



Technical Advisory Committee Guidebook

About the Division:

The Division of Professional-Technical Education is the administrative arm of the State Board for Professional-Technical Education that provides leadership, advocacy, quality control, and technical assistance for professional-technical education in Idaho, from secondary students to adults. The Division provides the focus for professional-technical education within existing schools and institutions by targeting resources, organizing and applying industry input, and managing programs.

Introduction

The Idaho Division of Professional-Technical Education believes that all Idaho residents deserve the opportunity to experience the dignity of work, and the education required to prepare them for work. As Idaho's primary educational delivery system for workforce education, professional-technical education is critical to the big picture of lifelong learning, ongoing training and education, economic vitality, and success in the workplace.

To fulfill our mission of *providing Idaho's youth and adults with the technical skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for successful performance in a highly effective workplace* there must be a strong partnership between education and industry.

Industry represents the ultimate employer of the students we prepare. Industry is also constantly incorporating the latest technology into their processes and envisioning the future of the marketplace – all of which translates to the ever-evolving skills necessary for their workforce.

Purpose of Technical Advisory Committees

Successful professional-technical programs maintain close ties with business, industry, and labor and must be integrally linked to the communities and state. Professional-technical programs in Idaho are required to “incorporate active input from an appropriately qualified business/industry technical advisory committee.”¹

An effective technical advisory committee reveals local career opportunities, prepares students to enter the workforce, and/or helps upgrade the skills of workers already employed. The committee advises the program to ensure that it stays up-to-date in terms of content and training. Committee members also assist in, and advocate for, student, faculty, and program needs. Ultimately, committees strengthen the working relationships between the professional-technical programs and the communities they serve. Specifically, technical advisory committees should:

- Bring focus to important program outcomes
- Bring training expertise to the table – they provide on-the-job training to their employees, and can share best practices
- Secure resources for your program – equipment, manpower, expertise
- Provide students and staff with new opportunities – internships, work experiences, career exploration
- Connect you with the larger community – committee members have networks they can engage as appropriate
- Advocate on behalf of your program

¹ IDAPA 55.01.03.102.02(g)

Creating a Technical Advisory Committee

Advisory committees are generally established by a program representative (usually the local PTE administrator, teacher, or departmental chairperson). For new professional-technical programs, or for those programs in need of a more formal committee structure, the program representative should take these steps to help ensure the success of the committee.

1. Determine the structure of the future committee:
 - a. Interview the representatives from programs with well-established committees
 - b. Study the duties, function, and framework of existing committees
 - c. Observe committee meetings
 - d. Consider creating an ad hoc committee to plan and develop the new advisory committee
2. Prepare a general structure and plan for the committee
3. Obtain appropriate approvals²
 - a. Explain the intended function of the advisory committee to administration
 - b. Share examples of other committees, particularly for similar areas of study or those with similar workforce needs
 - c. List potential benefits to the administration, school, and teachers

General Committee Framework

An advisory committee is a group that is:

- recognized for their expertise in their specific occupational area
- made up of business, industry and labor representatives of the occupation(s) for which training is provided, and
- organized to advise school personnel on matters concerning the professional-technical education program

Advisory committees can be shared between secondary (e.g. Professional-Technical High Schools) and postsecondary programs as long as there is adequate geographic representation by business and industry representatives. This is especially helpful in ensuring alignment of curriculum and seamless transition for students from high school to the technical colleges.

² Note: If a program representative is unable to obtain approval for the advisory committee, please contact PTE immediately, as committees are a *required* component of the program.

Committee Size

The size of the committee may vary by the size of the community, scope of the professional-technical program, diversity of businesses and industries in the community, and purpose of the committee. Size may also vary over time to align with specific committee activities. Committees should be large enough to reflect the diversity of the community, yet small enough to be managed effectively.

- Committees with fewer than five members tend to be less effective as they may have limited perspectives, inadequate information on a number of target jobs, and too few employers represented.
- Committees with more than 15 members can become unmanageable.
- Five to nine members are generally an adequate size for most committees.

Length of Service

To ensure continuity among committee members, each committee member should serve a standard term length, generally three years. These terms should be staggered, with 1/3 of the membership expiring each year. For a new committee, this may mean that initial appointments are assigned for one, two, or three years. As the initial appointments expire, subsequent members will serve the standard three-year term.

Generally, committee members should not be appointed to successive terms to ensure the committee allows for new perspectives. In addition, former members should have at least a one-year absence before being eligible for reappointment.

