ICE Digest: 2014 Q4 Edition

Message from the Chair

Features

CEO Profile

Special Thanks to the Industry Partners Who Made the 2014 Q4 Edition Possible:

Celebrating Our Successes and Moving Forward
By Linda Lysoby, MS, MCHES, CAE

This year was an exciting one for ICE, with the development of many new initiatives and educational programs. It was invigorating to interact with so many people at November's annual meeting in San Antonio. The conference name, ICE Exchange, reflects what is valued most by our annual conference attendees: the exchange of industry trends and best practices through networking and education.

The highlights of this conference included thought provoking keynote addresses, the highly attended session of the proposed NCCA standards revisions, and exciting updates about the activities of the Research and Development Committee at the R&D Summit. It was wonderful to connect with existing friends as well as meet new friends and colleagues. Please be sure to mark your calendar for the 2015 ICE Exchange, Oct. 27-30, at the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront in Portland, Oregon.

What's In a Name?
Our correct abbreviated name for the Institute of Credentialing Excellence is pronounced as the initials I.C.E. — not the word "ice." ICE spent time strategizing a new name as we moved away from NOCA. Some of us may not remember or realize the thought that went into creating the name ICE, so I thought that I would share this with you:

- **Institute** implies that this is an established organization, focused on both providing educational and advocacy resources to its members.
- **Credentialing** makes clear the organization's main purpose: to serve organizations and professionals in the credentialing community.
- **Excellence** communicates the organization's objective to deliver programs and services that enhance and advance the value and importance of credentialing.

I now ask each of you to help ICE to achieve one of its strategic goals: *Achieve global recognition of the ICE/NCCA brand and overall value.* As members and supporters of ICE, you can become an ambassador, promoting the organization and its activities. Remember to spell out the letters I.C.E. rather than saying the word "ice." ICE is an established organization, serving the credentialing community with excellence.

Board Changes
The ICE Board of Directors made some governance changes in the past few years that line up nicely with the policy governance model we are following. One significant change was that our officers are elected both by and from within the board, although those on the ICE Board of Directors continue to be elected by the membership through the annual election process. This allows for officers to serve multiple terms and to be involved in the creation of a longer term vision and strategy for the organization. This year, we have seen this idea in action, as the current officers were re-elected for the 2015 term. I will be entering my second year as chair, and Denise Fandel, MBA, CAE, and Claudia Zacharias, MBA, CAE, will repeat as vice chair and treasurer, respectively.

Leadership Development
Leadership development is an important topic for all credentialing organizations. This past year, the topic has been a priority for the ICE Board of Directors. We have discussed many different ways to build the leadership pipeline. The board has developed and enhanced a characteristics matrix that will be

used by the Nominating Committee in future years in order to match up the characteristics needed with the board's Strategic Plan. Future leaders are often created through their work on committees and task forces. Please consider the ways that you can get involved and share your expertise. ICE's prestige has been built upon the countless hours of volunteer contributions from individuals, industry partners and credentialing agencies.

New Programs

ICE continues to listen to the needs of the credentialing programs and offer programming in response. The CEO Connect Series, launched in 2014, will continue in 2015 with an Executive Summit on June 2, plus six webinars (twice the number in 2014) and ongoing executive conversations geared specifically to the needs of the executive leaders of certification organizations.

And, for the first time, a new program is being offered: an assessment-based Certificate Program for Credentialing Specialists. Until now, there has not been a true pathway to identify the competencies needed to be a credentialing specialist in certification, nor a direct medium to teach them in a comprehensive, methodical, and sequential way. ICE has created a comprehensive curriculum based on a job analysis that ICE conducted for certification professionals.

This self-paced online course is an assessment-based certificate program covering everything from the initial steps of determining the need for certification through psychometric concepts, policies, governance, and legal issues. The course is enhanced by additional resources to advance knowledge, a private online community with forums and file libraries, and facilitated real-time discussions. Individuals who complete the program and pass all course assessments will be recognized as a certificate-holder of the "Credentialing Specialist" credential.

Finally, the Continuing Competence Framework Document, developed over two years by a number of volunteers, has been reviewed and beta tested as a discussion document. The release is planned for early 2015.

