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# Improving Instructor Hiring and Development at the Emergency Management Institute



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# About This Report

The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) is undertaking a strategic initiative to expand its reach and elevate its programming (Stern, 2021). One part of the initiative involves improving its instructor hiring and development processes in order to better meet the needs of its students. EMI asked the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC) to evaluate gaps in EMI instructor consistency, quality, depth, and currency as identified through information from managers and instructors. HSOAC was also asked to identify ways to address gaps, such as through new recruiting or hiring approaches, and to make recommendations for better hiring and developing instructors.

Although this report is directly applicable to EMI, it might be of interest to other parts of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, other U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) components, and other education and training providers in the federal government and to state, local, tribal, and territorial entities. Other education and training providers might be interested in how to better hire and develop their instructors. This report could be of wide interest because the literature on this subject is sparse. Emergency managers and people in adjacent fields might be interested in how to better prepare to become instructors. Emergency managers might read the report with an eye to how EMI will expand and improve its courses through changes to its instructor hiring and development processes.

This research was sponsored by EMI and conducted in the Disaster Management and Resilience Program of the RAND Homeland Security Research Division, which operates HSOAC.

## About the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296, § 305, as codified at 6 U.S.C. § 185) authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Under Secretary for Science and Technology, to establish one or more federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs) to provide independent analysis of homeland security issues. The RAND Corporation operates HSOAC as an FFRDC for DHS under contract 70RSAT22D0000001.

The HSOAC FFRDC provides the government with independent and objective analyses and advice in core areas important to the department in support of policy development, decisionmaking, alternative approaches, and new ideas on issues of significance. HSOAC also works with and supports other federal, state, local, tribal, and public- and private-sector organizations that make up the homeland security enterprise. HSOAC's research is undertaken by mutual consent with DHS and organized as a set of discrete tasks. This report presents the results of research and analysis conducted under task order 70FA2022F00000068, Transforming the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) for a 21st Century Profession. The results presented in this report do not necessarily reflect official DHS opinion or policy.

For more information on the RAND Homeland Security Research Division, see [www.rand.org/hsrd](http://www.rand.org/hsrd).

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# Summary

## The Emergency Management Institute Is Transforming Itself

The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) is undergoing major change. Under the new EMI Anywhere initiative, the institute will offer emergency management training courses at numerous sites across the United States and modernize online course delivery. The initiative will also enhance the education of senior leaders and open more pathways for entrants to the field. To accomplish this, EMI is reorganizing itself to move toward a college model: hiring academic deans and a provost and enhancing its academic infrastructure.

Expanding EMI's courses and reach requires having qualified and effective instructors. EMI's hiring practices will need to adapt to the demands created by the new initiative and reorganization. For support in this transition, EMI asked a Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center team to help improve its instructor hiring and development practices. The goal of the research was to examine EMI's process, pinpoint challenges, and identify best practices in hiring instructors across the spectrum of activities, from recruitment to development.

The research team divided the research into four tasks:

- Interview eight EMI senior staff members, and hold discussions with the sponsor and the superintendent's office about current practices and needs.
- Examine documents describing EMI's processes and relevant guidance from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- Conduct focus groups with EMI instructors to identify strengths and challenges of existing processes and ideas for reform.
- Conduct 12 interviews with academic leaders from institutions identified as being promising models for EMI.

## Emergency Management Institute Staff Identified Strengths and Challenges in Every Phase of Hiring

We organized EMI's current hiring process into five phases: recruitment, selection, hiring, evaluation, and development. Within each of these phases, the team identified specific strengths and challenges, based on the EMI interviews and focus groups.

We found that EMI's instructor hiring and development were similar across its six branches as of 2023. There are some differences among branches, however. In particular, there is variation in short-term contract hiring (*micropurchases*), outside contract hiring, and the use of FEMA employee instructors. Most branches hire instructors through micropurchases, each of which is a specific contract for a specific instructor, for a specific course, with a traditional

maximum of \$3,500 per course. A small number of courses are staffed by outside contractors, which hire instructors, and another small group of courses are taught by FEMA employees.

## The Emergency Management Institute Has Some Effective Practices at Every Phase of the Process

EMI staff reported that current hiring practices were effective in some areas. For example, encouraging outstanding instructors to consider expanding their repertoires to teach related courses has worked as a recruiting approach. In addition, course managers (CMs) can recruit promising students to teach future versions of a course. Selection and hiring work well in cases in which instructor qualifications are clearly defined because, in those cases, the process is straightforward.

Some of EMI's evaluation and development practices also work well. EMI elicits feedback mainly using level 1 of the Kirkpatrick model,<sup>1</sup> a well-established method for training evaluation. CMs use evaluation data to identify which instructors would benefit from in-person classroom evaluation and which course materials might need updating.

Although there are few professional development opportunities for current staff, one practice was mentioned as effective: train-the-trainer courses that EMI staff implement for instructors outside EMI (for example, in state-level or state, local, tribal, and territorial settings where EMI-designed courses are delivered), which help them improve their knowledge and teaching.

## The Majority of Challenges Appear in Hiring, Evaluation, and Development

EMI staff pointed to areas for improvement in every phase of the process. Informed by our review of the research literature and our conversations with EMI staff, we identified a major challenge at each phase of the instructor hiring and development process, outlined in Table S.1 and illustrated in Figure S.1.

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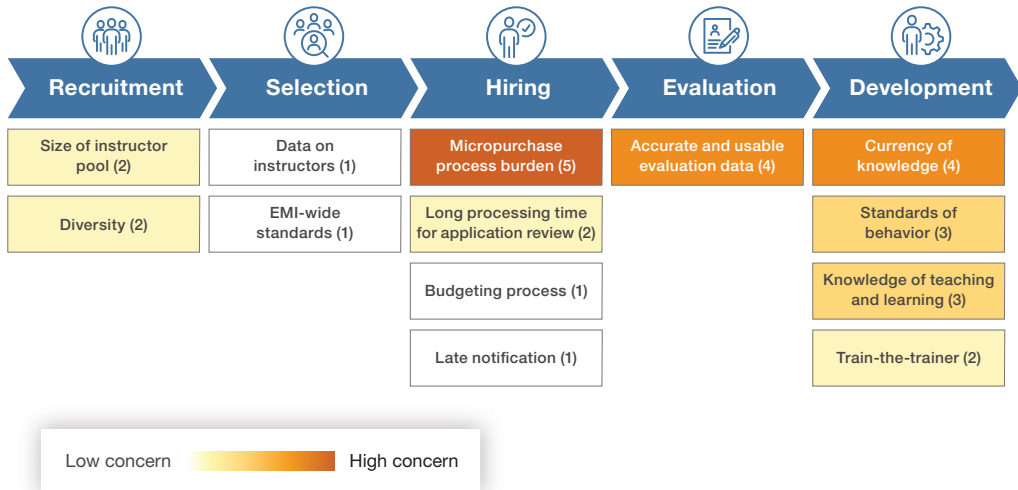
<sup>1</sup> The Kirkpatrick model is discussed further in the "Evaluation" section of Chapter 3. For additional information, see, for example, Donald Kirkpatrick (1994) for the original model and James Kirkpatrick and Wendy Kirkpatrick (2016) for the New World Kirkpatrick Model.

**TABLE S.1**  
**Phases of the Instructor Hiring and Development Process**

Phase	Concern
Recruitment	The current recruitment strategy—asking quality teachers to master additional courses—does not always produce a sufficiently large candidate pool. In addition, it tends to favor familiarity over diversity with respect to professional backgrounds.
Selection	Several issues surfaced at this phase, including slowness responding to instructor applications and inadequate compensation to attract qualified candidates.
Hiring	The most frequently mentioned problem was the high administrative burden imposed by the micropurchase process, which happens during the hiring phase. The process involves three EMI participants: the MPOC, the CM who owns the course, and the BC. The MPOC, who acts as a liaison between the applicant, CM, and BC, has the especially burdensome duty of sorting all incoming bids, a process that can take eight weeks. This step is labor-intensive and time-consuming. EMI staff also pointed to the lack institute-wide standards in defining instructor qualifications.
Evaluation	Multiple staff members pointed to a lack of evaluation data that can inform hiring, selection, and staff development.
Development	At the time of this writing in summer 2023, there were few development opportunities for instructors to stay current in their fields or learn about best practices in teaching and learning. EMI did not have development-focused efforts in place to promote recency and relevancy in instructors.

NOTE: BC = branch chief; MPOC = micropurchase point of contact.

**FIGURE S.1**  
**Instructor Hiring and Development Process Gaps and Challenges, According to Emergency Management Institute Leaders**



SOURCE: Features information from EMI staff, December 2022 to January 2023.

NOTE: Numerals in parentheses indicate the number of EMI entities whose representatives expressed each concern, out of six entities (branches or other offices) represented in our interviews.

## Recommendations: How the Emergency Management Institute Can Improve Instructor Hiring and Development Processes

We offer three high-level options for EMI to rethink how it structures its instructor hiring and development processes.

**Adopt war college practices that increase educational, research, and thought leadership impact. These practices include hiring staff with research responsibilities, educating midcareer and senior leaders in the field, and hiring instructors from academia and midcareer professionals for one to three years who will return to practice.** First, EMI can go back to its roots as an educational institution modeled on a war college. A key feature of the war college model, and of most universities, is the hiring of faculty who have closer and longer-term affiliations than those hired for a single contract course. These instructors would teach courses over multiple contracts and would include greater numbers of midcareer academics and professionals.

**Adapt EMI's employment model to take advantage of a mix of part-time, professional, and limited-term contract instructors.** Second, as it reorganizes itself to function more like a college, EMI should rethink its employment model. The new model still includes part-term instructors who have recently been in practice or will return to practice and bring expertise from the field but adds a greater mix of long-term or full-time instructors. A move away from piecemeal contracting for instructors on a course-by-course basis toward longer-term contracts would likely yield instructors who invest more in EMI and could help build new programs and advance recruiting. However, this adapted employment model would require additional investment and higher costs for instruction, as well as new means of contracting. If a sufficient budget is not available, EMI will have to make trade-offs to realize its vision.

**Develop standardized processes across the organization to add predictability, reduce administrative burden, and improve the ability to track performance.** A third big-picture option for EMI is to standardize its faculty hiring and development processes. EMI staff pointed to the benefits of creating more-predictable, standardized instructor hiring and development processes across the organization. At the same time, flexibility to tailor processes for the needs of particular programs would add value. For example, the Emergency Management Professional Program requires instructors with a knowledge of a wide variety of skills, whereas some courses require more-specific subject-matter expertise, which might require additional steps to verify and keep that specialized knowledge current.

Senior academic leaders with institution-wide responsibilities, including a provost and deans, can implement standardized processes. Greater standardization would reduce the burden on instructors who teach in multiple programs, and it would allow EMI to take an institution-wide view.



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# Introduction

The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) is implementing a strategic initiative known as EMI Anywhere, intended to make training available to emergency managers at any location and at any time in their careers (Stern, 2021). The strategic vision includes continuing to offer courses at EMI's historic campus in Emmitsburg, Maryland, while expanding offerings at new sites around the country and expanding and modernizing online course delivery. EMI already serves emergency managers at all phases of their careers, but EMI Anywhere includes plans for more senior leader education and clear pathways for new entrants to the field, as well as programs for people in adjacent fields or with other professional identities who are part of what is sometimes called the *emergency management enterprise*. The initiative is accompanied by a reorganization that will include hiring academic deans and a provost, greater academic infrastructure, and a renaming as a college. The reorganization will move EMI toward a college model.

Offering EMI's courses more widely and more effectively depends on having a qualified and effective instructor cadre. EMI has asked the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC) to help improve its instructor hiring and development practices so that they conform to best practices in adult training and education and better serve EMI's goals. EMI serves as "the emergency management community's flagship training institution, and provides training to Federal, State, local, tribal, volunteer, public, and private sector officials to strengthen emergency management core competencies for professional, career-long training" (EMI, 2014). The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) 2022–2026 strategic plan proposes to "modernize [EMI's] operational design" and to make EMI the "nation's emergency management college" (FEMA, 2023, p. 21).

## Emergency Management Institute Courses Serve Hundreds of Thousands of Students

EMI courses include weeks-long courses on campus in Emmitsburg and on-site trainings in many U.S. counties, all states, and many tribal areas and territories. EMI hires most instructors on a per-course basis for its on-campus and virtual courses and for some courses delivered off-site. States and other entities also use EMI materials to offer their own versions of EMI courses, often as part of federal grant requirements. In addition, EMI offers independent

study courses via computer that can be completed at a student's own pace. In fiscal year 2022, EMI offered 86 resident courses, in which 2,379 students were trained, at its campus in Emmitsburg. EMI's nonresident programs served 828,848 students in fiscal year 2022. Some students took more than one course; in total, they tallied 2,110,403 course completions. Some courses were instructor-led (20,667 in total), but the majority were completed through self-paced distance learning via the Independent Study Program.<sup>1</sup>

EMI courses cover a variety of topics, often arranged according to the phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. These include such topics as risk, geographic information system mapping technology, disaster science, community resilience, disaster recovery, exercises, the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS), and a series of courses called *academies* that were designed for more-advanced training in emergency management fundamentals.

Emergency management is a broad and changing field. One analyst found that emergency management spanned “many other professions, careers and areas of employment including risk management, business continuity planning, land-use planning, flood plain management, emergency services, homeland security, humanitarian assistance, etc.” (McEntire, 2018, Section 1.2). A separate HSOAC report (Roberts, 2023) presented EMI with options for arranging its course catalog to provide entry points for early-career people, as well as experienced emergency managers and people transitioning from other fields. The complexity and diversity of the field of emergency management requires finding instructors from a variety of backgrounds and qualifications specific to each course.

## The Emergency Management Institute Is Transforming Itself into the Country's Emergency Management College in an Era of Increasing Complexity

EMI is a FEMA institution that provides training and education to emergency managers outside FEMA in local, state, and federal offices of emergency management, nonprofits, and the private sector and to people in adjacent fields. In addition to EMI, FEMA offers classes through the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama, which focuses on incident management and response. FEMA also provides some workforce-oriented training for FEMA employees through its National Training and Education Division (NTED). Both the center and NTED list courses in EMI's catalog. The National Fire Academy, also part of FEMA, offers classes for fire professionals on a campus it shares with EMI. All of these entities are part of a FEMA ecosystem of training and education, and emergency managers may take classes in one, some, or all of these institutions. Beyond that, the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California,

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<sup>1</sup> Senior EMI staff member, email to the authors, October 6, 2022.

receives FEMA funding to offer educational programs in homeland security at the graduate and executive education level (CHDS, undated-a). The field of homeland security overlaps with that of emergency management, and many state and local emergency management directors are dual-hatted, serving as homeland security advisers or leaders of their homeland security agencies.

In addition to government and government-sponsored training and education entities, colleges and universities offer degrees and certificates in emergency management. In 1994, EMI launched the Higher Education Project to expand FEMA's ability to work with colleges and universities to develop emergency management as a field of study (Waugh and Goss, 2019). That effort seeded a flowering of programs. There were fewer than five emergency management degree and certificate programs in 1992. By 2007, there were 150; in 2023, there were more than 300, according to a list maintained by FEMA (EMI, undated-c; Roberts, 2023). EMI course materials made available on the internet are used in many of these courses, although there has been no systematic attempt to quantify how many college courses use EMI materials (Roberts, 2023; Waugh and Goss, 2019).

EMI's distinctive competence in the broader ecosystem lies in its national-level perspective on emergency management. It is the only federal entity in the ecosystem with *emergency management* in its name. Colleges and universities offer degrees, but few, if any, represent a national-level perspective closely aligned with FEMA's. EMI specializes in training courses much shorter than degrees and tailored for working professionals, although its materials can be used in college courses.

Improving instructor hiring and development processes is one part of EMI's effort to make it the country's premier emergency management college within the larger ecosystem of emergency management education in which EMI operates (Stern, 2021). Its students may take classes at other entities, and its instructors may teach at some of those same entities (Brush, 2014). Some instructors teach at multiple institutions in the larger emergency management and homeland security training and education ecosystem. These institutions also cooperate with each other, further illustrating the overlap in instructional staff. For example, in 2012, EMI worked with CHDS to deliver a course called "Emergency Management in the 21st Century" (CHDS, 2016). To become the premier emergency management college in the context of multiple emergency management training and education programs, many of which share instructional staff, EMI needs to hire and develop a strong cadre of instructors committed to the institute.

## The Emergency Management Institute's Reorganization Will Make It Look More Like a College

The EMI Anywhere plan proposes that EMI be reorganized into three schools, each with its own dean, and that the academic mission be headed by a provost, while other managers oversee operations. EMI's prior structure involved branch chiefs (BCs) overseeing functional

divisions. As of the writing of this report in summer 2023, EMI was still organized into six branches that manage and deliver courses (EMI, 2022b). Three branches—Mitigation, Preparedness, and Response and Recovery—were organized according to the phases of emergency management. A fourth, the Integrated Emergency Management branch, directs courses that provide a framework for different levels of government to work together across the phases of emergency management. A fifth, the Emergency Management Professional Program (EMPP), offers a series of courses designed for emergency managers to develop professional skills at all phases of their careers. A sixth, the Mission Support branch, provides training related to management topics. Another branch, Curriculum and Instructional Technology, provides support for EMI’s educational mission but does not directly deliver courses. Each branch is led by a BC, which is a common government agency structure.

After the reorganization and once deans are hired, the branches would be restructured as three schools: one focused on basic to intermediate training, one on training emergency management partners in resilience knowledge and skills, and another focused on advanced and senior leader training and education. The reorganization is expected to occur in 2023, and this provides an opportune time to reflect on how EMI hires its instructors and to implement changes to improve its processes.

## Instructor Hiring and Development Processes Need Updating and Are Understudied

EMI asked us to investigate instructor hiring and development because its leadership believed that the instructor pool could be widened to ensure that EMI is hiring the most-qualified instructors across its many subject-matter areas. EMI also wanted to ensure that its processes provided sufficient oversight, performance feedback, and development to assist the instructor pool in keeping its subject-matter expertise and instructional skills current. In Chapter 2, we describe our analysis of EMI’s processes in detail and identify opportunities for improvement.

