



Safety Education and Instruction Council Policy Manual

Revised 3.1.2025

This policy manual contains the official policies of the American Canoe Association's Safety Education and Instruction Council (SEIC).

This Manual and SEIC Policies can be amended or revised as needed to meet the needs of the ACA and the SEIC. Changes must be approved by majority vote of the SEIC at an official SEIC meeting. All such changes shall be documented and published as dated addenda to this document. Only verbatim referenced quotes of these official policies may be used elsewhere as SEIC policy statements.

Policies, course outlines, insurance documents, and all other SEIC documents shall be considered in force after approval by the SEIC and subsequent publication on the ACA website.

Waivers for exceptions to SEIC policy must be made in writing to the Safety Education and Instruction Department (SEI) at the ACA National Office: <https://americancanoe.org/seic>.

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Chapter 1 - ACA Instructional Policies

1. The ACA is committed to an educational environment that supports all individuals with respect and dignity. ACA Instructor Trainer Educators, Instructor Trainers, Instructors, and students are expected to conduct themselves in such a way that creates an environment where all participants feel welcome, thrive, and learn. Harassment due to gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or other protected characteristics will not be tolerated. Conduct that is detrimental to the mental or physical wellbeing of a student or class will not be tolerated. Such harassment and/or conduct could result in loss of certification.
2. The ACA authorizes certified Instructors, Instructor Trainers, and Instructor Trainer Educators the use of the ACA logo and marks with the following qualifications.

- a. ACA membership and SEIC registration must be in effect at the time of logo use. Should ACA membership or SEIC registration lapse, use of logo and marks is suspended and all printed materials must be destroyed regardless of quantity. Continued use of ACA logo and marks will be considered fraudulent.
 - b. Instructors, Instructor Trainers, and Instructor Trainer Educators may identify themselves as ACA certified. Their organization, employer, host, or sponsor may not claim to be "ACA certified" without an express written contract in force with the ACA National Office.
 - c. Any use of the ACA logo and marks comes under the authority of the ACA's acceptable use policy. The ACA reserves the right to selectively withdraw individual use in any portrayal of the ACA name, logo and marks that, in the sole opinion of the ACA, is of an offensive, inappropriate, or unwholesome nature.
3. Use of the ACA's instructional insurance program requires:
- a. Current ACA Instructor, Instructor Trainer or Instructor Trainer Educator certification
 - b. Current ACA membership and SEIC registration
 - c. Current first aid and age appropriate CPR
 - d. Use of the current unaltered *ACA Waiver and Release of Liability*
- This waiver must be signed and dated by each participant prior to the start of the ACA insured instructional program, and a digital copy of the signed waiver must be submitted to the ACA as part of approved course reporting procedures.
4. ACA courses are open to all individuals who satisfy the Essential Eligibility Criteria published on the ACA website.
5. SEIC business is conducted via electronic communication. All Instructors, Instructor Trainers, and Instructor Trainer Educators must have access to a valid email address and use the Course Management System (CMS) for the submission of all course documentation, i.e., registration, reporting, insurance requests, etc.

Chapter 2 - ACA Instructors

1. Duties:

ACA Instructors teach paddling skills using approved methods and techniques, after qualifying in various disciplines. Specific skills within an instructor's scope of practice are identified in appropriate course outlines. ACA Instructors are expected to represent and promote the ACA in a positive manner. ACA Instructors may issue participation cards to students and in some cases may perform skill assessments. Instructors may not certify other instructors.

2. Selection Criteria:

- a. Instructor candidates shall be at least 18 years old.
- b. Instructors must maintain ACA membership and SEIC registration. Full ACA membership is required for participation in an Instructor Development Workshop (IDW). SEIC registration is required upon successful completion of an Instructor Certification Examination (ICE).
- c. Instructors shall satisfy the appropriate Essential Eligibility Criteria.
- d. Demonstrate the following criteria:

