

## ASPPA Examination Policy

ASPPA's Retirement Plan Academy (RPA) exams include proctored credential exams, online certificate exams, and online exams for the CPC Modules. The following are considered credential exams: QKA1, QKA2, DB, DC-3, and CPC. The following are considered certificate exams: RPF and DB-A. The exam policies and requirements differ for credential and certificate exams.

### Online Credential Exam Policy

- **Enrollment:** Candidates will receive enrollment notification within three business days of completing purchase of the exam. If an exam is bundled with study material delivered through the learning management system (LMS), the candidate will request enrollment in the exam through their LMS catalog once ready to access.
- **Online Proctoring:** ASPPA credential exams are administered online using live and automated proctors. Proctored online exams can be taken at home using a computer equipped with a webcam and microphone. Any irregularity or suspected violation of exam standards of conduct (see below) will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action.
- **Identification Requirement:** All candidates must use their webcam to take a photo of themselves prior to starting the exam. The photo should show the candidate's full face in neutral lighting so the candidate's identity can be confirmed. The candidate must also present their photo ID during the online exam check-in process to confirm their identity. Candidates may present their photo ID in front of the webcam or prepare a scanned copy of the ID to be submitted during the check-in process. Passports, driver's licenses, identification cards, and other government-issued photo IDs are acceptable.
- **Time Limit:** All credential exams are timed and must be completed within the allotted time. Exams cannot be paused and resumed after starting. Any exam questions left unanswered at the end of the allotted time will be counted as incorrect.
- **Exam Results:** Candidates who complete credential exams will be able to view their pass/fail results within three business days. After three business days, candidates will be able to view a report and, if successfully completed, download a certificate of completion.
  - CPC exams are essay-based and graded by a team of expert graders. CPC Exam results will be emailed to candidates directly approximately 8-10 weeks after the exam date.
- **Exam Grading:** Most credential exam results will include a numerical percentage score and Pass/Fail status.
  - For the CPC exam a score of 9, 8 or 7 (passing grade) or 6, 5 or "N" (failing grade) is provided instead of a percentage score. A score of "N" indicates that the candidate's performance was below the minimum acceptable standards. Raw scores, spreads between scores, pass marks, pass percentages and copies of questions are not released. The score report indicates "needs work" for any topic where the candidate scored less than 70%. Each exam has different topic weightings, so it is possible for a candidate to receive "needs work" in several

areas and still pass the exam. Conversely, the candidate could receive “needs work” in only a few areas and still fail the exam if those topics comprised the majority of the exam.

### **Online Certificate Program Exam Policy**

ASPPA's Certificate program exams are not proctored. They are open-book online exams. Each consists of multiple-choice and true/false questions. Upon completion of a certificate program exam, a candidate will receive an immediate score and feedback/summary report. The summary report will provide the candidate with the exam questions, their responses, and which questions were answered correctly or incorrectly. It is strongly recommended that the candidate print the results for their records. ASPPA will not keep or provide records of certificate program online exams to candidates.

In general, two attempts on each certificate exam are permitted per purchase. Candidates are only required to pass one attempt. If a candidate's first attempt is unsuccessful, a second attempt will be available in the Learning Management System (LMS) during the 180-day access period. For example, if a candidate registers for the Retirement Plan Fundamentals exam and fails, they can retry the exam. If a candidate fails both attempts of the exam, the candidate must purchase the exam again.

### **CPC (Consulting) Modules**

Each CPC module includes an online exam which consists of 20 multiple-choice questions. Only one exam attempt is permitted per CPC module purchase. If candidates are not successful in their first attempt, they are required to repurchase the module. If candidates fail one or more CPC modules, they can still complete the CPC proctored exam and other CPC modules. All required CPC modules and the proctored CPC exam must be completed prior to applying for the CPC credential, but the modules and exam can be completed in any order.

### **Study Time**

The number of hours of study needed to prepare for ASPPA exams varies depending on the length and breadth of the candidate's experience. Many successful candidates begin studying several months before attempting their exam to cover all the material to the proper extent. As in other professional exam programs such as law exams, enrolled actuary exams, and CPA exams, it is not unusual for candidates to require multiple attempts before passing.

### **ASPPA Exam Sunset Provision**

The ASPPA Board of Directors adopted an eight-year sunset provision that took effect January 1, 1998 and applies to all ASPPA-sponsored exams. The provision (revised on June 28, 1998) now reads: “Credit for successful completion of an ASPPA-sponsored exam needed to attain an ASPPA credential (e.g. QKA) will expire six months past the eighth anniversary of the exam date.” For example, if a candidate passes RPF-1 and RPF-2 on June 1, 2015, and DC-1, DC-2 and DC-3 in 2016, and DB in 2017, application for the QPA credential must be made by December 1, 2023, or the RPF-1 and RPF-2 exams will become invalid.

For candidates who are ASPPA credentialed members and have met ASPPA's continuing education (CE) requirements for each CE cycle (including reinstatements) since the exam date, the sunset provision does not apply.

