

Athletics and Fitness Association of America™

# Candidate Handbook



ATHLETICS AND FITNESS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

## Certified Group Fitness Instructor (CGFI)

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Exam Blueprint

# Getting certified is simple. Follow these steps:

1. Read this Candidate Handbook
2. Check your eligibility, including CPR/AED certification
3. Prepare and study
4. Register and schedule your exam
5. Take and pass the certification exam
6. Receive and maintain your credentials

# INTRODUCTION

This Candidate Handbook provides information about the Athletics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA) and the certification examination it offers to group fitness instructors. This Handbook includes information concerning:

- AFAA's Certified Group Fitness Instructor (AFAA-CGFI) certification program, and the certification examination
- Eligibility requirements
- Applying and sitting for the AFAA-CGFI Exam
- Exam administration and results
- Rules of conduct and disciplinary action
- Awarding of credentials
- Maintaining credentials through recertification

This Handbook is written to provide essential information to candidates (those considering or preparing to sit for the AFAA-CGFI examination) and Certified Professionals (those who have successfully completed an AFAA certification examination and have received AFAA credentials). **All AFAA-CGFI candidates and all Certified Professionals are required to read this Candidate Handbook.**

The policies, procedures, rules and obligations set forth in this Handbook and in AFAA's website-published Terms & Conditions, are binding on all candidates and Certified Professionals.

## AFAA's Mission

Empower fitness professionals with the most respected and up to date solutions to set them apart as leaders in the industry.

## Group Fitness Instructor: Scope of Practice

Group Fitness Instructors are health and fitness professionals who design well-structured and balanced fitness classes or workouts for a diverse group of participants. AFAA-CGFIs are prepared to demonstrate comprehension of key presentation skills necessary for safe and effective group instruction and comprehension of fundamental scientific concepts related to exercise science. Group Fitness Instructors do not diagnose or treat areas of pain or disease and will always refer participants with such needs to health care professionals.

## AFAA 5 Questions

Group Fitness Instructors will be faced with participants who have diverse characteristics and goals.

Therefore, Instructors will need to have a foundation available to them in order to evaluate exercise with two main objectives: the effectiveness of the exercise, and assessing the potential risks for participants. With those two perspectives in mind, we present the AFAA 5 Questions:

1. What is the purpose of this exercise?
2. Are you doing it effectively?
3. Does the exercise create any safety concerns?
4. Can you maintain proper alignment and form for the duration of the exercise?
5. For whom is the exercise appropriate or inappropriate?

The AFAA 5 Questions provide a framework for evaluating a class at both a macro and micro level, allowing the Group Fitness Instructor to examine the appropriateness, effectiveness, and safety of not only the class objective as a whole, but also the individual exercises that make up the class.

## About the Certification Governing Board

The Certification Governing Board (CGB) is an independent and autonomous board that is responsible for overseeing the AFAA-CGFI program. The Certification Board sets policy over essential certification activities and oversees certification and recertification decisions, including governance, eligibility standards, disciplinary and appeals actions, and the development, administration, and scoring of the assessment examination.

## AFAA's Nondiscrimination Policy

AFAA and its designated test vendor, PSI, do not discriminate against any individual because of age, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other protected class. AFAA and PSI endorse and adhere to the principles of equal opportunity.

## AFAA-CGFI Certification Prep Program Options

AFAA's Certified Group Fitness Instructor (AFAA-CGFI) certification program includes, at a minimum, a certification examination developed pursuant to psychometric and standards to seek accredited status for the AFAA-CGFI certification and an administration process that includes issuance of credentials, a recertification process, and a code of professional conduct. Because the subject matter covered by the certification program is scientifically-based and challenging, AFAA offers several options to assist candidates prepare to challenge the certification examinations. Please see the AFAA website ([www.afaa.com](http://www.afaa.com)) for the most current preparation options available.

### Exam Only

The AFAA-CGFI Exam Only option allows the candidate to challenge the AFAA-CGFI certification examination. Purchase of AFAA certification preparation materials is not required in order to become eligible to sit for the AFAA-CGFI exam, and does not guarantee a passing score on the exam. Candidates who pass the examination will be awarded the AFAA-CGFI credential. Please see the AFAA website for the most current examination fees.

### Enrollment Period

The Enrollment Period for the AFAA-CGFI certification preparation programs is 180 days from the date of initial enrollment. In other words, candidates have 180 days from the date of purchase to complete their preparation, obtain their CPR/AED certification and successfully challenge the AFAA-CGFI certification examination. You may purchase a Program Extension of ninety (90) days by contacting AFAA Member Services. All fees, including the Program Extension Fee, are subject to change and you should reference the AFAA website to confirm the current fee structure.

## Candidate Eligibility Requirements

### Certification Eligibility

To be eligible to sit for the AFAA-CGFI certification exam and receive certification, each candidate must:

- Have obtained or be within no more than 90 days of successful completion of all requirements needed to obtain a high school diploma or the equivalent, such as the General Education Development test (GED) or other equivalency test recognized by the candidate's state of residency, or diploma and official transcript reflecting equivalent education as evaluated by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers for secondary education (if documents are not in English, a translation into English from a translation service approved in the United States for legal or government documents must be available upon request).

- Obtain and maintain Adult CPR and AED certifications. Candidates will be required to provide evidence of current CPR/AED certification prior to being admitted to sit for the AFAA-CGFI certification examination. Certified Professionals must have a current CPR/AED card when applying for recertification. All CPR/AED courses must have a hands-on training component. Examples of approved providers include: American Heart Association, American Red Cross, American Safety and Health Institute. Before taking a CPR/AED program from a provider not listed here, please confirm that such provider has been approved by contacting AFAA Member Services. AFAA will not accept a CPR/AED certification card from an online provider.

## Eligibility Exception Requests

Candidates may request an exception to eligibility requirements to sit for the certification exam by completing the Exception Request/Appeal form and submitting supporting documentation. The exception request will be reviewed and decided upon by the Disciplinary & Appeals Committee, a committee of the Certification Governing Board. The Committee's decision will be provided to the candidate in writing. Decisions of the Committee may be submitted to the Certification Governing Board for reconsideration. Such reconsideration will not occur until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board, which meets approximately three times each year. Decisions of the Board are final. See the "Appeals" section of this Candidate Handbook for more information. AFAA reserves the right to uphold eligibility requirements as established by the Certification Governing Board.

## Potential Practice Eligibility Requirements

The eligibility requirements described above pertain only to the AFAA-CGFI certification and are separate and distinct from any eligibility to practice requirements set forth under state law, regulation, or rule or the law or regulation of any other government or oversight body. The laws and regulations governing the practice of group fitness instruction, if any, may vary by state. Candidates are solely responsible for knowing and understanding the requirements, if any, which govern the practice of their profession in their particular state, including those concerning certification requirements. AFAA-CGFI certification does not guarantee any candidate's ability to meet any or all regulatory requirements pertaining to their profession.

**Please note:** Although AFAA does not require candidates to be 18 years of age when they sit for the AFAA-CGFI certification examination, most employers require group fitness instructors to carry liability insurance. Most insurance companies require insureds to be at least 18 years of age.

## Development of the AFAA-CGFI Exam

AFAA is committed to providing the highest quality certification examinations through continuous development and psychometric review. The examination development process begins with a job analysis. This is an industry-accepted process for determining the competencies that are required for safe and effective practice in the tested field.



Subject matter experts representing both practitioners and educators work with AFAA's psychometricians to define the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for safe and effective practice in the field covered by the exam. The results of this job analysis are then used to form the examination blueprint; every question written for the examination must address one of the specified tasks on this blueprint.

Regular assessment of the profession and the conduct of the job analyses allow the examination to remain a current assessment of the competencies a practitioner in the field must possess. Prior to the implementation of a new examination test plan, it is reviewed and approved by the Certification Governing Board.