- i. Knowledge of and advocacy for paddlesports, the ACA, and SEIC with representation in positive manner
- ii. Understand the importance of and practice the principles of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- iii. General knowledge of the purpose and significance of the ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria
- iv. Promote safe, effective, and efficient practices
- v. Selection of appropriate teaching venue based on ability and desired outcomes
- vi. Organizational skills including time management
- vii. Consistent CMS application and course documentation
- viii. Clear, objective, and consistent evaluation skills
- ix. Act with integrity
- x. Student centered learning, providing differentiated teaching for individual learning
- xi. Debriefing and reflective skills to facilitate learning experiences
- xii. Awareness and utilization of educational resources (i.e., student pre-course communications, informational packets, props, etc.)
- xiii. Utilizes a variety of current educational best practices and teaching theory
- xiv. Positive interpersonal skills to include:
 - 1. Solution oriented
 - 2. Active listening
 - 3. Self-awareness and self-assessment
 - 4. Collaboration and adaptability
 - 5. Empathy and compassion
 - 6. Humility and vulnerability
 - 7. Encouraging and enabling creativity
 - 8. Ability to hold boundaries

3. Instructor Certification Process:

- a. Successfully complete an Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) and an Instructor Certification Exam (ICE), or an Instructor Certification Workshop (ICW) at the appropriate level. IDWs, ICEs, and ICWs are taught by Instructor Trainers (ITs) or Instructor Trainer Educators (ITEs). IDW, ICEs, and ICWs may be held as formal classes.
 - i. Alternatively, ITs, and ITEs may mentor individual Instructor Candidates by co-teaching a minimum of three courses with a single candidate. All three courses must be at the desired level of certification and all aspects of an IDW and ICE must be appropriately covered and documented, using forms provided by the SEI Department. Only one Instructor Candidate may be mentored during any one skills course.
- b. Demonstrate paddling, teaching, interpersonal, safety and group management skills, knowledge of paddlesports, and knowledge of ACA curriculum and procedures, appropriate to the level of certification.

- c. IDW/ICE or ICW participation does not guarantee certification. An Instructor Candidate may be certified, or may be asked to complete additional activities, up to and including re-taking the IDW/ICE, or ICW.
- d. If an Instructor Candidate is not certified at a specific level, they may be "continued." Continued candidates have specific deficiencies that need to be addressed prior to certification. These may include specific paddling, modeling, teaching, leadership or organizational skills or can be due to age requirements.
 - i. Specific deficiencies and suggested corrective actions must be reported, in writing, to the Instructor Candidate and the SEI Department in the Course Management System (CMS). This report must accompany the certification course report in CMS.
 - ii. To complete their certification process, continued Instructor Candidates may submit a deficiency list and demonstrate proficiency to an appropriately certified IT/ITE within four years of their ICE or ICW. The expiration of a certification earned under this process will be December 31 of the fourth full year from participation in the initial ICE/ICW.

- e. ITs or ITEs may award instructors status at differing levels of certification. A candidate continued at a higher level should be awarded a lower level of certification when such certification is earned.

Example 1: A candidate might be certified as a Level 1: Introduction to Canoeing Instructor and be continued at Level 2: Essentials of Canoe Touring.

Example 2: A candidate might be certified as a Level 3: River Kayak Instructor and continued as a Level 4: Whitewater Kayak Instructor.

- f. Successful completion of the certification process must be reported in writing to the SEI Department in CMS by the facilitating IT/ITE within thirty days of the Instructor Candidates' demonstration of proficiency.
- g. Currently certified ACA Instructors may certify at or below their current certification level in an additional discipline by participating in an appropriate ICE or ICW. Prior to participation in the ICE or ICW, the Instructor Candidate must obtain permission from the facilitating IT/ITE. The facilitating IT/ITE may grant permission on a case by case basis and may require training in addition to the ICE or ICW. The Instructor Candidate must meet all appropriate performance objectives required for certification. Participation in an ICE or ICW does not guarantee certification.

Example: A currently certified Level 3: River Kayak Instructor can obtain Level 3: certification in coastal kayaking by completing a Level 3: Coastal Kayak ICE. To obtain Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayak certification, the same instructor would need to complete a Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayak IDW and ICE.

- h. Currently certified ACA Instructors may seek an upgrade in their discipline by participating in an ICE or ICW or after appropriate review by an ACA IT or ITE in their discipline. Instructors seeking such an upgrade must meet all appropriate performance criteria. ITs or ITEs conducting such reviews must provide documentation using forms provided by the SEI Department.

Example: A currently certified Level 3: River Kayak Instructor may be upgraded to Level 4: Whitewater Kayak Instructor after appropriate evaluation by a Level 4: Whitewater Kayak IT or ITE.

