The role of professional societies in promoting radiation protection education and training

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IRPA is…

**THE** international association of radiological protection practitioners, joining through national or regional Associate Societies

51 Associate Societies
64 Countries
About 18,000 individual members:
from regulatory bodies, industry, medicine, research, education, …
IRPA’s MISSION

- IRPA is the international professional association for radiation protection.

- IRPA promotes excellence in the practice of RP through national and regional Associate Societies and RP professionals by providing benchmarks of good practice and enhancing professional competence and networking.

- IRPA promotes the application of the highest standards of professional conduct, skills and knowledge for the benefit of individual and society.
IRPA’s VISION for 2020

• IRPA is recognized by its members and stakeholders as the international voice of the radiation protection profession in the enhancement of radiation protection culture and practice worldwide.
IRPA’s Strategic Plan

GOAL 3
“Promote excellence in radiation protection professionals”

Guiding principles for establishing a radiation protection culture
Action Plan on Education and Training
IRPA Guiding Principles for Establishing a RP Culture
The importance of education:

“Culture is learned, passed on and changed by a pattern of basic assumptions, cultural paradigms, and by groups of people who have shared significant problems, and who have taken in new members. When taught to new members, culture has a stabilizing function, and basic cultural assumptions serve to stabilize a group”
IRPA Guiding Principles for Establishing a RP Culture

The importance of education:

“Radiation protection culture is a learned way of life”

- It is obvious that a way of life should start with a proper education
- RP Culture must be present in all the academic curricula on radiation applications
There are at least four ways to impact RP culture:

– **Strong leadership** focusing on operational RP culture, and modelling, reinforcing and coaching safety behaviours;

– **Educating and training the people involved in RP applications**;

– Creating **positive and total awareness** about RP at working places;

– Establishing adequate and **proper communication** processes among all the practitioners involved in RP applications.
4.2 CULTURE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

As a general rule, it can be assumed that the usual ways to establish and improve levels of culture include continuous educational processes, access to multimedia (e-learning, applied games, etc.), and effective communication amongst workers, between directors / managers and workers, and between workers, patients and the public.

Continuous learning allows a proper sharing of competence looking for new and better RP methods.
4.2 CULTURE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Education and training contribute to a high level of RP culture by addressing the above issues, and also by:

- continued proactive updating for professionals and the general staff, on the **evolution of scientific knowledge and related judgments of relevance in RP**. Such information can be presented by different means, e.g. newsletters, discussions, etc.;
- **raising** an adequate **awareness** among people directly or indirectly involved in RP.
- making sure that all radiological aspects are well known to workers, and everybody has the **correct training** to take care, prevent unnecessary exposure and evaluate RP aspects;
- (...)

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IRPA Guiding Principles for Establishing a RP Culture
4.2 CULTURE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Education and training contribute to a high level of RP culture by addressing the above issues, and also by:

- (...) 
- emphasizing that radiation protection culture is not an established area of knowledge, but one of continuous change and update, not only in its contents, but also in its approaches.

- Training is undertaken and updated periodically, and testing is done to evaluate training efficacy.
- Learning from events, incidents and near misses is an important part of culture development.
General considerations:

- IRPA Associate Societies are not universities and their E&T activities are not intended for an academic diploma but for professional enhancement.
- Associate Societies do not offer courses intended for certification of RP professionals, which is the role of authorities in cooperation either with universities or specialised training centres.
- Activities of the Associate Societies on E&T focus either on general training for radiation workers or on specific topics for update (continuous education).
General considerations:

IRPA Associate Societies are not universities and their E&T activities are not intended for an academic diploma but for professional enhancement.

IRPA should

- promote and support,
- provide networking,
- provide guidance

to E&T activities of its Associate Societies individually or, preferably, in cooperation.
IRPA Strategic Programme for 2012 – 2016

• Continuing priorities:
  – “To embed the sharing of good practice and professionalism in Associate Societies and individual members through the development of Guiding Principles, the support and coordination of education and training and the convening of effective meetings and Congresses”
  – To increase the efforts of IRPA to support young practitioners and scientists in their work in radiation protection, in their education and training, and in their efforts to become members of the radiation protection community

• Full support to the Education & Training Plan
• Task Group on E&T
• Task Group on Certification of Radiation Protection Expert
IRPA Task Group on E & T

