



Certified Employment Support ProfessionalTM

2018

Certification Handbook



Employment Support Professional Certification Council

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The Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) Credential

The Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP™) credential recognizes individuals who have demonstrated a sufficient level of knowledge and skill to provide **integrated employment support services to a variety of client populations**. The CESP™ credential is intended to help employers, employees and potential employees by increasing the visibility of – and access to – competent individuals in the profession.

Individuals who earn the CESP™ credential have demonstrated knowledge of the facilitation and advocacy skills necessary to help establish and expand equitable employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. CESPs™ also raise awareness of benefits within the business community, and promote social change that fosters an independent, productive lifestyle for individuals with disabilities.

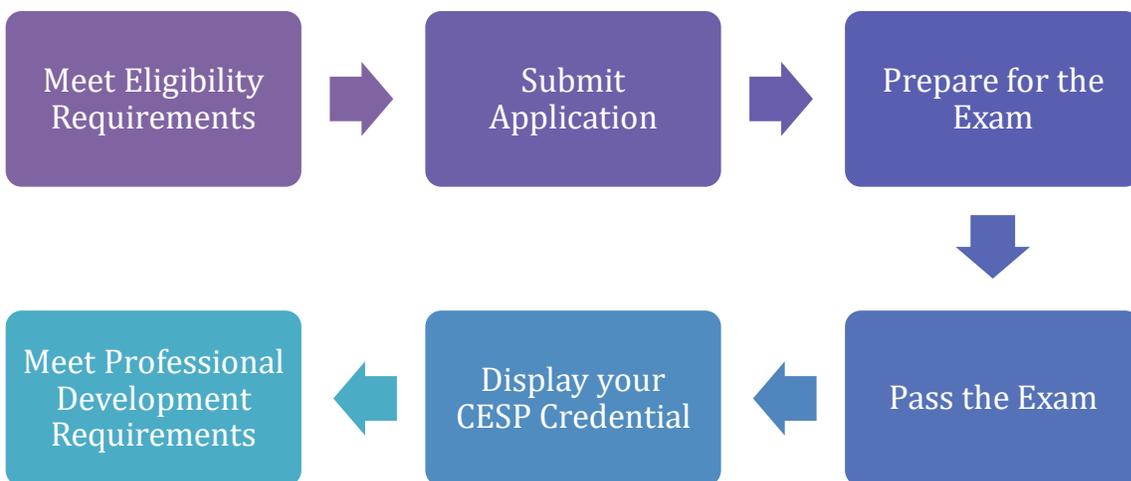
About ESPCC

The Employment Support Professional Certification Council (ESPCC) was established in 2011 by the APSE Board of Directors to establish and implement policies and procedures for the CESP™ certification program and to oversee the development of the CESP™ examination. The ESPCC is responsible for developing and overseeing all aspects of the certification program.

What is Certification

ESPCC developed the Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP™) program to set a standard of knowledge and distinguish employment support professionals who have shown they have the skill and competence to perform the requirements of the job.

Professional certification is different than a training or educational program. Training programs offer a certificate of attendance when an individual completes the coursework, but they do not give a credential. ESPCC used a nationally recognized process to define the roles and responsibilities of the employment support professional and awards a credential after the individual passes an exam to demonstrate their competence.



Potential Job Roles, Practice Settings of Typical Candidates/Certificants

The ESPCC developed the CESP™ for employment support professionals (ESPs) who provide employment services to individuals with significant disabilities by assisting individuals to obtain and maintain competitive employment in integrated community workplaces.

The CESP credential is designed for job coaches, job developers, transition employment specialists, job placement personnel, and employment specialists/consultants who serve a wide variety of target audiences including individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, mental health diagnoses, sensory impairments, physical disabilities, traumatic brain injury and autism spectrum disorders.

Level of the Credential

Eligibility requirements for test takers include education, experience, and code of conduct prerequisites to ensure that individuals certified by the ESPCC have an acceptable level of knowledge (as demonstrated by the exam requirements) and skill (as demonstrated by the experience requirement) needed to provide employment support services at an entry level of competency.

Individuals who earn the CESP™ credential have demonstrated knowledge of the facilitation and advocacy skills necessary to help establish and expand equitable employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. CESP™s also raise awareness of benefits within the business community, and promote social change that fosters an independent, productive lifestyle for individuals with disabilities.

Target Audience of the Credential

CESP™ certification has many audiences, including people with disabilities, provider/funder agencies, business, and certificants themselves.

For Provider Agencies, Funders, and Community Rehabilitation Programs, CESP™ certification:

- Increases the visibility of competent ESPs.
- Creates a standard that defines the roles and responsibilities of ESPs.
- Improves employability and provides opportunities for salary and career advancement.
- Legitimizes and enhances professionalism in the field.

For People with Disabilities, CESP™ certification:

- Ensures job seekers and supported employees have access to qualified professionals that have shown competency in best practices.
- Ensures professional staff pursue additional professional development in the maintenance of their credential.
- Secures that the services received by the job seeker/supported employee are provided in a safe and ethical manner.

For Businesses, CESP™ certification:

- Ensures you will receive help in hiring talented employees that are a fit for company culture and needs.
- Systematizes the specialized support for job acquisition and retention of diverse employees.
- Helps you feel confident that ESP has your business interests in mind.

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For CESP certificants, CESP™ certification:

- Certifies your competency in the full array of skills needed to assist individuals to succeed in employment.
- Opens the door for increased income opportunities.
- Opens up more job opportunities and fulfills personal and professional career goals. Validates your commitment to ethical and safety standards.
- Increases your credibility with community business leaders and opens the door to new employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Geographic Scope

The CESP is only offered in the United States at this time. While international candidates are welcomed, the examination was created using a Role Delineation Study process that studied best practices in the United States. In addition, the examination in its current forms reference US specific laws and systems.

Applying for Certification

Eligibility Application

ESPCC has developed requirements for eligibility to ensure that the application process is fair and impartial. Each eligibility requirement has been established to ensure that individuals certified by ESPCC have an acceptable level of knowledge — as demonstrated by the exam requirements — and skill — as demonstrated by the experience requirement — needed to provide employment support services at an entry level. In establishing these requirements, the ESPCC acknowledges that a combination of both work experience and demonstrated knowledge are essential for Certified Employment Support Professionals (CESPs).