The majority of instructors in EMI’s pool are hired to teach specific classes through short-term contracts, although most instructors teach their courses over multiple years and some instructors teach more than one class in the EMI catalog. EMI instructors resemble adjunct instructors in higher education or short-term contract hires in government training institutions more than tenure-track faculty or long-term contract or General Schedule (GS)–grade instructional positions.<sup>2</sup> Some GS-level EMI branch managers teach classes in addition to performing their management duties, and some FEMA staff on the GS schedule teach classes, but these amount to a small minority of the total classes. This report focuses on instructors

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<sup>2</sup> *Tenure track* describes a faculty member who has achieved or is in a position in which they can achieve tenure. *Adjunct instructor* is defined here as a non-tenure track, full- or part-time instructor. This category likely undercounts the percentage of faculty who are non-tenure track, part-time instructors.



selected and hired by EMI as opposed to the smaller number of instructors who are provided by FEMA and other agencies to deliver courses.

Although there is a vast literature on instruction in primary and secondary schools and higher education and a substantial literature on collegiate tenure-track faculty, there is remarkably little literature on adjunct or short-term contract instructors. Most of this literature addresses perceptions of teaching quality or analysis of the plight of adjunct instructors. There is little explicit guidance for how to best hire and develop instructors on short-term contracts rather than the long-term contracts used in primary and secondary education or the tenure track in higher education. In Chapter 3, we provide our analysis of this sparse literature and adjacent scholarly literatures in professional education (e.g., nursing) and corporate training and identify implications for reforming EMI's instructor hiring and development.

Chapter 4 offers recommendations for improving EMI's processes. The chapter begins by addressing EMI's options for structuring its instructor cadre with a mix of full- and part-time instructors and short- and long-term contracts that serve EMI's long-term goals and suit its resource constraints. The chapter also addresses what EMI can learn from military war colleges, which follow a well-regarded model in the national security education ecosystem. Finally, the chapter offers specific recommendations organized according to phases. An appendix provides additional information about the research approach and data sources, which we also summarize in the next section of this chapter.

## Research Approach

To analyze EMI processes, we used multiple methods, including interviews, focus groups, document review and process mapping, and a literature review. The appendix provides more details on our methods and approach, and scholars might want to skip ahead to that section of the report before reading the findings. General readers might prefer to read the analysis and recommendations in the body of the report first and consult the appendix if necessary. We provide a brief overview of our approach for general readers here.

This report draws on interviews with eight EMI senior staff members, as well as discussions with representatives from the sponsor's and the superintendent's offices. We interviewed leaders from five of EMI's six branches that manage and deliver courses, focusing on the branches that offer the most EMI courses. In some cases, we spoke with more than one person from an entity; each interviewee was a senior leader with more than ten years of government service and supervisory responsibilities. We asked interviewees about their perceptions of gaps or challenges in instructor hiring and development.

The research team also conducted two focus groups of EMI instructors to identify strengths and challenges of existing processes, as well as ideas for reform. One focus group was drawn at random from a list of active instructors, and another, smaller group was composed of instructors who were interested in providing input and nominated by the sponsor. We organized EMI staff interview and instructor focus group data into categories of

strengths and challenges based on interviewees' responses and the research team's reflection on those responses (Holton, 2007; Paavola, 2004).

From these interviews and the EMI website, the research team obtained documents describing EMI's processes and relevant FEMA and other U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) guidance. The research team sought help from interviewees and the sponsor in understanding what some of these documents meant and how the guidance was implemented in practice. Some of these processes are mapped in Chapter 2, which identifies potential changes to simplify or accelerate the process.

To understand best practices in instructor hiring and development, the research team conducted two research activities: a literature review and interviews with people from organizations that exemplify effective practices. The review of peer-reviewed literature published within the past decade identifies effective recruitment, selection, hiring, evaluation, and development practices and describes exemplars. For the interviews, the team developed a list of organizations recommended for their exemplary hiring and development practices based on interviews with EMI staff, sponsor discussions, and discussions with RAND subject-matter experts. The team conducted 12 interviews with academic leaders from these model institutions to learn about best practices and potential obstacles or challenges in improving instructor hiring and development. These interviews focused on government training and education entities and on universities that conduct training programs on behalf of or for government entities.

For the EMI staff interviews, focus groups, and academic leader interviews, the research team took notes and coded responses in relevant categories (e.g., by phase and strengths and weaknesses). Researchers sometimes describe this process as *open*, *axial*, and *selective* coding, in which responses are refined into smaller numbers of categories (Williams and Moser, 2019). Data were analyzed by one researcher and adjudicated by a different, senior researcher. Two researchers both coded a small number of categories and were in agreement for almost all coding decisions and discussed the areas of difference.

## Scope and Limitations

This report focuses on how to improve hiring and development of EMI's largely short-term-hire instructor workforce, although we also considered and report on other employment models used by peer institutions. The report addresses big-picture options for hiring different mixes of instructors in terms of the lengths of their employment contracts. However, most recommendations focus on more micro-level improvements to instructor hiring and development processes. A new direction for EMI's instructor workforce and employment model could affect some of the micro-level recommendations.

The report is limited by its focus on hiring and development. Instructor performance depends on other factors, including the nature of the curriculum, student recruitment, and the instructional environment (e.g., technology). These topics are outside the scope of this

report. The data sources were limited in particular by a lack of student perspectives. Improvements to the evaluation rubric and data systems that follow from our recommendations might make it easier to use student data to evaluate instructor performance in the future. The literature review provides evidence for recommendations, but the literature on short-term or adjunct instructor hiring and development is limited, so we relied on best practices from peer institutions, in addition to existing literature, as evidence for our recommendations.

## Potential Impact

Identifying improvements will help EMI widen its pool of potential instructors, select the best candidates for specific courses and topic areas, evaluate those instructors systematically, and assist them in updating their subject-matter knowledge and teaching skills. The impact of process improvements is potentially large, given that EMI trains hundreds of thousands of students per year and is expanding its educational programs for midcareer and senior leaders. EMI is implementing its EMI Anywhere strategy and a reorganization in which it will hire a provost and academic deans. Therefore, 2023 is a period of organizational change and an opportune time to implement recommendations.

Given the paucity of research on how to manage a large adjunct or short-term contract instructor workforce, this report will have implications beyond EMI. Public and private training institutions and colleges and universities could benefit from ideas for best practices that could be adapted to their environments. In addition, the literature on government training and education entities is rather thin. Government entities, such as FEMA, have a broader, more mission-specific public purpose than those of many other education and training entities. EMI trains and educates primarily non-FEMA employees, but it serves the FEMA mission of “helping people before, during, and after disasters” by building knowledge and skills in the broader emergency management community (FEMA, 2022e). This report will contribute to knowledge about how government entities can educate their audiences as part of an ecosystem with other training and education providers in government, the private sector, and colleges and universities.

## Report Organization

In Chapter 2, we use EMI documentation and interviews with EMI staff and instructors to describe current instructor hiring and development practices. We identify practices that are reported to work well, as well as challenges in each of the five phases. In Chapter 3, we draw on the research literature and best practices identified through interviews with exemplary education and training institutions, EMI leaders, and EMI instructor focus groups to identify recommendations organized by phase. Recommendations are presented in Chapter 4. The first part of the chapter addresses EMI’s options for learning from the war colleges, rethinking its employment model, and adopting more-standardized processes. The second part of

the chapter provides recommendations organized by phase. The appendix provides more details on the research approach and data sources.

# The Emergency Management Institute's Instructor Hiring and Development Processes and Practices

EMI is growing beyond its training roots and adding elements of education for both new entrants to the field and experienced emergency managers. Its new vision involves a reorganization that will adopt elements of a college rather than a government agency. This vision calls for changes to the hiring and development of instructors—with implications for the roles of instructors.

In the current EMI model, instructors are short-term hires with clearly delineated responsibilities. EMI instructors deliver instruction using a centrally developed curriculum; they are not responsible for developing the content they teach. EMI selects and hires instructors for specific courses; instructors do not have long-term, EMI-exclusive institutional affiliations. These part-time, short-term relationships shape and are shaped by EMI's approach to hiring and development.

Further, EMI currently takes a decentralized approach to instructor hiring and development, with much of the decisionmaking occurring within branches. EMI's historical approach to hiring and developing instructors offers great benefits, such as flexibility and the ability to tailor to the needs of each branch and course, but at the cost of efficiency and potentially quality.

In this chapter, we draw on EMI's documentation and data from EMI staff and instructors to describe EMI's approach to hiring and developing instructors. We highlight practices that seem to work well and might be considered for continuation, as well as challenges that could be addressed in the organizational model.

## Emergency Management Institute Instructor Hiring and Development Processes Consist of Five Phases

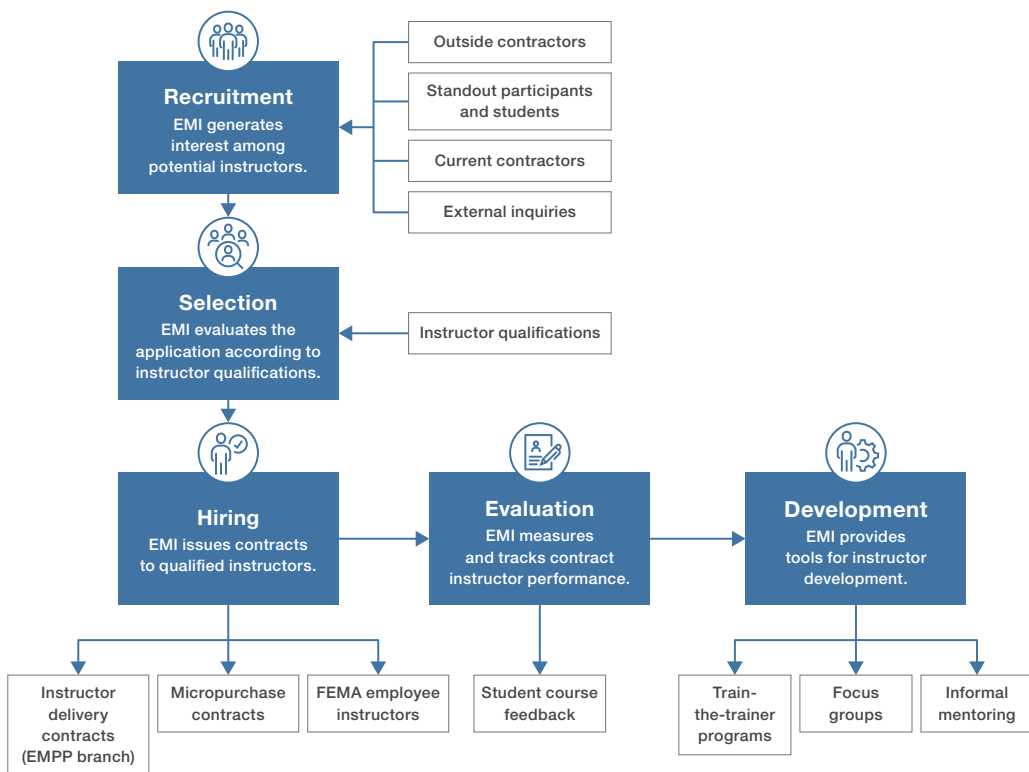
We discuss instructor hiring and development processes in terms of five phases: recruitment, selection, hiring, evaluation, and development. These phases are consistent with the human resource literature (see the appendix for a description of the study literature review), with

some adaptation to reflect the nature of EMI instructor hiring and development processes. See Figure 2.1 for a high-level description of EMI’s instructor hiring and development processes, demarcated in these five phases.

The process begins with recruitment. EMI generates interest among potential instructors after identifying participants in its courses who show potential to become instructors; identifying instructors who show potential to teach new courses; and receiving inquiries from its advertisements and through people who have heard about EMI through word of mouth. In a small number of cases, EMI uses an outside contractor to identify instructors.

Once hired, instructors are evaluated, largely through course-specific student evaluations. EMI staff refer to these student evaluations as *level 1* of the Kirkpatrick system.<sup>1</sup> These

**FIGURE 2.1**  
**Instructor Hiring and Development Process Overview**



SOURCES: Features information from EMI data files on instructor selection and hiring (2017–2021), including EMI staff discussions and interviews, a micropurchase job aid (EMI, 2017a), “How to Become an EMI Training Instructor” video (EMI, 2021), an instructor selection workflow chart, special admit procedures, and a NIMS ICS instructor qualification guide.

<sup>1</sup> The Kirkpatrick model is discussed further in the “Evaluation” section of Chapter 3. For further information, see, for example, Donald Kirkpatrick (1994) for the original model and James Kirkpatrick and Wendy Kirkpatrick (2016) for the New World Kirkpatrick Model.

evaluations are shared with the instructors and course managers (CMs). An instructor may choose to adjust their teaching style in response to feedback, or a CM may meet with an instructor if they identify a problem.

Instructor development is limited at EMI, and many instructors pursue development opportunities, such as training for online teaching or learning about their subject matter individually, outside EMI. Some EMI branches (e.g., Preparedness) use train-the-trainer courses to prepare instructors to deliver specific EMI courses. Instructors for these courses—whether hired by EMI or by a state, local, tribal, or territorial (SLTT) entity—must have completed the train-the-trainer course and earned a completion certificate to deliver the course. Some EMI branches also conduct focus groups of instructors, who share their perspectives on challenges and best practices.

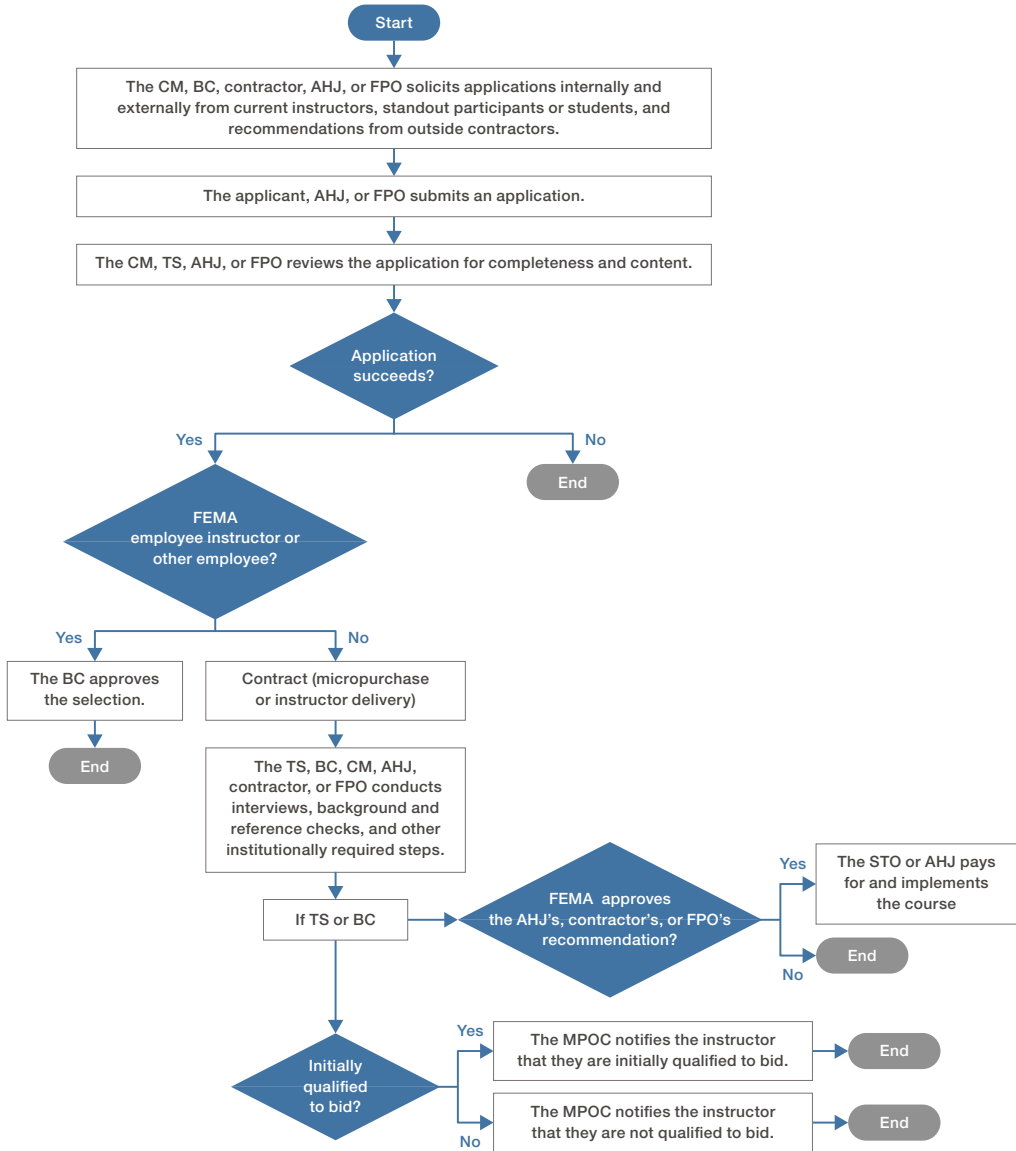
Figure 2.2 shows the first three phases—recruitment, selection, and hiring—in more detail from the perspective of an applicant seeking to become an instructor, along with EMI back-office processes that might not be visible to individual applicants. EMI and instructor applicants face complexity and inconsistency in the process in these three phases. The final two phases—evaluation and development—are less developed and therefore less complex. EMI faces the challenge of reducing the complexity of its hiring and selection processes and building more-systematic evaluation and development processes.

The process map in Figure 2.2 shows additional detail about the selection process, focusing on instructors who bid on a contract. EMI makes an initial determination that an instructor has the desired qualifications and is qualified to bid for a course. The bid process involves an instructor providing more specifics about the structure, content, and price of a particular course. The EMI CM selects among the bids for a particular course, considering the price of the offer and the instructor's qualifications to teach the course. There is some variation across EMI branches in how this process is implemented, but the basic steps from recruitment to application to bid qualification are the same across EMI's six course-delivery branches and multiple course types.

## The Emergency Management Institute's Recruitment Approach Is Easy to Implement but Limits the Instructor Pool

The process shown in Figure 2.1 begins with recruitment. EMI generates interest among potential instructors by identifying participants in its courses who show potential to become instructors, identifying instructors who show potential to teach new courses, and receiving inquiries from its advertisements and through people who have heard about EMI through word of mouth. In a small number of cases, EMI uses an outside contractor to identify instructors. In the rest of this section, we provide EMI staff members' good and bad observations, by stage.

