



# Advanced Academy Core Curriculum

2026

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# Executive Summary

Police officers at the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) undertake a variety of mandatory and supplementary training opportunities, beginning with the statewide Department of Public Safety Standards and Training Academy in Salem, Oregon. DPSST is a 640-hour curriculum focusing on core skills and subject areas, including police vehicle operations, firearms, communication, equity, and state law. Subsequently, all new Portland Police Officers must complete the Advanced Academy in addition to their assignment to precincts for an 18-month probationary period with the Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP).<sup>1</sup>

The figure below summarizes PPB’s training program at a high level:

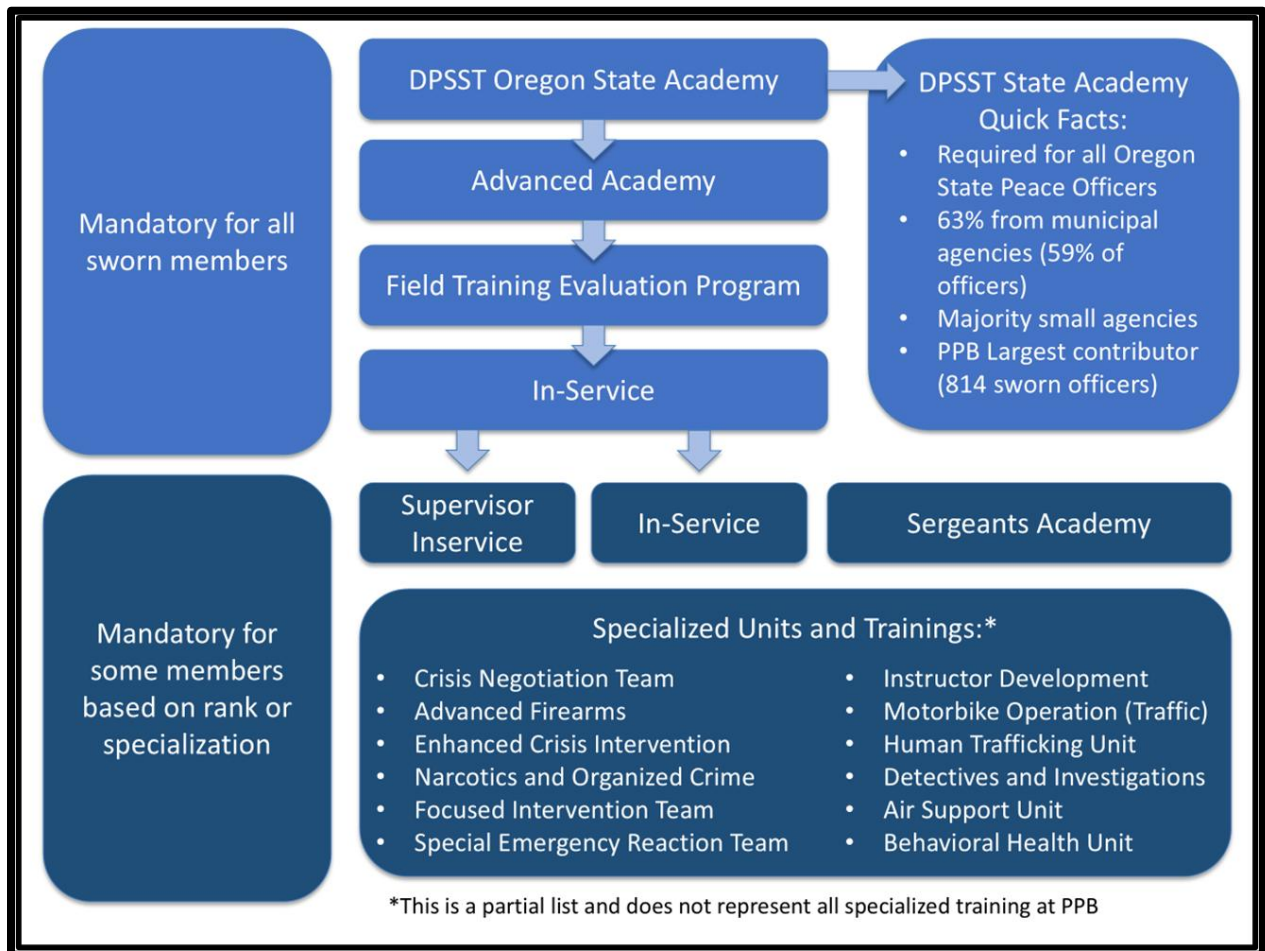


Figure 1 PPB Training Overview

Portland’s unique policy landscape, history of free speech events, and high standards of core skills necessitate additional specialized training. The Advanced Academy addresses these unique

<sup>1</sup> Depending on timing and logistics, some recruits may complete some of their time in FTEP between DPSST and the Advanced Academy.

requirements through a comprehensive 10-week program covering 11 integrative disciplines. Instruction increasingly emphasizes interdisciplinary approaches in realistic, high-fidelity scenarios, ensuring skills are scaffolded, integrated, and thoroughly assessed. Recruits must achieve objectives, competencies, and qualification standards within each discipline and pass written assessments on key concepts.

**Community Engagement:** Equips officers with knowledge and skills in community policing, community engagement, diversity, equity, and inclusion. The curriculum includes foundational skills and practices to foster improved relationships between the police and the community, such as wellness, cultural awareness, and communication.

**Active Bystandership in Law Enforcement (ABLE):** This discipline provides intervention skills training and fosters a culture of support through accountability.

**Control Tactics:** Develops fundamental skills to allow officers to control individuals when necessary and objectively reasonable. The CTs program emphasizes the use of simple, effective principles of control that utilize the minimum amount of force required to control an individual.

**Crisis Intervention:** Prepares officers to effectively and empathically address calls wherein mental illness is a factor. Crisis intervention training includes a general introduction to mental health, a framework for utilizing de-escalation tactics, and communication skills.