Once an exam form is implemented, the psychometric team evaluates the statistical properties throughout the life of the test items used on that exam form, as well as the quality of pretest items used to develop future exam forms. All examination items used in exams are reviewed and continuously monitored by the psychometric team to ensure the statistical properties meet the appropriate specifications.

## Exam Blueprint

The exam blueprint is made available on the AFAA website, at [www.afaa.com](http://www.afaa.com) and in the Appendix to this Handbook. The exam blueprint provides information about the domains (broad topics) that are covered by the exam and the number of questions allocated to each domain shown as a percentage of the entire exam content. Candidates may refer to the exam blueprint during their self-study and exam preparation.

## Cut Scores

A cut score is the minimum score needed to pass an examination. Criterion-referenced cut scores are set to establish minimum levels of competency for the AFAA-CGFI examination. A modified version of the standard setting method presented by Angoff (1971) is used to establish cut scores for each assessment. These cut scores are established by panels of subject matter experts who evaluate whether a minimally qualified candidate would correctly respond to each item on the examination, rating those items accordingly with final approval of the cut score occurring by the Certification Governing Board.

## Scoring

When an updated exam is released, AFAA employs a pilot scoring period. During the pilot scoring period, the new test is released but there is a brief delay in the release of scores or pass/fail results. This allows AFAA's psychometricians time to ensure candidates are scored appropriately and pass/fail scores are set fairly, to make any necessary scoring adjustments, and to conduct the cut score study. Once the scoring adjustments are complete and the pass/fail scores are set, AFAA progresses to full release of the exam and candidates receive their results immediately following the taking of the exam.

# Getting Started and Exam Registration

## Getting Started

Candidate Profiles are created at the time of purchase of the exam. Candidates can access their account and any applicable online self-study programs, by logging into the online student portal.

It is essential that you provide and confirm that the following information is always current and accurate:

1. **Name.** Your name should match the name you use on government-issued identification. You should not use nicknames or other substitute names. Your certification and credentials will be issued under the name in your candidate profile. You will not be allowed to sit for your certification examination unless you present a current and valid government-issued photo ID. Accordingly, you must be sure to register for your exam using the exact same name that appears in your candidate profile and on your government-issued identification. If your name changes due to a change in marital status or a legal name change, you must be sure to have the name change reflected in your candidate profile but only after you have arranged for government-issued identification using your new name.
  - a. To change your name with AFAA, you will need to provide an official duplicate of the legal document reflecting the change of name. This document must contain the official seal of the government entity issuing the document. AFAA cannot accept a photocopy of the official document.
  - b. Along with the document, you must provide your previous name, current mailing address, telephone number at which you can be reached and current personal email address.
  - c. AFAA may need to request additional documentation to confirm your identity before processing the name change in its systems.
2. **Contact Information.** You are advised to provide and keep your contact information current at all times. It is important that AFAA be able to provide you with information concerning your certification and credentials. You are encouraged to provide a personal email address when you create your candidate profile rather than an email address associated with a school or employer so that AFAA is able to contact you even after you have changed schools or employers.
3. **Attestations.** You are required to read and agree to the Attestations in the Getting Started section of the Online Self-Study and at the administration of the certification examination. See the "Attestation" section of this Candidate Handbook for more information.

## Attestations

Candidates are required to attest to understanding and agreeing to certain conditions when starting a AFAA-CGFI program and before taking their certification examination. All candidates will be bound by the Attestations made at the Getting Started and/or at the test site. Below are the Attestations that each candidate must make:

### **Attestations for Online Study Programs**

Please read the following statements carefully. You must attest to the following statements to use any of the AFAA-CGFI study courses:

I acknowledge and agree to the following statements:

- I have been advised that the Candidate Handbook is available for my review at [www.afaa.com](http://www.afaa.com) and I agree to abide by policies and rules found therein.
- I understand that the information contained in this program is the copyrighted property of AFAA and its parent company, Assessment Technologies Institute, LLC. Any attempt to use this material in whole or in part other than for personal use is forbidden under copyright law, and violations can result in civil and criminal penalties.
- I have read and agree to abide by the Terms and Conditions posted on [www.afaa.com](http://www.afaa.com) and, if on a payment plan, agree to fulfill the terms of the Retail Installment Agreement I executed.

### **Attestations for Certification Examination**

Please read carefully. You MUST attest to the following statements in order to sit for the AFAA-CGFI certification examination:

- I am the actual candidate who will take the certification exam and no other person is completing this attestation on my behalf.
- I possess either a high school diploma or the equivalent or will have within 90 days and I have and will maintain my CPR/AED certification.

**[PLEASE NOTE: If you do NOT meet this requirement, you must receive an official waiver from the Disciplinary & Appeals Committee that specifically allows you to sit for this exam. Answer "I do NOT agree" below and submit the Appeal Form which can be found at [www.afaa.com](http://www.afaa.com) .]**

- I have read the Candidate Handbook for this examination and attest that I meet all of this examination's eligibility requirements and I agree to abide by the Code of Professional Conduct, the Testing Rules of Conduct and all other rules and policies described in the Candidate Handbook.
- I have read the Terms and Conditions found on the AFAA website and, if on a payment plan, the terms set forth in the Retail Installment Agreement I executed, and I acknowledge and agree to be bound by the terms, conditions and obligations thereunder.
- I understand that all assessment questions are the copyrighted property of AFAA and its parent company, Assessment Technologies Institute®, LLC. The removal or attempt to remove questions or other assessment material from the test site is prohibited. It is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute, or disclose these assessment questions by any means, in whole or in part. A violation of this type can result in civil and criminal penalties.

- I certify that I will not cheat or violate the confidentiality of the examination. Cheating or violation of confidentiality may be defined as, but not necessarily limited to the following:
  - obtaining help from any other person during the examination,
  - communicating with or giving help to another candidate during the examination,
  - using notes, books, or any other sources of information during the examination,
  - using electronic programmable devices, such as calculators, cell phones and PDAs during the examination,
  - reproducing or making copies of an AFAA examination or test questions by any means,
  - memorizing and reproducing test questions,
  - soliciting test questions from previous candidates,
  - discussing or disclosing the contents of the examination by any means, or
  - providing false or purposely misleading information when applying for, registering for, or completing the exam.
- I understand that AFAA will publish a list of certified professionals and that my employer and state regulatory board, if any, may be notified if my certification expires, is revoked or if AFAA determines that I am "Not in Good Standing".
- I understand that any claim I may have related to the good-faith enforcement of these policies or the unintentional damage or loss of my exam records will not exceed the amount of my application fee for the examination.
- I attest that by clicking on "I agree", I have read and understand the above, that the information I have provided is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief, and I further understand that AFAA may revoke certification if I provided any false or incomplete information.

**Please note:** If you will not be able to agree with the Attestations for Certification Examination, described above, you will not be permitted to sit for the examination. You will need to submit an exception request, which is reviewed by the Disciplinary & Appeals Committee. You should submit this request well in advance of your exam date in order to increase the likelihood that your appeal will be heard and you will receive a response in time for your exam. AFAA cannot guarantee a timeframe by which the Committee will hear and make a decision on any appeal request. To file an exception request, you must complete an Appeals Form found at [www.afaa.com](http://www.afaa.com), attach any supporting documentation that explains why you cannot agree with the Attestations and email, fax, or mail the package to the address on the Appeals Form. The candidate will be notified in writing of the decision of the Appeals Committee. For more information, see the "Appeals" section of the Candidate Handbook.

If the Appeals Committee approves of your request, you will receive instructions on how to skip the Attestation that was the subject of your appeal when you take your exam. If you do not determine until you are at the test site that you will not be able to agree to the Certification Examination Attestations, you will not be able to take the exam and will be asked to leave the test site. You will not be entitled to a refund and may be required to pay fees for late

cancelation, retest and program extension while you file for and await an appeal determination.

