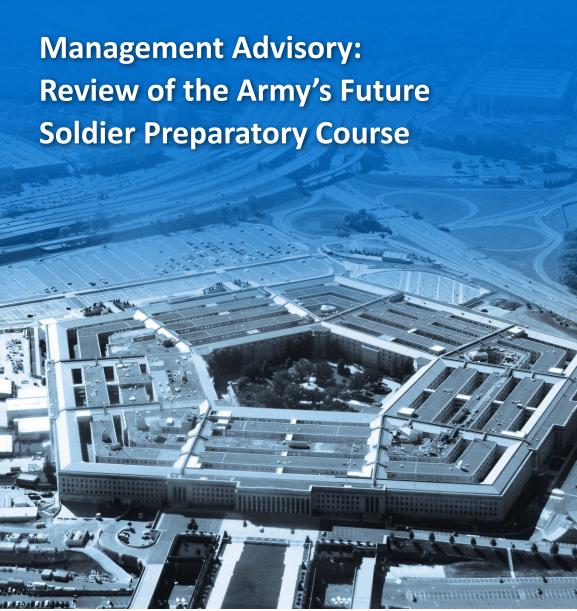


INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Defense

MAY 1, 2025









OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22350-1500

May 1, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)

SUBJECT: Management Advisory: Review of the Army's Future Soldier Preparatory Course (Report No. DODIG-2025-092)

This final management advisory identifies concerns found during the DoD Office of Inspector General's (DoD OIG) review of the Army's Future Soldier Preparatory Course (FSPC). We conducted this review from April 2024 through March 2025 in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's Quality Standards for Federal Offices of Inspector General. The objective of our review was to assess the effectiveness of the Army's FSPC and its impact on increasing enlistments. We previously provided copies of the draft management advisory and requested written comments on the recommendations. We considered management's comments on the draft management advisory when preparing the final advisory. These comments are included in the advisory.

This advisory contains one recommendation that is considered resolved and four recommendations that are considered unresolved because the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) (ASA[M&RA]) did not agree or did not fully address the recommendations. Therefore, these recommendations remain open. We will track these recommendations until management agrees to take actions that we determine to be sufficient to meet the intent of the recommendations and management submits adequate documentation showing that all agreed-on actions are completed. DoD Instruction (DoDI) 7650.03 requires that recommendations be resolved promptly. Therefore, please provide us your response concerning specific actions in process or alternative corrective actions proposed on the recommendations within 30 days. Send your response to

To address the challenging recruiting environment, in July 2022, the ASA(M&RA) authorized the Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) to establish the FSPC with the goal to help applicants qualify academically and physically for Military Service. The Army's FSPC consisted of two components—an academic and a fitness component.¹ The FSPC's academic component is identified as the Academic Skills Development Program (ASDP), which provides instruction to trainees in arithmetic reasoning, reading comprehension, and word knowledge. The ASDP accepts applicants that score below average on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT), specifically categories IVA and IVB (see table below) on their Enlistment Testing Program Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test.

¹ On February 18, 2025, we issued the "Management Advisory: Army's Future Soldier Preparatory Course Places Trainees at Increased Risk of Adverse Health Effects (Report No. DODIG-2025-069)," which identified potential health and safety concerns to trainees participating in the fitness component of the FSPC.

A December 2022 information paper from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD[P&R]) states that the Armed Forces' Enlistment Testing Program uses the ASVAB test to screen applicants for enlistment eligibility and enlisted occupations for each Military Service.² Specifically, the AFQT score, a composite of the ASVAB test's verbal and quantitative subtests, is considered the primary measure used during the enlistment process to determine applicants' Military Service eligibility and to report applicant and recruit quality. DoDI 1145.01, "Qualitative Distribution of Military Manpower," groups AFQT scores into the aptitude categories outlined in the table below.³

Table. AFOT Score Aptitude Categories

AFQT Category	Percentile Score	Persons' Trainability and On-the-Job Performance Tend to be
I	93-99	Above Average
II	65-92	Above Average
IIIA	50-64	Average
IIIB	31-49	Average
IVA	21-30	Below Average
IVB	16-20	Below Average
IVC	10-15	Below Average
V	1-9	Markedly Below Average

Source: The DoD OIG, based on DoDI 1145.01.

