

Title 14: Aeronautics and Space

PART 121—OPERATING REQUIREMENTS: DOMESTIC, FLAG, AND SUPPLEMENTAL OPERATIONS

Subpart Y—Advanced Qualification Program

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§ 121.901 Purpose and eligibility.

(a) Contrary provisions of parts 61, 63, 65, 121, 135, and 142 of this chapter notwithstanding, this subpart provides for approval of an alternative method (known as “Advanced Qualification Program” or “AQP”) for qualifying, training, certifying, and otherwise ensuring competency of crewmembers, aircraft dispatchers, other operations personnel, instructors, and evaluators who are required to be trained under parts 121 and 135 of this chapter.

(b) A certificate holder is eligible under this subpart if the certificate holder is required or elects to have an approved training program under §§121.401, 135.3(c), or 135.341 of this chapter.

(c) A certificate holder obtains approval of each proposed curriculum under this AQP as specified in §121.909.

§ 121.903 General requirements for Advanced Qualification Programs.

(a) A curriculum approved under an AQP may include elements of existing training programs under part 121 and part 135 of this chapter. Each curriculum must specify the make, model, series or variant of aircraft and each crewmember position or other positions to be covered by that curriculum. Positions to be covered by the AQP must include all flight crewmember positions, flight instructors, and evaluators and may include other positions, such as flight attendants, aircraft dispatchers, and other operations personnel.

(b) Each certificate holder that obtains approval of an AQP under this subpart must comply with all the requirements of the AQP and this subpart instead of the corresponding provisions of parts 61, 63, 65, 121, or 135 of this chapter. However, each applicable requirement of parts 61, 63, 65, 121, or 135 of this chapter, including but not limited to practical test requirements, that is not specifically addressed in the AQP continues to apply to the certificate holder and to the individuals being trained and qualified by the certificate holder. No person may be trained under an AQP unless that AQP has been approved by the FAA and the person complies with all the requirements of the AQP and this subpart.

(c) No certificate holder that conducts its training program under this subpart may use any person nor may any person serve in any duty position as a required crewmember, an aircraft dispatcher, an instructor, or an evaluator, unless that person has satisfactorily accomplished, in a training program approved under this subpart for the certificate holder, the training and evaluation of proficiency required by the AQP for that type airplane and duty position.

(d) All documentation and data required under this subpart must be submitted in a form and manner acceptable to the FAA.

(e) Any training or evaluation required under an AQP that is satisfactorily completed in the calendar month before or the calendar month after the calendar month in which it is due is considered to have been completed in the calendar month it was due.

§ 121.905 Confidential commercial information.

(a) Each certificate holder that claims that AQP information or data it is submitting to the FAA is entitled to confidential treatment under 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4) because it constitutes confidential commercial information as described in 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4), and should be withheld from public disclosure, must include its request for confidentiality with each submission.

(b) When requesting confidentiality for submitted information or data, the certificate holder must:

(1) If the information or data is transmitted electronically, embed the claim of confidentiality within the electronic record so the portions claimed to be confidential are readily apparent when received and reviewed.

(2) If the information or data is submitted in paper format, place the word "CONFIDENTIAL" on the top of each page containing information or data claimed to be confidential.

(3) Justify the basis for a claim of confidentiality under 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4).

§ 121.907 Definitions.

The following definitions apply to this subpart:

Crew Resource Management (CRM) means the effective use of all the resources available to crewmembers, including each other, to achieve a safe and efficient flight.

Curriculum outline means a listing of each segment, module, lesson, and lesson element in a curriculum, or an equivalent listing acceptable to the FAA.

Evaluation of proficiency means a Line Operational Evaluation (LOE) or an equivalent evaluation under an AQP acceptable to the FAA.

Evaluator means a person who assesses or judges the performance of crewmembers, instructors, other evaluators, aircraft dispatchers, or other operations personnel.

First Look means the assessment of performance to determine proficiency on designated flight tasks before any briefing, training, or practice on those tasks is given in the training session for a continuing qualification curriculum. First Look is conducted during an AQP continuing qualification cycle to determine trends of degraded proficiency, if any, due in part to the length of the interval between training sessions.

Instructional systems development means a systematic methodology for developing or modifying qualification standards and associated curriculum content based on a documented analysis of the job tasks, skills, and knowledge required for job proficiency.

