

Q&A Session for 'ASK CPC' Preparing for Promotion Wednesday February 13, 2013

Promotion Process Questions

Q1: Can you explain what the term "deep select" means, and what all it entails?

A1: Three categories of zones exist for the Officer Personnel Boards (OPBs) to review - above the zone above, in zone, and below zone. Deep select is when the Director, NOAA Corps authorizes the Board to select from officers below the zone. The RADM may authorize this, and if so, it will be identified in the Precept letter. Deep select is rare; however, a deep select is made when not enough "best qualified" officers exist in the category above the zone and in zone.

Q2: Can someone speak to rack and stack coming out of a promotion board?

A2: Rack and stack is a term utilized by the Military to prioritize a list of personnel being reviewed by an OPB. The [Matrix](#) is the tool utilized by the NOAA Corps OPB to provide a list of recommended officers for selection. Currently, the NOAA Corps does not adjust the lineal order of officers in the zone based on the "order of selection".

Q3: How does the Board gauge the difficulty of assignments?

A3: Your OER is the primary document used to gauge difficulty of assignments. OER input should include the context of the challenging environment, the skills and actions performed to meet the challenges and responsibilities of the billet, and what the impact of your actions were to the success of your office, unit, or NOAA. The title of the billet can often be misleading; every officer has the ability to make their billet better to fit the needs of the organization and their career. The time needed to update the billet description can significantly lag compared to the OER process. The Guidance Memorandum that is given to the selection Board, along with the Precept letter from the RADM, mentions the Board should not just look at the billet title. The Board is instructed to review the "Description of Duties" (box 2) on the OER. A good way to demonstrate your initiative and clarify your billet's level of difficulty is to add the duties performed aside from your billet description and highlight achievements outside the purview of the OER. Also, providing a list of the impacts from your accomplishments for your supervisor to include in your OER is a good way of demonstrating the level of difficulty of an assignment.

Q4: What's the final day for input to your Officer Personnel Folder (OPF) for officers in zone? Is it the same date as the Board as per the CyberFlash?

A4: Typically, the cut-off date for OPF input is two weeks prior to the Board's scheduled date. If you are in the zone for an upcoming Board be sure to get your documents submitted to your Online OPF as soon as possible. The earlier documents arrive the greater the opportunity CPC will have to turn-around OPF fixes prior the Board dates. OERs must be received by CPC 45 days prior to the Board allowing for the full reply timeframe.

Q5: What causes both the zone and selection to change after the fact, like happened last year?

A5: After the zones are set, if individuals within the zone submit a voluntary resignation they are then considered above zone. When this happens, the vacancy in the zone is then filled with the next officer on the lineal list.

Performance Recognition Questions

Q6: Now that the Annual Service Report is gone, are the only ways to convey an officer's skills and accomplishments to the promotion board through OERs and Awards received?

A6: In addition to the OER and awards, officers should submit a resume or biographical summary (bio) to your OPF and be sure to keep it up-to-date.

Q7: At what point does having a graduate degree become something that will help propel you above another in your same rank?

A7: Having a graduate degree does not necessarily propel you above your peers. Performance is the key to promotion, impacts, and successes. RADM Fields and several CAPTs did not have a Masters or higher degree. There is no hidden checklist that has all the answers guaranteeing promotion. An advanced degree is one example of a discretionary behavior or performance that may place an officer ahead of their peers during a promotion board. Other examples are: Master or 2M license, taking on challenging assignments or details, etc.

Q8: Is there a standard format that is required for the Bio/ Resume? Is there ANY official guidance or official requirement for the BIO?

A8: No, there is no "official guidance" or requirement for a resume or bio in your OPF. Boards typically will have dozens of documents to review, therefore, a concise (1-2 page) document summarizing your career and personal achievements is recommended. Bios are a chance for officers to outline their career goals and summarize past assignments and accomplishments in and outside direct observation in the OER.

OPF Review Questions

Q9: How to insure your medical information is correct or up-to-date when you can't actually view the documents in your OPF? It only shows the title of the document.-

A9: CPC is in the process of upgrading the online Officer Medical Folder (OMF) capabilities. Until the OMF upgrades are complete officers will need to contact CPC's Chief, Medical Administration Branch (elizabeth.hobson-powell@noaa.gov, 301-713-7718) directly with any questions you may have about your medical records. All officers in the upcoming zones that have not had a physical in the past 3 to 4 years will need some supplemental examinations that are required. [Requirements](#) are listed on the CPC website.

