



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Service Center
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MAR 19 2009

The Honorable A.J. Eggenberger
Chairman, Defense Nuclear
Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue NW, Suite 700
Washington D.C. 20004-2901

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Enclosed is the Federal Technical Capabilities Program (FTCP) Corrective Action Plan, Revision 2, which is Deliverable B for Commitment 13 in the Department of Energy (DOE) Implementation Plan to Improve Oversight of Nuclear Operations, issued in response to Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 2004-1.

This plan has been updated to identify that all Department corrective actions to improve recruiting, developing, training, qualifying, maintaining proficiency of, and retaining technical personnel to safely accomplish DOE's mission have been completed. This revised plan is approved and will be monitored by the FTCP for effectiveness as determined by FTCP performance metrics.

Please provide any feedback to me or your staff may contact Dave Chaney of the FTCP at (505) 845-4300.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Karen L. Boardman'.

Karen L. Boardman
Chair, Federal Technical
Capabilities Panel

Enclosure

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SEPARATION

PAGE

**U.S. Department of Energy
Federal Technical Capability Panel**

**Federal Technical Capability Program
Corrective Action Plan
Revision 2**



Washington, D.C. 20585

DRAFT: March 2009

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**FEDERAL TECHNICAL CAPABILITY PROGRAM
CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN**

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FEDERAL TECHNICAL CAPABILITY PROGRAM

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

1.0 Executive Summary

The Federal Technical Capability (FTC) Program provides for recruitment, deployment, development, and retention of personnel with the demonstrated technical capability to safely accomplish the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) missions and responsibilities. The FTC Panel reports to the Deputy Secretary and is responsible for overseeing and resolving issues affecting the Program and providing recommendations to senior Department officials regarding DOE technical capability.

The Department's vision described in the Implementation Plan in response to Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB or Board) Recommendation 2004-1, *Oversight of Complex, High-Hazard Nuclear Operations*, (2004-1 IP) is for its technical personnel to be recognized among all federal agencies for the excellence of its federal staff. Commitment 13 of that Implementation Plan states that the Panel will "...develop corrective actions to improve recruiting, developing, training, qualifying, maintaining proficiency, and retaining technical personnel, as well as FTCP effectiveness. The Corrective Action Plan will include a prioritized list of key positions that should be filled to enhance safety."

The Panel Chairman convened an Assessment Team of senior personnel with expertise in human resources, training, recruiting, safety management, and operations to perform an assessment of the Department's performance in recruiting, developing, training, qualifying, maintaining proficiency, and retaining technically excellent personnel who are fulfilling safety responsibilities. In March 2005, a working group was established to begin reviewing previous assessment data. Based on these reviews, the working group identified hundreds of potential issues related to recruiting, developing, training, qualifying, maintaining proficiency, and retaining technically excellent personnel who are fulfilling safety responsibilities for defense nuclear facilities. The issues were binned and further analyzed by the working group. Based on this analysis, the working group identified 18 common issues for the Assessment Team to review and consider. Appendix A provides a discussion of how prior activities, current activities and this Corrective Action Plan address the 18 common themes identified by the working group.

The Assessment Team met in April and May 2005 to review the results of the working group and started to develop a Corrective Action Plan. The Assessment Team developed a Corrective Action Plan that identified the following major actions:

- 1 *Conduct a functional workforce analysis as a basis for meeting the needs of the organization's missions for the next five years.*

- 2 *Establish and implement a corporate accreditation process and plan based on the Institute for Nuclear Power Operations (INPO) model for the Technical Qualification Program (TQP). The FTC Panel Chair will oversee this process for the Deputy Secretary.*
- 3 *Reestablish the corporate Technical Leadership Development Program (TLDP – technical intern program) and institutionalize it through commitments to funding and recruitment for classes on an annual basis.*
- 4 *Build on the Facility Representative program as a model for Senior Technical Safety Manager qualification program and other Functional Area qualification programs.*
- 5 *Revise DOE Manual 426.1-1A to incorporate and institutionalize changes in Federal Technical Capability expectations developed as part of the Department's DNFSB Recommendation 2004-1 Implementation Plan.*

The Corrective Action Plan was issued on August 30, 2005, by the Deputy Secretary of Energy and the FTCP worked with various organizations on the major actions described therein.

In April-May 2006, the Department performed a re-review of the 2004-1 IP commitments. Based on the results of this review and experience gained in implementing Recommendation 2004-1, the Department developed Revision 2 of the 2004-1 IP in October 2006. Accordingly, this Corrective Action Plan has been updated to align with Revision 2 of the 2004-1 IP, to reflect current status of previous actions and describe additional actions, and to address the following issue:

- Make the accreditation process described in the original Corrective Action Plan voluntary, rather than mandatory. Excellent organizations are expected to pursue accreditation and serve as a model for others. Organizations voluntarily pursuing accreditation are expected to be more committed than those who would have had to pursue mandatory accreditation.

Actions from the original and revised Corrective Action Plan have been completed. As with the original and revised Corrective Action Plan, the FTCP will take the Department lead in monitoring the effectiveness of the actions taken.

