

15 U.S.C. § 4301 *et seq.* ("the Act"), the National Center for Manufacturing Sciences, Inc. ("NCMS") filed written notifications simultaneously with the Attorney General and the Federal Trade Commission disclosing changes in its membership status. The notifications were filed for the purpose of extending the Act's provisions limiting the recovery of antitrust plaintiffs to actual damages under specified circumstances. Specifically, the Rapid Response Manufacturing project, formed predominately of NCMS membership, is pursuing a joint research and development venture focusing on generic enabling technologies in the general area of computer integrated manufacturing.

Changes to this venture area as follows: Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, NY has been added as a participant in the project. Cimflex Teknowledge Corporation has changed its name to Teknowledge Corporation and ICAD, Inc. has changed its name to Concentra Corporation. The MacNeal-Schwendler Corporation, Reston, VA, acquired Aries Technology, Inc. and subsequently became a participant in the project.

No other changes have been made in either the membership or planned activity of the group research project. Membership in this group research project remains open, and NCMS intends to file additional written notification disclosing all changes in membership.

On July 21, 1992, NCMS filed its original notification of the Rapid Response Manufacturing project pursuant to Section 6(a) of the Act. The Department of Justice published a notice in the Federal Register pursuant to Section 6(b) of the Act on November 19, 1992 (57 FR 54610). The last notification was filed on November 1, 1996. The Department of Justice published a notice in the Federal Register on December 4, 1996 (61 FR 64370).

Constance K. Robinson,
Director of Operations, Antitrust Division.
[FR Doc. 96-32161 Filed 12-18-96; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 4410-11-M

FEDERAL MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meeting

December 12, 1996.

TIME AND DATE: 2:30 p.m., Thursday, December 12, 1996.

PLACE: Room 6005, 6th Floor, 1730 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

STATUS: Closed [Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(10)].

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED: It was determined by a unanimous vote of the Commissioners that the Commission consider and act upon the following in closed session:

1. *Secretary of Labor v. Ambrosia Coal and Construction Co., et al.*, Docket Nos. PENN 93-233 and 94-15.

No earlier announcement of the scheduling of this meeting was possible.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFO: Jean Ellen, (202) 653-5629/(202)708-9300 for TDD Relay/1-800-877-8339 for toll free.

Jean H. Ellen,

Chief Docket Clerk.

[FR Doc. 96-32343 Filed 12-17-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6735-01-M

NATIONAL CREDIT UNION ADMINISTRATION

Sunshine Act Meeting

The National Credit Union Administration Board determined that its business requires the addition of the following item, which is closed to public observation, to the previously announced closed meeting (Federal Register, page 66337, Tuesday, December 17, 1996) scheduled for 11:00 a.m., Thursday, December 19, 1996.

4. Personnel Action(s). Closed pursuant to exemptions (2) and (6).

The Board voted unanimously that agency business requires that this item be considered with less than the usual seven days notice, that it be closed to the public, and that no earlier announcement of this change was possible.

The previously announced items are:

1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Closed Meeting.

2. Administrative Action under Section 206 of the Federal Credit Union Act. Closed pursuant to exemptions (8), (9)(A)(ii), and (9)(B).

3. Administrative Action under Part 745, NCUA's Rules and Regulations. Closed pursuant to exemption (6).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Becky Baker, Secretary of the Board, Telephone 703-518-6304.

Becky Baker,

Secretary of the Board.

[FR Doc. 96-32408 Filed 12-17-96; 2:52 pm]

BILLING CODE 7535-01-M

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

United States Antarctic Program (USAP) Blue Ribbon Panel; Notice of Meeting

In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-

463, as amended), the National Science Foundation announces the following meeting.

Name and Committee Code: United States Antarctic (USAP) Program Blue Ribbon Panel (#1531)

Date and Time: 1997. January 4, 8 am-3 pm;

Place: NSF, International Antarctic Center, Christchurch, New Zealand

Type of Meeting: Open

Contact Person: Guy G. Guthridge, Office of Polar Programs, Room 755, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22230. Telephone: (703) 306-1031

Minutes: May be obtained from the contact person listed above.

Purpose of Meeting: Examine a full range of infrastructure, management, and scientific options for the United States Antarctic Program so that the Foundation will be able to maintain the high quality of the research and implement U.S. policy in Antarctica under realistic budget scenarios.

