Nuclear Propulsion Officer Candidate (NUPOC) Program

For qualifying college graduates, the Navy Nuclear Program is a door leading to industry leadership and lifelong learning. Groundbreaking research and high-level civilian collaborations; work that extends far beyond the military to impact the very world we live in.

For current undergraduate students who meet the prerequisite background, especially those pursuing preferred majors like mathematics, engineering, physics or chemistry, there is all of the above to look forward to — plus the chance to get paid while finishing school.

If accepted into the Nuclear Propulsion Officer Candidate (NUPOC) program, you can take advantage of financial support of up to $175,000 and start receiving this funding up to 30 months prior to college graduation.

Once out of school, you will have a position waiting as a respected professional and Navy Officer affiliated with one of the most accomplished nuclear programs on earth. Here in AMERICA’S NAVY, you’ll begin an unrivaled training program that provides advanced education and accelerated hands-on experience like nowhere else.

How You Qualify

Because of the exclusive nature of the NUPOC program and the magnitude of the responsibilities members will take on from a young age, requirements to become a candidate are comprehensive — and competition for acceptance is great.

The NUPOC program is open to both men and women. The following basic qualification criteria apply.

- Age and Health
  - Be a U.S. citizen
  - Be at least 19 years of age and less than 29 years of age at the time of commissioning (waivers may be available: up to age 31 for Submarine or Surface Warfare Officer positions, up to age 35 for Naval Reactors Engineers or Nuclear Power School Instructors)
  - Meet the medical and physical standards of the US Navy

- Education

Candidates must be graduates or students of an accredited college or university in the United States or in a United States territory pursuing a BA, BS or MS (preferably majoring in mathematics, engineering, physics, chemistry or other technical areas). Those still in school may apply as early as their sophomore year of college and must have (at a minimum):

- Completed one academic year of calculus (2 semesters or 3 quarters)
- Completed one academic year of calculus-based physics
- A competitive GPA and a grade of “C” or better in all technical courses
VIP Tour

If you’re a qualified Nuclear Propulsion Officer candidate, the Navy offers a two-day VIP trip that allows you to immerse yourself in this world. Tour the flight deck of an aircraft carrier, walk through the torpedo room of a submarine, sit in a class at Nuclear Power School, or see engineers at work at the nuclear Navy headquarters. Interact with current and prospective Officers and ask questions. Learn about the rich history of the Navy and its nuclear program. This is a chance to learn firsthand what it may be like to launch your future as a Nuclear Officer in the Navy.

NUPOC Interview

All students who apply to the NUPOC program go through a rigorous screening process and are then selected for a personal interview with the Director of Naval Reactors in Washington, D.C.

The first part of the interview process focuses on technical questions from calculus, physics and other technical courses. The majority of the questions are from calculus and physics, and you may be asked questions from other topics in your major. This part of the interview process typically lasts 45–60 minutes and contains three to five major questions per interview.

The second part of the interview process involves meeting with Admiral John M. Richardson, the current director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion program. During this interview, he will review your transcripts and the evaluations from your technical interviews, and he will assess your communication skills, interests and motivation for the program. Admiral Richardson personally selects all Navy Nuclear Officers.

Offers for Students

The NUPOC program culminates in a career opportunity that is without equal. But the immediate financial rewards that can be gained as a student are impressive on a whole other scale.

While finishing your degree, you could receive a monthly salary and housing allowance that ranges from $3,990 to $6,000 (housing allowance may vary depending upon location, and the length of the offer depends upon the career area you plan to enter). Now do the math.

Submarine Officers, Surface Warfare Officers and Power School Instructors: The NUPOC offer is currently available for up to 30 months prior to college graduation — making it worth up to $175,000 to you as a student.

Naval Reactors Engineers: The NUPOC offer is currently available for up to 18 months prior to college graduation — making it potentially worth up to $95,000 to you as a student.

Use the money to cover tuition and books, to pay rent or buy a car, to purchase meals or whatever you want. It is there to allow students the freedom to focus on studies while in school. There are no requirements to wear a uniform or attend military training during this time. All you have to do is maintain the required grade point average and prepare for the exciting future that’s waiting.
The Added Bonuses

On top of the monthly income, NUPOC students are also eligible for military health-care and life insurance benefits for themselves and their dependents while in the program. Additionally, their issued military ID will allow access to low-cost shopping options on military bases.

