

Wildland Fire Learning Portal

Category Manager and Course Creator Guidelines

November 2025

Category Manager and Course Creator Guidelines

Introduction

Purpose of the Guidelines

1. This document aims to standardize responsibilities and expectations for category managers and course creators operating within the Wildland Fire Learning Portal. It outlines the roles and responsibilities, suggested training, and essential reference materials including templates and checklists, to support an efficient and effective content creation process.

Scope

These Guidelines are designed to align with the Wildland Fire Learning Portal Governance Board's objectives and adhere to National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) standards, ensuring consistency in course management within the WFLP. While providing overarching guidance, it does not outline specific steps or procedures for creating and managing courses. Operational instructions are detailed in the Wildland Fire Learning Portal Business Practices and Processes (BPP) document.

A designated Working Group has been assigned to develop and maintain this document. While the group will reconvene as needed to revise and update guidelines, it is not established as a permanent standing body.

Audience

The audience for this guide primarily includes current course creators and category managers, as well as individuals aspiring to more formal involvement in wildland fire training. Additionally, supervisors and/or leaders within the wildland fire community who oversee or utilize educational content may also benefit from the information contained herein.

Overview of the Wildland Fire Learning Portal

The Wildland Fire Learning Portal (WFLP) plays a crucial role in supporting wildland fire training and interoperability by providing a centralized, standardized platform for educational content. It acts as a single point of access for wildland fire training materials, streamlining the process of developing, delivering, and accessing critical information. By offering a consistent and accessible learning management system, the WFLP ensures that wildland fire personnel, regardless of their specific organization, receive the same high-quality training and adhere to common standards.

Governance and Oversight

The Category Manager and Course Creator Working Group operates under the guidance of the WFLP Governance Board, which ensures the group's efforts align with the platform's

strategic goals. The Board defines the group's scope, provides direction, and reviews deliverables to ensure consistency with current policy and best practices.

This working group is not intended to be a permanent or standing body. It can be formed, disbanded, and reassembled as needed to address evolving priorities or specific tasks. Through regular engagement and feedback, the Governance Board supports the group's progress and helps maintain focus on quality, collaboration, and user-centered design.

Category Management: Roles, Criteria, and Structure

In the WFLP, course categories provide a hierarchical structure for course organization that enhances manageability and searchability. WFLP categories represent course proponent organizations including national programs, geographic areas, individual agencies, cooperator organizations, etc. Subcategories can be created within the category hierarchy to allow for further organization and delegation of course management responsibilities, e.g. zones within a geographic area, individual programs within a larger parent organization, or hidden subcategories for course staging areas and archives. Categories and sub-categories have identical functionality, and they all fall within the hierarchy of a site-level parent category.

The category manager role is typically assigned to program managers or delegees, with up to 2 managers per category or subcategory. It is important that category managers possess an understanding of the WFLP, as well as have the bandwidth to manage the category effectively. Within an assigned category, a category manager has the permissions required to create subcategories, assign course creators, create cohorts, manage courses (assign roles, change visibility, edit settings, duplicate courses and content), and create custom reports. The category manager role is assigned at the category and system levels and must be assigned by a site administrator.

Responsibilities of Category Managers and Course Creators

Category Manager

The Category Manager plays a critical role in maintaining the integrity, organization, and strategic alignment of content within the WFLP. The responsibilities outlined below are to ensure consistency, accessibility, and relevance across all courses within the assigned category.

Each Category Manager is assigned oversight of a specific category which may include a geographic area, national program, state or local government wildland fire agency. They are responsible for establishing standards not outlined within this document and maintaining the structure, quality, and alignment of courses within their category.

Category Manager Standard Operating procedures are available in section **7.2 of the appendices**.

Category Manager Responsibilities

If needed, Category Managers will develop Standard Operating Procedures tailored to the unique needs of assigned category.

- Provide all stakeholders (course creators, editing trainers, and trainers) access to and follow these supplemental SOPs
- Share category specific SOPs with other Category managers to promote alignment and greater consistency across the WFLP

Oversee course categorization and subcategories

- Manage the creation, naming and organization of subcategories
- Periodically review categorization for consistency and make corrections as needed

Ensure alignment with WFLP objectives and stakeholder needs.