Standards Revision

After the completion of a two-year process of standards revision, the revised standards for NCCA accreditation were ratified by a vote of NCCA accredited programs.

The proposed standards were submitted for public comment on Sept. 6, 2014. Over 175 individuals provided comments. The standards were updated following the public feedback and presented to the organizations with NCCA accredited programs for vote on Oct. 24, 2014, with voting open until Nov. 26, 2014. Of the 131 organizations with accredited programs, 87 votes (66 percent of eligible voters) were received, with 75 votes (86 percent of votes cast) approving the proposed standards. Therefore, the new standards have been approved and will be implemented on January 1, 2016, so programs seeking accreditation or reaccreditation in 2016 must follow the new requirements.

ICE will provide training and resources in early 2015 to explain the new requirements and the evidence needed to demonstrate compliance. Throughout 2015, the NCCA will also be providing a formative review of applications received to prepare programs for any additional requirements that will be in place when they next renew their accreditation.

Learn more about the process and the volunteers.

Thank You
ICE has developed prominence in education and standard setting because of countless hours of volunteer contributions from individuals, sponsors and credentialing agencies. Thank you for your ongoing support of ICE in service, attendance and membership.

Linda Lysoby, MS, MCHES, CAE, *is serving her second term on the board of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence, is the 2014 board chair, and has served in numerous volunteer capacities for ICE. She has been the executive director of the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing Inc. (NCHEC) for more than 12 years, with previous leadership in various nonprofit organizations. Under her leadership, the Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) and Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES) certifications earned accreditation by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), meeting rigorous industry-wide standards for certification. She has been involved with a total of three health education job/practice analysis projects and numerous publications regarding quality assurance mechanisms in the field of health education.*

Meet the Authors of Best Practices for Preparing Your RFPs and RFIs
Featuring Sandra Greenberg, PhD and Carla Caro, MA

This year, ICE published a white paper on preparing RFPs and RFIs by Sandra Greenberg, PhD, and Carla Caro, MA, of Professional Examination Service. This recently released publication joins four other white papers that are complimentary to ICE members. We spoke to both authors about their experience in the credentialing industry as well as the specific topics they address in the white paper.

ICE: How did you get into the credentialing industry?

Sandra Greenberg: I laughingly say that I migrated to credentialing. Previously, I was a tenured faculty member at Marymount Manhattan College and directed a training program for potential special education teachers. Before that, I was a research scientist at a New York University, where my job was evaluating the impact of a unique curriculum on children's social skills. I guess you can say that I've been "evaluation focused" for a long time — and credentialing is a natural extension of that interest.

Carla Caro: I had previously worked in a number of fields: public policy, quantitative analysis, legal services and educational advocacy. The credentialing industry allows me to use all the different skill sets developed in these positions. In my role in the Research and Advisory Services Department at ProExam, I am able to call upon this varied experience to assist organizations meet the mission-driven requirements of their professions, while respecting the unique needs of each client.

ICE: How would you define your roles at ProExam?

Greenberg: As vice president for research and advisory services, I do a variety of things, including running large-scale studies of professions and conducting feasibility studies and validation research. Even more importantly, I get the chance to do strategic and long-range planning with clients, especially with regard to creating new and innovative credentialing programs. I've worked with representatives from many very different professions, and I am always amazed at a few things. For example, the similarity of the problems each profession brings to the table, and the subtle (and not-so-subtle) differences in the ways individuals from diverse professions express themselves. Most rewarding is the excitement that can be generated by helping organizations solve their novel problems.

Caro: As a research director, I work with clients across the professions and serve as principle investigator on many types of studies for a range of nationally and internationally recognized credentialing programs. These include the conduct of large-scale engagements such as job/practice analyses and the development of competency frameworks; feasibility studies; validation projects involving a range of complementary data collection initiatives; value proposition studies; and standard setting. At ProExam, we are mission-driven, and we consider our work with ICE as a natural extension of our public service mandate.

ICE: Why did you volunteer to author a white paper specifically on the topic of RFPs and RFIs? Why is this topic important to you?

