

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE GENERIC MEMORANDUM OF INSTRUCTIONS

I. Authority and Requirements

Your task is to recommend the best-qualified Air Force officers for promotion, and to ensure that all selected individuals are fully qualified for that promotion. You must act in the best interest of the Air Force, and not in the interest of any particular command, specialty, or group. You must consider all eligible officers regardless of promotion zone without prejudice or partiality, having in view the special fitness of the officers under consideration and the efficiency and effectiveness of the United States Air Force. Equal opportunity is an essential element of our selection system. Your evaluation of all officers must afford them fair and equitable consideration.

In order to encourage officers to broaden their assignments and remain competitive for increased responsibility, you shall not consider time in grade or year of commissioning in your evaluation of best qualified for promotion.

II. Considerations in Evaluating Records

You will apply the whole-person concept to assess all factors in the officer's record that bear on promotion potential or continuation of service. These factors include job performance, professional qualities, leadership, depth and breadth of experience, job responsibility, advanced academic and developmental education, and specific achievements. Of these factors, given officers equally committed to Air Force values, job performance is the most important.

You are prohibited from considering an officer's marital status or the employment, educational or volunteer service activities of an officer's spouse. If you see such information in the records you review, you will disregard it. Give no weight, whatsoever, to an officer's age.

A. Performance, Core Values, and Exemplary Conduct

I charge you with selecting officers who demonstrate commitment to integrity, service, and excellence. An evaluation of an officer's performance must rest on a foundation of commitment to our core values as demonstrated by an officer's conduct. I will only accept officers for promotion who have distinguished themselves through their job performance and who are models of exemplary conduct. You are required to deliberately review any information raising questions about departures from our core values and incidents casting doubt on an officer's ability to set the example to lead others to live in accordance with our core values.

Officers recommended for promotion must excel in four key performance areas:

1. Officers must execute their assigned mission. They will have mastered their craft and accomplished assigned tasks consistently and persistently with a high degree of skill and dedication.
2. Officers must lead people effectively. They will have inspired confidence in subordinates and fostered good order, discipline, teamwork, and trust.
3. Officers must display proficiency at managing resources. They will have been exemplary stewards of manpower, funds, equipment, facilities, and Airmen's time.

4. Officers must improve their unit. They will have demonstrated the ability to identify needed improvements and lead positive change so that the unit is better than they found it.

Excelling in these four performance areas is built on values and high professional standards, a healthy command climate, and personal conduct that is above reproach. You will only recommend officers for promotion who are disciplined and lead by example on and off duty.

With this understanding, during your deliberations, you may review records containing adverse information. You should carefully weigh the adverse information against the officer's complete record of performance and potential to serve in the next higher grade. You should give the information appropriate weight, neither ignoring significant information nor give undue weight to matters of slight significance. In examining adverse information, consider its severity, repetition, timing within the officer's career, the amount of time passed since the incident, the officer's performance since, and the senior rater's assessment of the officer. These factors may indicate whether or not the officer has demonstrated the potential to serve in the next higher grade. In particular, you should first make the judgement in each case whether the matter has served as a learning experience or is symptomatic of carelessness or character flaw, and then consider whether or not the incident should be a bar to promotion. While we need to avoid creating the perception of a "one mistake Air Force", you should not recommend any officers for promotion, who have demonstrated through their conduct that they do not have the potential to serve in the next higher grade.

To recommend an officer for promotion, including those who have adverse information in their records, you must find that he or she meets the needs of the Air Force consistent with the requirement of exemplary conduct set forth in Title 10, United States Code, Section 8583. Section 8583 requires all commanding officers and others in authority in the Air Force: to show in themselves a good example of virtue, honor, patriotism, and subordination; to be vigilant in inspecting the conduct of all persons who are placed under their command; to guard against and suppress all dissolute and immoral practices, and to correct, according to the laws and regulations of the Air Force, all persons who are guilty of them; and to take all necessary and proper measures, under the laws, regulations, and customs of the Air Force, to promote and safeguard the morale, the physical well-being, and the general welfare of the officers and enlisted persons under their command or charge.

B. Specific Experiences and Qualifications

You should take into consideration not all officers follow a common career path. In particular, we need officers who have experience beyond their core specialty. Career broadening assignments and higher education enhance the strength and professionalism of the officer corps. Education in engineering, science or mathematics also contributes to our ability to develop new capabilities and drive innovation in a rapidly changing and highly technical environment.

