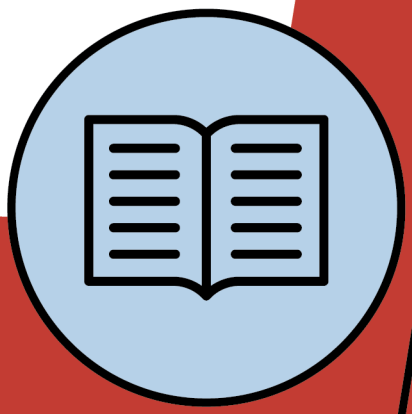
American Institute
of Certified Planners

Creating Great Communities for All

AICP CERTIFICATION GUIDE



This guide contains valuable information to help you complete the AICP Certification Process.
Updated July 2025 for the Fall 2025 cycle.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

American Planning Association

The American Planning Association (APA) brings together thousands of people—practicing planners, citizens, elected officials—dedicated to creating great communities for all. APA is a nonprofit public interest and education organization committed to urban, suburban, regional, and rural planning. APA's professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), provides leadership in professional development, ethics, and the standards of planning practice. More information about membership can be found on the AICP website.

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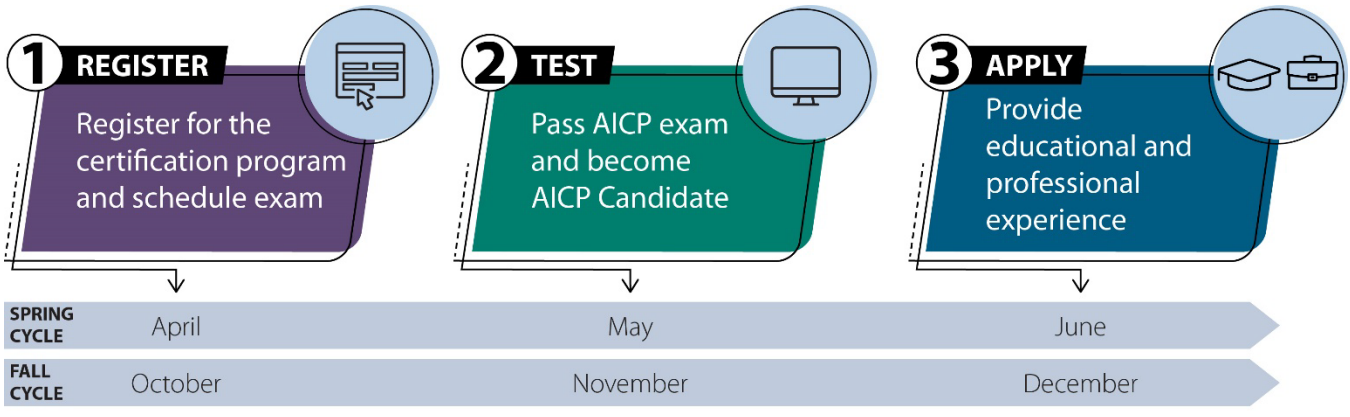
AICP-Certified Planners

AICP-certified planners are members of the American Institute of Certified Planners. They have demonstrated a commitment to high standards of professional practice and a mastery of theories and tools of planning.

Becoming a certified planner is a multistep process. All APA members can register for the program and take the AICP Certification Exam. Members who pass the exam can use the "AICP Candidate" designation. The Experience Assessment is the final step in which members demonstrate how their experience meets AICP's definition of professional planning experience.

The AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct defines the aspirational principles and Rules of Conduct to which a certified planner must adhere. AICP's Certification Maintenance program helps certified planners engage in ongoing professional development. Under the Certification Maintenance program, certified planners engage in 32 hours of professional development every two years.

ONE PATH TO BECOME AICP CERTIFIED



Candidates apply upon completion of experience requirements. There is no restriction on the time between becoming an AICP Candidate and applying for AICP Certification.

The One Path to AICP certification offers APA members a straightforward, three-step process to becoming AICP-certified. Planners can begin the certification process at any point in their professional planning careers.

Step 1: Register for the certification program *when prepared to test* and schedule your exam. The only requirement to take the exam is that you are an APA member.

Step 2: Test and earn the AICP Candidate designation when you pass.

Step 3: Submit your education, employment, and experience to meet the AICP professional planning practice requirements and achieve AICP certification.

Education[1]	Required Years of Professional Planning Experience
Graduate (master's or doctoral) degree in planning from a program accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB)[2]	2
Bachelor's degree in planning from a PAB-accredited program	3
Graduate degree in planning from a program not accredited by the PAB[3]	3
Any other graduate or undergraduate degree (including Associate degree)	4
No college degree/no degree information provided	8

[1] The degree may be obtained before, during, or after planning experience is obtained.

[2] Accredited degrees have been determined by the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) to meet standards approved by the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) or accredited by the Professional Standards Board (PSB) for Planning in Canada. The accredited degree must have been obtained during the period the university has been accredited (or previously recognized). If you are unsure about the status of your planning degree (PAB, PSB, or other), contact AICP.

[3] Use the Planning Curriculum Worksheet to determine whether a non-PAB-accredited graduate degree qualifies as a planning degree.

ELIGIBILITY PRE-CHECK

The AICP Eligibility Pre-Check is designed to help you understand how your experience fits into AICP certification. While experience and education aren't submitted until Step 3, these resources provide answers to our most frequently asked questions. **NOTE**: APA Resources may be updated each cycle, so be sure to download the most current versions from the APA website when preparing for certification.

- Use the **Experience Assessment Template** to prepare and review your responses before submitting your assessment in Step 3 of One Path.
- Does your experience meet AICP's definition of professional planning experience? Use the **Experience Worksheet** to confirm that your experience qualifies.
- Use the **Interactive Experience Calculator** to tally your years of professional planning experience to see how soon you can submit your Planning Experience Assessment.
- Wondering whether your master's degree qualifies as a non-PAB-accredited planning degree? Use the **Planning Curriculum Worksheet** to confirm how much professional planning experience you'll be required to provide.

Don't forget to check out the FAQs for more answers to your questions!

Prior to starting the path to certification, please add aicp@planning.org to your list of contacts so that all emails sent by AICP get delivered to your inbox.

