
Contents

Overview	1
The Instructor Quality Assurance Guide	1
I. Selection	3
1. Education	3
2. Experience/technical expertise	3
3. Special qualifications	4
4. Certifications/licenses	4
5. Instructor competencies	4
II. Monitoring	5
III. Professional Development	6
IV. Record Keeping and Documentation	7



Overview

Providing education, training, and technical assistance is essential to the COPS Office mission of advancing the practice of community policing in the nation's state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. Although there are several factors that impact the quality of training, maintaining highly qualified instructors is critical to providing a successful training program.

The COPS Office Instructor Quality Assurance Guide (IQAG) provides direction and minimum standards to COPS Office training providers for the selection of qualified instructors. COPS Office training providers are those institutions, associations, and organizations that are funded directly by the COPS Office to provide education, training, and technical assistance. This guide applies to all instructors including new ones and ones that are continuing existing training initiatives.

The Instructor Quality Assurance Guide

The purpose of the IQAG is to ensure that all instructors who conduct COPS Office–funded courses meet a set of standards and follow protocols that will contribute to their effectiveness in the classroom. The standards and protocols presented in this document standardize the selection, orientation, monitoring, and professional development of all instructors who present on behalf of the COPS Office. All training providers who develop and deliver training on behalf of the COPS Office must ensure that their instructors meet the standards and follow the protocols of the IQAG.

A successful instructor quality assurance process requires effective hiring protocols, ongoing monitoring, and continued professional development. It is imperative that training providers develop standards and processes that follow the guidelines established in this document to ensure that instructors possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to deliver quality instruction and maintain their skills.

I. Selection

The COPS Office requires the submission of all trainer names and affiliations for review and approval by the COPS Office prior to conducting training. In addition, all training providers must provide the COPS Office with a copy of their formal plans for monitoring and remediation policy prior to hiring trainers.

If new trainers are added to the training cadre, the COPS Office must review and approve prior to hiring.

A notification memo of trainer departures should be sent to the COPS Office to ensure proper documentation of active trainers for each COPS Office–funded course.

Selection of qualified instructors should be based on the following criteria:

- Education
- Experience/technical expertise
- Special qualifications
- Certifications and licenses
- Instructor competencies

Training providers must develop the following formal instructor requirements that detail the criteria that must be met for each course.

1. Education

Each training provider should determine the minimum formal education that is required to instruct a particular course. In lieu of formal education, the training provider may substitute experience, occupation-related certificates, on-the-job training, etc., according to its established policies and procedures or practices. Minimum educational requirements should be established for each course. These standards should be realistic and related to the course instruction.

2. Experience/technical expertise

To select appropriate instructors, training providers should establish the type and level of expertise needed to instruct each course. Based on the level of expertise needed, training providers should establish the minimum years of experience required to instruct a particular course. Instructors should be chosen to deliver training based on knowledge and experience related to course technical requirements. As with educational requirements, technical expertise and years of experience should be realistic so as not to unnecessarily screen out qualified applicants. The COPS Office recommends training providers conduct interviews with agencies who have employed the applicant in the past. Requirements for experience and technical expertise must be clearly designated in the formal instructor requirements for each course.

3. Special qualifications

If special qualifications are required to instruct a COPS Office–funded course, they should be specified in the formal instructor requirements.

Additional considerations when selecting instructors may include the following:

- Training providers should conduct a thorough review of the prospective instructor biography and resume, ensuring the applicant has subject matter expertise and experience delivering training in specific subject matter.
- Training providers should conduct interviews with agencies who have employed the prospective instructor in the past.
- Receive recommendations on prospective instructors
 - from recognized state and federal criminal justice agencies or partner organizations, such as other COPS Office training providers across the country;
 - from agency heads or other recognized subject matter experts related to the expertise of the prospective trainer.

4. Certifications/licenses

Some courses may require specific certifications or licenses. In such cases, requirements for certifications and licenses must be clearly designated in the formal instructor requirements for each course. If none are required, the instructor requirements should specify so. Training providers should establish procedures to verify credentialing for accuracy and currency and take steps to prohibit instructors whose credentials are dated or expired.

5. Instructor competencies

Prior to delivering COPS Office–funded courses, newly hired instructors should be required to (1) attend and participate in at least one class of the course(s) they have been designated to teach and (2) conduct a practice session of the assigned course(s) in which their knowledge and skills are evaluated by the training provider. The purpose of attending the course prior to teaching is to allow the new instructor to observe how the course is taught and how terminal objectives are presented and to familiarize the new instructor with the course material and administrative procedures for which the new instructor will be responsible.

The purpose of conducting a practice session is to provide feedback to instructors in areas where they need to improve. To accomplish this, the training provider should designate an approving official to observe the instructor conducting the course in a classroom setting prior to permitting him or her to instruct without supervision. The role of the approving official is to approve instructors that deliver COPS Office–funded courses.

Training providers must provide the COPS Office with a copy of their formal instructor requirements for selection and orientation prior to delivery of the first course.

II. Monitoring

Once instructors have met all of the requirements of selection and orientation, they should become part of an ongoing monitoring program designed to ensure that instructional skills are maintained and that instructors continue to meet the minimum standards specified in these guidelines. Training providers are responsible for establishing monitoring and remediation guidance and policy for their instructors, which may be more stringent than these guidelines. The providers' guidelines should establish quality assurance rating standards and associated remediation actions. The policy should provide clear guidance on how often instructors will be monitored, the competencies they are being rated against, and what actions will be required based on quality assurance results.

It is recommended that training providers conduct random instructor audits to ensure quality instruction of courses and that instructors continue to meet minimum standards set forth within these guidelines. At a minimum, training providers should monitor a random sampling of their instructors annually, the size of which sample as a percentage of all instructors should be specified in their policies and procedures. Instructors should complete a refresher course as needed to maintain instructional effectiveness. These courses can be sponsored by the training provider or offered by a recognized source as referenced previously.

Training providers must provide the COPS Office with a copy of their formal plans for monitoring and remediation policy prior to the first delivery of the course.

III. Professional Development

Professional development is critical to maintaining a highly effective cadre of instructors. Toward that end, training providers should encourage instructors to participate in professional development opportunities. Although resources may not always permit, training providers should consider providing professional development opportunities to their instructors through ongoing training, conferences, workshops, and seminars.

IV. Record Keeping and Documentation

Training providers will be responsible for maintaining records of instructors. These records should include the following:

- Resumes
- Formal instructional training or certifications
- A list of the COPS Office–funded courses instructors are qualified to teach with the formal instructor requirement for each course (as outlined in section I of this document)
- Monitoring results and any remediation actions taken as a result of monitoring
- Professional development activities taken by instructors

At the request of the COPS Office, training providers are to submit records and documentation to the COPS Office.

