



EFFECTIVE DATE: **CCI 371.01**
05 March 2009

By Order of the Acting Assistant Secretary for Health:

RADM Steven K. Galson, USPHS

SUBJECT: Early Commissioning Program

1. PURPOSE: This Instruction sets forth the policy and procedures establishing an Early Commissioning Program (ECP) in the Inactive Reserve Corps (IRC) of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service (Corps).
2. APPLICABILITY: This Instruction applies to eligible students in the last year of a qualifying degree program.
3. AUTHORITY:
 - 3-1. [42 USC 204](#)
 - 3-2. [42 CFR 21 Subpart B](#)
 - 3-3. [CC43.7.1](#), "Involuntary Separation"
4. PROPONENT: The proponent of this Instruction is the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH). The responsibility for assuring the day-to-day management of the Corps is the Surgeon General (SG).
5. SUMMARY OF REVISIONS AND UPDATES: This is the first issuance of this Instruction within the electronic Commissioned Corps Issuance System (eCCIS).

6. POLICY:

6-1. Overview of the ECP.

- a. The ECP is intended to provide orientation, career guidance, referrals, and facilitate applicant processing, suitable placement, and maintain applicant interest through early commissioning of students in health and health-related disciplines in shortage categories.
- b. Through this program, the applicant has the opportunity to familiarize him/herself with the Corps and career opportunities in the Corps. It also provides the applicant an opportunity to complete all processing requirements for appointment to the Corps and if found qualified, to receive an appointment prior to his/her graduation so that the applicant may be called to active duty without delay. The ECP provides the Corps with an opportunity to assess an applicant's qualifications so that the process of matching the applicant with an appropriate assignment may be initiated early in the process.

6-2. The ASH determines when the ECP is implemented or placed on hold.

6-3. To be eligible for the ECP a student must:

- a. Be in the last year of a professional school which will grant the qualifying degree;
- b. Meet the appointment standards for the Corps, except for attainment of the qualifying degree; and
- c. Be preparing for a profession, discipline or specialty in which the Corps has identified a specific recruitment need. This includes physicians, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, veterinarians, optometrists, psychologists, and other professions as appropriate. On a case-by-case basis, the SG may appoint candidates pursuing training in other categories based on an analysis of the needs of the Corps and special skills that the applicant may possess.

6-4. Applicants to the ECP who are in the last year of a qualifying degree program and who meet the requisite appointment standards will be appointed into the IRC in the Health Services category and referred for selection and assignment to Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Operating Divisions/Staff Divisions, or non-HHS organizations (OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs/non-HHS organizations) of their preference.

6-5. All appointments to the ECP will be at the Junior Assistant (O-1) grade. Upon completion of the qualifying degree, the officer's category will be determined in accordance with the appointment standards in [CCI 231.01](#), "General Appointment Standards," and [CCI 231.03](#), "Category Specific Appointment Standards."

6-6. An officer in the ECP earns Base Pay Entry Date (longevity) credit which affects the computation of his/her base pay when called to extended active duty.

6-7. Officers are appointed into the IRC to meet the needs of the Service. Therefore, the Corps has no obligation to call to active duty officers commissioned under the ECP.

6-8. Officers in the ECP incur no obligation and may be able to receive applicable incentive bonuses when called to active duty in accordance with law and regulation.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 7-1. The Office of the Surgeon General (OSG), through the Office of Commissioned Corps Operations (OCCO), 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 applications upon request from interested students;
 - c. Processing ECP applications;
 - d. Notifying applicants of the status of their application requests;
 - e. Issuing Personnel Orders appointing into the ECP those applicants who meet requisite requirements; and
 - f. Processing form [PHS-1662](#), "Request for Personnel Action," submitted by the OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs/non-HHS organizations.
- 7.2. OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs/non-HHS organizations are requested to:
- a. Advise OCCO 9-12 months in advance of the anticipated need for entry level officers in specific disciplines;
 - b. Furnish specific job information to applicants upon request;
 - c. Select individuals from those officers commissioned under the ECP for specific positions; and
 - d. Prepare form PHS-1662 requesting OCCO to call to active duty the officer selected for a particular position.

8. PROCEDURES:

- 8-1. Inquiries may be made directly to OCCO at the following address:

Office of Commissioned Corps Operations
Division of Commissioned Corps Assignments
ATTN: Early Commissioning Program
Plaza Level, Suite 100
1101 Wootton Parkway
Rockville, MD 20852

- 8-2. An application packet, which will be specifically identified as a request for ECP, will be furnished by OCCO. This packet will contain the necessary materials to apply for commissioning in the IRC in the ECP. [Form PHS-50](#), "Application for Appointment as a Commissioned Officer," included in the packet, should be completed and returned to OCCO.
- 8-3. OSG issues Personnel Orders appointing the candidate into the ECP, and appointment to the ECP is effective only upon issuance of such orders.

- 8-4. Upon completion of the qualifying degree, every effort will be made to assign the officer to an appropriate assignment. Appointment into the IRC does not obligate the officer to accept a call to extended active duty. Once appointed into the IRC, the officer may not accept appointment in another uniformed service unless approved for inter-service transfer or he/she resigns his/her Corps appointment. Within 1 year of graduation, an officer participating in the ECP must indicate in writing to the Director of OCCO his/her: a) desire to be retained in the IRC; b) desire to obtain a Corps active duty assignment; or c) indicate the intent to resign his/her commission. Those officers who do not indicate their intentions within 1 year of graduation will have their appointments terminated. The officer will be contacted prior to and/or following the expected graduation date to explore assignment options.
- 8-5. An officer who fails to complete his/her qualifying degree within 15 calendar months of the appointment date to the ECP will have his/her ECP appointment terminated. A request for waiver of this can be made by the officer to the Director of OCCO who will decide if and for how long an extension should be granted. Such officer will be encouraged to reapply to the Corps upon completion of the qualifying degree and meeting all other appointment standards.
- 8-6. If the SG, or his designee, determines that it is in the best interest of the Service to retain the officer in the IRC, then procedures for all other IRC officers will be followed (See [CC23.5.9](#), "Short Tours of Active Duty").
- 8-7. Pursuant to Section 216 of the PHS Act ([42 USC 217](#)) the President may, by Executive Order, declare the Corps to be a military service. In such case, IRC officers may be involuntarily called to active duty service.
- 8-8. In addition, an officers' commission may be terminated at any time if: a) he/she requests termination; b) is deemed not suitable for extended active duty service or not qualified for call to active duty or short tours; or c) fails to comply with maintenance requirements for the IRC.
9. HISTORICAL NOTES: This is the first issuance of this Instruction within the electronic Commissioned Corps Issuance System (eCCIS).