



# CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFICE JOB GUIDE

## MILITARY: JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

### General Description

Each branch of the U.S. military has a Judge Advocate General's Corps that operates like both a court system and a full service law firm. The licensed lawyers are referred to as Judge Advocates. They represent their particular branch of the military and its personnel in military and civil legal matters. They practice in a wide range of areas, including civil litigation, criminal prosecution and defense, tort claims, labor and employment, domestic and international contracts and transactions, estate planning, family law, landlord-tenant law, tax, immigration, healthcare, and administrative law.

Each entry-level lawyer joins the JAG Corps as a member of the military and must commit to a minimum of four years of active duty. After the initial four years, you would remain for four additional years on inactive status, during which time you would not be serving in the military but could be recalled should the need arise.

JAG members in all branches receive a base salary and employee benefits like health and life insurance. In addition, you may be eligible for housing and food allowances, on-base tax-free shopping privileges, and pension benefits. The Air Force and Army also provide student loan repayment assistance; the other three branches do not.

### General Qualifications

The characteristics that will make you a good candidate for a JAG position are common across all branches. There are no stated GPA minimums, but your academic performance will be a factor. In addition, the Corps will consider your legal experience, extracurricular activities, community service, prior

military work record (if any), and leadership experience. Because JAGs represent the United States and provide military personnel with a wide variety of civil legal services, all of the branches look for candidates with a strong commitment to public service.

You do not need to have any prior military service, any experience in an ROTC program, or any particular major in college. All JAGs must be U.S. citizens, graduates of ABA accredited law schools, and able to pass medical examinations. There are also age and other qualifications that can be found on the website for each branch.

The process for becoming a JAG will be similar for each branch of the service, with some differences. The descriptions below provide brief outlines for each branch, and you can find more detail along with application forms at the website for each branch. Be aware that, for all branches, the application process is lengthy, and you should start early if you are interested in this career path. Note also that standard military recruiting offices, which are often in storefront locations and recruit for military personnel at large, do not perform any of the application process for JAGs.

### U.S. Air Force

[www.airforce.com/jag/](http://www.airforce.com/jag/)



The Air Force JAG Corps hires between 80-100 attorneys per year. Your service would begin with Commissioned Officer Training at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama, where you would participate in

physical conditioning, military training, leadership seminars and classroom studies. During your service, you may be stationed at any of the hundreds of bases located in the U.S., Europe and Asia. You would also be subject to deployment.

**Post-Graduate Position.** The hiring process for entry-level lawyers in the Air Force is called the Direct Appointment Program. Minimum qualifications include, among other things, that you must be under the age of 35 at the time you are commissioned.

**Application Tips.** The application process starts with a mandatory informational interview. The Air Force typically sends a recruiter to conduct these screening interviews at Georgia Law as part of Fall OCI and again as part of Spring OCI. If you miss one of these, you can reach out to a recruiter directly for help in scheduling. During that initial interview, the recruiter will give you details about how the rest of the process works. Generally, you will be required to complete a detailed online application and then schedule an in-person interview with a Staff Judge Advocate at a local Air Force base. After that, your application will be reviewed by a Selection Board which meets three times per year, in April, October and December. Application deadlines for being considered at these board meetings are March 10, September 10 and November 10, respectively.

As part of the online application, you will be required to submit recommendation letters. You are allowed to submit up to five letters; we recommend that you submit at least three. The letters should be written by people who can attest to the qualifications described above, including your work ethic, leadership potential, maturity, integrity, and commitment to public service. You will also be required to submit a one-page motivational statement, explaining your desire to join the Air Force. CDO Counselors are happy to help you in preparing these documents.

**Summer Interns.** The Air Force also hires 1Ls and 2Ls as summer interns. These positions are unpaid, and the Air Force will require that you be able to receive course credit for the work. The program lasts for 8-10 weeks, and assignments are typically in either Washington DC or another domestic location. Applications must be sent in hard copy and are typically due in January each year. More details can be found [here](#). To determine if you can receive course credit, check with [Professor Alex Scherr](#) well in advance of the application deadline.

**JAG Contacts.** During the past several years, the Air Force JAG recruiter conducting OCIs at Georgia Law has been from Robins AFB in Warner Robins, GA. See a CDO Counselor, and we will help you find an appropriate Air Force JAG recruiter.

**U.S. Army**

[www.goarmy.com/jag.html](http://www.goarmy.com/jag.html)



Army JAGs have the option of serving as full-time legal practitioners on active duty or as members of the [U.S. Army Reserve](#). Your service would begin with a six-week Direct Commissioned Course at Fort Benning, GA, designed to teach leadership skills and military tactics, and including weapons and physical fitness training. Then you would complete an Officer's Course, taught on the University of Virginia campus, focusing on the organization, function and mission of the Army JAG Corps. This course also includes substantive legal training for the types of matters you are most likely to handle as a new JAG. Duty locations include the continental U.S. and a number of foreign countries.

