SUBJECT: Permanent Grade Promotions

1. PURPOSE: This Instruction sets forth the policies and procedures governing the permanent grade promotion program for Regular Corps officers in the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service (Corps) who are serving on extended active duty.

2. APPLICABILITY: This Instruction applies to Regular Corps officers serving on extended active duty. Unless otherwise noted, this Instruction does not apply to the following:

2-1. Officers assigned to the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) who are attending USUHS in order to obtain their qualifying degree (CCD 125.03, “Assignment of Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Officers to the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS)”); and

2-2. Officers being examined for promotion to the Assistant Surgeon General grades (O-7 and above) (see CCD 322.03, “Flag Grade Positions and Promotion”).

2-3. Officers nominated for statutory flag positions including the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH), Surgeon General (SG), Deputy Surgeon General (DSG), the Chief Medical Officer of the U.S. Coast Guard (Coast Guard), and Chief Professional Officer (CPO) for the Dental, Nurse, Engineer, and Pharmacy categories (see 42 U.S.C. §§206 and 207 and CCD 322.04, “Chief Professional Officer Nomination”).

3. AUTHORITY:

3-1. 42 U.S.C. §202, “Administration and supervision of Service”

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. Executive Order 11140 dated 30 January 1964

3-6. Reorganization Plan 3 of 25 June 1966

3-7. CCD 122.01, “Promotions”
3-8. [ CCD 122.02, "Force Management"

3-9. On 24 July 2003, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS or Department) has delegated the authorities that are necessary to administer the Corps to the ASH including the appointment and promotion authorities that pertain to the permanent grade promotion program.

4. PROPOSENT: The proponent of this Instruction is the ASH. The responsibility for ensuring the day-to-day management of the Corps belongs to the SG.

5. SUMMARY OF REVISIONS AND UPDATES: This Instruction replaces CCI 331.01, “Permanent Grade Promotions,” dated 8 May 2008 and replaces CCI 333.01, “Failure of Permanent Promotion.”

5-1. Removes references to permanent promotions for the former Reserve Corps and associated policy considerations.

5-2. Section 6-2 establishes the restricted categories and categories that are not restricted for promotion to the O-4 and O-5 grades.

5-3. Section 6-3 adds additional eligibility criteria for promotion and authorizes the Director, Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ), to refer an officer who does not meet the criteria for disciplinary action.

5-4. Clarifies that promotions are subject to approval by the President and no longer require confirmation by the U.S. Senate in accordance with Public Law 112–166, “Presidential Appointment Efficiency and Streamlining Act of 2011.”

5-5. Section 6-4 clarifies information reviewed for the precept related to compliance with the force readiness requirements, establishes that compliance with force readiness requirements is a factor in the fourth promotion precept, and removes the note regarding additional precept consideration for isolated/hardship assignments and response activities.

5-6. Removes the authority for the Director, CCHQ, to rescind an Annual Permanent Promotion Board’s (APPB) recommendation of “not recommend.”

5-7. Section 6-6 specifies the minimum success rates for the O-2 and O-3 grades, as well as the O-4 and O-5 grades when not restricted.

5-8. Section 6-6.e. clarifies that the SG 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.

5-9. Section 6-7 provides the policy and potential consequences regarding an officer’s failure of promotion and therefore rescinds CCI 333.01, “Failure of Permanent Promotion.”

5-10. Section 7-4 provides further clarification regarding an officer’s responsibilities.
6. POLICY:

6-1. Definitions. The following terms are defined for the purposes of this Instruction:

a. Annual Permanent Promotion Board (APPB). A board convened to examine Regular Corps officers serving on extended active duty for permanent promotion to the next higher grade.

b. Category or group. One of the professional categories or groups into which officers are divided for purposes of establishing eligibility for promotion (See 42 U.S.C. §§210b).

c. Examination. The process used to evaluate an officer for permanent promotion.

d. Extended Active Duty. A call or order to active duty for a period in excess of 120 days.

e. Failure of Promotion. An officer who is examined by an APPB and who is: recommended by the APPB but who is not above the promotion success rate; scored by the APPB in the lowest decile; “not recommend” by the APPB; or is 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 6-6.d.

f. Permanent Promotion. A promotion to a grade below which an officer shall not be reduced except for cause under applicable Corps Directives and Instructions.

g. Promotion credit. The total active-duty time of a Regular Corps officer in the Assistant grade (O-2) or above.

h. Restricted grades. The Senior grade (O-5) or both Full (O-4) and Senior (O-5) grade in a professional category to which promotions shall be made only if vacancies exist in such grade or grades.

i. Selected promotion. A permanent promotion to the Director grade (O-6) or a grade that is restricted.

j. Seniority credit. The total amount of active-duty time of a Regular Corps officer in his/her current permanent grade.

k. Service promotion. A permanent promotion for a Regular Corps officer to any grade other than to the Director grade (O-6) or a grade that is not restricted.

l. 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 or in determining an officer’s eligibility for permanent promotion on or after original appointment (See CCI 231.01, “General Appointment Standards”).

