NFPA 1000

Standard for

Fire Service Professional Qualifications Accreditation and

Certification Systems

2006 Edition

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This edition of NFPA 1000, *Standard for Fire Service Professional Qualifications Accreditation and Certification Systems*, was prepared by the Technical Committee on Accreditation and Certification to Fire Service Professional Qualifications, released by the Technical Correlating Committee on Professional Qualifications, and acted on by NFPA at its June Association Technical Meeting held June 6–10, 2005, in Las Vegas, NV. It was issued by the Standards Council on July 29, 2005, with an effective date of August 18, 2005, and supersedes all previous editions.

This edition of NFPA 1000 was approved as an American National Standard on August 18, 2005.

Origin and Development of NFPA 1000

In 1990 the Professional Qualifications Correlating Committee recommended that the Association establish a project related to fire service certification and accreditation programs. The project was approved at the July 1990 meeting of the NFPA Standards Council. As a result of this action, a technical committee was named to develop procedures for the accreditation of agencies involved in certification, based on the NFPA Professional Qualifications Standards, and procedures for the certification of individuals to those standards.

The Technical Committee on Accreditation and Certification to Fire Service Professional Qualifications met for the first time in October 1991 and regularly during 1992 and 1993 to develop this document. The committee reviewed materials related to accreditation and certification programs of non-fire service organizations and, where possible, used nationally accepted requirements from these programs as the basis for this document. The committee's objective was to develop requirements that could be used to evaluate accreditation and certification systems that use NFPA Professional Qualifications Standards.

In the 2000 edition of this document, the committee added provisions for the accrediting of

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nonengineering, fire-related, academic, degree-granting programs offered by institutions of higher education.

In the 2006 edition of this document, the committee has added provisions to recognize changing methodologies used for evaluations for both accreditation and certification agencies. Changes were made to bring the document into conformance with the *Manual of Style for NFPA Technical Committee Documents*.

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Frank E. Florence, NFPA Staff Liaison

This list represents the membership at the time the Committee was balloted on the final text of this edition. Since that time, changes in the membership may have occurred. A key to classifications is found at the back of the document.

NOTE: Membership on a committee shall not in and of itself constitute an endorsement of the Association or any document developed by the committee on which the member serves.

Committee Scope: This Committee shall have primary responsibility for the management of the NFPA Professional Qualifications Project and documents related to professional qualifications for fire service, public safety, and related personnel.

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NOTE: Membership on a committee shall not in and of itself constitute an endorsement of the Association or any document developed by the committee on which the member serves.

Committee Scope: This Committee shall have primary responsibility for documents on (1) procedures for fire service personnel certification to NFPA Professional Fire Service Qualifications Standards or other standards adopted by the authority having jurisdiction, and (2) procedures for accrediting national, state, provincial, and local jurisdictions as certifying entities for NFPA Professional Fire Service Qualifications Standards or other standards adopted by the authority having jurisdiction. The Committee shall also have primary responsibility for documents on procedures for accrediting nonengineering, fire-related, academic, degree-granting programs offered by institutions of post-secondary education.

NFPA 1000
Standard for
Fire Service Professional Qualifications Accreditation and Certification Systems
2006 Edition

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NOTICE: An asterisk (*) following the number or letter designating a paragraph indicates that explanatory material on the paragraph can be found in Annex A.

Information on referenced publications can be found in Chapter 2 and Annex C.

Chapter 1 Administration

1.1 Scope.

This standard establishes the minimum criteria for the following:

(1) Accrediting bodies

(2) Assessment and validation of the process used to certify fire and related emergency response personnel to professional qualifications standards

(3) Nonengineering, fire-related, academic, degree-granting programs offered by institutions of higher education

1.2 Purpose.

1.2.1 The purpose of this standard is to establish criteria and requirements applicable to the following:

(1) Organizations providing accreditation to entities certifying fire and related emergency response personnel and institutions of higher education granting degrees for nonengineering, fire-related, academic programs

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(2) Entities certifying fire and related emergency response personnel as having met or complied with a recognized national standard

(3) Nonengineering, fire-related, academic, degree-granting programs offered by institutions of higher education

1.2.2 It is not the intent of this standard to conflict with the statutory requirements of any jurisdiction.

1.3 Application.

1.3.1* Organizations that accredit certifying entities or that certify individuals to fire service professional qualifications standards or that accredit nonengineering, fire-related, academic, degree-granting programs offered by institutions of higher education shall meet the requirements of this standard.

1.3.2 Accrediting bodies shall meet the requirements of Chapter 4.

1.3.3 Certifying entities shall meet the requirements of Chapter 5.

1.3.4 Fire-related, academic, degree-granting programs offered by institutions of higher education shall meet the requirements of Chapter 6.

1.3.5 Accreditation of a certifying entity shall be, at a minimum, based on the process described in Section 4.2 and Chapter 5.

1.3.6 Accreditation of a degree-granting entity shall be, at a minimum, based on the process described in Section 4.3 and Chapter 6.

Chapter 2 Referenced Publications

2.1 General.

The documents or portions thereof listed in this chapter are referenced within this standard and shall be considered part of the requirements of this document.

2.2 NFPA Publication.

National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169-7471.

NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program,* 2002 edition.

2.3 Other Publication.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition, Merriam-Webster, Inc., Springfield, MA, 2003.

2.4 References for Extracts in Mandatory Sections. (Reserved)

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Chapter 3 Definitions

3.1 General.

The definitions contained in this chapter shall apply to the terms used in this standard. Where terms are not defined in this chapter or within another chapter, they shall be defined using their ordinarily accepted meanings within the context in which they are used. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary,* 11th edition, shall be the source for the ordinarily accepted meaning.

