Qualification Guide
Workshop 3
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Contents

1 Introduction

This document describes the Event Qualification guidelines and submission instructions for the DARPA Triage Challenge (DTC). Prospective teams are required to demonstrate track-appropriate performance capabilities to be eligible for event participation.

All teams in both competitions (Systems, and Data) are required to complete Team Qualification at the beginning of each Phase to officially participate in the DTC as a competitor. All teams are also required to complete Event Qualifications to participate in each workshop event and competition event.

This document will cover the Event Qualification requirements for Workshop 3 (see Figure 1). Later revisions will include updated Event Qualification requirements for Challenge Event 3.

Failing a previous qualification attempt does not preclude a team from resubmitting a qualification submission for later events. This document is subject to change and may be superseded by later versions. The latest official versions of all documents will be posted to the DTC website. Significant revisions from past versions in this document are indicated by blue text. Teams are encouraged to closely review the entire document. To qualify for Workshop 3 teams that have participated in previous DTC events will submit updates to their team qualification rather than a completely new qualification.

2 Qualification Schedule

The two competitions each have a coordinated Workshop and Challenge Event in each phase. Qualification criteria are split into two parts; Team Qualification and Event Qualification. The Team Qualification window will take place at the start of each phase and the Event Qualification will occur prior to each event, approximately 6-8 months after Team Qualification.

Qualification submissions will be reviewed on a rolling basis and must be submitted no later than the listed deadlines to be eligible to participate in the events. DARPA will review the submissions and notify teams of qualification status within 10 business days after the qualification deadline. Teams are encouraged to submit their materials well in advance of the qualification deadlines. DARPA may request additional information or a teleconference with a team to discuss their submitted materials.

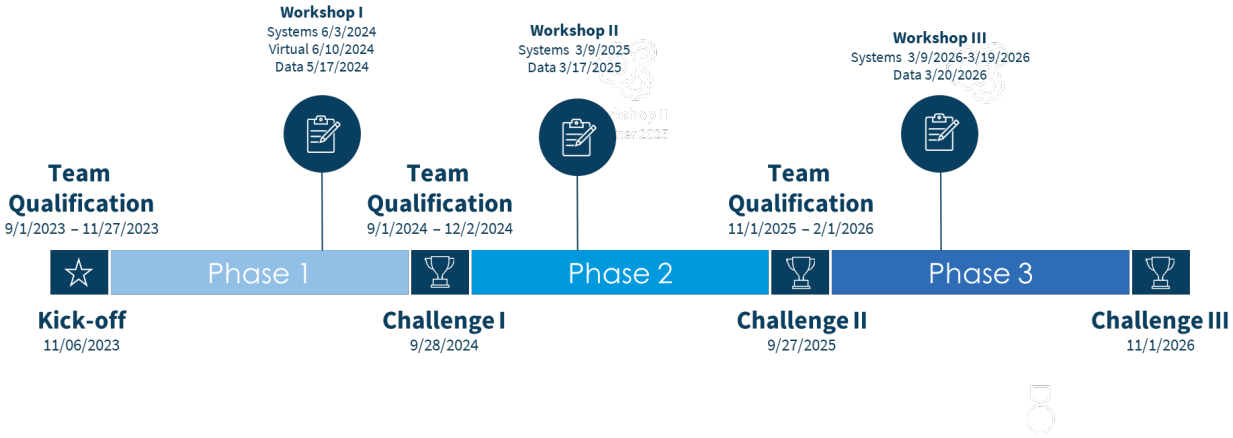

Figure 1: Competition Timeline. Dates for Phase 1, 2 and 3 Event Qualification windows and Events.

2.1 Event Qualification Deadlines

Prior to each Workshop and Challenge Event, teams will be required to submit updated team narratives and demonstrations of successfully completing a series of qualification tasks to show track-appropriate performance capabilities. All qualification materials must be submitted via the DTC Team Portal.

Additional details related to the qualification tasks will be available on the portal.