**FIGURE 2.2**  
**Instructor Recruitment, Hiring, and Selection, in Detail**



SOURCES: Features information from interviews and discussions with EMI staff, December 2022 to March 2023; EMI data files on instructor selection and hiring (2017–2021); a micropurchase job aid (EMI, 2017a), “How to Become an EMI Training Instructor” video (EMI, 2021); an instructor-selection workflow chart; special admit procedures; and a NIMS ICS instructor qualification guide.

NOTE: AHJ = authority having jurisdiction (e.g., local or tribal entity, non-FEMA federal agency); FPO = FEMA program office; MPOC = micropurchase point of contact; STO = state training office; TS = training specialist. Instructor delivery contracts are for the EMPP branch.



## Reliance on a Known Talent Pool for Recruits

EMI recruits from current instructors and students who appear to be promising candidates to teach new courses. For example, EMI staff might encourage a current instructor to expand their repertoire of courses (“sideways moves”), ask an exiting instructor to suggest a successor, or invite graduates of courses to consider becoming instructors. Although these practices are easy to implement and can help recruit instructors who understand the courses well, they do not grow the instructor pool beyond current instructors and students.

## Selection Processes Are Transparent and Can Be Enhanced with Consistent, Rigorous Selection Criteria

When instructor qualifications are clearly defined, selection and hiring are transparent, and there is less back and forth between instructor candidates and EMI about the process. Instructor qualifications are clearly defined at almost all levels of EMI, but inconsistencies between course types and branches prevent systematic consistency at the EMI level. Instructors commended EMI for having a clear description of the application steps on the website, including the video on the process for becoming an instructor. They said that this guidance would help applicants get through the process. The biddable course list, publicly available through EMI's website, lists minimum and preferred qualifications and education for the EMI instructor cadre writ large and a given course in the course description. For example, for E/L0050 Exercise Control and Simulation,<sup>2</sup> the preferred candidate will have a bachelor's degree from an accredited academic institution and five years of experience in exercise program management in the fields of emergency management and emergency services. If a candidate does not meet the preferred education requirement, those who have “broad progressive administrative and leadership experience related to the subject area” will be given consideration. Relevant experience for E/L0050 includes three years of experience with community-based emergency management exercise design and evaluation at the SLTT or federal level. These qualifications are applicable across most types of course delivery, including EMI resident courses and EMI courses taught by SLTT or other federal partners. The online Independent Study Program is an example of this discrepancy. Some EMI branches and courses allow an abbreviated qualification process for applicants from organizations with robust qualification processes, such as floodplain managers certified by the Association of State Floodplain Managers.

In the rest of this section, we describe ways in which EMI is not following best practices.

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<sup>2</sup> In EMI course listings, E indicates a resident course taught at the National Emergency Training Center campus; L indicates a resident course held off-site, including at FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness; and K indicates a resident course held via Adobe Connect.

## Variation in Hiring Standards for Different Levels of Expertise, Branch Needs, and Course Types

Lack of uniformity in hiring standards across EMI was a recurring theme in interviews. Instructor selection criteria vary across EMI branches. Some criteria are captured in various documents, while others are not formally documented. For example, the NIMS ICS instructor qualification guide lists specific course prerequisites and work experiences (NIMS, undated). In addition, one respondent shared that their branch looks for private-sector experience. In contrast to both examples, for the limited number of Independent Study Program courses taught by instructors, there are no specific requirements for instructor qualifications or preparation. Focus group respondents described the process as nonspecific. Greater standardization could make it easier for EMI to monitor and evaluate instructor-related processes and for instructors to apply to teach in multiple branches and programs.

## Dated Information on Instructor Qualifications

Senior EMI staff described situations in which CMs are unfamiliar with some instructors' capabilities because those instructors were selected before the CMs joined EMI. There is no process in place to reassess performance and qualifications and to give CMs greater familiarity with the legacy instructors. As a result, according to some interviewees, CMs tend to select instructors they know or have used before and not explore the potential of legacy instructors.

## Hiring Processes Could Be More Efficient

EMI hires staff primarily through three types of contract vehicles: short-term contract hiring (micropurchases); use of an outside contractor to recruit, hire, and manage instructors; and tapping FEMA employees as instructors. EMI's instructor hiring practices are broadly similar across its six course-delivery branches as of 2023, but they have key differences. Most branches hire instructors through micropurchases, in which each instructor is contracted for each course, with a traditional maximum of \$3,500 per course. The instructor applies to teach a particular course, and EMI evaluates the application according to stated criteria that vary by branch and course. EMI then issues contracts to those it finds qualified. The EMPP branch uses an outside contractor, rather than micropurchase contracts, to hire instructors. In some cases, FEMA employees teach classes in their areas of expertise.

The six course-delivery branches of EMI require a wide variety of academic and practical expertise associated with the different aspects of emergency management. Therefore, EMI does not take a one-size-fits-all approach to hiring. Nevertheless, interviews and EMI documents revealed an interest in and opportunities for greater standardization across the organization, particularly in the micropurchase contract hiring process.

## Long Processing Times for Application Review

Multiple respondents from EMI interviews and focus groups with EMI instructors noted that it takes a long time for applications to be reviewed. Focus group respondents described a lack of transparency about how long instructors can expect the process to take and little communication from EMI between when an application is submitted and when they are notified that their course bids are accepted. Institutional data indicate that the application review process should take roughly 44 days from receiving an application to notifying an instructor that they are initially qualified to bid. EMI staff and instructors reported that this process often takes much longer, with EMI instructors recalling months of processing rather than weeks.

Instructors also said that they wait too long to be notified that they have been awarded contracts: “They’re so late in letting you know that you’ve been awarded, sometimes not until three weeks before [the class starts]. I may have accepted something else, or the cost of airfare has gone up,” said one instructor who participated in a focus group. Late notification also gives instructors less time to prepare for teaching their courses, which EMI instructors say is critical to their delivery.

Some interviewees expressed an interest in shortening the hiring process by reducing barriers for applicants and improving the efficiency of EMI processes, shown in Figure 2.2. There are multiple ways in which EMI could reduce the steps required in the hiring process. First, perhaps not all applicants must go through the full qualification process. For example, EMI might waive some requirements, such as the 30-minute teaching demo, for applicants who have taught at peer institutions with rigorous instructor hiring processes. An instructor working through a micropurchase contract for one course currently must undergo the entire qualification process to teach a different course. Similarly, current instructors who request to teach more than five courses must go through the full qualification process again. Perhaps these applicants could have a streamlined application process for additional courses. Additional routes to qualification could be made explicit for applicants.

Finally, EMI has limited visibility into the hiring process for courses that are delivered by non-FEMA organizations. Recruitment, selection, and hiring for so-called G courses—courses delivered by state, local, or tribal entities in the field—are handled by AHJs (usually, SLTT entities). EMI staff provide instructor requirements to these entities to guide selection and ultimately approve or deny the AHJs’ recommendations for instructors, but EMI staff have little visibility into these hiring and selection processes. Some interviewees raised concerns about the quality of instructors hired through these processes; however, EMI staff might not have the capacity to engage in the process, given the large number of AHJ hires.

## Micropurchasing—the Most Common Contracting Vehicle—Is Particularly Challenging

The micropurchase contract process, in which qualified instructors bid for a contract to teach a specific course, was identified by multiple EMI staff and instructor focus groups as needing improvement. EMI implemented this process within the past decade and intended to set fair,

standardized criteria for hiring, but the new process has disadvantages, which we describe in the rest of this section.

### High Administrative Burden

The micropurchase process includes three key EMI staff: the MPOC, the CM who owns the course, and the BC. The MPOC acts as a liaison between the applicant, the CM, and the BC and bears a significant administrative burden. For example, the MPOC is responsible for sorting all incoming bids, a process that takes up to eight weeks. EMI staff noted that this step was labor-intensive for one person. Figure 2.3 illustrates the distribution of responsibilities, with the greatest number of steps falling on the MPOC. Multiple EMI staff reported that this single point of effort can slow application processing.

### Budgeting Limitations That Unintentionally Favor Local Instructors

For more than a decade, EMI has maintained a bid ceiling of \$3,500 due to historical practice and budget limitations, even as the cost of living has increased. Federal rules originally limited the ceiling to \$3,500, but, in 2018, a change in the Federal Acquisition Regulations System raised the permissible ceiling to \$10,000 (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 48, Chapter 1, Subchapter A, Part 2). However, budget limitations prevented EMI from raising its ceiling until 2023, when it received a budget increase and raised the ceiling to \$3,700 to help offset the inflation of travel costs.

The bid ceiling combines compensation and travel costs and creates an unintentional bias against instructors traveling to EMI from locations that have high travel costs to EMI. More than one instructor reported turning down a contract because “remuneration is so small” after paying travel costs. As a result, the instructor cadre reflects a narrower, geographically constrained selection of expertise and approaches to emergency management than would be ideal to support the country’s premier emergency management training and education institution.

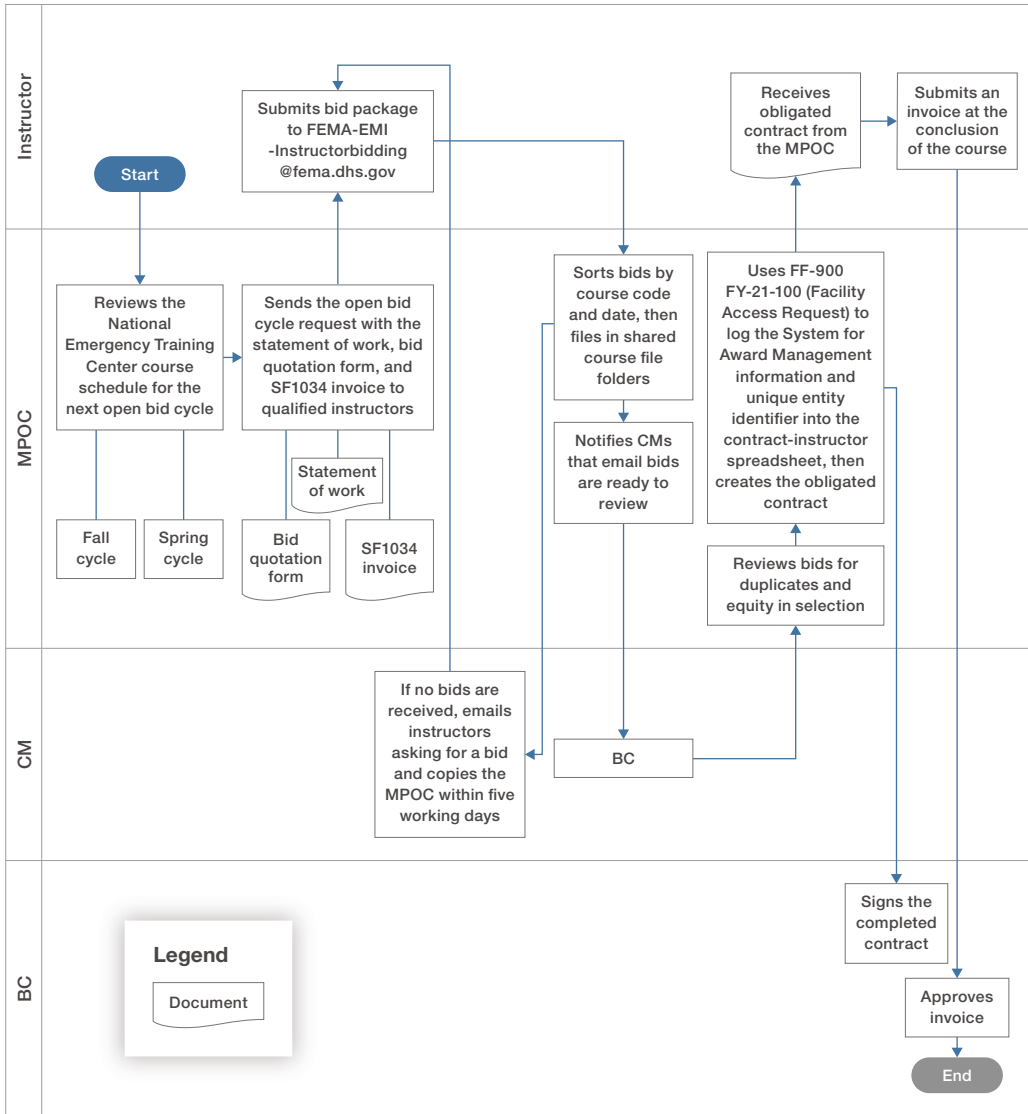
### Long Processing Times and Late Notification

In our analysis of interview and focus group data, we found that contracts are sometimes not established until days before the course begins. This timeline makes travel planning difficult and discourages some instructors from teaching the course or applying in the first place.

## Emergency Management Institute Reliance on Course Evaluation Forms Imposes Limitations on Instructor Evaluation

An evaluation system that gathers good data to measure instructor quality and performance is a high priority, according to interviewed EMI leaders. In this section, we discuss limitations in the current evaluation system that can affect EMI staff’s ability to measure instructor performance and establish standards for instructor quality.

**FIGURE 2.3**  
**Micropurchase Process Steps**



SOURCES: Features information from EMI staff, December 2022 to March 2023, and a micropurchase job aid (EMI, 2017a). See the appendix for more information and details on the additional documents we reviewed.

NOTE: Standard Form (SF) 1034 is U.S. Department of the Treasury, 1980. FF-900 is FEMA, 2021.

At the conclusion of each course, EMI staff elicit student feedback using course evaluation forms, which operate at level 1 (participants’ reactions) of the Kirkpatrick evaluation model (explained further in the “Evaluation” section of Chapter 3). On these forms, students score quality of content and quality of instruction for each course unit on a 1–5 Likert scale. They also rate elements of instruction (e.g., participation was encouraged) but focus on the course

as a whole and not a specific instructor. CMs use student evaluation data to identify which instructors might benefit from in-person classroom evaluation and which courses might need updated materials. In cases in which EMI contracts with outside companies to hire instructors on behalf of EMI, the contractors send EMI a monthly report that includes reviews of all instructors who taught in a given month. These reports identify courses that need to be updated with new government policies and guidance or new evidence from practice.

## Lack of Useful, Objective Data from Student Evaluation Forms

EMI staff noted insufficiencies in the data, such as low response rates, gathered from student evaluations of instructor performance. Some instructors reported not receiving information from student forms at all. In most cases, evaluations are collected by CMs and processed by EMI through the superintendent's business office. Contractors load the data into a database that is accessible only to EMI staff members. Instructors might receive summaries of the evaluations through the CMs, but they are not always given evaluation data.

This approach is not designed to assess individual instructors. One EMI staff member noted that the ratings for each course unit do not produce a score for an individual instructor for a given course or an average score for an instructor across courses. Staff also expressed a need for an evaluation form that collects feedback on each instructor rather than a form that collects feedback on the course and all associated instructors.

Another factor to consider is the value of open-ended feedback. A senior EMI staff member noted that open-ended questions on instructor performance, which are part of some evaluation forms, might not result in objective or complete measures of instructor performance. However, a state training officer who used a student evaluation form with narrative responses rather than numeric ratings expressed that such forms provide a better picture of the instructor. Generally, EMI instructors voiced agreement that the information from student evaluation was of limited value. For example, one remarked that student evaluations “may not be totally capturing [what] an instructor did, their content, their delivery. Sometimes there's a little personality involved in marking those things.”

Some EMI leaders reported that some CMs and branch leaders observe instructors and provide feedback as needed, in addition to the students' feedback. This direct assessment of instruction can address many of the limitations of student course evaluations (e.g., known bias), especially if it is applied consistently and with clear, measurable expectations for quality instruction.

## Structures for Higher-Level Instructor Evaluation

EMI also has structures to evaluate instructors at higher levels of the Kirkpatrick model. EMI staff can assess student learning (level 2) with pre-post tests for longer courses and sends students follow-up surveys of on-the-job use of course learning (level 3). However, EMI staff report that low response rates limit the usefulness of the follow-up surveys. Self-report survey data can be prone to the same biases as course feedback forms. Finally, the framing in

the follow-up surveys, asking about the impact of the course overall rather than of specific instructors, might impede use of the data to evaluate specific instructors.

## The Emergency Management Institute Has Opportunities to Improve Instructor Development

Supporting instructor development is crucial to maintaining the well-being of the instructor cadre and keeping up with changes in the emergency management field and educational practice. However, EMI offers few formalized instructor development opportunities, and those that exist are branch- or course-specific.

### Train-the-Trainer Courses

Many of EMI's courses are developed and overseen by EMI but taught by SLTTs and other partners at locations other than EMI's campus. For these courses, the optional train-the-trainer courses help basic academy instructors and state-level instructors improve their knowledge of teaching and learning and the best methods to reach adult learners. Simply put, these courses teach instructors "to be brilliant with the basics in their courses," according to one senior EMI staff member.

### Opportunities for Instructors to Maintain Currency in Their Field or in Best Practices in Teaching and Learning

EMI leaders consistently raised the importance of having current field knowledge and being able to deliver instruction effectively to adult learners. Instructors need "understanding and familiarity with adult learning theory . . . How adults learn. How to manage classroom of adult learners. Students learn best when [they] share experiences with each other." One EMI leader noted,

Some experts aren't great instructors because of how they conduct themselves. [They] can answer questions and do PPT [PowerPoint], but [they are] not working the classroom, engaging with students, getting out from behind podium. [They shouldn't just] teach the PowerPoint slide.

EMI currently does not have development-focused efforts in place to promote recency and relevancy in current instructors. One branch representative said that their branch conducted annual focus groups with instructors to discuss curricula that need to be updated, revise delivery plans and rubrics, and (sometimes) share teaching practices. Although focus groups allow instructors to give and receive peer feedback, these focus groups do not provide direct opportunities for instructors to develop their skills. Another respondent noted the lack of training for the entire instructor cadre.

## Lack of a Standardized Code of Conduct for Instructors

Respondents noted that there was no “soup-to-nuts” statement of purpose for instructors describing goals for EMI instruction (e.g., to build students’ capacity to apply their learning in new situations), which might drive instructors’ behavior with students. Although there is a code of conduct, it does not cover some common issues, and instructors are not well versed in its content. As of 2023, EMI was developing a new, more comprehensive code of conduct.

