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OFFICE OF THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL
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JAGINST 1520.2
AJAG 07
22 Apr 2025

JAG INSTRUCTION 1520.2

From: Judge Advocate General of the Navy

Subj: NAVY JUDGE ADVOCATE PERSONNEL QUALIFICATION STANDARDS

Ref: (a) JAGINST 1212.2D
(b) JAGINST 1500.4B
(c) JAGINST 5803.1E
(d) NAVEDTRA 43091
(e) OPNAVINST 3500.34H
(f) SECNAVINST 5430.27E
(g) U.S. Navy Regulations, 1990

1. Purpose. To issue policy, procedures, and responsibilities for designation as a fully qualified Navy judge advocate (JA) in accordance with references (a) through (g).

2. Cancellation. This instruction supersedes all references to JA Professional Development Standards (PDS) in reference (b). The PDS requirement will not apply to JAs graduating from the Basic Lawyer Course (BLC) on or after 28 March 2025.

3. Background

a. The mission of the Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAGC) is to provide full-spectrum legal services to enable naval and joint operations in support of our national security. Per reference (f), the Navy Judge Advocate General (JAG) has primary responsibility for supervision of legal services provided by JAGC personnel. To fulfill this responsibility, the JAG has established, through reference (b), a training continuum for JAs that begins with the BLC and continues through on-the-job training and qualification during a JA's initial tour, providing a foundation for intermediate and advanced training JAs receive later in their career.

b. Per reference (e), the Personnel Qualification Standards (PQS) program is a Navy-wide qualification process for personnel to develop and demonstrate the minimum level of competency required to perform specific duties. The goal of the Navy's PQS program is to maintain Fleet readiness by providing fully qualified watchstanders. Accordingly, the JA PQS promulgated in reference (d) is intended to provide a training framework through which JAs develop and demonstrate proficiency at the professional level of competence expected of a fully qualified JA.

4. Scope and Applicability. The qualification requirement outlined in this instruction applies to all active-duty and reserve JAs who graduate from the BLC on or after 28 March 2025. All Navy personnel under the cognizance of the JAG pursuant to references (c) and (f) are expected to support the JA qualification process. Consistent with references (c), (f), and (g), this instruction assigns specific responsibilities to supervisory attorneys exercising authority over JAs requiring qualification.

5. Definitions

a. Candidate. An active-duty or reserve JA seeking qualification.

b. Certifying Officer (CO). COs are responsible for implementing and managing the PQS program for Candidates assigned to their command or under their authority. For purposes of this instruction, “CO” refers to:

(1) Assistant Judge Advocates General (AJAGs);

(2) The Chief Judge of the Department of the Navy;

(3) Commanding officers of units within Naval Legal Service Command, the Office of Special Trial Counsel, and the Navy Reserve Law Program; and

(4) Commanding Officer of the Naval Justice School.

c. PQS Qualifier. An individual authorized to sign off on a PQS line item, section, or watchstation in reference (d), as designated by the COs consistent with this instruction.

6. Policy

a. Qualification Required. Qualification is mandatory for all active-duty and reserve JAs who graduate from the BLC on or after 28 March 2025. Qualification is optional for other JAs unless otherwise directed by their CO. Qualification is achieved when a Candidate successfully completes reference (d) and is certified by their CO in accordance with this instruction.

b. Timeline. Active-duty JAs must qualify within 18 months of graduation from the BLC, unless an extension is granted under this instruction. Reserve component JAs must qualify within 24 months of graduating from the BLC, unless an extension is granted under this instruction. For JAs graduating from BLC 25010, the time period to qualify will begin on 1 June 2025.

(1) JAs may begin studying reference (d) at any time but may not have PQS line items or sections signed as completed before graduation from the BLC. Line items signed off before a Candidate’s BLC graduation date are invalid.

(2) Upon a Candidate’s written request, the CO may extend the qualification deadline up to six months if the CO determines an extension is necessary due to unusual circumstances that

preclude the Candidate's timely qualification (e.g., extended absence from the command for operational or personal reasons). Extensions will be granted in writing, with a copy provided to the AJAG for Education, Training, and Professional Development (AJAG 07).