Governance

The program representative is responsible for developing draft policies (bylaws) regarding the technical advisory committee. Written policies should address the following items and should be established during the first or second meeting of the committee:

- Approval of committee establishment
- Committee membership
- Appointment procedures
- Length of appointments
- Officers and their responsibilities
- Any available financial resources
- Minimum number of meetings annually
- Any standing subcommittees
- Communication protocol with administration
- Any data collection or annual reporting requirements

These bylaws may be specific to a program or general for many programs within a school or postsecondary institution.

Meeting Frequency

The frequency of meetings is dependent on the implementation of the program of work. Some committees may need to meet monthly; others may meet bi-monthly during the academic year. The technical advisory committees for Professional-Technical High Schools and postsecondary programs are required to meet at least twice per academic year and should demonstrate that the committee has taken an active role in its relevant professional-technical education program.

Specific Roles and Responsibilities

As committees are developed and conduct their ongoing business, members may be assigned specific roles and responsibilities that align with individual roles on the committee and within the community.

Industry representatives

- Create and accomplish program of work
- Vote on committee position assignments
- Complete annual member survey

Role of Program Representative

- Work with chair to schedule meetings and create agendas
- Orient new committee members
- Complete program annual summary
- Communicate with PTE Program Manager

Role of Administration

- Invite and appoint new members
- Publish press release naming new members
- List technical advisory committees in school or college publications
- Complete college annual summary (postsecondary only)

Selection of Members and Appointment Process

Committee members should be appointed using the guidelines outlined below and a standard selection process.³ Division representatives, instructors or faculty of the programs, and other staff may *only* serve in an ex-officio capacity.

1. Develop a list of prospective members that include several key characteristics.
 - a. Representatives of:
 - i. business/industry
 - ii. local community
 - iii. general geographic area to be served
 - iv. programs at other schools
 - b. People who:
 - i. have recent related experience
 - ii. are available to attend
 - iii. have an interest in education and the program

³ Idaho State Board of Education, Governing Policies and Procedures, IV(I) outline the appointment process for the Eastern Idaho Technical College Advisory Council.

2. Once the list is compiled, interview prospective members. The interviews should:
 - a. Explain the nature of the committee
 - b. The prospective member's role on the committee
 - c. The terms and length of service
 - d. Gauge the prospective member's level of interest in serving and to what extent their participation would benefit the program
3. Send an invitation letter to prospective new member (signed by appropriate program or school leadership) that includes the date, time, and location of the next committee meeting (see Attachment D for an example).
4. Once the administrator approves the appointment and the member has accepted it, send a formal letter of appointment (see Attachment E for an example).

Committee Meetings

Conducting the First Meeting

The initial committee meeting is critical, as it provides the foundation to engage the interest and support of committee members. The program representative facilitates the meeting until the committee selects a chairperson. It is essential that the program representative contacts members and organizes an agenda well in advance. In addition, the program representative may want to have discussions with new members to ensure that at least one individual is willing to step up as chair.

Organizing and Conducting Meetings

Following the initial meeting, committees may fluctuate in the number of times they meet throughout the academic year. The Annual Program of Work of the committee (see template in Attachment F) helps to determine the frequency of the meetings. Contributions of advisory committee members depend to a great extent on how they are prepared for, and oriented to, their roles. For the committee to be effective, program of work responsibilities should be divided among all members so that no one individual has total responsibility for the committee's success.

The Chairperson

The chairperson collaborates with and gains member participation to make appointments to subcommittees and to determine dates for completion of subcommittee tasks. The chair should be familiar with Roberts' Rules of Order and should have the ability to lead.

The chair's responsibilities include:

- Coordination with committee secretary (program representative) to establish meeting dates and call the committee together when appropriate
- Developing the meeting agenda with the secretary
- Preparing background information and reports as necessary
- Seeking consultants for advice on specific problems
- Presiding at meetings and ensuring agenda and schedules are followed
- Promoting the committee's role as an advisory, not policy-making, body
- Helping members gain consensus on issues
- Reviewing minutes with the secretary for accuracy

- Representing the advisory committee at various official functions (e.g., Professional-Technical Student Organization banquets, school board hearings)
- Assigning/organizing sub-committees, standing committees, and ad hoc committees
- Maintaining communication with members, program representatives, and board members
- Determining strategies for developing and completing the program of work
- Recruiting members for the advisory committee
- Following up on committee decisions to ensure that they are acted upon

The Vice Chairperson

The vice chairperson is familiar with all the duties and responsibilities of the chairperson and will assume these responsibilities in the absence of the chairperson.

