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### 1. SSMP Contracted and Obligated Status

A. Defining contracted and obligated status is important as this determines how administrative processes are conducted. SSM contract and obligation thresholds are defined in law (46 USC Ch 513 and 515). Enlistment in the Navy is accomplished administratively by signing the DD Form 4 and the *SSMP Training and Service Agreement*. SSMs that apply for and receive MARAD’s SIP also agree to a separate but connected service agreement. Specific obligations in the event of non-completion/default are contained in the provisions of 46 United States Code Appendix, subchapter XIII.

#### B. Contracted: Navy and/or MARAD:

1. SSM Contracted with the US Navy: Contracted students have signed the Oath of Enlistment (*DD Form 4*) and the *SSMP Training and Service Agreement*.

- a. SMA: Conditional upon meeting all eligibility requirements, SSMP applicants can sign contracts with the SSMP/Navy up to the start of their 2/C fall semester.
- b. USMMA: Midshipmen sign a contract with the SSMP/Navy freshmen year.

#### 2. SSM Contracted with MARAD:

- a. SSM are not required to sign contracts with MARAD. There are multiple reasons why midshipmen do not receive SIP: being ineligible (age), were not selected, do not want post-graduation/commissioning obligation to MARAD, receiving SIP negatively affects institution financial aid, etc.
- b. MARAD’s Student Incentive Payment (SIP) Program provides financial support in exchange for maritime service post-graduation. SMA SSM willing to accept the terms and conditions sign the *Service Obligation Contract for State Maritime Academies (MA-889)*.
- c. USMMA SSM sign the *Service Obligation Contract for USMMA (MA-890)*.

C. Obligation Status:

1. Obligated to the US Navy: The Department of the Navy does not provided any financial support to any SSM. SSM are obligated to the USN once the *Oath of Office (DD Form 4)* and *SSMP Training and Service Agreements* are signed. Until policies change, the Navy considers all SSMP in a non-obligated status. This includes all non-SIP recipient SSM. Non-obligated SSM may commission in a non-obligated status.
2. Obligated to MARAD: MARAD updated SIP contract requirements in 2018. Financial obligation thresholds have been reduced from \$20,000 to \$8,000.
  - a. Non-Obligated Status
    - i. SSM SIP Recipients: SSM SIP recipients are in a non-obligated status prior to receiving a 5<sup>th</sup> SIP payment and/or receiving greater than \$8,000.
    - ii. USMMA: USMMA SSM are in a non-obligated status up to the 1<sup>st</sup> day of their 2/C year.
  - b. Obligated Status
    - i. SIP Recipient SSM: SSM are obligated to MARAD after receiving a 5<sup>th</sup> SIP payment, and/or receiving greater than \$8000. SIP recipients are typically obligated to MARAD during the fall semester of the 2/C year.
    - ii. USMMA SSM: USMMA SSM are obligated to MARAD at the start of their 1<sup>st</sup> day of their 2/C fall trimester.

2. Active Enlisted Service and Recoupment

- A. US Navy's Interest: As per 46 USC§1395 c 4.9, Active Enlisted Service (AES) for obligated SSM is at the discretion of the Secretary of Defense. The authority to determine AES for NROTC MIDN has been delegated to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy. The authority to disenroll contracted non-obligated SSM is delegated to the PNS/OIC. Until policies change, the US Navy considers all SSM in a non-obligated status and is not interested nor willing to pursue AES. The needs of the Navy will flex as environments and conditions change, and any SSM under contract shall understand that AES is a possibility if they break their contract.
- B. Should AES be considered, representatives from SSMP stakeholders (Naval Service Training Command, Officer Development (NSTC OD), Maritime Administration (MARAD), Chief of Navy Operations (CNO) N42, Military Sealift Command (MSC), and Commander Navy Reserve Forces Command – Strategic Sealift Program (CNRFC N14) will form a working group to discuss conditions and the process for implementing SSMP to AES. This discussion most likely will happen in a war-time environment when the Navy is looking for all avenues to meet recruiting goals.

