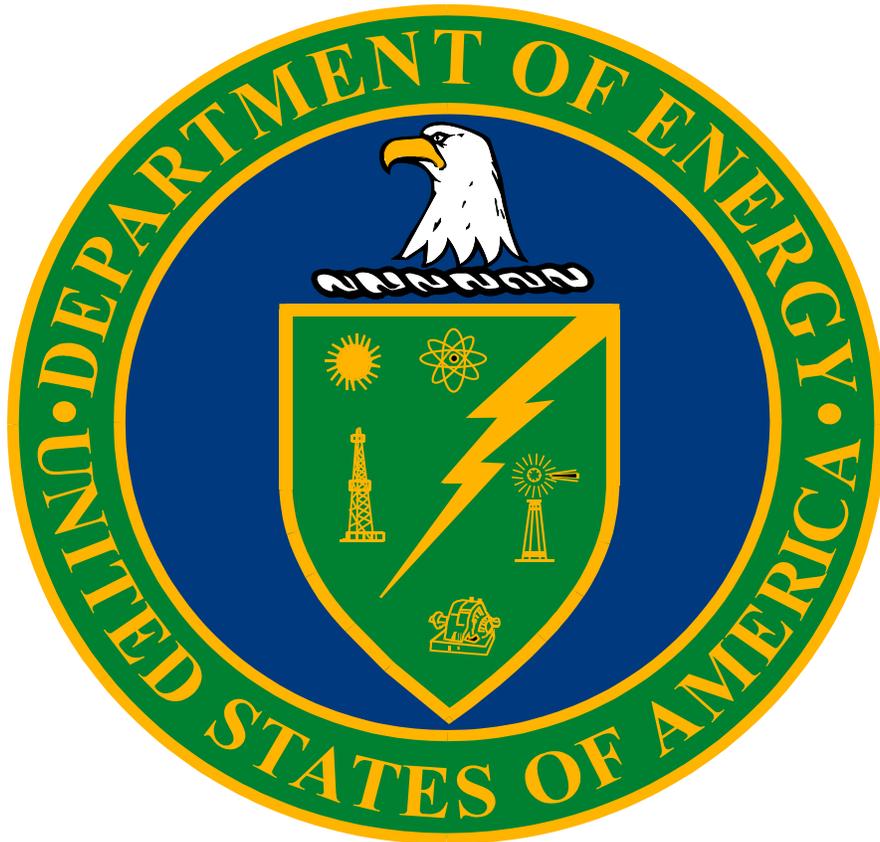


**Management Self-Assessment of the  
Idaho Operations Office  
Technical Qualification Program and  
Federal Technical Capability Program  
Final Report**

**December 2015**



# **Management Self-Assessment of the Idaho Operations Office Technical Qualification Program and Federal Technical Capability Program Final Report**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Idaho Operations Office (ID) conducted a management self-assessment of the DOE-ID Technical Qualification Program (TQP) and the Federal Technical Capability Program (FTCP) from October 26 thru December 15, 2015 per an approved assessment plan (available in Zeus). The management self-assessment was conducted by the Assistant Manager, Nuclear and Safety Performance (also the Federal Technical Capabilities Panel Agent) and a Facility Representative. The objectives and criteria for this review were derived from the “Assessment of Technical Qualification and Federal Technical Capability Programs,” available on the Federal Technical Capability Program (FTCP) website: <http://energy.gov/ehss/worker-health-safety-policy-guidance-reports/federal-technical-capability-program-ftcp>. This review met the assessment requirements of DOE O 426.1 *Federal Technical Capability* (FTC), Section 4. *REQUIREMENTS*, paragraph b, *FTC Program Implementation*, subparagraph (7) *Self-Assessment*. The review included observations, document reviews, and interviews.

The DOE-ID TQP and FTCP were found to be in compliance with the requirements of the DOE O 426.1. All objectives in the review plan were met. Although one Finding was identified, the programs continue to be effectively implemented to ensure retention of a technically competent workforce providing oversight of DOE-ID’s defense nuclear facilities and activities.

### Strength:

- The TQP Program Manager is actively engaged in all aspects of the program, ensuring effective program implementation.

