



Evaluation of Gender Equity in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Training Process for New Special Agents and Intelligence Analysts at the FBI Academy



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Introduction

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Training Division (TD) is responsible for administration of the FBI Basic Field Training Course (BFTC) at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia. The BFTC, which began in 2015, is a systematic, integrated curriculum that embodies training standards taught to New Agent Trainees (NAT) and New Intelligence Analyst Trainees (NIAT).

In 2019, several former NATs and NIATs filed a lawsuit against the FBI, alleging gender discrimination at the FBI Academy. Following a request from the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary, the U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (OIG) initiated this evaluation of policies and practices, trends, and patterns for male and female trainees, as well as perceptions of gender equity at the FBI Academy. The OIG did not evaluate the specific allegations made in the lawsuit, which remains pending in a U.S. District Court.

The OIG evaluation covered BFTC classes from 2015 through 2020 and assessed gender equity at the FBI Academy by analyzing data on training outcomes for male and female trainees, examining whether policies and practices could have disproportionate effects on men and women, and collecting and reviewing trainees' and FBI Academy employees' perceptions about gender equity.

As a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the need to conduct COVID-19 related oversight work, the OIG put this review on hold for approximately 10 months, between March 2020 and January 2021.

Recommendations

In this report, we make seven recommendations to improve factors that affect gender equity at the FBI Academy.

Results in Brief

We found that positive training outcomes, such as graduation rates, were generally equitable; however, we also found that female NATs received a disproportionate number of Suitability Notations (SN) in several areas and were dismissed at rates higher than their overall representation in the BFTC population. We also identified concerns in the disparity of treatment in several areas of the BFTC curriculum, especially the Academy's handling of tactical and defensive tactics training. Finally, we determined that women have been underrepresented as tactical and defensive tactics instructors.

Female and Male Trainees Graduated at Comparable Rates, but Female New Agent Trainees Received a Disproportionate Number of Dismissals and Negative Tactical Training Evaluations

During the scope of our evaluation, 33 percent (1,629 of 4,970) of all trainees, NATs and NIATs, in the BFTC were women. Women composed 25 percent of NATs and 60 percent of NIATs.

During our examination of SNs, which are issued to trainees for training deficiencies in need of correction, we found that in several categories female NATs received a proportion of SNs (36 percent) greater than their representation among all NATs (25 percent). This was especially the case with respect to tactical training SNs, which were the most common type of SN issued to all NATs. Additionally, while only 3 percent (135 out of 4,970) of all trainees were dismissed between 2015 and 2020, we found that women represented 44 percent of NATs referred to a Trainee Review Board (TRB) and women represented 46 percent of NATs who were dismissed, despite that, as noted above, they represented only 25 percent of all NATs.

We also found that, while most of the trainee award categories were based on objective criteria, one award category had no criteria for the selection of the pool of trainees eligible to receive the award. This lack of criteria creates the potential for bias in the selection.

A Substantial Number of Women Reported Inappropriate Behavior and Inconsistent Instructor Evaluations of Trainees Based on Gender

Most Academy instructors and trainees believed that trainees were treated equally, regardless of their gender. However, significant percentages of both male and female trainees described particular training areas in which they perceived that men and women were treated differently. For example, 43 percent of female NATs surveyed by the OIG believed that men were treated more favorably during the assessment and evaluation aspects of tactical training. In addition, we found that male and female trainees surveyed and interviewed experienced a negative training environment and had unprofessional interactions with instructors. Specifically, 50 percent of female survey respondents stated that instructors told sexist stories or jokes.

We found that both male and female trainees expressed a fear of receiving SNs, which was heightened during tactical training, and that SNs may be a factor in the negative perception of the training environment. Trainees expressed in trainee assessments that this fear resulted in some students not fully engaging in tactical training or not asking questions for fear of punishment and dismissal. We also learned that, even though the Academy has made efforts to evaluate and ensure consistency, trainees still described a lack of consistency among instructors as an issue. For example, 45 percent of female survey respondents reported being evaluated differently because of their gender. We observed that the Academy relies on each individual instructor to both instruct and evaluate trainees during tactical training, which may result in inconsistency across instructors. While the TD implemented new policies and practices in 2018 regarding how tactical instructors evaluate trainees and utilize SNs, these changes were not put into effect until 2019, when the Practical Applications Unit (PAU) had leadership changes. These changes have coincided with reduced dismissals, but they are

too recent for the OIG to discern their overall effect on outcomes or the training environment.

Women Have Been Substantially Underrepresented as Tactical and Defensive Tactics Instructors

Between 2015 and 2020 the PAU had 33 male tactical instructors and only 1 female tactical instructor. Similarly, the Physical Training Unit, responsible for defensive tactical instruction, had 21 male defensive tactics instructors and only 1 female defensive tactics instructor.

We identified two factors that contributed to the small number of women in instructor—and especially tactical instructor—roles. First, we found that during the scope of our evaluation few women applied to open positions for these roles. Second, we determined that the requirements for becoming a tactical instructor during this period limited the number of female FBI employees who would qualify to serve as an instructor because women did not often have the mandatory Special Weapons and Tactics or Hostage Rescue Team and firearms instructor certifications.

In OIG survey and interview responses, stakeholders emphasized the benefits of having more women serve in these positions. For example, they believed that female instructors could more effectively communicate with female NATs regarding tactical concepts, weapon placement, and firearms skills. However, we found that the TD does not currently have specific recruitment plans to increase the number of women serving in these positions as instructors. Recently, Academy leadership made changes to remove certain certification requirements for PAU tactical instructors that may increase gender diversity in these instructor positions; but such efforts have not yet been formalized in policy. We believe that having more female instructors would have a positive effect on training for men and women by creating an environment in which NATs feel more comfortable approaching and receiving instruction and feedback from a variety of instructors. We also believe that increasing gender diversity in the tactical and defensive tactics instructor staff may have a positive effect on women's success in the BFTC program for NATs, especially since tactical training has generated the highest number of SNs and dismissals for female NATs.

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Introduction

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Training Division (TD) is responsible for administration of the Basic Field Training Course (BFTC). The BFTC is the training curriculum taught at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, to New Agent Trainees (NAT) and New Intelligence Analyst Trainees (NIAT) so they can become FBI Special Agents and Intelligence Analysts, respectively. From 2015 through 2020, 4,970 personnel—3,914 NATs and 1,056 NIATs—entered the FBI Academy. Women composed 33 percent (1,629 of 4,970) of all trainees who entered the Academy during that period, making up 25 percent of NATs (997 of 3,914) and 60 percent of NIATs (632 of 1,056).¹

On May 29, 2019, 16 plaintiffs, all former FBI NATs and NIATs, filed a putative class action lawsuit against the Attorney General in his official capacity as head of the FBI, alleging gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and an overall hostile work environment at the FBI Academy, and claiming that the training process is highly subjective and has an adverse impact on female trainees.² Plaintiffs allege that tactical instructors applied gender-based stereotypes, judged female trainees more harshly than male trainees, and singled out females in tactical exercises because of gender-based stereotypes. The Complaint further alleges that FBI Academy instructors issued performance citations, called Suitability Notations (SN), to female NATs and NIATs in a discriminatory manner and dismissed them from the FBI Academy more frequently and for less serious infractions than their male counterparts. The civil action remains pending in a U.S. District Court.

On June 26, 2019, due to allegations of discrimination described in the lawsuit, the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary requested that the U.S. Department of Justice (Department, DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigate gender discrimination at the FBI Academy. The OIG initiated this evaluation to assess gender equity at the FBI Academy by comparing trends and patterns in the outcomes of male and female trainees, examining whether policies and practices could have disproportionate effects on men and women, and gathering perceptions about gender equity from trainees and staff.³ Gender equity is commonly defined as fair treatment for both genders, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of benefits and opportunities. The OIG did not evaluate the specific allegations made in the lawsuit, nor did we assess whether FBI personnel had engaged in discriminatory practices.

¹ For the purposes of our analysis, we separately counted each time an individual matriculated into the BFTC, resulting in those trainees who entered a BFTC course and recycled into a subsequent course being counted more than once.

² Class Complaint for Violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Rehabilitation Act, *Bird v. Garland*, No. 19-CV-1581 (D.D.C. May 29, 2019). The Complaint has since been amended in numerous respects, such as to include a seventeenth plaintiff and class representative. See Fourth Amended Complaint, *Bird v. Garland*, No. 19-CV-1581 (D.D.C. June 22, 2022).

³ As a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the need to conduct COVID-19 related oversight work, the OIG put this review on hold for approximately 10 months, between March and December 2020.

The OIG's findings in this report build upon the findings of the OIG's June 2018 report on gender equity in the Department's law enforcement components.⁴ During our 2018 review, leadership of each of the four reviewed DOJ components, including the FBI, told the OIG that they were striving to increase the diversity, including gender diversity, of staff to better represent the population they serve. However, the OIG found in 2018 that the components' actions to increase the representation of women were limited. In addition, the OIG found that women accounted for less than 20 percent of Special Agents and Special Agents in Charge and only 22.9 percent of Senior Executive Service positions at the FBI. Accordingly, the issues covered in this evaluation of gender equity at the FBI's Training Academy can further inform the FBI's efforts to increase the number of female Special Agents. Ensuring that the women recruited by the FBI to become Special Agents have an equal opportunity to successfully graduate from the Academy is a first step toward improving gender diversity at all levels and functions of the FBI and is critical to the FBI achieving its goal that its staff better represent the population it serves.

Background

In this section, we describe the overall structure of the FBI Academy; the BFTC, which is the training course that candidates must pass to become Special Agents or Intelligence Analysts; and how the Academy evaluates and provides feedback to trainees. We also describe how the Academy recognizes superior performance through awards and how it identifies and addresses performance deficiencies, including those that result in resignations and dismissals.

FBI Academy Organizational Structure

Figure 1 below illustrates the TD's relevant sections and units responsible for NAT and NIAT training at the FBI Academy.

⁴ See DOJ OIG, [Review of Gender Equity in the Department's Law Enforcement Components](https://www.oversight.gov/sites/default/files/oig-reports/e1803.pdf), Evaluation and Inspections Report 18-03 (June 2018), www.oversight.gov/sites/default/files/oig-reports/e1803.pdf. This report assessed gender equity in the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; FBI; Drug Enforcement Administration; and U.S. Marshals Service.

Figure 1

FBI Academy Sections and Units Involved in NAT and NIAT Training as of 2020



Source: FBI TD

FBI Academy Instructors

The TD oversees and administers the BFTC curriculum and appoints Supervisory Special Agents and Supervisory Intelligence Analysts to serve as instructors to teach and evaluate trainees. Instructors teach trainees in the subject areas listed in the next section. FBI staff who become instructors apply to teach at the Academy for a maximum 5-year term. Throughout the scope of the OIG evaluation, 18 percent (157 of 887) of instructors at the Academy were women.

The Basic Field Training Course

In 2015, the FBI initiated its BFTC to train NATs and NIATs.⁵ In the BFTC, NATs and NIATs initially train together, receiving over 260 hours of integrated lessons over 12 weeks. The BFTC includes academic and practical exercises designed to prepare NATs and NIATs for the FBI's combined law enforcement and national security mission. NATs and NIATs take courses in subject areas such as intelligence reporting, critical thinking, interviewing, interrogation, leadership, and legal. There are five BFTC classes in a typical year, with each class composed of four sections. Throughout the scope of our evaluation, there were an average of 151 NATs and 41 NIATs in each class and therefore an average of about 38 NATs and 10 NIATs in

⁵ Prior to 2015, NATs and NIATs received separate training. Then the BFTC replaced the distinctly separate basic training programs historically required for NATs and NIATs. The goal of the BFTC has been to prepare Intelligence Analysts and Special Agents for success in an intelligence driven, threat based, and operationally focused FBI.

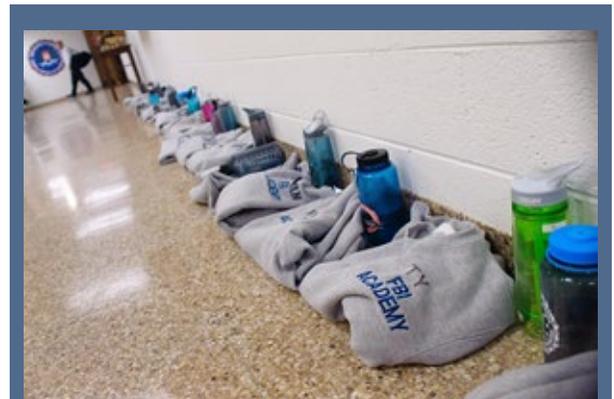
each of the four sections. Throughout the BFTC, NATs and NIATs are tested on their knowledge and development of the various skills necessary for their positions. During the scope of our evaluation, trainees had two chances to pass their performance tests; if a trainee was unable to pass after two attempts, he or she was dismissed from the Academy.⁶ After the integrated training is complete, NATs continue at the Academy for an additional 7 weeks to learn the skills needed to become Special Agents. Special Agent-specific subject areas include defensive tactics, evidence preservation and collection, tactical vehicle driving, tactical training, and firearms.

BFTC Class Management

The Trainee Management Unit (TMU) is responsible for mentoring, leading, and evaluating trainees. The TMU has two Class Supervisors (one Supervisory Special Agent and one Supervisory Intelligence Analyst) and three Class Counselors (two Special Agents and one Intelligence Analyst) assigned to each section.⁷ Class Supervisors' primary responsibility is to ensure that trainees are complying with the FBI's New Agent and Intelligence Analyst Graduation Requirements.⁸ In addition, Class Supervisors are expected to maintain a supervisor-to-subordinate relationship with trainees and do not provide curriculum-based training. Class Counselors enforce the Academy's rules; maintain administrative records; and provide support to trainees, including arranging meals for trainees whose schedules prevent them from dining in the cafeteria. Class Counselors must also be accessible to trainees and TMU staff at all times.

Training and Assessment Areas in the BFTC

The FBI Academy instructs and evaluates trainees on a variety of topics. According to the BFTC Requirements document, instructors use written and performance-based examinations to continuously test and assess trainees' grasp of and ability to apply the required foundational core knowledge and basic skills necessary to be successful as an Intelligence Analyst or a Special Agent. Written tests are graded, with a score of 80 percent required to pass. Performance tests and law enforcement skills tests require trainees to produce a work-related product or perform a work-related task or law enforcement skill. Trainee scores are determined by rubrics or checklists that are completed by an instructor who reviews the product or observes the task.



Trainee Belongings Outside of a Classroom

Source: FBI TD

⁶ On December 5, 2021, the FBI changed its test failure policy for trainees to give NATs three chances to pass their written, performance, and/or law enforcement skills test and NIATs two chances to pass their written and/or performance test.

⁷ Class Counselors can be staff from FBI headquarters or field offices who are assigned to a BFTC section.

⁸ Throughout this report, we refer to the BFTC New Agent and Intelligence Analyst Graduation Requirements as the BFTC Requirements document.

Below, we briefly describe the major training topics, as outlined and described in the BFTC Requirements document, including the standards and evaluation method(s) for each:⁹

- **Academics:** Academic training consists of subject areas including analytical writing, intelligence, briefing, core knowledge, investigative policies and procedures, interview and interrogation, and legal. Trainees receive written and performance tests in these academic areas, and they must achieve a passing test score. Trainees may receive academic awards, as determined by grade point average for academic tests.
- **Physical Training:** During the scope of our evaluation, NATs took the Physical Fitness Test (PFT), at the New Agent Standards for their gender, once during Week 1 of training and again during Week 9.¹⁰ NATs had to successfully complete one PFT to graduate from the BFTC. A physical fitness award is given to the trainee who scores the highest on the four core PFT events: sit-ups, 300-meter sprint, push-ups, and 1.5-mile run.
- **Firearms:** The Firearms Training Unit trains and continually evaluates NATs' ability to handle weapons safely and apply the fundamentals of marksmanship. NATs must pass several weapons assessments with a minimum passing score of 80 percent. A "Top Gun" award is given to the trainee who scores highest on the firearms qualification courses.
- **Defensive Tactics:** NATs learn the tools, tactics, and options for self-protection and arrest procedures. In addition to demonstrating competence in each of these areas, NATs must meet minimum performance standards on a law enforcement skills test, demonstrating tactical proficiency through role playing as assessed by an instructor who observes in real time.
- **Tactical Training:** During tactical training, NATs engage in various practical exercises designed to simulate real-life scenarios they might encounter as FBI Special Agents. FBI Academy personnel evaluate trainees based on their real-time observations of the trainees' demonstration of proficiency with law enforcement skills and adherence to FBI policies.



NATs Participating in a Tactical Exercise

Source: FBI TD

⁹ For a further description of these topics, evaluation methods, and dismissals, see [Appendices 3](#) and [4](#).

¹⁰ On December 5, 2021, the FBI changed its PFT policy and now administers three PFTs. Participation in the first two PFTs is mandatory, and the third PFT is required for NATs who did not achieve a passing score on the first two PFTs. NATs who fail all three PFTs will be dismissed from the BFTC.

Trainees must also adhere to the Academy's six suitability dimensions—conscientiousness, cooperativeness, emotional maturity, initiative, integrity, and judgment—throughout their time at the Academy (see [Appendix 3](#)).

In addition to the awards noted above, within the first 2 weeks of training, Class Supervisors select two Section Leaders, one NAT and one NIAT, at their discretion. Class Supervisors also have discretion to select one trainee in their section to have the distinction of serving as the Section Spokesperson. Typically, Class Supervisors select the Section Leader to serve as the Section Spokesperson but the Class Supervisor may have the trainee section vote for a Section Spokesperson. Near the end of the BFTC, the Section Spokespeople compete in a “speech-off,” in which TMU Class Supervisors and Class Counselors vote to award the honor of Class Spokesperson (also known as Class Leader) to one NAT and one NIAT per class.

Identifying Training Deficiencies, Corrective Action, and Dismissal

Throughout the BFTC, TD personnel assess and evaluate trainees' proficiency in knowledge and performance of the skills being taught. Underperforming trainees may be given corrective feedback and assessed to determine their suitability for FBI employment generally and for being FBI Special Agents or Intelligence Analysts specifically. The BFTC Requirements document states that a trainee may be dismissed from the BFTC due to failure to meet the necessary proficiency standards (as indicated by failed written, performance, or law enforcement skills tests); exhibiting behavior inconsistent with the suitability dimensions; failure to adhere to the Standards of Conduct; or failure to adhere to the FBI Academy Honor Code.¹¹ Trainees may also resign from the Academy at any time.¹² Below, we discuss the Academy's process for addressing and resolving deficiencies.

¹¹ According to the BFTC Requirements document, the FBI Standards of Conduct outline employees' responsibility to conduct themselves with integrity, whether on or off duty.