2.0 Introduction

The Federal Technical Capability (FTC) Program provides for recruitment, deployment, development, and retention of personnel with the demonstrated technical capability to safely accomplish the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) missions and responsibilities. The FTC Panel (henceforth referred to as the Panel) reports to the Deputy Secretary and is responsible for overseeing and resolving issues affecting the Program. This includes overseeing the Senior Technical Safety Manager (STSM) Program, conducting periodic assessments of the effectiveness of the FTC Program, and providing recommendations to senior Department officials regarding DOE technical capability.

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB or Board) issued its Recommendation 2004-1, *Oversight of Complex, High-Hazard Nuclear Operations*, on May 21, 2004. The Department submitted Revision 1 to its Implementation Plan to the Board in June 2005. Commitment 13 of that Implementation Plan stated that the Panel would develop corrective actions to improve recruiting, developing, training, qualifying, maintaining proficiency, and retaining technical personnel, as well as FTC Panel effectiveness. Revision 0 of the Corrective Action Plan included a prioritized list of key positions that should be filled to enhance safety.

In March 2005 a working group was established to begin reviewing previous assessment data. The Assessment Team met in April 2005 to review the results of the working group and begin to develop a Corrective Action Plan. The corrective action report was briefed to the Panel at their face-to-face meeting in May 2005.

3.0 Scope and Methodology

To accomplish this activity, in March-April 2005 the Chairman of the FTC Panel convened an Assessment Team of senior personnel with expertise in human resources, training, recruiting, safety management, and operations to perform an assessment of the Department's performance in recruiting, developing, training, qualifying, maintaining proficiency, and retaining technically excellent personnel who are fulfilling safety responsibilities for defense nuclear facilities. The assessment team members, assessment methodology, and areas reviewed are described in detail in the original Corrective Action Plan and are not repeated in this revision.

4.0 Results

Based on its review, the Assessment Team developed a Corrective Action Plan that identified the following major actions:

- 1 *Conduct a functional workforce analysis as a basis for meeting the needs of the organization's missions for the next five years.*
- 2 *Establish and implement a corporate accreditation process and plan based on the Institute for Nuclear Power Operations (INPO) model for the Technical Qualification Program (TQP). The FTC Panel Chair will oversee this process for the Deputy Secretary.*
- 3 *Reestablish the corporate Technical Leadership Development Program (TLDP – technical intern program) and institutionalize it through commitments to funding and recruitment for classes on an annual basis.*
- 4 *Build on the Facility Representative program as a model for Senior Technical Safety Manager qualification program and other Functional Area qualification programs.*

- 5 *Revise DOE Manual 426.1-1A to incorporate and institutionalize changes in Federal Technical Capability expectations developed as part of the Department's DNFSB Recommendation 2004-1 Implementation Plan.*

The Corrective Action Plan was issued on August 30, 2005 by the Deputy Secretary of Energy and the FTCP worked with various organizations on the actions described therein.

In April-May 2006, the Department performed a re-review of the 2004-1 IP commitments against the following four criteria:

- Appear to weaken line-management responsibility and accountability;
- Contribute to micromanagement;
- Could lead to unacceptably risk averse behavior; and
- Violate the principle that it is the job of the Federal Government to identify the "what" and of the contractor community to focus on the "how."

Based on the results of this review and experience gained in implementing recommendation 2004-1, the Department developed revision 2 of the 2004-1 IP in October 2006. Accordingly, this Corrective Action Plan has been updated to align with Revision 2 of the 2004-1 IP, reflect current status of previous actions and describe additional actions, and to address the following issue:

- Make the accreditation process described in the original Corrective Action Plan voluntary, rather than mandatory. Excellent organizations are expected to pursue accreditation and serve as model for others. Organizations voluntarily pursuing accreditation are expected to be more committed than those who would have had to pursue mandatory accreditation.

All actions from the Corrective Action Plan have been completed.

The FTCP Panel will continue to take the Department lead in managing implementation of the corrective actions. Upon completion of this Corrective Action Plan, the FTCP will report to the Deputy Secretary. The report will include an assessment of the effectiveness of the actions taken.

5.0 Corrective Actions

The corrective actions and sub-actions identified in this Plan only relate to defense nuclear facilities. References to DOE Office of Science (SC), Office of Nuclear Energy (NE), and other DOE offices only include activities of those offices that involve defense nuclear facilities.

The Assessment Team identified the following major corrective actions and corresponding sub actions to support the issues described above:

1. *Conduct a functional workforce analysis as a basis for meeting the needs of the organization's missions for the next five years.*

- 1.1. Resolve shortages identified during the 2004 FTC Program workforce analyses and prioritize a list of key positions that should be filled to enhance safety based on current and anticipated missions. Present the results to Deputy Secretary.