Job task listing means a listing of all tasks, subtasks, knowledge, and skills required for accomplishing the operational job.

Line Operational Evaluation (LOE) means a simulated line environment, the scenario content of which is designed to test integrating technical and CRM skills.

Line Operational Simulation (LOS) means a training or evaluation session, as applicable, that is conducted in a simulated line environment using equipment qualified and approved for its intended purpose in an AQP.

Planned hours means the estimated amount of time (as specified in a curriculum outline) that it takes a typical student to complete a segment of instruction (to include all instruction, demonstration, practice, and evaluation, as appropriate, to reach proficiency).

Qualification standard means a statement of a minimum required performance, applicable parameters, criteria, applicable flight conditions, evaluation strategy, evaluation media, and applicable document references.

Qualification standards document means a single document containing all the qualification standards for an AQP together with a prologue that provides a detailed description of all facets of the evaluation process.

Special tracking means assigning a person to an augmented schedule of training, checking, or both.

Training session means a contiguously scheduled period devoted to training activities at a facility approved by the FAA for that purpose.

Variant means a specifically configured aircraft for which the FAA has identified training and qualifications that are significantly different from those applicable to other aircraft of the same make, model, and series.

§ 121.909 Approval of Advanced Qualification Program.

(a) *Approval process.* Application for approval of an AQP curriculum under this subpart is made, through the FAA office responsible for approval of the certificate holder's operations specifications, to the Manager of the Advanced Qualification Program.

(b) *Approval criteria.* Each AQP must have separate curriculums for indoctrination, qualification, and continuing qualification (including upgrade, transition, and requalification), as specified in §§121.911, 121.913, and 121.915. All AQP curriculums must be based on an instructional systems development methodology. This methodology must incorporate a thorough analysis of the certificate holder's operations, aircraft, line environment and job functions. All AQP qualification and continuing qualification curriculums must integrate the training and evaluation of CRM and technical skills and knowledge. An application for approval of an AQP curriculum may be approved if the program meets the following requirements:

(1) The program must meet all the requirements of this subpart.

(2) Each indoctrination, qualification, and continuing qualification AQP, and derivatives must include the following documentation:

(i) Initial application for AQP.

(ii) Initial job task listing.

(iii) Instructional systems development methodology.

(iv) Qualification standards document.

(v) Curriculum outline.

(vi) Implementation and operations plan.

(3) Subject to approval by the FAA, certificate holders may elect, where appropriate, to consolidate information about multiple programs within any of the documents referenced in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(4) The Qualification Standards Document must indicate specifically the requirements of the parts 61, 63, 65, 121, or 135 of this chapter, as applicable, that would be replaced by an AQP curriculum. If a practical test requirement of parts 61, 63, 65, 121, or 135 of this chapter is replaced by an AQP curriculum, the certificate holder must establish an initial justification and a continuing process approved by the FAA to show how the AQP curriculum provides an equivalent level of safety for each requirement that is to be replaced.

(c) *Application and transition.* Each certificate holder that applies for one or more advanced qualification curriculums must include as part of its application a proposed transition plan (containing a calendar of events) for moving from its present approved training to the advanced qualification program training.

(d) *Advanced Qualification Program revisions or rescissions of approval.* If after a certificate holder begins training and qualification under an AQP, the FAA finds the certificate holder is not meeting the provisions of its approved AQP, the FAA may require the certificate holder, pursuant to §121.405(e), to make revisions.

Or if otherwise warranted, the FAA may withdraw AQP approval and require the certificate holder to submit and obtain approval for a plan (containing a schedule of events) that the certificate holder must comply with and use to transition to an approved training program under subpart N of this part or under subpart H of part 135 of this chapter, as appropriate. The certificate holder may also voluntarily submit and obtain approval for a plan (containing a schedule of events) to transition to an approved training program under subpart N of this part or under subpart H of part 135 of this chapter, as appropriate.

(e) *Approval by the FAA* . Final approval of an AQP by the FAA indicates the FAA has accepted the justification provided under paragraph (b)(4) of this section and the applicant's initial justification and continuing process establish an equivalent level of safety for each requirement of parts 61, 63, 65, 121, and 135 of this chapter that is being replaced.

§ 121.911 Indoctrination curriculum.