Those who opt to pursue Fleet leadership roles as nuclear-trained Submarine or Surface Warfare Officers are also eligible to receive:

- A $15,000 selection bonus once accepted into the NUPOC program.
- An additional $2,000 bonus upon completion of nuclear propulsion training (which occurs after graduating from college).

Officer Training

Upon college graduation, the formal training process for becoming a Navy Officer in the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program is officially underway.

- Officer Candidate School (OCS)

For those going the Submarine or Surface Warfare Officer route, the first step is Officer Candidate School (OCS) — a 12-week course in Newport, Rhode Island. OCS is tailored to train and prepare college graduates to become commissioned as Navy Line Officers — specifically, Submarine and Surface Warfare Officers (as well as Navy Aviators, Flight Officers, Special Warfare and Special Operations Officers). Officer Candidates obtain more responsibility as their training progresses and are eventually given command authority over other Officer Candidates. During the 12 weeks, individuals gradually move from Indoctrination Candidates to Officer Candidates to Candidate Officers.

Officer Candidates are assigned to battalions at the Newport Naval Station. During their 12-week training period they are instructed on leadership, physical and military training, as well as academics, ranging from Navigation to Shipboard Engineering and Damage Control. Each candidate is also assigned a Chief Petty Officer and a commissioned Naval Officer to aid in his/her transformation from civilian to Candidate Officer. Candidates are also rigorously trained by Marine Corps Drill Instructors who challenge them on every physical level.

- Officer Development School (ODS)

For those pursuing Naval Reactors Engineer or Nuclear Power School Instructor roles, the first step is Officer Development School (ODS) — a five-week course in Newport, Rhode Island. ODS is tailored to train already-commissioned Officers to become staff corps Officers — specifically, Naval Reactors Engineers and Power School Instructors (as well as Medical Corps, Medical Service Corps, Dental Corps, Nurse Corps, JAG Corps, and Chaplain Corps Officers).

While not as lengthy as its OCS counterpart, ODS still heavily stresses physical and mental readiness. The course offers newly commissioned Officers a comprehensive and intense introduction to their responsibilities as Navy staff corps Officers. Over the course of five weeks, Officers learn about the military structure of the United States Navy, its rich history of traditions and customs, leadership development, and military etiquette. ODS is also
physically demanding, though its requirements focus more on basic maintenance training, whereas OCS training is much more accelerated.

Unique Training Paths

Once commissioned as an Officer, candidates move on to receive the advanced training that is at the core of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program. Academically, the curriculum is recognized as one of the most difficult in the world — rivaling the top-notch nuclear programs at universities such as Harvard and MIT. Experientially, the hands-on application of what is learned is in a class by itself.

- **Submarine Officer**
  
  **Job Overview:**
  When it comes to upholding national security, the U.S. Submarine Force provides pivotal service by deterring conflict through stealth, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and the use of its powerful offensive capabilities. If you have the strength, ambition, and discipline to be part of an elite group of leaders, rise to your life’s challenge by becoming a Submarine Officer.

  **Job Description:**
  Only a select group of disciplined and committed Officers are given the opportunity to lead an entire crew and command some of the most technologically advanced equipment in the world. Submarines are the cornerstone of the Navy’s conflict avoidance and resolution, and naturally, the Officers who man these ships are held to the highest of standards and have extraordinary roles and responsibilities.

  Much of the initial time Submarine Officers spend on board is devoted to learning and overseeing the day-to-day operations of a nuclear-powered submarine. Upon mastering this operation, junior Officers learn more about communications, navigation, armament capabilities, and the tactical deployment of the submarine.

  Submarine Officers command, manage, and operate the Fleet’s attack, ballistic missile and guided missile submarines, as well as ensure that all the ship’s systems run smoothly — from atmosphere control and nuclear propulsion systems to fire control and weapons systems. They may also be in charge of the safe operation of a nuclear reactor, maintaining their ship’s weapons, charting the ship’s position and operating communications and intelligence equipment.