Lead Responsibility: FTC Panel Agents for NA, EM, NE, SC and EH
Action for Closure: Included in this CAP as Appendix B is the prioritized list of key positions rolled up from NA, EM, NE, SC and EH
Due Date: August 2005
Status: Completed (Included as Appendix B to Revision 0 of this Corrective Action Plan)

- 1.2. Provide additional guidance on completing the 2005 FTC Program workforce analyses at defense nuclear facilities to ensure they are comprehensive, effective and assess future needs, including new positions such as Central Technical Authority, Nuclear Safety Research, and other applicable positions. This will include reevaluating the definition of critical positions. Ensure that the guidance incorporates a five year look-ahead as well as guidelines for duration and diversity of experience, timing and duration of needs, and levels of leadership competencies needed alongside the technical skills.

Lead Responsibility: FTC Panel Chair
Action for Closure: Letter to site and office managers providing additional guidance on completing the December 2005 FTC Program workforce analyses
Due Date: October 2005
Status: Completed (FTCP Chairman letter 05-TED-068 dated October 28, 2005)

- 1.3. NA, EM, NE, SC and EH conduct an updated workforce analysis for each site/office for calendar year (CY) 2005 using the revised workforce analysis methodology by December 2005 transmitted by letter to the FTC Panel by January 2006.

Lead Responsibility: FTCP Agents
Action for Closure: Workforce analyses for NA, EM, NE, SC and EH sites and Headquarters offices transmitted to FTC Panel Chair
Due Date: January 2006
Status: Completed (Workforce Analysis Reports placed on FTCP webpage)

- 1.4. Line management analyze and identify shortages based upon the 2005 Workforce Analyses, and prioritize a list of key positions that should be filled to enhance safety based on current and anticipated missions.

Lead Responsibility: FTC Panel Agents for NA, EM, NE, SC and EH and FTC Panel Chair for the roll-up
Action for Closure: Prioritized list of key positions rolled up from NA, EM, NE, SC and EH
Due Date: March 2006
Status: Completed (FTCP Chairman letter 06-TED-025 dated May 4, 2006)

- 1.5. Secretarial Officers resolve CY 2005 shortfalls and provide CY 2006 workforce analysis data.

Lead Responsibility: Program Secretarial Officers for NA and EM
Action for Closure: Track gaps and resolution status for EM and NA key positions identified in Action 1.4
Due Date: March 2007
Status: Completed (EM Memo dated May 10, 2006 and NA Memo dated March 28, 2006 identify prioritized CY2005 skill gaps. EM Memo dated May 15 2007 and NA email date 3/31/07 [NNSA HQ/Lead Agent to NNSA HQ Senior Management] documenting status of updated CY2006 skill gaps.)

- 1.6. Update the Human Capital Management Plan guidance to ensure that the output of the 2005 FTC Program workforce analyses and resulting staffing plans, including the five year look-ahead, are used as input for any other comprehensive workforce analyses in the Department. Develop configuration control for the FTC Program workforce analysis results and the staffing plans generated.

Lead Responsibility: FTC Panel Chair
Action for Closure: Provide the output of the 2005 analysis and resulting staffing plans to DOE Human Resources for incorporation into the DOE Human Capital Management Strategic Plan
Due Date: March 2006
Status: Completed (FTCP Chairman letter 06-TED-017 dated March 29, 2006)

- 1.7. Develop and implement performance metrics that measure the efficacy of the actions taken to address the results of the workforce analyses. Review quarterly with the Deputy Secretary.

Lead Responsibility: FTC Panel Chair and Office of Departmental Representative to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
Action for Closure: Metrics included in FTCP Quarterly Report
Due Date: April 2007
Status: Completed (Issued FY07 Q3 Quarterly Report September 25, 2007 with expanded performance metrics. Expanded metrics used in subsequent quarterly reports.)

- 1.8. Revise DOE Manual 426.1-1A to institutionalize the workforce analysis process.

Lead Responsibility: FTC Panel Chair
Action for Closure: Release a draft revision of DOE Manual 426.1-1A into REVCOM incorporating the revised workforce analysis and staffing plan process and reporting requirements
Due Date: Close as part of Action 6.
Status: Completed (DOE O 426.1X released into REVCOM March 10, 2009.)

2. *Establish and implement a corporate accreditation process and plan based on the Institute of Nuclear Power Operation (INPO) model for the Technical Qualification Program (TQP). The FTC Panel Chair will oversee this process for the Deputy Secretary.*

- 2.1. Develop an accreditation process for DOE TQPs based on the INPO model for accreditation of commercial nuclear power training and qualification programs. Criteria for TQP accreditation will be developed using guidance already developed for assessments of the TQP as provided in DOE Manual 426.1-1A. This includes establishing the TQP accreditation review board and review team selection criteria.