Each indoctrination curriculum must include the following:

- (a) For newly hired persons being trained under an AQP: The certificate holder's policies and operating practices and general operational knowledge.
- (b) For newly hired crewmembers and aircraft dispatchers: General aeronautical knowledge appropriate to the duty position.
- (c) For instructors: The fundamental principles of the teaching and learning process; methods and theories of instruction; and the knowledge necessary to use aircraft, flight training devices, flight simulators, and other training equipment in advanced qualification curriculums, as appropriate.
- (d) For evaluators: General evaluation requirements of the AQP; methods of evaluating crewmembers and aircraft dispatchers and other operations personnel, as appropriate, and policies and practices used to conduct the kinds of evaluations particular to an AQP (e.g. , LOE).

§ 121.913 Qualification curriculum.

Each qualification curriculum must contain training, evaluation, and certification activities, as applicable for specific positions subject to the AQP, as follows:

- (a) The certificate holder's planned hours of training, evaluation, and supervised operating experience.
- (b) For crewmembers, aircraft dispatchers, and other operations personnel, the following:
 - (1) Training, evaluation, and certification activities that are aircraft- and equipment-specific to qualify a person for a particular duty position on, or duties related to the operation of, a specific make, model, series, or variant aircraft.
 - (2) A list of and text describing the knowledge requirements, subject materials, job skills, and qualification standards of each proficiency objective to be trained and evaluated.
 - (3) The requirements of the certificate holder's approved AQP program that are in addition to or in place of, the requirements of parts 61, 63, 65, 121 or 135 of this chapter, including any applicable practical test requirements.
 - (4) A list of and text describing operating experience, evaluation/remediation strategies, provisions for special tracking, and how recency of experience requirements will be accomplished.
- (c) For flight crewmembers: Initial operating experience and line check.
- (d) For instructors, the following as appropriate:

(1) Training and evaluation activities to qualify a person to conduct instruction on how to operate, or on how to ensure the safe operation of a particular make, model, and series aircraft (or variant).

(2) A list of and text describing the knowledge requirements, subject materials, job skills, and qualification standards of each procedure and proficiency objective to be trained and evaluated.

(3) A list of and text describing evaluation/remediation strategies, standardization policies and recency requirements.

(e) For evaluators: The requirements of paragraph (d)(1) of this section plus the following, as appropriate:

(1) Training and evaluation activities that are aircraft and equipment specific to qualify a person to assess the performance of persons who operate or who ensure the safe operation of, a particular make, model, and series aircraft (or variant).

(2) A list of and text describing the knowledge requirements, subject materials, job skills, and qualification standards of each procedure and proficiency objective to be trained and evaluated.

(3) A list of and text describing evaluation/remediation strategies, standardization policies and recency requirements.

§ 121.915 Continuing qualification curriculum.

Each continuing qualification curriculum must contain training and evaluation activities, as applicable for specific positions subject to the AQP, as follows:

(a) *Continuing qualification cycle* . A continuing qualification cycle that ensures that during each cycle each person qualified under an AQP, including instructors and evaluators, will receive a mix that will ensure training and evaluation on all events and subjects necessary to ensure that each person maintains proficiency in knowledge, technical skills, and cognitive skills required for initial qualification in accordance with the approved continuing qualification AQP, evaluation/remediation strategies, and provisions for special tracking. Each continuing qualification cycle must include at least the following:

(1) *Evaluation period* . Initially the continuing qualification cycle is comprised of two or more evaluation periods of equal duration. Each person qualified under an AQP must receive ground training and flight training, as appropriate, and an evaluation of proficiency during each evaluation period at a training facility. The number and frequency of training sessions must be approved by the FAA.

(2) *Training* . Continuing qualification must include training in all tasks, procedures and subjects required in accordance with the approved program documentation, as follows:

(i) For pilots in command, seconds in command, and flight engineers, First Look in accordance with the certificate holder's FAA-approved program documentation.

(ii) For pilots in command, seconds in command, flight engineers, flight attendants, instructors and evaluators: Ground training including a general review of knowledge and skills covered in qualification training, updated information on newly developed procedures, and safety information.

(iii) For crewmembers, instructors, evaluators, and other operational personnel who conduct their duties in flight: Proficiency training in an aircraft, flight training device, flight simulator, or other equipment, as appropriate, on normal, abnormal, and emergency flight procedures and maneuvers.

(iv) For dispatchers and other operational personnel who do not conduct their duties in flight: ground training including a general review of knowledge and skills covered in qualification training, updated information on newly developed procedures, safety related information, and, if applicable, a line observation program.

