



The Appraisal FOUNDATION

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APPRAISER QUALIFICATIONS BOARD

Appraiser Qualifications Board Q&As

TOPICS COVERED: DEFINITION OF SYNCHRONOUS COURSES and COURSE DELIVERY MECHANISM APPROVAL

Issue Date: October 4, 2021

On August 24, 2021, the AQB adopted changes to the *Criteria* which will go into effect on January 1, 2022 (and will be referred to as the “2022 *Criteria*” in this document). Some of these changes have drawn questions from stakeholders. These Q&As are specifically directed at answering those questions.

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For Appraisers

Question:

Will the changes to section III (Generic Education Criteria), effective January 1, 2022, impact me as an appraiser taking appraisal courses?

Answer:

While these changes are largely directed at the requirements for how education providers have their courses approved, they will benefit appraisers by giving them more flexibility in obtaining CE credits. If you are interested in learning more, you can read the below section for education providers.

Question:

One of the changes involves removing the 50% limitation on experience gained for work completed without a traditional client and it now allows the appraiser to complete up to 100% of their experience work without having a traditional client.

What is an example of a “non-traditional” client?

Answer:

Not having a client in the traditional sense, for example, means a client has not hired an appraiser for a business purpose.

In other words, an aspiring appraiser could ask people they know, “Could I appraise your home?” The people would have no business or personal reason to order the appraisal, but the individual would still be gaining experience. Of course, that experience would also have to comply with any additional state requirements, such as obtaining a supervisory signature, should such requirements exist.

Question:

Does removing the 50% limitation on experience gained for work completed without a traditional client mean I, a trainee, do not need a supervisor?

Answer:

This new change for the 2022 *Criteria* does nothing to impact the existing trainee/supervisor model. If a state requires a supervisory signature on appraisal reports, the 2022 *Criteria* does not affect that requirement. Additionally, this change does not eliminate the occurrence of an appraiser making necessary property inspections, the appraiser completing any needed field work, or the appraiser having any necessary or required supervision.

For Education Providers

Course Delivery Mechanism & *Criteria*

Question:

Are classroom and synchronous courses equivalent under the 2022 *Criteria*?

Answer:

Yes. The 2022 *Criteria* now states that because synchronous courses provide for instruction and interaction that are substantially the same as in-person classroom courses, synchronous courses no longer need to meet the approval requirements that are required for an asynchronous course.

The only remaining difference between a classroom course and a synchronous course is their definitions. In a synchronous course, the instructor and the students interact simultaneously online, and thus, a synchronous course falls under the definition of “distance education.” However, even though a synchronous course is defined as distance education, the 2022 *Criteria* allows synchronous courses to undergo the same approval process as a classroom course.

Now, both classroom and synchronous course sessions must meet requirements specified in III.A. and III.B. of the 2022 *Criteria* (below).

A. *Class hour*

1. *A class hour is defined as 60 minutes, of which at least 50 minutes are instruction attended by the student.*
2. *The prescribed number of class hours includes time for examinations.*

B. *Credit for the class hour requirements may be obtained only from the following providers:*

1. *Colleges or universities;*
2. *Community or junior colleges;*
3. *Real estate appraisal or real estate-related organizations;*
4. *State or federal agencies or commissions;*
5. *Proprietary schools;*
6. *Providers approved by state certification/licensing agencies; or*
7. *The Appraisal Foundation or its Boards.*

Question:

Do synchronous courses still require delivery mechanism approval?

Answer:

No. Under the 2022 *Criteria*, synchronous courses have the same requirements as classroom courses, with no delivery mechanism approval needed (e.g., IDECC or similar entities). However, state appraiser regulatory agencies (states) can still choose to require delivery mechanism approval for synchronous courses.

Question:

For synchronous courses, are the requirements in the 2022 *Criteria* the same as those presented in the ASC’s Covid-19 relief letter dated September 25, 2020¹?

Answer:

No. During the Covid-19 relief (expiring December 31, 2021), the ASC allowed, with the AQB’s recommendation, that approved classroom courses could be taught synchronously with no additional approval required for the course or delivery mechanism. This allowance was subject to multiple considerations that do not exist in the current *Criteria* including, for example, the requirement for the provider to verify the photo identification of each of the students.

In other words, the ASC’s Covid-19 letter had slightly different requirements than were ultimately adopted into the 2022 *Criteria*.

Question:

Given that synchronous and classroom courses are now equivalent, will I need to continue submitting separate applications to the AQB’s Course Approval Program (CAP) for these courses?

Answer:

No. On January 1, 2022 (when the 2022 *Criteria* goes into effect), all classroom and synchronous courses will be submitted and approved as “classroom/synchronous” under CAP. This means the provider can submit one application and if the course is approved, the provider can choose to present that course either in the classroom and/or synchronously, subject to any additional state requirements

Question:

When a classroom and synchronous version of a course were, in the past, approved separately through Course Approval Program (CAP), and thus both have different expiration dates, which expiration date – the one for the classroom course or the one for the synchronous course – will be honored, given that the two formats are now considered equivalent?