For the Army's ASDP, trainees with an AFQT score in categories IVA and IVB can enlist in the Army under Military Occupational Specialty 09M (Delayed Trainee) for the purposes of attending the ASDP for no more than 90 days. The Army then uses its In-Service Testing Program to proctor the Armed Forces Classification Test (AFCT) and evaluate ASDP trainees' improvement of their AFQT scores when compared to the AFQT scores obtained through the Enlistment Testing Program. While attending ASDP, trainees are scheduled to take the AFCT at least every 21 days and can take the AFCT for a total of 3 times. Once these trainees take the AFCT and achieve an AFOT score in category IIIB or higher, they will renegotiate their contract and move to basic training after selecting a Military Occupational Specialty based on their newly achieved scores and the needs of the Army.

Section 520, title 10, United States Code (10 U.S.C. § 520) limits the number of applicants that can enlist as AFQT category IV to 4 percent within a particular fiscal year.4

² USD(P&R), "Military Personnel Testing Program Overview for Candidates and New Members of the Defense Advisory Committee on Military Personnel Testing," December 8, 2022.

³ DoDI 1145.01, "Qualitative Distribution of Military Manpower," December 12, 2013 (Incorporating Change 3, September 19, 2024).

⁴ 10 U.S.C. § 520, "Limitation on enlistment and induction of persons whose score on the Armed Forces Qualification Test is below a prescribed level," January 3, 2024.

We found that the Army's implementation of the ASDP portion of FSPC was effective in increasing the enlistment of category IV personnel. However, to do this, the Army enacted less restrictive testing standards for ASDP trainees. We compared the testing frequency, retest test versions, and confirmation testing standards requirements required by both Enlistment Testing Program and In-Service Testing Program standards and found that the Army's In-Service Testing Program standards were less restrictive. For example, initial enlistment testing standards require a confirmation ASVAB test in instances where applicants' AFQT score increases by 20 or more points when compared to their previous score, where Army standards do not require any confirmation testing. This occurred because the Army has oversight of policy for the Army In-Service Testing Program for individuals already enlisted in the Army; however, the Army did not adhere to its own policy that limits retest frequency. For example, the Army did not adhere to its own policy that limits retest frequency to every 6 calendar months, but instead, allowed ASDP trainees to retest on the AFCT in as few as 7 days.5

In addition, the Army used the ASDP trainees' retest scores to incorrectly reclassify their enlistment categories from AFQT category IV to III or higher. In accordance with 10 U.S.C. § 520, the Army cannot use AFQT test scores achieved after a Soldier enlists in the Army to circumvent the requirements limiting category IV enlistments. This allowed the Army to avoid additional oversight of enlistment standards by the Secretary of Defense and Congress, as required by 10 U.S.C. § 520. Requirements of the law include:

- Obtain the Secretary of Defense's authorization for exceeding the 4 percent limitation on category IV enlistments.
- Enact mandatory requirements for a Future Servicemember Preparatory Course upon a Service exceeding 10 percent of category IV enlistments.
- Submit a report to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives on the structure and results of a Future Servicemember Preparatory Course, upon a Service exceeding 10 percent of category IV enlistments.

The Army reclassification of trainees' enlistment categories occurred because the Army received "exceptions to policy" from the USD(P&R) for reporting the percentage of category IV enlistments, which allowed the Army to reclassify ASDP trainees' enlistment categories based on the AFQT scores attained in the ASDP. However, the USD(P&R)'s exceptions to policy resulted in exceptions that circumvented the requirements in the law. The USD(P&R)'s interpretation contradicts 10 U.S.C. § 520, which requires that the AFQT score used in calculating the limitation on category IV enlistments for each fiscal year is the score when the trainee was "originally enlisted," not a retest score obtained during the term of the original enlistment.

