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**OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES (OCONUS)  
POLYGRAPH PROGRAM  
IMPLEMENTATION**

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# OCONUS Polygraph Program Implementation

The following information was derived from the successful implementation of OCONUS polygraph programs in Iraq, Mexico, Barbados (and other Caribbean Island nations), Dominican Republic and Nepal by the authors. This documents the procedures used to start and maintain a successful polygraph program.

## RECEPTION BY HOST COUNTRY

Polygraph science is in use throughout the world at various government agencies; however, not all countries participate in a polygraph program. It is incumbent upon the in-country U.S. law enforcement advisor to receive the enthusiastic support of the host agencies for the program to succeed.

Typically, many changes will have to be made to existing investigative practices in the host country with the addition of a polygraph program and cooperation is essential to effectively implement these changes.

## LEGAL ISSUES

The first step in the implementation of a polygraph program is to obtain a legal analysis, from both the in-country legal advisor and the US Embassy legal advisor, regarding the existing statutes (if any) in the host country concerning polygraph.

In most instances, there will not be any laws either authorizing and/or prohibiting polygraph in the host country. Similarly, there usually will not be case law on point in the host country.

It is important to note that the objective should not be to implement a program which results in court admissibility of polygraph as evidence; rather, it should be viewed as an investigative aid to be used by law enforcement. Recognition by the courts in a particular country will be a matter best left to that country and court admissibility is not the aim or objective of introducing polygraph to law enforcement agencies in the host country.

The law enforcement/government/military agencies represented by the various students attending the training typically do not have polygraph SOP's and/or directives within their agency. The polygraph school should be able to work with the host agencies to provide a template of language used in various places around the world which may be used as a starting point. The actual final SOP's and/or directives must be composed by the host agencies in a manner consistent with their existing policies and procedures.

## CANDIDATE SELECTION PROCESS

The selection of polygraph program participants is critical to the overall success of the mission. The instruction will be by English speaking instructors, in most cases, so a high level of speaking, reading and writing of English will be required by all participants. This is not a “conversational English” level of fluency; all of the scientific literature in the course is written in English, as are all published scientific updates.

It is possible to conduct a polygraph course via interpreters, however this turns a 400 hour, 10 week course into a 1200 hour 24-30 week course (as demonstrated multiple times in polygraph schools taught in the Middle East) and requires 2-4 interpreters for the duration of the course.

The second attribute desired in polygraph program applicants from the host country is the ability to conduct public speaking seminars after the polygraph school ends. Upon successful completion of the program, the new examiners will be the ambassadors of the program throughout the host country and the success or failure of a new polygraph program depends upon spreading knowledge of the science to all members of law enforcement in their own agencies. The polygraph school selected should, when requested, assist in the composition of a “travelling training packet” for the graduates to use at the completion of the course.

Each student selected should be proficient in the use of computers, as the whole course and the subsequent profession involve utilizing computers to administer polygraph examinations and prepare related reports.

The students need to be educated. The polygraph course of instruction is typically thought of as being 3<sup>rd</sup> year college-level material in such topics as Psychology, Physiology and Composition, along with some statistics.

## POLYGRAPH SCHOOL / ACCREDITATION / INSTRUCTORS

There are two polygraph accreditation/recognition bodies respected throughout the world: the American Polygraph Association and the American Association of Police Polygraphists.

The polygraph school selected to deliver training should have these qualifications:

- Demonstrated “past practices” of delivering polygraph instruction OCONUS
- Complete School Accreditation by the APA for classes OCONUS.
- Instructors fully APA qualified to deliver all polygraph instruction, preferably with OCONUS experience.
- Demonstrated experience in establishing a digital polygraph case management system.
- Demonstrated experience with long-term mentoring and quality control.



Each polygraph basic course will (by APA mandate) consist of a minimum of 400 hours that will be completed in not fewer than 10 nor more than 17 weeks. There should be at least two instructors at the basic school at all times. There are some special requirements for a minimum of 48 hours of instruction which require specialists, as follows:

- Minimum of 20 hours of Psychology – taught by an instructor that possesses, at a minimum, a master’s degree in psychology or a related course of study issued by a college or university accredited by a regional or national accrediting body recognized by the US Department of Education or the Counsel for Higher Education Accreditation.
- Minimum of 20 hours of Physiology – taught by an instructor that possesses, at a minimum, a master’s degree in psychophysiology, physiology or a related course of study issued by a college or university accredited by a regional or national accrediting body recognized by the US Department of Education or the Counsel for Higher Education Accreditation.
- Minimum of 8 hours of legal instruction – taught by an instructor that possesses a law degree recognized by a national or regional bar association; and possesses a license to practice law.

## **VENUE**

The host venue must be conducive to training, must be equipped with audio/visual equipment and must be able to be secured.

The majority of the course’s delivered academic material is via PowerPoint and videos, therefore a “whiteboard” or “smartboard” is the preferred option, along with a suitable projector and audio capabilities.

The students must have work tables, a single chair/desk type arrangement will not suffice. The preferred option is to have two-person work tables with comfortable chairs.

The room needs to have numerous electrical receptacles, as each table will have two laptop computers plugged in. We have run receptacle strips with success in the past, but we must have two plug-ins per desk and suitable extension cords.

The equipment is valuable inside the teaching room; therefore it must be a securable room.

Wi-Fi need not be available to the students, but must be accessible to the instructors in the classroom. It is preferable to have Wi-Fi access for everyone in class, to allow for the printers to be used by each student wirelessly.

The main classroom is where lectures are delivered, but numerous “break-out” rooms suitable for practical polygraph practice by the students are also required. The ratio for break-out rooms is: one practice room for every 3 students.