Federal Technical Capability Program – Corrective Action Plan

- Lead Responsibility: Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Facility Safety (EH-2)
Action for Closure: FTC Panel approved interim TQP accreditation process and Criteria Review and Approach Documents (CRADS) based on the INPO model for accreditation of commercial nuclear power training and qualification programs and guidance already developed for assessments of the TQP as provided in DOE Manual 426.1-1A. The NNSA and ESE Central Technical Authorities will review both the accreditation process and CRADS
Due Date: December 2005
Status: Completed (FTCP Chairman signed Interim Guidance on December 27, 2005, subsequently incorporated into new FTC Order 426.1X, posted in REVCOM on March 10, 2009)
- 2.2. Establish a schedule for accreditation of all defense nuclear facilities site/office TQPs approved by the FTCP.
- Lead Responsibility: Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Facility Safety (EH-2)
Action for Closure: FTC Panel approved schedule for accreditation of NA, EM, NE, SC and EH site/office TQPs
Due Date: February 2006
Status: Completed (FTCP Chairman letter 06-TED-035 dated May 11, 2006)
- 2.3. Ensure that the accreditation process is piloted at one site/office.
- Lead Responsibility: Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Facility Safety (EH-2)
Action for Closure: FTC Panel report to the Deputy Secretary on the pilot TQP accreditation process and path forward based on lessons learned
Due Date: June 2006
Status: Completed (Pilot held at Y-12 on May 22 – June 1, 2006)
- 2.4. Revise the process and criteria based on the lesson learned from the pilot.
- Lead Responsibility: Director, Office of Health and Safety (HS-10)
Action for Closure: FTC Panel approved revised interim process and criteria
Due Date: March 2007
Status: Completed (Lessons learned incorporated into DOE O 426.1X released into REVCOM March 10, 2009)

- 2.5. Institutionalize the voluntary accreditation process through revision of DOE Manual 426.1-1A.

Lead Responsibility: Director, Office of Health and Safety (HS-10)
Action for Closure: Release a draft revision to DOE Manual 426.1-1A into REVCOM incorporating the TQP accreditation process
Due Date: Close as part of Action 6.
Status: Completed (DOE O 426.1X released into REVCOM March 10, 2009.)

- 2.6 Revise and maintain a list of Sites/Offices and schedule to complete voluntary accreditation.

Lead Responsibility: FTCP Chair
Action for Closure: Annual updates promulgated.
Due Date: March 2007 and annually, thereafter
Status: Completed (List and Schedule added to FTCP Web Site in March 2007 and periodically updated. The 2009 schedule is currently posted on the FTCP Web Site)

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3. *Reestablish the corporate Technical Leadership Development Program (TLDP – technical intern program) and institutionalize it through commitments to funding and recruitment for classes on an annual basis.*

- 3.1. Establish the overall corporate champion and line champions for the corporate (career) technical (and administrative) intern program from each main line office.

Lead Responsibility: FTCP Chair
Action for Closure: Letter from the FTC Panel Chair to EM-1, NA-1, NE-1, SC-1 and EH-1 identifying the corporate champion and line champions for the corporate (career) technical (and administrative) intern program.
Due Date: October 2005
Status: Completed (FTCP Chairman letter 05-ORP-052 dated October 31, 2005)

- 3.2. Evaluate reasons past intern programs lacked continuity and commitment and prepare a report that provides recommendations to prevent reoccurrence, including appropriate secretarial guidance.

Lead Responsibility: Office of Facility Safety (EH-2)

Action for Closure: A report to the Deputy Secretary that provides recommendations to prevent reoccurrence, including appropriate secretarial guidance.

Due Date: November 2005

Status: Completed (EH-2 Report dated November 30, 2005)

- 3.3. Develop and publish interim guidance on the development and conduct of the (career) corporate technical (and administrative) intern program.

Lead Responsibility: Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Facility Safety (EH-2) and FTC Panel Chair

Action for Closure: FTCP Chair memo to FTCP Agents providing interim guidance on the development of the corporate (career) technical (and administrative) intern program.

Due Date: January 2006

Status: Completed (FTCP Chairman letter 06-TED-033 dated May 4, 2006)

- 3.4. Institutionalize the (career corporate) technical (and administrative) intern program and planning expectations with input and direct involvement from line management.

Lead Responsibility: FTCP Chair/Chief Human Capital Officer

Action for Closure: Release a draft revision to DOE Manual 426.1-1A into REVCOM incorporating the (career corporate) technical (and administrative) intern program.

Due Date: Close as part of Action 6.

Status: Completed (DOE O 426.1X released into REVCOM March 10, 2009.)

- 3.5. Establish and maintain a budget item to ensure a corporate investment in the (corporate career) technical and administrative intern program.

Lead Responsibility: FTCP Chair/DOE Human Capital Officer
Action for Closure: Approve budget and commence implementation of the corporate (career) intern program.
Due Date: October 2006
Status: Complete. (Commenced Intern candidate interviews in April 2008)

- 3.6. Recruit the first corporate (career) technical (and administrative) intern class based on the results of the 2005 FTC Program Workforce Analysis.

Lead Responsibility: FTCP Chair/DOE Chief Human Capital Officer
Action for Closure: Recruits are working for the Department and have been assigned to line organizations.
Due Date: July 2008
Status: Completed December 2008 (last intern hired for the program)

- 3.7. Conduct the first corporate (career) technical (and administrative) intern class.

Lead Responsibility: FTCP Chair/DOE Chief Human Capital Officer
Action for Closure: Class begins on schedule
Due Date: September 2008
Status: Completed (Interns initially joined the program in May 2008, with the last intern joining in March 2009; 10 participants currently, with at least 50% considered technical)

4. *Build on the Facility Representative program as a model for Senior Technical Safety Manager (STSM) qualification program and other Functional Area qualification programs.*

- 4.1. Establish Departmental champion for the STSM Program.

