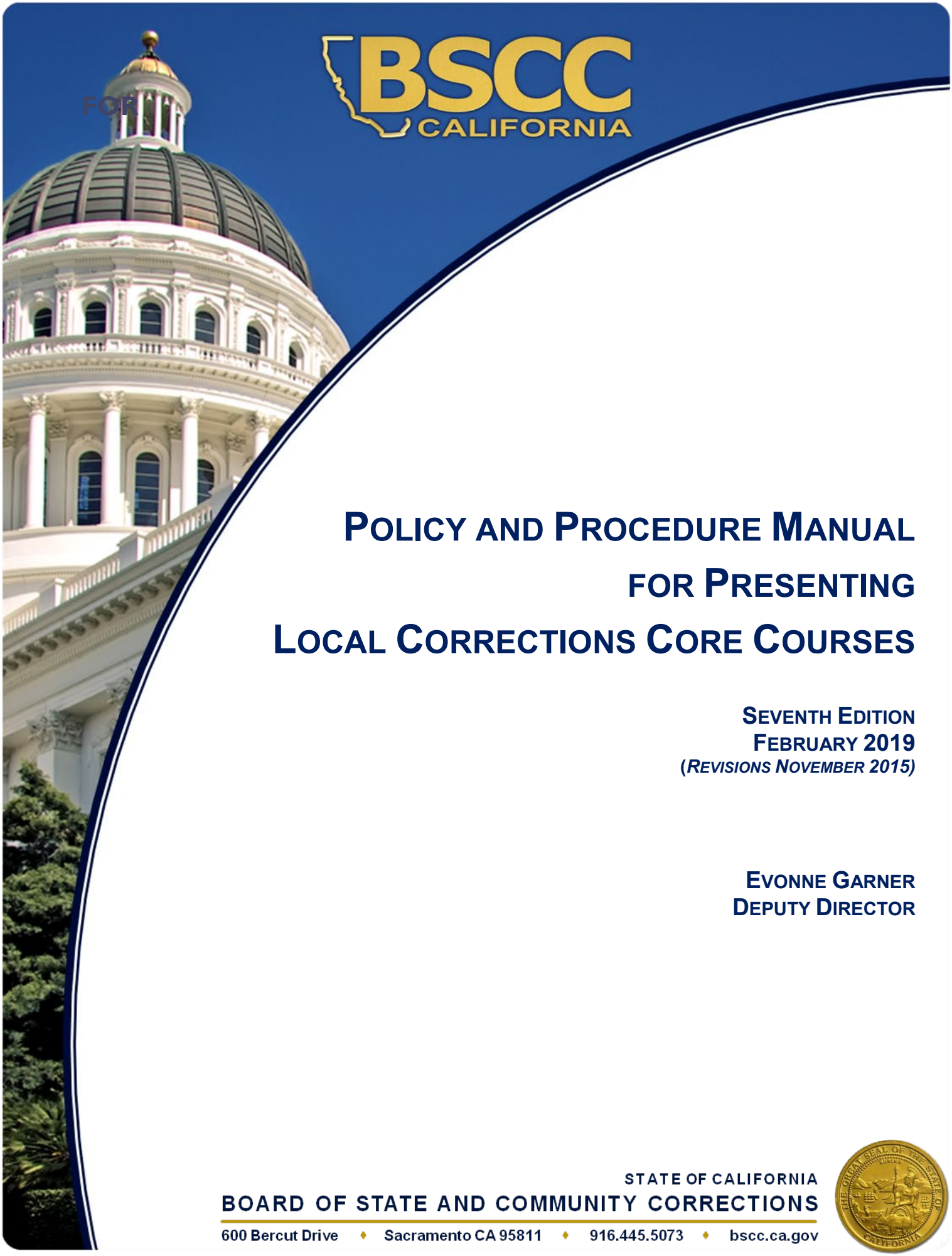

BSCC CALIFORNIA

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL FOR PRESENTING LOCAL CORRECTIONS CORE COURSES

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of the Manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide policies and procedures for certifying and delivering core courses through the Standards and Training for Corrections (STC) program.

This manual covers the following core courses:

Adult Corrections Officer
Adult Corrections Officer (Supplemental)
Juvenile Corrections Officer
Probation Officer
Supervisor
Manager/Administrator

Note: Additional standards are available in the Policy and Procedure Manual for Training Providers.

B. Board of State and Community Corrections

The Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) was established on July 1, 2012 and was formerly known as the Corrections Standards Authority (CSA), and prior to 2005, as the Board of Corrections (BOC). The BOC was created in 1944 to provide leadership and coordination in local California corrections. The BOC set minimum standards for local adult detention facilities and operations and had statutory responsibility for establishing selection criteria and training standards for local corrections personnel (Sheriff, Probation, Police and Departments of Correction). These responsibilities continue under the BSCC and are defined in California Penal Code Sections 6024 through 6037.

The Standards and Training for Corrections (STC) program, established in 1980, is a division of the BSCC. The purpose of the STC program is to raise the level of competence of the state's local corrections and probation personnel. The program accomplishes this by developing selection and training standards, providing a course certification and delivery system, technical assistance and support, and training to local corrections agencies statewide. In addition, participating departments are allocated subvention funding through the STC program.

Through research, planning, design, and assessment, the STC program assists local agencies in ensuring they select and train qualified personnel and maintain staff proficiency through job-related skills training. Job relatedness is defined as a demonstrable relationship between the course subject matter and the job being performed.

STC is charged with the following responsibilities:

- Assisting local corrections agencies in selecting qualified persons for employment and maintaining staff proficiency;
- Promoting development of an efficient and effective training delivery system;
- Providing technical assistance and support to all participating departments and providers; and,
- Developing selection and training standards for local corrections personnel.

Counties and cities participate in the STC program voluntarily. Through their participation, agencies receive STC support and subvention funding, and agree to follow all program regulations, policies and procedures. Local corrections agencies participating in the STC program may use this state funding to help pay course tuition costs in addition to other allowable expenses.

The regulations for counties and cities that choose to participate in the STC program are found in Title 15, Division 1, Subchapter 1, Articles 1 through 9, Sections 100-358 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR).

C. Target Audience for Core Courses

Entry-level core courses are designed for newly hired, newly assigned, or promoted employees to one of the following six positions:

Adult Corrections Officer
Adult Corrections Officer (Supplemental)
Juvenile Corrections Officer
Probation Officer
Supervisor
Manager/Administrator

Core course participants may also include students seeking to enhance their qualifications for employment in county or city corrections. By coming to the selection process with core training already completed, they become more attractive candidates to entities that are hiring.

The training needs of experienced employees are not covered by the core course. Although some entry-level employees may have some background on the job, the design of the core course assumes the employee has no prior training or experience and that the course will cover the needs of all entry-level personnel.

D. Seven Selection Standards

For agencies participating in the STC program, successful completion of the core course is part of the selection process for newly hired employees. The regulations that govern the STC program are found in Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations. Section 131 of these regulations specifies seven selection criteria to be used by those agencies participating in the STC program. These seven criteria are:

1. Basic abilities and other characteristics important for successful job performance demonstrated by passing STC's written examination.
2. Competence in oral communication as demonstrated in an interview.
3. Past behavior compatible with job requirements as demonstrated by a background investigation.
4. Competence in the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for entry-level job performance, as demonstrated by successful completion of the required core curriculum.
5. Competence in the performance of entry-level job duties of the position as demonstrated by completion of the probationary period.
6. Possession of the skills and abilities of the position as demonstrated by meeting STC's current guidelines for Vision, Hearing, and Medical Screening.
7. A minimum of 18 years of age prior to appointment.

Because of selection standard four, delivery of the core course must meet job-relatedness tests (validity) and fairness tests mandated by federal and state employment laws. Core training providers must exercise considerable care when delivering the prescribed curriculum, testing the trainees, and documenting the results of testing or any other aspect of the employee's performance in the course.

E. Foundation of Core Training

Core training is entry-level or basic training specific to tasks performed in designated job classifications. Except for the Supervisor and Manager/Administrator Core Courses, each has a specific outline, with prescribed subject matter, that must meet the minimum time frames for instruction. They include prescribed performance objectives as well as testing standards to measure the basic knowledge and skills taught in the training.

Core training is intended to provide newly hired employees with the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) necessary to perform the job during the first year of employment. As a stand-alone, the core course is not intended to produce employees who are competent at the journey level. Core training cannot and should not be expected to produce an experienced employee capable of handling every job assignment.

Core training provides the trainee with the basic concepts, tools, and skills necessary to make sense of the job and to accelerate the learning process once back on the job. A firm grasp of this concept by instructors of the course will aid them in the development of their lesson plans, which, by design, need to be focused at a very basic level.

Core training is based on the core tasks that each employee in the respective entry-level position must perform. The core tasks are identified through job analysis research conducted by STC. These analyses are periodically updated due to the evolving nature of the local corrections workers job duties.

There are a great many tasks performed by local corrections workers around the state. To be included on the list of core tasks, each task must meet the statistical criteria for frequency, importance, and statewide application. After the core tasks are identified, incumbents, supervisors and other subject matter experts (SMEs) identify the KSAs required to perform the core tasks. These KSAs are the basis for developing performance objectives that can be directly related to core job tasks. These performance objectives are the foundation for core training.

Who Can Provide a Corse Course?

Except for the manager/administrator core course, any of the following entities may apply for core course certification:

STC participating agencies
Public agencies
Private training companies
Community Colleges
Public and private university and college systems
Non-profit training organizations

An Open Market

STC does not control the number of core courses that are certified (except for the Manager/Administrator Core Course). This enables training providers to compete with one another to offer the highest quality, most cost-effective courses possible.

Advertising Course Offerings

Once a core course is certified, the course will be listed in the STC on-line catalog and calendar. STC will also respond to requests for information about core courses being offered around the state. However, the responsibility for advertising the course rests with the provider.

When providers advertise the course, they must include the STC certification number on all flyers, bulletins, etc. Providers may not advertise the class as STC certified until written notice of certification has been received. Providers may not advertise a course as "certification pending." From time to time college-based providers are faced with the need to submit materials to curriculum committees and catalog publishers in advance of receiving a certification number. In these instances, the provider should contact the STC Core Training Manager for guidance.

Enrollment

Certification of a core course by STC does not guarantee or imply the enrollment of trainees. Training providers must work with potential training consumers (probation, sheriff's, police, local corrections departments) to ensure course offerings correspond to training needs and that the departments will enroll a sufficient number of trainees.

F. Peace Officer Standards and Training

Many of the core trainees are required to also complete the mandates specified by the Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (POST) such as PC 832 training. If a core provider wishes to provide this training in conjunction with the core course they must apply to POST for certification and course registration. These hours may also be included under the STC certification. However, STC certification alone does not constitute the necessary approval from POST for PC 832 or any other POST course.

II. Core Course Design

A. Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation

ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Delivery, Implementation, and Evaluation) is an instructional system design process where information is categorized and organized to transfer knowledge. STC partners with core course developers in the ADDIE process as follows:

Phase I: Analysis (STC responsibility)

- Gather information about the training and trainees
- Define the training
- Research training needs using surveys, job analysis, interviews, etc.
- Establish instructional goals, outcomes, and lists of tasks that need instructed
- Identify target population's knowledge, skills, and abilities

Phase II: Design (STC responsibility)

- Use outputs from analysis phase
- Validate tasks
- Write performance objectives
- Develop evaluation strategy for each performance objective
- Develop test types
- Develop course outline with sequencing and methodologies

Phase III: Development (core provider responsibility)

- Budget, time, faculty, facilities, all the logistics
- Finalize decisions about content and methodologies
- Produce training materials
- Finalize lesson plan
- Write test questions
- Procure equipment

Phase IV: Implementation (core provider responsibility)

- Ensure that training delivery is effective and efficient
- Promote a positive learning environment
- Actively involve students

Phase V: Evaluation (core provider responsibility)

- Test to ensure performance objectives are met
- Class evaluations – Adapt class as necessary

B. Adult Learning Principles

It is important when designing core courses that the developers make classes interactive and engaging to meet the needs of adult learners. By incorporating a wide variety of activities and training methods other than lecture and PowerPoint, the instructor will ensure that the adult learner will have a higher retention of the material presented. A good rule to follow is the 85%/15% rule: The trainees should cover 85% of the material in a class and the instructor should only present 15%. This can be achieved by asking open ended questions and incorporating interactive methods of training into every core course. Some basic principles of adult learning are:

- Adults learn best from their own experiences and are motivated by problem solving and personal satisfaction.
- Adults are independent learners and have clear expectations about training.
- 90% of what adults learn and retain in long-term memory is tied to previous knowledge and discovery that occurs in the classroom.
- According to Dale's Cone of Experience, trainees retain only 50% of what they see and hear in a classroom, but they retain 90% of what they do and 95% of what they present to others.

C. Lesson Plans Insert Revised STC Lesson Plan Policy Here.

Best practices indicate detailed lesson plans enhance the development and delivery of training. Lesson plans help ensure quality training delivery by providing detailed information about the delivery of instructional objectives, instructional methodology, testing, and classroom activities. Furthermore, lesson plans provide written documentation of training.

All core courses must have a written lesson plan. A copy of the lesson plan must be made available to the STC field representative upon request.

STC does not require a standardized format; however, the lesson plan must be in such detail that a substitute instructor with requisite knowledge of the subject could teach from the lesson plan without contacting the instructor for clarification.

Core lesson plans must contain the following components:

- **Room Set-Up:**
  How the classroom needs to be set up (e.g., classroom style, small group, theater, etc.).

- **Instructor Material(s)/Equipment Needed:**
  All material and equipment needed, including handouts and reference material for the class.
- **Time for Each Section or Exercise/Activity:**
  The beginning and end time or amount of time needed for each exercise/activity, section, or topic.
- **Trainer's Speaking Notes:**
  Any notes to remind the trainer of anything pertinent in that section. This may include key concepts, targeted responses, activity instructions, etc. It is not necessary to capture everything the instructor will say, for example, stories drawn from the instructor's own experience to illustrate or underscore a key concept would not necessarily be included. This should be written to a level that a person that is familiar with the content and course could step in and complete the training.
- **Handout/Classroom Materials:**
  The distribution of handouts and classroom materials should be noted in the section of the lesson plans where the distribution occurs.
- **Testing Type and Description of BST/WST Completion:**
  The type of test(s) to be given in the class or class; i.e., Multiple Choice Test (MCT),), Behavior Skills Test (BST), and Written Skills Test (WST). Describe in writing each BST and WST to be completed in the class or class. This can be attached to the lesson plan as a handout and labeled appropriately as to when to administer it.

What is the difference between an outline and a lesson plan?

The information about the core that is provided during the request for certification is an outline. A lesson plan provides a detailed description of what the instructor will be teaching (instructional notes, script or major points), and how the material will be taught (methods).

Methods include the type of delivery and activities that will be used to support the learning. Though the core curriculum is standardized throughout the state, there is great variation in methods of presentation. This variation allows for tailoring the course to meet local needs.

D. Instructor Qualifications

STC strongly encourages all core course instructors to attend an instructor development course. Additionally, there are certain specialized training courses in which the skills

learned and later used present higher risk for liability exposure and thus require the instructor to attend a specialized certification course before instructing.
Specialized instructor certification courses include the following:

- Arrest and Control Instructor Certification Course
- Baton/Impact Weapons Instructor Certification Course
- Chemical Agents Instructor Certification Course
- Defensive Tactics Instructor Certification Course
- Diversionary Device Instructor Certification Course
- Driver Awareness Instructor Certification Course
- Electronic Weapon Instructor Certification Course
- Firearm Instructor Certification Course (POST approved courses qualify. Alternative courses must meet POST Administrative Manual Section 1082 – Minimum Content Requirement for Instructor Course - which is determined by the Agency.)
- Force Options Simulator Instructor Certification Course
- Less Lethal Force Instructor Certification Course
- First Aid/CPR

Since the core course is focused at an introductory level, designed to give trainees a basic understanding and mastery of skills, it is not necessary to use instructors who are the foremost experts in their subjects. An employee at the supervisory or senior journey level with strong training skills should be able to deliver most of the material in the core courses.

