

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE (MD)

**MD 10.78 NRC NUCLEAR SAFETY PROFESSIONAL DT-17-206
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

Volume 10, Personnel Management
Part 3: Performance Appraisals, Awards, and Training

Approved By: Mark A. Satorius
 Executive Director for Operations

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Issuing Office: Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer

Contact Name: Dafna Silberfeld Servicing Human Resources Specialist
 301-287-0737 (names and phone numbers are listed [here](#))

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Directive and Handbook 10.78 are revised as part of an ongoing effort to improve the agency's management directives (MD) program. This revision updates MD 10.78 to align organizational responsibilities with the most current policies, standards, and procedures of the NRC Nuclear Safety Professional Development Program (NSPDP):

- The Executive Director for Operations has delegated authority to the Chief Human Capital Officer for the responsibilities listed in MD 10.78.
- Organizations may no longer develop or maintain an individual NSPDP.
- Procedural guidance on the NSPDP and training requirements and required forms can now be found on the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer SharePoint site.
- The entry-level grades have changed from GG-5, GG-7, and GG-9 to GG-7, GG-9, and GG-11, respectively.
- Eligibility to apply to the NSPDP has been revised to include individuals whose (1) graduation date is no more than 2 years prior to the opening date of the NSPDP vacancy announcement (and 6 years for certain veterans) or (2) expected graduation date is no more than 1 year after the opening date of the NSPDP vacancy announcement.
- Applications to the NSPDP must be submitted through the agency's automated hiring management system.
- Participants are expected to remain in the position for which they were hired for a minimum of 6 months before going on a rotation.
- Participants are required to complete one 90-day rotation.

In addition, MD 10.78 is retitled from "NRC Intern Program" to "NRC Nuclear Safety Professional Development Program."

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I. POLICY

- A.** It is the policy of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to recruit, train, and retain talented, high-performing individuals holding college and post-secondary degrees in fields supporting the agency's mission and who have the potential for future growth as NRC professional employees. The NRC Nuclear Safety Professional Development Program (NSPDP) is conducted in accordance with Federal law and regulations including Title 5 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 410, "Training"; the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2011, et seq.); the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, as amended (42 U.S.C. 5801, et seq.); and the Government Employees Training Act, 1958, as amended (5 U.S.C. 4101-4118).
- B.** The NRC has established the NSPDP as a means of hiring, developing, deploying, and retaining a high quality, diverse workforce with the skills necessary to carry out the NRC mission.
- C.** With the approval of the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), offices and regions may adapt the training and development elements of the program that combine orientation, technical training, rotational assignments—as well as other learning assignments—to meet the organization's needs and provide participants with tools they may use in future NRC positions.

II. OBJECTIVES

- Attract recent college graduates with strong academic records and undergraduate or graduate degrees in disciplines that support the NRC's mission.
- Provide NRC with a source of highly-qualified, entry-level employees who can fill a wide range of key professional positions within the agency.
- Systematically train and develop these employees so that they reach the full performance level in their positions.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY

A. Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO)

1. Develops and implements the basic policy and program parameters for the NSPDP.
2. Manages the agencywide NSPDP, including monitoring and evaluating the program and providing periodic status reports to the Executive Director for Operations (EDO) about the program.
3. Authorizes exceptions to policies and program parameters contained in this MD.

B. Associate Director for Human Resources Training and Development (Chief Learning Officer), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO)

1. Appoints the NSPDP program manager who is responsible for the day-to-day administration of program activities on an agencywide level, and who provides program review and assistance to supervisors and regional human resource (HR) specialists.
2. Provides technical expertise to offices and regions on training and development of NSPDP participants.
3. Creates training and development programs.
4. Coordinates the development of and provides technical training courses to support applicable professional development programs.
5. Assesses operations and modifies NSPDP activities consistent with agency criteria, when needed, to make them more responsive to office or regional mission requirements and to improve both the quality of staff development and the success of the programs.
6. Evaluates agency program effectiveness and initiates program improvements as appropriate.