Agenda: Review notes from 29 Dec-3 Jan visit to USAP facilities and begin report drafting.

Dated: December 13, 1996

M. Rebecca Winkler,

Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 96-32172 Filed 12-18-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7555-01-M

NATIONAL SKILL STANDARDS BOARD

Request for Comments on a Proposal To Establish a Voluntary National Skill Standards System

BACKGROUND: This notice requests public comment on the National Skill Standards Board's (NSSB) Proposal to Establish a Voluntary National Skill Standards System. The National Skill Standards Act of 1994 (Pub. L. 103-227, Title V, Section 504(a)) requires the Board to "identify broad clusters of major occupations that involve 1 or more than 1 industry in the United States and that share characteristics that are appropriate for the development of common skill standards. * * * Prior to identifying broad clusters of major occupations * * * the National Board shall engage in extensive public consultation, including solicitation of public comment on proposed clusters through publication in the Federal Register." For the purposes of the National Skill Standards Act, the "sectors of the economy" described in

the proposal constitute the "clusters" required by the Act.

To solicit the views of all potential stakeholders in a voluntary national skill standards system, the NSSB has conducted six public hearings and a two-day National Skill Standards Forum on September 16 and 17, 1996. In addition, the NSSB or its staff have held numerous smaller meetings with stakeholder representatives. Stakeholder representatives have also made presentations at public meetings of the National Skill Standards Board.

DEADLINE FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Comments on the proposal must be postmarked no later than January 21, 1997. Comments must be in written form, and two copies must be provided, addressed to NSSB Proposal Coordinator, National Skill Standards Board, 1441 L St., NW, Suite 9000, Washington, DC 20005.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Marjorie Haas, National Skill Standards Board, 1441 L St., NW, Suite 9000, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 254-8628.

PROPOSAL

National Skill Standards Board
Proposal To Establish a Voluntary
National Skill Standards System

The 1994 National Skill Standards Act charged the National Skill Standards Board with "stimulating the development and adoption of a voluntary national system of skill standards." Skill standards specify the knowledge and competence required to successfully perform in a given occupation or field. By enhancing the skills of the workforce, skill standards will increase the productivity, economic growth, and competitiveness of America and American businesses. Skill standards will benefit all stakeholders:

- Businesses can use skill standards to maximize efficiency in recruiting, hiring, deploying, training, and promoting employees. Firms can also use skill standards to pursue the goal of becoming a high performance work organization.
- Unions can use the standards to ensure that workers have a greater voice at the workplace, and benefit from enhanced career and job opportunities.
- Workers can use the standards to advance their careers, protect themselves against dislocation, and enhance their ability to reenter the workforce.
- Students and jobseekers can use the standards to understand and acquire the skills needed to attain high wage jobs and successful careers.
- Educators and trainers preparing people for work can use the standards

to better meet business requirements, and to improve the school-to-work transition for individuals.

The Board itself will not set skill standards, but rather establish the guidelines used to endorse standards created by groups called "voluntary partnerships" in the 1994 law. The law requires that voluntary partnerships include employer, union, worker, community, and education and training representatives. The standards endorsed by the NSSB will cover workers in entry-level through first line supervisory positions.

**Grouping Jobs for the Purpose of
Creating Skill Standards**

The law required the Board to "identify broad clusters of major occupations" for the purpose of setting standards, for several compelling reasons.

- First, it would be extraordinarily confusing and inefficient if employers, unions, workers, and educators had to navigate a "system" in which different standards covered the same industry or occupation.
- Second, it's unwise to set standards that are so narrow that workers lack the versatility to adapt to changes within their firms, or cannot perform alternative tasks when the need arises
- Third, one of the goals of skill standards is to facilitate the acquisition of skills not just for a single job or occupation, but for a career. For this purpose it is necessary to group jobs in such a way that individuals clearly understand what skills and knowledge they need to obtain better jobs within a broad field.

The law also requires that the voluntary partnerships establish standards within the occupational categories designated by the Board.

To meet these goals, the NSSB has divided the economy into 16 sectors. The sectors are designed to accurately reflect employment patterns, and to make sense to the employers, unions, workers, students, and educators who will use the system. The 16 sectors combine the industry categories that are most familiar to employers with the concept of an occupation, which is how most individuals think of their jobs.

