Certification Program Handbook

CESB
Accredited Program

ACCE
Recognized Program

Revised January 2019
Welcome Construction Estimating Professional!

ASPE’s Certification Committee has established itself as a certifying body to promote the highest standards of construction estimating. We seek to recognize professionals who have mastered this unique skill set.

By choosing to review this Handbook, you have taken the first steps toward joining a select group of estimating professionals who have distinguished themselves by earning the Certified Professional Estimator (CPE) designation.

This Handbook summarizes key aspects of the ASPE Certification Program. It is intended to help you understand why the Program was developed, how it is governed, its policies and procedures, and the process toward earning and maintaining CPE designation.

This Handbook will serve as a valuable reference to:
- Understand the Certification Program and the established process.
- Gather the appropriate items to submit your Technical Paper.
- Understand the required computer-based examinations.
- Maintain Certification, after passing the Certification Program requirements.

ASPE Certification is a recognized Program defined by construction estimating experts. The examinations thoroughly test competencies necessary to provide quality estimates and ethical practices.

Program due dates are subject to change, and it is the responsibility of the Candidate to be aware of and comply with all Program deadlines. Please be sure to keep the communication open with your Certification Team.

*This Handbook cannot address every potential question, policy detail or program change. It will, however, serve as a Candidate’s guide to better understanding of the Program. You may wish to email the ASPE Certification Team at Certification@ASPEnational.org with additional questions or concerns.

Best wishes on earning your designation of Certified Professional Estimator (CPE).
American Society of Professional Estimators

CORE PURPOSE

ASPE is the construction industry’s leader and recognized authority in professional estimating through excellence in education, certification, and standardization.

CORE VALUES

Education

ASPE educates and mentors professional estimators for the sustainability of the construction industry.

Professionalism

ASPE promotes the lifelong pursuit of excellence and credibility in professional estimating.

Fellowship

ASPE develops a fellowship of professional estimators that connects and leads the construction industry.
Steps to Certification

Work Experience
The ASPE Certification Program requires you to provide documentation of five years of on-the-job experience in the estimating field.

Note: Acceptance into the Certification Program does not require a Candidate to complete educational coursework offered by the American Society of Professional Estimators.

Application
ASPE Members already have an Online Profile. Non-Members must create an Online Profile (no fee required). The Online application is found on the Certification page.

Technical Paper
Technical Paper Topics are generally selected from a Pre-Approved Topic List, available to candidates within the Application process. Candidates are provided an eight (8) week deadline to complete the Technical Paper. If needed, Candidates are provided an opportunity to make revisions to their Paper if their initial review is not satisfactory to Program requirements.

Exams
All Candidates are required to successfully complete the General Estimating Knowledge Exam (GEK), as well as the Discipline Specified Tests (DSTs) for which they are seeking Certification. Exams are computer based and require a Proctor. Candidates are allowed one re-take per test if the minimum passing score is not met the first time.

Professional Development
Professional Development is required to maintain your Certified status. The CPE Renewal Handbook is a good reference and is available on the ASPE Website.
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Section 1: About the ASPE Certification Program

History of the Program

Professional evaluation through Certification promotes the estimating profession and benefits the construction industry through standardized testing and adherence to a Code of Ethics. The Founders of the Society sought to include estimators of all types of construction in the membership of ASPE. This array of highly skilled professionals completed the “melting pot” envisioned by the Charter Members when they first organized in 1956.

In 1975, the Society explored seeking outside assistance in the area of test development. Several firms, including Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton, New Jersey, were contacted to submit proposals. During the year, a series of meetings were held to review examination procedures, test questions, and testing agency presentations. The Society involved all Chapters in the implementation of the examination process. The National ASPE Board of Directors approved the recommendations of ETS to establish a peer group that would create, staff, and administer the evaluation of the Candidates for Certification.

1976 was a banner year for ASPE. The Society formed the Code of Ethics to supplement Certification, introduced Standards and rewrote the National Bylaws to encompass the Program. In May, the Board of Directors officially adopted the tenants of Certification, including the Certification Program Application, the Code of Ethics, and certified members of the Executive Committee as the initial peer group. Applications were then distributed to the entire Membership population. More than 300 applications were processed in August, and 233 individuals were accepted for certification in 11 of the 16 CSI Divisions.

The Certification Program has expanded to include several Discipline Specific Tests (DSTs). The goal was first to develop the primary disciplines and grow the Program from that point. The first DST was developed for the General Construction estimators, followed by Electric, HVAC, Plumbing, Concrete, Roofing, and Drywall. Not all disciplines currently have a DST test. The tests developed are based on demand and trends of the estimating profession. All tests are continually reviewed and updated.

In 2008, ASPE received its accreditation from CESB (Council of Engineering and Specialty Boards). Accreditation of the Certification Program provides assurance for Candidates and their employers that our procedures conform to those of the highest standards.

The ASPE Certification Program earned recognition from the American Council for Construction Education (ACCE) in 2014 for having a Certification Program that met ACCE’s rigorous quality and content standards.
**Certification Program Overview**

Dedicated ASPE Members have served in various capacities over the years to ensure Certification is in the forefront as one of the purposes of the ASPE organization. The Program’s future course will continue to be charted by a desire to educate and mentor professional estimators for the sustainability of the construction industry, promote the lifelong pursuit of excellence and credibility in professional estimating, and develop a fellowship of professional estimators that connects and leads the construction industry.

ASPE Certification is the highest form of professional recognition an estimator can receive and is being sought by more construction estimators each year. Through its Certification Program, ASPE recognizes the estimating proficiency and the ethical awareness of the Certified Professional Estimator (CPE).

The National Certification Committee, with support from the Chapter Certification Committees, administers the Certification Program.

ASPE Certification may be defined as an educational process, which entails review and acceptance of this Candidate Handbook and successfully completing the following two (2) steps.

1. Submission of Technical Paper
2. Successful completion of approximately twelve (12) hours of computer based examinations
   a. General Estimating Knowledge (GEK)
   b. Discipline Specific Test (DST)

Once CPE status is earned, the CPE is expected to keep abreast of the current trends and improved practices in the construction industry. CPEs are required to document active participation in the following areas.

