



The Judge Advocate General's School Master Curriculum Plan: Special Victims' Counsel Course

*Course Code: SVC
Dec 2012*

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 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: The Judge Advocate General's School, Maxwell AFB AL.

Length of course: 3 days.

Student quota and profile: 60. Judge advocates assigned or likely to be assigned duties as Special Victims' Counsel, providing representational legal assistance to victims of sexual assault and other crimes. The target student is a base-level judge advocate, certified under Art 27(b), UCMJ, and currently serving in a civil law billet thereby reducing the likelihood of conflicts of interest.

B. Strategic Course Direction

Instructions: *Set out the elements of the Strategic Course Direction as provided below. Consider them carefully, as each decision on the course must be consistent with the stated mission, vision, and values.*

TJAG's Intent: The Special Victims' Counsel Course will train judge advocates in providing full spectrum legal services and advocacy to alleged victims of sexual assault and rape.

Mission: To prepare newly assigned Special Victims' Counsel to meet the challenges of transition from an Air Force legal office serving the needs of command to an independent office serving the needs of individuals who have been victims of sexual assault and other crimes. As a bridging mechanism (until billets are provided), base legal office JAGs will be appointed as Special Victims' Counsel.

Vision: Practical instruction in the fundamentals of Special Victims' Counsel duties, tailored to the attorney who is already experienced in legal work on behalf of command, and emphasizing experiential methods, effective communication, problem solving, and critical thinking.

Values: Fostering Air Force Core Values, expertise in military justice, client service and loyalty to crime victims, efficiency, maturity, dependability, good judgment, moral courage, and ethical conduct.

C. Instructional Areas and Strategic Learning Objectives

Instructions: Determine the broad subject areas (blocks) to be covered by the course. Determine the overall learning objectives for each block, setting out the cognitive level of learning. Include affective objectives, if appropriate. Consider these carefully, as they will your guide in planning the individual lessons within each block. See AFM 36-2236, Guidebook for Air Force Instructors, and consult the Academics Division.

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

Block objectives:

Comprehend the mission and learning objectives for the Special Victims' Counsel Course (SVCC).

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

Characterize attentive, active, and constructive participation in SVCC as important to successful service as a Special Victims' Counsel.

2. Block II: Professional Legal Knowledge for Special Victims' Counsel (series 200)

Block objectives:

Comprehend principles of military criminal law, evidence, and procedure of special interest to crime victims.

Comprehend principles of civil law of special interest to crime victims, including information law, victim assistance programs, and adverse administrative actions against offenders.

Comprehend ethical issues of special interest to judge advocates serving as Special Victims' Counsel.

Apply principles of law, evidence, procedure, and ethics to issues raised by factual scenarios.

Value a thorough understanding of applicable law, evidence, procedure, and ethics as essential to successful service as Special Victims' Counsel.

3. Block III: Legal Skill Sets for Special Victims' Counsel (series 300)

Block objectives:

Comprehend techniques for effective communication and positive relations with clients who are victims of sexual assault or other crimes.

Apply effective communication techniques in factual scenarios.

Value effective communication and positive relationships with crime victim clients as essential to successful service as Special Victims' Counsel.

4. **Block IV: Professional Situational Awareness for Special Victims' Counsel (series 400)**

Block objectives:

Comprehend JAG Corps leaders' and military judges' perspectives on the role of Special Victims' Counsel in the fair and efficient administration of military justice.

Comprehend the chain of command for Special Victims' Counsel.

Comprehend the charter for Special Victims' Counsel, including permissible and impermissible activities on behalf of crime victim clients.

Comprehend the roles of other Air Force offices and programs that provide assistance to victims of sexual assault and other crimes.

Respond to assignment as a Special Victims' Counsel as requiring change in the judge advocate's relationships with others in the base community.

Value zealous and ethical advocacy on behalf of crime victims as consistent with Air Force Core Values and supportive of the Air Force mission.

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

Instructions: Describe who will teach the course, how they will teach it, and how student performance will be evaluated. If there is no evaluation, so state. See AFM 36-2236, Guidebook for Air Force Instructors, for information and guidance on selection of teaching methods. Also state any other methods used to assess instructional effectiveness for the course as a whole (e.g., end-of-course critiques, pre- and post-course student self-assessments, diagnostic testing, and graduate assessments of alumni and their supervisors. Consult the Academics Division as needed.

JAG School resident faculty, adjunct faculty from cognizant JAG Corps activities, and guest speakers provide instruction.

Methods of instruction will be informal lectures, panel discussions, guided discussions, and experiential exercises. Informal lectures and panel discussions will be during plenary sessions. Guided discussions and experiential exercises will occur in small group seminars facilitated by resident or adjunct faculty. Guided discussions and experiential exercises will provide opportunities for application of information provided in prior informal lectures, requiring participants to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

There are no academic requirements for VCC graduation. Accordingly, participant performance is not formally evaluated, although seminar facilitators will provide contemporaneous feedback on performance during guided discussions and experiential exercises. Attendees are expected to participate attentively, actively, and constructively.

Assessment of instructional effectiveness will be by diagnostic survey or examination of participants at the start of the course followed by summative survey or examination at the close of the course, an end-of-course participant critique, and alumni surveys approximately six months following graduation.

E. JAG Corps Major Knowledge Areas

Instructions: This section contains descriptions of the JAGC Corps Major Knowledge Areas identified by TJAG. It remains the same for each Master Curriculum Plan and serves as a reference for completing Sec. F.

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

Instructions: Summarize the subjects addressed in the course and tie them to the appropriate JAG Corps Major Knowledge Areas described in Sec. E, above.

Professional Legal Knowledge Fields

Military Criminal Law

Court-martial Procedure

Nonjudicial Punishment

Evidence

Ethics and Professional Responsibility

Adverse Administrative Actions

Investigations

Information Law

Victim Assistance Programs

Legal Skill Set Fields

Civility in Practice

Client Relations and Communication, especially with sexual assault victims

Suicide Prevention

Professional Situational Awareness Fields

JAG Corps Leadership Perspectives

Military Judges' Perspectives

Victim Advocate and Sexual Assault Awareness Program Perspectives

G. Student Selection

Student selection will be made by The Judge Advocate General from nominations by Major Commands.