⁵ Army Regulation 611-5 "Personnel and Classification Testing," April 25, 2022.

Additionally, according to ASDP personnel and what we observed during site visits to Army Training Center and Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and Fort Benning, Georgia, a significant portion of trainees had difficulty speaking or understanding English. The ASA(M&RA) memorandum, "Army's Academic Skills Development Pilot Program," July 22, 2022, states that ASDP applicants must not require English as a second language training. According to TRADOC personnel, individuals requiring English as a second language training should have been identified before enlisting for the ASDP but were not. Based on our interviews with ASDP and TRADOC personnel and our onsite observations, we determined that once the ASDP personnel identified trainees who had difficulty speaking or understanding English, ASDP commanders did not take action to remove the trainees from the ASDP because TRADOC did not have a process to enforce the language comprehension standards established by the ASA(M&RA). Instead, TRADOC allowed the trainees to continue in the program, using techniques like offering bilingual classroom aides to the trainees, assigning bilingual trainees to translate curriculum materials to the trainees that had difficulty understanding English, and allowing the trainees to continue taking the AFCT until they achieved a score better than category IV.

Although Army and U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command regulations require the identification of applicants who have difficulty speaking or understanding English before enlistment, the ASDP is responsible for maintaining the standards of trainees within the program.⁶ Allowing applicants with insufficient English language skills to attend the ASDP may result in a less capable fighting force.

To conduct our review, we interviewed personnel from the offices of the USD(P&R) and ASA(M&RA) and found that the Army received "exceptions to policy" that allowed the Army to reclassify the ASDP trainees' enlistment categories based on AFQT scores achieved in the ASDP for 10 U.S.C. § 520 reporting. We reviewed documentation related to these exceptions and determined that these "exceptions to policy" are, in fact, exceptions to law as the excepted requirements are the requirements of 10 U.S.C. § 520. Section 520 does not contain language authorizing the reclassification of trainees' reported categories or an exception to the requirements of the law. A USD(P&R) memorandum states that "[a] Service member is considered to have 'originally enlisted' to serve on active duty on the date noted in Section H of the Department of Defense From (DD Form) 4," which is the trainee's date of enlistment.

We selected a random nonstatistical sample of 19 trainees from a list of 15,259 ASDP trainees that joined the Army Active and Reserve Components between FY 2022 and FY 2024. Based on the date of enlistment, we found that all 19 trainees were originally enlisted before attending the Army's FSPC. We reviewed enlistment data for FY 2024, detailing the reclassifications of the ASDP trainees and found that after removing the inaccurately reclassified ASDP trainees,

⁶ Army Regulation 601-210, "Regular Army and Reserve Components Enlistment Program," November 8, 2023, and U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command (USMEPCOM) Regulation 601-23, "Entrance Processing and Data Reporting Management," February 26, 2024.

⁷ USD(P&R) Memorandum, "Policies Related to the Qualitative Distribution of Military Manpower," May 31, 2024.

the Army was not in compliance with the requirements of 10 U.S.C. § 520 or DoDI 1145.01.8 Additionally, the Army did not comply with the DoDI 1145.01 requirements for at least 60 percent of enlistees to have AFQT percentile scores of 50 (AFQT category IIIA) or better.

We also compared the testing frequency, retest test versions, and confirmation testing standards requirements followed for applicants taking the ASVAB test through the Enlistment Testing Program and for the ASDP trainees taking the AFCT through the Army's In-Service Testing Program. Lastly, in June 2024, we conducted site visits to Army Training Center and Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and Fort Benning, Georgia. During these site visits, we interviewed ASDP commanders, enlisted cadre, civilian contractors, and trainees. We also observed trainees' classroom instruction sessions and the administration of the AFCT to trainees.

