



LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACADEMY



CADET RULES, POLICIES & PROCEDURES



956-682-3481



LRGVDC ADMINISTRATIVE LOCATION: 301 W RAILROAD ST, WESLACO TX 78596

HANDBOOK
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ACADEMY OVERVIEW & INTRODUCTION



Academy Overview

THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (LRGVDC) OPERATES THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACADEMY WITH OVER 50 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE ADMINISTERING TRAINING RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALIFIED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (LRGVDC) OFFERS SUPPORT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS INCLUDING QUALITY OF LIFE PROJECTS BENEFITING THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY AND SURROUNDING REGION. FORMED IN 1967 THROUGH A MERGER OF THE TEXAS SOUTHMOST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT AND THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS, THE LRGVDC IS ONE OF TWENTY-FOUR (24) STATE PLANNING REGIONS CODIFIED PURSUANT TO THE TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE, CHAPTER 391. THE DESIGNATED GEOGRAPHICAL SERVICE AREA IS COMPRISED OF THE 3,643 SQUARE MILES WHICH INCLUDE THE COUNTIES OF CAMERON, HIDALGO, AND WILLACY. THE LRGVDC IS ACTIVE IN THE FIELDS OF ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, HOMELAND SECURITY, CRIMINAL JUSTICE, LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING, TRANSPORTATION PLANNING, TRANSIT SERVICES, SOLID WASTE PLANNING, WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY PLANNING, SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY, HEALTH, EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION, REGIONAL TRAINING, AND DISASTER RECOVERY. FUNDING TO SUPPORT THESE PROGRAMS IS OBTAINED FROM LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL SOURCES.

THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACADEMY (ACADEMY) PROGRAM WITHIN THE PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT ADMINISTERS TEXAS COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT (TCOLE) LICENSING COURSES.

CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ARE OFFERED THROUGHOUT THE REGION IN COOPERATION WITH VARIOUS LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES. THE ACADEMY CONTINUES ITS EFFORTS TO EXCEED THE MINIMUM STANDARD REQUIRED BY THE STATE AND PROVIDES A HIGH QUALITY, COMPREHENSIVE CADET ACADEMY AS WELL AS IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR CERTIFIED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.

OUR PRIMARY GOAL IS TO PRODUCE HIGHLY TRAINED AND QUALIFIED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC SAFETY PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE REGION. THE LRGV ACADEMY'S SECONDARY GOAL IS TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY IN-SERVICE AND DEVELOPMENTAL TRAINING FOR CERTIFIED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WITHIN THE REGION.

Academy Introduction

CONTAINED WITHIN THIS DOCUMENT ARE THE RULES, REGULATIONS, AND EXPECTATIONS OF LRGV ACADEMY CADETS, INCLUDING THE STANDARDS HELD BY THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACADEMY IN COMPLIANCE WITH TCOLE ACADEMY TRAINING PROVIDER CONTRACT. THIS HANDBOOK WILL ALSO INCLUDE THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ADVISORY BOARD, APPOINTMENT OF A QUALIFIED TRAINING COORDINATOR, THE COMMISSION'S MINIMUM ENROLLMENT AND TRAINING STANDARDS, INSTRUCTOR GUIDES AND LESSON PLANS, AND REPORTING.

ALL CADETS MUST ABIDE BY THE LRGV ACADEMY CADET'S RULES, POLICY AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK OR MAY FACE THE APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINARY ACTION, INCLUDING FAILURE TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THEIR LICENSING COURSE.

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PROCEDURE 1:0 - LRGV ACADEMY CADET ELIGIBILITY

1.1 **CITIZENSHIP**

Applicants must be a United States Citizen. The following are acceptable forms for proof of citizenship;

- a. Birth Certificate
- b. Active U.S. Passport; or
- c. Naturalization Certificate

1.2 **AGE REQUIREMENTS**

- a. For peace officer academy, applicants must be at least 21 years of age prior to the “end of course” review date of the selected academy.
- b. Alternatively, applicants may be 18 years of age if they have obtained an associate degree or completed 60 semester hours of credit from an accredited college or university.
- c. Acceptance may also be granted to applicants who have received an honorable discharge from the armed forces of the United States after a minimum of two years of active service.
- d. For jailer and telecommunicators academy, applicants must be minimum 18 years of age.

Note: These rules are subject to change. It is the responsibility of the cadet to understand and comply with TCOLE regulations, which take precedence over academy rules once the state exam is undertaken.

1.3 **EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

Applicant must provide documentation for one of the following:

- a. A high school diploma or high school transcripts
- b. A general educational development (GED) completion document
- c. Documentation confirming the successful completion of a home school education, equivalent to graduation from a public high school
- d. For enrollment in a basic peace officer academy only, an Honorable Discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States after a minimum of 24 months of active-duty service.

1.4 **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants are required to complete a fingerprint process and obtain a DPS Driving Record to verify the following criteria:

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

The results of the fingerprinting process are determined solely based on the applicant's criminal history records and are not influenced by the academy. If court documents are required, it is the applicant's responsibility to contact the relevant court and provide the necessary documentation to the TCOLE representative in a timely manner. The fingerprint results are final and cannot be altered in any way by the Academy.

A Texas Department of Public Safety type AR driving record shall be submitted by all applications to confirm driver eligibility requirement.

PROCEDURE 1:0 - LRGV ACADEMY CADET ELIGIBILITY

1.5 | **DISQUALIFIERS**

Applicants shall face disqualification for the following reasons pertaining to their employment history:

1. Candidates must exhibit qualities of maturity, dependability, integrity, a commendable work ethic, and loyalty to both past and present employers.
2. The employment history of the applicant, from the age of seventeen (17), must not reveal more than three instances of instability, including excessive tardiness or absenteeism, inefficiency, failure to adhere to directions, policies, and regulations, poor working relationships, or negligent work habits.
3. Those disqualified under the aforementioned criteria may reapply after a period of one (1) year from the date of disqualification.
4. Applicants must not have been terminated, asked to resign, or have resigned from any prior employment due to inappropriate or unlawful conduct, which includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Assault
 - b. Discriminatory or retaliatory acts
 - c. Disorderly conduct or other breaches of peace
 - d. Sex crimes
 - e. Sexual harassment
 - f. Theft
 - g. Threats
 - h. Any felony offense
 - i. Any offense involving acts of moral turpitude.
5. Those disqualified for the reasons listed above may reapply two (2) years from the separation date of the most recent employer involved in the disqualifying cause.
6. Applicants must not have engaged in any occupation deemed illegal by state or federal law.
7. Applicants currently under an internal investigation by their employer will not be accepted until the investigation concludes and the applicant is cleared. In such cases, refer to point #4 & #5.
8. Final approval of any candidate shall be at the sole discretion of the LRGV Academy.

FALSE STATEMENTS OF MATERIAL FACTS

Applicants shall find themselves disqualified for the following reasons pertaining to falsehoods:

1. Applicants are required to embody truthfulness and integrity in their responses regarding their suitability for employment.
2. Those who are discovered to have concealed significant information or engaged in deception or fraudulent practices within their application or examination shall face disqualification.

USE OF ILLICIT SUBSTANCES

To be considered for selection, applicants must exhibit no signs of drug dependency or illegal drug use following a physical examination, urine test, blood test, or other medical assessment designated to unveil the presence of controlled substances. Disqualifications arise for the following concerning the use of forbidden substances.

Applicants shall be disqualified for 60 months, five years, for use of the following substance:

- Used marijuana, synthetic cannabinoids or any other unprescribed illegal drug for the purpose of recreation or intoxication
- Use paint, glue, or other inhalants for the purpose of intoxication

Applicants shall be permanently disqualified for any lifetime use of the following substances:

- LSD, STP, or Psilocybin, or any other illegal hallucinogenic substances
- Cocaine or any derivative thereof
- Methamphetamine or any other illegal amphetamine stimulant
- Unprescribed opioids (ie heroin, morphine, fentanyl, ect.)

