



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OAK RIDGE OFFICE (ORO)**

**Federal Technical Capability Program (FTCP)
Technical Qualification Program (TQP)
2014 ORO Self-Assessment Report**

March 2014

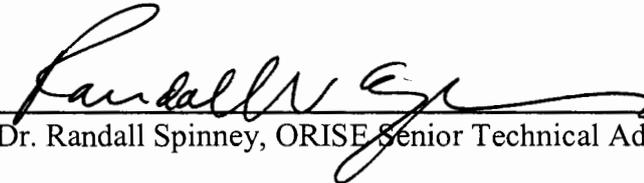
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Contents

Executive Summary	iii
I. Introduction.....	4
II. Scope and Methodology.....	4
III. Discussion	4
FTC-1, Executive Commitment and Line Management Ownership	5
FTC-2, Recruiting Technically Capable Personnel	5
FTC-3, Staffing and Deployment	6
FTC-4, Development of Technically Capable Personnel.....	6
FTC 5, Retaining Technically Capable Personnel.....	13
IV. Results	13
Strengths.....	13
Areas for Improvement	14
Conclusion.....	16
Attachment 1: <i>Documents Reviewed</i>	17
Attachment 2: <i>References</i>	18
Attachment 3: <i>FTCP-TQP Implementation Plan</i>	19

Executive Summary

The Department of Energy (DOE) established the Federal Technical Capability Program (FTCP) for the recruitment, deployment, development, and retention of federal employees who oversee nuclear and other hazardous material facilities to accomplish the Department's missions and responsibilities.

An Oak Ridge Office (ORO) FTCP Panel was also established, representing the key technical operations of the organization. The Panel, in its oversight role, coordinates the assessment of program implementation. The assessment covered the following FTCP objectives:

- FTC-1, Executive Commitment and Line Management Ownership
- FTC-2, Recruiting Technically Capable Personnel
- FTC-3, Staffing and Deployment
- FTC-4, Development of Technically Capable Personnel, including TQP Objectives 1-7
- FTC-5, Retaining Technically Capable Personnel

As required by DOE Order (O) 426.1, *Federal Technical Capability*, an assessment team evaluated program effectiveness of the implementation of the Federal Technical Capability Program (FTCP) and the Technical Qualification Program (TQP) at ORO and found that ORO fulfills the requirements of the Order. The following key areas for improvement were identified:

- Revision of the Office of Science Integrated Support Center (SC ISC) *Technical Qualification Manual* is required to ensure that all participants fully comply with DOE O 426.1.
- QO roles and responsibilities need to be reinforced and certified by the FTCP Agent.
- The six-month TQP review, approval of exemptions and equivalences, and documentation of development plans are not being conducted in accordance with the procedures in the SC ISC *Technical Qualification Manual*, Section III.

Detailed information is provided in the body of this report.

I. Introduction

The Federal Technical Capability Program (FTCP) applies to those personnel who oversee nuclear and other hazardous material facilities. The Oak Ridge Office (ORO) FTCP Panel consists of a core group of senior managers representing the key technical operations of the organization. The Panel, in its oversight role, coordinates the assessment of program implementation.

The requirement for this assessment is contained in DOE O 426.1, *Federal Technical Capability*, for supervisors with responsibilities for Technical Qualification Program (TQP) personnel to “periodically evaluate program effectiveness and serve as a management advocate within the Headquarters or the Field Element to resolve programmatic issues,” and for supervisors with responsibilities for Safety System Oversight (SSOs) to “periodically evaluate program effectiveness and serve as management advocates within their respective field elements to resolve programmatic issues.”

This assessment, using criteria referred to in DOE O 426.1, *Federal Technical Capability*, is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the FTCP and the TQP at ORO. The purpose of this report is to document the results of ORO’s self-assessment. The remaining sections of this report include the assessment scope and methodology, the results of the assessment, and supporting information.

Key criteria objectives for both the FTCP and TQP portions of the assessment are identified in the Discussion section, according to a graded or risk-based approach consistent with DOE oversight policy. Other FTCP and TQP criteria are not critical to this assessment, based on DOE operational issues.

II. Scope and Methodology

This assessment, using criteria referred to in DOE O 426.1, *Federal Technical Capability*, and other references, is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the FTCP and TQP at ORO.

In October 2013, the ORO FTCP Agent began planning this self-assessment. The general methodology of the assessment consists of record reviews and face-to-face interviews with senior managers and TQP participants. The interviews relate to how the assessment criteria are being met and identifying strengths and areas for improvement. The data collected are reviewed and compiled by the assessment team. Subsequently, the ORO FTCP Agent will present the results to the ORO Manager. The data may then be shared with other FTCP and TQP stakeholders.

III. Discussion

ORO has met all objectives to effectively implement the FTCP and TQP, in accordance with DOE O 426.1, *Federal Technical Capability*. Areas of strength and areas for improvement in

certain FTCP and TQP objectives were found by the assessment team during the self-assessment, as identified below.

FTC-1, Executive Commitment and Line Management Ownership

Line management is actively involved in all aspects of technical employee recruitment, retention, development, and deployment.

This objective is met.

Technical capability flows down from the Functions, Responsibilities, and Authorities (FRA). Senior management stated their commitment to TQP, and it is evident in their own participation in the TQP. All the senior technical managers are in the TQP themselves, and most are active Qualifying Officials (QO). Reinstatement of the ORO FTCP Panel, which consists of the Assistant Managers (AM), has been beneficial and is not delegated down. The ORO FTCP Agent recently updated the Oak Ridge Office Federal Technical Capability Panel charter to reflect changes due to an organizational realignment. Additionally, the new panel commenced meetings to address ORO specific issues starting with a review and revision of the ORO OFS Qualification Standards. The ORO FTCP Agent also added several program management documents to the FTCP website increasing transparency and communication.

There is a strong commitment to continuing training. ORO employees received an average of 55.0 Training, Development and Education (TD&E) hours (12,698 total hours) for FY 2013; an increase from 43.7 hours in FY 2012. In FY 2013, ORO employees completed 803 hours for compliance training, 1,964 hours for developmental training, and 9,931 hours for job-related training. In FY 2013, the ORO Training and Development Group (TDG) coordinated 31 in-house training courses. In addition, eight employees completed continuing education with tuition reimbursement for 29 educational courses in FY 2013.