(3) In extraordinary circumstances requiring an extension beyond six months, the AJAG 07 is the approval authority. If the CO determines that extension beyond six months is warranted, a written request will be forwarded to the AJAG 07 for approval. The AJAG 07 will notify the JAG of any extension granted under this authority.

c. Additional Qualification Designator (AQD). Upon qualification, JAs will receive an AQD that reflects the officer's status as a fully qualified JA. The AQD will be documented in the JA's Official Military Personnel File (OMPF).

d. Detailing Considerations. JAs required to qualify under this instruction are not eligible for transfer to a non-accession billet until they have met the qualification requirement. A Candidate's progress toward qualification shall be considered during the detailing process and may impact assignment. In extraordinary circumstances where a waiver of this provision is necessary to avoid negative impact to mission, the AJAG 07 is authorized to grant an exception to policy (ETP) upon written request by the CO or PERS-4416. If such a request is initiated by the CO, the request must be via PERS-4416. If the request is initiated by PERS-4416, the request must be via the CO. The ETP request must include a proposed plan and timeline for the Candidate's qualification. The AJAG 07 will notify the JAG and PERS-4416 of any exception granted under this authority.

e. Career Status Board (CSB). JAs required to qualify under this instruction are not eligible for consideration by a CSB under reference (a) until they have met the qualification requirement.

f. Adverse Action. JAs required to qualify under this instruction who fail to meet the qualification requirement may be subject to adverse administrative action, including but not limited to, redesignation or administrative separation. Active-duty JAs required to qualify under this instruction who fail to meet the qualification requirement are generally ineligible to transfer to the reserve component as a JA.

7. Procedures. COs shall establish internal PQS programs consistent with references (b), (c), (f), (g), and this instruction to support Candidates seeking qualification. While each CO is individually responsible for certifying Candidates under their authority, COs are encouraged to coordinate with other COs to develop a shared, uniform approach to supporting Candidates. DJAG (RA&O) may establish a PQS program for reserve component JAs consistent with references (b), (c), (f), (g), and this instruction.

a. Tailoring. COs may tailor reference (d) by modifying or waiving line items, as necessary, to balance timely qualification with mission requirements. The PQS was developed with the diversity of JA assignments in mind, is designed to be "billet-neutral," and should not require significant tailoring. To preserve the integrity of the PQS program and enable assessment of its effectiveness, tailoring is subject to the following limitations:

(1) COs will limit tailoring to measures that accommodate local circumstances while still requiring the Candidate to demonstrate an understanding of all subjects in the PQS, such as changing the method for demonstrating an adequate understanding of the subject (e.g., changing “draft” to “discuss”).

(2) COs will document their rationale for tailoring and ensure copies of documentation are retained by the Candidate and the command. To the greatest extent practicable, tailoring should be consistent within a command and across similarly situated commands.

(3) COs will not modify more than half of the line items in a PQS section, waive entire sections of the fundamentals (100 series), nor waive any of the watchstations (300 series). Additionally, COs will not waive any prerequisites or line items for watchstation completion. In extraordinary circumstances, the AJAG 07 is authorized to grant an ETP.

b. PQS Qualifiers. PQS Qualifiers shall be recognized experts in the subjects reflected in the line items and sections for which they serve as PQS Qualifiers. PQS Qualifiers are entrusted with protecting the integrity of the PQS program by guiding Candidates to references and confirming Candidates possess and demonstrate a level of knowledge commensurate with the applicable fundamental or watchstation. COs shall determine who may serve as PQS Qualifiers for Candidates under their authority and may impose more stringent requirements than those in this instruction. The following policies and guidance apply:

(1) PQS Qualifiers must possess sufficient experience and expertise to guide Candidates through completion of PQS line items and sections and determine whether the Candidate has demonstrated an adequate understanding of the subject to be considered qualified on that subject.

(2) Absent a limitation imposed by the CO, PQS Qualifiers may include individuals assigned to the Candidate’s command and individuals assigned outside the command, including Legalmen, civilians, and officers from other Navy communities or services, provided they otherwise meet the requirements of a PQS Qualifier.

(3) With the exceptions of fundamentals 101-104 and 107, all PQS Qualifiers must have at least four years of service on active duty, at least two of which must have been as a JA, or, for civilian attorneys, at least four years of experience as a practicing attorney, at least two of which must have been as an attorney working for the JAGC.

