

**Star Trek: The Role Playing Game**  
**Rules for Character Advancement in Rank**  
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Advancement in rank is based on merit, time of service, and intangibles such as LUC (being in the right place at the right time) and CHA (knowing and impressing the right people). For ranks above Lt. Commander, certain command service must also occur, and officers are selected for this service according to their demonstrated aptitude for command.

*Minimum Requirements for Rank*

The following are generally the minimum requirements to attain each rank:

Rank	Requirement
Ensign	Automatic for Helm, Navigation, Security, and Communications officers who have passed branch school and their Cadet Cruise
Lieutenant, JG	Automatic for Science and Medical officers who have passed branch school and their Cadet Cruise. Otherwise, minimum of three years service as Ensign.
Lieutenant	Minimum of three years service as Lieutenant, JG
Lt. Commander	Minimum of four years service as Lieutenant
Commander	Minimum of four years service as Lt. Commander; officer has attended Department Head School and has served as Department Head on a starship with at least 200 crew
Captain	Minimum of five years service as Commander; officer has attended Command School and has served as Captain of any starship or as First Officer of a starship with at least 200 crew
Commodore	Minimum of six years service as Captain
Admiral	Minimum of seven years service as Commodore

*Eligibility for Promotion*

An officer generally becomes eligible for promotion when he or she concludes a tour and, at the time the tour ends, he or she meets the minimum eligibility requirements. There are two exceptions to this rule, however.

First, the GM should award *merit points* for meritorious service in Star Fleet. Typically, at the conclusion of a successful adventure, each player character who participated in the adventure should get one merit point. For particularly successful or important results (such as preventing war with the Gorn), the GM may award two or three merit points. Four or more merit points should be reserved for truly extraordinary situations, such as saving an entire civilization, or even the galaxy, from destruction.

When a character is close to, but not quite at, the minimum service time requirement for a rank promotion, merit points can affect the result. For each two merit points earned, the character may “spend” those points to deduct one from the minimum service time to the next rank. For example, a character who finishes a tour with two years of service as Lieutenant and two merit points may spend those points to become eligible for rank Lt. Commander. Any merit points earned but not spent may be saved to be spent at a later point.

The GM should also award *demerit points* in cases where the PCs have botched an adventure or behaved in dereliction of duty, contrary to Star Fleet orders and regulations, etc. Demerit points should be rare, but they may be needed in some cases. Demerit points act just like negative merit points: they balance out any merit points earned on a one-for-one basis, and two demerit points may be “spent” by adding one year to the minimum service time to the next rank.

Second, when a character ends a tour and is one year away from eligibility for promotion, he or she may make a LUC roll. Success means that he or she immediately becomes eligible for promotion.

### *Advancing in Rank*

When a character becomes eligible for promotion, the GM may simply decide that the promotion occurs, if the promotion fits into the flow of the game. Alternatively, the GM may ask the player for a roll against the average of INT, LUC, and CHA if the advancement will be to Lt. Commander or lower; and INT, LUC, CHA, and Leadership if the advancement will be to Commander or higher. The player may “spend” merit points to add a 10% bonus to this roll for each point spent. If the roll succeeds, then the character is promoted. Otherwise, the character must wait until the end of the next tour of duty to try to advance in rank.

For characters to become eligible for rank Commander and higher, the GM and the player must work out the mechanics of how and where the character will fulfill the requirements, such as attending Department Head or Command School, or being posted to a suitable department head or command position. No random chances are given for attaining these postings; rather, they should be worked out according to the player’s idea of the character and the direction in which the GM wants to take the game. This is similar to the process of assigning initial rank at character creation time.

### *Retrofitting the Rules to Character Background*

These rules are primarily intended to help the players and GM decide how the characters advance in rank in an ongoing campaign. With a little bit of “fudging,” however, they can also be used to determine the course of promotions in the previous career of a character created according to the procedure described in the rule books.

For example, consider the career of Lee Sterling that is used as an example of character generation. Mr. Sterling graduated from the Science Branch, then served six tours of 1, 5, 2, 4, 3, and 2 years. He has also attended Department Head School and Command School, making him 45 years old. It is a little unrealistic that after all this training and experience he is still only a Lt. Commander! But we can try to explain the course of promotions in his career.

After graduating from the Science Branch and completing his Cadet Cruise, Mr. Sterling attained the rank of Lieutenant, JG. His first tour of duty was only one year long, so he was not yet eligible for promotion. His next tour was long — five years — so he had to wait until his sixth year of service to be promoted to full Lieutenant. He became eligible for promotion to Lt. Commander after his next two tours, totaling six years. Given his high LUC, CHA, and INT, and his two OERs of “Outstanding” (which should probably give him a couple of merit points), it is extremely likely that he would be promoted to Lt. Commander at first eligibility. Therefore let us say he was promoted to Lt. Commander in his twelfth year of service, after four tours.

This leaves us to explain how he has served two tours totaling five years, with two Outstanding efficiency reports, and has not been promoted to full Commander yet! Perhaps the explanation is that his last two postings were not Department Head positions. Somehow, he remained as Assistant Department Head on two Galaxy Exploration tours until his Outstanding ratings caught the attention of someone in Star Fleet. Noticing his aptitude, Star Fleet quickly posted him to Department Head School and Command School. This means that after his next tour (as a Department Head on a *Constitution* class ship), he will likely be promoted to full Commander and maybe even given his own command of a science vessel!