- i. ACA Instructors are required to maintain venue appropriate first aid and age appropriate CPR training from a nationally recognized first aid and CPR provider throughout the term of their ACA Instructor certification. First aid and CPR courses must include hands-on practice and skills demonstration. If an Instructor's first aid or age appropriate CPR certification expires during the period of their ACA

certification, the ACA certification is no longer valid. Instructors whose certifications are not valid are not eligible for ACA insurance coverage. (see Appendix II for comprehensive information).

- j. An instructor certified by another agency (e.g., American Red Cross, British Canoe Union, etc.) may present their current credentials in lieu of IDW participation, and then receive ACA certification by completing an appropriate ICE. The SEI Department shall be contacted to determine certification equivalents. Certification equivalents will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Candidates pursuing this certification pathway shall follow the guidelines below.
 - i. The instructor must join the ACA prior to participating in the ICE.
 - ii. The instructor must hold current certification from the other agency at the time of the ICE.
 - iii. The instructor must gain permission from the facilitating IT or ITE before the ICE. The facilitating IT or ITE is not required to grant such permission.
 - iv. The instructor must successfully complete the ICE and meet all appropriate standards for certification
 - v. SEIC registration is required upon successful completion of an ICE.
 - vi. After successfully completing the ICE, the ACA Instructor will hold certification valid through December 31 of the fourth full year following the ICE.

4. Maintenance of Instructor Certification:

- a. Certification is valid through December 31 of the fourth full year following certification. To maintain certification, Instructors must complete the following within each four-year certification period:
- b. Maintain annual ACA membership and SEIC registration. If ACA membership and/or SEIC dues lapsed at any point during the certification period, back dues must be paid in order to renew and maintain certification.
- c. Successfully complete an Instructor Update during the certification period. Three options for updating are available:
 - a. Instructors may complete a formal "Instructor Update" course in the appropriate discipline, at their highest level of certification.
 - b. An Instructor may take or co-teach an IDW, ICE, or ICW in their discipline and at the appropriate level, and the supervising IT or ITE may report it as an Instructor.
 - c. An Instructor may co-teach a skills course, at their highest level of certification, with a supervising IT or The instructor then must complete a review of current ACA Policies and Procedures under the direction of the supervising IT or ITE.

Options ii and iii require advance permission from the facilitating IT/ITE. IT/ITEs may grant or deny such permission on a case by case basis. Updates must include a review of ACA policies and procedures.

- d. Instructor Updates serve as opportunities to share teaching ideas, to describe changes in ACA policy, and to periodically assess instructor skills. During Instructor Updates, Instructors will be expected to demonstrate key skills appropriate to their level of certification, as determined by the SEIC, the SEI Department, and the IT or ITE leading the Update. Instructors who are unable to demonstrate skills appropriate to their level of certification may be asked to complete additional corrective training or have their certification challenged (Chapter 5.3).

- e. Instructors must teach and properly report two classes every four years. At least one class should be at their highest level of certification.

A current ACA instructor who acts as a qualified assistant to a higher level instructor in a skills or assessment course *in their certified discipline*, and craft in the case of introductory certifications, may report their assistance as a qualifying teaching credit *at their own certified level* as long as they provide instruction and their teaching contributions to the course do not go beyond the body of knowledge contained within their own level of certification. The higher-level instructor must discern if the lower-level instructor has the paddling skills necessary to safely provide assistance to the course just as they would for any qualified assistant.

- f. Each certification must be maintained by participation in an Instructor Update as appropriate for the discipline and level of certification. Instructors certified in multiple disciplines must update each certification.
- g. Instructor Updates may be conducted individually or in groups less than the IDW/ICE minimums. ITs are strongly encouraged to place Instructor Update notification on the ACA website in advance to maximize opportunities for Instructors to meet this maintenance requirement.
- h. Exceptions to maintenance requirements may be requested in writing to the SEI Department.
 - i. The SEI Department may authorize a one-year extension if requested in writing prior to the certification expiration. The SEIC Standards Committee may, on a case by case basis, extend certification for an additional time frame. Instructors who require extensions greater than one year in length should contact the SEI Department as soon as possible. Situations requiring prolonged extensions include overseas military or work deployments, and significant health issues. Prolonged extensions will be granted on a case by case basis and may include a mandatory re-evaluation.
 - ii. Any certification not updated within the eligible period will become void and may be reinstated as noted in Chapter 5.2.

