

# **BMRA INSTRUCTOR'S HANDBOOK**



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## I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to BMRA! You have joined a cadre of professionals who provide quality training and education to our clients. It is important to remember that all of your actions or inactions will reflect on BMRA. We have written this Instructor's Handbook to provide direction to you in performing as a member of the BMRA team.

The purpose of the Handbook is to provide standardized processes for course presentation, travel arrangements, end-of-course reports, and invoicing. It is our intent to inform you of all BMRA policies and procedures to fully prepare you to be a successful in-the-trench ambassador.

## II. GETTING STARTED

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### A. COURSE PRESENTATION

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#### 1. CLASS ASSIGNMENT

BMRA will contact you to determine your availability when a course that is in your area of expertise is scheduled. Upon acceptance of the assignment, you will be added to the Schedule of Classes as the instructor for the class.

If for any reason you are unable to teach a class you have accepted, you must contact our office immediately to allow us to assign another instructor or otherwise fulfill our obligation to the client. You must give at least three weeks notice *unless* you have an emergency situation.

BMRA will email you an instructor packet approximately two weeks prior to the start of the class. The packet will include the following:

- A BMRA invoice to be submitted upon completion of the course presentation.
- An expense report that must be properly completed. Instructions are provided on page 10.
- An attendance roster—*Fill in each* section of the roster **LEGIBLY**; include the student names in alphabetical order and the grade earned for the class. All information and responses contained in this form must be treated as private and confidential

information, in accordance with the Privacy Act. Always complete the attendance record for each day of class.

- An instructor End-of-Course Report form—BMRA values your feedback regarding correction/changes/improvements to course materials. All comments from instructors are considered during the regular materials revision process.

If you do not receive the packet two weeks prior to the course, please call to let us know.

## 2. COURSE MATERIALS

It is each instructor's responsibility to ensure that he/she has copies of current course materials, including the instructor's guide (if applicable). There are many difficulties encountered when your textbook is a different version than the students', especially when referencing specific page numbers during instruction.

The document number shown on the bottom left-hand corner of the **first page of the Table of Contents** in the textbook must be the same as the document number cited in your assignment letter. The control number on the Table of Contents may be different from the number of some of the subsections (chapters, appendices, etc.). However, the control number on the Table of Contents is the one that signifies the textbook as a whole. Handouts (including tests) have separate control numbers. If you have any questions or concerns about whether you have the correct version, do not hesitate to call us.

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delivery of up to 15 courses a week and staff cannot rely on verbal requests.

In our efforts to assure that instructors have the most current materials, we will ask you periodically to inventory materials in your possession. Your prompt response to our inquiry will be greatly appreciated.

### **3. POWERPOINT SLIDES**

It is BMRA's policy to use PowerPoint presentations for most classes. It has become an expected part of adult education. If you need assistance in using PowerPoint slides, please let us know. Upon request, we will provide a CD-ROM with the slides for your use. Please notify us at least two weeks before the course to alleviate any last minute rush. This will also give you adequate time to review the presentation.

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## **B. CLASSROOM ARRANGEMENTS**

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### **1. CLASSROOM NEEDS**

In most cases, instructors should phone the course point-of-contact provided in their instructor packets *at least 2-3 weeks* prior to the course to discuss particular needs for the classroom, directions to the location, times of class, and any other issues you may have. This would be a good time to ask about the specifics of the class makeup, the mission of the organization, and other details that will contribute to a more personalized approach. The exception to this practice is any class conducted for the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI); for FAI classes, all questions should be directed to the BMRA Training administrator.

Please be aware that more and more clients are requiring the contractor to provide all A/V equipment, including laptop and projector. If you will need such equipment, please contact our office before talking to your POC. The A/V arena seems to be ever-changing. Please contact us a minimum of 2-3 weeks before your class begins.

### **2. SECURITY PROCEDURES**

Always carry proof of personal identification, including photograph, when you arrive to work in any government building, regardless of how many times you have worked in the building previously. Issuing ID badges and other

security processes are managed by individual agencies. Processes vary widely and change frequently. The training administrator or the BMRA program manager will give you what information is available, but the agency point of contract is likely to be the most knowledgeable person. In your pre-assignment communications with him or her, this is one of the topics you should be sure to ask about.

There is a plan to centralize and coordinate security processes among civilian agencies. The Office of Personnel Management sponsored the e-QIP (Electronic Questionnaires for Investigations Processing) system to allow applicants to electronically enter, update, and transmit their personal investigative data over a secure Internet connection to their employing agency for review and approval. Development and implementation was to be done in phases, and currently it's in the "stalled" phase.