In October 2013, management conducted an organizational self-assessment, including the FTCP and TQP, to review organizational processes and the implementation of those processes. The self-assessment was helpful because it accomplished two things: (1) completion of the self-assessment, and (2) it provided a learning experience for two recently hired AMSTS engineers.

FTC-2, Recruiting Technically Capable Personnel

An effective process is implemented to attract highly competent technical personnel to fill key positions in the Department.

This objective is met; however, the process is not being used due to lack of funding.

Managers are aware of administrative hiring flexibilities. Bonuses for recruitment, relocation, and retention are in place; however, because of low turnover, there has not been much opportunity to use these bonuses very often, according to the Federal Human Resources Branch Chief.

FTC-3, Staffing and Deployment

Technical staffing plans are developed, maintained, and used as the basis for recruiting, developing, and deploying personnel to ensure that critical safety positions are filled with technically competent personnel.

This objective is met.

Workforce Analyses and staffing plans are developed annually as part of the staffing and deployment process. The ORO Annual Workforce Analysis and Staffing Plan, prepared February 2014, identifies critical positions and activities and a list of employees interested in reassignment or detail to such positions to facilitate reassignment and retraining.

The Federal Human Resources Branch Chief indicated that critical competencies are being preserved, to the extent possible, despite funding issues. For example, critical competencies are identified in job announcements and in position backfilling.

All ORO positions have minimum required experience and education, as prescribed in the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) *Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions*. In order to be hired, a candidate must meet these requirements. Examples of staff in these critical positions are facility representatives, STSMs, and the other TQP positions.

ORO has implemented the STSM program, as evidenced by ten current STSMs and two persons in the process of being designated STSMs. Further, ORO supplements the functional area STSM qualification standard with an ORO-specific qualification standard.

Position Descriptions (PD) for 21 selected interviewees were reviewed and verified to ensure proper documentation of a formal assignment to the TQP. Of the 21 records reviewed, seven were correctly designated as STSMs, and 12 were correctly documented for TQP participation. Two were neither in TQP or STSM, as they were non-technical positions.

FTC-4, Development of Technically Capable Personnel

Programs and processes are effectively implemented to encourage the continuous improvement of technical personnel.

This objective is met.

This FTC objective includes TQP Objectives 1 through 7:

- *TQP-1, Demonstration of Competence*
The program clearly identifies and documents the process used to demonstrate employee technical competence.
- *TQP-2, Competency Levels*
Competency requirements are clearly defined and consistent with applicable industry standards for similar occupations.
- *TQP-3, Plans and Procedures*
Plans and/or procedures are developed and implemented to govern administration of the program.

- *TQP-4, Qualification Tailored to Work Activities*
The program identifies unique Department- and position-specific work activities and specifies the knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish that work.
- *TQP-5, Credit for Existing Technical Qualification Program(s)*
The program is structured to allow credit, where appropriate, for other Technical Qualification Program accomplishments.
- *TQP-6, Transportability*
Competency requirements identified as applying throughout the Department are transferable.
- *TQP-7, Measurable*
The program contains sufficient rigor to demonstrate compliance to the principles.

TQP-1, Demonstration of Competence

As noted in the 2009 Technical Qualification Program Accreditation Self-Evaluation Report, the following information remains applicable for the current assessment. Prior to 2007, ORO administered the TQP with procedures, ORO O 360 and ORO TQP Manual. In 2007, the DOE SC required all SC sites to convert to an Organization-wide manual. In response, the SC Integrated Support Center (ISC) *Technical Qualification Program Manual* was issued in March 2007 to administer the TQP. The ORO Manager issued a memorandum in October 2008 that required all technical positions that oversee both nuclear and non-nuclear operations to be included in the TQP.

A well-defined process for identifying employees to participate in the TQP is identified in the SC ISC *Technical Qualification Program Manual*, Section II. It consists of an algorithmic series of steps to determine if the individual's position is a TQP position. The employee and supervisor then complete a TQP Assignment Memorandum, which is signed by the participant, Division Director (or equivalent), and Assistant Manager or Site Manager. The completed memorandum is sent to the TQP Manager and placed in the employee's TQP record file. The TQP Program Manager produces a Due Date Memorandum notifying the participant of the specific requirements. A TQP Orientation session is held to cover the items in the Qualification Binder including specific qualification standards, competency worksheets, the QO List and the final ESS documentation process. Procedures and requirements for documenting exemptions, equivalences and developmental activities are provided in the SC ISC *Technical Qualification Program Manual*. Participants document their education and experience and provide supporting documentation. QOs review the documented experience and supporting documentation and sign the Employee Self Service (ESS) report. Upon completion of all competencies, the final signature page is signed by the participant and reviewed and approved by the QO and the participants' manager(s). All TQP qualification records undergo a final audit review by the TDG staff. Overall, the process for designation of TQP participants and demonstration of competence is well defined and compliant with requirements. However, document reviews and interviews indicate that the 6-month review and approval of exemptions and equivalences or the documentation of development plans was not conducted in accordance with the procedures in the SC ISC *Technical Qualification Manual*, Section III.

Several participants noted that the ESS documentation process is cumbersome and difficult due to some software programming issues (i.e., the first character must be an alpha character or none of the entered text will be visible in the printed report). They also saw this step as redundant to the documentation utilizing the ORO TQP Binder. The TQP Manager expressed little added value since there is no reporting capability in the system. He did appreciate the automatic due date notification e-mails. It was also noted that Oak Ridge is believed to be the only DOE organization still utilizing ESS for TQP. DOE is currently reviewing a potentially new electronic tracking system (eTQP) for implementation this next year.

To ensure competence, a representative sampling of 20 of 58 TQP participants were interviewed as part of the self-assessment, and their technical qualification records were reviewed for composition. In addition, interviews were conducted with five senior managers who supervise TQP participants. All (100%) of the senior managers acknowledged they review the TQP status of their employees during their performance appraisals. They also noted that TDG, which manages the TQP, provides exemplary customer support.

All (100%) ORO employees and TQP participants prepared Individual Development Plans (IDP) for FY 2014, and aggregate data were reported by TDG in the Annual Training Needs Assessment. Although all employees complete IDPs, some participants noted that planning for TQP-related training could be more efficient through better utilization of the IDP process. Others noted that using the IDP process to request training or determine continuing education was helpful; however, listing education needs did not always ensure approval (even when using own funds).

