

MANUAL: Personnel
 Chapter Series--Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual
 Part 2--Commissioned Corps Personnel Administration

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
 Public Health Service

Chapter CC23--Staffing
 Subchapter CC23.1--Recruitment
 Personnel INSTRUCTION 1--Early Commissioning Program

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Section A. Purpose and Scope

1. This INSTRUCTION defines policy and procedures for implementation of an Early Commissioning Program (ECP) in the inactive reserve corps (IRC) of the Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps.
2. For information on the IRC, see Subchapter CC23.0, INSTRUCTION 1, of this manual.
3. For information on appointment standards, see Subchapter CC23.3, INSTRUCTION 4, of this manual.

Section B. Authority

Section 203 of the PHS Act (42 U.S.C. 204) authorizes establishment of an inactive reserve corps within the PHS Commissioned Corps. Regulations governing appointment to the PHS Commissioned Corps are set forth in 42 CFR 21.21 et seq. The Assistant Secretary for Health determines which of the 11 professional categories are to be included in the ECP based upon PHS personnel needs. Authority regarding the termination of IRC officers is contained in this manual, Subchapter CC43.7, INSTRUCTION 1, "Separation of Officers in the Regular and Reserve Corps Without Consent of the Officers Involved."

Section C. Description of the Early Commissioning Program

1. The ECP is intended to provide orientation, career guidance, and referrals to prospective officers and to facilitate applicant processing, suitable placement, and maintain applicant interest through early commissioning programs for students in health and health-related disciplines in shortage categories.
2. Through this program the applicant has an opportunity to familiarize him/herself with the PHS Commissioned Corps and employment opportunities in PHS. It provides PHS with an opportunity to assess an applicant's qualifications so that an assignment can be identified which utilizes optimally these qualifications. It also provides the applicant an opportunity to complete all processing requirements for appointment to the PHS Commissioned Corps prior to his/her graduation so that the applicant may be called to active duty without delay.

Section D. Application

1. To be eligible for the ECP a student must:
 - a. Be in the last year of professional school;
 - b. Meet the appointment standards for the PHS Commissioned Corps, except for attainment of the qualifying degree; and
 - c. Be preparing for a discipline in which the Commissioned Personnel Operations Division (CPOD) has identified a specific recruitment need.
2. Inquiry may be made directly to CPOD, Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Office of Management (OM) at the following address:

Early Commissioning Program
Officer Development Branch, CPOD/OPM/OM
Room 4-35 Parklawn Building
Rockville, MD 20857
3. An application packet, which will be specially stamped to identify it as a request for the ECP, will be furnished by CPOD. This packet will contain the necessary materials to apply for commissioning in the IRC in the ECP. The Form PHS-50, "Application for Appointment as a Commissioned Officer," included in the packet, should be returned in duplicate as soon as possible.
4. Commissioning into the IRC does not obligate the individual to accept a call to active duty, but if the call to active duty is not accepted, the reserve commission will be terminated within one year after the individual's graduation date. Likewise, PHS is not obligated to call to active duty all officers commissioned under the ECP. Calls to active duty are dependent upon PHS needs. Officers not called to active duty because of no suitable assignment within PHS will have their reserve commissions terminated within one year after the individual's graduation date. However, under Section 216 of the PHS Act (42 U.S.C. 217) the President may, by Executive Order, declare the PHS Commissioned Corps to be a military

service. In such case, IRC officers may be called to active duty involuntarily.

5. Officers in the IRC earn longevity credit which affects the computation of their base pay when called to active duty. Candidates for the IRC should be advised that their acceptance in the IRC is not confirmed unless they are notified by a personnel order issued by CPOD.

Section E. Appointment

1. Applicants for the ECP who meet the requisite appointment standards will be commissioned into the IRC and referred for assignment selection to the PHS program of their preference.
2. All appointments to the IRC will be at the Junior Assistant (01) grade. Adjustments to an officer's grade based on his/her training and experience will be made upon call to active duty.

Section F. Responsibilities

1. CPOD is responsible for overall administration of the ECP, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. Notification to schools and students about the ECP, and the need for specific disciplines;
 - b. Furnishing specially-marked applicant packets upon request from interested students;
 - c. Processing applications;
 - d. Notifying applicants of the status of their requests;
 - e. Commissioning into the IRC those applicants who meet requisite requirements;
 - f. Coordinating with PHS program components the selection for specific positions of IRC officers who are in the ECP; and
 - g. Processing the Form PHS-1662, "Request for Personnel Action," submitted by the PHS program.
2. PHS programs (e.g., Indian Health Service and National Health Service Corps) are responsible for:
 - a. Advising CPOD 9-12 months in advance of the anticipated need for entry level officers in specific disciplines;
 - b. Furnishing specific job information to applicants upon request;
 - c. Identifying individuals from the officers commissioned under the ECP

for specific positions; and

- d. Preparation of the Form PHS-1662 requesting CPOD to call to active duty the officer selected for a particular position.