## Instructors with Varying Levels of Teaching Knowledge

Under EMI’s current system, instructor training is not tailored to address the different needs of senior instructors, junior instructors, and regular instructors. One senior EMI staff member shared that new instructors are sometimes paired with experienced instructors to complement one another’s teaching styles and levels of experience. EMI instructors recalled that several courses paired new instructors with mentors, some of whom were CMs. Still, there was no systematic approach to building classroom skills and, as a result, it is difficult to gauge when instructors need to increase their knowledge of teaching and learning.

## Emergency Management Institute Staff Reported Strengths and Challenges at Each Phase, with Hiring and Development Concerns Mentioned Most

EMI staff identified strengths and challenges across the five phases of instructor hiring and development. Figure 2.4 summarizes gaps or challenges by phase; to help EMI prioritize them, we have listed the number of entities that shared the same concern. The categories were identified by research team coding of the challenges mentioned in interviews.

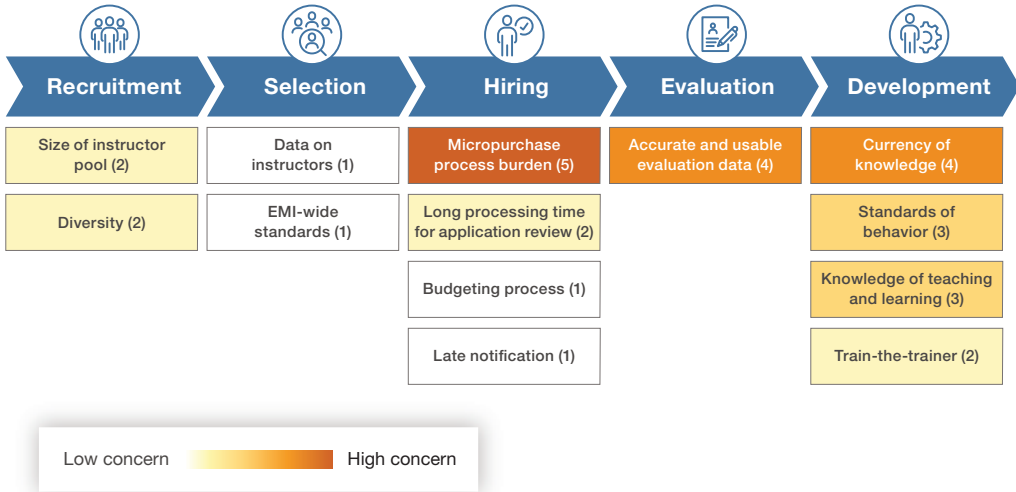
## Conclusion

Some branches have clear processes in place, but branches’ independence limits EMI in applying effective practices across the organization. One of the chief high-level recommendations in Chapter 4 is to standardize processes while allowing variation across courses, where appropriate. EMI staff reported strengths in the hiring and development of instructors. For example, EMI recruits by tapping high-performing students and instructors, and the hiring process that follows is transparent. For some courses and branches, train-the-trainer courses and focus groups support instructor development in adult learning and instructional techniques and give instructors practice in evaluating peers.

Although EMI’s current practices have strengths, there are opportunities for improvement. Recruiting known candidates is easy, but it does not grow the size or quality of the instructor pool. Selection processes are transparent in most cases but could benefit from



**FIGURE 2.4**  
**Instructor Hiring and Development Process Gaps and Challenges, According to Emergency Management Institute Leaders**



SOURCE: Features information from EMI staff, December 2022 to January 2023.

NOTE: Numerals in parentheses indicate the number of EMI entities whose representatives expressed each concern, out of six entities (branches or other offices) represented in our interviews.

more-consistent criteria, given the wide variety of instructor expertise, branch needs, and course types; for example, the online Independent Study Program could benefit from more-clearly defined instructor qualifications. Selection is also limited by the lack of formal reassessment of instructor qualifications, resulting in outdated information on instructors.

The micropurchase process causes significant administrative burden and bottlenecks in processing times. The inclusion of travel costs in micropurchase bids favors local instructors with low travel costs, limiting instructional expertise from across the country. Current evaluation forms do not provide usable data that can inform selection, hiring, or development. Finally, there are limited opportunities at EMI for instructors to gain expertise in their subject matter or teaching and learning. In Chapter 3, we discuss findings from interviews with academic leaders of model peer institutions and the research literature to learn more about best practices in instructor hiring that EMI could implement in the new EMI college model.



# Improving Instructor Hiring and Development Through Insights from the Research Literature and Best Practices

EMI's instructor hiring and development practices face challenges across the five phases. To develop ideas for how to improve EMI processes, we consulted the research literature and academic leaders of model peer institutions. The conclusions of the research literature and best practices from exemplary training and education institutions are organized in this chapter by phase. The appendix presents our approach to searching the literature and identifying institutions regarded as good models in their instructor practices.

## Recruitment

### Use Informal Strategies to Identify High-Quality Candidates

EMI leaders reported using informal strategies to recruit potential instructors, including the following:

- word of mouth: asking current or departing instructors or colleagues for recommendations
- tapping graduates: encouraging students who had completed courses and showed promise to consider becoming instructors
- sideways moves: recommending that instructors take on additional courses in new subject areas, with mentoring from existing course instructors.

Leaders from more than half of the model organizations relied heavily on informal recruitment methods, especially drawing on their professional and personal networks. They reported that referrals helped them find high-quality instructors with demonstrated expertise and instructional skills. One model organization senior leader noted, “referred folks often are already doing this type of training elsewhere.” In particular, faculty can help recruit. The organization leader reported, “Our guys do a lot of marketing for us. They sell the program. They can recruit” and especially favor using full-time instructors who “are in the organization on a daily basis . . . . A part-timer doesn't have as much knowledge of the organization.”

Several model organizations ask exiting instructors, such as those on military assignment, to nominate their replacements.

Another popular recruiting approach among model organizations is to tap students. EMI instructors who were recruited when they were students reported that observing students in class provided better visibility into their potential as instructors than reviewing applications and taped demonstrations. “We would make a recommendation to the CM, and the CM would evaluate that person and take a closer look at that individual. If appropriate, invite that person into the process. It was very much referral-based decisionmaking.” See Table 3.1 for practices culled from several model organizations that take this approach. One war college goes beyond its (small) student population to find candidates among its sister war colleges, which are larger.

## Explore Multiple Sources to Publicize Positions

Most of the exemplary training organizations whose representatives we interviewed used similar recruitment practices to those used by EMI, such as word-of-mouth recommendations and recruiting among strong class participants. In addition, several organizations’ representatives recommended widespread communication about open positions, such as having a presence of professional conferences, training events, using social media, and even—for one organization—posting guidelines on “how to be an instructor” throughout its trainings.

## Increase Diversity Through Formal Recruitment Approaches

A representative from the International Association of Emergency Managers noted that the emergency management field was growing more diverse and highlighted the importance of building an instructor cadre that reflected the diversity of the field. One approach is targeted outreach. The National Fire Academy, faced with a predominantly White male instructor pool, is working with associations, such as Women in Fire, the Black Chief Officers Committee, the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters, the Fire and

**TABLE 3.1**  
**Cultivating Instructors from Star Students**

Step	Action
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observe students in action in classes and exercises (e.g., resident courses).</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a standout student, and talk with them while they are still attending the course.</li> <li>Float the idea of teaching.</li> <li>Discuss their interests, and address questions.</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow up once the student has completed the course.</li> <li>Encourage them to apply for specific instruction opportunities.</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Counsel the interested student through the application process.</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the candidate through the onboarding process.</li> </ul>

EMS Pride Alliance, the Native American Fire Chiefs Association, and the National Association of Hispanic Firefighters to encourage a greater diversity of applicants. Within emergency management, such organizations as the International Network of Women in Emergency Management, the Bill Anderson Fund, and the Institute for Diversity and Inclusion in Emergency Management work to diversify the field.

Recruitment methods can affect the diversity of the applicant pool, according to a review of corporate recruitment research (Dineen, Yu, and Stevenson-Street, 2023). For example, non-White job seekers tend to use social networks and word of mouth less than White job seekers do (McFarland and Kim, 2021). Search committees led or staffed by women and underrepresented groups generate more-diverse sets of applicants (Kazmi et al., 2022). The wording of job advertisements (e.g., stressing stereotypically male attributes, such as “taking charge”) can also affect who applies (Chaney, Sanchez, and Maimon, 2019; Hentschel et al., 2021).

## Focus the Applicant Pool Through Tailored Recruitment Communication

The corporate human resource literature consistently emphasizes the importance of “attracting” candidates by using strong brand messaging aligned to candidates’ interests. Although it is not specifically focused on part-time instructors, this literature provides research evidence on effective hiring strategies more generally. For example, it might be important to narrow the applicant pool because having a large pool of underqualified applicants adds burden to the organization and overqualified applicants tend to have negative employment outcomes (Cappelli and Holmes, 2019; Dineen, Yu, and Stevenson-Street, 2023).

Tailoring the recruitment message to job seekers’ preferences and giving feedback to each applicant on their potential fit led to a smaller but more qualified applicant pool. For example, branding can affect an individual’s decision to apply for a position. An organization can shape its brand image by monitoring social media and employer ratings (e.g., “best places to work”). Dineen, Yu, and Stevenson-Street (2023) also found that maintaining communication with applicants throughout the process kept high-quality candidates in the applicant pool. To get a good sense of how well recruitment strategies are working, an organization might assess the quality of its applicant pool with a yield ratio—that is, the percentage of applicants who receive a job offer.

Model organizations interviewed for this project shared the reasons instructors chose their organizations over other training or military organizations. Some asserted that their organizations’ reputations drew top-notch instructors and visiting lecturers, even with a low honorarium. They emphasized the importance of protecting that reputation with, for example, consistently high-quality instruction and external validation.

The military war colleges provide an illuminating comparison for EMI, which began as a staff college. In the war college model, faculty have a role as thought leaders, as well as instructors. According to one war college leader, “We incentivize faculty to come because

they can do meaningful scholarship. We have to do this to get good civilian faculty.” This leader added that candidates see accreditation as an indicator of organizational quality and that accreditation is “key to attract quality faculty.” Several war college senior leaders said that instructors chose to work for their organizations over the Pentagon, for example, because they preferred the more measured pace, while other instructors were drawn to the action at the Pentagon. Whether the draw is the reputation of the organization or the quality of work life, EMI might incorporate that messaging in recruitment communication.

## Use a Combination of Regional and National Recruitment

National outreach can improve the diversity and quality of the instructor pool and, as suggested by one interviewee, can be done well by a contractor with national reach. Although EMI casts a national net for instructor candidates, several factors limit its recruitment reach. First, as widely reported by EMI leaders, the micropurchase system favors candidates who live near the campus because travel costs them less. Second, the emphasis on informal recruitment narrows the pool to candidates in EMI’s professional circles and could miss newly minted or more-distant candidates. Third, part-time instructors—the mainstay of EMI’s pool—might have more difficulty leaving their primary jobs to travel regularly for courses. In a study of the labor market for institutions of higher education (IHEs), Jacoby and Boyette (2020) found that part-time instructors preferred to work near home.<sup>1</sup>

To address both pragmatic and quality concerns, it might be worth considering a balance of national and regional outreach. Virtual instruction is an option to overcome limitations for instructors who do not wish to travel. Instructors who deliver courses online do not need to charge transportation costs or disrupt their home and work lives to the same degree as instructors who teach on campus at EMI do. Regardless of whether it pivots further to online instruction, if EMI aims to bring in the highest-quality instructors from a national pool, more needs to be invested in recruitment outside its home region because people in other regions might be less familiar with opportunities at EMI than those close to Emmitsburg.

## Selection

### Prioritize Current Knowledge of the Field in Selection

As one EMI leader stated, “Freshness and recency fade over time, and we need to do a better job at maintaining a fresh talent pool that is ongoing, and this has been a challenge for us.” Leaders of model organizations expressed agreement: The quality of the course and the reputation of the organization depend on having instructors with deep and current knowledge of

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<sup>1</sup> There are some limitations to relying on the findings in Jacoby and Boyette (2020) because the study focused on instructors who had recently completed their graduate degrees and EMI tends to recruit more-seasoned instructors.

their fields. Instructors need to have subject-matter expertise; the specific knowledge varies by the nature of the course.

In selecting for the instructor roster and for placement on specific courses, model organizations' representatives said that their organizations consider how recently the candidate has been in the field. For example, two organizations' representatives reported staffing their courses with pairs of instructors: one to provide some stability to the course (e.g., a full-time, retired leader) and the other to bring recent field experience. EMI instructors recommended a similar model for EMI, in part to provide mentoring and in part to capitalize on potential innovation and energy of instructors who are new to EMI.

Interviewees from model organizations also said that their organizations maintain instructor currency by using groups of staff whose other jobs require current knowledge. For example, the war colleges use military personnel who are assigned to teach for one to four years as part of their instructional cadre. Because military instructors must be at or above the rank of the students, this model translates into midcareer professionals with recent in-the-field leadership experience teaching the classes. Most model organizations hire part-time instructors who are still actively working full time in their fields. Finally, several organizations' representatives said that their organizations bring in nationally recognized experts for guest lectures. EMI might explore using guest lecturers and temporary reassignments to keep content fresh.

## Address Instructional Expertise Through Selection or Development

Leaders from both EMI and the model organizations consistently identified instructional skills—along with current knowledge of the field—as core capabilities. Interviewees highlighted the importance of instructional strategies for teaching adults (e.g., andragogy) in contrast to strategies for teaching children (pedagogy). Although there is some debate about differences between teaching adults and teaching children (e.g., Okojie and Sun, 2020), there are undeniable, distinct learning needs for adult learners, who bring a wealth of professional experience and knowledge to the classroom (McCall, Padron, and Andrews, 2018). Adults learn best when instruction is student-centered; the instructor facilitates learning (e.g., guiding discussion) rather than delivering content (e.g., lecturing) (Marquis et al., 2020; McCall, Padron, and Andrews, 2018). Research also supports using problem-based instruction (e.g., case studies, projects) with adult learners (McCall, Padron, and Andrews, 2018).

An emerging literature notes use of rigorous research to identify effective instructional strategies and curricula specifically for emergency management instruction. Feldmann-Jensen et al. (2019) made the case that characteristics of emergency management students and their work environment affect how they learn best. For example, emergency managers tend to work in team environments, so they are predisposed to learn better from practical group projects than from individual scholarly assignments. This theory is consistent with other research on how adults with hands-on jobs tend to learn (Marquis et al., 2020).

There are some boundaries on the strategies EMI instructors may use. EMI uses a “master course” model, in which courses are centrally designed and instructors are hired to deliver the courses more or less as designed. Thus, EMI instructors are expected to cover certain content in a specified period, which tends to drive instruction toward lecture and away from student-centered activities. Even within these boundaries, however, instructors can engage student voices with discussion and active, respectful listening and incorporate student experiences using case studies and discussion.

Model organizations differ in how they ensure that instructors are capable teachers of adult professionals. Some focus on selecting instructors with proven instructional skills. Others select instructors with potential and then invest in developing these skills. One interviewee, for example, reported that their organization selected instructors who had three years of experience actively teaching at the adult level and who had formal instructor education. According to another organization leader, “You didn’t come to [organization] to learn how to be an instructor. You already must be an instructor to become a [organization] instructor. [We’re] not doing Instructor 101.” An interviewee from a third organization said that that organization often hired candidates who did not have instructor experience and provided a weeklong course on how to carry out instructional activities. Similarly, according to a fourth interviewee, their organization adapted its branch’s certificate program into a weeklong educator development course, addressing curriculum, course development, instructional techniques, and inclusive instructional strategies.

## Establish Minimum and Optimal Qualifications for Instructors

Expectations for instructors should consistently inform every step of the hiring process, from recruitment to application, as well as later evaluation and professional development. According to the business literature, transparent job requirements (e.g., knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for the job) improve an applicant’s performance when applying for the job and their sense of fairness about the application process, as well as the measurement of their performance (Van Iddekinge, Lievens, and Sackett, 2023). There are some risks: Transparency on stereotyped qualities can affect some groups (e.g., women do less well when told about leadership expectations), and too much information can affect applicants’ answers (Van Iddekinge, Lievens, and Sackett, 2023).

Several model programs highlight the importance of a well-written position description. War colleges, which use military personnel for instructors, can use the position description to drive the best candidates because they do not control the assignment process. One interviewee said that their organization recommended describing the institution’s mission and responsibilities to encourage candidates who might have fresh ideas that align with the organizational goals. They also suggest knowing and using coded terms: “professor of practice” for people more senior in their careers and “visiting professors” for instructors who are looking for short-term assignments (e.g., moving to follow a spouse for a few years or on sabbatical).



## Use Rubrics to Clarify Expectations for Instructors

Clear and common instructor qualifications improve the hiring process. These expectations can be operationalized into rubrics. For example, using a rubric in selecting new faculty can help make the selection criteria clearer and encourage a selection committee to make decisions based on these criteria (Culpepper et al., 2023). A rubric is especially useful in a system that, like EMI's, has standards for hiring that vary by level of experience, branch needs, and course type. However, poorly created or implemented rubrics can exacerbate existing biases (Blair-Loy et al., 2022). One example of a potentially relevant rubric is the Systematic Interview Rubric for Adjunct Applicant Review (see Patrick and Yick, 2005). This rubric, based on a small empirical study, indicates that interviews for online adjunct instructors should cover the following topics:

- knowledge foundation (e.g., field of practice, teaching experience, contemporary issues)
- philosophical outlook on adult education (e.g., rationale for teaching adult learners, life-long learning)
- personal qualities and characteristics (e.g., personal description of self)
- classroom skills (e.g., managing the online classroom, feedback, communication).

The way the rubrics are used can affect bias in decisionmaking. Taking time to discuss the definitions in the rubric and clarify points of disagreement, especially when deliberating on an instructor candidate, could help the selection committee evaluate each candidate more fairly (Culpepper et al., 2023).