STEP 1: REGISTER AND SCHEDULE EXAM

Register for *One Path to AICP* When Prepared to Test and Schedule Your Exam Appointment

The only requirement to take the AICP exam is APA membership. To begin Step 1, you must confirm that you abide by the AICP Code of Ethics, understand the certification requirements, and have read the AICP Certification Guide. Then, you will register to take the AICP Certification Exam. In this step, you do not need to have earned all your professional planning experience. If you have approved essays on file from a prior cycle, you only need to pass the AICP exam to become recertified. (After you register for the exam, contact aicp@planning.org so we can flag your record.) **Please note:** Registration for the exam opens the month prior to the exam window (see cycle dates on APA's website).

General Exam Information

The AICP Certification Exam tests the knowledge and skills of planners seeking professional certification. The AICP exam is developed by task forces of experts in planning, guided by Prometric test specialists. The AICP Exam Committee oversees the exam to ensure it evaluates relevant professional planning knowledge and skills.

The AICP Certification Exam is designed to be taken by a national and international audience and covers a wide array of planning topics in the United States. Members may take the exam prior to earning the required amount of professional planning experience. **Thus, all APA members are eligible to take the exam.** The general content areas of the exam are outlined on the APA website. The exam consists of 170 multiple-choice questions, of which 150 are scored. The remaining 20 are questions being considered for future examinations and therefore are not scored. Members can take the exam any number of times, but only once per cycle.

The exam is administered in a computer-based format at more than 300 Prometric test centers in the United States, Canada, and international locations. Remote testing is also available at no extra cost. The examination is offered during two test windows every year in May and November. The exam is timed, and you will have 3.5 hours to complete it.

SCHEDULING EXAM APPOINTMENTS

You must schedule an appointment with Prometric, the exam provider, to take the AICP Certification Exam. Here's how:

- Register online with APA within the month prior to the exam window (see cycle dates on APA's website). Any major credit card is accepted. Checks are not accepted.
- When you register for the exam, you are expected to take the test during the upcoming exam window.
- If you need an accommodation to take the exam, review Appendix B in this guide. All accommodations must be added to your AICP exam registration *prior* to scheduling your exam with Prometric. Do not schedule your exam until your accommodation(s) have been approved by APA.
- You will receive a confirmation email shortly after registering with an "eligibility ID" and instructions on how to schedule your exam appointment with Prometric during the testing window. (Please check your spam and junk folders if you cannot find the email and add aicp@planning.org to your contact list.)
- If you plan on taking a remote exam, you must review these remote testing resources.
- When scheduling your exam with Prometric, please provide your candidate identification number (the eligibility ID provided after you register) to confirm you are authorized to test during the current window. You can choose to take the exam at any Prometric test center site, or you can take it remotely.
- Once your exam has been scheduled, you will receive a 16-digit confirmation number via e-mail. Do not lose this confirmation number as you will need it to make any changes to your appointment (see Changes to Your Test Appointment section in this guide).
- If you experience any issues with scheduling your exam, finding availability, obtaining your exam scores, etc., please contact Prometric through their customer service form. Allow 48 hours for a reply. Retain your customer service ticket number in case you need to contact Prometric (1-800-853-6769). Also, please review their FAQs.

Contact APA at aicp@planning.org if you need to update your name on your registration to match your legal ID.

You must take the exam during the testing window you registered for, and you must make your appointment at least 48 hours before the test window opens.

Where to Take the Exam

You can schedule, reschedule, and cancel exam appointments online with Prometric. Test centers are located domestically and internationally, and the website lists current test center locations, contact information for each site, and directions. Individual test center hours of operation typically range from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Saturday hours vary by test center.

You can select the most convenient location, regardless of whether it is in the state where you live. Prometric will make every effort to assign you to the center of your choice. There may be times, however, when more examinees apply for a center than can be accommodated. If you attempt to schedule at a test center that is already at capacity, you will have the opportunity to select another date within the exam window or a test center as near as possible to the requested location. If you are unable to schedule your appointment online, call Prometric's Candidate Service Call Center (CSCC) at 800-796-9853. **NOTE**: We highly recommend you schedule your appointment as soon as possible to maximize your scheduling options.

Taking the Exam Remotely

Prometric offers testers the flexibility to take the AICP Certification Exam anywhere with a secure and reliable internet connection.

Before registering for the remote option, review the ProProctor User Guide and Prometric's remote testing resources. It's essential to confirm that your computer meets the system requirements to take the exam remotely.

Corporate devices should not be used as they often have firewalls that prevent the test from starting. If you must use a corporate device, it's essential you review these instructions.

Appendix 3 in this guide provides additional information and links regarding remote testing. Contact Prometric with questions about remote testing.

TRANSFERS AND APPOINTMENT CHANGES

This section covers policies that apply to rescheduling your AICP Certification Exam appointment within the same exam window or completing an open-ended transfer to a future exam cycle.

Changes to Your Test Appointment (Within the Same Exam Window)

To change an appointment date, time, or testing method within the same exam window, you must cancel your scheduled appointment and reschedule your appointment through Prometric. You may do so up to five calendar days before your scheduled exam appointment. **Please note that you will not be permitted to transfer, cancel, or reschedule your exam appointment less than three calendar days before your scheduled exam appointment, and if you are unable to keep your appointment, your registration fee**

will be forfeited.

TO RESCHEDULE YOUR EXAM:

1. Log onto Prometric at least five calendar days prior to your scheduled appointment.
2. Enter your 16-digit confirmation number and your last name to pull up your exam record.
3. Choose to cancel or reschedule. Prometric will collect a fee for canceling or rescheduling an exam appointment 3–29 days before the scheduled test date (see the chart below for more information).

Transfers

When you register to take the exam, you are expected to take the test during the **upcoming exam window**. However, you may purchase a transfer for your exam registration **to a future exam window** if circumstances change and you are no longer able to take the exam. *Once you redeem the transfer and register for the exam in a future cycle, the registration cannot be transferred again whether you take the exam or not.* Use the steps below to transfer your exam registration.

TO PURCHASE A TRANSFER:

1. Cancel your existing exam appointment with Prometric (you will need your 16-digit confirmation number sent to you after you scheduled your exam with them). Please keep in mind that you must cancel more than five calendar days ahead of your scheduled test date or forfeit your exam registration fee.
2. Prior to APA's transfer deadline, visit APA's registration and transfer page and click on the transfer link.
3. Confirm you have canceled your exam appointment with Prometric by entering your 16-digit cancellation number or confirm you haven't scheduled an appointment for the current exam window.
4. Submit the transfer fee payment. Any major credit card is accepted. Checks are not accepted.
5. Receive a transfer confirmation email that confirms the transfer was successfully completed and includes important information on how to register for a future exam as a transfer applicant.

