

## Right of Way Professional Career Path

### Frequently Asked Questions

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### Frequently Asked Questions

#### THE PREMIER DESIGNATION:

1. *Is the SR/WA still the highest designation or is there one higher now?*
  - a. Yes. The SR/WA will remain as the top designation for right of way professionals.

#### ADDITIONAL RECOGNITION FOR ACHIEVING MILESTONES IN CAREER PATH:

2. *Why were other certifications added below the SR/WA?*
  - a. IRWA's new Career Path has a mechanism to reward right of way professionals on a generalist path, with certification at varying stages of their career: Right of Way Agent (entry level), Associate Right of Way Professional (new professionals), Right of Way Professional (mid level), each with increasing degrees of education, experience, and courses.

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#### ELIGIBILITY:

3. *Who is eligible to participate in IRWA's certification and designation programs?*
  - a. Anyone involved in the right of way profession is eligible to participate in the generalist certification program. This includes administrative personnel, appraisers, asset (property) managers, attorneys, engineers, environmental professionals, negotiations/acquisition agents, relocation assistance personnel, surveyors and title officers.

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#### RECERTIFICATION:

4. *Is recertification still required in this new program?*
  - a. Yes for some of certifications and for the designation. Recertification is not required for the Right of Way Agent Certification but is required for all other certifications and for the SR/WA designation. Recertification requirements vary depending on the individual program.

**5. *When does the new recertification requirements take effect for current SR/WAs?***

- a. The new recertification requirement will take effect during your next recertification cycle.

**6. *Where do I find when I need to recertify and how to recertify??***

- a. You can log into your account on IRWA's website and your recertification date will show for each certification.
- b. Contact your local Chapter Professional Development Chair for more information. You can also visit IRWA's website to review the program guides and to download necessary forms.

**7. *Are exams required for recertification?***

- a. No. Exams are not required for recertification, however, it is strongly recommended that you do so. Courses taken for recertification at the ARWP may be used to meet the course requirements at the RWP or SR/WA level only if exams are taken and successfully passed at the time the course is taken. You will not have the option to challenge the exam after the fact, unless you do not pass it the first time. Courses taken at the RWP level may be used to meet requirements for the SR/WA level, again, only if you successful take and pass the exam. Some outside certification bodies will require an exam for continuing education credit. Participants are suggested to check with their issuing body to ensure that credit will be awarded for attendance.

**RIGHT OF WAY QUALIFYING EXPERIENCE:**

**8. *What type of experience is needed to qualify?***

- a. To qualify, experience must be in one or more of the right of way disciplines. Candidates must work full time in the right of way profession as a practitioner, reviewer or supervisor. To earn the RWA certification requires 1 year qualifying experience; the ARWP certification requires 2 years qualifying experience (1 year at RWA level + 1 year at ARWP level); the RWP certification requires 3 years qualifying experience (1 year at RWA level + 1 year at ARWP level + 1 year at RWP level); the SR/WA requires 5 years qualifying experience (1 year at RWA level + 1 year at ARWP level + 1 years at RWP level + 2 years at SR/WA level).

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**EXAMS:**

**9. *Will the SR/WA Capstone requirement change?***

- a. No. The SR/WA Capstone Exam will not change and passing the exam is required.

**10. Who can sit for a capstone exam?**

- a. Only active candidates can sit for the capstone exam.

**11. How long after I take a capstone exam can I still use it to meet the requirement?**

- a. Exams are only valid for 5 years from the date of the pass notification letter.

**12. Are there more than one option for the SR/WA capstone exam?**

- a. Yes, there are two options to meet the requirements for the SR/WA capstone exam: taking a comprehensive exam or taking 4 of the 7 stand-alone, discipline-specific exams.
- b. Those with a certification may apply individual capstone exams used towards the designation as long as it occurs within a five year period.

**13. Can I test out of a course?**

- a. Yes. Candidates may challenge exams for beginning course. If an exam is challenged and not passed, it may not be challenged again. The course must be taken and passed in order to earn credit for the course. Exams may be challenged by submitting a form to local chapter Professional Development Chairs.

**14. Who can proctor an exam?**

- a. Any SR/WA can proctor an exam.

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**APPLICATIONS:**

**15. When can I submit my candidacy application and where do I send it?**

- a. Candidates must submit applications to IRWA HQ after consulting with and obtaining a signature from their local chapter Professional Development Chairs. Candidacy forms can be e-mailed, faxed or mailed in.

**16. Who do I send my completion application to?**

- a. Applications must be submitted to Chapter Professional Development Chairs. Completion forms can be e-mailed, faxed or mailed in as long as all supporting documentation is attached.

**17. How long will it take to process my application?**

- a. Each application has an approximate 4-6 week processing time.

