Frequently Asked Questions

NAPTA Troubleshooting Competition
Qualifying Round

Updated as of: 12/5/2018

1. **I have a question about eligibility. I was there last year as a participant and am still finishing up my degree in process technology. Just wanted to know if I am still eligible to participate in this year's competition.**

   Based on the fact that process technology is a two-year degree program at a minimum, a student may compete in the competition for two consecutive events as long as said student is currently enrolled in the PTECH program and meets all other stated criteria.

2. **What type of computer requirements do we need? i.e. what size and resolution monitor?**

   To clarify, the Qualifying Round will use a web-based Learning Management System to administer a test based on troubleshooting scenarios and related questions. The LMS is RISC Inc.'s Virtual Training Assistant (VTA) Learner, part of the VTA Suite. No simulator is required.

   The primary specifications for using the VTA Learner are Internet access (high speed recommended), an Internet browser such as Internet Explorer 9 or higher, or Chrome, Firefox, Safari and that any pop-up blocker software turned off. In general, there are no monitor specifications for using VTA Learner. Teams selected to participate in the NAPTA Troubleshooting Competition Semi-Final rounds will use a simulator from Simtronics, Inc. (the Dynamic Simulator System).

3. **(Do we need) One or Two monitors, can it be on a big screen HD TV as well?**

   You can use any monitor arrangement that suits your team's needs. However, you may want to have dual or large screen monitors to properly view some materials that will be supplied with the Qualifying Round test (such as a detailed P&ID).

4. **Are we just going to be connected to the internet and that's how we get our connection to the simulation program?**

   You will need an Internet connection to access the web-based VTA Suite during the Qualifying Round. You will not use a simulator in the Qualifying Round.

5. **How long does the first round take on average? We need to book a computer lab and I just need to get an idea of how long we need the room.**

   You should plan on booking at least five hours of computer-room time.

6. **The simulator program we use at our school is GSE Envision, with many refinery models. I was told that the trouble shooting simulator is a model by Simtronics. So it is just a different company, there will be some difference in how to navigate, what the help menu looks like, what the models look like, etc. In theory everything should operate the same, but sometimes just trying figure what the graphics all mean can be a problem.**

   My questions is will the students actually be running the simulator or are they just seeing a snap shot of a graphics screen and then trying to trouble shoot from that or will they need to operate the different simulator, and how do we get access to the simulator needed for the testing? Is it just a down load or is there a link to something?

The NAPTA Troubleshooting Competition Semi-Final and Final rounds will use the Simtronics simulator. Not everyone has this simulator, so teams selected for the Finals Competition will attend a training session and have practice time on the simulator. For more details, you can view information about the simulator by visiting www.simtronics.com.

For the Qualifying Round, teams will view troubleshooting scenarios (which can include P&IDs) through a web-based Learning Management System and take a test, answering questions about the scenarios using the supplied information. See question #4.

7. **Will team members get to practice as individuals (on the Learning Management System for the Qualifying Round), or are they required to practice as a team only?**

Here is some clarifying information on the Learning Management System (LMS) which will be used for the Qualifying Round. Early access to the LMS will be provided, prior to your competition date, so a technical person from the college (or location where the team will hold its Qualifying Round) is able to ensure that the LMS can be properly accessed at the location. Also, your team and/or individual team members to view a sample test and become comfortable with how to use the LMS. The actual troubleshooting competition test will not be made available until your scheduled competition date. By giving a team or its members early access to the LMS and a sample test, the purpose is not to practice so much as to learn about using the system. *The sample test content does not reflect the Qualifying Round test content.*

8. **What are the steps involved for students to access the practice program (LMS)?**

A document with a link and test login will be sent to all coaches. The coach should share the link with a technical person at the college or other location to verify the LMS can be accessed through the Internet at that location.

9. **Will the students get to practice (on the LMS) at only certain times of the day or can they access the website and practice 24/7?**

Access to the LMS is 24 hours a day, seven days. The coach will be given a login for the team which will be used to log on to the LMS and take the sample test. A separate login for the proctor and team will be provided that can be used to access the actual Qualifying Round; the team cannot log in without the proctor logging in first.

10. **Ideally the whole 4 person team should access (the LMS) at the same time and at the same location (i.e. School Computer lab)…to practice…but will the team members be able to access the (LMS) individually?**

The coach can distribute the provided link and login for the LMS to the individual students, if desired. As stated, the purpose of the LMS PRIOR to your Qualifying Round date is to test whether the LMS will work at the designated Qualifying Round location and for team members to familiarize themselves with how the LMS works.

11. **I saw that an application called the Virtual Field Operator will be added to the National Competition. What is the Virtual Field Operator?**

The Virtual Field Operator (VFO), developed by Simtronics, Inc., is an immersive 3D plant operating environment. With the VFO, users can navigate an operator around virtual units with a game controller, tracing flows and locating equipment.

According to the Simtronics website, users can view local gauges and panels to observe actual operating conditions, start and stop pumps, and open and close valves to interact with the process.

Troubleshooting teams selected for the National Competition will attend a VFO training session before the completion.

