



CCI 331.01
EFFECTIVE DATE: 9 December 2024

By Order of the Assistant Secretary for Health:

ADM Rachel M. Levine, M.D.

SUBJECT: Permanent Promotions

1. PURPOSE: This Instruction sets forth the policies and procedures governing the permanent grade promotion program for officers in the Regular Corps and Ready Reserve Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps.
2. APPLICABILITY: This Instruction applies to Regular Corps officers serving on active duty and members of the Selected Ready Reserve (SELRES) of the Ready Reserve Corps. Unless otherwise noted, this Instruction does not apply to the following:
 - 2-1. Officers in the Ready Reserve Corps whom the Director, Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ), assigns to the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). However, the Surgeon General (SG), without further delegation, may approve the promotion examination of a member of the active IRR if the USPHS Commissioned Corps' force management needs warrant such a promotion (see Commissioned Corps Instruction (CCI) [322.06](#), "Ready Reserve Corps Management");
 - 2-2. Officers who are participating in the Junior or Senior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Programs (COSTEP) (see [CCI 371.02](#), "Junior COSTEP," and [CCI 371.03](#), "Senior COSTEP," respectively);
 - 2-3. Officers who are assigned to the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) School of Medicine in order to obtain their qualifying medical degree (see Commissioned Corps Directive (CCD) [125.03](#), "Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences"); and
 - 2-4. Promotion of officers to the temporary Assistant Surgeon General grades (O-7 and above) (see [CCI 322.03](#), "Flag Grade Positions and Promotion," and [CCI 322.04](#), "Chief Professional Officer Nomination"), as well as the promotion of the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH), SG, and the Chief Medical Officer of the U.S. Coast Guard.
3. AUTHORITY:
 - 3-1. [42 U.S.C. § 207](#), "Grades, ranks, and titles of commissioned corps"
 - 3-2. [42 U.S.C. § 210b](#), "Professional categories"
 - 3-3. [42 U.S.C. § 211](#), "Promotion of commissioned officers"

- 3-4. [42 U.S.C. § 216](#), “Regulations”
- 3-5. [CCD 122.01](#), “Promotions”
- 3-6. [CCD 122.02](#), “Force Distribution and Management”
- 4. **PROPONENT:** The proponent of this Instruction is the ASH. The SG is responsible for providing supervision of activities relating to the day-to-day operations of the USPHS Commissioned Corps. The Director, CCHQ, provides overall management of USPHS Commissioned Corps personnel operations and processes.
- 5. **SUMMARY OF REVISIONS AND UPDATES:** This Instruction replaces CCI 331.01, “Permanent Promotions,” dated 5 September 2023 as amended on 13 May 2024 and 29 August 2024.
 - 5-1. The 13 May 2024 amendment revised the precepts that the Permanent Promotion Board (PPB) will use when examining officers and specifies that these precepts will be implemented for Regular Corps officers on 1 September 2025 (i.e., for PY 2026 and subsequent years).
 - 5-2. The 29 August 2024 amendment added a new Section 6-2.d., which includes Licensed Professional Counselors in the Allied Health Promotion Category.
 - 5-3. Clarifies in Section 6-3.a.(4) and (5) that eligibility for a Regular Corps promotion to the O-5 and O-6 grades is based only on time spent on active duty as an officer.
 - 5-4. Clarifies in Section 8-1.a. that the constructive seniority service credit is based on an officer’s pay grade to which they were appointed and called to active duty in the USPHS Commissioned Corps. The changes also simplify computation of this credit.
 - 5-5. Clarifies in Section 8-1.b. that the constructive active service credit is based on an officer’s pay grade to which they were appointed and called to active duty in the USPHS Commissioned Corps. The changes also specify that when granting this credit, the combined total of actual active commissioned service and the constructive active service credit cannot exceed the amounts authorized in Section 8-1.b.
 - 5-6. Removes, throughout this Instruction (i.e., from Sections 6-4.d.(1), 6-7.g., and 6-8.a.(1), and from the Appendix), that a recommendation for promotion by the PPB but ranking in the bottom 10 percent is counted as a failure of promotion

6. POLICY: This Instruction is effective immediately (i.e., for promotion year (PY) 2024 and subsequent years), except where otherwise noted.
- 6-1. Basis for Promotions. The USPHS Commissioned Corps promotes officers based on the qualifications of the officers, vacancies (see 42 U.S.C. § 211(a) and [CCD 122.02](#), "Force Distribution and Management"), the USPHS Commissioned Corps' needs for operational force readiness and response, and its public health workforce needs.
- 6-2. Not Restricted and Restricted Categories and Grades.
- a. Not Restricted. For the Medical and Dental categories only, promotions to the O-4 and O-5 grades in the Regular Corps are not restricted. Promotion rates for officers in the medical and dental categories to these grades are subject to the limitations in Section 6-7.b.(1)(b).
 - b. Restricted. Promotions to the O-4 and O-5 grades are restricted for the following promotion category groups: Applied Public Health, Allied Health, and Medical Services (see [CCD 122.01](#), "Promotions").
 - c. Promotions to restricted grades and the O-6 grade will be made only if vacancies exist in such grade, subject also to the limitations in Section 6-7.b.(1)(b).
 - d. Promotion Categories. In accordance with CCD 122.01, the Applied Public Health, Allied Health, and Medical Services promotion categories consist of the following disciplines/specialties:
 - (1) Applied Public Health consists of Engineer, Scientist (except psychologist), Veterinary, Environmental Health, Information Systems, Healthcare Administration, Public Health, Medical Technology, and Medical (Health) Record Administration.
 - (2) Allied Health consists of Pharmacy, Social Worker, Psychologist (PhD and PsyD), Dietitian, and Licensed Professional Counselor.
 - (3) Medical Services consists of Nurse, Optometry, Physician Assistant, Podiatry, Therapy, and Dental Hygiene.
- 6-3. Permanent Promotion Eligibility Criteria.
- a. Regular Corps officers become eligible to be designated for promotion examinations (see Section 6-4.b.) upon meeting the following criteria:
 - (1) To the O-2 grade. An officer must have 2 years of seniority credit in the O-1 grade and must have completed at least 6 months of active-duty service in the USPHS Commissioned Corps.
 - (2) To the O-3 grade. An officer must have 2 years seniority credit in the O-2 grade and must have completed at least 1 year of active-duty service in the USPHS Commissioned Corps (or have 6 months active-duty service in the USPHS Commissioned Corps and 6 months of active duty as a commissioned officer in another uniformed service).
 - (3) To the O-4 grade. An officer must have 5 years seniority credit in the O-3 grade and must have completed at least 5 years of active-duty service in the USPHS Commissioned Corps (or have 1 year active-duty service in

the USPHS Commissioned Corps and 4 years on active-duty as a commissioned officer in another uniformed service).

- (4) To the O-5 grade. An officer must have 5 years seniority credit in the O-4 grade and must have completed at least 11 years of active-duty service in the USPHS Commissioned Corps (or have 3 years active-duty service in the USPHS Commissioned Corps and 8 years on active-duty as a commissioned officer in another uniformed service).
- (5) To the O-6 grade. An officer must have 5 years seniority credit in the O-5 grade and must have completed at least 16 years of active-duty service in the USPHS Commissioned Corps (or have 6 years active-duty service in the USPHS Commissioned Corps and 10 years on active-duty as a commissioned officer in another uniformed service).

b. Ready Reserve Corps officers become eligible to be designated for promotion examination (see Section 6-4.b.) upon meeting the following criteria:

- (1) To the O-2 grade. An officer must have 2 years seniority credit in the O-1 grade and must have completed at least 6 months in an active status in the USPHS Commissioned Corps.
- (2) To the O-3 grade. An officer must have 2 years seniority credit in the O-2 grade and must have completed at least 1 of those years in an active status in the USPHS Commissioned Corps (or have 6 months active status in the USPHS Commissioned Corps and 6 months in an active status as a commissioned officer in another uniformed service).
- (3) To the O-4 grade. An officer must have 5 years seniority credit in the O-3 grade and must have completed at least 5 of those years in an active status in the USPHS Commissioned Corps (or have 1 year in an active status in the USPHS Commissioned Corps and 4 years in an active status as a commissioned officer in another uniformed service).
- (4) To the O-5 grade. An officer must have 5 years seniority credit in the O-4 grade and must have completed at least 11 years in an active status in the USPHS Commissioned Corps (or have 3 years in an active status in the USPHS Commissioned Corps and 8 years in an active status as a commissioned officer in another uniformed service).
- (5) To the O-6 grade. An officer must have 5 years seniority credit in the O-5 grade and must have completed at least 16 years in an active status in the USPHS Commissioned Corps (or have 6 years in an active status in the USPHS Commissioned Corps and 10 years in an active status as a commissioned officer in another uniformed service).

c. Permanent Promotions must be in sequential order (i.e., grades cannot be skipped, except as authorized in Section 8-2).