C. Associate Director for Human Resources Operations and Policy, Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO)

1. Develops criteria and guidance on human resources issues relating to the NSPDP, including, but not limited to, performance reviews and program removal.
2. Establishes and executes recruitment initiatives for the NSPDP.
3. Provides broad programmatic criteria, technical support, and guidance on the selection process for the NSPDP.

D. Office Directors and Regional Administrators

1. Manage, in cooperation with OCHCO, the NSPDP for their office or region.
2. Provide OCHCO a projection of the number of NSPDP hires and disciplines needed for their office or region.
3. As appropriate, designate office- or region-level NSPDP Senior Executive Service (SES) Champions to provide guidance on office- or region-specific technical training tracks and developmental activities.
4. Develop specific training and technical track requirements for positions in their office or region.
5. Identify technical recruiters to participate in campus-based recruitment efforts.
6. Select and make assignment determinations for participants.
7. Participate in the evaluation of office or regional program effectiveness.
8. Determine the need for an NSPDP participant to gain onsite experience at a licensee facility. The need for this experience will be documented in the employee's Individual Development Plan (IDP) or will be part of the formal inspector qualification program.
9. May delegate any or all of these authorities to lower-level supervisors or official team leaders, unless otherwise expressly stated.

IV. APPLICABILITY

The provisions of this directive and handbook apply to all headquarters and regional personnel who are involved with the NSPDP. Where the provisions of the "Collective Bargaining Agreement Between U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and National Treasury Employees Union" are in conflict with this directive and handbook, the provisions of the agreement govern with reference to bargaining unit employees.

V. HANDBOOK

Detailed guidelines for the administration, program requirements, and procedures of the NSPDP are contained in the handbook to this directive.

VI. REFERENCES

Code of Federal Regulations

5 CFR Part 410, "Training."

Nuclear Regulatory Commission Documents

Collective Bargaining Agreement Between U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and National Treasury Employees Union, November 1, 2009.

Delegation of Authority Memorandum from Executive Director for Operations Mark A. Satorius to Chief Human Capital Officer Miriam L. Cohen, dated February 27, 2014 (ADAMS Accession No. ML14042A435).

Management Directives—

10.1, "Appointments, General Employment Issues, Details, and Position Changes."

10.67, "General Grade Performance Management System."

OCHCO NSPDP SharePoint Site:

<http://portal.nrc.gov/edo/hr/training/nspdp/default.aspx>.

OCHCO Web Site:

<http://www.internal.nrc.gov/HR/>.

United States Code

Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2011, et seq.).

Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, as amended (42 U.S.C. 5801, et seq.).

Government Employees Training Act, 1958, as amended (5 U.S.C. 4101-4118).

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- Applications to the NSPDP must be submitted through the agency's automated hiring management system.
- Participants are expected to remain in the position for which they were hired for a minimum of 6 months before going on a rotation.
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I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This handbook contains core requirements and guidance for the Nuclear Safety Professional Development Program (NSPDP).

II. NUCLEAR SAFETY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (NSPDP) PROVISIONS

A. Qualifications for Becoming a Nuclear Safety Professional Development Program (NSPDP) Participant

1. Education and Experience Requirements

An individual who is eligible to be an NSPDP participant is or will be a college graduate who has or will have the following:

- (a) A bachelor's, a master's, or a doctoral degree;
- (b) At least a 2.95 overall GPA; or a 3.5 GPA in his or her major; and
- (c) No more than 2 years of post-graduate technical work experience related to the area of study (e.g., engineering, science, or mission critical fields).
- (d) The NSPDP is normally limited to positions that have a positive education requirement, i.e., scientific, technical, or professional positions (e.g., engineer or health physicist positions), for which selectees must possess specific education above the high school level. The Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) may approve exceptions to permit the inclusion of other types of positions in the program (e.g., security professionals).

2. Eligibility Requirements

An individual is eligible to apply if both of the following requirements are met:

- (a) The individual's graduation date is no more than 2 years before the opening date of the NSPDP vacancy announcement, or the expected graduation date is no more than 1 year after the opening date of the NSPDP vacancy announcement; and

(b) The individual has no more than 2 years of post-graduate technical work experience related to the area of study (e.g., engineering, science, or mission critical fields).