There was no evidence that participants reviewed revisions to the FAQs when determining their continuing training and education needs. The TQP Manager noted that there was no oversight process in place to review participants' IDPs with respect to continuing training and education. A plan is in place to review the IDPs for each TQP Participant in 2014.

TQP-2, Competency Levels

DOE developed and established competencies (and supporting knowledge and skills) for 34 DOE qualification standards. Similarly, ORO prepared six Office/Facility-Specific (OFS) qualification standards. These standards are not currently within the five-year review period. ORO is in the process of reviewing the current OFS and developing a consolidated OFS qualification standard. The current ORO OFS qualification standards include:

- Emergency Management
- Environment, Safety and Health
- Safeguards and Security
- Safety System Oversight
- Senior Technical Safety Manager
- Technical Training

The topic Reservation Management will be included in the upcoming, consolidated ORO OFS.

Each qualification standard contains relevant knowledge and skills. As of late 2006, the DOE Functional Area Qualification Standards (FAQS) contain mandatory performance activities (MPAs) for key working and expert level competencies. Most of the ORO-specific qualification standards also contain MPAs for working-level competencies.

The ORO TQP includes three levels of qualification standards:

- General Technical Base (GTB)
- DOE Functional Area Qualification Standard (FAQS)
- ORO Office/Facility Specific Standard (OFS)

Each standard includes the requisite competencies, knowledge, and skills that support the ORO technical mission.

TQP-3, Plans and Procedures

The ORO Human Resources Division (HRD) issues position descriptions (PD) for TQP positions. When a new PD is required or an existing one needs revision, the supervisor generates the document and submits it to HRD for processing. HRD reviews the PD and resolves any comments with the supervisor. If the position is a TQP position, the supervisor must provide the necessary documentation. This team reviewed 21 PDs, and all were found to have the proper TQP designations. The use of weekly performance status reports, application of appropriate resources to the TQP, and the inclusion of the TQP requirement in the PDs indicate a solid commitment to managing and maintaining the TQP.

As noted in the 2009 Technical Qualification Program Accreditation Self-Evaluation Report, the following information remains applicable for the current assessment. Several layers of management were interviewed for this self-assessment. It was noted that Assistant Managers (AM) were very committed to having a robust and accurate TQP program, as evidenced by the discussions, documents, and processes implemented in each organization. In some cases, AMs tracked the TQP status of their respective staff on a weekly basis.

The Assistant Manager for Administration (AMA) organization, where the TDG resides, maintains up-to-date TQP tracking data in a weekly status report. An "ORO TQP Participants Scheduled Commitments" report is also sent on a weekly basis to the ORO Program Manager, who distributes to the applicable AMs. The data in these reports are used at senior board meetings to determine when individuals are approaching their TQP assignment due dates.

Although the SC ISC *Technical Qualification Program Manual* contains a process for identifying employees to participate in the TQP, the self-assessment revealed that six-month equivalency and development plans are not submitted by participants nor approved by supervisors.

ORO manages a Qualifying Officials List for the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR). In the past training was developed and presented to all QOs. Training materials are currently available online for review and documentation utilizing a self-certification form. The ORO FTCP Agent has attempted to meet with new QOs to discuss their roles and responsibilities. The use of QOs

from multiple organizations makes this process difficult. The ORO FTCP Agent is currently addressing this issue.

Twenty of 58 records were reviewed, and the composition of all records was adequate. However, there is currently not a way to confirm the date when a QO documents completion of an individual competency. The QO initials the qualification card without providing a date until the final signature is entered on the ESS report. The record review process showed an inconsistent documentation of the final qualification process (written exam, oral exam, or facilitated walk-through) as required in DOE O. 426.1.4(C).

Four drawers in seven Training Center cabinets did not properly lock. This condition had been reported to Maintenance. Because of the layers of building security, this was not an issue.

TQP-4, Qualification Tailored to Work Activities

The following information remains applicable from the 2009 Technical Qualification Program Accreditation Self-Evaluation Report for this current assessment.

DOE developed and established the competencies (and supporting knowledge and skills) for 34 DOE qualification standards. Similarly, ORO SMEs prepared with their management the OFS qualification standards. There are currently six ORO OFS qualification standards. The current OFSs are outside of the five-year review period, and the ORO FTCP Panel is currently reviewing and developing an all-encompassing OFS qualification standard. The current ORO OFS qualification standards include the following offices or topics:

- Emergency Management
- Environment, Safety and Health
- Safeguards and Security
- Safety System Oversight
- Senior Technical Safety Manager
- Technical Training

The topic Reservation Management will be included in the upcoming, consolidated ORO OFS.

Each qualification standard contains relevant knowledge and skills. In addition, the more recent (since late 2006) DOE FAQs now contain MPAs for key working and expert level competencies. As well, most of the ORO specific qualification standards contain MPAs for the working-level competencies.

The ORO TQP includes three levels of qualification standards:

- General Technical Base (GTB)
- DOE Functional Area Qualification Standard (FAQS)
- ORO Office/Facility Specific Standard (OFS)

Each standard includes the requisite competencies, knowledge, and skills that support the ORO technical mission.

ORO has relied upon the DOE SMEs who developed and established the competencies (and supporting knowledge and skills) for the 34 DOE qualification standards.

According to the participants interviewed, their TQP assignment was a supervisory decision and was based on the TQP designation in the PDs. Gap analyses were conducted to determine general ORO TQP requirements for the new participants. The analyses were also intended to determine the need for developmental activities or justification for equivalencies. ORO has considerable experience performing these analyses and continues to support SC sites as well as the Chicago ISC, as requested.

ORO has established requirements and developed tools, including an annual TQP WFA and staffing plan, that effectively utilize the TQP to identify critical technical capabilities to support its mission as an ISC. ORO TQP participants qualify under DOE O 426.1 to ensure quality service to all ISC customers. The ORO FTCP Panel aligns program requirements to support ORO's mission.

TQP-5, Credit for Existing Technical Qualification Program(s)

Consistent with the ISC TQP Manual, ORO TQP participants possess the necessary skills and knowledge for competency in specific topical area(s). Credit is received by completing an equivalency narrative in the Employee Self-Service TQP system, which is then submitted to the supervisor and/or QO for evaluation purposes along with supporting evidence of previously completed education, training, and/or experience. The ORO TDG completes an audit review and final recordkeeping.