The FBI Academy Honor Code, to which all trainees must adhere, is as follows: “As a trainee of the FBI Academy, I devote myself to the pursuit of truth and knowledge. I subscribe to the highest standards of honesty, integrity, fidelity, and honorable behavior. I will not condone the actions of those who would use a dishonest means to attain these ethical goals.”

Trainees may also be dismissed from the Academy for security reasons, such as a failure to obtain a security clearance.

¹² Trainees who determine that they no longer want to become a Special Agent or an Intelligence Analyst may resign at any time, including if the trainee has been or will be “recycled” or if the trainee is under Suitability Review. Recycling happens when TD management officials decide to remove a trainee from the BFTC with the intention of placing him or her in a subsequent class of BFTC trainees. A trainee may resign from the FBI entirely or may resign from training without resigning from the FBI, which permits management to consider the trainee for employment with the FBI in another role. According to the Trainee Management Unit's Resignation/Recycle/Dismissal Standard Operating Procedures, if the TD recommends a resigning trainee for further FBI employment, supervisors will ensure that the resigning trainee provides his or her resume to the Human Resources Division. The document also states that the Human Resources Division should then reach out to the resigning trainee within a day or two to discuss further employment options.

When trainees are recycled as a result of a Trainee Review Board (TRB) based on a training performance deficiency, it is generally because the TRB believes that the trainee could successfully complete the training and overcome the identified issues in a subsequent class. Trainees may also be recycled for medical and personal reasons. The most common reason for recycling is medical, when injury or illness causes the trainee to miss too many training days or he or she becomes medically unfit to continue training. A trainee may also request to be recycled for personal or family reasons, which may include a death or serious illness in his or her immediate family or some other significant event that takes the trainee away from training.

Suitability Notations

Trainees can receive SNs, or performance citations, for failure to meet the necessary proficiency standards in the various training areas or failure to adhere to the suitability dimensions (conscientiousness, cooperativeness, emotional maturity, initiative, integrity, and judgment). Many of the training areas, such as academics and physical fitness, are judged based on objective standards and tests, while other areas rely on instructors' observations, which, although based on professional judgment and training rubrics, can be subjective. According to the BFTC Requirements document, trainees may receive SNs from Academy staff for behavior or performance issues that may reflect either negatively or positively on the trainee's overall suitability dimensions. In tactical training evaluation, trainees also may receive Tactical Feedback Forms (TFF) for failure to meet tactical standards (e.g., misapplication of deadly force, failure to take lifesaving action or protect others, or improper weapon handling).¹³ Practical Applications Unit (PAU) staff consider TFFs to be less serious than SNs, but a TFF still documents training deficiencies and can rise to an SN if the trainee repeatedly makes the same type(s) of mistake(s).¹⁴

Suitability Review

When a trainee does not meet the suitability dimensions or demonstrates unacceptable performance, the TMU may request that the TD's Executive Management evaluate the trainee's suitability to remain in training. The TMU provides information to the TD's Executive Management, which determines whether the trainee should either remain in training in a Suitability Review status until the BFTC is complete or have his or her case considered by a Trainee Review Board (TRB).¹⁵ This decision is based on a judgment about the totality of the trainee's performance. Prior to 2018, the PAU would recommend Suitability Review for NATs who had received three SNs. However, there is no specific number of SNs that automatically results in consideration by a TRB.

During a TRB, TD Executive Management is provided with facts and circumstances, including, but not limited to, SNs; examination scores; statements from witnesses, including the trainee; and other FBI Academy records addressing the totality of the trainees' proficiencies and deficiencies, to inform a recommendation about the trainee's suitability and ability to continue in the BFTC.¹⁶ The TRB then submits a recommendation to the Assistant Director of the TD on whether the trainee should be allowed to continue in the current BFTC, be recycled into a subsequent class of BFTC trainees, or be dismissed from the Academy. The TD's Assistant Director makes the final determination.

Scope and Methodology of the OIG Evaluation

In this evaluation, we examined the FBI policies, practices, trends, and patterns related to gender equity regarding male and female NATs and NIATs in the BFTC at the FBI Academy. We also evaluated gender equity for Academy trainees through an overall comparison of outcomes between men and women and by

¹³ SNs and TFFs document training deficiencies exhibited by a NAT or NIAT. See below for a further description.

¹⁴ The PAU trains and evaluates NATs on tactical skills.

¹⁵ FBI, Suitability Review and Trainee Review Board Standard Operating Procedures, March 5, 2019, 3.

¹⁶ TD Executive Management consists of the Assistant Director, the Deputy Assistant Director, the Section Chiefs, and the Assistant Section Chiefs within the TD. The Assistant Director does not take part in the TRB but instead makes a final determination on the status of a trainee based on the information obtained and the recommendation of the TRB.

collecting and reviewing trainees' and FBI Academy employees' perceptions about gender equity through OIG interviews, an OIG survey, and FBI trainee assessments collected by FBI Academy management during training.¹⁷ When analyzing trainee data, we categorized the BFTC's classes based on the year a BFTC class started. Our methodology consisted of document review and analysis and in-person and telephonic interviews of the FBI Academy's leadership, staff, and trainees who participated in the BFTC from 2015 through 2020. We further discuss the methodology of the evaluation in [Appendix 1](#) and summarize the survey results in [Appendix 2](#).

¹⁷ The FBI collects feedback and assessments from trainees through focus groups, course evaluations, and surveys. The information collected is not specific to gender equity but, rather, focused on evaluating BFTC content. Throughout this report, we refer to this information as "trainee assessments."

Results of the Evaluation

Female and Male Trainees Graduated at Comparable Rates, but Female New Agent Trainees Received a Disproportionate Number of Dismissals and Negative Tactical Training Evaluations

Our analysis of New Agent Trainee (NAT) and New Intelligence Analyst Trainee (NIAT) data indicates that women and men had similar overall graduation rates. Specifically, we found that during the 6-year scope of our evaluation 94 percent of women graduated (1,527 of 1,629) and 96 percent of men graduated (3,192 of 3,341). However, our analysis identified other areas of concern that warrant the FBI's attention. Our analysis of Suitability Notations (SN), citations for performance deficiencies, showed that female NATs received a disproportionate number of SNs as compared to their overall representation at the Academy.¹⁸ Of particular concern are disparities in SNs during tactical training and dismissals resulting in part from trainees' performance during tactical training. Additionally, while only 3 percent of trainees were dismissed from the Academy between 2015 and 2020 (135 out of 4,970, including 105 NATs and 30 NIATs), we found that female NATs were dismissed at rates higher than their overall representation. Below, we discuss the gender-specific outcome data, both positive and negative, that we found during our evaluation. We also found that, although the majority of trainee award categories have objective criteria, one award category lacks criteria for the selection of the pool of trainees eligible for the award.

Female NATs Received SNs Disproportionately, Especially in Connection with Tactical Training

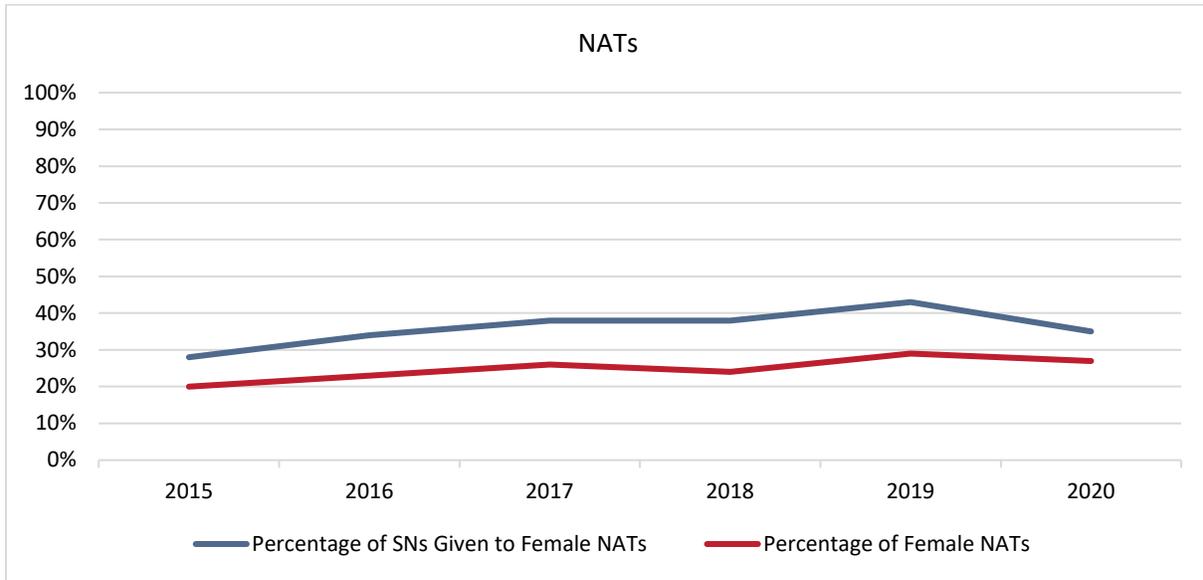
We found that for the study period of our evaluation female NATs received SNs at higher rates and were dismissed disproportionately to their share of the population; but this was not the case for female NIATs. As shown in Figure 2 below, between 2015 and 2020 female NATs consistently received a disproportionate number of SNs compared to their overall share of the population. Specifically, female NATs received 36 percent of all SNs issued to NATs (1,150 of 3,231) compared to their 25 percent of the NAT population while female NIATs received SNs at rates lesser than or nearly equal to their overall representation among NIATs in all but one year of our study period.¹⁹

¹⁸ The OIG did not analyze the particular facts and circumstances, including the specific conduct or performance deficiencies, that led to the issuance of SNs and dismissals.

¹⁹ During three years of our study period, female NIATs received SNs at rates lower than their overall representation. In 2015, female NIATs received 33 percent of SNs while representing 47 percent of NIATs; in 2017, they received 41 percent of SNs while representing 60 percent of NIATs; and in 2019, female NIATs received 50 percent of SNs while representing 61 percent of NIATs. However, we note that the total number of SNs issued to NIATs was low when compared to NATs, with only 288 SNs given to NIATs from 2015 through 2020 compared to 3,231 SNs given to NATs during the same period.

Figure 2

Percentage of SNs Given to Female NATs, Compared to Overall Percentage of Female NATs, 2015–2020

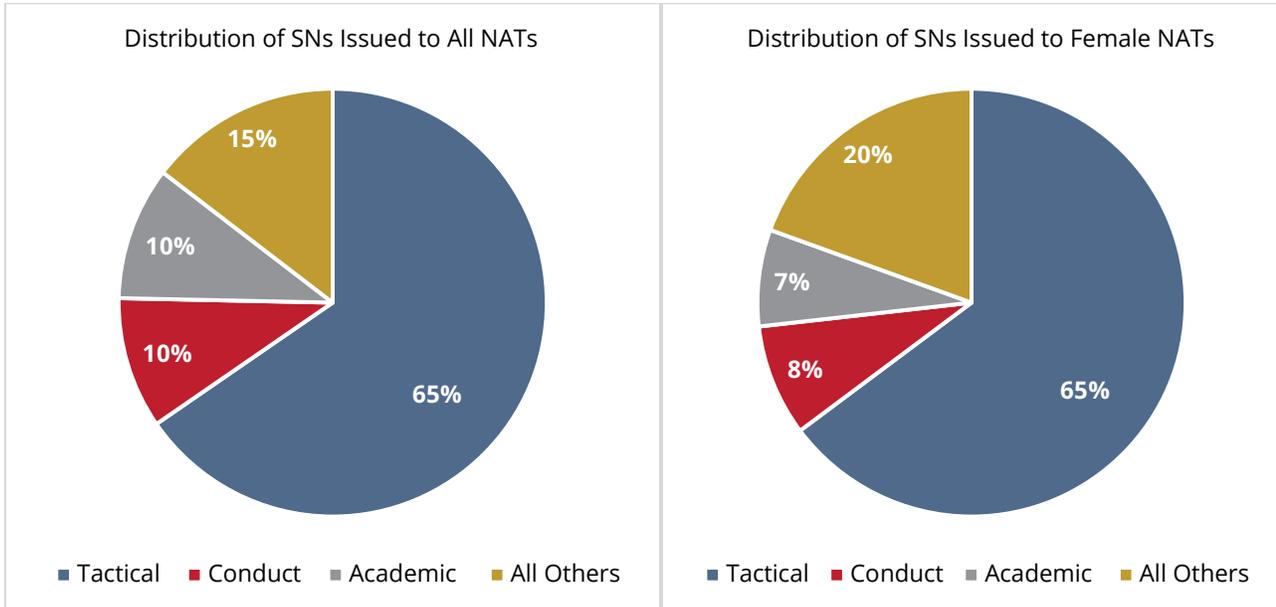


Source: OIG analysis of FBI data

Further, we found that SNs for tactical training deficiencies were the most common type of SN for male and female NATs, as well as the most common factor contributing to NATs being sent to a Trainee Review Board (TRB) to be considered for dismissal. When we looked at the makeup of SNs issued to women and the makeup of SNs issued to all trainees, shown below in Figure 3, the distribution of types of SNs issued to women was comparable to the distribution of types of SNs issued to all trainees. However, as shown below in Figure 4, when we compared the total number of SNs issued to men and women by SN category, we found that female NATs received a disproportionate number of SNs when compared to their proportion of the population in seven of the eight categories.

Figure 3

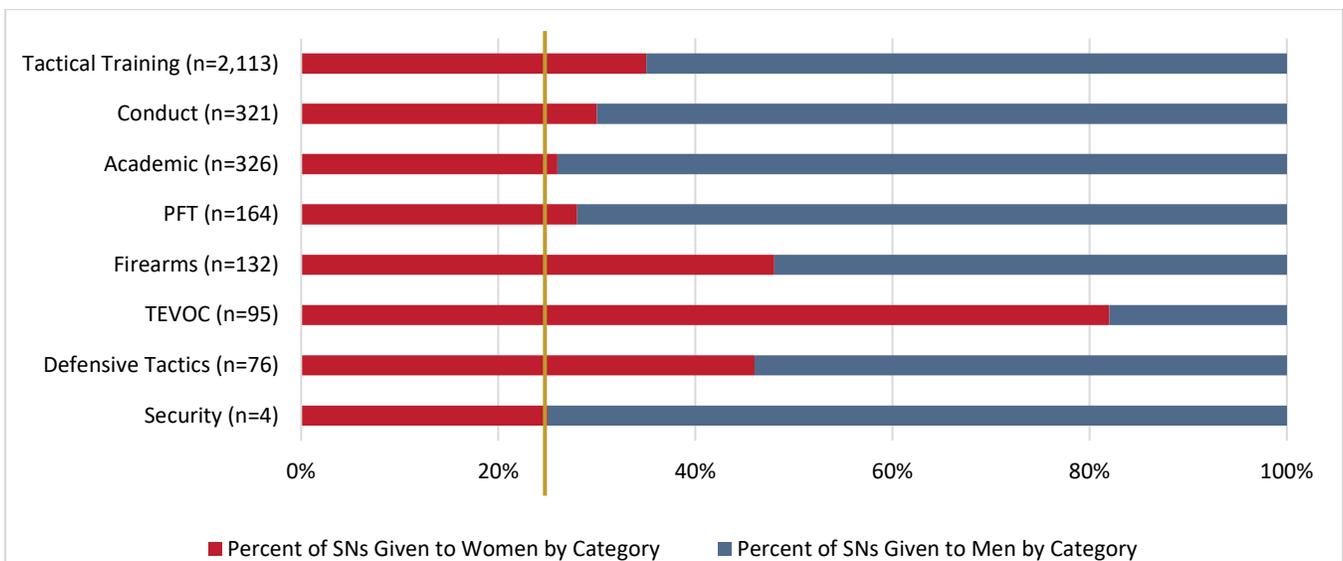
Distribution of SNs Issued to All NATs vs. Female NATs, 2015–2020



Source: OIG analysis of FBI data

Figure 4

Distribution of SNs Issued to NATs, by Category and by Gender, 2015–2020



Notes: PFT=Physical Fitness Test; TEVOC=Tactical Emergency Vehicle Operations Center. The gold line represents the average percentage of women among NATs (25 percent) over the course of our evaluation.

Source: OIG analysis of FBI data

Three of the SN categories in which women received a higher percentage of SNs compared to their population—Tactical Emergency Vehicle Operations Center (TEVOC, referring to tactical vehicle driving); firearms; and defensive tactics—represented a small amount of all SNs and rarely led to dismissal or referral to a TRB. Although we believe that the disproportionate numbers of SNs in these categories warrant further examination by the FBI, so that it can work to ensure that the Basic Field Training Course (BFTC) treats men and women equitably, we focused on tactical training SNs because we found that they represented the greatest number of SNs issued to all NATs and were a larger factor in disproportionate TRB referrals and dismissals for female NATs as compared to male NATs. In most cases, tactical training SNs, like all categories of SNs, did not lead to dismissals or TRBs and instead documented trainee deficiencies in job skills or failures to maintain standards.

Trainee Dismissals Were Rare, but Female NATs Were Disproportionately Referred to TRBs and Dismissed from the Academy

While the total number of trainees dismissed from the BFTC was low—3 percent, or 135 (105 NATs and 30 NIATs) out of 4,970 total trainees, female NATs were dismissed from the Academy at rates higher than their share of the population. Similarly, the largest share of trainee dismissals for men and women (67 of the 135) occurred after the Training Division (TD) convened a TRB, during which TD executives consider whether dismissal is warranted based on a trainee’s overall performance and conduct, and female NATs appeared before a TRB and experienced dismissals at rates that were disproportionate to their share of the population.²⁰

Overall, we found that tactical training SNs contributed to the greatest number of TRB or New Agent Review Board (NARB) referrals and that tactical training SNs were more common for female NATs sent before a TRB and subsequently dismissed from the BFTC than for male NATs sent before a TRB and subsequently dismissed from the BFTC.²¹ Specifically, 58 percent of all 55 NAT TRB dismissals involved at least 1 tactical training SN. As illustrated in Figure 4 above, tactical training SNs were issued to women at rates disproportionate to their overall representation in the BFTC. Specifically, women received 35 percent of tactical training SNs (745 of 2,113) while representing only 25 percent of NATs from 2015 through 2020. Moreover, 21 out of 27 TRBs resulting in female NAT dismissals involved at least 1 tactical training SN while only 11 out of 28 TRBs resulting in male NAT dismissals involved at least 1 tactical training SN. As discussed earlier, there is no specific number of SNs that would trigger a referral to a TRB. However, we found that,

²⁰ The TRB issues suitability-based dismissals through consideration of the trainee’s entire performance at the Academy, including a review of SNs received, performance on tests, and statements from Academy personnel. The TRB uses this information to decide whether to dismiss or retain the trainee. Most TRBs that we examined involved SNs for tactical training or conduct. It was not within the scope of this evaluation to analyze the particular facts and circumstances of each TRB referral or decision because the process involves review of the trainee’s overall performance, progress, and suitability.