**Equity:** This curriculum includes a history of diversity and racial issues in Portland, cross-cultural skills, communication skills, and field-trips to interact with the Portland community.

**Firearms:** Trains officers on proficient and safe tactical usage of service firearms. This curriculum progresses from basic gun safety and drills, to more complex activities that test recruits' abilities to make procedurally just force decisions and account for a multitude of factors.

**Law:** Orients police officers to case law, key supreme court rulings (e.g., *Graham v. Connor*), as well as federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the enforcement of the law.

**Patrol Procedures:** Develops a diverse tactical skillset in a wide variety of duties required for new officers (e.g., traffic stops, building searches, and foot pursuits). The Patrol Procedures curriculum integrates many of the skills taught in the other disciplines in high-fidelity scenarios.

**Police Vehicle Operations:** Prepares officers to operate police vehicles effectively and safely in the course of their duties. Recruits progress from basic maneuvering to conducting precision-intervention techniques (PITs), box-ins, and using spike strips.

**Procedural Justice and Ethics:** Addresses critical topics related to ethical policing, including the practical implementation of the four pillars of procedurally just policing: voice, neutrality, respect, and trustworthiness, and bystander intervention.

**Specializations:** Familiarizes members with specialized skills, topics, and units, such as the Air Support Unit (ASU), the Neighborhood Response Team (NRT), the Human Trafficking Unity (HTU) and criminal investigations.

**Wellness:** Introduces officer wellness practices and strategies, including effective self-care, sleep management, nutrition, and stress management.

Policies are woven throughout all training disciplines, with a particular emphasis on the 1010.00 Use of Force and 635.10 Public Order policies. For example, every firearms session begins with a review of 1010.00.

Furthermore, the Training Division is transitioning to a hybrid learning model—combining online and in-person instruction—to modernize officer training, optimize resource use, and enhance educational outcomes. This approach aligns with adult education principles emphasizing self-directed learning, scenario-based applications, and practical relevance. Research from other police departments indicates well-structured blended training is equally or more effective than traditional methods. By implementing a "flipped classroom," PPB can deliver theoretical content online, reserving valuable face-to-face time for interactive, practical training. As of early 2026, PPB's Training Division has transitioned approximately 10 hours (five modules) to online instruction, enhancing overall training efficiency.

