

How to Meet a Board

As the saying goes, “First impressions are lasting impressions.” All boards allow points for dress, appearance, and military bearing. If you study and master the tips below, you will greatly increase your chances for success.

PREPARATION

1) Write down your goals, aspirations, and extra curricular activities. Example: “I have just finished my career development course and am awaiting my 5-skill level. I am enrolled in the Community College of the Air Force and currently possess 24 credit hours. My goal is to receive my Associate’s Degree within two years.”

Board members are judging how you express yourself.

2) Write down your hobbies and a brief synopsis of your career, this is often an icebreaker question and gives you a chance to talk about yourself.

3) Study a copy of the narrative that accompanied your nomination. Board members often ask you to expound on information they find in the write up.

4) Obtain and memorize a current chain of command.

5) Females: Wear slacks and low quarters or low heeled pumps. It’s easier to get the length right on slacks than skirts, and it’s less likely to change when you sit and stand. Lower heels make it easier to make facing movements.

6) Practice facing movements in the same shoes you will be wearing when you meet the board. Determine the location of the board and practice on the same floor covering. Lastly, do a pre-visit to the area/room where the board will be held to familiarize yourself with your surroundings.

7) Invest in new shoes. If it is raining the day that your board meets, carry your shoes in a plastic bag and change when you get there. Ensure the welt seams of the shoes are free of dirt and dust. If you use edge dressing, ensure you have a fresh coat on. Take a small piece of cloth or old nylon hose to wipe the dust off your shoes.

8) If the weather is bad, carry your uniform in a garment bag and change when you get there.

9) Do not mix trouser and coat weights. Always get your service dress dry cleaned as a set—never do your trousers and coat separately. This will prevent uneven fading.

10) Ensure your buttons are straight. Ensure ribbons are in the proper order and that any you wear are listed in the MI-20141 Cadet Guide (SY 17-18).

11) Use masking tape to remove lint from service dress coat.

12) Males: Wear shirt garters. Droopy socks and a baggy shirt do not convey the image of a winner.

13) Do not have anything in your pockets except your ID card—no keys, change, etc.

14) If you meet the board in short sleeve shirt, clean your name tag with wax to remove scratches. Better yet, get a brand new name tag.

15) Males: Get a haircut one or two days before meeting the board.

16) Females: Ensure bangs are off your eyebrows and hair does not extend below the bottom of your collar. Don't even make it close—board members shouldn't have to look twice to see if you're in compliance.

MEETING THE BOARD

- 1) Be early. Stand while you wait—do not sit down.
- 2) When you arrive, there will be an official greeter, probably standing outside the meeting room. They should inform you who is on the board, what the reporting instructions are, and any other special instructions—If not, ASK!
- 3) Do not take your hat or purse in the room.
- 4) If you are instructed to knock before entering, knock once, but firmly.
- 5) When you open the door, take a good look at the room. Look for the chair you will be sitting in. March by the **most direct route** to position yourself in the front of the chair facing the board president. Do not stop and perform a facing movement, stop in place. Save the facing movement for your departure. Look directly at the president, salute (if it's an officer) and say, "Sir/Ma'am, Airman/Sergeant _____ reports to the (Airman/NCO of the Quarter/Year, Senior Airman Below-the-Zone) board." The chairperson will return your salute (if officer) and instruct you to be seated.
- 6) Back up until you feel the calves of your legs touch the chair. Do not look back or down. Don't turn your back to the board members until you are departing.
- 7) Sit in the middle of the chair—not on the edge, nor all the way back.
- 8) Sit at attention and place your hands on your thighs. The idea is to be erect and alert, but not rigid. NEVER slouch or recline, even though the chairperson may tell you to relax.

9) Do not cross your legs. Place one foot slightly in front of the other.

10) Smile and establish rapport with the board.

11) The first questions are usually relaxing icebreakers, such as, “Where you are from?” or “Where do you work?”

12) When answering questions, do not turn your body—turn your head toward the person asking the question and then pan the board members when giving your answer. Good eye contact is very important.

13) After being asked a question, repeat the question and preface your answer with “Sir/Ma’am.” Try to give more than the basic answer and use full name and rank in your answer. Example: “Who is the Air Force Chief of Staff?” “Sir, The Air Force Chief of Staff is General Michael D. Ryan, former Commander of United States Air Forces in Europe.”

14) If you do not understand a question, ask the board member to repeat it. If you do not know the answer at that point, ask to return to the question later. If you know part of the answer, give it—partial credit is better than none at all. Lastly, if you flat don’t know, simply tell the board you don’t know the answer to that question.

15) When answering opinion type questions, give a thoughtfully considered one. Tell the board members whether or not your opinion is in line with current policy. Most importantly, defend your position with logic, fact, and personal experience, not emotion. Be tactful, don’t crusade, don’t apologize.

16) If the board asks you if you have any comments, thank them for their time and add any other comments that may be appropriate.

17) When you are finished, the president will say “Airman/Sergeant _____ you are dismissed.”

a. Answer,” Thank you, Sir/Ma’am”

b. Push down on your thighs with your hands, stand up and look directly at the president.

c. Salute (if officer) and wait for the salute to be returned. If the president is enlisted, nod your head once.

d. Perform the appropriate facing movement to put you in direct line with the door. Exit the room smartly, marching with coordinated arm swing.