6-4. Permanent Promotion Examination. At least annually, the SG will review the current distribution and profile of officers needed for operational force readiness, response requirements, and public health workforce needs. If promotion of officers is warranted to meet the Department's and USPHS Commissioned Corps' mission, the Director, CCHQ, will convene the necessary Permanent Promotion Boards (PPBs) to examine eligible officers who the SG designates for such examination.

- a. Promotion Boards. A PPB will examine Regular Corps and Ready Reserve Corps officers:
- (1) Who will meet the eligibility requirements in Section 6-3 during the promotion year, which runs from 1 July of one calendar year through 30 June of the following year;
 - (2) Who do not have an approved request to defer examination (i.e., have not opted out of promotion examination) for that promotion year (see Section 6-5); and
 - (3) Who the SG designates, in accordance with Section 6-4.b., for examination by the PPB.
- b. Designation for Examination. The Director, CCHQ, or his/her designee, will establish lists that contain the officers who meet the eligibility criteria set forth in Section 6-3 (excluding those officers whose request to opt out of promotion examination is approved by the Director, CCHQ (see Section 6-5)) during the promotion year and the SG will designate officers from those lists that the PPB will examine. The SG will designate officers for examination as follows:
- (1) Promotion opportunities are based on the projected force management requirements of the USPHS Commissioned Corps, the number of officers authorized by the Secretary at each grade (see [CCD 122.02](#), "Force Distribution and Management"), the number of anticipated vacancies that will be available for promotions in the categories and grades under consideration, and the required minimum success rates outlined in Section 6-7.b.
 - (2) The SG will designate officers for examination in the order of officers' seniority (i.e., seniority credit date (SCD)) within the respective promotion category. However, the SG may exclude officers who have a mandatory retirement date within the PY (or have requested retirement or separation) or have been referred to a Board of Inquiry (BOI), Involuntary Termination Board (ITB), Involuntary Retirement Board (IRB) (see [CCD 111.02](#), "Disciplinary Action," [CCI 382.03](#), "Involuntary Termination of Commission," or [CCI 384.03](#), "Mandatory, Voluntary, and Involuntary Retirement"); are undergoing an investigation/action by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), or criminal investigation/action by a civil authority; or in a previous PY, had a suspended elimination that remains unresolved (see Section 6-7.e. and [POM 821.87](#), "Promotion Precepts and Eligibility Criteria").
 - (3) Officers who the SG does not designate for examination remain eligible to be designated for examination at such time as the SG determines in accordance with this Subsection unless the officer:
 - (a) Was not promoted after an Above the Zone (ATZ) examination, as defined in Section 6-4.e. (or Special Promotion Examination (SPE), if applicable in accordance with Section 6-4.f.), by the PPB to the restricted O-4 grade, restricted O-5 grade, or the O-6 grade; or

- (b) Fails promotion to the O-2 grade due to a recommendation against promotion or fails promotion after an ATZ examination to the O-3 grade or a grade that is not restricted.
 - (4) The Director, CCHQ, or designee, will notify officers when the SG has designated them for examination by the PPB. Such notification may be through electronic means and may be through posting the information on officers' dashboard display in the Secure Area of the Commissioned Corps Management Information System (CCMIS) website, the electronic Corps Mass Communication System (eCMCS), or other electronic means.
- c. Below the Zone (BTZ). Prior to being eligible for an In the Zone (ITZ) examination, the SG may designate officers for review by the PPB for a BTZ examination in accordance with this Subsection.
 - (1) A BTZ examination provides outstanding officers who are exceptionally well qualified an opportunity to advance quickly to positions with greater responsibility.
 - (2) The SG may designate officers in the O-3, O-4, and O-5 grades for a BTZ promotion examination (i.e., may be examined for the O-4, O-5 and O-6 grades, respectively). The SG cannot designate officers in the O-1, and O-2 grades for BTZ promotion examination.
 - (a) BTZ examinations are normally limited to no more than one year prior to the officer meeting the eligibility criteria in Section 6-3.
 - (b) The SG may designate officers for BTZ examination up to 2 years prior to officers meeting the eligibility criteria in Section 6-3. When there is a particular professional need and/or there are sufficient vacancies in a grade to warrant accepting such nominations in order to meet the USPHS Commissioned Corps' projected force management requirements.
 - (c) The SG may limit the number of BTZ examinations by profession, category, and/or grade (see [POM 821.88](#), "Below the Zone Promotion and Special Promotion Examination").
 - (3) The SG may issue further guidance and limitations regarding the designation criteria for examination and the number of officers that a PPB may examine for a BTZ promotion (see [POM 821.88](#), "Below the Zone Promotion and Special Promotion Examination").
- d. In the Zone (ITZ). An officer is ITZ when they meet the eligibility criteria in Section 6-3 and the SG designates their examination for review by a PPB for an ITZ promotion (see Section 8-3 for implementation of ITZ promotions).
 - (1) Restricted Grades and O-6 Grade. An officer who is not promoted ITZ for the restricted O-4 grade, restricted O-5 grade, or the O-6 grade will remain ITZ in for up to three consecutive PYs (total) unless the officer requests to defer an ITZ examination (see Section 6-5) or the officer twice fails promotion as outlined in Section 6-8.a.(1) (i.e., not recommended by the PPB, or eliminated from the list). However, the Director, CCHQ, may authorize continued eligibility as outlined in Section 6-7.g.(2) for an officer who twice fails promotion.

- (2) O-2, O-3, and Not Restricted Grades. An officer who is not promoted after their first ITZ examination for the O-2 grade, O-3 grade, not restricted O-4 grade, or not restricted O-5 grade is no longer eligible for an ITZ examination and will be considered in the subsequent PY for an ATZ examination (see Section 6-4.e.).
 - (3) Opting Out of ITZ Examination. An officer may elect to defer an ITZ examination as outlined in Section 6-5.
- e. Above the Zone (ATZ). Officers who are not promoted while ITZ as outlined in Section 6-4.d. are examined once by the next PPB for an ATZ examination unless the officer twice fails promotion while ITZ as outlined in Section 6-4.d.(1). An officer who is not promoted ATZ for any grade is no longer eligible for an ATZ examination and will remain in their permanent grade until they separate or retire (see also Section 6-8). However, certain officers may be eligible for nomination for an SPE as outlined in Section 6-4.f.
- f. Special Promotion Examination (SPE). When an officer has not been promoted after an ATZ examination, the officer's Operating Division (OPDIV)/Staff Division (STAFFDIV)/non-HHS organization may nominate the officer for a SPE in accordance with an SG established POM (see [POM 821.88](#), "Below the Zone Promotion and Special Promotion Examination").
 - (1) The SG may authorize an OPDIV/STAFFDIV/non-HHS organization to nominate 10 percent, or less, of the number of officers in their OPDIV/STAFFDIV/non-HHS organization who meet the eligibility requirements for a SPE.
 - (2) The SG may limit SPE nominations to a particular profession, category, and/or grade.
 - (3) The SG may not authorize an OPDIV/STAFFDIV/non-HHS organization to nominate an officer if:
 - (a) The officer was not promoted ITZ and ATZ to the O-2 grade, O-3 grade, not restricted O-4 grade, or not restricted O-5 grade.
 - (b) A PPB examined the officer for a BTZ promotion.
 - (c) Less than two years has elapsed since the officer's ATZ examination or since the officer twice failed promotion while ITZ and/or ATZ. The two years is measured from the beginning of the PY for which the last PPB examination occurred and the beginning of the PY for which the SPE is being requested.
- 6-5. Opt Out of Examination for Promotion. Officers who are eligible for an ITZ examination by a PPB may request to defer promotion in accordance with the eligibility criteria and procedures issued by the SG in a POM (see [POM 821.89](#), "Promotion Deferral/Opt-Out").
- 6-6. PPB Operational Policy and Procedures. The USPHS Commissioned Corps utilizes PPBs to examine the fitness and qualifications of officers for permanent promotion to the next higher grade.
 - a. Officers Examined. PPBs will examine the qualifications of the following:

- (1) Officers who are eligible and the SG designates for examination during the promotion year for permanent promotion to any grade;
 - (2) Officers who were eligible and examined for permanent promotion in a preceding promotion year, but did not receive a promotion, except for officers who twice fail promotion or are not promoted after an ATZ examination (unless an SPE examination is authorized as outlined in Section 6-4.f.) and officers who were not recommended for promotion to the O-2 grade; and
 - (3) Officers who are referred to a PPB by the Board for Correction of Commissioned Corps Records and officers that the Director, CCHQ, refers to the PPB to remedy an administrative error in the promotion process.
- b. Precepts. PPBs examine the fitness and qualifications of officers for promotion to the next higher permanent grade using precepts that are based on force management requirements and mission of the USPHS Commissioned Corps. The SG or designee may approve benchmarks to serve as general professional guidelines to assist officers and the PPB. The SG will, through the issuance of a POM, establish precepts, methodology for determining relative weights and scoring, and any necessary definition/clarification of terms used related to the precepts (see [POM 821.87](#), "Promotion Precepts and Eligibility Criteria"). The precepts will include at least the following components:
- (1) Performance; education, career progression, and potential; and contribution to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV/non-HHS organization to which the officer is assigned shall be precepts for promotion to all grades;
 - (2) Clinical and/or Professional Skills (e.g., specific to the officer's qualifying degree), including the application of discipline specific acumen, shall be precepts for promotions up to the O-4 and O-5 grades;
 - (3) Clinical and/or Professional Leadership (e.g., related to the officer's qualifying degree) shall be a precept for promotion to the O-5 grade;
 - (4) Scope and breadth of Departmental and USPHS Commissioned Corps experience shall be precepts for promotion to the O-5 and O-6 grades; and
 - (5) Leadership attributes and professional experience as a leader shall be precepts for promotion to the O-6 grade.
- c. PPB Membership. The SG or designee will appoint one or more PPBs to examine the fitness and qualifications of officers eligible for and designated for promotion examination.
- (1) PPBs will consist of three or more officers, the majority of whom are Regular Corps officers. The members must be at the O-5 or higher grade and senior in grade to the officers that the PPB will examine and must meet the conditions of service (see [CCD 111.03](#), "Conditions of Service"), have satisfactory performance, and not have any current actionable administrative action flags (see [CCI 211.07](#), "Accountability for Conduct and Performance"). The SG will appoint a flag grade officer to serve as the Chair of the PPB. At least one of the PPB members must be of the same promotion category group as the officers examined for promotion.

- (2) The SG may appoint separate PPBs to examine Regular Corps and Ready Reserve Corps officers. The SG may appoint one or more separate PPBs that examines Ready Reserve Corps officers by the officers' profession or promotion category, or the SG may appoint PPBs that examine Ready Reserve Corps officers regardless of the officers' profession or promotion category.
- (3) The SG or designee shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the selection process for PPB members complies with the Department's rules, regulations, and policies against discrimination in the workplace. In addition, the SG will attempt to ensure that PPB membership is as representative as possible with respect to OPDIV/STAFFDIV/non-HHS organization and field representation.
- (4) No officer may serve as a member of a PPB for the same promotion category group more frequently than once every two years.
- (5) Each PPB will commence with the Director, CCHQ, or designee, administering an oath of office to each member that addresses issues such as the requirement to recuse oneself if there is a conflict of interest and the confidentiality of the PPB process.
- (6) When a PPB is convened, the Chair of the PPB is responsible for:
 - (a) Calling the PPB to order; and
 - (b) Governing the general conduct of the PPB.
- (7) The Director, CCHQ, or designee, shall assign a non-voting Executive Secretary to each PPB. The Executive Secretary's duties consist of:
 - (a) Preparing the PPB's recommendation(s) for submission through administrative channels for approval; and
 - (b) Performing other board-related duties as required by the Chair, SG, or Director, CCHQ.
- (8) All PPB members are bound to hold in confidence all information concerning officers the PPB examines and will not divulge, discuss, nor transmit any information related to the PPB's proceedings and process unless authorized by the SG or Director, CCHQ. Such information includes, but is not limited to:
 - (a) Deliberations, rankings, and recommendations of the PPB;
 - (b) Comments made by any PPB member;
 - (c) Discussions with officers called as consultants to the PPB;
 - (d) Evaluations and votes made by PPB members; and
 - (e) Information regarding an officer that is contained in the officer's electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) that is made a part of the officer's promotion folder in the Officer Promotion Package Verification System (OPPVS) or that is provided to the PPB.

Note: In order to maintain the integrity of the promotion process, the SG or designee shall discipline any PPB member who does not maintain the confidentiality of the PPB process (see [POM 821.87](#), "Promotion Precepts and Eligibility Criteria"). Such discipline shall be in accordance with applicable policy and may include the separation of the officer from the USPHS Commissioned Corps. Furthermore, the Director, CCHQ, will report violations of the Privacy Act to the appropriate authority for investigation and enforcement of criminal penalties (see 5 U.S.C. § 552a).

- d. **PPB Responsibilities.** PPBs are responsible for ensuring that they recommend only the best qualified officers for permanent promotion. The PPB shall make a recommendation against permanent promotion for any officer that it determines is not qualified for promotion to the next higher grade. PPB members rank eligible officers individually by evaluating the information available to the PPB on each officer with the applicable precepts. Thereafter, the members' rankings for each officer are averaged to create a rank ordered listing by grade within each promotion category group. All recommendations by a PPB shall be based on a majority of votes of the PPB members. All members of the PPB shall have equal voting rights.
- e. **PPB Document/Information Review.** For purposes of making recommendations regarding permanent promotion, PPBs review documentation maintained in an officer's eOPF that is made a part of the officer's promotion folder in OPPVS along with any additional information that the SG authorizes in a POM (see [POM 821.87](#), "Promotion Precepts and Eligibility Criteria"), which may include other information regarding an officer that is not maintained in the eOPF (e.g., readiness history). However, the PPB will not review information maintained separately in an officer's adverse actions, medical, or compensation files.
- f. **Submission of PPB Recommendations.** After the PPB has finalized its recommendations and ranking for each promotion category group and grade, the PPB submits its results through the Executive Secretary to the Director, CCHQ, who, after eliminating officers in accordance with Section 6-7.e., submits the results to the SG for final approval through administrative channels.

6-7. Permanent Promotion Roster and Promotion Approval.

- a. Permanent promotions to the O-4, O-5, and O-6 grades depend on the needs and requirements of the USPHS Commissioned Corps as determined by the ASH within the limits established by the Secretary. Promotion opportunities to these grades are competitive (except for promotion to the O-4 grade for medical and dental officers) and are made from the permanent promotion rosters based on: vacancies in grade within the authorized permanent grade force distribution established by the Secretary pursuant to [CCD 122.02](#), "Force Distribution and Management," and/or force requirement projections in each promotion category group; and standing of the officer on the PPB's ranked order lists.
- b. **Success Rates.** Prior to the PPB convening the ASH will determine the anticipated number of officers by promotion category group and grade that will receive a promotion within the permanent grade force distribution established by the Secretary.
 - (1) **Regular Corps Success Rates.**
 - (a) The anticipated success rates for those officers the PPB examines for the O-2 and O-3 grades, as well as those officers the PPB

examines for promotion to the O-4 and O-5 grades when not restricted are as follows:

- (i) Promotion to the O-5 grade when not restricted will be no less than 90 percent.
- (ii) Promotion to the O-4 grade when not restricted will be 100 percent.
- (iii) Promotion to the O-3 and O-2 grades will be 100 percent.

Note: If the success rates outlined in this Subsection will result in the number of officers at a particular grade exceeding the Secretary's authorized force distribution pursuant to [CCD 122.02](#), "Force Distribution and Management," the ASH will establish a lower success rate that will not result in the USPHS Commissioned Corps exceeding an authorized distribution.

- (b) The ASH will base the success rates for O-4 and O-5 grades when restricted as well as the O-6 grade on whether a vacancy exists in such grades within the authorized permanent grade force distribution established by the Secretary in [CCD 122.02](#), "Force Distribution and Management," and/or force requirement projections in each promotion category group.
 - (c) Within the limits outlined in Section 6-7.b.(1)(a) and (b), the ASH may establish different success rates by zone and promotion category group.
 - (d) On an annual basis, the Director, CCHQ, in consultation with the Deputy Surgeon General (DSG), will evaluate the current and projected force strength of the USPHS Commissioned Corps and make a recommendation through the SG to the ASH to establish the authorized force distribution that the ASH should recommend to the Secretary (see 42 U.S.C. § 207(d) and [CCD 122.02](#), "Force Distribution and Management").
- (2) Ready Reserve Corps Success Rates. The ASH will base the anticipated success rates for all grades on the authorized force distribution, vacancies in each grade, the grades of officers needed for operational force readiness and response requirements needed by the USPHS Commissioned Corps, and availability of funds.
- c. Promotion Rosters. The Director, CCHQ, or designee, will establish permanent promotion rosters that lists officers that the PPB examined. The PPB will establish separate rosters for Regular Corps and Ready Reserve Corps officers, and will subdivide those rosters by promotion category group and grade. Each promotion roster will include the names of all officers that the PPB examines for permanent promotion and will identify officers as follows:
- (1) Promotion category group, eligible permanent grade, above or below the promotion success rate, PPB recommendation, and whether the officer was examined for a BTZ, ITZ, ATZ, or SPE promotion (if applicable).

