

National Fire Academy Criteria for Contract Instructor Selection

Course: Executive Skills Series (F/W0520, F/W0521, F/W0522, and F/W0523)

Curriculum: Leadership and Executive Development

Effective Date: February 2025

“Executive Skills Series: Exercising Leadership Within Communities.” This is a 2-day course intended to provide fire and emergency medical services (EMS) authority figures with knowledge and skills, enabling them to exercise leadership when confronting adaptive challenges presented by increasingly diverse internal and external communities. The goal of the course is for participants to use the diversity of ideas, peoples and cultures as resources in exercising leadership to address adaptive challenges in their communities.

“Executive Skills Series: Exercising Leadership to Facilitate Adaptive Change.” This is a 2-day course to provide skills that individuals in positions of authority can use to exercise leadership when confronted with adaptive challenges. The goal of this course is for the participant to develop an understanding of skills associated with exercising leadership to resolve adaptive problems, i.e., those problems where the solution is either unknown, requires significant change or both.

“Executive Skills Series: Exercising Leadership Through Difficult Conversations.” This is a 2-day course to provide knowledge and skills for having difficult conversations to exercise leadership in addressing adaptive challenges. The goal of this course is for the participant to identify and apply skills for having difficult conversations as they relate to exercising leadership when addressing adaptive challenges.

“Executive Skills Series: Exercising Leadership Ethically.” This is a 2-day course to provide students with the ability to recognize ethical dilemmas in the context of their environments and apply a decision model to resolve these dilemmas, render ethical decisions and defend under scrutiny the resulting decisions that were made in an effort to resolve these dilemmas.

Criteria for Contract Instructor Selection

All new contract instructors will be evaluated in accordance with the National Fire Academy’s (NFA’s) Contract Instructor Evaluation program. Existing contract instructors are subject to evaluation in accordance with this program.

1. Academic/Training Requirement

Required baccalaureate degree, graduate degree preferred, from a nationally or regionally accredited institution recognized by the Department of Education. The degree should be in a field closely related to the specific course’s subject matter.

2. Instructional Requirement

A minimum of 2 years of experience in facilitated adult learning processes within the last 3 years, to include the use of the Socratic method of instructional delivery and student-centered learning, preferably at the baccalaureate level or higher.

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

- a. Experience and knowledge in facilitating/instructing the designated course subject areas to include “adaptive leadership model/framework” as contained within “Leadership on the Line” (Harvard Press, 2002) and “The Practice of Adaptive Leadership” (Harvard Press, 2009).
- b. For “Executive Skills Series: Exercising Leadership Through Difficult Conversations,” experience and knowledge facilitating/instructing course subject area as contained within “Difficult Conversations: How To Discuss What Matters Most” (Penguin Press, 2010).
- c. A minimum of 2 years documented organizational work experience at the level of supervisor/lieutenant or above within the last 3 years. Experience related to fire, EMS organizations, public sector agencies serving public safety or closely related fields is preferred.
- d. Successfully completed the course(s) as a student and attended the course at the NFA as an instructor candidate (at own expense).

While attending as an instructor candidate, you will be assigned a topic(s) for purposes of an evaluated teaching demonstration in accordance with the NFA’s Contract Instructor Evaluation program.

4. Continuing Practice and Education

Contract instructors must maintain both work experience and academic relevance specific to the course(s) for which they are approved. To maintain eligibility to instruct any of the courses in this series, contract instructors may be required on a periodic basis to submit verification of both work experience and academic relevance. Work experience may be verified through submission of a resume.

5. Academic Relevancy

Instructor candidates must have and maintain academic relevance as evidenced by 1 or more of the following:

- a. Teaching the course(s) at the NFA (“W” course code) or in the field (“F” course code) at least once within the last 3 years.
- b. Teaching a similar course at an accredited institution of higher learning at least 4 times within the last 3 years.

- c. Completing a similar course of instruction within the last 3 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 instructors will be subject to the criteria effective at the date of application. Existing contract instructors are subject to re-application for failure to meet and/or submit verification of the continuing practice and education requirements when requested. Additionally, existing contract instructors are subject to re-application and meeting revised criteria as determined by the NFA based on revisions to course content.

7. 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 instructor 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. 3 references from persons who are knowledgeable about your character as well as your teaching ability. 1 reference letter should be from the department or agency head in your organization or certifying organization.
- e. Include a current email address so we can communicate more efficiently with you.

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

All documentation and statements provided may be subject to 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:

National Fire Academy
fema-nfainstructorapp@fema.dhs.gov