The non-suitability-based dismissals that did not result from a TRB were due to defined nondiscretionary reasons such as security clearance issues or failures to meet defined proficiency standards; we did not identify concerns related to non-TRB dismissals.

²¹ The NARB was the predecessor to the TRB. For the purposes of this report, we address dismissals from them collectively.

although 52 percent (2,027 of 3,914) of all NATs received at least one SN, only 3 percent (68 of 2,027) of NATs who received at least one SN were referred to a TRB.

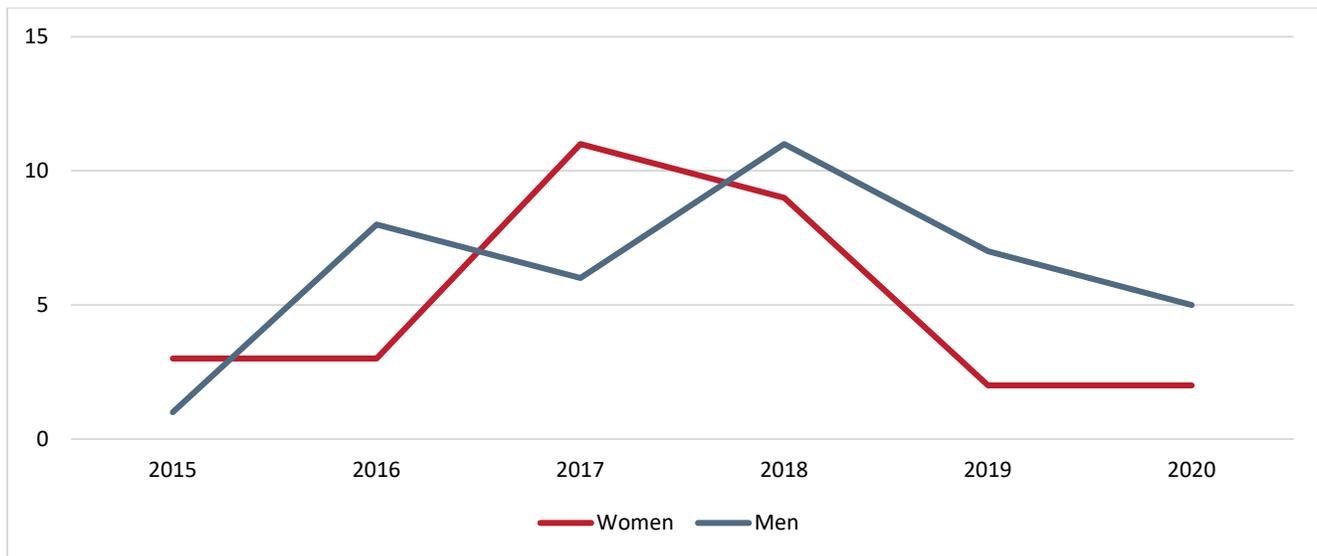
Female NATs Were Disproportionately Referred to a TRB

We found that a disproportionate number of female NATs were referred to a TRB: 30 of the 68 NATs (44 percent) referred were women. Since women made up on average about 25 percent of NATs during the scope of our evaluation, it is notable that in some years the number of women referred to a TRB was nearly equal to or greater than the number of men referred. Further, we found that women were more likely than men to be referred to a TRB for a tactical training SN. Eighty percent (24 of 30) of female NAT referrals involved at least 1 tactical training SN, whereas only 41 percent (16 of 38) of male NAT referrals involved 1 or more tactical training SNs.

We also found a notable increase in the number of female NATs referred to TRB in 2017 and 2018. Specifically, Figure 5 below compares the TRB referrals by gender during the scope of our evaluation.

Figure 5

NATs Referred to the TRB by Gender, 2015–2020



Source: OIG analysis of FBI data

Women Were Dismissed at Rates Disproportionate to Their Overall Share of NATs

We found that, in each year of our scope, the Academy dismissed female NATs at a rate higher than their overall representation in the BFTC. There were not similar discrepancies for NIATs (see the text box). Specifically, women represented 46 percent of all NAT dismissals (48 of 105) during our total evaluation period and a disparity in male versus female dismissals relative to their proportion of the population occurred during each year of the period under evaluation. In total, 5 percent of all female NATs were dismissed from the Academy while 2 percent of all male NATs were dismissed. Figure 6 below displays the differences between the numbers of male and female NATs dismissed during the BFTC classes from 2015 through 2020. Figure 7 below displays a gap between women as a proportion of all NATs and women as a proportion of dismissed NATs by year from 2015 through 2020.

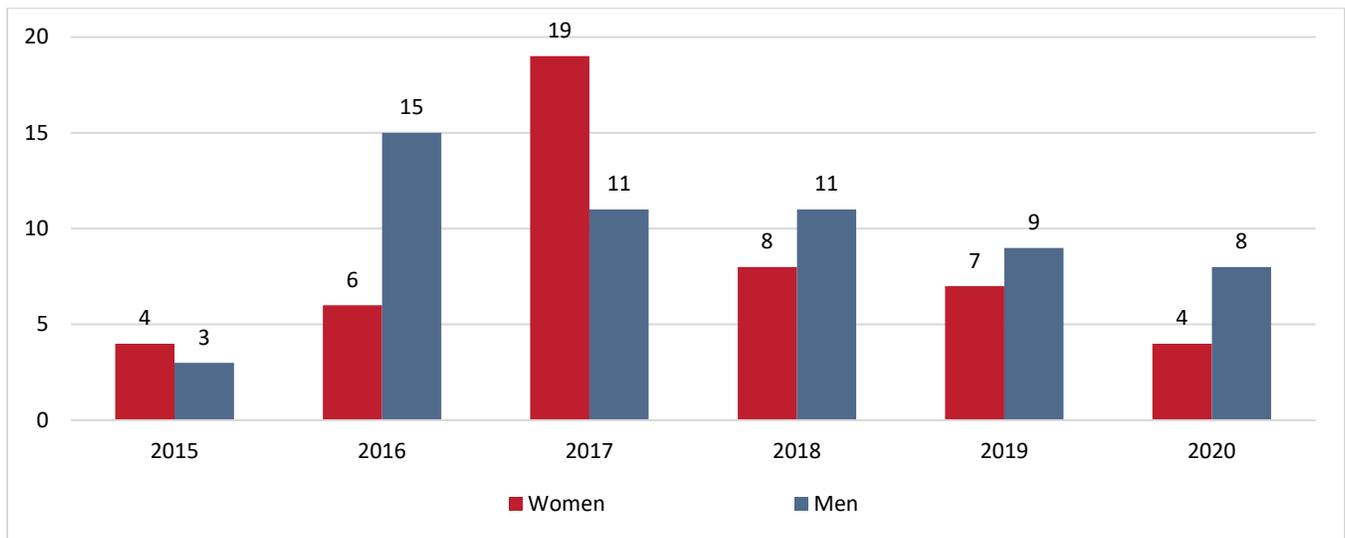
NIAT Dismissals

Only 30 of the 1,056 NIATs who attended the FBI Academy between 2015 and 2020 were dismissed. We found that female NIATs were not disproportionately dismissed from the Academy. Specifically, women composed 58 percent (7 of 12) of NIAT TRB dismissals and 57 percent of total NIAT dismissals (17 of 30). Further, all but 12 of the NIAT dismissals were for nondiscretionary reasons, including 17 dismissals for academic failures and 1 for a security clearance issue. Approximately 3 percent of all female NIATs and 3 percent of male NIATs were dismissed. Due to the relative proportionality between genders and the small number of NIAT dismissals, we did not examine NIAT dismissals further.

Source: OIG Analysis of FBI data

Figure 6

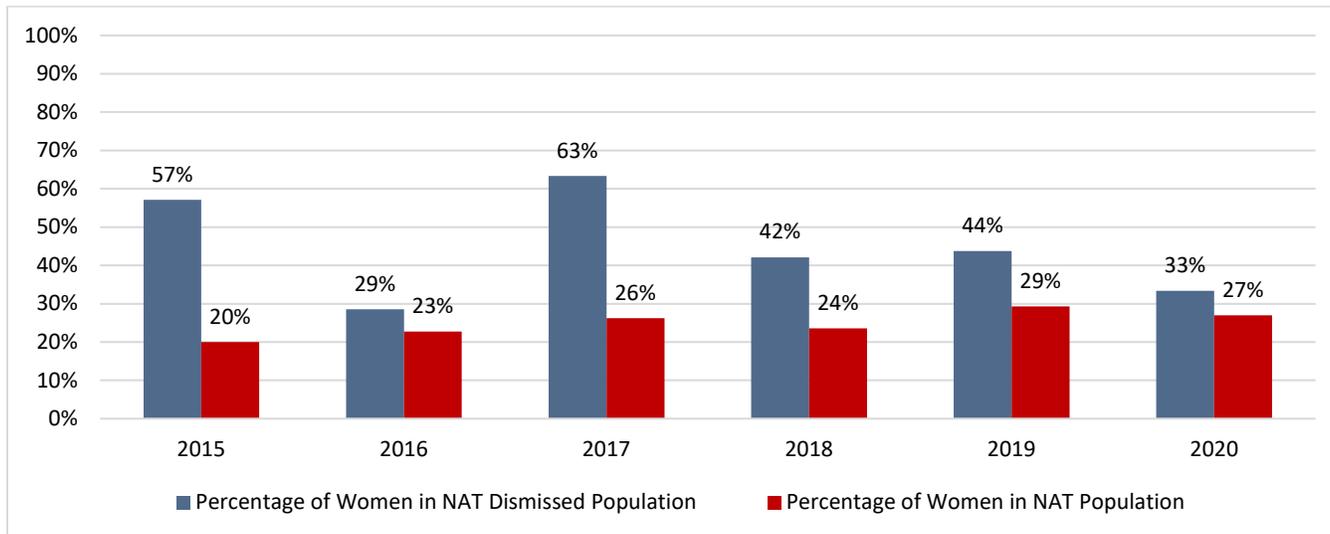
NATs Dismissed from the BFTC by Gender, 2015–2020



Source: OIG analysis of FBI data

Figure 7

Percentage of Women in NAT Dismissed Population Compared to Percentage of Women in NAT Population, 2015–2020



Note: An average of 25 percent of the NATs were women over the scope of our evaluation.

Source: OIG analysis of FBI data

In addition, we found that TRB referrals resulted in the greatest number of dismissals during our evaluation period and female NATs were disproportionately dismissed by a TRB. We found that 68 NATs were referred to a TRB during the scope of our evaluation. Of these 68 referred NATs, 44 percent (30 of 68) were women, even though women made up only about 25 percent of NATs. Of the 105 NATs who were ultimately dismissed from the BFTC during the scope of our evaluation, 52 percent (55 out of 105) were dismissed after TD convened a TRB.²² Women composed 49 percent (27 of 55) of these TRB dismissals for NATs, and only 10 percent (3 of 30) of women who went before a TRB were retained or recycled—as compared with 26 percent (10 of 38) of men who went before a TRB. As we discussed above, it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to analyze the facts, circumstances, or decisions of each TRB. However, we believe that it is reasonable to question whether Academy instructors applied different assessment standards to each gender in view of the disproportionate number of female NATs who were dismissed by TRB.

Non-TRB Trainee Dismissals

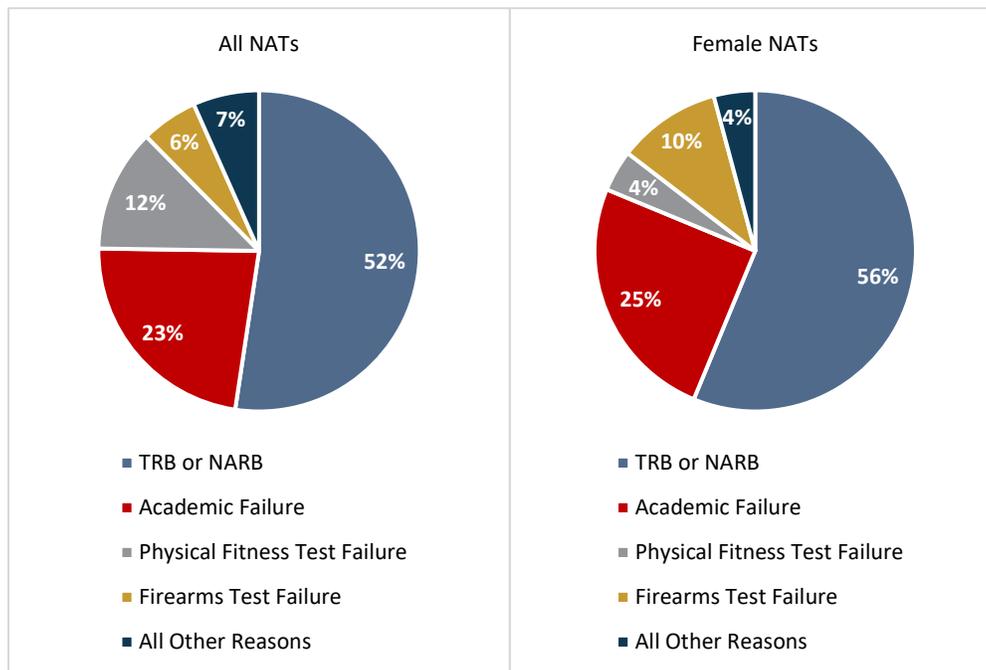
Although the most common form of dismissal was through a TRB, Academy leadership can dismiss trainees for other reasons, such as misconduct, failures to meet academic standards, and security reasons. We found that these non-TRB dismissals were not discretionary, represented fewer NAT dismissals than the

²² For an explanation of the TRB process, see the [Introduction](#) of this report.

TRB, and did not present clear opportunities for subjectivity or bias to play a role. Figure 8 below illustrates the distribution of dismissal reasons for all NATs and female NATs in the BFTC from 2015 through 2020.

Figure 8

Reasons for Dismissal for All NATs and for Female NATs, 2015–2020



Note: “All Other Reasons” includes defensive tactics test failure, tactical skills test failure, security clearance issues, and TEVOC failure.

Source: OIG analysis of FBI data

The Process for Selecting the Group of Trainees Eligible to Receive One of the BFTC Awards Lacks Criteria, Which Creates the Potential for Bias

NATs and NIATs are eligible for various awards during their time at the Academy. These include awards for academic performance and Class Leader selection, for which both NATs and NIATs are eligible, and for physical fitness and firearms performance, which are available only to NATs. Three of the four awards have objective criteria that determine the trainee selected. However, we found that one of the four categories of awards—Class Leader—has no criteria to determine the selection of the trainees who are eligible to receive the award, which creates the potential for bias in the selections.

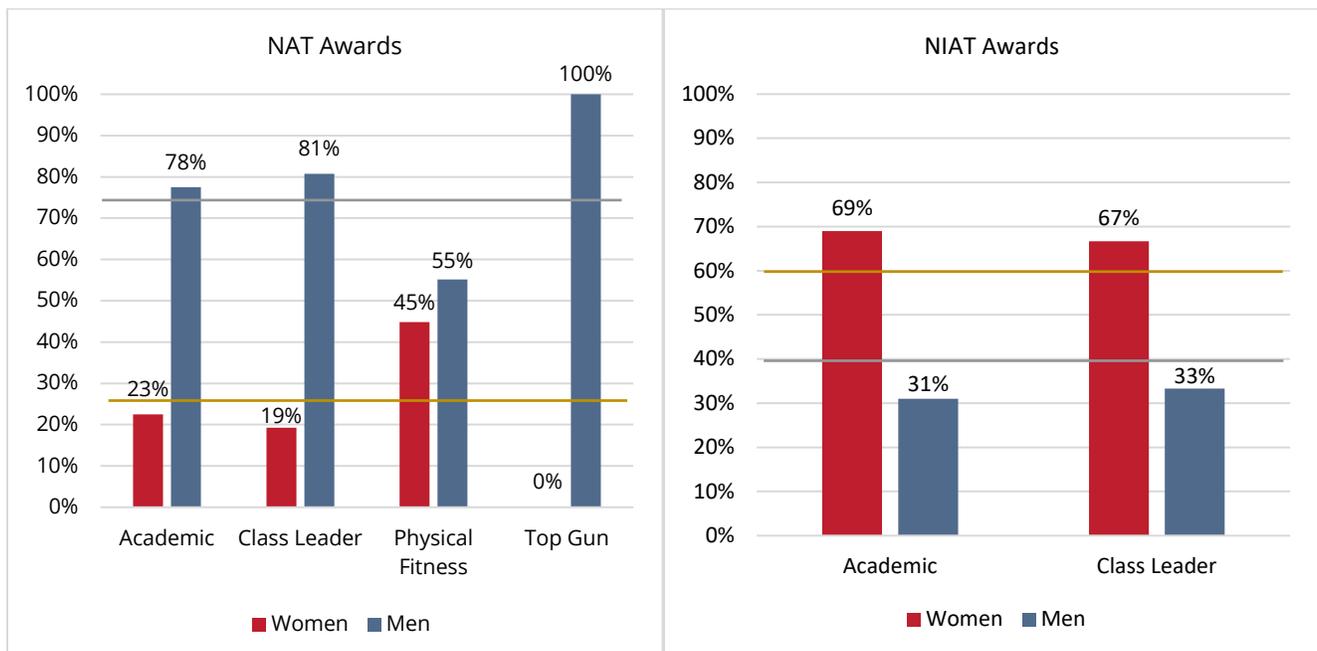
We found that the TD has no criteria for the selection of the Section Spokesperson, which determines the pool of trainees who are eligible to compete for the Class Leader award in a “speech-off” competition judged by Class Supervisors and Class Counselors near the end of the BFTC. Specifically, the Trainee Management Unit (TMU) Supervisor’s Handbook states that Class Supervisors have the discretion for how they select the Section Spokesperson. The lack of criteria for the selection of the Section Spokesperson creates a risk that

the selection for this position, which narrows the pool of trainees who are eligible for the Class Leader award, could be affected by bias.

As shown in Figure 9 below, we found that, among NIATs, women received awards at rates higher than their overall representation at the Academy (60 percent of NIATs were women). Among NATs, we found that women received academic awards at a rate that was slightly below their proportion of the NAT population, Class Leader awards at a rate that was below their proportion of the NAT population, and physical fitness awards at a rate that was higher than their proportion of the NAT population during our study period. We also found that the “Top Gun” award for performance in firearms was not awarded to a woman during the 6-year period we examined.²³ However, we did not receive negative feedback or testimonial evidence about the Top Gun award from the former trainees we interviewed or surveyed.

Figure 9

Percentage of Awards Given to NATs and NIATs by Gender, by Category, 2015–2020



Notes: The gold lines represent the average percentage of women among NATs (25 percent) and NIATs (60 percent) and the silver lines represent the average percentage of men among NATs (75 percent) and NIATs (40 percent) over the course of our study period. NIATs are eligible only for academic awards and selection as Class Leader. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number and may not add up to 100 percent.

