

NRC Public Meeting

Vogtle Initial License Exam High Failure Rate



Issue Summary

In March and April of 2011, Vogtle 1 & 2 Hot License Class HL-16 took a utility authored NRC license exam. Seven of ten candidates failed the NRC written exam, one of the seven also failed the operating test.

Driven by a loss of all exam generation experience at a critical time that was not compensated for rapidly enough by site management

Previous NRC pass rate has been consistently high



Root Cause

The root cause for the high NRC exam failure rate was less than adequate oversight and involvement of the HL-16 initial license class by Vogtle 1 & 2 management.

- Unexpected loss of all NRC exam development group experience & supervision due to retirements
- Management underestimated the effect of and did not adequately compensate for the loss of training experience
- Time pressure on exam development led to inadequate validation and inadequate internal and external review and challenge of the NRC exam
- Training management did not fully communicate developing issues with the license examination to site management



Corrective Actions

Exam Development:

- Exam group fully staffed and stabilized
- Recent retired experienced exam developers full time for this exam and for knowledge transfer and mentoring
- Exam team member qualification requires NRC exam writers conference or INPO sponsored exam writer course
- Completed an INPO Assist Visit on the current license class exam development and the development process
- The current NRC exam was independently reviewed by an experienced fleet lead examiner and an independent industry expert



Corrective actions:

Management Oversight

- Monthly line and senior management review process includes performance indicators that contain progress on exam development milestones
- Fleet and site management exam readiness challenges prior to exam submittal and exam administration put in process
- Exam validation scheduling requirements put in process
- The Training Manager now reports directly to the Site VP and clear communication expectations established
- These corrective actions were taken fleet wide



Current Class and Exam

- There are 22 candidates in the current license class and they are performing well
- Practice Audits, actual Audit and the NRC exams were developed with corrective actions in place
- Additional resources, reviews, challenges and validation were utilized on these exams
- The NRC Operating and Written exam review is in progress



Conclusion

- HL-16 license Exam was an anomaly compared with previous NRC pass rate for the last 10 years
- Driven by a loss of all exam generation experience at a critical time that was not compensated for rapidly enough by site management
- Causes have been identified
- Rigorous and sustainable fleet wide corrective actions have been taken and put in process