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Applicants will be disqualified under the following circumstances:

- 1.If they are under indictment for a felony offense
- 2.If they are under investigation for, or are classified as a suspect in, any criminal offense that may lead a conviction.
- 3.If they have an outstanding warrant for any criminal offense, include traffic warrants

TEMPERATE HABITS

Applicants and cadets are expected to embody the high standards associated with professional law enforcement. They must demonstrate self-restraint in their personal, social, and public conduct, including their interactions on social media. Furthermore, applicants and cadets should not display violent behavior, partisanship, or a lack of self-control. In situations where an applicant is under the influence of alcohol, they are required to exhibit exceptional temperance and show respect for others, as well as for dignity and property.

Applicants will be disqualified for the following reasons and will be ineligible to reapply for a period of one year from the date of disqualification:

- Cadets whose actions or omissions do not adhere to the established standards, reflecting a lack of good moral character or a violation of moral turpitude
- Cadets who have interacted with law enforcement officers must inform the LRGV Academy Training Coordinator of the reason for the contact. There will be no exceptions. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary actions, which may include dismissal from the academy.
- Cadets are required to adhere to the uniform policy outlined in Appendix B of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy Rules and Regulations. Noncompliance will lead to disciplinary actions, potentially culminating in dismissal from the academy.

Applicants and cadets are expected to maintain an appearance befitting a professional police officer. This includes demonstrating moderation and sound judgment regarding personal appearance, such that any body art does not detract from their overall presentation.

Cadets are required to cover any tattoos or inappropriate body art that fall within the classifications outlined below for the duration of their time at the police academy. Noncompliance with this regulation may result in dismissal from the academy.

Inappropriate body art shall be defined as:

- Body art that is obscene or offensive [example: nudity]
- Body art that depicts or advocates discrimination based on sex, age, race, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Body art that depicts or advocates gang affiliation, supremacist or extremist groups, or illegal drug use
- Tattoos that are visible or cannot be covered on the head, face, neck, and hand area.
- Inappropriate body art may be considered a potential disqualifier. Final approval will be made by the LRGV Academy Training Coordinator.

PROCEDURE 1:0 - LRGV ACADEMY CADET ELIGIBILITY

1.6 **MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS [L2]**

Applicants must undergo an examination by a physician approved by the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) and licensed by the Texas Medical Board. This professional must declare the applicant's fitness on a form prescribed by the commission within 180 days prior to the academy start date, affirming that the applicant meets the following criteria:

- a. Applicants must be physically sound and free from any conditions that may adversely affect their ability to perform the essential functions of a peace officer, including:
 - Adequate vision to apprehend suspects, gather information regarding disturbances, respond to service and accident calls, and read and interpret written communications.
 - Sufficient hearing and speech capabilities to communicate clearly and distinctly in person and over the radio, even under normal and adverse conditions.
 - Steady hands and manual dexterity necessary to handle weapons effectively, ensuring the safety of themselves and others.
 - Sufficient stamina and tolerance to remain physically and mentally alert during short bursts of intense activity.
- b. An applicant's drug screening results must indicate no evidence of drug dependency or illegal drug use following a blood test or other medical evaluation. The L-2 results are a prerequisite for the basic licensing course, and these results remain valid for 180 days from the applicant's graduation date from the LRGV Academy.
- c. Failure to secure medical clearance will result in a one-year disqualification from admission to the LRGV Academy.

1.7 **PSYCHOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS [L3]**

- a. Applicants must undergo an in-person evaluation by a psychologist approved by the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) and licensed by either the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists or the Texas Medical Board. The psychologist must complete an L-3 form prescribed by the commission, certifying that the applicant is in satisfactory psychological and emotional health to serve in the capacity for which the license is sought. This evaluation must occur within 180 days prior to the academy's start date and should assess appropriate personality traits and psychopathology.
- b. Results from a satisfactory psychological examination (L-3) conducted as part of a basic licensing course will remain valid for 180 days following the individual's graduation from the academy.
- c. Should an applicant fail to obtain psychological endorsement, they must wait a minimum of one-year before being eligible for re-admission to the LRGV Academy.

1.8 **L2 & L3 PAPERWORK**

Applicants shall not have access to TCOLE forms regarding the L2 & L3 paperwork. The LRGV Academy staff will coordinate the physical transaction of these forms with clinical staff.

1.9 **PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Cadets must be able to demonstrate the basic physical functions of the police recruit job description. Cadets must complete a physical assessment which measures cardiovascular endurance, strength, and flexibility. This assessment shall include the following;

- a. 1.5 mile run
- b. 1 minute maximum Push ups
- c. 1 minute maximum Sit ups
- 10 yard dummy drag

LRGV Academy shall have the final discretion regarding admissions based on the totality of the circumstances regarding an applicant's background.

PROCEDURE 2:0 - APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1 | ENTRANCE EXAMINATION ENROLLMENT

Applicants must pass a general aptitude examination measuring cognitive ability. Refer to the following for instructions to apply.

- LRGV Academy Entrance Exam dates will be posted on the official LRGV Academy website and will be administered periodically in accordance with scheduled LRGV Academy start dates. Register for Exam (registration link can be found on the official LRGV Academy Page) (Entrance Exam dates are only posted while they are being offered.)
- Print out and complete the LRGV Academy Application. Download application at the LRGV Academy Website
- LRGV Academy Entrance Examination fee is established at \$25.00 payable by check or money order made out to the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council at testing site prior to being admitted for exam.
- If applicant is honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States, they may have the LRGV Academy Entrance Examination fee of \$25.00 waived on their first attempt.

2.2 | ENTRANCE EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS

- a. Applicants must achieve a minimum passing score of 70.00% on the pre-entrance examination.
- b. Applicants are permitted two re-tests of the examination. Those who do not pass after three attempts will be ineligible for admission to the academy and must wait one year from the date of their third attempt before re-testing.
- c. Pre-enrollment testing scores remain valid for one year from the examination date for applicants who choose to defer their admission. It is imperative that applicants notify the academy's administrative staff of their deferment to maintain their file, as applicant files may be disposed of if no contact is established.

2.3 | TESTING DAY

The anticipated duration for testing is between one to three hours, although it may extend beyond three hours. Applicants are advised to plan accordingly.

Required Documents for Testing:

- Proof of Citizenship
- Texas Driver's License
- Social Security Card
- Birth Certificate
- High School Diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED)
- Payment of \$25
- Vehicle Insurance

Upon achieving a minimum score of 70.00% on the Entrance Exam, applicants will receive preliminary acceptance and must submit the LRGV application to the academy staff. Examination scores will be communicated as soon as feasible.

Please note that achieving the LRGV Academy's minimum passing score does not guarantee admission. Applicants with higher scores will receive priority for available positions. It is essential for applicants to maintain open communication with the academy staff; failure to do so may result in the forfeiture of their spot on the academy list. Final Entry Paperwork: Applicants who have successfully passed the entrance exam will receive a copy along with instructions for the following required documents:

1. Personal History Statement
2. Instructions for L2 Form – Medical Exam and Drug Screening
3. Instructions for L3 Form – Psychological and Emotional Health Declaration
4. FAST Fingerprint Background Check
5. Proof of Liability Insurance
6. Type AR Driving Record (must clear all pending violations)
7. For Veterans Only: A copy of the DD214, Joint Service Transcripts, all post-secondary transcripts, and the Certificate of Eligibility (C.O.E.) must be submitted.

PROCEDURE 2:0 - APPLICATION PROCESS

2.4 | APPLICATION PACKET DEADLINE

Final entry paperwork is due by the specified date set by the LRGV Academy staff.

PROCEDURE 3:0 - TUITION

3.1 | TUITION FEES

The LRGV Academy's peace officer academy tuition cost is \$2,500.00. Additional cost for entry paperwork and transaction/processing service fees will be applied. Applicants are responsible for coordinating with each facility to determine the cost for required documents.

All other LRGV academy licensing course tuition cost is \$1,250.00. Additional cost for entry paperwork and transaction/processing service fees will be applied. Applicants are responsible for coordinating with each facility to determine the cost for required documents.

3.2 | METHOD OF PAYMENT

Cashiers check or money orders must be made payable to LRGVDC:

LRGVDC or Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
301 W Railroad St
Weslaco Tx 78595

**Notes/memo: LRGV Academy

No cash or credit card payments allowed.

3.3 | PAYMENT DEADLINES

Peace Officer course enrollment: Tuition payment is due on the first day of orientation for the LRGV Academy. Payment extension is available if approved by the LRGV Academy training coordinator or Chief Administrator (Executive Director of the LRGVDC). Prior approval must be granted before entering into a payment arrangement plan.

