



## Credentialing Pathway Policy

**Document Type:** Rule/**Policy**/Plan/Guidelines/**Operating Procedures**

**Administering Entities:** The Credentialing Subcommittee of the International Professional Education Committee (IPEC) and IRWA Staff

**Date Approved:** September 21, 2023

**Most Recent Amendment Date:** N/A

**Approved By:** The International Executive Committee (IEC)

**Mandated Review:** Minimum Every Three Years

**Responsibility for Review:** The Credentialing Subcommittee of the IPEC

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to identify and develop, update, combine, or eliminate a credentialing pathway in an effective and transparent manner. The IRWA must continually improve its credentialing pathways with certificates or designation. The credentialing pathways provide the framework for

- Professional development and advancement for members to progress;
- Recognizing subject matter expertise and credibility;
- Academic development in relation to disciplines and industries;
- Curriculum development and review to ensure courses are current, impactful, and relevant; and
- Identifying and developing instructors qualified for delivering the curriculum.

### Definitions

**Credentialing:** the outcome or form of recognition: certification/designation, following the successful completion of a series of courses and associated exams, including a capstone exam.

**Required Experience:** the minimum active and relevant work history required for a particular certification/designation, which would demonstrate expertise and competency (see the experience and qualifications requirements found in the relevant certification/designation program guide).

**Pathway:** relates to the specific years of experience with the discipline/industry and the coursework requirements.

### Background

The IRWA has a long history of credentialing, starting with the SR/WA designation, and followed with the certification pathways related to industry disciplines. The credentialing pathways and associated courses, have adjusted and, in 2023, interest increased in developing courses, with the view of adding credentialing pathways. In support of various inquiries, the Credentialing Subcommittee identified the need for a Credentialing Pathway Policy, which provides the foundation for pathway development, updates, or retirement.



## **A. Credentialing Pathway - Addition**

The IPEC will ensure a new pathway is developed in the most efficient, effective, and equitable manner. A new pathway might be identified by:

- An International Committee (e.g., IPEC, IVC);
- IRWA leadership (e.g., IEC member); and/or
- IRWA member.

### **Assessment Criteria**

The written submission proposing a new Credentialing Pathway shall meet the following criteria:

1. Provide a strong discipline/industry rationale for a new credential, which demonstrates

- Support of the IRWA Purpose & Mission,
- IRWA Core Values,
- Benefit to members (professional development),
- Support by the market (agency/company requirement), and
- Financial feasibility for the Association and its members.

2. Is supported by an International Committee (e.g., Transportation Committee).

3. Is approved by the IRWA leadership: IEC, IGC, and ratified by the Board of Directors.

### **Needs Assessment**

The Credentialing Subcommittee will assess the need for the new credentialing pathway, which may include:

- Surveying membership and known external customers to determine interest and need,
- Consulting with the International Committee(s),
- Consulting with the IRWA Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer to assess member relevance to discipline/industry, cost, and potential profitability,
- Consulting with industry professionals and other organizations, and
- Reviewing the IRWA curriculum to determine whether there are sufficient mandatory courses. For example, a specialty certification would typically include the following requirements: 48 qualifying education credits (QEC), 16 elective QEC, and 8 IRWA Ethics QEC for a total of 72 QEC. In addition to education, the assessment process may include: a Capstone Exam and a minimum experience requirement (e.g., 2 of the last 5 years).

The Credentialing Subcommittee will review the Credentialing Pathway proposal in a timely manner, provide feedback, make appropriate recommendations, and notify appropriate parties, such as: requester, committee(s), and member(s).

### **Process**

If, based on the results of the needs assessment, there is adequate support for adding a new credentialing pathway, then:

- The Credentialing Subcommittee will submit an Executive Summary, which seeks the IEC's initial support/approval to commence initial development of the Credentialing Pathway (e.g., Surveying/Engineering Credentialing Pathway).
- The International Committee and the IPEC subcommittees will work together to complete the draft Credentialing Pathway, including initial course identification for certification, recertification, and instructor requirements (e.g., available, qualified).



- The International Committee and the IPEC will identify any courses that need to be updated, rewritten, or developed in support of the proposed Credentialing Pathway.
- The Credentialing Subcommittee, in conjunction with the International Committee will prepare the draft Program Guide and Application using the current guides as an example, which includes the standard information.
- The Credentialing Subcommittee will prepare an Executive Summary and the supporting document gathered during the Needs Assessment process, along with the Program Guide and Application to provide to the IEC for consideration. The IEC will manage the decision process by distributing the documentation to the IGC and then the Board of Directions for consideration and decision.
- The Credentialing Subcommittee will monitor member participation with any new Credentialing Pathway to assess ongoing viability and sustainability.
- IPEC will include this information in its presentations to IRWA leadership and members (e.g., Region Forums, Conference IPEC Sessions).

If approved, IRWA HQs will include the new Program Guide and Application on the IRWA website and communicate the new pathway to IRWA members through email, IRWA Member Network, Right of Way Magazine, IRWA website, social media, and any other appropriate methods.

## **B. Credentialing Pathway – Update**

The Credentialing Subcommittee will review the Credentialing Program Guides and Applications to ensure each is current, relevant, and applicable. Updates will be completed in conjunction with the applicable International Committee. Updates might be required based on:

- Name Changes,
- Elimination or renumbering of mandatory/elective courses,
- Development and inclusion of new courses,
- Redirection of certification to adjust to changes in the discipline/industry, and/or
- Requirements based on governing bodies, which may be based on legislation and/or regulation.

### **Process**

If, based on the results of the review above, it is determined updates are warranted, then the Credentialing Subcommittee and the International Committee will submit a red-lined version and a clean draft version of the Program Guide and Application to the IEC for consideration and decision under cover of an Executive Summary.

If approved, IRWA HQs will upload the updated Program Guide and Application onto the IRWA website and communicate the update to IRWA members. This information is also included in IPEC presentations provided to IRWA leadership and members (e.g., Region Forums, Conference IPEC Sessions).



### **C. Credentialing Pathway – Retirement**

The Credentialing Subcommittee will consider the following factors before recommending the retirement of a credentialing pathway:

- Number of members benefiting from the Credentialing Pathway (less members than fees support cost of the program),
- Number of members interested in attending the courses,
- Number of times the courses are offered within the discipline, and
- Number of qualified instructors available to deliver the courses.

#### **Process**

The Credentialing Subcommittee will:

- Discuss interest and need within the discipline/industry with the International Committee.
- Solicit member feedback through a survey.
- Identify interest/need within a region, or national/international concern, based on internal and external consultation.
- Analyze the statistics and survey results.
- If retirement is supported by the analysis, then the Credentialing Subcommittee will submit an Executive Summary to the IEC which includes the analysis and a recommendation for a Credentialing Pathway Retirement.
- If the retirement is approved, members with the credential (in good standing) will retain the credential and are not required to re-certify to continue to hold that credential. The credential is grandfathered and identified on the individual's education history.
- The IEC will consider the recommendation and manage the process to inform and receive decisions from the IGC and the Board of Directors.

If approved, IRWA HQs will retire the Credentialing Pathway and communicate this information to IRWA members and non-members. This information is included in the IPEC presentations to IRWA leadership and members (e.g., Region Forums, Conference IPEC Session).