

## CHAPTER 4. THE ADVANCED QUALIFICATION PROGRAM

### SECTION 2. THE ADVANCED QUALIFICATION PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS

**747. GENERAL.** This section establishes how the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) shall grant or withdraw approval of all or part of an advanced qualification program (AQP). Initial program approval, and approval to changes in AQP qualification standards thereafter, are managed by the Advanced Qualification Program Branch, AFS-230, at FAA Headquarters, Washington, D.C. Following approval for continuing operation, approval of curriculum content changes that do not entail modifications to approved AQP qualification standards shall be locally managed by principal operations inspectors (POI).

*A. Scope.* The approval process applies to Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 121 and FAR Part 135 certificated operators that apply for AQP, and to training centers that apply to provide AQP training to such operators.

*B. Role of AFS-230.* Approval is required by AFS-230 for initial development and implementation of a new AQP. AFS-230 approval is required to revise an AQP approved for continuing operation only if such revisions entail changes to approved AQP qualification standards for a specific operator. Requests for such revisions shall be processed and approved in accordance with the guidance provided in volume 3, chapter 2, for POI's. POI's shall provide an information copy of approval documents to AFS-230 to assist in program tracking.

*C. Training Center Requirements.* A training center may apply to develop a provisionally approved AQP prior to the establishment of a contract, agreement, or other arrangement to provide such training to a specific FAR Part 121 or FAR Part 135 air carrier, but may not implement an AQP training program until FAA approval specific to a given training center and given air carrier has been received. Approval to implement a training center's AQP shall require demonstration that it meets Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) 58 requirements for the target air carrier.

*D. Initiating the Process.* The AQP approval process can be initiated in two ways: (1) an operator can inform the FAA by letter of plans to establish or change an AQP; or (2) the FAA can inform an operator that revisions to its AQP are required based

on information acquired from surveillance or from trend analysis.

**749. PHASED APPROVAL PROCEDURES.** The following paragraphs describe how the FAA will work with an applicant to review or analyze material and to provide guidance for phased approvals. Applicants shall develop and implement their AQP in five sequential phases:

- One. Initial Application
- Two. Curriculum Development
- Three. Training System Implementation
- Four. Initial Operations
- Five. Continuing Operation

*A. Phase One: Initial Application.*

*(1) Applicant.* The applicant shall submit a written application directly to the manager of AFS-230, with a duplicate complete copy to the POI, consisting of an Application Cover Letter stating intent to develop, implement and operate an AQP for a make, model, and series (or variant) aircraft, with appendices addressing the following information:

- The specific concept, approach, and methodology for developing the AQP (specific methods and procedures for all steps)
- The specific methodology for implementing the AQP
- How the AQP will differ from a traditional training program, to include identification of anticipated departures from the requirements of FAR Parts 61, 121, or 135
- How the AQP will be maintained
- How crew resource management (CRM) will be integrated into training, and how the effectiveness of that training will be assessed in evaluation
- How security and hazardous material (HAZMAT) training will be addressed, as applicable
- How the following line-operational simulation (LOS) concepts will be integrated into

training and evaluation: line-oriented flight training (LOFT)/special purpose operational training (SPOT)/line-operational evaluation (LOE)

- Why the proposed program will provide an equivalent or better level of safety compared to the applicant's existing approved program
- A Transition Plan outlining the proposed method and schedule for entry into the program (The applicant should also include information on how the applicant might exit the program should it become necessary to do so.)
- A listing of applicable publications and manuals on aircraft, flight operations, and pilot training pertinent to the applicant's proposed AQP
- A summary of trainee, instructor, and evaluator pilot population characteristics sufficient to indicate flight training backgrounds and relative levels of flight experience pertinent to the proposed AQP
- A summary listing of existing or planned training equipment, to include level of existing or anticipated FAA qualification (airplane flight simulator and flight training device)
- Facilities description
- Operating environment description

(2) *FAA Review.* AFS-230 shall accomplish review and analysis of the application as follows:

- The applicant's proposed methodology for program development (The applicant may elect to employ the AQP development process described in existing FAA advisory materials, or may elect to propose modifications to that methodology. In any case, the process proposed must be deemed adequate by the FAA for the development of AQP qualification standards and associated curriculums.)
- Evidence of the applicant's ability to execute the processes of development, implementation, and operation
- Missing or incomplete application information

(3) *Application Approval.* After determining that the applicant's submittal is satisfactory, the manager of AFS-230 shall approve acceptance of the

application. This approval will permit the applicant to proceed to phase two.