Greenberg: I thought that developing this white paper was a way to empower the sponsors of credentialing programs, including our current clients and potential clients. By that, we designed the white paper to provide guidance as to how to get the best sets of services that match your organization's unique needs. Of course, many credentialing organizations have been doing this quite successfully for years, so the information might be less useful for them. On the other hand, many existing organizations may not be getting quite what they want or need; and, with the proliferation of new and emerging credentialing programs that are new to the business, we thought it would be a great way to facilitate the journey.

Caro: I work with our department to respond to RFPs. We have seen well-developed RFPs but also have received others that have posed more of a challenge to us in knowing how best to meet the organization's need — or even, what that need might actually be. We strive to be as responsive as possible to organizations requesting services but sometimes have been frustrated when we could not be as targeted in our responses as we would have liked. Our goal for this white paper was to provide guidance to issuing organizations; an added bonus will be that ProExam and other vendors/partners will be able to craft much more responsive submissions to RFPs.

ICE: As an industry partner, what oversight or mistake makes it the most difficult for you to effectively respond to RFPs?

Greenberg & Caro: When an organization develops an RFP, it is critical to walk a fine line between delineating the goal with a useful level of detail and describing overly specific methods to achieve the goal. If an organization is too specific in describing how they want something done, they do not give vendors the opportunity to propose more effective or efficient solutions, and therefore limit the scope of the responses they receive. Make sure you provide the opportunity for respondents to offer alternative solutions as well as propose optional or additional initiatives, based on their experience with similar projects. Sometimes a small add-on can result in much more bang for your buck.

ICE: Your white paper is filled with numerous tips for improving RFPs and RFIs. If you could leave *ICE Digest* readers with only one takeaway that would have the biggest impact on their RFP outcome, what would it be?

Greenberg & Caro: Recognize that selecting a vendor and coming to an agreement is a highly interactive and iterative process. Even though you have clearly articulated your organization's needs in the RFP, allow for the fact that during the process of reviewing and following up with multiple proposals, you may gain new insights regarding how to meet your organization's needs. Therefore, be flexible in how you define your requirements, and be ready to consider novel or unique solutions.

Sandra Greenberg, PhD, vice president of research and advisory services at Professional Examination Service (ProExam), is responsible for strategic planning; serving as a liaison to key clients and stakeholders; developing business relationships and expanding client engagements in new sectors; and coaching and mentoring colleagues. Dr. Greenberg has conducted large-scale studies of professions; standard setting, feasibility and recertification studies; and developed observational scales, portfolio-based assessments and practical examinations for nationally and internationally recognized credentialing programs. She has been an active participant at the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE); the Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR), where she currently serves on the Board of Directors; and the Association of Test Publishers (ATP). Dr. Greenberg has served on the ICE Program Committee, the Nominating Committee, the Publications Committee *(chair), the Governmental Affairs Committee, and the Marketing and Communications Committee, and has presented numerous times at the ICE annual conference.*

Carla M. Caro, MA, is the research director at Professional Examination Service, where she is responsible for conducting large-scale engagements such as job/practice analyses and the development of competency frameworks; feasibility studies; validation projects involving a range of complementary data collection initiatives; value proposition studies; and standard setting for a range of nationally and internationally recognized credentialing programs. Caro previously worked as a public policy analyst and held positions in the area of educational advocacy. Her volunteer activities with ICE include serving on the NCCA Standards Revision project in the Technical Advisory Group for Psychometrics and on the Publications Committee. She is a frequent presenter at the ICE annual conference.

About ICE White Papers

The Publications Committee is working to expand its portfolio of white papers. Volunteer authors are currently drafting white papers on the following topics for publication in 2015:

- score reporting
- value of certification
- recruiting and managing subject matter experts

If you or someone you know might be interested in publishing, we encourage you to learn more about the process. Abstracts are accepted on a rolling basis, year-round.