3. Extended Period of Eligibility for Veterans

A veteran who, due to a military service obligation, was precluded from applying during any portion of the 2-year eligibility period will have a full 2-year period of eligibility upon discharge from active duty. However, the eligibility period may not extend beyond 6 years from the date the individual completed the requirements of an academic course of study.

B. Length of Program

The NSPDP is an 18-month program. Participants receive classroom and on-the-job training, engage in individual study, and complete one 90-day rotational assignment.

C. Entry-Level

A participant enters as a permanent Federal employee at the General Grade (GG) 7, GG-9, or GG-11 level, depending on his or her educational level and work experience.

D. Ceiling

An NSPDP position is charged against an office's or region's full-time equivalent (FTE) and salaries and benefits ceiling.

E. Recruitment

1. The NSPDP is an entry-level recruitment and development program that places participants into U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission organizations to fill a specific, identified role important to the mission of the NRC. See Section II.A of this handbook for NSPDP qualifications and eligibility.
2. OCHCO conducts the recruitment efforts in collaboration with offices and regions in support of the NSPDP hiring goals. The NSPDP vacancy is advertised publicly through NRC and appropriate Governmentwide recruiting Web sites, and campus recruitment efforts take place during the vacancy posting period.
3. To ensure a diverse and qualified candidate pool, campus recruitment efforts include minority serving institutions and strive to ensure diversity in the recruitment teams.
4. The recruitment efforts focus on professional academic disciplines pertinent to an office's or region's NSPDP hiring need.

5. As appropriate, recruitment efforts may also be directed to non-academic sources (e.g., veterans).

F. Selection

1. An individual interested in being considered for the NSPDP must apply using the NRC automated hiring system.
2. The factors the NRC considers when assessing and evaluating an NSPDP application include grade point average, work experience, honors and awards, and participation and leadership positions in professional societies and student organizations. An applicant ranked as best qualified may be invited to visit NRC headquarters or the regional offices for interviews.
3. Merit staffing rules, including those related to veterans' preference, apply.

G. Nuclear Safety Professional Development Program (NSPDP) Positions

An NSPDP participant is assigned to an office and placed in an entry-level position specifically tailored to provide broad developmental training and specialized technical training appropriate to his or her occupation. The hiring office will coordinate assignments, evaluate performance, and recommend the permanent duty assignment, if not already determined, by the completion of the training.

III. NUCLEAR SAFETY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (NSPDP) ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the organizational responsibilities detailed in this directive, the following positions are instrumental to the program's administration.

A. Nuclear Safety Professional Development Program (NSPDP) Program Manager

1. The NSPDP Program Manager develops and oversees all NRC NSPDP program components across the agency.
2. The NSPDP Program Manager will—
 - (a) Evaluate the program components and recommend needed changes. Proposed changes will be provided for review to the Chief Learning Officer, OCHCO.
 - (b) Develop and maintain NSPDP information on the OCHCO Web site (<http://www.internal.nrc.gov/HR/>), including a core training track and program components.
 - (c) Meet, as required or requested, with office directors, regional administrators, and supervisors regarding program status, issues, and improvements.

- (d) Meet monthly with the NSPDP participants as a group or individually to discuss the program and their participation.
- (e) In collaboration with the NSPDP participant's supervisor, ensure that training and development for each participant is tracked and records are maintained.
- (f) Monitor completion of program requirements by NSPDP participants from all offices and regions.
- (g) Obtain feedback from NSPDP participants upon completion of the program.
- (h) Represent the NRC NSPDP when communicating with other Federal agencies.
- (i) Facilitate identification of and sharing information about available rotational assignments.

B. Senior Executive Service (SES) Office Champion

As appropriate, each office assigns an SES or management-level NSPDP Office Champion to assist with and advise on specific program issues and related training in collaboration with the NSPDP Program Manager.

