement pension’ in the period between Defence Forces mandatory retirement age and State Pension qualifying age.

(c) Employee pension contributions:

- **Note 1** – The 7.5% Single Scheme contribution is comprised of 4.2% of *net pensionable remuneration* (which means pensionable remuneration less twice the maximum rate of State Pension Contributory payable from time to time to a person who has no adult or child dependants) plus 3.3% of pensionable remuneration.
- **Note 2** – Subject to certain exemption thresholds, all Public Servants who are in pensionable employment – including members of the PDF – are also liable to pay an *Additional Superannuation Contribution (ASC)*. The ASC is separate from the standard employee pension contributions mentioned above. No additional superannuation benefits are earned as a result of the ASC. The ASC applies to pensionable earnings above certain thresholds at different bands and % rates depending on the pension scheme applicable to the member. From 1 January 2020, the ASC bands / rates are as follows:

Additional Superannuation Contributions
All Public Servants who are members of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme
First €34,500 of pensionable earnings – exempt
Next €25,500 @ 3.33%
Balance @ 3.5%

(d) Declarations:

Under the *Public Service (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012* (the 2012 Act), candidates are required to declare:

- any prior Public Service employment, or
- any pre-existing entitlements to a Public Service retirement benefit (whether already paid, in payment or deferred), or
- any existing remuneration from any other Public Service employment, or

⁴⁴ The current value of the Contributory State Pension (CSP) reduction is €265.30 per week / €13,795.6 Annually.

- any such employment in which they received a payment-in-lieu of pension for that service.

(e) Pension abatement:

If a person was employed previously in the Public Service and is in receipt of a pension from the Public Service, the 2012 Act provides for the *abatement* (i.e. reduction / suspension) of any Public Service pension on re-employment within the Public Service, even where the new employment is in a different area of the Public Service. The outcome will depend on factors such as a person's ongoing overall earnings from the Public Service by way of salary plus pension.

(f) Further information:

Further information on pension arrangements for Defence Forces members of the Single Pension Scheme can be found on the Department of Defence website at; <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/f65fb1-defence-forces-pension-information/> and [https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/2a3969-pension-schemes/-for-officers Single Scheme booklet](https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/2a3969-pension-schemes/-for-officers-Single-Scheme-booklet)

See also the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform website at; <https://singlepensionscheme.gov.ie/> and, <https://singlepensionscheme.gov.ie/for-members/scheme-information/scheme-booklet/#>
- for a booklet on the 'fast accrual' scheme

**Annex 'C' to Terms and Conditions and General Information regarding Cadetships
in the Defence Forces 2023**

Air Corps

LASER EYE SURGERY

Applicants, for whom any one or more of the following criteria apply, will be deemed unfit to join the Permanent Defence Force:

- (a) Applicants who have had their visual acuity corrected by non-laser surgery or laser surgery involving the raising of a corneal flap
- (b) Applicants who have had corrective laser surgery not involving the raising of a corneal flap, within 12 months of the advertised closing date for receipt of applications
- (c) Where there continues to exist, beyond one year of corrective laser surgery not involving the raising of a corneal flap, significant visual impairment or side effects related to the surgery, or both
- (d) Where, following corrective laser surgery not involving the raising of a corneal flap, the residual corneal stromal thickness is less than 300 microns.

Annex 'D' to Terms and Conditions and General Information regarding Cadetships in the Defence Forces 2023

Air Corps

PHYSICAL FITNESS ETC.

PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST

The physical fitness assessment is designed to test the candidate's current level of physical fitness and their capacity to undergo the rigours of military training. It is composed of two aspects:

- a. Components of physical fitness, consisting of body composition assessment.
- b. Local muscular endurance and aerobic endurance

FORMAT OF THE DEFENCE FORCES INDUCTION FITNESS TEST (DFIFT)

BODY COMPOSITION ASSESSMENT

This assesses the candidate's body composition. The candidate will undergo a body mass index (BMI) test and an assessment of body fat % will be assessed using skin calliper test (if necessary). Candidates who score > or equal to 30 on the BMI test must undergo a skinfold calliper test. Candidates who score in excess of 70mm (Males) or 80mm (Females) on the skinfold calliper test will **not** be permitted to continue with the test.

All tests are conducted in sports gear. Candidates are advised to bring the following should they be requested to attend: tracksuit, shorts, singlet or t-shirt, training shoes, towel, and wash gear etc.

Candidates who wish to prepare for the above tests should do so under the guidance of a qualified instructor.

AEROBIC ENDURANCE

Candidates will be required to run one and a half miles within the time limit below: (This is a pass or fail test)

Remarks	Males	Females	Distance
Green: test pass	<11 mins 40 sec	<13 mins 10 sec	2.4km
Amber: test pass	<12 mins 45 secs	<13 mins 50 sec	2.4km
Red: test fail	>12 mins 45 secs	>13 mins 50 sec	2.4km

A 'Green' grading reflects the candidate passing the DFIFT and results in immediate selection for induction.

An 'Amber' grading reflects a reduced aerobic capacity. The organisation **may** select these personnel for induction subject to vacancies. If an applicant achieves an amber pass they will be required to undergo additional fitness training during the induction training period. Cadets must pass the Defence Force's fitness test to be finally approved.

A 'Red' grading reflects the candidate has failed the DFIFT.

