

# THE JOBS' MARKET

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## Hey mum – I want to be a pilot!

If you have uttered those words, or they are on the tip of your tongue, there is some good news for you – the ADF is actively hiring pilots, you don't need any experience and the training is free – in fact you get paid to train.

Welcome to the first Jobs' Market, where we'll look at various ADF jobs, what they entail, what the selection criteria are and how you can prepare yourself to get the one you want.

Let's start with the pilot options in the ADF. All three services hire pilots – join the RAAF for jet fighters or heavy-lifting fixed-wing, the Army or the Navy for helicopters.

### Education

In all cases, the minimum education requirements are Year 12 with passes in maths (tertiary entry level), English and at least two other subjects, plus at least a C in year 10 science. This is where it starts to get complicated, as maths varies between the different States – so make sure you check this website [www.airforce.gov.au/psa/education.aspx](http://www.airforce.gov.au/psa/education.aspx) for details. This lists the maths requirements for each State's school system.

In the past, Year 12 physics was also required, but this was dropped mainly because of the declining numbers of students doing it. But doing physics to Year 12 will certainly help you and make your application more competitive.

For those who left school early, all is definitely not lost – you can still be an ADF pilot. There are a variety of options at TAFE and short maths or physics courses that the ADF will accept. PATS has seen many people who left school at Year 10, did a trade, went back to night school and are now flying for the RAAF or Army.

### Defence recruiting and age

Your application will be processed by Defence Force Recruiting (DFR), who do a good job, but sometimes conflicting information is given to applicants. The key person for you at DFR as a pilot applicant is the Team Leader Officer Entry (TLOE). It is important that you know their name and contact email. That way, when you have to make big decisions – such as leaving your job to do an intensive maths course because you didn't do it in year 12 – your TLOE can confirm that the course is 'approved' by DFR.

After the education is sorted, you have to think about which service interests you, what type of flying or aircraft you are interested in and, also, what is a realistic goal for you.

Firstly, let's consider what service you are eligible for. Well, technically, if you are over 17 and have the education minimums, the Air Force, Army and Navy are all possibilities as there is no upper age limit. In reality, however, the RAAF does not take pilot applicants over the age of 27 or 28. And, since most applicants want the RAAF, they can afford to be choosy.

The good news for older applicants is that the Navy and Army will consider applicants in their 30s or even up to early 40s.

The two avenues of entry to become an ADF pilot are direct entry or ADFA.

For the RAAF and the Navy, direct entry is just what the name implies – you do a five-month introductory officer course, then proceed to basic flight training at Tamworth.

The Army does things slightly different, but we'll talk about that later.

### To ADFA or not to ADFA

Let's imagine you are in year 11 or 12 or a first-year university student – then ADFA is most definitely an option for you. If you are already a second-year university student you may as well just complete your course and apply to be a direct-entry pilot when you graduate.

ADFA is the Australian Defence Force Academy based in Canberra and is part of the University of New South Wales (UNSW). The ADF has planned for most secondary-school leavers who want to become pilots to go to ADFA. There, students will do a three-year degree in arts, business, science or technology. There is also an option for RAAF pilot applicants to do only two years at ADFA before going to pilot school. People who are pre-selected as pilots are not allowed to do an engineering degree at ADFA because they are four-year courses and expensive to run. Plus, the ADF wants its engineering graduates to work as engineers not pilots.

Many Year 11 or 12 students are keen to join as direct-entry pilots when they leave school. Certainly, some have been able to do this and have been very successful.

There are some considerations you have to make here, though. On average, 35 per cent of people who start ADF pilot training do not complete it. The standard is demanding and remedial training is limited.

On the other hand, an ADFA graduate has a degree qualification to fall back on and another job in the ADF to go to if they fail pilot's course but, for the direct-entry graduate – well, unfortunately, they are on the street now, discharged from the ADF.

Also, you should reflect, realistically, if you have the maturity levels to cope with the direct-entry pilot regime straight from school.

ADFA is also a good development and maturing process. On any objective assessment, ADFA has a lot of pros.

UNSW is a top school to get a degree from; all your HECS is paid; you are paid around



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\$25K a year to attend; you will likely get a couple of overseas trips before you graduate; there's great staff/student ratios; there's a lot of extra leadership/management training; and, the campus boasts top sports facilities.