Event	Event Qualification	Event Date
Workshop 1	3/5/2024 - 4/5/2024	6/3/2024 – 6/8/2024
Challenge 1	6/28/2024 – 7/30/2024	**Systems** 9/28/2024 – 10/5/2024 **Data and Virtual** 8/30/24 - Submission 10/5/2024 - Awards
Workshop 2	12/5/2024-1/5/2025	3/10/2025 - 3/15/2025
Challenge 2	**Systems** 6/28/2025 – 7/30/2025 **Data** 5/28/2025 – 6/30/2025	**Systems** 9/27/2025 – 10/4/2025 **Data** 8/30/25 - Submission 10/4/2025 - Awards
Workshop 3	12/5/2025 – 2/5/2026	Window between: 3/9/26 and 3/19/26
Challenge 3	**Systems** 7/28/2026 – 8/30/2026 **Data** 6/28/2026 – 7/30/2026	**Systems** Window between: 11/1/26 and 11/15/26 **Data** 9/30/26 - Submission November 2026 - Awards

3 Human Subjects Research (HSR)

For the Systems Competition, teams must be included in the Independent Validation and Verification (IV&V) team's Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol to access training data collected by the IV&V team and to collect data at the DTC workshops and challenge events. For the Data Competition, use of training data provided by DARPA does not constitute HSR. For both Systems and Data Competitions, DARPA-funded competitors require DARPA approval for the collection or use of any other human subject data (note, the deadline for submission of proposals for DARPA-funding to compete in the DTC has passed). Self-funded teams are prohibited from the collection or use of any other human subject data as part of their involvement in the DTC because DARPA HSR supervision is not feasible for teams not under DARPA contract. Self-funded teams should carefully consider this limitation and should take this into account in their technical approach, leveraging other strategies as appropriate (*e.g.*, simulations).

Definition of Human Subjects Research (HSR)

The term "human subject" can be applied to research efforts that meet ***either*** of the following criteria:

A living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research:

- Obtains information or biospecimens through intervention or interaction with the individual, and uses, studies, or analyzes the information or biospecimens; or
- Obtains, uses, studies, analyzes, or generates identifiable private information, personally identifiable information, or identifiable biospecimens.

Human Subjects Research involves:

- Activities that include both a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge and involve a living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains information or biospecimens through intervention or interaction with the individual, or identifiable private information, or biospecimens.

4 Systems Competition Event Qualification

To qualify for the Systems Competition, teams must complete a set of qualification tasks and submit an updated narrative description of their approach. Submissions will be reviewed for validity and qualifying competitors will be notified within 10 business days after the closing of the qualification deadline.

It is anticipated that **up to** 16 teams may successfully qualify for Workshop 3. DARPA will review all the materials submitted by the Event Qualification deadline before finalizing the number of qualified teams for the event.

4.1 Systems Narrative Description

DARPA will use the narrative description to evaluate the team's overall approach and potentially inform additional follow-up questions and/or tasks. The narrative description must include the following sections:

Part 1: Team Information

- Team Name
- Team Organization(s)
- Team Point-of-Contact (name, email, phone number, address)
- Team Roster, i.e., list of all team members, their affiliations and email
- Confirmation of addition to ISR (formerly TATRC)'s research protocol
- Date of Part 107 license or planned date of testing.

Part 2: Technical Approach (500 words max per subsection)

For each element of the Technical Approach below, DARPA will assess whether the plan is consistent with the rules and can safely and successfully compete in the DTC.

- **Experience:**

- Note any relevant experience in autonomous operation of mobility platforms and/or stand-off sensing of physiological features

