



Certification Program FAQ Sheet

➤ **How long as the ASP Certification Program been in existence?**

The Certification Project was approved by the National Board of Directors in May 2008. In August 2009, the following Levels of Professionalism were established:

- ✓ Strategic Planning Professionals (SPP)—Level I
- ✓ Strategic Management Professionals (SMP)—Level II
- ✓ Student/Strategic Planning Associate Level

The Certification Program was introduced at the ASP Annual Conference in Pasadena, CA, in February 2010, and the first Nationwide Testing was administered in June 2010

➤ **What is the difference between the SPP, SMP, and SPA?**

	SMP	SPP	SPA	
				
Credential Title	SMP: Strategic Management Professional Level II	SPP: Strategic Planning Professional Level I	SPA: Strategic Planning Associate	
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with C-Level Executives and their Teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with Executives, Managers, and their Teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student, Apprentice, or New to Strategic Planning 	
Eligibility Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years (minimum) as an experienced internal Executive or external Consultant leading multiple Strategic Planning assignments • College Graduate or 10 years work experience • Holds SMP credential or meets all of its requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 years (minimum) in an internal planning role or as a junior external planning consultant • College Graduate or 5 years work experience in strategic planning or related field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet ASP criteria for Student membership⁴ • Has a senior planning professional mentor, preferably ASP certified • No prior experience in Planning nor demonstration of Business Acumen • Agree to apply for SPP within 2 years 	

➤ **How were the Exams developed?**

The ASP Certification Program is based on the ASP Standards, Competencies and Body of Knowledge Framework (BOK Framework) containing 164 core task statements organized by specific competency in the four foundational areas of Lead, Think, Plan and Act.

➤ **How many questions are on the Exams?**

Each Certification Exam has 160 questions covering the 84 and 80 competency task statements in the SPP and SMP exams, respectively. ASP sets the passing standard as the number of test questions it determines to be necessary for Candidates to answer correctly in order to be considered at least minimally competent.

➤ **How often are the exams offered?**

Both the Level I SPP and Level II SMP ASP Certification Exams are administered twice a year at computer-based testing facilities during established two-week testing periods. However, Qualifying Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis throughout the year by members of the ASP Certification Application Team. Those arriving after the published deadline become eligible for the following testing period. Please note that an Exam is not required to obtain the Strategic Planning Associate (SPA) designation.

➤ **How are the Exams administered?**

Professional Testing Corporation (PTC) (www.ptcny.com) is the independent testing company that manages the ASP Exam Testing Program. PTC uses computer test centers run by PSI Testing to administer the Exams.

➤ **Can the Exams be taken in countries other than the United States and Canada?**

Yes. It may be possible to establish a special testing center to take a paper and pencil examination in an Exam Candidate's own country for a surcharge of \$100 USD to cover administrative costs. International Exam Candidates requesting a non-US or Canada testing location must submit their ASP Qualifying Application in no less than TWELVE weeks before the testing period.

➤ **What are the applicable fees in order to obtain Certification?**

Fees Structure (payable only in USD)	For Members	For Non Members
Qualifying Application Fee for SMP, SPP, and SPA:	\$100	\$150
Candidate Exam Fee for SMP and SPP: To be paid ONLY after Certification Application is approved	\$300	\$400
Re-Exam Fees: \$175 US/CAN \$200 International		
International Test Center Surcharge: To set up Exam Location outside of US & Canada; Surcharge included in fee when home country not US or Canada	\$100 Surcharge	\$100 Surcharge
Testing Period Transfer Fee: To be paid ONLY AFTER ASP approval for test period transfer	\$150	\$150
Recertification Fee for SMP and SPP	\$175	\$275

➤ **What is the process for applying?**

ASP has a two-part application process that includes review of Applicant's ASP Qualifying Application followed by processing of the PTC Test Center Application. It is strongly recommend that Applicants submit their completed Qualifying Application at least TWO TO FOUR WEEKS IN ADVANCE OF THE DEADLINE to assure sufficient time to revise if additional information is needed. The four key components are:

1. Qualifying Application Form: a writable/savable pdf application form (downloadable from the ASP Certification Application and Handbook webpage)
2. Case Study: Up to 1000 words or two standard pages, following a set format outlined in the application; required for SMP Level II and optional for SPP Level I, but recommended if not strong in educational background. SPA applicants use the Case Study section for an essay describing their motives and interests in obtaining the SPA designation.
3. Professional References: Three (3) references for SMP and two (2) for SPP. At least one must speak to Applicant's ethics. For SPA, submit a statement from Applicant's strategy professional mentor re: the focus of professional development
4. Career Bio: Current professional resume, career bio, curriculum vitae or other description of professional education and experience, especially that related to strategy work

➤ **Do you have to obtain the Strategic Planning Professional Certification before the Strategic Management Professional (SMP)?**

In Oct. 2011, the ASP Board eliminated this limited "Grandfathering" provision and voted that all applicants who qualify for the SMP certification exam can take the SMP exam directly. Therefore, all experienced strategy professionals who meet eligibility criteria may directly apply for the SMP Level II credential without first holding the SPP Level I.

➤ **If I submit an application packet for the Strategic Management Professional (SMP), will I also be considered for the Strategic Planning Professional (SPP) exam?**

Yes. The Application Team performs a thorough analysis of each application and recommends the appropriate level based on the applicant's documented experience.

➤ **How quickly will I hear back on whether I have been approved to write an Exam?**

Applicants are notified within 21 business days.

➤ **What study resources are available to assist with Exam preparation?**

ASP qualifies Registered Educational Providers (REPs) to offer courses and programs in strategic planning and management that align with ASP's BOK Framework. Exam preparation resources, including ASP Exam Preparation Study Guides from ASP REPs, can be found on the ASP Certification New Association Products page at New Association Products. Current ASP Registered Educational Providers and their program offerings are also listed in the ASP Cert Pages at Qualified List of REPs.

➤ **How long is the Certification valid before re-certifying?**

The Strategic Planning Professional (SPP) is valid for three years and the Strategic Management Professional (SMP) is valid for five years . There is no re-certification for the Strategic Planning Associate designation (SPA) as it expires within two years of receipt.

➤ **Where can I find out more information about the Certification Program?**

Please visit strategyplus.org and select “Certification”, email certificationprogram@strategyplus.org or call 1.877.816.2080 for more information on the ASP Certification Program.