  Whether on a covert, classified mission or a typical day of operation, Submarine Officers gain valuable lifelong experiences, advanced nuclear training and a sense of responsibility. These responsibilities provide unique experiences in leadership and in managing people and time — attributes beneficial in either a career within the Navy or in the civilian sector.

  Submarines, their Officers, and their crews are heavily relied upon for antisubmarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, land attack, strategic deterrence, and landing Special Warfare forces, to name but a few of the many exciting missions. Standards for submariners are very high, and operations are often covert and classified. During a sea tour, Submarine Officers may be in charge of any number of tasks, including the safe operation of the nuclear reactor;
maintaining the ship’s torpedoes, cruise missiles, ballistic missiles, and sonar; charting the ship’s position; and operating communications and intelligence equipment. As a Submarine Officer, you will be specially trained in the nuclear field and assigned to a nuclear-powered attack submarine, fleet ballistic missile submarine, or guided missile submarine.

- Attack Submarines: Designed to pursue and attack enemy surface ships and submarines. They are the most effective antisubmarine warfare tool available to counter enemy diesel- and nuclear-powered submarines. They also conduct many other missions, such as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.

- Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarines: These submarines are almost two football fields long and carry long-range missiles. With their nuclear reactors and stealth, they are always ready should a situation arise needing their firepower.

- Guided Missile Submarines: High-payload submarines armed with tactical missiles and the ability to employ Special Operations Forces in support of Naval and joint operations.

**Career Outlook and Progression:**

Training as a Submarine Officer directly translates to civilian careers in executive-level management, as well as the technology industry and high-tech specialty systems. The specialized knowledge and expertise you could gain through Navy nuclear training will provide you with a skill set that is sought after worldwide. You will gain important insights from your international travels, which will be invaluable to employers in the private sector.

Upon completion of Officer Candidate School (OCS), newly commissioned Submarine Officers can expect an advanced training process that includes classroom study, field experience and the application of their comprehensive training in settings at sea and ashore.

**Naval Nuclear Power School (NNPS):** Through Naval Nuclear Power Training Command (NNPTC), Officers will attend Nuke Power School in Charleston, South Carolina. This 24-week graduate-level course of intensive study covers a variety of science and technology-based subjects from ordinary and partial differential equations to thermodynamics to reactor dynamics. NNPS provides the foundation of knowledge necessary for a theoretical understanding of nuclear propulsion.

**Nuclear Power Training Unit (NPTU):** Often referred to as Prototype, this 26-week phase of the learning process involves hands-on training at one of two NPTUs — in either Charleston, South Carolina, or Ballston Spa, New York — where there are several reactor prototypes in operation. Here, Officers apply the concepts learned at Nuke Power School — studying systems and components of a nuclear propulsion plant and working with all the associated systems of a full-scale operating plant. The training culminates with qualification as Engineering Officer of the Watch.

**Submarine Officer Basic Course (SOBC):** During this 12-week course that takes place in New London, Connecticut, Officers learn all about submarine operations, including safety, damage control, seamanship and the responsibilities of leading an advanced submarine crew as a division Officer, before reporting to an assigned submarine. Officers may receive an additional six weeks of advanced training through the strategic weapons system course at Trident Training Facilities in either Kings Bay, Georgia, or Bangor, Washington.

**First Sea Tour:** Next comes an assignment as a division Officer on a submarine, managing a team of highly trained Enlisted Submariners. Here, Officers are working toward a personal submarine qualification program that culminates in being designated as “Qualified in
Submarines” — earning the right to wear the coveted Gold Dolphins insignia and take on all the responsibilities that go with it. This is a three-year tour alternating between deployments, patrols, days in port, maintenance, local operations, and leave.

Shore Assignment: Upon After the first sea tour comes a shore assignment lasting approximately two years. In this role, Officers fill positions anywhere from Nuke Power School to Prototype to Submarine School. Others may be selected to serve on high-level staffs, commands and strategic projects, or they may elect to work in recruitment positions or further their education at Naval Postgraduate School (NPS). If selected for Department Head, Submarine Officers may sign another contract and continue their Naval career. The ultimate goal for many: to one day command their own submarine.

- Special Pay/Bonuses:
  As a nuclear-trained Officer, you’ll benefit from some of the most rigorous training the Navy has to offer. Your hard work is not only rewarded with an excellent salary, but you’ll also receive generous bonuses. Submarine Officers are eligible for sea pay and submarine duty pay. Additionally, Nuclear Officer Continuation bonus is currently $30K/year for each year after the initial 5-year contract.

