

## **Requirements for Forensic Photography & Imaging Certification (11/03/2019)**

### **Scope of Certification**

Forensic photography & imaging includes the photographic recording of crime scenes; accident scenes; items of evidence such as pattern and impression evidence; and other items that may be relevant in criminal and civil litigation matters for the purposes of documentation, comparison, further analysis or enhancement, and/or visual reconstruction. It also includes the archiving and maintenance of digital images and photographs, image processing, and preparation of images for printing or electronic display.

A Certified Forensic Photographer will have demonstrated the knowledge, skills and abilities to accomplish:

- Photographic documentation of crime scenes, accident scenes, items of evidence including documentation of pattern and impression evidence
- Image Processing, including:
  - Image correction, such as adjustments in color, brightness, contrast, and other allowable best practice corrections
  - Resizing images appropriate for their intended use, including 1:1
  - Preparation of images for printing and/or electronic display
  - Any other processes done within best practice guidelines intended to clarify the image and improve the visual appearance
- Image Authentication and Integrity (image preservation and protection)

### **1. Prerequisite Requirements**

#### **1.1. Formal Education**

- 1.1.1. Applicants are required to possess a minimum of a High School Diploma or Equivalency.

#### **1.2. Endorsements**

- 1.2.1. All applicants shall submit two letters of endorsement:
  - 1.2.1.1. One endorsement must be from an individual actively working in the area of photography and/or digital imaging, and
  - 1.2.1.2. One endorsement must be from an employer or supervisor, and/or persons who have knowledge of the applicant's experience working in the area of photography and/or digital imaging.
  - 1.2.1.3. Endorsements shall be addressed to the Secretary of the Certification Board and included with your application.

#### **1.3. Technical Training**

- 1.3.1. A minimum of eighty (80) hours of classroom training, or equivalent, in photography-related subjects as follows:

- 1.3.1.1. 40-hours of basic or advanced hands-on photography courses, no time limit.
- 1.3.1.2. 40-hours of forensic-specific hands-on photography courses within the previous 5 years.
  - 1.3.1.2.1. Up to 8-hours of training in forensic-specific image processing can make up a portion of the 40-hours required in this subsection.
- 1.3.2. Training listed by an applicant when applying for certification is reviewed and considered on a case-by-case basis. It is the applicants' responsibility to demonstrate the training received was substantive; proper documentation of all training is required. The following are examples of training that is acceptable and training that is not acceptable:
  - 1.3.2.1. Attending a hands-on course that has a structured curriculum is acceptable.
  - 1.3.2.2. Attending a college-level class that results in college credits is acceptable.
  - 1.3.2.3. Attending workshops at a professional conference specific to photography is acceptable.
  - 1.3.2.4. Sitting through a presentation or series of presentations at a local camera club or conference is not acceptable.
  - 1.3.2.5. In-service training in the basic use of a point and shoot camera is not acceptable.
- 1.3.3. NOTE: for initial certification, "hours" are used to calculate required training, and "credits" are used to calculate required recertification training.

#### 1.4. Experience

- 1.4.1. An applicant for certification must be actively engaged as an examiner, analyst, practitioner or supervisor in the discipline of forensic science whose duties include the discipline of photography and must have a minimum of two (2) years of experience in photography within this discipline.
  - 1.4.1.1. As used in this requirement, "actively engaged" means full-time forensic casework, i.e. more than 50% of job duties are conducted in the discipline of forensic science.
  - 1.4.1.2. As used in this requirement, being "engaged in the discipline of forensic science" includes anyone that is active through the course of their employment in documenting, collecting, analyzing, or otherwise engaged in the preservation of evidence that can be used in either a criminal or civil proceeding.

- 1.4.1.3. For purposes of meeting this requirement, a person employed in an academic setting that provides instruction on forensic photography-related subjects and has a minimum of two years of actual hands-on experience in photography, is considered an examiner, analyst, or practitioner.

