

AICP Exam

Application Tips + Preparation



www.ohioplanning.org/aicpexam

Outline

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- Exam Overview
- Applying to Take the Exam
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- Certification Maintenance



Introductions

- Katherine Keough-Jurs, AICP
- Christine Dersi Davis, AICP

Why AICP?

- Distinction among your peers and the public
 - Advocate and advance the field of planning
 - Be recognized for achieving professional level of skills

- Enhanced opportunities for employees and consultants
 - “AICP preferred” in job postings
 - Required within a certain time frame by employers
 - Distinguish yourself from the competition

- Enhanced salaries
 - AICP members earn median salaries \$15,700 more than non AICP members. (2014)

www.planning.org/aicp/why

Exam Overview

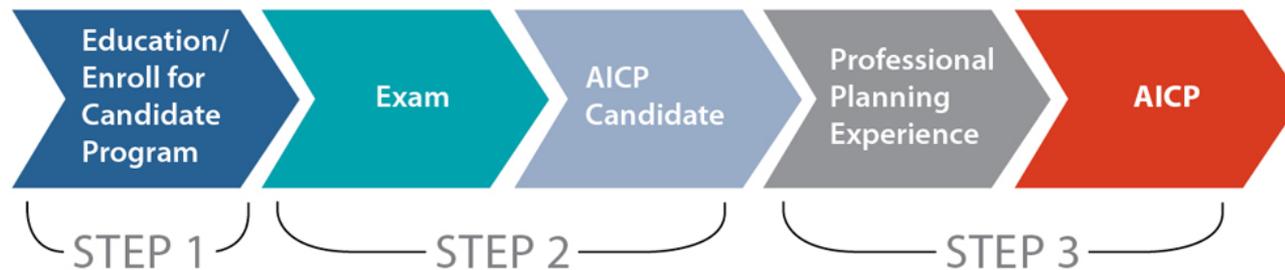
- Exam is offered twice a year: May & November
- Each exam window lasts 14 days
- Tests are administered electronically at Prometric testing centers
- You may take the test only once during each exam window
- You must register each time you wish to test
- Eligibility lasts for three years upon application approval
- Approved applications expire after three years

AICP Candidate Pilot Program

Traditional Sequence



AICP Candidate Pilot Program Sequence



When Does This Pilot Program Launch?

Starting in November 2017, qualified members may enroll in the program at any time during the year. Beginning in December 2017, graduates of PAB-accredited programs may register to sit for the May 2018 AICP exam. For details: www.planning.org/aicp/candidate.

Applying to Take the Exam

- Application is online only at www.planning.org/aicp
- Upcoming Dates:
 - **November 2018 Testing Window**
 Application Window: Closed
 Registration Deadline: October 31
 Testing Window: November 5-19
 - **May 2019 Testing Window**
 Application Window Opens: December 3
 Early Bird Deadline: December 10
 Final Application Deadline: December 28
 Registration Deadline: April 27
 Testing Window: May 6-20

Applying to Take the Exam

Professional Planning Experience

Level of Education*	Total Number of Years of Professional Planning Experience Required
Graduate degree in Planning from a program accredited by the PAB	2
Bachelor's degree in Planning from a program accredited by the PAB**	3
Graduate degree in Planning from a program not accredited by the PAB	3
Any other post-graduate, graduate, or undergraduate degree***	4
No college degree	8

** The education may be obtained before, during, or after the experience.*

*** Accredited degrees have been determined by the Planning Accreditation Board to meet standards approved by the American Institute of Certified Planners and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning or recognized by the Canadian Institute of Planners. AICP gives educational credit to applicants holding these degrees if the degree was received (1) during the period the university has been accredited (or previously recognized), and (2) by the time that an application for member is filed. If you are unsure about the status of your planning degree, consult the Planning Accreditation Board's list or contact AICP.*

**** Non-accredited undergraduate planning degrees and degrees in related and other disciplines (i.e. Geography, Architecture, History, Music, etc.) at undergraduate and post-graduate levels.*



Applying to Take the Exam

Does My Experience Qualify?

Part-Time - Part-time experience is accepted

Internship - Intern experience is accepted

Non-Traditional - Non-traditional experience, like unpaid work or volunteer work, is accepted

Related Field or Profession - Related field experience is accepted

Stipulations on all

Applying to Take the Exam

What Jobs Should I Include?