- Surface Warfare Officer

  - Job Overview:
    Upon The U.S. Navy operates some of the world’s most technically advanced equipment, the mainstay of which is a vast fleet of aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers, frigates, dock landing ships and other surface vessels. These ships and their crews are commanded and managed by a top-notch group of drivers and fighters — the Navy’s Surface Warfare Officers (SWOs). If you have the ability to take charge and have strong leadership skills, take command of your future as a Surface Warfare Officer trained in the fundamentals of nuclear propulsion.

  - Job Description:
    While Surface Warfare Officers (SWOs) are involved in nearly every aspect of a Navy mission, their ultimate goal and primary focus is to command a Navy surface ship. The highly specialized nuclear training SWOs receive prepares them to lead the Navy’s nuclear-powered vessels. While aboard the world’s most powerful warships, these intelligent, goal-driven individuals manage other Sailors to successfully maintain and operate the ship’s systems.

    While at sea, Surface Warfare Officers are in charge of numerous shipboard operations and activities, ranging from anti-air, submarine and surface warfare support to supplying combatant ships with fuel, ammunition and food to providing repair, maintenance and rescue capabilities through fleet support ships. Aboard multimillion-dollar aircraft carriers, they also provide and coordinate air defense, as well as transport vehicles, cargo and troops.

    Throughout their time on board a ship, Surface Warfare Officers are put in charge of a division and are responsible for ensuring that the people in their division remain highly functional. What’s more, it is their responsibility that equipment runs smoothly and that all required tasks are completed on time to ensure that the ship is mission-ready as scheduled. These day-to-day tasks lead to an incredible lifelong sense of responsibility for most Officers.
Surface Warfare Officers receive valuable nuclear training that often directly transfers to civilian careers in executive-level management as well as many technology and high-tech specialty systems. Proof positive that their ability to command leads to a lifetime of success and respect.

- **Career Outlook and Progression:**
  Upon completion of Officer Candidate School (OCS), newly commissioned Surface Warfare Officers can expect an advanced training process that includes classroom study, field experience and the application of their comprehensive training in settings at sea and ashore.

  Surface Warfare Officer School (SWOS): During this 20-week course that takes place in Newport, Rhode Island, Officers learn all about surface force combat systems, tactical concepts, propulsion systems (gas, turbine, diesel and steam), maneuvering, navigation, personnel administration, shipboard organization and the responsibilities of leading teams of Sailors as a division Officer before reporting to an assigned conventional surface ship.

  First Sea Tour: Next comes assignment as a division Officer on a conventional surface ship, commanding a team of Sailors responsible for a certain component of the ship — anything from electronics to weapons to engineering systems. Here, Officers are working toward Surface Warfare qualification — earning the right to wear the coveted Surface Warfare Officer insignia and taking on all the responsibilities that go with it. This is an 18-month tour alternating between deployments, patrols, days in port, maintenance, local operations and leave.

  Naval Nuclear Power School (NNPS): Same as Submarine Officers

  Nuclear Power Training Unit (NPTU): Same as Submarine Officers

  Second sea tour: With proven abilities as a Surface Warfare Officer on a conventional ship and nuclear training, the next assignment is as a division Officer in the engineering plant of a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. This is an 18-month tour alternating between deployments, patrols, days in port, maintenance, local operations and leave.

  Shore assignment: After completing their sea tours, Surface Warfare Officers may fill positions anywhere from Nuke Power School to Prototype to Submarine School. Others may be selected to serve on high-level staffs, commands and strategic projects, or they may elect to work in recruitment positions or further their education at Naval Postgraduate School (NPGS). If selected for Department Head, Surface Warfare (Nuclear) Officers may sign another contract and continue their Naval careers. The ultimate goal for many: to one day command their own ship.

