



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Number	Date	Organization
NTED 2020-01	3/12/2020	TPP

National Training and Education Division Course Review

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the National Training and Education Division (NTED) Headquarters (HQ), Training Partner Program (TPP) is to provide guidance to NTED TPP staff, training partners, and the contractor regarding the process for course reviews for new courses and existing courses due for recertification.

II. Background

NTED TPP manages sponsored training and education through grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Interagency Agreements. NTED applies the Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation model of instructional systems design in the development of curricula in a wide range of all-hazards subject matter developed to train and educate first responders, emergency managers, and elected and appointed officials.

III. Scope

This document describes the activities and interactions between and among NTED HQ TPP staff, NTED TPP's training partners, and contract support team in completing course reviews of NTED TPP sponsored all-hazards training courses, including the following requirements:

- Course Reviews (Onsite, Desk, and Online Reviews) – to ensure the content and subject matter of the course materials is accurate, appropriate, current, and relevant; and to ensure it meets the stated learning objectives
- NIMS Review – to ensure the content and subject matter of the course materials is accurate, appropriateness, current, relevant, and consistent with NIMS
- Course Review Boards – convened when necessary to build consensus on issues of concern identified during course review
- Testing and Verification for Section 508 Compliance – to ensure course materials and online course content/delivery meet accessibility standards

IV. Authority

Section 1204 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, (Pub. L. No. 110-53), (6 U.S.C. § 1102) Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2016 (Pub. L. No. 114-113)

V. Definitions

- NTED-Sponsored Courses - Those courses or programs developed for and/or delivered by institutions and organizations funded directly by NTED
- Course Materials - Any combination of the following materials: course design documents, storyboards, examinations, handouts, guides/manuals (instructor and student), slide presentations (e.g., PowerPoint) program of instruction, storyboards, visual presentations, voice-over scripts, and other relevant materials specifically for the purpose of ensuring safe delivery of the subject matter
 - Please Note: course materials must be provided in general use mediums, e.g., Microsoft Office products, Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF), and online content must be compatible with common Internet web browsers.
- Course Review - A complete review of curriculum to ensure the content and subject matter of the course materials is accurate, appropriate, current, and relevant to ensure it meets the stated learning objectives within a well-crafted course
- Course Review Board - A meeting (in-person, online, or teleconference) used to resolve differences when the Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and the Training Partner do not agree on issues related to course development and delivery observed by the independent third-party SMEs that conducted the detailed review of the course materials
- Desk Reviews - Carried out by one to three SMEs retained for the task by the Contractor; ensures the content and subject matter of the course materials is accurate, appropriate, current, and relevant to meets the stated learning objectives
- Onsite Reviews - Carried out by one to three SMEs retained for the task by the Contractor, at a location selected by the Training Partner and TPP Program Manager (PM); ensures the content and subject matter of the course materials is accurate, appropriate, current, and relevant to meet the stated learning objectives
 - Onsite reviews are typically conducted as part of the pilot offering of a traditional classroom course and again as part of the recertification process. The Contractor coordinates the logistical support to ensure the SME(s) attend and observe the delivery of pilot courses.
- NIMS Reviews - Carried out by the Contractor's NIMS SME to objectively evaluate whether NTED-funded courses are consistent with the concepts, terms, wording, and requirements of NIMS
 - A NIMS Review of training course materials should be conducted for consistency—not compliance—with NIMS. Consistency is defined as: (1) in agreement with, (2) holding to the same principles and practices and (3) not contradictory to. The reviews are similar to a Desk Review in that a designated consultant reviewer examines the course materials only and

does not attend a training session at which the course is delivered. Only one NIMS reviewer is assigned to each course.

VI. Training Partner Responsibilities

- a. The Training Partner will submit a Task Order request to the TPP PM when a course is ready to be reviewed by SME(s) that work for the Contractor.
 - i. A Task Order request should not be submitted if course materials will not be ready within 10 days.
- b. When directed by the TPP PM, the Training Partner will submit the course materials for review to the Contractor.
 - i. Course materials should be submitted electronically, e.g., email or FTP.
- c. The Training Partner receives, and reviews compiled comments from the Contractor PM.
- d. Once comments are received, the Training Partner must decide whether to accept the recommendations.
 - i. If clarification on comments or recommendations is needed, the Training Partner will coordinate with the TPP PM to seek clarification from the SME(s) either via email or through a teleconference.
 - ii. If substantial disagreements regarding the course review comments and recommendations still exist after the clarification period, a Course Review Board may be convened.
- e. When recommendations are accepted, the Training Partner will make the necessary revisions to the course materials.
- f. Once course materials are finalized, the Training Partner will notify the TPP PM.

VII. TPP Program Manager Responsibilities

- a. The TPP PM will initiate a Task Order request with the NTED COR.
 - i. The NTED COR issues Task Orders to the Contractor PM via email.
- b. Upon receipt of SME recommendations from the Contractor, the TPP PM will review SME qualifications and approve or deny the recommended SME(s) and notify the Contractor PM via email.
- c. The TPP PM receives and reviews compiled comments from the Contractor PM.
 - i. If the Training Partner requires clarification on comments or recommendations, the TPP PM will work with the Contractor to answer questions; this can be done through email or through a teleconference.
 - ii. If substantial disagreements regarding the course review comments and recommendations still exist after the clarifications period, the TPP PM will coordinate with the Contractor to convene a Course Review Board.
- d. Once notified by the Training Partner that course materials are finalized, the TPP PM will direct the Contractor to initiate the Section 508 review.