- Only include positions needed to meet the minimum eligibility requirements
- Include positions for which you can provide the strongest responses
- When possible, do not include jobs that were held for a short amount of time (i.e. less than 6 months)

Applying to Take the Exam

General Application Tips

- **Read** the Exam Candidate Bulletin & use the Criterion Response Checklist
 - www.planning.org/certification/bulletin
- **APPLY EARLY!**
- Proofread your responses
- Ask an AICP co-worker or supervisor to review your responses before submitting
- Write your essays in a Word document before submitting responses
- Keep copies of your essays and verification documents

Applying to Take the Exam

Employment Verification Tips

- Give your employer(s) ***ample*** time to complete a verification letter on your behalf
- Provide your employer (current and former) with the sample verification letter:
 - www.planning.org/certification/pdf/samplejobverification.pdf
- If you have a special circumstance, email aicpexam@planning.org with questions

Applying to Take the Exam

Educational Experience Verification Tips

Don't wait until the last minute to gather an official transcript or diploma copy – some schools require several weeks notice.

Applying to Take the Exam

Common Reasons Applications are Marked Incomplete

- Improper verification of educational experience
- Not meeting minimum eligibility requirements
- Not including the required information in an employment verification letter
- Not uploading the required verification documentation

Applying to Take the Exam

Criterion Responses: General Tips

- Craft responses that are between 250 and 500 words
- Speak in first person (i.e. use the word "I" throughout the response) – don't speak to what "the team" did
- Refrain from using bulleted lists and writing in incomplete sentences
- **REMEMBER** – Reviewers are required to base their decision on your criterion responses. Do not assume your application will be approved just because you have a lot of planning experience.
- Avoid "filler" information

Applying to Take the Exam

Criterion Responses: General Tips

- Only include completed project examples in your responses. Assumptions about project outcomes cannot be used to verify experience already gained.
- Only one essay is required per criterion.

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Criterion Responses: Specific Tips

Criterion 1: Involve a Professional Level of Responsibility and Resourcefulness while Applying a Planning Process Appropriate to the Project or Situation.

- Discuss how you applied a planning process appropriate to the situation through one of the three sections of professional planning content
- AND how you were a responsible and resourceful professional when applying that process.
- Choose ONE of 3 topics to write about

Applying to Take the Exam

Criterion Responses: Specific Tips

Criterion 2: Employ An Appropriately Comprehensive Point of View.

- Describe your role(s) in a project(s) and how you were able to employ a comprehensive point of view, rather than simply describing project outcomes.
- Describe how you employed a comprehensive point of view, not how the project/process itself or outcomes were comprehensive.

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Criterion Responses: Specific Tips

Criterion 3: Influence Public Decision Making in the Public Interest.

- There are two parts to this criterion you must answer:
 - 1) *Discuss how you have been responsible to the public.*
 - 2) *Discuss how you have influenced public decision making in the public interest.*

Applying to Take the Exam

Tips for Returning Applicants

Returning Applicants: Pre-Approved

- An application is pre-approved for six consecutive exam windows, beginning with the window in which you were initially approved.
- You must register your intent to sit for the exam within that open application window.
- If your application is expired (i.e. falls outside of the six consecutive exam window), you will need to submit a new application for full review.

Applying to Take the Exam

AICP Certification Related Costs

- Before Exam
 - AICP Comprehensive Planning Exam Application Fee - \$70 (non-refundable if denied)
 - AICP Comprehensive Planning Exam Fee - \$425 (*scholarships are available through APA Ohio*)
 - Transfer Fee - \$100
- Post Exam
 - AICP Dues – This fee is in addition to APA membership. You will receive an invoice for pro-rated AICP dues if you pass the exam. Sliding scale based on salary.
 - Certification Maintenance – free and for-cost educational activities are available