Joint Duty Assignment experience is also an extremely important consideration for promotion for Line of the Air force officers.

Acquisition Corps: Air Force Acquisition officers work in a variety of career fields leading and supporting the development, procurement, and sustainment of materiel and weapon systems vital to our nation's defense. Moreover, an understanding of acquisition matters is an important quality for officers called to serve in leadership positions.

For All Competitive Categories

When there is a 100% opportunity for promotion, do not select anyone who is not fully qualified. A 100% promotion opportunity is an “opportunity” – not a required selection rate. If your review of the record and this guidance leads you to conclude that an officer is not fully qualified and should not be promoted, I expect you to recommend against promotion for that officer.

Together with the rest of the Department of Defense, the Air Force needs to continue to foster a culture that encourages and rewards creativity, innovation, intelligent risk-taking, and critical thinking throughout the Department.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the Air Force, and the rest of the Department of Defense enterprise, will continue to demand excellent executive management skills. It is therefore essential that service leadership be well grounded in business practices.

To remain competitive, the Department must have members from the entire spectrum of qualified talent available in the United States. Accordingly, the Department of Defense needs to make every effort to encourage service by individuals from all backgrounds by providing for the equal treatment and equitable consideration of all personnel considered for promotion.

Air Force personnel performing duty in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other areas of the world are developing combat, international partnering, and coalition-building skills that need to be retained and utilized for future application. Deployment information may be reflected in various documents in an officer’s record. You should not make this a pass-fail item in your assessment. There are officers who have not had the opportunity to deploy. However, a successful tour in a deployed environment, especially as a commander, provides insights into an officer’s potential for assuming the next higher grade.

Experiences and education that contribute to broader cultural awareness and enable better communication in a global operating environment are crucial underpinnings to support strategic national interests. Undergraduate and advanced academic degrees are only displayed in records being considered for the grade of Colonel. The possession of an advanced academic degree, or lack thereof, will not be considered in assessing the potential of an officer until promotion to the grade of Colonel. You should not make this a pass-fail item in your assessment. The Air Force considers it essential that our officers have the knowledge and competency to accomplish the mission. However, completion of advanced academic education, like other whole person factors, must be assessed in terms of how it enhances performance and potential; and contributes to the mission and effectiveness of the Air Force.

While Developmental Education should not be a pass-fail item in your assessment of an officer’s potential for promotion, the Air Force considers Developmental Education important and encourages its officers to complete it. The completion of Developmental Education, or lack thereof, will not be considered in assessing the potential of an officer until in- and above-the-promotion zone. In addition, because officers who are listed as a “SELECT” to attend Developmental Education in-residence have no control over when they attend Developmental Education and are also precluded from completing it by any other method, Developmental Education “SELECT” status will be given equal weight to Developmental Education “COMPLETE” status for the same level of Developmental Education.

No undue weight should be given to multiple training reports or few performance reports for officers currently enrolled or recently completing Air Force-sponsored graduate education programs. These

officers were competitively selected for these opportunities, which meet a specific Air Force requirement.

No undue weight should be given when officers have short duty histories because they entered active service with constructive credit for education or civilian experience.

For Line of the Air Force

Officers with experience in Remotely Piloted Aircraft operations possess unique skills critical to national security and to our success in today's global environment. In addition, successful performance of Remotely Piloted Aircraft flight duties, especially under demanding, high-stress conditions, is a significant indicator of potential for promotion to the next higher grade. Some of these officers have been required to remain in place for extended periods of time, or return prematurely from other assignments to contribute directly to combat and contingency operations. You should consider that these officers, because of the needs of the Air Force and combatant commanders, may not have received the same development opportunities and normal career progression as their peers.

For Health Professions

You will consider the records of officers in clinical, scientific, or functional specialties assigned to fill critical requirements in direct patient care or education and training. Because of the needs of the Air Force, these officers may not have a traditional career path or assignments commensurate with their grade.

When considering Health Professions officers, clinical/functional skills or medical proficiency are important factors in assessing job performance. For Health Professions promotions to the grades of major and lieutenant colonel, you must give consideration to an officer's clinical proficiency and skill as a health professional to at least as great an extent as you give to the officer's administrative and management skills.

For promotion to Colonel only, you will consider that the professional development of Health Professions officers can emphasize progression along a path focused on executive leadership, clinical/functional proficiency, and/or academic prowess, each of which are highly valued and are important factors in professional development.

Board certification in a career field-related professional organization is considered an important accomplishment for promotion, except for Biomedical Sciences Corps officers.