Substantial objective evidence is submitted to receive credit (equivalency) for the following activities:

- Formal training documentation/records
- Course completion certificates
- University/college transcripts or grade reports
- Professional licenses/certificates/registrations
- Examination results
- Performance appraisals
- Work products
- Position descriptions
- Course syllabi for completed courses
- In-depth interviews
- Attestations
- Evidence of walk-throughs and walk-downs
- Statements of time on the job
- Publications authored
- Feedback from customers

ORO's TQP accepts all DOE O 426.1 qualifications transferred from other DOE sites when properly documented. However, participants must complete the appropriate OFS.

The team noted there is documentation of QO review and approval of each competency; however, these items are not individually dated to show the timeline of completion. All signatures on the ESS report are typically within one or two weeks of each other rather than during the 18-month duration of the qualification.

TQP-6, Transportability

ORO requires all TQP participants to complete their GTB and FAQs in their entirety, with the exception of the Safeguards and Security FAQs. The Safeguards and Security FAQs require a core set of competencies to be supplemented by specific functional competencies related to specific duties and responsibilities. All qualifications are in accordance with DOE O 426.1.

Because ORO supports the ORNL Site Office (OSO), Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management (OREM) and the Nuclear Energy, Oak Ridge Site Office (NEORSO) the assigned qualification standards reflect the diversity of each Office's mission. Nearly all 34 FAQss have been assigned to participants at ORO, as determined by a review of the ORO TQP quarterly status report. All participants have completed the GTB Qualification Standard.

TQP-7, Measurable

ORO strives to support professional memberships and certifications, despite the federal prohibition for reimbursing such activities.

ORO supervisors and QOs allow flexibility in the evaluation of TQP competencies and packages, although rigor is maintained in the final qualification review. Technical competencies are verified by the TQP participant's supervisor, which is completed by evaluation of written justifications. These justifications are compared to competency statements in the TQP Standard; however, a QO may conduct an oral or written evaluation as well to ensure adequate implementation of the TQP. Fulfillment options include (extensions of qualification periods may be requested):

- Equivalencies
- Exemptions (which require a written justification statement)
- Developmental activities

A review of TQP records and interviews with 20 TQP participants (34% of the total participants in the ORO TQP) confirmed adequate levels of competence for all applicable requirements on three levels:

- GTB
- FAQs
- OFS Qualification Standard

However, as noted in TQP-3, Plans and Procedures, there is not consistent documentation of a final qualification process.

Senior Technical Safety Managers and Nuclear Safety Specialist are required to requalify every five years, in accordance with DOE O 426.1 and the applicable FAQs. Other TQP positions are

required to complete continuing education, as appropriate. Budget constraints were cited as concerns to attain continuing education.

During the last year, the new TQP manager has reviewed multiple records, program policies, and processes and developed a feedback brief for the FTCP Agent and management. This brief identified program strengths, weaknesses, and areas for program improvement. Recommendations need to be solidified and presented to the ORO FTCP Panel for consideration.

FTC-5, Retaining Technically Capable Personnel

DOE is an organization where technically competent personnel are respected and want to work.

This objective is met.

Leadership and employee development techniques (e.g., job shadowing) are used to analyze and cover staffing gaps.

ISC recognizes the technical competency of staff and importance of how staff is qualified to support other site offices through the ISC. For example, ISC personnel must meet all requirements of DOE O 426.1.

TQP has evolved within ORO, in terms of its acceptance and value. For example, in the early years of the program, many individuals did not see the value in the program; however, new employees, particularly those new to DOE, recognize the value of the program to provide a foundation of DOE terminology and language. New employees commented the TQP program is valuable to identify needs required to fulfill their job duties, assimilate into the organization, and become a resource through the ISC.

Individual Development Plans (IDP) are an opportunity for employees to be able to express their future work goals or career paths. However, the IDP is not a substitute for a formal career path or succession planning. Participants do not have access to a formal career development path, as detailed in DOE O 426.1, Appendix B.

IV. Results

Strengths

1. The scope of TQP participation includes those employees who have an impact on safety at low-, medium-, and high-hazard nuclear and non-nuclear activities.
2. Of the 58 participants currently in the ORO Technical Qualification Program, 43 are complete and 15 are in-progress. This is a completion percentage of 74%.
3. Of the ten ORO Senior Technical Safety Representatives, eight are complete and two are in progress. This is a completion percentage of 80%.

4. There are two ORO Federal Project Directors available at ORO; one is certified at Level 3 and the other at Level 4.
5. There is a strong commitment to continuing education. Eight employees received tuition reimbursement for 29 continuing education courses in FY 2013.
6. There are 18 technical employees in the Professional Credentials Program in these professions :
 - Certified Safety Professional
 - Professional Engineer
 - Certified Hazardous Materials Manager
 - Project Management Professional
 - Registered Environmental Manager
 - Certified Industrial Hygienist
7. There is a strong commitment to continuing training. In FY 2013, ORO TDG coordinated 31 in-house training courses, and ORO employees:
 - Received an average of 55.0 TD&E hours (12,698 total hours), which is an increase from 43.7 hours in FY 2012.
 - Completed 803 hours of compliance training, 1,964 hours of developmental training, and 9,931 hours of job-related training.
8. In order to retain technical capabilities, some organizations are considering telework as an option to compete with the private sector.
9. The SC ISC *Technical Qualification Program Manual* contains a process for identifying employees to participate in the TQP.

Areas for Improvement

1. Revision of the Office of Science Integrated Support Center (SC ISC) *Technical Qualification Manual* is required to ensure that all participants fully comply with DOE O 426.1.
2. QO roles and responsibilities need to be reinforced and certified by the FTCP Agent. For example, documentation of QO reviews and approval of competencies exists; however, these items are not individually dated to show the timeline of completion. All signatures on the ESS report are typically within one or two weeks of each other rather than during the 18-month duration of the qualification.
3. The six-month TQP review, approval of exemptions and equivalences, and documentation of development plans are not being conducted in accordance with the procedures in the SC ISC *Technical Qualification Manual*, Section III.
4. Better use of the IDP process is warranted to plan for TQP-related training. Listing continuing education needs in the IDP does not always ensure it is approved (even when using own funds). While senior management commitment is strong, it is limited in post-

involvement (e.g., follow-up with TQP participants is not evident). Employee perception about how senior management addresses development is that it is non-existent after the 18 month qualification process.