**Audit of Attestation Responses.** AFAA reserves the right to audit candidate responses to attestations.

## Accommodations

Accommodations may be available to individuals with documented disabilities pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). AFAA provides reasonable testing accommodations to candidates whose documented disabilities or other qualifying medical conditions hinder their ability to take the examination under standard conditions. Examples of requests for special testing accommodations that may be granted include modification of seating or other physical arrangements in the testing facility, or providing for the examination to be taken in an accessible location, providing for a reasonable extension of testing time, providing a sign language interpreter (to assist with audio or spoken components, if any), reader, or other auxiliary aid.

AFAA recommends that you submit an accommodation request and obtain approval before registering for an exam date. Often, the provision of an accommodation will require AFAA's test administration site to make arrangements that will impact on scheduling. AFAA will provide notice of an approved accommodation to the test administration providers and the specific accommodations will then be taken into consideration in setting an exam date.

Requests for accommodations will be processed as quickly as possible. Candidates should allow for a minimum of thirty (30) days for processing, with the understanding that some cases may take longer. Candidates should include all of the required documentation (see instructions below for what is required) with their initial request.

Candidates will be notified in writing of the decision regarding their request for an accommodation. Candidates who receive a testing accommodation are subject to the same policies and procedures described in this Handbook as apply to all other exam takers. AFAA's determination about the approval of an accommodation request is final.

### Requesting Accommodations

To be considered for special accommodations, a candidate must complete the Request for Accommodations Form, located at [www.afa.com](http://www.afa.com) in its entirety.

Please be aware that submission of a request for an accommodation does not guarantee testing accommodations. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis considering the information submitted and in accordance with the law.

Requests for accommodations must include either:

- A letter, written no more than two years earlier than the date of the request, from an objective physician or healthcare professional qualified to diagnose the disability or medical condition and render an opinion as to the need for an accommodation. An "objective" professional cannot be the candidate requesting the accommodation or a relative of the candidate.

- If the candidate is a high school student, or is within two years of his/her high school graduation, an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) may be used in lieu of the letter provided that the IEP is actively in place, or was actively in place at the time of graduation. Older IEPs will be considered, if provided, in any accommodation determination, but cannot be used in lieu of a letter from a qualified healthcare professional.

The letter from your qualified professional or the IEP MUST include the following:

- The specific disability/diagnosis. Mental/emotional disabilities must be accompanied by a numerical DSM-IV classification code.
- A brief explanation of how this condition limits the candidate's ability to take the exam under standard conditions.
- If this is not a permanent disability or diagnosis, include date first diagnosed, approximate duration, and method used to make the diagnosis.
- State specifically the accommodation(s) required. Requested accommodations should be adequate to address the candidate's specific disability or diagnosis without creating an unfair advantage. Please note that candidates who require extra time to complete the exam will be given 150% (or 1 1/2 times) the standard allotted time. If more time is needed, the letter or IEP must specifically state how much time is needed and why that amount of time is required.

Accommodations are provided to qualified candidates with disabilities to the extent that such accommodation does not fundamentally alter the examination or cause an undue burden to AFAA or the test administration site. The cost of excessive accommodation requirements is to be borne by the candidate (i.e., electronic communication equipment, etc.).

*PLEASE NOTE: The exam is written and administered in the English language. A lack of facility with the English language is not considered a disability. Exams will not be translated into foreign languages, and interpreters are not permitted inside the exam room for the purpose of translating the examination from English into another language for a candidate.*

## Registering for an Exam

When you are ready to take the certification exam, you will need to register for an exam date. AFAA recommends that examination candidates register for their exam at least sixty (60) days prior to an anticipated examination date to allow adequate preparation time.

All AFAA-CGFI certification exams are administered by PSI, an independent testing vendor. Information about PSI locations can be found at: <https://candidate.psiexams.com/index.jsp>.

To register for the AFAA-CGFI certification exam within the US and Canada, call 800.211.2754 or visit their website at <https://candidate.psiexams.com/>.

To register for the AFAA-CGFI certification exam administered outside of the U.S. and Canada, the candidate must call the AFAA Member Services Department at 1-800-446-2322 to start the scheduling process.

You will receive confirmation of the examination location, date and time directly from the test administration site. Please keep the confirmation – you should bring it with you on the exam date and, if you should need to cancel, the confirmation will contain the contact information.

You should register for an examination date well in advance, but no later than three days before your preferred date, because availability at your preferred location and on your preferred date is subject to demand. For international candidates, please allow 4-6 weeks to schedule.

**Please note** that you will not be admitted into the examination if:

- 1) You are not registered to take the examination on that date and time at that location.
- 2) Your identity cannot be confirmed with a current and valid government-issued photo ID.
- 3) You do not present a current CPR/AED certification card.

Examination registrations, including registrations from bulk purchases, are nontransferable.

## Exam Check-in

1. You will need to bring a current and valid government-issued photo identification, your exam date confirmation provided by the test administrator, and a current CPR/AED certification card to the examination. Only the individual named on the exam registration roster will be permitted to take the certification examination. No substitutions are permitted. Accordingly, **the name on your government-issued photo identification must match the name on file with AFAA and the name provided at the time of the exam registration.**
2. You may only sit for the certification exam at the specific location and on the date and at the time for which you registered. You cannot go to another site offered by the test administrator or attempt to sit for the certification examination at a time other than the date and time for which you registered. **You will not be admitted into the examination if you are not registered to take the examination on that date and time at that location,** You are advised to bring the confirmation you received from the test administrator to avoid confusion.
3. You will need to **present a copy of a current CPR/AED certification card** from an approved provider. Approved providers are listed in the Certification Eligibility section of this Handbook.

## Rescheduling or Cancellation of an Exam

**Rescheduling an Exam.** Candidates may reschedule an examination date, without paying an additional fee, pursuant to the following conditions:

- The candidate must visit the PSI website (<https://candidate.psiexams.com/>) **at least 24 hours prior to the originally scheduled appointment** in order to reschedule or cancel his/her examination without penalty.
- If the candidate does not cancel or reschedule his/her exam in advance, the cost of the exam is forfeited and the candidate must re-register and purchase a retest. Additionally, the candidate will be charged a Late Cancellation Fee by AFAA to cover the cost charged by the test administration site for the empty seat.
- The new exam date must be within 180 days of the original exam date.

If the candidate fails to sit for a rescheduled exam within the required 180 days, the examination fees will be forfeited and the candidate will need to reregister and repurchase the exam.

**Exam Cancellation by AFAA or PSI.** If an exam date is cancelled by AFAA or PSI, typically due to inclement weather or a technical problem occurring at the test administration site, the candidate can reschedule an examination date within 180 days of the original examination date, without having to pay the rescheduling fee. In the event that severe weather or other emergency that forces the closure of a PSI test site on a scheduled examination date, the examination will be rescheduled by PSI at no additional charge. PSI personnel will attempt to contact candidates who are in this situation. However, candidates may also check the status of their examination schedules by visiting PSI at <https://candidate.psiexams.com> or calling PSI at 800.211.2754. Every effort will be made to reschedule the examination at a convenient time. If the exam cancellation was due to the closure of the PSI testing site, please notify AFAA so we can investigate the circumstances for the unanticipated closure. There are no circumstances under which refunds are offered due to a cancellation by AFAA or one of its test administration providers.

AFAA is not liable for expenses (e.g. travel) that may be incurred by the candidate during the course of the examination process.

## Late Arrival or Failure to Appear for an Exam

If you arrive late for the certification exam, you will not be permitted to take the examination at that time. You will be required to reschedule your exam within 180 days of the original exam date and you will be charged the Late Cancellation Fee. You are not entitled to a refund.

