

Criteria to Participate as an ACE Authorized Test Provider

Overview of the Authorized Test Provider Program

Organizations with ACE credit-recommendation sometimes distribute or sell their courseware to authorized providers such as, branches, clients, or other organizations for use at their sites. ACE college credit recommendations may apply to these authorized providers if:

- Written authorization is provided to the ACE College Credit Recommendation Service prior to the site visit.
- The ACE College Credit Recommendation Service verifies the currency of the ACE credit-recommendation.
- The authorized provider completes and submits an application and an organization description.
- The authorized provider demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the ACE representative, that the integrity and validity of the ACE Criteria to Participate are in practice.
- Site approval is valid long as the ACE credit recommendation is in good standing and the authorized provider continues to maintain the criteria to participate.
- The authorized provider undergoes an annual audit that may include a scheduled site visit.
- The authorized provider should instruct students seeking ACE credit recommendations to use the ACE Transcript Service.
- ACE college credit recommendations are never transferrable to unapproved sites.

Authorized Test Provider Eligibility Criteria

I. THE AUTHORIZED PROVIDER

A. The general purpose of the authorized provider and its training program is compatible with the mission of ACE's Center for Lifelong Learning.

Guidelines:

- Mission and vision statements, promotional materials, marketing brochures, or other documentation should demonstrate the authorized provider's potential to participate in a program designed to increase access to further postsecondary study.
- Tuition assistance, scholarships and student loans, employee training, and other organizational programs are reflective of a commitment to lifelong learning and access to further postsecondary study.

Required Practice:

- Authorized providers must be able to demonstrate that participation in the ACE CREDIT program has the potential to promote and increase adult learner access to further postsecondary education.

B. The authorized provider is easily identified as a properly licensed organization with a demonstrated history of bona fide operations.

Guidelines:

- The American Council on Education's College Credit Recommendation Service relies on public information to include *Dunn and Bradstreet Business Information Reports* to examine organizational profiles.
- In some cases, organizations will be asked to provide evidence of incorporation, licensure, or accreditation by relevant state and government authorities; verified payment performance; and a list of public filings.

Required Practices:

- The enterprise must be a real, active, and operating commercial or entrepreneurial undertaking that produces services or goods. The enterprise must meet applicable legal requirements for doing business in respective jurisdictions.
- The organizational profile, history and operations, payment performance, and public filings must indicate that the organization:
 - Is responsible in its payment procedures.
 - Has the assets to repay debts or provide collateral if necessary.
 - Has the character and background to stand behind its business transactions.

C. The authorized provider has been fully engaged in enrolling learners and delivering tests, and programs for at least two years.

Guidelines:

- Authorized providers should be prepared to submit evidence of being fully engaged in enrolling learners and delivering tests and programs for at least two years.
- Evidence is most often presented in the form of a verifiable historical record of learner enrollments, schedules, and completion data.

Required Practice:

- Authorized providers must be able to provide evidence of learner enrollment and test delivery. Evidence should include:
 - Catalogs, bulletins, or brochures; promotional material; and advertisements.
 - Learner records showing admission/start date(s), record of progress, termination, or completion.

II. ACADEMIC RECORDS

A. Test records are accurate, confidentiality is assured, and access is appropriate.

Guidelines:

- Specific efforts should be made to ensure that the records office is physically secure from theft, vandalism, fire, and flooding.
- Internal audits of the records of those who either have attended or are attending the institution should be conducted on a regular basis.
- Forms, stationery, institutional seals, diplomas, signature and certification stamps, and other supplies and equipment should be located in secure places during working hours and even more secure locations when the office is closed.
- Backup tapes of data, security dump tapes, and extra copies of microfilm should be stored in secure locations as a safeguard against destroyed or damaged tapes (or disks), system failure, and any man-made or natural disasters.

- Computer-generated transcripts, letters, certifications, and other similar documents should be protected by stringent data processing systems security, specified office security techniques, and auditing processes.

Required Practices:

- The authorized provider has a systematic process in place for securely maintaining learner files and records.
- Learners records provide accurate test participation and completion data.
- A systematic process is used for identifying individuals who satisfactorily complete, tests and programs.
- The ability to make changes to learner records is limited to staff directly responsible for establishing and maintaining learner data.
- There is a written policy regarding the retention and release of learner records.

III. PROCTOR POLICY

These standards and guidelines are intended to serve as a model for organizations in the delivery of quality testing services and are essential to the integrity of test administration. They endorse requirements without directly enforcing them, allowing discretion appropriate to specific programs. The standards have been, and will continue to be updated by ACE to reflect developments in testing operations.

A. Staffing

Each organization should provide written criteria for proctor selection to ACE.