VIII. Contractor Responsibilities

- a. The contractor receives the Task Order from the NTED COR.
 - i. Task Orders are entered and tracked into a tracking sheet.

- b. Based on the requirements outlined the Task Order, the Contractor PM will identify qualified SME(s) and submit their qualifications to the TPP PM via email.
 - i Note: For new courses being added to the [National Preparedness Catalog](#), three (3) SMEs are required. For courses that are reviewed for recertification or periodic reviews the TPP PM will identify the number of SMEs required. Additionally, all courses receive a NIMS review which may be completed by the Contractor PM or another SME.
- c. The Contractor PM receives course materials from the Training Partner, inventories the materials, and acknowledges receipt via email.
- d. The Contractor prepares task documents for each SME. Once prepared, the Contractor PM sends course materials and task documents to the SME(s) electronically.
 - i If travel is required for the Task Order, the Contractor will coordinate with the SME(s) to make appropriate arrangements for travel.
 - ii The NIMS SME does not attend courses on site, rather, all NIMS reviews are conducted as desk reviews.
- e. The Contractor's NIMS SME conducts a NIMS Review and completes an NTED NIMS Review Report which indicates that: 1) the Course is consistent with NIMS, 2) the Course is NOT consistent with NIMS, or 3) NIMS is Not Applicable to the course. This report is submitted along with the compiled comments. The task order initially assigned to the Course Review is valid for the initial and a follow-up NIMS Review. The Training Partner will be required to submit a request for third NIMS Review if necessary.
 - i If a course is rated "Course is consistent with NIMS" the Training Partner will retain the report and submit it in the final certification package.
 - ii If a course is rated "Not Applicable, course does not need to address NIMS" the Training Partner will retain the report and submit it in the final certification package.
 - iii If a course is rated "Course is NOT consistent with NIMS" the Training Partner will be required to correct the inconsistent course material in accordance with the recommendations outlined in the NIMS Review Report and re-submit the course for second NIMS Review.
- f. The Contractor PM receives comments from the SME(s); once all comments for the Task Order have been received, the Contractor compiles them and submits them via email to the TPP PM and the Training Partner
- g. The Contractor PM will arrange to have any questions from the Training Partner or TPP PM answered; this may involve contacting SMEs to clarify or expand on their comments.
 - i If the Training Partner has questions or concerns about comments and recommendations a Course Review Board can be held. A Course Review Board is generally convened electronically using a virtual meeting platform, and is attended by the Contractor PM, Training Partner representatives, the TPP PM, and required SME(s).

- h. Once instructed by the TPP PM, the Contractor begins the process for Testing and Verification for Section 508 Compliance. This process is described in detail in SOP NTED 2016-15, National Training and Education Division Testing and Verification for Section 508 Compliance.

IX. Subject Matter Expert Responsibilities

- i. The SME(s) receives course materials and task documents from the Contractor PM.
- j. The SME(s) reviews the course.
 - i. If the Task Order is for a Desk Review, the SME(s) reviews the materials and records their comments and recommendations.
 - ii. If the Task Order is for an On-Site Review, the SME(s) will attend the course in person and record their comments and recommendations.
 - iii. The NIMS SME completes the NIMS review and records appropriate comments and recommendations.
- k. Once their review is complete, the SME(s) returns their comments to the Contractor PM.
- l. Provide clarification regarding comments and/or recommendations, if needed.
- m. Attend a Course Review Board, if needed.

X. Timeline

- a. The table below shows the timeframes associated with each step of the process. Times are given in business days.

	Desk/Online Review	Course Delivery/Instructor Audit	Onsite Review
Contractor receives task order and identifies/submitS SME resumes to TPP PM	5	5	10
TPP PM evaluates/approves SME(s)	5	5	7
Contractor submits request for course materials to TP	5	5	5
TP provides Contractor the course materials	14	14	21
Contractor provides course materials to SME(s)	5	5	5
SME(s) reviews course materials and submits comments to Contractor PM*	14-18	14-18	21-25
Contractor conducts NIMS review	**	**	**
Contractor compiles SME review comments and NIMS review results and submits to TPP PM and TP	5	5	5
TP reviews and accepts/rejects comments, revises course materials, and submits to TPP PM	30	30	30
<i>If materials are not received after 30 days, Contractor sends out a reminder to TP and TPP PM to submit revised course materials to TPP PM and ISD for them to complete their reviews</i>	-	-	-
TPP PM and ISD complete review and direct TP to submit course materials for Section 508 review	14	14	14
Contractor conducts Section 508 review and provides results to TPP PM and TP; when results indicate course materials are compliant, Contractor forwards test results to FEMA Section 508 Coordinator for concurrence***	30	30	30
FEMA Section 508 Coordinator reviews test results for concurrence and issues an Approved Compliance Determination Form (CDF) for compliant courses	7	7	7

TPP PM

Training Partner

Contractor

FEMA Section 508 Coordinator

*The amount of time required for this step will vary depending on the length of the course (e.g., 14 days for a 1-day course, 18 days for a 5-day course)

**NIMS review occurs in parallel with SME review

***See Testing and Verification for Section 508 Compliance, SOP NTED 2016-15

XI. Process Flow Diagram

