



BILL RICHARDSON
Governor
JOHN DENKO Jr.
Cabinet Secretary

State of New Mexico
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Training & Recruiting Division
"New Mexico's Police Officer Standards and Training Agency"

June 10, 2009



ARTHUR D.C. ORTIZ
Director
ATTY. GEN. GARY KING
Chairman, NMLEA Board

Re: BPOT Academy Requirement Change

Dear Chief/Sheriff/Agency Head:

In response to numerous concerns expressed to Academy staff about the level of report writing skills of graduating Cadets and a further request to decrease the length of the Academy stay, we are instituting the following policy change. Starting with BPOT Class #179, currently scheduled for April 12, 2010, the curriculum report writing requirement will be completed prior to Cadets entering the Academy.

We have partnered with the Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) to provide a 45 contact hour (Law Enforcement) report writing class. I have reviewed the course curriculum with respect to the Law Enforcement Officer Certification Exam (LEOCE) and determined that all report writing questions on the LEOCE are covered. Equally as important, though, is that the CNM course greatly exceeds the minimum standards and course hours required by the New Mexico Administrative Code [10.29.9.8(M) NMAC]. The CNM course will take Cadets from basic writing skills to include grammar, sentence structure and punctuation, through content and composition. All Cadets will be better trained in report writing than we can currently accomplish in the Academy setting and better prepared to write reports when they start working.

CNM offers the report writing course as part of their Criminal Justice degree program. The specific course is CJ 1518 Report Writing. CJ 1518 is offered three times per year - in the spring semester, January to April; the summer semester, May to August; and, in the fall semester, September to December. It is offered in all three semesters as a twice per week in class course or on-line through their Distance Learning Program.

Prospective Cadets will be expected to complete the course prior to the start date of their scheduled Academy class. Depending on semester start dates vis-à-vis Academy start dates, Cadets that start an on-line course that overlaps with an Academy class start date will be allowed to complete the course at home on weekends and evenings while at the Academy using the Academy computer lab.

Whether on-line or in the class room, the course is 12 weeks long. The course instructor, Kevin Dooley, estimates the weekly time requirement for the on-line course is approximately 4 to 6 hours. The first 4 weeks of the 12 week course will be in the 6 hour per week range as the student learns to use and manipulate the computer access/interface. For the remainder of the course, the weekly time should be closer to 4 hours. The on-line course work can be completed from any place on any computer connected to the internet.

Course costs are minimal. For most course work, to include the Criminal Justice program courses, CNM does not charge a per credit hour tuition fee for in-district students. Out of district students only

pay a \$10.00 per credit hour tuition fee. Each student pays a \$44.00 registration fee and a \$3.00 technology fee. The only other cost is the course text book: Report it in Writing, Fourth Edition 2007, by Debbie J. Goodman, (ISBN 0-13-219380-9), at an approximate cost of \$50.00 new or \$38.00 used (when available). The sponsoring agency will be responsible for the costs and may decide to pass them on to the applicant, making completion of the course an application requirement. How agencies choose to handle the payment issue is up to individual agencies. According to CNM, the most common practice for government agency sponsored students is for the student to pay the costs up front and then apply for reimbursement. This practice has the benefit of the agency reimbursing only those individuals that has successfully completed the course.

The CNM course will take the place of the 14.5 hour report writing block of instruction at the Academy. The course final examination will take the place of the report writing block test at the Academy and, as such, the Cadet will have to pass the final examination to have completed the training requirements at the Academy for graduation and certification. If a Cadet fails the CNM course, as with any other instructional block failure at the Academy, the Cadet will have up to one year to complete the requirement to graduate.

Some of the 14.5 NMAC required hours of report writing will be used to shorten the academy stay while some will be put toward more scenario based training in high risk skills areas such as vehicle operations, patrol procedures and domestic violence calls. Cadets will be better prepared to write reports when involved in the skills and scenario based training exercises, which in turn, will give them more practical experience in writing actual incident/offense reports as opposed to class room exercises.

Most CNM application requirements can be completed on-line along with course registration. CNM does require new students to take the College Board Accuplacer™ exam. The Accuplacer™ exam covers Reading, Sentence Skills (English), and Math Placement Exams and are used to determine the appropriate course level for new students. The exam is free and can be administered at any appropriate location throughout the state. All Accuplacer™ scores are good for five years. Taking the Accuplacer™ exam will further benefit those people that would like to continue on with their education and work toward a degree.

CNM has an excellent website that contains all of the necessary information and help needed to apply for admission, register for classes and, make payments.

Applications for acceptance into a BPOT class will have to contain a notarized copy of a CNM grade report showing a final grade of C or better in CJ 1518. For those applicants that are enrolled in the class and will complete it during the Academy class, a letter from the agency head attesting to that will suffice. Any agency wishing to utilize a different higher educational facility may submit a request to the Basic Training Bureau to do so. The request must include the school name, location, course title and number, instructor name, and a copy of the most recent course syllabus listing the course description, course objectives, and a detailed content description.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Alessio, Bureau Chief
NMLEA Basic Training Bureau
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