

**DEFENCE FORCE RECRUITING**

The Medical Process for Candidates Applying for Entry into the Australian Defence Force.

The following information is provided to assist you with understanding the medical processing requirements as part of your application to join the ADF.

Information is also provided for you to be aware of what happens to your medical information within Defence Force Recruiting and in-Service should your application be successful.

There are many conditions which can be easily managed in civilian life and cause no difficulty, but which are exacerbated under the physical and psychological demands of military life. The ADF needs to ensure it selects individuals who can safely complete military training and serve anywhere in the world without suffering further injury or harm. To do this, a full medical check is needed as part of the application process. The entry medical standards have been developed in consultation with specialists who have a detailed understanding of military life.

The medical process is quite detailed and is broken up into components as you progress through the recruiting process.

Initial Stage

The first stage of the medical process involves filling in a few questions regarding your medical history. This can be completed online through a secure portal, the link is sent to you when you book a YOU Session. If you aren't comfortable completing this online, then you can complete it at the recruiting centre when you attend. This is checked by a nurse, who may phone you to clarify some points about your responses.

YOU Session

If you have not completed the medical questions prior to the YOU session this will be undertaken at the YOU Session. There is not a medical examination at the YOU Session however you will be provided with information concerning acceptable Body Mass Index (BMI) for ADF entry.

Assessment Session

If you progress to this stage, we will want to know a lot more detail, to ensure that you can safely participate in military training and deployment. We will ask you a lot more medical history questions, which can again be completed through a secure online portal. It is really helpful if you complete these prior to attending your Assessment Session but can be completed on the day if you forget or if you prefer. Again, the nurse may contact you prior to Assessment Session to discuss your responses.

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On the day of your Assessment Session, you will have a full medical. This will include some time with the nurse who will measure your height and weight, will conduct a hearing test and test your vision. Some candidates depending on job preference(s), age or clinical risk factors also require additional tests such as a urine test, cardiovascular risk screening, ECG, spirometry to check your lungs, and for aircrew positions detailed measurements such as sitting height and leg length will be measured. The preliminary tests conducted by the nurse generally take about 20 minutes.

Colour perception (CP) testing will also be undertaken on assessment day. Colour perception is critical for some jobs due to the requirement to distinguish shades of colour quickly with such items as electrical equipment, safety indicator lights, equipment control panels and coloured charts. Testing of CP is not normally conducted as part of childhood health screening and as such individuals may be unaware that they have a colour vision deficit (sometimes referred to as colour blindness). If you are found to have a colour perception deficit that does not meet the CP standard for your chosen job preference you will have the opportunity to discuss other job options with your career counsellor.

Once the medical preliminary tests are completed, you will see a doctor, who may go through your history again, and who will conduct a full physical examination. If you would like a chaperone present during the examination, please let the medical staff know, and this can be arranged.

Contact lenses or Glasses

We need you to bring your glasses along to all your medical assessments. It is really important for us to assess your vision without contact lenses, as they can change the shape of your cornea and interfere in our assessment.

If you normally wear soft contact lenses (the commonest type of contacts), the lenses MUST be removed at least 1 week before your assessment session.

If you normally wear hard (rigid) lenses the lenses must be removed at least 2 weeks before your assessment session.

If you forget to bring your glasses or inadvertently wear your contact lenses, unfortunately your vision won't be tested and you will need to return another day for the test or visit an optometrist at your expense. Colour perception testing cannot be tested whilst wearing contact lenses or glasses designed to enhance colour perception (EnChroma glasses) and you will need to return at another time to the DFRC to have this test conducted. We will still perform the rest of the medical assessment.

What the Medical Examination Involves

As part of the examination you will be required to strip down to your underwear. Females are requested to wear a sports bra (or similar) and briefs. Males are requested to wear underpants. Gowns are available on request. The doctor will conduct a complete physical examination, and it will normally take around 40 minutes. It will include a detailed musculoskeletal examination including sit ups and push ups.

No internal examinations will be performed, and breast examinations will not be performed on females. Males will have their external genitals examined for abnormalities.

There is likely to be some waiting time between your assessments, it is therefore recommended that you bring a book or an ipad etc to keep you busy during these periods.

What can you do to prepare?

The medical examination for joining the Australian Defence Force is very detailed, and may require additional information to assist us to make a final decision. Any information you can bring with you to the Assessment Session may assist in us making a decision on the day, and helping you achieve a career in the ADF. At this stage we do not want you to obtain any new reports but if you or your GP have previous reports these could be really helpful. Key pieces of information that you may be able to obtain from your GP that would help include:

- For all candidates aged 35 years and over copies of blood tests for your cholesterol or blood sugar in recent years. Also if you have seen a cardiologist or had a cardiac stress test, copies of these reports or results would help.
- If you wear glasses or are 45 years or older any recent reports from your optometrist or ophthalmologist.
- Copies of any operation reports, XRays or other imaging or specialist reports, particularly orthopaedic specialists or counsellors that you may have seen, would be really helpful.

After Assessment Session

After Assessment Session additional tests or information may be required to allow us to make a final decision on your medical fitness.

It is really important that you book these appointments as soon as possible to allow us to finalise our decision regarding your medical fitness, and allow you to progress with your career. You cannot join the military without this final decision, even if you have a letter of offer from the Navy, Army or Air Force.

What happens once I am assessed as medically fit for entry?

Once you have been assessed as medically fit for entry, we will arrange for you to have blood tests for HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. You will receive counselling and an information sheet about this testing during the recruiting process. Please note that these tests are mandatory for anyone wanting to enter the ADF and if you choose not to have these tests, your application to join cannot be continued.

