



## Colorado POST Instructor Methodology (IM) Program

*Transforming How Colorado Trains Peace Officers*

### What is the Instructor Methodology (IM) Program?

The Instructor Methodology (IM) Program is a statewide training and certification program created by Colorado POST to strengthen *how* law enforcement instructors teach. It is a core companion to POST's Unified Curriculum Redesign, ensuring that instructors statewide have the skills to deliver consistent, research-informed, performance-based training.

### How does the IM Program relate to the Unified Curriculum Redesign?

The curriculum redesign establishes *what* recruits must learn through statewide Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs). The IM Program ensures instructors can effectively teach toward those outcomes using active learning, scenarios, and guided decision-making. Both initiatives are required for the redesigned academy to succeed.

### Why did POST create the IM Program?

The IM Program emerged from extensive input from agency leaders, academy directors, instructors, and community stakeholders across Colorado, who consistently emphasized the need for greater statewide consistency in basic training and stronger preparation for real-world performance. As POST examined this feedback alongside the research, it became clear that achieving those goals requires not only alignment on *what* is taught, but deliberate improvement in *how* instructors teach. The IM Program addresses this gap by equipping instructors with evidence-based instructional methods that support consistent, performance-focused training statewide.

Traditional, lecture-heavy, modular training is less effective at preparing officers for the complex decisions they face in the field. Research shows that active learning—where trainees do the cognitive work of practicing, applying, and reflecting—leads to better retention, better decision-making, and better performance.

The IM Program advances a statewide shift by providing tools and training to LETA instructors on how to move:

- From **knowledge transmission** to **active learning**.
- From “death by PowerPoint” to **scenario-based, integrated practice**.
- From “content covered” to **skills demonstrated**.

By providing better training and resources to Instructors the state will benefit from:

- Improve officer safety and community safety.
- Reduce liability and remedial training.
- Strengthen public trust through transparent, evidence-based training.

### How does the IM Program work?

The IM Program includes two core courses with associated certifications.

#### Brief Summary

**IM Basic (2 days, in person):** Focuses on foundational instructional skills for active, engaging, skills-based teaching.

Completion of IM Basic results in certification as a *Certified Basic Instructor*.

**IM Course Design (up to 40 hours, flexible delivery):** Focuses on how people learn, how to design active learning, and how to build or modify curriculum aligned with the Unified Curriculum and ILOs.

Completion of IM Course Design results in certification as a *Course Designer*.

#### Deeper Dive

All Skills and Academic Instructors must become **Certified Basic Instructors** to teach on their own at a POST-approved academy.

To become a Certified Basic Instructor, an instructor must complete the **IM Basic** course:

- 2-day, in-person course
- Covers practical techniques for managing a classroom, using research-based instructional strategies (RBIS), and giving feedback that helps recruits grow

Instructors who do not complete IM Basic will be considered **Limited Instructors**, meaning they may teach only when a Certified Basic Instructor is present in the classroom.

Anyone who wants to modify or develop content for the upcoming Unified Curriculum must become a **Course Designer**.

To become a Course Designer, an instructor must first complete IM Basic and then complete **IM Course Design**:

- Up to 40 hours, with flexible delivery options
- Covers how people learn, levels of learning, and how to design and facilitate curriculum that supports learning at each level

## Who Teaches the IM Program Courses?

The IM Basic Course is taught by **IM Basic Instructor Trainers**.

To become an Instructor Trainer, a Certified Basic Instructor must:

- Successfully complete the IM Basic
- Attend an **8-hour Instructor Trainer workshop**, and
- **Co-teach** an IM Basic course with a Master Trainer and pass an evaluation.

Instructor Trainers can teach IM Basic on their own and help certify new Basic Instructors.

The IM Course Design course is taught by **IM Course Design Trainers**.

To become a Course Design Trainer, a Certified Course Designer must:

- Successfully complete the IM Basic
- Successfully complete the IM Course Design
- **Co-teach** an IM Course Design course with a Master Trainer and pass an evaluation

Course Design Trainers can teach IM Course Design and help certify new Course Designers.

## Master Trainers

Master Trainers are the most experienced IM instructors. They:

- Teach and co-teach IM courses,
- Mentor new Trainers, and
- Complete the evaluations that determine Trainer certification.

To become a Master Trainer, an Instructor Trainer submits an interest form and is appointed by the POST Director.

If you are interested in becoming a Trainer, please email [POSTIMCourse@coag.gov](mailto:POSTIMCourse@coag.gov).

## Who should take the IM Basic?

IM Basic will be required for any instructor who wants to teach independently at a POST-approved academy once certification requirements take effect. It is appropriate for:

- Full-time academy instructors
- Adjunct instructors
- Agency trainers who teach academy content

Instructors who have not completed IM Basic may continue to teach only as *Limited Instructors* and must be paired with a Certified Basic Instructor.

Certification requirements will begin when the new POST-created basic academy curriculum formally launches. Until then, POST is in a **Preparation Phase**, during which:

- IM Basic and IM Course Design will be offered for free in each region of the state.
- Certifications earned during this phase will count toward future requirements.
- POST will gather feedback from academies and instructors to refine the program.

However, as of May 15 anyone seeking to become a Full Skills Instructor must take the IM Basic.

### Who should take IM Course Design?

IM Course Design is required for anyone who develops, modifies, or substantially adapts curriculum for the Unified Curriculum. This includes:

- Lead instructors
- Curriculum developers
- Training supervisors responsible for course content
- Full Skills Instructors

Until the launch of the Redesigned Academy Curriculum those who develop and adopt law enforcement academy curriculum are not yet required to take the IM Course Design. Certifications earned now will count towards the requirements after the launch. POST encourages early participation to support a smooth statewide transition.

### How will the IM Program scale statewide?

POST is implementing a phased approach. During the current Preparation Phase, POST is offering IM Program courses statewide at no cost during the preparation phase. It is partnering with academies to host courses regionally in an effort to build a cadre of certified IM Trainers across the state. POST has offered various sessions of the IM Course Design and has offered the IM Basic in Northern Colorado and the Metro Region. It has future IM Basic courses scheduled in Southern Colorado and the Western Slope and in the process of scheduling many more.

This approach ensures that every POST-approved academy has reasonable access to IM training.

If you are interested in hosting a training or enrolling in a course, please email [POSTIMCourse@coag.gov](mailto:POSTIMCourse@coag.gov).

### Will academies be responsible for the cost of IM training?

No. POST provides IM Program courses at no cost to academies, including materials, facilitators, and evaluation tools.

To further reduce barriers to participation, POST is offering IM Program scholarships to offset the cost for participating in IM Program courses—including IM Basic, IM Course Design, and trainer pathways. Scholarships are intended to support statewide access to the IM Program and help agencies and academies build instructional capacity as Colorado’s redesigned academy curriculum is implemented.

Further details on eligibility, covered courses, and how to apply are available on the [IM Program Scholarship FAQs](#).

#### How does POST ensure quality and consistency as the program grows?

POST maintains program oversight through standardized course materials, trainer certification requirements, evaluation tools, and ongoing review. This ensures that IM instruction remains consistent, high-quality, and aligned with the Unified Curriculum.