

IAP2 USA Professional Certification Core Competencies and Criteria

The core competencies are the essential capabilities for a public participation (P2) professional to effectively design, implement, and evaluate public participation programs. The competencies emerged from qualitative analysis of a comprehensive list of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, skills, behaviors, and capabilities identified in June 2014 by more than 100 P2 professionals from around the globe who participated in a survey.

The descriptions and quality standards for each competency were developed, tested, and refined through an iterative process involving IAP2 members. The competencies are the CP3-level competencies, which are indispensable to every public participation professional.

The program assesses candidates using 29 CP3 criteria. To earn the CP3 designation, candidates must demonstrate they meet every criterion at the CP3 level.

Core Competency 1.0: P2 Process Planning and Application Skills					
Criterion No. and Description	Evidence Demonstrated			Quality Standard	
	Application	Case Study	Assessment Center	CP3	Pre-Certification
1.1 Work with the client to state the decision to be made, describe the decision-making process, and what role the public might play in that decision-making process.	√	√		Candidate works with the client to develop a full understanding of the decision to be made, the decision-making process, and how public input might improve the decision.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate the ability to work with a sponsor to clarify the decision to be made, the decision-making process, or how public input might be used to support the decision-making process.
1.2 Define, clear objectives for involving the public in the entire decision-making process.	√	√		Candidate establishes objectives for involving the public consistent with the selected level of the IAP2 Spectrum and the decision-making process.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate the ability to define objectives for involving the public in the decision-making process.
1.3 Conduct a situation assessment (project context, issues, background) and a stakeholder analysis.	√	√		Candidate conducts an independent situation and stakeholder assessment process and prepares an approach that is responsive to the results of the assessment. Candidate has considered all stakeholders and legal requirements.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate understanding of the project context. Candidate is unable to demonstrate the ability to learn about or understand the legal requirements or to account for them in process planning.

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1.4 Select, in consultation with the client, an appropriate level of the IAP2 Spectrum.	√	√		Candidate suggests an appropriate level of the IAP2 Spectrum and then supports that selection.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to select or support an appropriate level of the IAP2 Spectrum.
1.5 Document the P2 process and results so the project will be in compliance with project requirements.	√			Candidate prepares documentation that is appropriate for the project and meets client's needs.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to document the project.
1.6 Design an effective approach for evaluating the P2 process and outcomes based on P2 objectives.	√	√		Candidate develops an evaluation approach to demonstrate the effectiveness of the P2 process and the outcomes of the process based on the P2 objectives.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to design an effective approach to evaluate the P2 process and results.
1.7 Modify a P2 plan to adapt to changing circumstances		√	√	Candidate communicates that adjustments to a P2 plan are needed and offers potential solutions.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to recognize that changes need to be made.
1.8 Develop and adhere to a P2 schedule (including contingency plans).	√	√		Candidate prepares a reasonable P2 schedule, is able to adhere to it, and communicates effectively about schedule issues when they are encountered	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to prepare a project schedule
1.9 Identify all skills needed for the project team (graphic designers, translators, technical writers, etc.).	√	√		Candidate identifies the necessary skill sets to conduct the project.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to identify a team to conduct the project.
1.10 Establish and adhere to P2 budget.	√	√		Candidate prepares a reasonable P2 budget, is able to adhere to it, and communicates effectively about budget issues when they are encountered.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate awareness of project budget requirements.

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1.11 Analyze input received and recommend how that input might be used in the decision-making process.	√			Candidate analyzes and interprets public input, and reports the results.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to report the results of the public involvement activities.
1.12 Communicate to participants how their input was used (feedback loop).	√	√		Candidate prepares communication materials to report on what was heard and how the input was considered.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to communicate the results of the public involvement effort to the participants.

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Core Competency 2.0: P2 Event Planning and Implementation Skills					
Criterion No. and Description	Evidence Demonstrated			Quality Standard	
	Application	Case Study	Assessment Center	CP3	Pre-Certification
2.1 Design an agenda to meet P2 objectives and accomplish desired P2 outputs and outcomes.	√	√		Candidate develops a process design and event agenda that includes logical agenda topics tied to the meeting purpose and provides for reasonable time allocations.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to provide an adequate working agenda.
2.2 Identify logistical requirements (registration, room set-up, online meeting tools, etc.) and staffing requirements (facilitation, security, technical expertise, etc.).	√	√		Candidate identifies logistical and staffing requirements.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to provide an adequate logistics plan.
2.3 Design events to manage conflict when it arises.	√	√		Candidate recognizes when conflict might arise and makes appropriate plans for addressing that situation.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to recognize potential conflicts.
2.4 Identify the potential need for neutral facilitation.	√	√		Candidate recognizes the need for neutral facilitation and has a neutral facilitator in place.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to recognize the need for neutral facilitation.
2.5 Modify and/or substitute a P2 technique in response to unanticipated implementation challenges (e.g., venue doesn't meet specifications, an unexpected number of stakeholders show up) while accomplishing P2 objectives.			√	Candidate makes modifications to techniques to reflect unanticipated implementation challenges.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to make modifications when a technique is not meeting P2 objectives.
2.6 Anticipate the information needs of event's participants and how to meet those needs.	√	√		Candidate understands what information is needed for meaningful participation.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to prepare materials in advance.

