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Department of Commerce · National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration · National Weather Service

***NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE MANUAL 20-102  
SEPTEMBER 10, 2008***

***Training and Education  
Training and Education, NWSPD 20-1***

***NATIONAL STRATEGIC TRAINING AND EDUCATION PLAN PROCESS AND  
ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN***

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**NOTICE:** This publication is available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/>.

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***SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:*** This directive supersedes NWSM 20-102, dated December 31, 2003. It has been updated to incorporate changes made to the National Strategic Training and Education Plan (NSTEP) process, including better alignment with NWS corporate and strategic priorities, and NOAA's Planning, Programming, and Budgeting Execution System (PPBES).

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signed

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8/27/08

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Date

Director, Office of Climate,  
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**National Strategic Training and Education Plan Process and Annual Implementation Plan  
for Training and Education**

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1 Purpose. To define the National Strategic Training and Education Plan (NSTEP) process and the subsequent generation of annual Implementation Plans for Training and Education related to NSTEP.

2 NSTEP Process. The NSTEP process is the mechanism by which the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA’s) National Weather Service (NWS) training and education requirements are identified, prioritized and met.

2.1 Mission, Vision and Goals. The NSTEP mission is to identify, prioritize, develop and deliver effective training in response to NWS workforce needs. The NSTEP process ensures the NWS’ highest priority training needs are met within annual budget constraints.

Within the context of this mission, the vision is to develop and maintain a well-trained workforce, competent and skilled in the areas of leadership, administration, engineering, electronics, IT and the latest scientific and technological advances to support the NWS mission to protect life and property.

The following goals specify the framework by which this vision is realized:

- a. Establish a logical, flexible, and responsive training infrastructure to quickly translate training and education requirements into easily accessible, usable, and effective training on a yearly basis. An NSTEP team (see Infrastructure, Section 2.2) works with field and national headquarters representatives to define requirements, and establishes priorities for training.
- b. Implement an efficient and consistent process for defining and establishing priorities for NWS training requirements. Requirements are defined by field representatives and NWS Headquarters personnel. The NSTEP is led by the Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services (OCWWS), which manages the infrastructure to develop, deliver and evaluate training. All requirements and funding are prioritized by the field representatives to the NSTEP Team.

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- c. Establish an easy to use, easy to find resource to clearly specify and track training and professional development activities available to the NWS workforce. This is available through the NWS Training Portal Web page, located at [www.nwstc.noaa.gov/nwstrn](http://www.nwstc.noaa.gov/nwstrn), and through the NWS portal on the Department of Commerce Learning Center (CLC) Web page at <http://doc.learn.com/noaa/nws>.
- d. Develop a multi-year, strategic, training planning budget for input to NOAA's Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution System (PPBES). This process extends out to six years beyond the next Implementation Plan (IP) year. This process is led by OCWWS headquarters staff, which coordinates with PPBES Program Managers to consolidate and advocate for the annual training budget. The headquarters staff uses plans such as those submitted to the Operations and Services Improvement Process (OSIP) and the NOAA Transition Board, the major technology system plans, training statements in NWS Directives which specify initial training needs, and the NOAA Chief Financial Officer (CFO) planning budgets, etc. Applicable PPBES program managers are involved in the process, and must approve the IP.
- e. Develop an annual plan for training and support to ensure responsiveness to training requirements. The plan will sustain the high level of scientific and technical infusion required to maintain the high forecast standards of the NWS. The process begins with the most recent multi-year strategic planning budget, the costs of the training infrastructure and the previous year's training requirements. These tools are utilized to craft the IP for the coming year which will reflect updated and prioritized training requirements, and proposed staffing and funding distribution to meet those requirements. This evolution is a collaborative effort among representatives from the national headquarters office directors, regional headquarters directors, the Director of the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP), applicable PPBES program managers, and the NWS Employees' Organization (NWSEO). At the conclusion of this process, the IP is signed by the OCWWS director. This IP is described further in Section 3 of this document.
- f. Create a process to facilitate rapid response to emerging or changing training priorities within any fiscal year. Identify requirements which cannot be met due to resource limitations or additions to training priorities, and raise them to senior management and the CFO as unfunded requirements. The representatives to the NSTEP Team communicate regularly to discuss any revisions to requirements which arise during the year.
- g. Establish an effective, continuous evaluation process involving employees, supervisors, OCWWS, NWSEO and the NSTEP team to ensure the intended benefits of training are accomplished.

