

Enlisted vs. Officer



Characteristics	Enlisted Service Member	Military Officer
Basic Duties	Enlisted service members make up the majority of the military and perform much of the hands-on work. They perform specific job functions and have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to carry out their unit's missions successfully.	Officers are the managers of the military. They plan and direct operations or act in fields such as law and medicine. You can think of them as the problem solvers, influencers, and planners who lead the enlisted personnel.
Qualifications	To enlist, an individual must be 18 years old, or 17 with parental consent. They must also have graduated from high school, although a general equivalency diploma (GED) is sometimes acceptable.	Officers have generally completed a four-year college degree or greater before serving and are commissioned into their positions, though it is possible to advance through the enlisted ranks and complete officer training later.