

MANUAL: Personnel
Chapter Series CC--Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual
Part 2--Commissioned Corps Personnel Administration

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service

Chapter--Staffing
Subchapter CC25.2--Career Development
Personnel INSTRUCTION 6--Professional Growth and Development

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Section A. Purpose and Scope

Because of the individual needs and interests of each officer in the Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps, this INSTRUCTION describes the variety of resources available for the enhancement of professional growth and development. The continuum of activities in an officer's career begins with the officer's professional training and extends beyond the officer's PHS career. Utilization of information systems, training programs, career counseling, and an understanding of billet structures assist the officer in establishing career objectives and communicating needs and interests appropriately. While the Service generally tries to match the officer's desires and preferences in assignments, it must be understood that the needs of the Service take precedence.

Section B. Authority

1. The statutory authority for appointment of officers into the regular and reserve corps of the PHS Commissioned Corps is contained in Section 203 of the PHS Act (42 U.S.C. 204).
2. The authority for administering career development has been delegated to the Surgeon General (SG) as part of the general authority to administer the PHS Commissioned Corps and is published at 53 Federal Register 5046-5047, February 19, 1988.

Section C. General

1. Within the Agencies of PHS, commissioned officers participate in a variety of assignments which promote health and prevent disease and injury by developing the expertise and innovation necessary to deal with changing public health needs. Accordingly, PHS must develop career professionals who possess strong health-related credentials and demonstrate a commitment to the goals of PHS.
2. The purpose of career development for PHS commissioned officers is to enhance the mission of PHS and the commissioned corps by providing opportunities for professional growth for officers.
3. The responsibility for career development lies with the commissioned officer. It is necessary for the officer to define his/her career goals early in his/her career. In selecting a career track an officer should avail him/herself of career counseling by the Chief Professional Officer (CPO) and Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) of the officer's discipline, the Agency/Program, and from the Division of Commissioned Personnel (DCP).
4. An officer may develop his/her career by remaining primarily within the same career track and functional area and assuming progressively more responsible positions, or by moving across different career tracks and functional areas.

Section D. Definitions

For purposes of this INSTRUCTION, the following definitions apply:

1. Career Track. A series of professional experiences through which an officer progresses from the entry level to an expert level of skills, knowledge, and abilities throughout his/her professional career. Career tracks often reflect broad Agency missions and professional category disciplines.
2. Functional Area. A focus within a career track usually representing more specific job functions that normally correspond with major activities of an Agency or professional category.
3. Career Development. A series of steps that will form a logical progression toward a desired career goal.
4. Career Counseling. Consultation designed to develop a plan of action in moving toward career goals. The process of developing career strategies to meet professional goals may be a part of counsel received from CPO, PAC of the officer's category, the Agency/Program to which an officer is assigned, or DCP staffing officers.

Section E. Types of Career Tracks

1. The career tracks established within the PHS Commissioned Corps are:
 - a. Clinical/Clinical Management which encompasses professional activities that relate directly to patient treatment ranging from hands-on care to consultation and/or guidance of other patient care staff.
 - b. Epidemiology/Public Health Practice which encompasses professional activities that involve the study, analysis, and/or recommendation of health measures based upon the incidence, distribution, and control of disease in a population.
 - c. International Health which encompasses professional activities to address the influence of the global health environment on the PHS domestic mission.
 - d. Program Management which encompasses the application of control in directing the day-to-day operation of Agency programs requiring planning, development, budgeting, assessment, supervision, and/or coordination.
 - e. Regulatory Affairs which encompasses professional activities related to implementing, enforcing, controlling, directing, evaluating/-inspecting, developing policy, and/or regulations designed to safeguard public health.

- f. Research which encompasses investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery of new knowledge for the revision of existing theories or the development of new theories related to public health (basic research), or investigation or experimentation aimed at evaluating or mitigating potential risks to public health (applied research).
2. It is recognized that a commissioned officer may elect to work in more than one career track and functional area during his/her career. The career track and functional area designated as "primary" is that which reflects the officer's principal responsibility and is reflected in his/her billet. See INSTRUCTION 4, Subchapter CC23.5, "Billet Program," of this Manual.

Section F. Planning Assistance

DCP maintains a number of tools in an information system that may have an impact on an officer's career. It is, therefore, essential that the following items contain accurate and up-to-date information so that as assistance is provided, it is as helpful as possible.

