



Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

BASIC PEACE OFFICE COURSE (BPOC) RULES HANDBOOK

ACADEMY OVERVIEW:

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) operates the Regional Police Academy with almost 50 years of experience administering training resources and programs for the development of qualified law enforcement officers throughout the region.

LRGVDC Regional Police Academy utilizes a wide-variety of law enforcement instructors to provide a comprehensive, diverse academy, incorporating the expertise of some of the finest training officials in the region.

LRGVDC currently has partnerships with law enforcement agencies such as the Cities of Edinburg, Hidalgo, Harlingen, Mission and San Benito to provide instructors and training site locations that offer accessible day & night training locations across the Rio Grande Valley.

Our primary goal is to provide a premier, valuable training resource for citizens of the area and produce highly qualified, professional law enforcement officers to serve and protect the citizens of the Rio Grande Valley.

LRGVDC administers the Basic Peace Officer Course (BPOC) Academy to provide cadets the essential knowledge and foundational experience to begin a career in law enforcement while preparing to sit for the State Peace Officer Licensing Examination.

LRGVDC is a contractual training provider as approved and licensed by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) and must abide by all mandated TCOLE training regulations and compliance measures.

The LRGVDC BPOC Rules Handbooks serves as the Basic Peace Officer Course rules, policies and procedures and all Cadets must abide by the policies set forth or may face the appropriate disciplinary action, including failure to successfully complete academy.

Table of Contents

Procedure 1.0: BPOC Cadet Eligibility	3
Procedure 2.0: Application Process	4
Procedure 3.0: Tuition	5
Procedure 4.0: Required Supplies.....	7
Procedure 5.0: Attendance Policy	7
Procedure 6.0: Academic Achievement Standards	8
Procedure 7.0: Cadet Personal Appearance	11
Procedure 8.0: Personal Conduct.....	12
Procedure 9.0: Disciplinary Procedure	15
Procedure 10.0: BPOC Organizational Structure	18

PROCEDURE 1.0: BPOC CADET ELIGIBILITY

1.1 Citizenship

Applicant must be a United States Citizen

1.2 Age Requirement

Applicant must be at least 21 years of age prior to the scheduled final examination date of the selected academy.

1.3 Educational Requirement

Minimum educational requirements include high school diploma; high school equivalency certificate; or an honorable discharge from the armed forces of the United States after at least 24 months of active duty service.

1.4 Criminal Background Requirements

Applicant must complete fingerprinting and search of local, state and U.S. national records and fingerprint files to verify the following:

- a. is not currently charged with any criminal offense for which conviction would be a bar to licensure;
- b. has never been on court-ordered community supervision or probation for any criminal offense above the grade of Class B misdemeanor or a Class B misdemeanor within the last ten years (10) from the date of the court order;
- c. has never been convicted of an offense above the grade of a Class B misdemeanor or a Class B misdemeanor within the last ten (10) years;
- d. has never been convicted or placed on community supervision in any court of an offense involving family violence as defined under Chapter 71, Texas Family Code;
- e. is not prohibited by state or federal law from operating a motor vehicle; (must possess a valid Texas Driver's License)
- f. is not prohibited by state or federal law from possessing firearms or ammunition;
- g. has never received a dishonorable or other discharge based on misconduct with bars future military service;
- h. has been subjected to a background investigation.

1.5 Medical Requirements

Applicant must be examined by a physician, approved by LRGVDC, who is licensed by the Texas Medical Board. The appointee must be declared by that professional, on a form prescribed by the commission, within 180 days before the academy start date to be:

- a. physically sound and free from any defect which may adversely affect the performance and essential functions of a peace officer, including:

- Vision sufficient to perform functions such as apprehend suspects; obtain information at disturbances, service and accident calls; and to read and review written communications;
 - Hearing and speech sufficient to communicate clearly and distinctly face-to-face as well as over the radio in normal and adverse conditions;
 - Arm and hand steadiness and manual dexterity sufficient to use weapons necessary to prevent injury or to protect self and others;
 - Stamina and tolerance sufficient to remain physically and mentally alert for short bursts of extremely intense physical and/or mental activity separated by extended periods of physical and/or mental inactivity.
- b. show no trace of drug dependency or illegal drug use after a blood test or other medical test; and for the purpose of meeting the requirements for initial licensure, an individual's satisfactory medical exam that is conducted as a requirement of a basic licensing course may remain valid for 180 days from the individual's date of graduation from that academy.

1.6 Psychological Requirements

Applicant must be examined, face-to-face by a psychologist, approved by LRGVDC, who is licensed by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists or Texas Medical Board. The individual must be declared by that professional, on a form prescribed by the commission, within 180 days before the start date of academy to be in satisfactory psychological and emotional health to serve as the type of officer for which the license is sought measuring suitable personality traits and psychopathology.

In addition to the admission standards set forth, all applicants must exhibit no history or indication of a pattern of behavior that is unethical, violent, or criminal in nature.

PROCEDURE 2.0: APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1 Pre-Enrollment Entrance Examination

All applicants must complete and pass a general aptitude examination measuring cognitive ability.

