

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
Marine Corps University
Corporals Noncommissioned Officer Program

CPL 0110
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STUDENT HANDOUT

Enlisted Career Force Controls (ECFC)

LESSON PURPOSE: The purpose of this period of instruction is to provide the student with an overview of the Marine Corps Enlisted Career Force Controls (ECFC).

OUTLINE

1. GENERAL: It is imperative that all Marines who plan a career in the Marine Corps understand the ECFC's. It is even more important that the leadership understands and supports those controls. Much of the correspondence the Commandant of the Marine Corps receives from his Marines (Marine Mail) involves the ECFC's and the lack of understanding of these controls.

a. References: The ECFC policies are primarily effected by the following orders:

- * MCO P1040.31, Enlisted Career Planning Manual.
- * MCO 1300.8, Marine Corps Personnel Assignment Policy.
- * MCO P1400.32, Marine Corps Promotion Manual, Enlisted Promotions.
- * MCO P1900.16, Marine Corps Separation and Retirement Manual.
- * MCO P1200.7, Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) Manual.

These orders are inter-dependent and must at times be cross referenced when encountering a situation that is not specifically covered by one order. Additionally, ALMARS that also effect or further explain the ECFC's are routinely issued. All Marines, especially the enlisted leadership, must read and analyze those ALMARS as well as the orders highlighted above to stay abreast of our ECFC policies.

b. Purpose: ECFC's exist to ensure the following:

- * We have the right Marines in the right billets.
- * Each Marine has the necessary experience to get the job done.
- * Each Marine has a reasonable chance to be promoted based on their own performance.

c. Ethos: The ETHOS of our Corps is rooted in our being an Expeditionary Force. We are routinely the most forward deployed -- we operate "Forward from the Sea" -- we "Fight on the Littorals" -- and we are required to be "most ready when our Nation is least ready." Maintaining our expeditionary nature is physically and mentally demanding. It requires great personal and family sacrifice. Our expeditionary nature affects the way we recruit, train, equip, and provide for

our Marines. Whether we are a first term Marine or one with 20 years in service, those demands made on us and our families remain constant. Not everyone wants to make the Marine Corps a career, but those who do, must understand our ECFC's and why we have them; for we expect the requirements placed on the Corps of the future to be as considerable as they have been in the past and we must continue to be ready to meet these challenges.

d. Ethos Sustainment: To sustain our ethos, Marines must maintain their competitive spirit from the day they stand on the yellow footprints until they leave the Corps. We make Marines, we WIN our Nation's battles and when a Marine leaves the Corps we expect him or her to return to society a better citizen for having served with us. Understanding the ECFC's and strict adherence to them ensures that "spirit" is maintained.

2. TYPES OF CONTROLS: When looking at ECFC's, the Marine Corps separates Marines into two categories, first term Marines and members of the career force. As soon as a Marine reenlists one time, he is considered to be part of the career force, regardless of whether or not he eventually stays in long enough to retire. The Marine Corps has several tools to control the career force.

a. Reenlistment: The first tool in managing the enlisted career force is to limit the Marines who are permitted to enter the career force.

(1) Not Recommended for Reenlistment: Of the 22,000-27,000 first term Marines who reach the end of their contract, about 6,000-8,000 ask to enter the career force (reenlist). When a Marine submits a reenlistment package, his chain of command must make a recommendation concerning his request for reenlistment. Some of these Marines are quality Marines, while others are not. It is up to the chain of command to make an honest recommendation so that Headquarters Marine Corps can make an intelligent decision about whether to permit this Marine to reenlist. Thus, there are situations when a substandard Marine is denied reenlistment even though there is a need for Marines in his MOS.