If you fail to appear for a scheduled certification exam, it will be treated as a failed attempt and you will need to follow AFAA's Retest procedures (see the "Exam Retest" section of this Handbook for more information). You are not entitled to a refund.

Under certain circumstances, AFAA, at its sole discretion, may waive the Late Cancellation Fee for a late arrival or forgive the failure to appear. AFAA will consider the following circumstances: serious illness suffered by you or an immediate family member; death of an immediate family member; disabling traffic accident, court appearance or jury duty; or unexpected military call-up. In order to receive a waiver, you must send an email to [customerservice@afaa.com](mailto:customerservice@afaa.com), describing the circumstances and provide supporting documentation. The email must be postmarked within ten (10) business days of the registered exam date.

## Exam Administration

### Testing Format

The AFAA-CGFI certification exam is computer-based and has a four-answer, multiple choice format for each question. The exam includes 120 questions and candidates are provided two (2) hours to complete the exam.



Exam proctors will adhere to the time limit set for the AFAA-CGFI certification examination. If an accommodation for additional time has been requested and approved, proctors will adhere to the time limit set in the approved accommodation.

## Security at Test Administration Sites

All candidates must have their identification verified with a valid and current government-issued photo-ID before entering the examination room. Proctors are required to verify the candidate's identity as a condition of candidate admittance to the exam. Candidates must present a government-issued ID, such as a driver's license or passport, which should include a current photograph and the candidate's signature

The second step of the identification verification process is for the proctor to confirm that the candidate is registered to take the exam at that specific location and on that date and at that time. Proctors are supplied with a registration roster and only candidates listed on the roster will be permitted to take the examination.

## Confidentiality

Confidential information (non-public information including, but not limited to, social security number, financial account numbers, or medical information, etc.) is protected by federal, state and local laws or regulations. To protect the privacy of our candidates and Certified Professionals, AFAA's database of personal information is accessible only by authorized staff and authorized contractors operating under a nondisclosure agreement. Please see AFAA's Privacy Policy, posted on its website, [www.afaa.com](http://www.afaa.com), for more information about data collected by AFAA and the use of such data by AFAA.

Exam scores are considered confidential information and will not be disclosed without the written consent of the person in question, unless AFAA is required to do so by law or court order. Unless required by law to be provided to a regulating agency, score results are provided only to the candidate and only if the candidate did not pass the exam. Test scores are not provided over the phone.

Information that is not considered confidential and may be shared with schools, employers, inquiring participants of Certified Professionals, regulatory or licensure body, and other concerned third-parties includes general exam results (whether a candidate passed and exam), certification status, certification number, the current status of a previously-certified individual's credential and whether the individual is in a "Not in Good Standing" status with AFAA. AFAA allows any member of the public to verify credentials of Certified Professionals through a web application.

Information in the AFAA database, such as pass rates, number of Certified Professionals, score trends, etc., may be used in the aggregate (summarized across a group of individuals) for the purpose of research reports, marketing, partner relations and other published data. Additionally, schools, employers or AFAA partners may be provided aggregated data (e.g., summarized across all students of an institution, all employees of an

employer, or other grouping, provided that there are enough included individuals to assure that data pertaining to any one individual cannot be deduced) reflecting the Pass/Fail percentage, recertification rates and other data points collected by AFAA.

## Exam Conduct

*AFAA does not tolerate cheating or any breach of academic or professional ethics. AFAA also does not tolerate activity or conduct that jeopardizes the security or integrity of its certification exams. Accordingly, all candidates and Certified Professionals are required to (i) provide accurate and truthful information when they register, including responding to the attestations, (ii) abide by the Testing Rules of Conduct described below, and (iii) adhere to the Code of Professional Conduct, which is provided in the "Suspension or Revocation of Credentials (Disciplinary Action)" section of this Handbook. Failure to do so is considered Misconduct for which the candidate or Certified Professional may be disciplined.*

### Testing Rules of Conduct

Each candidate and Certified Professional must abide by the following AFAA Testing Rules of Conduct:

- All exams must be completed within a single, continuous session. Candidates may not stop their exam administration and return to review their answers or continue the exam(s) at a later date or time.
- No reference books are allowed during any AFAA examination administration. Such material or any other papers may not be brought into the examination room.
- Telephones, personal computers, electronic tablets, electronic readers, cameras, MP3 players, pagers, radios, watches, electronic translators, calculators, and all other electronic devices are prohibited in the examination room, except to the extent the electronic device is approved pursuant to an accommodation request. Such approved devices are subject to inspection.
- The proctor will not answer any questions pertaining to the examination content.
- Once the candidate has entered the exam room, referencing written materials, using electronic devices, or discussing or reviewing any aspect of the exam with other individuals is strictly prohibited, even during scheduled breaks, if any, until the exam is completed. Where an accommodation has been granted, and such accommodation requires the use of written materials, electronic devices, or the assistance of another person, the accommodation will be provided by the proctor (and not the candidate) or, with respect to certain electronic devices that must be supplied by the candidate, the device will be subject to inspection by the proctor. People providing assistance, such as sign language interpreters and test readers, may not assist the candidate with answering the examination and also are subject to these Testing Rules of Conduct.
- Eating or drinking in the examination room is not allowed unless deemed necessary due to a documented medical condition and the candidate sought and received approval for the accommodation prior to the examination date.

- Leaving the examination room at any time other than at a scheduled break, if any, is not allowed. The proctor is permitted to make an exception to this rule only under specific conditions, which include: (i) a determination by the proctor that the break is reasonably necessary; (ii) only one examinee may be absent from the examination room at any time; (iii) the candidate may not engage in conversation, may not reference any written materials, and may not use any electronic devices while outside of the examination room; (iv) the time for taking the exam will not be extended or altered (in other words, break time is counted as test taking time); and (v) any other condition the proctor determines is necessary to protect the integrity of the examination process and the security of the exam.
- Removal of exam content from the examination room is prohibited. Any act to retain exam content for use after the completion of the exam will be deemed a breach of the confidentiality policy and considered theft of AFAA's intellectual property. This includes any effort to copy, photograph, record, or memorize exam content.
- Candidates and Certified Professionals are honor-bound to report any and all suspected cheating or attempts to steal examination content by others that he/she witnesses, hears about, or is asked by another to participate in. Failure to alert the proctor or AFAA to such activity is a violation of the Testing Rules of Conduct.

## Disciplinary Actions for Exam Misconduct

Any misrepresentation of a candidate's eligibility, false attestation, violation of the Code of Professional Conduct is considered Misconduct for which AFAA may take disciplinary action. Any candidate engaging in any activity that may compromise the security, validity, or integrity of the AFAA-CGFI exam will be subject to disciplinary action, which can include the invalidation of exam scores, revocation of credentials, and imposition of a ban from retaking the examination or any other examination offered by AFAA.

In addition to the disciplinary action described herein, AFAA reserves the right to discipline a candidate or Certified Professional who engages in illegal, threatening or unprofessional behavior or activity, even if not specifically described in this Handbook. AFAA also reserves the right to report disciplinary actions to concerned third parties, which may include the employers, schools, inquiring customers of the Certified Professional, regulatory, licensing or oversight bodies, or law enforcement.

Candidates and Certified Professionals are entitled to Due Process and have a right to appeal disciplinary action, as described more fully in the "Due Process" and "Appeals" sections of this Candidate Handbook.

## Misrepresentation of Eligibility/False Attestation

If a candidate provides inaccurate or false information concerning Eligibility Requirements or falsely completes the Attestations, AFAA has the right to:

- If discovered before the exam is administered, disallow the candidate from sitting for the exam. No refund will be provided.
- If discovered after the exam was administered but before the exam is scored or before a credential is issued, invalidate the score and/or withhold the certification credential. No

refund will be provided. At AFAA's sole discretion, AFAA has the right to determine that the candidate is ineligible to retake the exam or sit for other AFAA exams.