- a. Applicants will select and attend a designated pre-enrollment BPOC entrance examination date.
- b. BPOC Entrance Exam dates will be posted at www.lrgvdc.org and will be administered periodically in accordance with scheduled BPOC Academy start dates.
- c. BPOC Entrance Examination fee is established at \$25.00 payable by check or money order at testing site prior to be admitted for exam.

Pre-enrollment entrance examination date will also serve as orientation to remaining steps in applying to the LRGVDC BPOC Academy. Examinations are graded onsite and all passing applicants must remain onsite for additional guidance in completing additional forms. It should be noted that some forms may take time to accurately complete. Applicants should plan their test date accordingly.

2.2 Entrance Examination Requirements

- a. Applicants must receive a passing score of 75.00% or greater on administered pre-entrance exam.
- b. Applicants will be allowed two re-tests for the examination. Applicants who are unable to pass the examination on the third attempt will not be eligible for admission into the Academy and may not test again until the next available Academy entrance exam cycle.
- c. The pre-enrollment testing scores are valid for one year after the date of examination for applicants who wish to defer admission into the Academy.

2.3 BPOC Application Packet

Applicants must print and complete the LRGVDC BPOC application and Personal History Statement (found at www.lrgvdc.org). Upon successful completion of pre-entrance examination (*with passing grade*), application and personal history statement will be submitted along with the following forms:

- a. Proof of U.S. Citizenship (Birth Certificate or Naturalization Certificate)
- b. High school diploma or G.E.D.
- c. College Transcript (if applicable)
- d. Photocopy of driver's license
- e. DD-214 (form 4)/VA Forms (prior military applicants)
- f. Driving Record
- g. Misc. correspondence, if applicable
- h. Photocopy of current automobile liability insurance card

If the cadet's automobile liability insurance card expires in the weeks between admission and the driving training course, the cadet shall provide a current, valid automobile liability insurance card before the cadet will be allowed to take the driving training course.

Applicants will also be provided the following documents and instructions to complete them on exam day.

- a. Declaration of Medical Condition (L-2)
- b. TCIC/NCIC Record Request Form or F.A.S.T. Form
- c. Agreement and understanding of payment

Applicants will then coordinate the completion of their Psychological Evaluation (L-3).

2.4 Application Packet Deadline

All required examinations, evaluations, forms and reports must be submitted to LRGVDC **no later than 15 calendar days prior** to Academy start date. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by LRGVDC Academy Training Coordinator.

PROCEDURE 3.0: TUITION

3.1 Tuition Fees

Basic Peace Officer Course (BPOC) \$ **2,500.00**

3.2 Methods of Payment

Cashier's Check or Money Orders must be made payable to LRGVDC:
LRGVDC Finance Department
Regional Police Academy
301 W. Railroad St.
Weslaco, Texas 78596

3.3 Payment Deadlines

All tuition payments are due by the first day of the BPOC Academy (Academy Orientation).

3.4 Payment Plan

LRGVDC may authorize a payment plan, when request is submitted and approved in writing, by the end of the first day of the BPOC Academy.

Payment plan includes **50% due by the first day** of the Academy, with the **final 50% due 30 calendar days after** the first day of the Academy.

Failure to pay tuition balance in full by thirty (30) day payment deadline will result in dismissal from academy.

3.5 Refund Policy

This policy applies to cadets who voluntarily drop or are terminated from the Basic Peace Officer Course (BPOC).

- a. BPOC Cadets who voluntarily drop before the 5th calendar day of scheduled class will be refunded 50% of the course fee only if the cadet has paid 100% tuition in full.
- b. BPOC Cadets who voluntarily drop after 5 days from the first day of scheduled class will receive no refund of course fees.

Cadets who are dropped for violation of Academy rules and regulations, disciplinary actions, or violations of statute shall not receive any refund of fees. Cadets must also return all Academy equipment that has been provided to the cadet for training purposes upon notification.

3.6 Veterans Administration Financial Assistance

Cadets intending to use Veterans Administration financial assistance must notify the Academy during the application process. Once authorized by the V.A. to utilize financial assistance to LRGVDC BPOC Academy, cadets will complete all necessary paper work at orientation. Payments must be made in accordance with LRGVDC payment policy. Cadets should contact the V.A. office at (888) 442-4551 or www.gibill.va.gov to verify their status.

3.7 Training Location Assignment

LRGVDC BPOC Academy utilizes multiple training site locations across the region. Each BPOC Academy is run concurrently at all authorized locations. Cadets may be initially assigned to a specific training location based on home address documented in application packet; however, LRGVDC BPOC Academy retains the right and authorization to assign or transfer a location based on logistics, classroom size, or other circumstances deemed necessary.

PROCEDURE 4.0: REQUIRED SUPPLIES

4.1 Cadet supplied equipment

Each cadet shall maintain the responsibility of purchasing his/her own equipment **no later than 30 calendar days** after Academy start date. All supplies must be in new or “like new” condition and free from defects.

