

Career Progression Guidance

Preamble:

The U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps is an elite cadre of professionally diverse assets that serve the missions of their agencies and the USPHS Commissioned Corps, rapidly responds to public health emergencies and national security threats to advance and protect the nation's health and safety, and functions as a force multiplier in public health programs.

Public Health Service (PHS) officers are expected to embody the following core values to guide their professional development as expert public health professionals and leaders:

- Demonstrate *excellence* in their roles and assignments within the Departments (OPDIV/STAFFDIV/non-HHS organization) (hereinafter Departments/Agencies) they serve through:
 - Maintaining and developing one's clinical and/or professional skills (e.g., specific to the officer's qualifying degree).
 - Continuous strive for career growth.
- Exemplify *integrity* through uncompromising ethical conduct and standards of responsibility and accountability.
- Manifest clinical and/or professional *leadership* through scope and breadth of experience, innovation in public health science and practice, with demonstrated value and impact to their Department/Agency and the USPHS Commissioned Corps.
- Be always *service* ready by maintaining clinical and deployment competencies, and training to effectively respond to public health emergencies and challenges.

Overall Vision of the New Precepts: These precepts provide guidance to USPHS Commissioned Corps officers seeking advancement in their careers as elite public health experts and leaders.

Precept 1: Officers demonstrate accomplishments and impacts associated with their assignments and in alignment with their Department's/Agency's declared mission, goals, and priorities.

Precept 2: Officers provide evidence of clinical and/or professional skills that are relevant to their Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) and readiness to serve in an expert and leadership capacity.

Precept 3: Officers take initiative to progress in their professional career by a) taking assignments and diverse professional work experiences of increasing responsibility that serve the Departmental/Agency and b) demonstrating value and leadership at the Departmental/Agency level beyond what is described in the Officers' performance for Precept 1.

Precept 4: Officers advance the priorities of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH)/Office of the Surgeon General (OSG)/Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ) and Department/Agency by readiness to perform duties as public health responders (trained, able, and willing to respond in deployment role) and promoting recruitment and retention, and mentoring.

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The Promotion Precepts are weighted as follows:

Precept	O-2/O-3	O-4	O-5	O-6
1. Performance and mission contribution	35%	35%	30%	30%
2. Clinical and/or Professional Skills	30%	30%	20%	20%
3. Scope and Breadth/Depth of Departmental Professional and Leadership Experience	20%	20%	30%	30%
4. Scope and Breadth/Depth of USPHS Commissioned Corps Professional and Leadership Experience	15%	15%	20%	20%

The purpose of the Career Progression Guidance (guidance) and Precepts 1 – 4 is to inform officers and promotion boards of the standards of excellence and levels of achievement that describe the “best-qualified” officer for promotion. This document can also benefit the officer in developing short- and long-term goals for career advancement.

Officers are not expected to meet all factors within the guidance document; it is common that promoted officers will have well-rounded achievements that exceed the factors for one or two precepts but may not meet all the factors for others. Therefore, the guidance in this document should not be considered a checklist of activities that must be completed to be promoted. The promotion board places more value on the accomplishments, impact, and outcomes of an officer’s service and future leadership potential than the quantity of activities in which an officer participates.

The promotion board assesses the capabilities, performance, and potential of officers eligible for promotion to the next higher grade. This assessment of qualifications is based on the promotion precept components described in the electronic Commissioned Corps Issuance System (eCCIS) Commissioned Corps Instruction (CCI) 331.01, “Permanent Promotions,” and the four promotion precepts described in POM 821.87, “Promotion Precepts and Criteria,” and in the Career Progression Guidance. The four promotion precepts are described in terms of factors; and each factor has criteria that identify the level of achievement for the officer at each grade.

The members of the promotion boards use their professional judgment, knowledge, and experience within the Corps in the review of the promotion documents of each officer under consideration for promotion and individually assign a score for each promotion precept. While the officer’s accomplishments and impact of their professional activities over the course of their career may be considered, the activities, accomplishments, and impacts since the officer’s last promotion receive greater consideration. Officers should document and provide evidence of their activities and achievements at their Department/Agency and to support of priority initiatives as set by the Assistant Secretary of Health (ASH) and/or the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) in their Promotion Information Report (PIR), Commissioned Officers’ Effectiveness Report (COER), Reviewing Official’s Statement (ROS), and curriculum vitae (CV).

