

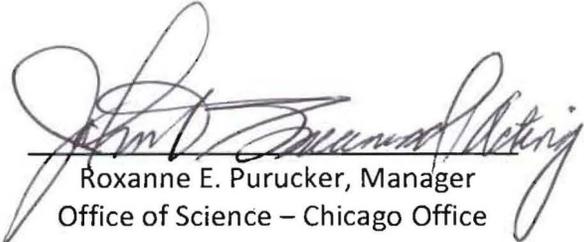


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Office of
Science

Integrated Support Center
Chicago Office

**Technical Qualification
Program Description**


Roxanne E. Purucker, Manager
Office of Science – Chicago Office

12/1/2010
Date

CONCURRENCE

The Office of Science-Chicago Office (SC-CH) is the sponsor for this Technical Qualification Program (TQP) Description. This is applicable to SC-CH, New Brunswick Laboratory (NBL), Ames Site Office (AMSO) and Argonne Site Office (ASO). These offices are in joint participation and endorsement of the SC-CH Technical Qualification Program process and have also provided concurrence below.

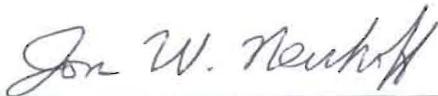
The SC-CH Manager is the approval authority for this program description.



11-17-10

Thomas A. Gradle, Manager
SC-CH Technical Qualification Program

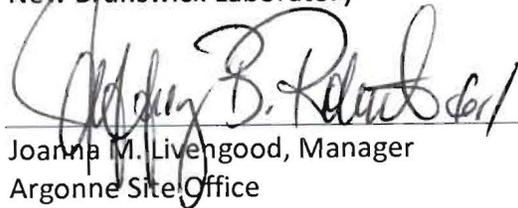
Date



11/29/10

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Date



11-30-2010

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11/18/10

Cynthia K. Baebler, Manager
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Date

SC-CH Revision History

TITLE: SC-CH Technical Qualification Program Description

POINT OF CONTACT: Thomas Gradle

SCMS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: [Human Resources Services](#)

SCMS SUBJECT AREA: [Employee Development](#)

EXPIRATION DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2011

REVISION	DATE	REASON/DRIVER	DESCRIPTION
0	Sept. 2008	To describe the SC-CH Technical Qualification Program	Formalize the SC-CH (and participating Site Offices) Technical Qualification Program.
1	Nov. 2009	Annual Update	Update plan to include administrative changes that occurred during implementation.
2	Nov. 2010	Annual Update	Update plan to include changes and clarifications identified throughout document.

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1. APPLICABILITY

The Office of Science-Chicago Office (SC-CH) Technical Qualification Program (TQP) is to ensure personnel with environment, safety, and health (ES&H), quality assurance (QA), safeguards and security responsibilities and other technical subject areas important for efficient and safe operations of SC facilities and activities possess competence commensurate with responsibilities by formally establishing training and qualification requirements. The Ames Site Office and the Argonne Site Office are in joint participation with SC-CH's program.

This program description, along with the Department of Energy (DOE) *SC Technical Qualification Program Manual (A Desktop Reference for Supervisors and Participants)*, constitutes the SC-CH TQP.

This TQP Program Description applies to the SC-CH Manager, Federal Project Directors (FPDs), applicable Site Office Managers, and staff involved with ES&H, QA, safeguards and security, or other technical subject areas important for efficient and safe operations of SC facilities and activities.

This program description and flow-down documents (such as qualification cards) address:

- DOE and SC rules, policies, and directives;
- SC-CH/Site Office/New Brunswick Laboratory (NBL) internal processes and procedures; and
- SC-CH/Site Office/NBL management systems, documents, and facilities.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SC-CH Manager (or Site Office Manager where applicable)

- Selects technical employees, based on job responsibilities, for enrollment in the TQP (selection based on identification of participants by Site Office Managers, Laboratory Director and/or supervisors).
- Approves all related TQP implementing processes and documents.
- Performs responsibilities identified in supporting documents, e.g., approves requests for time extensions.
- Ensures that the TQP is fully implemented, as described in the Technical Qualification Program Description.
- Ensures resources are available to support participant qualification.
- Ensures a balanced level of competence is maintained across the organization to meet the diverse programmatic and mission needs.