3.2 NFPA Official Definitions.

3.2.1* **Approved.** Acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction.

3.2.2* **Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).** An organization, office, or individual responsible for enforcing the requirements of a code or standard, or for approving equipment, materials, an installation, or a procedure.

3.2.3 Shall. Indicates a mandatory requirement.

3.2.4 Should. Indicates a recommendation or that which is advised but not required.

3.2.5 Standard. A document, the main text of which contains only mandatory provisions using the word "shall" to indicate requirements and which is in a form generally suitable for mandatory reference by another standard or code or for adoption into law. Nonmandatory provisions shall be located in an appendix or annex, footnote, or fine-print note and are not to be considered a part of the requirements of a standard.

3.3 General Definitions.

3.3.1 Accredit. To give official authorization to or to approve a process or procedure to recognize as conforming to specific criteria, and to recognize an entity as maintaining standards appropriate to the provision of its services.

3.3.2 Accrediting Body. A voluntary, nongovernmental association that administers accrediting procedures for entities that certify individuals to fire service professional qualifications standards, or programs granting degrees in nonengineering fire/emergency services–related fields.

3.3.3 Certification. An authoritative attestment; specifically, the issuance of a document that states that an individual has demonstrated the knowledge and skills necessary to function in a particular fire service professional field.

3.3.4 Certifying Entity. An organization that is accredited to award certification to individuals.

3.3.5 Degree. A formal recognition of completion of a prescribed program of study at the postsecondary level.

3.3.6 Degree-Granting Entity. An accredited institution of postsecondary education that is

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authorized to award degrees.

3.3.7 Job Performance Requirement (JPR). A written statement that describes a specific job task, lists the items necessary to complete the task, and defines measurable or observable outcomes and evaluation areas for the specific task.

3.3.8* **Simulation.** The repeatable act of carrying out a job performance requirement in a safe environment that reproduces actual job performance conditions to the fullest possible extent.

Chapter 4 Accrediting Body Requirements

4.1 General.

4.1.1* The accrediting body shall be independent of direct governmental control and shall have sole responsibility for the final decision on the accreditation of a certifying entity or degree-granting entity.

4.1.2 The accrediting body shall not be a certifying entity or the standards-making body for the standard(s) for which accreditation or certification is being offered and shall document policies and procedures to achieve compliance with this requirement.

(A) Accredition shall be conducted objectively and independently.

(B) Care shall be taken to avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest.

4.1.3 The accrediting body shall conduct accreditation on a multiple state/provincial/territorial, national, or international basis.

4.1.4* The accrediting body shall evaluate for accreditation the certification processes for fire and related emergency response personnel as requested by the certifying entity and as defined by the following:

(1) NFPA professional qualifications standards or other NFPA standards related to the competence of emergency responders

(2) Other standards adopted by the authority having jurisdiction for non-U.S. certifying entities

4.1.5 The accrediting body shall evaluate for accreditation the nonengineering, fire-related, academic, degree-granting programs offered by institutions of higher education.

4.1.6* The accrediting body shall evaluate for accreditation entities that are empowered to operate and that confer certification to fire and related emergency response personnel or that award degrees.

4.1.7 The accrediting body shall develop and maintain public documents that describe the accreditation process.

(A) Documents describing the accreditation process shall include, at a minimum, the scope,

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evaluative criteria, and procedures, including the following:

(1) Applications

(2) Self-study

(3) Granting

(4) Withdrawing

(5) Revoking or suspending

(6) Appealing decisions

(7) Responding to public inquiries

(8) Term of accreditation

(B) The accrediting body shall make public a current listing of the accreditation status of all institutions or programs with which it is affiliated.

4.1.8 The accrediting body shall have public representation in its evaluation, policy, and decision-making processes.

(A) The accrediting body shall include individuals who are not educators in, or members of, the profession for which students are being prepared and who are not in any way related to the institutions or programs being evaluated.

(B) Accrediting bodies shall include representation of the users of the accreditation system.

4.1.9 The accrediting body shall have the resources necessary to implement and maintain the accrediting process as described in this standard.

4.2 Accreditation Process for Certifying Entities.

4.2.1 Authority. The accrediting body shall be independent of direct governmental control and shall have sole responsibility for the final decision on the accreditation of a certifying entity.

4.2.2 Criteria. Accrediting bodies shall utilize evaluative criteria and processes that judge the following:

(1)* Appropriateness of the applicant program's mission

(2) Adequacy of resources and organization to meet its mission

(3) Outcomes that indicate that the mission is met

(4) Reasonable assurance of the continued meeting of the mission

4.2.3 Timing.

(A) The accrediting body shall evaluate an applicant only at the invitation of the party responsible for the program.

(B) The accrediting body shall have the right to initiate a review of the accreditation status

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of an accredited certifying entity at any time.

4.2.4* Term.

(A) Accreditation shall not be permanent.

(B) The accrediting body shall develop and maintain policies regarding the term for which accreditation is granted and the periodic re-evaluation of programs that it accredits.

4.2.5 Appeals.

(A) The accrediting body shall establish policies and procedures for appealing those decisions refusing an application for accreditation or terminating accreditation of a program.

(B) The accrediting body shall maintain the application or accreditation status of the program until completion of the appeal process.

4.2.6* Change in Scope. The accrediting body shall develop and maintain policies and procedures that address changes in the scope of certifying activities by an accredited certifying entity.