Going Global: Part Two
By Rory McCorkle, PhD, MBA, CAE, SPHR, NPDP

With only 4.4 percent of the global population residing in the United States, the potential to grow a credential's international market is huge. How does an organization go global with its credential? In many cases, an organization allows global expansion to happen *to* them, rather than intentionally growing. When an organization makes a conscious decision to go international with a credential, many steps are involved, starting with determining whether to grow due to the organization's mission, an increase in revenue or both. This strategic determination was the focus of the 2011 Innovations in Testing presentation. The next step involves the organization taking action. This article will focus on the areas covered in a presentation at the 2014 ICE Exchange:

- Selecting geographic areas for focus
- Adopting or creating a product
- Test development and psychometrics
- Delivery model
- Recertification requirements

Selecting Geographic Areas for Focus

How do you select a geographic area for your expansion? With the vastness of the global market, narrowing an organization's focus for growth is critical, and performing market research to determine areas for growth is crucial element for a successful expansion..

Market Size. Determining a credential's potential market size by country is an important initial step. It can be a difficult task, depending upon the maturity and global acceptance of your profession, but it may be as easy as obtaining reports from local governments, regulatory bodies or studies by HR companies, as these organizations may have sized the total workforce in a discipline within that country.

An alternative approach is to capture the market size of specific segments in a country. For example, if your credential is most valued in the manufacturing industry, you might reach out to local companies operating in this industry to determine the sector market size before deriving the total market size in the country. You could also make this segment-based sizing more specific by determining, for example, the number of practitioners in IT companies with more than 500 employees and aerospace companies with fewer than 250 employees.

Understanding market size also involves understanding your most critical segments as well as growth within the market. Investing in a moderately sized market that is currently contracting may not be a prudent area of focus. For either approach, a best practice may be to obtain a market research firm to determine market size or country-based priorities.

Competition. Who would be the potential competition in the market? When asking this question, it is important to take a broad view when considering potential competition. For example, if key stakeholders hold an educational or certificate program as equivalent to certification, it is important to include these types of programs in your analysis. In a competitive analysis, you should collect the following information about existing certifications, certificates, educational programs, etc., that could compete with your program:

- History of these programs

- Approximate market penetration
- Existing marketing/communication profile
- The programs' strengths and weaknesses in the market
- Whether they are a potential competitor and/or partner

Other information might need to be collected depending on any specific issues in the country or region. For example, some countries are difficult to access due to market controls, such as government policies that make it difficult for foreign companies to do business there. Other countries have strong preferences for products from organizations within the country.

Marketing Ability. A very important question to ask is if you will be able to access customers within the country. If not, this factor should weigh heavily against prioritizing that country in your expansion. Looking even deeper, consider how you will convey the credential's value, even if you can access customers. The ability to both access and properly convey value is critical to growth.

Adopting or Creating a Product

Once markets have been prioritized and you know where you want to expand in terms of your markets, it is time to determine what product you will bring to that market. You may need to develop a new product specific to your overseas practitioners or specific to a country/region. You should take the following into consideration:

- Is your existing credential recognized overseas? If so, it may make accessing these markets easier.
- Does the country/region have a large population of practitioners operating in multinational companies? If so, your existing credential may be easily recognized.
- Does the practice in your discipline differ significant between countries? Or, are there critical regulations that differ between countries? Using a United States-based credential may make for an invalid or biased measurement.
- Is differentiating between your current United States-based certification and a global certification critical to your existing credential holders? If so, you may need to develop a new credential to protect your existing credential's value.

Test Development and Psychometrics

Once you have your product approach, you may either need to develop a new credential or adjust your existing one to be compatible for a global audience. Generally, the credential development process will not change. While you will need to consider specific questions in localization, such as if the item types you use work for the local audiences or how you will document education or experience in the country/region, the major issue in development is obtaining proper representation. It will be critical to involve subject matter experts (SMEs) from the target country in your development process. This will be important at every stage, including obtaining responses to a job analysis survey, having item writers from the local area and having representation in an examination pilot.

If you have identified partners in the local area, whether other associations or companies, these partners can be a critical factor in identifying SMEs, and incentives will likely be critical to their involvement. These incentives may not be large, such as providing SMEs with gift certificates or continuing education materials; however, the incentives will likely be valued more than you realized by the SMEs.

Finally, consider if translation and localization of your exam are required. While localization will almost definitely be required, translation is a complex decision and should be based on a robust understanding of the local market. Furthermore, proper processes must be followed, such as those specified by the International Test Commission.