Recommendations, Management Comments, and Our Response

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) develop and implement procedures to:

a. Discontinue the reclassification of trainees enlisted under category IV eligibility for the Future Soldier Preparatory Course.

Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) Comments

The Acting ASA(M&RA), in coordination with TRADOC, disagreed and stated that the Army operates a non-statutory version of the FSPC before reaching the 10 percent threshold required for a statutory program. The ASA(M&RA) also stated that the Army is following the policy guidance provided by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) (ASD[M&RA]) when calculating year-to-date recruit quality in AFQT category IV, as long as the retest is completed in the same fiscal year and the student must not be reenlisted at the completion of the FSPC.

Our Response

Comments from the Acting ASA(M&RA) did not address the specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is unresolved. As stated in the advisory, in accordance with 10 U.S.C. § 520, the Army cannot use AFQT scores achieved after a Soldier enlists in the Army to circumvent the requirements limiting category IV enlistments. The Army's use of AFQT scores obtained in a non-statutory version of the FSPC to reclassify trainees' enlistment categories from AFQT category IV to IIIB or higher, circumvents the requirements limiting

⁸ The OIG reviewed data provided by the Strength Analysis and Forecasting Division, Army G-1.

category IV enlistments and ensures that the Army will not reach the 10 percent threshold, thus allowing the Army to never have to implement the statutory requirements of an FSPC detailed in 10 U.S.C. § 520. The Army may conduct a non-statutory version of the FSPC before exceeding the 10 percent limit of category IV enlistments; however, a non-statutory FSPC cannot be used to reclassify trainees' enlistment categories. Our review determined that the Army Active Component exceeded category IV enlistments by over 10 percent because of the improper reclassification of trainees and therefore was subject to the additional 10 U.S.C § 520 requirements. Further, the ASD(M&RA), which is a component of USD(P&R), may not create policy that supersedes requirements in law.

Therefore, we request that the ASA(M&RA) provide comments on the final advisory within 30 days describing the specific actions the ASA(M&RA) will take to develop and implement procedures to discontinue the reclassification of trainees enlisted under category IV eligibility for the FSPC.

b. Establish In-Service Testing Program standards for all Service members before beginning basic training that are at least as stringent as Enlistment Testing Program standards.

Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) **Comments**

The Acting ASA(M&RA), in coordination with TRADOC, disagreed and stated that in accordance with the DoDI 1304.12E, the Army receives the minimum two forms of the AFCT and that the instruction does not restrict test frequency or require confirmation testing standards for the In-Service Testing Program.9

Our Response

Comments from the Acting ASA(M&RA) did not address the specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is unresolved. We agree that DoDI 1304.12E provides policy on the Enlistment Testing Program and the Army's In-Service Testing Program standards; however, further detailed specifics for testing programs are contained in additional policies. Specifically, USMEPCOM Regulation 611-1 includes policy for the Enlistment Testing Program.¹⁰ Army Regulation 611-5 and the Army's Test Control Officer Handbook provide detailed policy for the Army's In-Service Testing Program standards.¹¹

In addition to comparing the testing frequency, retest test versions, and confirmation testing standards requirements, we determined, and USD(P&R) officials also shared their concern, that FSPC trainees' first AFQT scores within the FSPC may be impacted due to potential test

⁹ DoDI 1304.12E, "DoD Military Personnel Accession Testing Programs," September 20, 2005.

¹⁰ USMEPCOM Regulation 611-1, "Personnel Selection and Classification Enlistment Qualification Tests," March 18, 2024.