1. Continuing Education / Training
2. Authorship, Presentation or Teaching
3. Professional Organizational Activities
4. Other Professional Activities
What is CPE Certification?
Certified Professional Estimator Certification is an unparalleled recognition in the field of Construction Estimating that is achieved by successful completion of a Technical Paper, General Estimating Knowledge Exam and Discipline Specific Tests.

The CPE Certification Program benefits the profession and the professional by the following.
- Improving the quality of estimates
- Setting standards of competency for estimators
- Encouraging ongoing learning and improvement required for professional excellence over a lifetime of practice
- Helping the construction estimator maintain the quality of their educational experience and providing recognition of their qualifications
- Encouraging networking, and the sharing of knowledge among CPEs
- Enhancing the credibility of the certificate and the employer

Why Become Certified?
Construction Estimators across the United States and abroad have demonstrated their competency by the successful completion of the CPE Program. Achieving Certification is an investment in one’s career and one’s professional and personal development.

Becoming Certified by ASPE enables estimators to:
- Validate knowledge essential to the practice.
- Gain competitive advantage.
- Elevate their status in the field.
- Demonstrate commitment to the highest standards.
- Increase opportunities for career advancement.
- Enhance professional reputation.

Accreditation
The Certified Professional Estimator (CPE) Program is accredited by the Council of Engineering and Scientific Specialty Boards (CESB).

Due to its rigorous assessment process, CESB represents the highest standard in accreditation. Achieving and maintaining accreditation is part of an ongoing commitment to add value to the certifying body and signify to our CPEs and Candidates that the Certification Program adheres to the highest standard in credentialing.
Section 2: Exam Information

Exam Development
The Certification Program examinations are developed and written by ASPE Certification Committee Members with assistance by other CPEs. The questions and problems are standardized to insure that each test can equally measure the ability of the Candidate in each discipline field. Task analysis studies are performed to carefully determine the completeness and accuracy of each test.

Exam Topics
Certification Exams are designed to evaluate the extent of a Candidate’s knowledge and understanding of the established Body of Knowledge.

The Body of Knowledge of cost estimating must, therefore, include much more than techniques for gathering data and using it to estimate costs. The cost estimator must be skilled in the broad application of construction systems.

Body of Knowledge - Basic Skills
The basic skill areas form the background knowledge for cost estimating are listed below.

- Operations, Planning and Control
- Methods and Standards
- Project Management
- Economics
- Computer Science
- Scheduling
- Managerial Economics
- Probability and Statistics
- Cost Accounting
- Technical Report Writing
- Public Speaking
Body of Knowledge - Cost Concepts

The remainder of the Body of Knowledge is more closely associated with the particular tasks of cost estimating, listed below.

- Not-to-Exceed Cost
- Direct Cost
- Indirect Cost
- Variable Cost
- Fixed Cost
- Average Cost
- Marginal Cost
- Incremental Cost
- Life Cycle Cost
- Revenue
- Profit
- Overhead
- Differential Cost
- Direct Labor
- Incurred Cost
- Markup Rate
- Process Costing
- Job Order Costing
- Constant Dollars
- Risk/Uncertainty
- Internal Economics
- ROM (Rough Order Magnitude)
- Operating and Support Costs
- Acquisition Costs
- Allowable Costs
- Labor Burden
- Design-to-Cost
- Fee
- Cost Escalation
- General & Administrative Cost (G&A)
- Performance Factors
Body of Knowledge - Data and Measurement
The cost concepts with which the cost estimator would ideally work are frequently not measured precisely. As a result, cost estimators must work with data that include approximate measures of concepts such as the following.

- Cost estimators must fully understand the elements of data and measurements
- Labor Hour Standards
- Cost Accounting Systems and Standards
- Standard Hour Costs
- Construction of Cost Factors
- Run Time
- Index Numbers
- Share-Line
- Transfer Pricing and Imputed Values
- Scrap Rate
- Sampling Techniques
- Escalation
- Cost Elements
- Work Breakdown Structures
- Alternatives Determination
- Cost Baseline
- Composite Labor Rates
- Contract End Items
- Contract Types
- Equipment/Labor/Material Cost
- Electronic Measuring Estimating Software

Exam Scoring
All ASPE Certification Program examinations are designed to measure and evaluate a Candidate’s knowledge and proficiency in the field. All examinations are computer based. Candidates are encouraged to provide feedback on the examinations during the testing phase of their Certification participation.

For each of the General Estimating Knowledge (GEK) and Discipline Specific Tests (DSTs), Candidates must earn a minimum of 70% on each exam to pass. Candidates are provided one (1) re-take if a passing score is not achieved. The exam re-take must be completed within 15-20 business days.

Exam & Question Format
The ASPE Certification Examinations consist of multiple choice questions. Some questions involve interpretation of drawings/schematics to determine the appropriate answer. All exams are computer based, and ASPE requires a Proctor. All exams are administered in English using the Imperial System of Measures.
Exam Administration

All Certification Program exams are administered via computer. All exams require a Proctor. Typically, the Chapter Certification Chairperson serves as the local Proctor; however, any current active CPE may serve as a Proctor.

Staffing

The ASPE Certification Coordinator has the overall responsibility for initiating the test and insuring that the Proctor receives all information and supplemental documentation needed for the exam to be a success.

Responsibilities of the Proctor

The exam must be administered in a secure, proctored setting. The Proctor will have access to the Candidate’s login information and supplemental materials and support from the Certification Coordinator.

The Proctor’s main responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following.

- Ensure that testing room arrangements create a positive and secure working environment
- Conduct the Exam in compliance with the procedures established by the Certification Program
- Record the nature, time and duration of any interruption to the testing process
- Notify the Certification Coordinator of any changes to the scheduled date and time of the testing
- Maintain all login information and handouts secure until the test date and time
- Begin the testing session and monitor the progress of the Candidate
- At the conclusion of each session and collect and store all testing documents, including Candidate notes
- Once all exams have been completed, scan all information and email to the Certification Coordinator, Certification@ASPEnational.org, then shred all Exam documentation

Administering the Exam(s)

Bathroom/coffee breaks will be taken “on the clock” as each exam is timed. Once the exam is opened, the clock begins. An internal clock will notify Candidate of remaining time. Once an exam is opened, it must be completed. To complete the exam, simply finish the last question. When the last question is answered, or the allotted time expires, the Candidate will be notified of the score. Also a graded exam report will become available to the Certification Coordinator.