All other licensing course enrollment will require a minimum ½ tuition on the first day of class and ½ tuition to be paid prior to the end date of licensing course. Failure to pay the remaining tuition balance for any licensing course will result in a lack of final endorsement from the LRGV Academy.

3.4 | PAYMENT GUIDELINES & PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

If a payment arrangement is approved, a total payment of \$1,250 is required on the first day of orientation. A second payment of \$625 will be due within 30 calendar days from the commencement of the academy, followed by a final payment of \$625 due within 60 calendar days from the start of the program.

- a. Failure to remit the tuition balance in full by the specified deadlines will result in dismissal from the academy.
- b. Cadets opting for the payment plan must sign a tuition agreement.
- c. Failure to sign or adhere to the terms of the written agreement will automatically result in dismissal from the academy.
- d. Veteran cadets must sign a tuition agreement reflecting the total out-of-pocket cost if their VA benefits entitlement is less than 100% (refer to Procedure 3.6).
- e. Should a veteran cadet fail to complete the full LRGV Academy course, they will incur a total VA debt management calculation based on the hours not completed and must settle this debt with the LRGVDC.
- f. In the event of separation from the academy for any reason, any outstanding balance shall be nullified. Returning cadets must adhere to the entry process and payment guidelines upon re-enrollment in a new academy.
- g. Cadets sponsored by any entity not directly affiliated with the academy are required to follow the entry process, provide necessary information to the appropriate parties, and ensure that the tuition balance is settled.

PROCEDURE 3:0 - TUITION

3.5 **REFUND POLICY**

The LRGVDC policy pertains to cadets who either voluntarily withdraw from or are terminated from the LRGV Academy.

- a. Cadets who voluntarily withdraw before the fifth calendar day of the scheduled class will be eligible for a refund of 50% of their initial payment.
- b. Cadets who voluntarily withdraw after five days from the commencement of the scheduled class will not receive a refund of course fees.

Cadets who are dismissed from the academy due to violations of academy rules and regulations, disciplinary actions, or breaches of statutory law will forfeit their fees. Additionally, cadets are required to return all assigned equipment related to academy training. Failure to return LRGV Academy equipment will result in charges of theft.

3.6 **VETERANS EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS**

Benefits may be certified for the academy sites. Qualifying chapters include the following:

- Chapter 30 - Montgomery GI Bill® Active Duty (MGIB-AD)
- Chapter 33 - Post-9/11 GI Bill®
- Chapter 35 - Survivors and Dependent Assistance
- Chapter 1606 - Montgomery GI Bill® Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR)

Veterans seeking eligibility for VA Benefits must provide copies of the following documents:

- Educational Certificate of Eligibility (C.O.E.)
- DD214
- Joint Service (Military) Transcripts
- All Post-Secondary Transcripts (any educational records beyond high school)
- Additional items as required by the academy.

- a. The C.O.E. will indicate the remaining months and days of benefits, along with the total percentage of payable entitlement. Cadets will incur out-of-pocket expenses for any entitlement percentage below 100%. Cadets are responsible for signing a tuition agreement for any portion of the tuition not covered by their benefits entitlement.
- c. Should a veteran cadet fail to complete the full LRGV Academy, they will incur a total monetary VA debt corresponding to the hours not completed and must resolve this debt with the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Corporation (LRGVDC).
- d. In the event of separation from the academy for any reason, the outstanding balance must be settled in full, or the veteran will be denied reentry to the Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy until the debt is cleared.

In accordance with Title 38 US Code 3679 subsection (e), the LRGV Academy adopts the following additional provisions for any students using the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Post 9/11 GI Bill® (Ch.33) or Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (Ch.31) benefits, while payment to the college is pending from the VA. The LRGV Academy will not:

- prevent the student's enrollment
- Assess a late penalty fee to the student
- require the student to secure alternative or additional funding
- Deny the student access to any resources (access to classes, libraries, or other institutional facilities) available to other students who have satisfied their tuition & fee bills to the institution.

However, to qualify for this provision, such students are required to:

- Produce the VA Certificate of Eligibility (COE) or Form 28-1905 by the Last Day to Add/Drop class (per academic calendar)
- Submit a request to be certified or have a conversation with the college's SCO
- Provide additional information needed to properly certify the enrollment as described in other school policies

GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government Web site at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>. For more information, visit the GI Bill Comparison Tool at www.vets.gov/gi-bill-comparison-tool. For assistance, please contact the Education Call Center at 1-888-GI-BILL-1 or 1-888-442-4551.

PROCEDURE 3:0 - TUITION

3.7 | **SPONSORED CADETS**

Sponsored cadets are defined as individuals who have entered into an agreement with a third-party agency. The cadet and the sponsoring agency negotiate the payment of tuition and academy-related expenses. Any costs not covered by the sponsoring agency will be the responsibility of the cadet.

Testing:* Sponsored cadets must take the entrance exam and are required to register for an exam date. On the day of the exam, they need only to present a valid Texas Driver's License and remit a \$25 exam fee. Sponsored cadets must adhere to the testing standards set forth by the LRGV Academy. They are permitted two re-tests for the examination.

It is the responsibility of the sponsored cadet to inform their sponsoring agency of the results from the LRGV Academy entrance exam.

3.8 | **SPONSORING AGENCIES**

The sponsoring agency is responsible for conducting all necessary background procedures for the sponsored cadet. This includes maintaining a personnel file that contains all requisite documents to meet the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) eligibility for licensing and enrollment. These documents must be retained by the sponsoring agency in preparation for any potential TCOLE audit.

Before the commencement of the academy, sponsoring agencies are required to provide the following documents to the LRGV Academy:

- Signed original LRGVDC DOLCEE Application
- Declaration of Licensing Course Enrollment Eligibility
- L.E. Audit Checklist (TCOLE)

The LRGV Academy acknowledges that certain sponsored cadets may be employed by the sponsoring agency. However, the sponsoring agency recognizes that the rules, policies, and procedures of the LRGV Academy will take precedence over those of the sponsoring agency while the cadet is enrolled in the academy.

3.9 | **TRAINING LOCATION ASSIGNMENT**

The LRGV Academy operates multiple training sites throughout the region, with each Academy functioning concurrently at all authorized locations. While cadets may indicate their preferred training site in their application packet, the LRGV Academy reserves the right to reassign locations based on logistical considerations, classroom capacity, or other circumstances deemed necessary.

PROCEDURE 4:0 - REQUIRED SUPPLIES

4.1 | **UNIFORM & EQUIPMENT LIST**

Equipment Purchasing Guidelines for Cadets

Each cadet is responsible for acquiring their own equipment no later than 30 calendar days following the academy's start date. All supplies must adhere to academy specifications, be in new or "like new" condition, and free from defects.

Required Equipment:

- a. Academy uniform shirt as specified by academy staff.
- b. BDU/cargo pants in khaki, as specified by academy staff.
- c. A minimum of four nylon belt keepers.
- d. Duty gun belt (nylon).
- e. Expandable baton and case (21 – 26 inches).
- f. Handheld flashlight holder or pouch (nylon), with a minimum output of 1500 lumens (examples include Stream light, Stinger, Striker).
- g. Footwear (black, must be capable of holding a shine).
- h. Handcuffs and handcuff case (Smith & Wesson or H&K) [2 minimum]
- i. Holster, as specified by academy staff.
- j. Inner belt (black).
- k. Double magazine pouch (nylon).
- l. OC spray case (small).
- m. Inner duty belt with Velcro (if applicable).
- n. Training replica gun (Glock model 17 / 9mm in orange)
- o. Physical training gear, which includes a gray T-shirt, Black athletic shorts without stripes or designs & athletic shoes

PROCEDURE 4:0 - REQUIRED SUPPLIES

4.1
CONT

Ammunition Purchase:

Ammunition is recommended to be purchased after Chapter 29.

p. 500 rounds of 9mm pistol ammunition (no steel, reloaded, or hollow point ammunition allowed).

q. 15 rounds of shotgun ammunition (00 buck, 9 pellet).

r. 10 rounds of shotgun ammunition (slugs).

s. 50 rounds of shotgun ammunition (field/bird load).

t. 100 rounds of rifle ammunition (5.56 or .223).