- (2) Alternatively, the PPB may establish rosters that are further subdivided provided that each roster contains the information outlined in Section 6-7.c.(1).
- d. In cases of identical rankings, PPBs shall use the following order of precedence to establish an officer's placement (e.g., above or below the promotion success rate) on the promotion roster:
 - (1) The officer with the earlier seniority credit date has relative standing over an officer with a more recent seniority credit date;
 - (2) The Regular Corps officer with more years of active service in the USPHS Commissioned Corps has relative standing over a Regular Corps officer with fewer years of such service. The Ready Reserve Corps officer with more years in an active status in the USPHS Commissioned Corps has relative standing over a Ready Reserve Corps officer with fewer years of such service; and
 - (3) The Regular Corps officer with more years of active service at any rank in any of the Uniformed Services has relative standing over a Regular Corps officer with fewer years of such service. The Ready Reserve Corps officer with more years in an active status at any rank in any of the Uniformed Services has relative standing over a Ready Reserve Corps officer with fewer years of such service
- e. After the Executive Secretary has submitted the promotion roster, the Director, CCHQ, prior to submitting the roster to the SG, will eliminate any officer:
 - (1) Who has not met the licensure requirement(s) for his/her discipline and/or category (see [CCI 251.01](#), "Professional Licensure and Certification");
 - (2) Who has not met and maintained the basic level of force readiness requirements (see [CCI 241.01](#), "Readiness and Duty Requirements," and [POM 821.87](#), "Promotion Precepts and Eligibility Criteria");
 - (3) Whose eOPF is missing an annual COER from the past five years (see Section 7-3.c.) or whose most recent COER is unsatisfactory;
 - (4) Who has any outstanding adverse action(s). However, if allegations of misconduct or substandard performance are brought to the attention of the Director, CCHQ, before the close of the promotion year, and the officer is otherwise eligible for permanent promotion, the Director, CCHQ, may suspend the elimination process for a period not to exceed one year to allow sufficient time for an investigation (e.g., special investigator under [CCD 111.02](#), "Disciplinary Action," OIG, UCMJ, civil authority, etc.), if warranted, and the adjudication of the allegations. After the one year period the Director, CCHQ, will make a determination regarding the officer's promotion status unless the SG extends a suspended elimination beyond one year;
 - (5) Who receives a recommendation against promotion by the PPB (see Section 6-7.g.); or
 - (6) Who the Director, CCHQ, determines, based on additional information available to the Director, CCHQ (i.e., reports of security violations, disability under [CCI 393.01](#), "Medical Review Board"), is either not

qualified or not suitable for promotion to the next higher grade. However, if a security or medical investigation is ongoing, and the officer is otherwise eligible for permanent promotion, the Director, CCHQ, may suspend the elimination process for a period not to exceed one year to allow sufficient time for completing the investigation, after which the Director, CCHQ, will make a determination regarding the officer's promotion status unless the SG extends a suspended elimination beyond one year.

- f. Under the conditions outlined in Section 6-7.e., the Director, CCHQ, may eliminate an officer from the approval list or suspend the elimination process at any time during the promotion year provided the effective date of the promotion has not passed and the decision of the Director, CCHQ, to eliminate or suspend the elimination is made prior to the effective date.
- g. Action on PPB Recommendations Against Promotion and Two Failures. When the PPB makes a recommendation against an officer's promotion (i.e., "not recommend") and when an officer twice fails promotion as outlined in Section 6-8.a.(1) (i.e., not recommended by the PPB or eliminated from the list), the Director, CCHQ, will take the following actions:
 - (1) Not Recommends. The Director, CCHQ, will submit the PPB's recommendation to the SG with a brief summary of the officer's record, the PPB's reasons for not recommending the officer, and a recommended course of action. The SG may order further investigation and review of the non-recommendation by the PPB, approve the PPB's non-recommendation, or disapprove the PPB's non-recommendation.
 - (a) Except as noted in Section 6-7.g.(1)(c), if a further investigation and review results in the PPB recommending the officer, the officer is still considered to have failed promotion as outlined in Section 6-8 if the officer otherwise meets the criteria for a failure (i.e., eliminated from the list). In such cases the USPHS Commissioned Corps will not take an action that is specifically tied to a PPB's non-recommendation but may take other actions related to a failure of promotion as outlined in this Instruction. A PPB that is conducting a further investigation and review of an officer will not re-rank the officer and will only investigate and review the recommendation against promotion.
 - (b) Except as noted in Section 6-7.g.(1)(c), if the SG disapproves (i.e., rejects) the PPB's non-recommendation, the officer is still considered to have failed promotion, if applicable, as outlined in Section 6-8 if the officer otherwise meets the criteria for a failure (i.e., eliminated from the list). In such cases the USPHS Commissioned Corps will not take an action that is specifically tied to a PPB's non-recommendation but may take other actions related to a failure of promotion as outlined in this Instruction.
 - (c) If the PPB recommends the officer after further investigation and review or if the SG disapproves the PPB's non-recommendation, and if the officer's PPB ranking would result in the officer's promotion, the SG will submit the officer to the ASH for further action.
 - (2) Two Failures. The Director, CCHQ, will evaluate the reasons why the officer twice failed promotion and may authorize the officer's continued

eligibility for promotion examination (if applicable) when such a determination is warranted and in the best interests of the USPHS Commissioned Corps (see Section 6-7.g.(1) for not recommends).

h. Effective Date of Promotion.

- (1) Permanent promotions are effective on the first day of the month following an officer's date of eligibility unless a later date is indicated as follows:
 - (a) Permanent promotions for Regular Corps officers are subject to approval by the President. The USPHS Commissioned Corps cannot promote an officer earlier than the first day of the month following the date on which the President approves those Regular Corps officers that the Secretary submits to the President for promotion.
 - (b) Permanent promotions for members of the Ready Reserve Corps are subject to the approval of the ASH. The USPHS Commissioned Corps cannot promote an officer earlier than the first day of the month following the date on which the ASH approves those Ready Reserve Corps officers that the SG submits to the ASH for promotion.
 - (c) In all cases, a promotion cannot be earlier than the promotion year for which the PPB examined officers.
- (2) For the purposes of Section 6-7.f. and Section 6-7.h.(1), an effective date is not official until the Director, CCHQ, issues a personnel order as required in Section 6-7.i.

i. Upon approval of the President or ASH (as applicable), the Director, CCHQ, will issue personnel orders that promote those officers who are approved for promotion.

6-8. Failure of Permanent Promotion. As a condition of service, an officer must demonstrate career progression by preparing for, seeking, and accepting assignments of increased responsibility that are commensurate with or greater than their grade (see [CCD 111.03](#), "Conditions of Service"). An officer who fails to meet this, or any other, condition of service may fail to receive a promotion to a grade for which the officer is eligible. Failure of promotion may result in the reduction of the officer's grade, separation from active duty, termination of the officer's commission, and/or retirement.

a. For the purposes of this Instruction:

- (1) Failure of promotion includes an officer who fails promotion to a particular grade after ITZ and ATZ (and SPE, if applicable) examinations. Such failures must be the consequence of:
 - (a) A "not recommend" by the PPB; or
 - (b) Elimination from the final promotion approval list for the O-3, O-4, O-5, or O-6 grades because of any of the reasons in Section 6-7.e.

