OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1520.31D

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY/WOODS HOLE OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTION JOINT MASTER'S IN OCEANOGRAPHY PROGRAM

1. **Purpose.** To announce the policy and procedural guidance governing selection and assignment of naval officers for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)/Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) Joint Master's Degree in Oceanography Program. Key changes in this revision include establishing the number of annual quotas available, broadening the scope of the program to include officers from all unrestricted line communities, and extending eligibility to officers below the rank of lieutenant.

2. **Cancellation.** OPNAVINST 1520.31C.

3. **Background.** Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) letter of 14 July 1984 (NOTAL) directed the establishment of an MIT/WHOI joint master’s degree program in oceanography as part of a major reinvigoration of Navy efforts in oceanography. This program continues to serve as an effective cross-pollination between the Navy and the civilian ocean research community and has exposed Navy officers to new tactics, ocean research equipment, and oceanographic theories.

4. **Scope and Applicability.** Four to six quotas will be available, annually, for officers to enter the program each June. Participants will be selected from the oceanography restricted line community (1800) and any unrestricted line (URL) community based on projected 6402P (oceanography operational sciences) subspecialty requirements within each community. Upon completion of the program, URL officers will retain their URL warfare specialty designation. All graduates will be awarded the 6402P subspecialty code. Newly commissioned officers from the United States Naval Academy (USNA) and the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) may also compete, subject to the needs and requirements of the Navy. Specific eligibility will be detailed in the MIT/WHOI naval administrative message (NAVADMIN) issued each year. All applicants for this program must submit a formal MIT/WHOI Joint Program entrance application and be accepted by the MIT/WHOI Joint Program in the same manner as prescribed for other students. Participation is contingent upon academic acceptance by the MIT/WHOI Joint Program.
5. Requirements

a. Naval officers must carry a full academic load, including summer sessions, as defined by the MIT/WHOI Joint Program. Degree requirements will be completed in the shortest possible time. Course work must fulfill the educational skill requirements for the 6402P subspecialty. Acceptance of teaching or research assistantships is not permitted under this program. Participation will be limited to 27 months. Extensions to this program are highly discouraged, but may be approved by Chief of Naval Operations upon administrative board action conducted by Commander, Navy Personnel Command (COMNAVPERSCOM).

b. Participants in this program will receive their regular pay and allowances and will be entitled to permanent change of station costs if applicable. The President, Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), will fund this program under the Civilian Institutions Program. Student expenses will be reimbursed pursuant to NAVPGSCOLINST 1520.1K.

c. This program is to be considered fully-funded graduate education. As a condition of participating in this program, officers must execute an agreement to remain on active duty, for a period of 3 years after completion of or withdrawal from education. Newly commissioned officers who participate in this program as part of immediate graduate education will incur a greater obligation. For immediate graduate education participation of 20 months or less, participants will incur a service obligation of 5 years. For immediate graduate education participation for more than 20 months, participants will incur a service obligation of 6 years. These service obligations will be incurred upon completion of or withdrawal from the education program and will be served concurrently with any existing obligation. Such agreements do not obligate the Navy to retain the Service member on active duty.

d. Navy participation in this program will be reviewed biennially by the Director, Oceanography and Navigation (OPNAV (N2N6E)).

e. Active duty naval officers who meet eligibility criteria may participate in this program. Subject to Navy’s graduate education plan, each year the program may be open to individuals who will be commissioned following spring graduation from USNA or NROTC, and to URL and 180X officers as specified in paragraph 3, who are warfare qualified in the rank of lieutenant commander or below, having demonstrated distinguished performance, noteworthy leadership abilities, academic proficiency, and clear potential for professional growth. All applicants for acceptance into the program must meet the academic eligibility requirements of the MIT/WHOI Joint Program.

6. Selection Procedures

a. All applicants are required to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) general test and will report scores to MIT and NPS by entering the respective codes during the GRE test registration.
b. Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education (CNO (N1)) will annually set graduate quotas available for this program.

c. A NAVADMIN detailing specific application information for this program will be issued in late summer or early fall each year.

d. Application packages must be submitted to the MIT/WHOI Joint Program with a copy to Corporate Directorate for Information Warfare (OPNAV (N2N6C)) by the deadline stated in the annual NAVADMIN. Completed packages will be screened by the MIT/WHOI Joint Program (generally in February) to identify those packages which meet or exceed program standards. A Navy selection board will then be convened by OPNAV (N2N6E) and participating warfare community senior representatives (usually in late February or early March) to select successful candidates from those whose packages that have been determined to meet program standards by the MIT/WHOI Joint Program screening board. The maximum number of accepted students will not exceed the quotas set by CNO (N1) for participation in the MIT/WHOI Joint Program for that year.

e. All applicants will be notified of their status by OPNAV (N2N6C) as soon as possible following adjournment of the Navy selection board. MIT/WHOI Joint Program classes begin in June.

f. There are additional application requirements for midshipmen first class at USNA and NROTC. The nomination of students at USNA and in NROTC who may apply formally to enter this program after commissioning is the responsibility of the Superintendent, USNA and the Commander, Naval Education and Training Command, respectively. Specific academic requirements for USNA and NROTC candidates who are determined to be eligible for this program include:

(1) **Major:** engineering, mathematics, physics, oceanography, or meteorology with a math or physics minor.

(2) **Grade Point Average:** to be competitive, should be a minimum of 3.5 (on a 4.0 scale).

(3) **GRE:** general test verbal and quantitative sub-scores each should be 160 minimum to be competitive.

7. **Assignment**

a. Once selected for the program, an officer’s assignment to duty-under-instruction will be predicated on continued outstanding professional performance and availability for assignment.
b. For nuclear trained officers being assigned to the MIT/WHOI Joint Program, the officer’s total time away from a nuclear billet must be considered. COMNAVPERSCOM Graduate Education and Training Placement Division (PERS-440) must obtain concurrence from COMNAVPERSCOM Submarine and Nuclear Officer Assignments (PERS-42) and OPNAV Nuclear Propulsion Program Management Branch (OPNAV (N133)) prior to approving orders for these officers.

8. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, will be managed per SECNAV Manual 5210.1 of January 2012.

9. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, CNO (N1) will review this instruction annually on the anniversary of its issuance date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, Department of Defense, SECNAV, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will be in effect for 5 years, unless revised or cancelled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 5-year anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5215.17A, paragraph 9. Otherwise, if the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1.

Releasability and distribution:
This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via Department of the Navy Issuances Web site, http://doni.documentservices.dla.mil