(4) Absent additional requirements imposed by the CO, a PQS Qualifier’s signature for a line item on a Candidate’s PQS is an attestation that the Qualifier possesses the experience and expertise to evaluate whether the Candidate possesses an adequate understanding of the subject to be considered qualified.

(5) Candidates shall ensure potential PQS Qualifiers have a copy of the CO’s implementing instruction and PQS Qualifier requirements.

(6) Unless limited by the CO, all aspects of the PQS program may be accomplished virtually. Potential PQS Qualifiers are encouraged to make themselves available to serve PQS Candidates outside their commands and geographic areas.

(7) The limitations on who may serve as a PQS Qualifier do not apply to individuals assisting Candidates as the Candidates prepare to qualify. Candidates are encouraged to use PQS study as an opportunity to engage with a broad variety of individuals across the sea services legal community and the Fleet.

(8) Some tasks may satisfy multiple PQS line items. When this occurs, the PQS Qualifier may sign off on all standards satisfied by completion of the task (e.g., preparing a letter of deficiency following an administrative separation board, if done properly, could also satisfy the requirement to prepare a Navy letter in proper Correspondence Manual format).

c. Final Qualification. COs have the non-delegable authority to designate a Candidate as qualified according to this instruction. As an assessment of the line-item qualification process, COs shall establish a final qualification requirement for successful completion of the PQS. While COs are authorized to create additional final qualification events and requirements, the “capstone” event for successful completion of reference (d) must include an oral examination board. An oral examination board affords the CO an opportunity to evaluate the Candidate’s knowledge and ability to apply that knowledge in a high-pressure setting similar to that in which JAs are expected to perform in assignments across the Fleet. The oral examination board may be customized to fit the requirements and mission of each command, subject to the following limitations:

(1) The oral examination board shall consist of at least three members who collectively possess a sufficient range of experience and expertise to assess the Candidate on the various subjects and skills covered by the PQS.

(2) COs are encouraged to include members from outside of the command on the oral examination board. JAs from outside a Candidate’s command, with the requisite experience and expertise, are expected to be available to serve on oral examination boards.

(3) COs will normally chair oral boards for Candidates under their authority but may designate another JA in the grade of Captain to chair oral examination boards, provided that the CO still serves as the final qualification authority for Candidates under their cognizance.

(4) Under extraordinary circumstances, the AJAG 07 is authorized to grant an ETP. ETP requests will be submitted in writing and accompanied by a compelling justification.

d. Tracking Completion. COs are responsible for maintaining situational awareness of each Candidate’s progress toward qualification and will implement local procedures to track this information. Upon final qualification, COs will coordinate with PERS-4416 to ensure the Candidate’s OMPF is properly updated to reflect the JA AQD. As requested, progress reports will be provided to the AJAG 07, and to PERS-4416 or DJAG (RA&O) for active component

and reserve component candidates respectively, to support program assessment and inform detailing and assignment decisions.

e. Relationship to Other Programs. The PQS program is intended to complement, not replace, the JA Professional Military Education (PME) and Fleet Familiarization Program (FFP) requirements outlined in reference (b). Similarly, reference (d) has been developed in full consideration of the BLC curriculum and is intended to build upon it, not replicate it. Completing the BLC, PME, or FFP is not a valid basis for waiving any portion of reference (d).

f. Professional Responsibility. Reference (d) was developed in recognition that applicable law may change or result in professional disagreement among personnel. To the extent that changes occur or different views exist on a PQS subject, professional discussion by the Candidate and PQS Qualifiers should occur during PQS completion. The PQS program does not preclude personnel from taking a legally available position with respect to any matter under their cognizance consistent with professional responsibility obligations.

8. Responsibilities

a. AJAG 07

(1) Serve as the PQS Model Manager and Learning Center and coordinate with Naval Education and Training Command (NETC) as necessary in accordance with reference (e).

(2) Maintain reference (d) and identify updates necessary to ensure the PQS program remains relevant, current, accurate, and responsive to Fleet requirements.

(3) Solicit and collect feedback on the PQS program from internal and external stakeholders on a continuing basis.