- a. Duty Gun Belt
- b. Magazine Pouch
- c. Holster
- d. Inner Belt
- e. Handcuff Case
- f. Outer/duty belt
- g. Belt keepers
- h. Handcuffs
- i. ASP Baton and Case
- j. OC Spray case
- k. Taser cartridges
- l. Footwear
- m. Flashlight and Flashlight / Ring
- n. Academy designated Uniform (may include headgear)
- o. Pistol
- p. 1000 Rounds Pistol Ammo (9mm/.40 caliber)
- q. 15 Shotgun Ammo – 00 buck 9 pellet
- r. 15 Shotgun Ammo - Slugs
- s. 50 Shotgun Ammo – Field/Bird load
- t. 200 Rifle Ammo – 5.56 or 2.23 depending on location

Note: Ammo requirements may vary to accommodate any changes to the firearms training. Cadets will be advised of the required rounds needed prior to attending the range.

PROCEDURE 5.0: ATTENDANCE POLICY

5.1 Class Start Time

Class starting time shall be defined by the master schedule. The Academy reserves the right to alter start time in order to accommodate the training objectives of the topic, as well as availability of off-site training facilities.

5.2 Tardiness

Each class will start promptly as scheduled. **Tardiness in excess of 15 minutes will count as 1 missed hour towards attendance standards.** Frequent or habitual tardiness of any time amount may result in appropriate disciplinary action.

5.3 Attendance Standards

To ensure each candidate meets the TCOLE mandated minimum required classroom hours, each cadet is expected to attend all scheduled classes of the BPOC Academy.

*****Any cadet absent in excess of 40 clock hours will be dismissed from the Academy*****

Unauthorized departure from any scheduled class or training event or refusal to participate in any related assignment shall be construed as grounds for termination from the Academy.

5.4 Makeup Assignment Policy

If absent for any portion of the Academy, it remains the responsibility of the cadet to learn the applicable objective and lessons missed. **Each cadet must complete 2-full pages of handwritten notes per clock hour missed.** Makeup notes must be turned in to the instructor within 3 calendar days of return from absence.

5.5 Inclement Weather/Facility Closure Policy

It shall be the policy of this Academy that in the event of inclement weather, classes will be canceled should the Texas Department of Public Safety close main highways, bridges, overpasses, and side streets. All other weather or facility related closures will only be authorized by Academy Training Coordinator. It shall be the responsibility of the cadet to contact the on-site instructor or Academy Training Coordinator if there are circumstances regarding weather or facility issues.

PROCEDURE 6.0: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

The LRGVDC Regional Police Academy demands a high standard of achievement. The profession of law enforcement requires a high level of individual knowledge, ability and skills that will serve to maintain the officer's sense of pride, proficiency and personal safety throughout his or her career. Failure to achieve the minimum acceptable performance standards in any area will serve as grounds for termination from the Academy.

6.1 Grade Point Average

Cadets must achieve an 80% score or higher on all examinations to maintain the academic standards and remain in the Academy.

Content proficiency will be graded by:

- Individual Chapter Examinations;
- One (1) Mid-term Examination;
- One (1) Comprehensive Final Examination;
- Physical Training Participation;
- Firearms Proficiency and Reality-Based Training.

6.2 Chapter Examinations

Each topic included in the BPOC is considered to be an independent, functional area. An examination will be given at the conclusion of each chapter that will cover all functional areas within that chapter. This may include a written exam, practical exam, and/or combination. Cadets must achieve an 80% score or higher to meet academic standards.

6.3 Mid-Term and Final Examination

In addition to the individual chapter examinations, content mastery will be determined by one (1) Mid-Term Examination including content from the beginning of the Academy to approximate mid-point. Additionally, one (1) Comprehensive Final Examination will be administered which will include topics areas from the full duration of the Academy content and topics.

6.4 Retest Policy

All exams are graded on a scale of 1-100. Cadets must receive and 80% on all exams to be considered a passing grade.

*****Cadets will be allowed a total of four (4) retests during the entire Academy*****

- Three (3) retests may be used for Individual Chapter Exams or Mid-Term Exam Only.
- One (1) retest opportunity will be granted for the Comprehensive Final Exam Only.

If a cadet fails an exam, and has not exhausted retest opportunities, a different version of the exam will be administered. Should a cadet fail any retest attempt or has exhausted all retest opportunities, this will be determined failure to meet minimum grade point average and will be dismissed immediately.

6.5 Physical Training Participation

This phase of the Academy is rigorous and produces a multitude of benefits aside from physical conditioning, including: discipline, stress management, nutrition, self-confidence, teamwork, and street survival skills. It will also generate a clear perspective of the individual's attitude and desire toward this profession. All cadets will be expected to participate fully in all scheduled sessions of physical and skills training exercises. Any unauthorized absence from any physical or skills training session will be counted as an absence from class and the cadet may be subject to progressive disciplinary action.

6.6 Firearms Proficiency

Firearms proficiency requires good hand, finger, arm and shoulder strength and control. The hours of training devoted to this vital aspect is intended to provide the cadet with the skill necessary to attain the requisite proficiency. **A cadet must achieve a minimum score of 80% on the qualification course, and pass the firearms written examination to successfully complete the training program.** Cadets shall agree in writing to all range safety rules prior to range training. Cadets failing to meet these standards will not meet minimum standards for graduation.

