

## The Draft: Administration Orders End to Graduate Deferments

Graduate education is about to lose a privilege that has endured since the beginning of the Korean War—the immunity of most graduate students from the draft.

National Selective Service Headquarters announced last week that, beginning 30 June, all students currently graduating from college or completing their first year of graduate school will become immediately eligible for the draft. Undergraduates and students in their second or third year of graduate school are still deferred.

The announcement, made by General Lewis B. Hershey, director of Selective Service, was based on a memorandum from the National Security Council (NSC) declaring graduate deferments “not essential to the national interest.” NSC is chaired by President Johnson. The memorandum stated that deferments would continue to be granted in medical fields: medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, osteopathy, and optometry. It added that the sequence of selection in filling calls will remain unchanged. The oldest eligible men under 26 will continue to be called first. The draft ruling is in accordance with provisions of the 1967 Selective Service Act, which set 30 June as the cutoff date for most graduate deferments.

General Hershey's announcement has set off a wave of protest among educators, who predict enormous drops in graduate school enrollments as a result of the draft ruling. Both the American Council of Education (ACE) and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) maintain that the draft will probably cause a decline of 50 to 65 percent in new enrollments. Their statistics are based on answers to questionnaires sent to universities around the country. A CGS official said that in some graduate schools, especially law schools, where enrollment is predominantly male, the drop could be up to 80 percent. According to Gustave O. Arlt, president of CGS, the long-range effects of the draft on production of Ph.D.'s would be even worse. If next September's intake by graduate schools falls by 40 percent, the output of doctorates by 1972 will

be less than 16,000—back to the 1963 level. In addition, the draft could have serious consequences for university teaching, since many schools rely heavily on graduate students to teach undergraduate classes.

Undergraduate education at junior colleges could be affected seriously by a ruling on occupational deferments. Issued in the same announcement, the ruling suspends a list of “critical occupations” which, up to now, merited automatic deferment. Many junior college students who are enrolled in job training programs have been deferred because their work was considered “critical.” From now on, their deferments will be in the hands of local draft boards, and will be renewed only if the boards deem such college work “essential to local community needs.”

The armed forces, as well as schools, face major adjustment problems in coping with a vast increase of student inductions. The Department of Defense (DOD) reports that over 55 percent of next year's draft call will be comprised of college graduates and graduate students. Last year, only 4 percent of 230,000 inductees had college degrees. “The Army will have a monumental task in trying to utilize the advanced skills of so many well educated draftees,” Harold Wool, director of the Defense Department's Office of Procurement Policy and General Research, told *Science*. Contrary to the Army's stated preference for a young (age 19 to 20) draft pool, the influx of college graduates will raise the average age of induction from 20.3 years to over 23 years.

Defense Department officials speculate that a large-scale induction of students may force the Army to become increasingly entangled with the problem of war protestors. It is not unlikely that many students, suddenly faced with induction, will translate intellectual dissent into active resistance to the draft.

Last week's draft ruling came in the wake of intense activity by educators and Defense spokesmen to reduce the impact of the draft on graduate school enrollment. While they did not seek to

immunize graduate students, both DOD and ACE representatives had hoped to work out a selection system which would permit some students to pursue graduate degrees. This would not have required changing the law, but would probably have involved establishing an “age-quota” system, by which a given percentage of age groups 19 through 26 would be taken. Since the Army prefers younger men and the vast majority of college seniors and graduate students are over 22, ACE estimated that a significantly smaller percentage of students would have been drafted under the quota system.

An alternative system proposed by the Defense Department would have treated all men of draft age as if they were the same age in years, and would have used the month and day of birth as the basis of selection. Thus, everyone born on 1 January would have been called first. This system was opposed by the House Armed Services Committee because it arbitrarily favored those born late in the year.

In a recent letter to the National Security Council, the Armed Services Committee suggested that additional areas of study, particularly in engineering and applied science, be sanctioned for continued deferment. Not surprisingly, educators objected strongly to the discriminatory character of such a proposal.

Last spring, prior to the passage of the new draft law, the Administration proposed a lottery system for drafting eligible young men. However, Congress rejected the idea, partly because it was offered without a detailed plan of implementation. Indeed, the law passed by Congress specifically forbids the use of a lottery in selecting draftees.

Now, as June draws near, an estimated 226,000 physically qualified students face possible induction. Because most of them are over 22, they will be among the oldest men available in the draft pool. Thus, under a law which calls up the oldest men first, they are among the most vulnerable to the draft of any young men in the country.

Moreover, no one knows in advance just who is going to be drafted, or when. Although the new law goes into effect in June, many students may not be called until late in the year. This means that they can pay their tuition in September and risk forfeiture if they are drafted later, or they can wait and see. In the meantime, the draft boards will probably not be giving away any answers.—FRANK CLIFFORD