Although no single course explicitly titled "de-escalation tactics" exists, these concepts are thoroughly integrated across DPSST, Advanced Academy, and In-Service Training. Advanced Academy recruits complete extensive training, including 10 combined hours of ABLE, Procedural Justice and Ethics, as well as, 40 hours in crisis communication and mental health, and numerous realistic scenario exercises that reinforce effective de-escalation techniques.

# Mission, Goals, and Competencies

## Advanced Academy Curriculum Goal and Competencies

The Advanced Academy strives to equip recruits with the knowledge, behaviors, and skills required for successful deployment as Portland Police Officers <sup>2</sup> by bolstering and contextualizing foundational training received at the State of Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST).

Each discipline within the Advanced Academy maintains a set of core competencies, written to support the core goal and competencies of the Academy. Figure One (below) illustrates how these goals work together to achieve the Bureau’s overall mission.

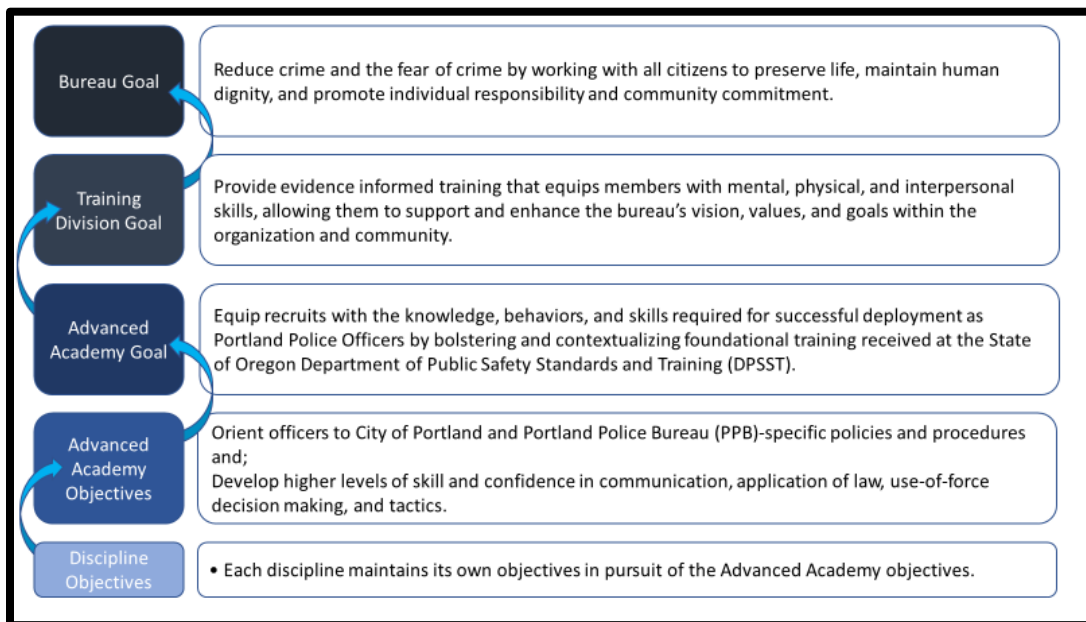


Figure 2 PPB Goals, from discipline to Bureau

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<sup>2</sup> This curriculum uses the terms officers, police officers, and members interchangeably.

## Core Competencies

The Advanced Academy Curriculum strives to develop working proficiency in six core competencies, including:

- Decision making and critical thinking;
- Tactics;
- Legitimacy;
- Law and Policy;
- Foundational Knowledge and Skills;
- And Communication and De-escalation.

These core competencies are interdisciplinary and are reached through the achievement of 40 discipline level competencies. The discipline level competencies are listed in the table below.