### 3. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If an emergency should arise during the weekend or after hours Monday through Friday, please leave a message on the training administrator's voice mail 703-691-0868 Ext. 11. If you need immediate assistance, please call Jenn Ashburn's cell phone: 571-338-8914. Leave Jenn a detailed message if you get her voice mail. If possible, also send an email to Jenn ([jashburn@bmra.com](mailto:jashburn@bmra.com)) and cc John Dove ([jdove@bmra.com](mailto:jdove@bmra.com)). This will ensure we get information as early as possible.

## III. TRAVEL

Instructors are responsible for making all necessary travel arrangements. Travel arrangements, primarily air travel, should be made *at least two weeks* in advance to take advantage of lower airfare costs. Hotel reservations also should be made early to assure room availability. NOTE: Please read the BMRA policy on staying an extra night in Paragraph A, below.

Our Travel agent is WorldTravelService, (202) 728-4040 or (800) 633-8822. Their webpage is [worldtravelservice.com](http://worldtravelservice.com). You are encouraged to book your airline reservations directly through WorldTravel, and they will place your travel expenses on the BMRA account. All they need is the course number, dates, and times that you would like to travel. You may give WorldTravel your preferred carrier and they will try to accommodate your request. However, if

there is a lower priced carrier available, your request for specific airlines will not be honored unless you are willing to make up the difference in ticket price.

Instructors may make your own travel arrangements rather than using our travel agent and BMRA will reimburse your expenses.

If you are scheduled to give two one-week classes at the same location and you have traveled to the location, you are not permitted to return home between classes if the cost of the flight would exceed the cost to stay in a hotel over the weekend. We will not reimburse this arrangement without prior approval.

To accommodate you while on the road, BMRA has a toll free number:

1-888-248-BMRA (1-888-248-2672).

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**A. ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE**

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It is BMRA policy that the instructor arrive at the training location on the day before the class starts and depart on the same day the class ends for presentations in the Continental U.S. Exceptions to arrival time (one day in advance) may be made if you can secure a more favorable airfare with a Saturday arrival. Please bear in mind that to be competitive, our quotations include only 5 days of hotel and salary, and 5-3/4 days M&IE for Continental U.S. courses. All exceptions must be approved in advance by the BMRA Training administrator.

Typically, the instructor is expected to depart the training location on the last day of class and any exceptions must receive advance approval. Staying an extra night after the course ends may be approved ***if flight arrangements have to be changed due to poor weather conditions or other conditions beyond your control.*** Please contact BMRA if you encounter such conditions to receive guidance.

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**B. LOCAL TRAVEL**

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**1. PERSONAL VEHICLES**

Instructors are expected provide their own vehicles for courses requiring travel of less than 3½ hours. BMRA will

reimburse mileage costs at the current government rate for local classes.

BMRA will reimburse Metro fees in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Taxi cabs should only be used when absolutely necessary.

## **2. RENTAL CARS**

Rental cars may be authorized in cases where adequate transportation is not available. Instructors must obtain a weekly rate for 5-day courses, unless there is a more favorable rate available. BMRA will reimburse the cost of a *compact car* only. Costs for other categories will not be reimbursed unless the instructor obtains prior authorization. BMRA has both comprehensive and collision insurance. No other insurance is needed and will not be reimbursed.

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## **C. HOTEL ARRANGEMENTS**

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An instructor may stay in a hotel if the distance between his or her home and the class site is more than 70 miles or 2 hours by car. Your instructor packet will outline the city's government per diem rates for you. Please contact the agency's point of contact to inquire about nearby preferred hotels.

**Telephone/Internet Charges:** BMRA pays a flat rate of \$10.00/week to reimburse for telephone and Internet fees while staying in a hotel.

Instructors must provide their hotel and flight information to BMRA prior to the trip for emergency purposes. Please provide a cell phone number if possible.

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## **D. HAZARDOUS/INCLEMENT WEATHER INFORMATION**

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Social Security Administration (SSA) has a Hazardous Weather Plan. For a hazardous weather decision message you can call: 410-298-1900 or 866-819-0149.

- Code Red = Federal offices in the Baltimore Metropolitan area are closed for the day.
- Code Yellow = Federal offices in the Baltimore Metropolitan area are opening 2 hours late.

- Code Blue = Federal offices in the Baltimore Metropolitan area are opening 4 hours late.

For the Washington DC Metropolitan area you may access the following website for closings and delays:

<http://www.opm.gov/status/index.aspx>.