(v) For instructors and evaluators: Proficiency training in the type flight training device or the type flight simulator, as appropriate, regarding training equipment operation. For instructors and evaluators who are limited to conducting their duties in flight simulators or flight training devices: Training in operational flight procedures and maneuvers (normal, abnormal, and emergency).

(b) *Evaluation of performance* . Continuing qualification must include evaluation of performance on a sample of those events and major subjects identified as diagnostic of competence and approved for that purpose by the FAA. The following evaluation requirements apply:

(1) Evaluation of proficiency as follows:

(i) For pilots in command, seconds in command, and flight engineers: An evaluation of proficiency, portions of which may be conducted in an aircraft, flight simulator, or flight training device as approved in the certificate holder's curriculum that must be completed during each evaluation period.

(ii) For any other persons covered by an AQP, a means to evaluate their proficiency in the performance of their duties in their assigned tasks in an operational setting.

(2) Line checks as follows:

(i) Except as provided in paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section, for pilots in command: A line check conducted in an aircraft during actual flight operations under part 121 or part 135 of this chapter or during operationally (line) oriented flights, such as ferry flights or proving flights. A line check must be completed in the calendar month at the midpoint of the evaluation period.

(ii) With the FAA's approval, a no-notice line check strategy may be used in lieu of the line check required by paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section. The certificate holder who elects to exercise this option must ensure the "no-notice" line checks are administered so the flight crewmembers are not notified before the evaluation. In addition, the AQP certificate holder must ensure that each pilot in command receives at least one "no-notice" line check every 24 months. As a minimum, the number of "no-notice" line checks administered each calendar year must equal at least 50% of the certificate holder's pilot-in-command workforce in accordance with a strategy approved by the FAA for that purpose. In addition, the line checks to be conducted under this paragraph must be conducted over all geographic areas flown by the certificate holder in accordance with a sampling methodology approved by the FAA for that purpose.

(iii) During the line checks required under paragraph (b)(2)(i) and (ii) of this section, each person performing duties as a pilot in command, second in command, or flight engineer for that flight, must be individually evaluated to determine whether the person remains adequately trained and currently proficient with respect to the particular aircraft, crew position, and type of operation in which he or she serves; and the person has sufficient knowledge and skills to operate effectively as part of a crew. The evaluator must be a check airman, an APD, or an FAA inspector and must hold the certificates and ratings required of the pilot in command.

(c) *Recency of experience* . For pilots in command, seconds in command, flight engineers, aircraft dispatchers, instructors, evaluators, and flight attendants, approved recency of experience requirements appropriate to the duty position.

(d) *Duration of cycles and periods* . Initially, the continuing qualification cycle approved for an AQP must not exceed 24 calendar months in duration, and must include two or more evaluation periods of equal duration. After that, upon demonstration by a certificate holder that an extension is warranted, the FAA may approve an extension of the continuing qualification cycle to a maximum of 36 calendar months in duration.

(e) *Requalification* . Each continuing qualification curriculum must include a curriculum segment that covers the requirements for requalifying a crewmember, aircraft dispatcher, other operations personnel, instructor, or evaluator who has not maintained continuing qualification.

§ 121.917 Other requirements.

In addition to the requirements of §§121.913 and 121.915, each AQP qualification and continuing qualification curriculum must include the following requirements:

(a) Integrated Crew Resource Management (CRM) or Dispatcher Resource Management (DRM) ground and if appropriate flight training applicable to each position for which training is provided under an AQP.

(b) Approved training on and evaluation of skills and proficiency of each person being trained under AQP to use his or her resource management skills and his or her technical (piloting or other) skills in an actual or simulated operations scenario. For flight crewmembers this training and evaluation must be conducted in an approved flight training device, flight simulator, or, if approved under this subpart, in an aircraft.

(c) Data collection and analysis processes acceptable to the FAA that will ensure the certificate holder provides performance information on its crewmembers, dispatchers, instructors, evaluators, and other operations personnel that will enable the certificate holder and the FAA to determine whether the form and content of training and evaluation activities are satisfactorily accomplishing the overall objectives of the curriculum.

§ 121.919 Certification.