Officers must carefully consider which precept addresses their specific activities and achievements as to avoid duplicative or repetitive responses. For example, if an officer wants to emphasize certain knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) related to training that advances an Agency

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programmatic or operational mission need, this should be covered in Precept 3 “Scope and Breadth/Depth of Departmental Professional and Leadership Experience.” If KSAs related to training are acquired/obtained to enhance professional competency but are not used in the officer’s Agency duties, that should be addressed in Precept 2 “Clinical and/or Professional Skills” (i.e., Professional Competencies Skills as Exemplified in Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities).

Promotion Board members examine many documents in the officer’s Officer Promotion Package Verification System (OPPVS) during the promotion review. Examples of these documents include, but are not limited to, COER, ROS, PIR, and CV. The most recent COERs, within the past 5 years, are visible to the Promotion Board members.

The Chief Professional Officers (CPO), in consultation with their respective category members, review the guidance annually and revise as needed to reflect the mission and professional standards of the U.S. Public Health Service and capture evolving Corps priorities and the dynamic nature of public health leadership needs. The Career Progression Guidance is effective on October 1 of the year of publication to coincide with the rating period. Promotion boards will use the guidance from the previous year to maintain consistency with the last annual rating period evaluated. Officers should review updates to the USPHS Career Pathways program regularly to align career planning accordingly.

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1. Performance and Mission Contribution

Precept 1 Purpose Statement: To assess the Officer's effectiveness and impact in their assigned duties.

Factor	PO-3/PO-4	PO-5/PO-6
Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Reports (COERs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focusing on most recent Rater's Comments and Reviewing Official's Statement 	<p>The primary focus in reviewing the COER is on the accompanying narrative rather than on the rating. Secondary assessment includes a review of the COER ratings, in the context of the accompanying narrative and officer's performance trends (taking assignment and supervisory changes into consideration). Annual COERs should highlight progression of responsibilities, accomplishments, identifying opportunities for professional development and career growth, impacts, and leadership. The officer demonstrates efficient and effective work at a level equal to or higher than their current grade. This primarily reflects on Department/Agency assignment performance and mission contributions.</p> <p>Reviewing Official's Statement (ROS) must focus on the officer's readiness for promotion to the next rank and the officer's potential to succeed/excel with the elevated responsibilities and challenges that are expected at the higher grade. Examples of leadership and contributions and impact to the Agency's mission must be used to validate the RO's comments. The RO must also address the officer's leadership role in the Agency. A comprehensive look at the Officer's accomplishments and challenges from the previous year, providing specific examples and feedback. The RO must describe how the officer's Agency duties and collateral activities contribute to increasing levels of impact to the Agency's mission, to include evidence of independent performance of complex tasks or leadership of organizations that demonstrate public health impact appropriate to the officer's role at community, state, regional, tribal, national, and/or international levels. The ROS should focus on information since the officer's last promotion.</p>	
	<p>Proficiently reaches sound conclusions in completing assignments of moderate complexity and contributes impact to the Agency mission with professional guidance. (COER components: Overall Effectiveness, Analysis, Judgement, and Decision-Making)</p> <p>Professional competency development demonstrates leadership potential at organizations, programs, clinical areas, or teams. Displays capacity to meet Agency mission priorities and goals for increased future leadership that may include management roles, technical authority, subject</p>	<p>Evidence of independent performance of complex tasks requiring developed professional competency with positive contributions and impact to the Agency mission and goals at a regional or national level. Independent initiative to take appropriate action to develop, coordinate, and/or lead organizations, programs, clinical areas, or teams with an expected level of expertise (COER components: Initiative and Growth, Professional Competencies, Analysis, Judgement, and Decision-Making, Overall Effectiveness)</p>