- If discovered after the credential was issued, suspend or revoke certification credential. No refund will be provided. At AFAA's sole discretion, AFAA has the right to determine that the candidate is ineligible to retake the exam or sit for other AFAA exams.

## Suspicion of Misconduct Arising at or During the Examination

If the proctor is unable to verify the identity of the person appearing to sit for an exam, the proctor must deny access to the examination. Under most circumstances, the candidate will be able to reschedule the examination without additional charge to a date on which he/she can present proper verification of identity. AFAA reserves the right to determine that the candidate is ineligible to take the exam at a future date in cases of misrepresentation, fraud, or other circumstances indicating attempted cheating or exam content theft.

Proctors are permitted, on AFAA's behalf, to enforce the Testing Rules of Conduct. If a candidate violates any of the Rules, the proctor can terminate the exam and remove the candidate from the examination room. The proctor will file a report with AFAA, and AFAA will determine if any further discipline is warranted. Absent a determination that the proctor's concerns were unfounded, no refund will be provided.

## Violations of Certain Testing Rules of Conduct

Violations amounting to cheating: All allegations of cheating will be investigated. AFAA has the right to invalidate test scores, suspend or revoke certification credentials, and deem a candidate or Certified Professional ineligible to retake the exam or sit for other AFAA exams.

Violations amounting to theft of exam content: All allegations concerning the security of the exam and AFAA's intellectual property will be investigated. AFAA has the right to invalidate test scores, suspend or revoke certification credentials, and deem a candidate or Certified Professional ineligible to retake the exam or sit for other AFAA exams.

AFAA reserves the right to report violations of these Rules to concerned third parties, which may include the candidate's school or employer, any regulatory or licensing body, or law enforcement.

# Exam Results

## Scoring

Certification exams are scored immediately upon completion by web-based testing software. Candidates are given a preliminary result while at the test center indicating whether or not they passed. Although the scores are not made official until verified by AFAA and any proctor or exam incident reports have been reviewed (within approximately two weeks after the exam date), candidates may use this preliminary report to provide evidence to employers of a passing score.

Accordingly, **please note** that although scores may be released immediately, all data subsequently will be analyzed for anomalies. If anomalies are found that impact the scoring, the exam will be rescored and the candidate will be advised if the rescore impacts whether he/she passed or failed the exam. In some cases, an anomaly will be determined to be the result of an administrative error or, possibly, misconduct.

AFAA reserves the right to require candidates to retake exams when an administrative error occurs that impacts exam scores or if it determines that misconduct by others may have impacted the scores of all examinees. Individuals involved in misconduct are subject to disciplinary action described in this Candidate Handbook.

AFAA examinations are scored using a scaled score method. Scaled scores can range from 0 to 100 and represent a conversion of the candidate's raw score to allow for comparison between different forms of the same examination. The use of a scaled score provides consistency in reporting passing standards by accounting for the difficulty level of the examination form. The same level of performance is required to meet the scaled passing score of 70 regardless of which form of the exam a candidate takes. A candidate must achieve a scaled score of 70 or higher in order to pass the examinations covered in this Handbook.

Each exam includes 20 "pretest questions" in the set of 120 questions. These are questions that are being tested for future examinations as part of the continuous exam development process at AFAA as required by AFAA's accreditor. Pretest questions are excluded from the scoring process and are scattered throughout the exam. Pretest items are not identifiable; therefore, all candidates should answer all questions to the best of his or her ability.

## Disclosure of Scores

**Disclosure of Scores to Candidates.** Candidates who pass the exam are not given their actual score. Candidates who fail the exam are provided with their score along with a content breakdown to help focus the candidate's preparation for a retest. Exam scores are never provided over the phone.

**Disclosure of Scores to Third-Parties.** Although AFAA may share successful exam results (a pass without a score) with third parties, AFAA does not disclose exam scores or failed attempts to others unless required by law to provide results to regulating agencies, or if permission has been granted by the candidate.

## Exam Challenges

**Rescoring requests.** Candidates may request a hand scoring of their exam by submitting a written request. AFAA has the right to assess a fee for any rescoring requests. Scoring requests must be received within sixty (60) days of the examination date. All rescoring determinations are final.

**Appeals.** Candidates may request an appeal of their final exam score. Requests must be received within thirty (30) days of the examination date in writing using the official AFAA Appeals Form, which can be found on the AFAA website,. Decisions will be communicated in writing only. All decisions are final. For more information about the Appeals process, please see the Appeals section of this Handbook.

## Retaking the Exam

Candidates who do not pass the certification exam on the first attempt and wish to retake the exam will be allowed to retake the exam after a one-week waiting period. If the candidate is unsuccessful after the second attempt, he/she will be required to wait thirty (30) days before retaking the exam. For each repeated failure after the third attempt, candidates will be required to wait a full year before attempting to take the exam again. Eligibility to retake an exam, under extraordinary circumstances, can be reviewed by the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee. See the Appeals section of this Candidate Handbook for more information.

## Certification Credentials

### Awarding of Credential

Only candidates who achieve a passing score on the exam will be allowed to use the certification program credential. The minimum score needed to pass the exam is published on AFAA's website, at [www.afaa.com](http://www.afaa.com).

Candidates who, after verification, pass the exam will receive a formal certificate indicating that they are a Certified Group Fitness Instructor. The certificate is sent by U.S. mail within four weeks following the date the exam. Certificates to candidates who live outside of the United States are sent by FedEx and may take longer than four weeks. AFAA credentials can be verified by members of the general public on the AFAA website, [www.afaa.com](http://www.afaa.com).

Certifications are valid for two (2) years and expire on the date provided on the certificate.

### Credential Use

Candidates who achieve a passing score on the exam and have a current valid credential are allowed to include the certification credential "AFAA-CGFI" behind their name and the title "AFAA Certified Group Fitness Instructor". The use of the certification credential should always be in a context and using media consistent with demonstrating professional credentialing, including but not limited to: office signage, resumes, websites, business cards, presentations, introductions, and electronic signatures. AFAA credentials may not be used to endorse any product, service, or company; or as a company, product, or brand name.

## Recertification

AFAA Certified Professionals are required to keep their certification current through fulfilling continuing education requirements every two (2) years. This is referred to as "recertification."

The purpose of recertification is to assure that Certified Professionals holding AFAA credentials stay current with best practices in group fitness instruction and fitness fields and demonstrate a continued investment in their profession.

### **Updating Your Contact Information**

As noted in the *Getting Started* section of this Handbook, it is important that AFAA always has your current name and contact information. It is important that you advise AFAA of changes to your name, address, and other contact information as soon as possible but at the very least before undertaking the recertification process. If your name has changed and you wish to have your new certificate match your current name, AFAA will need to update your records. Additionally, the name on the CPR/AED card submitted with your recertification application will need to match the most current name in AFAA's records.

## **Recertification Requirements**

A certification is valid for two (2) years following the issuance date of the certification. Your certification expiration date can be found on your certificate. In order to recertify, you must complete continuing education, complete the recertification application and pay the recertification fee, as follows:

- Continuing Education. Certified Professionals must complete 1.5 continuing education units (CEUs), the equivalent of 15 contact hours of training, every two years.
  - AFAA offers a ninety (90) day grace period; this allows a Certified Professional an extra 90 days beyond the expiration date shown on their certificate to complete the 1.5 CEUs. CEUs earned after the 90-day grace period will not count toward recertification. If a Certified Professional has not completed all of the required CEUs before the end of the 90-day grace period, he/she will be required to retake the certification examination in order to maintain his/her credentials.
  - The "Recertification Period" is the two-year period before your current certification expires plus, if you pay the Extension Fee, an additional 90 days.