When you complete the above steps, your current eligibility record with Prometric will be deleted. You will receive a new eligibility ID once you redeem your transfer (see below).

REDEEMING A TRANSFER:

You may redeem a purchased transfer during any future exam registration window (April and October) via AICP's Register or Transfer Exam webpage. **Once redeemed, the registration cannot be transferred again whether you take the exam or not.**

You will receive a new Eligibility ID after you redeem your transfer. You will use that new ID to schedule an appointment for the upcoming exam with Prometric.

No-Show Policy

You will be considered a no-show and will forfeit your full exam fee if you:

- Miss your scheduled appointment.
- Cancel with Prometric but do not request a transfer before the deadline.
- Arrive 15 minutes or more past your scheduled appointment time.
- Do not bring acceptable IDs with you to the test center and are denied admission (see Identification Requirements).

In the cases listed above, you will not be allowed to reschedule your exam appointment within the current exam window, you will forfeit all fees paid, and you must pay another full exam fee to register for a future exam window.

PROMETRIC'S CANCELLATION/RESCHEDULING POLICY	
Cancellation/Rescheduling Period	Cancellation/Rescheduling Fee
30 or more days before the test date	None
3–29 days before the scheduled test date	$35 cancellation/reschedule fee (to be collected by Prometric from the member)
(a) Less than 5 days before test date, or (b) Fails to appear for a scheduled test, or (c) Presents himself/herself more than thirty (30) minutes after the scheduled start time for taking the test and is refused admission	Member is unable to cancel or reschedule and forfeits the exam fee.

If You Never Schedule an Appointment

If you register to take the AICP Certification Exam (in April or October), you must schedule a test appointment and sit for the exam during the following month's exam window (May or November). If you register for the exam and do not test or transfer, you will forfeit your full exam fee (see Refunds below).

Refunds

No refunds will be given once the exam fee has been paid. Once you register for the exam, you must either take the test, transfer, or forfeit your registration fee.

STEP 2: TAKE THE AICP CERTIFICATION EXAM

Test and Earn the "AICP Candidate" Designation After You Pass

At the Test Center

Plan to be at the test center for four hours. Arrive early, and bring the proper ID. You must arrive at the test center 30 minutes before your scheduled appointment to complete the required admission process before testing begins. Late arrivals will not be admitted to the exam. After you are admitted, the Test Center Administrator (TCA) will give you a short orientation, then escort you to a workstation. You must remain in your seat during the examination, except when authorized to leave by a test center staff member. Members may not leave the testing room without the TCA's permission. For additional information about Prometric's testing requirements, please visit the Prometric site.

Remote Testing

Prometric offers the flexibility to take the AICP Certification Exam anywhere with a secure internet connection.

Before registering for the remote option, review these remote testing resources. You must:

- Confirm that your computer meets the system requirements to take the exam remotely
- Complete a pre-system check and a test-day check
- Confirm your testing environment is suitable

Corporate devices should not be used as they often have firewalls that prevent the test from starting. If you must use a corporate device, it's essential you review these instructions.

Contact Prometric with questions about remote testing.

Members planning to take the exam remotely should test their computers prior to the exam date to ensure you can successfully login to ProProctor. Launch your exam with ProProctor at least 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment. There may be a wait while your proctor sets up the exam.

Appendix 3 in this guide provides additional information and links regarding remote testing. For additional questions or information about Prometric's testing requirements, please contact Prometric.

Identification Requirements

To be admitted to the test center and to test for the exam remotely, you must have two forms of identification bearing your name and your signature. At least one must be a primary form of identification that includes a recent photo. Prometric will only accept a valid, government-issued ID for the primary form of ID. If you do not have valid and appropriate identification, you will not be able to test within that testing window. Please note that your name, as it appears on your identification, must match the name on your exam registration. If they do not match, please contact APA customer service at customerservice@planning.org to update your account prior to registering for the exam. If you register for the exam and then need your name updated, AICP staff must update your Prometric record, which must be done at least 72 hours prior to your scheduled exam

appointment. Contact APA at aicp@planning.org to update your Prometric record.

IDs accepted at test centers

PRIMARY FORMS OF ID	SECONDARY FORMS OF ID	INVALID ID
State-issued driver's license	Photo-bearing employee ID card	Draft classification card
Valid passport	Bank automated teller card	Student identification card
Citizenship card	Valid credit card with signature	
Military ID card	Social Security card	

IDs accepted when testing remotely:

PRIMARY FORMS OF ID	SECONDARY FORMS OF ID	INVALID ID
State-issued driver's license	Photo-bearing employee card	Social Security card
Valid passport	Insurance cards	Debit/Credit card
Citizenship Card	Membership cards	Military ID
	Library card	Birth certification

Additional Approval
Candidates are permitted to provide *two forms of Primary ID* for the Remote Testing **provided that both IDs are valid are unexpired**. Two primary IDs will be accepted in lieu of one primary ID and one secondary ID, as long as all the other ID requirements are met.

Acceptable Differences in ID

If there is a discrepancy in your name as it appears on the photo identification and your exam registration, please refer to the examples of acceptable name variations listed below. If the name variation is listed, you may schedule an appointment to test. If the name variation is not listed in the examples of acceptable name variations shown below, you must contact APA via e-mail at aicp@planning.org before making an appointment to test. AICP staff will update your record and forward the updated record to Prometric. You will be notified once the appropriate changes are made and must wait 48 hours before making an appointment.

If the name on your registration and ID differs because of a legal name change, you must present one of the following:

- Marriage certificate
- Divorce decree
- Legal name change

NOTE: The address in your exam appointment confirmation does not need to match the address provided on your identification. The substitution of another name for either the first or last name or both names (e.g., Smith to Jones, or John to Michael) is not permitted unless proof of legal name change is provided.

