

Texas Department of Public Safety Criminal Investigations Division



LAW ENFORCEMENT POLYGRAPH SCHOOL CATALOG

MISSION STATEMENT

The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Criminal Investigations Division (CID) Law Enforcement Polygraph School's mission is to qualify law enforcement personnel for successful careers as polygraph examiners in the criminal justice field. As the only law enforcement-exclusive polygraph school in the state of Texas, the Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School is dedicated to providing quality training and continuing education to government and law enforcement students in the professional field of polygraph.

INSTITUTION GOALS

- ▶ To provide law enforcement students with the ability to administer quality criminal and screening polygraph examinations immediately upon graduation from the polygraph school.
- ▶ To enable students to acquire an in-depth knowledge of the polygraph profession, focusing on the most reliable scientifically-validated polygraph techniques.
- ▶ To provide flexible methods of instruction to meet the unique learning styles of students.
- ▶ To instill within all students the DPS core values of Integrity, Excellence, Accountability, and Teamwork.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School is committed to equal opportunity in employment and education and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disabilities.

If you have special needs addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act, please notify the School Director prior to the date of the course you plan to attend.

The Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School reserves the right to correct, alter, or modify any item contained in this catalog. The Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School also reserves the right to make changes as required in course offerings, curricula, academic policies, and other rules and regulations affecting students. Enrollment of all students is subject to these conditions. Changes will be shown in the schedule pamphlet of classes, a correction sheet to the schedule book, or will be available from the Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School.

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HISTORY

Department of Public Safety

The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) officially came into existence in August 1935 when the Texas Legislature passed a law creating the Department and the Public Safety Commission. However, the roots of the Department can be traced back to the 19th century when Texas was still under Mexican rule.

In 1823, having been appointed commander of the new colony, Stephen F. Austin issued a proclamation by authority of the Imperial Mexican Government, appointing ten men to act as rangers for the common defense. This small cadre, which Austin paid himself, was the beginning of the organization we now know as the Texas Rangers. When DPS was created in 1935, the Texas Rangers became one of its two components. The other component, the Highway Patrol, also predates the formation of the Department. It was originally created as a unit of the State Highway Commission in 1929 and was transferred to DPS in 1935.

As one of the leading law enforcement organizations in the world, DPS has continued to grow and evolve since its inception in an effort to meet the challenge of providing “Courtesy, Service, and Protection” to the people of Texas. Today, DPS employs close to 10,000 people, including approximately 4,000 commissioned law enforcement officers and 6,000 specialized technical and administrative support personnel.

Polygraph Unit

The Department administered its first polygraph exam in July 1944 in connection to an investigation of a jewelry store burglary in Nixon, Texas. However, the first full-time polygraph examiner wasn’t hired by DPS until September 1949. Over the next 32 years, polygraph services were conducted by personnel assigned to the Identification and Crimes Records Division until transferred to the Crime Laboratory Division in 1981.

Polygraph responsibilities shifted again in 1989, at which time they were assigned to the newly-created Polygraph Service within the Criminal Law Enforcement (CLE) Division. At that time, the service consisted of ten examiners and one captain. In 2000, however, the Polygraph Service’s duties were absorbed by the Special Crimes Service, and polygraph examiners were required to serve a dual role of administering polygraph examinations and working criminal cases.

In 2005, the Texas State Legislature mandated that all DPS state trooper and police communications applicants take a pre-employment screening polygraph examination prior to being hired. The responsibility for conducting these exams was assigned to the polygraph examiners within the Special Crimes Service.

In September 2011, the CLE Division was reorganized as the Criminal Investigations Division. As a result, polygraph examiners became part of the newly-created Polygraph Unit and were transitioned back to a dedicated role of focusing solely on administering criminal and pre-employment polygraph examinations.

Since 2011, the DPS Polygraph Unit has administered more than 3,500 felony criminal polygraph examinations and solved numerous crimes as a result of pre- and post-test confessions, including approximately 42 homicides, 580 sexual offenses and child-victim crimes, and 569 other felony offenses.

A majority of the sexual offenses involved child victims with little or no physical evidence, and convictions would have been unlikely without the confessions. In addition, during this same time period, the Polygraph Unit cleared hundreds of innocent persons from suspicion.

Since 2011, the DPS Polygraph Unit has also administered more than 10,500 screening polygraphs as a part of the Department's hiring process. These efforts identified previously undetected criminal behavior—including conspiracies to commit murder, child-victim sexual offenses, and connections to drug cartels—and led to the disqualification of thousands of unsuitable applicants.

Today, the DPS Polygraph Unit has 17 polygraph examiners located throughout the state. These examiners conduct polygraph examinations in support of federal, state, and local criminal investigations in their assigned regions and also conduct screening examinations of applicants.