- C. MARAD's Interest – Recoupment of any SIP is at the discretion of the Maritime Administrator. Although funds have been given and contracts have been signed (MA-889/890), MARAD's current policy states that it will not pursue financial recoupment for contracted, non-obligated SSMP who attrite. MARAD may pursue recoupment for obligated SSM.

**3. SSMP Participation and Status Tiers:** There are three levels of participation in the SSMP:

- A. SSMP-C Applicants/Candidate: Students that have expressed interest in the SSMP, yet have not met eligibility requirements to sign a contract. Only requires a sports physical to participate. It is at the discretion of the unit's PNS/OIC to determine the requirement for mentorship/counseling and participation in unit activities.
- B. SSMP-B: Students have met all eligibility requirements to join the SSMP. SSM Applicants become contracted and enlisted in the USNR. SSMP-B are in a non-obligated status as follows. SSMP-B can be compared to NROTC's College Program Basic.
- C. SSMP-A: Students have met all requirements of SSMP-B. They are contracted and enlisted in the USNR. SSMP-A are in their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> class year and are in an obligated status with MARAD. SSMP-A can be compared to College Program Advanced Standing.

**4. SSMP Inter-Service Transfer**

- A. SSM midshipmen may seek appointments to any service academy or ROTC program. Midshipmen desiring to transfer to other accession programs will be placed on interim LOA and processed as a DOR. The disenrollment shall be effected one day prior to appointment by the other ROTC program or service academy. Inter-service transfers are not available at every Maritime Academy. If obligated to MARAD, the SSM will remain obligated until all service obligations are fulfilled. Procedures vary per program type.
- B. SSMP to Marines: SSM may apply to a Marine Corps commissioning program at any time. However, they must complete USMC OCS prior to being commissioned. USMMA DNS will complete a Conditional Release (DD Form 368) for midshipmen to attend OCS. If their request is approved, midshipmen must complete OCS. They remain in the SSMP until graduation but commission as second lieutenants. All requests shall be submitted to MCRC (ON/E) via NSTC OD4.
- C. SSMP to Air Force or Army (ROTC): SSM must apply and be accepted before their senior year. Midshipmen shall be disenrolled from the SSMP as a DOR.
- D. SSMP to Navy (ROTC):
  - 1. SSM are allowed to apply for NROTC side-load scholarships while still being enrolled in the SSMP. SSM compete in a status similar to a College Program Basic applicant. These requests are most likely received from SSM attending SMAs with both NROTC and SSMP programs.
  - 2. Upon selection for a side-load scholarship, the SSM will be disenrolled from the SSMP as a DOR. A conditional release from the SSMP (DD Form 368) will be required, as this releases



the SSM from the *DD Form 4* and *SSMP Training and Service Agreement*. The disenrollment shall be effected one day prior to an NROTC appointment. SSM in an obligated status will remain obligated until all service obligations are fulfilled. If the SSM is a SIP recipient, the unit will notify MARAD that the SSM has accepted an NROTC Scholarship Refer to *ROD Sections 2-14* and *4-32* for Change of Option Requests. SSM will be processed as per the College Program Basic process. Reference *Appendix Q* for the scholarship activation process.

- E. College Program Basic to SSMP. The midshipman must be in a USCG license track program.
- F. USNA/USMMA to SMA SSMP: Applicants must meet all SSMP eligibility requirements. A letter or statement of intent to join SSMP shall be addressed to unit PNS/OIC. Transcript from previous school will be required to process. The midshipman will most likely require a new DoDMERB as the pre-commission physical is only valid for 5 years, and the MIDN will be past this date at time of estimated commission at the SMA. The request will be processed through OD4 as a “reactivation” in OPMIS.