5. Some organizations reported there are limited rewards for outstanding achievement, which is typically only recognized in performance appraisals.
6. There is no written policy or procedure in place to preserve Critical Technical Capabilities (CTC) in the event of a reduction in force (RIF).

Based on the current environment, these items are recognized as management challenges:

- a. Hiring is limited because of budget, so staffing issues are addressed through rotating assignments and shared staff. For example, in Emergency Management three individuals have been rotating through the team leader position since 2009.
- b. According to the 2013 Annual Workforce Analysis and Staffing Plan Report dated February 2014, AMSSEM currently has 25 FTE positions in the Technical Qualification Program (TQP). There have been two retirements in FY 2013, and eight personnel are eligible for immediate retirement. Two individuals have indicated they will retire in the next year. An additional six personnel are eligible for retirement within the next five years. This is over half of the workforce. The evolving, expanding mission of Safeguards, Security and Emergency Management, legal requirements that impose time and adjudication metrics in Personnel Security, combined with positions that have not been backfilled are stressing the organization and restricting AMSSEM's ability to meet mission obligations with the quality expected for nuclear security. In addition, AMSSEM continues to evaluate resource requirements since the July 28, 2012, Y-12 event and recent retirements, and is evaluating potential shared resources with the Chicago ISC (CH). A workforce review has been conducted and identified supplemental training to enhance skill sets to effectively perform assigned duties. AMSTS has four Senior Technical Safety Managers (STSMs) and 20 Technical Staff currently. Since 2010, the number of AMSTS staff continues to decrease from 39 to the current total of 24. That represents a 39 percent decrease in staffing with only one remaining qualified staff in Fire Protection and no qualified staff in Electrical Safety. Environmental and Quality Services Division continues to remain severely depleted as only 0.5 FTE has been gained due to cross-training. AMSTS continues to suffer severe shortages in Quality Assurance (QA), Fire Protection, and Electrical Safety. Staff members are routinely called upon by ORO, SC and other DOE and NNSA organizations to support emerging issues, oversight, and assessment activities, technical consultations and various reviews. A request has been made for hiring approval of two STSMs to backfill the organizational management structure and two subject-matter experts. Cross-training assignments are being evaluated, but are becoming more limited as staffing levels continue to fall. Projected needs are based on current workload and increases due to anticipated support for ISC activities especially in the areas of broad assessment subjects such as ISM and CAS. AMA has a total of six technical positions with three of the six positions eligible for retirement within the next five years. This will equate to a 50 percent reduction in technical support in the

AMA organization if these employees retire. The recent decision by OREM to redirect cleanup activities from the ETTP Site to the NNSA Y-12 Site will delay reindustrialization activities and extend the need for technical positions beyond the previously projected 2017 cleanup completion date. The technical capabilities of the staff continue to be re-evaluated to ensure an appropriate mix of skills is available to adequately manage and oversee the technical reservation management responsibilities. AMA acknowledges additional resources are required in some technical capabilities in order to ensure safe operations. Presently, we intend to fulfill our additional oversight needs primarily through support from AMSTS and NE-OR. The utilization of this support will depend on the Projects' needs and execution schedules and availability of support from AMSTS organization and NEORSO.

- c. A lack of depth in staffing diminishes the effectiveness of the ISC.
- d. Many staff serve in multiple roles, and recently it has become difficult to balance.
- e. Some technical managers fill gaps, which create challenges with supervisory tasks. (e.g., AMSTS director is fulfilling Fire Protection Engineer duties).

Conclusion

The ORO FTCP and TQP are documented and functional. While several areas for improvement have been identified and management challenges are present, the program satisfies the requirements of DOE Order 426.1.

Attachment 1: Documents Reviewed

The following documents were reviewed during the assessment of the FTCP and TQP:

- Annual training reports
- Annual workforce analyses and staffing plans
- Charter, *ORO Panel Charter and Agent Responsibilities*, signed by the ORO FTCP Panel Chair/Agent P. Smith, dated November 1, 2013
- FY 2000 FTCP ORO Self-Assessment report
- FY 2009 TQP ORO Accreditation Self-Evaluation report
- Memorandum, *ORO Representative to the Federal Technical Capability Program Panel*, from L. Kelly (ORO Manager) to K. Boardman, dated June 25, 2013
- Memorandum, *ORO TQP Manual and Qualifying Officials*, from G. Boyd (ORO Manager) to ORO FTCP Panel members, dated October 14, 2008
- Needs assessments
- ORO TQP Participants Scheduled Commitment reports
- Position descriptions for the interviewed TQP participants
- List of professional certifications and technical degrees
- TQP assignment and start date memorandums
- Training history and summaries for the interviewed TQP participants
- Tuition reimbursement records for the interviewed TQP participants
- 2013 Annual Workforce Analysis and Staffing Plan Report, dated February 2014
- PowerPoint presentation, M. Wilson, *Oak Ridge Office TQP Program Review*, dated July 17, 2013

Attachment 2: References

The following documents were referenced in the development of this report:

- DOE O 360.1C, *Federal Employee Training*
- DOE O 426.1, Change 1, *Federal Technical Capability*
- *DOE Federal Technical Capability Program Assessment Guidance and Criteria*, dated September 1988
- *DOE Technical Qualification Program Accreditation Process and Criteria*, dated December 27, 2005

Attachment 3: FTCP-TQP Implementation Plan

**Implementation Plan for
Federal Technical Capability Program and Technical Qualification
Program Assessment**



December 16, 2013

Implementation Plan

Introduction

The Federal Technical Capability Program (FTCP) applies to those personnel who oversee nuclear and other hazardous material facilities. The Oak Ridge Office (ORO) FTCP Panel consists of a core group of senior managers representing the key technical operations of the organization. The Panel in its oversight role coordinates the assessment of program implementation.

The requirement for this assessment is contained in DOE O 426.1, *Federal Technical Capability for Supervisors with Responsibilities for TQP Personnel* to “Periodically evaluate program effectiveness and serve as a management advocate within the Headquarters or the Field Element to resolve programmatic issues,” and for Supervisors with Responsibilities for Safety System Oversight (SSOs) to “Periodically evaluate program effectiveness and serve as management advocates within their respective field elements to resolve programmatic issues.”