6.7 Reality Based Training

Practical skill problems will be conducted to determine the cadet's ability to demonstrate newly acquired skills during the course. Cadets will be required to perform in a variety of simulated situations during which they will

be closely observed and evaluated. A cadet who fails to demonstrate a level of acceptable proficiency may not meet minimum standards for graduation.

6.8 Testing Administration Procedures

The maintenance and security of Academy testing materials must be safeguarded as well as the integrity of the exam administration. A designated test proctor will be present for all exams including retests. Retests are given at the time and place convenient for academy staff and must be coordinated with advanced notice.

In order to ensure that cadets are prevented from committing academic dishonesty, the following procedures are put in place:

- a. On the date of the exam, the classroom must be free of cadets' personal gear. No cadet will be allowed in the classroom prior to the time the exam is administered.
- b. Cadets will be in their assigned uniforms for the day for any test they are taking.
- c. Cadets must assemble and begin their normal routine of formation, inspection, pledge, and citing the Code of Ethics prior to exam administration. Cadet shall occupy their assigned seat once notified by instructor that they may enter the classroom.
- d. Upon the start of the exam, no cadet is allowed to leave the classroom for any reason, unless the cadet has completed the whole exam. As a general guideline, the exam proctor will not leave the classroom while administering the exam.
- e. Upon completion of the exam, cadets may leave the classroom after they have placed the testing materials face down on the desk or turned in the test as described by the exam proctor.
- f. After a short break, the cadets will go back into the classroom and the tests will be graded according to established procedures.
- g. Exam time allotted for chapter examinations is one (1) hour. Mid-term and final exams will be allotted two (2) hours.

6.9 Classroom Participation and Notetaking

Cadets are required to be fully engaged in all lessons and encouraged to ask questions when necessary but stay on the subject and exercise good judgment in the privilege of inquiry. Participation in study groups may be required as assigned by Academy staff or class officers as an aid in improving cadets' grades, and most especially when cadets have failed an exam. Good study habits must be maintained; therefore, non-academy time must be devoted to review of class material or reference materials.

Cadets shall take careful notes during all lectures, unless the instructor notifies the students otherwise.

Students are required to maintain a permanent notebook (three-ring binder) for the purpose of maintaining handout materials and notes.

6.10 Licensing Examination Endorsement

Only those cadets who maintain the minimum grade point average (80% on all examination and applicable retests) attend the minimum classroom clock hours, and participate in all required practical, physical and reality-based training shall receive endorsement to take the State Peace Officer Licensing Examination.

Cadets not meeting these standards and who are not eligible to take the State Peace Officer Licensing Examination will not receive graduation status from the Academy or be allowed to participate in Academy graduation ceremonies.

6.11 Academic Achievement Recognition

The LRGVDC BPOC Academy and professional of law enforcement demands a high standard of achievement, knowledge, ability and skills. In recognition of those members which excel at each training site location, the following recognitions will be honored during graduation ceremonies:

- a. **Honor Graduate:** This award is based upon an overall G.P.A., attendance, disciplinary actions and includes the scores from the functional skills areas of training including Firearms and Driving and demonstrates behavior that exemplifies the mission and values of the LRGVDC BPOC Academy. At graduation, the cadet with the highest overall score will receive an award for excellence as the honor graduate of the class. ***Any Cadet who has failed an exam and later passed a re-test is not eligible for this award.**
- b. **Top Gun:** The cadet with the highest marksmanship score will receive an award in recognition of his/her skill level with a weapon. This applies only to handgun scores. ***Any Cadet who has failed an exam and later passed a re-test is not eligible for this award.**

PROCEDURE 7.0: CADET PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Disciplinary action for failure to comply with Cadet personal appearance policy will result in termination from the Academy after the cadet has failed to meet the daily inspection standards on no more than five occasions.

7.1 Dress Code Policy

- a. Cadet uniforms shall be worn each training day until graduation unless otherwise directed by Academy staff or instructors.
- b. The cadet uniform will be worn only while attending class, participating in other training activities, or when otherwise authorized by the Academy staff.
- c. The cadet uniform and duty gear must NOT be worn when engaging in personal business, shopping, or other non-Academy activities.
- d. After the cadets have received their required uniforms they will be required to wear their complete duty belt by a date specified by the Academy.
- e. Headgear may be worn only when authorized by BPOC Training Coordinator as official cadet uniform.
- f. Uniforms will be kept neat at all times.

7.2 Personal Grooming and Hygiene

All cadets must exercise respectable personal grooming body hygiene and cleanliness.

- a. **Male Students.** Hair must be worn as to present a neat and conservative appearance. Hair length must not exceed three inches on top. Hair at the base of the scalp must be trimmed so it will not extend below the top end of the collar of the uniform. Hair must be that of a natural color. No eccentric haircuts are allowed, i.e., Mohawks, spikes, horseshoe, etc. Also, earrings and other visible body piercings are not permitted. A daily facial shave is required. No beards or sideburns are allowed. Mustaches, when worn, must not exceed the corners of the lips and the length must not exceed 1/4 of an inch. They must be neatly trimmed so as to present a conservative appearance.
- b. **Female Students.** Hair is to be trimmed in a neat fashion that does not extend below the cap headband on the forehead. Hair must have a neat and conservative appearance. When wearing the Academy uniform, the hair must not extend below the lower end of the collar. When headgear is worn, the hair must not interfere with the fit and appearance of the headgear. Earrings or hair ornaments are not permitted. Hair must be that of a natural color. Makeup must be very conservative.