(2) Boat Spaces: Occasionally, superior Marines are denied entry into the career force because there are no "boat spaces" available in their MOS. A boat space is a need for a Marine in a particular MOS. We average about 4,000-4,500 boat spaces per year. Boat spaces are controlled by the annual First Term Alignment Plan (FTAP). It is our most basic force control. Boat spaces are determined by the number of projected vacancies for each MOS. This can be affected by the number of Marines in that MOS who retire, chose to get out after entering the career force, or are forced out after entering the career force. It is also affected by Marine Corps plans to increase or scale back the size of a particular MOS. For example, when the Marine Corps decided to disband the HAWK missile batteries, there were no longer any boat spaces in the HAWK MOS's. On a yearly basis, there are some MOS's that fill all of their boat spaces, while other MOS's do not. To help alleviate this problem, the Marine Corps permits high quality Marines in MOS's that have no available boat spaces to lateral move into MOS's with unfilled boat spaces. As such, first term Marines who think they might reenlist should prepare themselves for the possibility of having to make a lateral move. This includes retaking the Armed Forces Classification Test (AFCT) to increase the "EL" score in particular and the "GT" score in general. By increasing his scores, a Marine makes himself qualified for more MOS's. Equally important is

that we ensure all superior Marines who choose to leave the Corps understand that reentry at a later time is difficult since priority for boat spaces are given to active duty Marines. Regardless, if they leave under honorable conditions, counsel them to at least look into joining the local reserve unit.

b. Service Limitations: Once Marines enter the career force, they never again have to compete for boat spaces in order to reenlist; however, their continuation in service depends on their timely promotion to the next higher grade.¹ Not achieving a certain grade by an established time (service limit per grade) will, in all probability, require separation or retirement (if qualified). Service limits can be waived for the good of the service and in the case of hardship for short periods but such waivers are exceptions and not the norm. Further, serving to the maximum service limits will not be allowed for Marines who fail to maintain comparable records with their peers in their MOS in the areas of professional and technical competence. All Marines of every grade at any tenure of service must maintain the minimum acceptable standards of professional and technical competence as well as minimum acceptable standards of conduct. If a Marine fails to maintain the minimum standards, such as failing to maintain weight standards, then the Marine will not be permitted to reenlist and may even be discharged prior to the end of his current contract. While maintaining the minimum standards will permit Marines to serve to the end of their current contract, promotion and further retention is not likely. Marines who only perform to minimum standards aren't necessarily "bad" Marines; however, they aren't competitive with their peers. The higher the rank one competes for the more keen the competition becomes. Service limits by grade are as follows:

- * 8 years for Corporal.
- * 13 years for Sergeant.
- * 20 years for Staff Sergeant.
- * 22 years for Gunnery Sergeant.
- * 27 years for Master Sergeant/First Sergeant.
- * 30 years for Master Gunnery Sergeant/Sergeant Major.
- * The age of 55 is also established as a service limit providing the Marine meets the minimum time required for retirement eligibility.

3. PROMOTIONS: There are four different systems used to promote Marines.

a. Meritorious Promotion: Marines may be meritoriously promoted up to the rank of GySgt (meritorious promotions to SSgt and GySgt are typically given only to Marines on various special duty assignments such as drill instructor duty). The Commandant decides how many Marines of each rank he will permit to be meritoriously promoted during each quarter (a quarter is a three month period) during the year. He further divides up these promotions to each major command within the Marine Corps. These are called quotas. For example, FMF Atlantic may be given 30 quotas for meritorious promotion to Corporal. This means that the Commanding General (CG) of FMF Atlantic can meritoriously promote 30 LCpl's within his command to Corporal.

¹Even if a particular MOS is disbanded, the career Marines in that MOS (as long as they are otherwise qualified to reenlist) will be permitted to lateral move into another MOS that they are qualified for or (if they are close to retirement) they can be moved into a billet that does not require a primary MOS, such as being a recruiter, drill instructor, or an instructor at the Staff NCO Academy.