This assessment, using criteria referred to in DOE O 426.1, *Federal Technical Capability*, is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the Federal Technical Capability Program and the Technical Qualification Program (TQP) at ORO.

The assessment team consists of the following: Patrick Smith, ORO FTCP Agent; Michael Wilson, ORO TQP Manager; ORISE Team: Dr. Randall Spinney, Senior Technical Advisor; Kevin Farris, TQP Coordinator; Amparo Atencio, Training and Development Specialist.

Reverse Schedule

The duration of the FTCP-TQP Assessment is approximately two months, as detailed below with the milestone dates, required activities, and responsible team members.

Feb. 1, 2014	Deliver final report to Karen Boardman	ORO FTCP Agent
Jan. 31, 2014	Save final report as PDF	TQP Manager
Jan. 27-31, 2014	Obtain signatures Incorporate review changes	TQP Manager
Jan. 22-28, 2014	Review final draft of report Provide feedback and changes	TQP Manager/ORO FTCP Agent
Jan. 22, 2014	Submit final draft to DOE management	TQP Manager
Jan. 20-22, 2014	Finalize section write-ups and edits	TQP Manager/ORISE Team
Jan. 6-17, 2014	Review data Conduct interviews Draft interview notes and data	Assessment Team
Jan. 6, 2014	Assessment team kick-off meeting	Assessment Team
Dec. 31, 2013	Develop interview protocols for managers and TQP participants	TQP Manager/ORISE Team
Dec. 16, 2013 – Jan. 3, 2014	Collect data	TQP Manager/ORISE Team
Dec. 16-31, 2013	Schedule interviews	TQP Manager

Dates	Activity	Responsible
Dec. 5, 2013	Approve Implementation Plan Meet with TQP Manager to review Implementation Plan	TQP Manager/ORO FTCP Agent
Dec. 3, 2013	Formulate implementation plan Select interviewees	TQP Manager

Criteria

Key criteria objectives for both the FTCP and TQP portions of the assessment are identified below, according to a graded or risk-based approach consistent with DOE oversight policy. Other FTCP and TQP criteria are not critical to this assessment, based on DOE operational issues. These will be indirectly assessed during the assessment of key objectives.

FTCP Objectives

The objectives listed in the following table apply to the FTCP portion of the assessment.

FTC 1.2	Senior line management supports continuous technical development and improvement of employees.
FTC 1.4	The applicable Level One and/or field level Functions, Responsibilities, and Authorities Manual (FRAM) clearly define Federal line management responsibilities in the area of technical capability.
FTC 1.5	Achieving and maintaining technical competence is reflected in the goals and objectives of the organization and the position descriptions and performance.
FTC 1.6	Technical Capability programs and processes are institutionalized through Policy, Orders, Standards, and procedures.
FTC 2.1	Excepted Service Authorities and other allowed flexibilities are considered as a tool to attract highly competent technical personnel to fill key safety positions.
FTC 3.1	Technical staffing plans are developed and maintained to identify critical safety positions and other key technical positions within the organization.
FTC 3.3	Personnel in critical safety positions and other key technical positions possess the requisite education, training, experience, and background for the position.
FTC 3.4	The Senior Technical Safety Manager (STSM) Program is effectively implemented in the organization.
FTC 4.1	The Technical Qualification Program (TQP) is effectively implemented. <i>Note: This program is evaluated using the TQP objectives (see below).</i>
FTC 5.2	Career path planning and succession planning are effectively used to help retain technical capable personnel.
FTC 5.3	Technical performance is used as a basis for performance reviews, promotions, recognitions, rewards, etc.
FTC 5.4	An effective process is in place to preserve critical technical capabilities during a reduction in force (RIF).

TQP Objectives

The objectives listed in the following table apply to the TQP portion of the assessment:

Objective	Description
TQP 1	Demonstration of Competence. The program clearly identifies and documents the process used to demonstrate employee technical competence.
TQP 2	Competency Levels. Competency requirements are clearly defined and consistent with applicable industry standards for similar occupations.
TQP 3	Plans and Procedures. Plans and/or procedures are developed and implemented to govern administration of the program.
TQP 4	Qualification Tailored to Work Activities. The program identifies unique Department- and position-specific work activities and specifies the knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish that work.
TQP 5	Credit for Existing Technical Qualification Program(s). The program is structured to allow credit, where appropriate, for other Technical Qualification Program accomplishments.
TQP 6	Transportability. Competency requirements identified as applying throughout the Department are transferable.
TQP 7	Measurable. The program contains sufficient rigor to demonstrate compliance to the principles.

Data/Records Needed

FTCP Records

The following FTCP data and training records of select employees (i.e., interviewees) are needed:

1. 2000 FTCP assessment report
2. Technical degrees
3. Professional certifications
4. Tuition reimbursement records
5. Annual training reports
6. Annual workforce analyses (WFA)

TQP Records

The following TQP data and training records of select employees (i.e., interviewees) are needed:

1. 2009 TQP assessment report
2. Clustering criteria
3. Position descriptions
4. TQP assignment memos
5. Training histories
6. Needs assessments
7. Annual training reports

Interview Approach

Face-to-face interviews will be scheduled. If a candidate is not available for a face-to-face interview during the assessment period, lines of inquiry will be sent by email to be completed within a specific timeframe.

The assessment method will be a two-person approach: a questioner and a scribe. The questioner will use established interview protocols that include an introduction, purpose for the interview, and specific lines of inquiry based on the position of the interviewee. The scribe will record interview responses in real-time, using established forms. The relevant objective number will be noted at the end of each line of inquiry. The scribe will also capture any additional questions that are asked during the TQP Lines

of Inquiry for Non-Assistant Manager TQP positions, to be used as lessons learned for future interviews.

Proposed Interviews

The TQP candidates to be interviewed were selected from the following organizations, based on recent completion or requalification of the TQP assignments: Assistant Manager for Administration (AMA); Assistant manager for Safety and Technical Services (AMSTS); and Assistant Manager for Safeguards and Security and Emergency Management (AMSSEM). Assistant Managers (AMs) were selected based on their level of responsibility within the DOE Oak Ridge Office (ORO).