- Ensures that changes to the TQP procedures are consistent with DOE, SC, and local policy, and can be effectively implemented.
- Certifies that the employee has achieved the required level of competence.
- Designates technical personnel with specific subject matter knowledge to serve as Qualifying Officials (QOs).
- Approves Office/Facility-Specific Technical Qualification Standards.
- Appoints a TQP Manager.

TQP Manager

- Administers the TQP.
- Oversees the implementation of the TQP to ensure conformance to TQP goals and underlying requirements.
- Ensures the TQP has an appropriate amount of formality and rigor, and requires a satisfactory demonstration of competence for qualification.
- Ensures the TQP follows a consistent approach in implementation across the office.
- Provides guidance on best practices for implementation of technical qualification requirements and processes.

Human Resources Services (HRS) TQP Coordinator

- Issues assignment and start date memo (listing applicable Functional Area Qualification Standards (FAQS) and Office/Facility-Specific Qualification Standard and completion due date).
- Maintains and updates the list of TQP participants.
- Monitors employee progress toward qualification of the TQP.
- Prepares and provides TQP status reports to management.
- Obtains technical support as needed, such as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to serve as QOs.
- Maintains all necessary TQP documents, including tests, training course certification and test scores, records of completion, procedures, etc., in a central repository.
- Creates participant's initial electronic TQP record on the DOE Employee Self Service (ESS) website.
- Notifies employees when TQP record is created or updated in ESS.
- Reviews TQP records for completeness.
- Provides guidance on ESS, gap analyses, changes in standards and procedures, and other important areas of the program to ensure effective implementation on a routine basis.
- Prepares Certificate of Completion for the Manager's signature.
- Identifies and procures appropriate training sources for TQP participants.
- Coordinates lessons learned feedback and supports defined improvement efforts for the TQP.

Supervisors

- Review vacancy announcements and position descriptions for staff hiring to ensure TQP designations are included.
- For positions which are in the TQP, designate the FAQS and the level of competence required for each position based upon employee responsibilities.
- Ensure employees' position descriptions (PDs) include a statement about their assignment to the TQP.
- Ensure that TQP is addressed in personnel performance planning.
- Ensure that employees are qualified and determine when employee duties require limitations.
- Assist employee with determining applicable training, developing activities, assignments or other activities necessary to complete qualification requirements.
- Provide adequate time to employees for qualification, submitting request to the SC-CH Manager (or Site Office Manager, where applicable) for time extensions where necessary and justified.
- Review employee's TQP records for accuracy and completeness as appropriate.
- Sign the supervisory Certification of Completion on the qualification card.

Qualifying Officials (QOs)

QOs are assigned from a pool of SMEs and supervisors from the SC Integrated Support Center (Oak Ridge and Chicago), and other DOE offices, including Headquarters. They may perform any or all of the following QO duties; however, they must first complete QO Training:

- Assist in the development and presentation of learning activities. Maintain awareness and recommend high quality classes or instructors, and effective learning activities.
- Develop evaluation materials for their assigned area of expertise. Examination bank questions can be obtained from the HRS TQP Coordinator for the Facility Representative FAQS.
- Perform evaluations and sign off participants' completed competencies on qualification cards within assigned areas.
- Maintain technical skills and knowledge. Stay current with the status of assigned FAQS revisions.
- Keep the TQP Manager informed on issues regarding participants' performance on evaluations.
- Sign the qualification card and submit a memo to the employee with a copy to the TQP Manager, the HRS TQP Coordinator and the employee's supervisor stating that the employee has achieved the required level of competence and should be certified.

TQP Participants

- Be familiar with the TQP requirements in SCMS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM [Human Resources Services](#) SCMS Subject Area: [Employee Development](#): Procedure 5: [Implementing Technical Qualification Program](#).
- Identify and complete the learning activities necessary to achieve competency, indicate necessary training on their Individual Development Plan (IDP).
- For meeting the Facility Representative FAQs, use the qualification cards at [FAQ Qualification Cards](#) and enter a statement in ESS web application when the qualification card is approved.
- For all other FAQs and applicable Facility Specific Standards enter equivalency, exemption, developmental activity justification and other information in the ESS web application and use ESS to generate completion reports. These completion reports are used as the employee's qualification card. (Refer to the SC-CH Technical Qualification Program: Competency Data Entry Guidance.)
- Indicate on training requests (justification section) those courses related to the TQP.
- Complete qualification within the specified time limits. Bring issues preventing participants from completing the qualification to the attention of their supervisor, who may coordinate with the TQP Manager for resolution.
- Inform supervisor(s) when assigned work duties for which they are not qualified.
- Prepare evidence file of supporting documents for supervisor's and QO's review.
- Provide the required documentation of competence to the HRS TQP Coordinator, if the participant has achieved related qualification elsewhere.