- (2) Notification. The Director, CCHQ, or designee, will post information in each officer's eOPF so that officers can be aware of their failure of promotion. Such notification does not have to be individualized.
- (a) The notification will include information regarding:
- (i) The officer's failure to be promoted;
 - (ii) The consequences of continued failure of promotion; and
 - (iii) The availability of counseling to assist the officer to improve their career progression, performance, or conduct.
- (b) The Director, CCHQ, or designee, must notify an officer of each occurrence of the officer's failure of promotion no later than three months after the SG submits the promotion lists to the ASH in order to take the following actions without a review by another board (e.g., ITB, BOI, or IRB): separate a Regular Corps officer from active duty, terminate the officer's commission, and retire the officer from active duty (see Sections 6-8.b., c., and d.)
- Note: the notification requirement is not required in order to retire an officer upon reaching mandatory retirement as outlined in [CCI 384.03](#), "Mandatory, Voluntary, and Involuntary Retirement."
- (c) Except for mandatory retirements, when CCHQ fails to notify an officer as required by Section 6-8.a.(2)(b), the Director, CCHQ, must refer an officer to a BOI, ITB, or IRB to take any of the actions outlined in Section 6-8.a.(2)(b) (see also Section 6-9).
- (3) Separation from Active Duty, Termination of Commission, or Retirement due to Failure of Promotion.
- (a) In order to separate an officer from active duty, retire an officer, or terminate an officer's commission under this Instruction due to failures of promotion, such failures must be to the same grade (e.g., one failure of promotion for the O-4 grade and one failure of promotion for the O-5 grade do not count as a two failures of promotion). However, this does not prohibit including failures to multiple grades when the USPHS Commissioned Corps convenes a separation/retirement board under other Instructions.
- (b) The determination by the SG or Director, CCHQ, regarding the date of separation from active duty, termination of an officer's commission, or retirement is made in consultation with the program to which the officer is assigned. To the extent possible, the date will be determined so as to give the officer a reasonable period within which to formulate plans.
- (c) The determination of the date of termination of an officer's commission or retirement through a review and recommendation by a BOI, ITB, or IRB is made in accordance with the respective Instructions (see [CCD 111.02](#), "Disciplinary Action," [CCI 382.03](#), "Involuntary Termination of Commissioned," or [CCI 384.03](#), "Mandatory, Voluntary, and Involuntary Retirement").

- (4) Exceptions to a Failure of Promotion
 - (a) Failure of promotion does not include when an officer fails promotion to a particular grade after a BTZ examination, regardless of the reason(s) for the failure.
 - (b) Failure of promotion does not include an officer who the PPB recommends for promotion but ranks below the promotion success rate if the officer does not meet any of the criteria in Section 6-8.a.(1)(a) or (b).
- b. Regular Corps Failure of Promotion to the O-2 Grade. A Regular Corps officer who has a failure of promotion to the permanent O-2 grade because the PPB recommended against the officer's promotion (i.e., one "not recommend"), or who fails promotion (e.g., eliminated from the promotion list) after a PPB examines the officer for an authorized ITZ and ATZ promotion to the permanent O-2 grade for reasons other than physical disability, will have their commission terminated on a date determined by the Director, CCHQ. The Director, CCHQ, will determine the date of termination in consultation with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV/non-HHS organization to which the officer is assigned. However, if the officer has 18 or more years of creditable service for retirement, the Director, CCHQ, will retire the officer on the first day of the month following the officer's completion of 20 years of creditable service for retirement unless referral to an ITB or BOI is otherwise warranted. An officer who is retired or whose commission is terminated under this Subsection will serve in the O-1 grade until their separation/retirement and is not eligible for an SPE promotion examination.
- c. Regular Corps Failure of Promotion to the O-3 Grade. A Regular Corps officer who fails promotion after a PPB examines the officer for an authorized ITZ and ATZ promotion to the permanent O-3 grade for reasons other than physical disability, will have their commission terminated on a date determined by the Director, CCHQ, and will be paid 6 months of basic pay and allowances. The Director, CCHQ, will determine the date of termination in consultation with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV/ non-HHS organization to which the officer is assigned. However, if the officer has 18 or more years of creditable service for retirement, the Director, CCHQ, will retire the officer on the first day of the month following the officer's completion of 20 years of creditable service for retirement unless referral to an ITB or BOI is otherwise warranted. An officer who is retired or whose commission is terminated under this Subsection will serve in the O-2 grade until their separation/retirement and is not eligible for an SPE promotion examination.
- d. Regular Corps Failure of Promotion to a Grade that is Not Restricted.
 - (1) To the O-4 Grade when Not Restricted. A Regular Corps officer who fails promotion after a PPB examines the officer for an authorized ITZ and ATZ promotion to the permanent O-4 grade and the failures are for reasons other than physical disability will have their commission terminated on a date determined by the Director, CCHQ, and will be paid 1 year of basic pay and allowances. The Director, CCHQ, will determine the date of termination in consultation with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV/non-HHS organization to which the officer is assigned. However, if the officer has 18 or more years of creditable service for retirement, the Director, CCHQ, will retire the officer on the first day of the month following the officer's completion of 20 years of creditable service for retirement. An officer who is retired or whose commission is terminated under this Subsection will

serve in the O-3 grade until their separation/retirement and is not eligible for an SPE promotion examination.

- (2) To the O-5 Grade when Not Restricted. A Regular Corps officer who fails promotion after a PPB examines the officer for an authorized ITZ and ATZ promotion to the permanent O-5 grade will serve in the permanent O-4 grade until the officer is retired from the USPHS Commissioned Corps with retired pay. The Director, CCHQ, will retire such an officer on the first day of any month as determined by the SG, and the officer is not eligible for an SPE promotion examination.
- e. Regular Corps Failure of Promotion to the Restricted O-4 Grade, Restricted O-5 Grade, or to the O-6 Grade.
- (1) Two Non-Recommendations. The Director, CCHQ, may refer a Regular Corps officer to an ITB, BOI, or IRB when the officer fails promotion after a PPB examines the officer for an ITZ and ATZ (as well as after an SPE, if applicable) for the restricted O-4, restricted O-5, or O-6 grade because the PPB twice recommended against the promotion. An officer who is referred to an ITB, BOI, or IRB will serve in their current grade until their separation or retirement and is no longer eligible for further promotion examinations unless the officer is not separated or retired and the ITB, BOI, or IRB's approving official authorizes further promotion examinations.
 - (2) Non-Recommendation and Elimination.
 - (a) The Director, CCHQ, may refer to a BOI or ITB a Regular Corps officer who has two failures of promotion after a PPB examines the officer for an ITZ and ATZ (and SPE, if applicable) for the permanent restricted O-4, restricted O-5, or O-6 grade because the PPB recommended against promotion or the Director, CCHQ, eliminates the officer from the approval list (or any combination thereof). However, if the officer has 18 or more years of creditable service for retirement, the Director, CCHQ, will refer the officer to an IRB unless the officer will reach mandatory retirement prior to an IRB convening, has been retained beyond a mandatory retirement date (see [CCI 384.03](#)), or referral to an ITB or BOI is otherwise warranted. An officer referred to an ITB, BOI, or IRB under this Subsection will serve in their current grade and is no longer eligible for further promotion examinations unless further promotion examinations are approved through the ITB, BOI, or IRB process.
 - (b) A Regular Corps officer who has two failures of promotion, because the Director, CCHQ, eliminated the officer from the approval list, may submit a request to the Director, CCHQ, to transfer to the Ready Reserve Corps in lieu of referral to a BOI or ITB as outlined in Section 6-8.e.(2)(a). If the Director, CCHQ, approves the officer's request, the officer will transfer to the Ready Reserve Corps on a date determined by the Director, CCHQ.
 - (3) The failures of promotion for the reasons stated in Section 6-8.e.(1) and (2) must be to the same grade and may occur in consecutive or non-consecutive years/examinations and include ITZ and ATZ (and SPE failures, if applicable) failures. However, the Director, CCHQ, will not count BTZ promotion eliminations and non-recommendations.

- (4) Recommended but not Promoted.
 - (a) A PPB will continue to examine an officer for authorized ITZ and ATZ examinations unless the officer opts out of an ITZ examination or has twice failed promotion to the restricted O-4 grade, restricted O-5 grade, or O-6 grade after an ITZ or ATZ examination, or if the officer is not promoted after an ATZ examination. An OPDIV/STAFFDIV/non-HHS organization may nominate an officer (if eligible) for an SPE if the officer has failed promotion or is not promoted after an ITZ and/or ATZ examination (see Section 6-4.f.).
 - (b) An officer will serve in their current grade until their separation/retirement from service when the officer does not meet the conditions outlined in Sections 6-8.e.(1) or (2) and the officer has not been promoted after an ITZ and ATZ examinations (or after an SPE, if applicable), to the restricted O-4 grade, restricted O-5 grade, or O-6 grade.
 - (c) The USPHS Commissioned Corps may reduce an officer's grade at any time as outlined in Section 6-9 or through other administrative action if such actions are warranted.
- f. Ready Reserve Corps Officer Failures of Promotion to All Grades.
 - (1) Two Non-Recommendations. The Director, CCHQ, will terminate the commission of a Ready Reserve Corps officer who fails promotion after a PPB examines the officer for an ITZ and ATZ (and an SPE, if applicable) examination for a grade because the PPB twice recommended against the promotion. However, if the officer has 18 or more years of creditable service for retirement, the Director, CCHQ, will retire the officer on the first day of any month after the officer completes 20 years of creditable service for retirement unless referral to an ITB or BOI is otherwise warranted. The Director, CCHQ, will determine the date of termination or retirement. Such an officer will serve in their current grade until their separation/retirement and is no longer eligible for further promotion examinations.
 - (2) When a Ready Reserve Corps officer who has two failures of promotion after a PPB examines the officer for an ITZ and ATZ (and SPE, if applicable) examination for the permanent O-4, O-5, or O-6 grade because the PPB recommended against promotion or the Director, CCHQ, eliminates the officer from the approval list (or any combination thereof), the Director, CCHQ:
 - (a) May remove the officer from active status or refer the officer to a BOI or ITB;
 - (b) May continue the officer in an active status if the officer has training and skills that may be needed in the circumstances in which the USPHS Commissioned Corps may be called to respond. Such an officer will serve in their current grade and is no longer eligible for further promotion examinations; or
 - (c) Will retain the officer in an active status if the officer has 18 or more years of creditable service for retirement until the officer is

separated/retired under applicable Instructions. Such an officer will serve in their current grade and is no longer eligible for further promotion examinations.

