

National Fire Academy Criteria for Contract Facilitator Selection

Course: Executive Fire Officer Thesis (M5105)

Curriculum: Leadership and Executive Development

Effective Date: February 2020

“Executive Fire Officer Thesis” (M5105): The thesis experience is designed to drive the fire and emergency medical services (EMS) leaders outside of their normal comfort zone and into the role of an emerging scholar-practitioner by exposure to a rigorous research process. The result of this process is a peer-reviewed, publishable work. This is an advisor-guided, working document that follows the learner throughout the entire duration of the Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program.

“Executive Fire Officer Thesis” (M5105) is a mediated online course delivered over a period of two years in a four-semester format. There are two facilitators assigned per course offering, one academic and one emergency services practitioner. The offerings are based on the EFO Program cohort structure in which there is a maximum of 25 students per cohort. As students prepare their EFO Program thesis, facilitators serve as advisors and evaluators of the student work product. Facilitators will grade and submit the final thesis to the National Fire Academy (NFA) on behalf of the student, and the student will sit for an oral defense of the thesis during their fourth residential course “Integrating Executive Leadership for Self, Organization, and Community” (R5204).

Criteria for Contract Facilitator Selection

All new contract facilitators may be evaluated in three consecutive course deliveries in accordance with the NFA’s Contract Facilitator/Instructor Evaluation program. Existing contract facilitators are subject to evaluation in accordance with this program.

All facilitator candidates must meet or exceed the published course facilitator criteria and meet the general and administrative requirements (found at https://www.usfa.fema.gov/training/nfa/instructors_officials/criteria.html) before being approved to bid.

1. Academic/Training Requirement

Academic Role:

An earned doctorate-level, terminal research-based degree in a social science, business or public service-related discipline such as fire administration, business administration, public administration, human resources, education, leadership, sociology, psychology, et cetera, from a nationally or regionally accredited educational institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Professional doctorates such as a DBA, DPA, EdD or DEM may be suitable depending on the program. A professional doctorate that required a dissertation for completion may be acceptable with verification of course work in research design and data analysis to include quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods approaches.

Practioner Role:

An earned master's-level degree (doctorate-level, terminal research-based degree preferred) in a social science, business or public service-related discipline such as fire administration, business administration, public administration, human resources, education, leadership, sociology, psychology, et cetera, from a nationally or regionally accredited educational institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Earned degree must include a minimum of one semester of graduate-level course work in research design and data gathering verifiable through academic transcripts.

2. Facilitation/Instructional Experience

A minimum of five years' experience in facilitated adult learning processes within the last 10 years, to include the use of the Socratic method of instructional delivery and student-centered learning, preferably at the master's or doctorate level within a nationally or regionally accredited educational institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Facilitation/instructional experience teaching adult learners, ideally in nontraditional settings, to include a minimum of two years' experience instructing through distance learning means (learning management systems such as Blackboard, Desire2Learn, Canvas, etc.) in both synchronous and nonsynchronous delivery methods.

Experience as an academic advisor for master's degree or doctoral-level students is preferred.

3. Documented Knowledge and Experience in the Subject Area(s)

- a. Experience and knowledge in facilitating/instructing the designated course subject areas at the executive (graduate) level to include:
 - Research design and data analysis to include quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods.
 - The "concepts of the adaptive leadership model/framework" as contained within "Leadership on the Line" (Harvard Press, 2002) and "The Practice of Adaptive Leadership" (Harvard Press, 2009).
 - Leadership theories as contained within "Leadership" (SAGE, 2018).
 - Utilization of the "Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association" (6th ed.).

- b. Strong writing and editing skills consistent with the “Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.”
- c. Documented significant activity at regional/national levels within the areas of executive and management development. Documentation may include papers authored and published, consulting experiences, and related professional activities.
- d. Must attend and complete, in an observer role, the NFA course M5101: “Executive Leadership Introduction to EFO and Research Design.”
- e. Successfully completed the course(s) as a student and attended the course through the NFA as a facilitator candidate (at own expense), or completed an instructor development program (at own expense).
- f. While participating as a facilitator candidate, or during a facilitator development program, candidates may be assigned a topic(s) for purposes of an evaluated teaching demonstration in accordance with the NFA’s Contract Facilitator/ Instructor Evaluation program.
- g. Practitioner candidates must have a minimum of five years’ experience in the last 10 years at the level of an executive officer (fire, EMS or emergency manager equivalent to a fire/EMS battalion chief or higher) in an organization that serves the public safety.