- **Mobility Platforms**
  - Platform types (UGV with NDAA-compliant parts and/or **approved** NDAA-Compliant UAS) with specific models and components identified. Attach NDAA compliance tables for all UAS and UGVs.
    - **NOTE**: the DARPA approval process takes several months and should be started as soon as possible
  - Number of platforms (number team may field varies by course)
  - Weight and size of platforms (maximum of 9kg and 1.5m per UAS)
  - Fuel or energy sources and expected continuous runtime
  - Details on FAA compliant lighting for nighttime operation
  - Names and Part 107 license status of all UAS pilots
- **Perception**
  - What stand-off sensors do you plan to use at Workshop 3; include the make and model (sensors onboard UAS are required to be NDAA 817 compliant)?
  - What features will the sensors be used to detect?
  - What is the minimum standoff distance capability (please see *DTC Competition Rules* for DARPA requirements for standoff distances)?
- **Autonomy**
  - High-level software architecture for navigation and search
  - Level of autonomy planned for Workshop 3 and Challenge Event 3 (sensor pack, manual, semi-autonomous, fully autonomous).
  - Part 107.35 and part 107.31 waivers you intend to apply for (if any). DARPA has obtained a 107.35 waiver for DTC events for 10 simultaneously operated UAVs, individual waivers within this scope are not necessary.
  - Human operator interfaces
- **Data Transmission Method**
  - What networking solutions do you expect to use for communication between the platforms and the base station?
- **Algorithms for Physiological Signature Detection**
  - Describe your plan for algorithms and list any existing software you will be building off of.
- **Algorithm Training Methods**
  - Discuss your intended training methods and what if any additional data you intend to use.
- **End User interface (medic interface - optional)**
  - Teams may be implementing up to two types of user interfaces; one designed for crew control of the systems (base station interface) and one

geared towards medics (medic interface). Neither interface is required to compete on Lane 1. The medic interface is required for teams to qualify to compete on Lane 2.
    - Hardware
    - Displayed features
- **Safety:** The course is expected to have live actors and physical obstacles, as well as limited visibility due to obstructions, smoke, and/or time of day. Describe your approach and measures to ensure safety during your participation in the competition. Be sure to include descriptions of your approach to software emergency stops, hardware emergency stops, safety operators, and battery charging, monitoring, and storage.

4.2 Systems Qualification Tasks

4.2.1 Demonstration videos

- Links to unlisted YouTube videos
- Short descriptions of each video (100 words max per video)

The demonstration videos must include at least the qualification tasks listed in Section 4.2.3 but may also include additional videos that the teams feel will support their submission. Demonstration videos are required for each different type of mobile platform. For platforms with multiple configurations (e.g., different payloads), teams may select a representative platform to use in all of the demonstration videos. Other variants of that platform type should be listed in the "Mobility" section of the narrative description. For mobility, estop and night operations: If your teams' videos were accepted during challenge event 2 qualifications AND your systems were able to successfully navigate at challenge event 2, new videos only need to be uploaded for changes to hardware and software.

Based on the original submission, DARPA may choose to request additional demonstration videos, a follow-up teleconference, or an in-person visit to a team's site. Teams should be prepared for possible visits, if needed. Only materials received by the qualification deadline will be considered.

Any significant changes in technical approach after initial qualification must be disclosed to DARPA and approved in advance of each event. Examples of significant changes could include different communications hardware, frequency bands, and/or platform hardware. DARPA may require additional demonstrations and/or safety inspections before a new platform type may be used in a competition event.

All qualification materials must be submitted via the DTC Team Portal. The narrative description should include links to any videos that are intended to be included as part of the submission. All videos should be posted to YouTube with the privacy setting set to "Unlisted." Narration of the videos is allowed.

4.2.2 Event Knowledge Review

Teams must complete an open book test on the phase 3 Interface Control Document (ICD) and Systems Rules. Access to the test will be sent out after a team has completed their workshop 3 qualification in the portal. Teams must receive a final score of 90% on the test but may repeat the test to achieve that score. Teams will also be required to have a short call to discuss their networking plan and ICD compliance.

4.2.3 Platform Tasks

4.2.3.1 NDAA documentation

Teams must provide documentation of the country of origin of the relevant UxS components listed in the rules. For each UxS provide photos or video documenting the components. These should include the sensors (cameras, lidar, radar, etc), gimbals, the ground control system, flight controller, radios, and motherboards. Angles should enable viewers to see the brand and the place of manufacture. If the place of manufacture is not visible on the components provide additional documentation for those components.

