ASNT'S POSITION PAPER ON INTERNATIONAL PERSONNEL CERTIFICATION

Preamble

The American Society for Nondestructive Testing believes that accurate, efficient performance of nondestructive testing is essential to satisfactory performance and life of all engineered components and structures. Effective qualification and certification of NDT personnel is one of the necessary steps to achieving proper performance of NDT.

Prudent and cost effective usage of resources demands that the number of different certification systems employed in industry be minimized to avoid redundant and overlapping requirements and examinations. The increasing interdependence and trade among nations favors establishment of an NDT personnel certification system flexibly structured and organized to permit accommodation and harmonization of the existing practices of nations presently engaged in NDT, within a framework which will assure the competence of all NDT personnel.

ASNT supports establishment of such an international certification system, and will continue to work actively to aid in bringing it to fruition at the earliest possible moment.

Current ASNT Programs

- 1. SNT-TC-1A
- 2. ASNT Level III Program
- 3. ASNT Standard for PQ and Certification
- 4. National NDT Level III Certification Program

Since the conception of the Society in 1941, the organization has historically sought to provide the services and programs to industry that would ensure the successful practice of NDT.

The first document with significant impact on this industry was published by ASNT in 1968. Recommended Practice SNT-TC-1A was created to provide guidelines for the employer in the qualifications and certification of NDT personnel. As a result of this initiative, the document has successfully been used around the world and marks a milestone in the development of NDT.

Later in the mid-1970's after SNT-TC-1A had matured, it was realized that more emphasis must be placed on the Level III's qualifications and technical abilities. In 1976, the ASNT Level III Program was introduced. The program provides written examinations to measure the technical knowledge expected of the NDT Level III. The ASNT Level III Program has been recognized and used in numerous countries in addition to the U.S.

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The experience gained from these two programs has resulted in the development by ASNT of an NDT Personnel Qualification and Certification Standard using a consensus process. Instead of guidelines as offered in SNT-TC-1A, this ASNT Standard establishes minimum requirements for the qualification and certification of all levels of NDT personnel, including the mandatory central certification of Level III personnel. The most recent development is a National NDT Level III Certification Program. This program builds on the ASNT Level III program by providing for comprehensive examinations of Level III candidates, including industry-segment specific and hands-on practical examinations. The intent of this Program and the ASNT Standard is to provide industry a standardized process for qualification and certification of NDT personnel which is recognized universally, thereby eliminating redundant certification processes.

International Certification System: Essential Requirements

The American Society for Nondestructive Testing believes that the following considerations are essential requirements of any international certification system if it is to be acceptable to the international community and effective in assuring the competence of NDT personnel:

- 1. The system should provide a standardized process, e.g. three levels of certification, based on training, experience and examinations, to simplify comparisons among national systems with the ultimate goal of allowing nations to agree on the equivalence of different systems. It must be sufficiently flexible so as to be adaptable to individual national preferences and practices as dictated by cultural differences. The system shall require that the highest level of certification, e.g. Level III, shall be certified by a central, national certifying body such as ASNT.
- 2. The system must provide objective criteria for assessment of the competence of all members of the national certifying bodies which establish national certification criteria and issue or revoke certifications. This is necessary to assure the credibility of these bodies and of the certifications that they issue.
- 3. The system must provide means to minimize the impact of its adoption upon nations already having well-established national systems. Acceptable alternatives should be provided to provisions which overturn existing viable practices, or gradual, phased introduction of requirements should be acceptable.
- 4. The system should require establishment of a central register of currently certified personnel in each nation operated by the national certification board, with the ultimate goal of providing an international register.
- 5. The system must provide for certification of both generalists and specialists. This might be accomplished by permitting certification if either sector examinations or general examinations are passed in the specific and practical portions, in addition to the passing of general or basic method examinations.
- 6. The system must include qualification requirements for instructors, trainers or teachers assigned to training or educating NDT personnel to assure that instructors are knowledgeable and competent in the material to be taught.

- 7. The system should require that training and certification activities are to be conducted entirely independently of each other, and that the entire body of knowledge is to be taught, not just the material thought to be covered by the examinations. The intent of training shall be to teach the subject, not merely to enable passing of the examinations.
- 8. The system shall require periodic reassessment or reevaluation of competence of all certified personnel. This need not require reexaminations, but shall be carefully specified and administered to assure that competence exists at the time of the reassessment.
- 9. The system shall provide that each candidate for certification shall, prior to certification, subscribe in writing to a legally-binding, published code of behavior describing in detail the type, nature and degree of activities which are prohibited to all certificants.
- 10. The system shall provide a detailed, published procedure for implementing sanctions against any certificant violating the code of behavior. The procedure shall include thorough provisions for due process to prevent abuse, and shall provide that the sanctions may include loss of certification for life and criminal prosecution.

What ASNT Is Now Working Toward

In 1978 ASNT reemphasized the Committee on International Relations (IRC) due to growing globalization of businesses. The new goal was to promote cooperation between related international societies which would help pursue ASNT's commitment toward world harmonization.

Since then, ASNT has worked closely with the world NDT community participating in various activities such as the International Committee on Nondestructive Testing (ICNDT), the International Standards Organization (ISO), and promoting various conferences including the 11th World Conference in Las Vegas. Most recently, the IRC has worked towards bridging the gap with our U.S. neighbors by helping to establish the first Pan American Conference on NDT.

Another initiative at this time is the Industrial Radiography Radiation Safety Central Certification Program (IRRSP). As with the previously mentioned certification programs, this effort is intended to establish standard qualification and examination requirements for personnel performing safe industrial radiography functions. Additionally, ASNT is currently in the process of studying the merits of establishing a National Central Certification Program for Level III personnel.