

Course Updates Policy

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Administering Entity: The Curriculum Subcommittee of the International Professional Education Committee (IPEC) and IRWA Staff

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Responsibility for Review: The International Governing Council (IGC)

Purpose

This policy will ensure that all instructor-led IRWA courses are being updated in an effective and timely manner, which will result in curriculum that is impactful and relevant to today's right of way/infrastructure standards and practices. A proactively managed curriculum contributes to student learning and retention. Periodic curricular updates also enhance the performance quality of IRWA members who attend these courses.

The intent of a course update is to review existing course material to identify and address errors, omissions, or outdated material within the course and as indicated from instructor and student feedback. The update team will not typically rewrite sections of material but will identify sections where rewrites are recommended.

Background

Given the high volume of courses that constitute the IRWA's curriculum, it is vital that there are clear processes and procedures to determine how:

1. Course update priorities are determined by the Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC;
2. IRWA instructors, and when necessary, outside subject matter experts (SMEs)¹, will be selected to serve on Course Update Teams;
3. How IRWA education staff works with course review teams to ensure courses have the highest quality content; and
4. IRWA course instructors and members are notified of course updates.

Course Updates Processes and Procedures

The following processes and procedures will be employed to ensure that IRWA courses are updated in the most efficient and effective manner, and that responsible communication practices are being employed to inform all relevant stakeholders.

Course Updates - Priority List Process

1. At the beginning of each fiscal year (July), IRWA education staff will create a ranked priority

¹The International Industry Committees may assist with the identification of outside SMEs.

list of courses for the Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC to review, which will include the ranking criteria for each course and when it was last revised.

2. The Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC will engage and receive International Industry Committee feedback and contributions regarding courses as appropriate.
3. The International Industry Committees, IRWA's instructors, leadership, and members will share changes to legislation, regulation, statutes or standards with the Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC and IRWA education staff. These changes, which require updates to courses, will take priority over other considerations. The ranked, priority list will be based on the following criteria, which is contained within the IRWA education program database:
 - a. Course frequency – The number of times the course was offered the previous fiscal year.
 - b. Student assessment – The average score of the course materials, which is based on all the course evaluations received from students each time the course was held.
 - c. Instructor feedback – The volume and nature of the course-specific feedback that has been collected since the last update. The rankings will reflect a prioritization of content feedback over grammatical/spelling and opinion feedback².
 - d. Date of last course update or revision.
 - e. Course series disciplines – There will be a focus on ensuring that courses across all disciplines are equally reviewed over time.
4. The Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC will review that list and determine whether or not the IRWA education staff members should use it to guide their work or revise it based on other criteria.
5. Once the Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC has finalized and approved the course update priority list, IRWA education staff will utilize that list for the remainder of the fiscal year. The Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC reserves the right to make revisions to the course updates priority list at any time it determines that such a change is necessary for the benefit of the association and its members.

Course Updates - Team Selection Process

1. When each course update begins, the Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC will solicit volunteers to serve on the Course Update Team, which will collaborate with IRWA education staff.
2. Objectives for the update will be provided to potential volunteers during solicitation.
3. Eligible Course Update Team volunteers will be those who are formally approved to teach the course that is being revised, and who are not already serving on another Course Update Team. Exceptions can only be made when there are:
 - a. a limited number of instructors who are approved to teach a course (i.e., Course 600C – Environmental Awareness – Canadian), or
 - b. when there are less than three (3) instructors who express interest in being a volunteer.
4. Once potential volunteers have expressed their interest to the Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC, the subcommittee will consider and select three volunteers from those who responded within two weeks of the solicitation email. Other IPEC members and International Industry Committees may be consulted in the selection process.

² Content feedback will be weighted more than grammatical/spelling and opinion feedback.

This process will be fair, open and transparent, thereby providing opportunities to the volunteers. The subcommittees will select volunteers on a rotating basis to provide this opportunity to more volunteers.

5. Revisions to the content may require additional review by industry experts, depending upon the extent of the revisions, such as revisions to case studies. IPEC may solicit comments from industry experts as needed, provided the committee solicits comments from a diverse pool of experts.