6-2. Restricted Categories and Grades.

a. Not Restricted. For the Medical and Dental categories, promotions to the O-4 and O-5 grades (Full and Senior grades) are not restricted.

b. Restricted. For the Nurse, Engineer, Scientist, Environmental Health, Veterinary, Pharmacy, Dietitian, Therapist, and Health Services categories, promotions to the O-4 and O-5 grades are restricted and shall be made only if vacancies exist in
such grades within the authorized permanent grade distribution established by the Secretary pursuant to CCD 122.02.

6-3. Permanent Promotion Eligibility Criteria. The Director, Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ), or his/her designee, establishes which officers are eligible for permanent promotion examination based on the criteria set forth in this section.

a. Eligibility Criteria for Selected Promotion:

(1) To the Director grade (O-6) (all categories) - after 4 years seniority credit in the permanent Senior grade (O-5);

(2) To the Senior grade (O-5) when restricted - after 7 years seniority credit in the permanent Full grade (O-4); or

(3) To the Full grade (O-4) when restricted - after 7 years seniority credit in the permanent Senior Assistant grade (O-3).

b. Eligibility Criteria for Service Promotion:

(1) To the Senior grade (O-5) when not restricted - after 17 years promotion credit;

(2) To the Full grade (O-4) when not restricted - after 10 years promotion credit;

(3) To the Senior Assistant grade (O-3) (all categories) - after 3 years promotion credit; or

(4) To the Assistant grade (O-2) (all categories) - after 7 years of TED credit.

c. Additional Eligibility Criteria for both Selected and Service Promotions. To be considered for promotion by an APPB an officer must meet the additional eligibility requirements established by the SG via a Personnel Operations Memorandum (POM), which may include the following: the Corps’ licensure and Commissioned Officers’ Effectiveness Report (COER) requirements; the readiness standards pursuant to CCI 241.01, “Readiness and Duty Requirements;” the absence of any Letter of Reprimand in the officer’s file; pending non-medical board to determine the officer’s continuation on active duty (see CCD 111.02, “Disciplinary Action,” CCD 123.01, “Involuntary Separation,” CCD 124.01, “Retirement,” and CCI 385.01, “Involuntary Retirement (20 Years)”; and any other eligibility requirements established by the SG as set forth in a POM.

d. Failure to Meet Additional Eligibility Criteria for both Selected and Service Promotions. As determined by the Director, CCHQ, officers who do not meet the additional eligibility criteria in Section 6-3.c. may have their records referred to a Temporary Promotion Revocation Board (TPRB), an Involuntary Termination Board (ITB), Board of Inquiry (BOI), Involuntary Retirement Board (IRB), or other appropriate disciplinary or involuntary separation process (see CCD 111.02, “Disciplinary Action,” CCD 123.01, “Involuntary Separation,” CCI 382.03, “Involuntary Termination,” and CCI 385.01, “Involuntary Retirement (20 Years)").

e. After original appointment, Regular Corps officers must hold their temporary grade for at least 1 year prior to being promoted to the same permanent grade.

f. Permanent Promotions must be in sequential order, i.e., grades cannot be skipped.
6-4. Competitive Permanent Promotion Policy.

a. An APPB will examine Regular Corps officers who meet the eligibility requirements for permanent promotion during the annual promotion year which runs from July 1 through June 30. Permanent promotions for Regular Corps officers are subject to approval by the President.

b. APPBs will assess the qualifications of the following:

1. Regular Corps officers who will be eligible during the promotion year for permanent promotion to any grade;

2. Regular Corps officers who were eligible and examined for permanent promotion in a preceding promotion year, but did not receive a promotion, except for officers who: failed promotion to the O-2 grade because the officer was not recommended; twice failed promotion to the O-3 grade; twice failed promotion to the O-4, O-5, or O-6 grades in accordance with Sections 6-7.d. and 6-7.e.(a); and failed promotion three times in accordance with Section 6-7.e.(b);

3. Officers who are referred to an APPB as a result of an administrative process such as the Board for Corrections of PHS Commissioned Corps Records, a grievance, or an equal opportunity action; and

4. Officers who are referred to an APPB by the SG to remedy an administrative error in the promotion process.

c. APPBs measure the capabilities and performances of officers for promotion to the next higher permanent grade using predetermined precepts and benchmarks, which serve as professional guidelines to assist officers and the APPB. The SG, through issuance of a POM, will determine the relative weights of the precepts and publish the precepts utilized by APPBs, as well as establish additional precepts as necessary. The precepts will include at least the following:

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 Corps. Regarding officers’ history of compliance with the Corps’ basic level of force readiness requirements, the SG will determine (through issuance of a POM), 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 APPB.