### Finding:

- A number of Office Facility Specific Qualification Standards (OFSQS) have not been updated at the required periodicity.

### Recommendations for Finding:

- Revise the field office TQP procedure to eliminate the requirement for periodic review of OFSQS; this review and update can be accomplished prior to assignment to personnel (i.e. review and update will be performed on an as-needed basis).

## INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Idaho Operations Office (ID) conducted a management self-assessment of the DOE-ID Technical Qualification Program (TQP) and Federal Technical Capability Program (FTCP) from October 26 thru December 15, 2015. The management self-assessment was conducted by the Assistant Manager, Nuclear and Safety Performance (also the Federal Technical Capabilities Panel Agent) and a Facility Representative. The report format is consistent with that prescribed in the aforementioned FTCP website guidance, and includes an executive summary, introduction, a scope and methodology discussion, and a results section, which includes a summary evaluation of each objective reviewed, as well as an overall conclusion.

## SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives and criteria for this review were derived from the “Assessment of Technical Qualification and Federal Technical Capability Programs,” available on the Federal Technical Capability Program (FTCP) website: <http://energy.gov/ehss/worker-health-safety-policy-guidance-reports/federal-technical-capability-program-ftcp>. This review met the assessment requirements of DOE O 426.1 *Federal Technical Capability* (FTC), Section 4. *REQUIREMENTS*, paragraph b, *FTC Program Implementation*, subparagraph (7) *Self-Assessment*. The review also included a review of the following ID office administrative procedures that implement the TQP:

02.PD.01 (current version), *Idaho Operations Office (ID) Process for Employee Competency*  
02.OD.01 (current version), *Idaho Operations Office (ID) Technical Qualification Program*

These procedures were reviewed for adequacy in implementing the requirements of DOE O 426.1, and were reviewed for their implementation effectiveness. The review included observations, document reviews, and interviews.

## RESULTS

The DOE-ID TQP and FTCP were found to be in compliance with the requirements of the DOE O 426.1. All objectives in the review plan were met. The following provides the results of this review by Objective.

### **Objective 1: DOE-ID line management is actively engaged in the recruitment, selection, development, qualification, and retention of technical employees.**

The review team determined that DOE-ID line management was actively engaged in the recruitment, selection, development, qualification, and retention of technical employees. In almost all cases, recruitment occurs immediately prior to or following the attrition of technical employees. There is very little anticipatory hiring due to the nature of program direction budgets. The review team interviewed a number of management and supervisory personnel and determined recruitment or development programs, such as internships or fellowships, were not used due to either their lack of availability or budgetary constraints. DOE-ID is encouraged to

employ these recruitment and development programs once budgetary conditions improve. Such programs greatly benefit the organization, as evidenced by the high quality of past program participants within the office.

The assessment team conducted a review of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Office-Wide Priorities and Goals. These priorities and goals did not include an emphasis on maintaining the technical competence of the ID workforce. However, during further investigation, the team did find that the DOE-ID Strategic Plan for 2014-2018 included organizational responsibilities and workforce expectations for a highly skilled, trained, and qualified workforce.

DOE-ID uses feedback and improvement mechanisms to improve the TQP. The FY 2014 TQP self-assessment (AST-OS-10/3/2013-58905) demonstrates this value within the organization. When reviewing report 58905, however, this assessment team found that an issue was identified that was not entered into the Pegasus corrective action tracking system:

Several of the current Office/Facility Specific Qualification Standard (OFSQS) are outdated and need to be updated.

Several OFSQSs were reviewed as part of this self-assessment and, again, several OFSQSs were found to be outdated, contrary to the requirements of 02.OD.01, *ID Technical Qualification Program (Finding)*. This is a recurring issue. The team also noted this issue was identified as an Observation during a 2011 assessment. This self-assessment review team recommends the field office TQP procedure, 02.OD.01, be revised to eliminate the requirement for periodic review of OFSQS; this review and update can be accomplished prior to assignment to new personnel (i.e. review and update will be performed on an as-needed basis) (**Recommendation**).

