

Supporting Statement A
Advanced Qualification Program (AQP)
Subpart Y to 14 CFR 121
2120-0701

Summary of Changes:

- We re-estimated the monthly hour burden on operators in question 12 (explained in question 15)
- Wage rate of an AQP analyst was adjusted for fringe benefits and overhead in question 12
- The wage rate for a GS-14 was updated to include fringe benefits and overhead in question 14
- The maintenance costs or new component costs were removed in question 14

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection.

In October 1990, the FAA published Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) No. 58, Advanced Qualification Program (AQP). The SFAR addressed recommendations from a Joint Government-Industry Task Force on flight crew performance. The SFAR also addressed a National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Safety Recommendation (A-88-71) on the subject of Crew Resource Management. The FAA extended the SFAR several times since 1990 and also determined that the SFAR requirements should be codified into a permanent regulation.

Under SFAR No. 58, the FAA provides certificated air carriers, as well as training centers they employ, with a regulatory alternative for training, checking, qualifying, and certifying crewmembers subject to the requirements of 14 CFR parts 121 and 135. Air carriers can choose to use a traditional training program or to participate in AQP. AQP offers several long-range advantages to participation such as the flexibility to tailor training and certification activities to a carrier's particular needs and operational circumstances subject to data collection procedures that enable the FAA to determine whether the training and evaluations are working to accomplish the overall objectives of the curriculum. AQP encourages innovation in developing training strategies, but employs data collection and analysis to validate the effectiveness of such innovations.

The main goal of the AQP is to improve crewmember performance by providing alternative means of complying with certain rules that may inhibit innovative use of modern technology for crewmember training. The SFAR has been successful in encouraging carriers to become innovative in their approach to training, and in making use of data collection and analysis to validate such innovations. From an FAA perspective, the overriding advantage of AQP is the improved quality of training and its data driven validation. AQP provides a systematic basis for matching technology to training requirements and for approving training program content based on relevance to

operational performance. AQP also incorporates data driven quality control processes for validating and maintaining the effectiveness of curriculum content. Data collection and analysis is a fundamental part of AQP. AQP efficacy is continuously validated through the collection and analysis of trainee performance. Data collection and analysis processes ensure that the certificate holder provides performance information on its crewmembers, flight instructors, and evaluators 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.

This rule supports the Department of Transportation strategic goal of Safety. It has contributed to the reduction of commercial aviation fatal accidents to 0.01 per 100 thousand departures; and to the reduction of general aviation fatal accidents.

The pertinent section of the regulation concerning information collection is as follows:

§ 121.917 (c) Data collection and analysis processes acceptable to the FAA that will ensure that the certificate holder provides performance information on its crewmembers, flight instructors, and evaluators 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.

§121.683 (a)(1) (a) Each certificate holder shall (1) Maintain current records of each crewmember and each aircraft dispatcher (domestic and flag operations only) that show whether the crewmember or aircraft dispatcher complies with the applicable sections of this chapter, including, but not limited to, proficiency and route checks, airplane and route qualifications, training, any required physical examinations, flight, duty, and rest time records;

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

Certificated air carriers, as well as training centers they employ may voluntarily respond to this collection in order obtain the benefit of a regulatory alternative for training, checking, qualifying, and certifying crewmembers subject to the requirements of 14 CFR parts 121 and 135. Air carriers can choose to use a traditional training program or to participate voluntarily in AQP. Air carriers submit de-identified performance and proficiency data that represents the results of an individual's ability to successfully demonstrate the performance objectives of each curriculum. This information is captured during validation and evaluation gates as a crewmember progresses through an AQP curriculum. This data consists of graded proficiency objectives using a rating scale with associated reason codes. AFS-200, Air Transportation Division, Branch AFS-280, receives the AQP data monthly in order to monitor program compliance, effectiveness, and efficiency. AFS-280 processes the information for errors and

omissions then analyzes the data. The FAA principal operations inspector (POI) responsible for oversight of the certificate holder reviews the analyzed data. The POI and his or her staff make use of this information to monitor training trends, to identify areas in need of corrective action, to plan targeted surveillance of curricula, and to verify that corrective action is effective. AQP is a systematic methodology for developing the content of training programs for air carrier crewmembers and dispatchers. It replaces programmed hours with proficiency-based training and evaluation derived from a detailed job task analysis that includes Crew Resource Management (CRM). In general, the information is used to provide an improved basis for curriculum approval and monitoring, as well as agency decisions concerning air carrier training regulation and policy. This collection has reporting elements. AQP information is reported to the FAA monthly.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

In compliance with the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA), collection of this information is available 100% electronically. Air carriers routinely make use of state-of-the-art electronic collection and data transmission techniques as the primary means of compliance with the reporting requirements of the rule. Air carriers use electronic information management technology for archiving, maintaining, and reporting data associated with the requirements of the rule. The information is proprietary so it is not released to the public. The information is collected on a monthly basis.

<https://avssp.faa.gov/avs/afsteams/AFS-200/VSPCMO/AQP/SitePages/Home.aspx>

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

Similar information is not available from any other source. The rule does not entail any duplication of information reporting requirements.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.