Delivery Mode

States also exist globally: computer-based testing (CBT), paper-based testing (PBT) and remote-proctored examinations. However, some differences do exist.

- Will your existing delivery model export to these countries/regions? For example, if you have an existing CBT contract, does the vendor have sufficient testing centers in these areas? Also, is the cost per examination reasonable for the country/region?
- Will you have sufficient volume to extend existing contracts or will you need to use another delivery channel?
- How often will you need to deliver the examination? Do you need continuous testing, or will window or one-day testing work?
- Throughout these questions, what role does security play for your organization? How will you protect your intellectual property, particularly outside the United States?

Recertification Requirements

As a final issue, you will need to establish the importance of recertification, a poorly understood topic outside the United States. Bear in mind that many credentialing organizations experience significantly lower recertification rates among non-United States audiences. You can deal with these issues in the following ways:

- **Education.** You will need to educate the community about the value of recertification and how it can coincide with their existing continuing education.
- **Self-Directed and/or Virtual Learning.** You will also need to allow methods for continuing education to be earned through self-directed or virtual means, particularly if there are areas that do not have a significant training presence.
- **Communication.** Communicate the recertification requirements early on, and create a systemic communication plan to engage the certificant throughout the entire credential timeline. This plan should communicate the recertification requirements regularly, with specific tips on how to earn continuing education.

Summary

Taking a credential global is a complex task, so this article has inevitably missed steps or key tips. However, by focusing on these five areas, organizations can have a more complete approach to implementing a global credential. Retaining consultants, whether for market research, program management or test development, will likely be required to implement a plan appropriately. Finally, ensure that you draw on the success and failures of other credentialing bodies who have attempted the process. Benchmarking their process can be invaluable in your own planning.

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Leveraging Your Job Analysis To Assess the Value of Your Certification

By Maggie Collins, MA

What is the value of your certification? A credible credential provides employers and consumers a way to differentiate the qualified service providers from the unqualified. The credential upholds the standards of the profession, while providing professionals a way to show they are qualified to do the job. In other words, a credible credential is a win-win for everyone.

That said, a credential is no field of dreams. Just because you built an excellent credentialing program does not guarantee everyone recognizes its value. You may have applied best practices in the development and implementation of your credential. Your credential holders may have met clearly defined and valid criteria, identified through a systematic job analysis and passed a reliable and valid exam, just as NCCA and ANSI Standards recommend.

However, as Bennie Johnson said at the 2014 ICE Executive Summit, does the public feel the same way about your brand as you do? Is it recognized? Is it distinctive? Is it trusted? The focus of this article is about evaluating the importance of how others perceive your credential. One method for doing so that you can integrate into your current operations is a market evaluation or customer perception survey. To do so, you can compare the market's perception against how you *want* your program to be perceived, and better position it to align the two more closely. For example, if there is a large gap between these two perspectives, it might be addressed by a) improving the product or service if there is a concrete problem (e.g., Toyota and safety issues) or b) influencing perception through a promotional campaign (e.g., Starbucks emphasizes the *experience*, rather than the taste).

What Does This Have To Do with Job Analysis?

When you develop and administer a survey as part of your job analysis, practice analysis or role delineation study, you have a great opportunity to conduct market research. You are already investing significant resources toward the effort, building a pipeline for communication, reaching out to a large sample of stakeholders and efficiently collecting data. Why not use your job analysis survey to gather information about market perceptions? Simply develop and add a separate questionnaire to your job analysis survey.

The following steps apply regardless of your target audience, but if you currently only distribute your job analysis to credential holders, you may want to consider broadening its distribution. John Ganoe, executive director of the NCCA-accredited Certified Manager of Community Associations, says, "Unless there is a compelling reason not to [use it], the JTA survey is a valuable touch point, and [its] input from the broader field and consumers will enrich the results."