7.3 Jewelry and Personal Accessories

Standard wristwatches may be worn; smartwatches are not allowed in the classroom. Individuals with wristwatches with alarms, tones or other sounding devices shall secure the wristwatch so that no alarm, tone or noise is sounded from the wristwatch during class. An engagement or wedding ring may be worn. No other rings are permitted. Also, visible body piercings are not permitted. Visible necklaces and other decorative jewelry are prohibited.

PROCEDURE 8.0: PERSONAL CONDUCT

As a cadet of the LRGVDC BPOC Academy, you are considered a public servant. Cadets are reminded that the activities of law enforcement personnel are subject to public scrutiny and review at all times whether on or off duty. As such, cadets should remember that the same high ethical standards will apply in their individual activities regardless of duty status. Violations of Cadet personal conduct policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from the program. Certain conduct violations may vary in disciplinary action response.

8.1 Cadet Behavior Standards

- a. The classroom is to be regarded as a place of learning. Unnecessary distractions and/or conversations are not tolerated.
- b. Cadets will remain alert and awake at all times in the classroom. Cadets will occupy themselves only with Academy business and refrain from non-related reading material or activity.
- c. Cadets will promptly comply with instructions, directions, orders, and assignments given to them by Academy staff members and instructors. Failure to do so will be considered insubordination and will be grounds for termination.
- d. Cadets will address staff and supervisory officers by appropriate title and name. Cadets will be expected to address all instructors as “Sir/Ma’am” or as instructor/rank/last name as appropriate.

Cadets may not speak to instructors in a familiar manner. Instructors will address cadets as “Cadet/last name” as appropriate.

- e. Cadets are not permitted to speak or answer in class unless recognized by the instructor.
- f. The use of any classroom facilities or equipment is permissible only with an instructor’s approval.
- g. Improper or negligent use of any Academy property is prohibited.
- h. Cadets shall refrain from loitering in the hallways or working areas of an assigned building. Improper demeanor while in cadet uniform is prohibited.
- i. Cadets may enter an Instructors Office only after knocking on the door and receiving permission to enter.
- j. Cadets will be expected to come to the position of attention whenever an instructor, Academy staff member, or official visitor enters the classroom for the first time during each training day. Cadets will remain at attention until given the order “as you were” by the official.
- k. Cadets are expected to attend and fully participate in every assigned practical training exercise, field training exercise, physical fitness training session, and homework assignment. All homework assignments must be completed and turned into the instructor at the designated time and date.
- l. Use or possession of any items used as weapons, including, but not limited to, handguns, firearms, ammunition, fireworks, pellet guns, paintball guns, bb guns, knives, or explosive or noxious materials on Academy premises, except for equipment issued or required by the Academy for firearms training or other Academy tactical training at the designated time, are strictly forbidden and will be considered a Class III Offense.
- m. The BPOC Training Coordinator or designee has the authority to determine reparations for certain violations. Reparations may be in the form of writing assignments, physical exercise, additional physical training or any combination.
- n. Cellular phones or personal paging devices of any kind are expressly prohibited within the classroom.
- o. Any cadet who may become physically ill, injured, or who requires medical attention during training is required to notify the on-site instructor or Academy Training Coordinator as soon as practical.
- p. Cadets have no authorized powers other than those of any citizen. Cadets are expected to assist peace officers only when called upon or when the need is apparent.
- q. The carrying of weapons or ammunition by a cadet is prohibited except with staff authorization.
- r. Cadets involved in, or witness to a police related incident will file a written report with the BPOC Training Coordinator within 24 hours of the event.
- s. Cadets shall not consume intoxicants or have the odor of intoxicants on their breath while on duty, or while in uniform on or off duty. No cadet may consume intoxicants to the extent that the cadet becomes intoxicated to any degree.

- t. Contact by cadets with other agencies and persons must be handled in a professional manner as a credit to the Academy.
- u. Cadets shall conduct themselves with courtesy and professional dignity at all times. Discourtesy, rudeness, and/or vulgarity by trainees toward other cadets, citizens, staff, or police officers will not be tolerated and such conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action.
- v. The BPOC Training Coordinator or designee has the authority to determine reparations for certain violations. Reparations may be in the form of writing assignments, physical exercise, additional physical training or any combination.
- w. Cadets may be requested to participate in civil and community engagement activities. While no minimum requirements will be determined for this criterion, each cadet shall volunteer at their availability and represent the Academy with respect, service and honor.
- x. Cadets shall not post video, images, photos, or official Academy training activities to social media outlets. Cadets and/or training site locations are not allowed to create a social media “page”.
- y. Cadets shall not engage in fundraising activities and/or solicit donations aimed to create revenue associated with, or on behalf of the LRGVDC BPOC Academy training; this includes, but is not limited to graduation ceremonies, social events, etc.
- z. Cadet shall not comment or represent on behalf of the LRGVDC BPOC Academy to media outlets.