## **2. Examination**

- 2.1. Prior to taking the written exam, the applicant shall sign a nondisclosure agreement indicating their commitment to not release confidential examination materials or participate in fraudulent test-taking practices on all required tests.
- 2.2. Written examination
  - 2.2.1. The first portion of the certification process shall be determined by written testing. The certification test was developed and is maintained by the Forensic Photography & Imaging Certification Board.
    - 2.2.1.1. The written exam must be completed within 30 days from the time the written exam is received by the proctor.
  - 2.2.2. The written test shall consist of questions, including, but not limited to, the history of photography, basic photography principals, digital imaging basics, advanced camera controls, proper use of lenses, exposure theory, depth of field, light theory, lighting techniques, filters and color control, and close-up photography. A minimum passing score of 80% is required.
  - 2.2.3. The test provided to the applicant shall be selected at random from no less than three (3) variations of the written test.
  - 2.2.4. The secretary will make arrangements for the written exam to be given under the supervision of an approved proctor.
    - 2.2.4.1. The proctor of the exam cannot be an immediate supervisor, a person that is an acquaintance, or might otherwise have a vested interest in the success of the candidate.
  - 2.2.5. Applicants have two (2) hours to complete the written examination.
  - 2.2.6. The test questions are derived from textbooks and other materials approved by the Forensic Photography & Imaging Certification Board. All approved textbooks and materials are listed on the Forensic Photography Certification page on the IAI website, under the link: [Certification Requirements](#).
  - 2.2.7. The written test is graded by the secretary or other designated board member of the Forensic Photography & Imaging Certification Board.
  - 2.2.8. For validation purposes, the secretary of the Forensic Photography & Imaging Certification Board shall statistically analyze the results of all written examinations on an annual basis.

- 2.2.8.1. A report of these statistics shall be provided to the certification board, accompanied by recommendations for possible modifications to ensure all test questions are consistent with the most recent best practices and guidelines established by the appropriate standards-setting bodies, and that the questions accurately reflect the knowledge level of the applicants.
- 2.2.9. If the applicant passes the written examination, the secretary will provide the practical examination to the applicant.
- 2.2.10. If the applicant fails the written examination, the secretary shall notify the applicant in writing, and advise that they can reapply after 6 months from the date of the fail-notification to retake the examination.
  - 2.2.10.1. To reapply the applicant must submit a new application along with the current application fee as listed on the IAI website.

### 2.3. Practical Examination

- 2.3.1. After successfully passing the written exam, the applicant is provided with a practical exam, which must be completed and submitted within 45 days of receiving the practical exam.
  - 2.3.1.1. No more than one extension may be granted for extenuating circumstances and is not to exceed 15 additional days. A request for extension detailing the circumstances must be made in writing to the secretary. An approval for extension is not automatic and must be approved by the board secretary and/or board chair.
  - 2.3.1.2. If the applicant fails to submit the practical exam within the required period, they will be required to wait one year past the final date the exam was due, at which time they will be required to start the application process over with payment of the required fees.
- 2.3.2. Each applicant must complete a total of ten (10) practical assignments. Each assignment is graded separately and on a pass/fail basis. All 10 assignments must be completed successfully in order to pass.
- 2.3.3. The practical exam requires the applicant to demonstrate proficiency in the photography of crime scenes, latent fingerprints, footwear impressions, injury/assaults, night-time scenes, documenting vehicles, and 1:1 sizing of images.
  - 2.3.3.1. The first seven (7) practical assignments are required assignments that all applicants must complete, as they represent core skills that all Certified Forensic Photographers must be able to demonstrate.

- 2.3.4. Recognizing that other required skills may vary from department to department, each applicant must select and complete three (3) additional assignments from a second list of eight (8) assignments.
- 2.3.5. All assignments are graded on the following criteria:
  - 2.3.5.1. Correctly followed instructions
  - 2.3.5.2. Technical aspects of the photography, which includes, but is not limited to, proper composition, good lighting, correct exposure, accurate color, and sharp focus.
  - 2.3.5.3. Application of proper techniques, which includes, but is not limited to, how well an assignment is documented, demonstration of an organized approach, providing an adequate number of images for the subject matter, etc.
  - 2.3.5.4. Images are properly processed and sized.
- 2.3.6. All assignments must be submitted digitally on a CD, DVD, USB drive, or in another manner as directed by the certification board secretary. Specific instructions detailing submission requirements accompany the practical exam.
- 2.3.7. Upon receipt of an applicant's practical submission, a preliminary review is conducted by the secretary or another member of the board, at which time the submission will be either accepted or rejected.
  - 2.3.7.1. The preliminary review is not a review of the quality or accuracy of the applicant's work and is limited to that portion of a practical submission that does not measure an applicant's knowledge or skill to obtain certification.
  - 2.3.7.2. The preliminary review is limited to instructions that the applicant may have overlooked or misinterpreted, or portions of an assignment not submitted by apparent oversight.
  - 2.3.7.3. The preliminary review provides an opportunity for an applicant to make corrections to their submissions, in a timely manner, that are not a measure of their knowledge or skills required for certification.
  - 2.3.7.4. A rejection is only an indication that some portion of the practical exam is lacking and might otherwise have resulted in a failure.
  - 2.3.7.5. An applicant has 14 calendar days from the time they are notified to make corrections; not doing so within that time will result in an automatic failure.
- 2.3.8. Accepted practical examinations are independently reviewed and scored by three (3) members of the Forensic Photography & Imaging Certification Board.
  - 2.3.8.1. All board members asked to review an exam that believes they have knowledge of the identity of the applicant, either by personal or professional association, shall recuse themselves from that process for