Most of the sectors align closely with traditional industry categories used by trade associations and in national classification systems. Because some functions are common to many industries, 3 of the 16 sectors of the economy (business and administrative services; property management and building maintenance services; and research, development and technical services) cover multiple industries.

The 16 Economic Sectors

- Agricultural Production and Natural Resource Management
 - Mining and Extraction Operations
 - Construction Operations
 - Manufacturing, Installation and Repair
 - Energy and Utilities Operations
 - Transportation Operations
 - Communications
 - Wholesale/Retail Sales
 - Hospitality and Tourism Services
 - Financial Services
 - Health and Social Services
 - Education and Training Services
 - Public Administration, Legal, and Protective Services
 - Business and Administrative Services
 - Property Management and Building Maintenance Services
 - Research, Development and Technical Services
- The Board will begin its work with three of these sectors: Manufacturing, Installation and Repair; Wholesale/Retail Sales; and Business and Administrative Services (together these three sectors employ roughly half of all front-line workers). The NSSB will collaborate closely with the voluntary partnerships, learn from their experience in these three sectors, and use the lessons learned to improve the national skill standards system.

Skill Standards Framework

The following Skill Standards Framework will be used to create a system of voluntary national skill standards.

Skill Standards

The Skill Standards Framework for setting standards covers three types of knowledge and skill, ranging from the broad to the specific: core, concentrations, an specialties. By "standard" we mean a performance standard, that is, what one needs to know and be able to do and how well one needs to be able to do it.

- Core knowledge and skills are those common to, and essential for, the entire sector. For example, in manufacturing the core might include understanding what quality control is and possessing the ability to implement or apply various means of ensuring quality.

• Concentration knowledge and skills cover a broad area within the sector. Such knowledge and skills would be more targeted than the core level, but less specific than the specialty level described below. For example, in manufacturing this might cover a broad function, such as product assembly.

- Specialty knowledge and skills are the most detailed component in the skill

standards framework, targeting particular jobs or perhaps the needs of specialized firms. An example might be the knowledge and skills necessary for a specific occupation in steel production.

The standards for the core, the concentrations and the specialties will each be described in terms of the (1) academic skills and knowledge, (2) occupational skills and knowledge, and (3) employability skills and knowledge required to carry out the critical work functions for each of these three levels of the skills standards framework.

By *Critical work functions* we mean major chunks of the work that must be performed and which, taken together, constitute the critical or principal responsibilities of the individuals involved. For a chef, making sauces or planning the meals might be critical work functions; for a metal worker, the critical work functions might include statistical process control of product quality and setting up computer-controlled milling machines to perform specified operations. We do not mean by critical work functions a list of all the

tasks required to perform the critical work functions.

Academic skills and knowledge mean the skills and knowledge associated with the academic disciplines, including but not limited to English language arts (speaking, reading and writing), mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry, etc.

Occupational skills and knowledge mean the technical skills and knowledge particular to a specified trade or occupation or group of trades or occupations. For example, a technician who repairs and maintains small engines must understand how engines work, how to diagnose problems and fix them, and how to find and order the necessary parts.

Employability skills and knowledge mean the skill and knowledge needed to function effectively in almost all kinds of high performance work environments, but which is of neither kind described above. We have in mind such things as the ability to work effectively with others, to understand systems and how they function, to take responsibility for one's own work, to