ESPCC is committed to providing a fair and objective certification process. All individuals who seek certification must meet the established eligibility requirements before taking the exam. Candidates for CESP certification must meet all eligibility requirements in effect at the time of their application for certification.

Applicants for certification must meet **all** of the following requirements before they take the exam:

1. **Education Requirement** — High school diploma, GED or equivalent
2. **Experience Requirement** — Each applicant must meet **one** of the following requirements:
 - a. 1 year of employment support professional (ESP) work experience as defined below, which may include up to a maximum of 3 months of internship or practicum time
 - OR**
 - b. 9 months of ESP work experience with training component as defined below
3. **Code of Conduct** — Each applicant must agree to and sign the Code of Conduct

To earn the certification applicants must meet all of the eligibility requirements and pass the examination. Membership in APSE, or any other organization, is neither a requirement nor does it award any credit toward eligibility.

Definitions:

Work Experience:

A minimum of 20 hours per week of paid Employment Support Professional (ESP) related work is required. Examples of paid ESP related work are:

- Work directly related to providing and/or supporting community-based employment services.
- Employment as a direct employment services professional, provision of direct employment services as an agency/company employee, and/or managerial or supervisory work in employment services.
- Experience in school-to-work transition environments providing ESP service.

- Work completed as part of an internship, practicum, or other on-the-job training may be counted to the limits noted in the training definition below.
- Work related to residential and/or non-employment day services, or segregated employment services **will not be accepted**.

Training

Defined as either: an internship or practicum of at least 2 months in length and/or; successful completion of an intensive training course that includes at least 32 hours of ESP related course work.

The content for acceptable training courses must be directly related to the CESP content outline. Acceptable training content is related to supported and customized employment as well as training relevant to providing employment and community-based supports to people with disabilities. Examples of acceptable training content includes: specialized training to work with specific disability groups (i.e. autism or mental illness), training on small businesses development, American with Disabilities Act (ADA) training, benefits counseling, and strategies for job development.

Training related to segregated employment services or services that are not widely considered to be best practices will not be accepted.

Submitting the Eligibility Application

The exam is offered every other month at testing sites throughout the United States. To learn more, visit the [Scheduling and Application page](#).

The testing windows are the dates during which the exams are administered. The application deadline dates are the dates during which candidates can register for the exam.

Testing Window	Application Window
April 1-13, 2019	February 25-March 25, 2019
June 3-15, 2019	April 29-May 27th, 2019
August 5-17, 2019	July 1-29, 2019
October 7-13, 2019	September 2-30, 2019
December 2-8, 2019	October 28-November 25, 2019

To apply for certification, use the following link: apse.smapply.io Incomplete or draft applications may not be processed. Exam applications and applicable fees must be received by the published deadline for each examination administration. Please note that this also includes check payments.

You will receive confirmation that your application has been received via email, therefore it is vital to ensure that your email address is included on the application form. Please do not create a username with an email address other than your own.

Applicants who are determined to be ineligible for certification, in advance of taking the exam, will receive a partial refund less an nonrefundable application processing fee.

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No refunds of exam fees are available once a candidate has taken the exam.

Applicants must complete their own application.

Eligibility Review and Verification:

Only completed applications for certification will be accepted. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant. During initial review of an application, the ESPCC will review to ensure eligibility.

Applicants are required to upload the following documentation as part of their application:

1. **Proof of education** – this can be a high school/GED/HiSET diploma or transcript, or college/professional degree diploma or transcript. Please note the transcript can be an unofficial transcript but must have your name and show degree obtained.
2. **Resume** (must reflect experience as an employment support professional)
3. **Employment Verification**

To submit your eligibility application for CESP™ certification, you must submit an online recommendation from your current (or previous) employer verifying your work history as an employment support professional.

The application includes a task that will allow you to email that person. They will then be responsible for providing the recommendation before the application deadline, and your application will then be considered.

The recommender should be able to comment on the following:

- Your job title (current or previous)
- Dates of employment
- Your primary responsibilities and how they fit into the work definition for the CESP™ and your work supports people with disabilities in finding/maintaining employment (you may submit your job description in addition to a letter to show this)
- Hour per week you spend on Employment Services work (please see definition below)
- If you have less than 1 year of work experience with this employer, please ask for additional recommendations to verify employment or have your current employer state that you were hired with previous experience as an employment support professional. Also, ensure your resume reflects this information.

To be considered for the certification, the ESPCC has outlined that employment verification cannot come from the individual themselves. If you are self-employed, a contractor, or in similar circumstances, the Council requests additional documentation. This can include, but is not limited to, verification from funding source(s) or program(s) with whom you contract.

Application Audit

ESPCC will randomly select applications for verification audit. Applicants selected for audit will be reviewed for consistency in decision-making and to ensure each candidate has met all eligibility requirements. Applicants who fail to demonstrate that they meet all of the eligibility requirements will not be permitted to take the exam. In the case of individuals who have already taken the exam, failure to demonstrate compliance with all eligibility requirements may result in the revocation of the credential.

Acceptable evidence for exam application audit includes: 1) a high school or college diploma or transcript; 2) certificate of completion for training (if application was submitted with less than 1-year of full-time employment support professional work experience); 3) written verification from a supervisor; and 4) a current resume. ESPCC will contact supervisors as needed to verify work, internship, and/or practicum experience.

Nondiscrimination

APSE and ESPCC do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, or any other status that is protected by applicable law.

Eligibility Denial

Applicants who are notified that they do not meet the eligibility requirements may appeal this decision by sending a written notice of the appeal to the ESPCC within 30 days of receipt of the adverse eligibility decision. The ESPCC director will forward the notice to the Certification Council for review.

The Certification Council will review the applicant's information and will make a final decision regarding eligibility. No new or additional information may be submitted with the appeal request. The eligibility appeal will be reviewed within 45 days of receipt. Written notice of the final decision will be sent to the applicant within 30 days of the review.

Certification Fees

Please refer to the following APSE website page for current certification fees, as well as cancelation or rescheduling policies: <http://apse.org/certified-employment-support-professional/fag/>

Accommodations

All applicants requesting test accommodations for the examination must review the information below, complete the accommodations request during application for the examination, and upload the required supporting documentation when submitting their application online.

Reasonable accommodations provide candidates with disabilities a fair and equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skill in the essential knowledge being measured by the examination. Reasonable accommodations are decided upon based on:

- the individual's specific request
- the individual's specific disability

- documentation submitted
- the appropriateness of the request

Reasonable accommodations do not include steps that fundamentally alter the purpose or nature of the examination.