4.2.7 Accreditation Procedures. The steps in the initial accreditation process and subsequent re-accreditation(s) shall consist, at a minimum, of the following:

(1) Self-analysis of the applicant's program

(2) Written report of the results of the self-analysis

(3) Review of the report by the accrediting body

(4) Site visitation by the accrediting body to examine the applicant's certification system in relation to the criteria for accreditation established by the accrediting body

(5) Written preliminary report to the applicant by the accrediting body concerning the status of the application

(6) Opportunity and a reasonable period for the applicant to comment on the preliminary report before final action is taken relative to the accreditation status

(7) Final report and written decision regarding the application and accreditation status

(A) The accrediting body shall develop, maintain, and furnish to all applicants statements of the topics to be contained in the self-analysis required in 4.2.7(1).

(B) The accrediting body shall develop, maintain, and furnish to all applicants statements of the procedures to be used in the site visitation required in 4.2.7(4).

(C) The accrediting body shall develop and maintain policies for the selection, training, and evaluation of personnel who conduct the site visitation required in 4.2.7(4).

4.2.8 Withdrawal of Application. The accrediting body shall permit an applicant to withdraw an application for accreditation at any time before a final decision is made on that application.

4.3 Accreditation Process for Degree-Granting Entities.

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4.3.1* **Authority.** The accrediting body shall be independent of direct governmental control and shall have sole responsibility for the final decision on the accreditation of a degree-granting entity.

4.3.2 Criteria. Accrediting bodies shall utilize evaluative criteria and processes that judge the following:

(1) Appropriateness of the applicant program's mission

(2) Adequacy of resources and organization to meet its mission

(3) Outcomes that indicate that the mission is met

(4) Reasonable assurance of the continued meeting of the mission

4.3.3 Review Status. The accrediting body shall have the right to initiate a review of the accreditation status of an accredited degree-granting entity at any time.

4.3.4 Term.

(A) Accreditation shall not be permanent.

(B) The accrediting body shall develop and maintain policies regarding the term for which accreditation is granted and the periodic re-evaluation of programs that it accredits.

(C) The period of accreditation shall not be longer than the time elapsing between general institutional accreditations.

4.3.5 Appeals.

(A) The accrediting body shall establish policies and procedures for appealing those decisions that refuse an application for accreditation or that terminate accreditation of a program.

(B) The accrediting body shall maintain the application or accreditation status of the program until completion of the appeal process.

4.3.6* **Change in Scope.** The accrediting body shall develop and maintain policies and procedures that address changes in the scope of degree-granting activities by an accredited degree-granting entity.

4.3.7 Accreditation Procedures. The steps in the initial accreditation process and subsequent re-accreditation(s) shall consist, at a minimum, of the following:

(1)* Demonstration by the applicant's institution that it is generally accredited as a postsecondary, academic, degree-granting institution

(2) Self-analysis of the applicant's program

(3) Written report of the results of the self-analysis

(4) Review of the report by the accrediting body

(5) Site visitation by the accrediting body to examine the applicant's degree-granting system in relation to the criteria for accreditation established by the accrediting body

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(6) Written preliminary report to the applicant by the accrediting body concerning the status of the application

(7) Opportunity and a reasonable period for the applicant to comment on the preliminary report before final action is taken relative to the accreditation status

(8) Final report and written decision regarding the application and accreditation status

(A) The accrediting body shall develop, maintain, and furnish to all applicants statements of the topics to be contained in the self-analysis required in 4.3.7(2).

(B) The accrediting body shall develop, maintain, and furnish to all applicants statements of the procedures to be used in the site visitation required in 4.3.7(5).

(C) The accrediting body shall develop and maintain policies for the selection, training, and evaluation of personnel who conduct the site visitation required in 4.3.7(5).

4.3.8 Withdrawal of Application. The accrediting body shall permit an applicant to withdraw an application for accreditation at any time before a final decision is made on that application.

Chapter 5 Certifying Entity Requirements

5.1 Administration of Programs.

5.1.1* Authority. The certifying entity that is an applicant for accreditation shall provide documentation of its authority to issue certification.

5.1.2 Mission and Goals. The certifying entity shall document its mission and goals.

5.1.3 Levels. The certifying entity shall publish a listing of the certification levels that it has adopted, including career path and prerequisites, if any, for each level.

5.1.4 Job Performance Requirements.

(A)* The certifying entity within the United States shall utilize the job performance requirements (JPRs) found in the applicable NFPA professional qualification standards and other NFPA standards related to the competence of emergency responders.

(B) Certifying entities outside the United States shall utilize the JPRs in those standards that are adopted by the authority having jurisdiction for non-U.S. certifying entities.

(C) The certifying entity shall provide to applicants, on request, a listing of the JPRs to be used in the certification process and the prerequisites required before taking examinations at the various certification levels.

5.1.5* Funding. The certifying entity shall provide evidence of the financial capability to support its continuous operation.

(A) The certifying entity shall provide documentation to describe the source(s) of its funding.

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(B) The certifying entity shall utilize the budgetary and auditing procedures established by the authority having jurisdiction.

5.1.6 Record Keeping/Documentation.

(A) The certifying entity shall adopt policies and procedures consistent with applicable local, state/provincial, and federal requirements, specifying the information it will reserve or keep confidential and the information it will release or make available.

(B) The certifying entity shall maintain a record-keeping system that ensures the retrievability and preservation of certification records.

5.1.7 Staffing.

(A) The certifying entity shall have and maintain the personnel resources necessary to implement and sustain the certification system.

(B)* The certifying entity shall adopt and publish minimum criteria for the evaluators used in its programs.