Note: Ammunition requirements may vary based on adjustments in firearms training. Cadets will be informed of the necessary rounds prior to range attendance. Live firearms will be supplied during firearms qualification training (Chapter 41). Cadets may choose to purchase their own handguns at their discretion.

Dress Code: During the first 30 days of class, cadets are required to observe a business casual dress code, which includes a polo, button-down, or collared shirt (with sleeves), slacks, and closed-toed footwear. The following items are prohibited: graphic tees, tight or revealing clothing, jeans, skirts, pumps, or sandals.

PROCEDURE 5:0 - ATTENDANCE POLICY

5.1 **GENERAL SCHEDULE - TIME & HOURS**

In compliance with the regulations established by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) the licensing course must meet the minimum training hours specified by the TCOLE curriculum. This requirement also applies to any additional courses that may be introduced based on recommendations from the advisory committee. Please be aware that certain courses may require evening or weekend sessions, which will be indicated on the monthly class calendar provided to cadets. It is important to note that occasional adjustments to the schedule may occur due to unforeseen circumstances. Consequently, all academy schedules are subject to change.

Hours of Operation:

· Day Academies

Monday - Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

· Night Academies

Monday - Thursday from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM & Saturday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

5.2 **LRGV ACADEMY CALENDAR**

Cadets will be provided with a calendar detailing the dates, times, and scheduled topics of instruction. It is essential to note that the calendar may be subject to modifications. In the event of any schedule changes, cadets will be promptly informed. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of each cadet to remain aware of these adjustments and to prepare accordingly. Live calendar shall be available on the LRGV Academy website.

5.3 **CLASS START TIME**

Classes will commence punctually at the designated date, time, and location as outlined in the calendar. The academy reserves the right to adjust the start time to better align with the training objectives of the subject matter, as well as the availability of off-site training facilities.

5.4 **TARDINESS**

Tardiness exceeding 15 minutes will be recorded as one missed hour in relation to attendance standards. Repeated or habitual tardiness, regardless of duration, may lead to appropriate disciplinary measures.

5.5 **MANDATORY IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT - TCOLE COMPLIANCE**

The LRGV Academy follows the guidelines established by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) for Region 3, which requires 100% in-person instructional training during the entire active academy session. This in-person training is a prerequisite for eligibility to take the state licensing examination.

PROCEDURE 5:0 - ATTENDANCE POLICY

5.6 REPORTING ABSENCE

It is the cadet's responsibility to promptly inform the LRGV Academy Training Coordinator of any anticipated absences resulting from medical emergencies, court appearances, or other exceptional circumstances. A medical certificate or relevant documentation may be requested for verification purposes.

5.7 AUTHORIZED ABSENCE

Absences resulting from exceptional or unforeseen circumstances may be approved by the LRGV Academy Training Coordinator. In these instances, the cadet must complete an absence form detailing the plan to compensate for the anticipated missed hours.

5.8 ATTENDANCE RECORDS & REPORTING

It is imperative that LRGV Academy staff maintain accurate attendance records for all trainees. These records must be submitted to TCOLE as required and should be readily available for inspection during audits. Cadets are responsible for making up any missed hours through in-person classroom and instructional training, accompanied by the necessary documentation. Noncompliance with TCOLE regulations may result in a cadet's failure to receive final endorsement at the conclusion of the active academy session.

5.9 FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In the case of an authorized absence arising from exceptional circumstances, the staff at LRGV Academy will collaborate with the cadet and site instructor to devise and approve an alternative arrangement for making up the in-person instructional training. Should the cadet fail to attend and complete the alternative opportunity, it will be the cadet's responsibility to obtain the requisite instruction and documentation at their own expense before final endorsement can be granted.

PROCEDURE 6:0 - ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

The LRGV Academy upholds rigorous standards of achievement. The law enforcement profession necessitates a high level of knowledge, skills, and abilities, which are essential for maintaining an officer's pride, proficiency, and personal safety throughout their career. Failure to meet the minimum acceptable performance standards in any area may result in termination from the Academy. The licensing curriculum at LRGV Academy is governed by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement. Cadets must successfully complete all components of the individual licensing courses, and no credit will be granted for prior education before enrollment.

6.1 GRADE POINT AVERAGE

To remain in the Academy, cadets must achieve a minimum score of 80 or higher on all examinations to uphold the academic standards.

Content proficiency will be assessed through the following criteria:

- Individual Chapter Examinations
- One (1) Mid-term Examination
- One (1) Comprehensive Final Examination
- Participation in Physical Training
- Engagement in Reality-Based Training
- Demonstration of Firearms Proficiency

6.2 CHAPTER EXAMINATION

Each topic included in the LRGV Academy is 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.

PROCEDURE 6:0 - ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

6.3 **MID-TERM & FINAL EXAMINATION**

The Mid-Term Exam will assess cadet understanding of the course content covered thus far in the academy. Additionally, a Comprehensive Final Examination will be administered at the conclusion of the academy, encompassing topics addressed throughout the entire duration of the program.

6.4 **RETEST POLICY**

- a. All examinations are assessed on a scale of 1 to 100. Cadets must achieve a minimum score of 80% on each exam to be considered passing. The Academy does not round up scores.
- b. Cadets are permitted a total of three (3) retest attempts for Individual Chapter Exams.
- c. If a cadet exhausts all retest attempts, they will be dismissed for academic failure after the fourth unsuccessful Individual Chapter Exam.
- d. The Midterm Exam is subject to the same retest policy as the Individual Chapter Exams.
- e. Cadets are allowed only one (1) retest opportunity for the Comprehensive Final Exam.
- f. Failure on the retest for the Comprehensive Final Exam will result in immediate dismissal due to academic failure.
- g. In the event of academic failure from the LRGVDC or another provider's licensing course or another providers licensing course, the applicant must wait a minimum of one year before being eligible for admission to the Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy.

6.5 **PHYSICAL TRAINING PARTICIPATION**

Physical fitness assessments are mandatory for many law enforcement agencies. Throughout the academy, physical fitness programs will be implemented to aid cadets in reducing stress levels, enhancing endurance and strength, fostering teamwork, and meeting the employment requirements set by law enforcement agencies. Participation in physical training is compulsory for all cadets, who must successfully complete designated physical examination benchmarks as well as a final physical fitness examination.

Cadets with preexisting conditions or impairments that may hinder their ability to participate in physical activities are required to promptly inform the police academy staff and provide a physician's release form.

6.6 **REALITY BASED TRAINING**

Practical skill assessments will be administered to evaluate each cadet's ability to demonstrate the skills acquired throughout the course. Cadets will be required to perform in various simulated scenarios, during which they will be closely monitored and assessed. A cadet who fails to achieve an acceptable level of proficiency may not meet the minimum standards for graduation.

6.7 **PERFORMANCE TEST**

1. TxDot Accident Reports/Investigation: [For Peace Officer Courses Only]

The ability of a cadet to perform effectively in a controlled accident scene simulation is essential. These simulations provide an opportunity for cadets to demonstrate their competencies at a level acceptable to law enforcement.

Inadequate performance during the simulation may indicate an inability to fulfill the necessary police responsibilities. Any cadet who does not successfully complete the simulation will have the opportunity to participate in a subsequent accident scene simulation. A further failure will lead to dismissal from the police academy. Each cadet will conduct an investigation of a vehicle accident scene, during which qualified personnel will evaluate individual performance in the following areas:

- a) Approaching the scene, including appropriate use of the police radio.
- b) Safety awareness and responsiveness.
- c) Management of the entire accident scene, encompassing complainants, suspects, and witnesses.
- d) Adherence to Academy policies and procedures.
- e) Collaboration, support, and coordination with colleagues.
- f) Acceptance and implementation of constructive criticism.
- g) Filing appropriate charges, if warranted.
- h) Accurate completion of all required documentation.

The content of the crash paperwork will be assessed for both accuracy and neatness.

6.7 **PERFORMANCE TEST**
CONT**2. Vehicle Traffic Stops [For Peace Officer Course Only]**

Cadets will be evaluated on their performance during controlled vehicle traffic stops. These scenarios provide cadets with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to execute police tasks to an acceptable standard. Cadets who do not adhere to the established regulations during a traffic stop will have the chance to retake the vehicle stop tactics drill. However, failure to demonstrate proficiency in the makeup simulation will result in dismissal from the police academy.