**5. MARAD’s Student Incentive Pay (SIP) (Not Applicable to USMMA SSM)**

- A. SSMP Student Incentive Pay (SIP) Program. The MARAD SIP Program is available to State Maritime Academy (SMA) students. Students who enroll in the SIP program receive funding to offset the cost of uniforms, books, subsistence, and tuition in return for a service obligation. The SIP Program is offered at all six State Maritime Academies. The SIP students are eligible to receive tuition assistance not to exceed four (4) years or \$32,000. In exchange for this financial assistance, graduates of the SIP Program all incur a service obligation.
- B. MA-890 (SMA) – Once approved by MARAD, SSM are required to sign this form in order to receive SIP. These forms are the equivalent of NROTC’s Scholarship Agreement. These forms shall be kept in the Student’s Administrative File. The MA-889 is only required for SSM receiving SIP. These forms should be included in the commissioning package to PERS as part of the build for the OMPF record. MARAD manages and controls the MA-890.
- C. SIP Obligations upon graduation. Having successfully completed the course of instruction at a State Maritime Academy for a maritime degree and upon receiving a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) with an officer endorsement, the graduate’s service obligation includes the following:
  - a. Service/employment in the maritime industry for three (3) years (afloat employment is priority);
  - b. Maintaining a USCG MMC for six (6) years with the appropriate national/international endorsements and certifications required by the USCG for service aboard domestic and international vessels. Maintaining a document of continuity does not fulfill this portion of the obligation, and there is no grace period. Graduates must also maintain a valid Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) for six (6) years following graduation and maintain a valid USCG medical certificate.
  - c. A Navy Reserve commission as an SSO for eight (8) years; and

- d. Conducting an annual compliance reporting to MARAD until all service obligation components are fulfilled.
  - e. Fulfillment of the SIP Service Obligation requires completion of all elements listed above. The only exception to this is individuals who, serve as a commissioned officer on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States or as a commissioned officer of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) or the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS). Those SIP graduates following graduation who provide five (5) years of honorable Active Duty service will fulfill their MARAD obligation, with the exception of their annual reporting.
- D. MARAD is responsible for providing guidance for the selection and processing of SIP applications. They determine criteria for ranking, the interview process, and which applicants are selected to receive SIP. NROTC/DNS staff can participate as a member of the SIP application review board.
- E. Unlike NROTC scholarship program, SSM do not compete nationally for MARAD's SIP program. The number of SIP allocations are determined by MARAD. Students compete internally within each Maritime Academy. Eligibility and selection process is outlined in MARAD's SIP Manual.
- F. NROTC/DNS units will provide a list of SSM that are applying for SIP to a Maritime Academy point of contact. The list should be alphabetical to prevent presenting any indication of conflicts of interest. The timeline for requiring applications is described in MARAD's SIP Manual.
- G. There is no equivalent NROTC Educational Cost Breakdown Form (NSTC 1533/113) for SIP. Payment tracking information is handled by MARAD, and the unit is not required to tract monthly payments.
6. **SSMP and Navy Internships/Summer Cruises.** SSM that express a strong interest in active Naval Service following graduation are eligible to participate in summer cruises (or internships) similar to those of NROTC midshipmen. SSM as are ineligible for NROTC Program funding and generally pay all expenses out-of-pocket, including transportation, lodging and meals. Summer cruise/internships for SSM can be arranged through NSTC OD3 on case-by-case basis, conditional upon availability and resources. Due to Maritime Academy and USCG sailing requirements, SSM Navy internships may be scheduled outside of NROTC traditional summer cruise periods. Navy internships should be noted on the SSM Active Duty application package.
7. **SSM Performance Evaluation and Counseling.** Units shall conduct SSM Performance Evaluations and Counseling as close to ROD Chapter 6 instruction as possible. Since the SMA and DNS programs have significantly small staffs, variations to SSM performance evaluation and counseling is allowed.
8. **SSM and Sea Time on USS Ships** - SSM on USS ships may be eligible for USCG sea time. Acceptance of sea days is at the discretion of the USCG. SSM should research USCG requirements prior to relying on USS sea days to graduate.
9. **SSMP Disenrollments and Performance Review Boards (PRB)**

