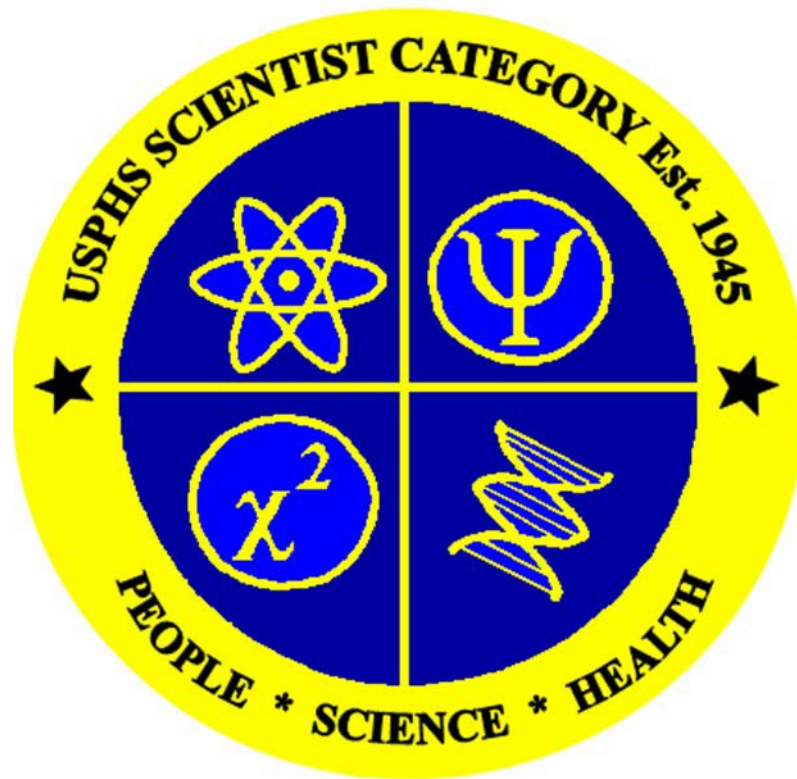


Scientist Professional Advisory Committee



Mentoring Guidebook

Updated July 2021

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Purpose of the Mentoring Guidebook

The Mentoring Guidebook is designed to provide Officers (both Mentors and Mentees) the necessary tools to establish and maintain a successful mentoring relationship. The document explains the role of the program and its participants and provides suggestions on how to make the mentoring relationship productive. It also provides resources for Mentors on topics that can be discussed with Mentees to further their professional development. The approaches described here are by no means intended to be prescriptive, rather to serve as a guideline to offer the necessary structure to the Mentor-Mentee relationship.

Goals

The specific goals of the Mentoring Program include:

Mentors

- Advise Mentee(s) about United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps' policies and core values
- Support Mentees' professional growth as a Scientist Officer in the PHS
- Provide advice and counsel to Officers about career goals, objectives and career plans
- Aid in the retention of Scientist Officers

Mentees

- Gain insight into USPHS organizational and political culture and the importance of officership
- Develop a larger network of professional colleagues and contacts
- Understand promotion benchmarks and their impact on promotion and career development
- Identify areas for growth and professional opportunities
- Maintain basic readiness standards

Importance of Mentoring

Mentoring is a relationship between a volunteer Mentor and Mentee. The primary objectives of the relationship are (1) to help the USPHS best complete its mission by strengthening the cadre of Officers and (2) to advance the Mentee's professional development and help the Mentee achieve their career goals.

A mentoring relationship can be important to both the Mentor and Mentee. Mentoring can help to focus the Mentee's career in positive ways (e.g., understanding the need for and formulating an individualized career plan). A positive mentoring relationship will not only help the Mentee prepare for promotion, but also aid in meeting other career milestones (e.g., finding billets of increasing responsibility and leadership). In addition, mentoring is an expected professional role that is clear evidence of leadership capability and investment in the mission of the Corps. The Mentor will have the opportunity to exemplify and further develop his/her leadership skills and serve as a role model for the Mentee. It is understood that all Officers walk the path of promotion

with the help of other more senior Officers. Mentoring offers a satisfying opportunity to serve the Corps by helping a more junior scientist define and attain goals and identify career options and planning strategies. In addition to formal mentoring, new call to active duty (CAD) Officers can access the Peer Support Network (PSN). The PSN team works with the OBC Engagement team to identify new officers and help ensure that they are given peer support within 2 weeks following OBC. This helps to ensure that new officers (who may be in more isolated/hardship positions) are given access to peer and early career support right out of OBC.