Reasonable accommodations generally are provided for candidates who:

- have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits that person in one or more major life activities (e.g. walking, talking, hearing, performing manual tasks)
- have a record of such physical or mental impairment
- are regarded as having a physical or mental impairment

Non-Discrimination Policy for Individuals with Disabilities

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, and other applicable laws in the United States, the ESPCC does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities in providing access to its examination program. The ESPCC provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations for individuals with documented disabilities who request and demonstrate the need for accommodation. The ADA and accompanying regulations define a person with a disability as someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. The purpose of documentation is to validate the applicant is covered under the ADA and applicable laws. Comprehensive information by a qualified professional is necessary to allow the ESPCC requires documentation to validate the type and severity of a disability and the resulting functional impairment that limits access to its examinations. Documentation also allows the ESPCC provide appropriate accommodations for such a disability in order to provide equal access to exam functions for all examinees.

No applicant shall be offered an accommodation that would compromise the CESP™ examination's ability to test accurately the skills and knowledge it purports to measure. Similar, no auxiliary aid or service will be provided that will fundamentally alter the examination.

How to Request Accommodations

Follow these steps to request accommodations:

1. During the application process, you will complete the Accommodations Request within the CESP™ Eligibility Application.
2. All accommodation requests require Professional Documentation from a qualified professional verifying your functional impairment. This documentation must also include diagnosis and the qualified professional's recommendation for accommodation.

A qualified professional is defined as an individual that is licensed by a state or is certified nationally, has had contact with the applicant, and is able to substantiate a record of diagnosis as listed on the Test Accommodation Request Form.

Examples of types of documentation include:

- Recommendations of qualified professionals;

- Proof of past testing accommodations;
- Observations by educators;
- Results of psycho-educational or other professional evaluations;
- An applicant's history of diagnosis; and
- An applicant's statement of his or her history regarding testing accommodations.

Please upload this form to this online application. If unable to upload documentation, please email us at cesp@apse.org for assistance.

Both the request and professional documentation are required to be submitted before the application window is closed. Failure to do so will result in your accommodation being denied.

Requests for accommodations will be reviewed by the certification program staff member who will communicate approved accommodations to the testing company. The testing company will be responsible for providing accommodations at the designated test site with all agreed upon provisions provided upon the individual's official check in at the testing center.

Application Appeal

Applicants with accommodation requests who are notified that their accommodation is not granted may appeal this decision by sending a written notice of the appeal to the Certification Director within 30 days of receipt of the adverse eligibility decision. The Director will forward the notice to the Certification Council for review.

The Certification Council will review the applicant's information and will make a final decision regarding accommodation. No new or additional information may be submitted with the appeal request. The appeal will be reviewed within 45 days of receipt. Written notice of the final decision will be sent to the applicant within 30 days of the review.

Scheduling Your Examination

All examinations will be scheduled and taken in person at an approved testing site daily during each testing window.

Approved candidates will receive a Scheduling Authorization email, which will specify how to schedule the examination appointment, as well as the dates of the testing period. Approved candidates are those who meet the eligibility requirements, complete the applicant application, and pay the required fees by the application deadline.

Appointment times are first come, first-served! As a result, it is important to request testing date, time, and location as soon as possible following receipt of the Scheduling Authorization.

Candidate responsibilities include:

1. Contacting PSI to schedule the examination appointment (either online or via phone);
2. Familiarity with the Testing Center location prior to the scheduled test date; and

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3. Arrival at the Testing Center at the appointed time, with their current, state issued driver's license or non-driver's photo identification, current passport or current U.S. military ID.

Temporary paper copies of driver's licenses will not be accepted. Anticipate weather, traffic, parking, and any security requirements specific to the Testing Center. Late arrival may prevent testing. Failure to arrive at the Testing Center for the exam or cancellation without the required notice will result in forfeiture of any paid fees.

Be advised: A candidate MUST present an approved government-issued photo identification (state-issued driver's license, U.S. military ID, or U.S. passport) when reporting to the Testing Center in order to gain admission. Please note:

- Temporary, paper driver's licenses are unacceptable, even when presented in tandem with the old identification.
- The name on the PSI Scheduling Authorization must exactly match the name on the government-issued photo identification. It is the candidate's responsibility to check that the name on the Scheduling Authorization matches the approved government-issued photo identification. If the name on the Scheduling Authorization does not exactly match the name on the government-issued photo identification, the candidate will be refused admission to the Testing Center and will forfeit any paid fees.

Telephone Registration

To schedule an examination by phone, please call 800-733-9267. The times of operation for live operators are as follows:

Time Zone	Monday - Friday	Saturday - Sunday
Eastern Time	7:30am - 10:00pm	9:00am - 5:30pm
Central Time	6:30am - 9:00pm	8:00am - 4:30pm
Mountain Time	5:30am - 8:00pm	7:00am - 3:30pm
Pacific Time	4:30am - 7:00pm	6:00am - 2:30pm

Internet Scheduling

For the fastest and most convenient test scheduling process, PSI recommends that candidates schedule for their exams using the Internet. Candidates may schedule online by accessing PSI's scheduling website at www.psiexams.com once you have successfully submitted your eligibility application and been deemed eligible. Internet scheduling is available 24 hours-a-day. In order to schedule by Internet, complete the steps below:

- Once eligibilities are received by PSI, candidates will be able to go to candidate.psiexams.com for online scheduling.
- From the website, candidates will be able to select a desired testing date and location.

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- After scheduling your examination appointment online, you will receive an email confirmation from no-reply@psixams.com. This will contain the test date, time, site address and directions.

Exam Rescheduling & Cancellation

Your examination fee and application are only good for the examination window in which you applied. Cancellation after the application window has passed will result in forfeiture of the full exam fee. Cancellation prior to the application window closing will result in a refund minus a nonrefundable application fee of \$40.

To change an exam date, time or location (based on seat availability) once within the same exam window, **candidates must reschedule online at least 48 hours before the scheduled exam date or by calling PSI at 800-733-9267.** Candidates who wish to change their appointment within two days of the examination will not be refunded their examination fee and will be required to pay the entire examination fee for any future examinations through the CESP per the application windows. You cannot change your exam appointment within two days of the scheduled examination. Failure to take the exam as scheduled will result in forfeiture of the full exam fee. PSI does not have the authority to authorize refunds or transfers to another testing period.