Answer:

CAP will honor the expiration date for the course which had the most recent “initial” approval.

Below is an example of a course (Basic Appraisal Principles) with different classroom and synchronous approvals and expiration dates. In this example, the classroom course has been renewed twice while the synchronous course is still on its initial approval. Even though the classroom expiration date is later than the synchronous expiration date, the synchronous course was *initially* approved more recently, so that expiration date will be honored.

Basic Appraisal Principles		
	Classroom Expiration	Synchronous Expiration
Initial Approval	December 31, 2018	October 1, 2022
First Renewal Approval	December 31, 2021	
Second Renewal Approval	December 31, 2024	

The course provider must use the most recently approved course’s materials.

¹ <https://www.asc.gov/Documents/OtherCorrespondence/MEMO%20to%20States%20COVID-19%20Relief%20-%20Addl%20Guidance%20for%20Educator%20Delivery%2009.25.20.pdf>

Question:

I always had my asynchronous courses approved through The International Distance Education Certification Center (IDECC), but I now want to use the Appraisal Foundation, which is a new AQB approved entity for course delivery mechanism approval. What are the delivery mechanism specifications for asynchronous courses approved by the Foundation? For example, is there a specific number of learning objectives required, how many quiz questions are required per hour, etc.

Answer:

The Appraisal Foundation (the Foundation) and the AQB are currently developing the policies, procedures, and requirements for asynchronous delivery mechanism approval. Once finalized, the Foundation will make an announcement through all its communication channels and post it on its website. Education providers will receive an email from the Foundation's Publications Manager, with the new information. As of the publication of this Q&A document, the Foundation expects to have their approval program ready in the first quarter of 2022.

Question:

Will the expiration dates of IDECC-approved asynchronous courses be honored for any course delivery mechanism approval? Or, when the courses expire, will all asynchronous courses need to be submitted for AQB course delivery mechanism approval?

Answer:

According to the *Criteria*, IDECC continues to be a valid delivery mechanism approval entity, and you can continue to use them to renew your courses. However, as an alternative to IDECC, the AQB has also approved the Foundation as a delivery mechanism approval entity. While you can choose to use either entity, please check with your state, as they may require you to have approval from IDECC (or from others) for distance education courses.

Question:

Will there be a certification requirement similar to IDECC's Certified Distance Education Instructor (CDEI) designation for either asynchronous or synchronous instructors?

Answer:

No. Under the AQB/Foundation delivery mechanism approval entity, there will be no delivery type specific instructor certification required, however, states may have their own additional requirements. Be sure to verify what is required directly with the state.

Question:

Will states be required to follow the new education requirements within the *Criteria* (e.g., allowing alternatives to IDECC)?

Answer:

States must follow the minimum requirements set forth in the *Criteria* but can exceed these minimums. For example, states could require IDECC for both synchronous *and* asynchronous courses as this is a requirement that is *above* the minimum requirements of the *Criteria*.

Question:

Do you have any guidance on how to incorporate and implement remote and/or biometric proctoring for distance education qualifying education courses?

Answer:

The *Criteria* requirements related to exams for distance education state that exams must include a written, closed-book final examination and that the exam must either be proctored in person or remotely. Because there are various ways to ensure a closed book exam experience, the *Criteria* leaves the “how” open to providers and state regulatory agencies to decide the best method to use to comply with this *Criteria*.

USPAP & the *Criteria*

Question:

Now that the *Criteria* regards synchronous courses as substantially the same as on-site classroom courses, does it mean there is no exam requirement for synchronous USPAP courses?

Answer:

Yes. With the adoption of the 2022 *Criteria*, the Functional Specifications and Requirements for Gaining Equivalency Rating for Asynchronous Delivery document was updated, which resulted in removing any references to synchronous delivery. Therefore, there is no longer an exam requirement for USPAP synchronous courses. View the new Functional Specifications documents by clicking [HERE](#).

Question:

Are we allowed to provide USPAP courses synchronously (e.g., via Zoom) after December 31, 2021?

Answer:

Yes. As mentioned above, the 2022 *Criteria*, does not require delivery mechanism approval for synchronous courses. However, a state may still require a synchronous course to have its delivery mechanism approved. Please check with the states in which you’ll be offering these courses to confirm what requirements they have.

For States

Question:

Did the AQB eliminate The International Distance Education Certification Center (IDECC) as a valid delivery mechanism approval entity?

Answer:

No, according to the *Criteria* (Section III. D. 3.), AQB approved organizations for course delivery mechanism approval (including IDECC) remain valid delivery mechanism approval entities. The only change the Board made was to add the AQB (via The Appraisal Foundation) as an alternative delivery mechanism approval entity option.

Question:

Since the Foundation will now be a valid alternative to IDECC, what does the AQB/Foundation delivery mechanism entail?

Answer:

The AQB and the Foundation are developing the process for the new delivery mechanism approval. It will be robust and will allow for course provider innovation and technological advancement. The AQB/Foundation is working with a panel of education providers and state regulators to ensure the program's success.