Lead Responsibility: FTC Panel Chair
Action for Closure: Letter from the FTC Panel Chair to EH-1 designating the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Facility Safety (EH-2) as the Departmental champion for the STSM Program.
Due Date: September 2005
Status: Completed. (FTCP Chairman letter 05-ORP-047 dated September 16, 2005. Responsibility transferred to HSS due to reorganization)

- 4.2 Review and revise as applicable the STSM qualification standard to ensure it contains appropriate and adequate qualification and re-qualification requirements.

Lead Responsibility: FTC Panel Chair
Action for Closure: Approved STSM Qualification Standard
Due Date: December 2005
Status: Completed (Approved by FTCP Chairman on November 9, 2006)

- 4.3 Develop a Department-wide STSM training course to prepare potential STSMs for qualification.

Lead Responsibility: Director, National Training Center, Office of Health, Safety and Security
Action for Closure: Course developed
Due Date: March 2006
Status: Completed (Pilot Course held in February 2006)

- 4.4 Conduct the first STSM training program

Lead Responsibility: Director, National Training Center, Office of Health, Safety and Security
Action for Closure: Course implemented
Due Date: June 2006
Status: Completed (STSM Course held on June 19-23, 2006)

- 4.5 Establish a Department-wide, formal and rigorous final testing program available to validate STSM qualification

Lead Responsibility: National Training Center, Director of Safety Training Operations
Action for Closure: Provide STSM qualification process
Due Date: November 2006
Status: Completed (Test material/test bank developed in conjunction with STSM course held on November 13, 2006)

- 4.6 Identify Departmental Champions for the core science and engineering Functional Area Qualification programs. Develop a schedule to prioritize, review and upgrade, as appropriate, these functional area qualification programs to ensure they contain appropriate and adequate qualification and re-qualification requirements.

Lead Responsibility: FTC Panel Chair

Action for Closure: Letter from the FTC Panel Chair identifying Departmental Champions for the core science and engineering Functional Area Qualification Programs. This letter will also establish a schedule for review of these Functional Area Qualification Programs.

Due Date: April 2006

Status: Completed (FTCP Chairman letter 06-ORP-024 dated July 20, 2006)

- 4.7 Conduct the first STSM training program based on the revised STSM FAQs.

Lead Responsibility: National Training Center, Office of Safety Training Operations

Action for Closure: Course implemented

Due Date: November 2006

Status: Completed (Course held on November 13-17, 2006)

- 4.8 Establish an exam bank that can be used to support qualification and will be a repository for future exams.

Lead Responsibility: National Training Center, Director of Safety Training Operations

Action for Closure: Exam bank established.

Due Date: October 2006

Status: Completed

5. Continue implementing activities identified under DNFSB Recommendation 2004-1 Commitment 12 Implementation Plan.

- 5.1 Implement the Professional and Leadership Development curriculum for the Professional Base. The curriculum will build on the Leadership Development Institute that is currently offered by the National Training Center.

Lead Responsibility: National Training Center, Director of Safety Training Operations

Action for Closure: NTC finalize the curriculum and provide training.

Due Date: October 2006

Status: Completed

- 5.2 Formalize the Nuclear Executive Leadership Training (NELT) program to ensure it is institutionalized in the Department.

Lead Responsibility: FTC Panel Chair and National Training Center, Director of Safety Training Operations

Action for Closure: Release a draft revision to DOE Manual 426.1-1A into REVCOM incorporating the requirement for designated senior managers to complete NELT.

Due Date: Close as part of Action 6.

Status: Completed (DOE O 426.1X released into REVCOM March 10, 2009.)

- 5.3 Develop a companion refresher workshop for the Nuclear Executive Leadership Training (NELT) to provide periodic training for those senior managers that have completed NELT.

Lead Responsibility: National Training Center, Director of Safety Training Operations

Action for Closure: Develop a refresher course for NELT graduates.

Due Date: September 2008

Status: Completed (Course held on December 3-4, 2008).

- 5.4 Formalize and institutionalize the Technical Professional Career Development Program (TPCDP) through the directives process.

Lead Responsibility: FTC Panel Chair

Action for Closure: Release a draft revision to DOE Manual 426.1-1A into REVCOM incorporating the Technical Professional Career Development Program

Due Date: Close as part of Action 6.

Status: Completed (DOE O 426.1X released into REVCOM March 10, 2009.)

6. *Revise DOE Manual 426.1-1A to incorporate and institutionalize changes in Federal Technical Capability expectations developed as part of the Department's DNFSB Recommendation 2004-1 Implementation Plan.*

Lead Responsibility: FTC Panel Chair

Action for Closure: For those changes in Federal Technical Capability identified by the Department's 2004-1 project team that need to be institutionalized in the FTC Program manual, release a draft revision to DOE Manual 426.1-1A into REVCOM

Due Date: September 2007

Status: Completed (DOE O 426.1X released into REVCOM March 10, 2009.)