Note: A voicemail or email message is not an acceptable form of cancellation. Please use the telephone system and speak to a Customer Service Representative.

Missed Appointment or Late Cancellation

Your registration will be invalid, you will not be able to take the examination as scheduled, and you will forfeit your examination fee if you:

- Do not reschedule your appointment 48 hours before the scheduled examination date;
- Do not appear for your examination appointment;
- Appear after examination start time;
- Do not present proper identification and letter of authorization when you arrive for the examination.

Preparing for the Exam

The CESP™ exam is a multiple-choice exam administered during an allotted time of three hours (does not include check-in time). The exam is currently offered only in English.

The CESP™ exam is a scenario-based exam based on the skills and information an employment support professional uses every day.

The exam assesses the candidate's ability to apply knowledge to context rather than their ability to memorize facts. The test presents fictional situations similar to those typically encountered by employment specialists in a variety of job roles or practice settings.

For each question, test takers must select the most appropriate and effective strategy for the scenario based on their knowledge of Employment First best practices that support community-based, integrated employment.

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EXAM Version	PASSING SCORE	# SCORED ITEMS	# NON-SCORED ITEMS	TIME LIMIT
Version 1	70%	114	21	180 minutes
Version 2	76%	122	13	180 minutes
Version 3	75%	126	9	180 minutes

Studying for the Exam

The exam is based on the results of a national Role Delineation Study and the resulting content outline. The exam includes questions from each content area in the percentage ranges noted below. Candidates should carefully review the content outline below as they prepare for the exam.

The CESP™ exam is a scenario-based exam based on the skills and information an employment support professional uses every day. The test presents fictional situations similar to those typically encountered by employment specialists. Test takers must select the most appropriate and effective strategy for the scenario. The exam assesses the candidate's ability to apply knowledge to context rather than their ability to memorize facts.

Glossary of Employment Support Professional Terms

Benefits Counseling and Benefits Analysis: Services provided to assist an individual in understanding the options and possibilities in order to make an informed choice about going to work. These services result in a report that reviews a person's assets and income to make an informed choice about employment.

Business Proposals (Job Carving): The process of listing the key components of jobs and employment needs to develop a written proposal for an employer on how those needs can be met. A proposal typically includes language identifying job tasks for increased work efficiencies and the matching of an individual's skills with workplace needs. This process can result in either job restructuring or job creation.

Career Seeker Portfolio: A job-hunting tool that developed to provide employers a complete picture of the job seekers experience, education, accomplishments, skill sets, and potential.

Employment: Competitive employment is work performed in the integrated labor market in which the individual is compensated at or above minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and benefits paid for the same or similar work performed by individuals who do not have a disability.

Employment First: The philosophy that presumes employability of all people in the community regardless of disability. Components include:

- Being the first and preferred outcome for working-age youth and adults with disabilities, including those with complex and significant disabilities, for whom working in the past has been limited, or has not traditionally occurred,
- Using typical or customized employment techniques to secure membership in the workforce, where employees with disabilities are included on the payroll of a competitive business or industry or are self-employed business owners,
- Where the assigned work tasks offer at least minimum or prevailing wages and benefits,

- And where typical opportunities exist for integration and interactions with co-workers without disabilities, with customers, and/or the general public.

Employment Supports: A set of services that are used to introduce, prepare, monitor, and facilitate individuals with disabilities to seek and maintain employment. These may also include supports provided to or by an employer.

Employment Support Professional (ESP): A professional who assists individuals in obtaining and maintaining integrated employment by meeting the needs of businesses in the community.

Job Developer: Professional who matches employers to employees through pairing targeted business needs with an individual's transferable skills.

Job Trainer/Job Coach: A professional who provides necessary supports during the initial employment period to assist the employee to perform their job tasks to the employer's specifications and then facilitates the transition to natural workplace supports while reducing his or her role.

Natural Supports: Support from supervisors and co-workers occurring in the workplace to assist employees with disabilities to perform their jobs, including supports already provided by employers for all employees. These natural supports may be both formal and informal, and include mentoring, supervision (ongoing feedback on job performance), training (learning a new job skill with a co-worker) and co-workers socializing with employees with disabilities at breaks or after work.

Person-Centered Planning: Person Centered Planning is an ongoing problem-solving process used to help people with disabilities plan for their future. In person centered planning, groups of people focus on an individual and that person's vision of what they would like to do in the future. This "person-centered" team meets to identify opportunities for the focus person to develop personal relationships, participate in their community, increase control over their own lives, and develop the skills and abilities needed to achieve these goals. Person Centered Planning depends on the commitment of a team of individuals who care about the focus person. These individuals take action to make sure that the strategies discussed in planning meetings are implemented.

People First Language: People First Language (PFL) represents more respectful, accurate ways of communicating. People with disabilities are not their diagnoses or disabilities; they are people, first.

Systematic Instruction: Materials and instruction are organized to follow the logical order of the language. The sequence of the instruction proceeds methodically from the easiest and most basic elements to more difficult and complex material.

Task Analysis: The process of breaking down a job into smaller steps for the purpose of teaching the job tasks to an employee in achievable parts over time.

Vocational Assessment: Formal and informal processes used to explore an individual's interests, abilities, and aptitudes in order to identify vocational assets, barriers, support needs and career potential.

Workplace Culture: Workplace culture can be defined as the "way of life" for those in a particular workplace. This has many elements including: laws, language, fashion, authorities, power relationships, conventions, conflict management processes, dispute resolution processes.

