



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION III
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August 1, 2022

MEMORANDUM TO: Joseph L. Nick
Deputy Division Director

THRU: David A. Curtis
Division Director

FROM: Mohammed Shuaibi
Deputy Regional Administrator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "MS", is placed next to the name Mohammed Shuaibi.

Signed by Shuaibi, Mohammed
on 08/01/22

SUBJECT: CHARTER FOR QUALIFICATION/TRAINING PROCESS REVIEW
FOR NEW STAFF IN REGIONAL MATERIALS PROGRAM

The purpose of this memorandum is to transmit the enclosed charter for the Qualification/Training Process Review for New Staff in the Regional Materials Program. The charter was reviewed and incorporates comments from management and staff in Region III and peers in the other Regional Offices. The purpose of this effort is to review the current process for training and qualification of inspectors and license reviewers to incorporate past experiences, lessons-learned, long-distance learning, and innovative ideas due to the various changes in NRC programs. An important goal of this review is to identify ways to modernize and streamline the process in a way to maintain its effectiveness while making it more efficient.

As the Lead for this review, you should explore possible methods allowable under the current IMC guidance and make recommendations for changes to strengthen existing NRC guidance, including licensing and inspection procedures and practices. You will report your progress to the DNMS Director and periodically update the Deputy Regional Administrator and other stakeholders as appropriate.

Enclosure: As Stated

SUBJECT: CHARTER FOR QUALIFICATION/TRAINING PROCESS REVIEW FOR NEW
STAFF IN REGIONAL MATERIALS PROGRAM

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DATE	7/26/2022	7/26/2022	8/1/2022

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QUALIFICATION/TRAINING PROCESS REVIEW FOR NEW STAFF IN REGIONAL MATERIALS PROGRAM (DNMS/DRSS)

Talking Points

1. The current process for training and qualification of inspectors and license reviewers should be modified to include past experiences, lessons-learned, long-distance learning, and innovative ideas due to the various changes in NRC programs. Other initiatives could be included to determine more efficient and effective implementation of the process that has not changed significantly in many years.
2. Due to designed flexibility in the current process, implementation of the training and qualification program may be inconsistent.
3. The time it takes to new staff to become qualified varies from 1 to 2 years (and sometimes longer). The goal should be 1 year or under.
4. This effort will perform a review of current practices used in various Offices/Regions to determine best practices for more efficient and effective implementation on a broader scale (including Qualification Boards and recent efficiencies in the reactor business lines). Modernization of the process will be included to take best advantage of remote learning and other changes to the NRC learning environment.
5. An important goal is to continue to build the relationships within this community of practice (DNMS/DRSS/MSST) and enable cooperation, knowledge-sharing, and work-sharing practices between other regional offices and the program office (NMSS).

Introduction

The current process for training and qualification of inspectors and license reviewers will be reviewed to incorporate past experiences, lessons-learned, long-distance learning, and innovative ideas due to the various changes in NRC programs. An important goal of this review is to identify ways to modernize and streamline the process in a way to maintain its effectiveness while making it more efficient.

Background/Analysis

The current process for qualification and cross-qualification is outlined in manual chapters (primarily 1248) and is implemented by direct supervisors or their delegates. The process is designed to have flexibility in implementation based on the current needs of the organization and the experience and background of the individual, while maintaining core requirements to maintain consistency and quality. Due to flexibilities in the process, implementation of the program may currently be inconsistent. New employees go through a process that trains them in knowledge and capabilities that are required for effective job performance. All new employees go through the same training (some of which can be waived). However, there is considerable variability in the time it takes to become qualified. The time it takes to become qualified varies from 1 to 2 years (and sometimes longer). In addition, there are elements of qualifications (for most staff) that remain incomplete for many years which requires extra work from BCs, supervisors, and mentoring staff to co-sign/peer review work products of staff not qualified.

Enclosure

Supervisors and mentors assigned to each employee are responsible for ensuring topics have been successfully learned in a timely manner. Our process needs to provide new employees appropriate knowledge of the process and to help them achieve qualification in 1 year or less from date-of-hire. In addition, they should receive organizational support to achieve such qualification in 1 year or less. With the influx of new staff, a significant effort is required by supervisors to mentor and guide these new employees through the qualification process. This review should consider traditional, as well as innovative, ideas such as centralization or consolidation of training and qualification efforts or cross office/region collaboration and more efficiently qualify the large influx of new staff. Other innovative ideas should also be explored.

