

**E-PME**  *Enlisted*  
**PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION**

Commissioning Programs 4.F.02

**Learning Objective(s):** **DISCUSS** the officer accession programs available to Coast Guard enlisted members.

**Why You Need to Know This**

The Coast Guard offers a variety of officer accession programs to its enlisted personnel. Each program has its own application procedures, time-in-service requirements and academic requirements. Specific qualifications for entry into any of the programs may change from time to time because of the Coast Guard's needs or if new legislation is enacted. Officer accession programs are available for both college students and graduates. Enlisted men and women who are outstanding performers may also qualify and apply for commissioning programs. By providing many paths to officer accession the Coast Guard can more effectively meet its personnel needs while taking into account individual performance, skills and leadership potential.

This lesson will provide you with the information you will need to know in regards to the Coast Guard's commissioning programs.

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**Topics Covered**

This section will cover the following topics:

- Coast Guard Academy (CGA)
- Officer Candidate School (OCS)
- Pre Commission Program for Enlisted Personnel (PPEP)
- Direct Commission Officer Program (DCO)
- Selective Reserve Direct Commission Program (SRDC)
- Chief Warrant Officer (CWO)

At the end of this lesson you will be required to participate in a learning activity. You are encouraged to first review the learning activity and the sign off requirements located in the "**You and Your Supervisor**" section of this lesson. Reviewing this information before you begin the lesson will allow you to take proper notes and focus on key learning points.

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## **Coast Guard Academy**

Coast Guard Academy is one of the five federal service academies. Located in New London, Connecticut, the academy provides education to future Coast Guard officers. Cadets graduate with one of eight majors and are obligated to five years of active duty service upon graduation.

Cadets to the Coast Guard Academy are selected by competitive examination. Enlisted personnel in all the armed forces are able to compete for direct appointments to the Academy.

Qualified applicants for the examination must have good character and meet the following criteria:

- **U.S. citizenship:** Be a United States citizen
- **Age:** Be between 17 and 22 years of age
- **Marital status:** Must be unmarried and have no dependents
- **Sufficient coursework:** Have graduated from high school with credits in the required subjects.

Additional information about the Coast Guard Academy can be found at the following link: <http://www.cga.edu/>

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## **Officer Candidate School (OCS)**

The Officer Candidate School (OCS) is a major source of newly commissioned officers. Candidates are selected based on a competitive system. Upon satisfactorily completing 17 weeks of training, candidates are appointed as commissioned Coast Guard ensigns or lieutenants junior grade, or as commissioned Coast Guard Reserve ensigns.

Applicants are screened to determine suitability. They must also meet a qualifying score on the SAT, ACT, or ASVAB exams and sit before a board of commissioned officers for a selection interview. The Commander convenes boards at least semiannually to select Reserve and temporary commission applicants to OCS.

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**Officer Candidate School (OCS)  
(Continued)**

To meet the eligibility requirements, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- **U.S. citizenship:** Be a United States citizen with no questionable foreign connections.
  - **Age:** Be between 21 and 26 years of age before the published class convening date for each selection period. However, there are exceptions to the age requirements. These exceptions apply to applicants who:
    - Served on active duty in any Armed Forces branch, may exceed maximum age limit by number of months served (up to 5 years);
    - Are currently serving as a regular Coast Guard CWO and are less than 40 years of age.
  - **Medical:** Meet the requirements listed in the Medical Manual, COMDTINST M6000.1 (series), Chapter 3.
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**Pre-Commissioning Program (PPEP)**

The Pre-commissioning Program for Enlisted Personnel (PPEP) provides upward mobility for qualified enlisted members to become commissioned officers. PPEP allows selected enlisted personnel to attend college on a full-time basis for up to two years. Upon graduation, you will attend Officer Candidate School (OCS). Selectees are required to complete degree requirements in 24 calendar months.

PPEP students receive full pay and allowances (less special duty assignment pay) for their enlisted pay grades and are eligible for advancement. Only members who have demonstrated the ability to excel will be considered for selection.

PPEP applicants must meet the following criteria:

- **U.S. citizenship.** Be a United States citizen.
  - **Age.** Be between 21 years and not yet 32 years of age prior to their OCS class convening date.
  - **Duty status.** Be an enlisted member of the Coast Guard or Coast Guard Reserve on active duty. You must be eligible to complete at least four years additional continuous active duty service following OCS graduation.
  - **Sufficient coursework.** Complete sufficient course work within 24 months for a baccalaureate degree. You must be enrolled/accepted for enrollment in an accredited 4-year college/university that is approved by Commandant (G-PRJ). You need to maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.5 or better on a 4.0 scale.
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**Pre-Commissioning Program (PPEP) (Continued)**

- **Recommendation.** Be recommended by the commanding officer...NO exceptions!
- **Medical.** Per Chapter 3 of the Medical Manual, COMDTINST M6000.1 prior to PPEP acceptance (physical to have been completed within the preceding two years).
- **Clean record.** Have no record of conviction by courts-martial, non-judicial punishment, or civil court for other than minor traffic violations.

