

## Background Investigator Survey Results

March 2019

The Background Investigator survey was sent to background investigators in March 2019. The primary purpose of the survey was to determine the effectiveness of the background investigation course. There were 142 respondents to the survey.

1. Experience conducting background investigations:	Responses N=142	
Less than a year	15	10.56%
1 - 3 years	38	26.76%
4 - 6 years	32	22.54%
7 or more years	57	40.14%

2. Background investigations conducted for:	Responses N=142	
Single department only	101	71.13%
Multiple departments	41	28.87%
<i>Approximately how many departments:</i>	N=40	
<10	29	72.50%
10 or more	11	27.50%

3. Conducting background investigations is:	Responses N=142	
Primary duty	97	68.31%
Auxiliary duty	23	16.20%
Temporary assignment	2	1.41%
Other (please specify):	23	16.20%

- Supervise/manage background investigators (9)
- Private contractor (5)
- Retirement job (4)
- Part-time employment (2)
- Pre-Employment Polygraph Examinations, Pre-Employment Background Interviews and Background Investigations
- Half backgrounds, half IA investigations
- Volunteers and Youth Cadets

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4. Attended the 32-40 hour Background Investigation Course?		Responses N=142	
Yes		134	94.37%
No		8	5.63%

When responding to questions about course attendance, respondents (n=132) indicated they attended the course from as early as 1990 to as late as January 2019. Locations included Riverside, Fresno, San Jose, Santa Rosa, Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Bernardino, Sunnyvale, Windsor, and Monterey.

Of the eight (8) respondents who did not attend the course, three (3) indicated they plan to attend a future session, three (3) will not attend due to cost, one (1) has no interest, and one (1) is retiring.

5. Ratings for Background Investigation Course:	Very Dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Neutral		Satisfied		Very Satisfied		N=
Content	5	3.79%	4	3.03%	11	8.33%	65	49.24%	47	35.61%	132
Format	5	3.82%	3	2.29%	16	12.21%	62	47.33%	45	34.35%	131
Method(s) of delivery	6	4.55%	4	3.03%	18	13.64%	61	46.21%	43	32.58%	132
Scenarios/exercises	7	5.30%	8	6.06%	25	18.94%	54	40.91%	38	28.79%	132
Length	5	3.79%	7	5.30%	18	13.64%	67	50.76%	35	26.52%	132
Pace	5	3.82%	4	3.05%	24	18.32%	62	47.33%	36	27.48%	131

Converting the above table to a 5-point scale using 1 to indicate “very dissatisfied” and 5 for “very satisfied,” the mean ratings (below) indicate that course content and format averaged on the lower end of “satisfied,” while method(s) of delivery, pace, length and scenarios/exercises fell just below the “satisfied” threshold.

	Rating
Content	4.10
Format	4.06
Method(s) of delivery	3.99
Pace	3.92
Length	3.91
Scenarios/exercises	3.82

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The comments in Item 6, below, provide further insight from respondents who provided less than satisfactory ratings, when responding to Item 5.

- 6. Summarized reasons for rating various aspects of the background investigation course less than satisfactory and suggestions for improving the course.** The number in parentheses indicates the number of respondents for each summarized comment, if applicable.

### ***Course Length***

#### **Too Short**

- Adding a day to the 32-hour class would be beneficial
- There was not enough time to cover the topic areas or participate in group exercises
- A lot of information presented; difficult to gain detailed knowledge in any one particular area; too much info = too little time.
- Need more time to go over legal info and certain forms like live-scan returns and DD-214's

#### **Too Long**

- Too long of course; cover the material faster (5)
- Contains unnecessary "filler"/meaningless information (4)
- Could have completed the class in two days (2)
- Could be shortened by a day
- Length was too long or not long enough; same with pace

### ***Instructor Quality***

- Instructor read from a manual; failed to give insight or best ways to get information (2)
- Social media instructor could not make it; different instructor read power-point without providing in-depth knowledge/information
- Original instructor could not make it; last minute substitute was putting the class together on the go
- Presenters did not really "know" the material, and seemed to be pinch hitting for another presenter
- Presenter didn't follow outline

### ***Content/Presentation***

- Very dry/generic course presentation (3)
- Need more information on background itself; applicability of laws and policies (2)
- Learned more in an update and CALEBI seminars than in original class
- Learned more about LASD's computer system than backgrounds
- Format does not provide investigative techniques
- More resources needed technology should be updated
- Average course; presentation and team-building exercises catered more towards academy type students entering into law enforcement
- Course taught laws and went over the manual; would have been helpful to go through the steps of the BG Investigation and the 55 touch points.
- Instructors are more innovative today
- The training is average/standard; background investigations are methodical and involve detailed work, gained from experience; training should give detailed road map of requirements
- No opportunity to network with other attendees

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***Scenarios/exercises***

- Not enough scenarios/exercises
- Don't recall any scenarios/exercises (4)
- The scenarios were fine but needs to have an initial interview exercise and a discrepancy exercise
- More actual report writing scenarios would be helpful
- Would help to have more current events and scenarios
- For a 32, 36, or 40 hour class, there could be more examples and group exercises given

**7. Respondents had the option to provide additional comments, they are summarized as follows.**

The number in parentheses indicates the number of respondents for each summarized comment, if applicable.

***General Feedback***

- Good course/presenter (8)
- Informative (8)
- Adequate for beginners/good foundation (5)
- Learned new techniques; reference material (4)
- Allowed for free flow of information (3)
- Helpful as an update

***Training Suggestions***

- Update/advance training would be helpful (9)
- Course should be mandated/required (2)
- Course should be condensed to intensive two-day, focusing on investigative techniques
- Course should be at least 40 hours

***Format/Presentation***

- Instructors followed the Manual (2)
- Need more networking; shared experiences (2)
- Long and a little boring; dry delivery (2)
- Fairly routine
- Sessions/materials stretched to fill time segments
- Leaves student to figure out how to conduct backgrounds; should be similar to ICI course
- Course/instruction quality varies depending upon location

***Missing Content***

- Candidate interviews; methods/techniques (5)
- Reporting form samples/templates (5)
- Examples of what to look for in background (4)
- Social media/web-based searches (4)
- File organization/file review; include digital (2)
- Scenarios/case studies (2)
- Neighborhood check information

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- Needs more substance
- In-depth ICRAA information
- Add legal aspect to course; have labor law discuss importance of POST Dimensions and not basing on opinions

### ***Course Availability***

- Needs to be more class availability, especially in Southern California (3)
- Class not offered enough; have trouble with availability

### ***Miscellaneous***

- Make sure Regional Consultants are on the same page
- BI experience before the course would be helpful
- Transgender information