- A. The PRB process was designed to work at fully staffed NROTC units for NROTC Midshipmen. It does not take into consideration the minimally manned DNS units or the lack of capacity of NROTC/DNS staff to support a full PRB process for both NROTC midshipmen and SSMs. The SMA DNS's are allowed specific exceptions to requirements to reduce issues such as conflicts of interest (e.g., staff member is also the class advisor), units to rely 100% on outside unit support, and SSMP commercial sailing schedules.
- B. Disenrollment Authority
- i. 46 USC identifies that the SSM disenrollment authority is the Secretary of Defense, with authority delegated to the Secretary of the Navy. Through the Assistant Secretary of the Navy and CNSTC, disenrollment authority for the SSMP is delegated as follows:
  - ii. Contracted and Non-Obligated: Disenrollment authority is delegated to the unit PNS/OIC.
  - iii. Contracted and Obligated: Disenrollment authority is delegated to NSTC OD.
  - iv. SSMP Disenrollment Documents to MARAD: NSTC OD will support MARAD by providing paperwork required to support financial recoupment.
- C. SSMP Disenrollment: SSMP disenrollments are based upon the SSM's obligation status.
- i. SSMP-C Applicants: SSMP applicants can be disenrolled at the unit.
  - ii. SSMP-B Disenrollment (*contracted, non-obligated status*)
    - a. Disenrollment authority for SSMP-B is delegated to the unit PNS/OIC. The PNS/OIC may forward any disenrollment to NSTC OD to review and make a disenrollment decision.
    - b. PRB's are not required for contracted SSM that are disenrolling for the following reasons: (1) drop-on-request, (2) dropped by institution, (3) medical disqualification, (4) academic, and (5) failure to meet security requirements. Holding a PRB for any of these disenrollments is at the discretion of the PNS/OIC, and the MIDN may waive the right to the PRB.
    - c. Aptitude/Disciplinary PRB process is required to be initiated. SSM may not waive the right to the PRB.
    - d. Any SSM that wants to argue their case to remain in the SSMP can request a PRB. Final disenrollment authority for these situations shall be NSTC OD. NSTC OD will inform MARAD and the unit of any SSMP disenrollments.
    - e. Disenrollment Paperwork: Once disenrolled, the unit will notify the SSM via a standard Navy letter stating the SSM is disenrolled from the SSMP. A copy of the disenrollment letter shall be kept in the Student's Administrative File along with any supporting documentation: trigger document, transcripts, probation/warning letters, etc. The unit shall attrite the MIDN from OPMIS.

- f. NSTC OD will inform MARAD of all contracted SSMP disenrollments.
- iii. SSMP-A Disenrollment (*contracted, obligated status*)
  - a. Disenrollment authority for SSMP-A is delegated to NSTC OD.
  - b. PRB's are required for all SSMP-A disenrollments.
  - c. Any SSM that wants to argue their case to remain in the SSMP can appeal. In these cases, final disenrollment authority for these situations is CNSTC. NSTC OD will inform MARAD and the unit of any SSMP disenrollments.