1. Allen, David	Assistant Manager for Safety and Technical Services	AMSTS	Hall, R. Kevin
2. Booker, Craig	Health Physicist	AMSTS	Ferrer, Jorge
3. Bush, Kara	Industrial Hygienist	AMSTS	Russell, Paige
4. Cadle, Aaron	Program Analyst	AMA	Henry, Brian
5. Cloar, Adam	Civil Engineer	AMSTS	Russell, Paige
6. Cooke, Paul Steven	General Engineer	AMA	Henry, Brian
7. Douglas, Pauline	Security Officer	AMSSEM	Medlock, John
8. Dyer, Debra	Emergency Management Specialist	AMSSEM	Medlock, John
9. Fadel, Gus	Industrial Hygienist	AMSTS	Ferrer, Jorge
10. Ferrer, Jorge	Supervisory General Engineer	AMSTS	
11. Hall, R. Kevin	Deputy Manager, ORO	Manager's Office	
12. Howse-Smith, Pat	Administrative Officer	HR	Shewairy, John
13. Kelly, Larry	Manager, ORO	Manager's Office	
14. Kent, Melanie	Supervisory Human Resources Specialist	HR	Shewairy, John
15. Lopez-Ferré, Mildred	Physical Scientist	AMSTS	Hall, R. Kevin
16. Medlock, John	Supervisory Industrial Security Specialist	AMSSEM	
17. Russell, Paige	Supervisory General Engineer	AMSTS	
18. Sherbine, Marlene	Personnel Security Specialist	AMSSEM	Medlock, John
19. Sherwood, Steve	General Engineer	AMA	Henry, Brian
20. Shewairy, John	Assistant Manager, Administration	AMA	
21. Smith, Patrick	Supervisory General Engineer	AMSTS	
22. Vasquez, Katatra	Environmental Scientist	AMSTS	Smith, Patrick
23. Willaford, Dana	Program Analyst (Transportation Safety)	AMSTS	Russell, Paige

Interview Matrix

The following employees are proposed for interviews, based on their skills and knowledge of the FTCP and/or TQP criteria objectives and lines of inquiry (LOI). See Attachment A for a working draft of the Interviewee Assignment Worksheet, to be completed by the assessment team.

FTCP Objective	Interviewees
FTCP Obj. 1	Pauline Douglas, R. Kevin Hall, David Allen, John Shewairy, Larry Kelly
FTCP Obj. 2	Pat Howse-Smith, Melanie Kent, Managers
FTCP Obj. 3	Assistant Managers, Workforce Analyses, R. Kevin Hall, sampling of supervisors (Jorge Ferrer, Patrick Smith, Paige Russell, John Medlock, Brian Henry), Pat Howse-Smith, Melanie Kent
FTCP Obj. 4.1 and TQP Criteria	Senior Management (Larry Kelly, Patrick Smith), Pauline Douglas, John Shewairy, Pat Howse-Smith, Melanie Kent, R. Kevin Hall, David Allen, Butch Brant, Mike Wilson
FTCP Obj. 5	Melanie Kent, Larry Kelly, Kevin Hall

Lines of Inquiry

FTCP Lines of Inquiry

The assessment team will interview candidates by using the following Lines of Inquiry (LOI).

FTC 1, Executive Commitment and Line Management Ownership. Line management is actively involved in all aspects of technical employee recruitment, retention, development, and deployment.

Lines of Inquiry

1. Has senior management shown a commitment to inform line managers of the administrative flexibilities available to them through use of the Administrative Flexibilities Workshop or through other means of education?
2. Does the Functions, Responsibilities, and Authorities Manual (FRAM) clearly define federal line management responsibilities for technical capability?
3. Are managers and staff aware of the requirements in the FRAM?

FTC 2, Recruiting Technically Capable Personnel. An effective process is implemented to attract highly competent technical personnel to fill key positions in the Department.

Lines of Inquiry

1. Are managers aware of the types of Administrative Flexibilities that are available to attract and recruit technically capable personnel?
2. Have managers attempted to use excepted service to attract technically capable personnel? If not, should they have? If they did, were there any obstacles or barriers encountered to using this authority?

FTC 3, Staffing and Deployment. Technical staffing plans are developed, maintained, and used as the basis for recruiting, developing, and deploying personnel to ensure that critical safety positions are filled with technically competent personnel.

Lines of Inquiry

1. Do incumbent STSMs and human resources personnel indicate that they are knowledgeable of STSM program requirements and procedures? Are the roles and responsibility for STSMs clearly defined?
2. How is the progress of STSM qualifications tracked? Have all the interviews per the STSM Handbook been completed? If not, why and what are the plans for completing the interviews?
3. Is the Panel Agent actively involved in the recruitment, selection and development of STSMs?

FTC 4, Development of Technically Capable Personnel. Programs and processes are effectively implemented to encourage the continuous improvement of technical personnel.

Lines of Inquiry

1. Are there opportunities for professionals in a given field or focus area to associate with peers through periodic professional activities? Does management encourage such activities?
2. Are there incentives or rewards for technical personnel to pursue professional certifications?
3. Are technical managers and their technical employees writing professional papers on a regular basis?
4. Are technical personnel taking leadership roles in local or national chapters of professional organizations? Are technical personnel guest speakers at professional organization meetings? Are technical personnel drawing on the experience, technical standards and contacts made from professional organizations?

FTC 5, Retaining Technically Capable Personnel. DOE is an organization where technically competent personnel are respected and want to work.

Lines of Inquiry

1. Is there a succession planning process in place and, if so, is it used by senior management in making personnel decisions?
2. How are employees rewarded for outstanding achievement? Are the current methods for rewarding employees working?
3. Are position descriptions written to preserve critical technical requirements in the event of a Reduction in Force?
4. What other methods are in place to preserve critical technical capabilities for your office? Have critical positions been placed in their own competitive area?

TQP Lines of Inquiry

The assessment team will interview candidates by using the following Lines of Inquiry (LOI).

TQP 1, Demonstration of Competence. The program clearly identifies and documents the process used to demonstrate employee technical competence.