Candidates and Proctors should make notes of any technical or other problems that may occur during any testing session. A form on which to make notes will be forwarded to the Proctor prior to the exam for use by the Candidate during the exam. The form must be returned to the Certification Coordinator at the conclusion of the exam.

ASPE Society Business Office Staff, including your Certification Coordinator, will be available during normal business hours for support or to respond to technical or procedural issues that may arise.
Exam System

ASPE Certification currently uses a web-based exam system known as Exam Professor. Candidates have the ability to move back and forth among questions as needed. This allows a Candidate to review answers as long as time remains on the clock. The system will only begin the grading process after the last question is answered or after the allotted time has ended.

A small sample exam is available to Candidates by using the following information.

   Exam Website:  www.examprofessor.com   Sign in as a Student
   Username/Email:  sample@aspenational.org
   Exam Password:  2018ASPE (password is case sensitive)

DST Requirement Fulfilled Through Questions & Problems

In the event that a Candidate does not find a DST that coincides with his/her specific discipline of experience or knowledge, ASPE does offer the Candidate the option to submit Questions & Problems to satisfy the DST requirement. If this is the wish of the Candidate, the Certification Committee must review and approve this option.

Questions & Problems is very rigorous and would require the Candidate to basically write the exam for that discipline. This can take much more time and effort on the part of the Candidate and the Certification Committee.

When developing a test, a Candidate should begin with their learning objectives for the discipline being addressed. Well-written, measurable learning objectives will greatly ease the process of test planning. Questions & Problems is divided into two (2) portions, as outlined below.

1. **Question Portion Format:**
   A minimum of one-hundred twenty (120) verifiable questions is required. Each question requires four (4) multiple choice answers. The questions must vary in location among the answer choices available (i.e., all the correct answers cannot be choice “a”). Each question may have only one (1) correct answer. The use of “all of the above”, “none of the above” is not permitted. Also no True/False questions; each question must be multiple choice. The ASPE Certification Coordinator will provide the Candidate with a template in which to use. The proper format is required to pass this portion.

2. **Problem Portion Format:**
   The Problem portion varies as the problems relate specifically to calculating quantities, production rates, unit pricing and costs for completing an estimate based on the information provided. Problems must be in an estimate format (labor, equipment, materials, etc.). Calculations of answer can be added to the source field on the template, thus forming an Answer Key. The Answer Key is also required to pass this portion of Questions & Problems.
A minimum of two (2) Problems or Mini-Estimates must be submitted. Each problem must contain a minimum of twenty-five (25) multiple choice quantity, cost, production rate, etc., calculation questions. Problems should be “min-estimates”. Each Problem shall provide a drawing or drawings of work, details as required to calculate the work, and information page covering general information. All required information such as general notes, assumptions, factors, schedules, allowances, material and equipment costs, wage and labor burden costs, production rates, sales tax, and so on, as necessary to calculate the correct answer shall be printed.

NOTE: Do not use the same plan or drawing for each problem. A different plan or drawing is required for each problem. Be consistent in your numbering and labeling of each drawing, plan, schematic or table of information. Be sure to number each problem and indicate what questions belong to which problem. (i.e., Problem #1 is for questions 1-39)

All documentation should be submitted together prior to the agreed upon deadline.

- Recap of Q&P Requirements: 120 Questions and 2-3 Problems

For more detailed information, please submit an inquiry to Certification@ASPenational.org.
Section 3: Candidate Information

Certified Program Administration
Each candidate seeking certification must meet the basic requirements.

- Experience: Minimum of Five (5) Years Estimating
- Technical Writing Abilities
- Communication Skills
- Successful completion of Certification Program Examinations

Candidates entering into the Certification Program are not discriminated against due to age, sex, religion, national origin, disability, or marital status. Candidates are assigned a candidate number that is utilized throughout the Certification process to maintain confidentiality and ensure objectivity.

Note: Acceptance into the Certification Program does not require a Candidate to complete educational coursework offered by the American Society of Professional Estimators.

All Candidates seeking Certification should review this Candidate Handbook and maintain it as reference during the Certification Program process.

Certification Exams are designed to evaluate the Candidates overall knowledge of estimating. It includes quantities, contract terms and conditions, cost reporting, ethics, and other fundamentals of the trade.

Steps to Certification
1. Submit Application and appropriate fee. The entire application is completed online. Non-Member Candidates must register and create a profile on the ASPE Website. ASPE Membership is not required to participate in the Certification Program. However, ASPE Members enjoy reduced Certification fees (among other networking advantages).
   - Website: www.ASPEnational.org
   - Login to your Profile
   - Select: Quick Links (in the black toolbar)
   - Select: Certification
   - Select: Certification Program (CPE)
   - Select: More Information (Yellow Box)

   This will allow the Candidate to complete the Application, submit payment, and print a receipt. Completion of the Application, online within the Profile, is easy and saves valuable time.

   Note: You should receive an email notice from the Certification Committee Team within 5-10 business days of your completed Application.

2. Candidates will be notified of acceptance into the Certification Program. Once accepted, Candidates will be asked to complete some read & sign documents. The Certification Team will then begin communications with each Candidate.

   Open Cycle Certification was created to allow Candidates to begin at the time that is convenient for them. The Program does have deadlines, and Candidates are expected to complete the entire Certification Program in 3-6 months.
Once read & sign documentation is complete and the Candidate commits to the general timeline, Candidates will be asked to select their path to Certification.

**Option 1:** Prepare your Tech Paper (Step 1) and complete the required Exams (Step 2). With this option, the Candidate will begin writing a Technical Paper on the approved topic. An eight (8) week timeframe is provided for completion of the Technical Paper. After the Technical Paper is submitted, the Candidate is encouraged to contact a Proctor and schedule exams within the following 15-21 days.