¹¹ Army Regulation 611-5, "Personnel and Classification Testing," April 25, 2022, and Army Personnel Testing, "Test Control Officer Handbook," July 2019.

information sharing between recycled trainees intermingling with new trainees. Further, until February 2024, according to the Defense Testing and Assessment Center the Army only used one form of the AFCT for the ASDP. As stated in the advisory, when comparing the Army's In-Service Testing Program standards to the Enlistment Testing Program standards, we found that the Army enacted less restrictive testing standards for ASDP trainees. Using the less stringent In-Service testing requirements for the ASDP limits the Army's capability to assess the ability of trainees.

Therefore, we request that the ASA(M&RA) or designee provide comments on the final advisory within 30 days describing the specific actions the ASA(M&RA) will take to develop and implement procedures to establish In-Service Testing Program standards for all Service members before beginning basic training that are at least as stringent as Enlistment Testing Program standards.

c. Ensure that the Future Soldier Preparatory Course meets all In-Service **Testing Requirements.**

Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) Comments

The Acting ASA(M&RA), in coordination with TRADOC, agreed and stated that the FSPC meets all In-Service testing requirements.

Our Response

Although the Acting ASA(M&RA) agreed, the comments did not address the specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is unresolved. The ASA(M&RA) did not provide any additional support for his statement that the FSPC meets all In-Service testing requirements. As stated in the advisory, the Army did not adhere to its own policy that limits retest frequency. Additionally, the FSPC did not adhere to Army Regulation 611-5, which does not allow appointing personnel that may be seen as having a conflict of interest when serving in the test control officer and exam proctoring roles.

Specifically, we observed that FSPC drill sergeants held study sessions with trainees while also proctoring the AFCT. In addition, the training control officer overseeing the administration of the AFCT to FSPC trainees at Army Training Center and Fort Jackson also handled the FSPC operations, such as coordinating class creation and graduations in support of the ASDP goal of increasing trainees' AFQT scores.

Therefore, we request that the ASA(M&RA) or designee provide comments on the final advisory within 30 days describing the specific actions the ASA(M&RA) will take to develop and implement procedures to ensure that the FSPC meets all In-Service Testing Requirements.

d. Ensure that the applicants entering the Academic Skills Development Program meet the requirement that they not require English language training.

Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) Comments

The Acting ASA(M&RA), in coordination with TRADOC, disagreed with the recommendation and stated that Army Regulation 601-210 details the English language competencies required of a recruit. The ASA(M&RA) stated that recruiters are obligated to identify all applicants who have difficulty speaking or understanding English and recruiters apply this scrutiny to all recruits.

Our Response

Comments from the Acting ASA(M&RA) did not address the specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is unresolved. We agree that Army Regulation 601-210 assigns the responsibility of identifying English language competency to recruiters; however, as stated in the advisory, it is ASDP leadership's responsibility to maintain standards. Allowing ineligible applicants to continue attending the ASDP is not in accordance with ASA(M&RA) policy and Army enlistment standards.

Based on our interviews with ASDP and TRADOC personnel and our onsite observations, recruits were not scrutinized for difficulty speaking or understanding English before their arrival at the ASDP and TRADOC did not have a process to verify whether trainees were properly assessed for English language proficiency by their recruiter. Specifically, we interacted with multiple trainees who were unable to communicate in English. When asked in Spanish if they had received assessments for English language comprehension, the trainees stated that they had not received assessments, such as the English Comprehension Level Test. We interacted with other trainees, whose primary language was French, who did not understand what we were saying and required other trainees to translate. In addition to our onsite observations, according to senior TRADOC leadership and ASA(M&RA) personnel, the Secretary of the Army raised English language competency as a concern after the Secretary's visit to Army Training Center and Fort Jackson in September 2024.

Therefore, we request that the ASA(M&RA) provide comments on the final advisory within 30 days describing the specific actions the ASA(M&RA) will take to develop and implement procedures to ensure that the applicants entering the ASDP meet the requirement that they not require English language training.

e. Ensure higher level oversight of program standards through designating the responsibility of Academic Skills Development Program information management to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs).

Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) Comments

The Acting ASA(M&RA), in coordination with TRADOC, agreed with the recommendation and stated that the office of the ASA(M&RA) will maintain all information and data related to the Army's FSPC no later than August 2025.

Our Response

Comments from the Acting ASA(M&RA) addressed the specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is resolved and open. We will close the recommendation once we verify that the office the ASA(M&RA) is maintaining all information and data related to the Army's FSPC.

If you have any questions or would like to meet to discuss the review, please contact We appreciate the cooperation

and assistance received during the review.

Bryan Clark Bryan Clark

Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Programs, Combatant Commands, and Operations

Management Comments

Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS 111 ARMY PENTAGON WASHINGTON, DC 20310-0111

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MEMORANDUM FOR Inspector General, Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General, 4800 Mark Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22350-1500

SUBJECT: Management Advisory Review of the Army's Future Soldier Preparatory Course (Draft Report)

- 1. I appreciate the Department of Defense (DoD) Office of the Inspector General's (IG) review of the Army's Future Soldier Preparatory Course (FSPC), As requested, I am providing a coordinated response with the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) to the recommendations contained in the subject draft report.
- 2. The Assistant Secretary of Army (ASA), Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) provides the following responses to the DoDIG's recommendations:
- a. Recommendation 1a: Discontinue the reclassification of trainees enlisted under category IV eligibility for the Future Soldier Preparatory Course.

Response: The Army non-concurs with this recommendation. Based on revisions to the execution of the statutory Future Servicemember Preparatory Course from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASD) for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, the Army operates a non-statutory version of the FSPC before reaching the 10 percent threshold required for a statutory program. Following the policy guidance provided by ASD(M&RA), the Army deducts the number of FSPC students who improve their Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) above the thirtieth percentile while in FSPC from the aggregate number of shippers with an AFQT at or above the tenth percentile and below the thirty first percentile when calculating year-to-date recruit quality in AFQT Category IV, as long as the retest is completed in the same fiscal year and the student must not be reenlisted at the completion of the FSPC.

b. Recommendation 1b: Establish In-Service Testing Program standards for all Service members before beginning basic training that are at least as stringent as Enlistment Testing Program standards.

Response: The Army non-concurs with this recommendation. Per Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1304.12E, DoD Military Personnel Accession Testing Programs, the Army receives the minimum two forms of the Armed Forces Classification Test (AFCT) for use in Service-specific retesting programs. The DoDI 1304.12E does not restrict test frequency or apply any confirmation testing standards for the In-Service Testing Program.

Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) (cont'd)

SUBJECT: Management Advisory Review of the Army's Future Soldier Preparatory Course (Draft Report)

c. Recommendation 1c: Ensure that the Future Soldier Preparatory Course meets all In-Service Testing Requirements.

Response: The Army concurs with this recommendation. The FSPC meets all the In-Service Testing Requirements as directed by DoDI 1304.12E.

d. Recommendation 1d: Ensure that the applicants entering the Academic Skills Development Program meet the requirement that they not require English language training.

Response: The Army non-concurs on this recommendation. Per Army Regulation (AR) 601-210 (Regular Army and Reserve Components Enlistment Program), an applicant must have the ability to read, write, and speak sufficient English to understand the oath of enlistment and the pre-enlistment interview. A recruiter is also obligated under this same AR to identify all applicants who have difficulty speaking or understanding English, including permanent resident aliens residing in the United States less than 1 year, who native tongue is not English, and all non-prior service applicants from Puerto Rico. Recruiters apply this level of scrutiny for all applicants they process.

e. Recommendation 1e: Ensure higher level oversight of program standards through designating the responsibility of Academic Skills Development Program information management to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs).

Response: The Army concurs with this recommendation. To facilitate a more direct Secretariat oversight role, the office will assume the role of maintaining all information and data related to the Army's FSPC no later than August 2025.

3. The Secretariat point of contact for this memorandum is

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