4. Desired Attributes

Facilitator candidates are expected to be highly dedicated professionals desiring to contribute to the development of current and future fire and EMS executive-level officers. The basic desirable attributes include but are not limited to:

- a. Ability to work collaboratively with co-facilitator(s) or peers.
- b. Commitment to the development of lifelong learners.
- c. Willingness to tailor approaches to the needs of individual learners.
- d. Capacity to provide clear, timely and objective feedback, including not only supportive feedback, but being willing to have difficult conversations with people unable to achieve course outcomes.
- e. Experience in fire, EMS, emergency management or public safety-related fields is preferred but not required.

Facilitator candidates must submit a list of three professional references who can attest to the candidate’s attributes listed above. This list must include the references’ full contact information.

5. Continuing Practice and Education

Contract facilitators must maintain both experience and academic relevance specific to the course(s) for which they are approved. To maintain eligibility to instruct this course, contract instructors will be required on a periodic basis, but no more than every three years, to submit verification of both experience and academic relevance.

Facilitator candidate's academic relevance may be verified by one or more of the following:

- a. Teaching the course(s) through the NFA at least once within the last three years.
- b. Teaching a similar course at an accredited institution of higher learning at least once within the last three years.
- c. Completing a similar course of instruction within the last three years through an accredited institution of higher learning or a nationally recognized organization providing certified continuing education credits.

6. Revisions to Criteria

These criteria are subject to revision as based on course changes and NFA needs. Potential facilitators will be subject to the criteria effective at the date of application. Existing contract facilitators are subject to reapplication for failure to meet and/or submit verification of the continuing practice and education requirements when requested. Additionally, existing contract facilitators are subject to reapplication and meeting revised criteria as determined by the NFA based on revisions to course content.

7. Instructional Materials and NFA-Specific Continuing Education

- a. NFA contract facilitators are required to maintain instructional materials consistent with the specific course(s) for which they are approved. The NFA furnishes initial course facilitator and student activity guides. Subsequent updates to these materials are generally made available electronically. The NFA, at its sole discretion, may provide written updated materials in lieu of electronic downloads. Contract facilitators, at their own expense, are responsible for obtaining and utilizing any course textbooks.
- b. Contract facilitators may be required to complete periodic in-service updates at their own expense. These updates are generally provided via online activities and may be self-study or mediated.
- c. Facilitator candidates must complete the following courses and attach the course completion record to the application:
 - Department of Health and Human Services Online Research Ethics Course at https://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/montana_round1/research_ethics.html.
 - Complete Parts 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6.

- Obtain the certification showing your completion of the training and attach to your application.
- NFA Online course “Applied Research Design for Fire and Emergency Medical Services” (Q0427) at <https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/nfacourses/catalog/details/10782>.
- Obtain the certification showing your completion of the training and attach to your application.

8. How to Submit an Application

The following documents are required with each submission:

- a. A cover letter listing the courses you want to teach.
- b. Your resume.
- c. Documentation that clearly addresses how you meet the facilitator selection criteria for each course you are seeking to teach. Incomplete packages will not be processed. List the criteria in this order:
 - Academic requirement.
 - Instructional experience.
 - Knowledge and experience in the subject matter.
 - Continuing practice or education.
- d. A written statement that you have read and agree to perform course facilitation within the parameters of the NFA Human Dignity Policy and all applicable National Emergency Training Center/NFA Standard Operating Policies. These may be located at https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/nfa/nfa_policies.pdf.
- e. Department of Health and Human Services Online Research Ethics Course certificate.
- f. NFA Online “Applied Research Design for Fire and Emergency Medical Services” (Q0427) course completion certificate.
- g. Three references from persons who are knowledgeable about your character as well as your teaching ability.
- h. Include a current email address and direct phone number so we can communicate more efficiently with you.

Do not include your Social Security number or your date of birth on any of the documents you submit.

All documentation and statements provided may be subject to a request for additional verification, including but not limited to the following: academic transcripts, verification of work experience and professional references.

Application package(s) must be submitted to the NFA using the following email address: FEMA-EFO-InstructorApplication@fema.dhs.gov.