## Assess Instructional Skills and Substantive Expertise with Demonstrations

An interview alone is not sufficient to determine whether a candidate would be a good instructor (Stokes, McLane, and Jones, 2021). Using a mix of assessments—including cognitive measures, personality, simulations, role-play, and multirater instruments—can help identify strong candidates (King, 2018). Optimally, demonstrations should be conducted in the same format as the course (e.g., face-to-face or virtual) (Stokes, McLane, and Jones, 2021). Some IHEs use simulations, fishbowl exercises, or similar tools to test candidates' ability to handle difficult classroom situations (Stokes, McLane, and Jones, 2021). One university that hires more than 100 adjunct online instructors per semester developed a weeklong, unpaid, online candidate assessment course (Stokes, McLane, and Jones, 2021). Candidates participate in a set of activities, such as responding to student emails and demonstrating teaching. Those who meet standards, as measured on a rubric, are placed in the qualified instructor pool.

Several model organizations use teach-backs both to select and to evaluate instructors. Teach-backs involve giving an instructor material and asking them to teach it back to an evaluator or panel of evaluators. One senior academic leader at a peer institution explained

the value of teach-backs in identifying instructors who need further development or should not be hired in the first place: “You can’t necessarily get a feel for how good a person will be during a course, but you can get a feel for how bad they are at that point and time,” they said.

EMI instructors expressed agreement that candidates should provide demonstrations as part of their applications. They expressed disagreement about whether submitting a video was enough. Some said that it did not provide an accurate picture of a candidate’s ability to work with students—especially if the candidate did not use a live class for the demonstration—and others said that it provided a window into how professionally candidates present themselves. As one said, “We don’t know you, so we get to see you and how you present yourself.” Instructors in the focus group also recommended a probation period of three to six months, with observations by fellow instructors, CMs, and student evaluations.

## Hiring

### Right-Level the Tasks in the Hiring Process

EMI has a well-documented process for engaging both central and branch staff in the instructor hiring process: Human resource staff manage the process, and BCs, who have substantive expertise, select instructors. Research on IHEs supports this approach and identifies further efficiencies.

Some IHEs can delegate screening to multiple, lower-level staff, which can make the screening process more cost-effective because they have clearly specified minimum criteria for instructors across the organization (Stokes, McLane, and Jones, 2021). If using this approach, screeners should be trained in the expectations for candidates and screening criteria and participate in periodic calibration to ensure consistency (Stokes, McLane, and Jones, 2021).

In the past several decades, corporations have increasingly used artificial intelligence (AI) technology in place of lower-level staff to streamline hiring. For example, AI can write job ads, screen resumes, scrape social media, assess writing skills, and analyze video interviews (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). Because AI is playing a larger role in human resources, there is also more discussion of the ethics of using AI in hiring decisions. Much of this work has focused on whether using AI in this context amplifies bias, with some evidence that AI-based hiring models can disadvantage female applicants (Peng et al., 2022). Overall, however, the research evidence is somewhat mixed on whether AI increases or reduces bias in hiring decisions (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022).

If lower-level staff or AI address the more time-consuming tasks, the hiring responsibilities of senior staff become more manageable. This approach appears to be a good fit for hiring qualified instructors: Senior staff members’ experience and subject-matter expertise are important for a full assessment of the candidate, including the interview and demonstration (Stokes, McLane, and Jones, 2021). At the very least, greater process automation could

save time collecting, merging, and cleaning data and allow managers to make decisions about instructor hiring more quickly (van der Aalst, Bichler, and Heinzl, 2018).

## Weigh the Benefits of Using a Contractor to Manage the Hiring Process

Interviewees from several model training organizations reported that hiring a contractor to manage their hiring processes was helpful. For example, a contractor can focus on continual recruitment—thus maintaining a ready pool of instructors—while the training organization tends to recruit only for specific instructor needs. A hiring contractor can also manage formal and national searches more effectively than a training organization, which will tend to rely on word of mouth within its own network, can. Contractors can also call on their bench to replace an instructor on short notice, if necessary.

Interviewees from some model organizations, however, said that they could better manage the quality of the instructors if they were directly involved in hiring. Directly selecting instructors gives organizations more control, whereas, when contractors hire, an education institution cannot easily request a preferred instructor. One senior academic leader explained that their organization prefers to hire directly and not use an outside contractor because “we are not just looking for a plug-and-play instructor.”

Cost is also a factor. As one model organization leader noted, “large contracts are expensive.” However, they also pointed out that costs were rising across the board and that instructors’ salary needs might outpace micropurchase limits.

Interviewees from model organizations recommended that, when using a contractor, an organization employ several strategies to improve contractor performance. First, they said, it should closely assess the instructors being bid before awarding the contract. They added that the proposed instructors should expand the organization’s cadre rather than already be on the organization’s roster. An interviewee from one model organization recommended calling colleagues in the community to validate that the instructors being bid are of the caliber needed by the organization.

Second, they said, consider the number and nature of the contracts. An interviewee from one model organization that experimented with one large versus several smaller contracts recommended one large contract for instructors, logistics, and technology—the activities most immediately related to course delivery. Having a single contractor responsible for course delivery can improve coordination at the classroom level, they noted. According to one interviewee, their organization found that using a contractor with an “instructor delivery contract” or “master contract” to hire instructors helped the organization stay in recruiting mode and fill positions when needed. A senior leader at that organization said, “I’m not going to say we have an A team, a B team, and a C team, but we have the ability to bring in someone else when our instructor is not available” because of the contractor’s ability to continuously recruit and maintain a list of qualified instructors.

Interviewees from several organizations suggested separating out some noninstructional functions, such as training support, student services, and program management, into a different contract so that the course-delivery contract is not too large. An interviewee from one model organization said that, as an alternative approach, that organization uses multiple contractors with specialized expertise in different fields to give it access to expert instructors across the curriculum.

Third, one model program's representative recommended using contracts with award fees rather than fixed fees because the award-fee contractor seemed to be more responsive to needs. In a cost contract that uses an award fee, the contractor is paid for its costs plus a fee that is based on ratings of its performance. In a contract that uses a fixed fee, the client agrees to pay costs plus a fee specified ahead of time, regardless of the contractor's performance.

## Establish Pay Mechanisms That Help Get the Desired Instructors

EMI leaders consistently noted that the micropurchase contract system—which limits the amount of pay per course—affected their ability to hire the best and most-diverse pool of instructors. For example, an applicant needs to include travel costs in their bid for a course, which introduces a bias toward local applicants who have minimal travel costs. In the case of EMI, the low-bid system likely favors East Coast instructors, which can result in a regional perspective being taught. Further, the cap on pay discourages the most-highly qualified instructors, who could earn more at other organizations, from applying. Interviewees from other model training organizations that relied on micropurchases for hiring reported similar challenges. However, people from some model organizations suggested work-arounds. For example, one organization formally separated instructor pay from travel costs and considered instructor pay only in hiring, so local and distant instructors were equally cost-competitive. EMI instructors in the focus group recommended a model that separates payment for teaching from travel reimbursement.

The micropurchase system, in which an instructor is hired at a set fee for a specific course, reflects a larger trend toward a “gig” workforce (also called the *alternative* or *contingent* workforce) of instructors. Most of the research on gig workers documents the growth of this group and the benefits and risks for both the individual and the organization. In their discussion of the internet-based labor economy, Vallas and Schor (2020) identified two types of gig work: (1) highly skilled, cloud-based consultants and freelancers who offer professional services (e.g., computer programming, journalism) and (2) low-skilled gig workers who offer offline services (e.g., ride-sharing, food delivery, home repair, care). Highly skilled freelancers who offer instruction on a class-by-class basis are relevant to EMI's workforce, so we considered the research on this group of gig workers.

The primary organizational benefit of gig work is that highly skilled workers can be hired for lower compensation (Mas and Pallais, 2020; Murray, 2019). Not all workers want to make the trade-off, but those who do report being willing to lose 12 percent of wages for flexible scheduling and 21 percent for the option to work from home (Mas and Pallais, 2017). These

might be workers with high levels of motivation who are willing to work extra hours (Mas and Pallais, 2020). However, these jobs are more stressful and less family-friendly, according to workers (Mas and Pallais, 2020), so not all qualified candidates will choose to take this work. Offering flexibility to workers might increase worker productivity, but at the cost of some elements of performance (e.g., teamwork, monitoring) that can have downstream impact through, for example, poorer communication (Mas and Pallais, 2020). If the organization values teamwork or monitoring, for example, the cost of flexibility could be too high (Mas and Pallais, 2020). And the stressors on contingent instructors might ultimately worsen student outcomes (Murray, 2019). The image of the “happy adjunct,” who takes on long hours at low pay for the opportunity to share their “real-world experience” with students is not consistent with the picture of the average contingent instructor, according to the research (Murray, 2019).

Compensation for instructors is an important consideration for some education and training organizations, according to the representatives with whom we spoke. Several respondents noted that pay should differ based on the experience and expertise requirements for a specific course. For example, the contractor used by a model organization established a variable pay and travel scale so that it could hire a variety of instructors (with pay commensurate with level of experience) from a variety of locations (with location-appropriate travel costs) for the life of the contract. EMI instructors also recommended differentiating novice from experienced instructors, with the latter requiring additional training and experience to be considered for that level of position. EMI instructors recommended mentoring new instructors for a few classes, both to assess their skills during a probation period and to support their development. A differentiated pay structure, if desired, is likely possible through a contractor but not through micropurchases.

## Commit to a Thorough Onboarding System

Research (e.g., Kemery and Serembus, 2019; Sibisi and Kappers, 2022) has indicated that onboarding supports instructor engagement and effectiveness, and most human resource models of the employee life cycle call out onboarding as a vital step in hiring.

Interviewees from most of the model organizations said that their organizations onboarded new instructors; many said that this was a one to two-week investment. Generally, onboarding is designed to orient instructors to the organization and its policies and train them on curriculum content and instructional strategies. According to respondents, onboarding also gives organization leaders a chance to observe and evaluate instructors and decide when the instructor is ready to lead a class. One war college, for example, has instructors learn about the curriculum and then teach a seminar back to colleagues as part of their two-week onboarding.

The instructor qualification process in one organization, described in Table 3.2, provides an example of one onboarding flow. This process is guided by the NTED manual (NTED, 2016) with some additional components. Another organization has a similar onboarding pro-

cess, with some distinct features, such as shadowing a current instructor for a week. In both cases, an instructor can qualify to teach the entire course at once or start slower, qualifying for and beginning to teach one module at a time.

## Evaluation

**The Kirkpatrick model is still an industry standard when fully implemented.** EMI evaluates instructors using elements of the widely implemented Kirkpatrick model. The Kirkpatrick model operates at four levels, shown in Table 3.3.

The full model has been validated for evaluating training in numerous settings, with a solid body of research supporting the original and somewhat revised versions (Tamkin, Yarnall, and Kerrin, 2002). For example, Ali, Tufail, and Qazi (2022) compared five training

**TABLE 3.2**  
**A Model Instructor Qualification Process**

Stage	Activity
Course completion	The instructor takes or audits each course they plan to teach.
Orientation	The education entity provides information about organizational expectations and policies.
Materials	The instructor receives course materials, including the curriculum.
Observation	The instructor observes at least three class sessions for each module or course they plan to teach.
Teach-back	The instructor demonstrates teaching part of the course to a certified instructor, who scores the demonstration.
Mentoring	The instructor receives mentoring when first teaching the module or course.
Qualification	The instructor may be qualified for specific modules or for the entire course.
Renewal	The instructor renews their qualifications every three years.

**TABLE 3.3**  
**The Four Levels of the Kirkpatrick Model**

Level	Level Name	Description
1	Reaction	Participants' opinions of the training (e.g., quality, whether it was engaging and relevant)
2	Learning	Measurement of gains in participant knowledge, skills, attitudes, confidence, and commitment
3	Behavior	Measurement of participants' on-the-job application of training content
4	Results	Measurement of targeted outcomes

SOURCE: Features information from Donald Kirkpatrick, 1994.

evaluation models and determined that the Kirkpatrick model was easy to use, applicable across sectors, and the most comprehensive. Research also indicates that all four levels of the Kirkpatrick model are important to measuring instructor effectiveness—and that success at the reaction level tends to be unrelated to success at the level of learning or behavior (Tamkin, Yarnall, and Kerrin, 2002). EMI tends to use level 1, with an occasional foray into level 2 or 3, and could benefit from evaluating instructors based on their impact on student learning, on-the-job application, and organizational outcomes.

## Use Student Evaluations in Conjunction with More-Objective Measures

EMI BCs report using level 1 evaluation (student feedback on the courses) to assess instructors. Training participants are asked to complete feedback forms or surveys about their course content and instruction. Although evaluation forms do not name instructors, BCs reported that they can and do identify instructors based on the timing of the course and use that information to identify inadequately performing instructors. A few BCs report using Kirkpatrick level 2 evaluation, in which they look at student learning, measured by course exams, to assess an instructor's effectiveness.

The literature on evaluation in postsecondary and professional training organizations shows a similar reliance on student evaluation to evaluate instructors (Simsek et al., 2021). For example, studies found that 89 percent of IHEs (Piña and Bohn, 2014) and 94 percent of nursing programs (Barker, 2021) used student assessments as part or all of their instructor evaluations. Although it is not clear why IHEs use student evaluations, it is possible that student evaluations provide credibility and help differentiate an IHE from its competitors (Ching, 2018), at minimal burden or cost to the IHE.

Although their use is common, student evaluations alone are not particularly valid or reliable measures of instructor effectiveness (Barker, 2021). There is substantial literature documenting gender and racial bias in student evaluation and a lack of alignment with objective measures of instruction (Barker, 2021; Chávez and Mitchell, 2020; Heffernan, 2022; Kreitzer and Sweet-Cushman, 2022; Peterson et al., 2019; Rosen, 2018). Small samples per instructor and low response rates also limit the reliability of the findings. Research points to several strategies that can improve student response rates on course evaluations and, thus, the reliability of the findings. In-class, paper-and-pencil course evaluations appear to yield higher rates than online forms (e.g., 55 to 60 percent for in-class versus 22 to 30 percent for online, according to Sundstrom, Hardin, and Shaffer, 2016, as reported in Lipsey and Shepperd, 2021). Microincentives and specific types of prompts also improve response rates. In a randomized controlled trial, Lipsey and Shepperd (2021) looked at the impact of microincentives (promising students extra credit questions on the final exam if the class reached target response rates) and prompts (messages to students setting goals for response rates, along with follow-up messages reporting the current response rates). The combined condition of microincentives plus prompts significantly raised response rates, from 53.9 percent to 79.7 percent.



Several studies point toward specific messaging in prompts, such as emphasizing the importance of students' input and telling students that their feedback is needed for instructors' job evaluation (Lipsey and Shepperd, 2021).

The model programs whose representatives we interviewed for this project consistently used end-of-course student evaluations as part or all of their evaluation approaches. Those that had high response rates said that they used such strategies as requiring an evaluation form before a student can take an exam or receive course credit. Most said that they collected the data electronically, which facilitated analysis. CMs clean and aggregate the data for the division or BC and, ultimately, for the provost or superintendent. One organization, for example, loads the data into the FEMA system at least weekly, runs reports, and looks for patterns of evaluations dipping below a score of 3 on the 1–5 Likert scale. Several leaders cautioned that analysis should focus on patterns: "I tell the instructors that, in a class of 40 to 45, someone will complain. I'm looking at [situations] when we get multiple complaints, [when] half the class says, 'You were arrogant.'" In most cases, the data are used to flag potential issues, which can prompt an observation or discussion with the instructor.

Another organization routinely fields a level 3 evaluation, in which students report, three months after returning to their units, on the training's impact. To encourage students to respond, instructors preview the follow-up survey and emphasize its importance to the instructors and organization during the course. The organization also reaches out to the students a few times after the course ends before sending the survey.

## Supervisor and Peer Evaluation Can Measure the Impact of Instruction

EMI leaders also reported that EMI staff observed contract instructors to evaluate instruction, either to become more familiar with new instructors or to follow up on concerns raised in student evaluations. Branches differed in whether, when, and how they observed instructors for evaluation.

Research on online IHE instructors found similar patterns, with 47 to 90 percent of IHEs using supervisor observations to evaluate online instructors (Piña and Bohn, 2014; Thomas, Graham, and Piña, 2018). In addition, to lower the costs of observations and to enhance professional learning for both observers and subjects of observation, 32 to 90 percent of IHEs used peer observation as part of their evaluation systems (Donnelli-Sallee and Autry, 2018; Piña and Bohn, 2014; Thomas, Graham, and Piña, 2018).

Most of the model organizations whose representatives we interviewed for this project observed instructors as part of evaluation. Typically, these were informal observations by, for example, a CM who drops into class sessions frequently to "see how things are going," similar to the informal observations some EMI CMs conduct. These observations did not necessarily feed into more-systematic evaluation and development of instructors over time.



## Use Rubrics to Guide Instructor Evaluation

Evaluation science consistently emphasizes the importance of clear, measurable objectives for job performance. A rubric can help a supervisor match an instructor's performance against those objectives. As one EMI senior leader said, "Evaluation is more sense-making than an absolute quantitative thing." As with EMI branches, IHEs vary in the metrics guiding instructor evaluation. Researchers in one study found that approximately one-third of IHEs developed their own rubrics to guide evaluation of online instructors, another one-third used Quality Matters, and the remaining one-third did not use a rubric (Piña and Bohn, 2014). Researchers on another, smaller study (Thomas, Graham, and Piña, 2018) found that only half of the IHEs studied had rubrics for evaluating online instructors.

The criteria for instructor performance, as measured in a rubric, should match the requirements of the job. It is not clear that these rubrics—when they exist—are a good fit for evaluating online adjunct instructors, who tend to deliver an established curriculum (e.g., the master course model). Further, they might not be a good fit for the master course model used by EMI and many IHEs. Thomas, Graham, and Pina (2018) and Thomas and Graham (2019) reported that most rubrics—including Quality Matters—emphasize course design over instruction. This emphasis on course design might not be appropriate for the master course model because instructors are generally not responsible for designing the courses. Thomas, Graham, and Piña (2018) and Thomas and Graham (2019) proposed instead to use an evaluation rubric, such as that described in Bigatel et al. (2012) that emphasizes instructional competencies and does not rate the instructor on the design of the course. For example, Quality Matters assesses the course learning objectives and grading policy, both of which might be outside the responsibility of an instructor of a master course. A Bigatel-based rubric assesses the instructor's performance in making grading visible, providing feedback, and keeping the students on track. Table 3.4 shows these two dominant models.