If the candidate is not currently a credentialed member, they may receive credit for sunset-invalidated exams and receive his/her credential by completing one of the following:

1. The candidate must provide documentation of having earned 40 ASPPA CE credits (including 2 hours of Ethics) within the 24 months immediately preceding the date of the application for credentialed membership; or
2. The candidate must retake and pass the invalidated exams within eight years of the oldest valid exam.

### **Additional Exam Policies**

- **Lost Exams:** In the unlikely event of the loss or destruction of a completed exam, the exam fee will be refunded. ASPPA can assume no other obligation and candidates must take all exams with this understanding.
- **Special Requirements:** It is ASPPA's intent to accommodate candidates who have physical, visual, hearing, or other special needs. Specify any accommodation(s) you require during exam registration and notify Customer Care of your needs.
- **Retention Policy:** Exam records are retained for two years. After two years, exam records will be destroyed.
- **Exam Refund & Transfer Policy:** Fees for exams are not refundable. The right to sit for an ASPPA exam belongs exclusively to the person named on the exam registration. That person may transfer the right to someone else. However, the transfer must be in writing from the original registrant and must be received no later than the final registration date.
- **Exam Copyright:** ASPPA exam questions are subject to copyrights owned by the association. Any reproductions, retransmissions, or republication of all or part of any exam question is expressly prohibited, unless the association has expressly granted its prior written consent to so reproduce, retransmit, or republish the material. All other rights are reserved.

## ASPPA Examination Standards of Conduct

ASPPA's Retirement Plan Academy (RPA) is committed to treating all candidates fairly and equitably during the exam process. Any irregularity or suspected violation of exam standards will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action.

### Proctored Credential Exam Standards

Candidates must prepare the testing space prior to the exam and follow all behavior standards during the exam to successfully complete the exam. Candidates are required to share their screens and allow video and audio recording during the exam. Recordings will be reviewed by ASPPA staff prior to validating an exam result. Violations of exam policy may result in an invalidated exam, suspension or ban from future exams, and loss of credential for credential holders.

Prior to the exam, candidates must remove the following personal items from the testing space and the candidate's body:

- Cell phones, hand-held computers/personal digital assistants (PDAs) or other electronic devices, pagers, calculators, and watches (including smart watches)
- Headphones, earbuds, microphones, or other audio transmission devices
- Wallets or purses
- Hats (and other non-religious head coverings), bags, coats, jackets, or eyeglass cases
- Barrettes or hair clips larger than ¼ inch (½ centimeter) wide and headbands or hairbands larger than ½ inch (1 centimeter)
- Jewelry that is removable and larger than ¼ inch (½ centimeter)
- Books or notes **unless** specifically authorized by the exam program for use during your test

Candidates are permitted to use the browser-based calculator or the Windows on-screen calculator to perform calculations. Candidates may use the notes field to record results in multi-step calculations. Candidates should not use cell phones, handheld calculators, or other software-based calculators during the exam. Using paper to take notes or perform calculations during the exam is prohibited.

If a proctor notes inappropriate items in a candidate's exam space during the exam, that candidate's test results may be invalidated and they may be disqualified from taking the test in the future.

During the exam, candidates must not:

- Communicate with others
- Leave the room at any time
  - Exception: Two 15-minute breaks are permitted during exams 3 hours or longer
- Use reference material of any kind

- Read the questions aloud
- Cover their mouth, attempt to hide their face or move it out of view of the webcam
- Write down questions or copy question text to another application

If any of those actions occur, a proctor may intervene and remind you of these policies. If the behavior continues, a proctor may be required to revoke your exam session. The proctor may also view a recording of your exam. Violations of exam policy may result in an invalidated exam, suspension or ban from future exams, and loss of credential for credential holders.

## Certificate Exam Standards

Candidates are prohibited from the following during certificate exams:

- Giving or receiving assistance of any kind during the exam
- Cheating, any attempt to cheat, assist others in efforts to cheat, or participation in cheating activities
- Engaging in improper conduct, such as:
  - Arranging for another person to take an exam for the candidate
  - Disclosing the contents of an exam to any other person
  - Presenting false information on an exam application
  - Failing to follow exam instructions
  - Looking at and/or copying the answers of any other candidate during the exam.

Improper conduct includes copying questions and/or answers to an exam, providing exam information to another candidate, and looking at and/or copying the answers or work of any other candidate.

By virtue of the format of the exam, candidates can study with other candidates, work with colleagues for advice/guidance and/or use other study materials or online resources, but the work submitted must be the candidate's own. Candidates cannot receive answers from employers, colleagues, or other exam candidates, nor can candidates have their exam reviewed by another party for the identification of correct or incorrect answers.

RPA will pursue any evidence that a candidate has cheated or failed to follow the exam rules. Any irregularity or suspected violation will be thoroughly investigated. Violations of exam policy may result in an invalidated exam, suspension or ban from future exams, and loss of credential for credential holders.

RPA may also report its action to ASPPA's Professional Conduct Committee. If an exam is jointly sponsored (e.g., the Enrolled Actuary exams), the other sponsoring organizations may also be notified.