- To develop ideas and establish priorities for the implementation of the IRPA E&T Plan
- To periodically review and update if necessary the IRPA E&T Plan

IRPA TG on Certification of Radiation Protection Expert

- Focus on developing guiding principles for a certification process for radiation protection experts which could be initiated by ASs in their countries/regions
Education & Training Plan

• Three main lines:

A. Cooperation with international and regional organizations dealing with E&T in Radiation Protection: IAEA, ETRAP conferences, ENETRAP/EUTERP, AAHP

IRPA is representing the profession views
Education & Training Plan

• Three main lines:

A. Cooperation with international and regional organizations dealing with E&T in Radiation Protection: IAEA, ETRAP conference, ENETRAP/EUTERP, AAHP

B. E&T actions within IRPA:
  • Refresher courses
  • Discussion forums during IRPA Congresses
  • Webpage: with searchable database of announcements and resources available

C. Support to E&T actions organized by Associate Societies:
  • Share, Coordinate, Networking, Young generations
B. E&T actions within IRPA (1)

Refresher courses at IRPA congresses:

– Inclusion of Refresher Courses and Seminars within each IRPA Conference

– Evaluation and follow-up (questionnaires to participants)

– Exploring live webcast and podcast …

– Improving website accessibility to texts and presentations (including RC from IRPA Regional Congresses) (searching engine)
B. E&T actions within IRPA (2)
E&T on the IRPA website

• IRPA Definition of Radiation Protection Expert (RPE)

• IRPA Education & Training: Presentation

• Reference documents
  – The role of IRPA in education and training of radiation protection professionals (2003)
    • Christian Wernli, David Cancio and Jack Valentin
      IRPA Executive Council Education and Training Committee
  – IRPA’s Contribution to E&T Activities for Radiation Protection Professionals (2009)
    • Eduardo Gallego and Alfred Hefner
      IRPA Executive Council

• IRPA Congresses Training Material:
  – IRPA 11 (2004) 16 Refresher Courses (Text+Powerpoint in one file)
  – IRPA 12 (2008) 20 Refresher Courses + 3 Seminars (Powerpoint)
  – IRPA 13 (2012) 21 Refresher Courses (Powerpoint with audio)
B. E&T actions within IRPA (2)

E&T on the IRPA website

- New web-based database on E&T*

*Donated by the Spanish Society of Radiological Protection*
B. E&T actions within IRPA (2)
E&T on the IRPA website

- **New web-based database on E&T:**
  - Announcement of future events
  - Available resources (documents; presentations; training material in general)

- **Objectives:**
  - To announce training courses or activities
  - To share and disseminate training material and resources
  - To provide a useful tool for searching

- **Users:** all RP professionals

- **Managers:** One contact person per Associate Society

- **Access the database (beta version)**
C. Support to E&T actions organized by the Associate Societies (1)

IRPA AS seminars, short courses, summer (or winter) schools on specialized topics.

- **Promote coordination:**
  - By conducting surveys to have a complete picture
  - Web-base database with searching engine in the website
  - IRPA sponsoring would be granted to those activities which clearly and openly look for professional enhancement within the IRPA family.
C. Support to E&T actions organized by the Associate Societies (2)

IRPA Stimulation and follow-up of E & T activities:

• Stimulate the creation of “E & T networks” within IRPA:
  — for instance by those societies sharing language (e.g. Latin-American societies together with Spain and Portugal)
  — or belonging to the same region (e.g. European Radiation Protection Young Scientists Exchange Network, with pilot project for schools and universities with participation from ÖVS, FS, SFRP, NVS, NSRP and SRP)
  — with dedicated space in the website
Attract and engage young generations

- Attract young professionals to IRPA, by initiatives like the Awards for young professionals or scientists at every IRPA Regional and International Congresses

- Creation of a Young Professional network
  - Launched at IRPA13
  - To integrate young radiation protection professionals more closely into the activities of the IRPA
What role can play the IRPA Associate Societies?

• AS can contribute significantly to continuous education of their members

• IRPA can help!
  – By sharing contributions to the IRPA database on E&T events and resources,
  – By promoting coordinated activities,
  – By encouraging the creation of E&T networks sharing language or regional proximity
  – By the new young professionals network