## IV. DOS AND DON'TS DURING COURSE PRESENTATION

- **DO** arrive one hour prior to the start of class on the first day. This will permit setting up the room, testing any computer equipment, and ensuring everything is in place prior to participants' arrival. Instructors should also arrive 30 minutes prior to class start time on subsequent days.
- **DO** contact the BMRA training administrator immediately if you encounter any problems with books, attendance, or any other issues at any time during the class. The training administrator or designee is in the office early on Mondays to assist you.
- **DO** greet the participants as they arrive. Shake their hands and make eye contact. Remember, you can only make one first impression.
- **DO** make sure the students fill out their registration forms on the first day of class. The only exception to this is State Department Foreign Service Institute classes (COR, DS/COR, and GSO Acquisition Module). We have to send certificates to individual students for all VA and GSA FAI classes so emphasize the importance of providing accurate mailing addresses. It is noted that some agencies are moving toward electronic registration and, as such, are phasing out the manual registration forms.
- **DO**, legibly and in ink, prepare the student roster with student *names in alphabetic order* and GS grade levels. You may obtain the roster format electronically and submit it by email to Edna Joyner ([ejoyner@bmra.com](mailto:ejoyner@bmra.com)) or Jennifer Ashburn ([jashburn@bmra.com](mailto:jashburn@bmra.com)).
- **DO** treat all information and responses contained in registration forms and rosters as private and confidential, in accordance with the Privacy Act.

- **DO** explain the ACE procedure **IF the course carries ACE equivalency** (reference your instructor letter). BMRA no longer submits student information for ACE credit. If a student would like to receive ACE credit, provide them with the following URL address, <https://www.acenet.edu/transcripts/register>.

When they first register, students will receive a registration fee request from ACE. After receiving payment for this fee, ACE will register the student. The student then will be able to access ACE on the Internet and be able to log into his or her individual account.

Please emphasize that it will take up to six weeks after completion of the class before students will be able to access the information on-line.

- **DO** maintain a positive attitude with the students.
- **DO NOT** make negative comments regarding the course or course materials to the students or client personnel. Such comments belong in course evaluations. Always remember, you are representing BMRA. Negative interactions reflect on the company and can cost us follow-on business.
- Because laws and procurement/contracting regulations and procedures change frequently, it may be necessary to give updates and corrections to text material orally. **DO** treat these changes for what they are: unavoidable and without impact on the quality of the course.
- **DON'T** engage in confrontation. Always handle any potential confrontation diplomatically. This is sometimes difficult, but taking an offensive or defensive position is a no-win approach. Please contact BMRA if you have a disruptive student that you would prefer not dealing with. We will contact the agency point-of-contact to reach resolution.
- **DON'T** permit the use of cell phones, pagers, or blackberries in the classroom. All such devices must be turned off or placed in the mute/vibrate position. Using such devices in the classroom disrupts the learning process. This should be announced on the first day of class and may need repeating throughout the week, sometimes more than once a day. Please notify BMRA

if you have problems in this area and we will take action to remedy the situation.

- **DO** obtain students' end-of-course evaluations. Avoid concern about anonymity by having students place the evaluations on a table away from you or in an envelope. These evaluations are very important and must be obtained from each student at the end of a class. Ask students to provide evaluations at the same time they hand in their final exams. Be aware that in some cases the client requires us to use their evaluations and will not permit you to remove them from the premises. We will notify you of this requirement in your instructor packet.
- **DON'T** discuss politics, religion, gender, or ethnic issues during class. Keep jokes politically correct or you will get comments on end-of-course reports. Please remain sensitive to these topics at all times. It may seem petty, but mix the use of referring to the contracting officer as "he" with "she".
- **DON'T** give students in-class reading assignments. You should give any reading assignments as homework. However, many of our exercises do require the students to forage through textbooks for relevant information, with an eye toward applying the information. This is in line with our instructional philosophy that the text references are to be regarded as tools by students, both with respect to classroom exercises and with respect to their work back at their job sites. This is not the same as scheduling "reading time" separate from exercises.
- **DON'T** read the book to students. There will be times where reading a phrase fits into the presentation. However, frequent reading from the text gives students the impression that the instructor isn't prepared and always results in negative comments in evaluations.

## V. PREPARING THE END-OF-COURSE REPORT

Please make sure your handwriting is legible; printing is best. Do not use pencil to complete forms. Many documents must be duplicated and pencil does not copy well.

Instructors must grade all pretests (when applicable) and final exams and enter grades onto the roster. All testing materials must be returned to BMRA for disposition.

Many of our clients do not want students to receive their test scores. It varies from client to client. Please contact the Course Manager before releasing test scores to make sure it's permitted.