6.0 Corrective Action Plan

The corrective actions identified in this plan have been completed. The FTCP will take the Department lead in monitoring continuing implementation of the corrective actions. The FTCP Chairman has the lead for overall management and coordination of the plan, in support of the Panel.

APPENDIX A

**FTC Program-Related Common Issues from
Past Assessments Identified by the Working Group**

The working group binned the relevant issues identified by the previous assessments into the following 18 common themes:

1. The Department is unprepared for the significant loss of technical competencies as a result of the eligible retirement of 30-50% of employees over the next five years.
2. The Department lacks an effective corporate recruitment program that takes into account current and future constraints.
3. There are weaknesses in technical competence in DOE.
4. DOE training and development programs are ineffective in enhancing technical competencies of employees.
5. DOE is lacking effective processes to capture existing in-house technical capabilities and knowledge.
6. Ineffective linkage between position descriptions, technical qualifications, performance standards, and IDPs.
7. The Technical Qualification Program does not have sufficient rigor, discipline, and realistic schedules.
8. There is a perception of inadequate technical competency in DOE management and staff.
9. There is insufficient or unequal participation of personnel in the TQP.
10. DOE has not adequately implemented a Defense Nuclear Facility-wide integrated workforce analysis to identify current technical capabilities and future needs.
11. DOE has not developed adequate succession plans for technical staff and managers.
12. Improper placement of technical talent and personnel (the right people in the right places at the right times).
13. Management technical competence is less than adequate
14. Inadequate management involvement in employee qualification and development.
15. Less than adequate management involvement in evaluating implementation of training, qualification and development programs.
16. Management involvement in follow-up activities is less than adequate
17. DOE has failed to create an environment that encourages retention of federal technical personnel.
18. The FTCP has not effectively communicated and followed up on issues with technical competencies to DOE executive management.

There are numerous tools currently available to DOE managers to help recruit, retain, and/or enhance the technical capability of currently employed DOE personnel to ensure that there is the necessary technical workforce available to meet mission needs and to aid line management in the placement of technical talent and personnel (the right people in the right places at the right times). Listed below are a few of these tools along with the activities underway through this Corrective Action Plan and other DNFSB 2004-1 Implementation Plan commitments that will have a direct impact on the competence of technical personnel to perform their responsibilities and the organization to meet its mission needs. The specific issue identified by the working group that these tools or activities address is also annotated.

Recruitment - Each of the areas below is a part of the Departments corporate approach to meeting its recruitment needs (Issues 1, 2).

- **Recruitment Compensation Flexibilities** – Agencies have considerable discretionary authority to provide additional direct compensation in certain circumstances to support their recruitment, relocation, and retention efforts, in the form of recruitment incentives in order to be more competitive with salaries in the labor market; hiring Federal civilian retirees, reimbursing travel expenses for interviews, advance payments for new appointees, repayment of student loans, use of critical position pay authority, and payment of expenses for travel and shipment of household goods for relocation of new hires. Many of these options have been effectively used to recruit personnel for the various technical positions throughout the DOE complex (e.g., Facility Representatives (FRs), Safety System Oversight positions, Authorization Basis personnel, fire protection engineers, etc).
- **Short-term Staffing Options** – A variety of options are available and have been used to upgrade technical capability in the Department. These range from using the Excepted Service Appointment Authorities to bringing in temporary assignees from state and local governments, colleges and universities, Indian tribal governments, and other not-for-profit organizations under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Mobility Program. DOE has three Excepted Service Appointment Authorities available as important tools to recruit and retain high-quality staff. Use of the excepted service authorities can expedite the hiring process and provide pay flexibilities to enhance recruitment and retention of key technical and other critical staff. They also support the Department's commitment to achieve the highest standards of scientific, engineering, technical, and professional excellence in its workforce.
- **DOE Career Intern Program** – This 2-year corporate entry-level developmental program maximizes use of new hiring authorities and pay flexibilities to attract and retain highly qualified, diverse technical and administrative/management candidates. It provides work and developmental training and experiences that provide a broad overview of the breadth, complexity, and importance of DOE's mission. A dual-track feature allows participants to initially take common core training, with subsequent training divided into scientific/engineering and business tracks according to the participants' target position. This program has had some issues in the past, therefore due to a recognition by NNSA that there was an immediate need for technical personnel, NNSA and EM have

established Program Secretarial Office-specific intern program with as many as 30 people annually enrolled. In addition, the FTCP recognizes that this needs to be expanded so this Corrective Action Plan included a commitment by the FTCP, the former Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Facility Safety (EH-2) and the Office of Human Capital Management (HR) to reestablish the corporate Technical Leadership Development Program and institutionalize it through commitments to funding and recruitment for classes on an annual basis.

