



Editor's Note: This post is part of the FTGN Army Broadening Series that we are running from March 15-30, 2021. Each day, we will publish new insights into the Army's various broadening assignments, starting March 15th, 2021 with an [overview of AIM 2.0](#) and a discussion on how to educate others on assignment selection criteria.

By Zachary Griffiths

West Point instructors [educate, train, and inspire](#) the next generation of Army leaders: West Point's more than 4000 cadets. This post focuses on positions at West Point for junior military faculty, generally post-KD captains and majors. Teaching at West Point typically lasts 3-6 years and involves three pieces: acquisition of a graduate degree, teaching, and then intermediate level education (ILE). Teaching at West Point is not just for former West Point graduates. The Academy seeks a diverse pool of instructors from all commissioning sources and backgrounds.

West Point instructors fall broadly into three bins: academic instructors, military

instructors, tactical officers, and physical educators. Academic instructors teach in one of West Point's 13 academic departments under the [dean](#), a brigadier general. The standard timeline for an academic instructor is five to six years with one or two years in graduate school, three years teaching, and a year at ILE.

The [commandant](#), the academy's other brigadier general, supervises cadet military and physical development. Compared to the traditional academic route outlined above, assignments under the commandant are typically shorter, falling into either the Department of Military Instruction (DMI) or the Brigade Tactical Department. Most officers in DMI [teach tactics](#) to cadets during the academic year and then run [Cadet Summer Training](#). [Instructors of Military Science](#) can spend one year acquiring a graduate degree, three years teaching, and conclude with a year at ILE.

"[TAC Officers](#)," who work in the Brigade Tactical Department, directly mentor the cadet chain of command that leads the Corps of Cadets. Though this position is not another company command, TACs engage cadets frequently and routinely. Typically, TACs acquire a one-year masters from Columbia University in organizational psychology, develop cadet companies for three years, and then attend ILE.

Below, I outline advantages and considerations of a West Point tour, followed by two things to do today if you are interested in teaching.

Advantages

- **Acquire a fully-funded masters degree as a full-time student.** This is a significant perk. Because of my [ACS degree](#), I earned a masters from a great school while living near home in Massachusetts for the first time in 12 years.
- **Develop the next generation of Army leaders.** Watching cadets develop and learn was exceptionally rewarding. Instructors typically involve themselves in cadet development outside class. I ran the [cadet combat diver training program](#). You also form long-term bonds with the students you mentor. Two of my combat diver cadets just reached out to update me as they finished Ranger School!
- **Learn a different side of the Army.** Because of my time in graduate school and teaching, new opportunities opened for me. Many officers take their time at West Point to pivot into a functional area. Operational officers often remain engaged with their branches, but often from an institutional perspective. After studying how SOCOM relates to Congress, I briefed the USASOC Commander. Teaching at West Point shows you a new side of the Army, and exposes you to mid-career officers from all of the Army's branches and career fields.

- **Great family time.** West Point tours offer great family time. In both graduate school and while at West Point, you'll be home most nights, though the schedule can be busy. Because of the awesome cadet development, social, and academy functions, many families choose to live on post.

Consideration

- **Length.** Teaching at West Point will take 4-6 years of your career - and you have to apply 4-6 years out. I applied to teach in the Department of Social Sciences in 2013 and started teaching in 2017. Depending on your timeline, West Point will work with you to ensure you remain competitive for promotion. I completed my tour in four years, teaching for two years and completing West Point's hybrid ILE program. Because teaching requires a relatively long commitment, [make the most](#) of your time there!

Conclusion

West Point offers great assignments for mid-career officers. Whether teaching, training, or mentoring motivate you, you'll find it at West Point. However, interested officers must pay attention to their career timelines. Because of the length of graduate school, teaching, and ILE, assignments can take 3-6 years. If you interested in teaching at West Point, do this today:

- **Be a great Army officer.** All West Point programs seek competitive Army officers. Strong evaluations are critical to selection.
- **Schedule a GRE test.** You'll need GRE scores before the academy will accept you as an instructor. Don't procrastinate, take the GRE in Kabul's testing center while deployed.
- **Open a file** today at teach.westpoint.edu.

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