Detailed Content Outline

Domain 1: Application of Core Values and Principles to Practice (13-17%)

1. All people having the right to work and being entitled to equal access to employment in the general workforce
2. Zero exclusion
3. Disability etiquette
4. People First Language
5. Job seeker strengths interests and talents
6. Full inclusion in the general workforce
7. Self-determination and empowerment
8. Providing services outside institutional and workshop settings
9. Involvement of job seeker in the employment process as a collaborative effort that includes paid and non-paid supports
10. Impact of employment services history on current practice
11. Legislation and regulations related to employment
12. Funding sources for employment services

Domain 2: Individualized Assessment and Employment/Career Planning (23-29%)

13. Rights and responsibilities related to disclosure of disability
14. Counseling job seeker on disability disclosure
15. Practices unique to school-to-work
16. Rapid engagement in the employment process
17. Limitations of traditional vocational evaluation for job seekers with significant disabilities
18. Motivational interviewing techniques
19. Interviews with job seeker and others familiar with his/her abilities and work history
20. Impact of job seeker's demographic cultural and social background
21. Reviewing job seeker's records and collecting pertinent employment information
22. Job seeker in his/her current daily routines and environments
23. Benefit analysis for job seeker
24. Strategies to reduce or eliminate entitlement benefits

25. Non-work needs that may impact successful employment (e.g. transportation counseling food assistance financial housing)
26. Job seeker's preferred style of learning skills talents and modes of communication
27. Integration of relevant employment information into a vocational profile that reflect job seeker's interests, goals and aspirations
28. Community-based situational assessment
29. Paid work trials and job tryouts
30. Volunteering
31. Job shadowing
32. Informational interviews
33. Self-employment resources for job seekers
34. Referrals to appropriate agencies organizations and networks based on career plans

Domain 3: Community Research and Job Development (19-25%)

35. Gathering and analyzing labor trend information
36. Identifying patterns in job markets
37. Disability etiquette
38. Maintaining updated information on businesses type of jobs available and locations of jobs within the community
39. Developing and communicating effective marketing and messaging tools for employment
40. Positioning the agency as an employment service
41. Targeting message to specific audience
42. Using language and images that highlight abilities and interests of job seekers
43. Developing job seeker portfolios
44. Informational interviews with businesses
45. Mentoring job seekers during the job search process
46. Workplace culture and climate awareness and sensitivity
47. Strategies for job matching
48. Strategies for contacting and communicating with employers
49. Employment proposals based on business and job seekers' preferences
50. Responding to employer concerns about job seekers' abilities and interests

51. Responding to employer concerns about job seekers' disabilities
52. Incentives to businesses when hiring job seekers with disabilities (e.g. tax credits on-the-job training diversity goals)

Domain 4: Workplace and Related Supports (27-33%)

53. Communicating with job seeker/employee and his/her natural and paid supports
54. Impact of earned income on entitlements
55. Transportation for work
56. Family support
57. Housing/residential staff cooperation
58. Gathering clear job expectations from employers
59. Preparing and coordinating for the first day on job
60. Developing and implementing job analysis
61. Ensuring typical employer provided orientation
62. Ensuring introduction of employee to co-workers
63. Helping employee meet employer expectations regarding workplace culture
64. Facilitating co-worker relationships and workplace connections
65. Identifying employer's training process and supplementing if needed
66. Recognizing and adapting supports to individual learning styles and needs
67. Baseline assessment from a task analysis
68. Employee attending typical training program
69. Training schedule and instructional procedures
70. Positive/negative behavior and intervention supports
71. Reinforcement procedures including naturally occurring reinforcers and natural cues
72. Use of data collection to monitor progress
73. Collaborating with employee employer co-workers and support team to develop and implement a plan and strategies for fading supports
74. Adapting and recommending accommodations to facilitate job performance
75. Promoting the use of universal design principles

Domain 5: Ongoing Supports (6-8%)

76. Scope and limitation of funding sources for ongoing support

77. Access to community resources and supports (e.g. transportation counseling food assistance financial housing)
78. Impact on benefits/entitlements as earned income changes and ongoing access to benefits counseling (e.g., Community Work Incentive Coordinators)
79. Collaboration with employees employers and family members to ensure successful employment
80. Support employees for job and/or career advancement

Strategies for Taking Multiple Choice Exams

- Read each question carefully before choosing the single best response.
- Pace yourself; sometimes it helps to answer the easiest questions first.
- If you are not sure about an answer, make an educated guess. Your score is based on the total number of correct answers.
- Responses are in random order. Looking for patterns won't help you.

How the Exam was Developed

In January 2011, ESPCC launched the first major project in the development of a national certification program, a role delineation study (RDS).

A representative panel of nine subject matter experts (SMEs) held a 2-day meeting to develop the RDS to correspond to the job content elements that are related to effective entry-level ESP performance in competitive, integrated employment settings. Established reference materials from the profession were used to identify 80 content elements grouped into content domains, sequenced in the order in which they are most typically performed.

The RDS survey was conducted in the form of an electronic survey. Two rating scales, frequency and criticality, were developed to evaluate the content items. The ultimate goal was to rank content items from most relevant to least relevant with regard to on-the-job performance. Both rating scales had three reference points. Twelve demographic items were included as well, to evaluate the representativeness of the respondent sample.

Following a pilot survey, the final survey was disseminated, data collected, and results analyzed. Means and standard deviations were computed for each of the content items. Combining the criticality and frequency means for each of the six content domains resulted in the basis for the exam content outline. The content outline was reviewed, revised (primarily by combining two of the domains for better balance), and finalized by a group of SMEs.

Following the approval of the content outline a diverse group of exam question writers were recruited and trained to submit questions for the exam. Questions were subsequently reviewed by additional SMEs before being assembled into an exam for a final quality check and review.

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Following each administration of the exam, question statistics are calculated and reviewed along with candidate feedback to identify any concerns or areas for improvement. When appropriate, questions are removed from grading. Following this quality assurance step exam grading is finalized and score reports are issued to candidates.

The ESPCC oversees a continual process of question writing, review and evaluation to ensure that exam content remains up-to-date, accurate, and consistent with the content outline.

Taking the Exam

What to Expect on Exam Day

To provide a fair and consistent environment for all candidates, the exam is delivered using standardized procedures and following strict security protocols.

If you have any issues on examination day with the testing experience, please email cesp@apse.org immediately to make them aware of the situation. CESP staff will work with you to ensure you are able to test in a fair and consistent environment.

Candidates are required to follow all exam site rules at all times.

- While at an examination site, you are considered to be a professional and shall be treated as such. In turn, you must conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times. While at the site, you shall not use words or take actions that are vulgar, obscene, libelous, or that would denigrate the staff or other candidates.
- Candidates should arrive 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the exam. Late arrivals cannot be accommodated. The exam session will last for 3 full hours (in addition to check-in).
- Candidates must have one form of acceptable **photo** identification that is government issued and is signed by the candidate. The unexpired Government-issued photo ID that bears your first and last name must match the name in the PSI system. If you need to update your information, please email cesp@apse.org.
- NO conversing or other form of communication among candidates is permitted once you enter the examination area.
- All electronic devices used to record, transmit, receive, or play back audio, photographic text, or video content, including but not limited to: cell phones, laptop computers, tablets, Bluetooth devices, wearable technology such as smart watches, MP3 players, pagers, cameras and voice recorders will not be allowed in the examination center. **No personal items are to enter the testing center**. All such items should be left in a locked vehicle or in a Testing Center locker, should such be available. It is STRONGLY recommended such items remain safely at home. APSE/ESPCC are NOT RESPONSIBLE for any personal possession losses occurring at the Testing Center, in a vehicle parked at the Testing Center or on the grounds of the Testing Center.
- No papers, books, or reference materials may be taken into or removed from the examination room.