ALLOWABLE NAME DISCREPANCIES	EXAMPLES
A single-letter discrepancy exists in examinee's name.	• Single-letter difference: Johnson vs. Johmson
	• Single-letter transposition: Alexander vs. Alexandre
	• Single-letter omission: Schultz vs. Shultz
	• Single-letter addition: Miller vs. Mialler or Miler
One version of examinee's name has a middle initial or middle name while other does not.	• John E. Smith vs. John Smith
	• Mary R. Abernathy vs. Mary Rose Abernathy
First name is provided formally on one document, but a typical variation is used on another document.	• Michael Jones vs. Mike Jones
Incorrect letters are used in a name on one document, but correct letters are used on another document.	• Diller vs. Ditter
	• Dutton vs. Ditton
Maiden name is used as a middle name on one document, while given middle name is used on another document.	• Mary Elizabeth Smith vs. Mary Jones Smith
The order of the first and last names do not match.	• Russell, Amy vs. Amy Russell
Suffixes are used on one document, but not used on another document.	• Robert Jones vs. Robert Jones, Jr. • Sam Smith vs. Sam Smith III

AFTER COMPLETING THE EXAM

Shortly after taking the exam, you will receive an email from Prometric with your Official Score Report (OSR). The OSR can also be accessed by going to the Prometric website (you will need the 16-digit confirmation number sent to you after you scheduled your exam with Prometric). It can take up to 48 hours for your scores to be transmitted to APA, at which time you will receive another email outlining your next steps.

AICP CANDIDATE DESIGNATION

When you pass the exam, you will have earned the "AICP Candidate" designation. This designation does not expire as long as your APA membership has not lapsed more than four years. You are not required to complete Certification Maintenance (CM) credits while holding the AICP Candidate designation. CM requirements begin once you achieve AICP certification.

The designation will be added to your APA Profile and can be used after your name where applicable. The designation should not be abbreviated (e.g., AICP-C). You will also have access to a digital certificate that you can link to your email signature, resume, social media, etc. The AICP Candidate designation will distinguish you from non-certified planners and can be leveraged with your employer. Learn more about the Value to Employers.

STEP 3: SUBMIT EDUCATION VERIFICATION, EMPLOYMENT HISTORY, AND EXPERIENCE ASSESSMENT

Apply Your Education, Employment, and Experience to the AICP Professional Planning Practice Requirements

To earn AICP certification, you must have completed a required number of years of professional planning experience based on your education. This section defines the combinations of education and professional experience that meet the requirements for AICP certification and describes the steps in the Assessment process. AICP Candidates demonstrate that their experience meets the AICP definition of professional planning experience via the Assessment. International degrees and experience are accepted.

To submit your Assessment, you must meet the following requirements:

1. Be a current member of the American Planning Association (APA).
2. Pass the AICP Certification Exam.
3. Have completed one of the combinations of education and corresponding years of professional planning experience listed in the chart below:

Education[1]	Required Years of Professional Planning Experience
Graduate (master's or doctoral) degree in planning from PAB-accredited program[2]	2
Bachelor's degree in planning from a PAB-accredited program	3
Graduate degree in planning from a program not accredited by the PAB[3]	3
Any other graduate or undergraduate degree (including Associate degree)	4
No college degree/no degree information provided	8

1. The degree may be obtained before, during, or after planning experience is obtained.

2. Accredited degrees have been determined by the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) to meet standards approved by the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) or accredited by the Professional Standards Board (PSB) for Planning in Canada. The accredited degree must have been obtained during the period the university has been accredited (or previously recognized). If you are unsure about the status of your planning degree (PAB, PSB, or other), contact AICP.

3. Use the Planning Curriculum Worksheet to determine whether a non-PAB-accredited graduate degree qualifies as a planning degree.

SECTION 1: EDUCATION VERIFICATION

Enter your education information to confirm you have received your degree, when the degree was conferred, and whether the degree was in planning. Not sure if your master's degree is considered a planning degree? Use the Planning Curriculum Worksheet to determine whether your degree meets AICP's definition of a non-PAB accredited planning degree and confirm how much professional planning experience you'll be required to provide.

You may provide education verification in one of the following three forms (PDF, JPG, or PNG formats are accepted):

- University transcript. Official, unofficial, and e-transcripts are accepted.
- Photocopy of diploma.
- Letter from school dean, registrar, or program director confirming that the degree was conferred. The letter must be printed on a school/university letterhead and include the letter writer's title and contact information.

Members who have a different name on their education document due to marriage can email their marriage certificate to aicp@planning.org.

SECTION 2: EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Enter professional planning employment information for each position needed to meet the experience requirements:

- Employer
- Position title
- Dates of employment
- Full-time or part-time indication
- Current/former supervisor
- Email address of supervisor
- Detailed summary of professional planning tasks and responsibilities

Use the Experience Worksheet to confirm if your experience qualifies and meets AICP's definition of professional planning experience. Not sure if you have enough professional planning experience? Use the Interactive Experience Calculator.

SECTION 3: ASSESSMENT

Demonstrate that your experience meets AICP's definition of professional planning experience as specified in the three criteria under the Does My Experience Qualify? section by selecting all items that apply from lists that align with each criterion and completing open-text fields with brief written examples from your employment history provided in Section 2.

Not sure if your experience meets AICP's definition of professional planning experience? Read the Does My Experience Qualify? section below and use the Experience Worksheet. to confirm that your experience qualifies.

SECTION 4: SUMMARY AND REVIEW

Review each section prior to submission. You will not be permitted to change or edit the assessment once it has been submitted.

SECTION 5: SUBMISSION AND PAYMENT

A fee is due upon submission. Any major credit card is accepted. Checks are not accepted. All fees are final, and no refunds will be granted. Your assessment will be reviewed, and APA will email you with your assessment status within two to four weeks (excluding holidays) of submission.

If your experience assessment meets requirements, you have completed all the steps for AICP certification. You can use the AICP designation immediately and no additional fees need to be paid. You will receive an email containing information on how to claim your digital badge with Credly, APA's digital badge provider, as well as Certification Maintenance (CM) information.

If your experience assessment does not meet requirements, you will be sent an email with next steps.

DOES MY EXPERIENCE QUALIFY?

This section describes what does and does not qualify as professional planning experience to help you determine whether your experience meets APA's definition of professional planning experience. The information is particularly helpful if you have not worked for, or provided planning services to, a municipality or regional planning agency.