Although Quality Matters focuses on course content, the Bigatel et al. rubric focuses on instructional delivery. Neither evaluates instructors' knowledge or currency, which are of great importance to EMI according to staff interviews. Therefore, a third approach might be appropriate for EMI.

## Development

### Engage Instructors Through Community and Professional Learning

The literature review surfaced some strategies that might be relevant for working with and developing EMI adjunct instructors. For example, multiple researchers found that adjuncts in IHEs tend to be disengaged, which can result in (1) less support for students outside the classroom and (2) high instructor turnover (Evans, 2021). There is also evidence that part-time instructors' working conditions ultimately result in poor student outcomes (Sylte, 2021). Research identifies strategies to improve engagement and effectiveness, such as teaching tool-

**TABLE 3.4**  
**Two Types of Rubrics for Evaluating Instructors**

Rubric	Item Measured	Example Measure
Quality Matters course evaluation	Course overview and introduction	Instructions for starting the course, expectations for communication, and prerequisite knowledge are clear.
	Learning objectives	Course and learning objectives are described and measurable.
	Assessment and measurement	The grading policy is clearly stated. Assessments are sequenced, varied, and course appropriate.
	Instructional materials	Materials use current theory and practice and are varied.
	Course and learner activities and learner interaction	There are opportunities for interaction.
	Course technology	Tools promote active learning.
	Learner support	Technical support is clearly described.
	Accessibility and usability	Navigation is easy to use.
Online instructor competency	Active learning	The instructor assigns team tasks, encourages students to share knowledge, and provides hands-on practice.
	Administrative and leadership	The instructor makes grading visible and clearly communicates expected student behavior.
	Active teaching and responsiveness	The instructor provides helpful, detailed feedback, shows caring, and keeps participants on track.
	Multimedia technology	The instructor uses a variety of multimedia technologies.
	Classroom decorum	The instructor helps student resolve conflicts and models expected communication behavior.
	Technological competence	The instructor is proficient and confident with course technology.
	Policy enforcement	The instructor monitors potential plagiarism.

SOURCES: Features information from Quality Matters, 2023, and Bigatel et al., 2012.

NOTE: Quality Matters provides research-based standards and processes for evaluating the courses, including rubrics for higher education courses and for continuing and professional education (CPE) courses. These rubrics have eight general standards for CPE and 42–43 specific standards. Online instructor competencies are research-based, empirically derived competencies for online instructors.

kits, onboarding, peer community, and administrative support and communication (Brady, 2020; Sylte, 2021); training for instructors can be delivered effectively online (Roman, 2018).

Some of the model programs convene their instructors for annual training events. One war college, for example, brings new and returning instructors to Newport, Rhode Island, once per year to reorient to the program. They review changes to the curriculum and technology, among other topics. Another organization holds an annual three-day training, described in Table 3.5. It chose to meet every year to foster continuity in the program.

EMI instructors strongly emphasized the importance of having space to work with their colleagues and EMI-wide guidance on approaches to instruction. Because many courses are taught by teams, instructors voiced the need for time before a course to plan together (which can be difficult if there is a short notification period) and time during multisession courses to revisit the prior class and plan the next. Those who had experienced them praised the “morning briefings” that instructors held in multiday classes as “extremely valuable to make sure we were ready for the students when they arrive.”

In addition, the focus group instructors enthusiastically voice support for developing an “EMI way” of instruction that could provide a baseline for all EMI instructors:

We need to figure out what is the EMI way . . . . People may have all these courses in their resume, but the EMI way is a good way to get everyone on the same page. What is the culture at EMI? Develop an identity.

This vision could be developed through a one- to two-week instructor development course tailored to EMI.

As reported by leaders in model organizations, having faculty who are thought leaders benefits the organization’s reputation and attractiveness to potential top students. Model organizations have used several strategies to encourage instructors to participate in training and stay current in their field. One organization covers the cost of training and certification for adjunct instructors as a way of encouraging them to attain and keep current relevant certifications. One war college has an innovative approach to rewarding instructor quality: It

**TABLE 3.5**  
**Model Annual Training**

Step	Activity
Set instructor expectations.	Review conduct rules, such as behavior in the classroom.
Assess use of best practices.	Discuss with a subject-matter expert (e.g., staff who worked on a bombing case) what went well and what did not.
Develop case studies.	Develop case studies for courses from these events.
Review new processes.	Prepare instructors to communicate new processes (e.g., online student registration) to students.
Teach back.	Complete the annual requirement for supervisors to observe instructors.

moved from longevity to merit as the determining factor in pay raises, and it makes innovation awards to faculty.

## Train Instructors on Instructional Strategies, Organizational Requirements, and Digital Tools

Research has also identified topics and models of professional delivery that address gaps in adjunct instructional skill sets. For example, adjunct instructors likely need training on organizational requirements and standards (e.g., academic integrity) (see Chugh et al., 2021) in addition to instructional strategies (e.g., blended learning, knowledge management). Online instructors especially need development on digital literacy and either training or expert support in the specific tools used for online instruction (Butters and Gann, 2022; Kemery and Serembus, 2019; Romero-Hall and Cherrez, 2023). Perhaps reflecting the recent focus on online instruction, EMI instructors voiced the need for more universal training on virtual course delivery. Instructors of virtual courses need to have some baseline technical knowledge, as well as strategies to effectively teach online. One instructor highlighted some missteps they had seen among EMI virtual instructors, such as using smartphones or only one screen to teach, using a subpar camera or poor lighting, and having difficulty being interactive in a virtual setting. Instructors in the focus groups voiced concurrence on the need for a train-the-trainer course for virtual instruction. These skills might not come naturally to all—and some might prefer not to teach virtually—but focus group instructors recommended that instructors be flexible enough to teach courses effectively in this way as EMI needs.

Online instructors who come from the field of practice might need training in instructional strategies (Delaney and Betts, 2022). Because adjunct instructors are not always subsidized to continue to their professional learning, incentives (perhaps pay bumps or more opportunities to teach) might help them stay current in their field (Cooper, 2021).

Representatives from model organizations echoed the importance of instructional knowledge. As one leader said, “Credibility is always one of the most important things we have: Are they not only credible, but can they also teach?” EMI instructors in the focus groups highlighted the importance of “reading the room”: understanding and being flexible enough to adapt for differences in student knowledge and skills, as well as facilitating rather than directing student learning. Instructors suggested that EMI could select candidates who have these skills already or provide mentoring and feedback to help instructors develop.

## Train Instructors on Curriculum Development or Implementation

Finally, adjunct instructors likely need training in curriculum development (Butters and Gann, 2022; Magruder et al., 2019; Swann et al., 2021), although the extent of that training might vary according to the degree to which the curriculum is developed for them. If the organization is using a master program model, in which the organization provides each instructor with a detailed curriculum, those instructors need training and feedback to ensure that they implement the courses as intended. For example, researchers studying university-

based principal preparation programs found that, after switching from an “expert-based” approach, in which tenure-track faculty developed their own courses, to a “master program,” in which adjunct instructors with field experience delivered a set curriculum, the adjunct instructors needed monitoring and feedback to stay true to the intended program (Herman et al., 2022).

According to some model programs, it is important for the curriculum developers to directly train instructors on new and revised curricula. One war college has the developer lead a faculty workshop the week before a lesson is taught. Workshops are held once per week over the year, and each workshop covers two to three lessons. Another organization moved from communicating curriculum changes via email to having curriculum developers discuss changes with the instructors. The discussion allowed developers to talk about how they present the materials and give examples, which helped instructors bring the changes into their courses.

The onboarding process, discussed under “Hiring” earlier in this chapter, also includes training and evaluation components.

## Tap Existing Resources for Developing Instructors

The business training literature provides some development resources that might be useful to EMI. In particular, the Association for Talent Development (ATD) brings together some potentially useful materials (see Table 3.6). However, we were unable to locate research on the impact of these approaches. In addition, EMI’s campus hosts an annual FEMA higher education conference that attracts college and university instructors who might be able to share teaching practices with EMI instructors or instruct for EMI themselves. Alternatively, the higher education conference is a potential venue for professional development in teaching and learning practices and substantive knowledge for instructors across multiple institutions, including EMI.

## Summary

Table 3.7 summarizes the recommendations from the literature, model programs, and EMI staff for improving hiring and development.

Three threads run through the phases of instructor hiring and development (recruitment, selection, hiring, evaluation, and development): the staffing model; standards for instructor knowledge, skills, and abilities; and the importance of professional community (see Figure 3.1). The EMI staffing model centers on using part-time instructors on a course-by-course assignment basis, regardless of the specific contracting vehicle. This model affects decisions across the hiring and development phases. For example, organizations recruit from different sources for part-time versus full-time instructors, and their levels of investment for developing long-term versus task-specific hires differ. Many training organizations in the literature and among the exemplar organizations whose representatives we interviewed for this

**TABLE 3.6**  
**Potentially Useful Association for Talent Development Resources**

Category	Resource
Courses and certifications	ATD Master Trainer Program: Self-assess training skills with the Learning Prioritization Inventory and eight weeks of online and in-person courses  Courses on designing instruction, curriculum, and coaching
Tools	Course maintenance plan template, tools to select and use learning technology, Kirkpatrick’s four levels of evaluation, learning delivery strategies, Bloom’s taxonomy, adult learning principles, and various tips and tricks
Related reading	“How to Use Competency Models for Recruiting” (Lasse, 2016)  “Hiring the Right People: Why Employers Stumble” (Brennan, 2015)  “Best Hiring Practices” (ATD, 2012)  “Virtual Interviews Are Tough—and Can Fail” (Development Dimensions International, undated)  “How to Enhance the Induction and Onboarding Training with Mobile Learning” (Pandey, 2019)  “Stuck on the Spreadsheet Treadmill: How Misused Data Hurts Training Teams” (Webb, 2022) (systems for managing training data better than spreadsheets)

**TABLE 3.7**  
**Recommendations for Improving Hiring and Development**

Category	Recommendation	Source <sup>a</sup>			
		EMI	Instructor	Literature	Model
Recruitment	Use informal strategies to identify high-quality candidates	x	x	x	x
	Explore multiple sources to publicize positions.				x
	Increase diversity through formal recruitment approaches.			x	x
	Focus the applicant pool through tailored recruitment communication.			x	x
	Use a combination of regional and national recruitment.			x	x
Selection	During selection, prioritize current knowledge of the field.	x	x		x
	Address instructional skills through selection or development.				x
	Establish minimum and optimal qualifications for instructors.			x	x

**Table 3.7—Continued**

Category	Recommendation	Source <sup>a</sup>			
		EMI	Instructor	Literature	Model
	Use rubrics to clarify expectations for instructors.			x	
	Use demonstration classes to assess instructional skills and substantive expertise.		x	x	x
Hiring	Right-level the tasks in the hiring process.	x		x	
	Weigh the benefits of using a contractor to manage the hiring process.				x
	Establish pay mechanisms that help get the desired instructors.		x		x
	Commit to a thorough onboarding system.			x	x
Evaluation	Measure at levels 2 through 4 (learning, on-the-job use, and organizational outcomes) on the Kirkpatrick model, which is still an industry standard when fully implemented.			x	
	Use student evaluations in conjunction with more-objective measures.			x	x
	Supervisor and peer evaluation can measure the impact of instruction.	x		x	x
	Use rubrics to guide instructor evaluation.			x	
Development	Engage instructors through community and professional learning.		x	x	x
	Train instructors on instructional strategies, organizational requirements, and digital tools.		x	x	x
	Train instructors on curriculum development and implementation.			x	x
	Tap existing resources for developing instructors.			x	

SOURCES: Features information from interviews with eight EMI staff from December 2022 to January 2023; two instructor focus groups conducted April 25 and 26, 2023; research literature cited in this chapter; and interviews with representatives of model organizations from February and March 2023. Those model organizations were the Air War College, the Army War College, the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, the FEMA Center for Domestic Preparedness, the International Association of Emergency Managers, the Marine Corps War College, the National Fire Academy, the Naval Postgraduate School, CHDS, the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, the Texas A&M University Engineering Extension Service training facility, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and the U.S. Naval War College. Further details about method and sources are available in the appendix.

<sup>a</sup> Recommendations emerge from the research literature, model program interviews, EMI staff interviews, and EMI instructor focus groups.

project use this model both alone and in combination with other models. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the benefits and risks of various staffing models.

Similarly, instructor standards affect every phase of hiring and development, including guiding recruitment language, shaping selection criteria, influencing evaluation criteria, and development strategies. Aligning instructor standards across phases and operationalizing the standards with measurable tools, such as selection rubrics and evaluation measures, are best practices.

Finally, building on the idea of cross-EMI instructor standards, EMI has the opportunity to build into every part of the hiring and development phases a professional community with a shared mission and approach. The research literature and model organization leaders highlighted the importance of a community, even in organizations staffed largely by part-time or adjunct instructors. And EMI instructors reported feeling atomized and isolated. EMI can build this community by accurately describing the organization and roles—the EMI way—during recruitment; selecting instructors who understand and commit to high standards of currency, knowledge, and instructional strategies; onboarding instructors with intensive training that develops the EMI way; and building time for instructors to plan and learn together.

**FIGURE 3.1**  
**The Instructor Hiring and Development Cycle**





## Future Directions for Instructor Hiring and Development

EMI's instructor hiring and development practices are poised for improvement as the institute reorganizes to hire academic deans and a provost and implement its EMI Anywhere strategy. The strategy promises to offer training to people in the emergency management enterprise at any location in the United States at any time in their careers (Stern, 2021). The broader emergency management enterprise includes people with emergency management in their job titles, as well as others who perform emergency management functions or work with emergency managers. The "Anywhere" portion of the strategy name includes in-person classes at EMI in Emmitsburg and at sites around the United States, as well as virtual options.

We offer high-level options for how EMI can structure its employment and instructor models in the future. These choices about what kind of instructors EMI wants to hire and for what length of time will affect the more-granular and -specific recommendations. We offer those more-specific phase-by-phase recommendations in the second part of this chapter.

### Choosing Between More Education or More Training

At a high level, EMI faces a choice about what kind of institution it wants to be. Postsecondary teaching and learning exist along a spectrum from education to training, with education aiming at more-complex, creative, nonstandardized forms of knowledge and thinking and training aiming at more-routine, repeatable processes (Menand, 2010, pp. 53–65). Both are important, but education is at the core of many colleges and universities, while corporate and professional education often emphasizes training for specific processes or job functions.

Another way to describe this spectrum is as one that runs from creating and transmitting knowledge for the purpose of a functional mission on one end to creating and transmitting knowledge for open-ended research and discovery or for its own sake on the other. Government agencies serve a mission. A fire academy trains future firefighters to serve the mission of preparing for and responding to fires. Fire science is the more open-ended research into the nature of fire and fire protection. Colleges and universities typically aim toward more open-ended research and discovery or the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Liberal arts colleges and faculties support development of free and creative human beings (Roche, 2010).

EMI has traditionally been organized as a mission-focused training organization, with some elements of education and discovery. By hiring a provost and academic deans, creating schools based around categories of knowledge, and improving its instructor hiring and development processes, EMI is poised to become more of an education entity with some research-oriented elements while preserving its important training functions. The potential development toward more educational missions in addition to training reflects the maturation of the field of emergency management. More people in the field have college degrees and, increasingly, graduate degrees than ever before. The body of knowledge in the field is growing (Roberts, 2023).

EMI will need to chart a path that complements existing education and training offerings, particularly those from colleges and universities. EMI is unlikely to abandon its training mission, and it has an opportunity to remain the leader in emergency management training. At the same time, greater educational offerings provide an opportunity to complement higher education degree and certificate programs by providing additional routes into the field and midcareer educational opportunities. The U.S. military war colleges play a similar role in providing government-led education that is part of a larger higher education ecosystem.

## War Colleges Offer a Distinctive Model for Government Education

EMI was founded as the Civil Defense Staff College in 1951. It became EMI and moved from Battle Creek, Michigan, to Emmitsburg after the creation of FEMA in 1979 (Roberts, 2023). The original vision of civil defense as a fully integrated national program never was fulfilled, and the staff college was primarily a training institute for state and local civil defense officials. However, the staff college idea has its roots in military education, and military war colleges offer a model for education that is a promising path for EMI's future development. The United States has five war colleges intended to train military officers and others in advanced tactical and strategic thought and to develop doctrine and new ideas. We spoke with senior academic officers from three of these colleges as part of our research. Their model of education has three broad differences from those of other higher education and training institutions.

First, universities function independently of their students' employers, but war colleges are formally connected to employers. Students enter a war college midcareer, and they leave the college to serve the same military service or other defense organization they served when they entered. A university might offer a master's degree for national security professionals, but it is not usually tied to a particular sponsor. Furthermore, employers typically do not return to a university to ask for a different skill set in their graduates, whereas war colleges often have their associated agencies or services asking for different skills or curricula to be taught (Stiehm, 2002).

Second, professional training institutions focus on training rather than education, but war colleges educate leaders and thinkers. Training involves instruction to perform specific tasks and roles, while education aims at critical thinking skills used to navigate complex and less predictable challenges (Garavan, 1997). War colleges have a research component and prepare graduates for complex, critical thinking tasks, often using small seminars and open-ended assignments. One war college academic leader told us, “This is an education institution, not a training institution. That’s a key difference [from government and corporate training institutions].” The war college leader noted that, without an explicit education focus, it would be difficult to attract high-quality faculty members interested in critical thinking and with a connection to research ideas. The college’s connection to scholarship allowed it to attract the best teachers, according to the academic leaders, and one scholarly analysis of the Army War College came to a similar conclusion (Stiehm, 2002, pp. 167–181). However, the war college leader admitted that the college struggled with identifying the scope of its education and research missions, given its need to serve a particular military service.

Third, war colleges lack the incentives for curricular innovation that universities have (Lacquement, 2019). Most colleges and universities compete with each other for students, and competitive enrollment drives curricular change (Brewer, Gates, and Goldman, 2004). War colleges receive students as part of required professional military education. The colleges compensate for the lack of market pressure incentives by building connections to universities and professional associations to help drive innovation and learn best practices (Stiehm, 2002, pp. 167–181).

These distinctive features of war colleges might be particularly relevant for EMI’s reorganization. EMI seeks to increase its impact in the emergency management field, provide more education (as opposed to training alone), and offer a more innovative and more relevant curriculum.