3. Defensive Tactics [For Peace Officer Course Only]

The capacity of a cadet to effectively engage in defensive tactics under controlled conditions is critical. This aspect of training allows cadets to showcase their ability to defend themselves and others against unarmed assailants. Inadequate performance during an unarmed confrontation suggests that the cadet may not be capable of fulfilling police responsibilities effectively. Cadets who do not succeed in defensive tactics will be granted an opportunity to participate in a supplementary drill. The policy of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy stipulates that ongoing failure in defensive tactics is indicative of a cadet's inability or unwillingness to perform police duties properly and may result in dismissal from the Academy.

4. Crime Scene Program [For Peace Officer Course Only]

Crime scene simulations are regularly conducted at the Academy, and cadets are required to participate to evaluate their responses in high-pressure situations. These simulations aim to recreate realistic crime scenarios, allowing cadets to practice making rapid decisions while ensuring quality control over the crime scene. Participants will learn essential skills, including proper patrol procedures, the creation of offense reports, completion of requisite forms, and filing appropriate charges for each offense. Cadets who fail to complete or pass the initial crime scene simulation will be afforded a chance to retake it. However, failure to perform adequately in the second simulation will lead to dismissal from the police academy.

During these simulations, qualified personnel will assess cadets based on their performance in the following areas:

- a) Approach to the scene, including appropriate use of the police radio.
- b) Safety awareness and reaction.
- c) Control of the crime scene area, encompassing complainants, witnesses, and suspects.
- d) Maintenance of crime scene integrity.
- e) Adherence to departmental policies and procedures.
- f) Compliance with the Texas Penal Code and Academy policy regarding the use of deadly force.
- g) Cooperation, support, and coordination with partners.
- h) Acceptance and implementation of constructive criticism.

5. CPR/First Aid [All licensing courses]

Cadets are required to maintain current CPR/First Aid certification. The academy will provide an initial opportunity for cadets to obtain this certification. Should a cadet fail to pass the first CPR/First Aid course, they will be financially responsible for enrolling in a second class. Failure to achieve CPR/First Aid certification will be grounds for dismissal from the police academy. Cadets who are already certified at the time of enrollment, and whose certification does not expire before graduation, will have the option to renew their existing CPR/First Aid certification.

6. Patrol Procedures [For Peace Officer Course Only]

The Patrol Procedures module is designed to simulate realistic crime-in-progress scenarios, allowing cadets to assess their ability to respond effectively in high-stress situations. Cadets are expected to demonstrate the capacity to make swift and accurate decisions akin to those encountered during routine patrols.

6.7
CONT

PERFORMANCE TEST

6. Patrol Procedures [For Peace Officer Course Only] cont.

This module provides each cadet with the opportunity to showcase their competency in performing essential police tasks. A failure to execute these tasks satisfactorily during a patrol reenactment signifies the cadet's inability to meet the standards required for police work. Cadets who do not meet these standards will be given a chance to rectify their performance by participating in a supplementary practical exercise. However, if a cadet fails to perform adequately during the makeup session, it will indicate an inability or unwillingness to properly execute police tasks, potentially resulting in dismissal from the Academy.

Each cadet may also be required to prepare an offense report and complete the necessary documentation to file the appropriate charges. All submitted paperwork will be evaluated based on content, accuracy, and presentation.

During the exercises, qualified personnel will assess each cadet's performance in the following areas:

- a) Approach to the scene, including the effective use of police radio communication.
- b) Safety awareness and appropriate reactions.
- c) Control of the entire crime scene, encompassing complainants, witnesses, and suspects.
- d) Adherence to departmental policies and procedures.
- e) Compliance with the Texas Penal Code and Academy policies regarding the use of deadly force.
- f) Collaboration, support, and coordination with partners.
- g) Acceptance of and responsiveness to constructive criticism.

6.8

EXPOSURES [For Peace Officer Course Only]

Cadets are required to obtain multiple certifications for the authorized use of non - lethal weapons. Specifically, they must be certified in the use of OC Spray, ASP Baton, and Taser. It is imperative that cadets receive thorough training in the use and maintenance of all authorized less-lethal tools. Each cadet must demonstrate the ability to properly utilize, maintain, and meet safety qualifications for these tools. Should a cadet fail the OC Spray Certification, ASP Baton Certification, or Taser Certification, they will have the opportunity to rectify the failure by participating in an additional practical assessment. Failure to meet the standards for any of these certifications may result in dismissal from the Academy. Furthermore, a refusal to complete any of the required certifications will signal a cadet's inability to perform essential law enforcement tasks and will also constitute grounds for dismissal from the Academy.

6.9

FIREARMS PROFICIENCY [For Peace Officer Course Only]

Firearms proficiency necessitates adequate hand strength, trigger control, and overall physical conditioning. The extensive training devoted to this critical skill is designed to equip cadets with the necessary abilities to achieve the required proficiency. Prior to engaging in range training, all cadets must agree, in writing, to adhere to established range safety rules. It is essential that all safety directives provided by the range officer, firearms instructor, and Academy staff are strictly followed. Grounds for dismissal include violations of safety rules and failure to meet training requirements. A cadet must achieve a minimum score of 80% on the qualification course and pass the written firearms examination to successfully complete the training program. No firearms are to be brought onto the Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy premises by any cadet unless expressly authorized by the firearms instructor or Academy staff.

Cadets are required to qualify using a semi-automatic handgun, which will be provided by the Police Academy.

6.10

INJURIES

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy does not provide medical insurance for cadets in training. As such, the Academy will not be held liable for any injuries sustained by cadets during their training. Although the Academy has an excellent record of minimizing cadet injuries, it is recommended that cadets obtain short-term medical coverage if they do not already possess a medical policy. All cadets are required to report any injuries, regardless of severity, to their classroom chain of command. For example, a cadet must report an injury to the class president, who will then inform the Academy instructor, who will subsequently notify the Academy Coordinator.

PROCEDURE 6:0 – ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

6.11 | ADMINISTRATION TESTING PROCEDURES

The Academy upholds academic integrity through the careful maintenance and security of testing materials and examination documents. Each exam site will be assigned a testing proctor, who will be present for the duration of all examinations, including retests. Retest examinations will be scheduled at a time and location convenient for academy staff and must be coordinated with prior notice. Cadets will be allotted one (1) hour to complete chapter exams and three (3) hours for both the Mid-Term and Final Exams.

To prevent academic dishonesty, the following procedures are established for examination:

- a. Cadets will adhere to the normal daily formation routine in their assigned uniforms, which includes inspection, pledge, and recitation of the Code of Ethics.
- b. Personal belongings will not be permitted in the classroom during the examination.
- c. Cadets will take their assigned seats once instructed to enter the classroom.
- d. Once the exam has commenced, cadets will not be allowed to leave the classroom for any reason.
- e. Cadets may leave the classroom only after completing the exam and placing their testing materials on the desk or turning them in as directed by the exam proctor.
- f. A brief break will be provided at the discretion of the exam proctor, after which cadets will be instructed to re-enter the classroom for grading.

6.12 | CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION & NOTETAKING

Cadets are expected to engage fully in all lessons and are encouraged to ask questions when necessary. Study groups may be assigned to enhance understanding of chapter material and improve academic performance. Consistent study habits are essential; therefore, non-academic time should be dedicated to reviewing class materials or reference resources.

Cadets are required to take meticulous notes during all lectures. Students must maintain a permanent notebook (three-ring binder) for organizing handouts and notes.

6.13 | LICENSING EXAMINATION ENDORSEMENT

Endorsement for the State Licensing Examination will be granted to the following:

- Cadets who maintain an average grade of 80%
- Cadets who complete the required classroom hours
- Cadets who participate in the essential practical, physical, and reality-based training

Cadets who do not meet the aforementioned standards will not receive graduation status from the Academy and will be ineligible to participate in Academy graduation ceremonies.