But ADFA isn't the only pathway in the ADF to becoming a pilot. The technical trades in the ADF provide fantastic training and experience in areas that have a real skill shortage. They are worth serious consideration, especially the aviation technician jobs. Work here for your initial four- or six-year contract, then apply for transfer to pilot training. Importantly, this gives you a great fallback position if you do not make it through pilot school.

### OK, it's for me. How do I get in?

You can complete your initial application on the [defencejobs.gov.au](http://defencejobs.gov.au) website.

Figure 1 shows how it is basically a three-stage process. For pilot applicants there are two separate days of aptitude tests – firstly, the YOU Session (used to be called JOES Day) then, if you get a high enough score in that

you can sit the aircrew aptitude test.

A pass in the aircrew aptitude test gets you to flight screening and the officer selection board at Tamworth where a final determination is made.

It is important to note that, from start to finish, the process does take time. Typically, from YOU Session to flight screening would be six to eight months.

This means you have to plan well in advance. If you are a final-year university or TAFE student you should apply at the start of your final year, because you want to join the ADF when you graduate.

School students should apply in year 11 and endeavour to complete testing in that year. There are a couple of good reasons for this.

Firstly, it is good to get testing passed before you start year 12 and secondly you will have time to give testing a second attempt if you don't pass initially.

Figure 2 details the 'freeze' periods applied after an unsuccessful attempt at testing. You can see clearly why a Year 12 student who attempts the aircrew aptitude test and

doesn't pass won't get a second attempt while still at school. You are not allowed to re-sit it for 12 months, so it's always better to apply in year 11 and give yourself a second shot if required.

You can see from the diagram that it is the testing phase where most people fall down. It is, in fact, where 90 per cent of applicants will be culled.

This is a real shame because most people who are prepared to work hard have the ability to pass.

The good news is that if you can get through the testing and proceed to flight screening, your odds of being 'recommended' are now around 60, or more likely, 70 per cent.

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Next Issue: ADF Pilot School

FIGURE 1: ADF AIRCREW SELECTION PROCESS

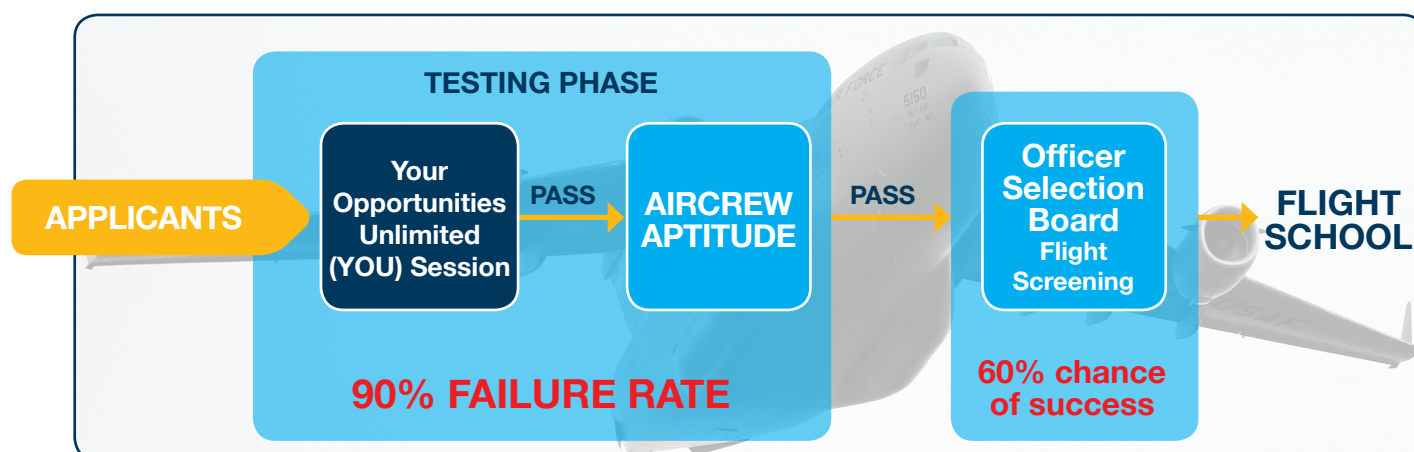


FIGURE 2: ADF AIRCREW SELECTION PROCESS