**Option 2:** Complete the required Exams (Step 1) and prepare your Technical Paper (Step 2). With this option, the Candidate will receive study materials within 3-5 business days and begin studying. The Candidate is required to select a Proctor and schedule exams within the following 30-60 days. If assistance is required to identify a Proctor, the Candidate is to contact the Certification Team.

3. In the event that a Candidate does not pass any part of the Certification Program, the following steps are available.
   - One (1) revision is allowed of the Technical Paper submission, if the Candidate’s original submission does not receive a passing grade. The revised Paper must be complete and re-submitted within 10 business days.
   - One (1) retake per exam is also allowed. The GEK is one exam and the DST is one exam (although the DST is divided into Part I and Part II). In the event that either portion does not receive a passing grade, the entire DST must be retaken. The retake must be complete within 15 business days.

**Technical Paper Selection and Submission**

While completing the Certification Application, the Candidate will be guided to a link that lists “Approved Technical Paper Topics.” Candidates are recommended to select from the list of Approved topics, but may choose a topic of their own. In the event that a Candidate selects their own Technical Paper topic, three (3) separate topics (as well as abstracts for each) are required. The Certification Committee must review and approve the topic before an Application is accepted.

Candidates will be required to submit, via electronic submission to the Certification Team, the following information.

- One (1) complete PDF of the entire Technical Paper, including all drawings, takeoffs or tables
- One (1) complete Microsoft Word version of the entire paper, including all drawings, takeoffs or tables
- Optional: Any additional supporting files may be submitted as one continuous PDF

The Candidate will be provided an eight (8) week deadline in which to complete and submit the Technical Paper. Late submission may be subject to penalty of score, or may cause the Candidate to be marked “incomplete.” If the incomplete is noted, the Candidate is required to wait 6 months to reapply and begin again by paying the associated fees.
Once the Candidate has submitted their Technical Paper for review, the Certification Coordinator will perform a very basic review (for spelling, grammar, and word count). The Technical Paper will then be sent to two (2) CPEs to perform a full review and for grading of the assignment. All Technical Papers must receive a passing grade of at least 18 of the 30 possible points from each review performed. Candidates are provided a copy of the grading sheet and comments from each reviewer.

- In the event that two (2) scores conflict, or one (1) reviewer does not award a passing grade, the Certification Coordinator will forward the Technical Paper to a third reviewer.
- In the event that the Technical Paper does not pass either review, the Candidate may have one (1) opportunity to revise the Paper and re-submit within 10 business days. The review process will begin anew with the two (2) original reviewers.
- The Certification Coordinator will make substitutions of reviews, if necessary, or requested by either reviewer of by the Candidate.

*Math Errors in the paper will result in an automatic fail, regardless of the other content criteria scores. Math errors include miscalculations, formula errors, typos and/or any other error that results in calculation being incorrect as presented.*

**Test Proctor Selection**

Candidates must select a Proctor for the testing phase of Certification. Typically, the Chapter Certification Chairperson will serve in this capacity. However, CPEs that are current/active ASPE Members are eligible to Proctor an exam. It is the goal to find local Proctors when possible. This prevents the need for a Candidate to travel to an exam site. Testing dates and times will be determined between Candidate and Proctor according to each person’s schedule.

It is the Candidate’s responsibility to ensure that the Certification Coordinator is aware of the schedule, or any changes to the schedule.

If a Candidate requires assistance in identifying a Proctor, the Candidate is encouraged to communicate the need to a member of the Certification Team. The Team is available to assist.

**Special Accommodations**

Candidates with sensory, visual, orthopedic, or other special needs that would prevent them from taking the examinations under the standard conditions may request special accommodations and considerations.

The ASPE Certification Program provides special accommodations in accordance with the American Disabilities Act. If a disability prevents taking the examinations under normal conditions, the Candidate is to submit a written request via email to Certification@ASPEnational.org. Upon receipt, the Certification Committee will review and respond to the request within 10 business days.

**General Information**

Candidates who do not fulfill the requirements of the Certification Program within the scheduled period (generally 3-6 months from the Application acceptance date) are marked “incomplete” and removed from the Program. No refunds will be given for any reason.
Any Candidate who is removed from the Program and who seeks Certification is required to wait 6 months to reapply. A new application and applicable fees must be submitted and may be reviewed by the Certification Committee.

A Candidate who wishes to re-apply within 6-12 months from the date they are marked as “incomplete” will be able to carry forth any successfully completed portions and may be eligible for a $100 credit toward the second Certification Program Application.

In the event that a Candidate waits longer than 12 months to reapply, the entire Program will begin anew, including retake of the GEK and DST Exams; and a new Technical Paper topic must be selected (cannot resubmit a Technical Paper that previously earned a passing score). All applicable fees will need to be satisfied.

**ASPE Certification Program Refund Policy**

No refunds are granted after the start of the Certification Program. No refunds will be made to any Candidate who fails to participate or who fails to meet the scheduled deadlines.

In the event of extenuating circumstances, a Candidate may submit a written request for consideration by the Certification Committee. Requests are to be sent via email to Certification@ASPEnational.org.

**ASPE Certification Program Appeal Process - Right to Appeal**

Candidates registered in the Certification Program and Certificate Holders have the right to file an appeal on matters relating to their applications, examinations, certification, annual renewal, re-activation or other matters affecting their status as a Candidate or as a CPE. There are generally three (3) types of appeals, listed below.

**Eligibility Appeal**
Candidates for the Certification Program who feel they were unjustly denied eligibility to the Certification Program may file an Eligibility Appeal in accordance with the Appeal Procedures listed below.

**Administrative Appeal**
Candidates or CPEs who allege inappropriate administration procedures, adverse environmental testing conditions, or for other reasons challenge the results of an Examination or Technical Paper review, have the right to file an Administrative Appeal in accordance with the Appeal procedures

CPEs who believe they were unjustly denied recertification or have had their status revoked have the right to an Administrative Appeal in accordance with the Appeal Procedures listed below.

**Appeal Procedures**

All Certification Program appeals must be submitted via email within 15 business days of the qualifying event. The request for appeal is to be emailed to Certification@ASPEnational.org.

