**DEVELOPING THE AIRMEN WE NEED-EDUCATION (DAWN-ED) PROGRAM**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**ELIGIBILITY**

**Q1:** I see that DAWN-ED is open to all LAF USAF and USSF officers, but are cadets eligible too?

* Yes, USAFA and AFROTC cadets graduating before December 2021 are allowed and encouraged to apply!

**Q2:** Will I be a full time student?

* Yes, if selected for DAWN-ED, you will be a full-time student completing a Department of the Air Force funded Master’s or PhD at an accredited university in the United States.  It will be your job to graduate and your reporting unit will most likely be AFIT. We encourage you to pick from quality universities schools that appeal to you and are leaders in your topic area.

**Q3**: What are the minimum recommended eligibility requirements I should have if I want to apply for a DAWN-ED Master’s Degree?

* Applicants need a bachelor’s degree with a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, at least a 153 GRE Verbal and 148 GRE Quantitative. For non-STEM programs requiring a GMAT, candidates should have at least a 550 score.

**Q4**: What are the minimum recommended eligibility requirements I should have if I want to apply for a DAWN-ED PhD?

* Applicants need a Master’s degree with grades averaging at least a 3.50 on a 4.0 scale in an area relevant to the doctoral program of interest, at least a 156 GRE Verbal and a 151 GRE Quantitative. For non-STEM programs requiring a GMAT, candidates should have at least a 650 score.

**Q5:** Are there any “work a rounds” to address situations where we may not have the pre requisites for a specific degree?

* Universities determine their admission requirements. Our advice is to find a program that builds on your existing academic work and speak with school officials to resolve any questions about your background, experiences, and pre-requisites before applying to the DAWN-ED program.

**Q6:** Does the DAWN-ED Program have any school agreements?

* No. We do not have standing agreements with civilian universities and advise you to carefully pick an accredited school that excels in the academic field you seek and works well with Air Force students. AFIT/CI can provide advice, and, if you are selected, we will ask that you work with the DAWN-ED program managers and the DAWN-ED Academic Advisor to ensure the university and the program you want to apply to meets the DAF emphasis areas

**Q7**: How do I get a Letter of Academic Eligibility from AFIT?

* Interested officers need to apply for an academic assessment online at [https://www.afit.edu/ADMISSIONS/AFITApplicationProcess/index.cfm?page=462 &tabname=Tab4A](https://www.afit.edu/ADMISSIONS/AFITApplicationProcess/index.cfm?page=462%20&tabname=Tab4A) to determine academic eligibility. Even though DAWN-ED selectees will typically attend a civilian university, the AFIT assessment provides an additional review for your academic qualifications (and shortcomings, if any), and helps identify AFIT as a possible school of choice in case you are unable to gain acceptance elsewhere. If an officer already holds a Letter of Academic Eligibility from AFIT for the program that interests them, they may use that letter to support their formal application as long as it was received within 5 years for MS programs and 3 years for PhD programs.

**ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE COMMITMENT (ADSC)**

**Q8:** What is the ADSC associated with a DAWN-ED assignment?

* AFI 36-2107, Table A2.1 specifies ADSC to be 3 times the length of the program, but not to exceed 5 years. So a 12 month Master’s program would incur a 36 month ADSC, an 18-month Master’s program would incur a 4.5 year ADSC, and a 36 month PhD program would max out at a 5-year ADSC. The post-graduation utilization tour begins upon assignment from school. ADSCs run concurrently.

**WAIVERS AND OTHER ASSIGNMENT RELATED QUESTIONS**

**Q9:** I am interested in applying for the program, but request clarification on the time-on-station (TOS) criteria. Is the 2 year TOS requirement as of the application due date or the program start date? Is this waiverable, and if so, by whom?

* Since you will be expected to begin your studies around August 2022, you would need to have arrived at your current assignment prior to August 2020 to give you 2 years TOS. We recommend speaking with your commander to express your interest and also speak with your assignment officer (AO) at AFPC to confirm your eligibility and their willingness to support a TOS waiver. AFPC is the approval authority for TOS waivers.

**Q10:** I am currently on the VML, am I still eligible to apply for DAWN-ED?

* Possibly. Your best course of action is to have a frank conversation with your commander and your AO at AFPC and express your desires. Ultimately, the decision rests with AFPC.

**Q11:** My TAFCSD is greater than 10 years, but I am really interested in applying for DAWN-ED, can I still apply?

* Yes, you may apply. However, officials at AFPC and the DAWN-ED team will need to evaluate your record to determine if you will have the necessary retainability to complete the DAWN-ED program, the post-graduation utilization assignment, and the associated ADSC.

**Q12:** The announcement states that after I graduate, I must accept a follow-on assignment according to the DAF’s needs. How will that work?