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Core Competency 3.0: Appropriate Use of P2 Techniques					
Criterion No. and Description	Evidence Demonstrated			Quality Standard	
	Application	Case Study	Assessment Center	CP3	Pre-Certification
3.1 Use diverse P2 techniques at various levels of the IAP2 Spectrum.	√			Candidate provides evidence of having used at least 10 P2 techniques on at least 3 levels of the IAP2 Spectrum	Candidate is unable to provide evidence of having used 10 or more P2 techniques or has worked on less than 3 levels of the IAP2 Spectrum.
3.2 Choose appropriate P2 techniques to accomplish P2 objectives.	√	√		Candidate chooses P2 techniques that will accomplish P2 objectives.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to choose appropriate P2 techniques that are appropriate for meeting P2 objectives.
3.3 Use information about stakeholders and the situational assessment to guide the selection of P2 techniques.	√	√		Candidate chooses P2 techniques that are appropriate for the needs of known stakeholders and situation.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to choose P2 techniques that are appropriate to the needs of known stakeholders.
3.4 Evaluate the potential usefulness of new and unfamiliar P2 techniques, including online technologies.	√		√	Candidate evaluates and makes recommendations about P2 techniques with which they are unfamiliar.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to use more than the basic P2 techniques or does not demonstrate how to learn about unfamiliar tools and techniques.

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Core Competency 4.0: P2 Communication Skills					
Criterion No. and Description	Evidence Demonstrated			Quality Standard	
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4.1 Develop communication objectives to support P2 objectives.		√		Candidate develops communications objectives to support P2 objectives.	Candidate is unable to demonstrate how to develop communications objectives to support P2 objectives.
4.2 Listen to understand.		√	√	Candidate uses appropriate listening skills to demonstrate understanding.	Candidate does not demonstrate listening skills.
4.3 Communicate orally (verbal and non-verbal communication).			√	Candidate uses non-verbal and verbal communication skills.	Candidate does not demonstrate appropriate non-verbal and verbal communication skills.
4.4 Communicate effectively in writing.	√	√		Candidate uses clear, concise, correct, professional, and well organized written communication.	Candidate does not demonstrate clear, concise, correct, professional, or well organized written communication.
4.5 Identify a diversity of communication needs to support the P2 process.	√			Candidate identifies the need for diverse communication materials for diverse audiences.	Candidate does not demonstrate experience or understanding of the need for diverse communication materials for appropriate audiences.
4.6 Communicate technical information in lay terms.	√			Candidate is able to explain technical communication for the lay public.	Candidate does not recognize the need to translate technical communication for the lay public.

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Core Competency 5.0: P2 People Skills					
Criterion No. and Description	Evidence Demonstrated			Quality Standard	
	Application	Case Study	Assessment Center	CP3	Pre-Certification
5.1 Work successfully with the public.	√		√	<p>Candidate is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative (works together with others in a positive manner toward a common goal); • Non-defensive (accepts criticism or adversity with grace, without trying to defend or justify his or her position or opinion); • Fair (treats others justly, honestly, & impartially, showing no prejudice toward anyone); • Neutral (does not take part in either side of a dispute or quarrel; unbiased); • Professional (behaves in a manner worthy of the highest standards of a P2 professional in all aspects of communication (written, verbal, dress, body language, etc.); • Respectful (is considerate & courteous to all; respectful toward the feelings of others); • Inclusive (brings all participants into the process); • Diplomatic and Tactful (is tactful & adroit in dealing with people; has a delicate perception of the right thing to say or do without offending; shows skill in dealing with people); • Empathetic (shares in another's thoughts, emotions or feelings; projects one's own personality into the personality of another in order to understand the person better); • Emotionally intelligent (ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others); • Situationally aware (ability to assess the situation and present oneself and behave in an appropriate manner for the circumstances). 	Candidate does not demonstrate appropriate P2 people skills.