3. REQUIRED PROCEDURE

Identification of Positions

Employees with responsibilities for ES&H, QA, safeguards and security or other technical subject areas important for efficient and safe operations of SC facilities and activities are identified by their supervisors as being required to participate in the TQP. This will be indicated in the vacancy announcement, PD, and in the individual's IDP. The process for assigning individuals or positions in the TQP is described below.

The SC-CH or Site Office Manager assigns the employee to the TQP by means of an assignment memo to the employee from HRS. The assignment memo includes a statement regarding assignment to the TQP, the particular functional areas, a "start date," and the qualification time limit of 18 months. If the employee is not a GS-11 or above or if the employee is a recent college graduate, the supervisor should discuss participation in the TQP with the TQP Manager (e.g., the appropriate time to begin the 18 month qualification period).

The position's inclusion in the TQP is:

- Specified in the PD and the TQP box is checked "yes." ("This position has been designated as a technical position subject to coverage under the Technical Qualification Program (TQP). This position requires the incumbent to acquire and demonstrate technical competencies identified in a technical qualification standard, and requires certification of those competencies by a qualifying official.")
- Stated in the job announcement.
- Included in the requirements in the start date memo to employees.

If there are changes in responsibilities identified or changes in positions or additional positions are identified with such oversight responsibility, the supervisor coordinates with the Human Resource Specialist to ensure proper documentation.

After the assignment memo is issued, a qualification card is prepared for each Facility Representative. HRS creates participant's initial electronic TQP record on the DOE ESS website. The supervisor works with the employee to ensure that the pertinent standards, competencies, and levels of each competency required for the position are tailored to the job responsibilities.

Transfer of Technical Qualifications from Other Offices

When an employee transfers from another office, he/she may request that the supervisor conduct a review of his/her previous qualifications, to determine which are transferable to the SC-CH TQP. The supervisor may consult with SMEs or QOs for determination of applicability and/or equivalency. Transfer of qualifications is at the discretion of the supervisor. The supervisor will then notify the TQP Manager and HRS TQP Coordinator.

Determination of Qualification Standard

There are three levels of qualification standards. The qualification standards are a combination of the General Technical Base Qualification Standard, FAQs and the Office/Facility-Specific Qualification Standard. The supervisor approves the level of competence required for positions in the TQP.

A key element of the TQP is a set of common FAQs. These standards are developed for various functional areas of responsibility. The FAQs identify the minimum technical competencies and supporting knowledge and skills for a typical qualified individual working in the area. The TQP does not have a specific standard for project management for individuals assigned project management responsibilities. The qualification for these individuals is accomplished through a combination of the Project Management Career Development Program (PMCDP), the General Technical Base Qualification Standard and the Facility Specific Standard.

Equivalencies

Equivalencies may be used as a method of fulfillment of competencies and can include relevant prior education, experience and/or learning activities. Documented, objective evidence of equivalencies must indicate how each competency has been met. The equivalency evidence may be evaluated by a QO or SME on the qualification card.

No equivalency will be granted for training required by regulation; required training must be completed.

Learning Activities

The method of learning must be tailored to the required knowledge level for each competency within each qualification standard; the knowledge levels include familiarity level, working level, and expert level.

The employee, in coordination with his/her supervisor, determines the best method for satisfying the competency for each qualification standard. These methods may include equivalency, formal training, self-study, mentoring, and/or on-the-job training. Future learning activities may be entered into a participant's IDP. Once completed, learning activities are documented on the participant's qualification card and in ESS.

Formal Training

Some types of formal training courses may fulfill the competencies within the qualification standards. The employee may consult with their supervisor, TQP Manager, or HRS TQP Coordinator for assistance in deciding whether a particular training course is appropriate for the given competency. Among other considerations, it should be consistent with employee's required knowledge level for meeting the competency. The QOs can provide assistance by recommending appropriate existing courses. Some courses may be developed and tailored to the employee's needs while other courses may be adopted and/or adapted for the TQP use.