Getting Started: Developing a Questionnaire

Developing the right set of questions requires careful thought and planning. There are several steps to develop a questionnaire that will elicit meaningful information:

- Clarify your objectives. Like any survey question and response, the content should reflect what you want to know. Before you begin, determine your primary objective. Consider what do you want to accomplish, such as refresh a flagging program, promote your program to non-certified professionals, promote it to employers, differentiate it from your competitors or even all of the above.

- Once you've figured out what you want to know, develop the right questions and responses. Always relate this activity back to your audience. Who can tell you what? See the sample topics below for ideas.
- Information should be actionable. If you cannot use the information as part of your strategy, you are taking up valuable real estate on the survey for no reason.
- Finally, and this may be obvious, keep it short and put it at the end of your job analysis questionnaire. Remember, the primary purpose of this survey is to document occupational requirements, create a test blueprint and support a valid assessment.

Sample Topics

For credential holders: Consider asking what your organization is doing well and what it could do better around communications, the applicant process, ongoing maintenance and recertification support.

When we conducted this type of study for the CMCA, we asked what certificants liked (and did not like) about the exam itself (e.g., format, content). We also asked if they used the study materials provided by the association and, if so, were they helpful?

For all professionals in the field: For this group, questions can involve asking if the professionals are familiar with your credential, if they are certified -- and if not, why -- what other credential(s) they hold and what benefits they see in credetialing.

For employers and consumers: Consider asking if the employers and consumers seek out credentialed applicants, if they are more likely to hire credentialed applicants, what credentials they look for and what value they generally associate with your credential — or any credential. For the CMCA survey, we provided a list of benefits to consider.

For everyone: It is always worthwhile to invite open-ended responses. These responses often include some kind of "aha" moment and new insights that can be turned into questions for a follow-up survey.

Using Results

The most critical part of this process is using the results. When you administer a questionnaire that collects actionable information, you can use what you learn to develop specific strategies or action plans. For example, with this information you can

- Create marketing messages that highlight the positive perceptions and benefits associated with your credential, tailoring each message to the different key segments.
- Develop specific strategies to address shortcomings and correct misperceptions, such as:
- An engagement campaign to increase member involvement
- Clarified messaging to eliminate consumer confusion between your credential and a related or competing credential
- Enhance materials, such as applications, handbooks and study guides.

According to the 2014 ICE Business of Certification Survey, applications for certification are increasing, but competing certification programs are also growing in number. It is critical to make a case for your program. There are many ways to measure your certification's value proposition through a salary survey, criterion-related validity (e.g., a study of the performance level of credential holders versus noncredential holders) and market perception surveys. Leveraging your job analysis is an efficient way to collect valuable information about your brand.

Maggie Collins, MA, *is the director of credentialing services at the Human Resources Research Organization, a company with a long history of providing measurement solutions for problems related to human capital management, credentialing, education and program evaluation. Collins has provided consulting expertise to credentialing programs and HR departments since the mid-1990s. She volunteers for several of ICE's research and development task forces and will chair its Fundraising Committee in 2015.*

Aligning Recertification Expectations with Your Program Goals
By Chad W. Buckendahl, PhD

Professional associations, certification programs and the public continue to discuss and debate recertification. The expectations for maintaining the initial credential signifies a commitment to the program and a preservation of its meaning. If the expectations are too lax, confidence in the abilities of certificants beyond the initial demonstration may begin to erode. However, if the expectations are too stringent, there is a risk of alienating certificants, even as they gain more experience in the domain. At an organizational level, business, practical, policy, legal and, hopefully, psychometric factors influence the design of a recertification program, each with varying levels of emphasis. In this article, I will highlight psychometric factors. A comparable framework can be applied for designing the recertification components of the program, a method similar to the development of the assessment system for the initial certification. I will briefly discuss the four elements of this framework: defining the purpose, sources of evidence, methods for gathering evidence and evaluating evidence.

Defining the Purpose

In developing any measurement system, the intended interpretation and use of the results drives the identification, prioritization, collection and evaluation of the sources of evidence that contribute to those intended uses. For certification programs, discussions about recertification designs tend to focus on questions about public perceptions, continued competence, enhanced competency and domain specialization. Each of these goals may influence different strategies for developing and validating the recertification components, while also the additional factors noted above must also be taken into consideration.

