COMMON TRAINING

GOLD STAR

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

SECTION 4

EO C407.01 – PREPARE FOR A MERIT REVIEW BOARD

Total Time:	90 min

PREPARATION

PRE-LESSON INSTRUCTIONS

Resources needed for the delivery of this lesson are listed in the lesson specification located in A-CR-CCP-704/PG-001, *Gold Star Qualification Standard and Plan*, Chapter 4. Specific uses for said resources are identified throughout the instructional guide within the TP for which they are required.

Review the lesson content and become familiar with the material prior to delivering the lesson.

Prepare to conduct merit review boards IAW CATO 13-02, *Cadet Rank Promotions*.

The practice merit review board in TP 3 should be composed of adults who have competent interview skills (eg, officers, civilian instructors, volunteers). Senior cadets should only be used as a last resort.

Obtain the materials for conducting a merit review board for a promotion interview.

Prepare interview questions, marking sheets and candidate scoring sheets (to be created locally) for TP 3.

Arrange for assistant instructors for TP 3.

Obtain a copy of CATO 13-02, *Cadet Rank Promotions*, for each member of the merit review board for promotion.

Photocopy Attachments A, B and D for each cadet.

Photocopy the Merit Review Board Scoresheet located at Attachment C (the number of photocopies will vary based on the number of board members and Gold Star cadets).

Using Attachment B as a guide, prepare the Merit Review Board Scoresheets by deciding on six questions to ask during the practice merit review board.

PRE-LESSON ASSIGNMENT

Nil.

APPROACH

An interactive lecture was chosen for TPs 1 and 2 to present preparations for merit review boards and to summarize the teaching points.

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An in-class activity was chosen for TP 3 as it is an interactive way to provoke thought and stimulate interest among the cadets about merit review boards.

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW

Nil.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson the cadet shall be expected to prepare for a merit review board.

IMPORTANCE

It is important for cadets to prepare for a merit review board to help them succeed in gaining opportunities through competitive application processes.

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Teaching point 1 **Identify occasions for a merit review board.**

Time: 5 min Method: Interactive Lecture

Merit review boards are a structured interview where candidates are evaluated by a group of board members. Candidates are scored on their dress, deportment and answers given to interview questions. Merit review boards are most often conducted for promotion to Master Warrant Officer (MWO) and Chief Warrant Officer (CWO). They provide selection recommendations that are fair and open, and provide candidates with valuable constructive feedback on their performance.

PROMOTIONS REQUIREMENTS



CATO 13-02, *Cadet Rank Promotions*, is the authority for this training.

A merit review board is required to be promoted to MWO and CWO. Promotion merit review boards have many benefits for the corps, to include:

- giving the cadet incentive to learn details of the rank or appointment responsibilities;
- ensuring that the best cadet is selected; and
- satisfying all members of the corps that the best available cadet is leading them.

OTHER POSSIBLE OCCASIONS FOR A MERIT REVIEW BOARD

Awards

Some corps may conduct a merit review board for important awards. Most often, recommendations for awards are made by a board of staff members who are familiar with the work of all cadets. In all cases, recommendations are given to the Commanding Officer (CO). The CO is the final arbiter of awards.

Scholarships

Scholarship cadets are often selected by the person or entity that is providing the scholarship funding. Corps may choose to hold a merit review board for such a purpose.

Senior Appointments Within the Corps

Some corps may conduct a merit review board for certain appointments within the corps. Most often corps will conduct a workshop or seminar for senior cadets at the beginning of the training year. During this time a merit review board may be conducted for senior appointments within the corps such as Company Sergeant Major (CSM) and Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM).

Cadet Summer Training Centre (CTC) Training Opportunities

When a corps has multiple excellent cadets for a limited number of course spaces, selection of cadets must be done in an open manner. The CO requires recommendations that are both unbiased and clearly seen to be unbiased. While staff members can and often do provide effective recommendations, the merit review board provides an unbiased option.

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Expedition Opportunities

Following the completion of Gold Star, cadets will have the opportunity to apply to attend regional and national (domestic and international) expeditions. The CO may conduct a merit review board prior to submitting the cadet's application to ensure that they meet the expedition requirements. The region may choose to conduct a merit review board to select cadets for expedition positions.

Staff Appointments at the CTC

When staff cadets arrive at a CTC prior to the start of summer training, they may be interviewed by a board. This usually takes one of two forms:

- cadets are interviewed by a panel of officers to determine which CTC position they are most suited for; and
- senior cadets are interviewed by a merit review board for CSM and the RSM positions.