## **PLAQUES AND PINS:**

### ***18. Will IRWA still be issuing plaques and pins?***

- a. SR/WAs will receive a framed certificate with the corporate seal of IRWA and an SR/WA pin. The certificate and frame resembles that used to reward those that earn a higher education as opposed to plaques which are used to reward or recognize.
- b. RWAs, AWRPs and RWPs will receive an unframed certificate and certification pin.
- c. All certificates and pins are issued to the Chapter Professional Development Committee Chair for presentation at chapter meetings. These are sent out within 6 weeks of approval of the completion application.

### ***19. If I have a plaque can I trade it for a certificate and frame?***

- a. Certificates and frames are available for purchase on our website.

### ***20. What will I get when I recertify?***

- a. When an SR/WA recertifies they are issued an official certificate. Those who are already that have a plaque may request a new plate when submitting the recertification application.

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## **STUDY SESSIONS:**

### ***21. Will study sessions be available for all capstone exams?***

- a. No. Study sessions are available for the SR/WA comprehensive exam only. No other exam study sessions are being developed at this time.

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**PROGRAM NAME:**

**22. What is the name of the new program?**

- a. Previously, IRWA's professional development program was known as the Credentialing Program. IRWA's professional development program will be referred to as IRWA's Right of Way Professional Career Path (To demonstrate right of way as a professional career, rather than a trade.)

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**SR/WA NAME:**

**23. What does SR/WA stand for?**

- a. The SR/WA was previously known as Senior Member International Right of Way Association; the new name is: Senior Right of Way Professional. The SR/WA will continue to be used to represent this designation.

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**ADDITIONAL UNITS:**

**24. Are more units required for the SR/WA?**

- a. Yes. To increase the rigor of the program, an additional 40 units must be earned throughout the program to earn the SR/WA Designation.

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**CHALLENGING OF COURSES:**

**25. Can you still challenge a course if you know the material?**

- a. Any beginning level course may be challenged (take the exam without attending a course) to earn qualifying education units. This is expanded from the previous policy which restricted exam challenges to core courses only.

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**IRWA APPROVED COURSES:*****26. Can courses taken from those other than IRWA count towards a certification or designation?***

- a. Yes, sometimes qualifying education units may be earned by attending courses outside of IRWA. A list of approved courses will be developed and posted on the website. Currently, IRWA approves up to 16 hours of qualifying education earned by attending education through an IRWA partner, as long as specific criteria are met. These units may be applied towards elective course requirements only.

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**CORE COURSES:*****27. Will I still need to take core courses for the new program?***

- a. No. Previously, the SR/WA credentialing program required specific courses to be taken within four disciplines, referred to as the “core courses”. The only certification that will require a specific course is the Right of Way Agent Certification (RWA). RWA Certification requires the successful completion or challenging of Course 100 exam. For all other certifications and the designation, the course requirement is based on a combination of beginning, intermediate and advanced coursework, as opposed to a list of specific courses to be taken. Specific courses are no longer required. Instead, candidates may choose a specific number of units from each right of way discipline.
- b. The course requirements have been expanded from the four original core disciplines to include all seven right of way disciplines. However, a maximum number of units may be earned within each discipline to meet the course requirement, at each level, to ensure diversity. There is no maximum number of electives in each discipline. This will allow more flexibility, while maintaining a multi-disciplined approach to education.

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**EDUCATION REQUIREMENT FOR CERTIFICATION:*****28. Do I need to have a college degree for any generalist certification?***

- a. No, there are alternate paths. The minimum education requirement to earn a certification is a two year degree or equivalent. Two years of experience or 128 IRWA approved qualifying course credits (in addition to that needed for the certification) may be substituted for the two year degree required. These in lieu of substitutions may no longer be combined and are granted

on an either/or basis (additional experience or additional courses). Either experience or coursework is substituted, and partial credit for college courses will not be allowed, unless the course is on the IRWA approved course list.

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#### **EDUCATION REQUIREMENT FOR DESIGNATION:**

##### ***29. Do I need to have a college degree for the designation?***

- a. No, there are alternate paths. The minimum education requirement to earn the SR/WA Designation is a four year degree (or university equivalent) or equivalent. In lieu of a 4 year degree, candidates may substitute four years of experience, a 2 year degree plus an additional 128 IRWA approved qualifying course credits or an additional 2 years of qualifying experience or 256 IRWA approved qualifying course credits (in addition to that needed for the certification). These in lieu of substitutions may no longer be combined and are granted on an either/or basis. Either experience or coursework is substituted, and partial credit for college courses will not be allowed, unless the course is on the IRWA approved course list. In lieu of experience may no longer run concurrent with qualifying experience, and is in addition to any right of way experience required for each certification or designation.

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#### **QUALIFYING EXPERIENCE:**

##### ***30. What type of experience is needed to qualify?***

- a. The list of qualifying experience categories has been expanded to consider: administrative, appraisal, asset (property) management, engineering, environmental, law, negotiations/acquisition, relocation assistance, surveying and title examination.

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#### **QUALIFYING EDUCATION UNITS:**

##### ***31. How are the education units classified?***

- a. Qualifying education units are classified as beginning, intermediate or advanced.

**32. Can I use a class that I took in 1990 towards a certification?**

- a. Yes. You can use any class that you took in the past as long as it was successfully completed, even if that class was taken many years ago.

