

# **Future Problem Solving Program of New Jersey**

**To:** Coaches and Evaluators, Team and Individual components  
**From:** Jason Navarino, Assistant Evaluation Director  
**Date:** Sunday, September 19, 2004  
**Re:** **Changes and Updates to the International Guidelines in New Jersey for 2004-05**

The International Governing Council of FPS approved at its June 2004 meeting all of the evaluation changes put out for piloting during the 2003-04 school year (point scale changes, changes in the descriptors for Clarity in Step 1, and a reduction in the severity of the penalty for using absolute verbs in Step 2) as permanent changes. In addition, **the Governing Council agreed to put out for piloting a substantial change in the rules governing Step 4 (Criteria) of the booklet competition, and Dr. Jeanne Carlson and the NJ FPS Board of Directors approved the state's participation in the piloting.** The Board agreed that the changes will likely be permanently adopted by the Governing Council within two years, and so it is to the benefit of NJ FPS participants to introduce them to the changes as soon as possible.

As this piloted change has not yet been incorporated into the Key Tips or Evaluations Guidelines documents put out by the International Office (and available on the NJ FPS website: <http://www.njfps.org>), this letter describes the change in detail for the benefit of coaches and evaluators. In addition, this letter reiterates the amendments to the international guidelines made by the state program that are applicable at the state level of competition (both Practice Problems, the Qualifying Problem, and the State Bowl) and that have been in place in New Jersey for some time. Coaches and competitors (and evaluators) who advance to the International Conference should note that international evaluators are required to adhere strictly to the international guidelines, and may not be familiar with the state-level changes explained in this letter.

Please note that the annual **Coaches' Training** session will be held on **Friday, October 15 at 10am at the Fords Library in Fords, NJ**. This year's meeting will be very important, as the evaluation and rules changes described in this letter will be discussed in depth there. Also, coaches and evaluators should be aware that the NJ FPS Board of Directors holds its annual meeting on or about the last Saturday in June of each year. The 2005 meeting has tentatively scheduled for July 9. All coaches and evaluators are strongly encouraged to attend these meetings, as they play a crucial role in the future planning and direction of the state program. In addition, all coaches and competitors are invited and encouraged to go to <http://www.fpsp.org/topicsandcalendar.htm> in order to learn more about the FPS topics for 2004-05 and for 2005-06, and to vote on topics for 2006-07.

## **Piloted Change**

The rules governing how to correctly write a Step 4 criterion (measure of degree, single dimension, worded in the desired direction) remain the same. The three descriptors measuring the applicability and relevance of criteria – Target, Stock, and Not Applicable/Relevant – have been replaced by four new descriptors – Specific, Modified, Generic, and Not Applicable/Relevant.

- A **Generic** criterion is a stock idea that can be applied to solutions of any underlying problem. This is the same definition as a Stock criterion under the old rules.

- A **Modified** criterion is one whose core idea is generic but that has been embellished with details that connect it to the future scene and/or underlying problem. Adding a relevant target group/population to a stock criterion, which would qualify a criterion for Target status under the old rules, would fall into this category under the new rules.
- A **Specific** criterion is one whose core idea is unique to the future scene and the underlying problem and cannot be easily applied to a variety of other future scenes. A criterion that directly relates to a team's Key Verb Phrase or Purpose from its underlying problem would fall into this category.
- A criterion that is improperly written or that does not relate at all to the future scene or underlying problem would continue to be marked as **Not Applicable/Relevant**.

Examples of each category are given on the attached sheet. Specific criteria receive 3 points each toward Applicability and Relevance in Steps 4-5, Modified criteria receive 2 points each, Generic criteria receive 1 point each, and Not Applicable/Relevant criteria receive no points. This raises the total possible Applicability and Relevance points in Steps 4-5 from 10 to 15.

### **New Jersey Amendments to International Guidelines**

1. Underlying Problems in Step 2 that restate, broaden, or are irrelevant to the charge of the future scene are given 1 point for adequacy and 1 point for focus, and the Step 3 score for booklets with such UPs is reduced by half, since such UPs are assumed to oversimplify the task of generating solutions.
2. In New Jersey, students are required to explain for each solution idea in Step 3 both what their solution idea is, AND how the idea accomplishes the Purpose of their UP in Step 2, in order to receive a grade of R (relevant). Additional details of 'who,' 'how' and/or 'why' (in regards to the KVP, not the Purpose) are required to receive a grade of E (elaborate). International guidelines permit the purpose explanation to be counted as a 'why' explanation, but this is not the case at the state level.
3. If the solution idea in Step 3 from which the Action Plan in Step 6 originates is deemed irrelevant to the UP, the Action Plan is assigned an automatic total score of five points (one point in each category).

# Criteria Evaluation Examples under the New Step 4 Scoring Rules

## Sample Underlying Problem

In 2030, women biologists represent a large majority (75%) of all university biologists worldwide yet they are not well represented as department heads or on executive committees. In what ways might we increase the advancement opportunities for women biologists so they can receive recognition commensurate with their work?

\*\*\* All criteria must be relevant to the Underlying Problem!!!!

Examples of Generic Criteria (stock criteria that can be applied to solutions of any underlying problem)

- Which solution (WS) can be implemented the most quickly?
- WS will (WSW) be the most accepted?
- WSW cost the least?
- WSW be the easiest to implement?

Examples of Modified Criteria (criteria whose core ideas are generic but that have been embellished with details that connect them to the future scene and/or underlying problem)

- WS can be **implemented the most quickly** for women in the workplace?
- WSW **be the most accepted** to increase advancement opportunities for women biologists?
- WSW **cost the least** for the university biology department?
- WSW **be the easiest to implement** so women biologists can receive recognition commensurate with their work?

Examples of Specific Criteria (criteria whose core ideas are unique to the future scene and the underlying problem and cannot be easily applied to a variety of other future scenes)

- WSW **increase the advancement opportunities** for women biologists in a university setting **to the greatest degree?** (wording of KVP)
- WSW **result most in** women biologists **getting the recognition they deserve** based on their hard work at the universities? (wording of Purpose)
- WSW **place the greatest value** on the female biologists?
- WSW **create the best gender balance** in the university biology leadership roles?
- WSW **best match the abilities** of the women biologists **with the leadership positions?**
- WSW **best develop the skills** the women biologists **need for leadership roles?**

**Note:** The Specific criteria listed above would remain Specific even if they only included the bold printed words and left out the future scene details.