



New Hampshire Fire Standards & Training Commission

Title: Curriculum Development	Effective Date: 9/5/2024
Meeting Approved: 9/5/2024	Revised Date: --

PURPOSE

The development and maintenance of firefighter curricula is essential for meeting the needs of students and their departments. Under NH RSA 21-P:27 II(a)-(b), the NH Fire Standards and Training Commission is responsible for establishing curricula for the training and education of Fire Service personnel by or for the state or any political subdivisions thereof. The creation or adoption of curricula must take into consideration the diverse needs of the NH Fire Service. NH Administrative Rule § Part Fire 402.03 requires the curriculum development process to produce a minimum set of curricular components. This policy describes a structured, inclusive, and transparent approach in developing a high-quality curriculum for training and education programs that comply with law and rule and that meet the needs of the New Hampshire Fire Service.

POLICY

I Definitions

- (a) **Accreditation.** A voluntary process by which a nongovernmental association grants a time-limited recognition to an organization that certify individuals to fire service professional qualifications standards after verifying that organization has met predetermined and standardized criteria.
- (b) **Competence.** The demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in the context of assigned response duties to achieve intended results.
- (c) **Curriculum.** A planned sequence of lessons, content, and educational activities that instructors deliver and students experience, that results in measurable changes in student knowledge, skills, or attitudes.
- (d) **Stakeholders.** An individual, or representative of same, having an interest in the successful completion of a project.

- (e) **Standard.** Also referred to as Professional Qualification Standard, a description of the performance required for a specific job, defining what an individual must be able to do in order to perform or achieve that job.

II Roles and Responsibilities

- (a) The role of the NH Fire Standards and Training Commission (FSTC) is to establish education and training standards, and to publish minimal curriculum requirements for preparatory courses and programs for the specific purpose of training fire service personnel. The FSTC will vote to establish visiting committees, seat, or delegate the seating of members of the visiting committees, present curriculum produced by visiting committees to the public for comment, and adopt the curriculum as the minimum education and training standard.
- (b) The role of the Curriculum Committee is to evaluate the need for, set the focus of, and evaluate the curriculum produced by Visiting Committees. The Curriculum Committee will receive updates about the progress of any seated Visiting Committees and pass along information to the FSTC. The Curriculum Committee will present curriculum produced by visiting committees to the FSTC.
- (c) The role of a Visiting Committee is to provide recommendations to the FSTC Curriculum Committee on the development and requirements for a specified training program curriculum. Members appointed to a Visiting Committee will be subject-matter experts representing New Hampshire Fire Service stakeholders to ensure the curricula meets needs of the New Hampshire Fire Service.
- (d) The role of the Division of Fire Standards and Training and Emergency Medical Services (FSTEMS) is to provide guidance and support for the curriculum development process as defined by this policy, receive recommendations from the Visiting Committee and Curriculum Committee for the development of curricular materials, and provide curriculum development and instructional design services to produce curricula that meets the goals of the FSTC, the accreditation requirements of accrediting bodies, and aligns with the standards applicable to the program being developed.

III Initiating a Curriculum Development Process

- (a) **Proposal of a Curriculum.** The FSTC may consider and approve the creation of a new curriculum, or the revision of an existing curriculum given the following circumstances:
 - (1) Upon a change in a nationally accepted standard regarding firefighter professional qualification that aligns with a current FSTC approved curriculum, or
 - (2) Upon a request from the public, or

- (3) Upon other presentation of need for a new or revised preparatory, in-service, or advanced Fire Service course or program,
- (b) **Needs Justification.** A verbal or written report of justification must be presented with the proposal. The report of justification should provide evidence of the need for the program, including an indication of demand from the New Hampshire Fire Service and alignment with the mission of the Department of Safety and the FSTC.
- (c) **Commission Review and Approval.** Upon receipt of the proposal and justification, the FSTC will review the proposal to determine whether the program should be developed further. The FSTC will vote to direct the Curriculum Committee to conduct a systematic process of curriculum revision or development. If the motion is approved, the Curriculum Committee may establish a Visiting Committee to conduct these processes. If the motion fails, the proposal will be rejected. Rejected proposals may be brought back to the Commission at a later date.
- (d) **Curriculum Committee Delegation.** The Curriculum Committee will vote whether a Visiting Committee is necessary to revise or develop the proposed curriculum. If a Visiting Committee is determined to be unnecessary, the Curriculum Committee retains the responsibility to revise or develop the proposed curriculum. If a Visiting Committee is determined to be necessary, one will be recruited. The Curriculum Committee retains responsibility for ensuring any proposed curriculum complies with the requirements of administrative rule and the authority to modify the proposed curriculum before presenting it to the FSTC.
- (e) **Recruiting a Visiting Committee.** Upon voting to establish a Visiting Committee, a public notice seeking volunteers will be distributed to the Commission Members to distribute to their constituents, and be posted on the Division's website, and distributed by any other means deemed reasonable to recruit the involvement of stakeholder representatives. This notice will include a brief explanation of the program to be revised or developed, the standard(s) applicable to the program, a summary of the responsibilities of a Visiting Committee member, and a date by which applications need to be returned. Applicants will submit an application that includes a record of relevant expertise. FSTEMS will collect applications for appointment to the Visiting Committee.
- (f) **Selection of Visiting Committee Members.** The Curriculum Committee will evaluate Visiting Committee applicants to ensure diverse representation of the New Hampshire Fire Service.
- (1) Each Visiting Committee should have a minimum of 5 and no more than 9 voting members.
 - (2) Membership should represent the curriculum stakeholders, including department type and geographic location.
 - (3) One voting member will be a representative from FSTC. The FSTC representative responsibilities will include conveying the intent of the FSTC.