The information requested is limited to the minimum necessary to fulfill the requirements. The amount of data required to be submitted is proportional to the size of the operation.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The monthly collection and review of data is required to identify positive and negative trends regarding training efficacy in a timely manner. If the requested data were not collected, the FAA would not have a data driven basis for identifying pilot, dispatcher, and flight attendant AQP curriculum deficiencies, nor be able to employ such data to ascertain that actions taken to correct such deficiencies have been effective. Similarly, the FAA would not be able to benefit from the use of AQP information for agency decision-making purposes concerning air carrier training and evaluation policies. The required electronic monthly performance data collection serves as a diagnostic tool used by the FAA in determining whether the form and content of training and evaluation activities are satisfactorily accomplishing the overall objectives of the curriculum. The information collection frequencies required by this rule are the minimum amount necessary and appropriate for these purposes.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- *requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;*
- *requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;*
- *requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document; requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years;*
- *in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;*
- *requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;*
- *that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or*

- ***requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.***

The information collection is consistent with the requirements of 5 CFR 1320.5(d) (2) (i) - (viii) with the exception that the information collection is to be provided at least monthly to the FAA in order to handle safety concerns in a timely manner.

8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A Federal Register Notice published on November 16, 2020 (85 FR 73124) solicited public comment. One comment was received, however the comment is political in nature and does not relate to this information collection.

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

There is no payment or gift to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

Section 121.905, Confidential Commercial Information, specifies the procedure for a certificate holder to make a claim that AQP information or data submitted to the FAA is entitled to confidential treatment under 5 U.S.C 552 (b)(4). The certificate holder must clearly identify its claim of confidentiality on each submission and must justify that claim. The FAA office of primary responsibility for the AQP will evaluate a submitter's claim for confidential treatment of information or data. The FAA office of primary responsibility for the AQP will make the determination whether the information submitted is entitled to protection under 5 U.S.C 552(b)(4), within a reasonable time, with review by the Office of the Chief Counsel.

In addition, applicants may be provided confidentiality under the provision of the Privacy Act and the Privacy system of records DOT/FAA 847, General Air Transportation Records on Individuals.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

There are not questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:

The estimated burden is the time required to transform the data already produced monthly by the certificate holder as part of an approved AQP into the appropriate form for use by the FAA.

Number of respondents with approved Advanced Qualification Programs: 25

Frequency of response per respondent: Monthly

Estimated number of hours per respondent to prepare information to be submitted to the FAA: 7.0

Estimated annual hour burden per respondent: 84 hours

Total estimated hours of industry burden: 2,100 hours

Based on a cost benefit study from certificate holders with existing AQP programs, the average cost of an AQP analyst is \$65 per hour. A 31.4 percent multiplier was then applied to account for fringe benefits which brings the salary to \$85.41.¹ To account for overhead, a multiplier of 17 percent was applied.² Therefore, the estimated hourly salary for an aviation technical specialist is \$99.93.

Therefore, the maximum cost of this burden is:
All respondents per annum (2,100 hours) \$209,853
Each respondent per annum (84 hours) \$8,394

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecec.nr0.htm>

² Source: Cody Rice, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Wage Rates for Economic Analyses of the Toxics Release Inventory Program" (June 10, 2002), <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=EPA-HQ-OPPT-2014-0650-0005>.

Summary (Annual numbers)	Reporting	Recordkeeping	Disclosure
# of Respondents	25		
# of Responses per respondent	12		
Time per Response	7.0 Hours		
Total # of responses	300		
Total burden (hours)	2,100 Hours		

13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information.

There are no other costs other than those associated with question 12.

14. Provide estimates of annualized costs to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

An Aviation Safety Inspector would review this information. Since many of these employees are remotely sited, the Kansas City locality rates were applied as it is a median locality rate. The cost to the federal government for a Kansas City, MO based employee at a grade 14, step 5 level is \$59.14 / hour. A 31.4 percent multiplier was then applied to account for fringe benefits which brings the salary to \$77.71.³ To account for overhead, a multiplier of 17 percent was applied.⁴ The total salary including overhead and fringe benefits is \$90.92.

GS-14 (or contract equivalent) average hourly wage is \$90.92 per hour
 Data review and analysis ~ 5 hours per week (\$454.60)
 \$23,639.20 per year

There are no annual maintenance costs or new component costs for the FAA.

³ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecec.nr0.htm>

⁴ Source: Cody Rice, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Wage Rates for Economic Analyses of the Toxics Release Inventory Program" (June 10, 2002), <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=EPA-HQ-OPPT-2014-0650-0005>.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

In question 12, we re-estimated the monthly hour burden on operators. 7 hours is a more accurate reflection of the actual amount of time that an operator would spend in reporting AQP information to the FAA. Additionally, the wage rate of an AQP analyst was adjusted for fringe benefits and overhead.

Question 14 was updated to reflect that a GS-14 is the most probable person to review AQP data. The wage rate for a GS-14 was updated to include fringe benefits and overhead. Also, the maintenance costs or new component costs were removed as the FAA does not have any costs associated with receiving the reported information.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

The information to be collected will not be published, and is releasable to the public only under special circumstances as may be required under 5 U.S.C 552 (b)(4). The FAA office of primary responsibility for the AQP will make the determination whether the information submitted is entitled to protection under 5 U.S.C 552(b)(4), within a reasonable time, and with review by the Office of the Chief Counsel. There are no complex analytical techniques that will be used.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.

The FAA is not seeking this approval.

18. Explain each exception to the topics of the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

There are no exceptions identified in Item 19, OBM Form 83-1.