4.2.3.2 Emergency stop

Teams must demonstrate the capability to execute an "emergency stop" for all mobile assets. All systems participating in the Systems Competition must utilize a complementary multi-tiered emergency stop system as described in the *DTC Competition Rules* document.

Tier 1 – Team Wireless E-Stop: Teams are required to implement a wireless emergency stop capability as a component of their system's communication architecture. The emergency stop must be able to be triggered from the team's base station and/or portable wireless transmitter. The Tier 1 E-stop transmitter must instruct mobile platforms within effective communication range to initiate safe behaviors.

Safety protocols dictate unique responses for Unmanned Ground Vehicles (UGSs) and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UASs) upon activation of the E-stop signal. UGSs are mandated to immediately cease all movement and maintain a stationary position until manual control is resumed by the operator. The platform must achieve this safe state within 30 seconds. Conversely, UASs are instructed to either execute a return-to-launch (RTL) procedure or sustain a hovering state until manual intervention from the safety operator is initiated. UASs are restricted from landing in their current location unless specifically directed by the operator.

The emergency stop must include clear visual feedback of the mobile platform's safe, halted state (e.g., red LED). The emergency stop capability may be targeted to a specific platform but should also provide the functionality to rapidly render all platforms safe. A team must be able to render all platforms within communication range completely motionless within 60 seconds.

Tier 2 – Recovery Wireless E-Stop

The tier 2 E-Stop will be optional for UAVs but required for UGVs weighing more than 0.5kg. The module specifications and configuration guidelines for the Tier 2 E-Stop are detailed in the *Transponder and Emergency Stop Integration Guide*.

Tier 3 – On-Platform E-Stop: Teams must integrate at least one physical emergency stop button on each platform that weighs more than 10 kg. The button must be a red mushroom-capped button at least 25 mm in diameter, with clear markings indicating that it is an emergency stop button. The buttons must latch when triggered and must require a twisting motion to release the latch. The buttons must be completely unobstructed and must be easily accessible by recovery personnel. The emergency stop procedures implemented on the mobile platforms must, upon receiving a Tier 3 E-Stop trigger, render all platforms completely motionless within 5 seconds.

Details and requirements for the three-tiered emergency stop system are provided in the *DTC Competition Rules* document.

The demonstration videos should show the successful integration of all tiers of the emergency stop system for each platform type. The wireless emergency stop videos must show a simultaneous view of both the platform and the emergency stop interface.

4.2.3.3 Mobility

Each type of mobile platform must demonstrate traversing a course with a distance of at least 15 meters. The demonstration video should show the platform traversing the course. The video can be from the platform's point-of-view, a third-person point-of-view, or both.

If relevant, teams are encouraged to include a second video that shows a simultaneous view of the supervisor interface. Teams are not required to show operation of multiple instances of the same platform type.

For ground systems, the movement must be over uneven terrain to include dirt, gravel, and grass. The course should include at least two 90-degree turns.

For aerial systems, the video must show takeoff and landing, inspection of a target (see figure 1 for an example from the NIST guide), and a 1m stand-off from a target sustained for 30s.

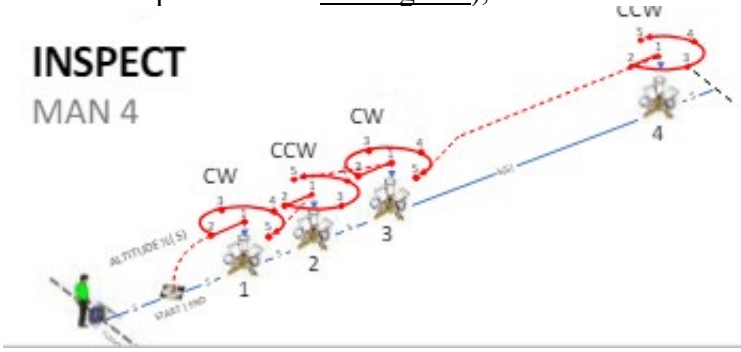

Figure 1: example of UAS inspection of a target. The UAS flies in closer proximity around objects to inspect detailed features on tap and all for sides. Maintains altitude on top of each target with alternating leftward and rightward rotations to inspect all four sides of each object.