**Submittal**

Each Certification Program appeal must include a written and signed statement of no more than five (5) typed pages, outlining the basis of the Appeal, including specific information the Candidate or CPE feels necessary, explaining why he or she is entitled to the appeal. The ASPE Certification Committee will
consider each written statement and is entitled to seek further information from the Application or any other person, organization or office that it feels appropriate to the decision of the Appeal. The Certification Committee will determine the result of the appeal and respond. Appeals will be resolved within 45-60 days of receipt.

**Personal Appeal**
Candidates and CPEs that are dissatisfied with the actions of the Appeal have the right to a Personal Appeal. A Personal Appeal must be submitted in writing to the ASPE Board of Directors. The appeal will be reviewed at the next Board of Directors meeting (which may include conference calls) or a special meeting may be called within twenty (20) days of receipt of the Personal Appeal to the Board. ASPE Certification Committee Members are excused from the Personal Appeal process. Any actions taken by a majority of a quorum of the Board of Directors pursuant to such Appeal shall be final. A report of the Board discussion shall be sent to the person submitting the appeal within ten (10) days of the Board decision. The request for Personal Appeal is to be emailed to ecersosimo@ASPenational.org.

**Ethics Violation**
The Certification Committee recognizes its responsibility to maintain the integrity of the Certification Program. CPE Certificate Holders and Certification Program Candidates are expected to act professionally and conduct themselves in an ethical manner.

The Certification Committee accepts that the good of the profession may require it to take action against a particular Certificate Holder or Candidate upon notice, investigation, and finding a violation(s) of the Code of Ethics.

By publishing this procedure, the Certification Committee does not expect, invite, solicit or encourage such complaints. The use of these procedures is for the sole purpose of protecting the reputation of ASPE, its Members, and the estimating profession as well as safeguarding the public’s trust.

Upon discovery, a report of the alleged violation of the ASPE Code of Ethics is to be submitted via email to Certification@ASPenational.org. The Certification Committee will only consider complaints that specify the part(s) of the Code of Ethics that has allegedly been violated.

**Terms and Conditions of the Disciplinary Policy**
The ASPE Certification Committee shall undertake sanctions against Candidates or CPE Certification Holders only in relation to their failure to meet requirements for initial Certification, Certification Renewal or Code of Ethics violations. The ASPE Certification Program is a voluntary process, not required by law for employment in the field. Monitoring and evaluation of actual job performance is beyond the scope of the ASPE Certification Committee. Applications may be refused, Candidates may be barred from future examinations, or Candidates or individuals certified may be sanctioned, including revocation of the CPE designation, for the following reasons:

- Attesting to false information on the Application or on Certification documents.
- Giving or receiving information to or from another Candidate during the examination process.
- Removing or attempting to remove examination material from the testing environment, including a Candidates’ own notes.
- Unauthorized possession and or distribution (oral, written, electronic, or any other medium) of any official testing or examination materials.
- Representing oneself falsely as a designate CPE.
- Violation of the Certification standards, policies or procedures.
Before any sanction occurs, Candidates, or CPE Certification Holders will be provided notice of the reason for the proposed revocation and an opportunity to explain their position to the ASPE Certification Committee as an Appeal and in accordance with Appeal Process.

**General Estimating Knowledge Exam (GEK)**
The General Estimating Knowledge Exam tests a candidate’s fundamental knowledge of estimating practices. The exam is based on educational materials provided by leading universities offering coursework in the field of estimating.

- The GEK Exam is a four (4) hour exam that must be completed in one sitting.
- A minimum score of 70% or higher is required for a passing grade.
- One (1) retake is allowed, if a Candidate does not earn a score of 70% on the first test.
- The Exam retake must be completed within 10-20 business days.

The purpose of the GEK Study Guide is to lead a Candidate through the General Estimating Knowledge (GEK) exam. However, the Candidate must realize and understand that their overall knowledge of the estimating process is the best basis for information in passing the GEK exam.

**Discipline Specific Test (DST)**
Recognizing the importance of evaluating the estimators' proficiency in his/her own trade or specialty, the Certification Program offers Discipline Specific Testing.

Each DST is one test; however, it has been divided into two (2) parts. Each part is approximately four (4) hours. Once the examination is initiated, it must be finished. Therefore, the DST is divided into two (2) parts to allow the Candidate (Student) a break in between exams. For the purpose of scheduling with your Proctor, this is a nine (9) hour test day.

Part I: Is primarily multiple choice questions, with general knowledge answers. Some calculations may be required.

Part II: Is primarily multiple-choice questions. Part II will include Supplementary Handouts that will be needed to successfully complete the Test problems or mini-estimates that comprise this portion of the exam. The Proctor will distribute the applicable Handouts to the Candidate on test day.

- The DST exam is an entire eight (8) hour exam that must be complete in one sitting, with a scheduled break.
- To pass the DST Exams, Candidates must earn a score of 70% or better on each Part I and Part II of the Exam.
- One (1) retake is allowed, if Candidate does not earn a passing grade during the first test.
- The DST is considered one (1) test. If a score of 70% or better is not earned on either Part I or Part II, the entire DST is a fail; and both Part I and Part II must be retaken.
- The DST Exam retake must be completed within 10-20 business days.

For the most current list of available DST Exams, reference the Certification Program Application available on the ASPE website.
Exam Rules and Procedures

The following rules and procedures will be strictly enforced on the day of the examination.

- The Proctor is responsible to ensure these rules are followed, or the Candidate must be reported to the Certification Committee Coordinator.
- The Examination will begin promptly at the hour designated by the Proctor and end at the stated time allowed for each specific exam.
- Visitors are not permitted in testing environment.
- Standard calculators are permitted. Digital scales, programmable calculators or other such aids are not permitted.
- No cell phones, pagers, or other audible electronics devices are permitted in the testing room. These should be left with the Proctor, in case of an emergency call.
- The Candidate must not discuss the exam with each other or anyone other than an ASPE Certification Committee Member, ASPE Staff, or the Proctor at any time during or after the examinations.