C. Supervisor

1. The supervisor has an important role in the career development of an NSPDP participant. The supervisor monitors the participant's progress.
2. The supervisor—
 - (a) Provides an orientation so the participant becomes fully acquainted with the work of the NRC.
 - (b) Provides meaningful work assignments and a work environment that furthers the participant's ability to meet the program objectives and training requirements.
 - (c) Periodically reviews the Individual Development Plan (IDP) with the participant to ensure that the IDP remains consistent with the experience and competencies gained during developmental assignments.
 - (d) Meets regularly with the participant to provide feedback on the participant's performance, monitor progress, and evaluate work performed.
 - (e) Participates in the development of or provides recommendations for each participant's rotational assignment and training schedule.
 - (f) Establishes and explains routine administrative procedures related to matters like hours of work and time and attendance reporting.

- (g) Collaborates with the SES-level NSPDP Office Champion, as appropriate.
- (h) Assists with selection of a mentor for the participant and, as necessary, consults with the participant's mentor to provide feedback and ensure that the participant's training and development program is on track.
- (i) Initiates promotion, termination, or other personnel actions and coordinates with OCHCO or regional human resources staff, as appropriate.
- (j) Provides suggestions for program improvement to the NSPDP Program Manager.

D. Rotational Supervisor

1. The participant's supervisor during a rotational or special developmental assignment is responsible for providing a work environment that furthers the objectives of the program.
2. The rotational supervisor—
 - (a) Provides meaningful work assignments to address the specific training described in a participant's approved IDP.
 - (b) Establishes a clear mutual understanding of the developmental goals and objectives of the assignment.
 - (c) Establishes routine administrative procedures related to matters like hours of work and time and attendance reporting.
 - (d) Monitors progress, evaluates and provides feedback on work performed during the rotation, and provides input to the participant's supervisor to be included in the annual appraisal.
 - (e) Suggests program improvements to the NSPDP Program Manager.

E. Mentor

1. A key element in the success of the NSPDP is mentoring. An NSPDP mentor assumes the role of sponsor, teacher, and coach. A mentor is typically competent in two or more functions or technical areas of the agency, and displays proficiency in the skills needed by the participant. Each participant must have a designated mentor who is a senior staff member, if possible, at the SES level.
2. The mentor—
 - (a) Helps participants understand the agency mission, structure, and culture.

- (b) Helps participants identify and develop competencies and strengths that enable them to contribute successfully to the agency mission.
- (c) Provides specific guidance and suggestions for training for the participant, including rotational and developmental assignments proposed for the participant's IDP.
- (d) Serves as a role model and provides continual encouragement to the participant.
- (e) Commits to employee development.
- (f) Demonstrates broad experience in high level management positions to ensure that the participant's developmental needs are fully supported.
- (g) Commits time for discussions with the participant, and
- (h) Exhibits interpersonal skills that promote openness, candor, and a willingness to share concerns, provides constructive feedback, and possesses the ability to assess developmental needs.

F. Participant

1. An NSPDP participant is, first and foremost, a full-time NRC employee who has an obligation to perform the work necessary to fulfill the mission of the organization at a "fully successful" level or higher.
2. The NSPDP participant responsibilities are to:
 - (a) Satisfactorily complete all work assignments and training.
 - (b) Attend and participate in office/regional meetings and agency NSPDP meetings and activities.
 - (c) Enhance his or her skills and knowledge through job experience, training, and rotational and other developmental assignments to the best of his or her ability. This includes participating in the development and implementation of the elements of the IDP, as well as notifying the supervisor and mentor if there is difficulty in executing the plan at any point.
 - (d) Provide feedback regarding program changes, improvements, or enhancements to the NSPDP Program Manager.
 - (e) Complete an evaluation upon graduating the program.

IV. NUCLEAR SAFETY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (NSPDP) DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

A. Individual Development Plan (IDP)

1. Within the first 6 months of employment, each NSPDP participant in conjunction with his or her supervisor and mentor should prepare an IDP specifying the appropriate mix of reading, orientation, visits, developmental assignments, and informal and formal training assignments, as appropriate, for the participant office's requirements and the agency NSPDP requirements.
2. The IDP should be reviewed periodically by the participant and his or her supervisor and mentor to ensure that it remains consistent with the experience and competencies gained during developmental assignments. A complete review should be made at the end of the first year and any needed adjustments should be made at that time and remain in place for the duration of the training program. The IDP will serve as the basis for developing individual performance or training plans for specific assignments, rotational tours, etc.