## The Emergency Management Institute Does Not Yet Fit the War College Model

EMI is different from the war colleges because it is a civilian agency that uses instructors hired on a per-course basis primarily to train people outside the federal government. Key differences between EMI and the war colleges include the following:

1. EMI serves many organizations in the federal government, SLTT partners, nonprofits, and the private sector.
2. The oldest war colleges have developed over more than a century, but EMI has been around much less time, dating in its current form from the 1979 creation of FEMA.
3. EMI lacks the same level of academic staff with Ph.D.’s found in the war colleges and lacks long-term students and the same number of long-term instructors. Its courses are shorter. EMI’s short-term, contract-hire instructors look very different from the war colleges’ mix of tenure-track academic and senior military instructors.

4. War colleges offer accredited degrees, typically master of arts degrees, as well as certificates. College and universities sometimes use EMI courses for credit, but EMI does not offer degrees.

Despite these differences, the war college model provides an alternative path for EMI's future development.

## The Emergency Management Institute Can Learn from the War College Model as It Evolves to Meet the Needs of Its Field

EMI can adopt some of the practices and structures war colleges use to hire and develop instructors to help implement its EMI Anywhere strategy and expand senior leader education. Although it has historically focused on training, EMI could choose to engage in more senior-level education and more discussions of strategy at greater levels of abstraction. The following war college practices are options for EMI to consider:

- Recruit faculty who are thought leaders, and offer high-level seminars to drive conversations in the broader emergency management field.
- Develop research-oriented programs involving research-active instructors to provide input into the broader emergency management research agenda from an institution close to the needs of practitioners but with some distance from the pressures of immediate operational needs.
- Draw on the existing emergency management higher education community for short-term faculty. War colleges sometimes host visiting faculty from IHEs, and EMI could draw on emergency management and related fields in higher education for guest instructors with both subject-matter and theoretical knowledge. These instructors might be well versed in best practices in teaching from higher education.
- Offer midcareer, strategic-level education, giving senior leaders a view of the big picture of the field. Earlier in their careers, many leaders rose through the ranks by performing a discrete function, but, once they assume leadership roles of large organizations, they need different kinds of knowledge and skills to succeed.
- Hire instructors at a higher level of seniority and with more experience than course participants.
- Recruit faculty from practice for terms of one to three years. Midcareer faculty can make excellent instructors for more-junior members of the field, and terms of one to three years can be long enough for a faculty member to become invested in the institution before returning to practice, often with new ideas.

## The Emergency Management Institute Has an Opportunity to Rethink Its Employment Model

If EMI intends to become more like a war college in its structure, its leadership might want to rethink its employment model. EMI relies on part-time instructors, typically retired professionals and working professionals who instruct as a side job. We explored the strengths and gaps of different types of employment models in the research literature and in conversations with model institutions. The three dominant models that emerged in the research are summarized in Table 4.1:

- part-time instructors, similar to the EMI model or contingent or adjunct faculty in higher education
- full-time, professional instructors, similar to tenure-track professors in IHEs
- limited-term, full-time instructors, often military personnel assigned to training for one to three years, similar to the war college model.

Many organizations take a hybrid approach.

**TABLE 4.1**  
**Employment Models**

Characteristic	Model		
	Part Time	Full-Time Professional	Full-Time Limited-Term
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More flexible than the other models for changing instructional needs</li> <li>• Potentially lower cost on a per-course basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledgeable about the organization and policies</li> <li>• Informal but informed recruiters for students and instructors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent experience with course content</li> <li>• Knowledgeable about the organization once onboarded</li> </ul>
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variable instructor quality and less institutional knowledge</li> <li>• Less ability to monitor work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costly</li> <li>• Less flexible for an organization with a wide variety of courses</li> <li>• Less-current engagement with course content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs of replacing and retraining every few years</li> </ul>
Relevance to EMI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential if EMI becomes a degree- or credit-awarding institution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasible through partnerships with other organizations</li> </ul>
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most current EMI instructors</li> <li>• Contingent higher education instructors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenure-track higher education faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior military officers serving as short-term professors of practice at war colleges; visiting professors in higher education</li> </ul>

EMI can choose from one or a mix of two or three of these models. Currently, EMI employs part-time instructors on a contract basis, but it could include more professional (full-time) instructors or limited-term contract instructors in the future. Part-time contingent instructors give EMI more flexibility, but professional and limited-term contract instructors provide the flexibility for EMI to hire based on demand and subject-matter need. Professional and limited-term contract instructors might be more committed to EMI as an institution, which could be advantageous in recruiting. An instructor who is a full-time EMI employee might take on other recruiting or administrative duties in addition to teaching.

Adding more professional and limited-term instructors would increase the number of instructors knowledgeable about the institution and its policies and who could act as informal recruiters. These instructors would be costlier than part-time instructors hired on a per-course basis and would require a greater EMI commitment to particular instructors for teaching multiple courses. Moving away from an employment model involving piecemeal contracting on a per-course basis would require additional investment and higher costs for instruction, as well as new means of contracting. If sufficient funds for moving away from its current employment model are not available, EMI will have to make trade-offs to realize its vision.

## The Emergency Management Institute Could Use New Authorities Under the Civilian Reservist Emergency Workforce Act and the Intergovernmental Personnel Act to Hire Active Professionals

Many of EMI's instructors are retired professionals who bring a wealth of experience. However, full-time emergency managers and other professionals might be an underused resource of knowledge of current practices and a source of mentoring. In many cases, active emergency managers do not have a practical path to take leave from their jobs to teach at EMI, aside from using their vacation days. EMI could use existing authority to create programs in which active professionals could more easily take leave from their jobs for weeks or up to one year in order to teach at EMI.

One potential route might be the Civilian Reservist Emergency Workforce (CREW) Act of 2021 (Pub. L. 117-178, 2022), which protects the civilian employment of FEMA reservists when they are deployed for disasters and emergencies or for training purposes. The act could be used to recruit emergency managers from SLTT agencies, for example, who might be more current in knowledge and represent more-diverse backgrounds than the current EMI instructor pool.

If EMI intends to hire some instructors for full-time employment for up to one year, it could pursue hires through the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) of 1970 (Pub. L. 91-648, 1971), which would allow state and local governments, colleges and universities, tribal governments, and federally funded research and development centers to temporarily assign staff to EMI. The assignments would be paid for by FEMA or EMI, not the home organization, but instructors hired through an IPA program (commonly referred to as *IPAs*) would be guar-

anteed to be able to return to their jobs at their home organizations at the end of the assignment. Their home organization would benefit when they return with new knowledge and new networks.

Making greater use of the CREW Act and IPAs to temporarily assign instructors active in practice could serve EMI's goals of attracting the best possible instructors and increasing the diversity of its instructor cadre. The EMI Anywhere vision proposes "building the capacity to train & educate emergency managers anywhere they are, anytime in their careers, on any platform" (Criswell and Stern, 2022). The strategy also involves creating new satellite campuses and new programs for thought leadership in emergency management. Instructors with longer-term commitments to EMI and midcareer instructors who will return to practice after teaching could help link EMI to the field at many locations in the country and to new entrants to the field, as well as midcareer and senior leaders.

## Recommendations: How the Emergency Management Institute Can Improve Instructor Hiring and Development Processes

### High-Level, Organization-Wide Options

We offer three high-level options for EMI to rethink how it structures its instructor hiring and development processes. First, EMI could learn from the war colleges and **adopt war college practices that increase educational, research, and thought leadership impact**. These practices include hiring staff with research responsibilities, educating midcareer and senior leaders in the field, and hiring instructors from academia or midcareer professionals for one to three years who will return to practice.

Part of the war college model includes hiring instructors who become part of the institution on contracts that extend for more than a single course. A second big-picture option is for EMI to follow the war colleges and IHEs in rethinking its employment model to include long-term and full-time contracts.

Second, EMI could **adapt its employment model to take advantage of a mix of part-time, professional, and limited-term contract instructors**. The part-time instructors who have recently been in practice or will return to practice bring expertise from the field. The professional or limited-term instructors would provide greater institutional investment in EMI and could help build new programs and advance recruiting. However, these longer-term instructors would cost more and require investment from EMI.

A third big-picture option for EMI is to **develop standardized processes across the organization to add predictability, reduce administrative burden, and improve the ability to track performance**. All the EMI staff with whom we spoke mentioned the benefits of creating more-predictable, standardized instructor hiring and development processes across the organization. Some staff members also mentioned the benefits of being able to tailor processes for the needs of particular programs. For example, the EMPP requires instructors with a knowledge of a wide variety of skills, whereas some courses require more-specific subject-



matter expertise, which might require additional steps to verify and keep current that specialized knowledge.

Senior academic leaders with institution-wide responsibilities, including the provost and deans, can implement standardized processes. Greater standardization would reduce the burden on instructors who apply for and teach in multiple programs, and it would allow EMI to take an institution-wide view. For example, a single instructor hiring application or single evaluation form could be used to compare instructors and classes and identify course or instructors in need of further development.

## Phase-Specific Recommendation: The Emergency Management Institute Can Improve in Every Phase of the Instructor Life Cycle

Beyond the high-level options for the future, EMI staff and instructor focus groups highlighted specific areas for immediate improvement, based on interviews and our review of documentation. High-level gaps and challenges reported in Chapter 2 appeared in all phases. The most frequently mentioned include the administrative burden of micropurchases and the lack of EMI-wide standards for hiring and other phases. In addition, multiple respondents noted the need for an evaluation phase with accurate and usable data that can inform hiring, selection, and development. Finally, multiple respondents mentioned the need for greater currency of knowledge in course content and teaching and learning.

## Recommendations, by Phase, with Strategies

We offer example strategies for adopting and implementing the recommendations based on the literature and interviews with exemplary institutions presented in Chapter 3. These example strategies, listed in Tables 4.2 through 4.6, provide concrete steps to put the recommendations in place in the context of EMI.

## Implementing Recommendations

EMI will need to consider whether the three big-picture options are on the table as part of its reorganization before fully implementing the more-targeted instructor hiring and development process recommendations. To what degree does FEMA and EMI leadership want to adopt a war college model, rethink the balance between full- and part-time instructors, and shift toward a greater use of full-time or long-term contract instructors? And to what degree will EMI standardize its processes when it reorganizes in its new college model, or are there limits to standardization in light of the autonomy that should be given to branches and other units? We offer reasons to adopt changes in all three of these areas, but FEMA and EMI input is required to clarify the long-term goals that these changes would serve. If FEMA and EMI's long-term goals are not served by changing the bigger structure of EMI, the status quo might be sufficient, and EMI should focus on more micro-level improvements.



**TABLE 4.2**  
**Recommendations for Recruitment**

Recommendation	Example Strategy
Use informal strategies to identify high-quality candidates.	Recruit star students as instructors. Tap the networks of existing faculty.
Explore multiple sources to publicize positions.	Develop separate strategies to recruit different kinds of subject-matter experts. Use social media and professional organizations, as well as formal job postings and informal networking.
Increase diversity through formal recruitment approaches.	Reach out to minority-serving professional organizations. Use job postings and similar formal recruitment, which are often better at reaching underrepresented groups, alongside informal communications. Include women and members of racial and ethnic minority populations and other underrepresented groups on search committees.
Focus the applicant pool through tailored recruitment communications.	Use clear position descriptions to attract candidates who best fit the position. Develop a reputation that draws people who believe in the mission and want to contribute. In business circles, this is known as <i>branding</i> . For example, provide EMI's mission in a job announcement.
Use a combination of regional and national recruitment.	Differentiate recruitment based on needs: Recruit nationally to increase diversity of perspectives and for virtual courses and short in-person courses. Recruit regionally for extended in-person courses. Develop a national recruiting strategy for EMI involving email communications, a website, and advertisements at major conferences.

Another path would be for EMI to adopt a select number of war college practices and standardize key processes on a trial basis. The EMI Anywhere plan prioritizes expanding EMI offerings to new locations and to people at any time in their careers and engaging in thought leadership. Standardizing basic procedures for how EMI recruits, selects, hires, evaluates, and develops its instructors is likely to increase efficiency and effectiveness of EMI instruction. Adding more instructors with research experience and credentials, as well as instructors active in practice, will put EMI in a position to create new ideas in the field. Other recommendations to improve instructor hiring and development processes will help improve instruction at EMI and grow its reach and impact on emergency management and beyond.

**TABLE 4.3**  
**Recommendations for Selection**

Recommendation	Example Strategy
During selection, prioritize current knowledge in the field.	<p>Team-teach courses such that at least one instructor in the team has recent field experience.</p> <p>Hire midcareer instructors who rotate in and then return to practice, as part of a larger instructor mix.</p>
Address instructional skills through selection or development.	<p>Screen out candidates with weak teaching skills if not prepared to train them on these skills.</p> <p>Offer EMI- or DHS-wide courses in instructional skills.</p>
Establish minimal and optimal qualifications for instructors.	<p>Clearly state requirements for the position while leaving some flexibility to draw candidates with unexpected skill sets.</p> <p>Use such terms as “professor of practice” in job descriptions to draw in candidates with on-the-ground experience.</p> <p>Qualify instructors in particular subject matter that spans multiple courses.</p>
Use rubrics to clarify expectations for instructors.	<p>Use a rubric to ensure fair and unbiased selection.</p> <p>Discuss the rubric with staff to ensure common understanding of the criteria.</p>
Use demonstration classes to assess instructional skills and substantive expertise.	<p>Ask instructors to provide teach-backs of course material in person or online for a panel of evaluators, who then decide whether to hire the instructor or recommend further development.</p>
Tap stakeholder expertise, as well as TSs, to define qualifications needed for instructors.	<p>Conduct a need assessment of stakeholders to identify needs for new courses or course series.</p>

**TABLE 4.4**  
**Recommendations for Hiring**

Recommendation	Example Strategy
Right-level the tasks in the hiring process.	<p>Allocate screening tasks to multiple lower-level staff rather than a single person or higher-level staff.</p> <p>To reduce the time it takes to hire and reduce the burden on EMI staff, adopt automated processes. Consider building new systems, using established FEMA or other DHS systems or off-the-shelf human capital systems to track and inform hiring.</p>
Weigh the benefits of using a contractor to manage the hiring process.	<p>Conduct an analysis of whether using one or more contractors to hire instructors would save money or maintain or increase instructor quality over the current process. Assess whether contracts for hiring instructors would reduce the burden on EMI or whether EMI would prefer the control afforded by direct hiring.</p> <p>Evaluate whether contractors with the desired experience and expertise exist.</p> <p>If pursuing an instructor delivery contract, weigh the value of the efficiency provided by one contractor against the diversification of risk and expertise provided by multiple contractors.</p> <p>Consider using CREW Act authorities or IPAs to recruit instructors in leadership or expert roles who will return to practice.</p>
Establish pay mechanisms that help get the desired instructors.	<p>Consider whether federal or SLTT agencies, nonprofits, or the private sector would sponsor instructors; evaluate online and hybrid course options to extend EMI's reach.</p> <p>In bids, separate instructors' pay from travel costs.</p> <p>Use a differentiated pay scale for more-experienced and -qualified (lead) instructors.</p>
Commit to a thorough onboarding system.	<p>Train instructors on curriculum and instruction in multiday or multiweek onboarding, including opportunities to practice teaching and get feedback.</p> <p>Incrementally increase instructors' responsibilities, starting with one or several modules and building from there.</p>

**TABLE 4.5**  
**Recommendations for Evaluation**

Recommendation	Example Strategy
Fully implement the Kirkpatrick model.	If using the model, go beyond student reactions. Also assess students' pre- and postlearning and on-the-job behavior, as well as organizational outcomes. The Kirkpatrick model is still an industry standard when fully implemented.
Use student evaluations with more-objective measures.	Borrow and adapt evaluation forms from leading peer institutions. Centralize evaluations in a learning management system similar to those in use by colleges and universities.
Supervisor and peer evaluation can measure the impact of instruction.	Consider asking supervisors, peers, or highly regarded master instructors to sit in on classes and provide developmental feedback to instructors.  Observe instructors regularly each year. Establish a schedule or structure so all instructors are covered equitably.
Use rubrics to guide instructor evaluation.	Align the rubric to the instructor's responsibilities.

**TABLE 4.6**  
**Recommendations for Development**

Recommendation	Example Strategy
Engage instructors through community and professional learning.	Sponsor professional communities, onboarding, and communication to help instructors engage with the larger enterprise.  Hold annual training events to keep instructors current.
Train instructors on instructional strategies, organizational requirements, and digital tools.	Hold an annual teaching technology workshop.  If using part-time instructors, provide explicit training on organizational functions about which they might not learn otherwise.
Train instructors on curriculum development and implementation.	Hold an annual curriculum development workshop and curriculum development work groups for priority areas.  Ask curriculum developers to share insights with instructors on how to implement the curriculum.
Tap existing resources for developing instructors.	Use FEMA's higher education conference or other widely attended events as opportunities for instructor professional development.  Develop an email list with online instructor development opportunities.

## Research Approach

In this study, we developed a picture of EMI’s instructor hiring and development, identifying areas of strength as well as gaps. In the study, we also summarized best practices from cross-sector research and as reported by organizations nominated for their strong hiring and development practices. The researchers then brought together these two bodies of knowledge to identify best practices that could resonate in the EMI context.

### Analyze Current Practices for Strengths and Gaps

The HSOAC research team conducted three data-collection activities to identify the strengths and gaps of the current instructor hiring and development processes: collect and review program description documents (through staff and on the EMI website), interview key EMI staff, and conduct focus groups with EMI instructors.

### Review Relevant Program Documents

Researchers downloaded relevant publicly available documents from the EMI website and requested additional documents from EMI staff. Researchers organized the data from the documents in an annotated bibliography and used the information in the documents to develop the process map of the EMI instructor hiring phase. In addition, researchers collected documents from model organizations that were used to inform best-practice recommendations. See Table A.1 for a list of documents reviewed.

### Interview Key Emergency Management Institute Staff

Researchers conducted semistructured, 60-minute interviews with eight EMI leaders, including BCs, about EMI hiring and development processes (see Box A.1 for the protocol). For these interviews, as well as one focus group during the interviews, researchers requested documents that interviewees identified, which were incorporated in the review of program documents.