Role of the Mentor

A Mentor is an experienced and trusted individual who serves in a number of capacities: teacher, guide, counselor, motivator, sponsor, coach, advisor, referral agent, and role model. The role of the Mentor is to inspire, encourage, and support the Mentee, and to contribute to their professional and personal development.

1. Mentor Eligibility

Any experienced junior Officer (O-4's with a minimum of 5 years of PHS service) or senior Officer (O-5's and above) who:

- is in good standing with the USPHS with no adverse personnel actions filed;
- is willing to commit to the Mentoring Program and the Mentee through periodic phone calls, e-mail, and/or person-to-person contact and investing time and effort to the Mentee's benefit; and
- maintains basic readiness or has a current medical waiver on file.

2. Responsibilities of the Mentor

- Establish a schedule for communication with Mentee through periodic phone calls, e-mail, and/or person-to-person contact and investing time and effort to the Mentee's benefit
- Select appropriate topics for discussion based on the needs of the Mentee (suggested topics are identified below)
- Provide consistent, accurate information regarding the USPHS, the Scientist category, the Corps personnel system, and training opportunities
- Maintain a trusting, empathic relationship to help the Mentee identify options for achieving goals and solving problems
- Offer specific, practical alternatives and suggestions to advance the career of the Mentee
- Orient the Mentee to the rules and regulations of the USPHS; help the Mentee view the organization as a whole as well as each part

- Help set realistic goals and provide encouragement to achieve them

Role of the Mentee

A Mentee is a committed and motivated individual who is willing to work and take responsibility for their career development and professional growth. A Mentee must be honest, open, and receptive to the guidance their Mentor has to offer.

1. Mentee Eligibility

- Any O-5 USPHS Scientist Officer or below who:
 - is willing to commit to the Mentoring Program and invest in the Mentor/Mentee relationship through periodic phone calls, e-mail, and/or person-to-person contact with the Mentor and
 - is interested and willing to have a Mentor assigned to assist in his/her professional development

2. Responsibilities of the Mentee

- Initiate and schedule regular discussions, actively seek out the Mentor's advice
- Discuss your self-assessment of career development needs and personal career goals

Initiating the Mentorship Process

If you are interested in becoming a Mentor or Mentee, please fill out a [SciPAC Mentor/Mentee Application](#) and submit it to the Mentoring Subcommittee Chair or Co-Chair. Once matched, the Mentor and Mentee should complete the [Mentor-Mentee Agreement](#), which helps define the goals of a new mentoring relationship and should be completed when the mentoring relationship is initiated and on an annual basis thereafter. The Mentee should schedule a meeting within two weeks of the match and provide the Mentor with an agenda of topics that impact the Mentee's professional growth as a Scientist Officer in the PHS. The Mentee and Mentor should discuss the frequency of interactions and schedule check-ins. The mentoring relationship should be assessed throughout the operational year to determine if the relationship is a good fit for both the Mentor and Mentee. Lastly, the Mentor and Mentee should discuss renewing the relationship during the last quarter of the operational year.

The period of mentorship should be, at a minimum, one year, but may be renewed on an annual basis for as long as the relationship is beneficial to the Mentee.

Meeting Suggestions

While each Mentor-Mentee relationship will be unique, the following are suggestions to make the most of the interactions.

1. Meet in-person when possible. Besides setting up individual meetings, more informal meetings can take place at Corps events such as COA Anchor & Caduceus dinners, conferences, seminars, lunch and learns, and socials.
2. Frequency of meetings will depend on the Mentee-Mentor pair. A minimum of quarterly meetings is suggested. It may be useful to set up an Outlook appointment as a reminder. Even if there is no formal “business” to discuss, it is important to continue to foster the mentoring relationship.
3. Both individuals should be on time to the meeting. Time is a valuable commodity.
4. Both individuals should be prepared for the meeting.
 - Mentees should send an agenda and any related items prior to the meeting. For example, if a Mentee would like feedback on their CV from their Mentor, send it ahead of the meeting to allow your Mentor time to review it.
 - Mentors should review any necessary information prior to the meeting. For example, if the Mentee wishes to discuss awards during the next meeting, the Mentor should be familiar with the benchmarks for their Mentee’s rank, timeline of award review board, types of awards, etc. ahead of time.
5. Develop action items to complete prior to your next meeting. See section below.