A person subject to an AQP is eligible to receive a commercial or airline transport pilot, flight engineer, or aircraft dispatcher certificate or appropriate rating based on the successful completion of training and evaluation events accomplished under that program if the following requirements are met:

(a) Training and evaluation of required knowledge and skills under the AQP must meet minimum certification and rating criteria established by the FAA in parts 61, 63, or 65 of this chapter. The FAA may approve alternatives to the certification and rating criteria of parts 61, 63, or 65 of this chapter, including practical test requirements, if it can be demonstrated that the newly established criteria or requirements represent an equivalent or better measure of crewmember or dispatcher competence, operational proficiency, and safety.

(b) The applicant satisfactorily completes the appropriate qualification curriculum.

(c) The applicant shows competence in required technical knowledge and skills (*e.g.* , piloting or other) and crew resource management (*e.g.* , CRM or DRM) knowledge and skills in scenarios (*i.e.* , LOE) that test both types of knowledge and skills together.

(d) The applicant is otherwise eligible under the applicable requirements of part 61, 63, or 65 of this chapter.

(e) The applicant has been trained to proficiency on the certificate holder's approved AQP Qualification Standards as witnessed by an instructor, check airman, or APD and has passed an LOE administered by an APD or the FAA.

§ 121.921 Training devices and simulators.

(a) Each flight training device or airplane simulator that will be used in an AQP for one of the following purposes must be evaluated by the FAA for assignment of a flight training device or flight simulator qualification level:

(1) Required evaluation of individual or crew proficiency.

(2) Training to proficiency or training activities that determine if an individual or crew is ready for an evaluation of proficiency.

(3) Activities used to meet recency of experience requirements.

(4) Line Operational Simulations (LOS).

(b) Approval of other training equipment.

(1) Any training equipment that is intended to be used in an AQP for purposes other than those set forth in paragraph (a) of this section must be approved by the FAA for its intended use.

(2) An applicant for approval of training equipment under this paragraph must identify the device by its nomenclature and describe its intended use.

(3) Each training device approved for use in an AQP must be part of a continuing program to provide for its serviceability and fitness to perform its intended function as approved by the FAA.

§ 121.923 Approval of training, qualification, or evaluation by a person who provides training by arrangement.

(a) A certificate holder operating under part 121 or part 135 of this chapter may arrange to have AQP training, qualification, evaluation, or certification functions performed by another person (a "training provider") if the following requirements are met:

(1) The training provider is certificated under part 119 or 142 of this chapter.

(2) The training provider's AQP training and qualification curriculums, curriculum segments, or portions of curriculum segments must be provisionally approved by the FAA. A training provider may apply for provisional approval independently or in conjunction with a certificate holder's application for AQP approval. Application for provisional approval must be made, through the FAA office directly responsible for oversight of the training provider, to the Manager of the Advanced Qualification Program.

(3) The specific use of provisionally approved curriculums, curriculum segments, or portions of curriculum segments in a certificate holder's AQP must be approved by the FAA as set forth in §121.909.

(b) An applicant for provisional approval of a curriculum, curriculum segment, or portion of a curriculum segment under this paragraph must show the following requirements are met:

(1) The applicant must have a curriculum for the qualification and continuing qualification of each instructor and evaluator used by the applicant.

(2) The applicant's facilities must be found by the FAA to be adequate for any planned training, qualification, or evaluation for a certificate holder operating under part 121 or part 135 of this chapter.

(3) Except for indoctrination curriculums, the curriculum, curriculum segment, or portion of a curriculum segment must identify the specific make, model, and series aircraft (or variant) and crewmember or other positions for which it is designed.

(c) A certificate holder who wants approval to use a training provider's provisionally approved curriculum, curriculum segment, or portion of a curriculum segment in its AQP, must show the following requirements are met:

(1) Each instructor or evaluator used by the training provider must meet all the qualification and continuing qualification requirements that apply to employees of the certificate holder that has arranged for the training, including knowledge of the certificate holder's operations.

(2) Each provisionally approved curriculum, curriculum segment, or portion of a curriculum segment must be approved by the FAA for use in the certificate holder's AQP. The FAA will either provide approval or require modifications to ensure that each curriculum, curriculum segment, or portion of a curriculum segment is applicable to the certificate holder's AQP.

§ 121.925 Recordkeeping requirements.

Each certificate holder conducting an approved AQP must establish and maintain records in sufficient detail to demonstrate the certificate holder is in compliance with all the requirements of the AQP and this subpart.