#### **10. SOP for DNS/NROTC Units Requesting Reserve Support**

- a. Reserve Support through CNRFC N14 – Military Sealift Command (MSC) is the SSO Flag Sponsor, and funding is often prioritized for operations and exercises. CNRFC N14 and MSC understand the importance of having an SSO presence at the units to support SSMP training and mentorship. SSOs bring a unique perspective to the DNS/NROTC program and they understand how to simultaneously balance Navy Reserve and Merchant Marine careers.
- b. Units will coordinate with ODSSO, who will notify CNRFC N14 a minimum 3 months prior to units requesting SSO ADT support. This allows for appropriate time for N14 to post the announcement, receive and rank applications, and review SSO readiness status (medical, PHA/PFA, etc.). N14 will prioritize SSO applicants based on maritime experience (upgraded licenses and sailing experience), completed advanced education and JPME courses, previous Post Commissioning Indoctrination (PCI) assistance, and SSO ADT experience. N14 will discuss ADT applicants with the PNS/OIC prior to approving any orders.
- c. Reserve Support through CNSTC: Units can submit requests to NSTC N1 for ADT or ADSW support.
- d. ADT Order Lengths Options:
  - i. 365 ADT orders: Every effort shall be taken to have the SSO attend *Teaching in Higher Education: NROTC Instructor Preparation Course* offered twice per year.
  - ii. 135 ADT orders
  - iii. 2-week ADT orders: case-by-case basis for USMMA and the other SMAs.

#### **11. Service Assignment for SSM**

- A. The US Navy highly values the SSM's technical merchant mariner skillsets. USN accession quotas are controlled at BUPERS and managed by Officer Community Managers (OCM). Most SSM commission in the USNR as SSOs. SSM are able to apply for a limited and highly competitive number of Navy URL and RL Active Duty billets. OCM's set the community requirements standards and entertain SSM applications on a case-by-case basis. SSM selection is not guaranteed and is dependent on qualification, class ranking, and needs of the Navy. Taking into account the Maritime Academy commercial schedules, SSM Active Duty Navy service assignment applications are not collected until the MIDN's 1/C year.

- B. 46 USC and 46 CFR allow SIP recipients to apply for Active Duty commissions in any branch of military service, including the NOAA and Public Health Service.
- C. SSMP Active Duty Navy Options: SSM can apply for all USN URL and RL designators. The following paragraphs provide specific information for specific USN communities.
- i. Pilot/NFO - Maritime Academies should schedule the best SSM candidates interested in Navy flight billets for flight physicals starting in the MIDN's 2/C year. SSM sent for flight physicals should complete the pilot and NFO physicals during the same physical. The minimum recommended ASTB scores should be 6-6-6 for AVN community. AVN OCM will not consider any applications if MIDN is not flight physically qualified.
  - ii. SWO/EDO: Marine Engineering majors should be encouraged to pursue SWO/EDO option. Requests for EDO should be accepted at the beginning of 1/C year, as these billets are limited even for NROTC.
  - iii. SEAL/EOD: Any SSM interested in SEAL/EOD Active Duty billets must apply and attend the 1/C SEAL/EDO SOAS summer programs. The SEA/EOD communities will most likely not select any SSMP Active Duty billets without competing SOAS.
  - iv. Restricted Line Communities – Restricted Line (RL) communities review applications and make selections on case-by-case basis. These billets are extremely competitive.
    - i. USMMA SSMP and the USMC. USMMA SSM should continue combined training with USNA (i.e., leatherneck). SMA SSM can participate in NROTC USMC summer cruise programs, but expenses will be paid for by the MIDN. Most likely the full 12-week USMC OCS will be required. NSTC OD3 Training Officer (Normally a USMC O-4) will be the POC for arranging USMC summer cruises and OCS/ODS scheduling.
- D. Active Duty Requests
- i. SSM who request active duty must submit a service assignment request package to NSTC OD per the service assignment timelines in this paragraph. In doing so, each maritime academy unit shall rank order their midshipmen per first choice designator. Packages are required to be submitted no later than 18 October to NSTC OD4. Service assignment packages received after that date may not be accepted. Upon receipt of the service assignment package, OD4 will liaison with each community manager to determine service assignment. The results will be passed to NSTC OD4 and each maritime academy.
  - ii. SSM Active Duty Application Request: The application paperwork shall include the following:
    - a. SSMP Designator Request Transmittal Letter
    - b. Interviewer's Appraisal Sheet, NAVCRUIT 1131/5, completed by a Naval Officer
    - c. Proof of pre-commissioning physical (i.e., DoDMERB-approved DD 2808) or BUMED/NMOTC approved waiver recommendation
    - d. Application for Recall to Extended Active Duty, NAVPERS 1331/5
    - e. Student Resume
    - f. At least (3) Letters of Recommendation
    - g. Current Unofficial Academic Transcript