CEUs can be obtained from AFAA-approved continuing education providers. The NASM/AFAA Provider Program allows outside organizations to submit their course content to be considered for review and approval of CEUs. Once approved, these courses will be designated as AFAA approved offerings and will meet Category A requirements. A list of current approved provider courses is located on the website at: <http://www.afaa.com/preferred-providers>. The cost, length and CEUs awarded for continuing education courses vary, so you should review carefully the information available about each course before enrolling.

If there is a continuing education course that has not yet been approved by AFAA, you must submit a CEU Petition Application form and information about the course for AFAA's review and a Petition Fee (see website for current fee amount) to cover AFAA's evaluation costs (all fees, including the Petition Fee, are subject to change and you should reference the AFAA website to confirm the current fee structure). As

with all AFAA-approved continuing education, AFAA will evaluate the course to ensure that it (a) promotes continued competence, develops knowledge and skills, and enhances professional skills and judgment beyond that required for entry-level practice and (b) that the number of awarded CEUs is appropriate. AFAA reserves the right to withhold approval of a submitted course or to limit the number of CEUs awarded. Until the course is approved by AFAA, it cannot be used towards recertification so you should be sure to submit the course well in advance of the end of the Recertification Period.

All recertification applications must demonstrate that the applicant has a valid and current CPR/AED certification. You will receive 0.1 CEU for completing a CPR/AED certification within the recertification time period. The name on the CPR/AED card submitted with your recertification application must match the most current name in AFAA's records.

Excess CEUs earned in one Recertification Period cannot be applied to the next Recertification Period.

- Recertification Application. With each recertification you will need to complete and submit the AFAA recertification application. You will be required to provide documentation verifying the completion of 1.5 CEUs. You are responsible for obtaining a certificate of completion or other official documents from each continuing education course you attended. You must also provide the front and back of your mandatory CPR/AED certification.
- Recertification Fees. Unless the Certified Professional has purchased the "Recertify for Life" package, see below, a fee must be paid with each recertification application (the "Recertification Fee"). If you timely recertify – before the expiration date on your certificate – you will be charged the Recertification Fee (see website for current fee amount). If you use the 90-day grace period to complete your CEU requirements, you will be required to pay the normal Recertification Fee plus an additional "Extension Fee" (see website for current fee amount). All fees, including the Recertification Fee and the Extension Fee, are subject to change and you should reference the AFAA website to confirm the current fee structure. CEU costs are separate and apart from the recertification fees and are paid at the time of purchase of each continuing education course.

## Recertify for Life

- This program is an opportunity to pay all recertification fees at one time and never have to pay the normal recertification fee again. Because fees, including the recertification fee, are subject to change, this allows you to avoid price increases over the course of your career.
  - The Recertify for Life fee is an in-full, one-time payment (see website for current fee amount). Previously paid recertification fees cannot be applied against the Recertify for Life fee.



- Recertify for Life only concerns the recertification fee. **You still must complete all other recertification requirements every two years:**
  - **Purchase and complete 1.5 CEUs;**
  - **Submit the Recertification Application and proof of CEU completion; and**
  - **Provide a valid and current CPR/AED certification.**
- If in the future you use the 90-day grace period to complete your CEU requirements, you will not have to pay the recertification fee but you still will be required to pay the Extension Fee (see Recertification Fees section above).
- AFAA reserves the right to discontinue offering Recertify for Life or change the terms offered to new purchasers of Recertify for Life at any time and without prior notice. All fees, including the Recertify for Life fee, are subject to change and you should reference the AFAA website to confirm the current fee structure.

## Restoring Certification

Should a certification expire, you may restore your certification after the 90 day grace period and within one year of the expiration date. In order to restore your certification, you must submit:

- evidence of 1.5 continuing education credits (the credits must have been earned prior to the original expiration date or within the 90 day grace period)
- a copy of the front and back of your CPR/AED certification card that shows the certification was continuously current from the original certification period;
- a statement that you have read the Code of Professional Conduct and agree to continue to abide by the Code; and
- payment of applicable fees, including the Recertification Fee and the Late Fee. If you have purchased the Recertify for Life package, you will still be required to pay a Late Fee.

You may not restore your certification after the one year anniversary date of the expiration date or if the above-listed requirements cannot be satisfied. Under such circumstances, you must register and successfully retake the examination to become certified. You are not permitted to use the AFAA-CGFI credential following your name or on office signage, your resumes, any websites, your business cards, presentations you give, introductions, or electronic signatures if you have let your certification lapse.

## Suspension or Revocation of Credentials (Disciplinary Action)

AFAA reserves the right to reprimand a Certified Professional or suspend or revoke his/her credentials for violating the AFAA Code of Professional Conduct (provided earlier in this Handbook), engaging in unprofessional conduct as described below:

### AFAA's Code of Professional Conduct

AFAA has established a code of ethics and guidelines in order to protect the public and the profession. Candidates are expected and Certified Professionals are required to agree to and follow the AFAA Code of Professional Conduct, stated below.

**Professionalism.** Each Certified Professional must provide optimal professional service and demonstrate excellent participant care in their practice. Each Certified Professional must:

1. Abide fully by this AFAA Code of Professional Conduct and continue to abide by the applicable provisions of the Testing Rules of Conduct;
2. Conduct themselves in a manner that merits the respect of the public and other colleagues;
3. Treat each colleague and participant with the utmost respect and dignity;
4. Not make false or derogatory assumptions concerning the practices of colleagues and participants;
5. Use appropriate professional communication in all verbal, non-verbal, and written transactions;
6. Provide and maintain an environment that ensures participant safety that, at a minimum, requires that the Certified Professional must:
  - a. Not diagnose or treat illness or injury unless for basic first aid or if the Certified Professional is legally licensed to do so and is working in that capacity at that time;
  - b. Hold a current cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillator (AED) certification at all times.
7. Refer the participant to the appropriate medical practitioner when, at a minimum, the Certified Professional:
  - a. Becomes aware of any change in the participant's health status or medication;
  - b. Becomes aware of an undiagnosed illness, injury, or risk factor; or
  - c. Becomes aware of any unusual participant pain and/or discomfort during the course of the class that warrants professional care, in which case the Certified Professional will immediately discontinue the class for that participant.
8. Refer the participant to other healthcare professionals when nutritional and supplemental advice is requested unless the Certified Professional has been specifically trained to do so or holds a credential to do so and is acting in that capacity at the time;
9. Maintain a level of personal hygiene appropriate for a health and fitness setting;
10. Wear clothing that is clean, professional, and appropriate to the work environment;
11. Remaining in good standing and maintain current certification status by acquiring all necessary continuing education requirements.

**Confidentiality.** Each Certified Professional must respect the confidentiality of all participant information. In his/her professional role, the Certified Professional must:

1. Protect the participant's confidentiality in conversations, advertisement and any other arena unless otherwise agreed upon by the participant in writing or, when necessary due to a medical occurrence or when legally required;
2. Protect the interest of participants who are minors by law or unable to give voluntary consent by securing the legal permission of the appropriate third party or guardian; and

**Legal and Ethical.** Each Certified Professional must comply with all legal requirements within the applicable jurisdiction. In his/her professional role, the Certified Professional must:

1. Obey all local, state, federal, and provincial laws, regulations and professional rules;
2. Accept complete responsibility for his/her actions; and
3. Respect and uphold all existing copyright, trademark and intellectual property right laws.

AFAA may revoke or otherwise take action with regard to the certification of an individual who is or has been convicted of, plead guilty to, or plead nolo contendere (no contest) to a felony or misdemeanor or has been found through legal process to have been negligent or responsible for injury or harm in performing in his/her professional capacity or have misrepresented his/her qualifications to provide services, including opinions or advice, to the public.

