

INTENT OF THIS BRIEFING:

Probationary Officer Continuation and Redesignation (POCR) Boards can have more than 60 candidates for review, and not all seem equally prepared for the process. The steps in this brief are suggestions that may help you set yourself up for success and be selected by one of your preferred communities, even if it is not the CEC.

Helpful CEC Information Links:

<https://www.navy.com/careers/civil-engineering>

<https://www.public.navy.mil/seabee/ngc1/Pages/default.aspx>

https://www.navfac.navy.mil/jobs/students_and_grads/CEC_Collegiate_Program/cec-training-and-career-progression.html

Step 1: One of the more important things for you to do in this process: reach out to the Officer Community Manager(s) (OCM). In your POCR package, you are supposed to apply to up to five designators, including one URL. Reach out to each OCM on your list.

As much as we would like to pick every single candidate that applies, we are constrained by year groups and quotas. I have had several candidates in the past boards who have put CEC as a desired designator, but did not contact me before the Board. If the POCR memorandum tells them to contact the Community Managers, but they do not, how strongly can I rate them?

Have questions when you call or email. Some good questions for your first conversation can include:

“Am I eligible to join your community?”

“Do you have room in my year group?”

“Do you have references where I can research more about your community?”

“What TAD options are there for me to experience your community before the Board convenes?”

Be ready for the OCM to ask questions too, such as:

“Why are you redesignating?”

“What attracted you to the Civil Engineer Corps?”

“What do you know about what we do?”

Step 2: One concern I have noticed: candidates not researching the community. Do in-depth research on each community on your list. Find out about the requirements to join, what will be expected of you in the community, what is required for your career progression and the types of jobs you will do. The research prepares you for interviews and TAD.

Step 3: Request **no cost TAD** to work in the community (if possible). Work with your Admin department to get a 1-2 week TAD (more if possible) to experience the day to day life in each of your chosen communities. You may find out it is not the right call for you to join that community, and you have the ability to contact that OCM and request they not select you. Try to take the “test drive” in as many communities as possible on your list.

Step 4: Request Letters of Recommendation from the supervisors at your TAD location and other senior officers who know you and observed your work. If timing does not allow it to be included in your

package, ask the OCM if they are willing to accept a late recommendation. Letters of Recommendation and results of senior officer interviews can factor strongly into the CEC decision to select you.

Step 5: Follow up with each community on your list. Things like periodic check-in and asking good questions, even if by email, shows initiative and desire. Remember, we can't pick up everyone who puts us as their #1 pick. Not following up, or only following up with one OCM, is like putting all your eggs in one basket. If that OCM can't take you in your year group, what does that mean for you?

No Cost TAD

Is TAD required? No, however I find it highly valuable in determining if you are a good fit for the CEC. It also allows you to make sure the CEC is the right career choice for you – and it is better for both of us if you find this out sooner rather than later. If you are unable to do a TAD with the CEC for reasons such as:

- > Your command will not release you,
 - > Insufficient time between receiving notice of POCR and package submission date, or
 - > You did TAD time with other designators, and ran out of time before the Board
- **You are not out of luck.**

I can generally arrange an interview with a senior CEC officer in your area. Interviews are less preferred because it is more difficult to objectively assess you, but I have selected based on interviews before. I can also consider non-CEC specific comments from your TAD to other designators in making my decision, so if you do well on another TAD but they cannot select you, it can still help.

What is a desired TAD duration? The CEC prefers 2 weeks. This gives time for us to assign you tasks that you can complete, observe your work ethic, thought processes, etc. More than two weeks, we are negatively impacting your ability to explore TAD opportunities with other communities. Less than this and it is more difficult to make a good assessment and give you a strong positive Letter of Recommendation.

TAD Process:

1. For the CEC, it is preferred that you coordinate your TAD through the Community Manager instead of "self-deploying" for a few reasons:

- a. It makes sure that I am tracking you as someone coming to POCR and considering the CEC.
- b. It allows me to help you have a local POC, a fellow junior officer, and possibly someone who was also a POCR into the CEC to help you learn more about our day to day.
- c. It allows me to make sure the supervisors, the Public Works Officers and Executive Officers, are expecting you, and that your planned arrival is not in the middle of a major exercise or other evolution where they cannot devote time to you.
- d. It gives you a chance to find out important details before arrival, such as:
 - What uniforms to bring/wear
 - Do you need to bring safety toe footwear?
 - Where to report and when
 - When and where is command PT
 - Special access concerns for the building where you will work

2. Usually people do TAD on the base where they are currently assigned. During our interview I will ask you what Navy bases are near you, or if you are currently on an installation without a Navy Public Works Department, what Navy bases are near your friends or family.

Why I ask about friends or family: This is **No Cost TAD**, which means there is no reimbursement for your travel, lodging and meals. If you can stay with friends or family during your TAD, this significantly reduces your costs.