**TABLE A.1**  
**Training Organization Documents Reviewed**

Document	Citation	Organization That Provided It to Us
<b>General background</b>		
“EMI Organizational Chart with Pins, Grades, and PDs”	EMI, 2022c	EMI
Organizational chart for the proposed National Emergency Management College	EMI, 2022d	EMI
<b>Recruitment</b>		
Email template for application received	None	EMI
<b>Selection</b>		
“Adjunct Maximum Pool Size”	Homeland Security National Training Program, 2021	Texas A&M
“Instructor Selection Workflow”	EMI, 2016a	EMI
“Job Aid for Processing Micro Purchase Contracts”	EMI, 2017a	EMI
“Special Admit Procedures”	EMI, 2016b	EMI
“Contract Instructor Selection Standard Operating Procedure”	EMI, 2017b	EMI
“ICS Instructor Qualifications”	NIMS, undated	NIMS
Email template for course that is not biddable	None	EMI
Email template for missing required elements	None	EMI
Email template for request for branch chief review	None	EMI
Email template for missing course-specific requirements	None	EMI
Email template for grading rubric forms	None	EMI
Email template for reapply after two-year lapse	None	EMI
Email template for letter of rejection	None	EMI
Email template for request to apply as assistant instructor	None	EMI
Email template for bid eligibility notification	None	EMI
Email template for response email to instructor applicant request for feedback	None	EMI
Email template for instructions for uploading video	None	EMI
<b>Hiring</b>		
“Employee Code of Conduct”	Texas A&M University, 2019	Texas A&M

**Table A.1—Continued**

Document	Citation	Organization That Provided It to Us
“Contract Instructor Criteria”	EMI, undated-a	EMI
“Quotation/Bid Form”	EMI, 2022a	EMI
“Facility Access Request”	FEMA, 2021	FEMA
Instructions for nonfederal and federal EMI instructors for Registering with the System for Award Management	None	EMI
<b>Evaluation</b>		
<i>End of Course Evaluation Offering Report</i>	National Fire Academy, 2023	National Fire Academy
“NTED Training Partners Program Instructor Evaluation Form”	Texas A&M University, 2021c	Texas A&M
Summary of Kirkpatrick levels of evaluation	Texas A&M University, undated	Texas A&M
“Course Observation Form”	Texas A&M University, 2021a	Texas A&M
“Level One Evaluation Form”	Texas A&M University, 2021b	Texas A&M
National Disaster Preparedness Training Center after-action report template	National Disaster Preparedness Training Center, 2015	Texas A&M
National Disaster Preparedness Training Center instructor evaluation template	National Disaster Preparedness Center, undated	Texas A&M
“Summary Results from K1274 Teach-Back Evaluations”	National Flood Insurance Program, 2021	Naval Postgraduate School
“Executive Leaders Program Evaluation”	CHDS, undated-d	CHDS
“Evaluation Collection and Reporting for Executive Education Seminars”	CHDS, undated-c	CHDS
“Evaluation Collection and Reporting for EEP Short Courses”	CHDS, undated-b	CHDS
“Strategy and Innovation 2201/2202—Quarter 3 Course Evaluation Development”	CHDS, undated-e	CHDS
<b>Development</b>		
<i>National Training and Education Division (NTED) Manual: NTED Instructor Qualification Program for Non-FEMA Employees</i>	NTED, 2016	EMI, Texas A&M
<i>Air War College Faculty Requirements and Curriculum Development Handbook</i>	Air War College, 2022	Air War College

**Table A.1—Continued**

Document	Citation	Organization That Provided It to Us
“Instructor Certification Program for the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium”	Texas A&M University, 2009	Texas A&M
EMI Mitigation branch instructor feedback form	EMI, undated-b	EMI
“How to Become an EMI Training Instructor”	EMI, 2021	EMI
“Topics for September Focus Group”	FEMA, 2022d	FEMA
“NEMAA End of Year Focus Group Leadership Brief”	FEMA, 2022c	FEMA
Example focus group agenda	FEMA, 2022b	FEMA
<i>E/L/K 0449: Incident Command System Curricula Train-the-Trainer Instructor Guide</i>	FEMA, 2022a	FEMA
<i>POI-ELK-00449: Incident Command Curricula Train-the-Trainer</i>	FEMA, 2020	FEMA

NOTE: A&M = agricultural and mechanical.

BOX A.1

**Protocol for Interviewing Emergency Management Institute Staff**

Could you briefly describe your area of responsibility as [title]?

- [Probe] How many instructors are you responsible for? What type of instructor?
- [Probe] How many courses are you responsible for? What type of courses?

In your view, what are the most-important instructor areas of knowledge and skills? What kind of experience is important for instructors?

- [Probe] Specifically, thinking about your optimal instructor, what skills would this person have? What knowledge? What experience?
- [Alt probe: Show example EMI instructor job description] In this job description, what do you think is essential for your ideal instructor? What is missing from this job description?
- [Probe] What evidence would convince you that an instructor has those skills, knowledge, experience?

Can you describe the process for instructor hiring and development?

What are the strengths and gaps in current hiring, development approaches?

What are the anticipated needs in instructor hiring and development?

What models of training are most relevant for EMI? What would you want to know about their approaches?

NOTE: The protocol also included some probes specific to the interview, such as questions about train-the-trainer courses for EMI branches that offered them.



## Conduct Instructor Focus Groups

Researchers conducted two 90-minute focus groups, with eight EMI instructors total (see Box A.2 for the protocol). Focus groups included current and past instructors, hired mainly under micropurchase agreements.

## Identify Best Practices

Researchers tapped three sources to identify best practices for instructor hiring and development. In the EMI staff interviews, we asked about which practices respondents felt were most effective. We also reviewed the existing literature. Finally, we interviewed leaders at programs identified by EMI staff as exemplars in hiring and developing instructors.

BOX A.2

### **Protocol for Emergency Management Institute Instructor Focus Groups**

What EMI courses have you taught in the past 12 months?

For how many other organizations have you taught in the past 12 months?

Instructor knowledge and skills

- What skills have you found to be most essential as an instructor with EMI?

Strengths and gaps in current hiring and development approaches

- What are the strengths of the current system of instructor hiring? [Probe if not addressed] strengths in the recruitment process? Selection process? Hiring process? Matching instructors to courses?
- What are the weaknesses or gaps in the current system of instructor hiring? [Probe if not addressed] gaps in the recruitment process? Selection process? Hiring process? Matching instructors to courses?
- What steps would you recommend that EMI take to improve instructor hiring?
- What are the strengths of the current system of instructor development? [Probe if not addressed] strengths in instructor training? Evaluation?
- What are the weaknesses or gaps in the current system of instructor development? [Probe if not addressed] gaps in instructor training? Evaluation?
- What steps would you recommend that EMI take to improve instructor development?

Anticipated needs

Models of training that are most relevant for EMI

- Are there models for instructor development with which you are familiar that EMI should consider? [Probe if appropriate] If you taught with another organization, what training were you provided by that organization that might be relevant for EMI?
- Models from other training and education institutions?

## Review Literature for Best Practices

Researchers conducted a three-phase literature search to identify best practices in instructor hiring and development: (1) keyword searches of online document databases, performed by a professional librarian; (2) keyword searches of Google Scholar; and (3) targeted searches of corporate human resource journals and websites of specific organizations nominated by experts. We prioritized research that focused on

- the hiring or development of instructors rather than employees more broadly
- instructors who trained a population of adult professionals similar to EMI's target students.

Almost all the relevant articles identified in the open-ended database and Google Scholar searches examined adjunct or contingent instructors teaching at community colleges, professional (e.g., nursing) schools, and four-year universities (IHEs). In the past 16 or so years, IHEs in the United States have moved toward greater use of adjunct instructors (Banfield, 2021; Hearn and Burns, 2021; Nica, 2018; Wheaton, 2020). Adjunct instructors outnumber tenure-track faculty, holding 70 percent of the faculty appointments in U.S. IHEs (American Association of University Professors, 2018; Barnes, 2017). A substantial body of qualitative research has documented this shift and the challenges and strategies associated with a reliance on an adjunct instructor workforce, mainly on supporting and developing the instructors. In particular, much of the research focuses on adjunct, online instructors, even prior to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic forcing greater use of online instruction. This focus could be relevant to EMI as the organization considers greater use of online course delivery.

We considered literature on adjunct IHE instructors relevant to the EMI instructor project because their profile is very similar to that of EMI instructors. These instructors are typically defined as part-time staff in short-term, temporary positions. Their primary responsibilities are teaching, in contrast to full-time, tenure-track faculty, who also have research and organizational responsibilities. Adjunct instructors tend to have recent or current experience as practitioners. Although adjunct and EMI instructors have similar profiles, they do not have similar class participants: Adjunct IHE instructors tend to teach undergraduate students, while EMI instructors teach postbaccalaureate professionals.

We also examined the literature on gig workers. Although specific terms differed across authors, sometimes calling these workers *contingent* or *alternative* workers, there was broad agreement that there are fundamental differences between types of gig workers, with highly skilled, college-educated workers having different experiences and motivators from low-skilled workers. The first group is most consistent with the nature of EMI instructors. The literature on this group is the same literature already reviewed in the IHE body of evidence.

See Table A.2 for a summary of bodies of evidence included and Box A.3 for the database search parameters.

The Google Scholar searches focused on recruitment and hiring, as well as non-IHE organizations, to address gaps in the evidence. Again, we restricted the search to articles published in 2018 or later, although we conducted some exploratory searches to confirm that there were no relevant earlier articles. Again, these searches produced articles mainly about development of online instructors, and very few articles focused on hiring. See Box A.4 for search terms used individually and in various combinations.

We believed that, parallel to the education sector focusing on instructors, the business sector might have relevant literature on trainers that had not surfaced in the database and Google Scholar searches. Therefore, we also searched business journals and websites for research on hiring trainers. This group is relevant to the EMI instructor study because the course participants are on par with EMI course participants: professionals with undergradu-

**TABLE A.2**  
**Evidence Considered for Literature Review**

Subject of the Body of Evidence	Relevance to EMI Instructors	Limitation to Relevance	Included in Our Study
IHE	Greater use of part-time, adjunct, and online instructors	Most evidence is on instructors of undergraduates rather than of postbaccalaureate professionals.	Yes
Nursing education	Greater use of part-time, adjunct, and online instructors	Most evidence is on instructors of undergraduates rather than of postbaccalaureate professionals.	Yes
Teacher and principal education	Greater use of part-time, adjunct, and online instructors in university-based programs	Instructors outside universities tend to be full-time staff in the training organization.	Yes, but we found limited research
Corporate trainers	Delivering instruction to professionals	Instructors tend to be full-time staff embedded in the workplace.	Yes, but we found limited research
Corporate recruitment and hiring	Best practices from broader recruitment and hiring literature	The literature focuses on hiring full-time, noninstructional employees.	Included research reviews, but there were too many irrelevant studies
Military, police, and firefighting instructors	Work context similar to emergency management	Most of the research focuses on basic training.	No
Gig economy workers	Part time	The literature is mainly on those delivering noninstructional services rather than instruction.	Yes, but we found limited research

BOX A.3

## Literature Search Parameters

### Databases Searched

Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Scopus, Homeland Security Digital Library, EBSCO

### Screening Criteria

#### Recency

- Initial searches published 2013 or later.<sup>a</sup> *Because of the limited relevance of early articles, we refined the publication criterion to 2018 or later.*

#### Relevant sample

- Study participants taught adults in career or vocational programs.
  - Excluded studies of K–12 teachers
  - Excluded studies of executive development programs
  - Included studies of college instructors
  - *Included studies of training in professional programs and corporate settings*
- Study participants were short- to medium-term contract hires, not tenure-track faculty.
- Study participants taught in classes (whether in-person or virtual) rather than in one-on-one situations (e.g., mentoring, coaching).
- *Excluded studies conducted outside of the United States*
- *Excluded dissertations and theses*

#### Relevant outcomes

- The study covered the impact of recruitment, selection, hiring, or development practices or all four on instructor outcomes (e.g., retention, diversity of instructor pool, quality of instruction) and student outcomes (e.g., improved skills).
- *Given the lack of rigorous outcome research, the review included all empirical studies.*

#### Rigor

- The study used quantitative analysis to identify best practices.
- Strong ethnographic studies
- *Given the lack of rigorous outcome research, the review included all empirical studies.*

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NOTE: *Italics indicate modification to search strategy.* Somewhere between 2011 and 2015, there was a profound shift in higher education employment. For the first time, adjunct faculty outnumbered tenure-track faculty. At that time, there did not appear to be much research on adjunct faculty. Research might have increased since.

BOX A.4

**Google Scholar Search Terms**

Adjunct OR contingent OR parttime AND  
Instructor OR trainer OR faculty AND  
Recruit OR hiring AND  
Professional OR corporate OR business AND  
Education

ate or advanced degrees who are looking to improve their work-related skills and knowledge. However, the instructors tended to be full-time trainers embedded in the workplace, unlike EMI instructors. This literature is particularly relevant for questions of how to improve and support instructors.

We first searched three journals identified by Penn State University Libraries (2023) as the top human resource journals: *Personnel Psychology*, *Journal of Management*, and *Harvard Business Review*. We determined that the other journals listed were not relevant to this project (e.g., they focused on theory rather than practice or did not report research evidence). The search terms listed in Box A.3 yielded no research on effective hiring practices for trainers or instructors. However, there was a rich body of evidence on best practices for recruiting and hiring full-time corporate employees, which we summarized.

Following guidance from a RAND expert on corporate training, Shirley Ross, we searched two websites—ATD (undated) and Conference Board (undated)—for best practices on hiring and developing corporate trainers. ATD is a member organization providing support, information, and training and certification for instructors. The Conference Board is a member organization supporting corporate leaders.

Neither the ATD's nor the Conference Board's website provided research on the topics of interest. However, the ATD website did offer several blog posts and other articles with interesting points about hiring and developing trainers, which we cite in the report, and provided certification courses and tools designed to help instructors improve their instructional practice. Although they are not best practices in and of themselves, these resources might be useful if EMI has not already tapped them.

## Interview Leaders of Model Programs

We interviewed 12 leaders of model programs. We identified potential model programs through nominations and the literature as follows:

- nominated by senior EMI staff during their interviews
- nominated by senior HSOAC staff upon request
- identified in the literature review.

We completed interviews with people from 12 of the 22 programs identified and screened. Box A.5 provides the interview protocol, and Table A.3 lists the organizations whose representatives we interviewed.

## Samples

The samples for data collection were mainly purposive. This was necessary for this study, given our time and budget limitations. However, this sampling strategy limited the application of findings to other settings and might have affected findings. For example, a random sample of EMI staff might have provided different perspectives on strengths and gaps in EMI instructor hiring and development. See Rivera (2019) for a discussion of sampling strategies.

For EMI interviews, we aimed to speak with senior leaders who were most knowledgeable about the organization and instruction within EMI. We purposively selected senior leaders in the model organizations to interview because they could best speak to the organizations' instructor hiring and development practices.

We selected model organizations on a nomination basis, hypothesizing that those in the field would best identify organizations that could operate in an EMI-like context. We recognize that this might have introduced a bias by ignoring organizations that were not nominated. However, the nomination was robust, with far more organizations than we had capacity to interview, from a variety of sectors.

Although we aimed to randomly select instructors for one of the focus groups to get an authentic sample of perspectives, because response rates were so low, we ultimately had a convenience sample of volunteers. Therefore, there are limits to how well the findings from focus groups generalize. We added a second, purposively selected focus group to incorporate people whom EMI leaders identified as having unique positions and perspectives.

BOX A.5

**Model Program Interview Protocol**

Please describe the types of instructors you hire into your program. Are they adjuncts or short-term contracts? Long-term (more than one year) contracts? Tenure track? Other? [If you have more than one type of instructor, please focus on the short-term contract instructors.]

What is your approach to recruiting, selecting, and hiring instructors?

- What has been successful?
- What would you change about the process?
- What do you wish you had known when you first developed the process?
- [If placing instructors with classes is not described] How do you place instructors into specific courses?
- Would you share any documents (e.g., process map, guidance) that describe this process?
- Do you have requirements for selecting low bids for instructors' applications to teach, or do you pay a set amount?

What is your approach to developing instructors at your institution?

- Do you provide required or optional training?
- What has been successful?
- What would you change about the process?
- What do you wish you had known when you first developed the process?
- Would you share any documents (e.g., orientation manual for instructors, syllabus for training courses) that describe instructor training?

How do you evaluate your instructors?

- What are the criteria or rubrics? Would you share your evaluation form?
- How and when do you collect instructor evaluations? What data tool or system do you use?
- How do you use instructor evaluations in managing your programs?

What are your criteria for qualified instructors?

Is there anything we have not yet asked but should have?

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NOTE: Protocols also included some probes specific to the interview.

**TABLE A.3**  
**Model Programs Whose Representatives We Interviewed**

Category	Program
War colleges	Air War College
	Army War College
	Marine Corps War College
	U.S. Naval War College
Other U.S. Department of Defense programs	CHDS
	U.S. Coast Guard Academy
FEMA training organizations	FEMA Center for Domestic Preparedness
	National Fire Academy
University-based programs	New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (New Mexico Tech), FEMA Homeland Security National Training Program
	Texas A&M Engineering Extension Office training facility
	Other
International Association of Emergency Managers	



# Abbreviations

AHJ	authority having jurisdiction
AI	artificial intelligence
A&M	agricultural and mechanical
ATD	Association for Talent Development
BC	branch chief
CHDS	Center for Homeland Defense and Security
CM	course manager
CREW	Civilian Reservist Emergency Workforce
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
EMI	Emergency Management Institute
EMPP	Emergency Management Professional Program
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FPO	Federal Emergency Management Agency program office
HSOAC	Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center
ICS	Incident Command System
IHE	institution of higher education
IPA	Intergovernmental Personnel Act
MPOC	micropurchase point of contact
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NTED	National Training and Education Division
SLTT	state, local, tribal, and territorial
TS	training specialist



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s part of its redesign, the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) is rethinking how it secures qualified, effective instructors.

For support in this redesign, EMI asked a Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center team to help improve its instructor hiring and development practices. The goal of the research was to examine EMI's current process, pinpoint strengths and challenges, and identify best practices in managing its instructor cadre across the spectrum of activities, from recruitment and hiring to evaluation and development. The team interviewed EMI staff, consulted the research literature, and identified best practices from other institutions to develop recommendations to improve every phase of the process.

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