Lines of Inquiry

1. What are the participation criteria and the percentage of participants who meet the criteria?
2. How are TQP qualification records and plans maintained? To what extent is CHRIS and ESS used?
3. How does the IDP process relate to the TQP?
4. What type of evaluations are conducted during the course of competency completion?
5. What guidance exists for the use of evaluations in the fulfillment of TQP requirements?
6. What guidance exists for the preparation and administration of knowledge and performance evaluations?
7. What is the approval process for in-house and vendor course exams?
8. Do the course examinations (including tests and quizzes) meet TDG's expectation for exam format, content, accuracy, and applicability?
9. What percentage of the competencies fulfilled were evaluated by an instructor or line manager?
10. What percentage of the fulfillment options are coursework, task performance, or prior experience?
11. What type of evaluation is conducted by line management of the employee when the employee completes the TQP or a qualification standard?
12. How many of the competency skills and knowledge are assessed prior to awarding qualification?

TQP 2, Competency Levels. Competency requirements are clearly defined and consistent with applicable industry standards for similar occupations.

Lines of Inquiry

1. How are local qualification standards developed and approved?
2. Do the local qualification standards define KSAs?
3. Are other accreditation standards (such as for college credit) used?
4. How are the SMEs used in this process?
5. How are the levels of qualification standards being implemented? What are the statistics?
6. How are professional certifications addressed in the TQP? In the IDPs? Other?
7. Are there opportunities for professionals in a given field or focus area to associate with peers through periodic professional activities? Does management encourage such activities? Are there incentives or rewards for technical personnel to pursue professional certifications?
8. Are technical managers and their technical employees writing professional papers on a regular basis? Are technical personnel taking leadership roles in local or national chapters of professional organizations? Are technical personnel guest speakers at professional organization meetings? Are technical personnel drawing on the experience, technical standards and contacts made from professional organizations?

TQP 3, Plans and Procedures. Plans and/or procedures are developed and implemented to govern administration of the program.

Lines of Inquiry

1. Questions for Senior Management
2. What is your personal involvement in the Technical Qualification Program?
3. What is the flowdown of Oak Ridge Office mission requirements into the TQP? (Check ORO mission statements and strategies, and senior manager commitment statements.)
4. How would you characterize senior ORO management's commitment to the TQP? How about your own? [Review and verify with ORO senior management that they endorse and are

committed to the TQP. Ask about evidence of their commitment (e.g., staff memos, subordinates' performance plans.))

5. How are people in your organization assigned to the program? (Ask the managers how they assign employees to the program and approve their functional areas. Ask about the process for evaluating employees against the competencies.)
6. How do you determine that a candidate has acquired a TQP competency?
7. How do you monitor your employees' progress toward qualification completion?
8. What confidence do you have that your people will meet the qualification completion schedule as required by the DOE Order?
9. How are your employees fulfilling their completion requirements (e.g., exemptions, equivalencies, courses, test-outs, self-study, etc.)?
10. One expectation within the program is to include TQP competencies in rewrites of the Federal employee position descriptions. Has this been done in your organization, or are there plans to do so?
11. What is your assessment of the support you are receiving from TDG?
12. What is your assessment of the TQP in terms of its worth and its effectiveness?
13. Have the deficiencies identified in earlier Technical Qualification Program (TQP) assessments been corrected? If not, is there a plan in place to do this, and is it being implemented?
14. Is the Panel Agent actively involved in monitoring the Technical Qualification Program?
15. How are TQP participants enrolled and how do they know their responsibilities?
16. How is the ORO TQP governed? Is it institutionalized in ORO or TDG policies or procedures?
17. How are the TQP records managed?

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

Lines of Inquiry

1. How are qualification standards and competencies assigned to TQP participants?
2. How do local qualification standards address the required local, DOE, and U.S. rules and regulations?
3. How do the ORO mission needs and requirements flow down to the TQP participants and their qualification standards?

TQP 5, Credit for Existing Technical Qualification Program(s). The program is structured to allow credit, where appropriate, for other Technical Qualification Program accomplishments.

Lines of Inquiry

1. What guidance exists for TQP participants and their supervisors for taking equivalencies?
2. What percentage of the fulfillment options are equivalencies?
3. Do the narrative justifications relate specifically to each competency?
4. How are equivalencies evaluated and approved?

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

Lines of Inquiry

1. To what extent are TQP participants completing all the DOE-level competencies in their assigned qualification standards?
2. How has ORO addressed the transfer of TQP participants and their qualifications from other DOE offices?
3. How has ORO addressed the promotion or transfer of TQP participants within ORO?
4. How is the TQP factored into HR-related initiatives (such as workforce analyses) and documentation?

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

Lines of Inquiry

1. Does line management obtain feedback from the training organization regarding how well the employee fulfilled his/her competencies?
2. What type of evaluation is conducted by line management of the employee when the employee completes the TQP?
3. Does the employee’s job duties reflect the competencies of the fulfilled qualification standard?
4. Are the fulfilled competencies addressed in the individual performance planning process?
5. How often does line management assess the worth and benefits of the TQP?
6. How often does line management inform senior management of the TQP worth and benefits?
7. How does the employee and line management rate the TQP as to its contribution to the employee’s skills and knowledge and ability to carry out the assigned safety duties and tasks?
8. To enhance or improve personnel performance, does line management monitor the following (describe how):
 - a. Industry events and accidents?
 - b. Facility events and unusual occurrences?
 - c. Industry events and unusual occurrences?
 - d. Personnel performance errors?

How are job scope changes addressed in the context of a completed TQP?

How are the employee’s skills and knowledge maintained? (Ask this of the employee and supervisor.)

What opportunities exist for skill and knowledge enhancement?

Is there a formal policy or procedure for continuing education? Is there a feedback process to assess the quality and effectiveness of continuing training?

Has senior management communicated to personnel the commitment for continuing education and the importance and the benefits of professional activities and certifications?

TQP PARTICIPANTS Lines of Inquiry, for Non-Assistant Manager TQP Positions

The assessment team may consider interviewing non-assistant manager candidates by using the following Lines of Inquiry (LOI).

Lines of Inquiry

1. Describe your qualification process. What is good about it? What is not so good about it?
2. How do you use your gained knowledge and skills in your job?
3. What continuing education/training have you taken? How was that determined?
4. How is your supervisor involved in your qualification process and in your continuing training program?
5. What tools or resources are available to help you in your qualification process?

6. Do you have a career path?
7. How has the TQP helped in your career and career path planning?
8. Do you participate in any professional organizations? If so, what are they?
9. Do you hold any professional certifications? If so, what are they?