



JOAG Voting Membership: Frequently Asked Questions

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 1st of the second year of their term.

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 Committee (PAC) liaisons. Five of the 20 voting members serve on the JOAG Executive Committee (EC). The remaining 15 members typically serve as chairs of JOAG's 10 committees. In addition, voting members may 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 ten JOAG committees that are each chaired by a voting member. 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 <http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/JOAG/committees.aspx>.

What are the responsibilities of a JOAG PAC Liaison?

Eleven voting 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. At-large voting members do not serve as PAC liaisons and therefore, are not responsible for these additional duties.

How long is each voting membership term?

Voting members serve for two years. The term begins October 1st of the nomination year and ends September 30th, two years thereafter. Please take the length of service into consideration when applying for voting membership as you must not be eligible to pin-on T-O5 (Commander) prior to July 1st of the second year of your term.

Can I serve more than one term as a voting member?

If you continue to meet the requirements to serve as a JOAG voting member, you may serve up to two terms for a maximum of four years as a JOAG voting member. Officers seeking reappointment as a voting member must reapply.

How many voting member spots are available each year?

There are a total of 20 voting members. Voting members include one officer from each of the 11 professional categories plus nine at-large members that can be from any category. Since each voting member serves a two-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.

The following voting membership positions are open for the 2014 – 2016 term:

- At-Large Member (4 openings)
- Engineer Liaison
- Environmental Health Officer Liaison
- Health Services Liaison
- Nurse Liaison
- Therapist Liaison

How long is the selection process?

It takes a few months to verify the information on the applications, select the new voting members, and obtain written concurrence on selection of the new voting members from their Chief Professional Officers (CPOs) and Agency Liaisons. JOAG typically tries to announce the new voting members by the annual USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium.

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.

How often do voting members attend meetings?

Voting member meetings and general member meetings occur once a month on alternate months (i.e. January – Voting Member Meeting, February – General Member Meeting, etc.). Voting members are expected to attend both of these meetings. Additionally, voting members 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 their respective PAC meetings. Voting members who serve on JOAG's EC attend monthly EC meetings and two additional committee meetings in their role as EC liaisons to those committees. Due to the geographic diversity of junior officers, all meetings are held via conference call.

How are voting members assigned to the various committee's chair and co-chair positions?
For each operational year, the JOAG Chair appoints committee chairs and co-chairs based on the needs of the committees and the experience and interest of the voting members.

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.

Can I apply more than once if I do not get selected my first time?

Yes! Officers who are not selected are encouraged to reapply the following year if they continue to meet requirements.

How do I apply to become a voting member?

The application for voting membership is attached to the JOAG call for nominations sent via the listserv. Additionally, the application will be posted on the JOAG website at the following webpage: http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/JOAG/about_membership.aspx. Submit your completed application to LCDR Robert Kosko, Co-Chair, Membership Committee, at Robert.Kosko@fda.hhs.gov by **COB Friday, March 7, 2014**.

How are voting members selected?

Once applications are collected, information submitted in the applications is verified by the Membership Committee. All applications are then reviewed and scored by the current JOAG voting membership. Scores are tallied by the Membership Committee. The applicant with the highest score from each category with an available liaison position will be selected as the category liaison. 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 Membership Committee, available by contacting the committee Co-Chair, LCDR Robert Kosko at Robert.Kosko@fda.hhs.gov.

How and when are the EC members selected?

Once the voting members have been selected, the JOAG Chair will distribute an email to the current and new voting membership soliciting self-nominations for the JOAG EC. The self-nomination packet includes a brief statement of intent where officers can articulate their interest and skills that may benefit JOAG. Then the nominees present their statement of intent via teleconference to the current JOAG voting membership. The JOAG Chair will hold an election where each of the current voting members votes to select the JOAG EC for the next term.

How many officers usually apply?

The number of applicants varies each year, and depends on the liaison positions available, as well as the number of at large positions. However, we typically have between 20-40 applicants each year.

How can I increase my chances next year if I'm not selected this year?

Review your application and strengthen your weaker areas. When compared to other officers, previous involvement with JOAG and leadership are often the areas that could use the most improvement. Also, be sure to clearly indicate your vision for JOAG and ensure that you understand the role of JOAG by reviewing JOAG's Bylaws and Standard Operating Procedures.

Is there someone that can review my packet for submission for nomination?

You may contact a previous JOAG voting member or the Membership Committee Chair/Co-Chair overseeing the voting membership selection process. For help identifying assistance, please contact your JOAG PAC Liaison. However, please note that having a previous JOAG voting member or the Membership Committee Chair/Co-Chair overseeing the voting membership selection process review your packet does not guarantee your selection.

Do I need supervisory approval to apply?

Yes, you must have supervisory approval to apply to become a JOAG voting member. There is a form included in the nomination packet that your current supervisor must sign and you must include this in your completed nomination package. If you change duty stations after you have submitted your package, you need to provide a new supervisory approval form.

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 care about 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 their term will receive a Special Assignment Award and Ribbon.