*This objective was met.*

**Objective 2: The DOE-ID Technical Qualification Program clearly identifies and documents the process used to demonstrate employee technical competence.**

DOE-ID TQP is effectively implemented to ensure personnel providing management direction or oversight that could impact the safe operation of a defense nuclear facility participate in the TQP program. However, during this review, a vulnerability was identified where a Senior Technical Safety Manager (STSM) designated position was temporarily vacated for an extended time period and temporarily filled by personnel on a detail basis. At least one of the temporary detail managers had not completed qualification as an STSM, as required by the position, and no compensatory measures were considered nor established. Review of 02.OD.01 revealed adequate guidance for this scenario. Based on the relatively short nature of this detail, the strength of the organization, and recognizing the subordinate supervisors are STSM qualified, no corrective actions are recommended in this case. However, management should ensure compensatory measures are considered during future similar temporary detail situations.

A review of the process used to establish qualifying officials (QO) for the TQP revealed no issues. The QO list was updated annually and appeared to be up to date.

*This objective was met.*

**Criterion 3: Plans and/or procedures are developed and implemented to govern administration of the program.**

DOE-ID primarily uses two procedures to govern TQP implementation:

02.PD.01 (current version), *Idaho Operations Office (ID) Process for Employee Competency*  
02.OD.01 (current version), *Idaho Operations Office (ID) Technical Qualification Program*

These procedures adequately document the process for DOE-ID TQP. Interviews with management and staff revealed an adequate understanding of the procedures. However, the review team did identify multiple non-compliances in the qualification of a TQP candidate during this review. Non-compliances included:

- Oral board membership did not meet requirements (2 members vice 3)
- Oral board members did not use the required oral board form
- Area and overall grades for the oral board were not assigned as required
- Remedial activity was not properly documented
- Exemption was granted on the Office Facility Specific Qualification Record without due consideration as required

This was documented in the corrective action tracking system as a separate issue (ISS-2015.12.15-971643). The number of issues identified in this qualification record and oral board is troubling. The review team recommends additional rigor in the review of completed qualification records by supervisors and the TQP Program Manager.

Minor deficiencies were also identified within the TQP processes and should be corrected when next revised or when convenient:

1. The most recent Safeguards & Security (INFOSEC) qualification card, issued to the candidate over a year ago, was not the correct version. The competencies are the same as the correct revision but some fields are different. The card has been completed and the record is being archived. There is no indication that the TQP process was compromised but the process should have ensured that the correct qualification card was issued and properly filled out. Some of the fields on the qualification record forms reviewed were not filled out properly or left blank. The TQP Record submittal form (rev 0, 10/1/2007) references ETS and an old process for handling records. This should be updated.
2. The TQP Web Page links to a document "[How to Determine if you are a Technical Person and Required to Complete the Technical Qualification Program.](#)" This document refers to DOE M 360.1-1B for the definition of "technical person." The current revision is DOE M 360.1-1C and does not contain this definition. DOE O 426.1, Federal Technical Capability provides a definition of "technical employees" in section 3.a that appears to meet the intent. Managers and employees should reference DOE O 426.1 for the requirements regarding technical employees vice DOE M 360.1-1B or C. This "How to" document should be

evaluated for usefulness and revised or removed.

3. Attachment B to 02.OD.01, for STSM compensatory measures, references an out of date document: “Handbook for Senior Technical Safety Manager Positions.” This reference should be deleted.
4. The table of contents for 02.OD.01 should be reviewed and updated (e.g. there is no section 4.n).

*This objective was met.*

**Objective 4: Competency requirements are clearly defined and consistent with applicable DOE standards for similar industrial occupations.**

Qualification records reviewed demonstrated DOE-ID’s reliance on DOE-wide technical qualification standards for the development of qualification records within the office, as indicated by DOE O 426.1. Subject Matter Experts (SME) were used in the development of qualification records. No deficiencies were identified in this objective.

*This objective was met.*

**Objective 5: The program identifies unique Department- and position-specific work activities and specifies the knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish that work.**

Interviews and document reviews confirmed that qualification competency requirements were adequately matched to unique Department and position specific work activities. Qualification records reviewed demonstrated DOE-ID’s reliance on DOE-wide technical qualification standards for the development of qualification records within the office, as indicated by DOE O 426.1. Subject Matter Experts (SME) were used in the development of qualification records and OFSQSs, ensuring position-specific and office-specific knowledge and skills were identified. No deficiencies were identified in this objective.