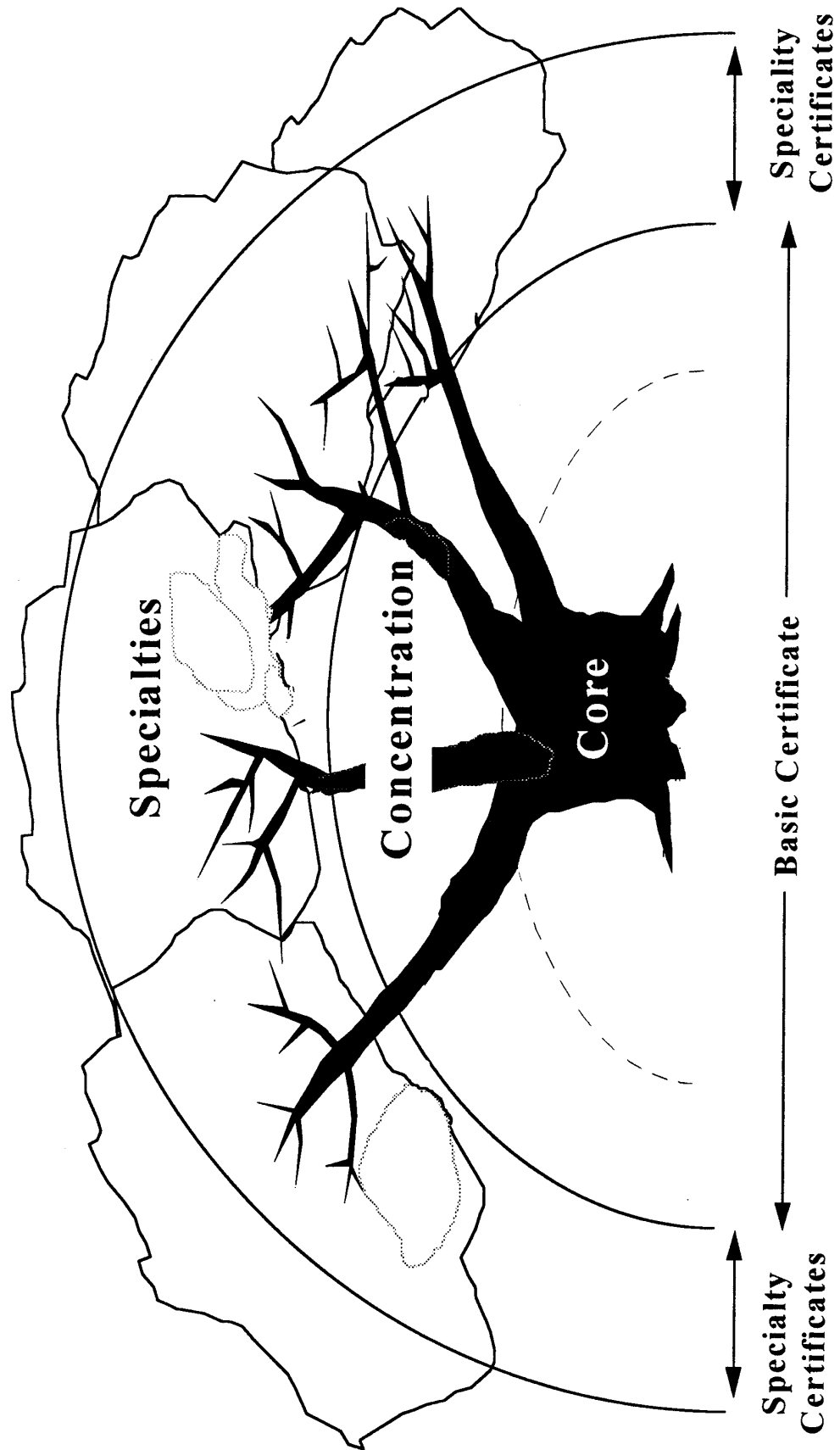
solve problems as they arise, and other skills of the kind described in the U.S. Department of Labor's Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) report.

In carrying out its statutory responsibility to establish economic sectors, the Board defines the area within which voluntary partnerships establish the core standards (which are common to the entire sector). But the voluntary partnership itself will designate concentration and specialty levels. A voluntary partnership might designate as few as zero, or as many as six, concentrations, but there will be no limit on the number of specialties. In deciding whether or not to endorse the work of the voluntary partnerships, the Board will use criteria described in a later section.

The framework might be pictured as a tree, with the core corresponding to the trunk, the concentrations corresponding to the branches, and the specialties corresponding to the leaves (see figure).

BILLING CODE 4510-23-P

Proposed Framework



Certificates Offered

Although there is the potential for three levels of knowledge and skills, there will be only two types of certificates: a basic certificate will encompass either the core alone (if there are no concentrations) or the core plus one concentration level, and a specialty certificate will cover the specialty level of knowledge and skills. A voluntary partnership could establish basic certificates for up to six concentrations.

The voluntary partnership will establish the standards for the basic certificate(s), which will then be endorsed by the NSSB if it meets the criteria described below. Outside groups (which might include trade associations, accredited educational institutions and training providers, and recognized third-party assessment groups) will recommend the standards for specialty certificates. These groups will present standards for prospective specialty certificates to the voluntary partnerships for review and endorsement, in the same manner that the voluntary partnerships will present standards for basic certificates to the NSSB for review and endorsement.