Also, instructor selection should incorporate the principles of good role modeling. Since the core course may be the first impression a trainee has of the field of corrections, and of the agency from which the instructor may come, this is an important area of instructor selection.

Successful instructors should be able to:

- Analyze course materials and trainee information;
- Prepare the instructional site;
- Establish and maintain instructor credibility;
- Manage the learning environment;
- Demonstrate effective communication skills;
- Demonstrate effective presentation skills;
- Demonstrate effective questioning skills and techniques;
- Respond appropriately to trainee's needs for clarification and feedback;
- Provide positive reinforcement and motivational incentives;

- Use instructional methods appropriately;
- Use instructional media effectively;
- Evaluate trainee performance; and
- Evaluate delivery of instruction.

STC offered courses that support core design and delivery:

Core Instructor Development Course
Core Lesson Plan Development Course
Testing in Core Course

E. The Structure of a Core Course

1. Topics, Classes, and Performance Objectives

Core courses are laid out in a specific order with time designations for each topic. Each of the three classifications, Adult Corrections Officer, Juvenile Corrections Officer, and Probation Officer, has its own topical outline that can be found in the CORE TRAINING MANUAL for that classification. Topics are broken down into major categories called topics. These topics are then subdivided into classes. Each class has a specific period of instructional time that meets the minimum requirement for that subject. Additional time may be added at the provider's discretion.

Each class contains performance objectives and training notes. Performance objectives are statements that provide direction for the trainer as to what specific, job-related knowledge, skill or ability the trainee will be able to demonstrate at the completion of the training. Every performance objective must be tested to measure the transfer of knowledge. Training notes indicate subjects that the instructor should cover during class but do not need to be tested.

If you are including material in the core course other than what is required, **and** that material is not just an expansion of the existing curriculum, you will need to develop and submit performance objectives for that additional material. Topic 1 is set aside for agency specific material. Typically, this is where additional performance objectives would be added.

2. Prerequisites

To provide flexibility in the presentation of classes and topics, prerequisites have been established for all core courses. They are modeled after college course curricula. Only those classes or topics that are a required learning foundation need to be scheduled before another class or topic. Prerequisite lists are in each of the specific core training manuals.

3. Agency-Specific Subjects

In some instances, departments may wish to add course content to the core course that is designated as "agency specific." This may include information on agency policies and procedures (e.g., court consent decrees, transitioning into a new jail, operating new supervision programs, etc.). Whenever supplemental curricula is added, performance objectives must be written for the material.

F. Testing Policy

Core providers must have written policies and procedures for exam administration. Successful completion of core, including the exams, is part of the selection process. Because the exams are used to measure successful completion of core, the purpose of exam policies and procedures is to ensure fair and equitable testing. No examinee should have an advantage or disadvantage of any kind. Following standardized policies and procedures helps ensure that each examinee is provided with a guarantee of fair testing and an equal opportunity to maximize exam performance. This policy must be available for review by STC staff upon request.

The components identified below must be addressed in core providers' policies and procedures for testing.

1. Exam Administration Staff

a) Qualifications (e.g., position, classification)
b) Training requirements (initial and periodic refresher training)
c) Responsibilities

2. Exam Administration Procedures

a) Exam room environmental characteristics (e.g., good lighting, comfortable temperature, adequate ventilation, freedom from noise and interruption)
b) Exam room preparation (e.g., working clock, remove materials on walls that may provide information to examinees, arrange seating with a minimum space distance, post any required information)
c) Staff requirements for number of examinees (e.g., exam supervisor and a proctor for 1 - 20 examinees, an additional proctor for each additional 20 examinees).
d) Accommodations for documented disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) allowed in the exam room
    i. Accommodations that can be handled with a regular exam administration (e.g., use of magnifier)

ii. Accommodations that require a special exam administration (e.g., extended testing time, reader)

e) Admitting examinees into the exam room
f) Review and remind examinees of "code of ethics" (responsible for confidentiality and security of the exam)
g) Administering the exam – follow proctoring scripts
h) Distributing exam materials
i) Timing and break policies
j) Collection and return of secure exam materials

3. Test Security

a) All exam materials (e.g., WSTs, MCTs, test scenarios, etc.) must be stored in a locked location always, unless being administered
b) Limited access to exam materials
c) Test security agreement signed annually by all exam staff
d) Test questions should never be brought into the classroom unless being administered

4. Maintaining Security in the Exam Room/Proctor Responsibilities

a) Accounting for test materials
b) Conducting the test (remain vigilant and do not engage in activities that are not exam related)
c) Monitor equipment use

5. Procedures for Reporting and Handling Test Irregularities and Compromises

a) Test irregularities
   i. Misconduct or inappropriate behavior of examinees
   ii. Test question error or ambiguities
   iii. Student complaints
   iv. Other incidents or disturbances (e.g., uncontrollable events such as fire alarms, power outage)

b) Compromises
   i. Test is lost or stolen
   ii. Unauthorized access to a test
   iii. Examinee copies from another examinee
   iv. Individual attempts to impersonate and take a test for an examinee
   v. Examiners and examinees share information about an exam
   vi. Examinee receives answers to questions before the test
c) Investigating compromises

d) Consequences of a security breach
   i. Agency
   ii. Examiners
   iii. Examinees

6. Accommodated Test Administration

a) Requests for accommodations
b) Required documentation for disabilities

7. Document Retention Policies

a) Test materials that should be retained in a secure location
b) Retention schedule for test materials (abide by record retention policy of your agency)

8. Emergency Plan

a) Identify staff responsible for managing an emergency
b) List emergency supplies available in the exam room
c) Identify alternative exam rooms and secure transportation of tests
d) Detailed plans for how to handle specific emergencies (e.g., violence, natural disasters, illness, hazardous waste, bomb threat)

9. Test Development

a) Instructors develop own test questions
b) Write at least two test questions for each performance objective; one for test and one for remedial test. Best practice would be one additional question in case there are problems with the other two
c) Review, evaluate (are the items functioning?) and revise tests regularly
d) Test development oversight by training coordinator

G. Remediation

The provider testing policy will identify how many times a trainee will be remediated in cases where he or she does not pass the MCT, WST, or BST. To successfully complete the course, each trainee must pass all tests.

The policy will minimally include:

- What is the provider's cut-off score for each test? This does not include WST or BST, which are pass/fail only.

- Procedure for the re-taking of a new test, with new test questions.
- The number of test failures that constitute a course failure.
- Briefing on testing procedures and successful course completion requirements to trainees prior to first test delivery.

For information regarding the development and delivery of tests see appendix I.

H. How to Report Test Scores

There are four forms used for reporting test scores to STC. Providers are expected to use these forms or, if locally generated, a form similar in appearance and layout. It is important that the information requested on the STC form be included.

- Multiple Choice Test Scores
- Behavior Skills Test Scores
- Written Skills Test Scores
- Physical Skills Test Scores (if part of the core course)

Note: Physical skills benchmark tests are reported on a specific form and should not be included with the other BSTs administered during the course.

Care must be taken to maintain the confidentiality of test scores from all but the individual trainee and their employing agency. Therefore, there is an individual trainee test score report form. This form is best for reporting scores to multiple agencies and to individual trainees. The forms provided may also be used to report test scores to employing agencies if all trainees were from the same agency.

Each of these test score report forms may be downloaded from the STC website in the area for core training publications.

The forms for reporting test scores to STC do not have enough columns to accommodate all test scores in each of the three entry-level core courses. Likewise, there may not be enough rows to list all the attendees. Like the roster form, there are continuation pages in the template.

It is important that providers and coordinators ensure that all the information requested is included on the form. Take care to clearly identify the test being reported and that the score is entered into the correct row. These templates can be converted for use as merge documents by "unprotecting" them and entering the desired field names. They have been designed for use as stand-alone documents simply by tabbing to the next data element.

III. Certification Process

A. The Major Steps

Experience has shown that it takes at least eight months to design, develop, and get approval for a new core course. Over this time, there are major steps to certifying a new core course. They are:

1. Become a STC provider (see BSCC-STC website)
2. Contact assigned core field representative for precertification meeting
3. STC provides instructor development course for trainers
4. Lesson plan review workshop from STC
5. Fill out the Request for Certification (RFC)
6. Submit RFC to STC at least 60 days prior to the first offering
7. Deliver course
8. Send required paperwork to STC within 30 days of course completion

B. Documents You Will Need Before You Apply for Certification

At a minimum, you will need the following documents before you can fill out the paperwork for course certification:

- Core training manuals (Probation Officer, Juvenile Corrections Officer, Adult Corrections Officer, ACO Supplemental Core, or Transfer Academies)
- STC Learning Portal user ID and password
- Policy and Procedure Manual for Training Providers

Your assigned STC Core Training Manager is available to assist you with the RFC process.

C. Creation of a New Core Course

- When building a core course, you do not need to add performance objectives on the first page of the certification because those objectives are already in the core manual. You can insert a comment along the lines of "meets STC policy for ACO Core".
- If the instructor you are trying to add is not listed under your agency when you are building your cert, but you know they work for another agency or private provider (or have worked for another agency or private provider at one point) please contact your STC Field Representative to add this user to your certification prior to submission for approval or to your agency as a secondary agency.
- The minimum hours for all cores can be found in the specific core manual.

- Anything not required in the core manuals is "Agency Specific".
- For any core course, you cannot submit your course until these requirements are made, however you can save and continue later if necessary.
- When inputting your activities, you will select the class you are going to teach and make sure to adjust the beginning and ending times.
- If you are using Internet explorer, you must click to the right of the box when selecting a topic as an activity. Google Chrome will allow you to click the actual box
- In the top right corner of your course outline, there is a table that shows the "Required" and "Actual" hours to make sure you meet the minimum required hours.
- You can start any given topic on one day and finish it on another day. The class column will show red until you fulfill the time requirement for that class.
- The number of BSTs or WSTs required for a class will already be included in the subject matter.
- For any agency specific classes you are adding to your core course, you need to add your performance objectives in the "Agency Notes" column (if this class is already STC certified enter the STC class number into this column).
- For testing, before you select the class, click "Test" in the methodology column. Now, you can click multiple topics to test on in one time period. At the bottom of the "Class" column it will tell you how many test questions you need for the activities you have selected. In the "Methodology" column, you will enter the number of test questions you are giving. This is assurance that you have met the requirements for those selected topics. THIS ONLY WORKS IF YOU CLICK "TEST" IN THE METHODOLOGY COLUMN FIRST
- You must make sure you are differentiating between instructional hours and testing hours or else you may be able to submit it without it having met all requirements.
- Do NOT select "Test" when attempting to insert instructional hours.
- If you try and submit a core course without meeting the minimum requirements, you will get an error message. For this function to work, please make sure you are fulfilling both instructional and testing requirements for each objective separately.
- You can go over the required number of hours, if you have met the minimum requirements.
- After building your outline, you need to schedule the date(s) you are offering this core course. The "Event ID" & "Subject" are for internal tracking only and are

completely optional fields.

D.. How to Handle Changes in The Course During the Year

Minor changes to a core course that occur after a certification or recertification has been approved can usually be handled by using the "edit" link within the Learning Portal. Minor changes include changes in instructors or simple schedule changes within a training day.

1. Adding or Deleting Dates

If you wish to add or delete a date, and it is more than ten days before the scheduled date, simply click on the "edit" hyperlink in the "schedule" section and make the changes needed. There is no interaction with STC and no approval needed.

If the change or deletion is within ten days of the scheduled presentation, contact your assigned field representative for assistance.

2. Changes in Instructors

At the time of the core presentation, all instructors should have been submitted and approved within the STC Learning Portal. In the event of a last-minute instructor change, the provider should contact their assigned field representative to notify of the change followed up by editing the instructor list for the specific core course and updating the course outline.

3. Changes in the Outline

Changes to the outline must be submitted 30 days prior to the course delivery date. If the proposed changes significantly change the way the course is sequenced or presented, a recertification may be required.

4. Emergency Changes

When an emergency occurs that causes last minute changes in a certified course (such as an outline change caused by an instructor's illness), the provider must notify STC immediately by telephone and email. In some cases, an STC field representative may advise a training provider to notify departments with registered participants. Providers must submit written notification to STC within ten calendar days. The written notice must include detailed information regarding what changes were made to the outline. An email message with sufficient information constitutes written notification.

5. Cancellation of Certified Courses

Providers may cancel a scheduled course for good cause. Providers must notify STC and all agencies with registered participants of the cancellation at least ten calendar days before the first scheduled day of the course. Failure to notify all departments with registered participants may subject all certifications to revocation.

Exceptions to the ten-day policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis when an emergency occurs. Low participant enrollment is not considered adequate reason to cancel a course with less than ten days' notice to departments.

E.. Record Keeping Requirements

1. Accounting Records

If a provider elects to follow STC budget guidelines, they *must* maintain adequate accounting records in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. *The records must provide an audit trail that will permit tracing of transactions from support documentation to accounting records, financial reports, and billings.*

Documentation is required for:

- The actual cost of instruction and on-site coordination.
- The actual costs of training aids/equipment rental, and "other" costs as listed under "Course Costs" in the approved RFC;
- Training room rental; and,
- Instructor and on-site coordinator travel and per diem.

Note: Accounting records must be kept in accordance with local document retention policies or for not less than three years.

2. Rosters, Test Scores, (WST, MCT, BST)

These records should be kept on file with the provider for not less than three years and/or in accordance with local document retention policy.

3. Trainee's Original Test Documents

STC has no requirement that providers retain these documents. However, providers may wish to forward written skills test materials to the training manager of a participating agency. Distributing original MCT materials will compromise test security and is not permitted.

Providers may wish to keep the original test documents in case of any litigation that pertains to core training.

4. Lesson Plans and Test Questions

Providers are responsible for maintaining adequate records of their lesson plans and test questions during the time the certification is active and for a reasonable period after the course delivery (e.g. 3 years).

F. Course Evaluation by Trainees

Providers are required to distribute and collect the STC Course Evaluation form on the last day of each core delivery. Providers shall keep copies on file. Providers are encouraged to incorporate a review of STC Course Evaluation instruments into their quality control efforts. You can download a course evaluation form from our website at http://www.bscc.ca.gov/programs-and-services/stc/services/stc-forms-and-publications - Course Evaluation Form

G. What Paperwork Is Required at The End of The Course?

1. A Note on Rosters

Because core courses span several weeks and multiple topics, it is not uncommon for there to be several instructors involved in training delivery. Sometimes providers find it difficult to list the names of all instructors in the space provided on the roster form. When that occurs, providers must attach a separate sheet listing each instructor that provided training. The sheet should identify the provider, the course name as it appears on the certification, the certification number, and the course dates. To avoid confusion, adding something that states the purpose of the list, such as "Instructor Roster," would be helpful.

H. What Paperwork Must Go to The Trainee?

Within 30 days after course completion, providers are required to send the following to each trainee:

1. Course Completion Certificate (optional and only if trainee is successful)
2. Individual Test Scores
3. Individual Trainee Evaluation (optional)

These documents may be sent in care of the training manager for the STC participating department. If the trainee is non-affiliated, they should be sent directly to the trainee.

Providers may wish to distribute a Course Completion Certificate to the trainee at a graduation ceremony.

STC does not provide certificate forms. Training providers may use a form of their own. If certificates are presented, they should include the following information:

- Trainee's name
- Core course title
- STC certification number
- Number of hours attended
- Training provider's name
- Course completion date

Note: Course completion certificates should not be issued unless the trainee has attended the entire course and has passed all tests.

I. What Paperwork Must Go to The STC Participating Agency?

Within 30 days after course completion, providers are required to send the following to each participating agency that sent trainees to the course:

1. a copy of the course attendance roster,
2. individual trainee evaluations (optional),
3. all test scores (MCT, BST, WST) for those trainees from the participating agency, and
4. an invoice, if applicable.

J. What Paperwork Must Go To STC?

Providers are required to send the following to STC within 30 days after course completion: the *original* course attendance roster.