Planners help create communities of lasting value by managing change. The goal of planning is to maximize the health, safety, and well-being of all people living in communities. The AICP Commission has established three criteria that distinguish the experiences of professional planners from those of layperson planners, allied professionals, community stakeholders, and elected/appointed officials. To qualify as professional planning experience, an applicant's professional experience must align with all three criteria.

Criterion 1: Demonstrate a Professional Level of Responsibility and Resourcefulness While Applying a Planning Process Appropriate to the Project or Situation

Professional urban, regional, and rural planners apply multistep processes related to managing change in communities. Typical process steps include defining a problem or opportunity, setting goals and objectives, generating alternative strategies, selecting a preferred alternative, implementing the preferred strategy, and monitoring and evaluating strategy performance.

Criterion 2: Evaluate Multiple Impacts to a Community When Implementing Professional Planning Tasks

Professional urban, regional, and rural planners consider the interrelated effects of policies, programs, projects, and actions that cause or influence change in communities. They identify and evaluate the potential positive and negative effects of specific planning interventions and work to shape those interventions in ways that minimize negative impacts and create quality-of-life improvements for the communities they serve.

Criterion 3: Influence Public Decision-Making in the Public Interest

Professional urban, regional, and rural planners influence decisions related to managing change in communities made by elected or appointed public officials in ways that protect or improve the well-being of the general public. This influence may be through direct communication with public officials or through intermediary processes.

While AICP eligibility is more likely to be met in an agency (private or government), institute, or firm providing planning services, instruction, or research, this is not a prerequisite. APA encourages individuals with nontraditional, professional-level planning experience to apply.

Not sure whether your professional experience qualifies as planning experience? Use the Experience Worksheet to determine whether your professional experience meets AICP's definition of professional planning experience.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Academic professionals conducting planning research or providing planning education may submit this work as eligible professional planning experience. To be eligible, research must have practical planning applications, and teaching experience must be part of a planning curriculum or focused on substantive planning concepts, theories, or skills.

If you use academic planning research and teaching experience as project examples for short answer responses in the Planning Experience Assessment, choose examples that reflect an application of your own planning skills and knowledge and that have specific practical application. For example, an eligible Criterion 1 project example might be a multistep process you developed and implemented for a planning-related research study; an eligible Criterion 2 project example might be a planning studio in which you guided students to consider multiple potential consequences to the community of their work; and an eligible Criterion 3 project example might be a research product you have published intended to be used by decision-makers to influence planning-related decisions in the public interest, or a studio you have taught in which the process you designed and led students through resulted in a study or plan intended to help local officials make better planning-related decisions for their community.

VOLUNTEER PROFESSIONAL PLANNING EXPERIENCE

Professional planning experience may include work done in a volunteer capacity. Like traditional professional

planning experience, volunteer professional planning experience must be submitted as a separate position in Section 2: Employment History.

Volunteer professional planning experience must involve a high level of personal responsibility and substantive technical accomplishments. For example, volunteer work at a community-based organization would not usually be considered professional planning experience if the applicant was only responsible for setting up meetings or supporting administrative functions such as data entry, file management, providing general customer service, etc. However, the experience may be considered to be at a professional level if the applicant was involved with or responsible for:

- The preparation of research and documents
- The supervision of projects
- The presentation of proposals and plans before decision-making bodies
- Providing significant input in one or more facets of a project (e.g., giving technical expertise in areas such as strategy development, impact analysis, etc.)

For volunteer service performed as a function or extension of a salaried planning position (e.g., appointment to an advisory committee) to be eligible as an example of professional planning experience, applicants must include this service as part of their job description for the position in Section 2: Employment History.

PART-TIME EXPERIENCE

Part-time professional planning experience may be used toward meeting the minimum eligibility requirements. Part-time experience will be prorated into a full-time equivalent. For example, if an applicant worked 20 hours/week for six months, that would equate to three months of full-time professional planning experience.

Similarly, if you work full-time but only part-time on planning-related activities, that experience is prorated into a full-time equivalent. See the Work in Related Fields section for more details.

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Because eligibility for AICP Certification depends on a combination of education and employment experience, these elements must remain separate and distinct. Applicants can only count internships (or any professional planning work completed while enrolled in a degree program) that satisfy the following conditions toward their professional planning experience requirement:

- The internship cannot be part of coursework for a grade or for course credit. This must be documented in the AICP assessment.
- The internship cannot be a requirement to complete the degree program.
- The work as an intern must meet all criteria for professional planning experience (i.e., this work is not pre-professional in nature).

Only internships completed independent of degree requirements can count toward meeting eligibility

requirements.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

APA recognizes international professional planning experience. Please refer to the Other National Certifying Institutions section for additional information regarding reciprocal agreements with other certifying planning organizations.

Experience That Does Not Qualify

WORK AT A PRE-PROFESSIONAL LEVEL

Although there is often a fine line between professional experience and pre-professional experience, the latter generally involves less personal responsibility and less substantive technical accomplishments. Work at a pre-professional level may include substantial time dedicated to providing general information to staff and the public in the administration of specific planning program areas or ordinances; performing routine office tasks in designated program areas, including data entry, file management, and answering the telephone; and preparing public notices or property owner verifications and maps, charts, or tables of limited complexity.

ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS

While contributions by mayors and members of city councils, boards of commissioners, planning commissions, boards of zoning appeals, and citizen advisory boards are invaluable to the advancement of planning, service in this capacity does not constitute professional planning experience.

WORK IN RELATED FIELDS NOT GENERALLY CONSIDERED PROFESSIONAL PLANNING EXPERIENCE

There are important distinctions between planners and allied professionals and between planning and related fields. Planners approach problems comprehensively, have a long-range perspective, and deal with unique place-based issues. Although people in related professions (e.g., law, architecture, landscape architecture, engineering, real estate development, etc.) and disciplines (humanities, psychology, etc.) often work with planners, they do not necessarily have the same knowledge base, skill set, or approach.

Persons working full-time but devoting a portion of their time to another field may prorate that experience into a full-time equivalent. For example, a position in which an environmental planner worked 40 hours/week for two years and devoted half their time to environmental science and half their time to professional planning may be prorated into the full-

Unsure if your professional experience meets AICP's definition of professional planning? Use the Experience Worksheet to determine whether your experience meets requirements.

time equivalent of one year of professional planning experience.

The following illustrates types of work in related fields sometimes performed by planners, but more often by other professionals. These areas are generally not considered to be professional planning experience and will not satisfy the experience requirements.