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**BEGINNING COURSES:**

**33. Can beginning courses be used to meet qualifying requirements for all programs?**

- a. No. Beginning courses may only be used for **qualifying education** at the Right of Way Agent, Associate Right of Way Professional, and Right of Way Professional Certifications. Beginning courses may not be used to qualify for the Senior Right of Way Professional Designation. However, beginning courses may be used for recertification at any level.

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**INTERMEDIATE COURSES:**

**34. Can intermediate courses be used to meet qualifying requirements for all programs?**

- a. No. Intermediate courses may only be used for **qualifying education** for the Associate Right of Way Professional and Right of Way Professional Certifications and the Senior Right of Way Professional Designation. Intermediate courses may not be used to qualify for the Right of Way Agent Certification. Intermediate courses may be used for recertification at any level.

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**ADVANCED COURSES:**

**35. Can advanced courses be used to meet qualifying requirements for all programs?**

- a. No. Advanced courses may only be used for **qualifying education** for the Right of Way Professional Certification and the Senior Right of Way Professional Designation. Advanced courses may not be used to qualify for the Right of Way Agent or Associate Right of Way Professional Certifications. Advanced courses may be used for recertification at any level.

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**ETHICS REQUIREMENT:**

***36. Do I need to take IRWA's ethics class or take I use one that I took from another organization?***

- a. To meet the ethics requirement for any certification or designation candidates must attend an IRWA Ethics course (either Course 103 or Course 104) within the past five years. Some ethics courses from outside of IRWA have been approved for recertification.

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**PREREQUISITES:**

***37. Are there prerequisites for each level of certification leading to the designation?***

- a. To earn a certification other than the Right of Way Agent, candidates must achieve the lower level certification or meet the qualifications through course work (or challenging exams of beginning courses) and experience. Additional candidacy forms are not required. This means a person may start at any level in the career path as long as they have met the requirements of education, experience and courses of all lower levels.

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**CANDIDACY:**

***38. How long after I declare my candidacy do I have to complete the program?***

- a. Once the candidacy application is approved, candidates have five years to complete the program based on the program guide in the year of their candidacy. This five year period is for each of the certification levels and the designation.

***39. What is the benefit of declaring a candidacy?***

- a. If the program requirements change during that five year period, it will not affect a confirmed and approved candidate. If someone chooses to work on a program without filing a candidacy, they are subject to the program in place at the time their candidacy is declared.

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**ELIGIBILITY:**

***40. Can a non-member earn a certification or designation?***

- a. Yes. Anyone involved in the right of way profession is eligible to participate in the generalist certification program, although members receive a substantial discount on all education products, including filing fees. Course pricing is still determined by the individual chapters and not affected by the pricing of the career path pricing.

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**GRANDFATHERING:**

***41. If I am a candidate now do I need to follow this new program?***

- a. No. Active Candidates are grandfathered into existing programs for the term of their original candidacy only. Extensions may be applied for by filling out a new candidacy form and submitting it by 9/30/2010. Extensions must be e-mailed, faxed or mailed before deadline (verified via date stamping).

***42. Can I still apply as a candidate for the current program?***

- a. Yes. If an application for SR/WA candidacy is received at IRWA HQ prior to 10/1/2010 and is subsequently approved, that person will fall under the current program requirements and not the new Career Path program. Applications must be e-mailed, faxed or mailed before deadline (verified via date stamping).

***43. Will there be a grace period for applications received after September 30th?***

- a. No. Any applications received on October 1, 2010 and after will be under the program.

***44. Can I transfer my candidacy to the new program?***

- a. Yes. If any candidate wishes to declare candidacy for a new certification or designation, they will forfeit the current candidacy. There will be an additional charge to switch programs.

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**USE OF ACRONYMS:**

***45. As I earn higher certifications, do I get to add all the letters after my name?***

- a. No. In the generalist path, only the highest level of certification or designation will be used. For example: once the Associate Right of Way Professional (ARWP) Certification is achieved the Right of Way Agent (RWA) acronym will no longer be used; once the Right of Way Professional (RWP) Certification is achieved, Associate Right of Way Professional (ARWP) is not used.
- b. Those with specialist certifications will still use their respective acronyms in addition to their generalist certification. For example: if John Doe has earned the Associate Right of Way Professional Certification in addition to the Right of Way Specialist Certification for relocation he would list his credentials as follows: John Doe, ARWP, R/W-RAC.

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***46. Can someone jump ahead to a higher level, or do you have to start at the RWA level?***

- a. Yes, someone can start at a higher certification level, as long as they meet the requirements of the lower certifications because those are prerequisites. Therefore, someone that has been working in the right of way profession for some time, can use their knowledge and experience to test out of the beginning courses and simply apply for a higher certification. They must have taken all required units. For example, if someone has earned more than 208 units, they can apply them towards the SR/WA without having to submit paperwork for the lower certifications.

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Please consult the individual program guides for each program for more detailed information.