

New J2X Training Opportunity

by Mr. David C. Summers

Introducing a New Distance Learning Course

A new training opportunity is available at the Human Intelligence Training–Joint Center of Excellence (HT–JCOE), which will be conducted on the SECRET Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET) Blackboard Learning Management System. Because of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command asked training institutions to examine alternative delivery methods that make training more accessible to the Defense Counterintelligence and Human Intelligence Enterprises. For military and civilian personnel who will serve in combatant command, sub-unified command, or Joint Task Force J2X staff positions, training is available via the J2X Staff Officer Course Distance Learning (DL), which will be conducted in lieu of the former resident J2X Course.

The J2X Staff Officer Course (DL) is a robust instructor-mediated, collaborative course that covers the same content as the previous resident course and ensures the same educational outcomes. The first pilot course occurred from 4 January to 2 March 2021 with 16 joint Service military and civilian graduates. The length of the course is 40 training days, or 8 weeks.

The Training Method

In general, distance learning courses are more rigorous than their resident counterparts. The J2X Staff Officer Course (DL) uses problem-solving as its method of instruction. The students will not only be responsible for individually completing assignments (solving problems), quizzes, and summative assessments, but also for collaborating with their classmates, participating in discussion forums, and completing the Capstone exercise.

Students will require SIPRNET access an average of 20 to 25 hours per week for the duration of the course. For the non-collaborative portion of the course, students can proceed at their own pace, meeting the minimum deadlines for each assignment, quiz, and assessment. For the collab-

orative portion of the course, they must adhere to timelines (schedule) for practical exercises and discussions.

Some individuals have asked why the distance learning version of the course (or any course) is longer than the previous resident version, considering that both versions cover the same critical tasks, have the same content, and assess the students to the same level of proficiency. In order to deliver distance learning via the most beneficial means, HT–JCOE allotted a total time of 40 training days, with the expectation that students will spend between 20 and 25 hours per week on the course. All input must be in written form, including the collaborative discussions, and therefore may require additional time from some students.

This training method has three additional challenges:

- ◆ First, students are “sent away” for training so that they are removed from their daily work environment, allowing them to concentrate on the task at hand. Allotting 40 training days for the completion of all course requirements takes into account the competing requirements at home station. HT–JCOE experienced this issue when it sent out mobile training teams to conduct training, during which students were often “pulled” out of class but still expected to receive a certificate of completion. However, we believe it to be a realistic expectation that students will be able to devote between 20 and 25 hours per week to the course.
- ◆ Second, the time zone differences are a challenge, within and outside the continental United States. Getting everyone together at the same time is not realistic.
- ◆ Third, the communication challenges to this synchronous learning method could be insurmountable because every organization and Service has different capabilities and regulations.

To view the current HT–JCOE course catalog, go to Intelligence Knowledge Network (IKN) on SIPRNET at <https://ikn.army.smil.mil/>, click on the TAAP icon, and then click on HTJCOE Information. 

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