**Business Practice.** Each Certified Professional must practice with honesty, integrity, and lawfulness. In his/her professional role, the Certified Professional must:

1. Maintain adequate liability insurance;
2. Accurately and truthfully inform the public of services rendered and his/her qualification to render such services;
3. Honestly and truthfully represent all professional qualifications and affiliations;
4. Advertise in a manner that is honest, dignified and representation of services that can be delivered without the use of provocative and/or sexual language and/or pictures;
5. Maintain accurate financial, contract, appointment, and tax records including original receipts for a minimum of four years; and
6. Comply with all local, state, federal, and providence laws and employer rules regarding harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment.

## Unprofessional Conduct

Certified Professionals who hold AFAA credentials serve the public and are entrusted with the care, safety and privacy of their participants. AFAA requires all of its Certified Professionals to behave professionally at all times and reserves the right to suspend or revoke credentials for any of the following reasons:

- Acts of dishonesty, misrepresentation, or fraud.
- Behavior that disregards the dignity, safety, or privacy of the participant or anyone under the Certified Professional's fitness or training oversight.
- Unlawful activity, particularly such activity that jeopardizes the life, safety or health of others or calls into question the Certified Professional's ability to practice as a competent fitness professional.
- Conduct that is discriminatory or harassing, including acts of sexual harassment.
- Denial or revocation of licensure, registration, or approval by a state board or agency or membership organization with oversight responsibilities for the profession on grounds of gross misconduct, gross negligence of duties, misrepresentation or fraud.
- Unauthorized use of AFAA's proprietary content or materials or any infringement activities with regards to any of AFAA's intellectual property rights, including its copyrighted materials, its trademarks, its trade names, including those of any of its products, whether in long name, short name or acronym form, its logos, its trade dress or its science, including the OPT™ Model.
- Material misrepresentation or fraud in any statement to AFAA, including, but not limited to, statements made to assist oneself or another candidate or Certified Professional to apply for, obtain, or retain certification or in applying for, entering into or failing to meet the obligations of a payment plan with AFAA.
- Violation of the Testing Rules of Conduct, even if not discovered until after the issuance of AFAA certification credentials.

AFAA reserves the right to discipline a Certified Professional who engages in illegal, threatening or unprofessional behavior or activity not specifically described above. AFAA also reserves the right to report disciplinary actions to concerned third parties, including employers, inquiring customers of the Certified Professional, school, any regulatory or licensing body or law enforcement.

## “Not in Good Standing” Status

AFAA offers candidates the opportunity to purchase its AFAA-CGFI products and services using a payment plan. The payment plan option is a privilege and not a right. If you are an AFAA Certified Professional and you have an outstanding balance on a payment plan you are required to make timely payments pursuant to your payment plan agreement. If you fail to make a payment on time, you will be put on “Not in Good Standing” status and your access will be suspended. You must contact AFAA Member Services to arrange for payment and clear the Not in Good Standing status.

While in a Not in Good Standing status, you will not be able to purchase any other products or services from AFAA and you will not be permitted to recertify.

If you remain in Not in Good Standing status for a total of ninety (90) days, even if not consecutive, your certification will be subject to revocation.

AFAA reserves the right to report to concerned third parties, including employers, inquiring customers of the Certified Professional, school or any regulatory or licensing body a Certified Professional's Not in Good Standing status.

## Due Process

Due process is afforded to any individual involved in Misconduct, violation of the AFAA Code of Professional Conduct, or other prohibited activity described in the Unprofessional Conduct section above. These procedures involve:

1. Determining the existence of a possible violation;
2. Investigating the suspected violation;
3. Communicating the findings and sanctions imposed, if any, to the affected parties.

If a proctor, candidate, consumer, or other party has a complaint, they can fill out and submit the Report of Conduct Violation Form, found at [www.afa.com](http://www.afa.com). The charged person will be notified of the complaint by traceable mail, such as registered mail or Federal Express. Where AFAA deems it to be appropriate, to protect the person who made the complaint from retaliatory action, AFAA reserves the right to withhold such person's name.

A written response concerning the complaint will be considered if submitted within ten (10) days following the delivery of the complaint to the accused individual. The complaint and response, if any, will be reviewed by a three-member Disciplinary & Appeals Committee.

Upon completion of its investigation of the reported conducted, including the written response and any materials provided by the accused individual, AFAA will make a determination and, if appropriate, impose disciplinary action. If the Disciplinary & Appeals Committee has considered substantially similar case(s) in the past, their decision in those prior cases will be considered precedent for future cases and AFAA staff will apply the prior decision where appropriate. Under those circumstances, AFAA staff will send a decision letter that is consistent with the Committee's earlier decisions. If the Committee has not considered substantially similar cases and there is no determinative precedent, the request and supporting evidence will be reviewed by the Committee.

Upon review of the complaint and the evidence, the Disciplinary & Appeals Committee will determine if a further investigation is warranted. Based on its review of the gathered information, including the written response and any materials provided by the accused individual, and after deliberations, the Committee will take a vote. Upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Committee, this Committee shall determine whether any disciplinary action already taken by AFAA needs to be revised or enhanced and, in cases where disciplinary action has been taken, whether grounds for additional disciplinary action exists and, if so, what additional disciplinary action should be taken. The Committee shall notify the charged candidate or Certified Professional of their decision within thirty (30) business days by traceable mail.

## Appeals

As described above in the Due Process Section, the first recourse for a disciplined candidate or Certified Professional who disagrees with the findings leading to disciplinary action or the imposed action itself, can file a request for appeal with the Disciplinary & Appeals Committee. The Committee will consider any new information provided by the affected individual and will either reverse or uphold the earlier determination.

Although the Committee may uphold the original finding, the Committee may determine to reduce or affirm the earlier imposed disciplinary action. The individual is then allowed to seek review of the Committee's appeal decision by the Certification Governing Board. A separate request for review by the Board must be submitted. The Board will review the appeal at the next scheduled board meeting. The Board typically meets three times a year. Decisions of the Board are final. All decisions of the Committee or the Board are communicated in writing only.

### Exception Requests

As noted in the "Eligibility" and "Recertification" sections of this Handbook, candidates must meet certain requirements to be eligible to sit for a certification exam or to obtain recertification. Candidates seeking exceptions to these requirements may do so as described below.

### Eligibility Exception Requests

Candidates may request an exception to eligibility requirements to sit for the certification exam by completing the appropriate Appeals/Exceptions request form. AFAA reserves the

right to uphold eligibility requirements as established by the Certification Governing Board. Decisions concerning exception requests will be communicated in writing only. Candidates may appeal the exception request decision to the Board. The Board will review the appeal at their next scheduled board meeting. Decisions of the Board are final.

## Recertification Exception Requests

Certified Professionals may request an exception to attestations required for recertification by completing the appropriate Appeals/Exceptions Request Form. AFAA reserves the right to uphold recertification requirements as established by the Certification Governing Board. Decisions concerning exception requests will be communicated in writing only. Certified Professionals may appeal the exception request decision to the Board. The Board will review the appeal at their next scheduled appropriate Board meeting. Decisions of the Board are final.

## Precedent-based Exception

Candidates/certified members may appeal a precedent-based determination, as described in the Due Process section above, to the Certification Governing Board within thirty (30) days of receiving the decision letter. The Board will hear the appeal at the next scheduled meeting. Decisions of the Board are final.

## **EXAM BLUEPRINT**

The Athletics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA) contracted with Professional Examination Service (ProExam) to conduct a practice analysis of Certified Group Fitness Instructors (CGFIs) in 2016.

This practice analysis study defines the current knowledge, skills and abilities that must be demonstrated by entry-level credential holders to safely and successfully practice. This study also serves as the “blueprint” for determining the content (performance domains) for the certification exam(s).

