

Audit Protocol Guidelines

Austin Police Department Training Academy

Background

On March 25, 2021, the Austin City Council approved Resolution 20210325-037 (“Resolution 37”), the Reimagined Police Cadet Academy Blueprint. The City of Austin is committed to full implementation of the Blueprint to ensure community involvement, adult learning tools and strategies, and transformative change within the Austin Police Department Training Academy. The City has acknowledged that historical training practices have impacted officers’ preparedness and relationships with the community. The City finds it imperative to transform the training academy within the Austin Police Department (APD) in order to implement needed reforms to APD’s curriculum, teaching methodologies, and the infusion of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices and principles throughout the training academy that ensures the highest degree of cultural competency, public interactions, and ethics for its police officers.

On November 12, 2020, the City executed a contract with Kroll Associates, Inc (Kroll) to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of APD, which included a review and assessment of the APD Training Academy (Academy). On April 23, 2021, Kroll issued its findings and recommendations based on its review and assessment of the Academy. The report included a number of short- and long-term recommendations, all of which APD accepted and agreed to implement as part of the 144th cadet class and beyond. In its subsequent role as Independent Evaluator of the 144th cadet class, Kroll made several additional recommendations that APD accepted and agreed to implement.

These Audit Protocol Guidelines are designed to ensure the sustainability of the Kroll recommendations and the objectives of Resolution 37, and to ensure that further adjustments and improvements, consistent with the aforementioned recommendations and objectives, are made by APD moving forward.

Audit Protocol Development

The Academy will develop an internal audit protocol that will be utilized for each cadet class starting with and including the 145th cadet class. The audit process will be managed by the Academy Commander (or designee) and will specifically address progress toward goals and objectives of Resolution 37. The audit process will serve three key functions. First, it will provide a review mechanism that Academy leadership can use to support decision making and ongoing planning. Second, it will create a framework for developing internal reporting to APD Executive Staff. Finally, it will create a framework to support the development of a standardized external reporting to the Public Safety Commission and Austin City Council.

The internal audit protocol should focus on three main areas of development: (1) community involvement, (2) culture of adult learning, and (3) transformative change. Each of these areas include a variety of specific elements, as specified below. There are several important questions that Academy leadership should consider when auditing the Academy. Not all of these questions can be expressly answered; however, they tap into the various dimensions of the specific elements being considered.

Several of the elements listed can be converted into metrics for internal and external reporting, and these should be used for both purposes. Other elements that may be more difficult to measure should be the focus of discussion within the department. Finally, some elements may not change substantially between Academy classes. These should likely only be reported when substantial change occurs.

Community Involvement

1. Academy Curriculum Review Committee
 - a. Who currently serves on the Committee (members and backgrounds)?
 - b. How many times did the Committee meet during the cadet class?
 - c. How effectively and collaboratively did Academy staff work with, and maintain accountability and transparency with, the Committee?

- d. What were the tangible results of the Committee's curriculum review (e.g., courses reviewed, recommendations implemented, and process for reporting back to the Committee)?
 - e. How many training videos were included in the curriculum review?
2. Co-facilitation of instruction between APD faculty and community subject matter experts
- a. What courses were taught by or in cooperation with outside subject matter experts or community participants?
 - b. How effectively were the courses co-taught?
 - c. What was the degree of collaboration between the assigned Instructor and the subject matter expert?
 - d. Which additional courses should include subject matter experts in the next cadet class?
3. Community Engagement / Community Connect
- a. How many hours were devoted to community engagement and Community Connect in the completed cadet class?
 - b. Which organizations participated, and what activities or content did the events include?
 - c. How effective were the programs in emphasizing empathy, the importance of community interaction and understanding, relationship building, and community trust and respect?
 - d. How did Academy training consider input and participation of community groups representing those disproportionately affected by policing, including non-white residents and populations, non-English speaking residents and populations, LGBTQIA+ residents and populations, and persons with disabilities?
 - e. How did Academy instructors reinforce the importance of empathy, relationship building, and community trust and respect into all other Academy curriculum?