(4) Conduct an annual review of reference (d) and coordinate with NETC to implement revisions as appropriate.

(5) Support COs in the implementation and management of local PQS programs.

(6) In coordination with the Chief Counsel for Assessments and Organizational Performance (CCAO), regularly assess the PQS program, paying particular attention to consistency in implementation and whether the program enables JAs to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill the JAGC mission.

(7) In coordination with Navy Personnel Command, establish and maintain an AQD to document an officer's designation as a fully qualified JA.

b. CCAO

(1) Incorporate consideration of PQS program implementation into assessments and share information gathered with the AJAG 07 for purposes of evaluating the PQS program.

(2) In coordination with the AJAG 07, share best practices regarding PQS program implementation with COs and other stakeholders, as appropriate.

(3) Support the AJAG 07 in assessing the impact of PQS completion on legal operations (e.g., through evaluation of legal “mishaps” and “near misses” akin to safety investigation and reporting procedures).

c. AJAG for Operations and Management (AJAG 06)

(1) Assist personnel with obtaining access to, and appropriately utilizing, Navy systems used to track PQS completion.

(2) In coordination with the AJAG 07, update JAG Corps knowledge management systems (e.g., SharePoint portal) as needed to facilitate Candidate identification of, and communication with, PQS Qualifiers.

d. COs

(1) Establish, implement, and oversee a command PQS program consistent with this instruction to take effect no later than 1 June 2025. This program must ensure Candidates have the structure and support necessary to achieve qualification within the required timeframe, and that PQS Qualifiers have the guidance necessary to participate effectively in the program.

(2) Ensure that Candidates receive a copy of the current version of reference (d) when checking-in and meet with the lead for the command PQS program during the onboarding process.

(3) Remain personally involved in the command PQS program, ensuring the integrity and efficacy of the qualification process. This includes coordination with other COs to ensure the consistency and efficiency of the program.

(4) Designate PQS Qualifier(s) in writing. The names of and/or criteria for designated Qualifiers should be made known to all members of the command and shared via the AJAG 07 site on the JAG Corps SharePoint portal.

(5) Serve as the final qualification authority for the command. Final sign-off of individual watchstations or fundamentals sections may be delegated to an eligible PQS Qualifier.

(6) Determine and implement the method of final qualification. This method shall include an oral examination board pursuant to the requirements of this instruction, but may also include a written examination, live exercise, personal observance of performance, or other method.

(7) Notify the AJAG 07 of any barriers to implementing the PQS program and provide feedback to the AJAG 07 and CCAO on the effectiveness of the program.

(8) Promptly notify PERS-4416 of any potential impact to the detailing process of any Candidate's progress toward qualification.

(9) Ensure appropriate administrative action is taken where necessary to encourage a Candidate to make progress toward qualification, or in the event a Candidate fails to meet qualification requirements.

e. Persons eligible to serve as PQS Qualifiers

(1) Notify COs or their designees that you are eligible and prepared to serve as a PQS Qualifier.

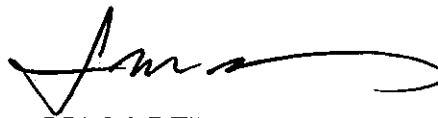
(2) Ensure your JAGLINK profile contains up-to-date contact information as well as information about your relevant experience and expertise.
(<https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/JAG/LINK/SitePages/Home.aspx>)

f. Candidates. Work diligently to pursue qualification as required by this instruction. Promptly notify your chain of command of any barriers to success. Support your teammates through the qualification process.

9. Point of Contact. The AJAG 07 is the point of contact for all matters relating to this instruction and may be reached via the distribution email at AJAG07@us.navy.mil.

10. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media or format, must be maintained and dispositioned per the records disposition schedules located on the Department of the Navy Assistant for Administration, Directives and Records Management Division portal page.

11. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, the AJAG 07 will review this instruction annually around the anniversary of its issuance date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, Department of Defense, Secretary of the Navy, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will be in effect for 10 years, unless revised or cancelled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 10-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 need for cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1 of May 2016.



LIA M. REYNOLDS
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Releasability and Distribution:

This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically via the Office of the Judge Advocate General's Corps public website, <http://www.jag.navy.mil>.