- Person(s) accompanying an examination candidate may not wait in the examination center, inside the building or on the building's property. This applies to guests of any nature, including drivers, children, friends, family, colleagues or instructors.
- No smoking, eating, or drinking is allowed in the examination center.
- During the check-in process, all candidates will be asked if they possess any prohibited items. Candidates may also be asked to empty their pockets and turn them out for the proctor to ensure they are empty. The proctor may also ask candidates to lift up the ends of their sleeves and bottoms of their pant legs to ensure that notes or recording devices are not being hidden there.
- Proctors will also carefully inspect eyeglass frames, tie tacks, or any other apparel that could be used to harbor a recording device. Proctors will ask to inspect any such items in candidates' pockets.
- If prohibited items are found during check-in, candidates shall return these items to their vehicle. PSI will not be responsible for the security of any personal belongings or prohibited items.
- If examinees must leave the testing area during the examination to use the restroom, no extra testing time will be allowed for the absence. Any exam materials must be left with the other proctor in the exam room.
- Any candidates possessing prohibited items in the examination room shall immediately have his or her test results invalidated, and PSI shall notify the examination sponsor of the occurrence.
- Any candidates seen giving or receiving assistance on an examination, found with unauthorized materials, or who violates any security regulations will be asked to surrender all examination materials and to leave the examination center. All such instances will be reported to the examination sponsor.
- Copying or communicating examination content is in violation of a candidate's contract with PSI and the ESPCC, and federal and state law. Either may result in the disqualification of examination results and may lead to legal action.
- Once candidates have been seated and the examination begins, they may leave the examination room only to use the restroom, and only after obtaining permission from the proctor. Candidate will not receive extra time to complete the examination.
- No questions concerning the content of the examination may be asked in the examination room before, during, or after the exam. Proctors are not allowed to answer any questions about the content of the examination. Proctors may answer questions about processes (e.g. time limit) but cannot interpret or explain any words or information on the exam.
- No exam questions are to be discussed during or after the exam administration. Any infraction of these terms is considered to be a violation of your ethical responsibilities. It is also a violation of copyright law and exam security.

Violation of any of the rules listed above may lead to forfeiture of fees, dismissal from the examination center, and or/cancellation of completed test responses.

After the Exam

Exam Results

Candidates will receive a score report immediately after testing at a PSI location. New CESP™ certificants will receive their digital certificate in email 1-2 weeks after the testing window has closed.

Score reports will include the candidate's pass/fail status, overall score, and a sub score in each of the 5 content areas of the exam. If you need a re-print of the score report, please email cesp@apse.org to request one to be emailed securely to you.

Certificants will be added to the CESP Professional List on the APSE website, including the certificant's name, date of certification, expiry date, state, and country. Should certificants elect to make the certificate private, one must go to your certificate through email, select 'privacy options,' and toggle it to private. The certificant will then not show up on the professional list.

Understanding Your Score

A criterion-referenced standard setting process is used to establish the passing point for each exam. This means that each candidate's performance on the exam is measured against a predetermined standard. Candidates are **not** graded on a curve and do not compete against each other or against a quota.

This passing point is established using a panel of subject matter experts who carefully review each exam question to determine the basic level of knowledge or skill that is expected. The passing point for the exam is established to identify individuals with an acceptable level of knowledge and skill.

Receiving a higher than passing score is not an indication of more advanced knowledge or a predictor of better job performance. All individuals who pass the exam, regardless of their score, have demonstrated an acceptable level of knowledge.

Re-Test Policy

Candidates who have failed the exam and are seeking to sit for the exam a second time must wait until the next testing window to apply and sit for the exam. A new application and full examination fee must be submitted for each exam attempt. **A candidate is limited to sitting for the exam two times in a 12-month period. This 12-month period begins at the time of their first testing.**

Exam Appeals

Candidates who fail the exam and believe there has been irregular testing conditions may file an appeal to the ESPCC. All appeal requests must be made in writing and postmarked or emailed no later than 7 days after the exam was administered. Candidates filing an appeal may request an opportunity to re-test due to disruptive exam conditions. The results of the appeal will be final. Appeals should be submitted to via email to cesp@apse.org

ESPCC Code of Conduct

Introduction

The ESPCC Code of Conduct applies to all individuals credentialed by the ESPCC as Certified Employment Support Professionals (CESPs or certificants); and, all individuals seeking CESP certification (candidates or applicants).

All applicants and certificants will agree to the ESPCC Code of Conduct (Code) as a condition of certification. Violation of any portion of the Code may result in disciplinary action as outlined in the Disciplinary Policy.

Purpose

The Code of Conduct establishes the basic ethical standards for the professional behavior of ESPCC certificants and candidates. The Code is designed to provide both appropriate ethical practice guidelines and enforceable standards of conduct for all certificants and candidates.

Code of Conduct

The ESPCC supports appropriate, professional standards designed to serve the public, employees, employers, people supported and the employment support profession. First and foremost, ESPCC certificants and candidates give priority to providing employment support services in a manner that promotes integrity and reflects positively on the profession, consistent with accepted moral, ethical, and legal standards.

CESP certificants and candidates have the obligations to: maintain high standards of integrity and professional conduct; accept responsibility for their actions; continually seek to enhance their professional capabilities; practice with fairness and honesty; and, encourage others to act in a professional manner, consistent with the certification standards and responsibilities set forth below.

Section 1: Adherence to Legal Requirements

1. Adhere to all laws, regulations, policies, and ethical standards that apply to the practice of providing employment support services and related activities.
2. Refrain from public behavior that is clearly in violation of professional, ethical, and/or legal standards that apply to the practice of providing employment support services and related activities.
3. Refrain from discrimination in professional activities, including relationships with employees, employers, customers and their families, and other professionals.