* Upon graduation, officers will be assigned to a post-graduation utilization assignment that will use the education and skills gained for the benefit of the DAF. The utilization tour is normally right after graduation, but there are situations where the needs of the DAF will dictate that the post-graduation utilization tour be deferred (i.e. to fill a command billet or attend pilot training).

**Q13:** Since I am married to another military member, if selected for DAWN-ED, will join-spouse assignment options be considered?

* Yes. As with all assignments, join-spouse will be considered not only for your assignment to school but also your follow-on tour. These can be difficult to arrange, so applicants need to be flexible and should expect that the DAWN-ED assignments will be the primary factor in the decisions.

**Q14:** Is it possible to cross train into a new AFSC after completing the DAWN-ED program?

* Yes, it is possible, but the decision to retrain rests with AFPC and your CFM. We strongly recommend having a conversation with your commander and your AO at AFPC about your long term goals and interests.

**Q15:** Will requesting release from my AO at AFPC in order to compete for a DAWN-ED degree have a negative effect on my career?

* Absolutely not. The AOs at AFPC are outstanding professionals who were selected based on their ability to constantly juggle the competing needs of the Air and Space Force, the broad professional development needs of their respective career fields, and the long and short term individual professional development needs of Airmen and Guardians within those career fields.

**Q16:** How will my post-graduation assignment be determined?

* We plan to start having those discussions with you, AFPC, and your CFM about 10-12 months before you are scheduled to graduate.  Post-graduation utilization assignment options will focus on places where your degree will have the greatest potential impact to influence future force capabilities. Ideally, that assignment will immediately follow completing your degree but the needs of the DAF may dictate a delay.

**Q17:** What do I need to know about the follow-on assignment process?

* DAWN-ED is a selective program intended to grow expertise in areas deemed critical to future DAF capabilities. Follow-on assignments will be to positions where your studies can have the greatest impact for the DAF and will be guided by senior DAF leader inputs. We expect most DAWN-ED graduates will move to selected positions in organizations at headquarters, planning staffs, research labs, and schools like AFIT, USAFA, and so on. Each will be hand-selected for greatest impact to the DAF’s future capabilities.

**Q18:** What if I have an idea of what I would like to do (or not do) for my DAWN-ED post-graduation utilization tour?

* By all means, please convey that to the DAWN-ED board in your package.

**Q19:** Will my DAWN-ED post-graduation utilization assignment be the only one or will it impact future assignments as well?

* While you are only obliged to serve one utilization tour based on your academic degree, your choices and Air Force needs will dictate your assignments beyond that. The intent of DAWN-ED is to educate, train, and develop a cadre of officers with a deep knowledge base in areas important to the DAF and help move the Air and Space Forces forward. Therefore, we hope your abilities, knowledge and performance will make you highly sought for influential assignments as your career progresses.

**NOMINATION PACKAGES**

**Q20:** What recommendations do you have for my personal statement?

* Part of your application for the DAWN-ED program should include a statement from you showing how your proposed program links to the areas of importance to the DAF and how you believe it will benefit the Air Force or Space Force.

**Q21:**  What documentation do I need to provide to show that my AO at AFPC has released me to compete for DAWN-ED?

* Officers interested in applying for DAWN-ED must email their AO at AFPC requesting release to meet the DAWN-ED Board. Your AO at AFPC should send you an email back confirming that you have been released to compete for DAWN-ED. Scan and include a copy of their approval message in your DAWN-ED application package.

**GRE and GMAT Requirements**

**Q22:** Can I provide an unofficial document that reflects our GRE or GMAT score?

* We would prefer to have an official copy of your GRE or GMAT scores. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) will send you a copy of your test results and you can include that in your package. If there are circumstances that prevent you from including an official copy of your test results, you must fully explain that in your nomination package.

**Q23:** Will the DAWN-ED board consider waiving GRE or GMAT scores given the current COVID-19 environment?

* No. Most graduate schools require the GRE General or the GMAT. Currently ETS and GMAC are offering the ability to take the GRE or GMAT from the comfort of your home. Follow this link for more information on the GRE <https://www.ets.org/s/cv/gre/at-home/> and go to <https://www.mba.com> to learn more about requirements for taking the GMAT and how you can take the GMAT online.

**Q24:** Is AFIT an approved organization to receive GRE and/or GMAT scores for graduate schools?

* Yes, AFIT is approved to receive test scores directly for GRE and GMAT exams. AFIT’s Institution Code is **1827**. Go to this link to find the codes for other universities: <https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/scores/send/aidi_fellowships/>.

**Q25:** Am I still required to take the GRE or GMAT if the universities I am applying to do not require it?

* Yes. In order to ensure a level playing field for all DAWN-ED applicants, completing the GRE (or GMAT if your intended university or program requires that exam) and submitting scores with your application package is mandatory.