6.14 | RETENTION OF RECORDS, GRADES, & TRANSCRIPTS

LRGV Academy maintains hard copies of all cadet records, including grades, for a duration of five years. This encompasses records for cadets who utilize veteran benefits. It is important to note that LRGV Academy is not an accredited institution of higher learning and does not issue transcripts. All relevant educational information is recorded in TCLEEDS, a statewide database managed by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement. Each cadet receives a copy of their TCLEEDS personal service record, which includes a comprehensive history of their training and education. These personal history records serve as a substitute for transcripts when seeking academic credit at other institutions. After five years, all hard copies of cadet records are securely destroyed.

6.15 | ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION

The LRGV Academy and the profession of law enforcement require a high standard of achievement, knowledge, ability, and skills. In recognition of those members who excel at each training site, the following honors will be presented during graduation ceremonies:

- a. Honor Graduate: This certificate is awarded based on an overall GPA, attendance, and disciplinary record, as well as scores from functional skills training areas. It also reflects behavior that embodies the mission and values of the LRGV Academy. At graduation, the cadet with the highest overall GPA will receive a certificate of excellence as the Honor Graduate of the class.

PROCEDURE 6:0 - ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

6.15 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION

CONT

- b. Leadership: This certificate recognizes outstanding demonstration of courage, decisiveness, passion, support, humility, empathy, and honesty, in alignment with the mission and values of the LRGV Academy. The cadet exhibiting the highest overall score will be awarded a certificate for excellence in leadership at graduation.
- c. Reproduction of Certificates: Reproduction of original or copies of certificates is not permitted if a cadet's graduation occurred outside the tenure or signing authority of the Chief Administrator/LRGVDC Executive Director. The LRGV Academy does not maintain records or copies of graduation certificates, as it is not required to do so.

PROCEDURE 7:0 - CADET PERSONAL APPEARANCE

The Academy enforces disciplinary measures for non-compliance with the cadet personal appearance policy. Cadets who fail to meet the daily inspection standards on more than three occasions will face disciplinary action from the Academy. It is imperative that cadets adhere to the dress code policies outlined below.

7.1 DRESS CODE POLICY

- a. Cadets must be in full uniform by the date specified by the Academy Instructor.
- b. Cadets are required to wear uniforms at all times while on academy premises, unless otherwise directed by Academy staff or instructors.
- c. Authorization for cadet headgear lies with the LRGV Academy Training Coordinator. Headgear is prohibited indoors unless specifically permitted by the Training Coordinator. All headgear must receive prior approval from the Training Coordinator.
- d. Cadets are expected to maintain their uniforms in a clean and organized manner.
- e. Cadets are not permitted to wear uniforms or duty gear outside the academy for personal business or non-academic activities.
- f. Unless otherwise specified, all undershirts must be white and short-sleeved.
- g. Non-matching jackets, hoodies, sweatshirts, sweaters, or pullovers are not authorized.
- h. Cadets must maintain uniformity during class sessions at all times.

7.2 JEWELRY & PERSONAL ACCESSORIES

Standard wristwatches are permitted; however, smartwatches are prohibited in the classroom during examinations. Watches equipped with alarm tones must be silenced or set to vibrate during instructional hours. Academy staff and instructors retain the authority to restrict cadets from possessing any electronic devices in the classroom if deemed necessary.

7.3 PERSONAL GROOMING & HYGIENE

All cadets are required to maintain respectable body hygiene, personal grooming, and cleanliness. Please refer to the specific requirements outlined below.

- a. **Male Students:** Hair must be of a natural color and styled in a neat and professional manner. The length of hair on top must not exceed three inches, and hair at the nape of the neck must be trimmed to ensure it does not extend below the top of the uniform collar. Eccentric hairstyles, such as Mohawks, spikes, or horseshoe cuts, are not permitted. Earrings and other visible body piercings are prohibited. Cadets must shave daily; beards and sideburns are not allowed. Mustaches, if worn, must not extend beyond the corners of the lips and should not exceed a length of 1/4 inch. Facial hair must be neatly trimmed and presented in a conservative manner. Male cadets may wear a wedding ring, but no other rings are permitted. No curled styled mustaches are permitted.
- b. **Female Students:** Hair must be of a natural color and styled neatly. Hair should be secured with a hair tie and must not extend below the headband of the cap or the lower edge of the collar. When wearing headgear, hair must not interfere with its fit or appearance. Earrings, necklaces, visible body piercings, hair ornaments, or other decorative jewelry are prohibited. Engagement or wedding rings may be worn, but no additional rings are allowed. Minimal makeup is permitted; however, dramatic eyelashes, bold lipstick, or eyeshadow are not allowed.

PROCEDURE 8:0 - PERSONAL CONDUCT

As a cadet of the LRGV Academy, you are recognized as a public servant. Cadets are subject to public scrutiny and must avoid questionable behavior both on and off duty. It is imperative that cadets uphold the same ethical standards expected of law enforcement professionals. Any violations of the cadet personal conduct policy may lead to disciplinary measures or severe repercussions, including termination.

8.1 CADET STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

- a. Cadets are required to address all instructors as “Sir” or “Ma’am,” or by using the appropriate title along with their rank and last name. Additionally, cadets should refer to staff and supervisory officers using their appropriate titles and names.
- b. Cadets are required to knock on the door and obtain permission before entering an instructor’s office.
- c. Cadets are prohibited from speaking or responding in class unless they have been acknowledged by the instructor.
- d. Cadets are expected to promptly adhere to all instructions, directions, orders, and assignments issued by Academy staff members and instructors. Any failure to comply will be regarded as insubordination and may result in termination from the program.
- e. Cellular phones and all personal communication devices are strictly prohibited in the classroom at the discretion of the academy staff.
- f. Cadets are required to remain vigilant and attentive throughout the duration of the class. They should focus exclusively on Academy-related tasks and refrain from engaging in any unrelated reading materials or activities.
- g. Cadets are required to assume the position of attention whenever an instructor, Academy staff member, or official visitor enters the classroom for the first time each training day. They are to maintain this position until they are dismissed to return to their original stance.
- h. Cadets are required to attend and actively participate in all assigned practical training exercises, field training exercises, physical fitness sessions, and homework assignments. All homework must be completed and submitted to the instructor by the specified deadline.
- i. Any cadet who experiences physical illness, injury, or requires medical attention during training must notify the on-site instructor and the Academy Training Coordinator as soon as is practicable.
- j. The LRGV Academy Training Coordinator, or their designated representative, holds the authority to determine appropriate consequences for specific violations. These consequences may include writing assignments, physical exercises, additional training sessions, or a combination of these measures.
- k. Cadets are expected to refrain from loitering in hallways or work areas within assigned buildings. Distractions, whether inside or outside the classroom, as well as unnecessary conversations, will not be tolerated.
- l. The improper or negligent use of any Academy property is strictly prohibited. Access to classroom facilities and equipment is permitted only with prior approval from an instructor.
- m. Improper conduct while in cadet uniform is strictly prohibited. Cadets may not wear LRGVDV-related attire during any activities or behaviors that could discredit or undermine the integrity of the Academy.
- n. Cadets possess no official authority beyond that of an ordinary citizen. They are expected to assist law enforcement officers only when requested or when a clear need arises.
- o. Cadets who are involved in or witness a police officer-related incident are required to notify to the LRGV Academy Training Coordinator within 24 hours of the event.
- p. Cadets are expected to uphold a standard of courtesy and professional integrity at all times. Any form of discourtesy, rudeness, or vulgarity exhibited by trainees towards fellow cadets, citizens, staff, external agencies, or law enforcement officers will not be tolerated. Such behavior may result in disciplinary action, which could include dismissal from the academy.