Sources of Evidence

Once the intent is defined, a program will then begin to draft the structure and suggest sources of evidence that align with that purpose. In practice, the program utilizes a number of sources of evidence classified into the following categories: continuing education, professional contributions, lower stakes assessments and higher stakes assessments.

Continuing education has been a common source of evidence for many recertification programs. Inclusion of continuing evidence may be designed to support additional learning in the domain, whether directed to specific sub-domains required by the certification program or directed by the certificant. Professional contributions may include contributions to certification program activities (e.g., program design, practice analysis, item writing, standard setting) or academic contributions (e.g., peer reviewed journal articles, books, book chapters, conference presentations).

Lower stakes assessments, including self-assessments or the equivalent of end of unit assessments, may serve as a companion to continuing education activities to provide some evidence that the certificant engaged with the curricular and instructional expectations. Alternatively, many programs rely on higher stakes assessments through more formal retesting activities. These assessment efforts have raised questions about design and implementation, as well as policy and political implications for programs, particularly if a formal retesting expectation has not been part of the original program’s culture.

Methods for Collecting Evidence

Once the program has identified the sources of evidence that align with the intended purpose of a certification program, strategies for ensuring systematic collection of this evidence are necessary.

Evidence collection for recertification expectations may involve submission of complete portfolios, incremental submission of evidence through electronic candidate management systems or the use of a range of assessment delivery channels. The collection methods are informed by the design of the recertification components of the program. The more complex the structure, the more robust the collection approach will need to be to efficiently support the effort. As with any data collection effort, consideration of the evaluation plan informs the design.

Evaluating Evidence

For programs that rely solely on evidence from retesting, evaluating performance for recertification is analogous to the performance evaluation on the initial certification. However, most programs have more complex designs for recertification, which may involve more qualitative elements requiring an evaluation strategy that aligns with that design. Defining the evaluation criteria for a more complex recertification design is similar to developing a scoring rubric for a complex performance assessment. To anchor the development to the intended purpose, engage stakeholders in discussions about characteristics of the minimally qualified expectations for recertification. This development is often an iterative process by which assumptions of different models are tested using certificant data to check whether different configurations yield results that are credible for the program.

In many programs, there is often a delegation responsible for determining the quality of evidence eligible for inclusion in a certificant's recertification file. This delegation may pass to the certificants, professional resources, third-party vendors or some combination of these. Because these varied sources can be uneven in terms of credibility, the evaluation plan should also include an audit mechanism that allows the program to evaluate both the collection of information and individual sources. Many recertification programs may offer equivalency as opposed to a strict interpretation of equality with respect to the types of evidence that a certificant may submit. However, it is important to ensure that the intended minimum threshold of quality is met, further contributing to the evidence of quality for the program from the initial certification through recertification.

An important component in protecting the meaning of a program's credential, recertification expectations communicate a particular level of quality to stakeholders within and beyond the program. Because the credibility and meaning of a credential spans entry level and experienced certificants, the design features applied to develop evidence to support initial certification can be reasonably generalized to the development of recertification components.

Chad W. Buckendahl, PhD, *is a senior psychometrician and director of education, licensure and professional certification services with Alpine Testing Solutions. He provides psychometric and testing policy consultation and leads validation and research projects for a range of testing programs. Buckendahl's research interests are applied psychometrics, including alignment, legal/policy issues, standard setting, test evaluation and validity. He was a co-principal investigator for the Evaluation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2009) and co-author of various industry texts. Buckendahl has also served on committees for membership, outreach and programs for the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) and as an associate editor for Applied Measurement in Education (AME). He currently serves as a psychometric reviewer for the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) and editor of the* Journal of Applied Testing Technology *(JATT).*

CEO Profile: Cary List, President & CEO, Financial Planning Standards Council

Professional certification is an exciting field that poses complex challenges and offers endless opportunities. The chief executive officers and executive directors of certifying agencies lead the effort to address challenges and take advantage of opportunities in a balanced partnership with the governing body. In this ongoing column, *ICE Digest* engages one-on-one with industry leaders to understand the role of the CEOs and executive directors, while delving into the issues facing certification today.