Similar issues and challenges currently exist in the cross-qualification process and this process should be similarly reviewed.

Objectives

Improve efficiency (the time it takes) to achieve qualifications for new employees while maintaining effectiveness of the qualification process. New hires with significant experience should be able to achieve qualification well within 1 year (e.g., 6 months), while the less experienced new hires should achieve qualification within 1 year. (Measurement: track qualified achievement times, perform root cause analysis on those that take longer than 1 year from hire date).

Improve effectiveness in consistency of individuals charged with qualifying new employees to ensure a more objective and consistent approach to judging who is qualified. All mentors/supervisors use a consistent behavioral observation approach based on specific objective descriptions to assess a new employee as qualified. (Measurement: track achievement time by mentor/supervisor and perform comparative analysis to identify those who have consistently longer times to qualify new employees, perform root cause review, obtain feedback from new employees using a consistent questionnaire regarding time for scheduled assessment and difficulty of assessment).

All new employees will have the support, ability, and willingness to meet the goal of achieving qualification in one year or less from date of hire. (Measurement: obtain feedback from new employees regarding any challenging situations/roadblocks to achieving qualification in 1 year from hire date)

Another important goal is to continue to build the relationships within this community of practice (DNMS/DRSS in various regions and MSST). If we do more to include staff and management across organizations, it could help with long term objectives such as standardization, collaboration, knowledge management, and supporting various workload volumes through peaks and valleys.

Process

Perform a review of current practices used in various Offices/Regions to determine best practices for more efficient and effective implementation on a broader scale (including Qualification Boards and recent efficiencies in the reactor business lines). Modernize the process to take best advantage of remote learning and other changes to the NRC learning environment.

1. Socialize the project through meeting(s) with key stakeholders/leadership and adjust effort as necessary based on feedback – one week (before 7/22/22).
2. Capture the current process through IMC/procedure review to support analysis – one week (before 7/29/22).
3. Obtain baseline data on measurements detailed above to demonstrate improvements after implementation of recommendations.
 - Baseline data of new employees over the past 5 years for time the time it took to obtain qualification – two days to one week (before 7/29/22).
 - Baseline data of mentors/supervisors assigned to each new employee to perform comparative analysis to identify trends among mentors/supervisors – two days to one week (before 7/29/22).
4. Prepare questions and interview new employees over the past 2 years regarding challenges/inefficiencies in obtaining qualifications (goal = 10-12 employees) – 3 days with ~3 interviews per day based on employee availability (before 8/5/22).
5. Prepare questions and interview mentors/supervisors (goal = 10-12 mentors and supervisors) – 6 days with ~3 interviews per day based on subjects' availability (before 8/19/22).
6. Prepare questions and interview leadership for critical incidents or problems with the current process (goal = 10-12 leaders) – 3 days with ~3 interviews per day based on employee availability (before 8/26/22).
7. Collect and analyze data for common themes, variations, cause of variation, and other conclusions – 10 days (before 9/9/22).
8. Formulate recommendations and write draft report for review/input – 14 days (before 9/23/22), including staff and stakeholder forums/discussions.
9. Incorporate feedback, finalize report, and specify steps for implementation of recommended actions - 14 days (before 9/30/22).
10. Formulate and communicate results and actions – 5 days (before 10/7/22).

Status briefings will be provided to DNMS/DRSS/MSST division management and informational sessions will be provided to staff and other stakeholders after Steps 3, 6, and 8 above as well as at the completion of the effort.

Assumptions

Project goals are focused on current training and knowledge content and not on determining the effectiveness of the current training and knowledge acquisition and recommend changes to content.

There is inherent variability present when different people assess other people's skills acquisition and may not consistently use specific objective behavioral descriptions (a ruler) of what the skill acquisition looks like.

New employees working toward qualification are dependent upon several people and several organizational systems to achieve qualifications (availability of assessors may influence the timing).