that applicant, and immediately advise the secretary. The secretary will then reassign the exam to a different board member to ensure impartiality to the applicant.

2.3.9. When all reviews are complete, the reviewers, Board Secretary and Board Chair conduct a joint review of the results to validate pass or fail recommendations. Following this review, a final determination is made.

2.3.9.1. Written feedback by each reviewer is provided to each applicant, pass or fail.

2.3.9.2. If the applicant fails no more than 3 of the practical assignments, they will be allowed to resubmit those failed assignments within 45 calendar days of the notification.

2.3.9.2.1. Failing to resubmit within the 45 days will result in a failure of the practical exam.

2.3.9.2.2. Failing any one of the 3 resubmitted assignments will result in a failure of the practical exam.

2.3.9.2.3. One extension of not more than 15 days may be granted for extenuating circumstances if approved by the board secretary and/or board chair.

2.3.10. If the applicant is unsuccessful in passing the practical examination, the secretary shall prepare a notification letter that provides the following information:

2.3.10.1. That the applicant was unsuccessful in passing their practical examination, with the specific assignments listed that were not passed.

2.3.10.2. That the applicant has 30 calendar days from receipt of this notification in which to appeal, in writing, the failing grade to the Forensic Photography & Imaging Certification Board.

2.3.10.3. That if the appeal is not received within 30 calendar days, the applicant can reapply after 6 months, and is required to complete only the practical assignments listed as failed in the notification letter.

2.3.10.4. If the applicant does not complete the practical retest within one (1) year from the receipt of their notification, the applicant must start-over with the entire process, including the written test.

2.3.10.5. A copy of the appeals process shall be included with the letter to the applicant.

2.4. Appeals are handled in accordance with Section 9.9 of the FCMB Operations Manual.

## **2.5. Reapplication**

- 2.5.1. Six (6) months following the initial notice that an applicant has failed the practical examination, the applicant can reapply to take the certification test by submitting a new application and application fee as posted on the IAI website.
  - 2.5.1.1. The retest shall be limited only to the specific assignments listed as failed in the failure notice received by the applicant.
  - 2.5.1.2. The applicant is encouraged to submit the required practical exercises at the same time the reapplication is submitted.
  - 2.5.1.3. If the applicant does not complete the practical retest within one (1) year from the receipt of their notification, the applicant must start-over with the entire process, including the written test.

## **3. Recertification**

- 3.1. Recertification requirements shall be adequate to ensure there is impartial assessment to confirm the continuing competence of the certified person.
- 3.2. Recertification shall be required every five years in order to ensure the continued competence of the certified person, and ongoing compliance with current certification requirements by the certified person.
- 3.3. All applicants for recertification shall be required to demonstrate professional development, and shall accumulate a minimum number of Continuing Education Credits (CEC's) since their initial certification or last recertification as described in Section 9.6 of the FCMB Certification Operations Manual as follows:
  - 3.3.1. Through 2/29/2020 applicants must accumulate a minimum of 80 CEC's, with no more than 75% of those credits being awarded for conference registration.
  - 3.3.2. From 3/01/2020 through 8/31/2020 applicants will be required to accumulate a minimum of 80 CEC's, with no more than 50% of those credits being awarded for conference registration.
  - 3.3.3. From 9/01/2020 through 2/28/2021 applicants will be required to accumulate a minimum of 100 CEC's, with no more than 50% of those credits being awarded for conference registration.
  - 3.3.4. Effective 3/01/2021 applicants will be required to accumulate a minimum of 120 CEC's, with no more than 50% of those credits being awarded for conference registration.
  - 3.3.5. Up to 75% of credits may be earned by attendance at or participation in a course or workshop or in-service training approved by the board.
    - 3.3.5.1. Up to 4 credits can be earned by participating in forensic-specific image processing.