A full document regarding Exam Rules and Procedures will be given to the Proctor. This Read & Sign document must be completed prior to each testing session. The Proctor is required to ensure this document is complete and sent to the Certification Committee Coordinator. An exam may be disqualified if this step is not completed.

Actions/Disqualifications

Candidates, as well as Proctors, are asked to use integrity and honesty in all exam procedures. Any form of cheating will not be tolerated. Some of the actions that will not be tolerated are listed below.

- Impersonation of Candidate or any other misrepresentation
- Creates disturbance in the testing environment
- Give or receives help on the examination
- Attempts to remove examination material or notes about the exam

*The Certification Committee reserves the right to conduct a full investigation in the event of any discrepancies or concerns regarding the integrity of the Candidate and/or the Proctor.

Successful Candidates

Candidates who earn a passing score on their Technical Paper and all Certification Examinations earn the status of Certified Professional Estimators (CPE). Newly issued CPEs are issued a framed certificate and a pin displaying their new designation in recognition of their accomplishment.
**Section 4: ASPE Code of Ethics**

The American Society of Professional Estimators

**Code of Ethics**

**Introduction**

The ethical principles presented are intended as a broad guideline for professional estimators and estimators in training. The philosophical foundation upon which the rules of conduct are based is not intended to impede independent thinking processes, but is a foundation upon which professional opinions may be based in theory and in practice.

Please recognize that membership in and certification by the American Society of Professional Estimators are not the sole claims to professional competence but support the canons of this code.

The distinguishing mark of a truly professional estimator is acceptance of the responsibility for the trust of client, employer and the public. Professionals with integrity have, therefore, deemed it essential to promulgate codes of ethics and to establish means of insuring their compliance.

**Preamble**

The objective of the American Society of Professional Estimators is to promote the development and application of education, professional judgment, and skills within the industry we serve. Estimators must perform under the highest principles of ethical conduct as it relates to the protection of the public, clients, employers and others in this industry and in related professions.

The professional estimator must fully utilize education, years of experience, acquired skills and professional ethics in the preparation of a fully detailed and accurate estimate for work in a specific discipline. This is paramount to the development of credibility by estimators in our professional service.

Estimating is a highly technical and learned profession, and the members of this society should understand their work is of vital importance to the clients and to the employers they serve. Accordingly, the service provided by the estimator should exhibit honesty, fairness, trust, impartiality and equity to all parties involved.

**Canon #1**

*Professional estimators and those in training shall perform services in areas of their discipline and competence.*

1. Estimators shall, to the best of their ability, represent truthfully and clearly to a prospective client or employer their qualifications and capabilities to perform services.

2. The estimator shall undertake to perform estimating assignments only when qualified by education or years of experience in the technical field involved in any given assignment.

3. The estimator may accept assignments in other disciplines based on education or years of experience as long as a qualified associate, consultant or employer attests to the accuracy of their work in that assignment.
4. An estimator may be subjected to external pressures to perform work above or beyond qualifying education and experience. Estimators must retain their integrity and professionalism by actively avoiding involvement in situations that may lead to loss of independence and integrity as a professional estimator.

Canon #2

*Professional estimators and those in training shall continue to expand their professional capabilities through continuing education programs to better enable them to serve clients, employers and the industry.*

1. A member of the American Society of Professional Estimators will strive to gain the honored position of “Certified Professional Estimator” and encourage others to obtain this honored position.

2. Members will lend personal and financial support, where feasible, to the schools and institutions engaged in the education and training of estimators.

3. Members will cooperate in extending the effectiveness of the profession by interchanging information and experience with other estimators and those in training to be estimators, subject to legal or proprietary restraints.

4. Members will endeavor to provide opportunity for the professional development and the advancement of estimators and those in training under their personal supervision.

Canon #3

*Professional estimators and those in training shall conduct themselves in a manner that will promote cooperation and good relations among members of our profession and those directly related to our profession.*

1. Treat all professional associates with integrity, fairness, tolerance and respect, regardless of national origin, race, sexual orientation, religion, gender or age.

2. Extend fraternal consideration when giving testimony that may be damaging to a member of our society, as long as it does not violate this Code of Ethics and the laws governing the proceedings.

3. Accept the obligation to assist associates in complying with the code of professional ethics. The professional character of our society is dependent upon continuing mutual cooperation with one another. It is an essential element of our continued success.

4. Recognize the ethical standards set by other professionals, such as architects and engineers, directly related to our industry and extend to them the common courtesies they deserve.

5. Act honorably, both in personal and professional life, by avoiding situations that may erode public respect.
Canon #4

Professional estimators and those in training shall safeguard and keep in confidence all knowledge of the business affairs and technical procedures of an employer or client.

1. Privileged information or facts pertaining to methods used in estimating procedures prescribed by an employer, except as authorized or required by laws, shall not be revealed.

2. Treat in strict confidence all information concerning a client’s affairs acquired during the fulfillment of an engagement and completion of an estimating procedure.

3. Serve clients and employers with professional concern for their best interests, provided this obligation does not endanger personal integrity or independence.

Canon #5

Professional estimators and those in training shall conduct themselves with integrity at all times and not knowingly or willingly enter into agreements that violate the laws of the United States of America or the states in which they practice. They shall establish guidelines for setting forth prices and receiving quotations that are fair and equitable to all parties.

1. By not participating in bid shopping. Bid shopping occurs when a contractor contacts several subcontractors of the same discipline in an effort to reduce the previously quoted prices. This practice is unethical, unfair, and is in direct violation of this Code of Ethics.

2. By not accepting quotations from unqualified companies or suppliers. Every effort should be made to pre-qualify any bidder to be used.

3. By not divulging quotes from subcontractors and suppliers to competitors prior to bid time in efforts to drive down the prices of either. Should quotes be received from subcontractors or suppliers that are excessively low or appear to be in error, the firm should be asked to review its’ price. When making this request, the quotes of others shall not be divulged.

4. By not padding or inflating quoted bid prices. An unethical practice for professional estimator is to pad or inflate quotes when bidding with firms known for bid shopping. If not a violation of applicable laws, a professional estimator should not provide quotes to known bid shoppers. However, it is not unethical to submit quotes with different values to different contractors, provided there are sound business reasons to justify the differences in the quotes.