*B. Phase Two: Curriculum Development.* This phase is the most demanding in terms of program development activity. Accordingly, it has been further divided into three distinct steps: Step 1 is the derivation of terminal and supporting proficiency objectives from the job task analysis; Step 2 is syllabus development; and Step 3 is development of training requirements and plans. AFS-230 shall lead the review of applicant activities in this phase and shall designate an interdisciplinary core of key FAA personnel to assist in this review, as well as in succeeding phases. Core FAA personnel shall include (but not necessarily be limited to) the following:

- The POI (or a designated representative)
- The assigned aircrew program managers (APM), if any
- AQP-qualified air carrier operations specialists
- An instructional system design specialist
- A data management specialist
- Additional personnel as required in specific areas of technical expertise, such as civil aviation security and aircraft evaluation group/flight standardization board (AEG/FSB) personnel

(1) *Required Documents.* The applicant shall submit the following documents to AFS-230:

(a) *For Step 1:*

- A current, complete copy of the flight operations training manual (or comparable document), with permanent distribution to AFS-230 of future changes thereto
- Such other publications, air carrier manuals, and manufacturer documentation as requested by AFS-230 to assist in the review team's activities
- Supporting task analysis
- Qualification standards

(b) *For Step 2:*

- Curriculum development methodology
- AQP syllabus

(c) *For Step 3:*

- AQP training resource requirements
- AQP implementation and operations plan

(2) *Review and Evaluation.*

(a) *For Step 1.* The FAA core review team shall evaluate the supporting task analysis for completeness and accuracy of technical content. The content of qualification standards shall be reviewed for comparison to the FAR appendices they replace (Appendices A, E, and F), the Practical Test Standards (PTS), and to the air carrier's operations specifications. The purpose of this review is to accomplish a determination of equivalent or better level of safety. AFS-230 shall request modifications to either document as recommended by the review team. Upon satisfactory completion by the applicant of all requested changes, the manager of AFS-230 shall approve the supporting task analysis and qualification standards documents in writing. This will permit the applicant to continue with step 2, syllabus development.

(b) *For Step 2.* AFS-230 shall review the applicant's curriculum development methodology with respect to the means proposed for ensuring that the content of the supporting task analysis will be incorporated into the curriculum, and for consistency with the guidelines of volume 3, chapter 2. The FAA review team shall evaluate the syllabus in terms of its completeness, training and evaluation strategies, and adequacy for achieving the approved AQP qualification standards. AFS-230 shall request the applicant to make changes as required, based on the recommendations of the FAA review team. Upon satisfactory completion by the applicant of all requested changes, the manager of AFS-230 shall approve the applicant's curriculum development methodology and AQP syllabus. This will permit the applicant to proceed with step 3, training requirements and plans.

(c) *For Step 3.* The FAA review team shall evaluate the training resources requirements document and the implementation and operations plan for completeness, feasibility, and adequacy of the applicant's resources to support and maintain the proposed AQP curriculum. AFS-230 shall request the applicant to make modifications as required, based on the recommendations of the FAA review team. Upon satisfactory completion by the applicant of all requested changes, the manager of AFS-230 shall approve the applicant's step 3 documentation. This approval will allow the applicant to proceed to phase three.

*C. Phase Three: Implementation.* In this phase, the applicant will complete development of required courseware and conduct preliminary assessment of training resources and materials, such as dry running new LOFT and LOE scenarios, testing the feasibility of proposed data acquisition strategies, or other such activities as are called for in the applicant's

implementation and operations plan. AQP qualification of instructors and evaluators shall be accomplished in this phase. Similarly, if not already completed, flight training equipment must be qualified by the FAA in accordance with existing FAA regulations, policies, and procedures.

(1) *Documentation.* Results of this step shall be supplied to the FAA in the form of a single document entitled, "Implementation and Operations Plan Update." The AQP qualification records for instructors and evaluators shall be generated and maintained by the applicant.

(2) *FAA Review and Evaluation.* FAA activities in this phase will consist principally of observing or participating in new LOFT/SPOT/LOE scenarios, and monitoring the AQP training provided to instructors and evaluators.

(a) *Surveillance of Phase Three Activities.* Assigned FAA field inspectors shall accomplish this surveillance. These inspectors shall also attend the applicant's evaluator training for their own qualification. The POI shall ensure inspection of all instructor and evaluator qualification records for completeness and correctness. Surveillance shall be augmented with visits from representatives of the manager of AFS-230. Representatives of the national simulator program manager (NSPM) shall conduct any required flight training device or flight simulator evaluation and qualification.