Typically, each commander in the chain will further divide up their quotas to the units within their command till these quotas reach the battalion or squadron level (though in some cases, some quotas may be held at higher headquarters). In our example, the battalion commander of 3rd Battalion 8th Marines, may receive 1 quota for meritorious promotion to Corporal. This quota would have reached him through the CG of FMF Atlantic, the CG of 2nd Marine Division, and the Commanding Officer (CO) of 8th Marines. In this case, the CO of 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines decided not to further divide up his quotas (which included 1 quota for Corporal). Since meritorious promotions are designed to promote Marines ahead of their peers (the Marines within a certain rank who all have roughly the same amount of time in grade), the battalion commander will select the Lance Corporal in his battalion who he thinks most deserves the promotion. But since he probably does not know all of the LCpl's in his battalion well enough to decide who is most deserving of the promotion, he may have his company commanders submit recommendations. Further, he may require these Marines to appear in front of a "meritorious promotion board" consisting of various officers and/or senior enlisted. The board members will examine the Marine and his record book before making their recommendation to the battalion commander, who can accept or not accept their recommendation. Within that battalion, there may be several Marines who deserve to be meritoriously promoted. But in this case, there is only one quota. The Marines that do not get the promotion must realize that although they were qualified, they were not the most qualified. Further, a CO does not have to use all of the quotas that he has been given if he feels that he has no Marines who are qualified for meritorious promotion. In this case, he turns the quotas back in up the chain of command. These quotas may eventually be redistributed or not used at all. As you can see, Marines who are meritoriously promoted must not only be qualified for meritorious promotion, but they may also have to be the most qualified. Thus, they have to not only meet the Marine Corps standards of being qualified for meritorious promotion, but they must also compete against their peers, many of whom might also be qualified. Meritorious promotion quotas are never divided up by primary MOS, though in some rare cases they may be divided up by secondary MOS, such as for drill instructors who hold a secondary MOS of 8511. The date of rank for meritorious promotions is always on the 2nd day of the month (even though this may not be the actual day that the Marine receives his warrant).

b. Promotion to Private First Class and Lance Corporal: Like meritorious promotions, promotions to PFC and Lance Corporal are not based on MOS. Unlike meritorious promotions, Marines competing for promotions to PFC and Lance Corporal do not have to compete against their peers. They only have to meet the Marine Corps standards for promotion and must be recommended for promotion by their superiors. For example, a PFC may meet most of the Marine Corps standards, such as time in service (TIS) and time in grade (TIG) requirements for promotion to Lance Corporal. However, the Marine's conduct may be substandard. His conduct does not necessarily have to be bad enough to warrant office hours, but it may be bad enough that his company commander will not promote him for that particular month. Entries in the SRB should be made on Page 11 on all Marines who meet TIS and TIG requirements but who still are not promoted. If the Marine is transferred, the Page 11 entries leave a paper trail for the Marine's new chain of command and alerts them to possible problems with the Marine. It also provides documentation for possible eventual administrative discharge proceedings, office hours, denial of reenlistment, etc.

c. Promotion to Corporal and Sergeant: Promotions to Corporal and Sergeant are based on

MOS. Not only must the Marine meet established Marine Corps standards (such as TIS and TIG), but, in an indirect manner, he must also compete against his peers for promotion. This is controlled through a system of composite scores and cutting scores.

(1) Composite Scores: Every Lance Corporal and Corporal has a composite score. This composite score is an objective evaluation² of the Marine that is used to compare him to his peers. Composite scores are figured up on all LCpl's and Cpl's on a quarterly basis. Each Marine then maintains the same composite score during the duration of that quarter. Follow Table 111-1 and the following explanation to determine the composite score for a particular Marine:

²An objective evaluation is one that is based solely on observable and indisputable facts, such as the indisputable fact that a particular Marine has 28 months TIS. Composite scores are strictly objective in nature; however, parts of the composite score are based on subjective evaluations, such as the pro and con marks. A subjective evaluation is one that is based on fact; however, there is room for the personal judgment of the evaluator. Although a CO should base the pro and con marks that he gives on facts, his evaluation is still subjective since, two separate CO's could give the same Marine two separate pro and con marks. Even though pro and con marks are subjective in nature, it is still an indisputable fact that the average of your pro and con marks is a particular number.