**Post-Graduate Positions.** The Army has an [online application](#) process for entry-level lawyers. Minimum qualifications include, among things, that you must be under the age of 42 at the time you are commissioned. The deadline for applying is November 1 of your 3L year.

**Summer Interns.** The [Army](#) also hires [2Ls](#) as summer interns. The number of interns varies from year to year, but is typically in the range of 75 students. The program lasts for 60 days, during which the interns work as civil service employees performing a variety of legal assignments. These assignments may be based in the U.S. or in foreign countries like Germany. The deadline to apply each year is November 1.

**Application Tips.** If you are interested in a JAG position or summer internship, you should start with an informational interview. The Army typically sends a recruiter to conduct these informational interviews at Georgia Law once per year as part of Fall OCI. If you miss one of these, you can reach out to a recruiter directly for help in scheduling. During that initial interview, the recruiter will give you details about how the rest of the process works.

**JAG Contacts.** During the past several years, the Army JAG recruiter conducting OCIs at Georgia Law has been from Fort Benning in Columbus, GA or Fort Gordon in Augusta, GA. See a CDO Counselor, and we will help you find an appropriate Army JAG recruiter.

## U.S. Coast Guard

[www.uscg.mil/legal/](http://www.uscg.mil/legal/)



The Coast Guard JAG Corps hires between 6-12 attorneys per year. Your service would begin with a five-week Direct Commission Officer Course at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, CT, followed by a two-week Operations Orientation on board various Coast Guard cutters, and a ten-week Basic Lawyer Course at the Naval Justice School in Newport, RI. From there, you would move to your assigned duty station, which will be in the U.S. There are no legal positions at overseas locations.

**Post-Graduate Position.** The hiring process for entry-level lawyers is called the Direct Commission Lawyer Program. Minimum qualifications include, among other things, that you must be under the age of 40 at the time you are commissioned.

**Application Tips.** The recruiting cycle runs with the government's fiscal year, October 1 – September 30. There will be one to three Selection Boards convened between October and February, to select candidates who would begin their training the following July – August. The Coast Guard publishes deadlines for applications, which are typically in August and November each year. Thus, if you are interested in joining the Coast Guard JAG immediately after graduation, your application needs to be complete and in the hands of your Coast Guard recruiter no later than either the August or November deadline of your 3L year.

The Coast Guard does not recruit on-campus at Georgia Law, but they usually open a job posting in Symplicity at least once per year to remind students of the application deadlines. If you want to apply, it is best to start by reviewing the details at the website, including the helpful FAQ document, and then schedule a screening interview with a recruiter.

As part of the online application, you will be required to write several personal statements about your desire and fitness to be a JAG. The Coast Guard has published an Officer Application Job Aid Kit to help guide you through the process. CDO Counselors are also happy to help you.

**Summer Interns.** The Coast Guard hires summer interns at its Washington DC headquarters and at most of its legal offices. These positions are unpaid, but you may be able to receive course credit. To determine if

you can receive course credit, check with Professor Alex Scherr. To apply, you must send the required materials to the point of contact for the particular legal office. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis. To get a list of currently available positions and contact information for each legal office, send an email to the Direct Commission Lawyer Program (contact information found here).

**JAG Contacts.** As mentioned above, the Coast Guard does not recruit on-campus. However, a CDO Counselor will be happy to provide you with the most current contact information in our system, typically provided to us once a year for job posting purposes, and otherwise identify an appropriate recruiter.

## U.S. Marines

<http://www.marines.com/being-a-marine/roles-in-the-corps/command-element/judge-advocate>



The Marines JAG Corps may not hire new entry-level lawyers every year, depending on need. Your service would begin with a ten-week Officer Candidate School (OCS), followed by six months of Basic School training, all at Quantico, VA. You would then move to the Naval Justice School in Newport, RI for additional training. Duty stations for Marines JAGs are located in the U.S. and Japan.

**Post-Graduate Position.** The hiring process for entry-level lawyers is called the Officer Candidate Course-Law. You can find more information here. Minimum qualifications include, among other things, that you must be under the age of 28 at the time you are commissioned.

The Marines hold three Selection Boards each year. You should contact a recruiter to get the current schedule of deadlines. If you want to apply, it is best to start by reviewing the details at the website, and then schedule a screening interview with a recruiter.