Section 2: Adherence to ESPCC Policies & Requirements

4. Follow all ESPCC CESP certification program policies, procedures, requirements and rules. This includes the obligation to be aware of and understand these policies and requirements.
5. Provide accurate and complete information to ESPCC concerning certification and recertification.
6. Keep confidential all CESP examination information; including preventing unauthorized disclosures of exam information.

7. Cooperate with ESPCC regarding matters related to the Code of Conduct and complaint and/or disciplinary investigations.
8. Report violations of the Code of Conduct by CESP candidates or certificants to ESPCC.

Section 3: Professional Performance

9. Deliver competent employment support services.
10. Act honestly in the conduct of responsibilities and in all professional interactions with others.
11. Be accountable and responsible for his/her actions and behaviors.
12. Recognize the limitations of one's professional ability (based on education, knowledge, skills, experience, etc.) and provide services only when qualified to do so.
13. Treat recipients of CESP services and their employers, families and other supports with fairness and respect.
14. Maintain the confidentiality of private and sensitive information, unless there is mandate to report or other legal obligation to disclose the information.
15. Properly use professional titles, degrees and all credentials and provide accurate and truthful information regarding education, experience, qualifications, and the performance of services.
16. Disclose any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest and avoid conduct that could cause a conflict of interest.
17. Uphold high standards of professional behavior at all times in the CESP role.

Complaints & Disciplinary Action

In order to maintain and enhance the credibility of the CESP certification program the ESPCC has adopted the procedures to allow individuals to bring complaints concerning the conduct of individuals who are CESP candidates or certificants' to the ESPCC. In the event an individual candidate or certificant violates the ESPCC Code of Conduct, CESP certification rules, or ESPCC policies the ESPCC may reprimand or suspend the individual or may revoke certification.

[A complete copy of the complaints and disciplinary policy is available as an appendix to this handbook.](#)

Maintaining CESP Certification

ESPCC supports the ongoing professional development of its certificants. All certificants must recertify every 3 years. The recertification process provides certificants with the opportunity to demonstrate the reinforcement, retention, and maintenance of their knowledge and skills and the retention of their knowledge of current practice. Recertification also provides encouragement to, and acknowledgement for, participation in ongoing professional development activities. To support this purpose, recertification requires continuing education and professional activities that enhance ongoing professional development, recognize learning opportunities, and provide a process for both attaining and recording professional development achievements.

ESPCC requires periodic recertification to promote professional development for employment services professionals and to ensure that individuals who hold the credential maintain an ongoing commitment to learning in their area(s) of practice.

Professional development is accomplished by either obtaining the required number of continuing education credits or by passing the certification examination for which the content is periodically updated. Recertification by continuing education credits ensures that the individual has participated in professional development activities that are directly related to the provision of employment support services. Since the examination is updated periodically, recertification by examination also ensures that certificants have maintained their knowledge and skills during the time since initial certification.

The 3-year time period established for recertification is based on both the scope of issues that face employment services professionals and the ESPCC's belief that new practices, research, and information are introduced in the field with enough frequency that professional development activities should be conducted routinely so that certificants remain up to date with both current best practices and emerging knowledge.

Certification is valid for a 3-year period from the date of certification indicated on each individual's certificate, expiring at the end of the month. Certificants will receive a courtesy recertification email reminder however it is the responsibility of the certificant to submit a timely recertification application.

Certificants may apply for recertification at any time in the 9 months before their credential is set to expire up through the 30-days grace period after the date of expiration.

Certificants are able to recertify by one of two methods:

1. CESP™ certificant must provide documentation for 36 hours of Continuing Education (CE) credit and submit with recertification application ([click for more information](#)), or
2. Sit for the exam ([click for more information](#))

More details about each method are provided below.

Submitting Continuing Education Credit for Recertification

After the 30 days have elapsed, certificants are no longer be eligible for recertification and must re-sit for the examination. Applications submitted after the 30-day period will be subject to a refund fee. Recertification applications will not be accepted from individual's whose certification is in a state of suspension or that has been revoked.

It is the responsibility of the certificant to collect the required documentation and submit this information to the Employment Support Professional Certification Council (ESPCC) for review. The certificant is required to retain and submit documentation for each continuing education activity completed. Certificants should retain a copy of their records for at least 12 months after their certification has been renewed.

A total of 36 CE credits are required to renew the CESP™ credential without retaking the CESP™ exam.

The process of recertifying by continuing education credits:

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1. Obtain 36 CE credits ([How do I know if my CE activity counts toward recertification?](#))
2. Gather documentation for recertification
3. Submit the online application (eligible during 9 months before expiration, up to 30 days after)
4. Pay recertification fee of \$125
5. Provide any additional information requested by ESPCC reviewer

ESPCC will send email confirmation to the certificant once all renewal requirements have been met.

Please note that the application is only available online here: apse.smapply.io. If you would like additional assistance or have disability related accessibility concerns, please contact us at cesp@apse.org or 301-279-0060.

Paper applications will not be accepted unless there is an disability-based accommodation request (email cesp@apse.org).

How Do I Know if My Continuing Education (CE) Activity Counts Toward Recertification?

Please note that the ESPCC does not approve credits for recertification until you have submitted for recertification. Ensure that you have proper documentation for any activity before submitting for recertification.

Generally speaking, if an activity you hope to claim for CEs fits into one of our approved CE activities* and is aligned with our Content Outline,** it should be approved.

IMPORTANT FORMS FOR DOWNLOAD

[Requirements for Continuing Education \(CE\) Credits Form](#)

[Detailed Content Outline for Recertification](#)

Requirements for Continuing Education (CE) Credits

- 1 CE credit is equivalent to 1 hour of clock time (except as noted below)
- [Documentation verifying the reported number of CE credits must be submitted with the recertification application](#)
- Additional documentation may be requested to determine compliance with the documentation requirements below.
- [All CE activities must be directly related to the content outline](#)
- Repeated activities/content will not be counted for credit within the same 3-year recertification cycle

1. Relevance to the Content Outline

Training or other recertification items should fall into one of these categories. A detailed content outline is available for download below:

- Application of Core Values and Principles to Practice & Legislation and Funding
- Individualized Assessment and Employment / Career Planning
- Community Research and Job Development

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- Workplace and Related Supports
- Ongoing Support

Acceptable activities include the knowledge and skills defined by the content outline published by ESPCC including content related to ethics and values.

