

## The Importance of Peer Reviews

**David Arakawa, FY 2011 FPD of the Year  
Steve Meador**

Today's widely recognized project peer reviews in the Office of Science (SC) have evolved from practices used for over 30 years.

SC's successful project completion track record is due to careful front-end planning with early involvement of the science community and industry partners; credible cost and schedule estimates with realistic amounts of contingency; clear line management authority executed by seasoned managers who are accountable for project outcomes; and regular, in-depth, independent project peer reviews throughout the project.

Regularly scheduled project peer reviews provide program managers (owners) timely, succinct, and credible independent analysis of all aspects of project performance – technical, cost, schedule, and management. They provide project managers (laboratories and contractors) immediate feedback in the form of clear, actionable recommendations for resolving major project issues/obstacles needed for successful completion.

In a March 4, 2010 memorandum, "Project Management Principles," Deputy Secretary Daniel Poneman recognized the value of peer reviews. In November 2010, the Department issued DOE Order 413.3B *Program and Project Management for the Acquisition of Capital Assets* that includes a section on reviews, stating they "are an important project activity and must be planned as an integral part of the project and tailored appropriately to project risk, complexity, duration and CD or phase." Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Deputy Secretary, by memorandum dated April 12, 2011, expressed his aspiration to "build a culture in which peer review is valued and integral to project success..." Through this memorandum, Deputy Secretary Poneman established his expectation for the conduct of peer reviews and gave clear guidance on their execution.

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## More Dates Have Been Added!

### Upcoming PARS II/EVMS Road Show Dates:

- Oak Ridge, June 11-12
- Los Alamos, June 18-19
- Sandia, June 20-21
- Idaho Falls, June 25-26
- Portsmouth/Paducah, July 25-26

Based on the widely recognized value of effective peer reviews for project success, and senior DOE management championing their conduct throughout the Department, peer reviews should rank high on any federal project director's (FPD's) list of project management tools. To anyone seeking more information about SC's peer review practice and process, I suggest visiting SC's Office of Project Assessment's website (<http://science.energy.gov/opa/>) and reading or downloading "DOE/SC Independent Project Review Process." This short handbook provides useful guidance for organizing and conducting project peer reviews.

If you have not experienced a project peer review first-hand, I urge you to serve on a peer review committee or observe one in action. The practical training and lessons learned you gain can benefit your project, and ultimately benefit the mission of the Department.

## Question of the Month #1

**Submitted by Geoffrey Gorsuch, Level II FPD**

**Question:** In the March PMCDP newsletter, it was announced that Level III and IV applicants will be responsible for demonstrating prior experience working on projects in each phase of the critical decision (CD) process, except CD-0. What exactly does this mean? For example, would CD-1 experience be in preparation for CD-1 approval, or for work executed after CD-1 and prior to CD-2? Logic suggests preparation for CD-1 would count towards this requirement.

**Answer:** Yes, work conducted in preparation for CD approval and the work executed between the CD phases count toward the experience requirement for each CD phase. For example, experience for CD-2 would include the preparation for CD-2 approval and the work executed between CD-1 and CD-2.

Please note, candidates may use both FPD and integrated project team experience for CD-1, but must use FPD or FPD-equivalent experience for CD-2 through CD-4. Additionally, candidates must serve on a project for at least six continuous months to receive experience credit.

## Question of the Month #2

**Answered provided by Steven Martinez, Learning & Development Training Services**

**Question:** There has been a lot of talk about individual development plans (IDPs). What are they and why are they important? How will completing one benefit me?

**Answer:** The IDP is an important tool for Department of Energy (DOE) employees. Due to budget constraints, and the importance of making do with less, we need to act responsibly and make the most of training opportunities. The IDP is a good place for you to start by identifying training goals that support DOE's mission. Providing the agency's learning and development (L&D) engines with fuel (your training plans) will help us get the right training to you.

When completing your IDP, remember that the purpose is to identify mission-critical training. Please take the time to identify mission-critical skill gaps that need to be improved, learned, or practiced to achieve the high level of performance required for your organization. Used as intended, the IDP should be completed with the same level of confidence as performance plans and the associated reviews. Remember, this is your opportunity to identify courses to meet your personal developmental goals, and is also a mechanism to use with your supervisor to capture the training necessary to achieve the goals of the organization.