- Code enforcement
- Building inspection
- Site platting and engineering
- Traffic engineering or highway design
- Land surveying or mapping
- Facility programming
- Community organizing
- Social work
- Market, physical, and social science research and analysis not connected to a planning process
- Construction/development logistics and management
- Business development

EXPERIENCE ASSESSMENT

Applicants must complete the Assessment to verify that their work experience meets the three criteria established by AICP to define professional planning experience. For the Assessment, applicants must complete the following:

For Criterion 1, **Demonstrate a Professional Level of Responsibility and Resourcefulness While Applying a Planning Process Appropriate to the Project or Situation,** applicants must (1) draw from the entirety of their professional planning experience to indicate the type(s) of planning processes they have applied and the professional planning skills and tools they have used in applying those processes, and (2) provide a brief written example of a planning process they have applied and a description of a skill or tool they used in that process.

For Criterion 2, **Evaluate Multiple Impacts to a Community When Implementing Professional Planning Tasks**, applicants must (1) draw from the entirety of their professional planning experience to indicate the type(s) of planning interventions they have participated in, the multiple community consequences they have considered, and the benefits to community quality of life that their work has resulted in, and (2) provide a brief written example of a planning intervention they have applied, the multiple community consequences they considered in that planning intervention, and the benefits to community quality of life that resulted.

For Criterion 3, **Influence Public Decision-Making in the Public Interest,** applicants must (1) draw from the entirety of their professional planning experience to indicate the method(s) of influence they have applied to

influence public decision-making, the type(s) of public decisions that they or their work influenced, and the ways in which those decisions serve the public interest, and (2) provide a brief written example of a method of influence they have applied, a type of public decision that they or their work influenced, and how that decision served the public interest.

Note: Applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully read each question and use the sample written responses provided in the Experience Assessment Template and in the assessment form itself as guidance when writing their responses to ensure that they provide the information required for approval.

You will also be asked to attest to the accuracy and truthfulness of your responses and your compliance with the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Practice.

If you are unable to complete the assessment based on your current professional planning experience, you have not yet met the criteria required to attain AICP Certification. You will need to complete the certification process when you have gained additional professional planning experience to demonstrate that you have met each of the criteria requirements.

The Experience Assessment Template can be downloaded here. This document is the actual assessment you will fill out in Step 3 of One Path. To prepare for submission, review this document ahead of time. You must complete the assessment online as the final step in the certification process.

Experience Assessments That Meet Requirements

AICP-credentialed staff will review your Planning Experience Assessment. Please allow up to four weeks for review. If your assessment meets requirements, you will receive an email indicating so. You can use the AICP designation immediately and claim your Credly badge (more information will be provided in the email).

Experience Assessments That Do Not Meet Requirements

AICP-credentialed staff will review your Planning Experience Assessment. Please allow up to four weeks for review. If you have not checked the minimum number of items required, or if your written examples do not provide the information required by the criteria questions, your assessment will be marked as not meeting requirements.

If your assessment is marked as not meeting requirements, you will receive an email with a description of why your assessment does not provide all the information required. Depending on your situation, you can supply additional information to amend or clarify your assessment responses in the same cycle, or you may wait to gain more professional planning experience and reapply in a future application window.

To supply additional information, please email aicp@planning.org for instructions within one week of receiving the email. Staff will review the additional information you provide, and you will be informed as to whether the requirements have been met.

When supplying additional information:

- Carefully review the information provided about why your assessment did not meet requirements.
- Carefully review the example responses provided in the Experience Assessment Template for guidance in how to write your new responses.
- Provide new responses with additional or clarifying detail regarding your original assessment work example that stay within the word limit established for those responses. If you decide to use a different work example, you must re-answer all the open text field questions for that criterion.

Note: Again, applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully read the instructions provided in the assessment and use the sample written responses as guidance when writing their responses. **In nearly all cases, assessments are marked as not meeting requirements not because the applicant is not qualified, but because the applicant did not follow directions, and their written responses did not contain the information required for approval.**

Appeals

If the additional information you provide still does not meet requirements, you will be sent an email that will inform you of the decision that your assessment will not be approved and explain why the additional information you have provided still does not meet requirements.

You may reapply in the next application window with more focused assessment responses that better demonstrate how your work experience meets the professional planning experience criteria required for certification, or you may appeal that decision with the AICP National Membership Standards Committee. If you choose to appeal, you must email APA within one week of receiving the decision to receive further instructions on creating an appeal letter and paying the appeal fee. The AICP National Membership Committee will review your original submission, the additional information you provided, and your letter of appeal and will make a final decision.

APPENDIX 1: TESTING PROCEDURES AND SCORING THE EXAM

TESTING PROCEDURES

To ensure that all members take the exam under comparable conditions and achieve fair and accurate results, a standardized testing environment will be maintained.

The following regulations and procedures will be observed at every test center:

- You must follow the instructions given by the Test Center Administrator (TCA).
- You will be provided with a secure locker to store personal possessions and materials not allowed in the testing room. You may reclaim these items when you leave the test center.
- Always keep both forms of identification with you. If you leave the testing room for any reason, you must show the TCA your identification to be readmitted to the room.
- You will be provided with a multifunctioning calculator. It will be a basic, nonprogrammable, nonprinting, four-function calculator with percent and square-root buttons. This will be the only calculator you will be permitted to use, if needed.
- You cannot bring books or other reference material into the testing room. The TCA will not permit anyone possessing such materials to continue the examination.
- You may not bring scratch paper into the testing room. The TCA will give you scratch paper, which may be replaced as needed during testing. When you have finished with the exam and a post-examination survey, the TCA will collect all your scratch paper.
- You will not be allowed to bring your own scratch paper, pencil, or calculator into the testing room.
- You will not be permitted to continue the exam beyond the 3.5-hour time limit. An on-screen clock will count down your time remaining.
- Visitors are not permitted at the test center.

Raise your hand if you:

- Have a problem with your computer.
- Need more scratch paper.
- Need to take a break (no extra time will be given to take the examination).
- Need the TCA for any reason.

If you wish to leave the room during the exam, you must secure the TCA's permission.