8.2 Ethical Conduct Policy

The commission of peace officer is one of public trust. A peace officer is a public servant who derives his/her authority from the people of the community the cadet is sworn to serve. In the United States, only the peace officer has been given the legal right under strict circumstances to deprive citizens of their life or liberty in the course of their duties. With the authority given to peace officers comes the burden of great responsibility. As cadets who endeavor to achieve the commission of peace officer, cadets are expected to maintain a posture that is above reproach. Behavior that is unethical, illegal, and/or immoral will not be tolerated.

All cadets of the LRGVDC BPOC Academy must be committed to our key guiding values:

- We treat everyone with respect.
- We are committed to honesty, integrity, and professionalism.
- We serve our community and organization as innovative and creative problem solvers.
- We strive for excellence as a team.

8.3 Harassment, Bias and Intimidation

It is the policy of LRGVDC BPOC Academy to provide and maintain an educational environment that is free of harassment, bias or intimidation. This policy includes but is not limited to any form of harassment that is directed to an individual due to their: gender, sexual preference, race, national origin, religion, age, or disability. All cadets are expected to comply with this policy. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action.

Any cadet who feels that he or she is being subjected to any form of harassment should tell the harasser that he or she finds the conduct offensive and insist that it stop. If the offensive conduct does not cease immediately, or if the cadet is uncomfortable with telling the offending person to stop the conduct, the cadet should report the matter to their instructor, the BPOC Training Coordinator, the Director of Public Safety or the Executive Director of the LRGVDC. If the harassment involves the supervisor, the cadet should contact the Executive Director of the LRGVDC and the Director will investigate the matter promptly and take corrective action as appropriate. Retaliation or reprisal against any cadet for complaining of harassment or discrimination is illegal and will not be tolerated.

8.4 Non-fraternization Policy

Cadets are taught the values of discipline, integrity, and commitment as they undergo training to be Texas peace officers. They are expected to be professionals in every aspect of their conduct and demeanor. Therefore, cadets are forbidden to have intimate relationships with Academy staff and instructors, as well as employees of the LRGVDC, while enrolled in the BPOC. These types of relationships undermine the discipline, ethical conduct, and morale of Academy personnel. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action and the consequent dismissal from the Academy.

PROCEDURE 9.0: DISCIPLINARY POLICY

It is the intent of the Academy staff to protect the rights of each cadet, and to adhere to a system of discipline that provides notice, fairness, equity, and due process. The cadet can thereby be assured of reasonable expectations concerning this procedure. The disposition of disciplinary incidents will conform to the following guidelines as closely as is practical.

The LRGVDC BPOC Academy classifies offenses into Class I or II categories. Each category has specific and individualized disciplinary procedures.

9.1 Class I Offenses

Consist of offenses that are minor to moderate in nature and may lend themselves as opportunities for learning and corrective behavior. Examples of Class I offenses include, but are not limited to:

- a. Tardiness (Fewer than 5 times).
- b. Failure to meet personal appearance standards (Fewer than 5 times).
- c. Failure to meet certain cadet behavior standards (Fewer than 5 times).
- d. Minor act of negligence or inefficiency.
- e. Insubordination (1st offense).
- f. Financial irresponsibility.
- g. Possession of cellular phones or personal paging devices in the classroom.
- h. Other acts or omissions that meet the above description.

9.2 Class II Offenses

Consist of offenses that are serious in nature and may preclude the possibility of continued participation in the program. Class II Offenses are grounds for immediate termination from the program. Examples of Class II offenses include, but are not limited to:

- a. Repetition of a Class I offense.
- b. Tardiness (Greater than 5 times).

- c. Failure to meet personal appearance standards more than 5 times.
- d. Failure to meet certain cadet behavior standards more than 5 times.
- e. *Gross Discourteous Conduct.
- f. *Insubordination (2nd offense).
- g. Gross Insubordination (1st offense).
- h. *Dishonesty.
- i. Violation of safety rules (range, tactical driving, defensive tactics, other).
- j. Improper use of authority.
- k. Intentional or reckless conduct which endangers the health or safety of self or others.
- l. Act of gross negligence in efficiency or competence.
- m. Use of illegal controlled substances at any time, or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on duty.
- n. Consumption of alcohol while in uniform on or off duty.
- o. Committing Assault, Theft, or Terroristic Threats.
- p. Criminal Actions that lead to charges that are classified as Class B Misdemeanors or above.
- q. Use or possession of any items used as weapons, including, but not limited to, handguns, firearms, ammunition, fireworks, pellet guns, paintball guns, bb guns, knives, or explosive or noxious materials on Academy premises, except for equipment issued or required by the Academy for firearms training or other Academy tactical training at the designated time
- r. Failure to reporting incidents or offenses or behavior not reflective of the values, policies, and procedures of the LRGVDC BPOC Academy.
- s. Fraternalization
- t. Patterns of misconduct
- u. Other acts or omissions that meet the above description.