Source: OIG analysis of FBI data

²³ The Top Gun award is given to the NAT who achieves the highest scores on five qualification requirements. If there is a tie, the higher score on the Bull’s Eye determines the winner.

Conclusion

We believe that the discrepancies in the data related to SNs, TRBs, and dismissals detailed above, as well as the lack of criteria for the selection of trainees eligible to receive the Class Leader award, warrant further attention by the FBI. Although we did not analyze or make judgments regarding individual SNs, TRBs, or dismissals, our analysis highlights areas that are more subjective and may have caused the disproportionate dismissals for women, thus illustrating the potential for inequity in the BFTC. In order to appropriately train and promote qualified candidates, it is in the TD's interest to continue to monitor and analyze this data to identify equity concerns and inform changes to training where warranted. These steps will also help to minimize perceptions of bias.

Recommendations

To address the disproportionate numbers of female NATs receiving SNs, being referred to a TRB, and being dismissed from the Academy, as well as the potential for bias in the selection of the trainees eligible for the Class Leader award, we recommend that the FBI:

1. Maintain, review, and analyze data related to Suitability Notations, Trainee Review Boards, and trainee dismissals to identify and address potential equity concerns.
2. Develop criteria for the selection of the Section Spokesperson, ensure that the criteria address any risks of bias, and ensure that the criteria are adequately communicated to trainees.

A Substantial Number of Women Reported Inappropriate Behavior and Inconsistent Instructor Evaluations of Trainees Based on Gender

While most trainees we interviewed and surveyed stated that trainees were treated equally at the FBI Academy, some male and female trainees reported negative training experiences.²⁴ Specifically, male and female trainees said in FBI trainee assessments, OIG survey responses, and interviews that they observed unprofessional behavior such as instructors telling sexist stories and treating them differently based on their gender. While the TD has processes to ensure that trainees are evaluated fairly, several trainees described instructor inconsistency and perceived bias, particularly in tactical training, and some trainees were not sure whether these inconsistencies were based on trainee performance or other factors. Trainees' risk of being considered for a Suitability Review may increase if an instructor is inconsistent or biased in issuing SNs to trainees. In addition, we observed that the Practical Applications Unit (PAU) relies on single instructors to assess trainees during most tactical training exercises. This could be a factor in trainees' reporting of inconsistency and potential bias in instructors' evaluations because there is limited oversight of how a single instructor may be evaluating individual tactical exercises.

²⁴ To assess perceptions of gender equity at the FBI Academy, we surveyed and spoke to trainees who attended the Academy during the BFTC in 2015–2020. We asked trainees about their experiences and perceptions of various aspects of the Academy, including of gender equity, instructors' evaluation of trainees, and the Suitability Review process. We also spoke with current and former instructors and asked them about their perceptions of gender equity and the Suitability Review and TRB processes. See [Appendix 1](#) for more information on the OIG survey methodology and [Appendix 2](#) for a summary of survey results.

While the Majority of Survey Respondents Did Not Report a Disparity in Treatment Based on Gender, a Significant Number of Women Believed that Men Were Treated More Favorably in Some BFTC Training Areas

Overall, the majority of OIG survey respondents—53 percent of female NATs, 70 percent of male NATs, 58 percent of female NIATs, and 69 percent of male NIATs—disagreed or strongly disagreed that there was disparity in the treatment of Academy trainees based on gender. Moreover, during interviews, trainees and instructors described an equitable environment in which trainees were afforded equal opportunities to succeed. While the majority of male and female OIG survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that there was disparity in treatment based on gender, a substantial number of respondents agreed that there was disparity. In addition, when we further analyzed the survey responses by gender and instruction type, we found that a high number of women believed that they were not assessed and evaluated fairly because of their gender and we identified specific BFTC training areas in which women believed that they were treated differently because of their gender.

In order to assess trainees' perceptions of treatment in the Academy, we asked them whether men or women were treated more favorably in specific BFTC training areas (academic, tactical, defensive, firearms, and physical fitness) and specific categories of instructor action (instruction of curriculum, assessment and evaluation, and instructor support).²⁵ Overall, a majority of all survey respondents believed that men and women were treated equally in every training area and category of instructor action. For instance, 90 percent of all survey respondents believed that men and women were treated equally in the academic instruction area of the BFTC. The category in which the highest percentage of female survey respondents believed that women were treated equally was instruction of curriculum for the academic training area, at 92 percent for female NATs and 83 percent for female NIATs, and the category in which the lowest percentage of female NAT survey respondents believed that women were treated equally was assessment and evaluation for the tactical training area, at 52 percent. Table 1 below provides additional details on how trainees responded to these sets of questions. In addition, during interviews, most trainees expressed to us that they believed they were evaluated objectively and did not witness gender-based treatment of trainees.

²⁵ We define the BFTC training areas as academic, tactical, defensive tactics, firearms training, and physical fitness.

Table 1

Percentage of Survey Respondents Who Believed that Men and Women Were Treated Equally in Training Areas, by Gender and by Category of Instructor Action

Training Areas	Respondent Gender	Instruction of Curriculum	Assessment and Evaluation	Instructor Support
Academic-NIAT	Men	86%	81%	75%
	Women	83%	77%	71%
Academic-NAT	Men	93%	80%	81%
	Women	92%	74%	80%
Tactical	Men	88%	68%	73%
	Women	72%	52%	63%
Defensive Tactics	Men	88%	74%	77%
	Women	75%	69%	77%
Firearms	Men	89%	87%	77%
	Women	85%	87%	81%
Physical Fitness	Men	N/A	77%	86%
	Women	N/A	85%	88%

Note: The academic training area had both NIAT and NAT respondents; all other training areas had NAT respondents only.

Source: OIG survey

While the majority of all survey respondents indicated that men and women were treated equally in every training area, several survey respondents had mixed views on disparity of treatment in one or more areas of the BFTC curriculum, especially of the Academy's handling of tactical and defensive tactics training. In response to the survey, 43 percent (148 of 344) of female NAT respondents believed that men were treated more favorably during the assessment and evaluation aspect of tactical training. To compare across other areas of training and the views between men and women on whether men were treated more favorably than women, please see Table 2 below.

Table 2

Percentage of Survey Respondents Indicating that Men Were Treated More Favorably in Their Assessment and Evaluation in Each BFTC Training Area

Assessment and Evaluation within the Training Areas	Men Treated More Favorably	
	Male Respondents	Female Respondents
Academic–NIAT	14%	22%
Academic–NAT	5%	25%
Tactical	12%	43%
Defensive Tactics	6%	27%
Firearms	3%	12%
Physical Fitness	2%	11%

Notes: The academic training area had both NIAT and NAT respondents; all other training areas had NAT respondents only. In addition, “Assessment and Evaluation” includes the phases of training during which trainee performance is tested and evaluated.

Source: OIG survey

We also found that some male NATs believed that female NATs were treated more favorably. Twenty percent of men believed that women were treated more favorably when their performance was being assessed by tactical instructors. A much smaller percentage of women, only 5 percent (17 of 344), shared this sentiment. Several survey respondents said that female NATs who struggled with tactical training, defensive tactics, or firearms training were given more specialized time and tailored one-on-one instruction than their male counterparts. While some trainees viewed the extra attention as women receiving additional assistance from training instructors, other trainees perceived the extra attention as instructors singling out and overly scrutinizing female trainees. For instance, a female survey respondent observed that women received more attention in areas such as firearms and tactical training but this resulted in women receiving more negative feedback and SNs.

A Substantial Number of Women Reported Inappropriate Instructor Behavior

A substantial number of women described instructor behavior, including telling sexist stories, using offensive language, and other inappropriate behaviors, that went against the FBI’s Code of Conduct.²⁶ Through OIG interviews, OIG survey responses, and FBI trainee assessments, some male and female trainees provided feedback on many aspects of training that depicted the culture at the Academy as unprofessional, particularly in tactical training. Male and female trainees spoke of hearing derogatory

²⁶ According to the FBI Code of Conduct, “All FBI employees are expected...to act in accordance with the highest standards of personal honor and integrity.” FBI Ethics and Integrity Program Policy Directive and Policy Guide, February 2, 2015, 3-1.

language and a fear of reporting issues, which we believe created an environment not conducive to learning. Table 3 below summarizes how trainees responded to survey questions related to their interactions with instructors.

Table 3

Survey Respondents Reporting Negative Interactions with Academy Staff

Academy Staff/Instructors:	Respondents That Reported Experiencing Any of the Below Interactions			
	Women		Men	
	Percent	Count	Percent	Count
Spoke to me in a demeaning manner because of my gender	41%	233	5%	37
Treated me as if I were incompetent because of my gender	40%	227	4%	28
Told sexist stories or jokes	50%	285	20%	151
Made offensive remarks about my appearance or body	22%	126	5%	39
Made references to people of my gender in insulting or offensive terms	39%	221	6%	48
Told me to be more aggressive because of my gender	40%	229	7%	50
Provided trainees of my gender with less support compared to trainees of the opposite gender who were doing the same job	40%	227	22%	164
Criticized trainees of my gender more compared to trainees of the opposite gender who were doing the same job	48%	273	15%	114
Evaluated me differently because of my gender	45%	253	19%	145

Note: The results here are from respondents that selected “Always,” “Sometimes,” or “Rarely” when answering survey questions about their interactions with Academy staff and instructors.

Source: OIG survey

One of several areas of concern highlighted in Table 3 above is a permissive culture in which Academy staff and instructors, as well as fellow trainees, told sexist stories and/or jokes. Fifty percent of female survey respondents said that this type of behavior occurred during their time at the Academy. In comparison, only 20 percent of male survey respondents said that instructors told sexist stories or jokes.



During OIG interviews, OIG survey responses, and FBI trainee assessments, some NATs described instructors disparaging trainees' immutable characteristics such as race or gender and telling women to be more aggressive because of their gender, which could create a negative learning atmosphere. For example, in response to the OIG survey, 40 percent of women said that Academy instructors told them to be more aggressive because of their gender. One female respondent stated, "I was regularly pulled aside by my section SSA [Supervisory Special Agent] and told that because I was a woman, I was inherently weaker and needed to be more aggressive, more stoic, and that I was too hesitant." Another female respondent witnessed instructors making sexist or offensive comments about women and people of color, and she said that these actions reinforced her perceptions of the offensive aspect of the FBI culture.

In addition, in FBI trainee assessments from 2017, a group of trainees detailed concerns about instructor demeanor overall and described instances in which trainers punished NATs who improperly applied deadly force by having other NATs shoot at their backs with inert training weapons at close range.²⁷ According to the trainee assessment summaries, besides finding no learning value from this action, the NATs who described this incident found it "painful to watch." While this instance is not related to gender, it provides an example of instructors exhibiting inappropriate behavior toward trainees.

Male and Female Trainees Reported Fear of Receiving SNs, and a Majority of Survey Respondents Did Not Believe that They Could Raise an Objection to an Instructor's Performance Assessment

One of the factors that may create a negative training environment at the Academy is the use of SNs. For example, one survey respondent believed that SNs were too often issued based on a trainee's lack of experience in a certain area, rather than his or her competence or ability, and that the training environment turned into avoiding SNs as opposed to truly learning and absorbing the knowledge taught at the FBI Academy. Male and female trainees said in survey responses, interviews, and FBI trainee assessments that they were afraid of receiving SNs. While this sentiment was expressed by both men and women, female NATs received SNs disproportionately to their percentage of the NAT population, as discussed earlier in this report, particularly in tactical training. Further, when asked whether they felt that they could raise an objection to an instructor's assessment of their performance, 55 percent of all survey respondents (755) said no.²⁸ Specifically, 68 percent of women and 46 percent of men felt that they could not raise an objection. Of those 755 male and female respondents who felt that they could not object, 65 percent (489) said that one of the reasons was that they wanted to avoid receiving an SN. Other reasons these respondents

²⁷ For tactical training, the PAU provides NATs with various inert, nonlethal training weapons, such as weapons similar to paintball guns. NATs must treat these training weapons as if they are functional weapons that fire live rounds.

²⁸ See [Appendix 2](#) for a summary of the survey data.

provided were that they were worried about reprisal (64 percent) and that they did not want to call attention to themselves (73 percent). We provided an opportunity for survey respondents to explain or elaborate on why they could not raise an objection, how they were affected by disparity in treatment, and whether they had any recommendations to improve gender equity. Male and female respondents said that they were either afraid to report issues or wanted a better system to report issues, such as an anonymous method outside of the chain of command. A female survey respondent explained that if trainees spoke up about issues they were labeled “dramatic and singled out in class.” Moreover, several respondents said that they tried to blend in with other trainees by keeping silent to avoid SNs.

We also found that the fear of receiving SNs was heightened during tactical training. Some NATs and former Academy staff told us that NATs received a lot of SNs in tactical training, which had a negative effect on trainee perception of tactical training. This aligns with data presented earlier in this report demonstrating that SNs in tactical training were the most common type of SN for male and female NATs. FBI trainees expressed in trainee assessments that this resulted in some students not fully engaging in tactical training or not asking questions for fear of punishment and dismissal. A current and a former Academy staff member also noted a period when there were a high number of SNs and said that the environment was one in which trainees were scared and could not make and learn from mistakes. They explained that NATs dubbed “Hogan’s Alley”—the location within the FBI Academy where tactical training is taught—as “Suitability Alley” due to the high number of SNs given there.²⁹ One trainee spoke of being “nervous every day and [having] panic attacks knowing that I had to continue to show up daily to [the PAU] knowing I could do everything right in a scenario but could get written up saying otherwise and knew that my voice would not be heard.”

PAU leadership and instructors told us that, between 2016 and 2018, TD leadership encouraged tactical instructors to strictly enforce tactical standards by issuing SNs and sought to dismiss trainees who did not meet standards. This corresponds with the spike in dismissals we noted above. One former Class Counselor who served during our review period told us that tactical instructors excessively punished NATs’ mistakes with SNs, and she believed that this led to trainees feeling that they were not allowed to make mistakes. This Class Counselor told us that she did not experience this type of punishment and that trainees were allowed to make mistakes when she completed training at the Academy before the development of the BFTC.

Trainees Identified Concerns Regarding Instructors’ Inconsistent Evaluation of Trainees and Related Perceptions of Bias

Some trainees believed that instructors were inconsistently instructing and evaluating trainees, particularly in tactical training, which may have contributed to a poor learning environment. In addition, a significant number of female survey respondents reported bias in their treatment from Academy staff and instructors.

²⁹ Hogan’s Alley is the name of a realistic town the FBI Academy uses to teach NATs tactical techniques while immersed in realistic and stressful scenarios. FBI, “[Tactical/Hogan’s Alley](https://www.fbi.gov/services/training-academy/hogans-alley),” www.fbi.gov/services/training-academy/hogans-alley (accessed April 21, 2022).

FBI Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Cases and Inquiries Regarding Trainee Dismissals

In October 2018, the FBI's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity Affairs (OEEOA) notified TD leadership about a pattern of inquiries and cases against the TD. The OEEOA observed a trend of increasing cases beginning in 2015, with a significant spike in 2018: a 340 percent increase in informal filings, up from 5 in 2017 to 22 in 2018. Most cases in 2018 (12 of 22) involved allegations that female NATs or NIATs were dismissed on the basis of sex.

A majority of the 12 female trainees specifically identified the Tactical Training Unit (TTU) in their complaints and named TTU instructors as those who discriminated against them. These individuals alleged that some TTU instructors' intentional targeting and intimidation of female NATs resulted in higher dismissals of female NATs and muted their participation in training.

The OEEOA recommended that the TD review TRB decisions from 2016 through 2018 to ensure that all were properly carried out, documented, and maintained.

The Assistant Director of the OEEOA provided two all-hands Equal Employment Opportunity trainings to the TD in 2018 and 2019 and one training to the TTU in 2019. In March 2019, the OEEOA followed up and noted that it had received nine new inquiries since October 2018. This represented a 30 percent reduction in cases when compared with the same timeframe in 2018.

Source: FBI OEEOA

As shown above in Table 3, 48 percent of women reported Academy staff and instructors criticizing women more compared to trainees of the opposite gender and 45 percent of women reported being evaluated differently because of their gender.³⁰ In addition, in FBI trainee assessments several women reported feeling "terrified" of the PAU and "targeted" during tactical training because they perceived that women were more likely than their male colleagues to receive SNs or go before a TRB. Both male and female survey respondents and interviewees told us that the inconsistencies in instructing and evaluating trainees during tactical training resulted in some trainees receiving SNs for their actions while others did not receive SNs for similar actions. Some of these respondents believed that women were judged more harshly during instructors' assessments and evaluations compared to their male counterparts. Furthermore, several female survey respondents said that they received SNs for certain mistakes also committed by male trainees who did not receive SNs. Some instructors we interviewed told us that, while it is rare for a trainee to receive an SN for a similar action for which another trainee did not, it could occur if a trainee was unable to articulate the action he or she took or if the trainee did not acknowledge his or her mistake. Even so, the gender disparities reflected in the OIG survey results, OIG interviews, and FBI trainee assessments are consistent with our finding, discussed earlier in this report, that from 2015 through 2018 female NATs disproportionately received SNs and TRB referrals.

During this evaluation, we also learned that in 2018 the FBI's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity Affairs (OEEOA) noted an increase in gender discrimination complaints regarding trainee dismissals from 2015 through 2018, which was highlighted earlier in this report as a period of increased dismissals that disproportionately affected women. Additionally, the OEEOA issued several recommendations regarding the Academy's handling of trainees' complaints and how to mitigate future issues. (See the text box for further details.)

³⁰ In comparison, 15 percent of men reported that Academy staff and instructors criticized men more than women and 19 percent of men reported being evaluated differently because of their gender.

OEEOA complaints also alleged that tactical training instructors are able to target women and “the training standards are inconsistently applied such that [women] are set up for failure.” One female survey respondent stated that the “disparity in treatment was not only demoralizing, but frustrating as it was not clear what the proper choices to make were since different students were evaluated in very different ways”; she believed that she would “have had a much stronger training experience if this disparity had not existed.” She continued, “Instead I spent most of my time in [the PAU] simply trying to avoid getting suitability [SNs], rather than trying to get the most out of the training.”

According to the FBI TD, Academy instructors receive training on ethical behavior, diversity, unconscious bias, and professionalism. In the discussion on diversity during the “Role of the FBI Instructor” lesson, the training content states, “It is inappropriate to make derogatory statements about any particular gender, ethnicity, race, religion, or culture or tolerate them in the classroom.” In addition, instructors must abide by the FBI’s Standards of Conduct and Core Values.³¹ However, as discussed above, through OIG interviews, OIG survey responses, and FBI trainee assessments, some trainees described incidents of unprofessional behavior and believed that instructors displayed bias in assessments and evaluations. Further, our analysis of FBI data showed that female NATs received a disproportionate number of SNs and were dismissed disproportionately to their share of the population. As discussed previously, assessments in some training areas are based on more subjective criteria such as behavior and performance and, therefore, there is potential for unconscious bias to affect instructor assessments of trainees. While the FBI includes content on unconscious bias and professionalism in its instructor training, it may not be adequately addressing the issues we found during this evaluation.