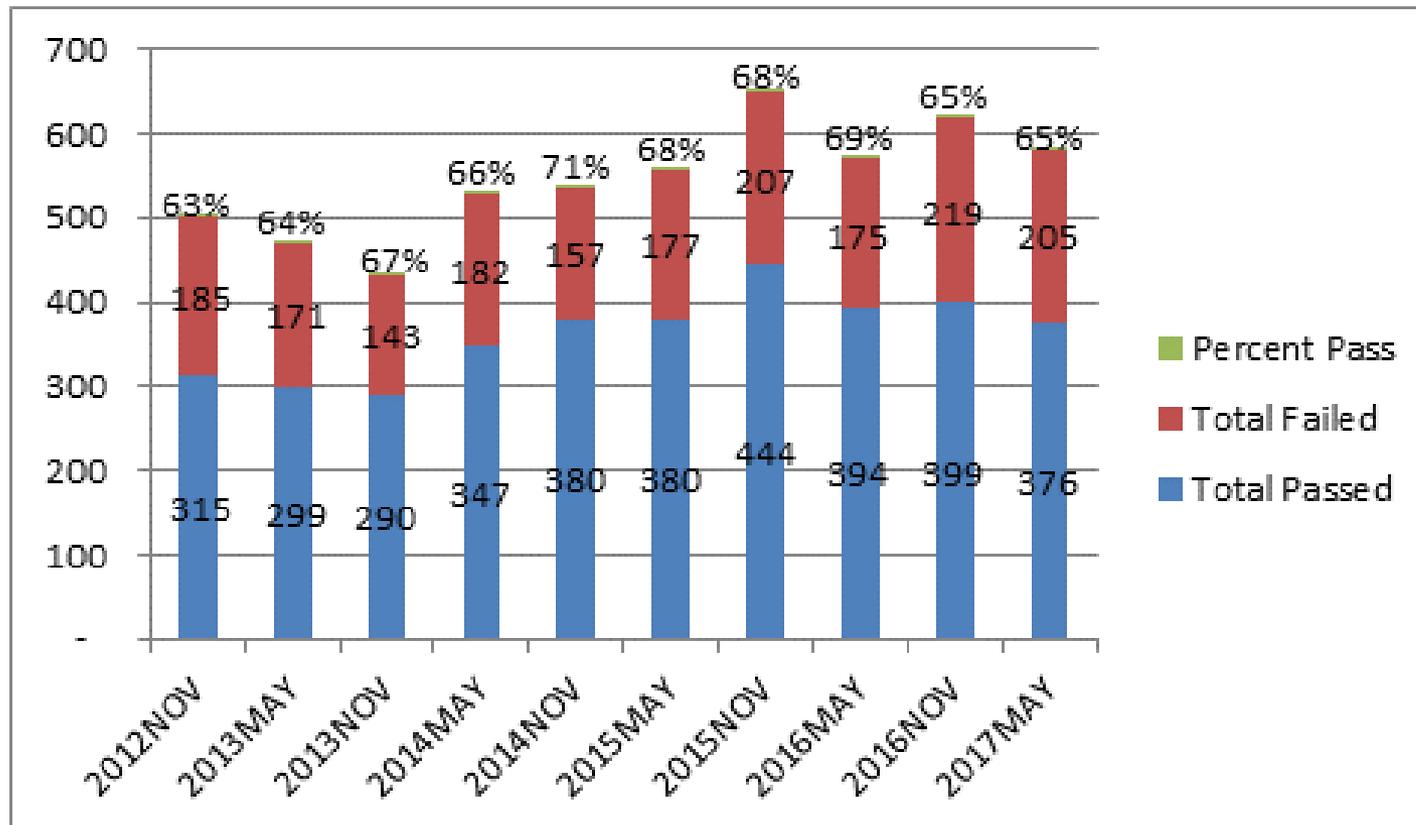
Applying to Take the Exam

Exam Score Details

- Official score provided immediately after completing the computerized exam (thank you!)
- Scores are reported on a scale of 25-75, with 55 as the passing score
- Official letter sent out about one month later along with pro-rated dues invoice
- Official welcome package sent out about three months after exam window closes

Applying to Take the Exam

Pass Rate Data





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**American Institute
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Making Great Communities Happen

Applying to Take the Exam

Personal Experience + Questions?

The AICP Exam - What to Expect

Overview

- 800 questions in the pool
- 170 questions on the test
 - Only 150 are scored – 20 are “feelers”
- 3 versions of each test at all times
- You are given 4 hours to complete the exam:
 - 15 minutes at the start to read directions
 - 3 ½ hours to take the exam
 - 15 minutes at the end to complete a survey
 - You must complete the survey before seeing your score on the screen. 😊

The AICP Exam - What to Expect

Exam Content

- Questions changing to reflect emerging trends
- Survey sent to members in February 2016; over 3,600 responses
- Will not be rewriting all questions; a large percentage will remain the same.
- Merely removing outdated questions and non-performing questions
- New questions will be added based on the new topic areas of the new exam outline.

The AICP Exam - What to Expect

Exam Content

- **Fundamental Planning Knowledge**
 38 Questions (25%)
- **Plan Making & Implementation**
 45 Questions (30%)
- **Areas of Practice**
 45 Questions (30%)
- **Leadership, Administration & Management**
 7 Questions (5%)
- **AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct**
 15 Questions (10%)

The AICP Exam - What to Expect

Ahead of the Exam

- Confirm your appointment (over the phone) with your testing center at least one week ahead of time.
- If you don't know where your testing site is, do a drive by ahead of time.
 - Know if there's construction or daily traffic that may affect your drive time.
- Bring two forms of ID (see Exam Bulletin for list).
 - If you have concerns, call the testing center ahead of time.
- If you plan to use ear plugs, call the testing center ahead of time to get their packaging policy.
- Get sleep the night before. Seriously!
- Maintain your normal eating/drinking routine the day of.