(b) *The Implementation and Operations Plan Update Document.* The FAA review team shall evaluate this document for a determination of the applicant's readiness to conduct and maintain the proposed AQP pilot training curriculum. The POI and the manager of AFS-230 shall conduct a joint final review of the applicant's proposed program. AFS-230 shall coordinate the resolution of any remaining concerns as required. The manager of AFS-230 shall then notify the POI that the AQP has been approved under SFAR 58 for initial operations. The POI in turn shall provide the air carrier with written notification of FAA approval. A recommended format for the AQP approval letter is presented in Figure 3.4.2.1.

*1. Operations Specifications Entry.* In addition, upon receipt of the approval document, the POI shall make the following entry into the air carrier's operations specifications:

"OPERATIONS SPECIFICATIONS A4. SUMMARY OF SPECIAL AUTHORIZATIONS AND LIMITATIONS. . . .

"A4. . . . a. Conduct initial operations of an approved Advanced Qualification Program, [enter qualification,

*continuing qualification curriculum, or both, as appropriate], under SFAR 58 for [enter make/model/series] aircraft only.”*

2. Initial approval and operations specifications authorization allows a FAR Part 121 or 135 operator to execute the Implementation and Operations Plan for the AQP through one complete continuing qualification cycle.

*(c) Provisional Approval for a Training Center.* Provisional approval under SFAR 58 allows a training center to engage with a FAR Part 121 or 135 operator in tailoring a generic AQP curriculum to a given air carrier's specific operations. An application for provisional approval shall contain the same information as that specified in this chapter for an air carrier, except that air carrier-specific information may be omitted. A training center may seek approval for initial operation by modifying a provisionally approved AQP to meet an air carrier's requirements, or by developing an entirely new program for that carrier. A training center that elects to develop a new program for a specific air carrier is not required to seek provisional approval as an intermediate step. In either case, a letter of intent to employ a training center to accomplish initial operation of an AQP must be submitted by the interested FAR Part 121 or 135 air carrier directly to AFS-230.

1. Upon receipt of the letter of intent, AFS-230 shall notify the air carrier, the training center, and the POI by letter specifying the documentation required to establish the operator-specific training center AQP. Depending on whether a previous AQP has been approved for the training center or for the air carrier operator, or on whether a provisional AQP has been approved for the training center, AFS-230 shall request those additional elements of the application necessary to complete the standard AQP information requirements specified for phases one, two, and three.

2. Upon receipt of any additional required documentation, AFS-230 shall designate an FAA AQP core review team to evaluate the package for completeness, accuracy, and appropriateness for the specific certificate holder for whom the AQP is being proposed. AFS-230 shall notify the POI, training center, and air carrier of any required modifications.

3. Upon satisfactory completion of any required modifications, AFS-230 shall notify all concerned parties that the AQP has been approved.

4. Upon receipt of the written notification of approval, the POI shall notify the air carrier that the AQP has been approved for initial operations by the specific training center, and the POI shall enter

the appropriate authorization in the air carrier's operations specifications.

#### *D. Phase Four: Initial Operations.*

*(1) Applicant.* The applicant operates and maintains its own AQP curriculum, submits updated training program evaluation results through the POI to AFS-230 as appropriate, and submits digital performance proficiency data directly to AFS-230 in accordance with the requirements specified for the applicant's program.

*(2) Review and Evaluation.* The FAA shall monitor phase four activities in accordance with the guidance provided in volume 3, chapter 2, regarding initially approved curriculums. AFS-230 shall accomplish trend analysis for AQP data.

*(a) Surveillance* of all of the applicant's phase four operations shall be accomplished by field inspectors who are knowledgeable concerning the applicant's approved AQP, and by other FAA representatives, as appropriate.

*(b) Representatives* of the manager of AFS-230 shall witness training and evaluation activities on a sampled basis for all curriculums.

*(c) A joint (FAA and applicant) program review* should be held within approximately 45 days after completion of the first AQP curriculum, with periodic reviews as required thereafter during the first continuing qualification cycle. The purpose of these reviews is to identify, recommend, and plan needed changes.