Culture of Adult Learning

4. Incorporation of adult learning theory / active learning into Academy course instruction
- a. How effectively was adult learning theory and active learning incorporated into each course?
 - b. What expectations and standards have been set for Academy faculty?
 - c. How did the overall process for curriculum development and implementation function?
5. Academy faculty evaluations
- a. How were faculty evaluations conducted and documented?
6. Professional development opportunities for Academy faculty
- a. Which staff professional development opportunities were utilized, and how are those programs expected to benefit Academy instruction?

Transformative Change

7. Incorporation of DEI content throughout the curriculum and Academy training
- a. Which new DEI-related course content was incorporated into Academy training?
 - b. Was DEI-related training effective and are there any recommended improvements?
8. The roles of the Training Division Manager and Training Supervisor
- a. How effectively did Academy staff implement and comply with the new standard operating procedures concerning the duties, responsibilities, and authority of the Division Manager?

9. Racial equity training that addresses systemic and institutional racism

- a. When did the training occur, and who conducted the training?
- b. What feedback was provided through cadet surveys or reports from the organization that led the training?

10. Academy diversity

- a. What are the current statistics regarding diversity (demographics) at all levels of the Academy (staff and cadets)?
- b. What are the current plans to further improve gender, racial, and ethnic diversity as needed at all levels of the Academy, including use of adjunct instructors?

11. Academy culture

- a. To what extent has the Academy changed from a paramilitary model to a resilience-based training and servant leadership model?
- b. Were self-defense exercises (including fight scenarios and ring exercises) held after basic defensive tactics training had been delivered and practiced?
- c. Were the exercises performed professionally and appropriately (without abusive tactics or high risk of injury, etc.)?
- d. Were performance accountability (PA) sessions entirely separated from academic classes?
- e. Were cadets appropriately dressed and warmed up before implementation of physically stressful scenarios, exercises, and sessions (including PA sessions, physical fitness training, and defensive tactics training)?
- f. Were sandbags, the sandpit, and other military-style bootcamp punitive measures excluded from cadet training? If not, explain purpose and why such tactics were used.

12. ICAT and other de-escalation training

- a. How many hours of ICAT content and other de-escalation training were incorporated into the training schedule?
- b. Were any updates to ICAT curriculum, if applicable, included in the training? If not, how and when will those updates be provided?
- c. Was overall de-escalation training effective?
- d. How was such training reinforced in use-of-force and other defensive tactics (DT) training, including in criminal law role plays and other scenario-based training?

13. CIT and other mental health awareness training

- a. Was CIT and similar training effective?
- b. To what extent were mental health advocacy and treatment organizations included in training?

14. Active Bystander for Law Enforcement Training (ABLE)

- a. Has ABLE or a similar training become a part of Academy curriculum?
- b. If so, how effective was the training and curriculum?

15. Procedural Justice

- a. How has procedural justice been emphasized in various areas of Academy training?
- b. Did role play scenarios incorporate aspects of procedural justice?

16. Cognitive decision-making and emotional intelligence

- a. Have effective social interaction skills been integrated into Academy training, and are there plans to improve this training?

17. Trauma-informed training

- a. Which courses included trauma-informed training, and are there any recommendations or plans to improve or expand upon such training?

18. Physical fitness (PT) and health and wellness training

- a. How many hours were devoted to PT, Mindfulness and Resiliency, and any other fitness/wellness training?
- b. How effective was the PT program at improving the overall fitness of cadets?
- c. How many cadets failed the initial PT Assessment?
- d. How many PT-related injuries and/or terminations occurred?
- e. Did the PT program distinguish between advanced cadets vs. sub-par cadets?
- f. How many cadets failed the PT final?
- g. Are any adjustments needed to the physical fitness testing process and standards?

19. Learning Management System (LMS)

- a. How is staff using the LMS software for curriculum development, organization, supervisory review process, and other important administrative functions?
- b. What plans are in place to ensure that LMS continues to be used effectively and in a manner that improves overall Academy instruction?

