

ACADEMIC YEAR (a.k.a. “Ac Year”)

Academics are the key to a Midshipman’s success, especially since everything is based on merit (80% academic and 20% military performance). Studies are very demanding, and after getting A’s in high school, getting a D or failing an exam at the Academy can be quite a shock. Early in the second semester your Plebe will choose his academic major. By choosing a major that one has a passion for, your Mid will take an important step toward his or her future, and will help them stay motivated while studying long hours and weekends.

If your Plebe can validate a course during Plebe summer, he or she will be able to move ahead or take more advanced courses. All Midshipmen are assigned academic counselors who will help them select the best course offerings.

Since the Naval Academy is such a concentrated four-year program, if someone falls behind academically, it is likely that the Midshipman will be forced to resign. A minimum course load is 15 hours per semester and a 2.0 CQPR (Cumulative Quality Point Rating) is required to graduate. Moreover, the Academy does not waste its time with anyone who fails due to a lack of effort. The Academic Board meets every semester and reviews individual records of those who have done poorly during the previous semester. The Board looks at all aspects of the Midshipman’s record and decides whether to separate him from the Academy. Some courses may be available during Summer School for make-up and/or enrichment, but for many such study is too little, too late. Extra Instruction (EI) is available to all Midshipmen if they simply seek out the help. It is generally said that everyone who receives an appointment should be able to conquer the academics if they really try, and the professors and officers want to help everyone succeed. Motivation to succeed comes from many sources; many Mids get “the gouge” from their roommates or upper classmen. Small classes are a definite learning advantage, but if you go to class unprepared, your lack of preparedness will not go unnoticed.

During Plebe year, nearly all courses are required. The required courses form the foundation for the more advanced courses chosen by the upper class Midshipmen. Some core requirements in the upper class years have alternative courses from which to choose, depending upon the academic background, abilities, and major. The Catalog gives a detailed description of the coursework.

The typical academic schedule for Plebes includes five courses in each of two semesters:

First Semester: (16 credit hours)	Second Semester: (18 credit hours)
Calculus I Chemistry I (Including Labs) U.S. Government & Constitutional Development Leadership I Rhetoric & Introduction to Literature I	Calculus II Chemistry II American Naval Heritage Fundamentals of Naval Science Rhetoric & Introduction to Literature II

Extracurricular activities are required of all Midshipmen. There are more than 75 extracurricular activities available. Every Midshipman should be able to find something of interest. The activities range from scuba diving to photography, and rock bands and chapel choirs. While many activities are geared to academic interest, others are just for fun.

During the Academic year, the following is recommended:

1. Continue sending care packages to your Midshipman.
 2. You are encouraged to visit your Midshipman as often as you like. Frequency of visits to the Academy should be determined based on your Mid’s needs during the academic year. Every Plebe enjoys having some free time on the weekends. There is a strict schedule of Liberty (time-off) for each Class and this varies with each new Academic Year. Special extras can be given when Navy beats Army in a major sport.
 - **Yard Liberty:** When Yard Liberty is granted, midshipmen are authorized to visit specified areas or places within the Yard, plus Perry Circle, quarters on Country Road near Perry Circle, Arundel Estates Officers’ Quarters, authorized sailing areas, and the USNA Golf Course. *Midshipmen must wear the uniform of the day during Yard Liberty unless participating in athletic events.*
 - **Town Liberty:** When Town Liberty is granted, Midshipmen are authorized to visit areas outside the Naval Academy grounds, but must remain within the 30 nautical-mile Limit. Town Liberty does not extend overnight, and Midshipmen must return to the Academy prior to expiration of Liberty. Midshipmen must wear the uniform of the day during Town Liberty.
 - **Overnight Liberty:** Plebes can earn Overnight Liberty. It begins at 10:15 on Saturday and ends at 13:00 on Sunday.
 - **Weekend Liberty (Overnight):** Plebes are not entitled to Weekend Leave, unless authorized under special circumstances by the Commandant or Superintendent. Weekend Liberty extends from LMO (Last Military Obligation) on Friday through the end of liberty on Sunday.
 3. Prior to making a visit with your Midshipman, have them obtain a permission “chit” so they can travel outside the 30 nautical-mile radius of the Academy for dinner or sightseeing. Remember, they cannot stay with you at a local hotel during your visit. They have to return to the Academy each night.
 4. If you haven’t already done so, get a computer set up in your home that will be able to access the Internet, and send and receive email. If money is an issue (and when isn’t it?), you can find a suitable computer in the local classifieds or in the “trader” magazines. You don’t need an especially new and powerful computer, just one that can send and receive email. You’ll also need an Internet Service Provider (ISP). This will involve a POP3 account (like another monthly telephone bill), and generally runs between \$10 and \$20 per month. Email allows you to stay in touch with your Midshipman on a daily basis, sending news of home and the normal world, and allowing nearly instant communications. Don’t expect multiple page letters in return; there just isn’t time in the busy schedule of your Midshipman.
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