* Definition Provided

Definition of Class II Offenses:

Gross Discourteous Conduct: is conduct by either action or omission that is disrespectful in nature and has the potential of negatively impacting the learning environment. Examples of gross discourteous conduct include but are not limited to: sleeping or otherwise disruptive behavior during class, abusive or obscene language, gestures, or behavior.

Insubordination: is the willful disregard or disobedience of a lawful and ethical order or directive issued by any person with authority over the student to include but not limited to: all Academy staff such as the BPOC Training Coordinator, Training-site Supervisor, Administrative Personal, Staff Instructors, Adjunct Instructors, and or designees of the Academy's authority.

Dishonesty: is any deceptive act or an act that may bring embarrassment, distrust or discredit to the LRGVDC Regional Police Academy, or the law enforcement profession. Acts of dishonesty include but are not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery or acceptance of bribes, destruction of property, theft or concealment. Cheating includes assisting others to cheat or failing to report observing a cheating incident, and includes cheating on quizzes or retests that have no effect on a cadet's G.P.A.

9.3 Disciplinary Procedures

The following process provides a fair and equitable course of progressive action that insures a clear understanding of the remedies to unacceptable behavior. Because not every possible scenario can be addressed in these rules, where disciplinary cases are not specifically addressed, it shall be at the discretion of the BPOC

Training Coordinator, Director of Public Safety and/or Executive Director as to the manner in which the situation will be resolved.

9.4 Disciplinary Process for Class I Offenses

1. Academy Instructor and/or other Academy personnel will immediately address any and all violations with cadet once observed and/or notified.
2. The Academy Instructor and/or other Academy personnel will address the violation with cadet and conduct a one-on-one performance coaching session addressing the disciplinary issue(s) and appropriate corrective action.
3. Following the performance coaching session and acknowledgment of corrective action, cadet will submit a corrective action written report to LRGVDC Training Coordinator to be placed in cadet file.

9.5 Disciplinary Process for Class II Offenses (or repeat Class I Offense)

1. Academy Instructor and/or other Academy personnel will immediately report any and all Class II violations to LRGVDC BPOC Training Coordinator once observed and/or notified.
2. The BPOC Training Coordinator and/or Director of Public Safety will conduct a thorough investigation into the offense including full disclosure and inquiry into the facts and circumstances of the violation.

Note: During an investigation into a Class II offense, the cadet in question may be temporarily removed from BPOC Academy training activities for no more than three (3) full class days while the investigation is ongoing and final action and/or determination is made.

3. **Should it be determined that the cadet may continue the Academy**, the BPOC Training Coordinator will address the violation with cadet and conduct a one-on-one performance coaching session addressing the disciplinary issue(s) and appropriate corrective action.

Note: If reinstated, any absence due to temporary removal will be addressed as per attendance policy.

4. Following the performance coaching session and acknowledgment of corrective action, the cadet will submit a corrective action written report to LRGVDC Training Coordinator to be placed in cadet file and be placed on probationary status.
5. Once a cadet is classified as on probationary status, any further Class II (and certain Class I) infractions will result in immediate dismissal from the BPOC Academy.
6. **Should the violation be determined appropriate for dismissal from the Academy**, the cadet (and sponsoring agency, if applicable) will be notified of dismissal in writing.

9.6 Disciplinary Action Appeal

Any cadet wishing to file an appeal to a disciplinary action, must submit the request in writing directly to the LRGVDC BPOC Training Coordinator as soon as possible, but no later than three (3) calendar days after notification of disciplinary action.

Written appeal request must include:

- a. Facts of the incident;
- b. Witness accounts (if applicable);
- c. Issues of substantive or procedural errors; and/or,
- d. Newly discovered or relevant information that was not available to staff determining disciplinary action.

Appeal response by the LRGVDC BPOC Training Coordinator shall be provided to the cadet, in writing, within three (3) calendar days after receipt.

9.7 Request for Administrative Hearing

The last and final course of action would include a request for administrative hearing directly to the LRGVDC Director of Public Safety or LRGVDC Executive Director.

Any cadet wishing to request an administrative hearing, must submit the request in writing as soon as possible, but no later than three (3) calendar days after appeal response notification.

Written administrative hearing request must include:

- a. Facts of the incident;
- b. Witness testimonies, in writing (if applicable);
- c. Issues of substantive or procedural errors;
- d. Why the appeal response was not satisfactory; and/or,
- e. Newly discovered or relevant information that was not available to staff issuing appeal response.

Based on the statements of the written request, an administrative hearing may be scheduled or final decision response letter will be issued within three (3) calendar days after administrative hearing written request receipt.

Note: If reinstated, any absence due to temporary removal will be addressed as per attendance policy.

PROCEDURE 10.0 BPOC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Regional Police Academy BPOC is a division of LRGVDC's Public Safety Department and will follow LRGVDC's organizational chain-of-command and that of its partnership law enforcement agencies for communication, incident reporting, feedback, etc.