In March of 2011, STC developed a roster for "Core Use Only". Core providers should use this roster as it pertains to core courses. There is a column labeled "Satisfactory Completion" included on this roster and should be checked "YES" if trainee has passed all tests in the core course. The roster is available for download from http://www.bscc.ca.gov/programs-and-services/stc/services/stc-forms-and-publications Core Course Roster –(PDF)

Note: It is best to send close out materials for each course offering under separate mailings to STC.

IV. Managing Core Delivery

A. Physical Tasks Training (for cores that include PT) - Considerations for Providers

In addition to the usual requirements of being a training provider that delivers an STC certified course, delivery of the physical tasks training during core training demands specific areas of attention. For instance, the provider must arrange for appropriate facilities and equipment to support the physical tasks training. This includes adequate space, proper running and exercise surface, mats, water, stopwatches, display clocks, first aid and CPR equipment, cell phones or portable communication equipment (in case of injury off-site) and many other details necessary for a safe and effective training environment. Providers should not leave these details to the instructor, as the provider may need to purchase additional equipment, arrange for their daily availability and proper maintenance. Further, the provider must develop appropriate safety guidelines for the physical tasks training and adequately brief staff and trainees on these guidelines.

All physical tasks instructors should have a complete copy of the physical tasks guidelines for the core course they are teaching. These guidelines are a separate manual available from STC and specify what should be covered in the physical tasks exercises and testing procedures.

Occasionally, physical tasks instructors increase the level of proficiency called for in the STC manuals. While STC does not prohibit this practice, neither can STC endorse it. Establishing physical tasks standards higher than the minimum prescribed by STC should be done only after serious consideration of the implications such change has on selection testing.

Providers are reminded that the physical demands being tested for in the core course are based on the job analysis for the position. If the job analysis indicates a certain level of proficiency is required for the job, it is problematic for training providers or instructors to train and test at the core level for a different level - either higher or lower.

For example, if the BST to measure one's ability to drag a 165 lb. dummy is lowered to a 95 lb. dummy, then the trainee is not being trained or tested according to the correct standards. On the other hand, if the training provider decides that 185 lbs. is a more acceptable level, the training provider is not basing this on the statewide job analysis validating this new standard. What authority or data can the provider rely on to support the higher standard?

Since failure to pass the BSTs for physical tasks included in this section of the core can mean the possible termination of an employee, any deviation from the specifications of each test, and the practice leading up to the tests, may compromise the integrity of the core course. It could also lead to litigation between the trainee and the training provider and/or employing agency.

In addition, physical tasks instructors should concern themselves with possible injuries that might occur to trainees, especially if the minimum specifications called for in the course are modified. Care should be exercised to maintain the link between the performance standards established by job analysis and the activities the trainee participates in during the core course. This is true not only in the structured physical tasks portion of the core course, but also other areas such as defensive tactics.

B. Physical Skills Test Results

The benchmark minimums in the core course are translations of the typical minimum performance levels found to be applicable across the full range of agencies participating in the STC Program. Thus, by meeting the benchmark minimums, trainees demonstrate that they can meet typical statewide minimum performance requirements on physically demanding tasks.

Whether meeting the benchmark minimums in the core course also indicates a trainee's ability to meet a specific agency's local performance requirements depends on how that agency's local standards compare to the statewide performance requirements.

It is imperative that local agencies not confuse the benchmark minimums utilized in the statewide core course with the specific job requirements for their agency. It clearly would be inappropriate to terminate an employee based on standards that do not apply to the agency by which they have been hired. For example, if an agency has no facility with stairs, or does not require corrections officers to climb stairs in making their rounds or getting to the scene of an emergency, then the benchmark minimum for the stair walk test would be difficult to defend as an absolute requirement for job entry with that agency.

In circumstances where the statewide performance requirements are the same as the local performance requirements and an individual trainee is unable to meet all the benchmark minimums, agencies should evaluate the situation on a case-by-case basis. A trainee should not be automatically disqualified from placement in the adult or juvenile corrections officer position for failure to meet benchmark minimums. The determination of how to handle the situation is made by the employing agency. The evaluation might include such considerations as the following:

- Is additional practice likely to bring the employee's performance up to the benchmark minimum(s)? If so, and if additional practice time is administratively feasible, the employer may consider providing that opportunity.
- Is the employing agency obligated under applicable statutes and/or regulations to make reasonable accommodation for an adult corrections officer who may be unable to meet minimum performance standards on the task(s) associated with the benchmarks in question? The employer needs to consider the issue of accommodation on a case-by-case basis.

C. Medical Screening Guidelines

A resource available to STC participating agencies, as well as to core training providers, is the Medical Screening Checklist linked directly to each entry-level position. These documents are available for download at http://www.bscc.ca.gov/programs-and-services/stc/services. Look for the Blue Link titled "Selection Standards". These documents provide the examining physician with information about the physically demanding tasks associated with each job.

Participating agencies should have screened their employees prior to sending them to the core course. However, training providers might wish to review the checklist with the trainee and the participating department prior to enrollment in the course. Additionally, providers may wish to require proof of similar medical screening for non-affiliated students.

Physical tasks instructors should also review these materials to remind them to stay within the parameters of physical tasks set forth in the STC documents.

Core providers may find it useful to advertise in their course flyers or enrollment forms that the core course includes physical tasks exercises and to alert trainees to bring the appropriate clothing to participate in these exercises.

D. Trainee Orientation

STC encourages core providers to develop an Orientation handout designed to be given to the trainees on the first day of class. This Orientation handout should address some of the most frequently asked questions from trainees about the core course, what is expected of the trainee during the course and other aspects of the training experience.

E. Homework

Homework cannot be included in the number of hours attributed to the core course. Trainees may wish to review their notes, study for their multiple-choice tests or read recommended articles and handouts as a supplement to the classroom material. But these activities are not a part of the formal, accountable training.

F. Scoring the Tests

General Principle: The provider is responsible for determining if the trainee has demonstrated entry-level mastery of the curriculum.

G. Setting the Cut-off Score for Multiple Choice Tests

Providers must determine what constitutes a passing score on the MCTs. Because the test questions are generated by the instructor's lesson plan, STC cannot determine the cut-off point. There may be wide variation in the difficulty, number and emphasis of the questions throughout the state. The only meaningful way to accommodate these variations is to allow the provider to determine what constitutes a passing score.

The provider's cut-off score should take into consideration the following analysis of each question:

- The level of difficulty of the question
- The average response rate, over several deliveries, for the question
- The number of people who answered the question correctly
- The correlation between performance on other test questions and the question being analyzed - in other words, did someone who scored well on most other questions, fail this question
- The number of questions the provider decides to ask (above the minimum required) for each objective
- Compelling feedback from trainees regarding ambiguity of the question

After such an analysis of test items, the provider makes the determination as to whether the trainee mastered the material.

Typically, providers use a percentage cut-off such as 70% or 80%.

H. Scoring Written Skills Tests

These tests are scored as pass/fail only. The key to evaluating mastery of the curriculum by examining the WST lies in the specifications of the performance objective. To score the test results, the instructor should look for the elements listed in the performance

objective and score the trainee according to how many of the elements were addressed and how well they were addressed.

In addition, the instructor should also base the scoring on how well the trainee incorporated previous elements of the course that build toward the specific objective called for in the WST.

The instructor should also review the trainee's grammar and writing skills as well as content. However, this is a secondary consideration in the scoring. If the trainee needs improvement in writing skills, the instructor may include this on the Individual Trainee Evaluation Form.

I. Scoring Behavior Skills Tests

These tests are also scored as pass/fail. The specifications for passing these tests are embedded in the performance objective.

In this test, the trainee can either perform the task or not and thus, receives a pass or fail score. Mastery of the curriculum in the BSTs is based on the research conducted through the statewide job analysis.

J. Remediation/Failing Tests in Core Courses

Prior to the first course delivery, core training providers should have a written policy on how they will handle a test failure. This policy should be followed consistently for all trainees. For instance, if one re-take is available to a trainee who fails a test, then one re-take should be available for all trainees. Re-takes for MCTs should be made using different test questions from the original test.

If a trainee is unable to pass a subsequent test attempt after remedial training, the provider should contact the trainee's employing agency. STC does not recommend that training providers dismiss a trainee from the rest of the core course just because they are unable to pass a portion of it. The trainee's employer may wish to provide additional instruction later and re-test the employee on-site.

In no case must a training provider keep a trainee in the course if the trainee's behavior is disruptive to the other trainees. Again, contact with the participating department is in order.

K. Attendance

Attendance in core courses is expected to be 100%. However, occasionally a trainee is ill for a short period of time or is called away to court or other unavoidable commitment. It is important to establish a plan for how to handle these absences prior to the course delivery.

An important element in this plan is prevention. Providers should make clear during the enrollment process with agencies and during the first day orientation with trainees that missed time is a problem. They should discourage all but the most critical reasons for lack of attendance. Routine medical and dental appointments, meetings, even some court appearances, can often be managed or rescheduled to avoid interfering with core course attendance.

Some providers have found it helpful to have a form available for trainees to submit to the coordinator or instructor if unavoidable absences arise. This form serves as the beginning of a paper trail to document when the absence occurred, and when and how the time was made up.

It is important to establish good communications about attendance between the coordinator and each instructor. Instructors may not understand the importance of complete attendance and excuse a trainee from attendance without notifying the coordinator and/or agency.

L. Making Up Missed Time

How a provider handles missed training time may depend on several factors, such as:

- How much time was missed?
- What subject matter was missed?
- How much time is left in the course to accommodate make up?
- What is the availability of the instructor to work with the trainee?
- Is the reason for the absence due to a trainee's condition that will last throughout the course (pregnancy or injury which interferes with the physical tasks components of the course)?

In all instances where time is missed, the core training provider should:

a) Notify the participating agency of the absence.
b) If acceptable to the department and the absence is relatively minor (such as 2 hours or less), allow the trainee to meet with the instructor or coordinator (if qualified) to review the missed material.

c) Document the missed time as well as how it was made up. The documentation should include:
   i. What materials were used to present the subject matter to the trainees? These might include:
      - Notes from other trainees
      - Lesson plan notes from the instructor
      - Handouts, videos, display materials
   ii. When the make-up time was conducted and by whom.
   iii. If testing was missed, which alternate test was used to measure the material covered.

This documentation should be sent to the participating agency along with other course completion documents. For non-affiliated trainees, the provider should retain the documentation.

Test security: If the trainee missed an MCT, the make-up test should contain different questions (not just in different order) than the test that was taken by the rest of the class. Also, administration of this make-up test should be under controlled, proctored conditions.

Note: Merely testing the trainee on the material is insufficient to make up portions of missed training. This is because testing only samples the trainee's knowledge and does not allow for a full exploration of the material covered.
If a trainee is unable to make up the material during the course delivery (for instance, due to being pregnant and unable to participate in physical tasks), the *participating department* should contact the provider and make arrangements for make-up. This may take the form of enrolling the trainee in a subsequent course offering, enrolling the trainee in another provider's course for that portion missed, or training and testing the employee at the agency.

For those trainees who were not able to complete all the required training in core, the provider should not issue a course completion certificate. A trainee who failed a portion of the course should not receive a course completion certificate. However, a roster noting the exact hours of attendance should be forwarded to the agency. The roster should note which topics or classes were missed.

M. Class Size

Because core courses involve testing of each trainee's performance and entails in-depth evaluation of each student, providers must maintain a reasonable instructor/trainee

ratio to fulfill this responsibility. Accordingly, STC may impose restrictions on the maximum number of trainees allowed in a core course.

V. Issues in Core Delivery

A. Instructor Conflict of Interest

Providers and participating departments should be aware of a potential legal problem that may be an issue whenever staff of a participating department receive additional pay for instructing members of their own department. County, city and departmental policy on conflict of interest must be adhered to by all participating departments. It is recommended that the agency's legal counsel be consulted regarding this issue.

B. Discrimination and Harassment

It is the expectation of STC that trainees in STC certified courses be provided a training environment free of discrimination and sexual harassment. STC is committed to enforcing this expectation.

Core training providers are encouraged to consult their human resource, risk management, or legal staff for assistance implementing policies intended to prevent discrimination including sexual harassment. Core training providers should inform all instructors of this policy and the procedures for reporting discrimination and harassment. It is the responsibility of core training providers to inform all trainees of this policy and reporting procedures at the beginning of each course delivery.

C. Inappropriate Comments by Instructors

It is the training provider's responsibility to ensure that the core course instructors conduct themselves professionally. This includes making sure that instructors do not make inappropriate remarks during classroom hours, during breaks, or during outside contacts with trainees.

The types of remarks that are inappropriate include disparaging, even teasing, comments about one's gender, ethnicity, weight, age, agency, sexual preference, or national origin. It also includes any comment that could lead to a feeling of humiliation or embarrassment on the part of the trainee.

Care should also be exercised when selecting videos for use in core courses. Providers and instructors should view these videos before showing them to the trainees to ensure that objectionable material is not contained in them. This is especially germane if the videos are somewhat dated. Older material may contain antiquated notions or insensitivity to current standards of conduct.

D. Avoiding Repetition

There is some intentional repetition in the design of the core course to reinforce important concepts. However, for inexperienced core providers, there is a danger of inadvertent repetition because of the use of multiple instructors. The training provider and on-site coordinator can do much to eliminate this repetition by carefully reviewing lesson plans and test questions, meeting with clusters of instructors who are scheduled to teach related topics (for example: medical issues and contraband). Providers should examine the lesson plans to determine which videos will be shown, what handouts will be distributed and what exercises are planned to catch potential repetition problems.

VI. The Most Frequently Asked Questions From Providers

1. How soon do I need to submit the RFC prior to delivering the course?

   Answer: 60 days prior to the first delivery.

2. What paperwork do I need to send to STC after the course is completed?

   Answer: The original roster.

3. Does STC provide topic guides or lesson plans for the topical outline?

   Answer: No. There are resources available on our website at http://www.bscc.ca.gov/programs-and-services/stc/resources. We also offer training to assist instructors in developing lesson plans.

4. Can I lower the minimum class size if I can't get enough trainees?

   Answer: This is within the discretion of the provider. No modification is necessary to the course certification.

5. What if I have more trainees than the course is certified for?

   Answer: Not a problem unless the class size becomes so large that adequate instructor/trainee ratio cannot be maintained.

6. What should I do if someone misses a portion of the course? Is there a 10% leeway for attendance?

   Answer: There is no leeway for missed hours. If a trainee misses a portion of the course, the STC participating agency must be notified and arrangements made for make-up, if possible. In most cases, consultation with the STC Core Coordinator or Training Manager will result in a successful action plan.

7. What if it is clear someone is failing major portions of the course?

   Answer: Unless the trainee is disruptive in the classroom, it is usually unwise to dismiss them from the training. Notify the STC participating agency as soon as possible to determine how to proceed.

8. What if a trainee cannot participate in the physical tasks portion of the course?

<u>Answer</u>: Notify the STC participating agency of the trainee's condition. It may be possible for the trainee to attend all other portions of the training except the physical tasks curriculum. The decision to continue the course rests with the agency. In the case of unaffiliated students, the student must understand that the course is not completed until all portions are completed. The best approach to completing the course for these students rests with the student and the provider.

9. Does STC keep a test item database for use by my instructors?

<u>Answer</u>: No. However, STC is available for consultation on the development of test questions.

10. What paperwork do I have to send to the STC participating agency?

<u>Answer</u>: Within 30 days after course completion, providers are required to send a copy of the course attendance roster, test scores for those trainees from the agency, and individual trainee evaluations if these were done.

11. What paperwork do I have to give to the trainee?

<u>Answer</u>: Within 30 days after course completion, providers are required to send a course completion certificate (optional and only if the trainee has successfully passed all the tests in the core training), individual test scores and individual trainee evaluation if one was done.

12. Must I issue a Course Completion Certificate?

<u>Answer</u>: STC does not require that you issue a course completion certificate. If a certificate is issued, it should include the certification number, hours attended, provider's name, trainee's name, course title, and course completion date.

13. Can I change the time allocated to each topic or class?

<u>Answer</u>: You cannot reduce the amount of time allocated, but you may increase it.

14. How do I write the performance objectives?

<u>Answer</u>: You do not need to write the performance objectives for the core course as presented in the core training manual because these are already provided for you. However, you need to sign an assurance statement affirming that you will present the objectives as specified in the core training manual.