<u>Line No.</u>	<u>Score</u>
1. Rifle and PFT:	
a. Rifle Marksmanship	$\frac{\text{SCORE}}{\text{RATING}}$
b. PFT	$\frac{\text{SCORE}}{\text{RATING}}$
c. Subtotal line (a) + (b)	= _____
2. Rifle and PFT Score (line 1.c. divided by _____) =	_____
3. Average Duty Proficiency _____ x 100 =	_____
4. Average Conduct _____ x 100 =	_____
5. Time in Grade (months) _____ x 5 =	_____
6. Time in Service (months) _____ x 2 = _____ (computed from AFADBD for USMC and from PEBD for USMCR)	
7. DI / Recruiter / MSG Bonus _____ x 1 =	_____
8. Self-Education Bonus:	
a. MCI / Extension School _____	
b. College / CLEP / Vocational _____ (a) + (b) x 10	_____
9. Command Recruiting Bonus _____ x 1 =	_____
10. <u>Composite Score</u> (sum of lines 3 through 10) =	_____

Table 111-1

(a) Line 1. - Rifle and PFT Scores:

1. Line 1.a. - Rifle Marksmanship: Use the recorded score achieved on the "KD" or "B - modified" course of fire during the current qualification period per MCO 3574.2 regardless of the grade held during the qualification. Failed initial attempts at qualification / re-qualification will not be reported unless the commander determines that the failure was the result of lack of effort or negligence on the part of the Marine. If the Marine is successful at a subsequent remedial attempt to qualify, enter the score of 190 regardless of the score actually achieved. If the individual has not yet fired for re-qualification during the current fiscal year prior to the cutoff date of the specific promotion quarter, use the most recent rifle qualification score.

Marines who fail to qualify after subsequent remedial attempts will have an entry of "unqualified" (be assigned a "0"), which will remain for composite score purposes until the Marine fires again in the next fiscal year. If the requirement to qualify has been waived by the CMC or the commanding officer and the Marine has not fired, enter "NC" (not considered). Marines who are not required to fire but fire for score anyway, will receive the score they fired in the computation of the composite score, regardless of their requirement to qualify. If no waiver or score is recorded, enter "0." Refer to Table 111-2 for the rating conversion.

<u>CONVERSION TABLE (Rifle Marksmanship Score to Rating)</u>					
<u>Score</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Rating</u>
240-250	500	220-224	460	200-204	360
235-239	490	215-219	440	195-199	340
230-234	480	210-214	420	190-194	300
225-229	470	205-209	380	0-189	0
<u>CONVERSION TABLE (Qual / Requal / Sustainment Course to KD)</u>					
<u>Score</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Rating</u>
57 - 65	500	40 - 44	460	30 - 32	360
53 - 56	490	38 - 39	440	28 - 29	340
49 - 52	480	35 - 37	420	25 - 27	300
45 - 48	470	33 - 34	380	0 - 24	0

Table 111-2

2. Line 1.b. - Physical Fitness Test: Enter the PFT score achieved during the current testing period. If the Marine fails the PFT, assign a "0," which will stand for composite score purposes until the next PFT is taken. Remedial PFT scores will not subsequently replace failing scores in composite score calculations. If the individual has not yet been administered the PFT during the current period, enter the score attained during the preceding testing period regardless of the grade held during the PFT. If the requirement to take the PFT was waived, enter "NC." If no waiver or score is recorded, enter "0." Convert this score to a PFT rating using Table 111-3 and enter the rating under the "Rating" column. PFT scores for Marines with a medical excusal from any or all PFT events will be computed by adding their most recent scores for each of the three events. In the case of a Marine excused from the run, for example, the most recent score earned on the run before the excusal should be added to the points earned on the partial PFT. A case of medical excusal where, through no fault of the Marine concerned, previous scores are not available should be treated as if the PFT had been waived for the individual.