General disability-related training does not count toward recertification (i.e. Mental Health First Aid, non-employment disability specific training). CPR, first aid, and other similar courses are often mandated by state agencies or ESP employers; however, these courses are not accepted for continuing education credit.

The application requires candidates for recertification to include details about each activity, in addition to documentation. Details include:

- Activity Name (usually the training, conference, or general activity information)
- Date completed (for)
- Type of activity dropdown menu
 - Conference
 - Courses, training
 - Academic courses
 - In-service training (max 20)
 - ESPCC Volunteer
 - Published article
 - Conducting published research
 - Teaching or training (max 10)
 - Unpaid service on a board
 - Leadership Activity
 - Other*
- Earned CE credits (candidate calculated based on CE requirements)
- Connection to content outline (identify which of the 5 domains the activity most connects, preferably a subtopic number as well)
- Any additional information about the activity, such as a webpage or marketing information to help show relevance to content outline

2. Has the Necessary Documentation

- Documentation that verifies the reported number of CE credits must be submitted with the recertification application. These should be saved as .pdf or .word files. If you need help with scanning paper documents to prepare for the application, [please watch this 3-minute video](#).
- Repeated CE activities/content will not be counted for credit within the same three-year recertification cycle.

On the application you are also able to request a trainer submit documentation. This is helpful in the instance of a letter from someone you served in a leadership capacity with (i.e. a board, leadership coalition, etc). It would also allow your employer to provide proof of in-service training (up to 20 credits per cycle). Please be aware that it is not intended to be used to request proof of webinar attendance, training attendance, etc. from professional organizations and trainers. This is provided as a convenience but is not intended to overwhelm trainers in this field.

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Activities Accepted for CE Credits:

Activity	Acceptable forms of Documentation*	Max Credits	How to Calculate CE Credits
Participation in an APSE conference or other state or national conference directly related to content outline	Certificate of attendance, CE certificate**		1.5 days of conference participation = 10 CE credits Note that social hours and networking times will not be counted toward CE credits
Attending courses, workshops, seminars (in person or online) with content directly related to content outline	Certificate of attendance/completion**		1 hour = 1 CE credit
Academic courses	College/university transcript		1 semester course = 10 CE credits
Attending in-service training	Memo or letter from the certificant's supervisor or training provider, certificate of attendance	Maximum allowed credit = 20 credits per cycle	1 hour = 1 CE credit
Participation as a ESPCC item writer SME with submission of at least 10 approved exam-quality items	Verification from ESPCC		1 accepted item*** = 1 CE credit
Published article regarding supported employment in a peer reviewed journal	Copy of published article****		1 article = 5 CE credits
Conducting published research	Copy of published research paper****		1 research article = 10 CE credits
Teaching a seminar, in-service training, course or workshop on a topic directly related to the content outline	Copy of detailed course outline with date and location of event, copy of promotional materials for the event listing the certificant as a presenter	Maximum allowed credit = 10 credits per cycle	1 hour of teaching = 1.5 CE credits

Unpaid service on a local, state, national, or professional board (such as the APSE Board of Directors or ESPCC) directly related to supported employment. A minimum of 1 year of service is required to qualify for credit.	Letter or memo from the organization or the certificant's supervisor verifying participation		1 year of service = 10 credits
Leadership activities such as serving on a state Commission, developing major policy initiatives, developing/implementing a new agency project	Letter or memo from the organization or the certificant's supervisor verifying participation		1 year of service = 10 credits Completion of 1 significant project = 10 credits

** Acceptable forms of documentation that will be submitted with the recertification application are listed here as examples. Other forms of documentation that provide evidence that the activity was completed may also be acceptable.*

*** Documentation must include the number of hours to be counted toward CE credits. Documentation that does **not** include the number of hours will be counted for CE credits.*

**** Regardless of the number of items submitted, only the number of items accepted for use in the item bank will be counted for CE credit.*

***** Information submitted must reflect your name as the author/co-author and date of the publication.*

Verification Process

In order to maintain the credibility and integrity of the certification process ESPCC reserves the right to verify any information provided on recertification applications. Requests for verification may be made prior to recertification or at a future time.

ESPCC will review all recertification applications for completeness. Three to five percent of recertification applications will be randomly selected for audit by the Certification Council and additional verification procedures each year. If any areas of non-compliance are identified during the audit (or any review of a recertification application) the individual will have 60 days to submit any required information. If the required information is not provided the individual's certification will expire at the end of the 60 days or on the normal expiration date (whichever comes last).

Recertification by Exam

If you choose to re-take the CESP™ exam, it is your responsibility to monitor the APSE website and announcements to learn when exams are offered in time to renew your credential. [See the website here.](#)

The process of recertifying by exam includes:

1. Apply for the exam during a scheduled application window apse.smapply.io
2. Pay examination fee at recertification rate
3. Sit for the exam during a scheduled testing window. For more about exam scheduling, please go to the [Exam Scheduling](#) portion of the handbook.

The application will not ask for proof of eligibility and documentation. Should you apply and sit for the exam after your 30 days grace period has passed, you will be required to submit all eligibility documentation and pay the full examination fee. [See more about the application process here.](#)

ESPCC Policies

Confidentiality

Information about applicants and/or certificants and their examination results is considered confidential. Exam scores will be released only to the individual candidate unless a signed release is provided. Personal information submitted by applicants /certificants with an application or recertification application is considered confidential.

The ESPCC will not disclose confidential applicant /certificant information unless authorized in writing by the individual or as required by law. The names of CESP certified individuals and their certification status are not considered confidential and may be published by the ESPCC and/or APSE.

Aggregate exam statistics will be published periodically as a service to the profession and as a requirement for CESP accreditation. Aggregate exam statistics and related reports will describe performance by the population of candidates, not by specific individuals.

Use of the Credential

After receiving notification of CESP™ designation, the CESP™ credential may be used only as long as certification remains valid and in good standing. Individuals may not use the CESP™ credential until they have received specific written notification that they have successfully completed all requirements, including passing the exam. Certificants must comply with all recertification requirements to maintain use of the credential. The certification mark may be used only as long as certification is valid, after which time certification may be renewed.

Certification is a non-transferable, revocable, limited, non-exclusive license to use the certification designation “CESP™”, subject to compliance with the policies and procedures, as may be revised from time to time.

Certificants are able to use the mark in the following ways:

John Doe, CESP

John Doe, CESP™

John Doe, Certified Employment Support Professional

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