In this issue, Cary List, president and CEO of the Financial Planning Standards Council (FPSC), shares thoughts on his organization and certification program. The Financial Planning Standards Council (FPSC) is a not-for-profit, standards setting and certification body that develops, promotes and enforces professional standards in financial planning through Certified Financial Planner® certification.

What is your professional background? How did you get into credentialing?

I was previously involved in education as an academic director at a local college, and also have CFP certification myself, so while I was/am not an expert in credentialing specifically, the combination of experience was very helpful to me in my position. I received a degree in mathematics and started my career as a CPA. I then spent the better part of a decade in the financial planning profession overseeing financial planners before moving to education and then FPSC.

I spent four years as a volunteer on FPSC's Panel of Examiners (the examinations committee) and learned the importance of integrity in the credentialing process. I also spent four years heading up standards and certification before becoming the CEO, so I learned a lot on the job.

What kind of expertise and experience do you have surrounding you? How is your team structured?

I have hired only the best credentialing, standards and testing experts to deliver credible certification programs. I have a senior management team made up of the heads of public policy, operations, communications, professional practice and certification.

How do you see your role as CEO?

In my view, the role of the CEO is five-fold:

1. Work in partnership with the board to set the mandate for the organization, establish the principles and values on which the organization is built, and develop and oversee the strategic plan for the organization.
2. Lead the staff team in accomplishing our strategic goals/ends.
3. Develop and maintain external relationships and strategic alliances with stakeholders.
4. Be the public face of the organization and ably represent the organization externally.
5. Most importantly, ensure that the organization successfully executes its mandate and achieves its ends.

How large is your organization?

- $7 million United States revenue
- 36 employees
- 17,000 certificates
- 1,700 candidates annually and growing

What three questions is your organization asking as it plans for the future?

- How do we increase demand with consumers for financial planning?
- How do we get consumers to seek certified individuals (CFP professionals)?
- How do we get governments to recognize the importance of recognizing certification?

What challenges are you currently facing (or anticipate facing) with regards to your certification programs?

While exam candidate numbers are growing at a rate of around 10 percent per year, it is still not keeping up with the 3.5 percent attrition we see from retiring CFP professionals. The average age of a CFP is late 40s, and it is difficult getting that number lower. In addition, the success of CFP certification has a number of credentials wanting in the game, which causes a challenge toward recognition of CFP by regulators and governments when there are others saying "if them, then us too."

What different types of outside QC/evaluation/input does your organization monitor?

We are ISO17024 accredited, so we have a full QC program base on ISO9001 and undertake both annual internal audit (through an external auditor) and a full ISO external evaluation.

How is your organization adapting to changes in the credentialing world? Do you feel your organization is structured in a way where you can adapt quickly if you need to?

Our organization is very nimble and not married to old views of certification or to old ways of doing things. For example, we recently introduced an entry-level credential, knowing it may be contentious. It is the best thing we ever did. We are large enough to be relevant and small enough to be able to change our governance or operating structure or our programs very quickly to meet external demands.

What was your motivation for introducing the entry-level credential that you mentioned?

We heard for many years that it was a daunting challenge getting the CFP, and pass rates were down to under 50 percent. There were no milestones to success. We also heard from the industry that there were many positions where the CFP designation was considered overkill, and it was too difficult to find people with the CFP for the position. The entry-level provides a stop-gap on the path to CFP certification. With pass rates in the 70 percent range for first-time writers, it feels more attainable and keeps people motivated.

What value do you see in certificate programs? Is your organization developing any?

This may sound like blasphemy, but we don't see a lot of value in certificate programs from a certification body, as it confuses the stakeholders. Employers, governments, regulators and consumers in particular don't understand the difference, as many of them don't even understand what certification is all about. We would leave certificates to educational institutions and focus on certification, including pathway credential.

What value do you find in attending the ICE Exchange?

As a past chair/president of ICE, I am delighted to see the board and executive director recognize the importance of C-level programming and the value of engaging the CEO community. The C-level sessions have increased and improved dramatically over recent years, where the ICE Exchange is more than just a meeting place for examinations staff and psychometricians, but an opportunity for exchange among those who are running the business of certification.