

What are the LPCB doing about COVID-19?

Certification Testing

When lockdown procedures related to COVID-19 first started, all certification testing was suspended temporarily. The nature of initial certification testing – requiring a proctor from a different agency to the applicant – presents a difficult scenario when considering COVID-19 protocols.

The FCMB recently made a decision – applying to all certification boards – to allow for proctored testing to recommence, provided that:

- a. Health and safety guidelines required by the geopolitical authorities where the testing is to take place are followed.
- b. The applicant and proctor are made aware of the health and safety guidelines they are expected to follow.
 - i. These may have to be customized depending on venue.
 - ii. The local proctor or applicant may be able to help with these.
 - iii. Restrictions should be attached/included with the proctor sheet.
 - iv. Applicant and proctor will acknowledge receipt and understanding of health and safety restrictions.
- c. Appropriate facilities are available to accommodate testing and safety precautions.

Applicants concerned about health and safety issues will not be penalized for delaying testing until restrictions are withdrawn.

This includes the digital testing option – meaning that if an initial certification applicant elects to take the certification test including the digital comparison option, it is available to them provided the above guidelines are met.

Recertification Testing

When lockdown procedures related to COVID-19 first started, all recertification testing was also suspended temporarily. Due to recertification testing being non-proctored, there is less COVID-19 related risk associated with recertification testing compared to initial certification testing. As such, recertification testing recommenced in June 2020, and all pending recertification applicants have had their tests sent out to them.

Recertification applicants are also reminded to follow the health and safety guidelines required by the geopolitical authorities where the testing is to take place.

Obtaining Credits for Certification or Recertification

With the lack of in-person training available, including conferences and externally provided training courses, some applicants have expressed concern regarding the ability to accrue the necessary credits to apply. Applicants are reminded that they have the 5 years preceding application to accrue credits, and accrual of credits should never be left until the last minute.

Whilst the ongoing concern of availability of training during COVID-19 is valid, it should be noted that there are over 300 courses that have been approved for credits, which includes over 40 online courses (the current – with noted effective date – approved list is available in the Latent Print Certification section of the IAI website, www.theiai.org/latent_print.php). These approved online courses have provided required evidence that they include a testing component to ensure student engagement, provide instructor feedback opportunities, and offer technical support if the student is having technology-related issues. Applicants are advised that some online training – such as webinars or lectures – that do not measure student participation will not be considered for credits.

If any course, including online courses, is not presently on the approved courses list, an application can be made for the course to be considered for credits towards initial certification and/or recertification. In these cases, an application form, together with a course syllabus (to include a course overview and a course schedule showing a break-down of course hours to topics) and instructor(s) CVs need to be provided to the LPCB for review. Online courses need to also provide proof that the course includes a testing component to ensure student engagement, provide instructor feedback opportunities, and offer technical support if the student is having technology-related issues. Applications can be sent to LPCB Board Member Shannon Prince at seprince@fbi.gov.

Please also note that there is no requirement for a course to be externally provided. Internal training programs and/or courses may be submitted for review for credits, and applicants and/or agencies are encouraged to do so. Many agencies have already done this, and these appear on the approved courses list. The requirements for internal courses are the same as listed above: an application form, together with a course syllabus (to include a course overview and a course schedule showing a break-down of course hours to topics) and instructor(s) CVs need to be provided to the LPCB for review.