

Course Updates Policy

Document Type: Rule/**Policy**/Plan/Guidelines/**Operating Procedures**

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

Date Approved: November 19, 2020

Most Recent Amendment Date: N/A

Approved By: The International Governing Council (IGC)

Mandated Review: Annually

Responsibility for Review: The International Governing Council (IGC)

Purpose

To ensure that IRWA's curriculum is current, impactful and relevant, courses must be continually improved and updated. A proactively managed curriculum contributes to student learning and retention. Periodic curricular updates also enhance the performance quality of IRWA members who are currently working in the right of way/infrastructure profession. This policy will ensure that IRWA courses¹ are being updated in an efficient, effective and timely manner.

Background

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

1. How course update priorities are determined by the Curriculum and Instructor Development Subcommittee of the IPEC.
2. How IRWA instructors, and when necessary outside subject matter experts (SME)², will be selected to serve on course review teams.
3. How IRWA education staff works with course review teams to ensure courses have the highest quality content.
4. How course instructors and IRWA 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 keep all relevant stakeholders informed.

Course Updates Priority List Development Process

1. At the beginning of each fiscal year (July), IRWA education staff will create a ranked priority list of courses for the Curriculum and Instructor Development Subcommittee of the IPEC to review, which will include the ranking criteria for each course and when it was last revised.

¹ In-Person courses are the primary focus of this policy.

² When necessary, the International Industry Committees will assist with the identification of outside SMEs.

2. The development of this ranked, priority list will be based on the following criteria³, which is all 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 feedback⁴.
 - 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.
3. The Curriculum and Instructor Development 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. For example, legal guidelines and relevant policies have changed, which could necessitate a higher priority course revision.
4. Once the Curriculum and Instructor Development 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 year⁵.

Course Review Team Selection Process

1. When each course update begins, the Curriculum and Instructor Development Subcommittee of the IPEC will solicit volunteers to serve on the course review team, which will collaborate with IRWA education staff.
2. Eligible course review 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 review team.
 - a. Exceptions can only be made when there are (i) a limited number of instructors who are approved to teach a course (i.e., Course 600C – Environmental Awareness – Canadian), or (ii) when there are less than three (3) instructors who express interest in being a volunteer.
3. Once potential volunteers have expressed their interest to the Curriculum and Instructor Development Subcommittee of the IPEC, the subcommittee will most often select the first three (3) volunteers to be part of the course review team. To be as fair as possible, the Curriculum and Instructor Development Subcommittee of the IPEC will make course review team selections based on who has and has not previously served.

Course Updates Collaboration Process

1. Once the Curriculum and Instructor Development Subcommittee of the IPEC have selected the individuals who will serve on a course review team, IRWA education staff will provide

³ A course with a high course frequency, low student assessment, high volume of instructor feedback and a longer duration since the last course update will be ranked the highest (other things being equal).

⁴ Content feedback will be weighted more than grammatical/spelling and opinion feedback.

⁵ The Curriculum and Instructor Development Subcommittee of the IPEC reserves the right to make revisions to the course updates priority list, at any time they determine that such a change is necessary for the benefit of the association and its members.

associated course materials to each review 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 review team will have three (3) weeks⁶ to review the existing course feedback, focusing on major issues and identifying any additional opportunities for improvement.
 - a. When necessary, the review 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 review team responsibilities, the Curriculum and Instructor Development Subcommittee of the IPEC will quickly act to replace that individual with another eligible course review team volunteer. Individuals who expressed initial interest in volunteering, but were not selected, will be given priority.
 3. The review team will work with IRWA education staff to determine the optimal format for their course review documents.
 - a. Once the review team members have completed their individual course reviews, 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 review team-education staff meeting.
 4. The review team and IRWA education staff will then meet to review and reconcile the course updates that are needed.
 - a. Should it be determined that a course rewrite is needed, the Curriculum and Instructor Development 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 review team, IRWA education staff will proceed with implementing those updates to the course materials.
 - a. 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.
 6. During the next Curriculum and Instructor Development 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.
 - a. New course materials will not be finalized with updates until the Curriculum and Instructor Development Subcommittee of the IPEC has been notified and formally approves the changes.

Course Updates Communication Procedures

1. When a course has been updated or rewritten, and the new course materials have been approved by the Curriculum and Instructor Development Subcommittee of the IPEC, all

⁶ In the event a review team needs additional time that extends beyond three (3) weeks, they will seek approval from the Curriculum and Instructor Development Subcommittee of the IPEC.

approved instructors for the updated or rewritten 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. 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. 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 review 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 review team.
 - The next five (5) courses scheduled to be updated, based on the IPEC-approved Course Updates Priority List.
 - b. 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 review/rewrite team.