*(d) An additional review* should be jointly accomplished by the FAA and the applicant as soon as feasible after the second evaluation period of a newly established continuing qualification curriculum (that is, after 24 months). Before that review, the applicant is responsible for submitting an AQP “Implementation and Operations Plan Results Report” to document the following:

- Changes to the implementation and operations plan engendered by initial experience in operating the curriculum
- That the current proficiency measures for AQP qualification standards are reliable and valid
- That AQP curriculums are being maintained in accordance with the approved implementation and operations plan
- That recordkeeping is complete and accurate

(e) Based on the outcome of this review, AFS-230 shall notify the POI by letter of AQP program deficiencies or recommended modifications, if any. When the POI notifies AFS-230 by letter that the applicant has corrected any deficiencies noted or has implemented all required modifications, if any, AFS-230 shall notify the POI by letter that the AQP has been approved for phase five. The POI in turn shall notify the air carrier of the AQP phase five approval, and modify the previously issued operations specifications entry to read as follows:

“OPERATIONS SPECIFICATIONS A4. SUMMARY OF SPECIAL AUTHORIZATIONS AND LIMITATIONS. . . .

“A4. . . . a. Conduct continuing operation of an approved Advanced Qualification Program, [enter qualification, continuing qualification curriculum, or both, as appropriate] , under SFAR 58 for [enter make/model/series] aircraft only.”

Final approval and operations specifications authorization will permit the air carrier to proceed to AQP phase-five status.

*E. Phase Five: Continuing Operations.* Phase five involves continuing operation of the applicant's AQP under local FAA surveillance. The operator's procedures for curriculum maintenance, as documented in the current implementation and operations plan, shall be executed on a continuing basis and shall be reviewed periodically by the FAA, as appropriate. The air carrier shall submit pilot, instructor, and evaluator proficiency data to AFS-230 on a continuing basis for trend analysis purposes. AFS-230 shall provide POI's with periodic reports on the results of those analyses, as required.

**751. DATA BASE MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS.** AFS-230 shall accomplish proficiency analysis, validation of performance measures, and other statistical analysis and research for approved AQP's. AFS-230 shall also apprise POI's and applicants of pertinent analysis results, as appropriate.

**753. METHOD OF GRANTING INITIAL OR PROVISIONAL APPROVAL.**

*A. Approval by Letter.* The FAA shall grant initial or provisional AQP approval by letter. The approval letter shall include at least the following information:

- The specific identification of the curriculums and curriculum segments initially or provisionally approved, including page numbers and revision control dates (date of revision for any page)

- A statement that initial or provisional approval is granted and what the effective and expiration dates are (for initial approval)
- Any specific conditions affecting the approval
- A request that the applicant provide the FAA with advanced notice of scheduled activities so evaluations may be planned

*B. Copies.* A copy of the approval letter shall be maintained by the POI in the certificate-holding district office (CHDO), and by AFS-230. For a training center, copies of a provisional approval letter shall be maintained at the training center, at the FAA district office responsible for oversight of the training center, and by AFS-230. When a training center's AQP is approved for a specific air carrier, copies of the approval letter shall be maintained by the latter three offices, as well as by the air carrier's POI, and by the air carrier itself.

**755. METHOD OF DENYING INITIAL OR PROVISIONAL APPROVAL.** If the FAA determines that initial (or provisional approval for training centers) must be denied, the FAA shall notify all the affected operators in writing. The letter shall identify any deficiency that was the cause of denial. The principal applicant may redevelop or correct the deficiencies and resubmit the AQP for approval.

**757. WITHDRAWAL OF INITIAL OR PROVISIONAL APPROVAL.** The FAA may decide to withdraw initial or provisional approval at any time the AQP is not in regulatory compliance, does not provide for safe operations, or does not effectively prepare crewmembers or dispatchers to meet qualification objectives. The FAA shall withdraw initial or provisional approval in writing to all affected operators, stating the reasons for the withdrawal and the effective date of withdrawal. An applicant who receives a letter of withdrawal may revise or refine the curriculum and resubmit it for initial or provisional approval.

**759. FINAL APPROVAL.** Based on the results of evaluations accomplished during the period of initial approval, the FAA shall grant or deny final approval of an AQP. Final approval is accomplished by stamped endorsement of AQP documents and by approval letter.