The AICP Exam - What to Expect

The Exam Center

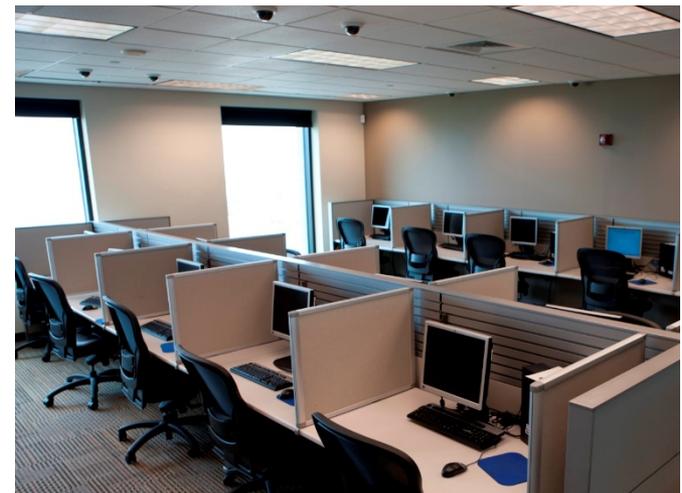
- Get to the testing center 15 minutes early to sign waver and provide ID's
- You'll be asked to remove any layered clothing and may be asked to lift pant legs. You may also get wanded. 😊
- Lockers/key are available
- Bring extra layers if you get cold easily
- You may not bring anything into the room besides a sweater, your locker key, your ID, and the materials provided to you
- You may exit the testing room for beverage/snack/bathroom (clock keeps ticking)
- You will receive a scratch paper booklet, a sharpened pencil, and a basic calculator and you must return all three upon completion of the exam

The AICP Exam - What to Expect

During the Exam – The Testing Space

- There will be sound blocking headphones at your seat and white sound pumped into speakers
- You're in a room full of people taking various tests
- Proctors circle the room every 15 minutes
- Utilize the Computer-based Examination Tutorial to become familiar with the computer program ahead of time

www.planning.org/certification/examprep





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The AICP Exam - What to Expect

Personal Experience + Questions

Exam Preparation

APA Resources

- ~~AICP Exam Prep Package 3.0 (All Online): \$249~~
- Recommended Reading List (Dauntingly Lengthy)
- Computer-based Exam Tutorial (Must do!)
- APA Policy Guides (25 PDF's)
- APA PAS Reports (now FREE to APA members)
- AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
- CPC Study Manual: \$15
- Planning Magazine
- JAPA/Zoning Practice: \$40-\$60

www.planning.org/certification/examprep



Exam Preparation

Other Resources

- *Local Planning: Contemporary Principles and Practice: \$125*
- *APA Planning and Urban Design Standards: \$110*
- *Everyday Ethics for Practicing Planners: \$35*
- Planetizen AICP Exam Prep (All Online): \$245-\$720
 - www.planetizen.com/store/aicp

Exam Preparation

Unofficial Resources > Beware!

- www.planningprep.com
- www.studystack.com
- www.quizlet.com
- www.flashcardmachine.com

Exam Preparation

Unofficial Resources > Don't Beware!

- Planning Webcast Series
www.youtube.com/planningwebcast
- Ohio Chapter
www.ohioplanning.org/aicpexam
- Northern New England Chapter
www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XLGIvqJQSI
- Florida Chapter
www.floridaplanning.org/treasurecoast/aicp_links.pdf
- Georgia Chapter
georgiaplanning.org/aicp/aicp-exam-reviews



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Exam Preparation

Personal Experience + Questions



Certification Maintenance

- All new AICP members' CM Reporting Period will begin on January 1st after they pay their first dues. Each reporting period is two (2) years with a four (4) month grace period.
- Required to complete 32 credits in period (1 hour = 1 CM credit) – 1.5 must be Ethics and 1.5 must be Law.
- More information about the Certification Maintenance program can be found at www.planning.org/cm.

Certification Maintenance

Opportunities to Earn Credits – FREE!

- American Planning Association
www.planning.org/cm/free
www.planning.org/tuesdaysatapa

- Planning Webcasts Series
www.ohioplanning.org/planningwebcast

- Local APA Ohio events
www.ohioplanning.org/calendar



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