



NEW INSTRUCTOR HANDBOOK

**A GUIDE FOR ALL WHO
COMPLETE GENERAL
INSTRUCTOR SCHOOL**

New Instructor Handbook

Congratulations on completing General Instructor School! You will now be held to certain expectations, and DPS has compiled some information to help you as you get started instructing. Some of this information could be beneficial to you throughout the years that you instruct, so hold on to this manual and reference it whenever you need.

1. Introduction

This handbook is intended for instructors of the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) who have completed the Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training (AZ POST) General Instructor School and is designed to be a guide to assist them as they begin instructing and ensure they understand and meet the instructor standards and requirements of both DPS and AZ POST. This handbook will include resources to aid instructors as they strive to accomplish the mission of all department instructors: to provide current and exceptional instruction and training to Department employees, state and local law enforcement agencies, and the State of Arizona.

2. Instructor Qualifications and Requirements

AZ POST requires sworn personnel to complete annual training with two different types of AZ POST credit, proficiency training credit and continuing training credit (Office of the Secretary of State Administrative Rules Division, 2021). In order to teach classes for AZ POST credit, instructors must meet specific AZ POST requirements to be authorized to teach for each type of credit they are going to teach, and contrary to popular belief, it is not sufficient for a qualified instructor to be in the room: if any instructor teaching a course is not properly qualified, the students will not receive AZ POST credit for the course (Office of the Secretary of State Administrative Rules Division, 2021).

2.1. Instructor Qualifications

There are three types of instructors recognized by AZ POST, and each type has specific requirements to become qualified (Office of the Secretary of State Administrative Rules Division, 2021).

- General Instructors – These instructors (sworn peace officers only) are qualified to teach any class for AZ POST continuing training credit. To become a General Instructor, an individual must have been a sworn peace officer for a minimum of two years and then complete the General Instructor School (Office of the Secretary of State Administrative Rules Division, 2021).
- Specialist Instructors – These instructors (not a sworn peace officer) are qualified to teach classes in their certified discipline for AZ POST continuing training credit. To become a Specialist Instructor, individuals who are not sworn peace officers must complete the AZ POST General Instructor School then be nominated by the Department to instruct in specific law enforcement disciplines and submit documentation of their experience and qualifications in those disciplines (Office of the Secretary of State Administrative Rules Division, 2021). The AZ POST board will determine if they qualify and certify them as Specialist Instructors, authorizing them to teach in the specific disciplines they are certified in (Office of the Secretary of State Administrative Rules Division, 2021).
- Specialty Instructors – These instructors (sworn peace officers only) are qualified to teach classes in the specific discipline for AZ POST proficiency training credit. To become a Specialty Instructor, individuals who are already General Instructors have to also complete an instructor school for the specialty discipline they would like to teach (Office of the Secretary of State Administrative Rules Division, 2021). Each Specialty Instructor school has its own prerequisites to be able to attend, but General Instructor School is required for all (Office of the Secretary of State Administrative Rules Division, 2021).

In addition to the three types of AZ POST instructors, DPS requires that anyone within the department attend the General Instructor School prior to teaching any classes, regardless if the class is for AZ POST credit or not. The most basic requirement to teach for AZ POST continuing

training credit is to be a General Instructor. In order to qualify to teach for AZ POST proficiency training credit, the instructor must be qualified as a Specialty Instructor in that discipline.

2.2. Instructor Expectations

When individuals attend the General Instructor School, the employee's department and the department that is hosting the school both (though sometimes both are the same department) incur a cost. As a result, DPS has some expectations of all individuals who attend General Instructor School. It is important that instructors understand what is expected of them, which is to teach, write lesson plans, and conduct research to assist others who are writing lesson plans.

2.2.1. Teach

All instructors within DPS are expected to teach. The Training Records Unit maintains a list of individuals who are qualified to teach, and at any given point an instructor can be asked to teach. The General Instructor School takes time and money, and instructors neglecting their responsibility to teach results in extra resources expensed.

2.2.2. Write Lesson Plans: In-person & Online

Writing lesson plans is a task that not many instructors do regularly at DPS, but if an instructor comes across a topic that needs to be taught or a lesson plan that needs to be updated, instructors are expected to step up. In addition, sometimes an instructor will be given a topic and instructed to write a lesson plan for a class on it. Every instructor has resources in their General Instructor handbook to help them write lesson plans, and all of the Operational Training staff will be able to assist instructors as well, as they work on writing or updating lesson plans.

2.2.2.1. Lesson Plans for In-Person Classes

There are six parts that need to be present in a lesson plan for an in-person class, the course approval page, performance objectives, outline, notes, and references.