The Secretary (Program Representative)

The success of the advisory committee depends a great deal on the program representative, who serves as the committee secretary. The secretary must devote enough time and attention to keep the committee actively involved in the professional-technical education program. The secretary plays a dual role, switching from leader to helper, depending on the needs of the committee.

The secretary's responsibilities include:

- Coordinating meeting arrangements
- Developing meeting agendas with the chairperson and distributing them the committee members in advance of the meeting
- Acting as recorder for the committee (e.g., coordinate all mailings, take minutes, compile committee recommendations for administration)
- Reviewing goals and objectives with the committee
- Providing members with resource materials and program information
- Initiating and facilitating discussion during each meeting
- Providing feedback to members on the results of their recommendations
- Compiling and maintaining contact information and background data from committee members, including e-mail addresses

Ongoing Committee Activities

All members of the Professional-Technical Advisory Committee have the following responsibilities:

- Attend meetings regularly
- Assist with development of the program of work
- Respect other committee member views
- Help reach consensus on issues
- Maintain objectivity and concentrate on the program's needs
- Make recommendations
- Accept assignments for subcommittees

Given their different functions within the education system, industry, and the community, committee members will have a wide variety of roles and responsibilities on the committee. The following list, while not exhaustive, should be useful in determining how committee members can contribute.

Offer Guidance		
Labor market information	On-the-job training techniques	Equipment and technology
Skill gaps	Certifications	Facility design
Marketing/Communications	Needs analysis	Curriculum review
Work Experience/Career Exposure		
Career exploration	Internships/job opportunities	In-service opportunities for teachers
Professional-Technical Student Organizations		
Speakers	Judges	Leadership Development
Financial Support and Advocacy		
Scholarships and fund raising	Support district levies and other legislative efforts	Equipment donation/purchase

Developing the Annual Program of Work

During the first technical advisory committee meeting each academic year, create the program of work (see Attachment F for a template). Investing time in developing a quality program of work will guide the committee for the remainder of the year. Align the program of work with the reasons for having a technical advisory committee. As a reminder, these are:

- Bring focus to important program outcomes
- Bring training expertise to the table – they provide on-the-job training to their employees and can share best practices
- Secure resources for your program – equipment, manpower, expertise
- Provide students and staff with new opportunities – internships, work experiences, exposure to career options
- Connect you with the larger community – committee members have colleagues and friends that they can engage as appropriate
- Advocate on behalf of your program

To make it even simpler, the action items can be developed under the following objectives:

- Outcomes
- Resources – Curriculum, Equipment, Expertise
- Exposure to Work/Careers
- Advocacy

All goals/activities should be formatted as SMART goals – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. A few examples are:

- Provide XX quality work experiences to senior students by March 20XX.
- Secure resources to purchase (or secure a donation) a XXX by December 20XX.
- Recruit XX freshmen to the 20XX “Fundamentals of XXX Course”

Once the program of work is finalized, incorporate a progress review into future meeting agendas. The need for subcommittees will become clear and committee members with expertise in certain areas will gravitate to lend support where they are best positioned to provide it.

Reporting Requirements

In Idaho, technical advisory committees are required to meet at least twice per academic year and should demonstrate that the committee has taken an active role in its relevant professional-technical education program.

The Division requires the following reports be delivered by June 1 each year. Committees should ensure their recordkeeping supports these requirements. Reports should be emailed to: tac@pte.idaho.gov.

- Technical Colleges
 - The Technical Advisory Committee Annual Member Survey (Attachment A) should be completed by each member of the committee.
 - The Technical Advisory Committee Annual College Summary (Attachment B) should be completed by the Dean to summarize the activities of all the technical advisory committees.
 - The Technical Advisory Committee Annual Report (Attachment C) should be completed by program heads and submitted to their Dean. Copies should be provided to the Division along with the Summary (Attachment B).
- Secondary Programs
 - The Technical Advisory Committee Annual Member Survey (Attachment A) should be completed by each member of the committee.
 - The Professional-Technical Program Advisory Committee Annual Report (Attachment G) should be completed by each program representative
 - The Annual Program of Work (Attachment F)

Additional Resources

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) has developed a handbook “Building Advisory Boards that Matter” that provides additional recommendations. It can be purchased at www.acteonline.org/shop.