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**Direct Commission Officer (DCO) Programs**

Persons with special training and skills have an opportunity to become Coast Guard officers through the Direct Commission Officer (DCO) Program. The DCO programs currently in place are presented below:

- Direct Commission Lawyer (DCL) Program
- Direct Commission Engineer (DCE) Program
- Direct Commission Intelligence Officer (DCIO) Program
- Direct Commission Aviator (DCA) Program
- Direct Commission Selected School (DCSS) Graduate Program
- Direct Commission Environmental Management (DCEM) Program
- Licensed Officer of the Merchant Marine (LOMM) Program
- Direct Commission Maritime Academy Graduate (MARGRAD) Program
- Prior Trained Military Officer (PTMO) Program

**Note:** The qualifications and eligibility requirements vary for each program. Additional information can be found at the following link:

<http://www.gocoastguard.com/>

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**Selective Reserve Direct Commission Program (RDC)**

The SRDC, essentially, is a program by which enlisted Reservists (or civilians) can become commissioned officers. SRDC officers attend a 3-week **Reserve Officer Candidate Indoctrination (ROCI)** course at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, CT. They then continue in their civilian employment while serving on military duty an average of two days a month and two weeks a year.

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**Selective Reserve  
Direct Commission  
Program  
(Continued)**

To qualify for the SRDC program, an applicant must:

- Be a U.S. citizen
- Be between 21 and 37 years old (as of 30 September of the fiscal year in which the selection board convenes)
- Meet security requirements for commissioning
- Meet the physical requirements for commissioning
- Have a bachelor's or higher degree (if a civilian), or at least 60 semester credits from a degree-granting college, or university (if currently an E-5 or higher in the Coast Guard or Coast Guard Reserve).

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**Chief Warrant  
Officer**

Petty officers First Class and above that are eligible to apply for promotion to the grade of Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) must possess the qualities, character, and leadership required of Chief Warrant Officers. They must:

- Demonstrate character consistent with Coast Guard core values
- Have no history of substance and/or alcohol abuse
- Have no history of civil or military misconduct
- Be financially responsible
- Fully support Commandant Policies in the all areas of civil rights, diversity, and all other human resource initiatives.

Applicant minimum eligibility requirements for appointment to warrant grade must be completed by January 1st of the year in which the Chief Warrant Officer Appointment Board convenes.

The applicant must meet the following criteria:

- **U.S. citizenship.** Be a United States citizen.
  - **Duty status.** Be a member of the Coast Guard or Coast Guard Reserve with at least eight years total active service in the U.S. Armed Forces, the last 4 years being with the Coast Guard. The member must not be scheduled for separation nor have applied for retirement.
  - **SWE results.** Have placed in the top 50 percent on eligibility list for advancement to E-7 based on SWE results administered in May prior to January 1st deadline.
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**Chief Warrant Officer (Continued)**

- **Enlisted rate.** Be serving in pay grade E-6 or above and have completed at least one year of sea duty in pay grade E-6 or above if applying for the boatswain, weapons, or naval engineering specialties.
  - **Medical.** Possess normal color perception if applying for the AVI, BOSN, ELC, INF, MED, or WEPS warrant specialties.
  - **Recommendation.** Obtain the commanding officer's recommendation.
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**Learning Activity**



To successfully complete this requirement you will need to discuss the commissioning programs presented in this lesson with a commissioned or Chief Warrant Officer (CWO).

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**For you and Your Supervisor**

In order to meet the sign-off requirement for this lesson **YOU** must perform the following:

1. Prior to meeting with the CWO or other officer, review the contents of this lesson and organize your thoughts.
2. Locate a Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) or other officer at or near your unit and discuss the different Coast Guard commissioning programs presented in this lesson.

Before signing off on this requirement the **CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER (CWO) OR OTHER OFFICER** must:

1. Make sure the member understands the different Coast Guard commissioning programs available to them.
  2. Provide the member with corrective feedback and answer any questions they may have related to this topic.
  3. Sign off the check-off sheet on the Record of Enlisted Professional Military Education (E-PME) Performance Requirements.
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## References

The references used to develop this lesson can be found at CG Directives (CG-612), [www.uscg.mil/directives](http://www.uscg.mil/directives):

- Training and Education Manual, COMDINST M1500.10 (series)
  - Medical Manual, COMDTINST M6000.1 (series)
  - Pre-commissioning Program for Enlisted Personnel (PPEP), COMDINST 1131.21 (series)
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