- (3) The failures of promotion for the reasons stated in Section 6-8.f.(1) and (2) must be to the same grade and may occur in consecutive or non-consecutive years/examinations and include ITZ and ATZ (and SPE failures, if applicable). However, the Director, CCHQ, will not include BTZ promotion eliminations and non-recommendations.
- g. An officer referred to a BOI, ITB, or IRB is not eligible for a permanent promotion until the recommendation of the BOI, ITB, or IRB has been made and the authorized official has finalized their decision:
 - (1) An officer who is retained on active duty may be once again designated for promotion examination, if eligible under this Instruction, provided that the BOI, ITB, or IRB makes a specific recommendation regarding the officer's promotion eligibility.
 - (2) An officer who is being separated from active duty or active status remains ineligible for permanent promotion.

6-9. Reduction of a Permanent Grade.

- a. The SG may reduce an officer's permanent grade based on the recommendation of:
 - (1) An ITB, BOI, and/or IRB; or
 - (2) A specially convened Permanent Promotion Reduction Board (PPRB).
- b. The Director, CCHQ, without further delegation and in consultation with the officer's OPDIV/STAFFDIV/non-HHS organization, may appoint and convene a PPRB for an officer who:
 - (1) Has performance that has deteriorated to an unsatisfactory or marginal level;
 - (2) Has engaged in misconduct;
 - (3) Is functioning one or more grades below their permanent grade;
 - (4) Has failed to respond to progressive counseling and/or discipline or has any outstanding adverse action(s);
 - (5) Has failed to meet or maintain a condition of service (e.g., license requirements, force readiness standards, weight standards) (see [CCD 111.03](#), "Conditions of Service"), and/or any other requirements officers must meet; or
 - (6) The Director, CCHQ, determines, based on additional information available to the Director, CCHQ, (e.g., reports of security violations), that the officer may be either not qualified or not suitable to hold the permanent grade.

- c. PPRB Membership Criteria and Procedures.
- (1) **Membership.** The Director, CCHQ, will appoint a flag grade officer who serves as the chair and two or more officers who hold the O-6 grade or higher. A majority of the PPRB members will be Regular Corps officers and at least one of the PPRB members should be, if practical, of the same promotion category group as the officer to be examined for permanent grade reduction.
 - (2) **Notification.** The Director, CCHQ, or designee, will provide the officer being examined by a PPRB with notification at least 30 calendar days before the PPRB convenes. The Director, CCHQ, or designee, must also provide the officer with a copy of, or electronic access to, all documents to be reviewed by the PPRB at least 30 calendar days before the PPRB convenes. Such documentation may include documents from the Director, CCHQ, and/or the officer's OPDIV/STAFFDIV/non-HHS organization and may be made available via electronic means with a verifiable delivery or other appropriate method.
 - (3) **Officer Submissions.** The officer must submit documents using a method that ensures that CCHQ receives them no later than seven (7) calendar days prior to the date the PPRB convenes.
 - (4) **Convening the PPRB.** The PPRB will commence with the Director, CCHQ, or designee, administering an oath of office to each member that will address issues such as the requirement to recuse oneself if there is a conflict of interest and the need for confidentiality. (Note: PPRB members are bound to hold in confidence all information concerning the officer as outlined in Section 6-6.c.(8) and are also subject to discipline as outlined in that Section.)
 - (5) **PPRB Meeting.** The PPRB will review the officer's eOPF and the documentation outlined in Section 6-9.c.(2) and (3). The officer is not entitled to appear personally before the PPRB, but the PPRB, by majority vote, may elect to grant a request by an officer to appear.
- d. Findings and Recommendations of the PPRB. Based on the evidence presented, the PPRB may recommend one or more of the following actions:
- (1) **Investigation or No Action.** When the PPRB finds, based on the documents referred to the PPRB, that a reduction in the officer's grade or other actions authorized in this Subsection are not warranted, it may recommend that the USPHS Commissioned Corps take no further action or it may recommend further investigation into the matter(s);
 - (2) **Disciplinary Action.** When the PPRB recommends issuing a Letter of Reprimand (LOR), the PPRB must also make a specific recommendation regarding the period of time the USPHS Commissioned Corps should maintain the LOR in the officer's eOPF;
 - (3) **Reduction of the Officer's Permanent Grade.** When the PPRB recommends the reduction of the officer's grade, the PPRB must also make a specific recommendation, as applicable, regarding the officer's seniority credit in the grade to which reduced and time in service credit; and/or

- (4) Involuntary Separation. When the PPRB recommends an officer's separation, the PPRB must make a specific recommendation regarding the appropriate board to refer the officer (i.e., BOI, ITB, or IRB).
- e. Minority Report. Any member not concurring with the majority will sign and submit a separate minority report, setting forth the extent of their concurrence and non-concurrence and the reasons therefore, and the variant findings, opinions, or recommendations, as appropriate. Each minority report submitted will be attached to the recommendations of the PPRB and will be considered by all authorities reviewing the PPRB's recommendations.
- f. Submission of PPRB Recommendations. The Director, CCHQ, will submit the PPRB's recommendations to the SG unless the Director, CCHQ, orders further investigation and review by the PPRB.
- g. Action on PPRB Recommendations. The SG may order further investigation and review by the PPRB, convene a new PPRB, approve the PPRB's recommendations in whole or in part, or order another action that may not be of greater severity than the PPRB's recommendations.
 - (1) The approval of an LOR and/or reduction of the officer's permanent grade will become effective on the date of the SG's approval.
 - (2) The approval of an involuntary separation recommendation results in the convening of the board that the SG approved. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will conduct the separation board in accordance with the applicable policy (e.g., notification to the officer and approval of the board's recommendation), except that a separate decision by the convening authority is not required (i.e., the SG's approval is deemed to convene the board under the applicable policy).
- h. Notification of SG's Decision. The Director, CCHQ, or designee, will notify the officer of the SG's decision. Notification may be made via electronic means with a verifiable delivery or other appropriate method.
- i. Appeal of the SG's Decision. An officer may submit an appeal to the ASH of the SG's decision to reduce the officer's grade or to approve a disciplinary action. However, the officer may not appeal a decision that refers the officer to an involuntary separation board.
 - (1) The officer must file an appeal in writing and the ASH must receive it within 10 calendar days of the date the officer receives written notification of the SG's decision.
 - (2) The ASH shall provide written notification to the officer of his/her decision.
 - (a) If no decision is rendered by the ASH within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal, the SG's decision becomes the final decision.
 - (b) If an LOR and/or reduction in the officer's grade is upheld, the effective date shall be the date of the SG's decision, not the date of the appeal.
 - (c) Based on review of the appeal, the ASH may reverse the SG's decision, approve the PPRB's recommendations in whole or in

part, order another action that may not be of greater severity than the PPRB's recommendations, or order further investigation and review by a new PPRB. If the ASH orders further investigation and review by a new PPRB, the Director, CCHQ, will convene a new PPRB that will review the officer's eOPF and the documentation outlined in Section 6-9.c.(2) and (3) and to make a new recommendation to the ASH who will make the final decision, without further appeal rights by the officer. The officer may not submit additional documents for a new PPRB's review unless the ASH authorizes such submission.

- j. Reexamination for Permanent Promotion. A future PPB may examine an officer who has a permanent promotion grade reduced when the officer meets the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 6-3 and the SG designates the officer for examination in accordance with Section 6-4. Such examinations are limited to ITZ and ATZ examinations (i.e., an officer whose grade is reduced is not eligible for a BTZ or SPE examination). The USPHS Commissioned Corps will not consider previous failures of promotion to a grade for an officer who previously held the grade prior to the officer having a permanent grade reduced.