Chapter 3 - ACA Instructor Trainers

1. Duties:

- a. Instructor Trainers (ITs) evaluate Instructors and Instructor Candidates to ensure they meet certification criteria. Instructor Trainers conduct Instructor Development Workshops (IDWs), Instructor Certification Examinations (ICEs), Instructor Certification Workshops (ICW: combined IDW and ICE) and Instructor Updates. Instructor Trainers are expected to represent and promote the ACA in a positive manner. Instructor Trainers are certified to teach candidates only in their discipline, at or below the IT's level of certification, and are subject to all conditions developed by the SEIC and SEI Department.

Example: All Canoeing ITs must certify in both solo and tandem (bow & stern).

The Instructor Trainer of record for a certification workshop is responsible to report via the Course Management System (CMS).

2. Selection Criteria:

- a. Instructor Trainer Candidates shall be at least 21 years of age.
- b. Instructor Trainer candidates must:
 - i. Hold current ACA membership and SEIC registration

- ii. Be an active ACA Instructor in the appropriate discipline for at least two years
 - iii. Have taught and properly reported at least two skills courses at their desired level of Instructor Trainer certification within the past four years
- c. Instructor Trainers should have advanced paddling and teaching skills relative to their level of certification and also should possess excellent overall knowledge of paddlesports.
- d. In addition to meeting the Instructor criteria listed in Chapter 2.2, Instructor Trainers must demonstrate the following criteria:
 - i. Appropriate CMS registration and course documentation skills
 - ii. Completion of an ACA skills course (or higher) in another discipline
 - iii. Ability to identify and recruit new members and instructors and the ability to build community
 - iv. Willingness to travel to teach ACA courses
 - v. Ability to give effective instructor candidate mid-course and exit interviews
 - vi. Ability to personally model, identify, and evaluate the following interpersonal skills of an instructor candidate:
 - i. Solution oriented
 - ii. Active listening
 - iii. Self-awareness and ability to self-assess
 - iv. Collaboration and adaptability
 - v. Empathy and compassion
 - vi. Humility and vulnerability
 - vii. Encouraging and enabling creativity
 - viii. Ability to hold boundaries

3. **Instructor Trainer Certification Process:**

- a. Submit the Instructor Trainer Candidate (ITC) Registration Form to the SEI Department
- b. Receive written confirmation from the SEI Department that you are eligible to begin the Instructor Trainer process
- c. Complete the Instructor Trainer Candidate online course prior to conducting your first co-teach of an IDW/ICE or ICW
- d. Participate in an Instructor Trainer Development Workshop (ITDW) or co-teach an IDW and ICE (or ICW) with either an IT or an ITE. An ITDW is required for newly developed disciplines. Only one IT Candidate can receive co-teach credit for each IDW/ICE.
- e. The Instructor Trainer Candidate must actively contribute to the CMS course reporting processes for their co-teach and receive confirmation from the SEI Department that they are eligible to proceed prior to their lead-teach:
 - i. IDW and ICE (or ICW) Course Report and Roster
 - ii. Evaluations of the Instructor Trainer Candidate completed by the Instructor Candidates
 - iii. Evaluations of each Instructor Candidate reviewed and signed by the Instructor Trainer Candidate