Polygraph School

To meet law enforcement's growing polygraph needs, DPS and the Texas Police Association (TPA) co-sponsored their first basic polygraph school on May 30, 1995. Today, the Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School is taught by a nationally renowned faculty and is accredited by the American Association of Police Polygraphists (AAPP), approved by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR), and recognized by the Texas Association of Law Enforcement Polygraph Investigators (TALEPI).

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS, REGULATIONS, AND PROCEDURES

Admission Requirements

DPS Personnel: Refer to the Criminal Investigations Division for current job description for a special agent's position.

Non-DPS Personnel: To become a candidate for admission to the program offered by the Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School, the applicant must complete or meet each of the following:*

1. Applicant cannot have been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude.
2. Applicant must be employed by a federal, state, or local governmental agency (law enforcement, corrections, parole, probation), and must attend the school in an official capacity.
3. Applicant must hold a baccalaureate degree or have five consecutive years of active investigative experience.
4. Applicant must submit a verification letter stating that the applicant is a full-time employee of their agency, and describing how their agency would benefit from having a polygraph examiner.
5. Applicant must complete the matriculation process and pay the tuition and other applicable fees (tuition must be paid in full by the applicant's sponsoring agency).

* *The Texas Polygraph Examiners Act requires that applicants for a Polygraph Examiner's License hold a baccalaureate degree or have five consecutive years of active investigative experience. Out-of-state applicants should inquire about the licensing requirements of the state in which they wish to practice before enrolling in this course of study.*

* *All applicants to the Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School must submit a completed Law Enforcement Polygraph School Admission Application (Form POLY-3) to polygraph@dps.texas.gov.*

Attendance

The 10-week Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School has often been accurately described as an intense, fast-paced learning environment comparable to the experience of a full-time college student taking summer classes at a major university. As a result, the following rules apply:

- A student must attend all classes and lectures unless excused. The student's assigned faculty member may excuse a student for one class period (one-hour duration). Any absence over one hour must be approved by the School Director or his or her designee. A student must be physically present at the school facilities for not less than 90 percent of the total classroom instruction time. Remediation is required for all missed hours.

- Due to the challenging nature of the basic course in the polygraph profession, the student must be free to concentrate on academic pursuits. If the student believes that factors independent of the classroom and laboratory may adversely affect academic performance, the student should remedy any such issue before it adversely affects academic performance. The student should take immediate steps to resolve the issue. If the issue cannot be resolved through the student's initiative, the student should enlist the support of Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School faculty in attempting resolution. It is the responsibility of the student to make known to a faculty member any problem being experienced. In the event a student perceives the faculty is not being responsive to his or her needs, the student should personally meet with the School Director to discuss the issue and gain faculty support.

Standards of Conduct and Appearance

Students may be dismissed for any of the following reasons:

- Academic deficiency/failure: Student must maintain a 75 percent grade average through week five of the school, and an 80 percent grade average to graduate the school.
- Cheating.
- Involvement in substantiated allegations of unethical practices, such as destruction of polygraph equipment, falsification of personal data, intentional misrepresentation on admissions application, etc.
- Disciplinary problems to include, but not limited to, excessive tardiness or absences.
- Violation of the Texas Penal Code, Texas Code of Criminal Procedures, or any Texas law.
- Sponsorship withdrawal by student's agency.
- Sexual harassment.

Student withdrawal will not become official until the Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School has received written notice from the student's sponsoring agency. **NO REFUNDS** will be issued after the fifth class day. Funds will **NOT** be transferable toward future schools.

Students are required to dress in business casual attire. Students should also be prepared to dress formally for class photographs and the graduation ceremony.

All absences from scheduled instructions, regardless of reason, are recorded. When absences affect progress, are considered excessive, or exceed 10 percent of total classroom time, the student will be subject to expulsion. Re-enrollment is at the discretion of the school. If re-enrolled, the student must re-enter on a probationary basis. All class work missed will be made up on a student's own time. If an instructor has to spend extra time with that student, an additional hourly instructor's fee may be charged.

The Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School reserves the right to impose an immediate temporary suspension in an instance where the student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property, or is an ongoing threat to the academic process. If the school exercises this option, a hearing will be granted within a reasonable time period (72 hours).

Furthermore, any student dismissed for non-academic reasons is entitled to written notice, hearing, and explanation. A hearing will be held before a hearing board to be convened and appointed by the School Director in writing. At the conclusion of the hearing, the matter, along with the recommendations of the hearing board, will be forwarded to the School Director or his/her designee for final disposition.

Loss of agency sponsorship constitutes automatic withdrawal and does not require a hearing.