(C)* At a minimum, evaluators shall have the following skills capabilities:

(1) Demonstrable proficiency in the knowledge and skills for the subject matter

(2) Familiarity with the evaluation/examination and record-keeping processes

(D) The certifying entity shall develop and maintain a process for the periodic evaluation of evaluators to assess degree of skills and knowledge levels.

5.1.8 Facilities and Equipment.

(A) The certifying entity shall provide adequate space for classroom and manipulative skills testing as required to serve its purposes.

(B) The facilities and equipment provided shall ensure that the health and safety of the participants is safeguarded.

5.1.9 Delegation of Authority.

(A)* An accredited entity that elects to delegate some or all of its certifying authority to another entity shall establish written policies regarding such delegation.

(B) The delegated certification authority shall be conducted under the same procedures, criteria, and standards as those used by the accredited entity.

(C) The delegated authority, as specified in 5.1.9(A) and 5.1.9(B), shall not be transferable.

(D) The accredited entity shall be responsible for the compliance of the delegated authority with the criteria of the accrediting body.

(E)* The accredited entity shall not delegate its certifying authority to another entity that has broader authority.

5.1.10* Conflicts of Interest.

(A) Certifying entities shall establish policies and procedures to ensure that no individual,

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entity, or interest group exercises inappropriate influence over the certification system.

(B) A national standards-making body that wishes to certify individuals to a standard it has developed shall establish an independent mechanism to certify such individuals.

5.2 Policies and Procedures.

5.2.1* **Statutory Compliance.** The certifying entity shall provide evidence of compliance with applicable statutes and other local, state/provincial/territorial, and federal regulations operative in its jurisdiction.

5.2.2 Nondiscrimination. The certifying entity shall ensure that its services are available to all qualified individuals without regard to race, creed, sex, age, or ethnic origin.

5.2.3 Safety and Health.

(A)* The certifying entity shall ensure the safety and health of individuals participating in the evaluation process by complying with applicable NFPA standards or equivalent standards adopted by the authority having jurisdiction.

(B)* Personal protective clothing, apparatus, equipment, and facilities utilized in the evaluation of candidates shall meet the applicable NFPA standard(s) as required of NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program*, or equivalent standards adopted by the authority having jurisdiction.

5.2.4 Evaluation/Testing.

(A)* The certifying entity shall establish and maintain procedures for administering a standardized written and manipulative skills examination, where applicable, for each level of certification offered.

(B) Examinations and other evaluative processes shall be administered or caused to be administered by the certifying entity for each level of certification offered, and the certifying entity shall document those evaluative processes utilized when cognitive or manipulative skill examinations are not used for certification.

(C) Examinations shall be drawn from a test bank(s) and/or job performance skills list maintained by the certifying entity.

(D) The certifying entity shall establish an evaluation security system that will prevent compromising of the evaluation instrument(s) and the evaluation process.

(E) The certifying entity shall ensure that questions and job skill tests used in certification examinations are reliable discriminators.

(F) The certifying entity shall ensure that question item banks utilized in the certification process are of sufficient size to allow generation of multiple written examination forms.

(G)* The certifying entity shall ensure that cognitive and manipulative skills examinations are comprehensive with respect to the requirements of the professional qualification standard being tested.

(H)* The certifying entity shall have the means to evaluate each objective or JPR in the level

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for which accreditation is being sought.

(I) Examinations shall sample the various objectives or JPRs contained in each professional qualification standard.

(J)* Certifying entities shall ensure that evaluators of manipulative skills testing perform their evaluations in an objective manner.

(K)* When performance in actual conditions cannot be duplicated, manipulative skills shall be permitted to be performed in a simulated environment, provided that simulation is demonstrated to lead to the successful evaluation of the skills required by the actual condition.

5.2.5 Historical Recognition.

(A)* The certifying entity shall document the policy and procedures to be used toward historical recognition of prior training conducted within its jurisdiction.

(B) Adoption of any standard or program shall not render any individual's prior certification invalid.

5.2.6 Reciprocity.

(A) The certifying entity shall develop a policy and procedure to be used to evaluate certification or training received in another jurisdiction.

(B) Accredited entities shall examine the credentials of individuals from other accredited entities to determine which level of certification, if any, is applicable.

5.2.7* Current Knowledge and Recertification. The certifying entity shall provide documentation describing a current knowledge policy and a recertification policy.

5.2.8 Suspension, Revocation, and Denial. The certifying entity shall develop and maintain policies and procedures for the suspension, revocation, and denial of certification.

5.2.9* Appeals. The certifying entity shall document procedures to resolve disputes arising from the interpretation or application of any provision of the certification process.

Chapter 6 Degree-Granting Entity Requirements

6.1 Administration of Programs.

6.1.1 Authority. The degree-granting entity that is an applicant for accreditation shall provide documentation of its authority to issue degrees.

6.1.2 Mission and Goals. The degree-granting entity shall document its mission and goals.

6.1.3* Levels. The degree-granting entity shall publish a listing of the degree levels that it offers, including career path and prerequisites, if any, for each level.

6.1.4* Student-Based Outcomes. The degree-granting entity shall develop and utilize student-based outcomes in the development and delivery of the academic program.

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6.1.5* **Funding.** The degree-granting entity shall provide evidence of financial capability to support its continuous operation.

(A) The degree-granting entity shall provide documentation to describe the source(s) of its funding.

(B) The degree-granting entity shall utilize the budgetary and auditing procedures established by the authority having jurisdiction.

6.1.6 Record Keeping/Documentation.

(A) The degree-granting entity shall adopt policies and procedures consistent with applicable local, state/provincial/territorial, and federal requirements, specifying the information it will reserve or keep confidential and the information it will release or make available.