The FBI informed the OIG that it has made efforts to evaluate and ensure consistency. The Section Chief of the TMU initiates a Suitability Review at his or her discretion based on input from all training venues, including instructors.³² Former Class Counselors and Class Supervisors told us that they periodically meet with instructors to discuss trainee progress and SNs issued and that these conversations may lead to a recommendation for a Suitability Review. However, the focus of these meetings is to discuss trainee performance, suitability, and possible remediation, not to review all SNs to ensure that they were given consistently. To address consistency among instructors, the Academy uses “norming sessions,” a type of internal control, during which management and instructors meet to discuss training needs and clarify training criteria. The Unit Chief of the Academy’s Residential Instructional Design Unit told us that these norming sessions are designed to increase training reliability across instructors, decrease bias, and reduce subjectivity.³³ Moreover, PAU management and instructors told us that they conduct regular norming sessions for instructors to meet to discuss any training issues to ensure consistent application of instruction

³¹ The FBI Standards of Conduct were discussed above.

The FBI’s Core Values include compassion, fairness, and uncompromising personal and institutional integrity. In addition, “degrading, off-color, inappropriate, disrespectful, tasteless and/or otherwise unprofessional comments or statements made towards any person or group is a violation of our Core Values. Inappropriate comments regardless of one’s intentions, would include, but are not limited to, remarks of a sexist or racist nature; or statements disparaging anyone’s personal beliefs, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age, or national origin.” BFTC New Agent and Intelligence Analyst Graduation Requirements, August 12, 2020, 9.

³² FBI TD, Suitability Review and Trainee Review Board Standard Operating Procedures, March 5, 2019.

³³ The Residential Instructional Design Unit is responsible for ensuring that training requirements, lesson plans, trainee guides, and learning objectives are aligned with the learning objectives and job tasks.

and evaluation. The PAU Unit Chief explained that, if instructors disagree on whether a NAT's actions warrant an SN, the primary instructor makes the final determination. However, through document review, we found that norming sessions have been used as a tool since as early as 2016 at the FBI Academy, yet, as discussed above, trainees perennially bring up consistency and potential targeting as issues.³⁴

Tactical Training Reliance on a Single Instructor to Instruct and Evaluate Trainees

We also found that the reliance on a single instructor to assess a NAT's performance during tactical training may contribute to trainees' concerns about inconsistency and inequity in the tactical training evaluation. As stated earlier, the final determination of whether a trainee's actions warrant an SN is made by the primary instructor. While tactical instructors are required to have the experience and credentials to assess trainee performance, having only one person, in a single snapshot, to evaluate a situation could introduce bias or at least the perception of bias. In FBI trainee assessments and in response to the OIG survey, several trainees reported inconsistencies among individual instructors' observations of exercises, saying that a trainee's evaluation could be different depending on which instructor was at the scenario. During our site visit at the FBI Academy, only one instructor was present during most tactical training scenarios to evaluate NATs' actions and identify performance deficiencies that warrant corrective feedback such as an SN. We found that this reliance on a single instructor's subjective assessment creates the potential for inconsistency among instructors, as well as bias.³⁵ Moreover, even if a particular instructor is not in fact biased, this situation creates the risk that the instructor will be perceived as biased, which itself could negatively affect the experience of trainees and the credibility of the instructor. As previously described in this report, tactical training evaluations play an important role in NAT success at the Academy.

PAU leadership told us that they have entrusted individual instructors to provide the sole evaluation of trainees due to their tactical instruction expertise and the overall trust the FBI places in them to use their



NATs Participating in a Tactical Training Exercise

Source: FBI TD

³⁴ A 2016 After Action Report discussing BFTC Classes 15-09 and 15-13 notes that "norming sessions...allowed instructors to calibrate their ratings to ensure consistency when assessing performance-based tests." FBI TD, Basic Field Training Course Class 15-13 After-Action-Report, May 25, 2016, 20.

³⁵ The only scenarios that had multiple instructors were those in which a defensive tactics instructor was present to provide feedback or those occasions when the trainees had to perform defensive tactics techniques on a "subject." PAU leaders told us that the scenarios are modeled after actual events that have happened to Special Agents on duty.

judgment and testify in a variety of settings.³⁶ In addition, Academy leadership explained to us that staffing and budget limitations do not allow for additional instructors to be present and evaluate most tactical exercises.

Even though the PAU utilizes individual instructors to evaluate trainees, the FBI Academy tactical training instruction does not use any methods—such as video or photographic records of training—that would allow for independent evaluation of trainees, even though some TD personnel and trainees told us that recordings could be useful. Some PAU management, instructors, and NATs expressed, in OIG interviews, the OIG survey, and FBI trainee assessments, a belief that video recordings could be a useful tool to provide additional instruction to the trainees, improve oversight of instructors, and allow trainees and instructors additional evidence to discuss and defend their actions. Additionally, the current PAU Unit Chief explained that camera footage would assist in mitigating the risk of an instructor exerting his or her biases during a NAT assessment. Some NATs that had gone before a TRB explained that video footage would permit the TRB to view independent coverage and would take a lot of the subjectivity out of tactical exercises. In our view, such recordings could also serve to protect instructors who are accused of bias but have acted appropriately. During our review of TRB records, we noted one example in which photographs were taken to document a trainee's mistake (temporarily losing possession of a firearm during a tactical exercise). These photographs were included in the trainee's TRB documentation, which also contained additional SNs and Tactical Feedback Forms (TFF); ultimately, the trainee was dismissed from the Academy. Additionally, after the PAU used video feedback on a limited basis in some tactical scenarios, trainees responded in FBI trainee assessments that this feedback had been very beneficial to their learning. In response to our survey, a few trainees also described the benefit of using video footage for trainee education and instructor oversight. One respondent specifically recommended that a percentage of training exercises be video recorded so that supervisors could review the footage to determine whether instructors are issuing SNs equitably.

Despite recognizing the benefits of video recording, Academy management and instructors were hesitant to fully endorse implementing video recording due to logistics and security concerns. For example, the current PAU Unit Chief explained that camera footage may not be feasible due to the multiple locations used for training. The Assistant General Counsel assigned to the FBI Academy explained that there would be several concerns regarding video recording of tactical training, including privacy concerns and the potential to reveal law enforcement techniques. While there may be logistics and security concerns for video footage, we believe that the FBI Academy should look into methods for independently documenting tactical training. Such methods would allow for instructors' observations to be validated using internal controls and would increase trainees' trust and perception in the assessment and evaluation portion of tactical training.

The FBI Academy Has Made Several Changes to Improve the Training Environment, and the Number of Dismissals Has Declined

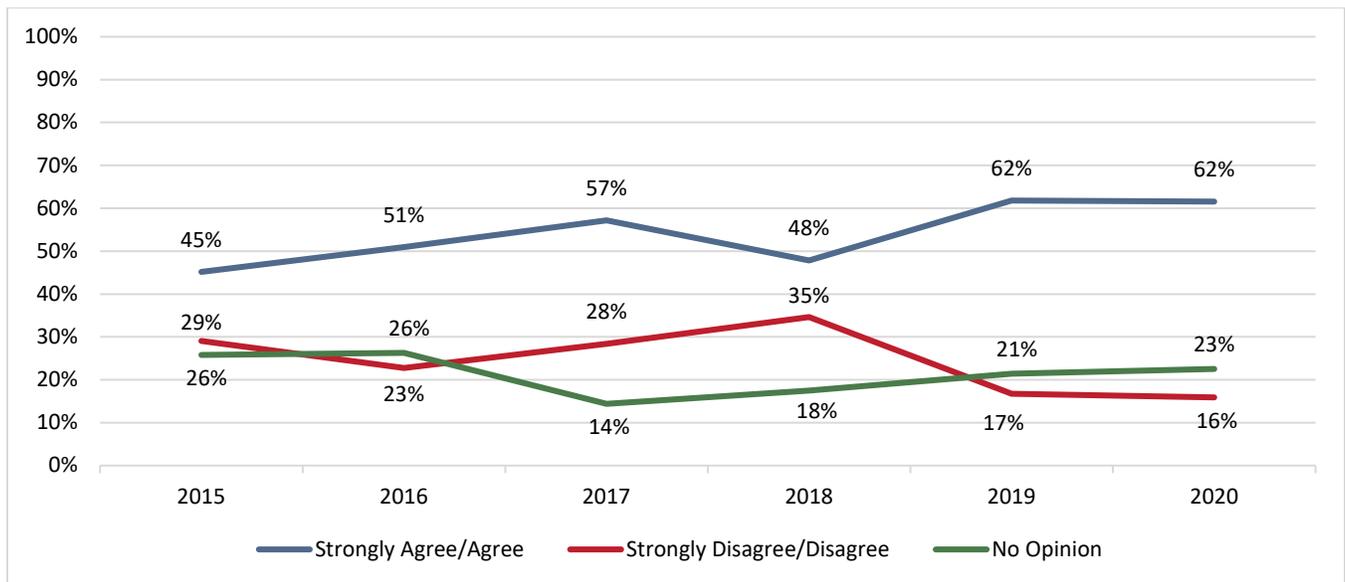
Based on feedback collected from trainees and periodic assessments of the BFTC, the TD periodically makes changes to the BFTC that affect the training environment. We found, based on data presented earlier in this

³⁶ We observed that Academy Class Counselors are sometimes present for exercises; however, they do not have a role in assessing NAT performance and they do not necessarily have the tactical expertise to evaluate trainees. Their role is to serve as mentors for trainees, to photograph trainees during training, and to assist class supervisory personnel in the handling of administrative matters and assessing trainees' suitability to continue in the training program.

report, that these changes coincided with a decline in female NAT dismissals beginning in 2018, following a spike in dismissals observed in 2017.³⁷ Trends in female TRB referrals similarly declined beginning in 2018, following the increase in 2017. We also observed an increase after 2018 in the number of survey respondents stating that SNs were issued equitably by gender (see Figure 10 below).

Figure 10

Responses to the Survey Question “Please indicate how much you agree with the following statement: Suitability notations were issued equitably by gender,” by Most Recent Year of Attendance at the FBI Academy BFTC



Source: OIG survey

In December 2021, the FBI’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion assigned a Diversity and Inclusion Senior Liaison to the TD.³⁸ TD leadership and the Senior Liaison explained that the goal of the position is to review TD data, procedures, policies, and practices to promote inclusivity and to inform trainees about resources available to them. While the position is new, the Senior Liaison told us that she hopes that her role will reduce trainee perception that the culture at the Academy encourages being a “grey man,” a colloquialism for someone who keeps their head down and avoids standing out.

We also found that the BFTC Requirements document now deemphasizes the use of SNs to evaluate NATs during tactical training but that it took leadership changes in the PAU for these changes to take effect. In 2018, the BFTC Requirements document was amended to add TFFs to be used to document a trainee’s failure to meet tactical standards in training exercises while advising that SNs should be issued only for

³⁷ Due to the small number of trainees dismissed every year, it does not take many dismissed trainees to create a spike in dismissals.

³⁸ There are Diversity and Inclusion Senior Liaisons located in other FBI divisions as well.

egregious or multiple critical element failures.³⁹ However, current and former PAU management and instructors told us that it was not until the 2019–2020 classes, which coincided with leadership changes in the PAU, that the unit decreased the usage of SNs overall. They also told us that the PAU has since relied on TFFs to document training mistakes and critical element failures. A tactical instructor explained that the PAU shifted to using TFFs to document training mistakes for various reasons, including trainees' fear of receiving SNs and instructors' realization that they needed a better way to document trainee mistakes that did not rise to the level of an SN. In addition, according to PAU leadership and instructors, beginning in 2019 Academy leadership encouraged instructors to allow more time for trainees to make mistakes and learn from them during tactical training without the pressure of potential dismissal. The current PAU Unit Chief explained that instructors now focus on ensuring the success of each trainee according to standards and that instructors work with trainees so they can address and learn from their mistakes. While these changes coincided with reduced dismissals, they are too recent for the OIG to discern their overall effect on outcomes or the training environment.

Conclusion

While the Academy has made changes to improve the trainee learning environment, such as how NATs receive feedback during tactical training, we remain concerned that trainees described an environment and culture that year after year included inappropriate behavior, unprofessional remarks from instructors, and other practices that go against the FBI's Code of Conduct and the expectations for a learning environment. This is particularly troubling since some of these issues were submitted in trainee feedback to the Academy and in responses to the OIG's survey from trainees that attended the Academy in 2020. In addition, the inconsistency in evaluation and issuance of SNs, particularly in areas that rely on instructor observation, which could be more subjective, creates a risk of a perception that instructors target certain trainees. The reliance on a single instructor in tactical training may also create a risk that, if an instructor is biased, there is no way to prevent a NAT from receiving an unfair evaluation. We believe that the Academy needs to ensure consistency in the issuance of SNs and utilize the feedback it is collecting to ensure that concerns of inequitable treatment are addressed. In addition, while instructors receive training on unconscious bias and professionalism, the Academy needs to evaluate this type of training offered to instructors. We recommend that the Academy add methods such as an additional instructor during the same exercise or independent footage of exercises to evaluate trainees, which could address some trainees' concerns about inconsistency and bias and protect instructors who acted appropriately. Having a method to record NAT performance could also aid training by allowing NATs to observe their own actions during tactical training scenarios.

Recommendations

To address both the potential for and the perceptions of gender inequity and instructor inappropriate behavior in the BFTC, we recommend that the FBI:

³⁹ Critical element failures include misapplication of deadly force; failure to take lifesaving action to protect self or another from death or serious physical injury; and displaying improper handling, means of transport, or awareness of the condition of one's weapon appropriate for the circumstances. FBI TD, BFTC New Agent and Intelligence Analyst Graduation Requirements, Tactical Training Unit appendix.

3. Collect and evaluate trainee feedback and use it to address concerns about inequitable treatment and inconsistency in instruction and evaluation.
4. Increase transparency by clarifying to trainees the actions that cause a negative evaluation of a trainee's suitability, such as a Suitability Notation, Suitability Review, or Trainee Review Board.
5. Evaluate the training that Basic Field Training Course instructors receive to determine whether it adequately addresses professionalism and bias, and adjust the training accordingly.
6. Develop additional internal controls for tactical training—such as reviewing multiple instructors' evaluations or video recordings of an exercise to ensure consistency in trainee evaluations—to reduce the potential for bias.

Women Have Been Substantially Underrepresented as Tactical and Defensive Tactics Instructors

Over the study period of this evaluation, 2015–2020, few women served as tactical instructors; they composed 18 percent (157 out of 887) of the FBI Academy's instructors and just 4 percent (2 out of 56) of tactical and defensive tactics instructors. FBI personnel records for tactical positions showed that between 2015 and 2020 the PAU had 33 male instructors and only 1 female instructor. Similarly, the Physical Training Unit, which was responsible for defensive tactics instruction, had only 1 female instructor and 21 male instructors. These records also revealed that the majority of female instructors served in an academic instruction section, such as the Intelligence and Investigative Training Unit.

We found that multiple factors contributed to the small number of women in tactical and defensive tactics instructor roles. During the study period of our evaluation, few women applied to openings for these positions and requirements for becoming a tactical instructor limited the number of female FBI employees who would qualify because women did not often have the mandatory Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) or Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) and firearms instructor certifications, which are discussed in further detail below. Records we received from the FBI showed that men submitted 114 applications for tactical instructor positions over the study period of this evaluation, compared to only 2 submitted by women. Out of the 62 applicant submissions to Physical Training Unit vacancies, only 5 of the applicant submissions were from women.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ The 62 applicant submissions include individuals who submitted applications for different Physical Training Unit instructor vacancies.

Stakeholders Detailed Multiple Benefits of Women Serving as Tactical Instructors

In OIG survey and interview responses, stakeholders throughout the Academy told us of specific potential benefits to staffing more women as tactical instructors to improve training outcomes at the Academy. These benefits included the ability to offer NATs perspectives that women could uniquely provide, such as challenges that women experience with weapon placement, the type of body armor, and defensive techniques for NATs of smaller stature. Similarly, the OIG's June 2018 review of gender equity in the Department's law enforcement components discussed how women in law enforcement may bring a different skill set that relies on communication and can be useful for defusing potentially violent confrontations before they become physical. The 2018 report also described the DOJ law enforcement component leadership's views on recognizing the significance of enabling women at all levels of the organization to look up the chain of command and see leaders demographically like themselves and thus perceive that advancement within the organization is possible. In addition, some female survey respondents for the current OIG evaluation believed that women bring unique experiences, including the ability to connect with the communities they serve. For instance, one survey respondent recalled that during her BFTC training experience there were very few female instructors and only one female tactical instructor; she stated that "instructors should set the tone for trainees and should call out misogynistic and inequitable behavior when they see it." In addition, one instructor we interviewed stated that it can be motivating for trainees to see female instructors. A trainee told us that he believed it is important to have more female instructors because female instructors could provide mentor relationships for female trainees. See the text boxes for other sentiments from female survey respondents regarding the benefits of women serving as tactical instructors.

"Women add value to the FBI by bringing life and world experience."

Source: OIG survey

During interviews, some female trainees also emphasized the importance of having more women as instructors to improve how women, particularly those entering the Academy with no prior law enforcement or military experience, learn law enforcement skills such as firearms and tactics. While some male and female survey respondents commented that the Academy should provide trainees with additional training in tactical scenarios, PAU leadership explained that the PAU offers voluntary, after-hours, one-on-one and group sessions to all NATs to offer extra assistance, noting that participation in these sessions declines after NATs take the tactical skills test. An instructor from a different part of the BFTC program stated that female trainees in her training section often gather and ask female instructors questions that are specific to women in the FBI and their training needs. These interactions have involved female trainees discussing weapon concealment or defensive techniques based on their physical body structure. More specifically, one survey respondent stated, "Allow modifications to equipment for females when the male versions do not work well." We believe that having more female instructors would have a positive effect on training for men and women by creating an environment in which NATs feel more comfortable approaching, learning from, and receiving feedback from a variety of instructors. However, the PAU Chief expressed concerns about raising the quota for the sake of increasing the population of female instructors, stating that having instructors without the right qualifications would do a disservice to training as a whole. FBI Academy leadership and tactical instructors that we interviewed also stressed that, regardless of gender, tactical instructors at the Academy should have a mindset invested in others and should be approachable and available.

While some OIG male and female survey respondents stated that there were few women instructors to potentially raise an objection during training assessments and evaluations, one female survey respondent stated that, in some instances, female instructors demonstrated behavior similar to male instructors and that she perceived this behavior as trying to be tough or to toughen them up. A different survey respondent shared her thoughts that the PAU needs “more female instructors” and that the PAU needs to “not allow male instructors to single out females as weak based on appearance.” Male and female trainees we interviewed also said that some male instructors communicated in a way that was intended to “toughen up”

“It is learning how to incorporate women into that ‘boys club’ culture that is so prevalent in that atmosphere.”