In either case, the interview skills learned at a corps will prove vital to the cadet.

CONFIRMATION OF TEACHING POINT 1

QUESTIONS:

Q1. What are two important benefits of merit review boards?

Q2. What are five occasions in which a cadet might encounter a merit review board?

Q3. What benefit does a corps get from holding promotion merit review boards?

ANTICIPATED ANSWERS:

A1. Merit review boards have two important benefits:

- providing selection recommendations that are fair and open; and
- providing cadets with a valuable life skill.

A2. A cadet might encounter a merit review board for:

- promotions,
- awards,
- scholarships,
- senior appointments within the corps,
- CTC training opportunities,
- expedition opportunities, and
- staff appointments at the CTC.

A3. Promotion merit review boards have many benefits for the corps, to include:

- giving the cadets incentive to learn details of the rank or appointment responsibilities;
- ensuring that the best cadet is selected; and
- satisfying all members of the corps that the best available cadet is leading them.

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Teaching point 2 **Describe how to prepare for a merit review board for promotion and tips for a successful interview.**

Time: 20 min Method: Interactive Lecture

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A MERIT REVIEW BOARD FOR PROMOTION

A cadet for a merit review board for promotion should:

- think about potential questions that could be asked and prepare answers to them;
- talk to others who have been through the process to find out what to expect; and
- participate in any opportunity to practice for a board, such as practice merit review boards.

Dress Requirements

The interview cadet shall identify dress requirements ahead of time. The uniform must be worn in accordance with the cadet dress instructions in the relevant Cadet Administration and Training Order (CATO). Dress shall be maintained to a high standard.



Arriving properly dressed to a merit board, or even a civilian interview is critical. The way in which the interviewee is dressed may influence the interviewer's first impression. One should always present themselves in a clean and tidy manner.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

Importance of Bearing

Many cadets exhibit high standards of dress and high levels of knowledge. The final selections will be based partly on the winning candidates' bearing.

Unless given other instructions, the cadet will enter facing the board, wearing headdress and salute. Wait until offered a seat and remove headdress when seated.

During the interview, the cadet should avoid doing things that may distract the interviewers, such as:

- biting one's lips;
- squirming;
- scratching;
- chewing gum;
- twisting fingers;
- playing with hair;
- checking the time;
- yawning—make sure to have a good night's sleep before the interview; and
- taking anything into an interview that has any chance of distracting the interviewers.

Hand gestures while speaking may also distract interviewers.

The cadet should sit with an open posture with arms and legs uncrossed.

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The members of the board want the cadet to feel comfortable and relaxed. The cadet should try to do so, while maintaining respect and decorum. A confident cadet sits up straight, calmly looking the interviewer straight in the eyes without fidgeting. Nodding or shaking the head does not constitute an answer of any kind. All replies must be verbal.

Cadets must be prepared to introduce themselves.

Remember that the interviewers are also going through a process for which they have made long preparations and to which they attach great importance. The cadet being interviewed is, in many ways, part of a team that includes the interviewers. All members of this team are expected to maintain respect, decorum and friendliness.

When the interview is completed, the cadet should stand, replace headdress, make firm eye contact, salute, and smartly depart the room. The board members may or may not offer to shake hands. The cadet should follow the lead of the board members.

Merit Review Board for Promotion Questions



Distribute a copy of Attachment A to each cadet.

IAW CATO 13-02, *Cadet Rank Promotions*, question areas at a merit review board for promotion may include:

- cadets recounting their achievements through cadet training (eg, corps program, CTC program);
- cadets explaining what previous positions of leadership they have held (eg, at cadets, at school) and how they performed in related situations;
- personal goals and / or their goals for the corps;
- scenario-based questions that relate to typical corps situations where the candidate shares how they might approach / deal with the situation; and
- achievements outside of the cadet corps setting (eg, at school, in their community, sports teams, extracurricular activities).

Cadets are expected to take their time when formulating answers but the answer should be as direct as possible. They should ask for clarifications when necessary. A comprehensively correct answer, formulated carefully and delivered in a relaxed, friendly manner is best.

If the cadet does not know the answer to a question it is best to say so, in as direct a manner as possible, so the interviewer moves on to another topic where the candidate has better knowledge. This will help minimize both the psychological impact of the missing information and the damage to the candidate's mark. Shoulders must never be shrugged during an interview.



Distribute a copy of Attachment B to each cadet.

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CONFIRMATION OF TEACHING POINT 2

QUESTIONS:

Q1. How will a candidate know which uniform to wear for a merit review board interview?

Q2. When should a candidate take a seat in an interview?