The break-out rooms must be of sufficient size: approx. 9' x 8'. The APA requires a minimum of 24 square feet per person for labs - 3 students times 24 square feet equals 72' minimum. The room needs to handle three people, three chairs, a table, a polygraph and a laptop.

Each room needs to have three chairs and one table (or desk) sufficient to hold laptop computers and the polygraph instrumentation.

One of the three chairs in each room needs to be sturdy, with arm rests. This will be the polygraph testing chair in each room.

## **EQUIPMENT SUMMARY**

1. Polygraph instruments: one instrument for every three students is acceptable; one instrument for each student is preferable. Each polygraph instrument will have the capabilities to collect and/or monitor (at a minimum):
  - Respiration channels – abdominal and thoracic
  - Electro-dermal activity (EDA)
  - Finger pulse amplitude (PLE)
  - Cardio – rate strength and amplitude
  - Movement sensor – seat sensor at a minimum
  - Full Audio/Video
    - It is not a mandate that all of the polygraph instrumentation come from one manufacturer, as the polygraph instructors should be familiar with all brands of instrumentation.
    - However, having differing polygraph instrumentation in class dramatically slows down the teaching process, as everything turns from a group demonstration to individualized assistance.
    - Therefore, it is preferred that all students have the same equipment.
    - The polygraph school selected to deliver instruction can assist in selecting the polygraph instrumentation.
2. Laptops: one per student, no exception. The laptop must be at least a 15" screen size (17" preferred), an i5 or later processor and at least a 500 GB hard drive. Preferably, this laptop will be used for polygraph purposes and will not be for personal use.

3. Laptops will have the polygraph software installed in class by instructor-led example. Each laptop also needs to have Microsoft Word or equivalent for report writing purposes and each laptop needs Adobe Free Reader for scientific literature review.
4. Printer(s): two printers needed for school purposes, lasers with (10,000 copy) cartridges, black and white. Ink jet type printers will not be sufficient for the duration of the school.
5. Scanner: one scanner adequate for school purposes, preferably of business/office quality.
6. Paper: the school will need a case of paper for the duration of the school.

## **MENTORING AND QUALITY CONTROL**

Following graduation, a mentoring program is essential for a successful program. This consists of a polygraph instructor(s) being in-country to set up the program with the host agency(s), help develop SOP's and directives with that agency, set up a digital case management system to track and monitor polygraphs, help the new examiners develop polygraph questions from criminal case material and conduct quality control of their polygraph charts (polygrams).

The mentor will be on-site with the examiners as much as practical and available via phone and email at all times during the mentoring period. The mentoring period is variable in length, but has ranged from 3 months (Nepal) to 6 months (Mexico, Iraq).

It should be noted that a polygraph program established in Barbados had all the requisite parts to succeed, but the mentoring segment was not funded. Therefore, of the 25 students trained in Barbados, only a few have been successful long-term. In contrast, all 30 of the students trained in Nepal have been successful, in part due to the 3 month mentoring program established.

The quality control aspect of a polygraph program is crucial for a number of reasons:

- It ensures correct procedures are being followed by examiners
- It helps ensure public trust in this new (to them) forensic science
- It helps identify and correct errors being made by the new examiners
- It is considered "best practice" by the APA.

After the mentoring period in-country has ended (usually 3 months), the quality control aspect needs to be continued for at least a year, until good practices have become ingrained in the new examiners.



This is best handled by some type of retainer paid to the polygraph school as a part of the initial contract bid and the charts can be emailed back and forth. However, emailing to different time zones is not as timely as the mentoring period in-country and while emailing charts suffices for quality control purposes, it does not replace a mentoring program.

## **SOFTWARE**

The polygraph school will furnish polygraph program software commensurate with whatever polygraph equipment purchased. The periodic software updates will be provided by the respective polygraph manufacturers and are available for online download.

The polygraph case management system for tracking polygraphs need not be complicated or expensive. Microsoft Excel works well for this purpose and a sample log is attached to this paper. The polygraph database should be stored on an external hard drive and backed up frequently.

## **POLYGRAPH ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Every graduate of an APA accredited polygraph school is eligible for membership in the APA. The APA comprises all polygraph examiners (private, public, government, academic, researchers, law enforcement, and counselors). The cost of joining the polygraph organization should be borne by the sponsoring agency as part of the overall polygraph program.

There is a continuing education component involved which (as of this writing) is 30 hours every two years.

The continuing education must be provided by an APA certified recognized polygraph instructor, preferably by instructors dedicated to “Best Practices.”

In the APA professional organization, there are paths for advanced certifications, depending upon advanced training, the number of polygraph examinations conducted and the level of formal education.

In an OCONUS polygraph unit environment, it is usually cost prohibitive to send examiners to the United States every other year for CEU training; although that certainly is a possibility. Each of the professional organizations holds a 40 hours annual training seminar at various locations around the U.S.



It is usually preferable to bring a certified recognized and highly qualified instructor, preferably from the same basic polygraph school as delivered the initial instruction (but not mandatory), to the host country to deliver a 40-hour block of instruction to the examiners. This can be done every year or every other year, as required.

The cost to bring an instructor to the host country should be borne by the sponsoring US agency, or the host country agency.

## **LONG-TERM**

The U.S. instructors who conduct the continuing education and quality control should identify the most accomplished examiner(s) in the host country. There should be an in-country transition period in which that person(s) selected should ease into the role of in-country quality control officer, supervised by the US instructors until such time that they can perform unassisted (usually several years).

This will eventually make the host country polygraph unit self-sufficient; however will never reduce the mandatory CEU bi-yearly training hour requirement for continuing membership in APA.