- Coordinate with WFLP staff and key stakeholders to ensure content supports overall training objectives
- Monitor usage trends and learner feedback to identify areas for improvement

Oversee course creation and archiving.

- Provide guidance to help ensure each course is appropriately categorized and titled in alignment with the WFLP Business Practices and processes document.
- Utilize course archiving processes, including migration of completed courses to archive storage.

Manage category level cohorts and reporting

- Set up and maintain cohorts or learner groups relevant to your category.
- Utilize reports to provide determine category usage, cohort and learner engagement
Provide a couple of examples of types of reports.

Course Creator

The Course Creator role is essential to generating courses that are used by editing trainers and trainers to deliver high-quality, engaging, and effective training within the WFLP. The responsibilities outlined below for Course Creators ensure alignment with category level standards and WFLP objectives.

Course Creators are responsible for creating a new course within assigned category, assigning roles, and ensuring course settings align with category and WFLP standards.

Course Creator Responsibilities

Create a new course within a category

- Build new course shells based on training and stakeholder requests
- Use naming conventions and templates provided by the Wildland Fire Learning Portal Business Practices and Processes document.

Assign editing trainers

- Assign editing trainer to manage individual course settings and content
- Ensure editing trainers understand their responsibilities and current best practices

Support Editing trainers and trainers

- Provide editing trainers and trainers a working course framework from importing established courses across the category
- Assist with course reuse from courses outside of the category
- Act as a point of contact for troubleshooting course structure, access issues, or development

Archive inactive courses

- Archive completed courses through coordination with editing trainers or trainers
- Utilize archiving procedures identified by the Category Manager

Collaboration Between Roles

Category Managers and Course Creators are expected to work collaboratively to support training content is accurate, relevant, and aligned with agency standards. Category Managers provide guidance on course structure, metadata, and alignment with category goals, while Course Creators are responsible for developing and maintaining course content. Open communication, shared planning, and timely feedback are essential to maintaining a high-quality learning environment within the Wildland Fire Learning Portal.

Training and Support for Category Managers and Course Creators

Foundational Training

These sessions help all users understand the platform and their collaborative responsibilities.

Roles and Responsibilities in WFLP

- Differences between Category Managers, Course Creators, and Trainers
- Collaboration best practices
- Governance and content lifecycle

Using Moodle in WFLP

- Key Moodle features used in WFLP
- Course formats and settings
- Activity and resource types

Category Manager–Focused Training

- Category Management Essentials
 - Creating and organizing categories and subcategories
 - Managing course visibility and archiving
 - Assigning roles within a category
- Course Review and Approval Process
 - Reviewing course metadata and structure
 - Providing constructive feedback to Course Creators
 - Using checklists and documentation tools
- Quality Assurance, Auditing, and Archiving
 - Conducting periodic reviews of category content
 - Identifying outdated or redundant courses
 - Supporting accessibility and metadata standards
- Generating and Interpreting Category-Wide Reports
 - Using reporting tools to monitor engagement and completion
 - Identifying trends and training gaps

Course Creator–Focused Training

- Building a Course Shell in WFLP
 - Step-by-step walkthrough of course creation
 - Setting up course formats, sections, and navigation
- Instructional Design for Wildland Fire Training
 - Writing clear learning objectives
 - Designing engaging and accessible content
 - Using multimedia and interactive tools effectively
- Assessment and Completion Tracking
 - Creating quizzes, assignments, and feedback tools
 - Setting activity and course completion conditions
- Maintaining and Updating Courses

- Version control and content updates
- Responding to learner feedback

Support Resources

Refer to Appendix 7.6 for Contacts

- Access to SMEs for specialized guidance.

ZenDesk – what articles should be in there for both roles? Something to have ready before this paper comes out.

Community of Practice

2. Purpose

The Category Manager Community of Practice (CoP) is a dedicated space within the Wildland Fire Learning Portal designed to bring together Category Managers, Course Creators, and other training stakeholders to share knowledge, ask questions, and collaborate on best practices in wildland fire training and education.

Goals

- Foster peer-to-peer learning and mentorship.
- Share tools, templates, and examples of effective course design.
- Discuss challenges and solutions related to course development and category management.
- Stay informed about platform updates, policy changes, and training initiatives.