1. Official Personnel Folder (OPF). This is the official repository for the officer's records and reports of his/her service in the PHS Commissioned Corps and documents career development. The information in the OPF can be used to assess the overall status of an officer in his/her career. The contents of the OPF may be a key tool to reflect the unique combination of knowledges, skills, and abilities as well as the experience possessed by an officer in documenting career development. The information is also used to establish an officer's rights and benefits under pertinent laws and regulations governing service in the commissioned corps and to determine eligibility or entitlement of dependents. (See INSTRUCTION 1, Subchapter CC28.1, "Official Personnel Folder," of this Manual.)
2. Curriculum Vitae (C.V.). This is an account of the career and qualifications prepared typically by an applicant for a position. A C.V. should also be a part of the officer's official personnel folder (OPF). When applying for a position, it may emphasize current professional duties, and address specific criteria and/or selective factors required to perform the job. When prepared for an officer's OPF, it generally emphasizes increasing professional responsibilities and accomplishments, as documented by a career history, that have resulted in significant impact upon program goals.
3. Vacancy Announcement and Tracking System (VAATS) is a data base that contains vacancies voluntarily submitted by PHS Agencies and approved by DCP as appropriate for commissioned officers. The system is designed to match vacancies with officers who are qualified and interested in the position. VAATS is utilized by:
 - a. Agencies, as a means of advertising vacancies;

- b. Officers, as a means of identifying vacancies of professional interest;
 - c. DCP, as a means of identifying officers who may fill career enhancing positions; and
 - d. Agencies, as a means of identifying officers with the interest and qualifications to meet their personnel needs.
4. Electronic Bulletin Board (EBB). Vacancies in VAATS are displayed on the EBB during the period vacancies are available. Officers can access the EBB to view vacancies in PHS programs and consider application consistent with personal career strategies. Periodic review of vacancy listings can also assist in development of career planning strategies by identifying the types of positions that become available in PHS.
 5. Assignment Preference, Proficiency in Language, Education and Skills Survey (APPLES). This survey is one of the principal mechanisms used by DCP to collect and maintain current and accurate information on all active duty officers concerning an officer's assignment and career track preferences, languages, specialty training and education. The information provided by the officer is used in making assignments in keeping with career development and mobility priorities.
 6. Officer Information Summary (OIS). This report is designed to summarize, in a standard format, some of the pertinent information collected in various data bases available to DCP. These data bases include APPLES, assignment histories, awards, billets, Commissioned Officer Effectiveness Reports (COER), payroll information, etc.
 7. Billets. These documents describe the duties, responsibilities, and qualifications necessary to perform a specific assignment in the PHS Commissioned Corps, progressing from entry to senior level positions. (See INSTRUCTION 4, Subchapter CC23.5, of this Manual.)
 8. Training. Training supported through PHS must be of benefit to PHS and is divided into two categories: short-term training and long-term training. Training positions and funds are controlled/supported by Agencies to meet program goals. (See INSTRUCTION 1, "Extramural Training," and INSTRUCTION 3, "Intramural Residency Training Programs," Subchapter CC25.2, of this Manual.)

Section G. Guidelines to Career Progression

1. Billet Structure

- a. Officers pursuing career opportunities along a career path within their category are provided specific career track guidance through a category standard billet structure. Positions and their associated billet grade are identified according to minimum training, experience and active

duty service requirements. (EXHIBIT I) See INSTRUCTION 4, Subchapter CC23.5, of this Manual.

- b. Each Agency's mission and goals dictate the knowledge, skills and abilities required of its work force. Agencies may develop Agency-specific billets modeled after the category standard billet "career ladder" structure to meet specific personnel needs and when category standard billets do not apply. Agency-specific "career ladder" billets are for the most part consistent with at least one of the career tracks outlined in Section E. of this INSTRUCTION. Officers pursuing career opportunities outside the usual category career path are provided specific guidance through an Agency-specific billet structure that describes successive positions according to a "career ladder" model. (EXHIBIT II)
- c. Agencies may also meet unique manpower needs not provided for in the category or Agency-specific "career ladder" billet structures by developing nonstandard billets. Officers currently assigned to Agencies in nonstandard billets are best able to determine successive positions according to structure within civil service models or established Agency staff utilization patterns.

2. Career Tracks

- a. Upon call to active duty, commissioned officers initially pursue professional interests within their health disciplines, applying knowledge and abilities in a manner that maximizes their effectiveness. Early in an officer's career, the opportunity exists to consider career opportunities and set career objectives that are in keeping with their professional interests. This can be facilitated when an officer: (1) maintains APPLES data that is current and accurate; (2) maintains an up-to-date curriculum vitae in his/her OPF; and (3) conducts periodic review of positions advertised in the Commissioned Corps Bulletin and on the electronic bulletin board.
- b. As officers' careers develop, they are faced with professional and personal challenges that provide opportunities to demonstrate career growth. Within this early-to-mid career stage, officers are encouraged to pursue progressive assignments that increase professional responsibility and value to programs. There may be a need to consider further training in the development of professional expertise. Alternative career tracks may be considered according to one's qualifications. Through a process of continued assessment of individual career objectives, a logical plan can be established to achieve the desired goal. Tools utilized by the officer during this time include: career counseling as provided by the officer's category, Agency/Program, and DCP; an understanding of the billet structure in relation to future goals; consideration of training programs that augment a career development strategy; and maintaining current,

accurate professional information in the OPF that identifies experience, accomplishment, and impact within programs. Officers are encouraged to develop familiarity with the professional expectations required to progress toward career goals within or outside their current professional setting, by applying personal initiative to become familiar with programs that are of interest and by interacting with individuals who can provide programmatic insight.