10.1 Academy Personnel Organizational Flow-chart

a. Training-Site Instructor

The assigned training-site instructor will serve as the first line supervisor for the cadet's day-to-day activities.

b. Training-Site Liaison

The training-site liaison is identified as the lead representative of the partnering law enforcement agency.

c. LRGVDC Staff (*Administrative and/or direct instruction staff members*)

LRGVDC administrative and/or instructors may serve as a resource for coordination and curriculum matters of the LRGVDC BPOC Academy.

d. LRGVDC Training Coordinator

The LRGVDC Academy Training Coordinator is responsible to ensure compliance with all state rules, guidelines, maintenance of training files, development of course objectives, lesson plans and the enforcement of all established BPOC rules. The Academy Training Coordinator is a TCOLE-mandated requirement and must be a full-time staff member of the Academy and hold a valid instructor license.

e. LRGVDC Director of Public Safety

The Director oversees the operations of LRGVDC's Public Safety Department including multiple divisions, grants and programs. All Regional Police BPOC Academy staff members report directly to the Director of Public Safety.

f. LRGVDC Executive Director

The LRGVDC Executive Director is the chief administrator of all operations and staff of the Regional Police BPOC Academy. The Executive Director establishes training agreements with Police Chiefs of the region and also directly appoints members to serve on the Police Academy Advisory Committee. Under contract with TCOLE as a regional training provider, the Executive Director upholds compliance and reporting agreements to the state agency.

10.2 Classroom Elected Leadership

Each Cadet training-site class will conduct elections under the direction of the Academy Training Coordinator between the second and fourth week of the Academy. The elected positions are that of President, Vice President, and up to two (2) additional squad leaders. No other class leadership is authorized or recognized.

- a. Any class leader that fails to demonstrate the ability and/or willingness to execute their respective duties will be removed from their position. The BPOC Academy Supervisor will appoint a replacement. All elected or appointed leadership will assist in the coordination of the Academy graduation.
- b. Any class leader that is placed on academic probation will be removed from their position. The BPOC Academy Supervisor will appoint a replacement.

10.3 Class President

Duties: The class president will serve as the primary liaison between the class and Academy staff. All cadet daily task assignments, rosters, etc. will be assigned from Academy staff to the President who may delegate those duties and responsibilities on to his/her squad leaders. The class president will organize the class in up to three (3) operations squads, which will be under supervision of three (3) squad leaders. He or she is ultimately responsible for actions of his/her class. The class president will maintain a class telephone notification roster. The duties of the class president may be delegated to the vice president who will act in place of the president and shall assist in class management where needed.

10.4 Vice President (Squad Leader 1)

Duties: 1st squad leader will serve as class vice president. The class vice president will perform the same duties as the class president in his/her absence. The class will be divided in up to three (3) sections. Each squad leader will have 1/3 of the class assigned to them. The squad leader and his/her squad will complete all assignments given to them by Academy staff or the class president. Cadets will receive training assignments in the skills functional areas by squads. The squad leaders will report to Academy staff through the class president. Squad leaders may delegate assignments to his or her subordinates within each squad.

10.5 Squad Leader 2

Duties: 2nd squad leader will serve as class secretary/treasurer. The secretary/treasurer will keep records as required for the class in session. The class will be divided into three sections. Each squad leader will have 1/3 of the class assigned to them. The squad leader and his/her squad will complete all assignments made to them by Academy staff or the class president. Cadets will receive training assignments in the skills functional areas by squads. The squad leaders will report to Academy staff through the class president. Squad leaders may delegate assignments to his or her subordinates within each squad.

10.6 Squad Leader 3

Duties: 3rd squad leader will serve as class historian. The historian will document anything of historical significance to the class. This may include written or photographic information obtained in corroboration with the instructor that may be shared at graduation. The historian is responsible for leaving historical documentation, plaques, etc. with the Academy upon graduation. The class will be divided into three sections. Each squad leader will have 1/3 of the class assigned to them. The squad leader and his/her squad will complete all assignments made to them by Academy staff or the class president. Cadets will receive training assignments in the skills functional areas by squads. The squad leaders will report to Academy staff through the class president. Squad leaders may delegate assignments to his or her subordinates within each squad.

10.7 Regional Police Academy Advisory Committee

LRGVDC utilizes the collective knowledge and experience of local law enforcement personnel to serve on the Regional Police Academy Advisory Committee.

- a. Committee meetings are held annually at a minimum; however, generally the committee will meet once a quarter. All members are appointed by the LRGVDC Executive Director and composition of the committee includes law enforcement agency chief executives, law enforcement instructors and at least 1/3 general public.
- b. The primary function of the advisory committee is to advise on the development of curricula, provide input into the development of policies and procedures, advise on the need to study, evaluate, and identify specific training needs, advise on the determination of the types, frequency, and location of courses to be offered, advise on the establishment of the standards for admission, prerequisites, minimum and maximum class size, attendance, and retention; and advise on the order of preference among employees or prospective appointees of the sponsoring organization and other persons, if any.
- c. Advisory committee members do not have the authority to make determinations for cadet disciplinary actions, including cadet appeals.

10.8 Report of Non-Compliance Violation

LRGVDC also is committed to investigating and taking appropriate action into reports of non-compliance violations and prohibits retaliation against any person making a report. To submit an identified or anonymous report, please visit the main page of www.lrgvdc.org



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