Topic Suggestions

Each mentoring relationship should be tailored. Mentors will have different strengths and Mentees will have different needs for professional development. The Mentor and Mentee should continuously evaluate the relationship to determine which topics should be tackled and ensure the match is still effective and worthwhile. Some suggested topics for mentoring, potential action items, and resources are located in Appendix A.

Suggested discussion topics during the first mentoring meeting:

- Current PHS assignment and job responsibilities
- The Mentee’s career goals
- Any recent promotion results and feedback
- When the Mentee is next up for promotion
- The promotion benchmarks and how the Mentee is addressing them
- Involvement in PHS activities, organizations
- How to address professional development and continuing education gaps and needs

Additional potential resources include:

- SciPAC Mentoring Subcommittee
- Other SciPAC subcommittees
- Commissioned Officers Training Academy
- Commissioned Officers Association (National and Local Branches)
- Junior Officer Advisory Group

Best Practices (Tips) for a Successful Mentor/Mentee Relationship

For the Mentor

Serve as a role model – share personal experiences and present a good example

- Take responsibility – it takes two to have a successful mentoring relationship
- Be prepared and timely in response to the requests and needs of the Mentee
- Be accessible – have an open-door or open-phone policy
- Be a conduit and consultant for career networking opportunities

For the Mentee

- Use proper interpersonal and communication skills – do not be judgmental or critical
- Be a good listener – be open and understanding; keep conversations confidential
- Be honest, open and frank about your training and career development needs
- Listen – consider all suggestions
- Participate – take full advantage of the services and assistance offered by your Mentor. This will allow you to make informed decisions based on information gathered.

Potential Challenges with the Mentoring Relationship

1. **Not having clear expectations or clear definition of the mentoring relationship:** The Mentee can become dependent on a Mentor or have false expectations of the relationship. The mentoring relationship and its boundaries need to be clearly defined from the beginning. To avoid this type of situation, the Mentee and Mentor should discuss from the beginning what the Mentee's expectations are (e.g., advice on career development, promotion, or writing awards; reviewing the Mentee's CV; etc.). The Mentor should be candid in the type of guidance they are able to provide the Mentee. The Mentorship Agreement asks for Mentors and Mentees to describe the objectives and goals of the relationship. This should be revisited as the relationship progresses.

2. **Not having a good match:** The mentoring match is not an exact science. After discussing the Mentee's expectations and the Mentor's guidance capabilities, it may become evident that a Mentor and Mentee are not a good match. Further, personality differences may exist, or the quality of the match may change over time. If either the Mentor or Mentee feels that the relationship is not in the best interest of both parties, the relationship may be terminated (see the next section for further guidance on terminating the relationship). Providing feedback to the Mentoring Subcommittee will help the Program develop better matches.
3. **Disagreements:** The Mentor and Mentee understand that differences of opinion can arise. They should resolve any confusions or disagreements in a timely manner. If differences are irreconcilable, either party should request a new Mentor/Mentee (see the next section for further guidance on terminating the relationship).

Termination of the Mentoring Relationship

The mentoring relationship may terminate for a variety of reasons, Examples include: (1) if either the Mentee or the Mentor feels that the objectives of the mentoring agreement are not being fulfilled, (2) if either the Mentor or Mentee feels that the relationship is no longer necessary or has run its course, (3) if there are disagreements and/or if the Mentor and Mentee do not get along. Both parties should agree that a termination of the mentoring relationship is in the Officers' best interest and should handle the situation in a respectful and professional manner.

Steps for terminating the Mentor-Mentee relationship:

1. Notify the Mentee or Mentor of your intention to terminate the mentoring contract (phone or in person is preferred)
2. Determine the effective end date of the mentoring relationship
3. Notify the Mentoring Subcommittee of the termination of the relationship

Guidebook Development

The SciPAC Mentoring Guidebook was created and is maintained by the SciPAC Mentoring Subcommittee. The SciPAC Mentoring Subcommittee will review this document every operational year and assess the need to make updates to assure content accuracy, including PHS policy references and links to pertinent websites. It is anticipated that substantive changes to the Guidebook may need to occur every two years.

Acknowledgments

This guidebook was created in part based on mentoring resources from the Health Services, Pharmacy, and Dietitian categories.