To be completed by each member of the TAC and submitted to the program head.

The purpose of this report is for the program head to gather the opinions of the TAC members to improve the effectiveness of the committee.

**Technical Advisory Committee
 Annual Member Survey**

Program _____

Academic Year _____

The following are questions for rating your experience on the Technical Advisory Committee this year. Circle the number that best describes your feelings about each statement.

	Agree....Disagree
	1 5
1. The meeting agendas were planned and sent to me in advance.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I clearly understood the meeting agendas and what the committee was trying to accomplish	1 2 3 4 5
3. The meetings were well organized and efficiently run.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I was free to speak at the meetings and make a contribution to the committee.	1 2 3 4 5
5. I understood my role and assignment on this committee.	1 2 3 4 5
6. The committee met its objectives for the program of work we established.	1 2 3 4 5
7. The committee work was important this year.	1 2 3 4 5
8. I feel satisfied with the activities and accomplishments of the committee this year.	1 2 3 4 5
9. The Program Head was responsive to the recommendations of the committee.	1 2 3 4 5
10. I feel my time and effort were well spent in serving as a member of this committee.	1 2 3 4 5

Additional Comments or Suggestions for Improvement:

 Date

 TAC Member



To be completed by deans and submitted to the Division Administrator. The purpose of this report is to summarize the activities of all the TACs of the college to send to the Division administrator.

**Technical Advisory Committee
 Annual College Summary**

College _____

Academic Year _____

College Technical Advisory Committees

Program Name	TAC Active This Year	
	Yes	No

Significant Activities

Program Name	Activities

Additional Comments:

 Date

 Dean



To be completed by program heads and submitted to their dean. The purpose of this report is to advise the dean of the TAC's progress on its program of work for the year and to make recommendations for next year.

**Technical Advisory Committee
 Annual Report**

Program _____

Academic Year _____

Meeting Dates _____

TAC Members

TAC Member Name	Company or Industry Represented	Years on TAC (including this year)

TAC Program of Work

Objectives	Activities	Target Date	Program Head's Evaluation

TAC Recommendations to Program

Recommendation	Budget or Considerations	Outcome



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Program Head's Recommendations for Next Year

Recommendation	Budget or Considerations	Action Plan

Additional Comments:

Date

Program Head



[Your Name] [Street
Address] [City, ST ZIP
Code] April 20, 2006

Mr. Con Sumer Title
Company
Street Address
Your Town, Idaho 83300

RE: LETTER OF INVITATION TO ATTEND COMMITTEE MEETING

Dear Mr. Sumer:

Because of your experience and demonstrated competency in the field of **(program area)**, the **(Governing Board or trustees)** of the **(school) (institution)** believe that you may be able perform a valuable service to the institution and business community as a member of the **(Committee title)** Technical Advisory Committee of **(name of school)**.

An advisory committee is composed of outstanding business and civic leaders in the community and is directed toward achieving closer cooperation between business and education in providing Professional-Technical Education opportunities and training for prospective students in our community.

We would appreciate it if you would give consideration to this invitation to attend the next meeting of **(program area)** Advisory Committee to discuss your potential membership on the committee. The next meeting will be held on **(date)**. Please let us know if you are able to attend.

Sincerely,

Administrator and/or
Chair of Committee



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[Your Name] [Street
Address] [City, ST ZIP
Code] April 20, 2006

Mr. Con Sumer
Title
Company
Street Address
Your Town, Idaho 83300

RE: LETTER OF APPOINTMENT

Dear Mr. Sumer:

This letter is to inform you that your appointment to the _____ Technical Advisory Committee is effective beginning _____, 20 __, and ending, 20 __.

The (first/next) meeting of the committee will be held in _____(place) at _____(time) on _____(date).

We wish to thank you for your interest as indicated by your acceptance of this committee appointment. We appreciate your willingness to assist us in supporting Professional-Technical Education opportunities for students in our community.

Sincerely,

Administrator and/or
Chair of Committee



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To be created by the TAC each year. The purpose of this document is to direct the work for the technical advisory committee for the year.

**Technical Advisory Committee
 Program of Work**

Program _____

Academic Year _____

TAC Members

TAC Member Name	Company or Industry Represented	Years on TAC (including this year)

TAC Program of Work

Objectives	Activities	Committee Member(s)	Target Date