Demonstrations should be in the autonomy mode intended for the challenge.

For any special-case considerations (e.g., other mobility types, teleoperation-based deployment), teams may send inquiries to TriageChallenge@darpa.mil.

4.2.3.4 Night Operation

Teams must demonstrate nighttime takeoff and landing with use of anti-collision lighting.

The demonstration video should show the platform traversing the course. The video can be from the platform's point-of-view, a third-person point-of-view, or both. If relevant, teams are encouraged to include a second video demonstrating the triage capabilities of the platform.

4.2.3.5 User Interface (optional)

Teams **planning on running in the HMT lanes** must demonstrate a working user interface. This should include features such as marking objects on a map and the capability to convey casualty features such as location and health status.

Supplemental Tasks: DARPA encourages submissions that also include video demonstrations of the following capabilities. It is anticipated that these capabilities may be necessary to be competitive.

- Multimodal sensing of objects
- Demonstration of object localization
- Demonstration of the triage capabilities of the platform

For any special-case considerations, teams may send inquiries to TriageChallenge@darpa.mil to ask for an appropriate sensor task.

4.3 Systems Competitor's Qualification Checklist

- ❑ STEP 1: Update your online qualification profile
- ❑ STEP 2: Complete NDAA compliance review
- ❑ STEP 4: Respond to any feedback/inquiries from the DTC team
- ❑ STEP 5: Await final notification from DARPA regarding qualification status

5 Data Competition Event Qualification

5.1 Data Narrative Description

The narrative description must include the following sections:

Part 1: Team Information

- Team Name
- Team Organization(s)
- Team Point-of-Contact (name, email, phone number, address)
- Team Roster, i.e., list of all team members, their affiliations and email

Part 2: Technical Approach (500 words max per subsection) For each element of the Technical Approach below, DARPA will assess whether the plan is consistent with the rules and can feasibly compete in the DTC.

- **Experience:**
  - Note any relevant experience working in/with medical datasets.

- **Workflow for handling large volumes of noisy multimodal data**
  - Data cleaning
  - Missing data
- **LSI prediction algorithms**
  - Describe your plan for algorithms and list any existing software you will be building off.
- **Algorithm Training Methods**
  - Discuss your intended training methods and what if any additional data you intend to use. Keep in mind limitations on HSR by self-funded teams.

Part 3: Data Handling Agreement

Competitors acknowledge DARPA's mission-requirement and intent to safeguard privacy and civil liberties, and that sensitive or identifying data (including personally identifiable information (PII) or protected health information (PHI)) is not relevant to the DTC activities and that DARPA-provided datasets supporting those activities have been intentionally de-identified to ensure—to the greatest extent practicable—that there is no reasonable basis to believe that the data could be used to trace a specific identity or present a risk of harm to any individual. Accordingly, the DTC competitors agree they will not intentionally attempt to download, re-identify, share, or re-use DARPA-provided data.

At its discretion, DARPA may arrange follow-up teleconferences to discuss a team's submission and/or request additional information about the submission to aid the review. DARPA retains the right to approve or deny team qualification based on materials submitted.

The scoring mechanism has changed since Challenge Event 2. Teams that qualify to participate in Phase 3 automatically qualify for WS3. Once the phase 3 scoring server is released, teams are **strongly** encouraged to prepare their algorithms according to the Data Competition Phase 3 ICD document and test integration with JHUAPL prior to the workshop.

At its discretion, DARPA may arrange follow-up teleconferences to discuss a team's submission and/or request additional information about the submission to aid the review. DARPA retains the right to approve or deny team qualification based on materials submitted.

5.2 Data Competitor's Qualification Checklist

- ❑ STEP 1: Update your online qualification profile
- ❑ STEP 2. Coordinate with the JHUAPL team for systems integration testing
- ❑ STEP 3: Respond to any feedback/inquiries from the DTC team
- ❑ STEP 4: Wait to receive final notification from DARPA on your qualification status