Q3. What should candidates say if they do not know the answer to a question?

ANTICIPATED ANSWERS:

A1. The interview candidate shall identify dress requirements ahead of their interview.

A2. When offered a seat.

A3. It is best to say they do not know, in as direct a manner as possible.

Teaching point 3 — **Have the cadets participate in a practice merit review board based on the instructions given in TP 2.**

Time: 55 min — Method: In-Class Activity



This TP shall take place a minimum of two weeks after the instruction of TPs 1 and 2.

The practice merit review board should be composed of adults who have competent interview skills (eg, officers, civilian instructors and volunteers). Senior cadets should only be used as a last resort.

ACTIVITY

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this activity is to have the cadets participate in a practice merit review board.

RESOURCES

- Annex B of CATO 13-02, *Cadet Rank Promotions*,
- Merit Review Board Scoresheet,
- Dress Inspection Scoresheet, and
- Pens / pencils.

ACTIVITY LAYOUT

- In a quiet room:
  - place a table and a chair for each board member and one chair facing the merit review board for the candidate;
  - arrange the lighting to provide the interviewers with a good view of the candidate; and
  - ensure the candidate's back faces toward any window or opening, to avoid distraction.

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- Arrange a holding area for cadets prior to their interview.
- Arrange a separate holding area for cadets following their interview.
- Arrange for a messenger to bring each candidate for their interview as directed by the merit review board.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prior to the commencement of the practice merit review boards:
    a. show the practice merit review board members to their room;
    b. ensure that each practice merit review board member has the required resources;
    c. distribute the Merit Review Board Scoresheet to each merit review board member;
    d. assign a question(s) to each merit review board member to ask during the practice merit review board;
    e. assign a merit review board member to inspect each cadet using the Dress Inspection Scoresheet;
    f. introduce the messenger to the practice merit review board;
    g. explain that the board members will tell the messenger when to bring each cadet; and
    h. explain that cadets will be guided to a separate holding area after being interviewed.
2. Conduct the practice merit review boards by:
    a. having the messenger bring a cadet into the room;
    b. having the assigned merit review board member inspect the cadet;
    c. having the cadet report to the merit review board and sit down;
    d. introducing the cadet to the members of the merit review board;
    e. explaining to each cadet how the merit review board will be conducted; asking if the cadet as any questions prior to asking interview questions;
    f. having the merit board review members ask their pre-assigned questions;
    g. having the merit board review members score the cadet based on their answers and take notes using the Merit Review Board Scoresheet;
    h. debriefing the cadet on their performance and proving them with a copy of their Merit Review Board Scoresheets; and
    i. having the messenger bring the cadet into the separate holding room prior to bringing in the next cadet.
3. Upon completion of the practice merit review boards;
    a. thank the members of the practice merit review board for their time and effort; and
    b. debrief the cadets by providing feedback, focusing on:
        (1) best practices,
        (2) general trends and key areas for improvement, and
        (3) re-motivation, highlighting the effort and accomplishments of the group.

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SAFETY

Nil.

CONFIRMATION OF TEACHING POINT 3

The cadets' participation in the activity will serve as the confirmation of this TP.

END OF LESSON CONFIRMATION

The cadets' participation in the practice merit review board will serve as the confirmation of this lesson.

CONCLUSION

HOMEWORK / READING / PRACTICE

Have the cadets prepare for a merit review board.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Nil.

CLOSING STATEMENT

Effective preparation for merit review boards will help to obtain important opportunities. These skills will also prove invaluable throughout life.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES / REMARKS

When scheduling this lesson, allow at least two weeks between TPs 2 and 3.

REFERENCES

A0-126 CATO 13-02 Director Cadets 3. (2008). *Cadet rank promotions*. Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence.

A2-028 CATO 46-01 Director of Cadets 4. (2005). *Army Cadet dress instructions*. Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence.

C0-416 Air Cadet League of Canada BC Committee (2009). *Sponsoring committee resources: Mock boards*. Retrieved March 4, 2009, from http://www.aircadetleague.bc.ca/SponCommResources/Mock_Boards.PDF

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EXAMPLE QUESTIONS TO EXPECT AT A MERIT REVIEW BOARD FOR PROMOTION

Question areas may include:

- your achievements through cadet training (eg, corps program, CTC program);
- previous positions of leadership held (eg, at cadets, at school) and your performance in related situations;
- personal goals and / or your goals for the corps;
- achievements outside of the cadet corps setting (eg, at school, in the community, sports teams, extra-curricular activities), and
- scenario-based questions that relate to typical corps situations and how you might approach / deal with the situation.