- **Special Pay/Bonuses:**
  As a nuclear-trained Officer, you’ll benefit from some of the most rigorous training the Navy has to offer. Your hard work is not only rewarded with an excellent salary, but you’ll also receive generous bonuses. Surface Warfare (Nuclear) Officers are eligible for sea pay. Additionally, Nuclear Officer Continuation bonus is currently $30K/year and Surface Warfare Officer Continuation Pay is currently $15K/year for each year after the initial 5-year contract.
- **Naval Reactors Engineer**

  - **Job Overview:**
    For Naval Reactors Engineers, the future is now. Responsible for designing, maintaining and operating the world’s most advanced reactor plants, Reactors Engineers stay ahead of the curve in order to remain on the cutting edge of nuclear propulsion at all times. If you like to take control and stay at the forefront of technology, a career as a Naval Reactors Engineer could be ideal for you.

  - **Job Description:**
    Some of the brightest minds the Navy has to offer work at Naval Reactors (NR) in Washington, D.C., as Engineers. Their intelligence, backgrounds and extensive training provide them with an impressive knowledge of all aspects of nuclear propulsion, as well as the flexibility to move into other technical areas involved in nuclear propulsion work. Simply put, the Naval Reactors Engineers are the best of the best.

    While at junior level, Naval Reactors Engineers assume responsibility for various portions of technical work in a variety of state-of-the-art facilities, including two Department of Energy laboratories, six shipyards, two nuclear prototype/training sites, more than 100 nuclear-powered ships, and more than 1,000 firms that support the Naval Reactors Program. It’s this firsthand, on-the-job training that provides them the knowledge needed to excel in the Navy’s rapid-paced nuclear propulsion field.

    Typically in charge of several projects at once, Naval Reactors Engineers take part in a number of technical disciplines. They design nuclear reactors and their components. They develop and implement operating, maintenance and refueling procedures for nuclear propulsion plants. They oversee the acquisition, construction, testing and operation of these plants. They sail aboard nuclear-powered vessels and observe propulsion plant performance. No area goes untouched.

    Much like the nuclear propulsion field, the working environment at NR is both challenging and rewarding. All Engineers selected for NR assignment are at the top of their class, making up a workforce consisting of the best and brightest technical experts in the country. The attributes acquired at NR are invaluable and will lead to a successful future, whether in the military or the private sector. Few careers can make that claim.

  - **Career Outlook and Progression:**
    Upon completion of Officer Development School (ODS), newly commissioned Naval Reactors Engineers can expect to spend the next five years overseeing all the shipboard nuclear power plants, shore-based prototypes and nuclear propulsion support facilities in the Navy. The advanced training process they undergo prepares them to join some of the best and brightest technical experts in the country.

    Naval Reactors Headquarters (NR) — Preliminary Training: Officers have an initial assignment of approximately four to five months receiving preliminary training at the Naval Reactors Headquarters in Washington, D.C. This is followed by approximately two weeks spent gaining a working background at one of the Navy’s land-based prototypes in either Charleston, South Carolina, or Albany, New York.
Naval Reactors Training Program (NRTP): The next step involves the six-month process of earning a postgraduate-level education in nuclear engineering through the Bettis Reactor Engineering School at the Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Naval Reactors Headquarters (NR) — Staff Assignment: Following Naval Reactors Training, Naval Reactors Engineers are then assigned a Nuclear Engineer position with the group responsible for managing all technical aspects of the Navy Nuclear Propulsion Program — planning, approving and confirming the design, operation and maintenance of over 100 nuclear reactors. Engineers start in a junior role under a supervisor and rapidly advance to take on more and more responsibilities. If selected for Engineering Duty Officer, NR Engineers can sign another contract and continue their Naval careers.

- **Nuclear Power School Instructor**

  - **Job Overview:**
    The brilliant minds of the Navy Nuclear Program work in complex ways, seemingly with the greatest of ease. Shaping these individuals are Nuclear Power School Instructors, whose job is to teach nuclear-trained Officers and Enlisted personnel the theories and fundamentals behind the design and operation of Navy nuclear propulsion plants. If teaching is your calling and you want to be part of one of the most prestigious communities in the world today, consider a career as a Naval Nuclear Power School Instructor.

  - **Job Description:**
    Atomic physics. Thermodynamics. Integral calculus. For many, the sheer thought of these subjects gives reason to shudder. However, for the bright young minds of the Navy Nuclear Program, these things come easily — thanks to the superb, thorough teaching provided by Nuclear Power School Instructors.