CONVERSION TABLE (PFT Score to Rating)

<u>AGE (17 - 26)</u>				<u>AGE (27 and Older)</u>			
<u>Score</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Rating</u>
285-300	500	225-234	440	285-300	500	225-234	440
275-284	490	200-224	400	275-284	490	200-224	420
265-274	480	175-199	360	265-274	480	175-199	380
255-264	470	135-174	300	255-264	470	150-174	360
245-254	460	0-134	0	245-254	460	110-149	300
235-244	450			235-244	450	0-109	0

Table 111-3

3. Line 1.c. - Subtotal: Add figures entered on lines 1.a. and 2.b. under the "Rating" column. Enter subtotal.

(b) Line 2 - Rifle and PFT Score: Divide the total on line 1.c. by the number of lines which have a rating other than "NC." The number used to divide the subtotal will be either 1 or 2. Enter this number in the space provided on line 2. The result of this division will represent an average rating for those lines considered.

(c) Line 3 - Average Duty Proficiency Marks: The mark to be used is the average of all proficiency marks assigned prior to the cutoff date³, but on or after the date of the last promotion, reduction, or reenlistment (after a complete break in service of 24 hours or more), whichever is most recent. In the absence of such marks, an anticipated or projected duty mark will be assigned by the commander for use in the composite score. A duty proficiency mark assigned solely for use in the composite score will be made per the standards for duty proficiency marking contained in MCO P1070.12 and will be determined through interview, observation, proficiency marks received in lower grades, or any combination of these methods. Marks assigned to hospitalized Marines will be determined in recognition of the limitations imposed by the Marine's medical condition. Proficiency marks received by Marines in the Marine Corps Reserve will be included when determining the average proficiency marking. The average of duty proficiency marks will be rounded off to the nearest 10th. Multiply the average marks by 100 and enter the result on line 3 under the "Score" column.

(d) Line 4 - Average Conduct Marks: The average conduct marks are figured the same way as the average proficiency marks. The average conduct mark will be rounded off to the nearest 10th. Multiply the average marks by 100 and enter the result on line 4 under the "Score" column.

(e) Line 5 - Time in Grade: The computation of the total months in grade includes

³When new composite scores are to be figured out, HQMC will establish a cut off date, which is a date which the composite score is to be based on. For example, if a Marine completed an MCI course (Line 8.a.) after the cut off date, this would not be used to figure out his composite score.

the number of months in the present grade on the current enlistment to the designated cutoff date and the TIG in the current or higher grade from a previous enlistment, if the service was satisfactorily performed. TIG from prior service in another branch of the Armed Forces will not be included. TIG from which a punitive or an incompetency reduction has been effected is not satisfactory service in that grade and will not be included. Marines who are punitively reduced to the grades of Lance Corporal or Corporal should serve 8 or 12 months inclusively from the date of reduction before becoming eligible for promotion to the grades of Corporal or Sergeant again. Marines reduced on or before the 15th of the month are not eligible until the first promotion quarter beginning with or subsequent to the 1st of the month following the 8 or 12 inclusive months in the reduced grade. In the computation of time in grade and time in service only, a fraction of a month of 15 days or more will be counted as 1 month; less than 15 days will be disregarded. Enter total months time in grade on line 5 and multiply it by 5. Enter the result under the "Score" column.

(f) Line 6 - Time in Service: The number to be used is the total months in service (US Armed Forces (active and reserve)) accrued from the Armed Forces Active Duty Base Date (AFADBD) for members of the USMC and from the PEBD for members of the USMCR to the designated cutoff date for the specific promotion quarter. Fractions of a month are figured the same way as for TIG. Enter total months in service and multiply by 2, then enter the result on line 6 under the "Score" column.

