

NHI Instructor Certification Program

Overview

The National Highway Institute (NHI) offers a certification program to provide, oversee, and continuously improve the application of quality for instructor skills and adult instructional techniques. The NHI Instructor Certification Program and Certificate of Accomplishment provide evidence of each instructor's credentials satisfying these standards. For candidates to be afforded the privilege to facilitate NHI training courses in their technical areas of expertise, they must become certified instructors through the NHI's certification process.

The certification process is built upon the following set of instructor competencies that are selected from a validated list of the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD) competencies:

- Application of Adult Learning Theory
- Communication Skills
- Facilitation Trainer Skills
- Positive Behavior Modeling Skills
- Classroom Management
- Subject Matter Expertise

CERTIFICATION ELIGIBILITY: The NHI Instructor Certification Program is only open to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) employees and FHWA contract employees who have been approved for technical competency and subject matter expertise by the appropriate FHWA Program Office and Resource Center technical managers. In addition, candidates must be actively teaching or preparing to teach NHI courses.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS: To achieve NHI instructor certification, instructors must successfully complete the three-step certification process listed below.

STEP 1: Instructor Development Training

Instructors interested in becoming candidates for certification must show evidence of successful completion of an approved instructor training, either FHWA-NHI-420018—Instructor Development Course (3.5-Day) or FHWA-NHI-420018A—Instructor Development Course (4.5-Day). The first course provides participants with the knowledge and skills to deliver more effective training and the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to succeed by passing the observation for certification (STEP 3) to become an NHI-certified instructor. The second course not only helps participants deliver more effective training but provides knowledge and skills to develop lesson plans, lessons, and an instructor's guide.

At the discretion of NHI and/or the Instructor Liaison, equivalent courses or hands-on experience may be substituted for completion of the NHI Instructor Development Course on a case-by-case basis.

Candidates for instructor certification are eligible to continue to the next step of the certification process. Candidates are not conditionally certified instructors nor are they eligible to teach NHI courses, except for the purpose of obtaining certification.

STEP 2: Obtain Approval of Subject Matter Technical Expertise from the Appropriate Program Office at the FHWA Headquarters

Before a certified instructor or a candidate for instructor certification is allowed to facilitate a technical NHI course, they must possess the minimum technical experience requirements set for the course by the Program Office or Resource Center technical managers and NHI's Contracting Officer Technical Representative (COTR). The aforementioned approval is required for each course that an instructor intends to teach for the first time. This step is required to ensure that the instructor can serve as a credible technical facilitator, authority, and resource.

If the Program Office or Resource Center technical manager or NHI's COTR has concerns about the performance of a specific contractor or certified instructor or candidate, he/she may require an instructor audition before a panel established by the COTR to test the technical and instructional skills required in STEPS 1, 2, and/or 3.

NHI

Instructor Certification Program

STEP 2a: Instructor Audition

If the COTR decides that an audition is required to assess the technical and instructional skills, instructors must submit for approval a proposed technical topic of the specific courses they intend to facilitate to demonstrate their technical and instructional strengths and skills. Shortly after the auditions, the judging panel will communicate the results of a pass, fail, or required re-audition. If re-audition is required, instructors must pass the instructor audition before they can request observation for certification (STEP 3).

Unless otherwise agreed upon with the COTR, auditions usually take place at NHI's offices in Arlington, VA, and all associated travel and other costs will be the responsibility of instructors/contractors/candidates.

STEP 3: Pass Observation for Certification by a Master Trainer

The next key element to certification is having a master trainer observe candidate instructors during the delivery of properly designed curriculum material to participants. The master trainer will provide immediate feedback to facilitate improvement, if appropriate.

Requests for observation should be submitted at least 2 to 3 months in advance of the desired observation date indicating the technical competency and subject matter expertise as well as course(s) to be taught. After an observation date has been set, NHI will send candidates materials explaining the requirements for certification, along with the criteria against which the instructors will be evaluated. These materials are based on the key concepts demonstrated in STEP 1.

The observation must take place at a regularly scheduled NHI course, not a pilot presentation, and the instructor must present multiple lessons during the course. In preparation for the observation, the master trainer will meet with the approved instructor candidate at the course location to discuss any questions on the requirements for certification or the criteria by which he/she will be evaluated. The observation typically lasts 1 day. Throughout the observation, the master trainer will provide feedback during scheduled breaks to discuss good performance areas as well as areas needing improvement.

Upon successfully demonstrating the required competencies and skills in an actual teaching situation, the approved instructor candidate will be awarded NHI Instructor Certification. If, in the opinion of the master trainer, the instructor needs to demonstrate a better grasp and efficient application of the competencies and skills required for certification, a self-improvement plan needs to be developed jointly by the candidate and master trainer, which may include attendance at instructor or other competency development courses. After completing the self-improvement plan, the instructor may request a second observation and pay an observation fee.

CERTIFICATION MAINTENANCE: NHI staff will review and evaluate information from multiple sources to validate ongoing performance and adherence to the principles upon which certification was granted. Further, instructors who fail to maintain an average of 4.0 or higher on NHI's instructor evaluations will be required to develop and execute a self-improvement plan after which they will need to be observed by a master trainer to maintain certification. Failure to act on the improvement plan and observation will result in decertification.

CERTIFICATE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT: After completing STEPS 1–3 and achieving certification, certified instructors can receive an official Certificate of Accomplishment from NHI by contacting the NHI Instructor Liaison.

ENROLLMENT: Customers can login, enroll, and pay their individual fees via the NHI Web site at www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov. FHWA participants should ask their local training coordinator to register them through the U.S. DOT Electronic Learning Management System (eLMS).

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Please visit www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov for more information about other NHI courses and the Certificate of Accomplishment Program.