If you add other course material not covered in the prescribed curriculum, you must submit performance objectives for those topics. For more information on how to develop these objectives, please refer to STC's publication, A Guide for Writing Objectives for STC Annual Course Certification.

VII. Checklist For Closing Out Each Core Course Offering

Within 30 days after the last day of the course offering, the following must be submitted to:

STC

1) Original signed roster

STC Participating Agencies

1) Copy of roster
2) Individual trainee evaluations if done
3) Test scores on the appropriate test score report form
4) Invoice, if applicable

Agency Affiliated Trainees (may be submitted in care of agency)

1) Individual test scores
2) Individual trainee evaluations if done
3) Course completion certificate (if issued and if the trainee passed all tests and attended all hours)

Non-Affiliated Trainees

1) Individual test scores
2) Course completion certificate (if issued and if the trainee passed all tests and attended all hours)
3) Individual trainee evaluations if done

VIII. Checklist For Maintaining Your Core Certification

- Notify STC of course dates, additions and deletions by using the online Learning Portal "dates" hyperlink in your work base.
- Notify STC of new instructors for the course by using the Learning Portal "edit" hyperlink and submitting the instructor for review and approval.
- Submit revised core if any changes in sequence of topical outline. Minor changes may be submitted through the "edit" hyperlink, more substantive changes will result in the need for a new certification.
- Core certification is good for two years. You must apply for re-certification every two years if you intend to continue to offer the course.
- Submit closeout paperwork within 30 days of course completion date.
- Make sure rosters and other documents list *exactly* the same dates as those dates registered with STC.
- Maintain quality of course instruction by periodically evaluating course.

IX. Important Time Lines For Core Courses

Original Certification Request:	Within 60 days of 1st offering
Re-certification Request:	Within 30 days of course expiration
Deleting Course Dates:	Ten days before
Cancellation Notice to Enrollees:	Within ten days before offering
Close Out Documents (rosters only):	Within 30 days after offering

X. Recertification Checklist

Within 30 days prior to course expiration, submit the following:

1) Overall: Review the course to ensure instructor information is current, budget elements are current, and course outline complies with STC requirements.
2) Instructor Certificates: Ensure that updated instructor certificates for CPR and First Aid are on file in the training provider's business records. Update online instructor sheets as required.
3) Future Course Dates: Not required, but if you have them, course dates for the next year. Do not include course dates that occur beyond the year of certification.

XI. STC Certified Core Training Frequently Asked Questions

The Standards and Training for Corrections (STC) Program, a division of the state Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), This section is designed to answer some of the most common questions providers have about STC certified core training.

a. What is STC?

STC was created in 1980 to establish and maintain statewide standards that assist local sheriff's, probation, police and corrections departments in selecting and training their professional corrections personnel. STC also helps departments meet these standards by providing technical assistance and a comprehensive statewide training delivery system. Prior to STC, few local corrections agencies in California had consistent criteria for selecting qualified personnel and maintaining their professional skills.

b. What is an STC Certified Core Course?

A core course is formal, structured, job-related training, approved by STC, for professional personnel entering one of three key local corrections positions.: Adult Corrections Officer, Juvenile Corrections Officer, and Probation Officer. Core is introductory training, to be completed within the first year of employment. It is a critical part of the overall requirements to reach journey-level status.

c. What am I Required to Achieve During the Core Course?

Within the first year of your job assignment, you must successfully complete the core course. Core training focuses on you, the student, learning and developing the necessary skills to perform all basic entry-level tasks of your job. It is important to attend the entire course. You will be required to make up any time or learning objectives you miss. You will be tested throughout the course on your learning and performance. The testing results are provided to your employer. Your employer has the ultimate responsibility of determining if your test scores demonstrate adequate mastery of the subject.

d. How was the Course Content Determined?

Course content is based on how the job is performed in most agencies throughout California. The core course curriculum was developed from research and the content provides training designed to increase your job-related knowledge and skills. It has been updated periodically based on changes in law, job duties and skill needs. The course is directly related to the most frequent and important job duties and skills performed by people in your job position throughout California.

e. How are Core Course Instructors Selected?

Core courses are offered throughout the state by private vendors, colleges and local agencies. These providers are responsible for selecting instructors they believe are qualified to teach the subject matter. During the core course certification process, STC reviews instructor information sheets for documentation of the person's qualifications, including expertise in the subject area, work experience, prior teaching experience, education level, and any specialized certifications or training that might apply.

f. Will the Course Address my Department's Issues or Practices?

As a basic, introductory skill building course, core training does not include detailed department-specific information. Department-specific training is available in the form of on-the-job training and/or additional formal training sessions. If any information provided to you in the core course conflicts with your understanding of your department's policies or practices, you should consult your supervisor or training department for clarification and follow your supervisor's direction in performing your job duties.

g. What if I Have Other Questions or Problems During the Course?

If you have questions regarding this course, please ask the instructor or course coordinator for further clarification. If you are having problems during the course, immediately advise the course coordinator and the assigned representative from your department (usually your supervisor or training manager).

XII. 80-Hour Supervisor Core Course Curriculum

Role of the Supervisor – Rights, Responsibilities and Duties

Management Theory and Process
Styles of Supervision
Functions of the Supervisor

Managing Personnel

Legal Responsibilities
Labor Relations
Performance Appraisals/Evaluations
Grievances and Grievance Procedures
Discipline and Disciplinary Procedures
Safety in the Work Place
Cultural Awareness
Employee Assistance and Counseling Techniques

Supervisory Skills

Leadership
Motivation of Staff
Problem Solving
Decision Making
Time Management
Staff Training
Assigning Tasks
Delegating
Planning and Setting Objectives
Conducting Meetings
Conflict Management

Laws and Standards

Laws
Legal Issues
Legal Update

Communication

Principles of Effective Communication
Public Relation

XIII. 80-Hour Manager / Administrator Core Course curriculum

Management Styles

Leadership

Negotiation

Organizational Assessment

Operation Management

Budgets and Resource Management

Systems Approaches

Strategic Planning

Action Planning Tools

Human Resource Management

Legal Structures

Information Technology

Managing Time and Priorities

Public Relations and Marketing

Handling the Media

Emerging Management and Leadership Trends

Appendix A: Multiple choice test Scores Report Form

STANDARDS AND TRAINING FOR CORRECTIONS PROGRAM

MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST SCORES:

PLEASE ENTER SCORES AS PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT RESPONSES

CERTIFICATION NUMBER	COURSE START DATE	COURSE END DATE	COURSE TITLE	TRAINING PROVIDER	Page of Pages

Name of Student	MCTMCT#	MCTMCT#	MCTMCT#	MCTMCT#	MCTMCT#	MCTMCT#	MCTMCT#	MCTMCT#	MCTMCT#	MCTMCT#	MCTMCT#	MCTMCT#
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18.												
19.												
20.												

NAME AND TITLE	AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

Appendix B: Behavior Skills Test Scores Report Form

STANDARDS AND TRAINING FOR CORRECTIONS PROGRAM

BEHAVIOR SKILLS TEST SCORES:

PLEASE MARK AS EITHER "**PASS**" OR "**FAIL**" OR "**N/A**= NOT ADMINISTERED"

CERTIFICATION NUMBER	COURSE START DATE	COURSE END DATE	COURSE TITLE	TRAINING PROVIDER	Page of Pages

Name of Student	BST#	BST#	BST#	BST#	BST#	BST#	BST#	BST#	BST#	BST#	BST#	BST#	BST#
1.													
2.													
3.													
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NAME AND TITLE	AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

Appendix C: Written Skills Test Scores Report Form

STANDARDS AND TRAINING FOR CORRECTIONS PROGRAM WRITTEN SKILLS TEST SCORE FORM

:

Please mark as either "***pass***" or "***fail***" OR **N/A** (Not administered)

CERTIFICATION NUMBER	COURSE START DATE	COURSE END DATE	COURSE TITLE	TRAINING PROVIDER

Name of Student	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#
1.												
2.												
3.												
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20.												

NAME AND TITLE	AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

Appendix D: Adult Corrections Officer Physical Tasks Test Scores

Training Course Date (mo./year): _____

STC Certification #: _____

Provider: _____

Instructor Name: _____

Please record the date trainee was officially observed to meet or exceed Benchmark Minimum Performance Level.

<u>Note</u>: Only record as *Pass, Fail*, or *Not Administered*.

Trainee Name	BST Sprint (50 yds)	BST Dummy Drag (165 lbs.)	BST Weighted Carry (30 lbs.)	BST Stair Walk (15 yds/ 10 steps)

Appendix E: Juvenile Corrections Officer Physical Tasks Test Scores

Training Course Date (mo./year): _____

STC Certification #: _____

Provider: _____

Instructor Name: _____

Each of the following benchmark tests is included in BST #13 in the course curriculum. Please record the date trainee was officially observed to meet or exceed Benchmark Minimum Performance Level.

Note: Only record as *Pass, Fail*, or *Not Administered*.

Trainee Name	BST Sprint (75 yds)	BST Dummy Lift (150 lbs.)	BST Weighted Obstacle (20 lb.)	BST Dummy Drag (150 lbs.)

Appendix F: Summary of Test Scores

Trainee's Name: _____ STC Certification #: _____

Course Title: _____ Presentation Dates: _____

	Summary of Test Scores Report					
Topic or Class Number	Job Knowledge Test Number (MCT) and Score (%)		Written Skills Test Number (WST) and Score (Pass/Fail)		Behavior Skills Test Number (BST) and Score (Pass/Fail)	

APPENDIX G: GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CORE COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Training design involves a series of decisions, many of which are critical to producing an effective instructional program. For example, the designers must repeatedly make decisions regarding the inclusion or exclusion of specific content in the course. While such decisions are often complex and difficult, they are more easily made if guiding principles have been established for the project. The principles that guide the development of the core course are presented below.

Guiding Principle 1: Develop a Job-Related Course

The content of the course must be related to the job. To the extent that knowledge or skills are essential to job performance, they are included in the course. This guiding principle subsumes training content, methods, and format.

Guiding Principle 2: Specify the Training Needed by "Entry-Level" POs, ACOs, and JCOs

The course should specify the training needed by "entry-level" POs, ACOs, and JCOs who have no prior training or experience in corrections. Although some entry-level staff may have some background in corrections, the assumption of no prior training or experience ensures that the course will cover the needs of all entry-level personnel.

Guiding Principle 3: Training Must be Applicable to Probation Departments Across the State

The course should meet the training needs of all departments across the state regardless of department size, location, or budget.

Guiding Principle 4: Specify Minimum Training

The course should provide the basic knowledge, tools, and skills that are essential to meet minimum performance standards and prepare entry-level staff for subsequent on-the-job training. It is very important to recognize that the course cannot and should not be expected to produce an experienced officer capable of handling every job assignment.

Guiding Principle 5: Course Should be Completed Prior to First Work Assignment

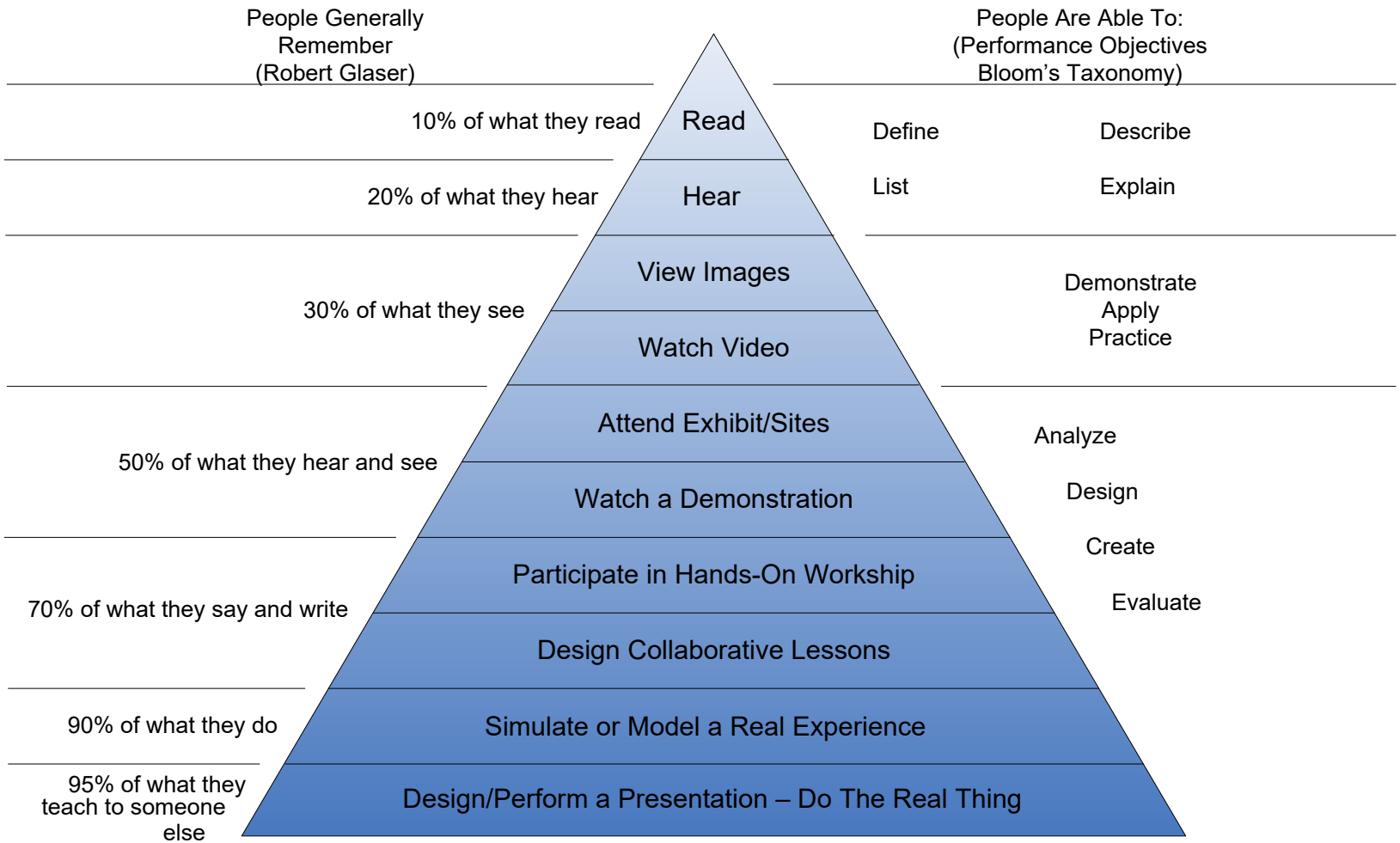
Research has indicated that students attend the core course after different lengths of time on the job (ranging from zero to about eight months). It is recommended that newly hired POs, ACOs, and JCOs be provided with the opportunity to complete the course as early as possible, preferably prior to their first work assignment.

Guiding Principle 6: Delivery is Administratively Feasible

The course should be administratively feasible. To enable every training course to operate within certain administrative constraints (e.g., time, budget, personnel, etc.), the course was designed with the following considerations:

- Daily Schedule – Daily course schedules are designed to be eight hours per day, five days per training week.
- Testing Periods and Methods
  - MCTs are designed to be scheduled in blocks. This provides for the potential use of a test proctor as an alternative to the instructor monitoring this type of testing.
  - WSTs and BSTs) are to be administered by the designated instructor during training delivery. WSTs are designed to be graded by the instructor during non-instructional time.
- Instructional Methods – The traditional classroom training model is the preferred training delivery format. This allows for a variety of delivery methods along with the use of supportive multi-media technology. Where feasible, it is recommended that course delivery consider adult learning styles and that student participation is encouraged.

Appendix H: Dale's Cone



Dale's Cone of Experience

APPENDIX I: TESTING WORKBOOK

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Core Testing: Introduction and Performance Objectives

Core providers are responsible for the administration of the tests that are used to assess the trainees' mastery of the core course subject matter. This course provides information that will assist core coordinators with developing and implementing test administration policies and procedures that ensure fair and equitable testing for trainees. Its primary focus is on the:

- types of test used to assess each trainee's ability to meet the course performance objectives.
- basic principles of test development.
- best practices for test administration.