- iv. Evaluation of the Instructor Trainer Candidate completed by the lead Instructor Trainer or Instructor Trainer Educator
- f. Prior to leading an IDW and ICE (or ICW), the IT Candidate and the supervising ITE will both confirm with the SEI Department the IT Candidate's eligibility for certification.
- g. After completing an ITDW co-teaching an IDW and ICE (or ICW), IT Candidates must satisfactorily lead at least one IDW and ICE (or ICW), with assistance and direct oversight by an Instructor Trainer Educator (ITE). The IT Candidate shall prepare and submit the IDW and ICE (or ICW) outline, course report forms, and candidate evaluations within the CMS. The final leading of an IDW and ICE (or ICW) may be repeated as needed for successful completion; IT candidates cannot be continued. Only one IT Candidate can receive Lead Teach credit for each IDW and ICE (or ICW).
- h. When the IT Candidate has led an IDW and ICE (or ICW) under the direct supervision of their mentoring ITE, the IT Candidate shall submit an official IT Application Form within 30 days of the ICE (or ICW) completion, to the SEI Department. In addition to a recommendation letter from the mentoring ITE, two additional ACA Instructor or Instructor Trainer recommendation letters are required. At least one of the two additional letters must be from an Instructor or IT in the IT Candidate's discipline.
- i. The IT Candidate's application will be reviewed by the SEI Department, with final certification approved by majority vote of the SEIC Standards Committee and the appropriate discipline chair.
- j. The two-year Instructor experience requirement may, in exceptional situations, be waived at the discretion of the SEIC Standards Committee. Exceptions must be requested in writing, with supporting documentation as requested by the SEIC Standards Committee or SEI Department, before completing step 3.3.a listed above.
- k. ITs upgrading within a discipline or ITs attempting to certify in a subsequent discipline must lead an IDW and ICE (or ICW) at the new level or in the new discipline under the direct supervision of a mentoring ITE. ITs are eligible to conduct this lead teach provided they are already an appropriately certified ACA Instructor at the level of the lead teach and have taught and properly reported at least two skills courses at the desired level in lieu of the two year minimum requirement (Chapter 3.2.b.ii).
- l. ITs pursuing certification within a newly developed discipline may complete the IT certification process as above but may apply for a waiver to the SEIC Standards Committee to operate provisionally, in accordance with the corresponding program roll out plan, to encourage discipline development.
- m. IT's upgrading within a discipline or certifying in a subsequent discipline, must submit a new IT Application Form to the SEI Department for the new level or discipline.
- n. ACA Instructor Trainers are required to maintain venue appropriate first aid and age appropriate CPR training from a nationally recognized first aid and CPR provider throughout the term of their ACA Instructor Trainer certification. First aid and CPR courses must include hands-on practice and skills demonstration. If an Instructor Trainer's first aid or age appropriate CPR certification expires during the period of his or her ACA certification, the ACA certification is no longer valid. Instructor Trainers whose certifications are not valid are not eligible for ACA insurance coverage (see Appendix II for comprehensive information).

The SEIC Standards Committee may modify any of the above requirements as needed for discipline development.

4. Maintenance of Instructor Trainer Certification:

Certification is valid through December 31 of the fourth full year following certification. To maintain certification, Instructor Trainers must complete the following within each four-year certification period:

- a. Maintain annual ACA membership and SEIC registration. If ACA membership and/or SEIC dues lapsed at any point during the certification period, back dues must be paid in order to renew/maintain certification.
- b. Teach and properly report at least four courses during each certification period. Courses must include at least one IDW and ICE (or ICW) at the highest level of certification, one Instructor update, and one skills or assessment course. Course reports and evaluations for these courses must be submitted via the CMS.
- c. Participate in an Instructor Trainer Update. Alternatively, ITs may co-teach an IDW and ICE with another IT or ITE, or assist an ITE teaching an ITDW. ITs may not receive update credit for co-teaching with the same IT or ITE in two consecutive certification periods.

Multi-discipline Instructor Trainer Updates may be used to meet the maintenance requirements for multi-discipline Instructor Trainers in the disciplines represented. However, Instructor Trainers must meet all appropriate performance criteria, as established by the SEIC and SEI Department, for each of their certifications.

- d. Exceptions to maintenance requirements must be requested in writing to the SEI Department.
 - i. The SEI Department may authorize a one-year extension if requested in writing prior to the certification expiration. The SEIC Standards Committee may, on a case by case basis, extend certification for an additional time frame. Instructor Trainers who require extensions greater than one year in length should contact the SEI Department as soon as possible. Situations requiring prolonged extensions include overseas military or work deployments and significant health issues.
 - ii. Any IT certification not updated within the eligible period will become void but may, after evaluation on a case by case basis, be reinstated by approval of the SEIC Standards Committee.

