



ATTENTION OFE APPLICANTS: Application Guidelines

Below are the guidelines that have been established for the OFE application process. Please carefully read and follow the directions for submitting an application or you will risk disqualification from the candidate pool. The following information answers several key questions about the application process and should be read by the candidate and the nominating chief or government official.

1. How are candidates selected to be in OFE?

The selection process is conducted by the OFE Program Director and the Admissions Committee (all of whom are EFO or OFE graduates). The applications are reviewed through a blind process (applicant identity and department is hidden) with primary attention given first to the answers submitted for each essay question.

First, the director reads all essay question answers and scores each on a five point scale considering the correctness of form, grammar, sentence structure, completeness of thought and correctness in following instructions.

Second, the response to each of the essay questions is read by the Admissions Committee and scored on a five point scale. Consideration is given to the substance, development, logic and completeness of thought given to the question. Each judge reads the answers to only one of the questions. This practice assures consistency of the reviews and that no one judge has an undue influence on a candidate's total application score. There are five individual scores for each candidate.

Next, the scores of all judges are added and each candidate is ranked in order based on his/her total score. The judges then consider other factors such as rank, years of experience, education, and certifications. The top ranked candidates are accepted until the point in the ranking is reached where the scores are judged to be too low.

2. How should a candidate proceed?

The overall quality of a candidate's responses to the essay questions and the written recommendation of his/her chief (or nominating official) are the primary factors that will determine acceptance into the program. Therefore, it is critically important that a candidate begins the application process early and involves his/her chief or nominating official from the beginning.

Candidates should read the application carefully and collect all information needed to complete the process. The candidate should give considerable attention to each essay question in terms of the substance and thoroughness of his/her answer and the correctness of the writing and form.

Instructions must be correctly followed as improperly completed or late applications will not be included in the review process.

One of the questions requires candidates to consider the challenge of managing their time in order to accomplish the OFE out-of-class homework assignments. Homework assignments can require in excess of 400 hours of time over the two and a half year period. Time management is a critical factor in the success of all students and the answer to the question must be realistic and take into account current and future career, family and community obligations.

3. What is the role of the nominating chief or official?

The nominating chief or government official has an important role to play in assuring a successful application process for a candidate. He/she should review and discuss the expectations of the department for a candidate and assist in the application process as necessary to assure a quality application is submitted in a timely manner.

In addition, there are four major assignments in the OFE program that require the participation and support of the department chief. The Research Project, the Strategic Planning Project, the Change Initiative Project and the Budget Project require that the chief provide advice, access to necessary information, and support of each of the lengthy and complex assignments. The role of the chief, or a highly qualified appointee, is essential for a student in the program to successfully accomplish the assignments and to achieve the maximum benefit for him/her self and for the home department.