Additionally, score report forms and guidelines for the development of the different types of the tests are provided in the appendices. Core coordinators are encouraged to read the appendices and provide the information to core instructors. The appendices include:

- Guiding Principles for Core Courses
- Score Report Forms
- Guidelines for Designing Behavioral Skills Tests and Written Skills Tests
- Structure of Multiple-Choice Items
- Multiple-Choice Formats
- Multiple-Choice Item Writing Guidelines

The information provided applies to the following core courses:

- Adult Corrections Officer (ACO) Core Course
- ACO Supplemental Core Course
- Juvenile Corrections Officer (JCO) Core Course
- Probation Officer (PO) Core Course

Performance Objectives

- **Identify the types of test that are used to assess performance objectives in core courses.**
- **Identify the basic principles of test development.**
- **Identify best practices for test administration.**
  - **Identify the key components of test remediation policies and procedures.**
  - **Identify the best practices for test retention and storage.**
- **Given a scenario, describe how to handle the situation in accordance to the best practices for test administration.**

Types of Tests in STC Core Courses

Most performance objectives in the core training manuals are followed by the type of test that is required to assess each trainee's ability to accomplish the performance objective. This section describes the three types of tests including who is responsible for test development and time of delivery.

Behavior Skills Test (BST)
BSTs require the trainee to physically demonstrate a job skill such as donning a self-contained breathing apparatus. The design of BSTs is guided by or laid out in the performance objectives. For example, consider BST #8 from the Adult Corrections Officer (ACO) Core Course provided below. The instructor would provide the instruction and guided practice necessary for trainees to learn the appropriate techniques to perform a rear break fall. Then each trainee would be responsible for individually demonstrating a rear break fall. The components listed in the bullets shall be demonstrated during the rear break fall. BSTs are completed *during* classroom instruction time and are graded by the instructor as pass/fail.

BST #8 ACO Core Course

ACO Core Performance Objective 8.4.1 (p. 42): In a simulation of a frontal assault, demonstrate a rear break fall technique incorporating the following:

- correct body positions
- proper movement
- balance
- position of advantage

Written Skills Test (WST)
WSTs require the trainee to write a simulated job document such as a portion of a report, interview questions, or an incident report. The design of WSTs is guided by the performance objectives. For example, consider WST #2 from the ACO Core Course provided below. The instructor would provide a sample case description and policy. Each trainee would independently classify the individual in the description and provide supporting rationale. The instructor would develop the sample case description and sample department classification policy. This WST would be completed *during* the classroom instruction time and graded by the instructor during non-training hours.

WST #2 ACO Core Course

ACO Core Performance Objective 5.2.3 (p. 32): Given a sample case description, classify the individual using a sample department classification policy and state your rationale.

Multiple Choice Test (MCT)
MCTs are paper and pencil tests that are usually presented in a multiple-choice format. The multiple-choice test (MCT) format is the preferred methodology for measuring knowledge-based performance objectives because of its proven value in measuring different types of learning, as well as ease of administration and scoring. An MCT is comprised of many questions, commonly referred to as *items*, that when combined, assess multiple performance objectives from one or more course classes or topics.

In the ACO and JCO Core Course Manuals, performance objectives that are assessed with a MCT will also identify the minimum number of items that must be used to assess the performance objective. Two examples are provided below. In the first, the performance objective must be assessed with at least two items while the second requires a minimum of one item to assess the performance objective.

Example 1

ACO Core Performance Objective 2.2.5 (p. 26): Distinguish the major types of dispositions (e.g., incarceration, probation, restitution). MCT 2 items

Example 2

JCO Core Performance Objective 2.2.3 (p. 18): Describe the steps in the Juvenile Justice System from arrest to disposition. MCT 1 item

In the Probation Officer (PO) Core Manual, these tests are referred to as MCTs. For each objective that is assessed using an MCT, at least one multiple-choice item must be used to assess the performance objective. Because the example provided below is from the PO Core Course, the performance objective must be assessed by a minimum of one item.

PO Core Course Example

PO Core Manual Performance Objective 2.3.1 (p. 39): Student will be able to identify the elements of civil liability law as they relate to the probation officer and probation department. (MCT)

In most cases, instructors for each core course class should develop the multiple-choice items that are combined to develop the MCTs or MCTs. Instructors will be able to link the items most accurately to the performance objective and lesson plans. It is also recommended that instructors develop a bank of items to draw on to prepare for remediation, substitute for poorly written items, and alternate items for test security. Each core course has time designated for the administration of MCTs or MCTs. Thus, these tests are administered *after* the delivery of the associated content (i.e., class or topic).

Basic Principles of Test Development

Core Courses are a Selection Standard in

Role of STC: Penal Code 6035
(a) For the purpose of raising the level of competence of local corrections and probation officers and other correctional personnel, the board shall adopt, and may from time to time amend, rules establishing minimum standards for the selection and training of these personnel employed by any city, county, or city and county who provide for the custody, supervision, treatment, or rehabilitation of persons accused of, or adjudged responsible for, criminal or delinquent conduct who are currently under local jurisdiction. All these rules shall be adopted and amended pursuant to Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

California Code of Regulations: Title 15 § 131. Minimum Selection Standards
(a) In addition to the requirements set forth in Section 830 et seq. of the Penal Code and Section 1029 et seq. of the Government Code, the standards set forth below shall apply. These standards for entry probation officer positions, entry juvenile counselor positions, and entry corrections officer positions shall include but not be limited to the following:

(1) Basic abilities and other characteristics important for successful job performance as demonstrated by passing the Board's written examination. An alternative examination may be substituted pursuant to Section 132.
(2) Competence in oral communication as demonstrated in an interview.
(3) Past behavior compatible to job requirements as demonstrated by a background investigation.
(4) <u>Competence in the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for entry-level job performance, as demonstrated by successful completion of the required core curriculum.</u>
(5) Competence in the performance of entry-level duties as demonstrated by successful completion of the probationary period.
(6) The ability to perform the essential job functions of the position as demonstrated by meeting the Board's current guidelines for Vision, Hearing, and Medical Screening.
(7) A minimum of 18 years of age prior to appointment.

(b) The level of competence in (a) (2) and (a) (3) above shall be commensurate with the needs of the individual job classifications of each county or city. The level of competence in (a) (1) above shall be commensurate to the cutoff score that is chosen by the county or city and is consistent with research validation.

Legislation and Personnel Selection

Fair Employment Law

1964 Civil Rights Act – This had many titles. The most important for personnel decisions was Title VII, which:

- made it illegal to discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin as a basis for making hiring decisions.
- created protected groups and subgroups including Blacks, American Indians (including Alaskan Natives), Asians (including Pacific Islanders), Hispanic (including persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish origin or culture regardless of race), and Whites (Caucasian) other than Hispanic.
- created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for oversight and enforcement.
- defined selection procedures.

Because of Title VII, there was and continues to be close examination of the procedures that are used for making hiring decisions. This examination has mostly happened through litigation settled at the Supreme Court level.

Selection Procedure

A selection procedure is any measure, combination of measures, or procedure used as a basis for any employment decision. Selection procedures include the full range of assessment techniques from traditional paper and pencil tests, performance tests, ***training programs***, or probationary periods and physical, educational, and work experience requirements through informal or casual interviews and unscored application forms.

Additional protected groups were identified because of the:

- 1967 Age Discrimination in Employment Act – This forbids discrimination against people who are age 40 or over.
- 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act – This prohibits discrimination against people who have disabilities. "A disabled person is defined as one with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, or who has a record of such impairment, or who is regarded as having such impairment" (Guion, 1998, p. 199). This does not protect the employment of those who would threaten the safety or property of others on a given job.

Outcomes of Important U.S. Court Cases

- Procedures must be job related as demonstrated through research.
- Defendants are responsible for providing validity evidence.
- Procedures may not wrongfully discriminate.
- Definition of a test – A test is **any form** of collecting information on individuals when that information is used as a basis for making employment decisions.

Legal Requirements and Professional Standards for Employee Selection

Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures

- These provide a single set of principles which are designed to assist employers, labor organizations, employment agencies, and licensing and certification boards to comply with requirements of Federal law, prohibiting employment practices which discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin.
- They were designed to provide a framework for determining the proper use of tests and other selection procedures.
- They are consistent with professional standards, such as those described in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* and the *Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures*.

Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures

- These specify established scientific findings and generally accepted professional practice in the field of personnel selection psychology concerning the choice, development, evaluation, and use of personnel selection procedures designed to measure constructs related to work behavior.
- The *Principles* focus on the accuracy of the inferences that underlie employment decisions.

Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing

- These provide criteria for the evaluation of tests, testing practices, and the effects of test use.
- While the evaluation of tests and personnel selection procedures depends heavily on professional judgment, the *Standards* provide a frame of reference to ensure that relevant issues are addressed.

Application to Testing in STC Core Courses

Any test that is used as the basis for making an employee decision must:

- be based upon job information (job analysis) obtained from experts who know about the job [subject matter experts (SMEs)] who represent the population of job incumbents.
- assess components that are necessary for successful job performance such as:
  - important job behaviors.
  - knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to do the job.
  - work products that are representative of the job.

STC and core instructors are partners in meeting the legal and professional standards for selection procedures. STC developed the core courses in accordance with legal and professional standards. Core instructors are responsible for ensuring that tests assess the performance objectives and adhere to legal and professional selection standards. To assist in evaluating compliance with this requirement, consider the Reasonable Person Test provided on the following page. Remember, defendants (i.e., STC agencies, core coordinators, core instructors) are responsible for providing evidence for the job-relatedness of tests.

Reasonable Person Test

Reasonable Person: An individual with considerable experience on the job who would be asked to use their professional judgment to evaluate the validity of a test.

Would a reasonable person judge the test (BSTs, WSTs, and MCTs) to be clear and unambiguous, tied to the performance objective, tied to the lesson plan, related to the job, and representative of work products?

If the answer is NO, do not use the test!

Notes:

Best Practices for Test Administration

Because core courses are a selection standard, it is important to ensure that tests are developed in accordance with legal and professional standards. A trainee's failure may mean the loss of employment. Therefore, all tests must be constructed, administered, scored, and reported appropriately. Each provider/agency should have a written policy and procedure for test administration. The goal of which is to provide accurate and comparable assessment of all trainees and unfair advantage to no one. This is achieved by developing and adhering to standardized procedures for test administration. This section focuses on the following key criteria that should be incorporated in policies and procedures for test administration:

- Test Individual Trainees
- Proctored Testing
- Test Security (include age of the test)
- Testing Environment
- Cheating
- Individuals with Disabilities
- Reviewing Test Performance and Cut Scores
- Remediation Policy
- Reporting Test Scores to STC

STC FAQs

1. What are the types of tests used to assess trainee performance in core? Where and when is each test (a) administered and (b) scored?
2. Who should develop the tests? Should the instructor or someone skilled at test item writing
3. Why doesn't STC provide test questions?
4. What's wrong with "teaching to the test?"

Test Trainees Individually

The core course is a part of the selection process and agencies may base employment decisions on an individual's performance in a core course. Therefore, it is critical that the core tests represent individual performance. For this reason, STC requires that all tests are completed individually by each trainee.

Proctored Testing

All tests should be proctored; that is, they are overseen by an individual who monitors and supervises the trainees taking the exam. For STC core courses, BSTs and WSTs are proctored by the instructor MCTs can be proctored by staff or an instructor. The role of the proctor is to ensure tests are administered under the proper conditions and to maintain the security of tests. The test administration policies and procedures should document the specific responsibilities of proctors and proctors should be trained on these responsibilities. The proctor responsibilities may include:

- maintaining test security at all times.
- ensuring the physical conditions are appropriate for testing.
- making sure materials are appropriately distributed and all materials are returned upon completion of the test.
- ensuring appropriate test administration procedures are followed.
- assisting students with emergencies and restroom breaks during testing.
- monitoring students.
- following appropriate procedures for providing accommodations.
- reporting all testing irregularities.

It is also beneficial for providers/agencies to have detailed test administration instructions, possibly including a script, for the proctor who is administering a test. These instructions generally inform test takers of how to make their responses, what kind or level of help they may be given if they do not understand a question or task, how to correct inadvertent responses, and any time constraints.

SAT and ACT Test-Takers Face Tighter Security
NY Times March 28, 2012
Marry Ann Giordano

The SAT cheating scandal involving at least 20 Long Island high school students last fall triggered criminal charges and test-maker recriminations — and now it will result in tougher security measures for test-takers nationwide.

The College Board's Educational Testing Service, which administers the SAT, and ACT Inc., which administers the ACT — both of which are used for college admissions — said students would now be required to submit photos with their applications to take the exams. The photos will be printed on their admissions ticket and on the roster at the testing location.

Students will also be required to list the high school they attend. That school will receive a copy of the photo submitted by the student, to help verify the test-taker's identity. Another measure, which would require that the photos also be sent to colleges with the test scores, came under fire after the security changes were announced, with some expressing concerns that a photo could sway college admissions.

The announcement of the new security measures was made Tuesday by Kathleen M. Rice, the Nassau County district attorney, who brought cases against 20 students at five Long Island high schools for either taking the SAT for other students or for paying for the test to be taken by an imposter. Jenny Anderson reports in The New York Times on Wednesday that the changes will take place nationwide, in the fall.

Test Security

Because core tests are part of the selection process, it is crucial that the security of the tests is ensured. Maintaining the security and confidentiality of tests is crucial for ensuring valid test scores and providing all trainees with an equal performance opportunity. Providers/agencies should have written documentation of their security procedures. The security procedures should address the physical security protocols for developing tests, storing tests and answer keys, printing tests, preparing/setting-up examination sites, and taking inventory of testing materials (Buchendahl & Plake, 2006). The written security procedures should include the following components:

- **Pre-testing security** – Testing materials should be kept in a locked storage area when not in use.
- **Consequences of test security violations** – These includes consequences for all parties who may have access to a test (e.g., trainees, instructors, proctors, etc.)
- **Testing procedures** – These are steps for maintaining security during test administration (e.g., distribution, collection).
- **Use of test information** – This includes procedures to protect test items and trainees' scores on the test.
- **Test access** – This defines who has access to testing materials. Individuals who have access to testing materials:

  - must sign a confidentiality agreement.
  - may not discuss, disseminate, describe, or otherwise reveal the contents of the test to any third party with the intent to compromise the validity of the test.
  - may not make copies of the test or any test items, take notes, or otherwise reproduce the test or test items.
  - may not publish, or cause to be published, the test or any of the test items.
- **Security breaches** – This defines how breaches in test security will be reported and handled if they occur. Procedures for handling a breach in test security should include:

  - the individual to whom the breach should be reported.
  - immediate suspension of the test.
  - a discipline policy for the individual (e.g., trainee, proctor, instructor, etc.) responsible for the breach.
  - a procedure and protocol for replacing the compromised test.
- **Test replacement** – The age of a test can have an impact on security. The longer a test is in use, the greater the probability that the security of the test has been compromised in some manner. Additionally, older tests are also at risk of assessing outdated content. Tests should be updated on a consistent basis. In order to maintain security and content validity, test should be replaced as often as it is feasible.

In addition to adhering to a training provider's/agencies' security procedures, instructors are responsible for ensuring the security of the tests they develop and/or administer. To ensure the security of tests, instructors:

- are personally responsible for and accountable for all testing material in their possession.
- shall not permit trainees or other unauthorized individuals to have access to testing materials other than as is required for administration.

- shall not leave testing material in unsecured locations (e.g., on top a desk, in a notebook, or with materials for instruction) that can be accessed by unauthorized individuals.
- shall not discuss tests with anyone who is not directly involved in the testing process (e.g., development, administration).
- shall not email tests and testing materials. It is impossible to control the servers or networks on which the test may inadvertently be stored.
- shall not engage in any classroom behavior that provides trainees a verbatim copy of test questions. This "teaching to the test" is not training and constitutes a breach in test security.

Test Security: An Issue Addressed by a Proposed Assembly Bill

AB 2285 (Eng)
Peace officer testing: cheating.

SECTION 1.