Appendices

Appendix A – Potential Mentoring Topics, Action Items, and References

Appendix B – Bulleted List of Mentoring Action Items

Appendix C – Schedule of Commissioned Corps Activities and Updates

Appendix D – General Resources for Mentoring

APPENDIX A

Potential Mentoring Topics, Action Items, and References¹

Commissioned Corps history

Overseen by the Surgeon General, the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps is one of the nation's eight uniformed services. USPHS Commissioned Corps Officers advance our nation's public health, serving in agencies across the government, as physicians, nurses, dentists, veterinarians, scientists, engineers and other public health professionals. These Officers fill essential public health leadership and clinical service roles within Federal Government agencies and in many professional capacities. Additional information about the Commissioned Corps can be found at: <https://www.usphs.gov/about-us>

Action items: Junior Officers may be interested in learning more about the history of the service they have joined; engage in discussion or point the Mentee towards helpful resources, if so desired. Consider discussing the milestones of previous Surgeons General.

Commissioned Corps timeline: <https://www.usphs.gov/history>

Promotions

The promotion schedule is fixed for an Officer dependent upon their (1) years of training and experience, (2) years of service in the Corps, and (3) the number of years they have served at their current rank. Once an Officer has reached promotion eligibility, promotion packets must be submitted to their electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) in order to compete for promotion. An Officer is assessed based on five different promotion precepts: Performance; Education, Training, and Professional Development; Career Progression and Potential; Officership; and Basic Readiness.

Action items: Work through the calculations to determine the Mentee's next year of promotion eligibility. Ensure the Mentee is knowledgeable of all relevant deadlines. Discuss the SciPAC benchmarks, assess how the Mentee compares to the "best qualified Officer," and determine any improvements the Mentee can make to improve their promotion competitiveness. Develop a plan for improving chances for promotion success that factors in the time until they are next eligible for promotion. Help assess whether the Mentee may be deserving of an exceptional proficiency promotion.

Promotion process: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/PROMOTIONS_process_m.aspx

Exceptional proficiency promotion information:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/PROMOTIONS_EPP_m.aspx

¹URLs functional at the time of publication. This document will be reviewed periodically to ensure broken links are deleted or replaced.

Competitive promotion eligibility criteria:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/PROMOTIONS_competitive_eligibility_m.aspx

Promotion checklist: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/PROMOTIONS_checklist_m.aspx

Promotion process frequently asked questions:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/PROMOTIONS_FAQs_m.aspx

Promotion Benchmarks:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/Promotions/PROMOTIONS_category_benchmarks_m.aspx

Maintaining your personnel file

The eOPF is available through the CCMIS webpage

(<https://dcp.psc.gov/eOPF2/OfficerPrivacyAct.aspx>). Various documents in the eOPF will be

available to the Promotion Board for review. The eOPF includes documents such as your

Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Reports (COERs), Promotion Information Report (PIR),

Curriculum Vitae (CV), license and certifications, and educational information.

Action items: Ensure the Mentee knows how to properly submit documents to the eOPF. Review each section, including the PIR. Periodically check in with the Mentee regarding updates to their eOPF. Encourage the Mentee to correct any errors in their eOPF as soon as possible.

eOPF information: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/PROMOTIONS_eOPF_m.aspx

eDOC-U User Guide: [https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/eDOC-](https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/eDOC-U%20Officer%20User%20Guide.pdf)

[U%20Officer%20User%20Guide.pdf](https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/eDOC-U%20Officer%20User%20Guide.pdf)

eOPF FAQs: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/CCMIS_eopf_faqs_m.aspx

Curriculum vitae preparation and review

The CV is the best place to present a concise account of an Officer's career, in addition to

providing information not reflected on the PIR. The importance of a current CV in the eOPF

cannot be overly emphasized. An absent, outdated, or improperly formatted CV will put the

Officer at a disadvantage and will make him/her less competitive for promotion. Officers are

encouraged to update their CV at least once a year.

Action items: Encourage the Mentee to take advantage of the SciPAC CV review service offered each year through the SciPAC Career Development Subcommittee when they are up for promotion. Review the Officer's CV and provide constructive feedback regarding strengths and potential improvements.