Chapter 4 - ACA Instructor Trainer Educators

1. Duties:

Instructor Trainer Educators (ITE) are Instructor Trainers designated by the SEIC Standards Committee to prepare and evaluate Instructor Trainer Candidates. Only ITEs may teach IT Development Workshops (ITDWs) and IT Updates. ITEs may lead IT workshops and mentor IT candidates only in the disciplines in which they are certified as ITEs. An ITE shall demonstrate excellent teaching, mentoring, and paddling skills, and shall serve as a goodwill ambassador for the ACA.

2. Selection Criteria:

- a. Instructor Trainer Educator candidates will demonstrate paddling and teaching skills that are significantly advanced relative to their level of certification. They also will demonstrate excellent knowledge of paddlesports. They will, in addition, meet the criteria listed below:
- b. ITE candidates must serve as an Instructor Trainer in good standing in the discipline of application for at least two years prior to application. They also must have conducted and reported at least two IDWs, ICEs, or ICWs at their highest level of certification, one Instructor update (if applicable), and one skills or assessment course. Exceptions may be granted upon majority vote of the SEIC Standards Committee and the appropriate discipline chair.
- c. Have experience in leadership training outside of the ACA

- d. Provide consistent and valuable mentorship (mentorship framework to be developed)
- e. Teach how to give effective instructor candidate mid-course and exit interviews
- f. In addition to meeting Instructor (Chapter 2.2) and Instructor Trainer (IT) criteria (Chapter 3.2), ITEs must demonstrate the following criteria:
 - i. Be actively engaged in solution-oriented involvement at the committee level
 - ii. Participate in an ACA instructor workshop in another discipline
 - iii. Recruit ITs and identify potential new ITEs
 - iv. Travel to train and participate in the certification process of other ITs
 - v. Personally model, identify, evaluate, and **mentor** the following interpersonal skills of an instructor trainer candidate:
 - i. Solution Oriented
 - ii. Active listening
 - iii. Self-awareness and ability to self-assess
 - iv. Collaboration and adaptability
 - v. Empathy and compassion
 - vi. Humility and vulnerability
 - vii. Encouraging and enabling creativity
 - viii. Ability to hold boundaries

3. **ITE Certification Process:**

- a. An ITE candidate must apply to the SEIC Standards Committee by submitting the ITE Application Form to the SEI Department, a paddling resume, and three letters of recommendation. At least one letter shall be from an ITE in the appropriate discipline. At least two letters must be from current ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, or Instructor Trainer Educators in the appropriate discipline
- b. Candidates shall submit videotape modeling of paddling and teaching skills or arrange an in-person review with a designated representative of the discipline committee, as determined by both the SEIC Standards Committee and the appropriate discipline chair.
- c. The ITE Candidate must submit course outlines from four separate workshops. To include the following: one Instructor update, two IDWs, ICEs, or ICWs, and one skills or assessment course. These courses must all be at the ITE Candidate's requested level of ITE certification.
- d. The ITE Candidate must submit an outline of the process or framework they plan to use for mentoring their Instructor Trainer Candidates for each discipline in which they are applying.
- e. The ITE Candidate must meet with SEIC Standards Committee (via online meeting) for a 30 minute conversation for each discipline in which they are applying.
- f. ITE candidates will be approved by majority vote of the SEIC Standards Committee and the appropriate discipline chair. Exceptions to the above criteria may be granted, on a case by case basis, upon majority vote of the SEIC Standards Committee and appropriate discipline chair.
- g. ACA Instructor Trainer Educators are required to maintain venue appropriate first aid and age appropriate CPR training from a nationally recognized first aid and CPR provider throughout the term

of their ACA Instructor Trainer Educator certification. First aid and CPR courses must include hands-on practice and skills demonstration. If an Instructor Trainer Educator's first aid or age appropriate CPR certification expires during the period of his or her ACA certification, the ACA certification is no longer valid. Instructor Trainer Educators whose certifications are not valid are not eligible for ACA insurance coverage (see Appendix II for comprehensive information).

4. Maintenance of Instructor Trainer Educator Certification:

Certification is valid through December 31 of the fourth full year following designation as an ITE. To maintain certification, Instructor Trainer Educators must complete the following within each four-year certification period.

