



JOAG | JUNIOR
OFFICER
ADVISORY
GROUP

United States Public Health Service

JOAG Voting Membership: Frequently Asked Questions

How does a JOAG Voting Member differ from a general member?

There is no formal process for becoming a general member. Any junior officer at the rank of LCDR (O-4) and below who participates in JOAG meetings or serves on one of JOAG's committees or workgroups is considered a general member. Voting Members serve as the leadership of JOAG and must apply and be selected by the current Voting Members.

What tasks are required of a Voting Member?

Voting Members serve as committee chairs and/or Professional Advisory Committees (PACs) liaisons. Six of the **22** Voting Members serve on the JOAG Executive Committee. The remaining **16** members typically serve as chairs or co-chairs of JOAG's **9** committees. In addition, Voting Members serve as liaisons to their respective PACs, select incoming Voting Members, assist with award nominations, make presentations at the Officer Basic Course (OBC) and other venues, and perform other duties as requested by the Office of the Surgeon General and the JOAG Chair.

What are the responsibilities of a committee chair?

There are currently nine JOAG committees that are each co-chaired by two (2) Voting Members. Committee chairs are responsible for calling and running committee meetings, making decisions about the activities of their respective committee, and overseeing all of the work that is done by members of their committee. For information about the responsibilities held by the chair of a particular committee, contact the current chair directly. A list of committees and the respective chairs can be found at <https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/JOAG/committees.aspx> .

What are the responsibilities of a PAC Liaison?

Eleven Voting Members (including some Executive Committee members) serve as liaisons to their PACs. As PAC liaisons, the Voting Member is responsible for communicating information about JOAG to their PACs and from their PACs back to JOAG. JOAG liaisons typically give reports on JOAG activities during their PAC meetings. They are responsible for forwarding information to members of their PACs such as nominations for JOAG awards, calls for volunteers for JOAG activities, and nominations for Voting Membership.

How long is the Voting Member term?

Most Voting Members serve for two years, though some officers may apply for a one-year term. The term begins October 1st of the nomination year and ends September 30th, either one or two years thereafter. Please take the length of service into consideration when applying for Voting Membership. One-year terms are limited to the Dentist, Dietician, Therapist, and Veterinarian categories and only if the officer is ineligible for a two-year term.

How many Voting Members are there each year?

There are **22** Voting Members. Voting Members include one person from each of the **11** professional categories plus **11** at-large members that can be from any category. Since Voting Members serve a one- (1) or two- (2) year term, the number of positions that are up for election each year varies depending on the number of Voting Member seats that will be vacated.

Approximately how much of my time will it take to perform the duties of a Voting Member?

Current Voting Members have stated that they spent a median of three hours per week on activities associated with JOAG. However, this time commitment may vary throughout the term. Please remember, serving as a Voting Member requires a significant time commitment over the full term of Voting Membership.

How often do Voting Members attend meetings?

Voting Member and general member meetings occur once a month on alternate months (i.e., January – Voting Member meeting, February– general member meeting, etc.). Voting Members attend both of these meetings. Additionally, a Voting Member serving as Chair/Co-chair of a committee will also lead their respective committee meetings. Voting Members who serve as liaisons to a PAC also attend the respective PAC meetings. Voting Members who serve on the Executive Committee (EC) attend semi-monthly EC meetings and serve as a liaison to two (2) committees. As an EC member, they are encouraged, if possible, to attend the two (2) additional committee meetings but not required. As junior officers are stationed in many locations, all meetings are held via conference call.

Who can apply for Voting Membership?

Any active duty officer who has pinned-on at the rank of Lieutenant Commander (O-4) or below may apply, with the exception of those officers who would be eligible to pin-on to Commander (O-5) prior to July 1 of the second year of their term or July 1 of the following year if applying for a one-year term. However, if an officer is promoted during their term they should make every attempt to fulfill their duties until a replacement is appointed.

How do I know if I am eligible for promotion to O-5 prior to July 1 of the second year of the term (or July 1 of the first year of the term in applying for a one-year term)?

You can check your eligibility on your CCMIS Dashboard under Promotion Details, or you can have your eligibility checked in advance of submitting a nomination, by contacting **LCDR Colin Smith** at colin.smith@duke.edu no later than two weeks after the call for nominations is distributed with your name, rank, and PHS Number and asking for an eligibility check.

Are any activities required before applying to become a Voting Member?

Voting Members must have and maintain a qualified basic readiness status. Although prior experience in JOAG is not required to apply for Voting Membership, prior contributions to JOAG and to the Corps are considered in the selection process.

I have never been involved with JOAG. Should I apply to become a Voting Member?

If you are ready for the challenge, we encourage you to apply. Certain categories with fewer officers may have fewer applicants for their liaison positions. In addition, other PHS and outside activities are considered in the selection process.

How do I apply to become a Voting Member?

Additionally, the application will be posted on the JOAG website at https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/JOAG/about_membership.aspx. Submit your completed application to the Voting Member (VM) subcommittee Co-Chairs, LCDR Mavis Darkwah (Mavis.Darkwah@fda.hhs.gov) and LT David Burnett (David.Burnett@ihs.gov).

How are Voting Members selected?

Once applications are collected, information submitted in the applications is verified by the Membership Committee (MC). Include Letters of Appreciation, Certifications of Appreciation, or any documentation for participation in activities you have referenced in your package. If documentation is not provided, the membership committee can attempt to confirm your participation. All applications are then reviewed and scored by the current JOAG Voting Membership. Scores are tallied by the MC. The applicant with the highest score from each category with an available liaison position will be selected. Applicants not selected for one of the category liaison positions are then placed in the pool of applicants and evaluated for the at-large positions. Applicants from categories without liaison positions available will automatically be placed in the pool for the at-large positions. The applicants with the top scores will be selected to fill the at-large positions. Professional, organizational, and geographic diversity of the applicant pool will also be taken into consideration during the selection process. Further details pertaining to this process can be found in the Standard Operating Procedure of the MC, available by contacting the MC Co-Chairs, LCDR Michelle Nielsen at mrlocke@anthc.org and LCDR Colin Smith at colin.smith@duke.edu.

Why should I apply to become a Voting Member?

Voting Membership offers an excellent leadership opportunity for junior officers. You should apply to become a JOAG Voting Member if you want to help shape the future of the Commissioned Corps and are committed to improving the professional development of junior officers and providing feedback to the Office of the Surgeon General on those issues affecting junior officers. Members who successfully complete a two-year term will receive a Special Assignment Award; those officers who only serve a one-year term are ***NOT*** eligible for this award.

Where can I find more information to assist in the decision to apply for Voting Membership and/or to further my supervisor's understanding of JOAG?

Consult the flyer "Why a Senior Officer of Civilian Supervisor Should Care About JOAG" for further information which may be helpful in the decision process, and to help your mentor/supervisor better understand JOAG's purpose and why they should support your decision to be involved. See the JOAG website Resources page for the latest version of this flyer, also included in the complete application package.

How are JOAG Voting Members formally recognized?

JOAG Voting members receive an appointment letter from the Office of the Surgeon General at the beginning of their term that can be submitted to the officers' eOPF. The voting members who serve a two-year term are eligible for the PHS Special Assignment Award (SAA) as long as they meet eligibility requirements as outlined in Commissioned Corps Policy, *CCC 27.1.1 sec d.3*. The JOAG Awards Committee is responsible for putting together the JOAG Voting Membership SAA packets and will contact each voting member at the beginning of his or her term with instructions. *Also see Article III, Section 12 of the JOAG Bylaws.* Officers who serve a one-year term are **NOT** eligible for a SAA award for JOAG work.