Source: OIG survey

female trainees, which some trainees might perceive as instructors being harder on women. Such behavior may discourage women from asking for help or grasping concepts, and this may in turn negatively affect women’s success in the Academy. Though Academy leadership described recent changes to remove certification requirements, as well as individual efforts to train and recruit more female instructors, these changes have not been implemented in policy. Moreover, though stakeholders throughout the training program emphasized the benefits of and expressed support for having more women serve in these positions, we found that the TD does not currently have specific recruitment plans to increase the number of women serving in these positions.

Requirements to Become a Tactical Instructor Contributed to the Low Pool of Potential Applicants, but the FBI Has Taken Steps to Address This Issue

We found that during our study period requirements to become a tactical instructor limited the number of female FBI employees who would qualify to serve as tactical instructors at the Academy. According to the 2015 FBI Tactical Training Program Policy Directive, a candidate can be eligible for tactical instructor certification if he or she is a certified firearms instructor and has experience as a certified member of an FBI SWAT team or HRT; in lieu of SWAT or HRT experience, a candidate can submit a request for consideration demonstrating 24 months of pertinent tactical experience.⁴¹ According to a former Tactical Training Unit Chief, there were times when no women qualified to serve as tactical instructors due to lack of these certifications.⁴² The current PAU Unit Chief told us that in 2018 the FBI informally removed the SWAT or HRT certification requirements for PAU tactical instructors to teach the BFTC to NATs, offering instead a separate practical applications course that would cover the SWAT requirement. This created a pathway for non-SWAT personnel to become tactical instructors, which Academy leadership told us has expanded the number of women and non-SWAT certified personnel becoming qualified tactical instructors; but we found that this has not yet been finalized in official policy.⁴³ When we reviewed FBI Human Resources Division records for tactical instructor vacancies at the Academy, we found that it still categorized applicants based on whether they have the mandatory SWAT and firearms instructor certifications.

The Academy’s PAU leadership recently made an informal/ad hoc recruitment effort to encourage more women to become tactical and defensive tactics instructors at the Academy, resulting in the hiring of one

⁴¹ FBI Tactical Training Program Policy Directive and Policy Guide, January 6, 2015, 6.

⁴² The Tactical Training Unit is the predecessor to the BFTC’s Practical Applications Unit.

⁴³ Academy management explained that this policy change is currently before the FBI Internal Policy Office pending approval.

female defensive tactics instructor whom we observed during our site visit in June 2021. This effort involved individual tactical training leaders identifying and encouraging women with potential to apply to become tactical instructors. However, the FBI is not currently making any official recruitment efforts to increase the number of women serving as tactical instructors. Due to these efforts not being encapsulated in an official strategic recruitment plan, we are unsure how effective or sustained they will be. Further, we note that, in order to be successful, any efforts should address the variety of factors limiting women's interest in these roles. Academy leadership and an instructor told us that tactical instructor positions are in an undesirable location. Accepting a position may require instructors to relocate their families to the Academy's remote location, outside Washington, D.C. Effective recruitment efforts in these areas are critical to realizing the benefits of having more female tactical instructors, as multiple Academy stakeholders identified.

Conclusion

Academy leadership stressed the importance of having more women fill critical tactical instructor roles and removed certain qualification barriers. However, we found that the FBI lacks a targeted approach to increase the applicant rate of female instructors. Changes in leadership priorities could limit long-term success in the BFTC gained through current informal recruitment efforts. Such efforts to recruit women for these roles should identify the barriers that prevent women from applying to these positions, offer remedies to identified barriers, and be part of an official recruitment plan. In addition, increasing the number of female tactical instructors to realize these benefits is critical for advancing gender equity throughout the FBI because future supervisors and leaders will be drawn from the existing pool of Special Agents.

Recommendation

To address the lack of female tactical and defensive tactics instructors in the BFTC, we recommend that the FBI:

7. Evaluate, develop, and implement a recruitment plan with methods to increase the recruitment of women as certified tactical and defensive tactics instructors.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

We found that 94 percent of women and 96 percent of men successfully graduated from the Basic Field Training Course (BFTC) during our study period, and most trainees that we interviewed and surveyed felt that they were treated equitably throughout every training area. However, we identified areas of disparity in how women were evaluated and treated that affected their experience at the Academy, in addition to areas of risk that could affect equity. We found that female New Agent Trainees (NAT) were overrepresented among both NATs who were issued Suitability Notations (SN) and NATs who were dismissed from the Academy, as compared to their share of the overall NAT population. We specifically identified tactical training as a potential area of concern because tactical training SNs—which were the most common type of SN for all NATs and the most common factor contributing to NATs being sent to a Trainee Review Board (TRB) to be considered for dismissal—disproportionately affected women. Additionally, women had more referrals to and dismissals from a TRB than their share of the NAT population. We also found that, although most of the categories for trainee awards are based on objectively scored criteria, one category had no criteria for the selection of the pool of trainees eligible to receive the award. The lack of criteria creates the potential for bias in the selection of awardees.

Some trainees, especially women, believed that trainees of the opposite gender unfairly received favorable treatment in specific training areas, and trainees observed negative conduct and behavior that created a poor learning environment. In particular, some trainees said that they had a fear of receiving SNs, which caused them to be more focused on their fear of making mistakes than they were on learning proper tactics. Some male and female survey respondents reported that they witnessed female NATs blending in with other trainees in their class to avoid standing out and receiving SNs. Additionally, respondents reported that women were treated differently from their male counterparts based on stereotypes. We also found that the reliance on a single instructor may contribute to concerns and perceptions about inconsistency and bias in tactical training evaluation and creates a risk that NATs may receive an unfair evaluation. While the Training Division (TD) has implemented new practices and some new policies regarding tactical feedback to improve the training environment, we remain concerned that trainee feedback and OIG survey responses from trainees who went through the Academy after these changes still discussed these issues. We believe that the FBI needs to assess these discrepancies and identify any concerns related to the equitable treatment of trainees. In addition, we believe that the FBI needs to assess the training the TD provides BFTC instructors regarding bias and professionalism toward trainees. Further, to reduce the potential risk of bias, even perceived bias, the TD needs to increase the transparency and consistency of trainee evaluations, particularly in areas of training that rely on instructor observations that may be subjective.

Stakeholders and trainees emphasized the potential benefits to staffing more women as tactical and defensive tactics instructors, noting that women could offer NATs perspectives on challenges that women experience while also providing motivation and positive examples for female NATs. However, we found that few women served as tactical and defensive tactics instructors at the FBI Academy between 2015 and 2020. As previously noted in the OIG's June 2018 report, women may bring a different skill set that relies on communication and can be useful for defusing potentially violent confrontations before they become physical. The 2018 review also described law enforcement component leadership's view on recognizing the significance of having women at all levels of the organization look up the chain of command and see leaders

demographically like themselves. We believe that the TD needs to do more to recruit female Instructors. Academy leadership described recent changes in requirements and individual efforts to train and recruit more female instructors, but these changes have not yet been implemented in policy.

Recommendations

To improve gender equity in the BFTC, we recommend that the FBI:

1. Maintain, review, and analyze data related to Suitability Notations, Trainee Review Boards, and trainee dismissals to identify and address potential equity concerns.
2. Develop criteria for the selection of the Section Spokesperson, ensure that the criteria address any risks of bias, and ensure that the criteria are adequately communicated to trainees.
3. Collect and evaluate trainee feedback and use it to address concerns about inequitable treatment and inconsistency in instruction and evaluation.
4. Increase transparency by clarifying to trainees the actions that cause a negative evaluation of a trainee's suitability, such as a Suitability Notation, Suitability Review, or Trainee Review Board.
5. Evaluate the training that Basic Field Training Course instructors receive to determine whether it adequately addresses professionalism and bias, and adjust the training accordingly.
6. Develop additional internal controls for tactical training—such as reviewing multiple instructors' evaluations or video recordings of an exercise to ensure consistency in trainee evaluations—to reduce the potential for bias.
7. Evaluate, develop, and implement a recruitment plan with methods to increase the recruitment of women as certified tactical and defensive tactics instructors.

Appendix 1: Purpose, Scope, and Methodology

Standards

The OIG conducted this evaluation in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation* (January 2012).

Purpose and Scope

The OIG conducted this evaluation to assess gender equity by examining policies and practices, trends and patterns for male and female trainees, and perceptions of gender equity at the FBI Academy during the 2015–2020 Basic Field Training Courses (BFTC).

Methodology

Data Collection and Analysis

We requested and reviewed the FBI's Human Resources Division applicant datasets, including gender, for all instructor positions at the Academy throughout the 2015–2020 BFTC timeframe. Further, we requested data regarding the FBI Training Division's (TD) instructor certifications. We also requested and reviewed Suitability Notations (SN) for training deficiencies, awards and recognition for trainees, and climate surveys of former BFTC trainees for the same period. We did not analyze the particular facts and circumstances, including the conduct or performance deficiencies, that led to a trainee receiving an SN, a referral to a Trainee Review Board, or the decision to dismiss a trainee. Lastly, we conducted and analyzed the results of a survey to gather perceptions of gender equity at the Academy from former New Agent Trainees (NAT) and New Intelligence Analyst Trainees (NIAT) who participated in the BFTC from 2015 through 2020. Percentages that are used throughout this report are rounded to the nearest whole percent.

Interviews and Observations

We conducted in-person and telephonic interviews with the following FBI staff:

- TD Assistant Director,
- TD Deputy Assistant Director,
- Unit Chief of the Practical Applications Unit,
- Supervisory Special Agents serving as instructors and Class Supervisors,
- Supervisory Intelligence Analysts,
- Intelligence Analyst Program Manager, and
- Class Counselors and former trainees of the BFTC.

In addition, we conducted in-person interviews with the FBI's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity Affairs (OEEOA) about the implementation and monitoring of practices to prevent gender-based discrimination, as well as to determine whether the OEEOA's handling of specific cases regarding employment discrimination at the Academy was in accordance with FBI and federal government policies. We also interviewed the FBI Academy Employee Assistance Program Co-Coordinator. Lastly, we interviewed the Chief of the Enforcement Operations Division at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center to

compare how trainees are evaluated and how video footage is used during tactical exercises among federal law enforcement agencies.

We conducted a 1-day site visit at the FBI Training Academy and observed various aspects of NAT tactical training and defensive training and testing.

Policy and Document Review

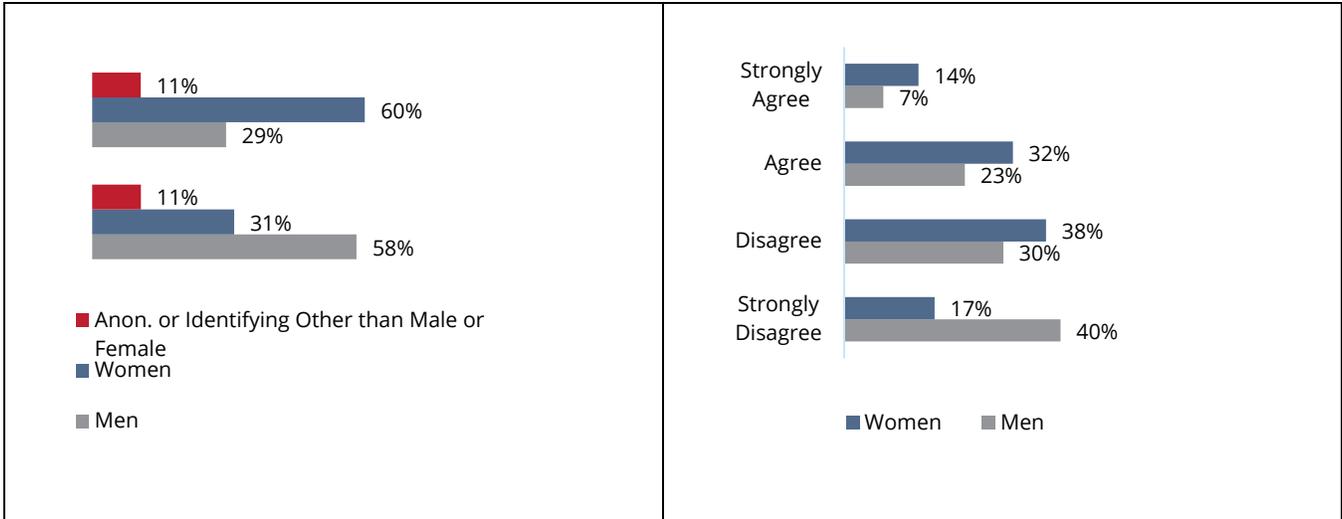
We examined the FBI TD's New Agent and Intelligence Analyst Graduation Requirements, as well as a performance-based rubric or checklist used to measure trainee performance. We also examined the FBI's Tactical Training Program Policy Directive and Policy Guide. Additionally, we reviewed the May 2016 BFTC After-Action Report and a misconduct allegation submitted to the FBI Inspection Division. Moreover, we reviewed FBI OEEOA policies and documents.

Appendix 2: Summary of the OIG Survey on Gender Equity

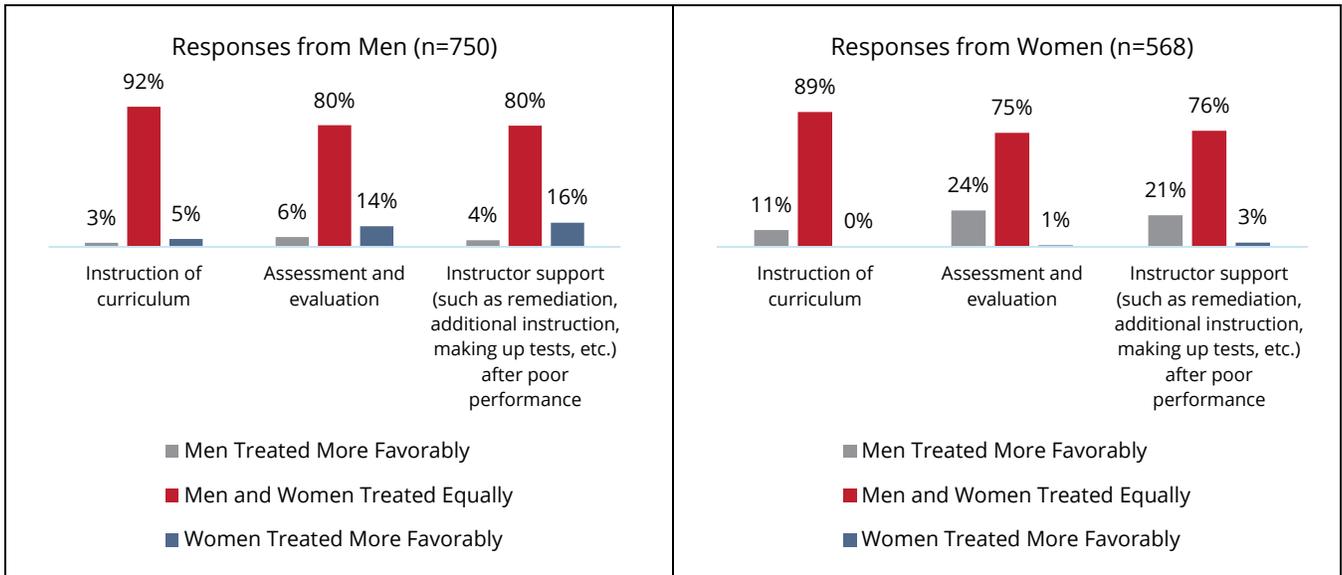
Open Period:	Invitations Sent:	Overall Responses:
January 11–24, 2022	4,811	1,476 ⁴⁴

Please indicate whether you were a New Agent Trainee (NAT) or a New Intelligence Analyst Trainee (NIAT) during your most recent training period at the FBI Academy's Basic Field Training Course (BFTC). (n=1,476)

During my time at the FBI Academy, there was disparity in the treatment of Academy trainees based on gender. (n=1,318)

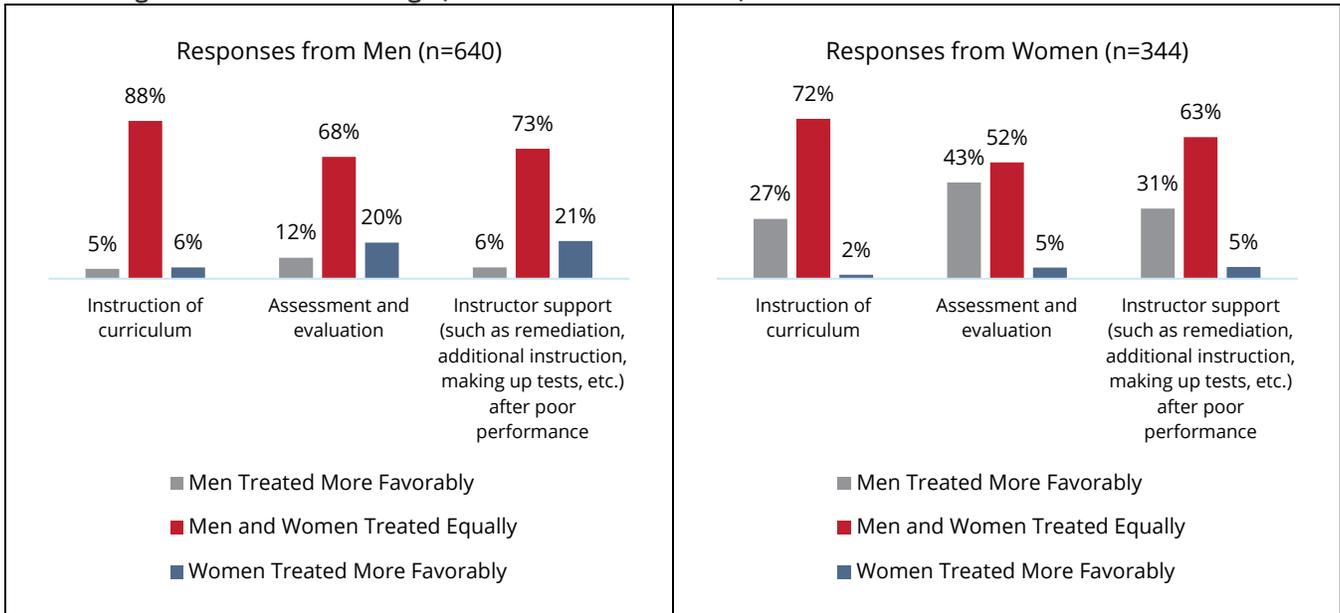


During your time at the FBI Academy, indicate whether you believe that men or women were treated more favorably in the following areas of academic training. (Choose one for each area.)