- **Central Technical Authority (CTA) – DNFSB Recommendation 2004-1** Implementation Plan (Commitments 1, 2, and 3) states the Departments intention to assure that consistent evaluations of the flow-down of key nuclear safety requirements is performed and that nuclear safety performance meets or exceeds safety performance. Therefore, the Department originally established two CTAs (NNSA and a ESE) and supporting organizations.
- **Nuclear Safety Research Program – DNFSB Recommendation 2004-1** Implementation Plan (Commitments 6, 7 and 8) states the Department will establish an integrated corporate program for assessing, prioritizing, and integrating and managing applicable nuclear safety research. This will require hiring key critical staff positions that support the function.
- **Student Career Experience Program –** More commonly known as the “Co-op” program, this entry-level program is a structured, year-round program that allows students at all educational levels (high school, college, graduate school, or certificate study) to perform work within the Department related to their academic program. There are a number of colleges and universities, high schools, and certificate programs whose students meet eligibility requirements. Students must be enrolled in school, and may work on a part-time or full-time basis. Upon completion of the educational and work requirements students may be non-competitively converted to permanent status.
- **Presidential Management Fellows Program (PMF) –** The PMF program is an entry-level career development and training program designed to attract outstanding individuals at the graduate degree level who have an interest in, and commitment to, a career in public service. Candidates are nominated by the Dean, Director or Chair of their academic program during their year of graduation and undergo a rigorous application and screening process conducted by the Office of Personnel Management. Once candidates are “finalists,” they are eligible to be appointed quickly and directly by any Federal agency.

Retention -Each of the areas below are a part of the Departments corporate approach to meeting its retention needs. (Issues 1, 5, 10, 11)

- **Retention Compensation Flexibilities –** Agencies have considerable discretionary authority to provide additional direct compensation in certain circumstances to support their retention efforts, such as retention allowance (individual and group) which may be paid to high-quality employees who are likely to leave the Federal Government and whose services the Department considers essential. A successful example is the group

retention allowance provided to the Facility Representatives at select DOE sites.

- **Succession Planning/Workforce Analysis** – DOE Manual 426.1-1A, Federal Technical Capability Program, requires the annual review of the site/office staffing situation and development of a workforce analysis/staffing plan. The FTCP reviews the analysis/staffing plan and makes recommendations to the Secretary of Energy, Deputy Secretary and senior Department officials regarding DOE technical capability. Another tool, as part of the President’s Management Agenda that the Department is using, is a number of skills assessments to assist in identification of workforce skill gaps and preparing for succession planning. The FTCP has continued to improve the guidance on preparing the workforce analyses and staffing plans for all sites with defense nuclear facilities. This Corrective Action Plan includes a commitment to take the requirement to the next level by requiring it to be a functional workforce analysis for meeting the needs of the organizations mission for the next five (5) years.
- **Awards Programs** – Agencies have authority to design extensive awards programs that include cash awards, honorary awards, informal recognition awards, and time-off awards. Agencies can give these awards to Federal employees to recognize employee and group performance, and can design incentive programs with awards granted because an individual or a group achieved pre-established goals.
- **Work Arrangements and Work/Life Policies** – The Federal Government is a leader in providing family-oriented leave policies and flextime and telecommuting arrangements to support a positive work culture and environment. This includes the use of flexible work schedules and telecommuting; leave programs (leave sharing, leave banks, leave for medical conditions and family responsibilities); part-time employment and job sharing; Employee Assistance Programs; Employee Health and Wellness Programs; on-site child development centers; and information and referral services. The Government is committed to helping employees meet the responsibilities of work and home life.

Training, Qualifying, and Maintaining Proficiency -Each of the areas below are a part of the Departments corporate approach to meeting its training, qualifying and proficiency needs. (Issues 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18)

- **Training and Development Programs** – Options ranging from detailing employees in 120-day increments to other positions within the Department to Tuition Assistance or paying for academic coursework to develop an employee's knowledge and skill in an area related to an employee's official duties. If in accomplishing this training, an employee earns an academic degree, the degree is an incidental by-product of the training. Adjusting employees' work schedules for educational purposes is a good opportunity to incentivize critical staff to stay and possibly train for a “new” career after retirement. There are also formal Professional Development Opportunities, such as the Mentoring Program, SES Candidate Development Program, Certificate Program, Executive Potential Program, and Excellence in Government Fellows Program available for use.

- **Payment for Professional Credentials** – Expenses may be paid for employees of eligible occupations to obtain initial and subsequent renewals of professional credentials, including accreditations, state-imposed and professional licenses and certifications, and examinations to obtain such credentials when payment contributes to recruitment, retention, career development, or worker transition objectives.
- **Technical Qualification Program (TQP)** – In 1998, as part of the revised Implementation Plan responding to DNFSB Recommendation 93-3, the Secretary of Energy directed the formation of a working group of senior line managers reporting to the Deputy Secretary to oversee and resolve issues, associated with recruiting, deploying, developing, and retaining Departmental technical personnel. The Federal Technical Capability Panel (FTCP) as senior management representatives from each Site/Headquarters office in the Department with defense nuclear facilities and personnel, is chartered to pursue opportunities to deal with the Department's concerns with assuring that its technical workforce are ready and able to meet the Department's goals, and that each site's and office's TQPs have sufficient rigor. These TQPs specifically apply to DOE technical employees whose duties and responsibilities require them to provide assistance, guidance, oversight, or evaluation of contractor activities that could impact the safe operation of a defense nuclear facility.