    Today’s Power School Instructors train the future Navy nuclear community through a technologically advanced curriculum. From mathematics to physics, chemistry to reactor dynamics and electrical engineering, the subject matter is as intense as it is challenging. And all taught with a sole purpose in mind: to prepare Nuclear Officers for their work in the fast-paced, competitive nuclear power field.

    Nuclear Power School is a 24-week course in science and technology, designed to provide theoretical background knowledge of nuclear power. Nuclear Power Instructors provide detailed knowledge of a pressurized-water Navy nuclear power plant, its reactor core nuclear principles, heat transfer and fluid systems, plant chemistry and materials, mechanical and electrical systems, and radiological control. Typically, there is one instructor per subject on duty each academic night, allowing students requiring additional assistance on their homework or studies to call upon them at any time.

    For years, the Naval Nuclear Power School has been widely regarded as one of the most difficult academic programs in the country. At the heart of this program are the extraordinary instructors who shape the equally extraordinary minds of future Nuclear Officers. And while the course work they teach may be fast-paced and the standards they set may be high, the results Nuclear Power Instructors get in return are worth it.
Career Outlook and Progression:

Upon completion of Officer Development School (ODS), newly commissioned Power School Instructors can expect to spend the next four years teaching future nuclear-trained Officers and Enlisted personnel the theory and fundamentals behind the design and operation of Navy nuclear propulsion plants. But first, they must undergo the same advanced curriculum and training that they will expertly instruct.

Through Naval Nuclear Power Training Command (NNPTC), Officers attend Nuke Power School in Charleston, South Carolina. This four-month comprehensive course of intensive study in science and technology provides the foundation of knowledge necessary for a theoretical understanding of nuclear propulsion.

While at NNPS, Officers assume an intense workload. The subjects covered at NNPS include:

- **Mathematics (39 hours)** — Ordinary and partial differential equations, integral calculus, and probability and distribution functions.
- **Physics (71 hours)** — Atomic and nuclear physics, special relativity, reactor physics and neutron diffusion theory.
- **Chemistry (50 hours)** — Basic chemistry, reaction kinetics, boiler chemistry, radiation induced reactions, gases and oxidation-reduction.
- **Thermodynamics (87 hours)** — Heat transfer, fluid dynamics, steam thermodynamics, properties of water, Rankine cycle, and conduction and convection.
- **Electrical Engineering (basic and advanced — 138 hours)** — Circuit analysis, inductance and capacitance, solid state amplifiers, AC and DC motors and generators, digital and analog integrated circuits, reactor plant instrumentation, safety circuits, and reactor control equipment design.
- **Materials (28 hours)** — Strength of materials and complete development of the Nil Ductility Phenomenon. Fuel and clad alloy composition, pressure vessel design, development of neutron embrittlement and other material radiation effects, as well as corrosion and structure of materials.
- **Reactor Dynamics and Core Characteristics (86 hours)** — Complete core design satisfying all requirements for power, temperature, control and radiation levels. Essentially, a course in nuclear engineering.
- **Shielding and Radiological Fundamentals (46 hours)** — Study of materials, attenuation factors and geometry in shielding calculations.
- **Aspects of Reactor Plant Operations (115 hours)** — Study of reactor plant operations integrating knowledge from all of the above courses.

Upon completion of NNPS, the student becomes the teacher. Power School Instructors then take the lead in administering the technologically advanced curriculum, working closely with both the Officer and Enlisted personnel who come through their classrooms.
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Months Eligible for Program²  30  30
Total prior to starting OCS:
| SINGLE | $167,213.70 | $181,847.70 |

***** REMEMBER: THIS IS YOUR PAY WHILE IN COLLEGE AND WAITING FOR OCS/ODS. Pay Increases significantly once you are Commissioned as an Officer!!!!!

BOTTOM LINE: If you are eligible for the $15,000 NUPOC Signing Bonus³, You could earn this much before you even graduate!

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NOTES:
1 - Promotion to E-7 is based on the successful recruitment of an applicant provided by the NUPOC student.
2 - 30 months prior to graduation is the earliest a NUPOC Student can receive this pay.
3 - Applicants accessed for the submarine or surface nuclear positions and naval reactors engineer are eligible for the $15,000 bonus.