6-5. APPB Operational Policy and Procedures. The Corps utilizes APPBs to assess the fitness and qualifications of Regular Corps officers for permanent promotion to the next higher grade. APPBs are responsible for ensuring that only the best-qualified officers are recommended for permanent promotion.

a. At least once each calendar year, the SG, or his/her designee, will appoint one or more APPBs for each professional category or group to consider the fitness and
qualifications of officers appointed to the Regular Corps. Such APPBs will consist of three or more officers at the rank/grade of Director/(O-6) and a majority of the members will be appointed to the Regular Corps. Insofar as it is practicable, the majority of APPB members will be of the same category or group as the officers to be examined for promotion.

(1) The SG, or his/her designee, shall make every effort to ensure that the selection process for APPB members complies with the Department's rules, regulations, and policies against discrimination in the workplace. In addition, the SG, or his/her designee, will make every effort to ensure that APPB membership is as representative as possible with respect to Agency/Operating Division (OPDIV) and field representation.

(2) No officer may serve as a member of an APPB for the same category or group more frequently than one time every 3 years.

(3) Each APPB will commence with the SG, or his/her 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 need for confidentiality.

(4) When an APPB is convened, the senior officer of the APPB shall be designated as the “Chairperson.” The Chairperson’s duties consist of:

(a) Calling the APPB to order;

(b) Governing the general conduct of the APPB; and

(c) Overseeing the duties of the Executive Secretary.

(5) The SG, or his/her designee, shall assign a non-voting Executive Secretary to each APPB. The Executive Secretary’s duties consist of:

(a) Preparing the APPB’s recommendation(s) for submission through the Director, CCHQ, and SG to the ASH for approval; and

(b) Performing other board-related duties as required by the Chairperson or the SG or his/her designee.

(6) Subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act, all APPB members are bound to hold in confidence all information concerning officers being examined by the APPB, including:

(a) Deliberations and recommendations of the APPB;

(b) Comments by any APPB member;

(c) Discussions with officers called as consultants to the APPB; and

(d) Evaluations and votes made by APPB members.

b. The APPB makes recommendations for or against permanent promotion to the next higher grade. APPB members score eligible officers individually by comparing the information available to the APPB on each officer with the applicable precepts and benchmarks. Thereafter, the members’ scores for each officer are averaged, and the officers for each permanent grade and category or group are ranked
according to their scores. All recommendations by an APPB shall be based on a majority of votes of the APPB members. All members of the APPB shall have equal voting rights.

c. For purposes of making recommendations regarding permanent promotion, APPBs review documentation maintained in an officer’s electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) and do not review information maintained separately in an officer’s adverse actions, medical, or compensation files. As established by the SG in a POM, APPBs may review other information regarding an officer that is not maintained in the eOPF (e.g., readiness history).

d. After the APPB has finalized its recommendations and ranking for each category and group, the results are submitted through the Director, CCHQ, to the SG who, after eliminating officers in accordance with Section 6-6.d., submits the results to the ASH for final approval.

6-6. Permanent Promotion Roster and Promotion Approval.

a. Permanent promotions to the Full grade (O-4), Senior grade (O-5), and Director grade (O-6), depend on the needs and requirements of the Corps as determined by the ASH in consultation with the SG. Promotions to these grades are competitive and made from the permanent promotion rosters based on: vacancies in grade within the authorized permanent grade distribution established by the Secretary pursuant to CCD 122.02 and/or force requirement projections in each category or group; and standing of the officer on the ranked order lists prepared by the APPB.

b. Success Rates.

(1) The success rates for those officers considered for the O-2 and O-3 grades, as well as the O-4 and O-5 grades when not restricted are as follows:

   (a) Promotion to O-5 grade when not restricted shall be no less than 80 percent.

   (b) Promotion to the O-4 grade when not restricted shall be no less than 90 percent.

   (c) Promotion to the O-3 and O-2 grades shall be 100 percent.