COMPUTER-BASED EXAM TUTORIAL

A brief tutorial precedes the examination. The tutorial is designed to familiarize you with the computer and the testing software. You will have up to 15 minutes to complete the tutorial. This is in addition to the 3.5 hours allotted to take the examination. The tutorial will teach you how to select answers, move from one question to the next, and use testing features such as "Item Review," as well as how to use the mouse and keyboard. By familiarizing you with the operation of the computer, the tutorial will make it easier for you to concentrate on completing the examination. You do not need to be concerned with the answers you select during the tutorial; it is intended for practice only, and there is no penalty for incorrect answers. Once you exit the tutorial, you may not return to it.

EXAMINATION LOGISTICS

Your scheduled appointment time is four hours. You will have 3.5 hours to answer 170 examination questions. 150 of the questions will be scored; 20 are questions being considered for future examinations that will not be scored. Scored and unscored questions and content areas are distributed randomly throughout the exam.

You will have 15 minutes prior to the exam for an online tutorial and 15 minutes after the exam to answer a brief computer-administered exit survey at the end of the examination.

During the exam, you will have the opportunity to review all questions. You may change answers, mark, or skip questions, and then go back to complete them. This system allows you to use your time efficiently. Answer the questions you are sure of first, leaving your remaining time for the more difficult questions.

Should your time expire while taking the exam, all answers, regardless of how they are marked, will be calculated into your score. Once your allotted time has expired or you exit the exam, you cannot see or review the questions again.

EXAMINEE MISCONDUCT

The following are examples of behaviors that are misconduct. This will not be tolerated, and you will not be permitted to complete the exam.

- Giving or receiving assistance of any kind.
- Using any unauthorized references.
- Attempting to take the exam for someone else.

- Failing to follow testing regulations or the instructions of the TCA.
- Creating a disturbance of any kind.
- Copying, removing, or attempting to remove exam questions or scratch paper from the testing room.
- Tampering with the operation of the computer or attempting to use it for any function other than taking the exam.
- Leaving the testing room without permission.
- Using electronic communications equipment, such as cellular phones.
- Bringing in a calculator.

REPORTING TEST CENTER IRREGULARITIES

While at the test center, should you experience a delay in taking your exam or encounter any technical problems, please make sure that this irregularity is documented by the TCA. The TCA will file a written report with Prometric and APA.

SCORE REPORTS

Your scores are confidential and are released directly to APA by Prometric. Though you will receive a pass/fail indication immediately after completing the exam on your computer screen, you will receive an official score report by email about two hours after completing the exam. Your official score report will show a total scaled score (see below for more information about scaled scores) and indicate whether you have passed or failed. To protect your privacy and to maintain the confidentiality of test results, score information will not be given over the phone. If you have specific questions or concerns about your scores, you may write to APA. Requests for duplicate score reports must be made in writing to aicp@planning.org. Electronic score data files will be retained by Prometric for two years. APA retains this information in perpetuity.

You can retrieve a copy of your official score report at scorereports.prometric.com by entering your 16-digit appointment confirmation number and your last name.

DIAGNOSTIC SCORES

For diagnostic purposes, members who do not pass are informed of how many questions they answered correctly (raw score) in each of the exam content areas. Do not expect diagnostic scores to average out to the total score. Raw score information is intended only to assist the member in preparing for reexamination by indicating the areas in which the member had the most difficulty. Members who do not pass should review those areas in which they scored comparatively low before retaking the exam.

EQUATING AND SCALING

After completing the AICP exam, you will receive an official score report from Prometric (please add aicp@planning.org into your contacts so you do not miss this email!). The overall score on your score report converts the number of questions you answered correctly to a score on a standardized scale. This process is called scaling, and it allows scores to be compared across multiple test versions and administrations.

NOTE: Scaled scores are not percentage scores. Scaled scores allow us to report different raw scores that represent the same demonstration of knowledge, skills, and abilities as the same scaled score.

There are three versions of the exam, and each version of the exam contains 150 scored questions. Each version contains a unique set of questions specific to that exam while also containing some questions that are on all three versions (called equators). Equating makes statistical adjustments to test scores to compensate for differences in the relative difficulty of different versions of the exam.

For example, presume you and your colleague are equal in your mathematical abilities. You both take a mathematics test. Both tests are intended to cover the same type of mathematics questions; however, the test you take is statistically harder than the one your colleague takes. You answered 35 questions correctly on your test. Your colleague answered 40 questions correctly on his test. It would not be accurate or fair to conclude, based on the test scores, that you were not as proficient in mathematics as your colleague.

The difference in the scores was not due to your mathematical abilities because our first assumption was that you and your colleague were of equal ability. The difference in your scores was because one test was harder than the other. Equating allows us to determine that a 35 on the test that you took represents the same level of mathematical knowledge, skills, and abilities as a score of 40 on the test that your colleague took.

Instead of having to remember that a 35 on the test that you took is equivalent to a 40 on the test that your friend took, we can use a common conversion scale and report both of your scores as a scaled score of 55. The score of 55 is then comparable to a scaled score of 55 across all the possible versions of this exam.

RELIABILITY

Reliability is a concept that refers to the accuracy of test scores, such as the scaled scores derived for the AICP Certification Exam. All test scores are affected by sources of error to some extent—the smaller the effect, the higher the reliability. Examples of error sources include an unclearly worded test question or even a momentary spell of boredom. If you could take the same test an infinite number of times while remaining unchanged (physically and psychologically), your scores would vary. The average of these scores would be your true score, which would be free of error. If a test were perfectly reliable (not affected by error), each time you took the test you would receive the same score, and there would be no difference between your test scores and your true score. For a highly reliable test, your test scores would vary but would all be close to your true score. The concept of reliability is expressed statistically as a reliability coefficient. Reliability coefficients range from 0 (absence of reliability) to 1 (perfect reliability).

STANDARD ERROR OF MEASUREMENT

Since no measure of test performance is perfectly accurate, you might ask: "How accurate is my AICP Certification Exam score?" This question is not directly answerable since it requires knowing what your score should be (true score). Your true score can never be known. The difference between your actual test score and your true score would be the "error of measurement" associated with this administration of the exam. Because errors of measurement vary from one test administration to another, it would be convenient to estimate how much these errors can be expected to vary. Such an estimate can be calculated without administering the exam to any examinee more than once. This estimate is called the standard error of measurement (SEM). If a test could measure basic elements of the subject matter without error, the value of the SEM associated with that test would be zero, in scaled score units.