In their review of prospective specialty certificates, the voluntary partnerships will use the same criteria that the NSSB will use to review the work of the voluntary partnerships themselves (these criteria are described below). The voluntary partnerships also will ensure that the standards for prospective specialty certificates build directly on the standards for the basic certificate(s). Specialty certificates could cover overlapping—or even identical—jobs or functions. By allowing competition among those who develop standards at the detailed specialty level, the skill standards system can adapt to changes in technology, work organization, and customer preferences.

The Board will require each voluntary partnership to develop a plan to meet the needs of experienced workers. The plan will include in its skill standards system an opportunity to acquire and demonstrate through assessment the skill and knowledge required for the basic certificate.

Voluntary partnerships may begin the analytical process of developing standards at the broad core level(s), or by reviewing the narrower specialties if these already exist in the sector. However, the NSSB will only endorse the work of voluntary partnerships that submit basic certificates to the Board before the voluntary partnership endorses specialty certificates.

Criteria for the Skill Standards

In order to qualify for Board endorsement, the skill standards system recommended by the voluntary partnerships (or the outside groups in the case of the specialties) will have to meet the following criteria (in addition to other criteria specified in the National Skill Standards Act):

- Follow a common nomenclature identified by the Board;
- Describe in clear terms the critical work functions specific to the core, concentrations, and specialties;
- Describe the academic, employability, and occupational knowledge and skills necessary to perform the critical work functions for the core, concentrations, and specialties;
- Adhere to statutory requirements and Board policy on assessment;
- Be consistent with civil rights law;
- Meet or exceed the highest applicable standards used in the United States, including registered apprenticeship standards;
- Be benchmarked to the best international standards;
- Be forward looking; and
- Include a plan for the updating and continuous improvement of standards and certificates.

These criteria will pertain to all three levels of standards, as well as the two types of certificates. However, as noted earlier, the voluntary partnerships—not the NSSB—would review the specialty certificates for adherence to the NSSB's policies.

Some of these criteria are required by the National Skill Standards Act, including consistency with civil rights law; meeting or exceeding the highest applicable U.S. standards; and procedures to periodically revise and update the system.

Signed at Washington, DC this 13th day of December, 1996.

Edie West,

Executive Director, National Skill Standards Board.

[FR Doc. 96-32224 Filed 12-18-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4510-23-M

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Abnormal Occurrence Reports: Implementation of Section 208 Energy Reorganization Act of 1974; Final Policy Statement

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Final policy statement.

SUMMARY: This final policy statement presents the revised criteria the

Commission will use in submitting the annual abnormal occurrence (AO) reports to Congress and the public in a timely manner as stated in Section 208 of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, as amended. The AO policy statement has been revised to provide more specific criteria for determining those incidents and events that the Commission considers significant from the standpoint of public health and safety for reporting to Congress, and to make the AO policy consistent with recent changes to NRC regulations. The revised AO criteria contain more discrete reporting thresholds making them easier to use and ensuring more consistent application of the intended AO reporting policy set forth by the Commission.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 19, 1996.

ADDRESSES: The proposed policy statement published in the Federal Register (January 9, 1996; 61 FR 661), and the comments received may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW. (Lower Level), Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Harriet Karagiannis, Office for Analysis and Evaluation of Operational Data, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, telephone: (301) 415-6377, internet: hxxk@nrc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

- I. Background
- II. Summary of Public Comments and NRC's Response
- III. Summary of Agreement State Comments and NRC's Response
- IV. The Commission Policy

I. Background

Section 208 of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 (Pub. L. 93-438, 42 U.S.C. 5848), as amended, required the Commission to submit to Congress each quarter a report listing for that period any AOs at or associated with any facility which is licensed or otherwise regulated pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, or pursuant to this Act. In a letter to the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, dated October 1, 1993, the NRC recommended to Congress a change in the AO report publication frequency from quarterly to yearly. As a result, Senate 790, "Reports Elimination Act," Public Law 104-66, was signed by President Clinton on December 21, 1995, changing the AO report to a yearly publication.

For the purposes of Section 208 of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, as amended, an AO is an unscheduled incident or event which the Commission has determined to be