Core Competency	Discipline	Code
Demonstrate sound tactics and decision-making, to include communication and de-escalation, when determining the response and disposition of a call when an officer identifies that mental health or mental illness may be a factor.	CIT	CIT1
Integrate knowledge of mental health into decision-making on calls involving a mental health crisis.	CIT	CIT2
Demonstrate ability to emphasize fair and respectful treatment during police interactions, fostering trust and cooperation between officers and the public.	PJ/Ethics/Able	PEA1
Demonstrate the ability to take an active role in promoting safety and respect in all aspects of police work, both with fellow officers and the public.	PJ/Ethics/Able	PEA2
Utilize the core principles of active bystandership to effectively intervene and prevent/reduce harm.	PJ/Ethics/Able	PEA3
Understand the cardinal safety rules and how they apply in training as well as the realities of police work.	Firearms	FAR1
Articulate nuances of and be able to apply PPB Directive 1010.00 as it relates to the Use of Deadly Force.	Firearms	FAR2
Maintain their issued sidearm and operate the Holosun optic.	Firearms	FAR3
Understand where certain skills become primary as demonstrated with the Student Skills course	Firearms	FAR4
Demonstrate familiarity and experience selecting a variety of skills in stressful situations as demonstrated in Skills Courses and Force on Force situations.	Firearms	FAR5
Understand how PPB firearms and a variety of common weapon types can be rendered safe for seizure.	Firearms	FAR6

Demonstrate consistently repeatable and fundamentally sound technique in: a) Precision shooting fundamentals; b) Distant shooting; c) Close proximity shooting; d) Unconscious competency in Empty Reloads, Tactical Reloads and Malfunction Clearance; Fundamentals of shooting a moving target; Demonstrate the principles behind principles behind, as well as advantages and disadvantages of Moving and Shooting vs. Moving Then Shooting; Demonstrate the ability to use cover while shooting.	Firearms	FAR7
Have familiarity and experience with common shooting drills, used to maintain skills throughout their career.	Firearms	FAR8
Demonstrate PIT with Proficiency in desired location.	PVO	PVO1
Demonstrate varying methods of a Box-In.	PVO	PVO2
Deploy varying methods Stop Sticks, safely.	PVO	PVO3
Demonstrate sound judgment in pursuit and intervention strategies policies under stress.	PVO	PVO4
Demonstrate operation of a vehicle with Due Regard.	PVO	PVO5
Utilize appropriate specialized PPB resources in the field.	Specializations	SPC1
Apply a working knowledge of Portland, Oregon State, Federal, and Constitutional Law in the field.	LAW	LAW1
Recognize personal protective equipment used in public order events.	Public Order	ORP1
Demonstrate ability to follow direction of a squad leader and operate in a dynamic environment.	Public Order	ORP2
Understand bureau policy and apply procedural justice during public order events.	Public Order	ORP3
Demonstrate control tactics principles and techniques to physically control both cooperative and uncooperative individuals.	Control Tactics	CTR1
Demonstrate control tactics principles and techniques during entangled close quarters engagements involving weapons.	Control Tactics	CTR2
Apply effective communication and team tactic strategies when working with multiple officers to physically control individuals.	Control Tactics	CTR3
Apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills to address dynamic and rapidly evolving situations encountered on duty.	Control Tactics	CTR4
Apply Oregon state law and Bureau policy for effective force decision making while responding to calls for service.	Control Tactics	CTR5
Demonstrate effective communication skills to engage with diverse communities and facilitate positive interactions.	Patrol Procedures	PPR1
Apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills to address complex and dynamic situations encountered on duty.	Patrol Procedures	PPR2
Apply state law and Bureau policy to make appropriate and ethical decisions while responding to calls for service.	Patrol Procedures	PPR3
Apply foundational Patrol Procedures principles to safely and effectively respond to critical incidents and high-risk situations.	Patrol Procedures	PPR4
Demonstrate a foundational competency level of tactical decision-making, risk assessment, de-escalation, and force application.	Patrol Procedures	PPR5