- 3.3.6. Applicants may be subjected to any, or all, of the following:
  - 3.3.6.1. on-site assessment
  - 3.3.6.2. a structured interview
  - 3.3.6.3. show demonstrated physical ability to perform the required competencies for certification
- 3.4. Applications for recertification shall be submitted in conformance with the general provisions of the FCMB Certification Program Operations Manual and will be reviewed and approved by the secretary of the Forensic Photography & Imaging Certification Board. If the secretary does not believe the person has attained the required recertification credits as posted on the IAI website, the secretary shall first contact the applicant and determine if there are any additional supporting documents that the applicant can send to show that the applicant is qualified.
  - 3.4.1. Prior to either accepting or rejecting an applicant, the secretary shall provide the board chair with a recommendation, along with all documents pertaining to the recommendation.
  - 3.4.2. If the applicant is determined not to be qualified for recertification, the secretary shall notify the applicant why the applicant is not qualified and shall advise that the applicant has 30-days to appeal this decision to the chair of the Forensic Photography & Imaging Certification Board. The decision of the chair in this matter shall be final.
  - 3.4.3. If an applicant is rejected, the certification board shall retain all funds remitted by the applicant.
  - 3.4.4. If an applicant is accepted, they will then be provided with a practical exam as described in the following section.
- 3.5. Effective 9/01/2019, all applicants for recertification are required to take a practical examination. The practical exam component has been designed to measure continued proficiency in the actual skill of taking proper forensic photographs.
  - 3.5.1. The practical exam must be completed and submitted within 30 days of receiving the practical exam.
    - 3.5.1.1. No more than one extension may be granted for extenuating circumstances and is not to exceed 15 additional days. A request for extension detailing the circumstances must be made in writing to the secretary. An approval for extension is not automatic and must be approved by the board secretary and/or board chair.
  - 3.5.2. Applicants are required to complete their choice of three (3) out of five (5) of the following assignments:
    - 3.5.2.1. Clothing with a stain, footwear impression, macro assignment, night scene, or vehicle documentation.



- 3.5.3. Individual assignments are graded separately and on a pass/fail basis; all 3 assignments must be completed successfully in order to pass.
- 3.5.4. All assignments are graded on the following criteria:
  - 3.5.4.1. Correctly followed instructions
  - 3.5.4.2. Technical aspects of the photography, which includes, but is not limited to, proper composition, good lighting, correct exposure, accurate color, and sharp focus.
  - 3.5.4.3. Application of proper techniques, which includes, but is not limited to, how well an assignment is documented, demonstration of an organized approach, providing an adequate number of images for the subject matter, etc.
  - 3.5.4.4. Images are properly processed and sized.
- 3.5.5. All assignments must be submitted digitally on a CD, DVD, USB drive, or in another manner as directed by the certification board secretary. Specific instructions detailing submission requirements will accompany the practical exam.
- 3.5.6. The practical examination is independently reviewed and scored by three (3) members of the Forensic Photography & Imaging Certification Board.
  - 3.5.6.1. The practical exam is reviewed anonymously; no name or other identifying indicators shall appear within the assignments or the overall exam. Board members suspecting they know the identity of the person being evaluated, shall notify the board secretary and shall recuse themselves from grading that exam.
- 3.5.7. When all reviews are completed, the reviewing board members, the board secretary, and the board chair will conduct a joint final review of the results to validate pass or fail recommendations, after which a final determination shall be made.
- 3.5.8. An applicant for recertification shall have only one opportunity to correctly submit the practical exam. No do-overs are allowed.
- 3.5.9. A person failing the practical exam loses their certification and will need to submit a new application if wishing to reapply for certification.

**Test questions are taken from the following publications:**

- *A Short Course in Digital Photography (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)* by Barbara London and Jim Stone
- *Crime Scene Photography, (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)* by Edward M. Robinson
- All forensic photography appropriate SWIG Guideline