

Automated Certification Exam for Juvenile Probation Officers

Frequently Asked Questions

August 2016

When is the automated JPO certification exam (exam) effective?

September 1, 2016

Who is required to take the exam?

Any individual who assumes a position (either new hire or transferred) requiring a juvenile probation officer certification on or after 09/01/2016.

Are juvenile probation officers who were hired prior to September 1 required to take the exam?

No.

Are juvenile probation officers who are currently certified required to take the exam?

No.

Is a juvenile probation officer required to take the exam if the application has been submitted prior to September 1 and is pending?

No.

What statutory authority does TJJD have to administer the exam?

The competency exam is in accordance to Texas Human Resource Code §222.001 and was promulgated to bring an increased level of credibility to the officer's certification, with requirements are set forth in Texas Administrative Code Chapter 344.

Was an exam administered in any way prior to September 1?

Yes, but at CMIT only. While juvenile probation officers were taking a written exam following the completion of JPO Basic training if they attended at CMIT for a number of years now, the administration of such an exam was not universally administered statewide in departments providing their own training.

How can individuals best prepare for the exam?

At a minimum, staff should be receiving the information contained in the curriculum for each mandatory topic as provided by TJJD in accordance with Chapter 344. Trainers should ensure they are using the most current training material from TJJD's Training Resource webpage.

How many questions are on the exam?

A total of 60 total questions will be on the exam. Twenty pre-determined questions will be the same for all exams identified to be the most important. An additional 40 questions will be randomly generated with at least three questions from each mandatory topic.

How were the exam questions developed?

TJJD used existing questions that had been on the legacy JPO Basic written test administered by CMIT in paper form for a number of years as a starting point, and then additional questions were created by TJJD with the help of regional training officers statewide. All questions derive from the

learning objectives found in each mandatory topic curriculum as provided by TJJD. Questions have been evaluated annually with the paper form based on data from people taking the exam. New questions have been evaluated from the pilot period. As anomalies are identified with questions, they will be modified or replaced. This will be ongoing.

Is there a fee to take the exam?

There will be a \$20 fee per person/per attempt imposed for the exam that will be made payable to Sam Houston State University (not TJJD). Hiring authorities will have the ability to set up an automated billing process with Sam Houston State University as agreed upon by both parties, not TJJD, if desired.

How will officers pay for the exam?

TJJD will leave the discretion of payment to the hiring authority on how this fee is paid. Options discussed may include: requiring the individual to pay in full; requiring the individual to pay, but getting reimbursed after certain circumstances are met (either passage of test or length of service met, etc.); department may pay using county funds; or department may pay using state aid funding.

How many new juvenile probation officers were certified in FY 2015?

There were a total of 234 new juvenile probation officers certified statewide in FY 2015.

Does the exam require a proctor?

Yes. If an individual takes JPO Basic through CMIT, the exam will be proctored by staff at CMIT on the final day of training. Hiring authorities providing their own training will be required to designate an individual to proctor the exam. A webinar has been developed specifically for those staff that will be proctoring the exam. The webinar will be placed online following its recording.

How long does the exam take?

On average, the exam takes approximately 20–25 minutes to complete.

What is considered a passing score?

An individual is required to score a 70% or higher on the exam in order to successfully pass.

How many attempts do I get if I fail the exam?

Individuals will have two attempts to pass the exam. The hiring authority will be able to request an exemption to allow an individual a third attempt to pass the exam, to be submitted in ICIS.

If I fail the exam, when can I take it again?

You may take the second attempt at any time as agreed upon with the exam proctor. An individual who has not passed the exam after two attempts (or three attempts if an exemption was granted) may not take the exam again until 180 days have lapsed and has repeated the training topics required in §344.620(a)(1) or (2) after the date the individual last took the exam.

What happens if I get caught cheating?

If an individual is dismissed from an exam for cheating, that individual will no longer be eligible to take the exam again or be certified. Guidelines regarding cheating will be described in the acknowledgement page of the exam that each individual will be required to read prior to taking the exam.

How and where will the exam scores be sent?

When an individual takes the exam, the score will be sent electronically to the individual, the hiring authority's designated proctor and TJJJ's certification office.

Will an individual know which questions are missed?

Yes. When the score is sent electronically, the questions missed will be provided, along with the correct answer.

How many people were piloted with the automated exam?

TJJJ worked in partnership with CMIT and two urban sized departments to pilot the exam over a five-month period. A total of 52 people took the test during the pilot, equating to 22% of the total number of new JPO certifications approved last fiscal year.

When will the juvenile supervision exam be implemented?

We fully anticipate that the JSO exam will not be piloted until Spring 2017 and will not start before September 1, 2017. Once TJJJ is in a position to determine pilot dates and site locations, we will provide additional information.

Will the fee be the same for the juvenile supervision officer exam?

No. TJJJ is hopeful that we will be able to provide this exam at either a reduced rate from the \$20 JPO exam, or no charge altogether. TJJJ is still exploring options on how best to implement this exam.

How many new juvenile supervision officers were certified in FY 2015?

There were a total of 1,071 newly certified juvenile supervision officers statewide in FY 2015.

Will an officer be required to take both the JPO and JSO exam if they are applying for dual certification?

Once the JSO exam has been implemented, yes. If an individual will be dually certified, anyone submitting an application after the effective date of the JSO exam will be required to take each exam for which they are applying for certification since the exams will be different.

Where can I find additional resources?

TJJJ has developed a webinar to assist in providing information specific to the requirements of taking the exam. You may view the webinar [here](#), and is also located on TJJJ's home page and the Training Academy's webinar page.

Can an individual request an ADA accommodation?

Yes. Individuals should read the Accommodations Application Guidelines and then complete the Accommodations Application found online. The completed application, along with supporting documentation, should be forwarded to TJJJ's Juvenile Justice Training Academy at least two weeks in advance of taking the exam. TJJJ will review the request and be the ultimate decision maker on whether or not an accommodation is made.

For more information, please contact Kristy Almager at 512.490.7125 or Kristy.Almager@tjjd.texas.gov or Chris Ellison at 512.490.7245 or Chris.Ellison@tjjd.texas.gov.