PROCEDURE 8:0 - PERSONAL CONDUCT

8.1
CONT

CADET STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

- q. Cadets may be invited to engage in civil and community service activities. Although there will be no established minimum requirements for participation, each cadet is expected to volunteer according to their availability and to represent the Academy with respect, service, and honor.
- r. Cadets are prohibited from participating in fundraising activities or soliciting donations intended to generate revenue for, or in association with, the LRGV Academy training without authorization. This restriction encompasses, but is not limited to, graduation ceremonies, social events, and similar activities.
- s. Cadets are prohibited from posting videos, images, or photographs related to official Academy training activities on social media platforms. Furthermore, cadets and training site locations are not permitted to establish a dedicated social media page.
- t. Cadets are prohibited from commenting on or representing the LRGV Academy to media outlets.
- u. The use or possession of any items classified as weapons is strictly prohibited on Academy premises. This includes, but is not limited to, handguns, firearms, ammunition, fireworks, pellet guns, paintball guns, BB guns, knives, and explosive or noxious materials. The possession of these items constitutes a Class II offense. Exceptions are made for firearms issued by the Academy or those utilized during approved Academy tactical training conducted at designated times.
- v. Cadets are prohibited from consuming intoxicants to the point of intoxication or from having the scent of intoxicants on their breath while on duty or while in uniform, regardless of whether they are on or off duty.
- w. The usage of Tobacco and Vaping products by cadets is prohibited while class is in session. Tobacco products may include but are not limited to cigarettes, chewing tobacco, dip, snuff, etc. Vaping products may include but are not limited to e-cigarettes, vape pens, or any other form of electronic cartridge device designed for the inhalation of vapor like substances. This policy extends to all satellite sites. Cadets shall refrain from using Tobacco or Vaping products while in direct contact with the public.

8.2

ETHICAL CONDUCT POLICY

All cadets at the LRGV Academy must adhere to our core guiding values:

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

The Law Enforcement Code of Ethics recital can be found in Appendix 1.0 at the end of this Handbook. All cadets are expected to be able to recite this statement from memory at any time throughout their tenure in the LRGV Academy.

8.3 HARASSMENT, BIAS & INTIMIDATION

The Academy is committed to fostering an educational environment that is free from harassment, bias, and intimidation. This policy encompasses all forms of harassment directed at individuals based on their gender, sexual orientation, race, national origin, religion, age, or disability. All cadets are required to adhere to this policy, and any failure to do so will result in disciplinary measures, potentially leading to dismissal.

Cadets who believe they have experienced harassment, bias, or intimidation are encouraged to report such incidents to their instructor, the LRGV Training Coordinator, the Director of Public Safety, or the Executive Director of the LRGVDC. In cases where the harassment involves a supervisor, the cadet should contact the Executive Director of the LRGVDC directly. The Executive Director will promptly investigate the matter and implement corrective actions as necessary.

It is important to note that retaliation or reprisal against any cadet for reporting harassment or discrimination is illegal and will not be tolerated.

PROCEDURE 8:0 - PERSONAL CONDUCT

8.4 **NON-FRATERNIZATION POLICY**

Cadets are prohibited from engaging in intimate relationships with Academy staff, instructors, employees of the LRGVDC, or fellow cadets during their enrollment in the LRGV Academy. Noncompliance with this policy will result in disciplinary measures, including potential dismissal from the Academy.

PROCEDURE 9:0 - DISCIPLINARY POLICY

The Academy staff is committed to safeguarding the rights of each cadet while upholding a disciplinary system that emphasizes notice, fairness, equity, and due process. Cadets can therefore expect reasonable clarity regarding this procedure. Disciplinary incidents will be addressed in accordance with the following guidelines to the greatest extent practicable.

The LRGV Academy categorizes offenses into Class I and Class II categories, each with its own specific disciplinary procedures.

9.1 **CLASS I OFFENSES**

Class I offenses consist of minor to moderate infractions that present opportunities for learning and corrective action. Examples of Class I offenses include, but are not limited to:

1. Tardiness
2. Failure to adhere to personal appearance standards (fewer than five occurrences).
3. Noncompliance with specific cadet behavior standards (fewer than five occurrences).
4. Financial irresponsibility.
5. Insubordination (first offense).
6. Minor acts of negligence or inefficiency.

Additionally, any other acts or omissions that align with the aforementioned criteria may also be classified as Class I offenses.

CLASS II OFFENSES

9.2

Class II Offenses consist of serious violations that may jeopardize continued participation in the program. Such offenses are grounds for immediate termination. Examples of Class II offenses include, but are not limited to:

1. Accumulation of three Class I offenses.
2. Acts of gross negligence regarding efficiency or competence.
3. Criminal actions resulting in charges classified as Class B misdemeanors or higher.
4. Consumption of alcohol while in uniform, whether on or off duty.
5. Commission of assault, theft, or making terroristic threats.
6. Dishonesty.*
7. Cheating on examinations.
8. Repeated failure to meet specific cadet behavior standards (more than three instances).
9. Fraternization.
10. Grossly discourteous conduct.*
11. Gross insubordination
12. Insubordination
13. Improper use of authority.
14. Intentional or reckless conduct that endangers the health or safety of oneself or others.
15. Failure to report incidents or behaviors that do not align with the values, policies, and procedures of the LRGV Academy.
16. Violations of safety rules (e.g., range, tactical driving, defensive tactics).
17. Patterns of misconduct.
18. Tardiness (exceeding three instances).
19. Use of illegal controlled substances at any time or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on duty.
20. Use or possession of any items that could be considered weapons—including, but not limited to, handguns, firearms, ammunition, fireworks, pellet guns, paintball guns, BB guns, knives, or explosive/noxious materials—on Academy premises, except for equipment issued or required by the Academy for firearms or tactical training at designated times. Other acts or omissions that fall under the aforementioned descriptions. (Definitions provided.)
21. Publicly endorsing political candidates by any means while acting under LRGVDC representation.

PROCEDURE 9:0 - DISCIPLINARY POLICY

9.2 CONT **DEFINITION OF CLASS II OFFENSES:**

Dishonesty is defined as any deceptive act that may lead to embarrassment, distrust, or discredit for the LRGVDC Regional Police Academy or the law enforcement profession. Such acts of dishonesty encompass, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery or acceptance of bribes, destruction of property, theft, and concealment. Cheating also includes assisting others in cheating or failing to report observed incidents of cheating. This encompasses cheating on quizzes or retests that do not impact a cadet's GPA.

Gross Discourteous Conduct: This term refers to behavior, whether through action or inaction, that is disrespectful and has the potential to adversely affect the learning environment. Examples of gross discourteous conduct include, but are not limited to, sleeping or exhibiting disruptive behavior during class, as well as the use of abusive or obscene language, gestures, or actions.

Insubordination: Insubordination is defined as the willful disregard or disobedience of a lawful and ethical order or directive issued by any individual in a position of authority over the student. This includes, but is not limited to, all Academy staff, such as the LRGV Academy Training Coordinator, Training-site Supervisor, Administrative Personnel, Staff Instructors, Adjunct Instructors, and any designated representatives of the Academy's authority.

9.3 **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

The following process outlines a fair and equitable course of progressive action designed to ensure a clear understanding of the remedies for unacceptable behavior. As it is not feasible to address every possible scenario within these guidelines, any disciplinary cases not explicitly covered will be subject to the discretion of the LRGV Academy Training Coordinator, the Director of Public Safety, and/or the Executive Director, who will determine the appropriate resolution for each situation.

9.4 **DISCIPLINARY PROCESS FOR CLASS I OFFENSES**

The following process delineates a fair and equitable framework for addressing unacceptable behavior through progressive action, aimed at ensuring clarity regarding the remedies available. Given that it is impractical to account for every possible scenario within these guidelines, any disciplinary matters not explicitly addressed will be at the discretion of the LRGV Academy Training Coordinator, the Director of Public Safety, and/or the Executive Director, who will determine the appropriate resolution for each case.

1. Academy instructors and/or other personnel will promptly address any violations with a cadet upon observation or notification.
2. The Academy instructor and/or other personnel will engage in a one-on-one performance coaching session with the cadet to discuss the violation and appropriate corrective actions.
3. The following steps outline the progression of discipline for Class I offenses:
 - o ****1st Offense:**** Written reprimand and coaching session
 - o ****2nd Offense:**** Written reprimand and disciplinary probation
 - o ****3rd Offense:**** Dismissal from the academy

9.5 **DISCIPLINARY PROCESS FOR CLASS II OFFENSES (OR REPEAT OF CLASS I OFFENSE)**

1. Academy instructors and/or other Academy personnel are required to promptly report any Class II violations to the LRGV Academy Training Coordinator upon observation or notification.
2. The LRGV Academy Training Coordinator and/or the Director of Public Safety will conduct a comprehensive investigation into the offense, ensuring full disclosure and inquiry into the facts and circumstances surrounding the violation.
 - o ***Note:**** During the investigation of a Class II offense, the cadet involved may be temporarily removed from LRGV Academy training activities until the investigation is concluded and a final determination is made.
3. Given the serious nature of Class II offenses, disciplinary actions may range from probation to immediate dismissal from the Academy. Investigations into Class II offenses will utilize a comprehensive approach, considering the totality of circumstances.