6-10 Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS). Irrespective of the promotion eligibility criteria outlined in Section 6-3.a.(2), the Director, CCHQ, will effectuate the promotion of officers who graduate from USUHS as medical doctors and who are placed into the Medical category to the permanent O-3 grade on the date of their appointment to the Medical category or the date of the President's approval of the promotion, whichever is later.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 7-1. The ASH is responsible for establishing policy Instructions related to promotions.
- 7-2. The SG may issue Personnel Operations Memoranda (POM) and make delegations as necessary to implement this Instruction.
- 7-3. The Director, CCHQ:
 - a. Or his/her designee, advises the SG, implements the policies of the ASH, and oversees and manages the promotion board process.
 - b. Appoints members of the PPRB.
 - c. Without further delegation, in consultation with the Agency Liaison and consideration of the specific circumstances, may exempt an officer from the requirement to have an Annual COER. If the Director, CCHQ, exempts the officer from the requirement to have an Annual COER, CCHQ will annotate the officer's eOPF to reflect the decision.
- 7-4. Each officer is responsible for adhering to the guidelines established in this Instruction and any operational guidelines established by the SG, the Director, CCHQ, or their designees.
 - a. It is the officer's responsibility to be familiar with the published policies that apply to all officers and to maintain an ongoing awareness of updates and changes to USPHS Commissioned Corps policies and operational guidelines.
 - b. It is the officer's responsibility to routinely review information that CCHQ posts on the CCMIS website including promotion information as well as notifications of

the officer's promotion eligibility status and the outcome of examinations by the PPB (e.g., through the officer's dashboard display in the CCMIS Secure Area, eCMCS, eOPF, posted successful promotion lists, etc.).

- c. An officer must maintain their current and updated contact information (e.g., e-mail, phone, address) as established by the Director, CCHQ, or designee, in order to facilitate the USPHS Commissioned Corps' communication of information to the officer.
- d. An officer must adhere to all guidelines and communications provided by the SG and/or CCHQ.
- e. It is the officer's responsibility to review their eOPF on an ongoing basis to ensure that its contents are up to date and accurate. The officer is responsible for reporting any discrepancies and errors in their eOPF in accordance with guidelines and communications from the SG and/or CCHQ.
- f. It is the officer's responsibility to submit appropriate documents for their eOPF (e.g., Curriculum Vitae (CV)), requests for corrections to the Promotion Information Report (PIR)) and verify their promotion folder in the OPPVS before the CCHQ established deadlines.
- g. It is the officer's ongoing responsibility throughout their career to regularly seek appropriate career counseling from, among others, their mentor(s), supervisor, Professional Advisory Committee (PAC), Agency Liaison, and/or Chief Professional Officer (CPO).

8. PROCEDURES:

8-1. Service Credit on Appointment. Effective on 1 October 2024 (i.e., for PY 2025 and subsequent years), CCHQ will, for promotion purposes only, grant officers credit towards their seniority credit and active service based on their latest appointment and call to active duty pay grade in accordance with this Section. This credit will not be used for any promotion years prior to PY 2025.

- a. Seniority Credit Based on Appointment Grade. Except for officers who are appointed through an inter-service transfer, CCHQ will grant officers credit towards the officers' seniority credit date for the pay grade to which they were appointed and called to active duty in the USPHS Commissioned Corps (for their latest call to active duty) for their training and experience date (TED) reflected on the call to duty orders (see also the Promotion Information Report (PIR)) in their USPHS Commissioned Corps records as follows:
 - (1) Appointments to the O-2 Grade and Below. CCHQ will give officers who are appointed at the O-1 and O-2 grade no more than 1 year of seniority credit in the appointed grade for the TED credit that exceeds the initial 4 years of their TED.
 - (2) Appointments to the O-3 Grade. CCHQ will give medical, dental, and veterinary officers who are appointed at the O-3 grade no more than 4 years of seniority credit in the O-3 grade for the TED credit that exceeds the initial 8 years of their TED.
 - (4) Appointments to the O-4 Grade and Above. Officers who are appointed to the O-4, O-5, and O-6 grades are not eligible for constructive seniority credit.

Note: CCHQ will grant constructive seniority credit outlined in this Subsection (i.e., Section 8-1.a.) on a one-to-one basis. For example, CCHQ will grant a medical officer who had 11 years and 6 months of TED credit and was appointed at the O-3 grade with 3 years and 6 months of constructive seniority credit for the 3 years and 6 months TED credit that exceeds 8 years.

b. Active Service Credit Based on Appointment Grade. CCHQ will grant officers credit towards the officers' active service (for promotion purposes only) based on the pay grade at which they were appointed and called to active duty to the USPHS Commissioned Corps (for their latest call to active duty). However, if the officer has creditable prior commissioned service (either in another uniformed services or prior USPHS Commissioned Corps service) that applies to their promotion eligibility, they may only be granted constructive credit for active service if their actual active service is less than that determined as follows:

- (1) Appointments to the O-2 Grade and Below. Officers who are appointed to the O-1 and O-2 grades are not eligible for constructive active service credit.
- (2) Appointments to the O-3 Grade. CCHQ will give medical, dental and veterinary officers who are appointed at the O-3 grade four years of active service credit with the USPHS Commissioned Corps.
- (3) Appointments to the O-4 Grade. CCHQ will give officers who are appointed at the O-4 grade five years of active service credit with the USPHS Commissioned Corps.
- (4) Appointments to the O-5 Grade. CCHQ will give officers who are appointed at the O-5 grade 11 years of active service credit with the USPHS Commissioned Corps.
- (5) Appointments to the O-6 Grade. CCHQ will give officers who are appointed at the O-6 grade active service credit with the USPHS Commissioned Corps as the SG, without further delegation, determines.

Note: When granting constructive active service credit, the combined total of actual active commissioned service and the constructive active service credit cannot exceed the authorized amounts outlined in this Subsection (Section 8-1.b.). For example, an officer who is appointed to the USPHS Commissioned Corps at the O-4 grade with 3 years of prior active commissioned service will be granted only an additional 2 years of active service for promotion purposes only. However, if this officer had 5 or more years of actual active commissioned service, then they are ineligible for the constructive active service for promotion purposes.

c. Inter-Service Transfer Appointments. See [CCI 374.01](#), "Inter-Service Transfer," for information regarding credit for officers who receive a commission in the USPHS Commissioned Corps through an inter-service transfer.

8-2. Conversion to Permanent Grade. In accordance with [CCD 122.01](#), "Promotions," the Secretary has directed the USPHS Commissioned Corps to convert all qualified officers who hold a temporary grade to an equivalent permanent grade (except flag officers who hold temporary flag grade positions in accordance with [42 U.S.C. § 206\(c\)](#)) no later than

1 September 2023, the date of the President's approval, or another date established by the Secretary, whichever is later.

- a. Qualification to Convert. Effective on the approval date of this Instruction and before 1 September 2023, the Director, CCHQ, will review the records of each officer prior to converting an officer to an equivalent permanent grade.
 - (1) The Director, CCHQ, may refer an officer to a Temporary Promotion Revocation Board (TPRB) if the Director, CCHQ, determines that the officer meets the criteria for referral to a TBRB as outlined in CCI 332.01, "Temporary Promotions," dated 17 October 2019.
 - (2) The Director, CCHQ, may delay converting an officer's temporary grade to an equivalent permanent grade for no more than one year to allow for the completion of an investigation (e.g., medical, misconduct, criminal). The Director, CCHQ, may submit a request through the SG to the ASH to delay a conversion beyond one year.
 - b. Seniority Credit on Conversion. CCHQ will adjust such officers permanent grade seniority credit as follows:
 - (1) Non-Flag Grade Officers.
 - (a) For officers who hold a temporary grade that is higher than their permanent grade, CCHQ will adjust the officers' seniority credit date to be the date that the officers were promoted to the temporary grade that becomes their permanent grade.
 - (b) For officers who hold only a permanent grade (e.g., their temporary grade is the "same" as their permanent grade), CCHQ will adjust the officers' seniority credit date to be the date that the officers were promoted to that temporary grade or the date that the officers were appointed or promoted to that permanent grade, whichever is earlier.
 - (2) Flag Grade Officers. CCHQ will adjust the seniority credit date of a flag officer to be the date on which the officer was promoted to the temporary O-6 grade.
 - (3) CCHQ will not make any adjustments to the officer's years in an active status when CCHQ adjusts an officer's seniority credit date.
 - c. After 1 September 2023, the USPHS Commissioned Corps will continue to use the temporary promotion authorities for the flag grades and will not use temporary promotions for grades below the flag grades unless the ASH authorizes such use.
- 8-3. Implementation. This Instruction is effective immediately (i.e., for PY 2024 and subsequent years), except as follows:
- a. Zones.
 - (1) Regular Corps. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will begin implementing processes for all zones, as well as SPE, effective immediately (i.e., for PY 2024 and subsequent years). A PPB examination in PY 2024 that is not a BTZ examination will be an officer's first ITZ examination regardless of

whether they were examined for that grade (temporary or permanent) in previous promotion years.