(B) The degree-granting entity shall maintain a record-keeping system that ensures the retrievability and preservation of degrees awarded.

6.1.7 Staffing.

(A)* The degree-granting entity shall have and maintain the personnel resources necessary to implement and sustain the academic program.

(B) At a minimum, faculty shall have the following skills capabilities:

(1) Adequate knowledge of the subject matter

(2) Understanding of the instructional process

(C)* The degree-granting entity shall develop and maintain a process for the periodic evaluation of faculty to assess instructional ability and knowledge levels.

6.1.8* **Facilities and Equipment.** The degree-granting entity shall provide an adequate learning environment.

6.1.9 Reserved.

6.1.10 Conflicts of Interest. Degree-granting entities shall establish policies and procedures to ensure that no individual, entity, or interest group exercises inappropriate influence over the degree-granting process.

6.2 Policies and Procedures.

6.2.1 Statutory Compliance. The degree-granting entity shall provide evidence of compliance with applicable statutes and other local, state/provincial/territorial, and federal regulations operative in its jurisdiction.

6.2.2 Nondiscrimination. The degree-granting entity shall ensure that its services are available to all qualified individuals without regard to race, creed, sex, age, or ethnic origin.

6.2.3 Safety and Health.

(A)* The degree-granting entity shall ensure the safety and health of individuals

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participating in the instructional/evaluation process by complying with applicable NFPA standards or equivalent standards adopted by the authority having jurisdiction.

(B)* Personal protective clothing, apparatus, equipment, and facilities utilized in the instruction/evaluation of candidates shall meet the applicable NFPA standard(s) as required of NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program*, or equivalent standards adopted by the authority having jurisdiction.

6.2.4* Evaluation and Testing. The degree-granting entity shall develop methods of evaluating student progress towards completion of course and degree requirements.

6.2.5 Historical Recognition.

(A) The degree-granting entity shall document the policy and procedures to be used toward historical recognition of degrees awarded prior to the date of its accreditation.

(B) Adoption of any standard or program shall not render invalid any individual's degree or degrees received prior to the date of its accreditation.

6.2.6 Reciprocity.

(A) The degree-granting entity shall develop a policy and procedure to be used to evaluate credits received from another institution.

(B)* Accredited entities shall examine the credentials of individuals from other accredited entities to determine which level of transferability, if any, is applicable.

6.2.7 Reserved.

6.2.8 Revocation and Denial. The degree-granting entity shall develop and maintain policies and procedures for the revocation and denial of degrees.

6.2.9* Appeals. The degree-granting entity shall document procedures to resolve disputes arising from the interpretation or application of any provision of the degree-granting process.

Annex A Explanatory Material

Annex A is not a part of the requirements of this NFPA document but is included for informational purposes only. This annex contains explanatory material, numbered to correspond with the applicable text paragraphs.

A.1.3.1 Fire service organizations, as public agencies, are open to public scrutiny and are held accountable for their actions. There is value in being able to demonstrate that the personnel of these agencies are certified as meeting standards of competency by an entity that has itself been evaluated by an independent, thorough, objective, and public process and that these personnel are approved (accredited) as meeting the requirements of the process. Accreditation establishes accountability for performance by putting competency on the record so that it can be evaluated on the record.

A.3.2.1 Approved. The National Fire Protection Association does not approve, inspect, or certify any installations, procedures, equipment, or materials; nor does it approve or evaluate

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testing laboratories. In determining the acceptability of installations, procedures, equipment, or materials, the authority having jurisdiction may base acceptance on compliance with NFPA or other appropriate standards. In the absence of such standards, said authority may require evidence of proper installation, procedure, or use. The authority having jurisdiction may also refer to the listings or labeling practices of an organization that is concerned with product evaluations and is thus in a position to determine compliance with appropriate standards for the current production of listed items.

A.3.2.2 Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). The phrase "authority having jurisdiction," or its acronym AHJ, is used in NFPA documents in a broad manner, since jurisdictions and approval agencies vary, as do their responsibilities. Where public safety is primary, the authority having jurisdiction may be a federal, state, local, or other regional department or individual such as a fire chief; fire marshal; chief of a fire prevention bureau, labor department, or health department; building official; electrical inspector; or others having statutory authority. For insurance purposes, an insurance inspection department, rating bureau, or other insurance company representative may be the authority having jurisdiction. In many circumstances, the property owner or his or her designated agent assumes the role of the authority having jurisdiction; at government installations, the commanding officer or departmental official may be the authority having jurisdiction.

A.3.3.8 Simulation. It is the intent of the committee that actual tasks be performed as required by the applicable standards [e.g., it is not acceptable merely to explain how to use a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) in a smoke-filled environment]. The student should actually demonstrate the ability to use the SCBA in the smoke-filled environment. It is further the intent that simulation refers only to the environment in which the task is performed (e.g., a room filled with smoke produced by a smoke-generating device as opposed to task demonstration in a burning building).

A.4.1.1 The accrediting body should have the ability to operate independently of political or economic influences either within or outside the organization that sponsors the accrediting activity. The accrediting body should not be obligated to, nor should its decisions on particular schools or programs be reviewed by, any other body having political or economic goals that could conflict with the educational goals of accreditation.

A.4.1.4 The NFPA's professional qualifications system is made up of NFPA 1000, *Standard for Fire Service Professional Qualifications Accreditation and Certification Systems*, and the Professional Qualification Standards and other standards referenced in C.2.1.

The standards that comprise the system establish, in terms of JPRs, the minimum criteria necessary to perform the specific job function. The standards are not training outlines — they are the criteria for the evaluation of an individual's ability to perform critical job functions. In many cases this evaluation is conducted as part of a certification process.