2.2 NSTEP Team. The NSTEP Team is composed of:

- a. The Field Requirements Group (FRG) consists of one representative from each region and the NCEP. This group is responsible for identifying and prioritizing training requirements and deficiencies, and for providing recommendations for the annual IP. This group recommends to the NWS Corporate Board which training items should be developed and delivered in a given fiscal year.
- b. The Heads of Training Group (HOTG) is composed of training providers including the NWS Training Center in Kansas City, Missouri; the Warning Decision Training Branch in Norman, Oklahoma; the Forecast Decision Training Branch in Boulder, Colorado; and the Cooperative Program for Operational Meteorology, Education, and Training (COMET) in Boulder.

Additional training requirements are identified and prioritized by NWS program offices and submitted for inclusion and integrated prioritization in the overall training requirements.

The process is facilitated by OCWWS headquarters staff, which coordinates with all OCWWS service divisions, and representatives from all offices within NWS Headquarters. This includes the Office of Hydrologic Development, the Office of Operational Systems, the Office of Science and Technology, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, the Office of the CFO, the Office of International Activities, and the PPBES program managers among others. This group provides support, direction and coordination for the NWS training requirements process.

2.3 Annual NSTEP Timeline. Each year, an IP with updated and prioritized training requirements along with proposed staffing and funding distribution to meet those requirements is developed by OCWWS headquarters staff in collaboration with representatives from the office directors, regional headquarters directors and the NCEP director. The annual NSTEP process used to determine the required training in a given fiscal year is as follows (target dates in parentheses):

- a. The process begins with NOAA/NWS priorities, the most recent multi-year strategic planning budget, the list of training infrastructure requirements, the output from the previous PPBES programming cycle and the previous year's training requirements. (October)
- b. Training providers and stakeholders review and update the previous year's training requirements by omitting requirements no longer valid, updating requirements based on new information and creating new requirements to meet service and program needs. Training Needs Statements (TNS) are updated by operational authors with OCWWS Training Program leadership guidance. New TNS are submitted to the OCWWS Training Program from the field through the Regions and by program offices. Each group, as necessary, coordinates with the HOTG to determine training options and resources needed to accomplish each training need. (October-February)

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- c. OCWWS and the HOTG meet with all relevant PPBES program managers. OCWWS distributes TNS and HOTG analyses to the FRG for review. (March)
- d. The FRG reviews each TNS and generates any related questions. If there are questions, OCWWS convenes a conference with the TNS author(s). TNS will be considered for funding and included in the draft IP. (April)
- e. The FRG jointly discusses and recommends the proposed allocation of training resources for the next fiscal year via the IP, ensuring alignment with NOAA/NWS priorities and strategic goals. PPBES program managers submit Program Plans which include a training component. (April)
- f. The HOTG provides input for PPBES program managers. The HOTG reviews the proposed allocation and assures adequate staffing to meet each training requirement within the proposed IP. This process is facilitated by OCWWS. (May)
- g. The IP is finalized and staffed through the NWSEO, NWS Headquarters office directors, regional directors, the NCEP director, and applicable PPBES program managers. IP is approved and signed by the OCWWS director. (July)
- h. IP posted on NWS Training Portal Web page and the first quarter class schedules and residence course slot assignments are released and loaded into the online Department of Commerce Learning Center (CLC). (By September 1)
- i. The full fiscal year class schedule is released on the Web and/or CLC. (September)
- j. Multi-year planning budgets are prepared by the HOTG based on PPBES planning cycle. (October)
- k. The FRG reviews and comments on multi-year training budgets. (November)
- l. Multi-year planning budgets are updated based on PPBES programming cycle and the current year budget reallocations, and serve as the basis for next year's NSTEP cycle. (December)
- m. HOTG designs, develops and delivers training in accordance with the annual IP. (Ongoing)
- n. OCWWS works with the FRG and HOTG during the budget execution year to modify and adjust the IP deliverables based on changes in budget, staffing, new requirements, and changing priorities from NWS senior management. (Ongoing)
- o. Training assessment/evaluation occurs. (Ongoing)

3        Annual IP for Training and Education. The IP is the agency's official, validated document for the funding, development and delivery of training for the upcoming fiscal year along with strategic, multi-year planning information. The IP identifies the training and budget priorities for the upcoming fiscal year and summarizes all requirements submitted for the covered period including those that are unfunded due to manpower or budget shortfalls. The IP is posted by the OCWWS Training Program on the Web each August at:  
<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/training/>.