U.S. Department of Energy

Office of Health, Safety and Security

Technical Qualification Program
Self-Assessment Report

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Submitted by:

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Date: 12-14-19
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning in April 2014, a self-assessment of the Technical Qualification Program (TQP) was performed in the Office of Health, Safety and Security (HSS). The assessment was led by the HSS TQP Manager who is assigned the responsibility for maintaining and implementing the programs. The assessment reviewed implementing procedures and associated records along with interviewing a sample of staff who participate in these programs. The assessment identified several areas for process improvement to ensure that:

- Personnel are clearly identified as TQP participants in their PDs.
- Expected TQP area of qualification and its status is clearly documented in participant’s IDPs and is reviewed, updated biannually during the performance reviews.
- The Qualification cards are maintained in participant’s TQP records and a copy is sent to TQP Manager.
- Roles and responsibilities as identified in the HSS TQP Plan is fully understood by TQP participants and their supervisors.
- The HSS TQP Plan clearly identifies the need to perform periodic self-assessment of the TQP implementation.

INTRODUCTION

According to DOE Order 426.1, Change 1, Headquarters and Field elements must conduct a self-assessment of Technical Qualification Program (TQP) and Federal Capability Program (FTCP) implementation within their organization at least every four years. These assessments must be conducted in accordance with the requirements of DOE Order (O) 226.1B, implementation of Department of Energy Oversight Policy, dated 4-25-11, and the current objectives and criteria approved by the FTCP Chair and posted on the FTCP Web site at: http://www.energy.gov/ehss/ftcp-guiding-documents

HSS delivers corporate leadership and strategic vision to protect DOE’s workers, the public, the environment and national security assets. HSS collaboratively develops, interprets and enforces policies and standards, assesses performance and provides related corporate services as DOE’s environment, health, safety and security advocate.

As of the first quarter of FY 2014, HSS has a total of 98 personnel that are in the HSS TQP, 29 of those personnel are designated Senior Technical Safety Managers (STSMs). HSS technical staffing is based on HSS management’s judgment of TQP FTE requirements based on technical issue priorities and past experience with actual staff time spent in the respective functional areas supporting technical issues.
SCOPE & METHODOLOGY

The following TQP and FTCP Objectives and Criteria were used for this TQP Self-Assessment:

1. TQP-1, Structured Program. The program clearly identifies and documents the process used to demonstrate employee technical competence.

Criteria:

1.1 Senior Management is committed to the TQP.

1.2 At a minimum, personnel providing management direction or oversight that could impact the safe operation of a defense nuclear facility have been identified as TQP participants.

1.3 Individual Development Plans (IDPs), training plans, technical qualification records, or other related documents are updated to reflect the activities required for each individual to satisfy competencies.

1.4 A formal evaluation process (e.g. select and train Qualifying Officials) is in place to objectively measure the technical competency of employees. The rigor of the evaluation process is commensurate with the responsibilities of the position.

2. TQP-2, Plans and Procedures. Plans and/or procedures are developed and implemented to govern administration of the program.

Criteria:

2.1 Written procedures that adequately define the processes and requirements to implement the TQP are in place.

2.2 Roles and responsibilities for implementing the TQP are clearly defined and understood by all involved.

2.3 The procedures that govern implementation of the TQP are understood by all involved and are being implemented as written.

2.4 A training and qualification records development and maintenance process is established for each employee in the TQP.

3. TQP-3, Competency Requirements. Competency requirements are clearly defined and consistent with applicable DOE standards for similar industrial occupations.

Criteria:

3.1 Competency requirements include clearly defined knowledge, skill, and ability elements.
3.2 Recognized experts help establish competency requirements.

3.3 Related professional accreditation requirements are considered in the program as applicable.

3.4 Competency requirements are identified in the areas listed below. (Note: this does not imply that three separate documents are required.)

• Basic Technical Knowledge
• Technical Discipline Competency
• Position Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

4. TQP-4, Qualification Tailored to Work Activities. The program identifies unique Department and position-specific work activities and specifies the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to accomplish that work.

Criteria:

4.1 An analysis has been performed to identify the related knowledge, skill, and ability elements to accomplish the duties and responsibilities for each TQP functional area or position.

4.2 The program includes job-specific requirements related to the rules, regulations, codes, standards, and guides necessary to carry out the mission of the office. The program supports the mission needs of the office.

5. TQP-5, Credit for Existing Technical Qualification Programs.

Criteria:

5.1 Credit (equivalency) is granted for previous training, education, experience, and completion of related technical qualification programs, where applicable.

5.2 Equivalency is granted based upon a review and verification of objective evidence, such as transcripts, course certificates, test scores, or on-the-job experience. Equivalencies are formally validated, approved, and documented.

6. TQP-6, Transportability. Competency requirements identified as applying throughout the Department are transferable.

Criteria:

6.1 The program includes all competencies that have been identified as applying throughout the Department.
6.2 Formal documentation of the completion of Department wide competencies is maintained in a manner that allows for easy transferability.

6.3 TQP is integrated with personnel-related activities, such as position descriptions, vacancy announcements, recruiting, and performance appraisals.

7. TQP-7, Measurable. The program contains sufficient rigor to demonstrate compliance to the requirements.

Criteria:

7.1 The technical competency of personnel who have completed the requirements of the TQP is adequate and appropriate.

7.2 The program allows for continuous feedback and periodic evaluation to ensure that it meets the needs of the Department and the missions of the office.