2.2.2.1.1. Course Approval Page

This page includes the basic information about the course. It will include the course title, course number, course description, number of hours of credit given for the course, the author and reviewers names, approval signature and date, materials necessary for students and instructors, and the performance objectives. This page needs to be filled out as much as possible by the instructor before submitting the lesson plan to Operational Training for approval.

2.2.2.1.2. Performance Objectives

The performance objectives are written **verbatim** in three places (at a minimum), the cover sheet, the introduction in the outline, and the conclusion in the outline. Performance objectives should be what the students are expected to be able to do to demonstrate their learning after the class is completed. Performance objectives must be measurable, and they must include a task, a condition, and a standard. Performance objectives cannot just describe what occurred during the class or what the students should know, but they should describe how the students

would be able to demonstrate what they have learned (Hammons, 2017). Everything listed in the performance objectives should be covered in the content of the outline, and the performance objectives should be listed in the same order on the coversheet, introduction, and conclusion.

2.2.2.1.3. Outline

The outline is where all the content for the lesson is written. Anything that is expected to be covered during the lesson needs to be written down in the outline, which must cover everything discussed in the performance objectives. The outline can be written in any standard outline numbering format but must be consistent from the beginning to the end. There should be no isolated subpoints. Every subpoint should have a minimum of one additional subpoint with it. If there is an 'A' there must be a 'B' and if a '1' there must be a '2.'

2.2.2.1.4. Transitions

Between every main point or anywhere the lesson is shifting ideas, there needs to be a transition written into the lesson. Transitions are statements that can be used to continue the flow while shifting topics. They can include an activity or even something as simple as a statement connecting the two topics, but they need to be written right into the outline.

2.2.2.1.5. Notes

Any point in the lesson where there needs to be a reminder for the instructor or instructions for the instructor to follow, they should be written down as a note in the outline. In addition, the visual aids, such as PowerPoint slides, need to be noted throughout the outline wherever they would be used in the class. Similarly, wherever a performance objective is being discussed in the outline, it needs to be noted which performance objective is being discussed at that point.

2.2.2.1.6. References

When writing a lesson plan, the author should always use resources to ensure current, accurate, and relevant information is being taught. Each resource needs to be listed in a final point, references, at the end of the outline to ensure that the original locations of the content can be found.

2.2.2.2. Lesson Plans for Canvas

Technology is changing the way classrooms function, and instructors need to learn how to adapt with the new technologies (Anderson, 2014; Stone, 2011). DPS uses Canvas for some online classroom learning. While there are some similarities to lesson plans for in-person courses, Canvas courses have some different requirements for lesson plans.

2.2.2.2.1. Course Approval Page

The course approval page works the same for Canvas courses as for in-person courses.
See the course approval page information above

2.2.2.2.2. Performance Objectives

The performance objectives function the same for Canvas courses as for in-person courses.

See the performance objectives information above

2.2.2.2.3. Modules

For Canvas courses, the modules will be in place of the outline of the in-person courses. What would be a main point in the outline is a module heading. The last page of the module can even have a transitional statement.

2.2.2.2.4. Quizzes

Quizzes in Canvas can be placed throughout the course or just at the end of the course, but they are how students receive credit for completing a Canvas course. Students are always required to achieve a score of 100% to pass a Canvas course but are given the ability to re-take the quiz as much as they need to pass it.

2.2.3. Research

While some instructors may not often write lesson plans on their own, every instructor should be prepared to assist when called upon. Because of the requirements to become an instructor, those who have become instructors have a level of given credibility and are expected to live up to it. Each instructor will have knowledge in certain topics and may be requested to assist with knowledge, resources, or research to aid an individual who is writing a lesson plan.

3. Instructor Expectations

3.1. Planning a class

When an instructor is assigned to teach a class, they need to plan. The four primary areas that the instructor needs to plan are time, space, lesson materials, and required paperwork.

3.1.2. Time Management

Every lesson plan is given an allotted time. The instructor needs to ensure the class is scheduled for the correct amount of time and stick to it. It is important to respect the students' time, but instructors must not plan to end a class early: the length of time in the class equals the training credit hours.

3.1.3. Classroom space

The amount of classroom space needed is another important point to consider. If the instructor announces an open-ended registration for a class, the number of students attending may not be determined until the class actually starts. Set a cap before announcing the class, and make sure the room reserved is large enough to accommodate all the students and instructors, including any activities planned, taking outside factors into consideration (i.e. interpreter for the deaf, the coronavirus restrictions, etc.). There may be times when the space in the classroom is no longer sufficient. Have a back-up plan.

3.1.4. Lesson materials

All lesson materials (to include PowerPoints, tests, answer keys, scenarios, etc.) must be submitted to and approved by the Operational Training Section **before** being taught in a class. Once the materials are approved, the course will be assigned a course number. When that course number is seen on student records, it is to designate exactly which lesson plan was taught for the class they attended. Whenever there are changes made to the material, it must all be resubmitted for approval, at which time the updated materials will receive a new course number.