The committee recognizes that accrediting bodies can be called upon to accredit certification systems from national jurisdictions that utilize standards other than those of the NFPA. It is the committee's strong opinion that accrediting bodies should take into account that the international community can, at their discretion, establish their own standards that can make it inappropriate to assess them by NFPA professional qualifications standards. It is the committee's opinion that applicant certifying entities from the international community

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should, at the entities' discretion, be evaluated based upon such national, provincial, or territorial standards as can exist in their own jurisdiction.

There is no nationally recognized standardized curriculum for nonengineering, fire-related, academic, degree-granting programs offered by institutions of higher education. Determination of curricula is the province of the institution awarding the degree(s). Consequently, a wide divergence is expected and should be taken into account by the accrediting body. It is the committee's opinion that applicant institutions should be evaluated based upon their own self-defined curricula.

Model curriculum documents are under development by the Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education group sponsored by the National Fire Academy. Depending on the specific mission and graduate outcomes of a degree program, these documents can provide useful guidance for developing new programs or modifying existing ones. These documents are available to any school regardless of nationality.

A.4.1.6 An accredited entity should do one of the following:

(1) Show evidence of a legal act, legislation, resolution, or statute from a state, provincial, territorial, or federal government agency authorizing that entity to certify the professional competence of fire service personnel

(2) Show significant evidence of support for their accreditation as a certifying entity from within their constituency

(3) Show evidence of the existence of a law broad enough in scope as to encompass certifying activities of the organization seeking accreditation

A.4.2.2(1) The mission should be consistent with purposes accepted as appropriate to the fire and emergency services and to the recognized scope of the accrediting body.

A.4.2.4 The term of accreditation should be no longer than five (5) years. This time frame is based on the revision cycle for NFPA standards and on the time required for certifying entities to implement changes into their programs.

A.4.2.6 Such policy statements should address possible changes in the scope of a certifying entity's activities. The policy, at a minimum, should make provision for the certification entity to withdraw voluntarily all or some of its programs from the accreditation system.

A.4.3.1 See A.4.1.1.

A.4.3.6 Such policy statements should address possible changes in the scope of a degree-granting entity's activities. The policy, at a minimum, should make provision for the degree-granting entity to withdraw voluntarily all or some of its programs from the accreditation system.

A.4.3.7(1) Such accreditation is usually provided by a regional accrediting organization (e.g., the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges or the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools).

A.5.1.1 The documentation required by this section should be either of the following:

(1) Legislative acts, resolutions, state/provincial and federal statutes, and administrative

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codes from a state/provincial/territorial or national government authorizing the entity to certify the professional competence of fire service personnel

(2) Significant evidence of support for its accreditation as a certifying entity from within its constituency

The accrediting body should verify the certifying entity's empowerment, such as the existence of laws that designate the organization as a certifying entity or that are broad enough in scope to encompass certifying activities of the organization seeking accreditation or evidence of support from state/provincial fire service organizations and/or other interested or affected organizations that are served by the organization seeking accreditation.

A.5.1.4(A) See A.4.1.4.

A.5.1.5 Examples of funding sources that a certifying entity could use to support the certification process are as follows:

(1) Governmental appropriation, such as federal, state, county, and local

(2) Fee generation, such as fees charged for the certification process or membership in the system

(3) Public or private grants

(4) Fire service trust funds

A.5.1.7(B) This requirement should not be construed as precluding the usage of non-fire service subject matter experts as evaluators.

A.5.1.7(C) See A.5.1.7(B).

A.5.1.9(A) It is not the intent of this standard to mandate the delegation of an entity's authority.

A.5.1.9(E) It is the intent of the committee that if certifying authority is to be delegated by an entity, it not be delegated to organizations or entities that represent a broader geographical base or a broader constituency than the delegating entity.

A.5.1.10 See A.4.1.1.

A.5.2.1 The certifying entity should address, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Bylaws and operational policies

(2) Compliance with state/provincial/territorial statutes, regulations and federally mandated standards, such as those issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA)

(3) Equal Employment Opportunities Act

(4) Affirmative action policies

(5) Americans with Disabilities Act

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(6) Age Discrimination Employment Act

A.5.2.3(A) The certifying entity is responsible for the safety of those individuals who participate in the examination process. To comply with this requirement, the entity should provide a risk management plan.

An example of an applicable NFPA standard is NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program*.

A.5.2.3(B) The protective clothing, apparatus, equipment, and facilities used in the evaluation of candidates should be in good repair and meet the requirements of the applicable NFPA standards.

A.5.2.4(A) The committee recognizes that for certain levels of certification a manipulative skills examination might not be appropriate. However, it is the opinion of the committee that manipulative skills examinations are required for most levels of certification.

The committee recognizes that other evaluation methodologies are becoming increasingly common. It is the opinion of the committee that these evaluations are merely a different mechanism for evaluation.

A.5.2.4(G) It is not the committee's intention to require that a certification examination, whether cognitive or manipulative, examine each and every objective or JPR of the standard or level for which certification is being sought. The committee strongly believes that a randomized sample of objectives or JPRs chosen from an exhaustive objective pool is adequate. The sampling can be weighted to conform to the relative importance of a particular subject area. If other evaluative methodologies are used, such as a portfolio process, all components of the objectives or JPRs should be evaluated.

A.5.2.4(H) When appropriate, entities should adopt a portfolio or other evaluative methodology that allows for the proper assessment of job and life experience toward the successful completion of specific objective or JPRs.