20. Cadet ride-out program

- a. Was the cadet ride-out program effectively implemented?
- b. Are there any recommended improvements needed and, if so, what are the current plans to implement the improvements?

21. Scheduling coordination

- a. Did LSU and Cadet Training work together to coordinate scheduling?
- b. How effectively did the class schedule ensure that cadets were trained in the proper sequence and at the right pace?
- c. Are there any further adjustments needed moving forward?

22. Facility and staffing needs

- a. What facility improvements are needed, and what are the current plans to address those needs?
- b. What are the current staffing needs, short-term and long-term, and what are the plans to address them?

23. Field Training Officer (FTO) training

- a. How effectively has FTO training incorporated de-escalation training updates, DEI and community content?
- b. Are the FTOs up to date on recent Academy training of cadets?
- c. What adjustments are needed to the FTO program to ensure consistency with Academy training and values?
- d. To what extent are current Academy instructors involved in FTO training?

- e. Has APD's Return to Officer program been effective (numbers of officers included and how they were evaluated for fitness, etc.)?
- f. Does the FTO selection process require FTO candidates to demonstrate a commitment to community-oriented policing, ethical behavior and professionalism, relationships with the community, quality of citizen contacts, and commitment to APD values and philosophy?

24. Continuing education for active APD personnel

- a. What is the current required biennial recertification process on topics including implicit bias, racial and ethnic bias, gender bias, de-escalation, the history of policing and its intersection with race in our community, cultural competency, and other topics as recommended by the Equity Office and Office of Police Oversight?
- b. How effectively does the continuing education program address the above topics?

25. The disqualification and termination process

- a. What percent of cadet terminations were voluntary vs. involuntary?
- b. Were there any important patterns related to numbers, demographics, and reasons for disqualifications/terminations in the Academy's disqualification and termination process?
- c. How many cadets were separated from the Academy – reasons, demographics, etc.?
- d. What follow-up occurred with cadets who separated and how was it documented?
- e. What arrangements were made with separated cadets who agreed to be re-cycled?
- f. Are any adjustments needed to the formalized procedures currently in place regarding cadets separated from the Academy?

26. Cadet injuries, separations, and attrition rates

- a. How many cadet injuries occurred, which activities were associated with injuries, and how many injuries resulted in separations from the Academy?
- b. What were the statistics concerning class size at start of Academy, total cadet separations, and reasons for separations (e.g., injury, academic failures, illness, disciplinary violations, etc.)?
- c. Were there any important demographic patterns related to separations or reasons for separations?

27. Cadet survey/feedback results

- a. What were the cadets' perceptions of their Academy experiences based on surveys and feedback?
- b. Did cadets believe that instructors emphasized the importance of ICAT, CIT, Verbal Communications Skills, community trust, empathy, community respect and engagement, and values pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

28. Evidence-based exit interviews of cadets

- a. Were exit interviews conducted and appropriately documented?
- b. Were complaints and identified issues of concern properly addressed and resolved?

29. Cadet mentorship program(s)

- a. Were cadet mentorship programs appropriately messaged, and how many cadets actively participated in the programs?
- b. What were cadets' perceptions of the programs?
- c. Are any adjustments needed to ensure effectiveness of mentorship programs in future cadet classes (e.g., reach out to recent graduating cadets who might be willing to participate as mentors to future cadets)?

30. Academy Video Library

- a. What is the current state of the video library and the process for adding content to the library?
- b. How is the content reviewed and evaluated internally?
- c. To what extent has media literacy training impacted instructors' ability to evaluate content and develop new content?

31. Time Management

- a. How effectively did the Academy use the time allotted for cadet training?
- b. Are there additional ways to improve time management to allow for more training in needed areas?

Reporting Requirements

Within 30 days of the end of each Academy cadet class (excluding modified Academies), the Academy Commander, or designee, shall report to the Public Safety Commission and City Council the results of the internal audit. The reports will include any recommendations or additional measures or adjustments which are planned to improve Academy effectiveness with respect to achieving the fair administration of justice, an indicator in the Council-adopted five-year strategic plan (Strategic Plan 2023).