(g) Line 7 - DI/Recruiter/MSG Bonus: Bonus points will be awarded and added to the composite score of Lance Corporals and Corporals who are in one of these categories and will remain in effect, provided the Marine completes the assignment in a satisfactory manner. On the occasion of the award, an entry will be made on the administrative remarks page of the SRB. Once bonus points are used in a composite score and the Marine is promoted, those points will not be applied for subsequent consideration for promotion.

(h) Line 8 - Self-Education Bonus Points: Bonus points will be awarded to Marines who have completed courses substantiated by appropriate documentation of completion (i.e., certificate). Only bonus points completed since promotion, reduction, or re-appointment upon reenlistment to the current grade will be utilized. The exception will be for those Marines who are returned to active duty from the temporary disability retired list. Their bonus points will be utilized since they will continue the service for which they were previously contracted. Completion of a formal resident school (e.g., MOS qualifying school) does not count for points towards the composite score because these schools are not completed through self-education efforts. Determine the number of bonus points for each course completed and enter the total in the space on line 8 (a maximum of 7.5 points may be awarded). A course may only be used one time for this purpose, regardless of how many times the Marine has actually taken it. Multiply this total by 10 and enter the results under the "Score" column. The following is a list of approved courses with the assigned bonus points for each:

<u>Course</u>	<u>Bonus Points</u>
* MCI Course or other military service correspondence course	1.5
* Extension School Subcourse	1.5

- * CLEP Test (Each Portion) 1.0
- * College Course (Semester or Quarter hour) 1.0
- * Vocational School Course (Semester hour) 1.0

(i) Line 9 - Command Recruiting Bonus Points: Enter the bonus points awarded for participation in the command recruiting program. For each individual referred while in the current grade, enter 20 points. Bonus points are to be awarded when the individual referred enlists. A maximum of 100 bonus points may be awarded for this category.

(j) Line 10 - Composite Score: Add the value under the "Score" column for lines 2 through 9. The total is the Marine's composite score.

(2) Cutting Score: A cutting score is a score that is selected for LCpl's and Cpl's for each MOS on a monthly basis. Marines of that rank who have a composite score that is greater than or equal to the cutting score for that month will be promoted as long as they are otherwise eligible and are recommended for promotion. Here is how cutting scores are determined. Every quarter, Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) determines how many openings are anticipated in each MOS for Corporal and Sergeant for the upcoming three months. This can be affected by the following:

- * The number of Marines in an MOS who chose to get out or are forced out.
- * The number of Marines in an MOS who are promoted out of the rank of Corporal or Sergeant.
- * Marine Corps plans to increase or scale back the size of a particular MOS.

Next, HQMC computes the composite scores for all LCpl's and Cpl's who are eligible for promotion and breaks them down by MOS. These scores are ranked highest to lowest. For example, let's say that HQMC has decided that for MOS ##### there will be 13 openings for Sergeant for the month of January and the composite scores for Cpl's in that MOS are as follows (ranked highest to lowest):

1800	1761	1750	1738	1730	1724
1795	1760	1748	1737	1728	1723
1794	1758	1747	1736	1728	1722
1790	1755	1745	1734	1728	1700
1775	1755	1745	1734	1726	1675
1769	1753	1745	1733	1725	1648
1761	1751	1740	1730	1725	1625

Since there are 13 anticipated openings for the month of January, HQMC will select a cutting score for this MOS such that 13 Cpl's will have a composite score that is greater than or equal to the cutting score. In our example, the cutting score might be 1752 or 1753. In the same example, if for the month of February, HQMC anticipates an additional 10 openings in the MOS, they will select a cutting score such that 10 Cpl's in this MOS have a composite score that is greater than or equal to the cutting score. Now remember, because composite scores are figured out only once per quarter, the above composite scores are still in effect. Thus those Marines with a