Recent activities that the Panel has been involved in include working with the Office of Health, Safety and Security (HSS) to continue enhancements at the "Center of Excellence in Security and Safety Professional Development" (National Training Center) for the Department with expanded training services for safety and security. The Panel continues to pursue other opportunities to improve the technical competency of Departmental personnel. The FTCP continues to create new and update current Functional Area Qualification Standards to improve their technical content and rigor, assure their consistency in application across the DOE Complex, and establish a consistent technical performance standard for TQP personnel.

A prime example of a mature program that meets the expectations and standards set by the Department is the Facility Representative program. The personnel in this program are some of the best and brightest representing the Department. Another program that is improving the technical capability of the Department is the Safety System Oversight program. These personnel are a key technical resource qualified to oversee contractor management of safety systems at defense nuclear facilities. Unlike Facility Representatives, who are responsible for monitoring the safety performance of the Department's defense nuclear facilities and day-to-day operational status, staff members assigned to safety system oversight are responsible for overseeing assigned systems to ensure that they will perform as required by the safety basis and other applicable requirements. Requirements and qualification standards have been institutionalized in the FTCP Manual for consistent application across the complex; positions have been advertised, if needed; personnel have been hired/reassigned into positions; personnel are being qualified via a process similar to the Facility Representative qualification; assessments of the sites have been performed to assure that sites are enacting the requirements and staffing is consistent with the unique conditions of the sites; and

assessments are currently being performed to verify implementation, in-place staffing, qualification, and performance meets FTCP expectation.

In addition, the NNSA, through the NNSA Service Center, has commenced developing study guides, a question bank for FAQS-level exams, and course material to hold classes. The NNSA Service Center is responsible for providing subject matter experts to NNSA Site Offices and NNSA Headquarters to enable successful accomplishment of their respective national security, facilities engineering, environmental management, and ES&H objectives.

As part of the FTCP's mission to continually improve the technical qualification programs for Department personnel, this Corrective Action Plan includes a commitment to build on the Facility Representative program as a model for the Senior Technical Safety Manager qualification program and the other functional area qualification programs.

Key to successfully managing the TQP is communicating data with DOE management regarding the current state of the organizations' technical competency. Therefore, the FTCP developed a quarterly performance indicator and associated report that tracks the qualification of technical personnel by organization. The DOE goal is to exceed an 80% fully qualified or in-process qualification rate for all personnel in the TQP. The report is provided to the Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary for Energy, Science and Environment; the Administrator, NNSA; the Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management and Environment, Safety, and Health; and the Directors/Managers of the field and Headquarters offices responsible for defense nuclear activities. The Chairman of the FTCP and Agents communicate with DOE management on relevant issues in various venues, as the situation requires.

- **Accreditation** – Key to assuring that the Department is able to meet its goals for defense nuclear facilities is evaluating its training and qualification programs. Therefore, through this Corrective Action Plan, the Department established a corporate accreditation process based on the Institute of Nuclear Power Operation (INPO) model. The accreditation will validate whether sites' and offices' TQPs are effective in assuring that the requisite technical capability is available to meet mission needs. The accreditation review will validate whether personnel documentation, such as position descriptions, technical qualifications, performance standards and/or individual development plans are adequately defined to assure that technical personnel and the organization support needs for assuring technical competency; that technical personnel are receiving the necessary training; and management is involved in employee qualification and development. The accreditation review board and review team(s) is expected to be small select groups of qualified individuals led by the HSS for the FTCP Chair and Deputy Secretary.
- **Central Technical Authorities (Commitments 1, 2 and 3), Nuclear Safety Research Function (Commitments 6, 7 and 8), Highly Qualified and Experienced Personnel (Commitment 11), Nuclear Executive Level Training (Commitment 12), and Emeritus-Level Panel (Commitment 14)** – These commitments in DNFSB Recommendation 2004-1 Implementation Plan directly impact the quality of the Department's workforce because they involve the need for ensuring/providing technically

competent personnel in specific areas of expertise. To meet that goal, the level of expertise must be defined, training provided as needed such as through the Nuclear Executive Level Training, and performance evaluated. This Corrective Action Plan requires revising FTCP Manual 426.1-1A in order to institutionalize DNFSB Recommendation 2004-1 commitments that affect Federal Technical Capability.

- **List of highly qualified and experienced personnel (Commitment 11)** – In addition to this Corrective Action Plan (Commitment 13), the FTCP had identified highly qualified and experienced personnel in the specific functional areas of Criticality, Fire Protection Engineering, Civil/Structural Engineering, Nuclear Explosives Safety, and Safety Software Quality Assurance, among other areas, who will assist the Department in improving the overall technical capability of its technical workforce. These individuals will serve as the primary point of contact for reviewing and updating the technical content in the functional area qualification standards and serving as examining officials in the qualification of candidates. This action communicates the importance of retaining federal technical personnel.

Executing the activities and actions dictated by this Corrective Action Plan, along with the other DNFSB 2004-1 Implementation Plan commitments described above will improve the effectiveness and importance of the FTCP.