Section 13510.4 is added to the Penal Code, to read:

13510.4.

(a) A peace officer trainee who, based on the commission's investigative findings, knowingly cheats, assists in cheating, or aids, abets, or knowingly conceals efforts by others to cheat in any manner on a basic course examination mandated by the commission shall be liable for a civil fine of not more than one thousand dollars ($1,000) per occurrence.

(b) For purposes of this section, "cheating" means any attempt or act by a peace officer trainee to gain an unfair advantage or give an unfair advantage to another peace officer trainee or group of trainees taking a POST-mandated basic course examination.

(c) For purposes of this section, "peace officer trainee" means an applicant for a basic course examination who has not been hired by a department or agency and who has not been sworn as a peace officer.

Testing Environment
The testing environment should be reasonably comfortable with minimal distractions. Noise disruptions, extreme temperatures, poor lighting, inadequate workspace, illegible materials and so forth are conditions that should be avoided. The testing area should be readily accessible and monitored by a proctor to assist test takers when necessary to maintain administration procedures.

Cheating
Reasonable efforts should be made to ensure the integrity of test scores by eliminating opportunities for test takers to use fraudulent means to improve scores. Test development and administration procedures should minimize the possibility of cheating. When practical this may include constructing seating charts, specifying appropriate space between seats, limiting the type and content of personal property (e.g., bags, backpack, purses, cell phones, etc.) permitted in the testing area, and continuous monitoring of the testing process. In general, providers and proctors should take steps to minimize the possibility of cheating.

Individuals with Disabilities
For the administration of tests, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) makes it unlawful to:

- fail to select and administer a test such that it reflects what the test is intended to measure rather than reflecting a trainee's or employee's impairment.
- fail to make reasonable accommodations to the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual unless such accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the provider/agency.

Prior to the first course delivery, providers/agencies should have a *written* policy on reasonable accommodation. Examples of reasonable accommodations include additional testing time, assistance (e.g., reader, accessible work stations), format (i.e., larger print), or a separate room for testing. The following criteria may be included in a reasonable accommodation policy:

- formal procedures for requesting and receiving accommodations
- informing test takers of the procedures for reasonable accommodation prior to testing.
- documentation requirements for modification to testing procedures.

Notes:

Reviewing Test Performance

Tests are designed to reflect course content and objectives. They are an essential component of core courses. They reinforce performance objectives and are the final measure of trainee success. Therefore, it is important to develop tests that meet these requirements in a valid manner. An important, often overlooked, step in developing and designing tests is a thorough editing and review process. An editing and review process can greatly improve the quality of tests (Wallach, et. al., 2006). It is STC's recommendation that core tests (BSTs, WSTs, and MCTs) are reviewed by a committee of peers prior to their first use whenever possible. The focus of edit and review committees is to:

- detect any lack of clarity in the test (e.g., question, supporting materials, appropriate response).
- identify and remediate multiple correct answers or lack of one best answer.
- verify the correct answer.
- offer suggestions to improve the item.

For developing MCT items, it is not uncommon that for every three items that are developed, only one will make it through the review process. Consider also that a remediation test should also be developed. This means that for each MCT item that is required, at least 6 MCT item should be written. Thus, after review, 3 MCT items will be available. The instructor will have one item for the test, another for the remediation test, and as a replacement in case it is needed. A similar argument could be made for WSTs and BSTs as well.

"If item writing is considered an art, then item editing is a craft, which can improve the overall validity of a test (Baranowski, 2004, p. 349)."

After tests are taken by trainees, STC recommends that instructors evaluate the performance of the tests or test items they developed. This evaluation can be as simple as determining the percent of trainees who responded appropriately to the test (BST or WST) or answered the MCT item correctly. If trainees have poor performance overall, the cause of the poor performance should be considered. Once the cause is identified, steps should be taken to correct the problem. The following are some possible causes of poor performance:

- the content was not included in the course instruction.
- the content covered in course instruction was unclear or ineffective.
- the test or item was unclear, ambiguous, or tricky.
- the test or item is completely flaw.

Cut Scores

Because tests are generated by instructors, STC cannot set cut scores. Throughout the state there may be wide variation in the difficulty of the tests, the average difficulty of the questions, number of test questions, and emphasis of the questions. To accommodate these variations, providers determine what constitutes a passing score. Ideally, all tests would be pilot tested prior to first use. The pilot data would provide test and question level information to determine the cut score. While it is not always feasible to pilot a test, it is possible to have tests reviewed by a committee of peers who then determine a cut score or pass/fail criteria.

Setting the Cut-Off Score for /MCTs

Based on the recommendations of the review committee or analysis of pilot data, a cut-off score for a MCT is set. Typically, providers use a percentage cut-off such as 70% or 80%. To determine a cut-score for MCTs, the review committee should consider:

- the difficulty of each test question.
- critical questions that must be answered correctly.
- the number of questions included above the minimum required for each objective.
- the overall difficulty of the exam.

If pilot data is available, the following should be considered:

- The number of correct answers for each question.
- The correlation between performance on a test question and the test score.
- Feedback regarding the clarity of each question.

Scoring WSTs

WSTs are scored as pass/fail only. The key to evaluating mastery of the curriculum by examining the WST lies in the specifications of the performance objective. To score a WST, the instructor should look for the elements listed in the associated performance objective and score the trainee according to how many of the elements were addressed and how well they were addressed. In addition, the instructor should also:

- base scoring on how well the trainee incorporated previous elements of the course that build toward the specific objective called for in the WST.
- review the trainee's grammar and writing skills as well as content. However, this is a secondary consideration in the scoring. If the trainee needs improvement in writing skills, the instructor may inform the employing agency and/or include this on the Individual Trainee Evaluation Form (see *Handbook for Presenting Local Corrections Core Courses*).

Scoring Behavior Skills Tests

BSTs are also scored as pass/fail. The specifications for passing these tests are embedded in the performance objectives. The trainee can either correctly perform the task or not and thus receives a pass or fail score. For each BST, the instructor should look for the elements listed in the associated performance objective and score the trainee according to how many of the elements were addressed and how well they were addressed.

Remediation Policy

Prior to the first course delivery, providers/agencies should have a *written* policy on how they will handle a test failure. According to the *Standards* (AERA, APA, NCME, 1999) and the *Principles* (SIOP, 2003), opportunities for reassessment and reconsideration should be provided. It is STC's recommendation that training agencies have a remediation policy in place for reassessment. This policy should be followed consistently and fairly for all trainees. For example, if one re-take is available for a trainee who fails a test, then one re-take should be available for all trainees. The following criteria should be incorporated into a remediation plan:

- **Proctored.** The test that is used for remediation must be proctored. It cannot be a take-home test.
- **Multiple versions of the BSTs, WSTs, and MCTs.** When a trainee takes a test and fails and is then permitted to retake the same test as a remediation process, practice effects may influence the scores on the second test (Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2005). When a test is given a second time, test takers score better simply because they have sharpened their skills by having taken the test the first time. For this reason, STC:
    - *recommends* that the training agency have available multiple versions of the BSTs, WSTs, and MCTs.
    - *requires* that quizzes are not the same as the final BSTs, WSTs and MCTs.
- **Communication and Coordination with the Employing Agency.** When an employing agency is informed that a trainee has not successfully completed core training, a difficult decision must be made as to whether to retain the employee. For this reason, training agencies and employing agencies should communicate and coordinate with each other especially when a trainee is struggling in a core course. This means the employing agency is aware of the remediation plan. Also, the employing agency should be consulted before a trainee is dismissed from a core course.

Test Challenges

There may be times when a trainee challenges a test indicating it was unfair or not related to the job. Providers should take these challenges seriously and investigate the complaint. Providers who implement best practices for test development and administration are more likely to have a favorable outcome to such challenges. Additionally, providers should have the ability to:

- link each test question to a core course performance objective.
- link each test question to a lesson plan.

To investigate the complaint, the provider should ask the trainee questions to clarify the specific aspect of the exam that is being challenged (e.g., the overall content, the content was not covered in course instruction, a specific question, the cut score, etc.). The validity of the exam with respect to the specific challenge should then be investigated. The investigation steps may vary for a variety of complaints, but the focus of any investigation should be to determine if the test was administered appropriately, the test content was covered during course instruction, the test or test question was clear and unambiguous, the test was tied to a specific performance objective and lesson plan, and level of difficulty of the test was appropriate for an entry-level core course. The complaint, investigation, and outcome should be thoroughly documented.

If it is determined that the challenge to a test or test question is valid, appropriate steps should be taken to resolve the complaint. For example, if only one question on a 50-question test is found to be unfair because it assessed material that was not covered in class, only scores on the 49 fair questions should be included in each trainee's overall test score. The flawed question should be replaced before the test is used again. If a WST or BST is determined to be flawed or unfair, a replacement WST or BST should be administered for all trainees.

Record Retention and Storage

In accordance with the STC *Handbook for Presenting Local Corrections Core Courses*, rosters, test scores, and individual trainee evaluations should be kept on file for at least three years **and** in accordance with the local agencies document retention policy. STC has no requirement that providers retain trainee's original test documents (i.e., their completed tests). Providers may wish to keep the original test documents in case of any litigation that pertains to core training. Remember all test materials must be stored in a secure location at all times.

Providers or agencies that have the storage space (electronic or physical) are encouraged to maintain records for the life of a career. It never fails that the one test that is questioned, is the one that was thrown away. At the minimum, a copy of the test, test scores, and documentation linking each test question to performance objectives and lesson plans, should be retained for at least three years. However, agencies should **always** comply with their record retention policy.

Appendix A: Guiding Principles

Training design involves a series of decisions, many of which are critical to producing an effective instructional program. For example, the designers must repeatedly make decisions regarding the inclusion or exclusion of specific content in the course. While such decisions are often complex and difficult, they are more easily made if guiding principles have been established. The principles that guided the development of the core courses are presented below.

Guiding Principle 1: Develop a Job-Related Course
The content of the course must be related to the job. To the extent that knowledge or skills are essential to job performance, they are included in the course.

Guiding Principle 2: Specify the Training Needed by "Entry-level" POs, ACOs, and JCOs
The course should specify the training needed by "entry-level" POs, ACOs, and JCOs who have no prior training or experience in corrections. Although some entry-level staff may have some background in corrections, the assumption of no prior training or experience ensures that the course will cover the needs of all entry-level personnel.

Guiding Principle 3: Training Must Be Applicable to Departments across the State
The course should meet the training needs in all departments across the state regardless of department size, location, or budget.

Guiding Principle 4: Specify Minimum Training
The course should provide the basic knowledge, tools, and skills that are essential to meet minimum performance standards. It is very important to recognize that the course cannot and should not be expected to produce an experienced officer capable of handling every job assignment.

Guiding Principle 5: Course Should Be Completed Prior to First Work Assignment
Research conducted during the core revision process indicated that students attend the course after different lengths of time on the job (ranging from 0 to about 8 months). To the extent that it is feasible for jurisdictions to do so, it is recommended that newly hired POs, JCOs, and ACOs be provided with the opportunity to complete the course as early as possible, preferably prior to their first work assignment.

Guiding Principle 6: Delivery is Administratively Feasible
To enable every training course to operate within certain administrative constraints (e.g., time, budget, personnel, etc.), the core courses were designed with the following considerations:

- Daily Schedule – Daily course schedules are designed to be 8 hours per day, 5 days per training week.
- Testing Periods and Methods
    - MCTs are designed to be scheduled in blocks. This provides for the potential use of a test proctor as an alternative to the instructor monitoring this type of testing.
    - Written Skills Tests (WSTs) and BSTs are to be administered by the designated instructor during training delivery. WSTs are designed to be graded by the instructor during non-instructional time.

Instructional Methods – The traditional classroom training model is the preferred training delivery format. This allows for a variety of delivery methods along with the use of supportive multi-media technology. Where feasible, it is recommended that course delivery consider adult learning styles and that student participation is encouraged.

Appendix B: Score Report Forms

This appendix provides the following score report forms:

- Multiple Choice Test Score Report Form
- Behavior Skills Test Score Report Form
- Written Skills Test Score Report Form
- Adult Corrections Officer Physical Tasks Test Scores
- Juvenile Corrections Officer Physical Tasks Test Scores

Multiple Choice Test Score Report Form

STANDARDS AND TRAINING FOR CORRECTIONS PROGRAM
CORE COURSE TEST SCORE REPORT

Multiple Choice Test Scores: Please enter scores as percentage of correct responses

CERTIFICATION NUMBER	COURSE START DATE	COURSE END DATE	COURSE TITLE	TRAINING PROVIDER

Name	MCT#	MCT#	MCT#	MCT#	MCT#	MCT#	MCT#	MCT#	MCT#	MCT#	MCT#	MCT#
1.												
2.												
3.												
4.												
5.												
6.												
7.												
8.												
9.												
10.												
11.												
12												
13.												
14.												
15.												
16.												
17.												
18.												
19.												
20.												

NAME AND TITLE	AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

Behavior Skills Test Score Report Form

STANDARDS AND TRAINING FOR CORRECTIONS PROGRAM CORE COURSE TEST SCORE REPORT	**Behavior Skills Test Scores:** Please mark as either "***pass***" or "***fail.***" Total number tests required for: **ACO** = *38 BSTs (#35-38 on separate sheet)*; ACO **Supplemental** = *6 BSTs (#27, 29, 30-33)*; JCO = *13 BSTs*; PO = *35 BSTs*			
CERTIFICATION NUMBER	**COURSE START DATE**	**COURSE END DATE**	**COURSE TITLE**	TRAINING PROVIDER

Name	**BST#**	**BST#**	**BST#**	**BST#**	**BST#**	**BST#**	**BST#**	**BST#**	**BST#**	**BST#**	**BST#**	**BST#**
1.												
2.												
3.												
4.												
5.												
6.												
7.												
8.												
9.												
10.												
11.												
12												
13.												
14.												
15.												
16.												
17.												
18.												
19.												
20.												

NAME AND TITLE	AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

Written Skills Test Score Report Form

STANDARDS AND TRAINING FOR CORRECTIONS PROGRAM CORE COURSE TEST SCORE REPORT	**Written Skills Test Scores:** Please mark as either "***pass***" or "***fail***." Total number tests required for: **ACO** = *10 WSTs*; ACO **Supplemental** = *5 WSTs (#2-4, 8, 10)*; JCO = *27 WSTs*; PO = *27 WSTs*

CERTIFICATION NUMBER	COURSE START DATE	COURSE END DATE	COURSE TITLE	TRAINING PROVIDER

Name	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#	WST#
1.												
2.												
3.												
4.												
5.												
6.												
7.												
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9.												
10.												
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12												
13.												
14.												
15.												
16.												
17.												
18.												
19.												
20.												

NAME AND TITLE	AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

Adult Corrections Officer Physical Tasks Test Scores

Training Course Date (mo./year): _____

STC Certification #: _____

Provider: _____

Instructor Name: _____

Please record the date trainee was officially observed to meet or exceed Benchmark Minimum Performance Level. Note: Only record as *Pass, Fail*, or *Not Administered*.

Trainee Name	**BST #35 Sprint**	**BST #36 Dummy Drag**	**BST #37 Weighted Carry**	**BST #38 Stair Walk**

Juvenile Corrections Officer Physical Tasks Test Scores

Training Course Date (mo./year): _____

STC Certification #: _____

Provider: _____

Instructor Name: _____

Each of the following benchmark tests is included in Behavior Skills Test #13 in the course curriculum. Please record the date trainee was officially observed to meet or exceed Benchmark Minimum Performance Level. Note: Only record as *Pass, Fail*, or *Not Administered*.

Trainee Name	Weighted Obstacle	Sprint	Dummy Lift	Dummy Drag

Solicit Appropriate Trainee Response

The response that the test solicits from the trainee should be appropriate for the test type.

- BSTs should require the trainee to perform a physical behavior that can be seen (e.g., interview, handcuff, takedown, etc.). BSTs should not result in a test that has a trainee write a report, justification for a response, etc.
- WSTs should require the trainee to produce a written document such as a report, completed form, case plan, etc.
- BSTs and WSTs are to be completed individually be each trainee.