5. Professional estimators shall not enter into the unethical practice of complimentary bids (also known as comp bids). Complimentary bidding is a violation of this Code of Ethics.
Canon #6

*Professional estimators and those in training shall utilize their education, years of experience and acquired skills in the preparation of each estimate or assignment with full commitment to make each estimate or assignment as detailed and accurate as their talents and abilities allow.*

1. To formulate an accurate estimate in any discipline, a full review must be made of all related documents. Any other approach could cause errors or omissions that may endanger professional integrity and reliability.

2. It is of paramount importance to a professional estimator to minimize the possibility of making mistakes or errors. The more detailed the estimate, the better the accuracy will be.

3. Each estimate should be cross-checked by means that will insure that it is technically and mechanically free from mistakes, oversight or errors. If possible and feasible, estimates should be checked by other professionals. If it is not feasible for someone else to cross-check an estimate, the estimator should cross-check their own estimate by utilizing a different method, such as using historical data or unit prices based on previous cost data on similar project.

Canon #7

*Professional estimators and those in training shall not engage in the practice of bid peddling as defined by this code. This is a breach of moral and ethical standards, and a member of this society shall not enter into this practice.*

1. Bid peddling occurs when a subcontractor approaches a general contractor with the intent of voluntarily lowering the original price below the price level established on bid day. This action implies that the subcontractor’s original price was either padded or incorrect. This practice undermines the credibility of the professional estimator and is not acceptable.

2. The same procedure applies to a professional estimator engaged as a general contractor, as defined in the previous paragraph, when the estimator approaches an owner or client to voluntarily lower the original bid price.

3. When a proposal is presented, the professional estimator is stating the estimate has been prepared to the best of their ability using their education, expertise and recognized society standards. Entering into unethical practices such as “bid peddling” jeopardizes both personal and society professional credibility, while violating the trust of the clients.

4. This canon does not consider the practice of the solicitation of a “best and final offer” to be unethical. Where permissible by law and authorized by the procurement authority, an estimator may request a best and final offer from his subcontractors and suppliers, but must keep the value of the original quotations strictly confidential.
Canon #8

Professional estimators and those in training to be estimators shall not enter into any agreement that may be considered acts of collusion or conspiracy (bid rigging) with the implied or express purpose of defrauding clients. Acts of this type are in direct violation of the code of ethics of the American Society of Professional Estimators.

1. Bid rigging, collusion and conspiracy, as defined by the American Society of Professional Estimators, may occur between two (2) or more parties. Agreements reached by companies or individuals in the act of conspiring to set the price of a particular project or scope of work with the express purpose of circumventing the competitive bid process are illegal and a violation of this Code of Ethics.

2. Professional estimators and those in training to be estimators shall not be associated with firms which are known to participate in the practice of bid rigging.

3. There are no conditions that will allow a professional estimator to enter into such fraudulent acts such as bid rigging, knowing that they are held to be unlawful, immoral, unethical and unacceptable to this Society.

Canon #9

Professional estimators and those in training to be estimators shall not participate in acts such as the giving or receiving of gifts, which are intended to be or may be construed as being acts of bribery.

1. Professional estimators and those in estimating should not offer cash, securities, intangible property rights or any personal items in order to influence or that give the appearance of influencing the judgment or conduct of others that would place them in the position of violating any laws or leave them with the feeling of obligation or indebtedness.

2. Professional estimators and those in training should not accept gifts, gratuities or entertainment that would place them in a position of violating and laws (municipal, state or federal) or that give the appearance of creating an inducement which would affect the estimator’s professional credibility by placing them in a position of obligation or indebtedness.

Restated August 2018
Section 5: The Technical Paper

Purpose and Criteria for the Technical Paper

The purpose of the Technical Paper is to evaluate the Candidate’s ability to communicate technical ideas in a logical and reasonable manner.

One of the requirements for the Technical Paper states that it must be a minimum of 2,500 words. There is no maximum stated. However, by choosing a topic with which the Applicant is extremely familiar, it should not require more than ten to fifteen percent more in length than the minimum.

The Technical Paper topic should be selected based on the following criteria.

1. The Technical Paper topic should be something with which the Applicant is intimately familiar, thus making it easier to provide a step-by-step guide to the quantification, production rate, material, and equipment estimating system.

2. The Applicant’s objective is to teach the reader How To Estimate The Cost Of (HTETCO) said topic.

3. The program Application includes a list of Approved Technical Paper Topics, from which a candidate is recommended to select.

   - If the list does not include a topic with which the candidate is familiar, the Application allows the Applicant to identify three (3) topics, providing a (very) brief synopsis of what the Paper will cover. The Applicant must understand that the Committee will consider allowing the Applicant to write about their first choice. But the Applicant must list topics with the full understanding that their first choice may not be the choice for the Committee.

4. The scope of the topic must be narrow enough to allow the subject matter to be covered in detail within the word count. In other words, one would not select “Estimating the cost of the power system for an elementary school.” A more narrow topic would be “Estimating the cost of furnishing and installing the electrical sub-panels in an elementary school.” Or in lieu of “Estimating the cost of a suspended drywall ceiling”, select “Estimating the cost of a coffered drywall ceiling”.

5. The Technical Paper must include a drawing for use in the estimating process. The drawing(s) must be clear and legible when printed on an 8.5 x 11-inch paper.

The Technical Paper Guide document was designed to provide the Candidate with details about the Paper structure and how it will be scored during the peer review. For reference purposes, the Technical Paper Guide is available on the ASPE website and is accessed from the Certification Menu.

Papers with math errors will be scored a fail, regardless of how well the paper scored in all other grading criteria. Math errors include miscalculations, incorrect formulas, and/or typos in the material presented as part of the Technical Paper.
Section 6: Continuing Certification

ASPE requires the Certified Professional Estimator to renew their designation on an annual basis.

- Twenty-four (24) Professional Development Units (PDUs) are required for annual renewal.
- Annual renewal is accomplished online, through our secure system.

