



The Judge Advocate General's School Master Curriculum Plan: TRIALS: Training by Reservists in Advocacy & Litigation Skills

Course Code: TRI

Instructions: *The Master Curriculum Plan is the charter for the course. Course Directors use the Plan to make decisions about curriculum content, including preparation of new lessons and revising existing ones, evaluation/assessment methods, identifying support requirements, and constructing course schedules. The Plan is available for review by JAGC members, their supervisors, CLE and other accrediting authorities, and others seeking information about JAG School courses and methods.*

A. General Information

Location: Air Force installations in the Continental United States and overseas.

Length of course: 2.5 days

Student quota and profile: Class size is usually 8-15 students. Students are primarily Active Duty first assignment Captains without extensive courtroom experience, second assignment JAGs with some courtroom experience, and current Area Defense Counsel. Reserve Component and Air National Guard JAGs as well as JAGs from other services are often invited to attend.

B. Strategic Course Direction

Mission: To improve the trial advocacy and litigation skills of judge advocates in an efficient and economical manner through a series of regional course offerings.

Vision: Practical and focused instruction in fundamental trial advocacy and litigation skills from expert faculty directed at high levels of learning with an emphasis on learning by doing.

Values: Fostering Air Force Core Values, training efficiency and economy, expertise in military justice and advocacy, critical thinking, communication skills, client service and loyalty, good judgment, moral courage, civility, and ethical conduct.

C. Instructional Areas and Strategic Learning Objectives

1. Block I: Course Introduction, Administration, and Graduation (series 100)

Block objectives:

Comprehend the mission and learning objectives for TRIALS.

Know the administrative, logistical, and academic requirements for students attending TRIALS.

Characterize attentive, active, and constructive participation in TRIALS as important to successful service as a judge advocate.

2. **Block II: Advocacy and Litigation Skills (series 200)**

Block objectives:

Comprehend effective trial advocacy techniques.

Comprehend ethical conduct in litigation.

Characterize trial advocacy skills and ethical conduct in litigation as essential to success as a judge advocate.

3. **Block III: Advocacy Practicum (series 300)**

Block objectives:

Analyze components of effective trial advocacy techniques.

Apply trial advocacy skills and techniques in a courtroom setting.

Respond positively to faculty feedback during advocacy exercises.

D. Methods of Instruction, Faculty, and Evaluation/Assessment

Informal lectures on effective advocacy techniques. Experiential advocacy exercises based on a mock trial case file.

Faculty are Air Reserve Component judge advocates with extensive litigation backgrounds in the military and civilian legal careers, augmented by an Active Duty Military Judge and JAG School Military Justice Division faculty.

Student performances in the advocacy exercises are formatively evaluated by faculty using the four-part National Institute for Trial Advocacy critique method: 1) Headnote, 2) Playback, 3) Rationale, and 4) Fix.

In addition to the formative evaluation of student exercises, instructional effectiveness will be assessed by pre- and post-course student self-assessments, student end-of-course critiques, and subsequent alumni and supervisor assessments.

E. JAG Corps Major Knowledge Areas

Professional Legal Knowledge. Knowledge of the law and processes involved in JAG Corps fields of practice.

Legal Skill Sets. Knowledge of the lawyering skills that attorneys and paralegals must maintain or be able to support (e.g., advocacy, client services, discovery management, interviewing, investigating, legal and factual research, legal writing, and litigation).

Universal Skills. Skills required by all who (1) lead and work with people and (2) manage and use resources. These skills include communications, information technology, interpersonal skills, leadership, mentoring, office management, and personnel development.

Professional Situational Awareness. Knowledge that provides context on national security issues and on JAG Corps, unit, command, and Air Force history, missions, organizational structures, and perspectives.

F. Lesson Fields

Professional Legal Knowledge: Ethics & Professional Responsibility

Legal Skill Sets: Trial Advocacy

G. Student Requisites and Selection

Student selection will be made by The Judge Advocate General based on nominations from the field.