In the example provided to the right, the performance objective specifies that the trainee must demonstrate how to safely approach a compliant subject prior to the application of handcuffs. The poor BST is inappropriate because it does not require a physical demonstration of the required behavior; that is a safely approaching a compliant subject prior to the application of handcuffs. It also does not require the trainee to demonstrate the behavior for the three positions (standing, kneeling, and prone). For these reasons, the better BST is more appropriate as it requires a physical, visible behavior.

BST Example

Performance Objective: Demonstrate how to safely approach a compliant subject in a standing, kneeling, and prone position prior to the application of handcuffs. (BST)

Poor BST: The trainee is provided with several diagrams that illustrate several options for approaching a subject in a standing position. The trainee is asked to circle the diagram that corresponds to the safest approach for

Measure the Core Course Performance Objective

Each BST and WST must be carefully designed to provide a valid indicator of the trainee's ability to meet the associated performance objective. The verb(s) in a performance objective has a direct effect on the test design. The test must directly measure the performance specified by the verb(s) in the performance objective.

In the WST example provided, the key verbs in the objective are classify, assign, and justify. The poor WST is inappropriate because it does not require the trainee to apply knowledge of classification and housing assignments. It also does not require the trainee to justify the classification or housing assignment. For these reasons, the better WST is more appropriate as it is directly associated with all of the verbs in the performance objective.

WST Example

Performance Objective: Given a sample intake profile and a sample classification plan, classify the juvenile and assign housing according to key classification factors, and justify your decision. (WST)

Poor WST: A written skills test that asks the trainee to list key factors that should be considered in classifying and assigning a juvenile to a housing unit.

Better WST: A written skills test that provides a sample intake profile and classification plan. The test asks multiple questions requiring the trainee to write a narrative that (a) classifies the individual, (b) assigns housing, and (c) justifies the classification and housing assignment of the juvenile.

Provide the Resources Specified in the Performance Objective

BSTs and WSTs require resources specified in the condition of the performance objective. These resources may include, but are not limited to, sample scenarios, penal code, handcuffs, sample case plans, sample procedures, etc. Instructors may need to develop these resources as part of designing the BST or WST. For WSTs the vocabulary and reading level of the resources should be at the appropriate level for the trainees.

In the example provided, the performance objective specifies that the trainee will be provided with a scenario of inmate behavior. The poor WST is inappropriate because it does not provide a scenario for the trainee to use in the assessment of the performance objective. It also does not require the trainee to apply job knowledge. The trainee is simply asked to list what should be included in documentation, rather than actually writing a report that includes the required content based on a provided scenario. For these reasons, the better WST is more appropriate because it provides the resources specified in the performance objective and requires the application of job knowledge.

WST Example

Performance Objective: Presented with a scenario of inmate behavior, generate a written report of the inmate's behavior and appearance. Include the following:

- factors that indicate risk
- statements made by inmate
- corrections officer actions

Poor WST: A written skills test that asks the trainee to list content that should be included when documenting an inmate's behavior or appearance.

Better WST: A written skills test that provides a scenario (e.g., written description, vignette, video, or skit/play) that includes an inmate whose behavior or appearance requires documentation. The test question requires the trainee to write a narrative that (a) documents the inmate's behavior (if necessary), (b) appearance (if necessary), and (c) the required content as identified in the performance objective.

Assess Important Content

BSTs and WSTs should measure important content from the course that is necessary to perform the job. The tests should not measure trivial knowledge, skills, or abilities that are not pertinent to successful job performance. It is important to remember that these tests are part of the selection process. Trainees should not fail based on irrelevant, trivial content that is not job-related or critical to job performance.

In the example provided above the performance objective specifies that the trainee will list key considerations for planning cell extractions. The poor WST is inappropriate because it does not measure the performance objective. Telling a story about a poorly executed cell extraction may be considered trivial compared to identifying the key considerations for planning a cell extraction. The better BST is more appropriate because it measures the performance objective rather than knowledge of a past incident.

WST Example

Performance Objective: List key considerations that must be addressed in planning cell extractions.

Poor WST: A written skills test that asks the trainee to describe a cell extraction incident that did not go as planned.

Better WST: A written skills test that requires the trainee to write a list of the key considerations that must be included in a cell extraction plan, which includes the required content presented during the instruction of the course class.

Pass the Reasonable Person Test

Would a reasonable person judge the test (BST, WST, or MCT) to be clear and unambiguous, tied to the performance objective, tied to the lesson plan, related to the job, and representative of work products? If the answer is NO, do not use test. The test should be redesigned before it is used to measure the associated performance objective.

In the example provided, the performance objective specifies that the trainee will demonstrate the proper manipulation of handcuffs. The poor BST is inappropriate

BST Example

Performance Objective: Demonstrate proper manipulation of handcuffs. For example:

- retrieval
- pistol grip by chain
- ensuring swing arm is facing toward subject's wrist
- ensuring that handcuffs are not double locked before attempting to place them on the subject's wrists
- once placed on subject's wrists, check for excessive tightness before double locking
- double locking on subjects' wrists

Poor BST: Ask the trainees to raise their hands if they already learned how to correctly apply handcuffs in the PC 832 course. Have only those students who did not raise their hand demonstrate the proper manipulation of handcuffs.

Better BST: Require each trainee to correctly apply handcuffs on a subject incorporating the principles identified in the performance objective.

Appendix D: Structure of Multiple-Choice Items

Multiple-choice (MC) items consist of the following components:

- **Stem** – This states the question or problem. The stem may be a simple question, a statement, or a question incorporating a reading passage, chart, graph, or other information.
- **Alternatives** – These are the response options from which the test taker may choose from to answer the item.
  - The **key**, or the keyed response, is the correct alternative.
  - **Distracters** are the incorrect alternatives.

Example

Use the information in the table below to answer question 1.

Inmate K's Schedule

Time	Activity	Duration
8:00 a.m.	breakfast	1 hour and 15 minutes
9:30 a.m.	laundry duty	1 hour
10:30 a.m.	recreation time	30 minutes
11:15 a.m.	counseling	1 hour
12:30 p.m.	kitchen duty	4 hours

→ **Stem**

1. The table above provides Inmate K's schedule for the day. Which two activities will have LESS THAN a 15-minute break between them?

A. breakfast and laundry duty
B. laundry duty and recreation time
C. recreation time and counseling
D. counseling and kitchen duty

→ **Alternatives** = A thru D
Key = B
Distracters = A, C, and D

Appendix E: Multiple-Choice Formats

This appendix presents a variety of MC formats, including examples, that are recommended by Halydyna (2004).

Conventional MC
The conventional MC format is the most common. There are three variations of the conventional MC format: question, incomplete stem, and best answer. An example of each is provided below.

Examples of Conventional MC Format

Question Format:
Who is John Galt?
A. A rock star
B. A movie actor
C. A character in a book

Incomplete Stem Format
John Galt is a character in an Ayn Rand novel who is remembered for his
A. integrity.
B. romantic tendencies.
C. courage.

Best Answer Format
Which is the most effective safety feature in your car?
A. seat belt
B. front air bag
C. anti-lock braking system

Matching
The matching format is used when a set of options is available that is useful for two or more items. The format begins with a set of options at the top followed by a set of stems at the bottom. The instructions at the top inform the test takers how to respond and where to mark their answers. An example is provided below.

Example of the Matching Format

For each question select the correct answer from the options provided below. Mark your answer on the answer sheet.

A. Minnesota
B. Illinois
C. Wisconsin
D. Nebraska
E. Iowa

1. What is the home state of the Hawkeyes?
2. Which state is known for its cheese heads?
3. Which is the land of many lakes?
4. What state is Cornhuskers country?
5. Which state contains Cook County?

Extended Matching

The extended matching (EM) format uses a long list of options linked to a long list of stems. A set of EM items has four components: (a) a theme, (b) a set of options, (c), a lead-in statement, and (d) a set of stems. The theme focused a test taker on the context. The list of options, which can be lengthy, is possible right answers. The list of options can exhaust the content domain but must be similar in content. The lead-in statement may be a scenario or vignette. The stems should be able to be independently answered. The set of items must have at least two stems. An example is provided below. The theme for the example is neuropsychological tests.

Example of the Extended Matching Format

For each question, select the correct answer from the options provided below. Mark your answer on the answer sheet.

A. Cognitive Estimates Test
B. Digit Span
C. Go-No Go Test
D. Mini Mental State Examination
E. National Adult Reading Test
F. Raven's Progressive Matrices
G. Rivermead Behavioural Memory Test
H. Stroop Test
I. Wechsler Memory Scale
J. Wisconsin Card Sorting Test

A 54-year old man has a year's history of steadily progressive personality changes. He has become increasingly apathetic and appears depressed. His main complaint is increasing frontal headaches. On examination, he has word-finding difficulties. His EEG shows frontal slowing that is greatest on the left.

1. You are concerned that he may have an intracranial space-occupying lesion. Which test should you consider?
2. Tests indicate that his current performance IQ is in the low to average range. Which test should you consider?
3. The estimate of his premorbid IQ is 15 points higher than his current performance IQ. It is recommended that he has a full WAIS IQ assessment to measure both performance and verbal IQ. On the WAIS his verbal IQ is found to be impaired over and above his performance IQ. Which test is part of the WAIS verbal subtests?
4. An MRI shows a large meningioma compressing dorso-lateral prefrontal cortex on the left. Which test is most likely to indicate impairment?

Alternate Choice
Alternate choice is a conventional MC with only two options. An example is provided below. Although the alternate choice format is a downsized version of the conventional MC format, it is not a true/false format. Alternate choice requires a comparison between two choices. The true/false format does not explicitly require a comparison.

Example of the Alternate Choice Format

What is the most effective way to motivate a student?

A. intermittent praise
B. consistent praise

True/False
The true/false (T/F) format has been well established in classroom assessment but is seldom used in standardized testing programs (e.g., SAT, GRE). T/F format can be traditional or unusual. An example of each is provided below. The T/F format should be used with caution because research suggests it tends to be used to assess recall of trivial knowledge.

Examples of the T/F Format

Traditional T/F Format:
Mark A on your answer sheet if true and B if false.

1. The first thing to do with an automatic transmission that does not work is to check the transmission fluid.
2. The major cause of tire wear is poor wheel balance.
3. The usual cause of clutch "chatter" is in the clutch pedal linkage.
4. The distributor rotates at one half the speed of the engine crankshaft.

Unusual T/F Format:
Place an X beneath each structure for which each statement is true.

Characteristic	Root	Stem	Leaf
Growing point protected by a cap			
May possess a pithy center			
Epidermal cells hair-like			
Growing region at tip			

Multiple True/False

The multiple true/false (MTF) format has much in common with the TF format. The difference is that TF items should be different in content. However, MTF has similar content that is a result of a lead-in statement. For this reason, it is also similar to the EM format. The MTF format can be simple or complex. An example of each is provided.

Example of the Complex MTF Format

Your video store rents VHS for $2.00 on weekdays and $3.00 on weekends. You also rent DVDs for $3.00 on weekdays and $4.00 for weekends. Below is a weekly summary of rentals.

	Videos Rented	
	VHS	**DVDs**
Monday	38	35
Tuesday	31	28
Wednesday	40	45
Thursday	47	49
Friday	55	52
Saturday	63	60
Sunday	75	68

Mark A on your answer sheet if true and B if false.

1. The video store makes more money from VHS than from DVD.
2. DVDs and VHSs are more expensive on the weekdays.
3. The video store rents more DVDs in a week than VHS.
4. DVDs are more expensive than VHS.
5. The video store rents more videos Friday, Saturday, Sunday than on the weekdays.
6. Customers rent about the same number of DVDs and VHSs on the weekdays.
7. The video store rents more VHS than DVDs on the weekends.

Appendix F: Multiple-Choice Item Writing Guidelines

Many books and journal articles have been written that provide guidance on writing MC items. However, despite this guidance, item writing is not yet a science. It is still part art and part science. The guidelines presented in this appendix were quoted from and adapted from a journal article by Haladyna, Downing, and Rodriquez (2002) and *Developing and Validating Multiple-Choice Test Items* (Haladyna, 2004, p. 97 - 121). These guidelines were drawn from textbooks and analyses of over 90 research studies on the validity of these guidelines.

Content Guidelines

1. Assess the Core Course Performance Objective

Items must be carefully written so that they provide a valid indicator of the trainee's ability to meet the associated performance objective. The verb(s) in the performance objective has a direct effect on the test item. The item must directly measure the performance specified by the verb in the performance objective.

In the example provided to the right, the performance objective specifies that the trainee will identify primary legal references and sources. The poor MCT item is inappropriate because the question is not related to the performance objective. The better BST is more appropriate because it requires test takers, who are given a list of possible legal references and source, to identify the option that impacts the work of a corrections officer. The better BST measures the performance objective.

Example of Assessing the Performance Objective

Performance Objective: Identify the primary legal references and sources that impact the work of a corrections officer. For example: code statutes, case law, and regulations.

Poor MC Item:
Which of the following agencies is responsible for establishing and maintaining the minimum standards for local corrections facilities?

A. Office of Administrative Law
B. Corrections Standards Authority
C. State Personnel Board
D. California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Better MC Item:
Which of the following options is a primary legal reference or source that impacts the work of a corrections officer?

A. Title 15
B. Evidence Code
C. Title 2
D. Civil Code

2. **Assess Important Content**
MC items should only assess important content and avoid trivial content. Judging the importance of content is subjective. Haladyna (2004) suggests consulting with other content experts to determine if the content is too trivial. The example below shows the difference between trivial and important content. The poor stem asks for a fact that is trivial to trainees. The better stem addresses the population for which a specific risk and needs assessment was developed. The better stem seems more appropriate for probation officers.

Example of Assessing Important Content

Poor MC Stem:
When was the STRONG created?

Better MC Stem:
The STRONG was created as a risk and needs assessment for which of the following populations?

3. **Use Novel Material to Test for Understanding**
It is important to test for understanding rather than simple recall. Testing understanding can be done by presenting a concept, procedure, or principle in a novel way. This can be done by presenting scenarios or vignettes that require the trainee to use critical thinking or problem-solving skills. The example below shows the difference between testing recall and understanding. The poor item provides definitions which are likely to be memorized. The better item tests understanding. The trainee who understands a metaphor will select the correct alternative.

Example of Using Novel Material to Test for Understanding

Poor MC Item:
Which is the best definition of a metaphor?
A. Metaphors describe something as if they are something else.
B. Metaphors make comparisons to other things.
C. Metaphors are trite; stereotyped expressions.

Better MC Item:
Which of the following is a metaphor?
A. At the breakfast buffet, I ate like a pig.
B. My cat has fur like knotted wool.
C. She is like a rose, full of thorns and smelly.

4. **Keep Content of Each Item Independent**
When writing multiple items, it is possible to provide information in one item that will help the test taker correctly answer another item. Test wise trainees will look for clues in

items. For example, consider the two items below. A test taker who correctly answers the first item can use the information to assist with answering the second item. Because Roxie is correct for the first item, it cannot be for the second. Also, because Kate was mentioned in the first item, it can be ruled out as the correct answer. Therefore, the correct answer must be Sara.

Example of Item Dependence

MC Item:
Who was Lupe's best friend?
A. Kate
B. Delores
C. Roxie*

MC Item:
Who was quarreling with Lupe?
A. Kate
B. Sara*
C. Roxie

5. **Avoid Overly Specific or Overly General Content**
Items may assess knowledge on a continuum from very specific to very general. Items should be written with this continuum in mind. That is, the extremes should be avoided. Overly specific items tend to be trivial and overly general items tend to be ambiguous. In the examples below the first item is too specific and the second is too general.

Example of Very Specific and Overly General Content

Very Specific Item:
Who wrote the Icon of Seville?
A. Lorca
B. Ibanez
C. Rodriquez

General Item:
Which is the most serious problem in the world?
A. hunger
B. lack of education
C. disease

6. **Avoid Opinion-Based Items**
   Items should assess well-known facts, concepts, principles, and procedures. It is unfair to test a trainee on an opinion unless that opinion is qualified by analysis, supported by evidence, or presented during instruction. The example below shows the difference between an unqualified and qualified opinion.