Locations of special interest are:

Gulfport, Mississippi
Virginia Beach, Virginia
Port Hueneme, California (Near Los Angeles)
San Diego, California

If you are willing to go to one of these locations at your own expense, we may have an opportunity for you to also experience the Expeditionary (Seabee) side of our community. This would add about a week to your TAD time with the CEC, provided you are able to get your TAD with the **other** communities **first**.

After settling on the location, you will need to talk with your Admin department to find out when they will release you for your TAD. Please provide a range of dates so I can work with the Public Works Officer and Executive Officer in the event of a schedule conflict. It does not happen often, but I would rather no one is surprised.

What you will do on TAD:

It depends on the unit you go to, and what they have for you to do. POCR candidates have performed studies, reviewed construction contract designs and documents, and participated in planning exercises, many times it is the same thing the junior officer they are shadowing does on a daily basis. More than once I have received a Letter of Recommendation describing specific projects where the POCR candidate made a significant positive contribution to the office.

After the TAD:

1. Keep working on improving your chances with all communities up until the Board convenes – this is you influencing the course of your future!
2. Review the elements in your POCR Package – does your personal statement indicate your motivation to serve the Navy and **all** of your identified designators? Does it contain the information the Community Manager needs to confirm you meet their minimum requirements?
3. Consider a “thank you” email to the Office where you did your TAD. They took time to work with you.
4. Talk with the Community Manager. Reaffirm your desire to join their community. This does not mean to call us every week, but if there is something significant, or you have questions...

FAQ: What makes a POCR package strong/competitive?

1. Some of this is out of your control when you are notified that you are going to POCR.
 - a. Objective factors: **Candidates not meeting these requirements are rarely, if ever, selected.** Engineering or Architecture Degree program (must be ABET-EAC or NAAB Accredited program, or have your EIT), your cumulative GPA (minimum 2.7), Navy performance history (recommended for promotion and retention), Secret security clearance (eligible), world-wide assignable/deployable (no restrictions).

b. Other things we consider, more subjective:

- Soft skills: what is your leadership experience, how you deal with leadership challenges, how you deal with personal challenges and setbacks, how you interact in a team-based environment, how you interact with peers, subordinates and superiors.

- Past relevant experience: expeditionary/forward deployed, contract administration, facilities operations, facility construction, project management.

c. Your Year Group has room and the Community Manager has POQR quotas remaining for the FY: Each community receiving POQRs has a given number of quotas, set by the Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel. For strong candidates, we can occasionally receive additional quotas as long as we are not exceeding our authorized end strength for your rank. We can go a bit above our target for a year group if you are an otherwise strong candidate, but this means we are likely shorting an adjacent year group, not preferred.

FAQ: Do I need to take the Fundamentals of Engineering Exam (FE) to be considered or competitive?

If your degree is from an ABET-EAC or NAAB accredited program, **NO***. Given the choice between researching new opportunities and cramming for an exam that covers the full breadth of your engineering curriculum, in my opinion your time is better spent researching designators and career opportunities. You will need to pass the FE (or at least one of your architectural registration exams) before making O4, but not right now. Notice I also did not list the FE in the “how to be more competitive” answer...

* If you do not have a degree from an ABET-EAC or NAAB accredited program, then **yes**, both the FE **and** registration as an Engineer in Training are required. ABET-EATC (Technology) degrees require Engineer in Training registration to be considered. No waivers.

FAQ: What if I don't select you as my #1 choice? Do you still rank me?

Yes, if you “tell me” to. When I start my record review to rank candidates, I look at their personal statement and the recommendations in the application package.

If the personal statement discusses the CEC and why they feel they are a good fit for us,

If they have taken the time to seek CEC TAD and / or interviews, and

If they have called me to ask at least those Step 1 questions,

I can ignore the community rank order.

- I understand you have to select up to 4 other designators and not everyone can be #1.

- Statements such as, “If I am unable to be selected for (other designator), I would gladly accept redesignation into the CEC. I can bring value to the CEC because...” might be helpful.

Remember – I have limited quotas and cannot select every single candidate who applies. If your POQR package does not indicate serious interest in the CEC, my ranking of your record will reflect this.

FAQ: What happens at the POQR Board? How does the process work?

In the two weeks prior to the board, all of the Community Managers review the board packages to confirm eligibility for candidates who have requested to redesignate into their community. Ideally this is not the first time they are aware you are considering their community. (See step 1!) Candidate records are ranked considering factors such as community requirements, available room in the year group, and available quotas.

The Board generally tries to balance needs of the Navy and desires of the member whenever possible. When the board convenes, each POQR candidate record is briefed, followed by the rankings of the

various community managers. After all records are briefed, the Board recommendations are presented to the Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel for review and approval. The results are typically released within a few weeks of the board convening date, however there have been occasions where the results have not been released for a month or more. Please do not ask the Community Manager to tell you the results before the approval memo is released – we are not allowed to discuss this.

FAQ: The results are out, what now?

Contact your new Detailer! Use the Navy Personnel Command website, Officer menu to navigate to the Detailer contact. Although your new Detailer probably already knows you are coming, this is a good way to find out where you will go, and the plan for any required school/training before your first assignment. You may need to sign some paperwork relating to your designator change as well.