Participation

Participation in the CoP is open to all users involved in course creation, category management, or training coordination within the WFLP. Members are encouraged to:

- Post questions or discussion topics.
- Share resources or examples of successful practices.
- Provide constructive feedback and support to peers.

Features

- Discussion Forums: Themed threads for ongoing conversations.
- Resource Library: Shared templates, checklists, and guidance documents.
- Event Announcements: Webinars, office hours, and collaborative work sessions.
- Feedback Channels: Opportunities to provide input on platform improvements and training needs.

Getting Started

To join the Community of Practice:

1. Log in to the Wildland Fire Learning Portal.
2. Navigate to the designated CoP course or category.
3. Enroll or request access if required.
4. Introduce yourself in the welcome forum and explore available resources.

Appendices

Permissions of Category Manager and Course Creator

Roles & Permissions Matrix

Permission	Editing Trainer	Course Creator	Category Manager
Assign Learners and Trainers	✓	✓	✓
Edit course content, settings, and completion conditions	✓	✓	✓
Generate course-specific reports	✓	✓	✓
Create new course shells and copy existing courses		✓	✓
Assign Editing Trainers	✓*	✓	✓
Assign Course Creators			✓
Archive courses			✓
Set course visibility	✓	✓	✓
Generate category-wide reports			✓

*Once an Editing Trainer has been assigned by a Course Creator, the Editing Trainer can assign additional Editing Trainers, as needed.

Category Manager Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Role Overview

Category Managers oversee the structure, quality, and organization of training content within their assigned category in the WFLP. They do **not** build or edit course content directly but instead provide oversight, coordination, and support to ensure consistency and alignment with agency standards.

Core Functions

A. Content Oversight

- Log in regularly.
- Communicate proper use of Development Instance and Production Instance
 - Development instance is for anything experimental including items that may be part of an existing course
- Review course proposals for:
 - Accurate metadata (title, description, tags).
 - Relevance to the category's scope.
- Category Managers may choose how to proceed based on their category's needs and structure. Options may include:
 - Approve the course if it meets category
 - Requesting revisions or clarification.
 - Referring to another designated reviewer.
 - Provide direction included in the Business Practices and Processes (BPP) document for guidance on standards and readiness.

Note: Category Managers do not edit course content. That is the responsibility of Course Creators and Editing Trainers.

Collaboration

- Coordinate with Course Creators to:
 - Provide guidance on course structure and standards.

- Recommend use of templates and naming conventions
 - Templates may be created at the category-level.
 - Templates provide consistency for students and trainers.
- Support Editing Trainers by:
 - Ensuring they are assigned appropriately.
 - Offering feedback on course alignment and learner experience.
- Liaise with other Category Managers to maintain consistency across categories.

Quality Assurance

- Conduct regular audits of courses in your category:
 - Identify outdated or redundant content.
 - Archive courses when they are no longer current, relevant, or actively used.
- Do not modify course content—instead, notify the Course Creator or Editing Trainer of needed changes.

Course Shell Creation Workflow

1. Log In and Navigate to the Correct Category

- Go to the WFLP login page.
- Use your credentials to log in.
- Navigate to the category where the course will reside (you must have Course Creator or Category Manager permissions in that category).

2. Create a New Course

- In the course categories page, click the “Create a new course” button.
- Fill in the basic course settings:
 - Course full name (e.g., *S-290: Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior*)
 - Short name (used in navigation menus)
 - Course start date
 - Course visibility (set to *Hide* until ready to publish)

4. Add Course Summary and Metadata

- In the Course Summary field, provide a brief description of the course.
- Add tags or keywords to help users find the course in search.
- Upload a course image (optional but recommended for visual appeal).

5. Assign Roles

- Go to Participants > Enroll users.
- Assign roles such as:
 - Editing Trainer (for instructors who will build content)
 - Non-editing Trainer (for support staff or observers)

Category Maintenance

- Review course list for outdated or duplicate content.
- Update category descriptions if needed.
- Conduct a full review of the category's structure.
- Identify training gaps and recommend new course development.
- Communicate Changes:
 - Notify Course Creators and Trainers of updates to structure or standards.

Best Practices

- Use Standard Naming Conventions
 - Listed in the Wildland Fire Learning Portal Business Practices and Processes document.
- Encourage Template Use:
 - Recommend WFLP course templates to Course Creators.
- Promote Accessibility:
 - Ensure creators are using captions, alt text, and accessible formats.
- Stay Informed:
 - Attend WFLP webinars or training sessions.