Promotion CV guidelines:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/PROMOTIONS_curriculum_vitae_m.aspx

Performance review/COER

The COER is the uniform appraisal form used for documenting the performance of an Officer's assignments, duties and proficiencies. The information provided in this report reflects evaluation of the Officer's performance during the current rating period. The rating period occurs from October 1–September 30 of each year. The COER is a web-based instrument and is required for all active duty Officers except those exempt as discussed in the COER Personnel Operations Memorandum (POM). This performance review is conducted annually. The POM is also updated annually. Some Officers may also be required to conduct a transfer or interim COER.

Action items: Explain the COER process for any Mentees undergoing a performance review for the first time. Ensure the Mentee is aware of COER deadlines and the current COER POM. Provide guidance on whether the Mentee should conduct a transfer or interim COER.

COER Information and Policy:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/CCPM25_1_1.pdfOnline COER:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/POM19_001.pdfCOER types:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/COER/COER_Types_m.aspx

COER FAQs: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/COER/COER_frequently_asked_questions_m.aspx

Awards

The progression of awards, relevance to mission, quality, as well as quantity across the career is assessed. There should be a record of awards across the career. Officers should strive for increasing impacts at the local level, including team or unit participation, which may result in individual or unit awards. Division, Institute, Agency, and professional organization awards and recognition such as letters of commendation are also helpful to the career of a Corps Officer. PHS service awards can also serve the Officer well and the award should clearly reflect the impact(s) that result from the responsibility and performance of the Officer.

Action items: Discuss the different types of awards. Notify the Mentee of activities that may boost their award record. If you are in the position to, consider nominating the Mentee for strong work. Ensure the Mentee has appropriate award development guidance and knows who their awards representative is. Ensure the Mentee has access to the most up-to-date awards forms and understands how the submission and review process works. Discuss awards strategy (e.g., targeting lower-level awards now versus targeting higher-level awards in the future by waiting for greater impacts to accrue).

Commissioned Officers' Award Program:

https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/COAP/COAP_index_m.aspx

Awards FAQs:

https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/COAP/COAP_frequently_asked_questions_m.aspx

Types of recognition & awards criteria:

https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/COAP/COAP_award_criteria_m.aspx

Billets

Billets describe the minimum requirements and responsibilities of a position. It does not describe the capabilities of the Officers in those positions. Billets indicate the type of work done and level of the position. Officers should strive for increasingly stronger billet assignments as they progress through their career. The billet applies to the position, not the Officer. Positions are also assessed to determine if they fulfill any of the five Pillars (see below). This should be documented on your CV.

Action items: Ensure the Mentee is aware of the importance of the level of their billet and the implications for promotions.

Pillars: See page 6 https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/JOAG/documents/19vol_fall_2011.pdf

Career progression and mobility

Officers can show career progression in responsibility, leadership and independence. They should take on increasingly complex tasks. The goal is to take on higher levels of responsibility and independently conducting projects of exceptional technical difficulty. Mobility can be programmatic or geographic. Mobility can come in the form of reassignments, special assignments, and details.

Action items: Send relevant job announcements and listservs to the Mentee. Encourage the Mentee to explore short-term assignments such as TDYs and details. Identify possible job shadowing experiences for the Mentee.

Professional licensure/credentialing

Officers should have all licenses and credentials required by law for their discipline/billet.

Action items: Ensure the Mentee is aware of the need to maintain their licenses and credentials, if required by their degree, as well as any relevant expiration dates.

Licensures: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ASSIGNMENTS_licensure_m.aspx

Deployment readiness and opportunities

All Officers are required to maintain basic readiness status. Failing to meet these standards may negatively affect Officers with regard to promotion, special assignments, awards, and retention. Readiness checks are conducted at the end of each month. Officers may seek out opportunities to participate in responses. Corps Officers deploy in response to national emergencies declared by the President, public health emergencies as declared by the President or Secretary, an urgent

public health need, or a national special security event declared by the Secretary of Homeland Security.

Action items: Ensure that Mentee is currently basic ready; provide guidance and assistance to Officer to meet basic readiness status if not currently basic ready. Provide information about how to join a Tier I or Tier II team. Encourage Mentee to seek the FMRB and provide information regarding FMRB criteria.