Demonstrate increased ability to recognize and mitigate one's own bias.	Equity	EQ1
Demonstrate increased ability to manage difficult conversations.	Equity	EQ2
Demonstrate improved awareness of some of Portland's cultural communities.	Equity	EQ3
Develop skills that assist with and maintain the ability to work well under pressure.	Wellness	WEL1
Maintain effectiveness and self-control in the midst of any one or combination of stressors (including emotional strain, ambiguity, risk to self, and fatigue).	Wellness	WEL2
Sustain resilience and awareness of social, emotional, psychological, and financial wellness throughout career.	Wellness	WEL3

# Andragogical Approach

## Theoretical Framework

The Advanced Academy utilizes an iterative approach to training rooted in current adult education best practices and research. This section briefly summarizes the pedagogical underpinnings of the Academy.

The Advanced Academy focuses on the effective retrieval and application of knowledge using a goal/objective-oriented curriculum design process.<sup>3</sup> In order to facilitate the effective retrieval and application of skills, instructors at the Training Division employ the following key strategies:

- **Interleaved Block Structure:** The curriculum is organized primarily in 1.5 to 4-hour blocks on specific topics within a discipline. Discipline and skill-specific training sessions are interspersed throughout the program to promote the regular retrieval and application of skills utilized in previous blocks.<sup>4</sup>
- **Crawl, Walk, Run:** This strategy goes by many names (4MAT, backward curriculum design, scaffolding, among others) and essentially focuses on progressing from a theoretical introduction to guided practice and, ultimately, application. This structure is utilized throughout the program.
- **Cooperative Problem Solving:** Academy recruits frequently work cooperatively to apply new skills and knowledge to realistic scenarios to apply and strengthen their development. This problem-first approach aligns with adult education literature, underscoring the importance of relevant, challenging training structured around problem-solving.<sup>5</sup>

Additionally, the Advanced Academy utilizes a synthesis of andragogical adult learning principles,<sup>6</sup> the experiential learning model,<sup>7</sup> and the theory of margins.<sup>8</sup> These theories refer to the core traits of adult learning, the importance of experience and problem-solving, and the role of conflicting responsibilities on an adult's ability to learn, respectively.

This literature can best be summarized using the five Rs framework, which emphasizes Respect, Relevance, Realism, Rigor, and Rapport. The Advanced Academy seeks to design *respectful* training by presenting well-prepared training sessions that address the specific needs of trainees; *relevant* training by ensuring redundant or unnecessary training sessions are excluded; *realistic*

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<sup>3</sup> This approach utilizes “backwards” curriculum design processes wherein goals and assessment strategies guide the process of activity and training design. This approach was pioneered in *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins, G. 2005).

<sup>4</sup> For a sample of how interleaved block scheduling is put into practice, see Annex Three.

<sup>5</sup> Moore, C. (2017). *Map it: The hands-on guide to strategic training design*. Montesa Press.

<sup>6</sup> Knowles, M. S., Holton, E. F., Swanson, R. A., & Robinson, P. A. (2020). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development*. Routledge.

Merriam, S. B., & Caffarella, R. S. (1991). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. Jossey-Bass.

<sup>7</sup> Jarvis, P. (2010). *Adult education and lifelong learning: Theory and practice*. Routledge.

<sup>8</sup> Weiman, E. R. (1984). *Power load margin concept key components of adulthood*. Distributed by ERIC Clearinghouse.

training by developing practical scenarios, case studies, and practice activities based on the experience of officers in the field; *rigor* by ensuring activities are appropriately challenging to cultivate learning through problem-solving; and by developing *rapport*, which allows recruits and instructors to foster a productive learning environment.

## Integrated Learning Model

Although the Advanced Academy curriculum comprises ten unique disciplines, many disciplines apply topics and skills from peer disciplines. Patrol Procedures, specifically, contain in-depth instruction on applied policy (Law), de-escalation tactics (Crisis Intervention), force decision-making (Firearms, Control Tactics, Law), and applied communication and procedural justice (Community Engagement; Procedural Justice, Equity, Ethics, and ABLE).