Evaluation Methods

Academic examinations may be in the form of essay, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, true-or-false, or other types of testing formats. Examinations also may be presented through computerized systems or programmed instruction methods. Lab work and research projects will also be evaluated.

The Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School staff firmly believe that great polygraph examiners are made through the hands-on application of techniques and theories taught in classroom lectures. Beginning on Week One, classes will be “hands-on,” with students partnered together in individual polygraph suites to administer polygraph examinations. A standard day will include a morning lecture followed by a lab pertaining to the lecture material. The goal is to have each student administer 20 to 30 polygraph examinations by the end of the school. Scenario testing will be conducted near the end of the 10-week school utilizing civilian volunteers in a mock crime scenario to give the polygraph student as realistic a polygraph scenario as possible.

Internship

To receive credit for completing this course, each student must complete a field work project after graduation from the academic phase of the course. The Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School has established an internship program to ensure professional, ethical, and operational proficiency in real-life case production.

Students are required to conduct 10 complete polygraph examinations using techniques taught by the Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School after returning to their duty station or agency. The student is allowed six months to complete this project. Once the project has been completed, it will be subject to quality control review by the school. The final graduation certificate will be awarded upon successful completion of this internship.

Academic Standards

A student is required to complete all academic examinations and practical evaluations. The student will receive eight written examinations, one written mid-term exam, and one written final examination. One research paper and a presentation of that research paper will also be completed by the student. Incompletion due to illness or agency requirements will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Success in any course of instruction by the Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School is predicated upon the student's preparation and persistence.

Students with academic performance difficulties will be counseled and the sponsoring agency will be advised in writing. Students with continued academic or performance difficulties will not graduate and will be subjected to expulsion from the school at any time. If a student is expelled from the school, **NO REFUND** will be given to the student or to the student's sponsoring agency. Difficulties or deficiencies in laboratory exercises will be brought to the student's attention, and remedial training will be offered. All deficiencies and remedial action taken will be documented. Students experiencing difficulty in any area of instruction are encouraged to meet with the appropriate faculty member to discuss the student's progress and possible remedies.

Sponsors Workshop

The Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School will offer a sponsors workshop in conjunction with the school. This workshop may be attended by the student's sponsor or a designee. The purpose of this workshop is to familiarize the sponsor with the polygraph skills taught to the student and to provide the sponsor with an assessment of the student's performance in the Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School.

Student Grievance Policy

Students are encouraged to discuss informally any grievances they may have regarding grading, course requirements, or inadequacy of subject-matter instruction with the responsible faculty member within three working days of identifying the grievance.

The student should bring all supporting material (handouts, text, and class notes) to this informal meeting and be prepared to openly discuss their grievance.

In the event this meeting does not resolve the issue, the student is encouraged to schedule an appointment to appeal the matter to the School Director. During this meeting, the student must present in writing all issues in question. To aid the School Director in rendering a fair and equitable decision, the student should be prepared to provide any supporting material. The appeal must include information regarding the action the student is protesting and any related mitigating circumstances.

The School Director will act on all student grievances and provide a written response to the student within one week of receipt. All decisions by the School Director will be considered final.

Financial Fees

The sponsoring agency or the student (with appropriate sponsoring agency approval) is responsible for all course fees and costs.

Tuition fee for attending the Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School is \$4,000. This fee should be paid to DPS not later than two weeks before the beginning of the school, or a time period provided by DPS.

As of 2020, the cost of meals is not included as part of the tuition fee and will be at the expense of the attending student. In addition, the cost of lodging is not included in the tuition fee and will not be provided by DPS. A list of nearby hotels is available for prospective students.

All fees and tuition are subject to change at any time before the four-week period preceding the opening day of the school.

A student confirmation letter and receipt will be forwarded to the student upon acceptance into the school. For a refund to be authorized, preliminary notice of cancellation must be given at least 30 days before the beginning of class. The refund will NOT be issued unless a written request from the sponsoring agency has been received prior to the opening day of class. Any refund of a tuition fee will not be applied toward the tuition fees of a future school.

School Materials

All books, materials, and other equipment required to complete the courses taught at the Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School are furnished by the school. Each student must bring a laptop computer. Students are encouraged to bring the actual polygraph instrument (or one that is similar) that the student will utilize after completion of the polygraph school. This will provide the student with an opportunity to receive individual training specific to the student's own or assigned instrument.

Licensing

The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) regulates and licenses all persons in the state of Texas who purport to be able to detect deception or verify the truthfulness of statements through the use of instrumentation. The Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School coordinates with TDLR to ensure that all students seeking licensure through TDLR are in compliance with TDLR rules governing the polygraph licensing and internship process.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

The Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School coursework consists of 400 hours of intensive classroom study and 10 complete polygraph examinations to be submitted to the School Director within six months after school graduation. The course is designed to ensure the graduate will be equipped with the skills necessary to conduct conclusive polygraph examinations in a professional and ethical manner.