(2) The success rates for officers considered for the O-4 and O-5 grades when restricted as well as the O-6 grade may only be made when a vacancy exists in such grades within the authorized permanent grade distribution established by the Secretary pursuant to CCD 122.02.

c. Each roster will include the names of all officers examined for permanent promotion. In cases of identical scores, APPBs shall use the following order of precedence to establish an officer’s placement on the promotion roster:

(1) The officer with the earlier seniority credit date has relative standing over the officer with a more recent credit date;

(2) The officer with more years of active service in the Corps has relative standing over the officer with fewer years of such service; and
The officer with more years of active service at any rank in any of the Uniformed Services has relative standing over the officer with fewer years of such service.

d. After an APPB has adjourned and submitted the results through the Director, CCHQ, to the SG, the SG will ensure that the final approval list for permanent promotions is complete after eliminating any officer from the approval list who does not meet the eligibility requirements as set forth in Section 6-3, any POM issued by the SG, and:

(1) Who has not met the licensure requirement(s) for his/her discipline and/or category (See CCI 251.01);
(2) Who has not met and maintained the basic level of force readiness requirements (See CCI 241.01);
(3) 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 SG before the close of the promotion year, and the officer is otherwise eligible for permanent promotion, the SG may suspend the elimination process for a period not to exceed 180 calendar days to allow sufficient time for the adjudication of the allegations, at which time, the SG will make a determination regarding the officer’s promotion status;
(5) Who receives a recommendation against promotion by the APPB; or
(6) Who, based on additional information available to the SG, as established in a POM issued by the SG, is found either not qualified or not suitable for promotion to the next higher grade.

e. Under the conditions outlined in Section 6-6.d., the SG 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 SG’s decision to eliminate or suspend the elimination is made prior to the effective date.

f. Officers are listed in rank order as recommended by the APPB through the SG and approved by the ASH for each respective category or group. Permanent promotions will be effective following approval by the ASH on July 1 of the promotion year or on the date of eligibility, whichever is later.

g. At the close of each promotion year and upon Presidential approval, the Director, CCHQ, will issue personnel orders that effect the promotions of those officers who are approved for promotion during the period of July 1 through June 30 of the following year.

6-7. Failure of Permanent Promotion. As a condition of service, an officer is required to demonstrate career progression by preparing for, seeking, and accepting assignments of increased responsibility that are commensurate with or greater than his/her 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 he/she is eligible.
Failure of promotion may result in the reduction of the officer’s grade, termination of his/her commission, and/or retirement from active duty.

a. For the purposes of this Instruction:

(1) Failure of promotion includes an officer who is:

(a) Recommended by the APPB but who is not above the promotion success rate;

(b) Scored by the APPB in the lowest decile;

(c) “Not recommend” by the APPB; or

(d) 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 6-6.d.

(2) Notification. The Director, CCHQ, or his/her designee, will notify an officer upon the officer's initial failure of permanent promotion to the O-3, O-4, O-5, or O-6 grades.

(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 his/her performance or conduct.

(b) An officer must be notified of each occurrence of his/her failure of promotion in order to take the following actions without a review by another board: revoke the officer’s temporary grade, terminate his/her commission, and/or retire the officer from active duty.

(c) If CCHQ fails to notify an officer as required by Section 6-7.a.(2)(b), the Director, CCHQ, may refer the officer to a BOI, ITB, or IRB.

(3) Revocation of Temporary Grades, Termination of Commission, or Retirement due to Failure of Promotion.

(a) In order to revoke an officer’s temporary grade, retire an officer, or terminate an officer’s commission due to failures of promotion, such failures may be related to either successive or non-successive reviews by an APPB, but 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).

(b) Pursuant to Section 6-7.a. of CCI 332.01, “Temporary Promotions,” utilization of a TPRB is not required to revoke a temporary grade under this Instruction provided that the officer was notified of his/her failure of promotion in accordance with Section 6-7.a.(2)(b). The effective date of revocation of an
officer’s temporary grade is the date the ASH approves the promotion list.

(c) The determination by the SG or Director, CCHQ, regarding the date of 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.