Readiness essentials:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ReDDOG/REDDOG_essentials_m.aspx#MEMBERSHIP

Readiness Down to Basics:

https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/RedDOG/Forms/Basic_Readiness_Checklist.pdf

Readiness and Deployment Operations contacts:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/DCCPR_readiness_and_deployment_m.aspx

FMRB required modules: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/RedDOG/REDDOG_fmr Modules_m.aspx

Rotational roster schedule:

<https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/RedDOG/Forms/Response%20Team%20Roster%20Assignment%20Schedule.pdf>

Response teams: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ReDDOG/REDDOG_current_teams_m.aspx

Annual Physical Fitness Test (APFT):

https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/RedDOG/REDDOG_APFT_m.aspx

Weight standards:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/Commissioned%20Corps%20Retention%20Weight%20Standards.pdf

PHS agencies and career opportunities

Corps Officers may apply to a variety of positions throughout the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and certain non-HHS Federal agencies and programs that perform work related to disease control and prevention; biomedical research; regulation of food, drugs, and medical devices; mental health and drug abuse; and health care delivery. A Corps Officer can transfer to any of these agencies and stay within the same personnel system. Temporary assignments with these agencies may also be possible.

Action items: Discuss career options (geographic and programmatic moves) with the Mentee.

Where we work: <https://www.usphs.gov/about-us>

PHS Scientists and the National Prevention Strategy:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5308146/>

Training

Officers are encouraged to take leadership courses and attend trainings that increase their skill set and bolster their career. Officers should seek out trainings available through their agency, the Department, Commissioned Corps organizations, the [Commissioned Corps Learning Management System \(CCLMS\)](#), [Responder e-Learn 2.0](#), or in the non-government sectors. Trainings may also be available through deployment team membership. Both short-term and long-term trainings can be beneficial.

Action items: Discuss career goals with the Mentee and determine trainings that will support these goals. Share training opportunities and conferences with the Mentee. Discuss long-term training opportunities with the Mentee. Discuss academic programs that offer free or reduced-price certificates or degrees for Commissioned Corps Officers. Encourage the Mentee to attend the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium. Ensure the Mentee has any proper paperwork necessary for trainings. Encourage the Mentee to seek the FMRB and provide information regarding FMRB criteria.

Commissioned Officer Training Academy:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/training/TRAINING_default_m.aspx

HHS Learning Portal/Learning Management System: <https://lms.learning.hhs.gov/>

Commissioned Corps Headquarters

Operations of the Commissioned Corps function through Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ) are in collaboration with the Office of the Surgeon General. Officers should be aware of the services CCHQ provides.

Action items: Discuss which documentation should be sent to which CCHQ unit and how they should be submitted (i.e., APFT documentation should be entered into the Readiness Section of the Officer Secure Area AND uploaded into the eOPF). Ensure the Mentee has proper contact information for CCHQ.

About CCHQ: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/CCHQ_about_m.aspx

Readiness Down to Basics:

https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/RedDOG/Forms/Basic_Readiness_Checklist.pdf

eDOC-U User Guide: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/eDOC-U%20Officer%20User%20Guide.pdf

SciPAC involvement

Getting involved with Commissioned Corps organizations will help the PHS Commissioned Corps fulfill its mission and enhance Officers' career development. Professional contributions

and officership are also important for promotion. Officers should strive for increasing levels of leadership. SciPAC provides many opportunities for Officers to become involved.

Action items: Encourage the Mentee to join the monthly SciPAC teleconferences and at least one SciPAC subcommittee. Encourage the Mentee to become a voting member of SciPAC and explain the nomination and selection processes.

SciPAC membership: <https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/scientist/membership.aspx>

PHS uniforms

All Officers are required to wear the Corps uniform in the performance of their official duties, except for certain situations. By wearing the uniform, Commissioned Corps Officers display a profound respect for their country, their service, and themselves. Uniforms promote the visibility and credibility of the Commissioned Corps to the general public and the Nation's underserved populations.

Action items: Ensure that the Mentee has obtained all required uniforms. Serve as reference for uniform and appearance guidance should the Mentee have questions. Provide uniform inspections at the request of the Mentee.

PHS Uniform Policy

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/CCMIS_searchresult.aspx?cx=005033069507062507141:ucufwnampq&cof=FORID:9&ie=UTF-8&q=uniforms&sa=Search

Military courtesy

Essentially, uniformed services courtesies are an extension of common customs of courtesy in civilian life. By nature of their assignments, PHS commissioned Officers may serve in either a civilian or uniformed services environment. Basic standard courtesies should be extended in either location. On assignment to a uniformed services branch, PHS Officers should conform to the rules of courtesy practiced by that branch of the service. Likewise, PHS Officers visiting uniformed services installations must observe the general rules of courtesy practiced on those installations. It is important to be familiar with such courtesies.