I encourage you to take the time and effort required to enter the correct courses into your IDP. When IDPs are completed in a timely manner, and by all employees, DOE's L&D can rely on the accuracy of the plans, eliminate multiple training needs assessments, and use the IDP data as input to plan training events for the upcoming fiscal year. Please take this important step to help improve DOE's training delivery.

## CRB Clarifies Certification Requirements

During the May 23, 2012 Certification Review Board (CRB) meeting, the CRB approved several policy changes/clarifications. The *Certification and Equivalency Guidelines* will be updated as needed.

### **Experience Self-Assessment Requirement for Level I Certification Applications**

Level I candidates are now required to complete a self-assessment when applying for certification. The self-assessment is designed to gauge the overall breadth of project management experience of prospective Level I FPDs, and requires applicants to rate their experience with the activities covered in competency 1.12.2 (three years of experience in project management). The assessment must be signed by the candidate's first-line supervisor and should be submitted with the certification package. For additional questions and to obtain a copy of the self-assessment template, please contact your Program's designated PMCDP point of contact.

### **Modification to the Process for FPDs who Fail to Meet the PMCDP's Continuing Education Hours Requirement**

When an FPD does not meet the biennial continuing education (CE) hour requirement, he/she is then placed into a 90-day notification period of pending certification revocation.

- If the FPD can satisfy the CE hour requirement within the first 15 business days after entering the 90-day notification period, there will be no additional action required by the FPD or the sponsoring Program.
- If the first 15 business days pass and no remedial action is taken, the sponsoring Program will be required to submit a request to CRB Secretariat which identifies 1) the reasons why the FPD was unable to meet the requirement, and 2) a remedy plan to satisfy the requirement within the 90-day notification period's remaining time.
- If the FPD is unable to meet the CE hour requirement within the 90-day period, the sponsoring Program will need to submit a formal request to the CRB Co-Chairs for consideration.

If the sponsoring Program does not submit a request or if the Co-Chairs deny it, the CRB will revoke the certification at the end of the 90-day period.

### **Revised Mentoring Requirements for Level III Candidates**

To satisfy competency 3.12.2 (be mentored for six months by a Level III or IV FPD who has a minimum of two years of experience on a Level III or higher project), all Level III applicants will be required to provide a signed copy of the mentoring agreement as part of the certification package.

For equivalency 3.12.2.2 (serve as a member of the Senior Executive Service [SES] for two years), candidates will be permitted to demonstrate equivalency by serving in other executive excepted service positions (e.g., EN, EJ, EK, etc.) as long as the position is that of a "level four" or higher (e.g., EN-4, EJ-4, EK-4, etc.).

### **Reinforce Time Limit on Stalled Certification Applications**

Certification applications will be reviewed against the certification requirements in place at the time of the initial submission by the Program. Applications that fail to complete the independent review phase and are not presented to the CRB for certification action within one year will be removed from consideration. Once removed, the sponsoring Program will be required to resubmit the certification package and the candidate will be required to address the current certification requirements.

# PMCDP Course Schedule

Course Available Online	PMCDP Info	Course Code
Contracting Officer Representative Training	Level I Core	CLC222
To register through the Federal Acquisition Institute's Training Application System (FAITAS): <a href="#">Ctrl + Click Here</a>		
For a Tutorial on using FAITAS: <a href="#">Ctrl + Click Here</a>		