The primary course material is as follows:

History and Development of Polygraph **Min. of 8 class hours**

A complete history of the origin and development of the science behind the detection of deception; various methods and techniques of the past and present; the history of polygraph schools; scientific research done and how it became related to the profession; and famous individuals who contributed to the advance of polygraph science as we know it today.

Mechanics of Instrumentation **Min. of 32 class hours**

A comprehensive study of the instruments used in polygraph. Both analog and computerized polygraph instruments will be studied. The student will conduct an in-depth study of how each component of a polygraph instrument works and the function each component performs.

Question Formulation **Min. of 34 class hours**

Instructions and practical exercises concerning theory, selection, preparation, and phrasing of the various types of questions used in polygraph.

Polygraph Techniques **Min. of 60 class hours**

A complete explanation of the nature, purpose, structure, and sequence of the various types of tests administered during polygraph examinations, including comparison question, relevant-irrelevant question, and peak-of-tension techniques.

Police Pre-Employment Examinations **Min. of 16 class hours**

A comprehensive study of the psychology and methodology of administering a police pre-employment examination, including the techniques used and how to construct and ask proper questions.

Chart Analysis **Min. of 50 class hours**

Comprehensive and detailed explanation of the theory of polygraph chart interpretations: Methods of comparing the graphic indices to truth and deception criteria, factors that affect polygraph responses, and steps involved in rendering an accurate opinion of truth and deception.

Pre- and Post-Test Interview **Min. of 40 class hours**

An intensive study of pre-test interviewing and post-test interrogation to give the examiner the skills needed for obtaining admissions or confessions from a subject.

Ethics..... **Min. of 6 class hours**

Lectures on the ethical and moral standards required of every professional polygraph examiner regarding the examiner, examinee, and other interested parties; the laws regarding confidentiality; and ethics of submitting oral and written reports.

Polygraph Skills **Min. of 40 class hours**

Hands-on training in the use of the polygraph instrument, with supervision and critiques by faculty members. Simulated and realistic situations will be utilized.

Psychology and Physiology **Min. of 64 class hours**

Lectures in general physiology; specialized instruction in the respiratory, electrodermal, cardiovascular, musculature, and nervous systems of the human body as they relate to the reactions and responses recorded by the polygraph instrument; and lectures in general psychology with emphasis on human behavior and how different personality disorders will affect the outcome of a polygraph examination.

Legal Issues **Min. of 8 class hours**

Instruction regarding basic legal matters pertaining to criminal and civil polygraph testing, provided by qualified guest instructors who know and understand polygraph and the legal issues involved.

ACADEMIC FACILITIES

A major responsibility of DPS is the education and training of law enforcement officers. As a matter of historical interest, the first peace officer's school conducted by DPS was in December 1937 at its original headquarters at Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas. Through the succeeding years, as the enforcement officer's training needs have increased, the Department's facilities and staff have expanded accordingly. Today, the DPS Training Academy is equipped with various classrooms that will seat a combined total of 552 students.

The Department not only trains its own peace officers and personnel but also offers retraining and in-service instruction to personnel and officers from other agencies. Training is not confined to traffic enforcement, but extends also to specialized criminal investigations. The Department's polygraph training facility has 10 dedicated polygraph lab rooms and is equipped with the latest in audio and visual training aids, including monitoring equipment; the latest in computerized polygraph instruments; and an impressive collection of analog instruments. The Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School library also has an abundance of polygraph reference material available for student use.

The Department will also make arrangements to allow student access to watch live tests being conducted. During orientation on the opening day of class, the DPS Training Academy staff will provide each student with a student information and guideline handout, which will contain general information concerning the wearing of security badges, after-hours conduct, illness or injury emergencies, parking regulations, etc.

STAFF AND FACULTY

Qualifications

The Texas DPS Law Enforcement Polygraph School continually strives to seek out the most qualified instructors available. The Department believes that the selection, development, and retention of competent faculty at all levels is paramount to the success of the school. The Department retains only the most experienced, qualified, and respected faculty in all courses of instruction.

Each primary instructor must at a minimum:

- Be an active, affiliate, or retired member in good standing with the AAPP; and
- Have a minimum of three years' experience as a practicing polygraphist and have conducted no fewer than 200 exams.

Administration

School Director: Lieutenant Billy McCloskey

School Coordinator: Lieutenant David Stewart

Polygraph Staff Service Officer: Mariah Garcia