**Summer Interns.** The Marines JAG Corps has a summer intern program available to 1L and 2L students. It is called the Platoon Leaders Class-Law. You can apply any time after you have been accepted by an ABA accredited law school. More information can be found here. If you are accepted into the program, you will complete the ten-week OCS at Quantico, VA during either your 1L or 2L summer. At

the end of the summer, you would be sworn in as a Second Lieutenant and placed on reserve duty until you graduate from law school and pass a bar exam. If you complete the OCS during your 1L summer, you can apply to work during your 2L summer as a paid JAG intern. If you complete the OCS during your 2L summer, you can apply to be a paid intern between graduation and receiving bar exam results.

JAG Contacts. The Marines have not historically recruited on-campus at Georgia Law, but they occasionally submit a job posting. See a CDO Counselor, and we will help you find an appropriate Marines JAG recruiter.

## U.S. Navy

<http://www.jag.navy.mil/>



The Navy JAG Corps has over 800 attorneys stationed around the world. Your service would begin with a five-week Navy Officer Development School, followed by a ten-week Basic Lawyer Course, all in Newport, RI. From there, you would move to your assigned duty station, which will most likely be in the continental U.S.

Post-Graduate Position. The hiring process for entry-level lawyers is called the Student Program. Minimum qualifications include, among other things, that you must be under the age of 42 at the time you are commissioned.

Application Tips. If you are interested in a Navy JAG position, you will be permitted to apply after you have completed at least one full year of law school. The application process starts by completing a detailed and lengthy online application. Then you must schedule a screening interview with a designated recruiter, which you can identify from a list found on the Navy's website. After the interview, your application will be reviewed by a selection board. If you are "Professionally Recommended" by the board, you then apply for a commission as a Navy officer. A recruiter will work with you during that phase, which involves a medical exam and security investigation. Deadlines are posted on the Navy website. If you want to enter the Navy JAG during the Fall after graduation, you have to apply no later than the Fall of your 3L year.

As part of the online application, you will be required to submit recommendation letters. The letters should be written by people who can attest to the qualifications

described above, including your work ethic, leadership potential, maturity, integrity, and commitment to public service. You may also be required to submit a motivational statement, explaining your desire to join the Navy. CDO Counselors are happy to help you in preparing these documents.

Summer Interns and Academic Year Externs. The Navy hires interns for the summer, as well as externs who work during the academic year. Summer positions are usually 8-10 weeks, and school year externships are more flexible in duration and timing. These positions are unpaid, but you may be able to receive course credit. To determine if you can receive course credit, check with Professor Alex Scherr. You may apply any time after you have completed one full semester of law school. Your application must be submitted via email in pdf format. The deadlines are posted on the website. The deadline for Spring externships is usually in September, for Summer internships usually in January, and for Fall externships usually in July.

JAG Contacts. The Navy has not historically recruited on-campus. However, they usually open a job posting in Symplicity once each year for both entry-level positions and summer interns. A CDO Counselor will be happy to provide you with the most current contact information in our system and otherwise identify an appropriate recruiter.

## Job Search Strategy

- If you want a career in the JAG Corps of any military branch, it is critical that you start the application process early and not miss a deadline. The latest date for applying for a post-graduate position will be early Fall of your 3L year. But you will be well served to consider applying during at least your 2L year, and consider applying for a summer internship or academic term externship.
- The application processes for all branches require a lot of information and take a lot of time to complete. Start early and allow yourself enough time, and get help from a military recruiter or a CDO Counselor. Failure to adhere to a technical requirement will likely result in your application being rejected.
- Carefully review the website of any branch in which you are interested, and contact a recruiter at any point. They will be happy to talk with you and answer your questions.

- Watch for programs organized by CDO. Some of the branches send recruiters on-campus to do group presentations, which can give you a lot of very helpful information.

## Experiential Learning Opportunities

Externships during the school term with the branches that offer such programs are an excellent way to increase your chance of becoming a JAG. Check with [Professor Alex Scherr](#) about the possibility of obtaining course credit for such a position. Also, there may be opportunities for externships through the [D.C. Semester in Practice](#) program. In addition, it might be useful to display a commitment to public interest work in general by participating in the school's [Public Interest Practicum](#).

## Relevant Courses

The legal work performed by JAG members spans many practice areas, so there is no specific course of study that you need to follow. Taking a broad selection of course offerings might serve you best. As mentioned above, the military recruiters often consider your commitment to public service, and the following video provides helpful guidance on public interest law from Georgia Law Professor Alex Scherr.



Check the Law School's [Course Offerings page](#) for an updated list of courses offered and the applicable semester class schedule.

## Relevant Law School Activities

Activities that generally provide you with excellent training and exposure to the law, and enhance your resume, are appropriate. So consider law review and journals, moot court, mock trial, the business negotiation team, etc. Similarly, many of the student organizations on campus will be helpful.

## Recent Jobs

Each year, we have a number of students who work as summer interns and who obtain entry-level JAG positions. Check with a CDO Counselor for connections with current students who have completed internships, as well as alums who have served as JAGs.