All candidates will be asked the same questions, which could be similar to the following examples:

- Describe your current corps responsibilities.
- Describe your involvement in corps teams, band and drill, flag party or clubs.
- What leadership positions have you held in any organization?
- What do you consider your strengths / weaknesses are?
- If you had to change something about yourself, what would it be?
- How did you become interested in the cadet movement?
- On an average evening, how much time do you dedicate to homework?
- For what do you use your home computer (eg, games, research, emails)?
- Where are you headed in life?
- Do you plan to take any post-secondary school education?
- What discipline or education do you wish to pursue?
- Do you have a part-time job and, if so, does it compete with cadets or school?
- What community related-activities do you participate in?
- What targets have you set for your personal growth or improvement?
- Do you participate in any organized school teams / groups (eg, band, football)?
- Are you involved with any citizenship activities in your community outside of cadets?
- Do you have any hobbies?
- Scenario-based questions:
    - You have been given responsibility for a group of cadets, some of whom require motivation in uniform care. What will you do?
    - You are in charge of drill instruction and one of your assistant instructors keeps touching cadets when correcting them, despite your instructions to not touch. What do you do?

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PREPARATION FOR A MERIT REVIEW BOARD FOR PROMOTION

A candidate for a merit review board for promotion should:

- think about potential questions that could be asked and prepare answers to them;
- talk to others who have been through the process to find out what to expect; and
- participate in any opportunity to practice for a board, such as practice merit review boards.

Dress Requirements

The interview candidate shall identify dress requirements well ahead of time. The uniform must be worn in accordance with the cadet dress instructions in the relevant Cadet Administration and Training Order (CATO). Dress shall be maintained to a high standard.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

Importance of Bearing

Many candidates will exhibit high standards of dress and high levels of knowledge. The final selections will be based partly on the winning candidates' bearing.

Unless given other instructions, the candidate will enter facing the board, wearing headdress, and salute. Wait until offered a seat and remove headdress when seated.

During the interview, do nothing that may distract the interviewers, such as:

- biting one's lips;
- squirming;
- scratching;
- chewing gum;
- twisting fingers;
- playing with hair;
- checking the time;
- yawning—make sure to have a good night's sleep before the interview; and
- taking anything into an interview that has any chance of distracting the interviewers.

Hand gestures while speaking will also distract interviewers, making a negative impression.

Sit with an open posture and legs and arms not crossed.

The members of the board want the cadet to feel comfortable and relaxed. Try to be so, while maintaining respect and decorum. A confident candidate will sit up straight, calmly looking the interviewer straight in the eye without fidgeting. Nodding or shaking the head does not constitute an answer of any kind. All replies must be verbal.

Candidates must be prepared to say some introductory words about themselves.

Remember that the interviewers are also going through a process for which they have made long preparations and to which they attach great importance. The candidate being interviewed is, in many ways, part of a team which includes the interviewers. All members of this team are expected to maintain respect, decorum and friendliness.

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When the interview is completed, stand, replace headdress, make firm eye contact, salute, and smartly depart the room. The board members may or may not offer to shake hands. Follow their lead.

If the candidate does not know the answer to a question it is best to say so in as direct a manner as possible so the interview moves on to another topic where the candidate has better knowledge. This will minimize both the psychological impact of the missing information and the damage to the candidate's mark. Shoulders must never be shrugged during an interview.

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MERIT REVIEW BOARD SCORESHEET

Cadet's Name: _____ Date: _____

Question	Score	Comments
1.	/5	
2.	/5	
3.	/5	
4.	/5	
5.	/5	
6.	/5	
Total	/30	

Additional Comments:

Board Member's Name: _____ Board Member's Signature: _____

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DRESS INSPECTION SCORESHEET

Cadet's Name: _____ Date: _____

Uniform Items / Accessories	Score	Comments
HEADDRESS		
Beret and Insignia (includes other headdress)	/5	
CLOTHES ON THE UPPER BODY		
Badges (proper placement and sewn on correctly)	/5	
Cadet Slip-on or Armlet	/5	
Shirt, Cadet, Short Sleeve / Turtleneck Sweater	/5	
Uniform Jacket and Belt	/5	
Name Tag	/5	
CLOTHES ON THE LOWER BODY		
Trousers and Belt	/5	
FOOTWEAR		
Parade Boots (with socks)	/5	
OVERALL PERSONAL APPEARANCE		
Hair (includes facial hair)	/5	
Makeup, Jewellery, Sunglasses, etc	/5	
Total	/50	

Note. Additional comments may be recorded on the back of the checklist

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