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	<p>matter expertise, program management, or emergency response coordination at the appropriate Department/Agency level. (COER components: Leadership, Initiative and Growth, Planning and Organization, Professional Competencies)</p> <p>Officer contributes to resolving conflicts, initiatives, build teams, and strives to innovate. (COER components: Communication Skills Interpersonal Skills)</p>	<p>Highly proficient and recognized leader that influences and effectively impacts Agency mission priorities as an executive, senior manager, clinical/scientific/technical/subject matter expert, and/or special advisor. (COER components: Leadership, Planning and Organization)</p> <p>Officer functions as a role model to resolve conflicts, lead initiatives, build teams, and strives to innovate. Officer positively receives feedback and input from subordinates and team members to guide successful decisions and outcomes. (COER components: Leadership, Communication Skills, Interpersonal Skills)</p>
Professional Accomplishments and Impact	<p>Record reflects increasing levels of achievement (i.e., accomplishments & impacts) to the missions of the Agency and USPHS Commissioned Corps demonstrated in the PIR, impact statements within CV Cover Page, recognition from programmatic and professional stakeholders, and COER written statements on impact from rater and RO. Rater and ROS satisfactory ratings and narratives provide impacts commensurate with, or higher than current rank.</p>	<p>Record reflects increasing and sustained levels of achievement and exceptional leadership (i.e., accomplishments & impacts) to the missions of the Agency and USPHS Commissioned Corps as demonstrated in PIR, impact statements within CV Cover Page, recognition from programmatic and professional stakeholders, and COER written statements on impact from rater and RO. Rater and ROS satisfactory ratings and narratives provide impacts commensurate with, or higher than current rank.</p>

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2. Clinical and/or Professional Skills (i.e., Professional Competency as exemplified by Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities)

Precept 2 Purpose Statement: To assess the scope and impact of the Officer's Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities to their professional and career development as well as public health duties and responsibilities.

Factor	PO-3/PO-4	PO-5/PO-6
Officers must maintain core competencies in their qualifying degree/discipline and are expected to demonstrate a commitment towards continuous professional competency development related to or beyond their category-specific qualifying degree and/or credentials in their discipline, agency duties or public health-related applications through various means including, but not limited to other educational degrees/disciplines, professional development training (e.g., post-graduate, organizational, leadership, technical, management, etc.), credentials, licensure, and/or certifications.		
Scope and Impact from application of acquired Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) from the officer's qualifying degree, other educational degrees, professional training (e.g., post-graduate, organizational, leadership, technical, management, etc.) credentials, licensure, and/or certifications	Officers will explain how application of Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) acquired from the officer's qualifying degree/discipline , other educational degrees/disciplines, professional training (e.g., post-graduate, organizational, leadership, technical, management, etc.), credentials, licensure, and/or certifications affect the scope and impact of their work within and at (wherever/whenever applicable) the Department/Agency and USPHS Commissioned Corps levels. Note: CCHQ-directed Readiness and Deployment training are addressed in Precept 4.	
	Officers are required to also maintain KSAs associated with their qualifying degree/discipline, regardless of current primary assignment or current professional work setting. Officers should include content from all professional work settings applicable to the period relevant to the promotion board review. Some educational degrees/disciplines, professional development training (e.g., post-graduate, organizational, leadership, technical, management, etc.), public health training, credentials, licensure, and/or certifications may be unique to a particular category, may cross some categories or may apply to all categories. Permanent promotion boards (PPBs) receive informational one-page resources in advance of meetings from the Professional Advisory Committees (PACs) that highlight and explain the most encountered and relevant items for PPB members to reference.	
	Scope and impact from application of the Officer's KSAs exceed their position requirements. Officer seeks to develop, improve, and apply KSAs to achieve greater proficiency in scope and impact in their professional work. Officer demonstrates commitment to continuous learning opportunities by seeking other educational degrees/discipline, professional development training	Scope and impact from application of the Officer's KSAs exceed their position requirements AND are commensurate with managerial, supervisory, leadership, or subject matter expert roles in their career or field. Officer applies KSAs from other educational degrees, professional development training (e.g., post-graduate, organizational, leadership, technical, management,