Note: no officers will be eligible for an ATZ examination until they have exhausted their ITZ examinations or a SPE examination until they have exhausted their ITZ and ATZ examinations.

- (2) Ready Reserve Corps. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will immediately implement zones for Ready Reserve Corps officers, including the provisions of Section 6-8.f.
- b. Precepts. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will implement the precepts outlined in Section 6-6.b. on 1 September 2025 (i.e., for PY 2026 and subsequent years). Until that time, PPBs will use the following precepts, with weights determined by the SG, when examining an officer for promotion:
 - (1) Performance rating and reviewing official statement;
 - (2) Education, training, and professional development (professional qualifications);
 - (3) Career progression and potential; and
 - (4) Professional contributions, basic level of force readiness history, and service to the USPHS Commissioned Corps. Regarding officers' history of compliance with the basic level of force readiness requirements, the SG will determine, up to 5 years of history, the frequency (e.g., monthly, quarterly) of an officer's history of readiness compliance that will be reviewed by the PPB.
- c. Implementation of Promotion Board Membership. The provisions of Section 6-6.c. regarding the membership of promotion boards is effective immediately for all promotion boards that the USPHS Commissioned Corps convenes.
- d. Implementation of Failures of Promotion.
 - (1) Regular Corps. The provisions of Section 6-8.b., c., d., and e. are effective beginning in PY 2024 for Regular Corps officers. The provisions of Section 6-8.e.(1) and (2) regarding the authority of the Director, CCHQ, to refer an officer to an ITB, BOI, and IRB is effective beginning in PY 2023. The provisions of Section 6-7.g. regarding the process to review promotion board recommendations against permanent promotion is effective beginning in PY 2022.
 - (2) Ready Reserve Corps. The provisions of Section 6-8.f. are effective immediately for Ready Reserve Corps officers.
- e. Permanent Promotion Reduction Board (PPRB). The USPHS Commissioned Corps will immediately implement the PPRB outlined in Section 6-9 for Regular Corps and Ready Reserve Corps officers.
- f. Eligibility Criteria.
 - (1) Regular Corps. Effective on 1 September 2024 (i.e., for PY 2025 and subsequent years), the USPHS Commissioned Corps will implement the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 6-3.a. for Regular Corps officers. For

PY 2024 an officer may be designated for promotion examination (see Section 6-4.b.), including designation for a BTZ examination, if they meet the following criteria during PY 2024 (or during PY 2025 for BTZ):

- (a) To the O-2 grade. An officer must have 4 years of training and experience date (TED) credit.
- (b) To the O-3 grade. An officer must have 8 years of TED credit.
- (c) To the O-4 grade. An officer must have 12 years of TED credit and must have at least 6 months on active duty in their current tour in the USPHS Commissioned Corps (i.e., as of 1 March 2024 for PY 2024).
- (d) To the O-5 grade. An officer must have 17 years of TED credit, served on active duty in the O-4 grade for at least 2 years, and must have at least 5 years on active duty in the USPHS Commissioned Corps (or have 2 years on active duty in the USPHS Commissioned Corps and 3 years on active duty (either commissioned or enlisted) in another uniformed service).
- (e) To the O-6 grade. An officer must have 24 years of TED credit, served on active duty in the O-5 grade for at least 3 years, and must have at least 9 years on active duty in the USPHS Commissioned Corps (or have 3 years on active duty in the USPHS Commissioned Corps and 6 years on active duty (either commissioned or enlisted) in another uniformed service).

Note: An officer who is designated for a promotion examination in PY 2024 (except for officers designated for a BTZ examination) in accordance with this Subsection is eligible to be designated for promotion examination for that permanent grade in subsequent promotion years until the officer is either promoted or fails promotion after ITZ and ATZ examinations (and SPE, if applicable). Furthermore, an officer who fails promotion after ITZ and ATZ examinations (and SPE, if applicable) is not eligible to be designated for promotion examination when they meet the criteria in Section 6-3.a. for that same grade.

- (2) Ready Reserve Corps. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will immediately implement the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 6-3.b. for Ready Reserve Corps officers.

9. HISTORICAL NOTES: This is the fifth issuance of this Instruction within the electronic Commissioned Corps Issuance System (eCCIS).

- 9-1. CCI 331.01, "Permanent Promotions," dated 25 September 2023 as amended on 13 May 2024 and 29 August 2024.
- 9-2. CCI 331.01, "Permanent Promotions," dated 24 February 2023. The release of the 2023 version of CCI 331.01 also rescinded CCI 332.01, "Temporary Promotions," dated 17 October 2019.
- 9-3. CCI 331.01, "Permanent Grade Promotions," dated 12 December 2019 (rescinded effective 1 September 2023). The release of the 2019 version of CCI 331.01 also replaced

Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual (CCPM) CC23.4.5, "Failure of Permanent Promotion," dated 1 August 1985.

- 9-4. CCI 331.01, "Permanent Grade Promotions," dated 8 May 2008.
- 9-5. CCPM CC23.4.1, "Permanent Grade Promotions," dated 18 December 2003.

Appendix A

Definitions

The following terms are defined for the purposes of this Instruction:

1. **Active Service.** Active duty as a commissioned officer in the USPHS Commissioned Corps' Regular Corps, Ready Reserve Corps, or the former Reserve Corps as it existed prior to 23 March 2010. Such service does not include service in another uniformed service nor does it include PHS civil service employment and employment as a member of the Silvio O. Conte Senior Biomedical Research Service (SBRS).
2. **Active Status.** Included in "Active Status" are memberships in the following classes of the USPHS Commissioned Corps Organizations. This term does not include members while placed on the Temporary Disability Retired List (TDRL), an inactive status list, in the inactive Army National Guard or inactive Air National Guard, or in a retired status:
 - a. Regular Corps.
 - b. Selected Ready Reserve (SELRES).
 - c. Active Individual Ready Reserve (IRR).
3. **Promotion Category Group.** An arrangement of professions into which officers are divided for purposes of establishing eligibility for promotion (see 42 U.S.C. § 210b).
4. **Examination.** The process used to evaluate an officer for permanent promotion.
5. **Failure of Promotion.** An officer who is examined by a PPB and who is: "not recommend" or found "not qualified" by the PPB; or eliminated from the final promotion approval list for the O-3, O-4, O-5, or O-6 grades because of any of the reasons in Section 6-7.e.
6. **Opt out.** An opportunity for an officer to elect to delay their promotion consideration so they can focus on enhancing their career and promotion potential.
7. **Permanent Promotion.** A promotion to a grade below which an officer shall not be reduced except for cause under applicable USPHS Commissioned Corps Directives and Instructions.
8. **Permanent Promotion Board (PPB).** A board convened to examine officers for permanent promotion to the next higher grade.
9. **Restricted grades.** The Senior grade (O-5) or both Full (O-4) and Senior (O-5) grade in a promotion category group of the Regular Corps to which promotions shall be made only if vacancies exist in such grade or grades.
10. **Seniority credit.** The total amount of time an officer is in his/her current permanent grade while in an active status during a continuous tour of duty (i.e., an officer who has a break in their service will have their seniority credit restarted on their next appointment).
11. **Success Rate.** The number (which may be one or more) of officers who, after passing an examination that results in the PPB recommending the officer(s) for promotion, that the ASH anticipates recommending to the approving official for promotion. The ASH may express the success rate in a percentage of the number of officers the ASH anticipates that the PPB will examine.

12. Training and Experience Date (TED) Credit. Education, training, or work experience that is creditable for purposes of establishing an officer's permanent grade at appointment (See [CCI 231.01](#), "General Appointment Standards").
13. Zones. Groupings of officers in the same grade and promotion category groups who are eligible for promotion and the SG designates for examination fall into one of the three promotion zones:
 - a. In the Zone (ITZ). Refers to officers in the same grade and promotion category group who meet the promotion eligibility criteria and the SG designates for promotion examination and who have not had two failures of promotion.
 - b. Above the Zone (ATZ). Refers to a group of officers who are eligible for consideration for promotion to the next higher grade and were not promoted after a PPB examined them for promotion as an ITZ eligible officer.
 - c. Below the Zone (BTZ). Refers to a group of officers who are in the same grade as the officers ITZ for that promotion category group and are designated for promotion examination prior to meeting the ITZ promotion eligibility criteria.