Please complete the instructor course evaluation form. In the comments section for course materials, please be as specific as possible and cite the precise chapter, subsection, and paragraph to describe the reference (page numbers are often not descriptive). Providing a marked up copy of the text in question is very helpful. Your comments are critical to our course update efforts.

## VI. PREPARING EXPENSE REPORTS

- *Please write legibly.* Illegible expense reports take much longer to review and thus may delay payment of your invoice.
- Please separate your daily expenses when filling out your expense reports (i.e., lodging, lodging tax, meals and incidental expenses (M&IE), etc.). It is noted that the mileage reimbursement rate and hotel rate is stated in your course assignment letter. Mileage for travel to and from dinner is not authorized for reimbursement.
- Laundry costs are reimbursable *only* if your stay exceeds one week (7 days). The cost of laundry/dry cleaning is generally considered to be included in the M&IE amount. Include receipts with your reports. This will expedite reimbursement to you and BMRA. Please do not add a miscellaneous line on your expense report. You must identify all costs to receive reimbursement.

BMRA generally reimburses expenses in accordance with the joint travel regulation (JTR), as follows:

- Costs associated with travel to the course location. This includes taxi fare to an airport or mileage costs for your personal vehicle, as appropriate. For local classes, you will be reimbursed mileage costs only.
- M&IE is reimbursed at the rate of 75% on **the first and last day** of travel. However, you will be

reimbursed at 100% when you return home on the last day of training. You will be reimbursed 100% M&IE for each day of class, plus lodging as referenced on your instructor packet.

- Instructors who reside in the local area will not be reimbursed M&IE for classes in the local commuting area (e.g., 70 miles or 2 hour commute).
- Expense forms are available in electronic format and are formatted to do calculations. If you are interested in using these electronic forms, please contact our office.

Contact Edna Joyner if you have any questions or need additional guidance about reporting expenses for travel.

## VII. SUBMITTING YOUR END-OF-COURSE DOCUMENTATION

All End-of-course materials must be provided to BMRA promptly upon course completion. We have implemented a new policy recently to encourage prompt submission of your end-of-course documentation. To qualify, you must send by FAX the completed roster on the last day of class. Your 30-day payment period will begin on that last day of class, provided BMRA receives the complete package by Wednesday of the following week. The end-of-course documentation includes Roster, Registration Forms, Evaluations, Tests, and Invoice. ***Please do not delay. Mail your end-of-course material no later than the Monday after the course is completed.*** Call for information on using UPS if necessary. The majority of our contracts require that we submit our final summary report within two (2) weeks after completion of the class and some are required earlier than that. Agencies will not process our invoice until they receive the report.

Include all course materials, other than your copy of the student text and instructor manual. This includes the mobile computer laboratory. We will give you instructions on how to return it. ***Destroy or return to BMRA any unused pretests and exam materials.*** Do not leave pretest or exam materials at the class site.

Please ask the points-of-contact if they wish to retain any unused text materials. If they would like to send the

materials back to us, they should call us at (703) 691-0868. We can give them our UPS account number and address. BMRA will not pay for any shipping method other than UPS ground.

## VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

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### A. LIABILITY INSURANCE

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Professionals that work as instructors for BMRA may choose to obtain professional liability insurance to protect against financial losses from lawsuits filed against them by clients. BMRA considers this a personal expense of the instructors.

Professionals are expected to have extensive technical knowledge or training in their particular area of expertise. They are also expected to perform the services for which they were hired, according to the standards of conduct in their profession. If they fail to use the degree of skill expected of them, they can be held responsible in a court of law for any harm they cause to another person or business.

When liability is limited to acts of negligence, professional liability insurance may be called “errors and omissions” liability. Professional liability insurance is specialty coverage and is not provided under homeowners’ endorsements, in-home business policies, or business owners’ policies (BOPs).

### B. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS AND PASSING SCORES

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**Health and Human Services University** - The HHSU Acquisition Workforce Training and Certification Handbook requires that students receive a minimum number of hours of classroom instruction. As a result, the following attendance policy is in effect for all HHS Project Officer and Acquisition classes:

- 3-day or less course – No Absences Allowed
- 4-day course – Up to 1/2 day Absence
- 5-day course – Up to 1 day Absence

**Defense Acquisition University Equivalent Classes** – Students are expected to attend all scheduled course sessions and complete all course work. Absences for

medical or family emergencies must be approved by the instructor. Cumulative absences that exceed 5 percent of contact time may be grounds for removal from the course, and the student's record will be annotated accordingly.

Please call the BMRA Training administrator if you have a question about attendance.

**PLEASE NOTE: STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO TAKE THE EXAM UNLESS THEY MEET THE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS.**