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	<p>(e.g., post-graduate, organizational, leadership, technical, management, etc.), credentials, licensure, and/or certifications to enhance their KSAs.</p> <p>The candidate for promotion to O-3 and O-4 will describe how KSAs from their qualifying degree, other degrees, and professional training applies to any or all the factors below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informing work being done at their primary assignment at the Department/Agency along with describing associated scope and impact. • are being utilized for direct patient care or for professional work directed to them by supervisors, managers, faculty, mentors or others along with describing associated scope and impact. • informing, directing and impacting work and accomplishing goals and objectives at the Officer's professional work setting at the local and community level (or higher if applicable). • are being maintained and advanced in an Officer's professional work setting. Officers are expected to maintain and advance professional competencies relevant to their qualifying degree and grade regardless of primary assignment. This includes maintaining proficiency in KSAs associated with their qualifying degree/discipline. <p>At O-3 and O-4, officers are expected to maintain core professional competencies and demonstrate how their KSAs support mission outcomes. Additional training and</p>	<p>etc.), credentials, licensure, and/or certifications to lead and influence programs, projects, policies, or provision of services.</p> <p>The candidate for promotion to O-5 and O-6 will describe how KSAs from their qualifying degree, other degrees, and professional training applies to any or all the factors below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informing work being done at their primary assignment at the Department/Agency and USPHS Commissioned Corps levels along with describing associated scope and impact. • are being utilized for directing others' work in some capacity as a supervisor, manager, faculty, mentor, or other with describing associated scope and impact. • informing, directing and impacting work and accomplishing goals and objectives at the Officer's professional setting at the health care system, county, state, regional, national, or international level. • are being maintained and advanced in an Officer's professional work setting. Officers are expected to maintain and advance professional competencies relevant to their qualifying degree and grade regardless of primary assignment. This includes maintaining proficiency in KSAs associated with their qualifying degree/discipline. <p>At O-5 and O-6, officers should demonstrate application of KSAs that influence systems, policies, and programs at the highest level available to them (organizational, regional, national, or international).</p>
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	credentials may enhance scope and impact but are not required.	
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3. Scope and Breadth of Departmental Professional and Leadership Experience

Precept 3 Purpose Statement: To examine the officer's career trajectory, readiness for higher levels of responsibility and demonstrated leadership, and their potential to contribute to their Agency.

Factor	PO-3/PO-4	PO-5/PO-6
Career Progression Culminating in Leadership Roles, Duties, and Responsibilities	<p>Acquiring mastery in leadership competencies reflective of your current position then pursuing varied professional work experiences to prepare for assignments of increased responsibility that are commensurate with or greater than the officer's current grade.</p> <p>Assume responsibilities and demonstrate impact commensurate with current or the next rank such as leading a project.</p> <p>Identify only the Leadership Competencies Acquired:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes ownership of tasks and demonstrates initiative to assume greater responsibilities. (Competencies: Leading People; Results Driven). 	<p>Mastery of leadership competencies in a series of roles you have held as well as varied professional work experiences demonstrating impact while encumbering more advanced and challenging assignments that are of increased responsibility, authority, and independence.</p> <p>Assume responsibilities and demonstrate impact commensurate with current or the next rank such as executive, senior manager, clinical/scientific/technical/subject matter expert, and/or special advisor. Frame your narrative to highlight how your leadership skills evolved from one position to the next, emphasizing transferable skills and quantifiable achievements.</p> <p>Identify only the Leadership Competencies Acquired and Utilized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence or lead national and/or international public health policy and/or programmatic implementation (Competencies: Leading Change; Leading People; Results Driven; Business Acumen; Building Coalitions; Strategic Thinking;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptable and resilient to changing priorities and mission needs. (Competency: Leading Change). • Leverages position and responsibilities to support mission and strategic priorities of the Officer's Department/Agency assignment. Identify process improvements and continuous improvements for projects. (Competency: Business Acumen). • Demonstrates influence and effective communication skills within an organization, program, or team at, or above, the local, regional, branch, or division level. (Competency: Building Coalitions). 	<p>Decisiveness; Problem Solving; Influencing; Negotiating).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting the vision, providing direction for Departments, lead cross functional teams, and engage with stakeholders to achieve results. (Competencies: Leading Change; Leading People; Results Driven; Business Acumen; Building Coalition). • Assessing available data and environmental factors to inform and lead organizational strategy. (Competency: Leading Change through applying data analysis, creativity and innovation, and strategic thinking. • Provides leadership consulting service or serves on Boards to guide organizations in strategic direction and governance. (Competencies: Leading Change; Leading People; Results Driven; Business Acumen; Building Coalitions). • Demonstrates effective listening, communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills leading and/or influencing at the Department/Agency level. (Competencies: Leading People; Results Driven; Building Coalitions).
	<p>COER, ROS and CV should document new competencies acquired and achieved through varied professional work experiences, including but not limited to, billeted positions, assignments, collateral duties, TDYs (outside of normal scope of current responsibilities and position), detail assignments, and acting positions.</p>	
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking assignments of increasing leadership and responsibility that serve the Department/Agency and demonstrate value and leadership at the Unit/Branch/Division level. • Taking on varied assignments of increasing responsibility that are commensurate with or greater than current grade. • Assignments include: permanent assignments, TDYs (outside of normal scope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking assignments of increasing leadership and responsibility that serve the Department/Agency and demonstrate value and leadership at the Departmental/Agency level. • Taking on varied assignments of increasing responsibility that are commensurate with or greater than current grade. • Assignments include: permanent assignments, TDYs (outside of normal scope of responsibilities