Action items: Discuss when and when not to salute. Discuss opportunities to serve as an aide de camp.

U.S. military customs and courtesies: <https://www.uakron.edu/armyrotc/MS1/18.pdf>

U.S. military ranks: <https://www.militaryfactory.com/ranks/index.asp>

Networking

Networking helps Officers build relationships that can help them in their current or future work. Networking can apply to other Officers, retired Officers, and civilian personnel. It may also extend outside of our federal agencies. Officers are already expanding their networks by participating in this mentoring program, but the Mentor can help introduce new opportunities.

Action items: Introduce the Mentee to other individuals that may be of interest to the Mentee. Encourage the Mentee to seek out Corps, agency, and community opportunities for networking.

Planning for retirement

Retirement is one of the most important decisions made during one's career. How to best plan for retirement depends on an individual's situation. However, all Officers should prepare as early as possible for retirement. When you fail to plan, you plan to fail. The Blended Retirement System (BRS) combines elements of the legacy retirement system with benefits similar to those offered in many civilian 401(k) plans. BRS eligibility depends on when you joined the Uniformed Services. All Officers entering the Uniformed Services on or after January 1, 2018, are automatically enrolled in BRS. Retirement seminars provide the basic features of the retirement annuity, describe the retirement process, and identify some important resources. All Officers should participate in a retirement seminar between their 14th and 18th years of active service and every couple of years, after the initial, until retirement. This ensures that all knowledge concerning the retirement policies and procedures is current.

Action items: Share information regarding the online USPHS retirement seminars. Inform the Mentee of any in-person pre-retirement seminars. If needed, provide the Mentee with the retirement coordinator's name and contact information.

Retirement information:

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/separations/ASSIGNMENTS_retirements_m.aspx

USPHS Commissioned Corps Retirement Seminars (online):

https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/separations/ASSIGNMENTS_seminar_m.aspx

Blended Retirement System: <http://militarypay.defense.gov/BlendedRetirement/>

Involuntary Separations

In 2018, HHS Secretary signed an updated Commissioned Corps Directive regarding involuntary separations. The Directive contains regulations concerning the termination of the commission of an Officer without consent of the Officer concerned.

Action items: Mentors should review the directive with their Mentees and advise Mentees throughout their career on how to maintain good standing as an Officer and avoid being brought up for involuntary separation.

Involuntary separations FAQs: <https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/CCISFAQ.aspx>

APPENDIX B Mentoring Action Items

PHS history

- Engage in discussion the history of the USPHS or point the Mentee towards helpful resources, if so desired
- Consider discussing the milestones of previous Surgeons General

Military courtesy and uniform wear

- Discuss when and when not to salute, other military base protocols, and the military rank system
- Discuss opportunities to serve as an aide-de-camp
- Ensure that the Mentee has obtained all required uniforms
- Serve as reference for uniform and appearance guidance should the Mentee have questions
- Provide uniform inspections at the request of the Mentee

eOPF/Officer Secure Area

- Discuss which documentation should be sent to which CCHQ unit and how they should be submitted (i.e., APFT documentation should be entered into the Readiness Section of the Officer Secure Area *and* uploaded into the eOPF)
- Ensure the Mentee knows how to properly submit documents to the eOPF
- Review each section of the eOPF, including the PIR
- Periodically check in with the Mentee regarding updates to their eOPF. Encourage the Mentee to correct any errors in their eOPF as soon as possible
- Ensure that the Mentee is familiar with the current promotion process and COER system

Curriculum vita

- Direct the Mentee to refer to the SciPAC CV guidelines to ensure a properly formatted CV
- Encourage the Mentee to take advantage of the SciPAC CV review service offered each year through the SciPAC Career Development Subcommittee when they are eligible for promotion
- Review the Officer's CV and provide constructive feedback regarding strengths and potential improvements

Performance and awards

- Explain the COER process for any Mentees undergoing a performance review for the first time
- Ensure the Mentee is aware of COER deadlines and the current COER POM
- Provide guidance on whether the Mentee should conduct a transfer or interim COER
- Discuss the different types of PHS awards
- Discuss awards strategy (e.g., targeting lower-level awards now vs. targeting higher-level awards down the road by waiting for greater impacts to accrue)
- Notify the Mentee of activities that may boost their award record