*This objective was met.*

**Objective 6: The program is structured to allow credit, where appropriate, for other Technical Qualification Program accomplishments.**

Interviews, document reviews, and direct observations revealed the DOE-ID TQP is effectively structured to allow credit for other TQP qualifications and achievements. Additionally, the equivalency process is effectively used (with the one exception noted previously and documented separately). The DOE-ID program is also structured to allow credit for professional certifications, where appropriate. A review of recent qualification records showed equivalencies for various criteria with the required documentation as part of the qualification record.

*This objective was met.*

**Objective 7: Competency requirements identified as applying throughout the Department are transferable.**

The DOE-ID TQP contains qualification standards for the functional areas applicable to the field office. These standards are derived from approved DOE-wide standards, contain all applicable competencies, and are tailored to specific site requirements. This ensures that completed training and qualification meets DOE-wide standards and is completely transferrable to other sites. Documentation is kept hard-copy in a central storage location, as well as electronically. All documentation and objective evidence is available to employees who may transfer to another DOE site.

The requirement for participation in the TQP is integrated into the hiring process and is included in the appraisal process, when applicable. Positions requiring a TQP include successful completion as a condition for retention. This is reflected in the position description. DOE-ID ensures TQP requirements are documented in vacancy announcements and position descriptions for applicable positions through human resources processes.

*This objective is met.*

**Objective 8: The program contains sufficient rigor to demonstrate compliance to the requirements.**

The DOE-ID TQP is compliant with the requirements of DOE O 426.1 and ensures that personnel completing the technical qualification program are technically competent. The program includes continuing training guidance, consistent with the guidance contained in the technical qualification standards.

Review of TQP procedures 02.OD.01 and 02.PD.01 revealed they do not contain a specific requirement for feedback and periodic evaluation. Based on review of completed assessments, DOE-ID conducts periodic TQP assessments, consistent with the requirements of DOE O 426.1. The review team recommends revising 02.OD.01 to include a requirement for self-assessment of the TQP at least every 4 years as required by DOE O 426.1.

Based on interviews, document reviews, and direct observation, the DOE-ID TQP Program Manager (PM) was found to be actively engaged in all aspects of the program, ensuring effective program implementation (**Strength**). The TQP PM was also actively involved at the DOE complex level in Federal Technical Capability matters.

*This objective is met.*

## CONCLUSION

This review found the DOE-ID TQP and FTCP to be very healthy, mature, and effectively implemented programs. Although some issues were identified, the overall programs are effective in ensuring technical personnel are competent, qualification processes are consistently applied, and DOE-ID technical qualifications are transportable. Below is a summary of the Strength, Finding, and Additional Opportunities for Improvement from this review.

### Strength:

- The TQP Program Manager is actively engaged in all aspects of the program, ensuring effective program implementation.

### Finding:

- A number of Office Facility Specific Qualification Standards (OFSQS) have not been updated at the required periodicity.

### Recommendations for Finding:

- Revise the field office TQP procedure to eliminate the requirement for periodic review of OFSQS; this review and update can be accomplished prior to assignment to personnel (i.e. review and update will be performed on an as-needed basis).

### Additional Opportunities for Improvement:

- Revise 02.OD.01 to include a requirement for self-assessment of the TQP at least every 4 years as required by DOE O 426.1.
- Revise 02.OD.01 to eliminate the requirement for periodic review of OFSQS; this review and update can be accomplished prior to assignment to new personnel (i.e. review and update will be performed on an as-needed basis).
- Revise 02.OD.01 Attachment B to delete references to the out of date document: "Handbook for Senior Technical Safety Manager Positions."
- Review and revise 02.OD.01 Table of Contents (e.g. there is no section 4.n).
- Additional rigor should be implemented in the review of completed qualification records by supervisors and the TQP Program Manager.
- The TQP record submittal form (Rev. 0, 10/1/2007) should be updated to remove references to ETS and an old process for handling records.
- The TQP Web Page links to a document "[How to Determine if you are a Technical Person and Required to Complete the Technical Qualification Program.](#)" This document should be reviewed for efficacy and, at a minimum, revised with current information and references.