PROCEDURE 9:0 - DISCIPLINARY POLICY

9.5 **DISCIPLINARY PROCESS FOR CLASS II OFFENSES (OR REPEAT OF CLASS I OFFENSE)**

4. If it is determined that the cadet may continue in the Academy, the LRGV Academy Training Coordinator will discuss the violation directly with the cadet and conduct a one-on-one coaching session focused on the disciplinary issues and necessary corrective actions.
5. Once a cadet is placed on probationary status, any subsequent infractions may lead to immediate dismissal from the Academy. If the violation warrants dismissal from the Academy, both the cadet and the sponsoring agency (if applicable) will receive written notification regarding the dismissal.

*Note:** If reinstated, any absences resulting from temporary removal will be managed in accordance with the attendance policy.

9.6 **DISCIPLINARY ACTION APPEAL**

Any cadet wishing to file an appeal regarding a disciplinary action must submit a written request directly to the LRGV Academy Training Coordinator as soon as possible, and no later than five (5) calendar days following notification of the disciplinary action.

The written appeal request must include the following:

1. A detailed account of the incident;
2. Witness statements (if applicable);
3. Identification of substantive or procedural errors; and/or
4. Newly discovered or relevant information that was not available to the staff making the disciplinary decision.

The LRGV Academy Training Coordinator will respond to the appeal within five (5) calendar days of receiving the request.

9.7 **REQUEST FOR ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING**

The final course of action involves submitting a request for an administrative hearing directly to the LRGVDC Director of Public Safety or the LRGVDC Executive Director. Any cadet wishing to initiate this process must submit their request in writing promptly, but no later than five (5) calendar days following the notification of the appeal response.

Upon receipt of the written request, an administrative hearing may be scheduled, or a final decision response letter will be issued within five (5) calendar days.

Please note: If reinstated, any absences resulting from temporary removal will be addressed according to the attendance policy.

PROCEDURE 10:0 - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The LRGV Academy operates as a division of the LRGVDC's Public Safety Department and adheres to the organizational chain of command established by LRGVDC and its partner law enforcement agencies for communication, incident reporting, and feedback. We kindly request that individuals follow the appropriate chain of command when submitting inquiries, reporting incidents, or providing feedback.

In cases of conflict of interest or distrust, the complainant should escalate the matter to the next level within the chain of command. For any issues or conflicts related to the positions listed below, please direct your formal complaint to the individual immediately above that position.

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 (Site Training Coordinator);

The Training-Site Liaison is typically a Sergeant or Lieutenant responsible for training within the respective department or agency. This individual serves as the primary representative for the partnering law enforcement agency.

PROCEDURE 10:0 - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

10.1 **ACADEMY PERSONNEL ORGANIZATIONAL FLOW- CHART**

CONT

(c.) LRGVDC Staff (Administrative and Instructional Personnel)

The administrative staff and instructors of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) may act as resources for coordination and curriculum-related matters pertaining to the LRGV Academy.

(d.) LRGVDC Training Coordinator (Assistant Director and/or Director)

The Training Coordinator at the LRGV Academy is tasked with ensuring compliance with all state regulations, maintaining training records, developing course objectives and lesson plans, and enforcing established rules. As mandated by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE), the Training Coordinator must be a full-time Academy staff member and possess a valid instructor license.

(e.) LRGVDC Executive Director

The Executive Director of the LRGVDC serves as the chief administrator overseeing all operations and personnel at the Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy. This role includes establishing training agreements with regional Police Chiefs and directly appointing members to the Academy Advisory Committee. Operating under a contract with TCOLE as a regional training provider, the Executive Director ensures adherence to compliance and reporting requirements established by the state agency.

10.2 **CLASSROOM ELECTED LEADERSHIP**

Each training-site class of cadets will hold elections under the supervision of the Academy Training Coordinator between the second and fourth weeks of the Academy. The elected positions include President, Vice President, and up to two squad leaders. No additional class leadership roles are authorized or recognized.

a. Any class leader who fails to demonstrate the ability or willingness to fulfill their responsibilities will be removed from their position. The LRGV Academy Supervisor will appoint a suitable replacement. All elected or appointed leaders will assist in coordinating the Academy graduation.

b. Any class leader placed on academic probation may also be removed from their position, with a replacement appointed by the LRGV Academy Supervisor.

10.3 **CLASS PRESIDENT**

The class president will act as the primary liaison between the class and Academy staff. All daily task assignments, rosters, and related responsibilities will be assigned by the Academy staff to the president, who may delegate these duties to squad leaders. The class president will organize the class into up to four (4) operational squads, each supervised by a squad leader. Ultimately, the president is responsible for the actions of the entire class. Additionally, the class president will maintain a telephone notification roster for the class. Responsibilities may be delegated to the vice president, who will assume the president's role when necessary and assist in class management as required.

10.4 **VICE PRESIDENT (SQUAD LEADER 1)**

The first squad leader will serve as the class vice president. In the absence of the class president, the vice president will assume the president's responsibilities. The class may be divided into four sections, with each squad leader overseeing one-fourth of the class. The squad leader and their squad are responsible for completing all assignments issued by Academy staff or the class president. Cadets will receive training assignments in various skill functional areas organized by their respective squads. Squad leaders will report to Academy staff through the class president and may delegate tasks to their subordinates within each squad.

PROCEDURE 10:0 - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

10.5 **SQUAD LEADER 2**

The Second Squad Leader will assume the role of Class Sergeant of Arms (Sgt of Arms). In this capacity, the Sgt of Arms will take the lead in promoting physical fitness by motivating fellow cadets with workout plans, conducting inspections for hygiene (such as shaving), overseeing uniform inspections, and administering class-wide disciplinary actions within a formation setting to ensure accountability.

The class will be divided into four sections, with each squad leader responsible for one-fourth of the class. The squad leader and their assigned squad will complete all tasks designated by the Academy staff or the class president. Cadets will receive training assignments related to specific skill areas within their respective squads. Squad leaders will report to the Academy staff through the class president and may delegate assignments to their subordinates within each squad.

10.6 **SQUAD LEADER 3**

The third squad leader will assume the role of class secretary and treasurer. This individual will maintain all necessary records for the class during its session. The class will be divided into four sections, with each squad leader responsible for one-fourth of the class. The squad leader and their squad will complete all assignments designated by the Academy staff or the class president. Training assignments in various skill areas will be distributed by squad. The squad leaders will report to the Academy staff through the class president and may delegate assignments to their subordinates within each squad.

10.7 **SQUAD LEADER 4**

The leader of the fourth squad will serve as the class historian, responsible for documenting any historical events of significance to the class. This documentation may include written accounts or photographic evidence, which should be obtained in collaboration with the instructor and may be shared during graduation. Additionally, the historian is tasked with ensuring that all historical documentation, plaques, and related materials are submitted to the Academy upon graduation.

The class will be divided into four sections, with each squad leader overseeing one-quarter of the class. The squad leader and their respective squad are expected to complete all assignments designated by the Academy staff or the class president. Cadets will receive training assignments according to their functional skill areas within their squads. Squad leaders will report to the Academy staff through the class president and may delegate tasks to their subordinates within each squad.

10.8 **ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) leverages the collective expertise and experience of local law enforcement personnel to serve on the Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy Advisory Committee.

1. Committee meetings are held at least annually, with a typical frequency of once per quarter. All members are appointed by the LRGVDC Executive Director. The committee's composition includes chief executives from law enforcement agencies, law enforcement instructors, and at least one-third representation from the general public.
2. The primary function of the advisory committee is to provide guidance on curriculum development, contribute to policy and procedure formulation, identify and evaluate specific training needs, and determine the types, frequency, and locations of courses to be offered. Additionally, the committee advises on the establishment of admission standards, prerequisites, class size limits, attendance requirements, and retention policies, as well as preferences for employees or prospective appointees of the sponsoring organization and other individuals, if applicable.

It is important to note that advisory committee members do not possess the authority to make determinations regarding cadet disciplinary actions, including appeals.

10.9 **REPORT OF NON-COMPLIANCE**

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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