- Subscribe to platform updates.
- Regularly visit the Community of Practice site

Support & Resources

- WFLP Help Center: <https://wflms.zendesk.com/hc/en-us>
- Category Manager Community of Practice
- Technical Support: <https://wflms.zendesk.com/hc/en-us>
- Templates & Checklists:
 - Category Course Creator Guidelines Document

Wildland Fire Learning Portal Business Practices and Processes Document

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Accessibility	Design practices that ensure content is usable by all learners, including those with disabilities (e.g., captions, alt text, screen reader compatibility).
Activity	A Moodle feature that allows interaction, such as quizzes, assignments, forums, or feedback tools.
Archive	The process of removing a course from active use while preserving its content for future reference or reuse.
Block	A side panel in Moodle that displays additional information or tools (e.g., calendar, navigation, reports).
Category	A top-level organizational structure in WFLP used to group related courses (e.g., by region, agency, or program).
Category Manager	A user role with permissions to manage categories, assign roles, create subcategories, and oversee course structure and reporting.
Cohort	A group of users enrolled in a course or category for tracking, reporting, or access control purposes.
Completion Tracking	A Moodle feature that monitors learner progress through activities and courses based on defined criteria.
Course Creator	A user role responsible for building course shells, assigning editing trainers, and ensuring alignment with WFLP standards.
Course Shell	A blank or template course structure created to be populated with content and activities.
Development Instance	A non-public version of WFLP used for testing, building, or experimenting with course content.

Term	Definition
Editing Trainer	A user role that allows instructors to add, edit, and manage course content and settings.
Enrollment	The process of adding users to a course or cohort, assigning them specific roles (e.g., learner, trainer).
Feedback Activity	A Moodle tool used to collect learner input through surveys or evaluations.
Forum	A discussion board where learners and instructors can post messages and replies.
Gradebook	A Moodle feature that tracks learner performance across activities and assessments.
Metadata	Descriptive information about a course (e.g., title, summary, tags) used for searchability and organization.
Module	A section or unit within a course, often representing a topic or week of instruction.
Monitor	A non-editing role designed for users who need to observe and track course activity without actively participating or modifying content.
Non-editing Trainer	A user role that allows viewing and grading but not editing course content.
NWCG Standards	Guidelines from the National Wildfire Coordinating Group that ensure consistency in wildland fire training.
Production Instance	The live version of WFLP where learners access published courses.
Quiz	A Moodle activity used to assess learner knowledge through multiple-choice, short answer, or other question types.

Term	Definition
Report	A tool for generating data on course activity, learner progress, or category usage.
Resource	Static content in Moodle such as files, pages, or URLs used to support learning.
Role	A set of permissions assigned to a user (e.g., learner, trainer, course creator, category manager).
SCORM Package	A standardized e-learning format that can be uploaded into Moodle for interactive content delivery.
Section	A part of a course used to organize content by topic, week, or module.
Settings	Configuration options for courses, activities, or user roles.
Subcategory	A nested category within a parent category, used to further organize courses (e.g., zones within a geographic area).
Tag	A keyword or label added to courses or activities to improve searchability.
Template	A pre-built course or activity structure used to ensure consistency across courses.
Trainer	A general term for instructors or facilitators delivering training in WFLP.
User Profile	A Moodle feature that stores user information, roles, and activity history.
Visibility	A setting that determines whether a course or activity is visible to learners.

Reference Documents

- [Wildland Fire Learning Portal Business Practices and Processes \(BPP\)](#)

This document outlines the operational standards and procedures for managing content within the WFLP. It includes naming conventions, course creation workflows, archiving processes, and role responsibilities. It serves as the primary reference for day-to-day platform use and ensures consistency across all training content.

- [NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1](#)

This publication defines the minimum training, experience, physical fitness, and currency requirements for wildland fire positions. It ensures that personnel mobilized for national incidents meet consistent qualification standards across agencies.

- [NWCG Standards for Course Delivery, PMS 901-1](#)

This guide sets the national standards for delivering NWCG training courses. It covers instructor qualifications, course coordination, delivery formats, and certification requirements. It ensures that all NWCG courses are delivered consistently and professionally across agencies.