Q10: If we need to add training certs, transcripts, etc., to our OPF, is adding it electronically the preferred way, or submitting a hard copy?

A10: Yes, submitting your documents electronically through your Online OPF is the best method. Through OPF Fix, the documents are tracked continuously and you are notified immediately once the documents have been loaded into your OPF, and are ready for review. There are some documents that must be submitted by mail as we require originals (e.g. Transcripts and Record of Emergency Data).

Q11: Currently our OPFs are being "updated" or "corrected" and I have found that some of my assignments are now listed as "null" but they are worthy assignments to be in my OPF. How do we fix the null listing?

A11: When historical billets (billets discontinued before the OPF system) and in some cases current billets were loaded into the CPC database, there may have been missing data (i.e., routing code,

location, supervisor). The database marks missing data as "null". If that is the case in your OPF, immediately submit a request via your Online OPF and it will be corrected.

Q12: How frequently do you recommend updating/submitting a bio/resume? Once a year?

A12: Whenever there is a significant change in your career, for example PCS to a new assignment, Mate's License, degree completion, or prior to a promotion Board. Resumes and bios are also used for selection to special details and assignments. Without a current resume/bio you could be missing out on opportunities.

Q13: Are prior service (IST) FITREPs evaluated/taken into account during the OPB? (pending the FITREPs are in the OPF)?

A13: Yes, if the FITREPs are within the scope of time being reviewed by the Board. For example, the Board will typically have access to 5 years of OERs. If an officer had transferred within those 5 years, then their prior service FITREPs would be included.

Q14: When someone submits a voluntary resignation, then pulls it, does it leave any "residue" in that officer's file? In other words, will an OPB know that this officer's commitment is low?

A14: No, the resignation letter will be placed in a separate section of the OPF which the Board does not access. This is done to prevent biasing the Board. The submission of a resignation letter does not mean an officer is not committed to NOAA or the Corps.

Q15: What can an officer do if they do not get there OER?

A15: 45 days after the end of reporting period, if an officer has not received an email notification that CPC has checked in the OER, notify the Director, CPC in writing, cc: OER.cpc@noaa.gov and your Line Office Liaison Officer. The email should contain contact information for the OER rating chain, period of report, and any known extenuating circumstances. CPC will work with the Line Office Liaison to track the OER. The Officer Career Management Division is addressing this issue by establishing a tracking system and adding staff to focus on the OER processes.

Workforce Questions

Q16: What is the reason for the high attrition rate for O2s in FY10?

A16: Currently, there is no instrument in place to measure the reasons officers are leaving. CPC is working on ideas for how to implement an effective tool (such as an exit survey) that will allow departing officers to submit anonymously their reasons for leaving.

Q17: How will the current budget climate, particularly ship lay-up and flight hour reduction on aircraft, impact promotion opportunities?

A17: The largest impact could be the inability to bring in the planned level of new officers. If the strength of the Corps decreases, promotion vacancies will decrease proportionally. Also, promotion rates recently were high due to the Corps authorized strength increasing to 321 officers. Promotion rates should naturally slow now that we are averaging at or near maximum strength.

Q18: How do you see the lack of sea days this year and next affecting development for OOD, SWO, Command, Licenses, and Promotion?

A18: Ship Commands will be queried to determine if their Junior Officers should be extended to obtain OOD qualification and adequate experience to compete for an Operations Officer position on their next sea tour.

Q19: Has there been any discussion on a stop gap measure to keep people from leaving, for example, not approving their resignation?

A19: By law the NOAA Corps cannot deny an approved voluntary resignation. If we keep people from leaving that can also raise other issues including safety, morale of the individuals and their co-workers.

Webinar Related Questions

Q20: Will this be available for replay?

A20: CPC will post the presentation along with any summary and Questions/Answer documents. Once the system is more familiar CPC plans to upgrade the presentation with a voice over version.

Q21: What are some potential future topics for the next WEBEX?

A21: Webinar topics are completely chosen based upon officer demand. Officers can supply their input on desired topics through the on-line survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/7YXPKQQ> . There is a fill-in option for "other" subjects, if what interests you is not listed. The survey will be reviewed and refreshed periodically to determine the subjects of the Webinar. The next quarterly webinar subject, based on the responses, will be on Training Opportunities. However, based on the success of the first webinar and the spike in responses for an Assignments webinar, CPC may host an earlier webinar to meet this need. The date will be posted, and notices will be sent out similar to this seminar.