- a. Maintain ACA membership and SEIC registration. If ACA membership and/or SEIC dues lapsed at any point during the certification period, back dues must be paid in order to renew/maintain certification.
- b. Teach at least **six** properly reported courses during the four-year certification period. One of these must be a skills or assessment course, one must be an Instructor update and one must be an IDW and ICE (or ICW) at the highest level of certification. In addition, the ITE must teach at least one course with another IT or ITE within their discipline. Finally, ITEs are expected to demonstrate significant service to paddlesports and the ACA. Exceptions to these requirements may be made on a case by case basis upon majority vote of the SEIC Standards Committee and the appropriate discipline chair.
- c. ITEs must submit an outline of the process or framework they use for mentoring their Instructor Trainer Candidates for each discipline in which they are renewing.
- d. ITEs must meet with SEIC Standards Committee (via online meeting) for a 30 minute conversation for each discipline in which they are renewing.

Chapter 5 - Certification Maintenance, Reinstatement, and Challenges

1. Maintenance of ACA Certifications:

Certification is valid through 31 December of the fourth full year following certification. To maintain certification, Instructors, ITs, and ITEs must complete the items listed below:

- a. Maintain annual ACA membership and SEIC registration. If ACA membership and/or SEIC dues lapsed at any point during the certification period, back dues must be paid in order to renew/maintain certification.
- b. Successfully complete an appropriate Update (as described in previous chapters)
- c. Teach an appropriate minimum number of courses (as described in previous chapters)
- d. Multi-discipline Instructors, ITs, and ITEs must meet the maintenance requirements for each of the respective disciplines
- e. Exceptions to maintenance requirements must be requested to the SEI Department in writing

The SEI Department may authorize a one-year extension if requested in writing prior to the certification expiration. The SEIC Standards Committee may grant an additional extension in unusual circumstances (e.g., prolonged medical problems, overseas military deployment), or as needed for discipline development.

2. Reinstatement of ACA Certification:

To reinstate lapsed Instructor certification, the applicant must:

- a. Ensure ACA membership and SEIC registration are current. If ACA membership and/or SEIC dues lapsed at any point during the certification period, back dues must be paid in order to renew/maintain certification.
- b. Satisfactorily complete an appropriate ICE. Candidates must meet all performance criteria for their desired level of certification. Mere participation in an ICE does not guarantee reinstatement of certification. In many cases, candidates may be better served by completing both an IDW and ICE (or ICW).
- c. If certification is expired for more than 18 months, a former Instructor MUST successfully complete a full Instructor Certification Workshop (IDW and ICE).
- d. Reinstatement of lapsed IT and ITE certification will be evaluated by the SEI Department and SEIC Standards Committee on a case by case basis.

3. ACA Certification Challenge Procedures:

ACA Certification may be reviewed any time an Instructor, IT, or ITE is challenged for not meeting appropriate ACA and SEIC standards. Challenges may be initiated by workshop students, Instructors, ITs, ITEs, or the ACA National Office. The SEI Department will coordinate investigations related to challenges. In addition, the ACA National Office may initiate investigations when they discover evidence of inappropriate conduct.

- a. When questions arise regarding an Instructor, Instructor Trainer, or Instructor Trainer Educator's skills or knowledge, a personal conference between challenger and challengee shall be initiated. During this meeting, every effort shall be made to address and correct any perceived deficiencies. This conference may be held via face to face, telephone, email, video conference, or written correspondence.
- b. If the perceived deficiencies can be satisfactorily addressed at the time of the conference, no further action or documentation is needed.
- c. If the deficiencies cannot be satisfactorily addressed at the time of the conference, the challenger and challengee may develop a mutually agreeable plan to address them. This plan must be submitted in writing to the SEI Department within 30 days. The plan may not involve arbitrary revocation of certification.
- d. If the deficiencies cannot be satisfactorily addressed at the time of the conference, and the challenger and challengee cannot develop a mutually agreeable remediation plan, the challenger may notify the SEI Department and institute a formal challenge, as described below. The ACA National Office may independently initiate a formal challenge.
- e. To initiate a formal challenge, the challenger must submit a signed letter or email to the ACA National Office, describing the alleged deficiencies in detail. Details must include a description of when and where the deficiency was observed, a list of other witnesses, and an exact description of the alleged deficiency. Statements such as "their strokes were bad" or "their teaching was ineffective" do not provide adequate detail. Instead, specific details regarding the deficiency must be provided. Supporting evidence such as video, course outlines, and handouts should be included.
 - i. The ACA National Office may independently initiate investigations or formal challenges upon discovery of violations of ACA or SEIC policies. However, before any disciplinary action can be taken against an Instructor, Instructor Trainer, or Instructor Trainer Educator, a challenge must be filed and the challengee given an appropriate opportunity to rebut the challenge.

