

Automated Certification Exam for Juvenile Probation or Supervision Officers Frequently Asked Questions

August 2017

When is the automated certification exam (exam) effective?

Juvenile Probation Officers – Officers hired on or after September 1, 2016

Juvenile Supervision Officers – Officers hired on or after September 1, 2017

Who is required to take the exam?

Juvenile Probation Officers – Any individual who is hired or assumes a position requiring a juvenile probation officer certification on or after 09/01/2016.

Juvenile Supervision Officers – Any individual who is hired or assumes a position requiring a juvenile supervision officer certification on or after 09/01/2017.

Are juvenile probation officers who were hired prior to September 1, 2016 required to take the exam?

No.

Are juvenile supervision officers who were hired prior to September 1, 2017 required to take the exam?

No.

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

No.

Is a juvenile supervision officer required to take the exam if the application has been submitted prior to September 1, 2017 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.

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/JSO 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.

Does the exam require a proctor?

Yes. If an individual takes JPO/JSO Basic through CMIT, the exam will be proctored by staff at CMIT on the final day of training. Hiring authorities who provide their own training will be required to designate an individual to proctor the exam.

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 three attempts to pass the exam. An individual who has not passed the exam after three attempts 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. During 180 time period after three failed attempts, an individual may not be employed in a position requiring certification.

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 shown on the screen and if the individual passes, a certificate of successful completion will be generated. The scores will also be retrieved by TJJD's certification office.

Will an individual know which questions are missed?

Yes. When the score is sent electronically, the questions missed will be provided.

How was the JPO exam piloted?

TJJD worked in partnership with the Correctional Management Institute of Texas 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.

How was the JSO exam piloted?

The JSO exam was piloted statewide. There were three different exams piloted, each for a two-month period, for a total of six-month pilot. Over 600 individuals took the exam, with an average score of 84%.

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

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.

Can an individual request an ADA accommodation?

Yes. Individuals should read the Accommodations Application Guidelines and then complete the Accommodations Application found TJJJ's Training internet page. 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.