12. **Can we have four teams from the same campus to participate in the Qualifying Round Competition?**

   Yes, you can field as many teams as you want for the Qualifying Round as long as each team has four students enrolled in your Process Technology program and meet the other criteria (see page 1). <mark>The same student cannot participate on multiple teams</mark>.

13. **If two of our school's teams score among the top 8, will there still only be one team selected from my school system?**

   Two teams from any one school system will be eligible for the NAPTA Troubleshooting Competition.

14. **May the Qualifying Round Competition be conducted on a Saturday?**

   The Learning Management System (LMS) is available 24/7, so it is up to your school, team, and proctor to agree on the team's Qualifying Round Competition date. We would caution you that technical support may not be reached immediately on a weekend day. Your coach would need to submit a *"trouble ticket"* and wait for a response.

15. **Can teams from the same campus complete the Qualifying Round Competition on different days?**

   Yes, it is up to your school, teams, and proctor(s) to agree on the Qualifying Round Competition dates for your team.

16. **What if the LMS does not work with our computer infrastructure?**

   You will be allowed to use an alternate location with a computer and Internet access to participate in the qualifying round.

17. **Is the LMS accessed via a website?**

   Yes, the web-based Virtual Training Assistant (VTA) from RISC, Inc. will be used for the Qualifying Round.

18. **What if I do not know who will serve as proctor yet?**

   Enter "To Be Determined" for all the proctor-related information fields on the registration form. You must designate a proctor by February 18th, by emailing the proctor information to support@naptaonline.org and troubleshooting@naptaonline.org . We need this information so we can create a Learning Management System login for your proctor.

19. **Can the team have students that have already graduated, but not worked in a plant yet?**

   Students must be enrolled in a Process Technology Program at your college during Spring 2019, in either a semester or quarter system.

20. **When will we get further information?**

   This Qualifying Round Questions document will be updated regularly on http://www.naptaonline.org/events/tsc Also, information is currently posted on the troubleshooting web page.

21. **2 yrs ago….the 1st round was computer based….so if it is paper based then why does it need to be in a computer lab?**

The information will be disseminated as paper, but an LMS is used to collect the answers from the students. The computer is needed for the students to enter their answers.

22. **We have Envision at our school. Would we have to purchase a particular Simtronics Simulator?**

No – students should be familiar with how to use procedures in their operation of the simulator.

23. **Can you say which Simtronics model the competition will be on?**

No – Students should work toward being proficient in the troubleshooting traits and skills described in the webinar presentation.

24. **The previous slide…"Students must cover travel costs to final round"…If they make it to the final round. 2 years ago those costs were somewhat covered. Is any costs of the finalists covered this time?**

Update: The NAPTA will award scholarships in the amount of $500 to help cover travel costs for teams selected to enter the Semi-Final Round of competition.

This event was originally sponsored by a National Science Foundation grant. That grant has been closed and the competition is now stewarded by the NAPTA. Remaining travel costs will need to be assumed by the college whose team is selected for the TSC Finals event. More information is given in the general documentation found online on the NAPTA Troubleshooting web page.

25. **Explanation of compensating and correcting in relation to process related actions during a scenario.**

Compensating – a temporary fix of a process problem, does not correct the root cause.

Correcting – repairing or replacing the process piece of equipment or instrumentation that is defective.

26. **Can the proctor be an instructor from another program?**

Faculty or personnel from another college program can proctor the test. The proctor should not be an instructor with the Process Technology program, or in any way affiliated with the program.

27. **Will the computers need specific simulator software?**

The Qualifying Round does not use a simulator program, it is paper-based. The computer is needed for accessing an LMS to answer test questions.

28. **Is the Finals competition round split with inside and outside operators communicating on radios or is everyone around one simulator screen?**

In the 2 previous competitions we had one exercise round that required the teams to split up. One person worked as an outside operator in a separate room at a separate station.

29. **I have a student who completed the Process Technology program and has a degree. The student served as an alternate on a team for the 2017 competition. The student is currently enrolled in the Instrumentation program. Is this person eligible to participate as a team competitor?**

Per eligibility rules all student competitors must be currently enrolled in a Process Technology program.

30. **Update Qualifying Round – How many teams are eligible to move into the Semi-Final Round of competition?**

Two teams from the same college may be selected for the Semi-Final round of competition if the team score is high enough to merit this selection.

31. **Why was the competition format changed?**

Per feedback from previous student competitors and coaches via surveys, face-to-face discussion, and other venues, the competition was expanded to allow more students to compete in the event.

32. **Comment from an industry point of view.**

The competition should be discussed and promoted as an employment opportunity. Industry representatives from many companies attend and host booths to have the opportunity to speak with the competitors.

(Staff note: The industry networking opportunity is being expanded in the 2019 event and will include activities for all students when not competing in the Semi-Final Round.)

33. **Will there be an opportunity to practice prior to the competition rounds?**

Yes – There will be a practice session on Thursday afternoon starting at 2:30 PM. RPCC has purchased enough computers to ensure all teams will have a chance to practice and become familiar with the system.

NOTE: If your team qualifies as one of the top twenty teams in the Qualifying Round, you will be invited to take part in the Semi-Final Round of the NAPTA Troubleshooting Competition at River Parishes Community College in Gonzales, LA on April 25 – 27, 2019.

To submit a question, email troubleshooting@naptaonline.org .