- (4) One voting member will be a representative from FSTEMS. The FSTEMS representative responsibilities will include conveying the available resources and capabilities of the Division.
- (5) One or more alternate non-voting members should be identified to replace a voting member who withdraws from the Visiting Committee process.
- (g) **Appointment of Visiting Committee Members.** The Curriculum Committee will recommend the list of members to serve on the Visiting Committee to the FSTC. Upon recommendation from the Curriculum Committee, the FSTC may vote to approve the list of Visiting Committee members and alternates. The Commission may delegate the authority to seat the Visiting Committee to the Curriculum Committee following initial review and approval of a curriculum development process.

IV Curriculum Development Process

- (a) **Duration and Scheduling.** Once the Visiting Committee has been established, it will meet regularly until the curriculum has been approved by the Curriculum Committee for presentation to the FSTC. The Visiting Committee will remain seated until the curriculum is adopted by the FSTC, at which point it will be disbanded. Visiting Committee meetings will be scheduled at times and in formats to provide opportunities for input from all stakeholders.
- (b) **Goal of Curriculum Development.** The FSTC is legislatively enabled to establish minimum standards for the training and education of Fire Service personnel. The Visiting Committee is tasked with developing a curriculum that supports instructors in bringing students to a level of competence in accordance with those standards.
- (c) **Public Meetings.** All meetings of the Visiting Committee will be open to the public with the intent of soliciting input from all stakeholders affected by the curriculum. Visiting Committee meeting times and locations will be posted in advance on the Division's website. Notifications will be sent to any person that applied for membership on the visiting committee who was not selected. All Visiting Committee meetings will be posted on the Division's website and other required notice locations a minimum of 7 days in advance of the meeting in substantial compliance with RSA 91-a. With approval of the appointed FSTC representative, meetings may be scheduled with less than 7 days but not less than 24 hours' notice. An overview of the meeting will be posted to the Division's website within 5 business days following the meeting.
- (d) **Visiting Committee Orientation.** At the initial meeting of the Visiting Committee, the Division will conduct a presentation on the current status of the existing curriculum. This presentation shall include the following:
 - (1) Overview of the structure of the program;
 - (2) The focus of the Visiting Committee as declared by the Commission when the Committee was established;

- (3) Program prerequisites and program requirements for testing;
 - (4) Current course schedule format;
 - (5) Summary of student evaluations;
 - (6) Summary of past enrollment status;
 - (7) Historical number of training programs offered;
 - (8) Historical pass rates for certification examinations;
 - (9) Any additional information requested by the Commission specific the curriculum.
 - (10) An overview of the curriculum development process.
- (e) **Quorum.** For any matters requiring a vote, quorum will be a simple majority of the voting members. The intent of the FSTC is to have an in-person quorum at each meeting, however in coordination between the FSTEMS and the FSTC representatives, the use of alternative or hybrid conferencing may be utilized. In the event a quorum is not met, and the FSTC or Curriculum Committee has appointed alternate members, the alternate members will be counted to meet the quorum and be granted voting powers if they are in attendance. All recommendations will be approved by a majority of the voting members. In the event a quorum is not possible, the Commission representative shall make the determination whether to hold the meeting or postpone it.
- (f) **Curriculum Development.** The Visiting Committee will follow a standardized curriculum development process resulting in curriculum materials that meet or exceed the criteria listed in NH Administrative Rule § Part Fire 402.03. Curricular materials will be assembled using the FSTC approved curriculum template. The curriculum development process may include the following:
- (1) **Practice Analysis.** If FSTEMS or FSTC determine an analysis of practice is necessary to ensure program development meets local needs, a practice analysis may be conducted by FSTEMS prior to seating the Visiting Committee. The indications for a practice analysis would include a new program, evolving roles within a profession, significant changes in standards, or a lack of existing data.
 - (2) **Gap Analysis.** If a published update to a standard has significant revisions, or a practice analysis reveals a gap between needed job performance and applicable standards of job performance, the Division may conduct a gap analysis such that any gaps are quantified, instructional needs are identified, and a list of recommendations are presented to the Curriculum and Visiting Committees.
 - (3) **Subject Area(s) Covered.** The Visiting Committee will define the scope and sequence of content the curriculum will address. At a minimum, this includes a list of main topics or modules.