Start	End	Course	CEUs	Location	PMCDP Info	CHRIS Code/ Session	Registration Restrictions
<b>June 2012</b>							
6/11/12	6/14/11	Managing Contract Changes	28*	Idaho Falls, ID	Level 1 Core	002102/0013	None
6/12/12	6/14/12	Real Property Asset Management	21*	Fermilab	Level 2 Elective	001183/0021	None
6/19//12	6/22/12	Project Risk Analysis & Management	25*	Washington, DC	Level 1 Core	001035/	Priority given to NNSA employees
6/19/12	6/22/12	Managing Contract Changes	28*	Las Vegas, NV	Level 1 Core	002102/	Not in CHRIS Contact Betty Warrior
6/25/12	6/28/12	Managing Contract Changes	28*	Washington, DC	Level 1 Core	002102/0020	None
6/26/12	6/28/12	LEED for New Construction & Existing Buildings	18*	Oak Ridge, TN	Level 1 Elective	001936/0016	None
<b>July 2012</b>							
7/9/12	8/31/12	Project Management Systems & Practices in DOE	60*	Idaho Falls, ID	Level 1 Core	001024/0039	None
Onsite: 8/7-8/9							
7/10/12	7/13/12	Managing Contract Changes	28*	Albuquerque, NM	Level 1 Core	002102/0022	None
7/17/12	7/20/12	Managing Contract Changes	28*	Cincinnati, OH	Level 1 Core	002102/0028	None
7/24/12	7/26/12	Performance-Based Management Contracting	21*	Germantown, MD	Level 1 Elective	001951/0009	None
7/30/12	8/2/12	Planning for Safety in Project Management	25*	Idaho Falls, ID	Level 1 Core	001035/0050	None
<b>August 2012</b>							
8/7/12	8/10/12	Managing Contract Changes	28*	Oak Ridge, TN	Level 1 Core	002102/0024	None
8/8/12	8/9/12	Capital Planning for DOE O 413.3B Capital Asset Projects	14*	Aiken, SC	Level 1 Elective	002152/0004	Priority given to SRS employees
8/14/12	8/17/12	Federal Budgeting Process in DOE	28*	Washington, DC	Level 2 Elective	001034/	Priority given to NNSA employees
8/14/12	8/17/12	Project Risk Analysis & Management	25*	Aiken, SC	Level 1 Core	001033/0039	None
8/21/12	8/22/12	Effective Program and Project Communication	14*	Folsom, CA	Level 2 Core	001940/0010	None
8/21/12	8/24/12	Managing Contract Changes	28*	Aiken, SC	Level 1 Core	002102/0018	None

**Note:** Asterisked courses are PMI approved

**For a step-by-step guide to register for PMCDP courses in CHRIS/ESS, please visit the PMCDP website:**

<http://energy.gov/management/downloads/pmcdp-course-registration-process>

## Recently Certified FPDs

The Certification Review Board certified the following individuals:

### Office of Environmental Management

- Arturo Q. Duran, Level I
- George C. Henckel III, Level II
- Cheryl L. Rodriguez, Level II
- Isabelle Wheeler, Level II
- Daniel W. Sullivan, Level III

**Congratulations to our  
newly certified FPDs!**



## Correction

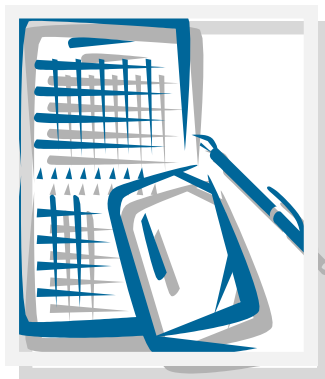
In the May newsletter, one of the recipients of the Secretary's Award of Excellence was cited incorrectly. Standing between the Deputy Secretary of Energy, Mr. Daniel Poneman, and the Director of the Office of Management, Ms. Ingrid Kolb, are left to right: Chad Henderson, Jeff Pittman, Marc Jones, and Dan Lehman. PMCDP apologizes for this error.



## Special Thanks!

PMCDP would like to thank David Arakawa, Steve Meador, Geoffrey Gorsuch, and Steven Martinez for contributing to the newsletter. We welcome questions and news from the field. If you have a question or would like to write a newsletter article, please contact Linda Ott or Victoria Barth. Help us make the newsletter a valuable resource for you.

## Full PMCDP Course Schedule



For the full listing of FY 2012 and FY 2013 classes, visit the PMCDP website:

<http://energy.gov/management/downloads/pmcdp-course-schedule>

## Questions or Comments?

Please email general questions and comments to [PMCDP.Administration@hq.doe.gov](mailto:PMCDP.Administration@hq.doe.gov), or visit our website: <http://energy.gov/management/office-management/operational-management/project-management-career-development-program>

For specific information, please contact one of the following individuals:

- Linda Ott, PMP, MA Adult Ed - PMCDP Team Lead, [Linda.Ott@hq.doe.gov](mailto:Linda.Ott@hq.doe.gov)
- OR-
- Victoria C. Barth, MA ISD - Course Schedule, Certification Review Board information, Certification and Equivalency Guidelines, Newsletter, [Victoria.Barth@hq.doe.gov](mailto:Victoria.Barth@hq.doe.gov)