B. Education and Training

The participant's supervisor should assign training according to the participant's job function so that the participant is prepared for the work of the position. Each participant is required to complete core training and training specified in the participant's IDP (see Section III of this handbook). When assigning training, supervisors should ensure that:

1. The office's technical training track requirements do not duplicate NSPDP core requirements.
2. Each participant's IDP specifies the type and duration of education and training to be covered as part of the program. Specific assignments described in the IDP will be based on the education and experience of each participant.
3. Education and training activities are short-term and directly job-related. Examples are seminars, conferences, reading assignments, specialized technical training, and on-the-job training to understand NRC's operations and mission, safety issues, and specialized topics in the participant's career field.

C. Core Training

The OCHCO Web site (<http://www.internal.nrc.gov/HR/>) provides a core training track and program components, including a listing of NSPDP core classes. Core training applies to all NSPDP participants regardless of the office or region in which they work.

D. Technical Training

The NSPDP endeavors to provide challenging professional technical assignments with both a broad and specialized perspective of NRC operations. Technical training curricula are specified by the participant's hiring office and are defined as any training related to the NSPDP participant's position. An office subject matter expert is encouraged to identify specific training to develop a participant's skills in his or her technical job function.

E. Rotational Assignments

A rotational assignment allows the participant to gain a broader perspective of the role of the NRC in the regulatory process. A participant should remain in the position for which he or she was hired for a minimum of 6 months before participating in a rotation.

1. A rotational assignment is required and is expected to reflect strategic connections to the specific role the participant was hired to fill. The primary goal of a rotation is to improve the participant's understanding of which, and how, other parts of the NRC contribute to the participant's support of the agency's mission. A rotation generally has a duration of 3 months and will be documented in the IDP.
2. A rotational assignment may be made to allow the participant to obtain onsite experience at a licensee facility.
3. Rotations to licensee facilities, regional rotations for headquarters participants, and headquarters rotations for regional participants are not guaranteed and are subject to budgetary constraints.

V. APPRAISALS AND EVALUATIONS

A. Performance Management

A participant receives a performance plan, feedback, mid-year reviews and appraisals in accordance with the guidelines set in Management Directive (MD) 10.67, "General Grade Performance Management System," and the "Collective Bargaining Agreement Between U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and National Treasury Employees Union," as appropriate.

B. Ongoing Evaluation

1. The supervisor will monitor and evaluate the participant's progress in the training program, and recommend the individual's retention or termination from the program. Typically, the supervisor will consider progress at every 6 months of participation in the program.

2. The participant must receive a “fully successful” or higher rating of record and recommendation from all sources in order to remain in the program. Actions based on failure to satisfactorily complete the trial period must follow applicable NRC procedures. These issues should be addressed by the employee’s supervisor and the OCHCO Employee and Labor Relations Branch.
3. With the advice and approval of OCHCO, an office or participant may request placement in a non-NSPDP position (e.g., for personal reasons or because of interest in a career change).

C. Promotion

NSPDP participants are normally hired into career ladder positions with a full performance level of GG-13. They receive consideration for career ladder promotions in accordance with MD 10.1, “Appointments, General Employment Issues, Details, and Position Changes,” and the Collective Bargaining Agreement, as appropriate.

VI. PROGRAM COMPLETION

A. Certificate of Completion

At the completion of the program, the NSPDP Program Manager will verify that the participant has met the NSPDP requirements and will notify the supervisor. A certificate of completion will be presented to the NSPDP participant.

B. Extension to the Standard Program Period

Continuation in the NSPDP for a specified time period beyond the standard 18-month period may be allowed if the participant has not completed the program requirements, subject to the approval of OCHCO and the supervisor. The supervisor will be informed by the NSPDP Program Manager of any extensions. Under no circumstances will a participant remain in the NSPDP indefinitely.

VII. NUCLEAR SAFETY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (NSPDP) FORMS

NSPDP forms are available on the OCHCO SharePoint site (<http://portal.nrc.gov/edo/hr/training/nspdp/default.aspx>).