Course Updates Collaboration Process

1. Once the Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC has selected the individuals who will serve on a Course Update Team, IRWA education staff will provide associated course materials to each Course Update Team member, as well as a document that contains the following information:
 - a. Date of last course update/revision/rewrite
 - b. The current list of course feedback that is within the education program database. That feedback will be divided between minor issues (grammatical, spelling, typos, etc.) and major issues (content requiring subject matter expertise).
2. The Course Update Team will have four (4) weeks³ to address the existing course feedback, focusing on major issues and identifying any additional opportunities for improvement.
 - a. When necessary, the Course Update Team will reach out to the appropriate International Industry Committee(s) for additional guidance on how to update the course.
 - b. In the event an individual cannot fulfill his or her Course Update Team responsibilities, the Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC will quickly act to replace that individual with another eligible Course Update Team volunteer, if necessary and a replacement is available in a timely manner. Individuals who expressed initial interest in volunteering, but were not selected, will be given priority.
3. The Course Update Team will work with IRWA education staff to determine the optimal format for their course update documents. Once the Course Update Team members have completed their individual course update, they will be responsible for meeting with one another and creating a single document containing their proposed course updates. That list will be sent to IRWA education staff, who will be responsible for reviewing that document in advance of the update team-education staff meeting.
4. The Course Update Team and IRWA education staff will then meet to review and reconcile the course updates that are needed. Should it be determined that a course rewrite is needed, the Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC will be notified at their next meeting and the *Course Rewrites Policy* will be utilized.
5. Once a final list of course updates is approved by the Course Update Team, IRWA education staff will proceed with implementing those updates to the course materials. In addition to implementing the course updates, IRWA education staff will maintain a detailed log of substantive changes that have been made to the course.

³ In the event an update team needs additional time that extends beyond four (4) weeks, they will notify IRWA education staff and the Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC.

6. During the next Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC meeting that occurs after those changes have been implemented, IRWA education staff will provide the subcommittee with an overview of the course updates that have been implemented and the detailed log of substantive changes. New course materials will not be released for piloting and instructor commenting until:
 - a. The Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC has been notified, reviews and formally approves the changes; and
 - b. A successful course pilot has been completed, if deemed appropriate by the Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC based on the extent of the changes.

Course Updates Communication Procedures

1. When a course has been updated, and the new course materials have been approved by the Curriculum Subcommittee of the IPEC, all approved instructors for the updated course will be notified and provided with the following via email:
 - a. A link to the updated course materials.
 - b. A summary of what was updated, and when applicable, a course rewrites log.
2. Each approved instructor for the updated course will then be given an opportunity to share their feedback on the materials during a 30-day instructor comment period.
3. After that 30-day period and a potential pilot has concluded, all feedback will be gathered, reviewed and addressed by the Course Update Team and IRWA education staff.
4. Each approved instructor for the updated or rewritten course is expected to attend a Course Updates call that will be led by the Course Update Team.
 - a. On that call, the Course Update Team will address all the substantive changes made to the materials, utilizing the IPEC's [Course Update Template Presentation](#) and address all instructor feedback from the 30-day instructor comment period.
 - b. Although attendance is preferred, unavailable instructors may watch a recording of the call.
5. In addition to the email update sent to all approved instructors for courses that have been updated or rewritten, the following will occur to enhance transparency and elevate IRWA members' awareness of the work being conducted by the IPEC, IRWA instructors and IRWA education staff:
 - a. A list of updated courses will be provided to the IEC/IGC
 - b. The *Leader's Edge* and each issue of the *Right of Way* magazine will contain a section that provides the following information:
 - Courses that have been updated during the current fiscal year, including the names of the IRWA members and/or SMEs who were on the associated Course Update Team.
 - Courses that are currently being updated, including the names of the IRWA members and/or subject matter experts who were on the associated Course Update Team.
 - The next five (5) courses scheduled to be updated, based on the IPEC-approved Course Updates Priority List.
 - c. Course materials will have a section titled "Revision History," which will contain information on all significant course updates and rewrites and the names of those IRWA instructors and/or SMEs who served on the associated Course Update Team.