- (4) **Required number of hours per subject area.** The Visiting Committee will define the amount of instructional time allocated to the subject area. At a minimum, this includes a list of hours per topic or module.
- (5) **General content of each subject area.** The Visiting Committee will develop a broad description of the material covered in each subject area. At a minimum, this includes a list key ideas, required knowledge, and required skills for each module.
- (6) **Teaching methodology.** The Visiting Committee will define the strategies used for delivering instruction. At a minimum, this includes an Identification of in-person, hybrid, or online delivery.
- (7) **Description of visual aids.** The Visiting Committee will identify the visual materials to support learning. At a minimum, this includes a list primary visual aids.
- (8) **Description of reference material.** The Visiting Committee will identify the resources that supplement the core content. At a minimum, this includes a list approved textbooks or other reference materials.
- (9) **Required facilities.** The Visiting Committee will define the physical or virtual spaces needed for the curriculum. At a minimum, this includes a list of necessary rooms and spaces.
- (10) **Terminal performance objectives.** The Visiting Committee will define the actions students must demonstrate upon completion. At a minimum, this includes a list of required skills to be demonstrated by the student.
- (11) **Description of written and practical certification tests.** The Visiting Committee will develop an outline of assessments to measure competency. At a minimum, this includes a table of test specifications.
- (12) **Statement of meeting standards.** The Visiting Committee will ensure that the curriculum aligns with recognized benchmarks. At a minimum, this includes a statement of compliance.
- (13) **Instructor/student ratio.** The Visiting Committee will define the number of instructors relative to students. At a minimum, this includes a specific ratio.
- (14) **Minimum and maximum number of students.** The Visiting Committee will define the allowable range of student enrollments. At a minimum, this includes a specific range.
- (15) **Prerequisites.** The Visiting Committee will define the prior knowledge, experience, or certification required to enroll. At a minimum, this includes a list of prerequisites.
- (16) **List of equipment required.** The Visiting Committee will identify the tools and materials needed for delivery. At a minimum, this includes a list of equipment.
- (17) **Modular Design.** Per NH Administrative Rule § Part Fire 401.02, courses shall be provided either in their entirety or in modules. Curricula should be designed with divisions at logical

points such that students are able to complete the training requirements in a logical progression. Module prerequisites should be defined if necessary to ensure safety or successful completion.

- (g) **Reporting to the Curriculum Committee.** The FSTEMS Curriculum Administrator or designee will provide an overview of the visiting committee progress to the Curriculum Committee during scheduled committee meetings. The overview will include any significant modifications to existing curriculum or any requests for clarification from the Visiting Committee. Members of the Visiting Committee will be invited to attend Curriculum Committee and FSTC meetings.
- (h) **Recommendation of the Curriculum.** At the conclusion of the curriculum development process, the Visiting Committee will vote to recommend the curriculum to the Curriculum Committee. An FSTEMS representative will present the proposed curriculum to the Curriculum Committee for their review and comments. The Curriculum Committee retains the authority to make changes to the proposed curriculum. If deemed necessary due to the extent of changes needed, the curriculum may be returned to the Visiting Committee for revision. If no changes are deemed necessary, the Curriculum Committee will vote to endorse the curriculum for presentation to the FSTC for preliminary approval. If, following two cycles of revision, the Visiting Committee and the Curriculum Committee cannot come to a consensus, the proposed curriculum will be presented to the FSTC for review.
- (i) **Public Review.** Upon preliminary approval by the FSTC, the following will occur:
 - (1) A notice of the proposed action will be given to the Commission Members to distribute to their constituents, and be posted on the Division's website, and distributed by any other means deemed reasonable to notify the members of the New Hampshire Fire Service.
 - (2) The curriculum will be posted on the FSTEMS website, and a 60-day public commentary period will begin. FSTEMS will collect feedback from the public during this time.
 - (3) Two public hearings will be held, one in the daytime hours and another during the evening hours, in such a way as to maximize input from members of the New Hampshire Fire Service. FSTEMS will collect feedback from the public during this time.
- (j) **Adoption.** Following the public review period, the FSTC may vote to adopt the curriculum as it was presented, adopt the curriculum with modifications, or send the curriculum back to the Curriculum Committee for further development. Upon adoption, the date of approval shall be printed on the front cover and signed by the FSTC Chair.
- (k) **Accreditation.** NH RSA 21-P:29 requires firefighter training programs to be accredited. FSTEMS will guide the Visiting Committee in creating accreditable curricula during the curriculum development process. FSTEMS will maintain the accreditation of FSTC approved curriculum.

(l) **Curriculum Review and Analysis.** Upon the delivery of two courses or one year, whichever is sooner, FSTEMS will conduct a review and analysis of the curriculum and provide a report to the Curriculum Committee. The report will contain the following components at a minimum:

- (1) A review of reference material suitability;
- (2) An overview of matriculation and attrition;
- (3) An overview of student feedback;
- (4) An overview of examination performance;
- (5) An overview of the performance of each module;
- (6) Recommendations for revision, if any.

Appendix A: FSTC Curriculum Development Flowchart