Professional Development Units (PDU’s)

ASPE Renewal requires the CPE to earn a minimum of twenty-four (24) Professional Development Units (PDUs) annually in two (2) or more of the following Categories.

Category 1: Continuing Education / Training
Most activities in this Category earn between one-half (0.5) and one (1) PDU credit per hour of attendance.

Examples:
- Webinar/DVD/Webcast: If you are learning and attend for 2 hours = 1 PDU credit
- Lunch & Learn: If you are learning and attend for 2 hours = 1-2 PDU Credit(s)
- Academic Courses/ College or Trade school (online or in person) 2 hours = 2 PDU credits

Category 2: Authorship, Presentation, Teaching
Most activities in this Category earn one (1) PDU per hour. Remember, equal credit may be claimed for prep time.

Examples:
- Review Technical Paper(s) for Candidates in Certification Program = 4 PDU Credits
- Write a blog. The CPE earns 0.25 PDU credits for each published blog
- Instructing a class or seminar on estimating

Category 3: Professional Organizational Activities
Most activities in this Category earn one (1) PDU per hour of attendance.

Examples:
- Attend and participate in Chapter/Regional or ASPE sponsored meeting, workshops, etc. = 1-3 PDUs depending on the time and level of participation, or education
- Professional Membership with other industry related organizations (Examples AACE, CSI, SAVE) = 1 PDU/active membership
- Elected leadership role for Chapter or other ASPE organizations = can be 3-5 PDUs per year
Category 4: Other Professional Activities
Most activities in this Category earn one (1) PDU per hour of attendance.

Examples:
- Community volunteer work (relevant to estimating) = 1 PDU per hour
- Media interview, source of press release (live or in print, relevant to estimating) = 1 PDU per instance, published article
- Volunteer job training activities related to profession = 1 PDU per hour

Uploading Earned PDU Units:
You have the ability to upload PDU credits as earned, thus streamlining the Renewal process.

- Access ASPE Website: www.ASPEnational.org
- Login to your Profile
- Select: Quick Links (in the black toolbar)
- Select: Certification Journal
- Select: + Add entry
- Populate the fields
- Select: Submit

Once a CPE selects Submit, the entry is forwarded to the Certification Team. A member of the Team will verify and approve the entry or contact the Applicant for additional information.

CPE Annual Renewal, the Process
To complete the CPE Renewal process, follow the steps below.

- Access ASPE Website: www.ASPEnational.org
- Login to your Profile
- Select: Quick Links (in the black toolbar)
- Select: Certification
- Select: Applications + Forms
- Select: CPE On-Time Renewal

This will allow for completion of the Renewal Application, submit payment, and print a receipt. Online Renewal, within the CPEs Profile, is easy and saves valuable time. If assistance is needed, simply contact the Certification Team by emailing your request to Certification@ASPEnational.org.
Late Renewals, the Policy
If a CPE fails to complete their on-time CPE Renewal Application, including payment of fees or submission of required PDUs by December 31, the CPE will be assessed a $50 fee for each month, until requirements are met and fees are submitted.

Policy: All fees must be paid within 5-10 business days from invoice date. If unpaid, CPE status will be revoked.

Note: All CPEs are responsible for updating their PDU Journal. Please note that approximately 5-10 business days should be allowed for the approval of all PDU submissions.

Note: Attendance at Summit will be automatically entered into your Certification Journal at the conclusion of the event.

Revocation
When a CPE does not maintain their CPE status, it will be revoked. Once CPE Status is revoked, there are two (2) ways an individual may reapply for CPE designation.

• Reactivation: Detailed below
• Re-Apply to Certification Program: This includes all appropriate fees, and the individual must apply and complete the entire program (regardless of the scores achieved during the first Certification Process)

Reactivation
This is a one-time only process in which a former CPE may apply for reactiviation. An application and appropriate fees must be submitted prior to two (2) years from the last Cycle End Date.

• Only through majority approval, by the current Certification Committee, may any individual become reactivated
• Reactivation does not require submission of PDUs to begin the process
• Upon reactivation, current CPE requirements must be met
• Reactivation Fees: $1,500

Reapplication
Candidates that fail one or more parts of the Certification Program are required to wait six (6) months before they may reapply.

Incentive: If a Candidate reapplies in 6-12 months after the first program was deemed as incomplete, the Candidate may be eligible to receive the following concessions.

• $100 Credit: To be applied against fees paid for Re-Application to Certification Program
• Candidate may be able to carry-forward any passing grades from the failed attempt
Section 7- Proper Use of CPE Logo

As a CPE Certificate Holder in good standing, you may want to utilize the official CPE Logo on letterhead, in an email signature block, and on business cards. This will emphasize your achievement.

To request an electronic version of the CPE logo, a written email request is to be sent to Certification@APSEnational.org.

The following guidelines must be adhered to when using the CPE logo.

- The logo may not be revised or altered in any way. The logo must be displayed in the same form as produced by ASPE and cannot be reproduced unless such reproduction is identical to the logos provided by ASPE.
- The CPE logo is meant to identify a Certified Professional Estimator as opposed to a business entity. The logo may be used only on the Certified Professional Estimator’s (CPE) business cards, stationery, etc.
- The logo may not be used in any manner that detracts from the high standards of ASPE or our Certification Program.
- No Person gains any rights whatsoever in the logo or its use; it remains the property of ASPE and the Certification Committee. ASPE and the Certification Committee reserve the right in their sole discretion to require the removal of the logo from any location or object that ASPE or the Certification Committee feels does not comply with these guidelines.
- The Certification Committee may authorize the use of the symbol, the phrase “Certified Professional Estimator” and the initials “CPE” by Certificate Holders only, provided such holders currently possesses a valid Certification issued by the ASPE Certification Committee.

Consequences for Improper Use of Marks

The ASPE CPE logo is intended for the exclusive use of ASPE certified professionals. Misuse of the CPE credential or logo may result in denial of initial certification, re-certification, revocation, suspension, or any other limitation of a certification or combination of sanctions. ASPE further reserves the right to take any legal action it deems reasonable or appropriate in any court or other tribunal having jurisdiction with respect to the matter.