Self-Study, Mentoring, and On-the-Job Training

In many cases competencies can best be learned through self-study, mentoring, and on-the-job training. The employee should work with the supervisor and the appropriate SME to obtain the materials and activities required for these types of learning activities.

Evaluation

At completion of single or groups of competencies, the employee will be evaluated to determine attainment of those competencies. Written examinations, oral examinations, interviews, and performance demonstrations are options that may be used by the supervisor or QO. Also refer to Attachment 2 – Qualifying Official Job Aid.

Evaluation of Competencies

Generally, formal training courses that are being used for competency fulfillment have an evaluation component that will constitute evidence of competency attainment. The course certificate will be documented on the qualification card. A QO will sign off the competency to verify that the course has met the requirements of the competency.

Evaluation of equivalencies will require the involvement of the QO, SME or supervisor. These evaluations may take the form of oral interviews conducted over the phone, on-site walkthroughs, written examinations, or some other appropriate method. Best practices and resources should be used in the conduct of these evaluations, and assistance about how to best accomplish the evaluation may be requested of the TQP Manager. Such resources include the DOE standards (as DOE-HDBK-1078-94, DOE Training Program Handbook: A Systematic Approach to Training) and staff at the SC Integrated Support Center.

Based on the recommendation of the QO or SME, employees who do not successfully complete an evaluation shall receive supplemental learning activities. Upon completion, the employee shall be re-evaluated.

The TQP Manager, in support of a participant's supervisor, will review the training and qualification record of any employee who has demonstrated a consistent inability to successfully complete competency evaluations and determine if the employee should continue efforts toward qualification.

The HRS TQP Coordinator will retain the actual evaluation results (or any other evaluation notes) in a secure location.

Qualification Approval Process

Once the participant has completed the qualification card and the final check-out has been performed, the QO will:

- Submit a memo to the employee with a copy to the HRS TQP Coordinator, TQP Manager and employee's supervisor stating that the employee has achieved the required level of competence and should be certified.
- For requalification (e.g., Facility Representatives) the same process will be followed.

Time Limits

Once an employee's qualification card has been established, the employee has 18 months to complete the qualification process. The SC-CH Manager (or Site Office Manager where applicable) may approve extensions to the time limits based upon satisfactory written justification.

The employee's supervisor will establish an appropriate qualification time limit for an employee who transfers positions.

The employee's supervisor will periodically review the employee's qualification progress and take appropriate actions to provide the employee adequate time for qualification, limit the employee duties if necessary, or approve an extension of the time limit.

Requalification

When a TQP participant is away from the job under which they were qualified for an extended time (twelve months or longer), the employee will meet with the supervisor to determine whether any additional training or requalification is required to maintain competence; otherwise, requalification for TQP participants is not required unless specifically identified in the standard (e.g., Facility Representative, Nuclear Safety Specialist, Senior Technical Safety Manager, General Technical Base).

Duty Limitations

During qualification or requalification, the supervisor should determine whether an employee can provide direct feedback to the contractor or oversight of contractor activities that could impact the safe and secure operations at DOE facilities. In most cases, an employee in the qualification and requalification process will continue with assigned duties while they complete their qualification or requalification. In the case where an employee is found not qualified until completion of qualification or requalification, assigned duties will be limited.

When assigned duties are limited, the supervisor must clearly delineate compensatory measures such as accompaniment by other technical staff on walkthroughs or staff concurrence on work products. Until the completion of qualification or requalification, the employee may work under the direct supervision of an experienced technical employee in that subject area.

Continuing Training

An employee must complete all training required by regulation within the specified time limits, e.g., Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Training, General Employee Radiological Training, etc. Qualification under the TQP doesn't relieve an individual of completing training required by regulation or facility requirements.

Each person certified under PMCDP is required to successfully complete 60 hours of Continuous Learning Point/Continuous Education (CLP/CE) biennially to maintain certification, which meets the TQP requirement. Beginning April 1, 2011, this requirement will increase to 80 hours biennially for all participants. All certified Federal Project Directors (FPDs) whose 2-year CE hour cycle is completed prior to April 1, 2011, will be held to the current requirement of 60 CE hours. All persons certified after April 2, 2009, will be required to attain 80 CE hours; persons whose 2-year CE hour cycle begins after April 2, 2009, and ends after April 1, 2011, will also be required to attain 80 CE hours. ([PMCDP Certification and Equivalency Guidelines, January 2010](#)). Dual monitoring under the TQP is not required; the PMCDP requirement meets the TQP requirement.