Proctors' Responsibilities

As a general guideline, proctors should

- Actively manage the test administration procedures.
- Be knowledgeable about test policies and processes.
- Be informed about all incidents occurring during testing, e.g. irregularities, facilities problems, examinee or staff concerns.
- Be reliable, punctual, detail-oriented, and able to deal effectively with people in difficult situations.
- Understand the requirement for security of test materials and examinee information.
- Ensure the security of the examination environment and session during a candidate's exam session.
- Adhere to program requirements of testing companies in the administration of specific tests.
- Operate in a diligent manner to promote honesty, integrity, fairness, confidentiality and rights of privacy in all testing procedures.
- Treat examinees in a fair, courteous, professional, and nondiscriminatory manner.

Conflict of Interest

To avoid a conflict of interest or appearance of any impropriety, proctors must ***not***

- Be directly involved with the subject matter of the proctored test, to include serving as an instructor, mentor, tutor, or student in the course, workshop, or training that involves preparation of the same test content.
- Administer, or provide access to, any test to a member of his or her household or any immediate family member, or any third party known to them who has not followed standard test registration procedures.

- Handle secure test materials for administration of a test to a household or immediate family member or any third party known to them, such as a fellow employee, who would obtain advantage or benefit as a result of administration or handling of materials.
- Provide access to any examination or proprietary test delivery software to any third party except those who are registered to take test under secure testing conditions.

IV. PROCEDURES & PRACTICES

The participating organization should provide to ACE a copy of their proctoring policies, procedures and practices. As a general guideline the following are recommended.

Test Site Readiness

The organization should maintain adequate physical facilities suitable to the requirements of the testing program. This includes providing a testing environment that is well lit, appropriately heated or cooled, free from distractions such as noise and offers adequate workspace. The facility should also operate under the guidelines of equal opportunity, affirmative action, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and other local, state, and federal regulations. Each organization should provide to proctors a protocol for preparing the test site for an examination session.

As a general guideline, before the administration of any test, the proctor should

- Set up the test room for the testing session.
- Remove any educational visuals from the walls or boards (i.e., charts and notes).
- Clear any clutter from the desks and surrounding areas.
- Space desks at appropriate distances.
- Verify that a working clock is present and visible for all candidates.
- Perform any other functions to ensure test site readiness

Candidate Identification

Verification of each candidate's identity for testing is critical to maintaining the security and integrity of the Testing Site. Proctors are responsible for verifying that each candidate tested is eligible to take the test in question and that each candidate can prove identity. Organizations shall ensure that testing centers employ appropriate means to verify the identity and eligibility of each candidate prior to testing.

Valid driver's licenses, valid passports, military IDs, or other forms of government-issued (national or foreign) identification are all acceptable forms of identification, unless there is any reason to question their authenticity. Outdated identification or identification suspected of being forged should not be accepted.

Note: SkillsSoft clients only

Prior to enrolling in the course, the student must indicate that they intend to pursue ACE CREDIT recommendations. In these cases, the student is not eligible to take any practice examinations.

Monitoring the Testing Room

The organization should maintain adequate staff to cover testing program demands. At least one proctor must be in the testing room at all times while testing is in progress, and must remain with or within a reasonable distance of the candidate(s) throughout each exam. Proctors are responsible for the supervision of the candidate during examination sessions.

As a general guideline, proctors should

- Ensure that no copies of the test or notes that contain the content of the test questions or answers are used by the candidate during the examination.
- Walk through testing room at frequent intervals.
- Adhere to any applicable time limits
- Ensure that only approved materials (if stipulated) are permitted during the examination process. (Note: Organization should provide to the candidate a list of items that are prohibited during the examination, such as phones, study materials, electronic devices, etc.) If the use of electronic devices is required during the exam, proctor should ensure that usage is limited to the manner in which intended.
- Monitor unscheduled breaks and ensure that examinees only leave the testing room briefly during actual testing time. (Note: The proctor should remind the examinee that they will not be allowed extra testing time for such an absence)
- Examinees are not permitted to leave the Test Site vicinity during the test session or during breaks. (Note: Certain test center situations may require limited exceptions to this rule)
- If there is improper conduct on the part of the candidate or any evidence that the examination process has been violated, to terminate the examination, confiscate exam materials, and immediately notify the Organization. (Note: Organization should have a policy in place for documenting any security violations, misconduct or other irregularities)

Exam Conclusion

The organization should provide proctor with guidelines on the termination of examination sessions, including the release of student and securing of test materials.

As a general guideline, proctors should

- Collect and verify materials and supplies.
- Have examinees sign out, score test, if required.
- Perform required system functions at individual workstation to end exam.
- Secure answer sheets and all other test-related materials.
- Return test materials and/or test results and any other applicable documentation to the Organization and/or ACE CREDIT.

Retake Policy

The participating organization should provide to ACE their policy on candidates' eligibility for retaking an examination. As a general guideline the examination retake policy should include but is not limited to the following:

- The number of attempts
- The waiting period between each attempt
- Approvals and specified criteria required before a candidate becomes eligible for retake