A.5.2.4(J) Generally, objectivity can be increased if a manipulative skills testing checklist is used. The checklist should include each task that should be completed in order to address the stated objective successfully.

A.5.2.4(K) The committee recognizes that evaluation can involve some element of simulation. The committee's intent is to require that evaluation be conducted in such manner that it approximates actual job performance conditions to the fullest possible extent. To the extent that it is not possible to duplicate actual job performance conditions, simulation is appropriate. See also A.3.3.8.

A.5.2.5(A) See 5.2.4(H).

A.5.2.7 The certifying entity should address, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Establishing a period of time for which a certification is valid

(2) Establishing procedures that address lapsed certification

(3) Identifying a continuing education process (i.e., maintaining currency and/or

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progression to next level of completion)

(4) Establishing re-certification requirements and criteria, procedures, and administrative responsibilities, if certification is time-limited

(5) Establishing the currency of knowledge and skills of personnel, if certification is not time-limited

A.5.2.9 The appeal procedures should address, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Method of notification/time period

(2) Personnel or agencies notified (e.g., appellant, fire chiefs/departments)

(3) Response period

(4) Review process, such as hearing, communications, and so forth

(5) Final ruling

(6) Final notification of ruling

A.6.1.3 The types of nonengineering, fire-related, academic programs found are at the associate, baccalaureate, and postgraduate levels, with emphasis in areas of study such as fire science and technology, fire administration, and technology. Besides providing information about career paths and prerequisites, additional information concerning admissions policies and procedures, program requirements, graduation requirements, and academic advising should be provided.

A.6.1.4 Student-based outcomes should provide the student with an understanding of knowledge and skill levels acquired through the completion of the degree. Student-based outcomes should also provide this same information to potential employers. Advisory committees, potential employers, and nationally recognized standards and competencies can be utilized in developing these outcomes. Selected outcomes can require the successful completion of multiple courses prior to fulfillment of such outcomes.

A.6.1.5 Examples of funding sources that a degree-granting entity could use to support the degree program(s) are as follows:

(1) Governmental appropriation, such as federal, state, county, and local

(2) Fee generation, such as fees charged for the degree program or membership in the system

(3) Public or private grants

(4) Internal or external scholarship funds

(5) Fire service trust funds

A.6.1.7(A) Qualified faculty members are critical to the success of any academic program. A combination of education and experience is the foundation of this quality. This education and experience should be recognized in the hiring, promotion, and tenure of faculty members. When determining staffing levels, the following should also be taken into

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consideration:

(1) Teaching loads

(2) Academic advising

(3) Student recruitment

(4) Educational and professional experience

(5) Professional certifications

(6) Research requirements

(7) Public service activities

A.6.1.7(C) A variety of mechanisms exist to evaluate faculty, including formative and summative student evaluations, peer evaluations, and administrative evaluations.

A.6.1.8 The learning environment will vary based on the delivery methods used in the academic program. Academic institutions should take this into consideration when determining the needs associated with traditional environments versus those of distance learning, along with support services found in laboratory classes and library/reference services.

A.6.2.3(A) The degree-granting entity is responsible for the safety of those individuals who participate in the instructional/examination process. To comply with this requirement of the standard, the entity should have a risk management plan.

An example of an applicable NFPA standard is NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program*.

A.6.2.3(B) The protective clothing, apparatus, equipment, and facilities used in the instruction/evaluation of students should be in good repair and meet the requirements of the applicable NFPA standards.

A.6.2.4 Academic programs should utilize a variety of methods to evaluate student progress towards course and degree requirements, including portfolios or other evaluative methodology, traditional examinations, assignments, projects, and research papers.

A.6.2.6(B) See A.6.2.4.

A.6.2.9 The appeal procedures should address, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Method of notification

(2) Time period for notification

(3) Response period

(4) Review process, including hearing, communications, and so forth

(5) Final ruling

(6) Final notification of ruling

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Annex B Accreditation and the Fire Service

This annex is not a part of the requirements of this NFPA document but is included for informational purposes only.

B.1 Purpose.

The purpose of this annex is to provide an overview of the concept of accreditation for institutions and/or programs. The outline covers a brief description of the activity and the process. The outcomes of accreditation are intended to ensure quality for the learner, the educational institution or program, and, ultimately, the public. Accreditation by a recognized accrediting body serves as a significant indicator that an institution and/or program is meeting established standards and stated objectives.

B.2 Role and Value of Accreditation.

B.2.1 Accreditation is a status granted to an educational institution or a program that has been found to meet or exceed stated criteria of educational quality. For the most part, accreditation is voluntarily sought by institutions and programs and is conferred by nongovernmental bodies.

B.2.2 Accreditation has two fundamental purposes: to ensure the quality of the institution or program and to assist in the improvement of the institution or program. Accreditation, which applies to institutions or programs, is to be distinguished from certification, which applies to individuals.

B.2.3 The bodies conducting institutional accreditation are national or regional in scope and comprise the institutions that have achieved and maintained accreditation. A specialized body conducting accreditation of a program preparing students for a profession or occupation is often closely associated with professional associations in the field.

B.2.4 Both institutional and specialized bodies conduct the accreditation process using a common pattern. The pattern requires integral self-study of the institution or program followed by an on-site visit by an evaluation team and a subsequent review and decision by a central governing group. Within this general pattern, the various accrediting bodies have developed a variety of individual procedures adapted to their own circumstances. Increasingly, attention has been given to education outcomes as a basis for evaluation.