- h. Most Recent Evaluations
    - i. Personal Letter (addressing work history, personal achievements, extracurricular activities, leadership potential, and interest in the community)
    - j. If necessary, applications or any documents required for certain designators (ex: ASTB scores)
  - iii. With input from the DNS/NROTC units, the applicants are rank ordered per their first choice designator. Service assignment packages received after this date may jeopardize the student's opportunity for active duty assignment through this process. Upon receipt of the service assignment package, NSTC ODSSO will liaison with each community manager to determine service assignment. Official results will be sent to the DNS/USNR units via Official Mail Message from NSTC OD.
  - iv. Officer Community Managers (OCM) review applicants and inform NSTC OD of the primary and alternate selections. SSMP applicants are allowed 2 weeks to respond with an accept/decline response. Any declined responses will be filled by the alternates, which are allowed 2 weeks to respond. By the end of November, the SSM to Active Duty list is finalized and distributed to Maritime Academies, NSTC OD, and the OCM's.
  - v. If selected for Active Duty Navy, the commissioning package will follow ROD guidance for the NROTC scholarship process.
- E. Reserve Duty Requests: All documents required for commissioning shall be forwarded to PERS-8 at least six months prior to the midshipman's commissioning date. At the same time, all reserve commissioning scrolls shall be prepared by the unit and forwarded to NSTC OD4.
- F. SSM Scrolls - When preparing commissioning scrolls, SSM who request active duty must appear on both the regular and reserve commissioning scrolls. This is required because not all SSM who request active duty are approved for active duty when commissioning scrolls are due.
- G. Other than USN Commissions:
- i. SSM that do not apply or are not selected through NSTC's Active Duty Navy application and selection process remain eligible to seek active duty commissions in other branches of service. SSM who seek an appointment as a commissioned officer in another service, as an officer with NOAA or the Health Service Corps, must be accepted by the other service and conditionally released from the SSMP. If disapproved, the midshipman remains obligated to accept a USNR/SSO commission if qualified for active duty assignment.
  - ii. If approved, the SSM shall be disenrolled and discharged from the Naval Service the day preceding appointment in the other service.
  - iii. It is highly recommended that the application process be started as early as possible to reduce potential delays in the commissioning process.
  - iv. A conditional release (DD-368) will be required for commissions other-than-USN. Conditional releases are not guaranteed, as the SSM has signed a contract with the USN. Conditional release authority is only delegated if the Navy is allowing conditional releases. For SMA NROTC units and USMMA, conditional release authority is at the discretion of the

PNS/OIC. For the SMA DNS units, conditional release authority is at the discretion of NSTC OD. NSTC ODSSO maintains communication with SSO key stakeholders and will inform NSTC OD if the Navy is not allowing SSM conditional releases.

- ii. Air National Guard Commission. There is no direct commission option for SSM to the Air National Guard. A conditional release is required for the SSM to commission to the USAF Reserve, and then laterally transfer to the Air NG. This paperwork process and commission can be signed on the same day.

## **12. Delayed Commissioning**

- A. Extenuating circumstances occasionally prevent SSM from commissioning as scheduled. Sometimes additional sea time or coursework/sea projects are required prior to graduating. Occasionally SSM did not pass the license on the first attempt.
- B. A SSM has 3 months from the time of graduation to pass the USCG license (Ref: 46 USC). Each SMA's program is different, and some allow MIDN to graduate without passing the USCG license. Not passing the license will be processed as an Academic PRB.