- c. Officers in later years of their career, often possess exceptional and specialized knowledge, skills and abilities. The leadership skills developed through an officer's career contribute to his/her ability to act as a mentor and authority for professional categories, individuals, and programs; to serve as a role model; and to assist in establishing mentorships.

Section H. Resources

1. The Commissioned Officer's Handbook is a resource providing a series of extracts from the Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual.
2. The supervisor should be the next source of information. A Supervisor's Guide to the Commissioned Personnel System has been provided to assist supervisors and administrative personnel who work with commissioned corps officers.
3. Career Counseling. Officers can call or write PAC Chairperson or CPO for support and career counseling and to discuss the utilization of their particular skills, knowledge, and abilities in PHS, and identify potential areas of need. When considering career opportunities outside a current professional activity, officers can also call or write to the appropriate Agency representative and/or DCP for further guidance.
4. Billet. Officers are encouraged to discuss the billet progression in their professional discipline with the PAC/CPO and to discuss Agency-specific issues with Agency representatives and senior officers in the Agency.
5. Training. Training sponsored by the Government must meet the needs of the Agency. Officers wishing to use the GI bill while on active duty should contact the nearest Department of Veterans Affairs office. Officers need to be aware that continuing education is the responsibility of the individual professional. However, where possible, Agencies do attempt to provide continuing education for officers but it is not incumbent on the Agency to support these activities.
6. Information Systems
 - a. OPF. An officer may schedule a meeting by phone or in person to review his/her OPF and to discuss strengths and weaknesses with DCP. The OPF

review may also serve as an opportunity to further engage in career counseling and to develop strategies to attain career goals.

NOTE: Significant documents, such as the C.V., must be submitted directly to the file room, DCP, for inclusion in the OPF:

Attention: File Room
Division of Commissioned Personnel
Room 4-35, Parklawn Building
Rockville, MD 20857

- b. C.V. Officers are encouraged to maintain a current C.V. in their OPFs which reflects current position, experience, and accomplishment. When applying for a position, officers are often encouraged to develop a specific C.V. that addresses the professional duties and specific criteria and/or selective factors required by the position.

NOTE: Some officers have found it helpful to update the C.V. and submit it to their OPF, on a schedule that coincides with the annual COER.

- c. VAATS. Agencies identify vacancies and list them within the tracking system by completing and forwarding a vacancy worksheet to DCP or through an alternative method developed by the Agency and DCP.
- d. Officers may view current vacancies listed in the Commissioned Corps Bulletin and in the Electronic Bulletin Board following directions provided in the Commissioned Corps Bulletin. Formal registration is required following initial access.
- e. APPLES. In order to express career preferences, periodic updates sent directly to each officer should be filled out and returned according to instructions contained in the mailing. APPLES information is utilized in VAATS and in the officer's OIS, and becomes a part of the DCP data base.
- f. OIS
 - (1) Periodic updates sent directly to officers should be reviewed for accuracy and returned according to instructions contained in the mailing.
 - (2) Officers requesting an update outside the normal cycle must make a written request to their respective Agency Liaison.

7. Additional sources of information are the:

- a. Local personnel office;

- b. Commissioned corps liaison. (Each agency has a commissioned corps liaison who is responsible for communicating with DCP. The liaisons meet on a regular basis to discuss commissioned corps issues);
- c. Agency representatives to the Office of the Surgeon General. (The Agency representatives meet on a regular basis with the Office of the Surgeon General to discuss issues of mutual interest); and
- d. PHS Commissioned Officer Services Directory (Exhibit III) distributed by DCP.

Section I. Privacy Act Provisions

Personnel records are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974. The applicable system of records are 09-37-0002, "PHS Commissioned Corps General Personnel Records, HHS/OASH/OSG," and 09-37-0008, "PHS Commissioned Corps Unofficial Personnel Files and Other Station Files, HHS/OASH/OSG."