7.3 The TQP provides for continuing training.

RESULTS

The results of the assessment are documented in Appendix A – Assessment Criteria and Performance Level. A summary of the findings is listed below. Further explanations are found in Appendix A.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A – Assessment Criteria and Performance Level
Appendix B – Documents Reviewed and Personnel Interviewed
### APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND PERFORMANCE LEVEL TABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TQP Criteria</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Senior management is committed to the TQP</td>
<td>• Senior management demonstrates commitment by providing resources and setting time for personnel getting qualified. Performance is monitored through the FTCP quarterly status reports.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 At a minimum, personnel providing management direction or oversight that could impact the safe operation of a defense nuclear facility have been identified as TQP participants.</td>
<td>• Need to work with HR, to ensure personnel are identified as TQP participants in their PDs. Personnel are tracked in the FTCP quarterly status report sent to HQ.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3 IDPs, training plans, technical qualification records, or other related documents are updated to reflect the activities required for each individual to satisfy competencies.</td>
<td>• Need additional interactions with all supervisors to ensure that TQP qualification and status is indicated in participant's IDPs and that they are updated/reviewed biannually during the performance reviews. HSS TQP Plan requires that qualification cards are prepared and approved by senior management. And official copies are maintained in participant's TQP records and a copy is sent to TQP Manager. Only a few qualification records were located and reviewed because when HSS was created in 2006 many participants did not have formal records from their prior organizations: Office of Environment, Safety and Health (EH) and Office of Safeguards and Security Assurance (SSA). A new records system needs to be put in place and the e-TQP system will assist with that effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 A formal evaluation process (e.g. to select and train Qualifying Officials) is in place to objectively measure the technical competency of employees. The rigor of the evaluation process is commensurate with the responsibilities of the position.</td>
<td>• Qualifying Official evaluation/training process is in place and documented in HSS TQP Plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1 Written procedures that adequately define the processes and requirements to implement the TQP are in place.</td>
<td>• Program is documented in HSS TQP Plan;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2 Roles and responsibilities for implementing the TQP are clearly defined and understood by all involved.</td>
<td>• Roles and responsibilities are identified in the HSS TQP Plan. There seems to be a basic understanding of roles and responsibilities by staff members but additional outreach is required to ensure that all participants and supervisors fully understand TQP expectations and their roles and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 The procedures that govern implementation of the TQP are understood by all involved and are being implemented as written.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 A training and qualification records development and maintenance process is established for each employee in the TQP.</td>
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</table>
Personnel have a general understanding of the HSS TQP Plan in their area of functionality and will be further enhanced when a new AU TQP Plan is developed.

The TQP Plan identifies the requirements for developing and maintaining qualification records for each employee. A reliable Qualification records system, however, has not been implemented.

| 3.1 Competency requirements include clearly defined knowledge, skill, and ability elements. |
| 3.2 Recognized experts help establish competency requirements. |
| 3.3 Related professional accreditation requirements are considered in the program as applicable. |
| 3.4 Competency requirements are identified in the areas listed below. (Note: this does not imply that three separate documents are required.) |
| • Basic Technical Knowledge. |
| • Technical Discipline Competency. |
| • Position Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities. |

- HSS uses FTCP approved Functional Area Qualification Standards developed by DOE experts.
- Appropriate methods for considering professional accreditation and for granting equivalencies are identified and authorized in the TQP Plan.

| 4.1 An analysis has been performed to identify the related knowledge, skill, and ability elements to accomplish the duties and responsibilities for each TQP functional area or position. |
| 4.2 The program includes job-specific requirements related to the rules, regulations, codes, standards, and guides necessary to carry out the mission of the office. |

- Site specific qualification standards are not being currently used.

| 5.1 Credit (equivalency) is granted for previous training, education, experience, and completion of related technical qualification programs, where applicable. |
| 5.2 Equivalency is granted based upon a review and verification of objective evidence, such as transcripts, course certificates, test scores, or on-the-job experience. Equivalencies are formally validated, approved, and documented. |

- Methods for granting equivalency are identified and authorized in the TQP Plan.
6.1 The program includes all competencies that have been identified as applying throughout the Department.
6.2 Formal documentation of the completion of Department-wide competencies is maintained in a manner that allows for easy transferability.
6.3 TQP is integrated with personnel-related activities, such as position descriptions, vacancy announcements, recruiting, and performance appraisals.

7.1 The technical competency of personnel who have completed the requirements of the TQP is adequate and appropriate.
7.2 The program allows for continuous feedback and periodic evaluation to ensure that it meets the needs of the Department and the missions of the office.
7.3 The TQP provides for continuing training.

- TQP Plan relies on completing DOE approved GTB and FAQ standards.
- FAQS process is completed in a manner that allows transferability.
- TQP process needs to be better integrated with PDs, hiring process, and IDPs.
- Technical competency is evaluated during performance reviews. No concerns were identified in this area. Goals are discussed and documented to address areas for improvement.
- The HSS TQP Plan does not identify the need to perform periodic evaluation. However, the need for periodic assessment was recognized and will be directed by the FTCP agent as demonstrated by this review.
- The HSS TQP Plan discusses continuing training, and many of the participants do take continuing training but this training along with any certificates received needs to be documented in the participants TQP record.
APPENDIX B: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AND PERSONNEL INTERVIEWED

Documents Reviewed:

- HSS TQP Plan
- HSS TQP SOP
- FTCP Workforce Analysis and Staffing Plan Report, FY 2013

Interviews:

- STSM (FTCP Agent)
- Nuclear Safety Specialist
- Industrial Hygienist
- TQP Manager