- If you are in the position to, consider nominating the Mentee for strong work
- Ensure the Mentee has appropriate award development guidance and knows who their awards representative is
- Ensure the Mentee has access to the most up-to-date awards forms and understands how the submission and review process works

Career progression

- Ensure the Mentee is aware of the importance of the level of their billet and the implications for promotions
- Send relevant job announcements and listservs to the Mentee
- Encourage the Mentee to explore short-term assignments such as TDYs and details, including volunteer opportunities with CCHQ
- Identify possible job shadowing experiences for the Mentee
- Discuss career options (geographic and programmatic moves) with the Mentee
- Discuss career goals with the Mentee and determine trainings that will support these goals

Readiness and deployment

- Ensure the Mentee is aware of the need to maintain their licenses and credentials, as well as any relevant expiration dates
- Ensure that Mentee is currently basic ready; provide guidance and assistance to Officer to meet basic readiness status if not currently basic ready
- Provide information about how to join a Tier I or Tier II team
- Encourage Mentee to seek the FMRB and provide information regarding FMRB criteria

Continuing education/training

- Share training opportunities and conferences with the Mentee
- Discuss long-term training opportunities with the Mentee
- Discuss academic programs that offer free or reduced-price certificates or degrees for Commissioned Corps Officers
- Encourage the Mentee to attend the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium; provide them with information about the junior Officer scholarship, if applicable
- Ensure the Mentee has any proper paperwork necessary for trainings

SciPAC involvement

- Encourage the Mentee to join the SciPAC teleconferences and at least one SciPAC subcommittee
- Encourage the Mentee to become a voting member of SciPAC and explain the nomination and selection processes

Promotion

- Work through the calculations to determine the Mentee's next year of promotion eligibility. Ensure the Mentee is knowledgeable of all relevant deadlines.

- Discuss the promotion benchmarks, assess how the Mentee compares to the “best qualified Officer,” and determine any improvements the Mentee can make to improve their promotion competitiveness
- Develop a plan for improving chances for promotion success that factors in the time until they are next eligible for promotion
- Help assess whether the Mentee may be deserving of an exceptional proficiency promotion

Retirement

- Share information regarding the online USPHS retirement seminars
- Inform the Mentee of any in-person pre-retirement seminars
- If needed, provide the Mentee with the retirement coordinator’s name and contact information

Involuntary Separations

- Mentors should review the directive with their Mentees and advise Mentees throughout their career on how to maintain good standing as an Officer and avoid being brought up for involuntary separation

Other

- Ensure the Mentee has proper contact information for CCHQ and their relative Commission Corps Agency Liaison.
- Introduce the Mentee to other individuals that may be of interest to the Mentee for networking
- Encourage the Mentee to seek out Corps, agency, and community opportunities for networking

APPENDIX C
Schedule of Commissioned Corps Activities and Updates

<u>Activity or Update</u>	<u>Schedule</u>
1. SciPAC conference calls	Monthly
2. Readiness checks	Monthly
3. Medical history and disclosure, self-administered	Annually
4. Periodic Health Update (includes medical exam, dental exam and other documentation)	Annually
5. Influenza vaccination	Annually
6. Tetanus/Diphtheria booster	Every 10 years
7. APFT (including body mass index)	Annually
8. BLS certification	Every 2 years
9. Mid-year COER	Annually, due April 30 (for some agencies)
10. COER	Annually, opens Oct 1
11. Update CV and CEU	At least annually
12. COA membership renewal	Annually, due by July 1 (if a member)

APPENDIX D General Resources for Mentoring

There are several resources available online about mentoring that may serve as good references for Mentors.

The Importance of Workplace Mentors

<http://www.careerstonegroup.com/z-media/wp-mentoring.pdf>

Educause Mentoring Resources

<http://www.educause.edu/careers/special-topic-programs/mentoring>

U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Mentoring Best Practices

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/training-and-development/career-development/bestpractices-mentoring.pdf>

Mentoring and Career Development – Additional Resources

<http://cfde.emory.edu/resources/mentoring/mentoring-resources/mentoring-more.html>

Corps Cares

<https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/CorpsCare/About%20CorpsCare.aspx>

Recruitment and Retention SOP

<https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/scientist/documents/Recruitment-and-Retention-SOP-Final-2020.pdf>