(d) 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, CCI 382.03, or CCI 385.01).

b. Failure of Promotion to the O-2 Grade. An officer who has completed less than 20 years of creditable service for retirement eligibility purposes and who has a failure of promotion to the permanent O-2 grade because he/she has not been recommended by the APPB will have his/her commission terminated on a date determined by the Director, CCHQ. However, if the officer has 18 or more years of creditable service for retirement, the officer will be retired on the first day of any month, as determined by the Director, CCHQ, following completion of 20 years of creditable service for retirement.

c. Failure of Promotion to the O-3 Grade. An officer who has completed less than 20 years of service for retirement eligibility and who after having been twice examined for promotion fails to be promoted to the permanent O-3 grade for reasons other than physical disability, will have his/her commission terminated on a date determined by the Director, CCHQ, and paid 6 months of basic pay and allowances. However, if the officer has 18 or more years of creditable service for retirement, the officer will be retired on the first day of any month, as determined by the Director, CCHQ, following completion of 20 years of creditable service for retirement. An officer whose commission is terminated or who is retired under this Subsection due to a failure of promotion because he/she has not been recommended twice by the APPB will have his/her temporary grade revoked.

d. Failure of Promotion to a Grade that is Not Restricted.

(1) To the O-4 Grade when Not Restricted. An officer who after having been twice examined for promotion and fails to be promoted to the permanent O-4 grade for reasons other than physical disability will have his/her commission terminated on a date determined by the Director, CCHQ, and paid 1 year of basic pay and allowances. However, if the officer has 18 or more years of creditable service for retirement, the officer will be retired on the first day of any month, as determined by the Director, CCHQ, following completion of 20 years of creditable service for retirement. An officer whose commission is terminated or who is retired under this Subsection due to a failure of promotion because he/she has not been recommended twice by the APPB will have his/her temporary grade revoked.

(2) To the O-5 Grade when Not Restricted. An officer who after having been twice examined for promotion and fails to be promoted to the permanent O-5 grade will have his/her temporary grade revoked and will serve in the permanent O-4 grade until he/she is retired from the Corps with retired
pay. Such an officer will be retired on first day of any month as determined by the SG.

e. Failure of Promotion to the Restricted O-4 Grade, Restricted O-5 Grade, or to the O-6 Grade.

(a) An officer who has two failures of promotion for the permanent O-4, O-5, or O-6 grade because he/she has not been recommended twice by the APPB for promotion will have his/her commission terminated on a date determined by the Director, CCHQ. However, if the officer has 18 or more years of creditable service for retirement, the officer will be retired on the first day of any month, as determined by the Director, CCHQ, following completion of 20 years of creditable service for retirement. The failures of promotion for the reasons stated in this Subsection may be consecutive or non-consecutive, but must be to the same grade. An officer whose commission is terminated or who is retired under this Subsection will have his/her temporary grade revoked.

(b) An officer who has three failures of promotion to the permanent O-4, O-5, or O-6 grade because he/she has a score in the lowest decile, or is not recommended by an APPB, or is eliminated from the approval list (or any combination thereof) after having been examined for promotion to such grade three or more times, will be referred to a BOI or ITB or, if he/she has 18 or more years of creditable service for retirement, to an IRB. The three failures of promotion for the reasons stated in this Subsection may be consecutive or non-consecutive, but must be to the same grade.

(1) When less than a total of 10 officers are considered for a permanent grade promotion by an APPB for any category and grade, the officer with the lowest score is deemed as being in the lowest decile.

(2) 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 is finalized.

(i) An officer who is retained on active duty may be once again considered for promotion provided the BOI, ITB, or IRB makes a specific recommendation regarding the officer’s promotion eligibility.

(ii) An officer who is being separated from active duty remains ineligible for permanent promotion.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES:

7-1. The ASH is responsible for setting the policies related to promotions.

7-2. The SG or his/her designee is responsible for the appointment of Board members for the APPB and may issue Personnel Operations Memoranda (POM) as necessary to implement this Instruction.

7-3. The Director, CCHQ, or his/her designee, advises the SG, implements the policies of the ASH, and manages the promotion board process.
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 Corps officers and to maintain an ongoing awareness of updates and changes to Corps policies and operational guidelines.

b. An officer must maintain his/her current and updated contact information (e.g., e-mail, phone, address) as established by the Director, CCHQ, or designee, in order to facilitate the Corps’ communication of information to the officer.

c. An officer must adhere to all guidelines and communications provided by the SG and/or CCHQ.

d. It is the officer’s responsibility to review his/her 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 his/her eOPF in accordance with guidelines and communications from the SG and/or CCHQ.

e. It is the officer’s ongoing responsibility throughout his/her career to regularly seek appropriate career counseling from, among others, his/her mentor, supervisor, Professional Advisory Committee, Commissioned Corps Liaison, and/or Chief Professional Officer (CPO).

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

8-1. CCI 331.01, “Permanent Grade Promotions,” dated 8 May 2008.