What do I do if something changes?

If you suffer an injury, have any shin pain, have an operation (including removal of skin lesions, Laser Eye surgery, endoscopy or arthroscopy), see a specialist (including a physiotherapist or a counsellor) or commence a new medication at any time, it is important to let us know as soon as possible so that we can ensure it doesn't affect your job options. If it affects your ability to safely complete training, it may change

your joining date or job offer, so the earlier you can let us know, the better we can let you know whether it does affect you, and the more options we have to help you.

Your medical assessment is generally valid for 12 months but may need to be reviewed if things change in that time.

What will happen if I am found to be medically unfit for entry to the ADF?

If you are found to be medically unfit for ADF entry at any stage you will be notified by the medical staff and you will also receive a letter advising you of the reasons for the Class 4 determination, and information concerning the appeals process.

If you don't understand the reasons, then contacting the DFRC medical staff and asking them to clarify the reasons as well as discussing your options would be a good first step.

How will I be contacted by Medical staff?

All correspondence will be sent to you via email, unless requested otherwise. You will need to ensure DFR has your up-to-date email address as the information sent to you is very important for you to receive and read.

Do I have a medical check on the day I join?

On the day that you enlist or appoint into the ADF, you will have one final medical check. This medical (called the attestation medical) is to make sure that there haven't been any changes that might affect your ability to safely complete training. It includes a few questions, a repeat check of your height and weight, as well as a final urine test for females. You will briefly see the nurse for these, and you will have a brief medical examination with the doctor. If anything shows up that may affect your ability to safely participate in training, the medical staff will talk to you about it.

Vaccinations

As part of deploying and serving in the ADF, being vaccinated is really important. Most people will have had a lot of vaccinations required by the military throughout their childhood. If you have evidence of this (a vaccination book, or an immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register, the link is <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register> or phone myGov helpdesk 132 307) then this will greatly help the medical staff by ensuring you are not vaccinated again unnecessarily.

What happens after entry to the ADF

Upon enlistment or appointment to the ADF your medical file will be transferred to Defence Health Service and will be managed by your joining unit. You will be required to undergo further blood tests for blood grouping and blood screening which are necessary for specific military operational requirements; and undergo immunisations as required by ADF protocols.

The ADF can only consider candidates who agree to undergo these procedures should they be successful in their application. Should you have any objections or concerns about the post entry requirements you are strongly encouraged to discuss these concerns with the DFR medical officer.

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Privacy of Medical Information

The Department of Defence through the Defence Force Recruiting (DFR) and its contracted service providers are collecting the personal information about you and, to a certain extent, your family members to assess your suitability and/or overall health and fitness for service in the ADF.

The information will be used:

- To process and manage all health aspects of your recruitment and enlistment or appointment to the ADF if your application is successful.
- To assist in the Defence Force Recruiting audits which assesses and determines compliance with ADF recruiting medical policies and procedures.

If you do not consent to collection of information your medical suitability for entry to the ADF cannot be determined and your application cannot be progressed.

If your application is unsuccessful or you decide to withdraw from the process your DFR medical records will be held for a period of 7 years and destroyed after this period. If your recruitment to the ADF is successful this information will be transferred to the Defence Health Service (DHS) and its contracted service providers on your entry to the ADF. Your entry level medical examination (ELME) is the beginning of a health record covering all ADF service inclusive of the medical recruiting process. The health record will include the collection of additional medical information and records inclusive of, but not limited to, immunisation records, pathology results, hospitalisation records, medical examinations and specialist opinions. This information will be used to record your medical history which will assist in the provision of health care and for ongoing assessment of your medical fitness for military service. The term health relates to both medical and dental records.

Two copies of your health record will be maintained to ensure that you are not disadvantaged if your medical record is lost or damaged:

- One copy is held at the ADF health facility at the locality in which you are serving; and
- Another copy is held at the ADF Health Records Office for Navy and Air Force, or Army as appropriate.
- For Army Reserve personnel, only one copy of health records is maintained.

Medical information will be managed by health personnel and administrative staff employed by, or contracted by, the ADF to provide health support and advice to the ADF.

The DHS also collects medical information for the following purposes:

- to provide, plan, monitor and coordinate health care for all ADF members;
- to assist in the management of claims in relation to repatriation, compensation, invalidity or other matters arising from service in the ADF;
- to establish an occupational health database;
- to contribute to group data for research and health studies; and
- to assist the DHS in developing enlistment standards and to ensure they meet ADF requirements.

Collection, storage and use or disclosure of your personal information is subject to the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) from Schedule 1 of the *Privacy Amendment Act 2012*, which amends the *Privacy Act 1988*.

You will be entitled to have access to your personal information held by Defence Force Recruiting Centre (DFRC) or DHS and its contracted service providers in accordance with the terms of the Act and correct any information if it is incorrect.

Applicants can obtain information regarding access to personal information by contacting your local DFRC.

ADF personnel can obtain information regarding access to medical information by contacting the Senior Medical Officer at an ADF health facility.

For the above purposes and for related purposes, DFRC or DHS and its contracted service providers usually gives some or all of this information to:

- Other contracted medical and mental health providers who provide services to Defence;
- Recruiting Officers and ADF Personnel Managers; and
- the Department of Veterans Affairs who will assume responsibility for continuous management of your medical records for the life of the record, following your separation from the ADF.

Except as provided in the Act, these agencies and organisations will not use or disclose your personal information, without your express permission, for a purpose other than the purpose for which the information was given to them.