Accordingly, Patrol Procedures can be considered the core of the Advanced Academy curriculum. Theory, knowledge, and skills gained in other disciplines are practiced, applied, and honed through Patrol Procedures scenarios.

Thus, although certain disciplines may only receive a handful of dedicated classroom hours, the foundational knowledge gained in the classroom is developed further during Patrol Procedures scenarios. The graphic below illustrates how disciplines are integrated during the Advanced Academy.<sup>9</sup>

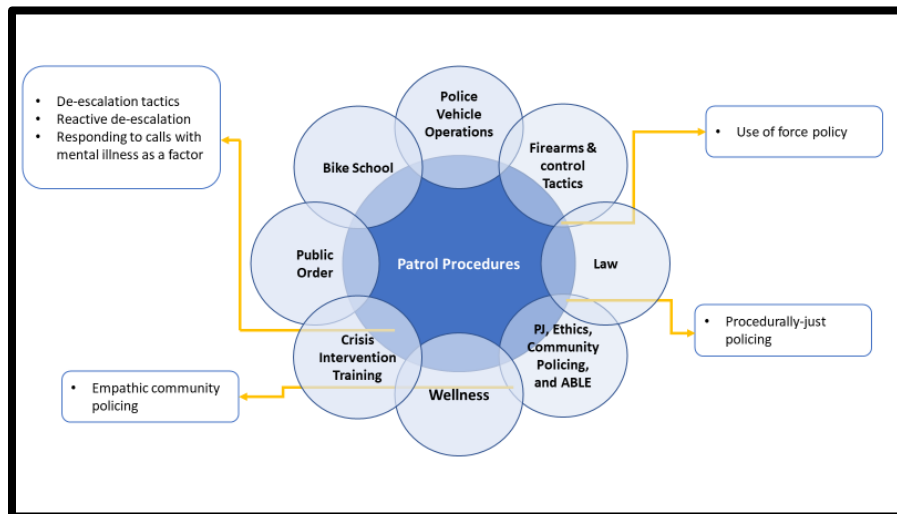


Figure 3 Sample illustration of discipline integration.

## Hybrid Learning Approach

The Portland Police Bureau (PPB) has determined it will move towards hybrid learning—combining online and in-person instruction—to modernize officer training, optimize resource use, and enhance educational outcomes. Hybrid learning aligns with adult education principles by

<sup>9</sup> This illustration is *not* intended to convey the full scope of topic integration at the Advanced Academy. There are many other instances of overlap, including Law and Public Order, which are not covered in this graphic.

emphasizing self-directed learning, scenario-based applications, and relevance to practical police tasks.<sup>10</sup> Research and case studies from other police departments<sup>11</sup> indicate that well-structured blended training is at least as effective as traditional methods and often superior, particularly when tailored to learner needs.<sup>12</sup>

Integrating e-learning and hands-on practice allows academies to deliver theoretical knowledge online, reserving face-to-face sessions for practical, interactive skills.<sup>13</sup> This "flipped classroom" approach reduces overall academy duration while maintaining instructional quality. Cadets can engage with foundational materials remotely, freeing instructor hours for critical hands-on scenario training.

Ultimately, hybrid learning enables PPB to deliver high-quality, targeted training efficiently, addressing perennial challenges of resource constraints without compromising officer readiness. As of the beginning of 2026, the Training Division has moved a total of five modules, or approximately 10 hours of training, online.

## De-Escalation Tactics Integration

De-escalation tactics refer to a broad spectrum of policing protocols, practices, techniques, and tactics to defuse a conflict and reduce its intensity.<sup>14</sup> These tactics include, but are not limited to, the following components:

1. **Procedural Justice: Voice, Neutrality, Respect, and Trustworthiness**, the four pillars of procedural justice, form the foundation of de-escalatory community policing. By using this pillars to build trust and legitimacy at the individual and community level, PPB members reduce the probability that force will be necessary.