Administration

The HRS TQP Coordinator administers the TQP as described in Section 2, Roles and Responsibilities.

Documentation includes the following:

- Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are established and updated annually. The IDPs reflect employee training or learning activities required or recommended during the performance review, including those activities required under the TQP.
- Qualification Cards:
 - The Facility Representatives will utilize the Facility Representative qualification card templates available at [FAQ Qualification Cards](#) and enter a statement in ESS web application when the qualification card is approved.

- For all other FAQs and applicable Facility Specific Standards, employees will enter equivalency, exemption, developmental activity justification and other information in the ESS web application and use ESS to generate completion reports. These completion reports are used as the employee's qualification card. (Refer to the SC-CH Technical Qualification Program: Competency Data Entry Guidance.)

4. REFERENCES

DOE O 226.1A, "Implementation of Department of Energy Oversight Policy," (July 31, 2007)

DOE M 360.1-1B, "Federal Employee Training Manual," (October 11, 2001)

DOE O 360.1B, "Federal Employee Training," (October 11, 2001)

DOE O 414.1C, "Quality Assurance," Section 4 (Requirements), b (Quality Assurance Criteria), (2) Management / Criterion 2 – Personnel Training and Qualification (June 17, 2005)

DOE O 426.1, "Federal Technical Capability," (November 11, 2009)

DOE-HDBK-1078-94, DOE Training Program Handbook: A Systematic Approach to Training

DOE Technical Personnel Functional Area Qualification Standards (various) available at [DOE Federal Technical Capability Program Functional Area Qualification Standards Web site](#)

[Memorandum from George Malosh](#), SC-3 to SC Field Managers, Subject: Technical Qualification Program, (April 2, 2007)

Memorandum from Robert Wunderlich, Manager, Chicago Office, to SC-CH Technical Staff establishing the SC-CH TQP, (January 11, 2008)

Memorandum from applicable Site Office Managers committing to joint participation and endorsement of the SC-CH TQP process, (January 11, 2008)

Office of Science-Chicago Office (SC-CH) Functions, Responsibilities, and Authorities Manual, (October 29, 2010)

Office of Science-Chicago Office (SC-CH)/Site Offices/New Brunswick Laboratory Facility-Specific Qualification Standard, (June 2008)

[Office of Science Technical Qualification Program Manual, A Desktop Reference for Supervisors and Participants](#), (March 2007)

Office of Science-Chicago Office (SC-CH) Technical Qualification Program Competency Data Entry Guidance, (October 25, 2010)

[Project Management Career Development Program, Certification and Equivalency Guidelines, January 2010](#)

SCMS Management System (SCMS): [Quality Assurance and Oversight](#); Subject Area: [Oversight Skills](#)

SCMS Management System: [Human Resources Services](#); Subject Area: [Employee Development](#), Procedure 5: [Implementing Technical Qualification Program](#)

SCMS Management System: [Environment, Safety and Health](#); Subject Area: [Office of Science \(SC\) Environment, Safety, and Health \(ES&H\) Functions, Responsibilities, and Authorities Manual \(FRAM\)](#)

ATTACHMENT 1 -- Acronyms and Definitions

Acronyms

DOE	Department of Energy
ES&H	Environment, Safety, and Health
ESS	Employee Self Service
FAQS	Functional Area Qualification Standard
FPD	Federal Project Director
FRAM	Functions, Responsibilities, and Authorities Manual
HRS	Human Resources Services
IDP	Individual Development Plan
NBL	New Brunswick Laboratory
PMCDP	Project Management Career Development Program
QA	Quality Assurance
QO	Qualifying Official
SC	Office of Science
SC-CH	Office of Science-Chicago Office
SCMS	Office of Science Management System
SME	Subject Matter Expert
STSM	Senior Technical Safety Manager
TQP	Technical Qualification Program

Definitions

Continuing Training is the program to maintain proficiency for technical qualification.

Equivalency is defined as satisfactorily meeting a specific competency through prior training, education, or experience that provides knowledge, skill and ability of equal value to that acquired by training or other learning activities.