EXHIBIT I

Categorical Career Track Model

Junior Staff	02-03
Staff	03-04
Senior Staff	04-05
Deputy Chief	04-06
Area/Regional/National Consultant	06
Agency Program Director	06-07
Residency (Specialist)	03-04
Fully Trained (Specialist)	04-05
Board Certified (Specialist)	05-06
Research Associate (Category)	03-04
Senior Research Investigator (Category)	04-05
Lead Research Investigator (Category)	05-06

EXHIBIT II

Agency Specific Career Track Model

When the category career tracks do not apply, Agencies have the opportunity to develop and/or utilize career track billets for Epidemiology/- Public Health, Program Management, Regulatory Affairs, Research, and International Health. Agency specific billets must adhere to Agency organization and civil service guidelines.

Trainee	(Non-Supervisory)	02
Assistant Staff	(Non-Supervisory)	03
Staff	(Non-Supervisory)	04
Senior Staff	(Non-Supervisory)	05
Supervisory Senior Staff (Advanced Training)		05
Expert (Certified)	(Non-Supervisory)	06
Senior Supervisory Officer		06

EXHIBIT III

PHS Commissioned Officer Services Directory

PHS COMMISSIONED OFFICER SERVICES DIRECTORY

TELEPHONE NUMBERS LISTED ARE (301) 443 + EXTENSION, unless otherwise specified

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PHONE</u>	<u>CONTACT</u>
ASSIMILATION		Agency Liaison
AWARDS		Agency Awards Coordinator
BILLETS		Agency Liaison
CAREER DEVELOPMENT	9000	Category Staffing Officer, ODB
CHAMPUS	Local Military Facility	Health Benefits Advisor
COER		Agency Liaison
COMMISSIONED CORPS BULLETIN	3067	Bulletin Editor, OD
COSTEP - Junior and Senior		Agency Liaison
DEATH/SURVIVOR BENEFITS	9000	Survivor Assistance Officer, ODB
DEERS (ID CARDS)		Local Administrative Officer
DENTAL-DEPENDENTS DENTAL PLAN	(916) 381-9368	Delta Dental
Delta Dental-Enrollment Forms	6132	CB
DETAILS/SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS		Agency Liaison
DISCIPLINE/MISCONDUCT	2626	Adverse Actions Officer, OD
ELECTRONIC BULLETIN BOARD	3036	<2400 baud, 8 bits, 1 stop bit, no parity
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS	3067	Emergency Coordinator, OD
EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION (ONLY)	6132	CB
GRIEVANCES		Agency Liaison or Adverse Actions Officer
INACTIVE AND READY RESERVE	9520	Ready Reserve Coordinator, TAB
LEAVE POLICIES		Agency Liaison
LICENSURE AND WAIVERS		Agency Liaison
MEDICAL CARE - Officers	1-800-368-2777	Patient Care Coordinator
-Officers in MD/AK/HI call collect	(301) 443-1943	Patient Care Coordinator
MEDICAL RELATED ISSUES	2606	Medical Branch
OFFICIAL PERSONNEL FOLDER-Review	9000	Category Staffing Officer, ODB
- Career Counseling	9000	Category Staffing Officer, ODB
- Copies of documents	Written Request	Privacy Act Coordinator, OPS
- Document Submission	Mail	File Room, OPS
- Officer Info Summary	Written Request	Privacy Act Coordinator, OPS
PAY AND ALLOWANCES	6132	CB
PERSONNEL ORDERS AND ACTIONS		Agency Liaison
POLICY/CCPM		Agency Liaison
PROMOTIONS		Agency Liaison
RECRUITMENT	1-800-221-9393	
RETIREMENT		Agency Liaison
SEPARATIONS (Processing)		Agency Liaison
SHIPPING OF HOUSEHOLD GOODS		Local Shipping Officer
SICK LEAVE		Agency Liaison
TRAINING		Agency Liaison
TRAINING & EXPERIENCE DATES	9520	TAB
TRAVEL AND PER DIEM		Agency Liaison
UNIFORMS		Agency Liaison
VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT AND TRACKING SYSTEM		
Entry of Vacancy	9000	VAATS Coordinator, ODB
Contact for Vacancy	9000	Category Staffing Officer, ODB
VETERAN'S BENEFITS		Local VA Office
Guaranteed Home Loan Program	9000	Home Loan Coordinator, ODB
Education Assistance Program	9000	VEAP Coordinator, ODB

Abbreviations for Division of Commissioned Personnel Offices

OD - Office of the Director ODB - Officer Development Branch
 PSB - Personnel Services Branch MB - Medical Branch
 CB - Compensation Branch OPS - Office of Program Support
 TAB - Transactions & Applications Branch

MAILING ADDRESS for DCP: Room 4-35
 5600 Fishers Lane
 Rockville, MD 20857

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