3.1.5. Required paperwork

Every class must have, at a minimum, a lesson plan and a roster. Any class for AZ POST credit must also have a POST Approval (PA) Form.

3.1.5.1. Lesson plan

The lesson plan accounts for everything that will be happening during the class. It is the instructor's responsibility to ensure the lesson plan is the current, approved version of the course.

3.1.5.2. Roster

The roster is the record of who attended the class. The instructor is responsible to verify the accuracy of the roster and ensure it is properly entered into the Training History and Online Records (THOR) system. Typically, this involves preparing the roster before class with the class

dates, location, title, and course number on it, then students will sign their names during, before, or after class.

3.1.5.3. PA Form (if applicable)

The PA Form is a document that the instructor fills out and provides to each student for any class that is for AZ POST credit. This is the equivalent of a certificate for completing the class that also indicates how much and what type of AZ POST credit the student will receive.

3.2. Classroom Management

All employees at DPS are expected to behave with a certain level of professionalism both as a student and as an instructor. However, that does not stop some students from behaving in ways that distract from the class.

3.2.1. Professionalism

By adhering to the DPS values, JUSTICE, in everything they do in the classroom, individuals will be demonstrating the professionalism that is expected of DPS employees.

- Justice
- Undaunted Commitment
- Service
- Trust
- Integrity
- Courtesy
- Empathy

While this professionalism includes a focus on justice and commitment, it also includes paying attention to the needs of others with the other five values. To be truly professional, teachers need to remember to take upon themselves the responsibility of those in their classroom (Heersink, 2019).

3.2.2. Responding to issues

Disruptive students can be one of the most frustrating aspects of teaching for many teachers (Gage, et al., 2018). Ideally, the adult students that will be attending classes taught by DPS employees would be professional and respectful enough of the instructor and other students to not cause problems. However, there will always, though not necessarily in *every* class, be students who are disrespectful or distracting. It is important that instructors understand and are prepared with how to handle those situations and those students.

One of the best ways to manage a classroom and deal with disruptive behavior in the classroom is to be proactive in preventing the problem behavior before it starts and reinforce desired behaviors (Ackerman, 2008). While many people may be aware that children cannot sit still very long in classrooms, it is important to note that research has shown that adults also notice increases in both discomfort and tiredness when they sit for extended periods of time

(Hosteng, et al., 2019). Specifically, research indicates that adult students have notably increased tiredness after 15 minutes (Hosteng, et al., 2019). As a result, of hour of class time at DPS generally includes 50 minutes of instruction, leaving 10 minutes for a break. In addition, instructors are also encouraged to find ways to break up the monotony of the class with activities that include physical movement (Hosteng, et al., 2019).

3.3. Instructor Development

Professional development for instructors is important, and with ever-changing classrooms and evolving technologies, instructors need to remember that teaching is a perishable skill (Wenmoth, 2020). If instructors don't maintain or develop their skills, they will become less effective or potentially ineffective instructors (Blanco, 2020). It is the responsibility of each instructor to maintain and develop their skills as instructors, to include their ability to write lesson plans, speak in front of others, and teach. To help instructors maintain their teaching skills, the Operational Training Section has a few recommendations.

- **Practice:** Instructors should practice with each lesson plan before teaching it, even if they have taught it several times before. Instructors should also practice teaching lessons when they are not actually going to be teaching, especially if there are long periods between teaching opportunities.
- **Volunteer:** When instructors volunteer to teach, the staff in Operational Training give the teaching opportunities to those instructors. One of the best ways to maintain and improve on any skill is through practice, so by volunteering, instructors are giving themselves extra opportunities to maintain and improve on their skills. If no one has volunteered, the Operational Training Section will tend to rely on others who have taught or who have volunteered in the past. Volunteering says that the instructor is interested or even excited about teaching, which results in more engaging classes and makes the classes more enjoyable for the instructor and the students.
- **Keep track of the classes taught:** When instructors have a record of all the times they have taught, potentially even the topics, length of class, and number of students, it can be beneficial for them. They can use that information to track how they are doing with practicing and maintaining their skills. They could provide solid data to their superiors about their instructional activities, and there are many other ways this data could be used. In fact, supervisors may be able to use this data to submit a nomination for an instructor to receive an award.
- **Seek out instructor development classes:** Instructors should seek out instructor development classes by AZ POST, other agencies, or even outside the law enforcement community to sharpen their skills and even learn new skills for teaching. These types of classes can help instructors keep up to date with new technologies that may be available for the classroom as well.

4. Recommended Resources for Instructors

Anderson, J. (2014). *Handbook of research on digital tools for writing instruction in k-12 settings*. ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu>

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