Evaluation is defined as the process of assessing the knowledge, skill and ability of a candidate based upon required competencies and qualification standards.

Examination Bank is a document or database containing questions and answers necessary to create a written or oral examination for competencies and qualification standards.

Expert Level is defined as a comprehensive, intensive knowledge of the subject or process sufficient to provide advice in the absence of procedural guidance.

Familiarity Level is defined as basic knowledge of or exposure to the subject or process adequate to discuss the subject or process with individuals of greater knowledge.

Functional Area Qualification Standards build on the requirements of the general technical base qualification standard and establish functional competence requirements in each of the identified functional areas.

General Technical Base Qualification Standard establishes the base technical competency required for all DOE technical personnel.

Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a written schedule or plan designed to meet particular goals for individual employee development that are aligned with the organization's strategic plan.

Office/Facility-Specific Qualification Standards establish unique operational and administrative competency requirements at the office level.

Qualification is the total of education, experience, learning experience and other special requirements that provide the employee with the competencies required to perform the duties for their positions.

Qualification Card is the record of an individual participant's assigned competencies, planned method of learning, and means of demonstrating competence. Each signature of an approved Qualifying Official on the qualification card is official evidence of demonstrated competence.

Qualifying Official is an individual, designated by the Manager or designee, authorized to sign the qualification card after verifying the candidate possesses the appropriate level of knowledge or skills for such signature.

Subject Matter Expert is a person who currently is involved in activities related to the subject matter and has sufficient technical knowledge, skill and ability and understanding to provide learning activities and perform evaluations in the subject matter.

Technical Position is a position which provides management direction or oversight of contractor activities that could impact the safe operation of DOE facilities.

Technical Qualification Record is a document used to record an employee's requirements for qualification and progress toward completion of those requirements.

Working Level is defined as the knowledge required to monitor and assess operations/activities, to apply standards of acceptable performance, and to reference appropriate materials and/or expert advice as required to ensure the safety and security of activities.

ATTACHMENT 2 – Qualifying Official Job Aid

Job Aid Purpose	To assist subject matter experts (SMEs) and managers as qualifying officials (QOs) in preparing and conducting the evaluations or check-outs of the TQP participants' competencies.
QO Responsibilities	To determine that the TQP candidate demonstrates the appropriate level of knowledge and skills that will fulfill the requirements of the competency listed in the qualification card.
Steps	Process
Prepare for the evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QOs should try to evaluate candidates to the best of their ability. However, if a QO does not possess the technical knowledge in a given area, assistance in planning the evaluation should be requested from other QOs or from subject matter experts who are knowledgeable of the competency requirements. 2. Review the applicable qualification requirements and references (i.e., the qualification card and supporting knowledge and skill statements described in the competencies of the applicable DOE Functional Area Qualification Standard shown in the qualification card header) for the candidate. 3. Prepare the necessary evaluation questions that will be asked of the candidate during the check-out or walk-through evaluation. This may be as simple as highlighting areas of a DOE directive to quiz the candidate.
Conduct the evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For each competency, ask the prepared questions to assess the candidate's knowledge or skill. This can be done in an office or during a facility walk-through. 2. Probe as necessary to adequately assess the knowledge or skill level. 3. At the completion of the discussion for each requirement, determine whether or not the candidate's responses adequately meet the qualification requirement. 4. Sampling the competency's supporting knowledge and skills are a good practice. Also, pulling related questions from the candidate's evidence package will provide a good and fair evaluation. How this is done is at the discretion of the QO.
Complete the evaluation	<p>Unsatisfactory Rating: If the candidate needs additional study or practice (or rated "unsatisfactory"), inform the candidate, assist in identifying remedial activities, and reschedule the evaluation.</p> <p>Satisfactory Rating: If the candidate has responded satisfactorily, sign the qualification card indicating your affirmation of the candidate's fulfillment of the knowledge and skill level required by the competency in the qualification card.</p>

**File the
documentation**

A signature on the qualification card and a memo to the employee with a copy to the TQP Manager, the HRS TQP Coordinator and the employee's supervisor are required for documenting the evaluation. The candidate retains the original qualification card. The completed qualification card and evidence package is forwarded to the HRS TQP Coordinator to prepare the Certificate of Completion for the SC-CH Manager's signature (or Site Office Manager's signature where applicable).