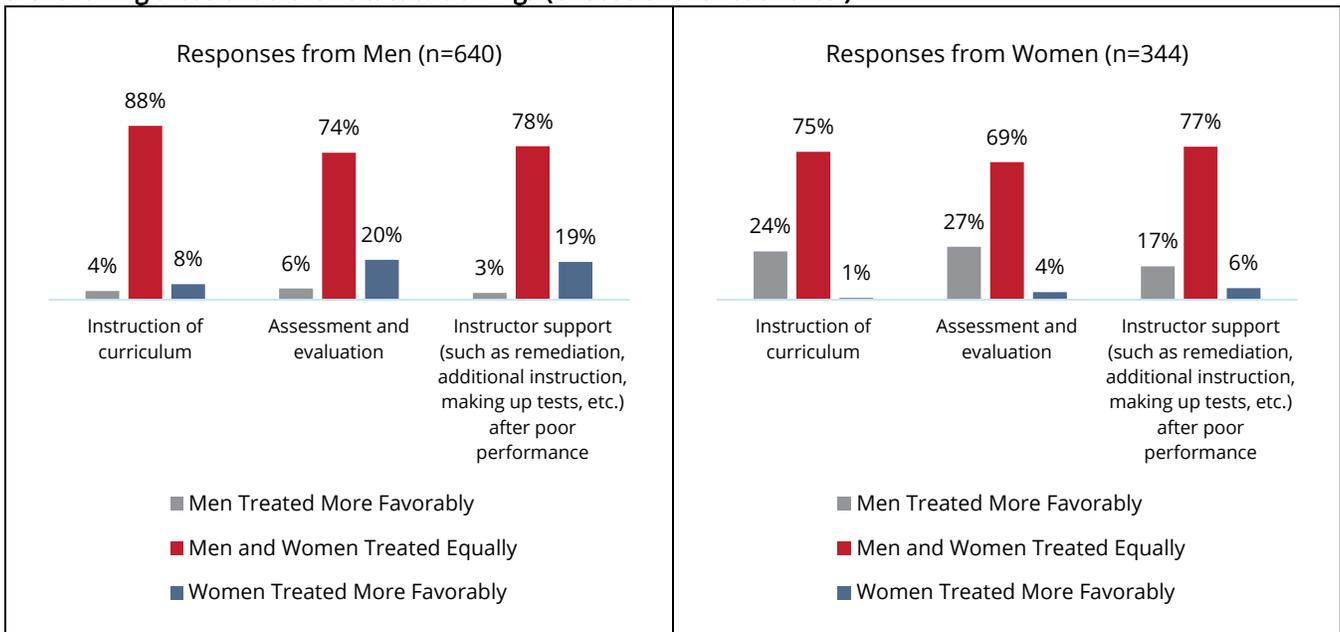


⁴⁴ Even though 1,476 people started the survey, some respondents did not complete the survey. In addition, most of the data displayed in this appendix is filtered by whether the respondent identified as male or female.

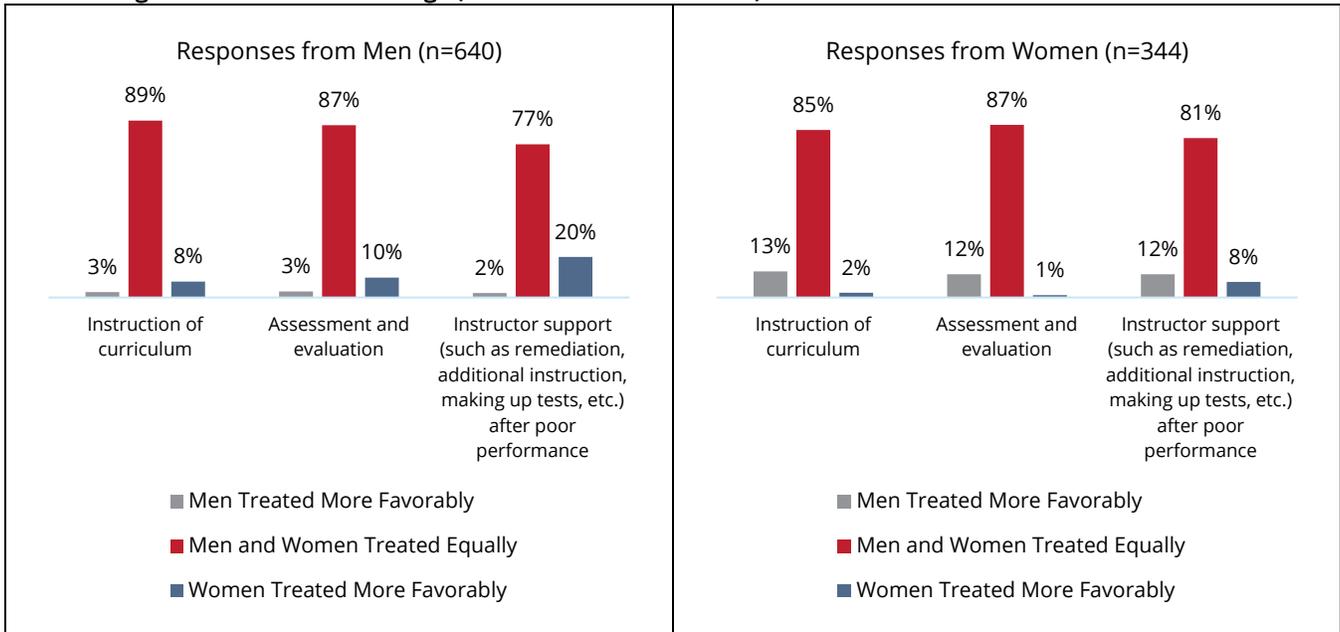
During your time at the FBI Academy, indicate whether you believe that men or women were treated more favorably in the following areas of tactical training. (Choose one for each area.)



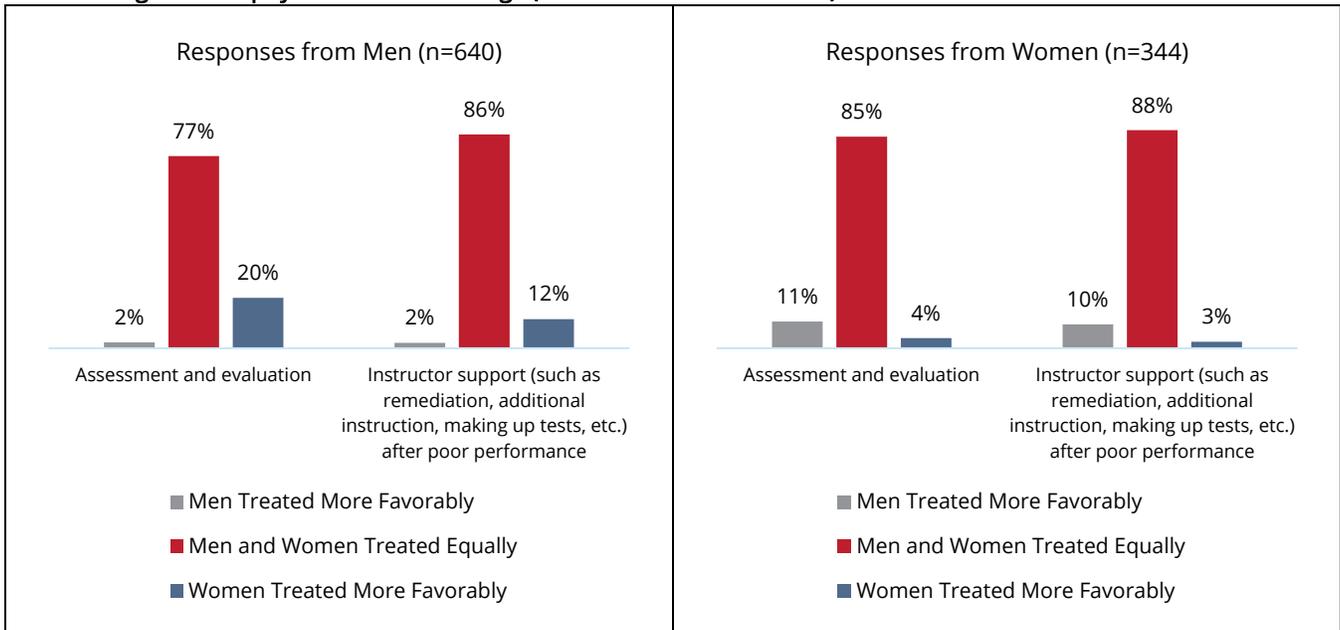
During your time at the FBI Academy, indicate whether you believe that men or women were treated more favorably in the following areas of defensive tactics training. (Choose one for each area.)



During your time at the FBI Academy, indicate whether you believe that men or women were treated more favorably in the following areas of firearms training. (Choose one for each area.)



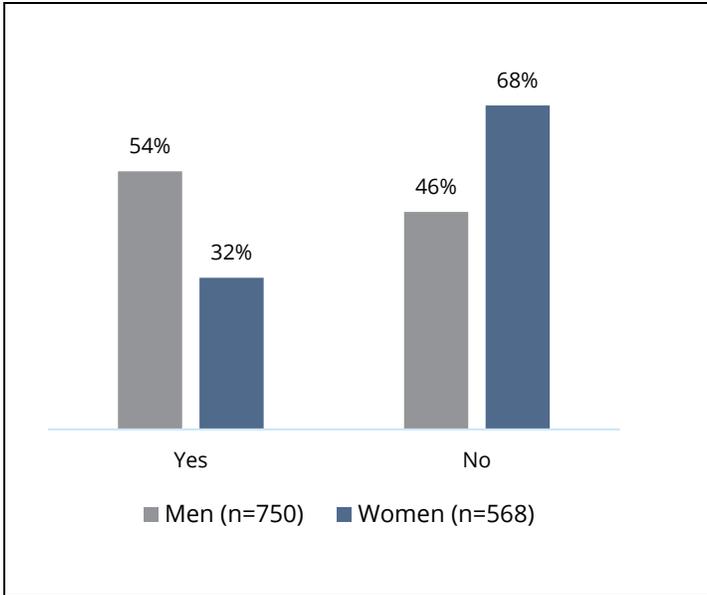
During your time at the FBI Academy, indicate whether you believe that men or women were treated more favorably in the following areas of physical fitness training. (Choose one for each area.)



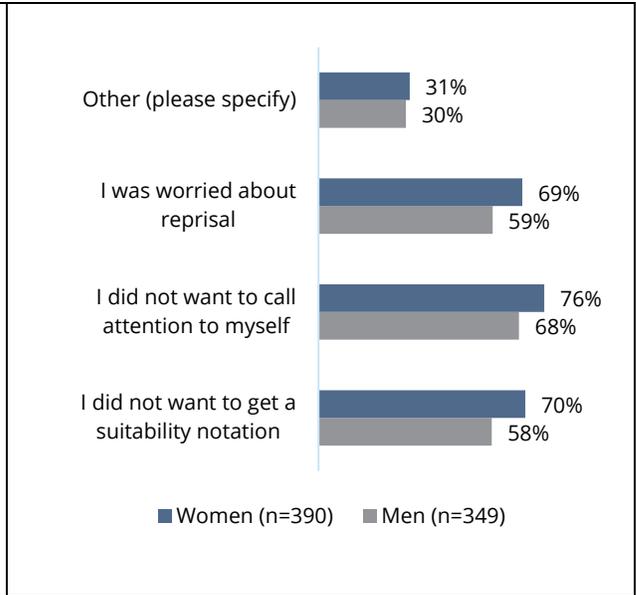
Academy staff/instructors:	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Spoke to me in a demeaning manner because of my gender				
Responses from Men	1%	2%	3%	95%
Responses from Women	3%	25%	13%	59%
Treated me as if I were incompetent because of my gender				
Responses from Men	1%	1%	2%	96%
Responses from Women	3%	24%	13%	60%
Told sexist stories or jokes				
Responses from Men	1%	9%	10%	80%
Responses from Women	5%	27%	18%	50%
Made offensive remarks about my appearance or body				
Responses from Men	1%	2%	3%	95%
Responses from Women	2%	9%	10%	78%
Made references to people of my gender in insulting or offensive terms				
Responses from Men	1%	2%	4%	94%
Responses from Women	3%	20%	17%	61%
Told me to be more aggressive because of my gender				
Responses from Men	1%	2%	3%	93%
Responses from Women	8%	20%	13%	60%
Provided trainees of my gender with less support compared to trainees of the opposite gender who were doing the same job				
Responses from Men	2%	10%	10%	78%
Responses from Women	4%	20%	16%	60%
Criticized trainees of my gender more compared to trainees of the opposite gender who were doing the same job				
Responses from Men	1%	7%	7%	85%
Responses from Women	8%	27%	13%	52%
Evaluated me differently because of my gender				
Responses from Men	2%	11%	7%	81%
Responses from Women	6%	23%	15%	55%
Responses from Men (n=750); Responses from Women (n=568)				

My fellow trainees at the Academy:	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Spoke to me in a demeaning manner because of my gender				
Responses from Men	0%	1%	3%	96%
Responses from Women	1%	17%	18%	64%
Treated me as if I were incompetent because of my gender				
Responses from Men	0%	1%	2%	97%
Responses from Women	3%	19%	16%	63%
Told sexist stories or jokes				
Responses from Men	1%	12%	13%	74%
Responses from Women	4%	28%	22%	45%
Made offensive remarks about my appearance or body				
Responses from Men	0%	1%	4%	95%
Responses from Women	1%	11%	14%	75%
Made references to people of my gender in insulting or offensive terms				
Responses from Men	0%	3%	5%	92%
Responses from Women	2%	20%	19%	59%
Responses from Men (n=750); Responses from Women (n=568)				

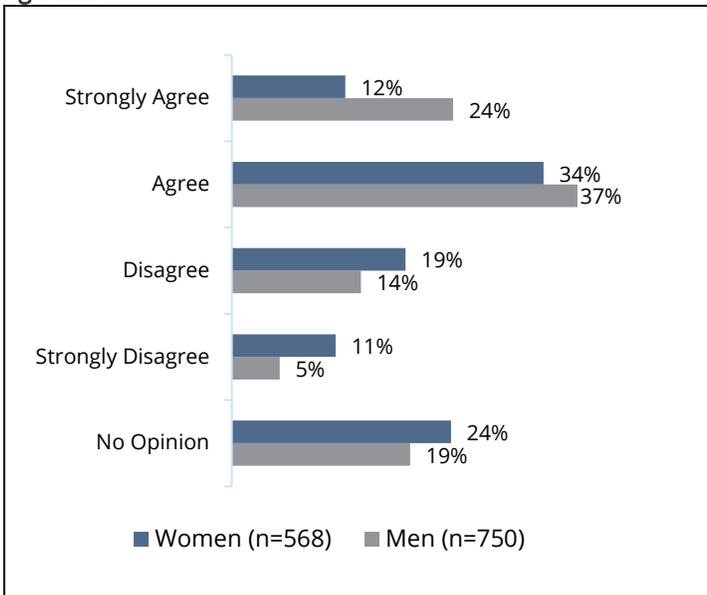
Did you feel that you could raise an objection to (or give a critique of) an instructor's assessment of your performance during training?



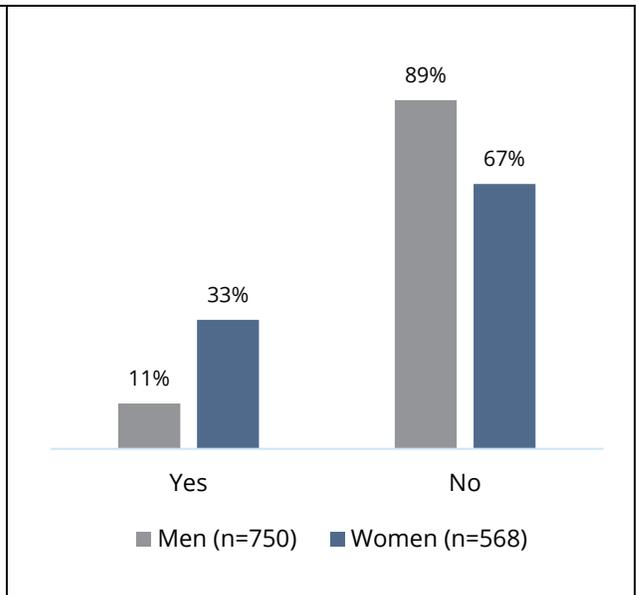
If no, why did you feel you could not raise an objection to (or give critique of) an instructor's assessment of your work during training? (Select all that apply) (n=739)



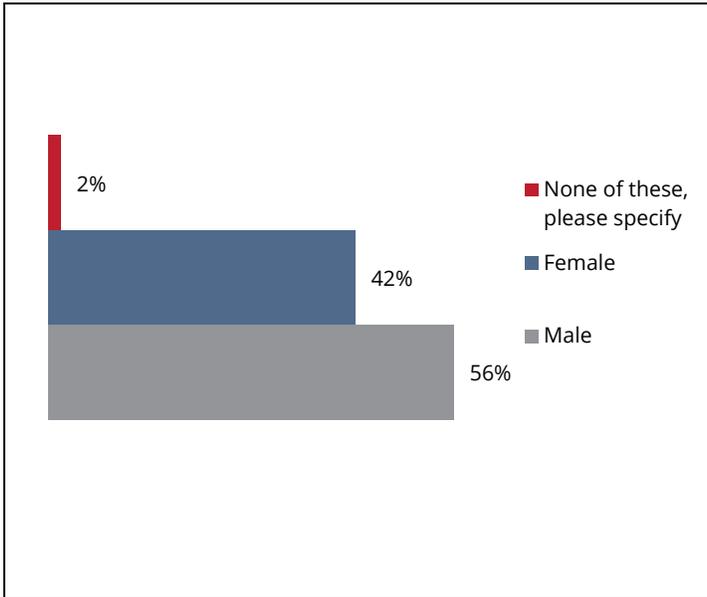
Please indicate how much you agree with the following statement: "Suitability notations were issued equitably by gender."



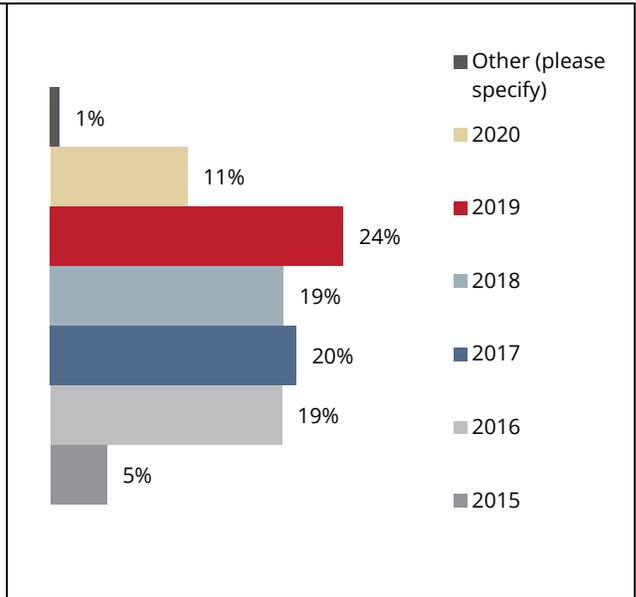
Did disparity in treatment based on gender negatively affect your experience at the FBI Academy?