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<sup>10</sup> Belur, J., & Bentall, C. (2023). Reviewing the 3C's of blended learning for police education: Assessing capacity, building capability, and conquering challenges. *Police Practice and Research*, 25(2), 168–188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2023.2210249>

<sup>11</sup> Case Studies: [Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department \(IMPD\)](#); [Kentucky Department of Criminal Justice Training \(DOCJT\)](#); [England and Wales Police Training \(National Blended Learning Initiatives\)](#); [Seguin Police Department in Texas](#); [Polk County Sheriff in Florida](#).

<sup>12</sup> Belur, J., Glasspoole-Bird, H., Bentall, C., & Laufs, J. (2022). What do we know about blended learning to inform police education? A rapid evidence assessment; *Police Practice and Research*, 24(1), 32–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2022.2073230>; **Blended Learning Delivery: A Strategy for Maximizing Investments in Training**

<sup>13</sup> Contributors, P. S. (2020, July 17). *P1 first person: Hybrid training for defensive tactics in law enforcement*. Police1. <https://www.police1.com/police-trainers/articles/p1-first-person-hybrid-training-for-defensive-tactics-in-law-enforcement-bxq0Q1vYSrtLk1pI/>

<sup>14</sup> Borrello, A. (2021, July 23). *De-escalation summit results in New California Post Publication*. Police1. <https://www.police1.com/police-training/articles/de-escalation-summit-results-in-new-california-post-publication-4YnUJdZkOEVfaNw/>;

*De-escalation & use of Force*. De-Escalation & Use of Force | Umatilla, Oregon. (n.d.).

<https://www.umatilla.gov/police/page/de-escalation-use-force#:~:text=prioritizing%20the%20safety%20of%20both,the%20need%20for%20forceful%20interventions>

2. Communication: De-escalatory communication includes speaking to people in a calm, clear, and respectful tone, as well as active listening techniques. This includes giving simple instructions or requests without shouting or anger and empathetically approaching individuals. In some situations, this may require more authoritative language but maintains calm and clarity in order to reduce escalatory confusion or the likelihood of increasing tensions.
3. Patrol Tactics: Patrol Tactics include effective, safe, and appropriate usage of recognized policing procedures to reduce opportunities for escalation and conflict. This includes using distance and time to increase the options available to PPB members, utilizing effective cover, containing critical incidents, utilizing numerical superiority, having clearly established roles, and planning for contingencies.

Thus, although there is not a course explicitly titled “de-escalation tactics”, PPB extensively covers these topics at DPSST, the Advanced Academy, and In-Service Training. For example, Advanced Academy recruits complete four hours of Procedural Justice and Ethics training in addition to prior training at DPSST; 40 hours of crisis communication and mental health training; and complete several days of scenarios re-enforcing effective usage of effective patrol tactics, including branching scenarios that allow for situations to be addressed peacefully when recruits employ appropriate de-escalation tactics.

## Equity Content Integration

Recruits in the academy receive 32 hours of equity-specific training provided by in-house experts and the City of Portland. This training augments eight hours of implicit bias training recruits receive at DPSST. However, additional coursework is integrated into other core competency content throughout the curriculum. See the table below for specific examples.

Competency	Integration
PEA1	PEA1 focuses on fair and respectful treatment of individuals during police interactions and includes coursework on Procedural Justice. This curriculum prepares recruits with skills to address all individuals with neutrality, give individuals voice, and treat all individuals respectfully regardless of the nature of the contact.
PEA3	PEA3 includes content on active bystandership. Specifically, this prepares officers to intervene if they see unethical or high-risk behaviors, either for themselves or towards others.
PPR1	PPR1 asks recruits to demonstrate communication skills in scenarios include diverse and complex interactions with individuals, including with individuals with mental illness. These scenarios are debriefed with a procedural justice framework.
SPC1	SPC1 introduces recruits to specialized resources available at the Bureau, and during these introductions, receive valuable instruction from specialists with deep experience with marginalized groups. For example, the Neighborhood Response Team session includes a lively discussion on the root causes of

	<p>homelessness and the stories of individuals experiencing homelessness. Additionally, the Human Trafficking Unit introduces recruits to the realities of human trafficking in Portland and the experience of individuals impacted by human trafficking.</p>
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