**Q26:** Since I have been out of school for several years, who should I contact for my Letters of Recommendation?

* The letters of recommendation should be provided by people who are able to comment about your academic abilities, character, work/study ethic, leadership ability, ability to complete challenging tasks, and other factors that would influence the decision of the DAWN-ED selection board. You have the flexibility to choose the people you feel can best provide that information through their letters.

**APPLICATIONS TO OTHER RELATED PROGRAMS**

**Q27:** I have applied for the Dr. Heather Wilson STEM PhD Program, can I also apply for DAWN-ED?

* Yes, you may apply for both programs.

**Q28:** I have applied for the CSAF Captain’s Prestigious PhD Program, can I also apply for DAWN-ED?

* Yes, you may apply for both programs.

**Q29:** If I apply for the Dr. Heather Wilson STEM PhD Program or the CSAF Captain’s Prestigious PhD Program and selected as primary, will I still be allowed to meet the DAWN-ED Board?

* Yes and No. Officers identified as a primary select in these other competitive boards will be removed from DAWN-ED consideration and WILL NOT meet the DAWN-ED board. However, officers identified as an alternate WILL be allowed to compete in the DAWN-ED program.

**Q30:** I am applying for the Dr. Heather Wilson or CSAF program, can I use the same letters of recommendation for DAWN-ED?

* Yes.

**Q31:** Is it possible to do both a Master’s and PhD back to back with this program?

* Maybe. The maximum length allotted for a DAWN-ED quota is 36 months. You would have to find a school that can support earning both degrees in 36 months.

**Q32:** Any limitations on the schools?  Can it be any program in the US or only specific colleges?

* DAWN-ED candidates should apply to quality, accredited US-based universities that are among the top tier schools in your degree area. Many offer merit-based scholarships to offset tuition costs, and that is a huge plus. AFIT/CI can assist with your choices and provide feedback on the universities that work well with Air Force provisions.

**Q33:** I am interested in getting a degree in an area that does not appear to be listed on the DAWN-ED announcement. Am I still eligible?

* The DAWN-ED Board will only consider and select candidates in the areas listed in the program announcement. If you apply for an area not listed, you will not be considered by the board.  Part of your application for the DAWN-ED program should include a statement showing how your proposed program links to DAF interest areas and how you believe this will benefit the DAF. Those that cannot show linkage to the DAWN-ED areas will not be considered.

**Q34:** Am I allowed to attend a foreign university?

* As a general rule, DAWN-ED candidates are expected to attend US-based universities where there is a stronger support network available.

**KEY DATES**

**Q35:** When is the DAWN-ED Board scheduled to convene and when are results expected to be released?

* The DAWN-ED Board is scheduled to convene in mid-July 2021 and board results are projected to be released in early August 2021.

**GENERAL QUESTIONS**

**Q36:** Do some of the topics only support AFIT vs. civilian institutions? Does the DAWN team select a civilian institution from the ones that applicant is accepted to? What are the considerations for that decision?

* If you are selected by the DAWN-ED board, you will be sent to school full-time (most likely at a civilian institution) but there is always the possibility that you could attend AFIT or the Navy Post Graduate School (NPS). We will also work closely with you to identify and select a university and program that not only meets the criteria that meets the needs of the DAF but meets your educational objectives as well.

**Q37:** I'm more interested in applying for DAWN-ED next year, is this planned to be an annual offering or is it only this year?

* We fully expect DAWN-ED to be an enduring program, so if you are not eligible or available this year, we hope you’ll apply in a future cycle.

**Q38:** I have already completed some of my post-graduate coursework. How does this affect my eligibility?

* Candidates that have completed some relevant post-graduate courses are welcomed and encouraged to apply. The credit for completed courses may shorten the program length and/or allow immediate assignment to school in a full-time, favorable funding status for seamless continuation of studies, and possibly sooner graduation.

**Q39:** Do I need to wait until August 2022 to begin?

* You can begin any time during FY22. However, most universities begin their annual academic year in the fall, and given the length of the application process and course availability, most candidates are expected to begin in the typical fall semester cycle. Note that beginning in the winter, spring, or summer semester means accelerating the enrollment processes, but it can be done.

**Q40:** What does my reporting chain look like when I am attending a CI program?

* Students assigned to AFIT will report to AFIT and be managed by the Graduate School leadership. Students assigned to a CI program will usually report to the closest base or ROTC unit, but AFIT Civilian Institution staff will oversee annual performance reports, orders, and other official functions.

**Q41:** Is it possible to obtain an extension to complete your degree program?

* Officers sent to school are expected to complete their studies and graduate on time. However, extensions are considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Q42:** I am a cadet projected to attend flying training after commissioning; if I get accepted into the DAWN-ED program, will I be able to attend pilot training after my DAWN-ED experience?

* Yes, as long as you continue to meet eligibility criteria (medical, moral, legal, etc.)

**Q43:** I am a cadet and have been awarded an AFSC, will I be able to keep it?

* Yes, as long as you continue to meet eligibility criteria (medical, moral, legal, etc.)