Example of Avoiding Opinions

Unqualified Opinion Item:
Which is the best comedy film ever made?
A. Abbot and Costello Go to Mars
B. Young Frankenstein
C. A Day at the Races

Qualified Opinion Item:
According to the American Film Institute, which is the greatest American film?
A. It Happened One Night
B. Citizen Kane
C. Gone with the Wind
D. Star Wars

7. **Avoid Trick Items**
   Trick items deceive the test taker into choosing a distracter instead of the right answer. Items may be written to deliberately trick the test taker or may accidently trick the test taker. Test takers perceive the following elements as tricky:
   - The item appears to intentionally deceive, confuse, or mislead.
   - Trivial content was presented.
   - The difference between the alternatives was too fine.
   - The item included information that was not important to the problem.
   - Principles were presented differently than in instruction.
   - The item was too ambiguous such that even the best trainee didn't know the answer.

According to Haladyna (2004) trick items are difficult to illustrate, but the open-ended questions below are a few examples of trick items. Of course, there is a fourth of July in England, as there is around the world. Also, all months have 28 days.

Examples of Trick Items

Is there a fourth of July in England?

Some months have 31 days. How many have 28?

Format and Style Guidelines

8. Use Question, Phrase, or Best Answer Format

The most common MC item formats are question, incomplete stem, and best answer. Each format has the following three parts: (a) a stem, (b) the correct choice, and (c) several wrong answers called distracters. An example of each is provided below. The use of these MC item formats is recommended by Haladyna, Downing, and Rodriquez (2002) based on a review of various item formats that were identified as supported, not supported, or uncited in the text-books that were reviewed.

Examples of Common MC Formats

Question Format:
Who is John Galt?

A. A rock star
B. A movie actor
C. A character in a book

Incomplete Stem Format
John Galt is a character in an Ayn Rand novel who is remembered for his

A. integrity.
B. romantic tendencies.
C. courage.

Best Answer Format
Which is the most effective safety feature in your car?

A. seat belt
B. front air bag
C. anti-lock braking system

9. Format Items Vertically

The examples below illustrate horizontal and vertical formatting. Horizontal formatting is sometimes preferred because more items can fit on a single page. However, vertical formatting is more visually appealing because it looks less cramped. Students with test anxiety may find horizontal formatting harder to read. As a result, it may confuse students and unfairly lower test scores.

Example of Horizontal and Vertical Format

Horizontal Item Format:
You draw a card from a deck of 52 cards. What is the chance you will draw a card with an odd number on it?
A. 36/52 B. 32/52 C. About one half

Vertical Item Format:
You draw a card from a deck of 52 cards. What is the chance you will draw a card with an odd number on it?

A. 36/52
B. 32/52
C. About one half

10. Edit and Proof Items

Clarity is the most important consideration in editing and proofing items. The first step for editing and proofing items is determining if the central idea is presented clearly. Once the item is edited for clarity, editing to ensure that each item has correct grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling is also important.

11. Use Appropriate Vocabulary and Reading Level

MC items are developed to measure knowledge and skills. Some items can even measure aspects of problem solving, critical thinking, and other cognitive abilities. Unless the test is measuring reading comprehension, the test taker's reading level should not affect test performance. Thus, vocabulary and reading level should be simple and at the level of the weakest readers in the group. Unless reading comprehension is a focus of the tests, items should not measure both reading comprehension and the desired knowledge or skill.

12. Minimize Reading Time

Items should not be overly wordy. In fact, wordy items tend to lack clarity. Long test items will also require longer administration time. If a fixed testing time is available, wordy items limit the number of items that can be presented. With fewer items, the content area cannot be sampled appropriately. For these reasons, items should be as brief as possible without compromising the item. Both the stems and the alternatives should get to the point and be as brief as possible. In the example to the right, the first item has repetitive wording. The second item eliminates the unnecessary words.

Example of Minimizing Reading Time

Wordy Item:

Effective student grading should probably minimize:

A. the student's present status.
B. the student's progress against criteria state in the syllabus.
C. the student's status relative to his or her ability.
D. the student's status relative to the class.
E. the student's progress relative to state standards.

Better MC Item:

Which should determine a student's grade?

A. achievement against stated criteria
B. status relative to other class members
C. progress relative to his or her ability

13. Proofread and Have Each Item Peer Reviewed

The most important part of item writing is proofreading. Preferably the items are proofread by a peer. Thus, they can be reviewed not only for correct grammar, formatting, spelling, and capitalization, but also for clarity. Even after thorough review, tests will have items with errors. According to Haladyna (2004), if four errors are found in the final review of an item, at least one error was not found. Errors in a test suggest carelessness and negligence. This may lead to the impression of poor test development. This should not be conveyed to a test taker. Additionally, errors may reduce clarity in the item and may distract test takers resulting in unfairly lower scores.

Stem Guidelines

14. Clear Directions

The stem should be written so that the test taker knows the focus of the item

immediately. From the stem the test taker should know what situation or problem is presented. In the poor stem below, a test taker would have to review the options to guess what happened to the plant. In the better stem, the clearer directions lead to the expectation that the plant would grow in the direction of the light source.

Example of Clear Directions

Poor Stem:
A plant in a flower pot fell over. What happened?

Better Stem:
A plant growing in a flower pot was turned on its side. A week later, what would you expect to see?

the stem may affect the quality of the item. In the example below the poor item does not provide adequate information while the second is more direct, asks a question, and provides plausible options.

Example of Including the Central Idea

Poor Item:
Corporal punishment:

A. has been outlawed in many states.
B. is psychologically unsound for school discipline.
C. has many benefits to recommend its use.

Better Item:
What is corporal punishment?

A. a psychologically unsound form of school discipline
B. a useful disciplinary technique if used sparingly
C. an illegal practice in our nation's schools

15. Include Central Idea

The item stem should always include the main idea. The test taker should always know what is being asked after reading the stem. Failing to put the main idea in

16. Make as Brief as Possible

Lengthy items increase administration time. Thus, it is a good idea to keep the stems as brief as possible while still including all the necessary information. The example below shows both lengthy and brief stems.

Example of Brevity

Lengthy Stem:

Destruction of certain cortical tissue will lead to symptoms affecting our behavior. However, this destruction may lead to symptoms that are due to withdrawal of facilitation in other cortical areas. Thus, the tissue damage affects cortical functioning both directly and indirectly. While such effects may be temporary, what is the typical recovery time?

A. immediately
B. several days to a week
C. several months
D. seldom ever

Brief Stem:

What is the typical recovery time for cortical functioning when tissue is destroyed?

A. immediately
B. several days to a week
C. several months
D. seldom ever

17. Word Positively

The use of negative words in the stem (e.g., not, except, etc.) has negative effects on test takers and their performance. Test takers may have difficulty understanding the meaning of negatively phrased stems. The example below shows the use of EXCEPT in a stem. While this is a popular item format, it is not recommended. This type of item taxes a test taker's working short-term memory. If a negative term is used, it should be in bold type, underlined, capitalized, or all three of these. This is because test takers often read through the ***NOT*** and forget to reverse the logic required to answer the question. This is why ***NOT*** shouldn't be used in stems.

Example of Using "Except"

Each of the following drugs is appropriate for the treatment of cardiac arrthymia EXCEPT one. Which one is the exception?

A. Phenytoin
B. Lidocaine
C. Quinidine
D. Propranolol
E. Epinephrine

Alternative Guidelines

18. Develop as Many as Possible, but Three is Adequate

Research is beginning to support the use of three alternatives for MC items. That is, two distracters and one correct answer. However, there is a slight benefit to having as many alternatives as possible, but only if they are plausible and different from each other. As many alternatives as possible should be written, but it is typical to find that only one or two works as intended.

19. Only One Correct Choice

Unless the whole test is designed to have test takers choose the best of a correct set of alternatives, and this is virtually never done, then make sure that there is only one choice that is technically correct for each item.

20. Balance the Key Position

Item writers tend to place the key as the B or C response options. Also, wise test takers will identify patterns for key responses and use this information when they are in doubt as to the correct answer. For these reasons, the location of the key should be varied. For example, consider a 100-item test on which each item has four alternatives. Approximately 25% of the items should have A as the correct option or keyed response. Thus, 25% of the items should have B as the correct option. This applies to options C and D as well.

21. Logical or Numerical Order

The alternatives should always appear in logical or numerical order. The example below shows two versions of the same item, first with the numerical order wrong and then with the order correct. Alternative should always be in either ascending or descending order. Also, decimal points should always be aligned. The intent of an item is to test for knowledge, not have the test taker hunt for a correct answer. Doing so only wastes the test taker's time and causes unnecessary stress.

Example of Numerical Order

Incorrect Numerical Order:

What is the cost of an item that normally sells for $9.99 that is discounted 25%?

A. $5.00
B. $7.50*
C. $2.50
D. $6.66

Correct Numerical Order:

What is the cost of an item that normally sells for $9.99 that is discounted 25%?

A. $2.50
B. $5.00
C. $6.66
D. $7.50*

21. Logical or Numerical Order (continued)
Logical order is more difficult to demonstrate. Logical order of items requires judgment, but alternatives may be ordered based on the order of the information provided in the stem, alphabetically, or by the form of the alternatives.

Example of Logical Order

Alphabetical Order:
Which is the most important consideration in preparing a waxajet?

A. lubricant*
B. O-ring integrity
C. positioning
D. wiring

Organized by Length:
When an item fails to perform on a test, what is the most common cause?

A. The item is faulty. *
B. Instruction was ineffective.
C. Student effort was inadequate.
D. The item failed to match the objective.

22. Keep Choices Independent
Alternatives should not be overlapping. These types of options may give clues to wise test takers about the correct and incorrect response. Also, if alternatives have overlapping values or meanings, it is possible that the item has more than one correct answer. Consider the example below. If the correct answer is 25 years of age, then both C and D are correct. This can be corrected by creating ranges that are distinct from each other. These types of errors can lead to embarrassing challenges to test items.

Example of Non-Independent Choices

What age range represents the physical "peak" of life?

A. 11 to 15 years of age
B. 13 to 19 years of age
C. 18 to 25 years of age
D. 24 to 32 years of age
E. over 32 years of age

23. Similar in Content and Grammatical Structure

Alternatives should be similar in content. Alternatives that are different in content provide a clue to the test taker. These cues are not the intent of the item and are an unfortunate accident. To avoid this situation, the alternatives should be similar in content. In the example provided below, the correct answer, B, is different from the other alternatives. It is the only alternative that mentions beta burns and therefore provides a clue to the test taker.

Example of Content Clues

The treatment of beta burns depends on the nature and seriousness of the injury. If no physician is available, Beta burns should be treated just like other burns. After all fallout is removed, such burns should be bandaged, and salves and jellies should be used to protect the wound.

According to the paragraph, which statement is most correct?

A. All minor burns should be treated by a physician.
B. Beta burns should be treated similar to heat burns.
C. Radioactive burns should be covered with salves and jellis for protection.
D. Fallout should be removed from all burns

All minor burns should be treated by a physician

Radioactive burns should be covered with salves and jellies.

Fallout should be removed from all burns.

Alternatives should be similar in grammatical structure. Alternatives that have different grammatical structure provide a clue to the test taker. Several examples are

provided below. In the first example, because the stem ends with "an," the correct response must begin with a vowel. Thus, even a test taker who does not know the answer could use the clues to answer the item correctly. In the second example, the article "a" in the stem indicates that the correct response is singular. Therefore, a wise test taker could rule out A, C and D as correct answers.

Example1 of Grammatical Clues

Poor Item:

An example of an extinct animal is an:

A. sloth
B. Eskimo curlew
C. gorilla
D. baboon

Example 2 of Grammatical Clues

Poor Item:

Penicillin is obtained from a:

A. mold
B. bacterium
C. coal-tars
D. tropical trees

Better Item:

From which of the following is penicillin obtained?

A. mold
B. bacterium
C. coal-tars
D. tropical trees

27. Avoid Giving Clues to the Correct Answer

The following clues tip off test takers to the correct answers:

- **Specific determiners:** Specific determiners include the terms

always, never, totally, absolutely, and completely. These are so extreme that they are seldom the right answer. If the use of one of these is appropriate for the right answer, be sure at least one of the incorrect alternatives also contains one.

- **Clang associations:** Clang associations occur when a word or phrase is used in the stem and it also appears in an alternative. Usually this alternative is the right answer. If it is not, the item might be a trick question.
- **Blatantly absurd, ridiculous options:** When trying to develop a third or even fourth alternative it is tempting to develop an absurd or ridiculous choice as either humor or out of frustration. In either case this alternative will not be chosen. Distracters that are not plausible are useless.

An example of each clue is provided on the right.

Examples of Giving Clues

Item with a Specific Determiner:
Which of the following does research on homework support?

A. Never assign homework on Fridays.
B. Homework should be consistent with class learning.
C. Always evaluate homework the next day.

Item with Clang Association (tax):
What is the purpose of the tax table? To help you determine:

A. your gross income.
B. the amount of tax you owe.
C. your net earnings.
D. your allowable deductions.

Item with Ridiculous Distracters:
Who is best known for contributions to microelectronics?

A. Comedian Jay Leno
B. Robert Sveum
C. Actor Bruce Willis

28. Make all Distracters Plausible

The incorrect answers must be plausible. Plausibility refers to the idea that the test takers with a high degree of knowledge should answer the item correctly. However, test takers with little knowledge should answer the item incorrectly. A plausible distracter will look right to a test taker who does possess the required degree of knowledge. Thus, the incorrect options "distract" the less knowledgeable test taker.

Once a quality stem is written, the effectiveness of a test item depends on the quality of the distracters. The series of examples provided to the right shows this principle. In the item with very poor distracters, a test taker with no knowledge of history could correctly answer the item. This is because the only plausible option is C, Franklin D. Roosevelt, because the remaining options are a well-known cartoon character, an actor, and an author. The item with poor distracters is a slight improvement because at least all the options are or were presidents. However, even test takers with limited knowledge could rule out B, Barack Obama, and C, George Washington. Obama can be ruled out because he is the current president. George Washington can be ruled out because most people know he was the first president. A test taker with limited knowledge could rule out Andrew Jackson because he was the 7th president and known for creating the modern Democratic Party; which must have been a long, long time ago. The better item has the best distracter as the options are all presidents who were not very recent or very early presidents. In fact, the options were the 30th, 31st, 32nd, and 33rd presidents.

Examples of Distracter Plausibility

Item with Very Poor Distracters:
Who was the thirty-second United States President?

A. Mickey Mouse
B. David Hasslehoff
C. Franklin D. Roosevelt
D. Anne Frank

Item with Poor Distracters:
Who was the thirty-second United States President?

A. George Washington
B. Barack Obama
C. Franklin D. Roosevelt
D. Andrew Jackson

Item with Better Distracters:
Who was the thirty-second United State President?

A. Calvin Coolidge
B. Herbert Hoover
C. Franklin D. Roosevelt
D. Harry S. Truman

29. Use Typical Errors of Students to Create Distracters

Good plausible distracters come from a thorough understanding of common trainee errors. These can be identified when a trainer reviews student work products (e.g., reports, documents students write, answers to essay or short answer questions, scratch paper). In these work products, trainees may provide the correct answer and plausible wrong answers that are actual trainee errors.

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Resources

Handbook for Presenting Local Corrections Core Courses
http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/csa/STC/Docs/STC_Core_Handbook-6th-Edition-includes-small-revisions.pdf

Lesson Plan Development for Core Courses
http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/csa/STC/Core/STC_Core_Courses_Lesson_Plan_Development.pdf

SPB Selection Analyst Training Program
http://www.spb.ca.gov/training/catalog/selection_analyst.htm

Testing in Core Courses
http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/csa/STC/Docs/TestingInCoreCourses.pdf

Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Guidelines
http://uniformguidelines.com/uniformguidelines.html

Uniform Guidelines Questions and Answers
http://uniformguidelines.com/questionandanswers.html

WRIPC (Western Region Intergovernmental Personnel Assessment Council)
http://www.wripac.org/
WRIPAC occasionally has one-day item writing courses.

Enforcement Guidance: Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship under the Americans with Disabilities Act
http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/accommodation.html