B.2.4.1 A recognized accrediting body can be regarded as qualified to conduct evaluations of institutions and/or programs seeking accreditation, and accreditation by such bodies is generally recognized and accepted. Institutional or specialized accreditation cannot, however, guarantee the quality of individual graduates or of individual courses within an institution or program, but it can give reasonable assurance of the context and quality of the education offered.

B.2.4.2 An institutional accrediting body considers the characteristics of whole institutions. For this reason, an institutional accrediting body gives attention not only to the educational offerings of the institutions it accredits but also to other institutional characteristics such as

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the student personnel services, financial conditions, and administrative strength.

B.2.4.3 Accreditation by an institutional accrediting body signifies to the general public that an institution has demonstrated the following:

(1) It has appropriate purposes.

(2) It has the resources needed to accomplish its purposes.

(3) It is accomplishing its purposes.

(4) It will continue to accomplish its purposes.

B.2.4.4 Institutional improvement is encouraged by an accrediting body by requiring that the accredited institution conduct periodic self-evaluations to identify the areas in which the institution does well, to determine the areas in which improvement is needed, and to develop plans to address needed improvements. While the granting of accreditation indicates an acceptable level of quality, an institution, however excellent, is capable of improvement, which must come from its own clear identification and understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.

B.2.4.5 Improvement is also encouraged by the accrediting body through its publications and through the advice and counsel provided by the visiting team, which is comprised of experienced educators drawn primarily from accredited institutions.

B.2.4.6 The focus of an institutional accrediting body on an institution as a total operating unit provides assurance that the general characteristics of the institution have been examined and found to be satisfactory. Institutional accreditation, concerned with evaluating the institution as a whole, does not seek to deal with any particular program in great detail, although programs are reviewed as a part of the consideration of the entire institution. There are institutions offering a single program (free-standing schools) that occasionally might seek institutional and/or specialized accreditation.

B.2.5 In fulfilling its two purposes, quality assurance and institutional and program improvement, accreditation provides service of value to several constituencies.

B.2.5.1 To the public, the values of accreditation include the following:

(1) Assurance of external evaluation of the institution or program and a finding that there is conformity to general expectations in postsecondary education or the professional field

(2) Identification of institutions and programs that have voluntarily undertaken explicit activities directed toward improving the quality of the institution and its professional programs and are carrying them out successfully

(3) Improvement in the professional services available to the public, as accredited programs modify their requirements to reflect changes in knowledge and practice generally accepted in the field

(4) Decreased need for intervention by public agencies in the operations of educational institutions, because their institutions, through accreditation, are providing for the

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maintenance and enhancement of educational quality

B.2.5.2 To the learners, accreditation provides the following:

(1) Assurance that the educational activities of an accredited institution or program have been found to be satisfactory and therefore meet the needs of students

(2) Assistance in the transfer of credit or certification between institutions or in the admission of students to advanced programs through the general acceptance of credits among accredited institutions where the performance of the student has been satisfactory and the credits to be transferred are appropriate to the receiving institution

B.2.5.3 To the institution, accreditation provides the following:

(1) Stimulus for self-evaluation and self-directed institutional and program improvement

(2) Strengthening of institutional and program self-evaluation by the review and counsel provided through the accrediting body

(3) Application of criteria of accrediting bodies, which helps guard against external encroachments harmful to institutional or program quality by providing benchmarks independent of forces that might impinge on individual institutions

(4) Enhancement of the reputation of an accredited institution or program because of public regard for accreditation

(5) Criteria for eligibility for certain government aid programs

(6) Indicator of institutional and/or program quality, usually considered highly desirable by private foundations

B.2.5.4 Accreditation contributes to the unity of the profession by bringing together practitioners, teachers, and learners in an activity directed at improving preparation and professional practice.

Annex C Informational References

C.1 Referenced Publications.

The documents or portions thereof listed in this annex are referenced within the informational sections of this standard and are not part of the requirements of this document unless also listed in Chapter 2 for other reasons.

C.1.1 NFPA Publication. National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169-7471.

NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program*, 2002 edition.

C.2 Informational References.

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The following documents or portions thereof are listed here as informational resources only. They are not a part of the requirements of this document.

C.2.1 NFPA Publications. National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169-7471.

NFPA 472, *Standard for Professional Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials Incidents*, 2002 edition.

NFPA 473, *Standard for Competencies for EMS Personnel Responding to Hazardous Materials Incidents*, 2002 edition.

NFPA 1001, *Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications*, 2002 edition.

NFPA 1002, *Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications*, 2003 edition.

NFPA 1003, *Standard for Airport Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications*, 2005 edition.

NFPA 1006, *Standard for Rescue Technician Professional Qualifications*, 2003 edition.

NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, 2003 edition.

NFPA 1031, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner*, 2003 edition.

NFPA 1033, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator*, 2003 edition.

NFPA 1035, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Public Fire and Life Safety Educator*, 2005 edition.

NFPA 1041, *Standard for Fire Service Instructor Professional Qualifications*, 2002 edition.

NFPA 1051, *Standard for Wildland Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications*, 2002 edition.

NFPA 1061, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Public Safety Telecommunicator*, 2002 edition.

NFPA 1071, *Standard for Emergency Vehicle Technician Professional Qualifications*, 2006 edition.

NFPA 1081, *Standard for Industrial Fire Brigade Member Professional Qualifications*, 2001 edition.

NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program*, 2002 edition.

NFPA 1521, *Standard for Fire Department Safety Officer*, 2002 edition.

C.2.2 Other Publication.

FESHE National Model Curriculum, NFA, available from the USFA/NFA Higher Education web page. http://usfa.fema.gov/training/nfa/higher_ed/

C.3 References for Extracts in Informational Sections. (Reserved)

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