composite score of 1752 or above have already been promoted in January. Thus the cutting score for February might be 1737. (Realize that predicting how many openings there will be for each MOS for Corporal and Sergeant for three months in advance and how many Marines who have the cutting score who will actually be recommended for promotion is an inexact science. Thus, HQMC may fudge a bit on the cutting score that they actually select.) The important thing to remember is that each MOS is different. Some MOS's have a low reenlistment rate. This means that the number of Cpl's and Sgt's in that MOS who get out is higher than in other MOS's. This means that there are more vacancies, which means that MOS will have a lower cutting score than other MOS's. As an example of the disparity, for January 1998 MOS 5526 had a cutting score of 1482 for Sergeant while MOS 5963 had a cutting score of 1873, a difference of almost 400 points. Thus, Corporals in MOS 5526 who got promoted probably had less TIG and TIS than Corporals in other MOS's.

d. Promotion to SSgt and Above: Just like promotions to Corporal and Sergeant, promotions to the Staff NCO ranks are based on MOS. There are a few differences though. First, when HQMC looks at how many openings they expect for a particular Staff NCO rank for a particular MOS, they look at it for the entire upcoming year, not just three months. Next, the process that is used to determine who will be promoted is not based on the objective evaluation of composite scores. Rather it is based on a very subjective process.

(1) Fitness Reports: Sgt's and above do not get pro and con marks. They are evaluated through "fitness reports," which is a more in-depth evaluation than pro and con marks.

(2) Eligibility Requirements: After HQMC decides how many Marines to promote into a particular rank in a particular MOS, they must decide who is going to be eligible for consideration for promotion. The eligibility requirements are based on date of rank and is set up so that anywhere from 55% to 90% of the people who are eligible are selected for promotion. (The actual percentage is based on rank and how fast Marines are being promoted in that MOS.) For example, if the percentage chosen is 75% and there are going to be 75 open slots for GySgt in a particular MOS, HQMC will establish the eligibility requirements (date of rank) so that 100 SSgt's in that MOS are eligible. Just like with cutting scores, some MOS's promote faster than others. For example, there might be a Sergeant with only 2 years TIG in one MOS who is selected for promotion while another Sergeant in another MOS has 4 years TIG and is not even eligible for promotion.

(3) Promotion Boards: After the eligibility requirements have been established, the Marine Corps convenes a promotion board for each Staff NCO rank, starting in January with MGySgt's and Sgt's Major and ending in the summer with SSgt's. Each board consists of 18 senior officers and Staff NCO's who are selected from various commands throughout the entire Marine Corps. When the board meets, they go through each MOS and vote on who is going to be selected for promotion after reviewing each Marine's fitness reports. These Marines are then promoted in increments during the following months. Realize that the process is far more complicated than this, but this should give you a general idea of how it is done.

(4) Marines not Selected: Because of the tough competition, and limited allocations, outstanding Marines may fail selection for promotion, so anyone who has the time enough

remaining on a contract to be considered a second or more times should never give up; for every board selects Marines who has been considered before. Additionally, our promotion process does forgive Marines who have made mistakes. Remember, the competition is with one's peers, so if a Marine is not selected, it's because his peers had overall superior records and therefore beat them out for promotion: Not because a mistake was "Unforgiven by the Corps," or that the "System failed them." There is no zero defect policy in the Marine Corps!

(5) The Level Playing Field: We are striving to promote all Marines at or about the same tenure of service per grade but because of MOS needs that hasn't occurred. In reality, a few MOS's are always going to promote faster than others. While adherence to the ECFC's will, in the future, make it a more level field, it will never be perfect or perceived to be fair by everyone.

REFERENCES: Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps memorandum dtd. 26 Nov 1996.
MCO P1040.31, Enlisted Career Planning Manual
MCO 1300.8, Marine Corps Personnel Assignment Policy
MCO P1400.32, Marine Corps Promotion Manual, Enlisted Promotions
MCO P1900.16, Marine Corps Separation and Retirement Manual
MCO P1200.7, Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) Manual