Although the SEM will invariably exceed zero, its value should be small. APA and Prometric closely monitor the SEM of each test form to ensure reasonable accuracy for the AICP Certification Exam.

SCORE VALIDITY REVIEW

In the absence of observed misconduct, it should be noted that Prometric and APA routinely conduct post-test administrative review of the validity of the test scores. If irregularities are found as a result of these reviews, you will be contacted and notified of procedures to resolve any validity issues concerning your score.

IF YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT

If you have a complaint or wish to make a comment about test center facilities or supervision, examination content, or any other matter related to the testing program, please write to APA at aicp@planning.org.

In all correspondence, be sure to give your name, address, and APA ID number. If your questions or comments concern an exam you already have taken, also include the name of the exam, the date you took the exam, the location of your test center, and your exam number. APA will investigate each complaint and respond within a reasonable amount of time.

IF YOU RETAKE THE EXAM

If you decide to take the exam again, you should be aware that without any change in your level of knowledge, your test score may increase or decrease slightly. This slight change may be caused by something as simple as the way you feel on the day of the test or the temperature of the room in which you take the test. To increase the probability of significantly improving your test score, increase your knowledge of the subject material. You cannot retake just one part of the exam; you must retake the entire exam again and pay the full exam fee.

APPENDIX 2: EXAM ACCOMMODATIONS

APA members can request an exam accommodation for English as a Second Language (ESL) considerations or for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) considerations.

An accommodation is provided individually and varies based on need and documentation provided. Together with Prometric, the test provider for the AICP exam, APA will provide reasonable accommodations so that test-takers with ESL considerations or documented disabilities have a fair opportunity to pass the exam. The accommodation(s) must:

- not present an undue burden to APA/AICP;
- not fundamentally alter the fairness of the grading of the exam for all test-takers;
- not result in any changes to the actual content of the examination;
- not fundamentally alter the measurement of the skills or knowledge the examination is intended to test;
- not jeopardize examination integrity and security; and
- be compatible with the nature and purpose of the examination.

Note**:**

- Requests must be made each time an applicant registers for the exam.
- **All requests for exam accommodations are strictly confidential.**
- Please review the Testing Accommodations section on Prometric's website for more information.
- Please note that not all requests will necessarily be granted.

ESL CONSIDERATIONS

APA members may receive additional time and other necessary accommodations to take the AICP exam based on ESL considerations. All requests for accommodations based on lack of proficiency in English will be considered by AICP. Applicants must wait for approval before registering for the exam.

To request an accommodation for ESL considerations and schedule your exam:

1. Submit an ESL accommodation request form. APA will contact you with the status of the request within five business days.
2. If your request is granted, register for the exam on the APA website during the registration window. Do not schedule the exam with Prometric.
3. After you register for the exam, email aicp@planning.org to request that your accommodation be added to your Prometric record.
4. After you receive an email from APA confirming that your accommodation was added to your record, schedule your exam with Prometric.

ADA CONSIDERATIONS

AICP complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and is committed to providing reasonable testing accommodations for examinees with documented disabilities, consistent with the requirements of the law. Accommodations may also be approved for examinees with documented qualifying medical conditions that may be temporary or are not otherwise covered by the ADA.

> *The decision as to whether a medical condition that is not covered by the ADA is a "qualifying medical condition" for purposes of the AICP examination accommodation is at the sole discretion of APA.*

AICP uses the ADA definitions of a "qualifying medical condition" for purposes of the AICP examination accommodation.

To request ADA accommodations and schedule your exam:

1. Submit an ADA accommodation request form and upload the necessary documentation of the nature and extent of your disability from your health-care provider.
2. Documentation is used solely for the purpose of evaluating the request and must:
   - Be on official letterhead and include the credentials of the person submitting the documentation, along with email address, mailing address, telephone number, and signature.
   - State each accommodation requested and the reason for the accommodation.

   APA will contact you with the status of the request within five business days. Failure to provide APA with adequate supporting documentation in a timely manner will cause a delay in the review process and may impact your ability to register, schedule, and take the exam.
3. If your request is granted, register for the exam on the APA website during the registration window. Do not schedule the exam with Prometric.
4. After you register for the exam, email aicp@planning.org to request that your accommodation be added to your Prometric record.
5. After receiving an email from APA confirming your accommodation was added to your record, schedule your exam with Prometric.

APPENDIX 3: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

AICP DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP

A limited number of scholarships are available each test cycle. The scholarship will reduce the cost of the exam registration fee or the assessment fee. More information can be found on the APA website. If you have any additional questions, please contact APA.

GI BILL EXAM REIMBURSEMENT

Military veterans and their surviving dependents who are seeking AICP certification can now ask the Veterans Administration to reimburse the certification fees. Veterans interested in the GI Bill Education Benefits Program may find information about reimbursement for AICP certification online.

MEMBERS OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES

The exam is administered in a computer-based format to members outside of the United States during the same May and November testing windows. The exam can be administered at Prometric international sites or prearranged sites, such as embassies or universities. View international Prometric test center sites on the Prometric website. There is no additional fee to take the AICP Certification Exam outside of the United States.

LAPSED AICP MEMBERS

Former AICP members whose membership has lapsed and who are not eligible for reinstatement must sit for the AICP Exam to regain certification. These members will be preapproved to sit for the exam and are not required to submit an experience assessment or provide verification of education or employment. After registering for the AICP exam, lapsed AICP members must contact APA staff at aicp@planning.org for further instructions.

OTHER NATIONAL CERTIFYING INSTITUTIONS

APA members who are also in good standing with another professional planning national or international certifying institute administering an exam as part of their planning certification may be exempted from the Planning Experience Assessment. Please contact aicp@planning.org during an open registration window with your APA ID number and a verification letter confirming your membership with the other institute. APA staff will set up your exemption status, then email you with instructions to register for the AICP Certification Exam.

PROMETRIC – REMOTE TESTING

Prometric offers a variety of resources to help you prepare for remote testing. Please review *all* materials carefully. For additional assistance, contact Prometric directly.

Key Resources

- ProProctor User Guide
- Prometric Manuals and Guides
  (Includes instructions for Mac, Windows, and corporate or company devices)

System Requirements

- Perform a system check both before and on your test day
- Understand requirements for using corporate devices, including firewall settings

Remote Exam Preparation

- Review guidelines to get ready for exam day