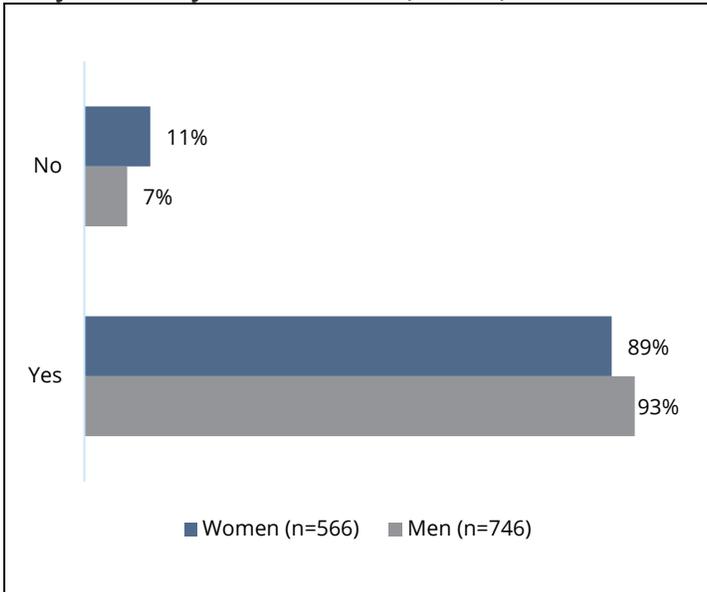
How did you describe yourself while attending the Academy? (n=1,342)



What year did you start your most recent training at the BFTC? (n=1,329)



Do you currently work for the FBI? (n=1,335)



Appendix 3: FBI Academy Suitability Dimensions

The FBI defines the six suitability dimensions by which trainees are evaluated and provides examples of unsuitable trainee behavior as follows:

1. **Conscientiousness:** Conscientiousness includes behavior that is dependable, responsible, organized, careful, and thoughtful, with a great attention to detail and follow-through. It is the ability to systematically plan, anticipate problems, and develop contingencies to avoid these problems. Anticipation and assessment of problems as described in this category include the ability to self-monitor and seek help in overcoming potential difficulties and obstacles.

Unsuitable behavior in this category includes doing excessively sloppy and careless work; being irresponsible when asked for something; losing important documents, materials, equipment, etc.; and failing to ask for assistance when appropriate and necessary.

2. **Cooperativeness:** Cooperativeness includes behavior that involves following the chain of command and being willing to collaborate with fellow classmates, instructors, and other individuals at the FBI, the Intelligence Community, other law enforcement agencies, and the government. It is closely associated with the ability to relate effectively with others and being sensitive to others' needs.

Unsuitable behavior in this category includes being rude, antagonistic, and/or impatient with instructors, fellow classmates, or other FBI personnel; unnecessarily questioning the performance of fellow workers in front of others; being disrespectful to employees; and using abusive language. It also includes failure to communicate critical information to others.

3. **Emotional Maturity:** Emotional maturity includes behaviors that involve maintaining self-control and approaching potentially volatile situations, events, and people in a calm, professional manner. It is the ability to be flexible, adapt to changing situations, and remain level headed and effective under stress. It is contrasted with behavior that is immature, irrational, and shows a lack of control over one's behavior.

Unsuitable behavior includes reacting angrily or violently to comments made by individuals; acting inappropriately outside of work (e.g., drinking excessively); using excessive force; or not reacting at all when it is appropriate to react. Unsuitable behavior also includes engaging in any form of harassment or discrimination.

4. **Initiative:** Initiative includes behavior that involves perseverance and dedication in performing the duties of the job, going above and beyond expectations to accomplish the job, making suggestions to improve work processes, performing duties without having to be told, and a willingness to put in the long hours the job requires. This is correlated with motivation and includes exhibiting a commendable work ethic. It can be contrasted with behavior that involves failing to do what it takes to perform the job successfully because of laziness or lack of interest.

Unsuitable behavior in this category includes refusing to put in additional time during training, failing to follow through with others because of inconvenience, and deliberately wasting time by taking a number of breaks while on duty.

5. **Integrity:** Integrity includes behavior that shows the person to be honest, trustworthy, disciplined, and respectful of laws and regulations; behaviors that display high standards of ethical conduct; and actions that are taken without jeopardizing or compromising these standards, even when there are no ramifications for not doing so. Behaviors involve following agency policy and the letter and spirit of the law and avoiding even the appearance of impropriety. This is related to a person's professionalism, ability to maintain a positive image, and ability to serve as a role model and represent the FBI positively to others. It can be contrasted with behavior that involves breaking the law and deviating from agency policy.

Unsuitable behavior in this category includes accepting favors and gratuities; showing favoritism to friends or relatives; failing to report conflict of interest situations; lying; cheating; stealing (e.g., voucher fraud); lack of candor; failure to cooperate in an administrative inquiry; abuse of sick leave; and using government property for inappropriate personal reasons.

6. **Judgment:** Judgment includes the ability to evaluate information, think critically, question assumptions, discern merits and deficiencies in logic, and self-assess one's own skills. Behaviors indicate the ability to decide on and commit to a responsible course of action, as well as the ability to accept constructive criticism and evaluate it appropriately.

Unsuitable behavior in this category includes taking actions without thinking of the consequences, acting in a way that jeopardizes the reputation of the office and/or the FBI, or adamantly denying feedback on performance and refusing to improve one's deficiencies noted by a superior.

Appendix 4: Major Training Topics and Evaluation Methods

The Basic Field Training Course (BFTC) New Agent and Intelligence Analyst Graduation Requirements discuss the major training topics for New Agent Trainees (NAT) and New Intelligence Analyst Trainees (NIAT) and the methods by which performance is evaluated in the FBI Academy's BFTC. NIATs are evaluated only in the academic units.

- **Academic Topics:** Academic training consists of seven topic areas for NIATs and three topic areas for NATs with three and four tests, respectively. Trainees must pass each test with a minimum score of 80. During the scope of our evaluation, failure of any two written or performance tests resulted in dismissal. On December 5, 2021, the FBI changed its test failure policy for trainees to give NATs three chances to pass their written, performance, and/or law enforcement skills test and NIATs two chances to pass their written and/or performance test. The FBI Academy's academic subject areas include analytical writing, intelligence, briefing, core knowledge, the Domestic Investigations and Operations Guide, interview and interrogation, and legal.
- **Physical Training:** During the scope of our evaluation, NATs took the Physical Fitness Test (PFT) at the New Agent Standards for their gender in Week 1 and Week 9 of training.⁴⁵ These standards measure NATs' ability to complete sit-ups, a 300-meter sprint, push-ups, a 1.5-mile run, and pull-ups according to preestablished standards. NATs must successfully complete one PFT to graduate from the BFTC. NATs who fail the initial PFT (Week 1) must pass the second PFT, NATs who pass the initial PFT but fail the second PFT will be given a Suitability Notation, and NATs who fail both the initial and second PFTs will be dismissed. NATs also attend mandatory physical training for approximately 6 weeks.
- **Firearms:** The Firearms Training Unit trains and evaluates NATs' ability to handle weapons safely and apply the fundamentals of marksmanship. NATs must meet the established standards for weapons handling safety by successfully passing weapons handling skills assessments for the pistol and carbine. NATs are also required to achieve a minimum passing score of 80 percent in two of three attempts on the Pistol Qualification Course and one of two attempts on the Carbine Qualification Course. If a NAT fails to meet established qualification standards for the pistol or the carbine, the NAT will be provided counseling and remedial instruction and retested. The FBI Academy dismisses NATs who fail to meet pistol and carbine qualification standards in the retest.
- **Defensive Tactics:** This unit teaches NATs the tools, tactics, and options for self-protection and arrest procedures. Instructional blocks include confrontation techniques, such as ground fighting and boxing; control holds, such as the arm-bar and carotid restraint; handcuffing for both compliant and noncompliant subjects; searching of subjects; confined space training; weapon retention and disarming techniques; and less-lethal device training. In addition to demonstrating competence in each of these areas, NATs must meet the minimum performance standard on a law enforcement skills test. NATs who fail to achieve the minimum performance standard on this test receive

⁴⁵ On December 5, 2021, the FBI changed its PFT policy and now administers three PFTs. Participation in the first two PFTs is mandatory, and the third PFT is required for NATs who did not achieve a passing score on the first two PFTs. NATs who fail all three PFTs will be dismissed from the BFTC.

counseling, remedial instruction, and a retest. The Academy dismisses NATs who fail to meet the minimum performance standard on the retest.

- **Tactical Training:** During tactical training facilitated by the Practical Applications Unit, NATs engage in various practical exercises designed to simulate real-life scenarios they might encounter as FBI Special Agents. NATs typically operate in teams of two during practical exercises, applying many of the lessons learned in other areas of the BFTC, such as firearms, interrogations and interviewing, and defensive tactics. FBI Academy personnel evaluate trainees on their performance in accordance with rubrics and Tactical Feedback Forms, on their performance on a tactical skills test to demonstrate basic tactical concepts, and throughout tactical training based on their demonstrated level of the six suitability dimensions described in [Appendix 3](#).

Appendix 5: The FBI's Response to the Draft Report



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Washington, D. C. 20535-0001

November 14, 2022

Ms. René Lee Rocque
Assistant Inspector General
Evaluation and Inspection
Office of the Inspector General
U.S. Department of Justice
150 M Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Ms. Rocque:

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) appreciates the opportunity to review and respond to your office's report entitled, *Gender Equity in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Training Process for New Special Agents and Intelligence Analysts at the FBI Academy*.

We look forward to working with the Office of the Inspector General to address the concerns and recommendations provided within the report. The FBI has made Gender Equity a priority and has seen multiple improvements since this review was initiated. We appreciate your feedback as we continue to enhance our Training Processes at the FBI Academy.

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me. We greatly appreciate the professionalism of your audit staff throughout this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy Dunham", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Timothy Dunham
Assistant Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation Training Division

FBI Response to Recommendations: DOJ-OIG Review of Gender Equity in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Training Process for New Special Agents and Intelligence Analysts at the FBI Academy

Recommendation 1: Maintain, review, and analyze data related to Suitability Notations, Trainee Review Boards, and trainee dismissals to identify and address potential equity concerns.

FBI Response: The FBI concurs with the recommendation. TD will review its current ability to maintain, review, and analyze Suitability Notations, Trainee Review Boards, and trainee dismissals. TD will evaluate whether an automated system would improve the ability of TD personnel to identify and assess trainees for suitability against FBI assessment standards as well as FBI policies, procedures, and regulations.

Recommendation 2: Develop criteria for the selection of the Section Spokesperson, ensure that the criteria address any risks of bias, and ensure that the criteria are adequately communicated to trainees.

FBI Response: The FBI concurs with the recommendation. The Trainee Management Unit (TMU) will formally document and communicate to trainees the selection criteria for the Section Spokesperson.

Recommendation 3: Collect and evaluate trainee feedback and use it to address concerns about inequitable treatment and inconsistency in instruction and evaluation.

FBI Response: The FBI concurs with the recommendation. The FBI solicits survey responses from trainees during the Basic Field Training Course and after graduation. The FBI will continue to review BFTC survey responses on an ongoing basis.

Recommendation 4: Increase transparency by clarifying to trainees the actions that cause a negative evaluation of a trainee's suitability, such as a Suitability Notation, Suitability Review, or Trainee Review Board.

FBI Response: The FBI concurs with the recommendation. All trainees are provided a copy of the Basic Field Training Course Graduation Requirements upon reporting to the FBI Academy. The graduation requirements document contains information regarding the evaluation of a trainee's suitability, including a Suitability Notation, Suitability Review, or Trainee Review Board. TMU will review the graduation requirements document with trainees to clarify the actions that may lead to a negative evaluation of a trainee's suitability and require trainees to acknowledge the same.

Recommendation 5: Evaluate the training that Basic Field Training Course instructors receive to determine whether it adequately addresses professionalism and bias, and adjust the training accordingly.

FBI Response: The FBI concurs with the recommendation. The FBI will conduct a review of the training provided to Basic Field Training Course instructors to determine whether it appropriately addresses professionalism and bias.

Recommendation 6: Develop additional internal controls for tactical training—such as reviewing multiple instructors’ evaluations or video recordings of an exercise to ensure consistency in trainee evaluations—to reduce the potential for bias.

FBI Response: The FBI concurs with the recommendation. The FBI will conduct a review of its internal controls for tactical training and examine ways in which the FBI may be able to reduce the potential for bias in tactical training, while weighing costs, benefits, and the operational needs of the FBI Academy.

Recommendation 7: Evaluate, develop, and implement a recruitment plan with methods to increase the recruitment of women as certified tactical and defensive tactics instructors.

FBI Response: The FBI concurs with the recommendation. The FBI recognizes the benefits of women serving as tactical and defensive tactics instructors. In 2018, the FBI informally removed the SWAT and HRT certification requirements and added the practical applications instructor certification to become an instructor for the BFTC. This created a pathway for non-SWAT personnel to become tactical instructors and has expanded the number of women becoming qualified instructors. The FBI’s Tactical Training Policy (1230PG) which memorialized this change was published on November 4, 2022. TD will coordinate with ODI’s Senior Liaison to develop a communications plan to solicit women applicants for the tactics instructor positions.

Appendix 6: OIG Analysis of the FBI's Response

The OIG provided a draft of this report to the FBI for its comment. The FBI's response is included in [Appendix 5](#) to this report. The OIG's analysis of the FBI's response and the actions necessary to close the recommendations are discussed below.

Recommendation 1

Maintain, review, and analyze data related to Suitability Notations, Trainee Review Boards, and trainee dismissals to identify and address potential equity concerns.

Status: Resolved.

FBI Response: The FBI concurred with the recommendation. The FBI stated that the Training Division (TD) will review its current ability to maintain, review, and analyze Suitability Notations (SN), Trainee Review Boards (TRB), and trainee dismissals. The TD will also evaluate whether an automated system would improve the ability of TD personnel to identify and assess trainees for suitability against FBI assessment standards, as well as FBI policies, procedures, and regulations.

OIG Analysis: The FBI's planned actions are responsive to the recommendation. By March 29, 2023, please provide an update on, or the results of, the TD's evaluation of its ability to maintain, review, and analyze data related to SNs, TRBs, and trainee dismissals and any planned actions resulting from the TD's evaluation. Additionally, provide an update on the evaluation of whether an automated system would improve the TD's ability to identify and assess trainees for suitability against FBI assessment standards, as well as FBI policies, procedures, and regulations.

Recommendation 2

Develop criteria for the selection of the Section Spokesperson, ensure that the criteria address any risks of bias, and ensure that the criteria are adequately communicated to trainees.

Status: Resolved.

FBI Response: The FBI concurred with the recommendation. The Trainee Management Unit (TMU) will formally document and communicate to trainees the selection criteria for the Section Spokesperson.

OIG Analysis: The FBI's planned actions are responsive to the recommendation. By March 29, 2023, please provide documentation demonstrating that the TMU has developed criteria for the Section Spokesperson and how the criteria were or will be communicated to trainees.

Recommendation 3

Collect and evaluate trainee feedback and use it to address concerns about inequitable treatment and inconsistency in instruction and evaluation.

Status: Resolved.

FBI Response: The FBI concurred with the recommendation. The FBI solicits survey responses from trainees during the Basic Field Training Course (BFTC) and after graduation. The FBI stated that it will continue to review BFTC survey responses on an ongoing basis.

OIG Analysis: The FBI's planned actions are responsive to the recommendation. By March 29, 2023, please provide the OIG with a description of how the FBI will review its BFTC survey responses to identify and address any concerns of inequitable treatment and inconsistency in instruction and evaluation. Also, provide a copy of the survey questions.

Recommendation 4

Increase transparency by clarifying to trainees the actions that cause a negative evaluation of a trainee's suitability, such as a Suitability Notation, Suitability Review, or Trainee Review Board.

Status: Resolved.

FBI Response: The FBI concurred with the recommendation and stated that the TMU will review the Graduation Requirements document with trainees to clarify actions that may lead to negative evaluation of a trainee's suitability and will require trainees to acknowledge the same.

OIG Analysis: The FBI's planned actions are responsive to the recommendation. By March 29, 2023, please provide the OIG with information and documentation demonstrating how the FBI has and will continue to clarify to trainees the actions that cause a negative evaluation of a trainee's suitability.

Recommendation 5

Evaluate the training that Basic Field Training Course instructors receive to determine whether it adequately addresses professionalism and bias, and adjust the training accordingly.

Status: Resolved.

FBI Response: The FBI concurred with the recommendation and stated that it will review the training provided to BFTC instructors to determine whether it appropriately addresses professionalism and bias.

OIG Analysis: The FBI's planned actions are responsive to the recommendation. By March 29, 2023, please provide an update on, or the results of, the FBI's review of the training provided to BFTC instructors and a description of how the FBI is assessing whether the training appropriately addresses professionalism and bias.

Recommendation 6

Develop additional internal controls for tactical training—such as reviewing multiple instructors' evaluations or video recordings of an exercise to ensure consistency in trainee evaluations—to reduce the potential for bias.

Status: Resolved.

FBI Response: The FBI concurred with the recommendation and stated that it will review its internal controls for tactical training and examine ways in which the FBI may be able to reduce the potential for bias in tactical training, while weighing costs, benefits, and the operational needs of the FBI Academy.

OIG Analysis: The FBI's planned actions are responsive to the recommendation. By March 29, 2023, please provide an update on, or the results of, your review of internal controls for tactical training and a description of how the FBI will examine ways to reduce the potential for bias in tactical training.

Recommendation 7

Evaluate, develop, and implement a recruitment plan with methods to increase the recruitment of women as certified tactical and defensive tactics instructors.

Status: Resolved.

FBI Response: The FBI concurred with the recommendation and stated that it recognizes the benefits of women serving as tactical and defensive tactics instructors. In 2018, the FBI informally removed the Special Weapons and Tactics and Hostage Rescue Team certification requirements and added the practical applications instructor certification to become an instructor for the BFTC. The FBI stated that on November 4, 2022, it memorialized this change in the FBI's Tactical Training Policy (1230PG). The TD will also coordinate with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion's Senior Liaison to develop a communications plan to solicit female applicants for the tactics instructor positions.

OIG Analysis: The FBI's planned actions are partially responsive to the recommendation. By March 29, 2023, please describe how the FBI will evaluate, develop, and implement a recruitment plan to increase the recruitment of women as certified tactical and defensive tactics instructors. In addition, provide a copy of the FBI's Tactical Training Policy (1230PG) and the communications plan developed to solicit female applicants.