Performance Domains as validated by the 2016 Job Analysis Study include the information below:

Domain 1: Fundamentals of Exercise Science	32%
Domain 2: Class Design and Planning	28%
Domain 3: Class Instruction and Presentation	28%
Domain 4: Professionalism	12%

### **Domain 1: Fundamentals of Exercise Science**

This domain encompasses the scientific knowledge bases that are fundamental to all activities performed by group fitness instructors.

#### Knowledge of:

- k1. Basic structure and function of nervous, muscular and skeletal systems
- k2. Basic structure and function of cardiovascular and respiratory systems
- k3. Fundamentals of human movement science/kinesiology including basic biomechanical terminology and how muscle actions and outside forces relate to human movement
- k4. Fundamentals of exercise metabolism, nutrition, and bioenergetics including basic training adaptations
- k5. Training concepts (such as flexibility, cardiorespiratory, core, balance, plyometric, SAQ, resistance)
- k6. Adaptation, progression, specificity, overload and recovery concepts
- k7. Health benefits of exercise (such as weight management, preventing chronic disease, stress management, increased energy)
- k8. Basic considerations for special populations (such as medical and orthopedic conditions, special needs, older adults, pre- and post-natal)
- k9. Physiological responses to environmental conditions (such as temperature, humidity, altitude, pollution)

### **Domain 2: Class Design and Planning**

This domain encompasses the essential tasks performed when designing and/or planning for a well-structured and balanced fitness class for a diverse group of participants in order to create a safe and effective class and reduce the potential for injury.

### Tasks

1. Define class objectives (such as endurance training, strength training, stability and core, flexibility, weight management) in order to create a goal-oriented class.
2. Select specific exercises appropriate for each class component (such as warm-up, main body of the workout, cool-down) based on class objectives and format, with consideration of fitness and skill levels of participants.
3. Select equipment based on understanding of the multiple uses for exercise equipment, classroom constraints (such as size, availability), class objectives and format, and the fitness level of participants.
4. Select appropriate music based on the context of the class (such as appropriate BPM for activity, using music genre/styles conducive to activity, consideration of participant demographics) in order to create a safe, effective, motivating and dynamic experience.
5. Design class movement/combinations/choreography and transitions to ensure class flow.
6. Select options and develop a plan for incorporating modifications, progressions and regressions for specific exercises used in the class based on considerations for participants at varying levels of fitness.
7. Develop a plan to periodically and strategically change class components by varying elements such as music, exercises, and intensity in order to support continued participant engagement and retention.

### Knowledge of:

- k10. Basic components of a class (such as warm-up, main body of the workout, cool-down)
- k11. Class types/formats (such as dance, aqua, indoor cycle, interval, resistance, flexibility) and benefits and expected results
- k12. Considerations for various class sizes, locations and environments (such as outdoors, pool, small spaces, on the gym floor)
- k13. Methods to improve potential for results (such as adjust/alter frequency, intensity, time, type of training, and/or tempo)
- k14. SMART goal development
- k15. Proper warm-up exercises and techniques
- k16. Proper cool-down exercises and techniques
- k17. Proper techniques to increase muscle strength and endurance
- k18. Proper techniques to improve cardiovascular fitness
- k19. Proper techniques to increase flexibility and improve mobility (such as static and dynamic stretching)
- k20. Proper techniques to improve stability and balance
- k21. Appropriate exercises for use in different class formats
- k22. Proper sequencing, transitions flow (movement/combinations/choreography)
- k23. Exercise modifications



k24. Exercise progressions and regressions

k25. Various group fitness-related equipment, appropriate and safe uses, and space requirements

k26. Proper music BPM and volume/decibel guidelines for common class activities

k27. Music styles and tempos appropriate for different class formats and class components

k28. Music structures (such as chorus, verse, 32 count phrase, radio edits, DJ mixes, mash-ups)

k29. Differences between freestyle, pre-designed, and pre-choreographed class formats

### **Domain 3: Class Instruction and Presentation**

This domain encompasses the essential tasks performed to deliver a positive, safe and effective group fitness class. These tasks include coaching, demonstration, monitoring, and providing modifications.

#### Tasks

1. Communicate class objectives and design to participants to set expectations
2. Demonstrate correct exercise form and technique.
3. Instruct participants, using various cueing techniques, in order to facilitate safe and effective movement execution and transitions.
4. Utilize positive and inclusive coaching techniques to motivate participants and encourage continued class participation.
5. Monitor participants' exercise/movement, form, posture, and exertion levels to identify contraindications or the need for individualization.
6. Provide exercise and movement feedback, corrections, regressions, and modifications in order to prevent injury.
7. Provide movement options to accommodate different fitness goals and enhance participants' experience
8. Instruct participants on how to monitor their own pacing/intensity using a measure of exertion to enable them to exercise at the most appropriate level.
9. Maintain flow and structure of classes, including adapting to unexpected environmental conditions (such as interruptions, potential conflicts, equipment failure, and insufficient equipment).

#### Knowledge of:

k30. Communication strategies (such as speak clearly, make eye contact)

k31. Coaching and motivation techniques to engage and retain participants

k32. Participant-centered teaching approaches

k33. Various learning styles (such as visual, auditory, kinesthetic)

k34. Appropriate class objectives and design characteristics that should be communicated to participants to set expectations

k35. The major types of classes: cardio, strength, flexibility, and fusion and the benefits associated with each

- k36. Appropriate music, equipment, and temperature and other environmental considerations for each class type
- k37. Various cueing techniques (such as verbal, non-verbal, music-based cueing) and when to use them
- k38. Proper body alignment and posture (neutral spine, lordosis, kyphosis) during exercise
- k39. Safe and effective exercise technique (such as joint alignment, range of motion)
- k40. Correct mechanics for each exercise, movement, stabilization and balance
- k41. Physical signs and symptoms of over- and under-exertion, fatigue, and dehydration
- k42. Heart-rate response to various class components
- k43. Methods of monitoring exercise intensity (such as rate of perceived exertion [RPE], talk-test, monitoring devices)
- k44. Modifications for exercises for complexity, impact level and fitness level (such as taking out arm movements, removing jumping, push-ups on knees)
- k45. Appropriate responses to unexpected environmental conditions (such as interruptions, potential conflicts, equipment failure, insufficient equipment)

#### **Domain 4: Professionalism**

This domain encompasses the essential tasks focused on working within the confines of scope of practice and safety, legal and ethical requirements as well as tasks required to increase success as a group exercise professional.

#### Tasks

1. Work within the confines of legal and ethical practices (such as participant confidentiality, proper instructor-participant relationship, trademark/copyright, music).
2. Demonstrate professional behavior (such as effective communication, punctuality, appropriate attire, appropriate language).
3. Operate within scope of practice.
4. Maintain requirements for liability insurance and participant liability waivers in order to help minimize risk for the instructor and organization.
5. Foster class growth and participant loyalty and retention by building rapport and using marketing strategies.
6. Engage in self-management (such as protect voice, monitor workload, avoid overtraining) in order to stay healthy and injury-free as well as prevent burnout.
7. Respond to emergencies following established protocols and documentation requirements.

#### Knowledge of:

- k46. Applicable music licensing laws
- k47. Participant confidentiality requirements
- k48. Credible sources of information
- k49. Established industry guidelines regarding ethical practice

- k50. Scope of practice and limitations (such as nutritional advice, medical advice, psychological advice)
- k51. Liability insurance requirements
- k52. Proper/appropriate physical contact with participants
- k53. Considerations when using social media (such as appropriate content, participant agreement, music licensing, facility considerations)
- k54. Emergency response preparedness and documentation requirements
- k55. Aspects of professional behavior (such as punctuality, appropriate attire, appropriate language)
- k56. Customer service strategies to foster class growth and increase participant loyalty and retention
- k57. Marketing strategies to foster class growth and increase participant loyalty and retention
- k58. Potential risks and occupational hazards (such as overuse injuries, overtraining syndrome, vocal damage) for group fitness instructors and how to prevent them