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	<p>of responsibilities and position), acting, and new/different assignments and jobs:</p> <p>O-3: Assignment that demonstrate responsibility, independence, and leadership capacity with measurable impact.</p> <p>O-4: Assignment that demonstrates progressively more responsibility, independence; and leadership capacity with measurable impact.</p>	<p>and position), acting, new/different assignments and jobs:</p> <p>O-5: Demonstrate progression through multiple assignments of increasing complexity, culminating in leadership of projects, teams, or policy development with significant scope of impact.</p> <p>O-6: Demonstrate progression through multiple assignments of increasing complexity (culminating in leadership of projects and/or policy development, considered a subject matter expert and/or supervises teams) with significant scope of impact.</p>
	<p>CV/COER/ROS should document progressively increased complexity of assignments or leadership throughout the officer's career. Officer should document any detailed assignments >90 days in the eOPF and CV, including TDY assignments.</p>	
Billet Level	<p>PIR should demonstrate progressively higher billets and supervisor status throughout the officer's career. Officer should document level of work performed, including supervisory duties, in the CV and the Officer section of the COER, and should be reflected by the Officer's Rater in their narrative for the COER and by the RO in the ROS.</p>	
	<p>O-3: Occupy billet ≥ O-3</p> <p>O-4: Occupy billet ≥ O-4</p>	<p>O-5: Occupy billet ≥ O-5</p> <p>O-6: Occupy billet ≥ O-6</p>
Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmatic and/or geographic mobility (can be supported by TDY or detail assignments). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased programmatic and/or geographic mobility (can be supported by TDY or detail assignments).

4. Scope and Breadth of USPHS Commissioned Corps Professional and Leadership Experience

Precept 4 Purpose Statement: To recognize the officer's contributions beyond their Agency duties, and commitment to advance the core values and mission of the USPHS Commissioned Corps.

Factor	PO-3/PO-4	PO-5/PO-6
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Preparedness and Deployment Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation that demonstrates impact in CCHQ coordinated deployment -OR- Serve in a mission critical position. • Participation that demonstrates impact in intra-agency or inter-agency public health response/recovery mission (not CCHQ coordinated deployment). • Participation that demonstrates impact in training and/or exercise (beyond required PHS trainings) focused on public health/emergency response and deployment preparedness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership that demonstrates impact in CCHQ-coordinated deployment -OR- Serve in a mission critical leadership position. • Leadership that demonstrates impact in intra-agency or inter-agency public health response/recovery mission (not CCHQ coordinated deployment). • Leadership that demonstrates impact in trainings and/or exercises (beyond required PHS trainings) focused on public health/emergency response, recovery and/or deployment preparedness.
Recruitment and Retention, and Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation that demonstrates impact in recruitment event. • Participation that demonstrates impact in a formal mentor program as either a mentee or a mentor. <p>Recruitment and retention can cover issues such as welcoming and supporting officers.</p> <p>Mentoring can cover issues such as reducing attrition, promoting Esprit de Corps, coaching, and supporting long-career planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership that demonstrates impact in recruitment events. • Participation that demonstrates impact in a formal mentor program as a mentor. <p>Recruitment and retention can cover issues such as welcoming and supporting officers.</p> <p>Mentoring can cover issues such as reducing attrition, promoting Esprit de Corps, coaching, and support long-career planning.</p>
Commissioned Corps Leadership and Professional Stewardship	<p>Uniform wear [Verified in COER Yes/No]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively contributes to the work of PHS activities, including but not limited to OSG chartered groups. • Participation that demonstrates impact in professional, uniformed service, or specialty organizations at the local or regional level. 	<p>Uniform wear [Verified in COER Yes/No]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership that demonstrates impact in PHS activities, including but not limited to OSG chartered groups. • Leadership that demonstrates impact in a professional, uniformed service, or specialty organizations at the national or international level.