- [Accessibility Guidelines \(e.g., Section 508, WCAG\)](#)

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act requires that all digital content be accessible to individuals with disabilities. The [Section508.gov](https://www.section508.gov) site provides tools, checklists, and testing resources to help ensure compliance, including color contrast analyzers, screen reader testing, and accessibility conformance reporting tools.

- [WFLP Governance Board Charter](#)

This document defines the structure, responsibilities, and authority of the WFLP Governance Board. It outlines how decisions are made regarding platform standards, content oversight, and strategic direction.

Templates and Checklists

Purpose

This section outlines the planned development of standardized templates and checklists to support consistency, quality, and efficiency in course creation and category management within the Wildland Fire Learning Portal (WFLP).

Development Status

Templates and checklists will be created and refined collaboratively by the WFLP Working Group and subject matter experts. These resources will be made available as they are completed and approved.

Planned Resources Include:

- **Course Shell Template**
A standardized course layout including recommended sections, naming conventions, and metadata fields to ensure consistency across WFLP courses.
- **SOP Template for Category Managers**
A customizable standard operating procedure template to help Category Managers document and communicate expectations within their assigned categories.
- **Course Proposal Review Checklist**
A tool for Category Managers to evaluate proposed courses for alignment with WFLP standards, metadata accuracy, and relevance to the category's scope.
- **Course Archiving Checklist**
A step-by-step guide to ensure completed or inactive courses are archived properly, including coordination with trainers and metadata updates.
- **Accessibility Compliance Checklist**
A checklist to help Course Creators and Editors ensure their content meets Section 508 accessibility standards, including use of alt text, captions, and readable formatting.
- **Metadata Tagging Guide**
A reference for applying consistent and effective metadata to improve course discoverability and alignment with WFLP search functions.

Access and Distribution

Once finalized, templates and checklists will be available through:

- The WFLP Help Center
- The Community of Practice resource library

Ongoing Development

These resources will be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect platform changes, user feedback, and evolving best practices. Users are encouraged to contribute suggestions or examples through the Community of Practice.

Contact Information

Directory of key contacts (e.g., WFLP administrators, SMEs, technical support).

[SPREADSHEET LINK – Coming Soon](#)

This spreadsheet provides a directory of key contacts for the Wildland Fire Learning Portal, including platform administrators, technical support, governance representatives, and others. Use this resource to identify the appropriate point of contact for questions related to system access, course management, policy guidance, or platform support.

Directory of Category Managers

[SPREADSHEET LINK – Coming Soon](#)

This spreadsheet provides a current list of Category Managers across the Wildland Fire Learning Portal, organized by geographic area, program, or organizational unit. It serves as a reference for identifying key points of contact for category-level coordination, support, and collaboration.

Job Aid Information

Purpose

This section outlines the intent and future direction for developing job aids to support Category Managers, Course Creators, and other Wildland Fire Learning Portal (WFLP) users in performing their roles effectively and consistently.

Development Approach

Job aids will be developed as needed and as time and resources allow. These tools are intended to provide concise, task-specific guidance that complements formal training and documentation.

Incorporating Subject Matter Expertise (SME)

The development of job aids will include input from subject matter experts (SMEs) to ensure accuracy, relevance, and alignment with current practices. SME recommendations will be gathered through working groups, feedback channels, and the Community of Practice.

Accessing Job Aids in WFLP

Once available, job aids will be accessible through:

- The WFLP Help Center (e.g., <https://wflms.zendesk.com/hc/en-us>)
- The Community of Practice resource library
- Direct links within relevant training courses or guidance documents

Examples of Planned Job Aids

- Course Structuring Checklist – Step-by-step guide for organizing course content
- Metadata Tagging Guide – Best practices for tagging and categorizing courses
- Accessibility Checklist – Ensures compliance with Section 508 and usability for all learners
- Role Assignment Quick Guide – Clarifies permissions and responsibilities for each WFLP role
- Course Archiving Workflow – Outlines the process for retiring or storing completed courses

Ongoing Updates

As the WFLP evolves, job aids will be reviewed and updated to reflect platform changes, policy updates, and user feedback. Users are encouraged to suggest new job aid topics through the Community of Practice or by contacting WFLP support.