*A. Stamped Approval Endorsement.* For final approval, the original and a copy of each title page and table of contents pages of all AQP required documents are stamped approved, dated, and signed by the FAA operations official designated by AFS-230

to do so. The approval stamp shall be a facsimile of the following:

<b>FAA FINAL APPROVAL</b>	
OFFICE DESIGNATOR:	_____
EFFECTIVE DATE:	_____
NAME:	_____
SIGNATURE:	_____

**NOTE: As approved changes are made to AQP documents, the "Final Approval" endorsement shall be reaccomplished on each table of contents page.**

*B. Approval Letter.* The manager of AFS-230 shall sign all letters of final approval. The manager may delegate this authority to the operator's assigned POI. The letter shall specifically identify the subject curriculums, contain a statement that final approval is granted, and provide the effective date of approval.

*C. Copies.* A copy of the approval letter shall be kept on file in the operator's assigned district office; at AFS-230; by the operator; and, where applicable, at the location designated as the principal training site of a training center approved under SFAR 58.

**761. REVISIONS TO AN AQP.** Following approval for continuing operation, circumstances that typically trigger revisions are changes in the kinds, size, or complexity of operations; changes in the configuration of aircraft; and changes in special authorizations permitted through operations specifications, maintenance programs, minimum equipment lists (MEL); exemptions or deviations. Revisions that entail changes to approved AQP qualification standards require coordination and approval from AFS-230. All other revisions to curriculum content may be locally approved in writing by the POI or other authorized FAA representative, provided information copies of such approval documents are forwarded to AFS-230 to facilitate program tracking activities.

**763. GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR WITHDRAWAL OF FINAL APPROVAL.** The FAA may withdraw final approval of a curriculum at any time if the FAA determines that sufficient safety reasons exist or that required data is not being maintained

and provided. Before withdrawing approval, the FAA shall make reasonable efforts to convince an applicant to correct its AQP. The FAA shall withdraw approval by letter. The letter shall identify the affected curriculums, state the reasons for the withdrawal, and state the effective date of the withdrawal (except in an emergency, not less than 7 days after receipt of the letter). The letter shall advise the certificate holder that withdrawal may be appealed and shall provide instructions on how to appeal.

**765. APPEAL OF A WITHDRAWAL.** To appeal withdrawal of final approval, an operator should petition the Director of Flight Standards Service (AFS-1) for reconsideration within 30 days after receiving withdrawal notification. The petition should be in writing and should explain in detail why the operator believes the withdrawal should not occur.

*A. Denial of Appeal.* The Director may immediately deny the petition after considering all relevant information presented if the Director believes that an emergency exists that directly affects aviation safety. In this case, the Director shall inform the operator, by letter, of the decision to deny the appeal due to the existence of an emergency. The letter shall state that an emergency exists and shall describe the deficiencies and the actions necessary to correct them.

*B. Stay of Withdrawal.* If the Director does not believe that an emergency exists, the Director shall carefully consider both the operator's petition for appeal and the FAA's reason for withdrawal of approval. In this case, the operator's petition, provided it goes out within 30 days, stays withdrawal, and the operator may continue to use the AQP curriculum pending the decision of the Director. The Director may find it necessary to conduct additional evaluations of the operator's AQP.

*C. Director's Final Decision.* In any case, the Director shall make a final decision within 60 days of receiving the operator's petition. The Director may rescind or modify the letter of withdrawal or uphold the withdrawal. If the decision is to modify or uphold the withdrawal, the operator shall be notified by letter. The letter shall contain the reasons for denying all or part of the petition.

**NOTE: Final approval does not expire.**

**766.-776. RESERVED.**

**FIGURE 3.4.2.1.**  
**RECOMMENDED FORMAT—AQP APPROVAL LETTER**

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Manager, Appropriate Airline Office Title  
XYZ Airline

Dear xxxxxx,

I am pleased to inform you that your Advanced Qualification Program (AQP) pilot training *[enter qualification or continuing qualification]* curriculum, pages 01 through *[enter total inclusive pages]*, dated *[enter date on document]*, for the *[enter make/model/series]* aircraft, has been approved under Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) 58 for AQP Phase Four, Initial Operations, effective *[enter desired effective date]*. Future page changes to that curriculum must reflect a revision control system that includes page number, revision number, and preparation date.

This approval is contingent on *[enter specific principal operations inspector (POI) or Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Headquarters-levied conditions and limitations, if any]*.

The expiration date of this initial approval is *[enter a date 2 years from the initial effective date]*. Please provide this office with at least *[enter desired number]* days' advance notice of any training conducted under this curriculum to allow for evaluation of the training in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) § 121.405(b), § 121.405(c), and SFAR 58.

POI Signature Block

**[PAGES 3-438 THROUGH 3-448 RESERVED]**