An applicant who achieves an "amber" result in their aerobic capacity (run) test may be considered for induction into the Defence Forces, should the HR demand exist. Applicants inducted under these circumstances will be required to pass the DF Fitness Test (part 2/run) during stage 1 of the Cadet Training Course (initial 12 weeks).

LOCAL MUSCULAR ENDURANCE

This will be assessed using push-ups and sit-ups. The time allowed is 60 seconds (This is a pass or fail test).

	Males	Females
Push-ups: (Minimum requirement)	20	20 (modified)
Sit-ups: (Minimum requirement)	20	20

If a candidate fails to meet any of the above minimum requirements, they will not be permitted to proceed to the next stage of the competition.

Suggested 4 Week Training Programme for Cadetship Applicants.

Week	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
1	15 min Warm up. Steady Run for 20 Mins. Record your distance. 15 min Cool down. Push Ups 5 sets x 5 reps. Sit Ups 5 sets x 5 reps. Stretch.	15 min Warm up. Tempo Training. 4 x 5 min runs with 2 min recovery. Record your distance. 15min Cool down Stretch.	15 min Warm up. Steady Run for 20 Mins. Record your distance. 15 min Cool down. Push Ups 4 sets x 7 reps. Sit Ups 4 sets x 7 reps. Stretch.
2	15 min Warm up. Tempo Training. 3 x 6 min runs with 2 min recovery. Record your distance. 15min Cool down. Push Ups 4 sets x 7 reps. Sit Ups 4 sets x 7 reps. Stretch.	15 mins Warm up. Steady Run for 25 Mins. Record your distance. 15 min Cool down. Push Ups 4 sets x 7 reps. Sit Ups 4 sets x 7 reps. Stretch.	15mins Warm up Tempo Training. 2 x 10 Min runs with 2 min recovery. 15mins Cool down. Push Ups 3 sets x 10 reps. Sit Ups 3 sets x 10 reps. Stretch.
3	15 mins Warm up. Steady Run for 30 Mins. Record your distance. 15 min Cool down. Push Ups 3 sets x 12 reps. Sit Ups 3 sets x 12 reps. Stretch.	15mins Warm up Tempo Training. 2 x 1 mile/1600 m runs with 2 min recovery. Record your time. 15mins Cool down. Push Ups 3 sets x 15 reps. Sit Ups 3 sets x 15 reps. Stretch.	15 mins Warm up. Steady Run for 2 Miles. Record your time. 15 min Cool down. Push Ups 2 sets x 17 reps. Sit Ups 2 sets x 17 reps. Stretch.
4	15mins Warm up Tempo Training. 2 x 1 mile/1600 m runs with 2 min recovery. Record your time. 15mins Cool down. Push Ups 2 sets x 20 reps. Sit Ups 2 sets x 20 reps. Stretch.	Pre-Test Rehearsal. Push Ups-20 Repetitions/1 Min. Sit Ups-20 Repetitions/1 Min. 1.5 mile run-Timed. Males-11 min 40 sec. Females-13 min 10 sec.	Recovery session. Allow sufficient recovery time between this session and your test date.
5.	20 push-ups (1 Min) 20 sit-ups (1 Min) 1.5mile run (Males - 11 min 40 sec, Females - 13 min 10 sec)		

Points to Note

This Programme is a suggested training programme. You are under no obligation to undertake it. You do so at your own risk.

- a. This programme presupposes a certain level of fitness. **If in doubt talk to your GP.**
- b. **Step 1**-Invest in proper training equipment particularly a good pair of runners.
- c. **Step 2**-Talk to a Defence Forces PTI (Physical Training Instructor) or a fitness expert. Get them to help you to tailor this generic programme to suit your ability/lifestyle. Get them to help you with your technique with Push ups and Sit Ups. Videos of correct push ups and sit up technique are available online at www.military.ie
- d. **Step 3**-Mark out a safe route of 1.5 miles/2.4km.
- e. **Step 4**-Get a stopwatch to time your runs.
- f. **Step 5**-Set your goals.
 - **Run**-11 min 40 sec Males/13 min 10 sec Females to achieve a green result.
 - **Push Ups**-20 Repetitions in One Minute.
 - **Sit Ups**-20 Repetitions in One Minute.
- g. **Warm Up**
 - Warm up properly before every session.
 - Exercises: Jogging, fast feet, high heels, high knees and high knee skip.
 - Try to keep warm up specific to the activity you are doing.
- h. **Heart Rate Intensity:** To achieve the required intensity of exercise use the simple formula.
 - Example.
 - $220 - \text{your age} = 220 - 20 = 200.$
 - $75\% \text{ of } 200 = 150 \text{ Beats per minute.}$
 - This is your target Heart Rate to improve your Cardio-Vascular Endurance)*(Required Intensity).
 - Check your HR pre and post exercise.
- i. **Cool Down:**
 - Just a general reduction in pace to decrease blood flow to the activated muscles.
- j. **Stretching:**
 - Stretching is very important pre and post exercise.
 - Stretch all major muscle groups and show particular attention to the muscles that are involved in the activity.
- k. **On the Day:**
 - Arrive on time at the test centre.
 - Eat 2/3 Hours prior to the Test.
 - Bring a snack to the Test Centre to stay refuelled.
 - STAY HYDRATED. Sip water all day.
- l. **If you are in any doubt about your fitness levels to undertake this programme, see your Doctor first.**