- f. Within 10 days of receipt, the SEI Department will acknowledge the complaint by written or email notice to the challenger, the challengee and the SEIC Standards Committee. The acknowledgement will list observed deficiencies and any corrections suggested by the challenger.
- g. The SEIC Standards Committee, along with the appropriate ACA National Office staff, will investigate the challenge, and notify all parties involved if disciplinary action is considered. The SEIC Standards Committee may restrict the challengee's certification during the investigation.
- h. The person challenged may rebut to the SEIC Standards Committee by letter, videotape, or in person at regular meetings. Intent to rebut must be emailed or postmarked within 30 days of challenge notice. All ACA Instructors/Instructor Trainers/Instructor Trainer Educators are expected to cooperate with investigations. Both challengee and challenger may be requested to submit video documentation of their paddling and teaching or may be reviewed in-person by a designee of the SEIC Standards Committee. Failure to cooperate with a standards investigation is grounds for summary revocation of certification. Investigations will be completed in a timely fashion. However, due to the volunteer nature of the ACA and the SEIC Standards Committee, investigations may take longer to complete.
- i. After investigating all evidence, the SEIC Standards Committee will issue a written decision in a timely fashion. The SEIC Standards Committee may:
 - i. Find the complaint without merit.
 - ii. Find the complaint valid, and issue a warning to the challengee noting suggested remedy.
 - iii. Place the challengee on probation, with a mandated corrective plan. The challengee is responsible for correcting the deficiency and must be successfully reassessed by an appropriately certified IT or ITE, or by a designee of the SEIC Standards Committee. The evaluator will be responsible for reporting the evaluation to the SEI Department.
 - i. If the challengee successfully addresses the situation during the probationary period, the certification will be reinstated with the existing expiration date.
 - ii. If the challengee does not remedy the situation within one year of being placed on probation, their certification will be terminated. Recertification will require successful completion of an appropriate IDW and ICE (or ICW).
 - iv. Summarily terminate the challengee's certification. Recertification will require successful completion of an appropriate IDW and ICE (or ICW).

4. Voluntary Downgrades:

An Instructor, IT, or ITE may voluntarily downgrade one or more levels (e.g. L4 to L3) and/or grades (e.g. ITE to IT) during or at the end of a four-year certification period. The applicant must:

- a. Submit the request to the SEI Department in writing.
- b. Provide effective date(s) that cannot be later than the applicable certification(s) expiration date(s).
- c. The SEI Department will implement the downgrade(s) with the requested effective date(s).

5. Voluntary Retirements:

An Instructor, IT, or ITE may voluntarily retire (give up one or more certifications) during a four-year certification period, while remaining an ACA member. The applicant must:

- a. Submit the request to the SEI Department in writing. Email is acceptable.
- b. Provide effective date(s) that cannot be later than the applicable certification(s) expiration date(s).

- c. The SEI Department will implement the retirement(s) with the requested effective date(s) and adjust membership dues, as needed, to comply with current policy.

Chapter 6 - ACA Courses and Workshops

1. ACA Skills and Assessment Courses:

ACA Skills and Assessment Courses are taught by ACA Instructors holding appropriate certification. ACA course outlines are made available by the SEI Department and are available to view and download from the ACA website. Participants in skills courses may receive a participation card. However, skills courses do not provide documentation that a particular skill was mastered. Assessment courses include a formal evaluation template designed to assess mastery of a defined skill set. Upon successful completion of an assessment course, participants who are current ACA members will receive an assessment credential from the ACA National Office, housed within the CMS.

- a. Instructors shall notify the ACA National Office of courses they have taught by completing the official course reporting processes within the CMS, which must be submitted within thirty days of the course completion. Courses insured by the ACA must be reported within the timeframe established by ACA Insurance Guidelines.
- b. Instructors are encouraged to use safety and instructional materials approved by the SEIC and available from the ACA National Office. Other resources may be used if the material is technically up-to-date.
- c. Instructor to student ratios and maximum course sizes shall not exceed those established by the ACA SEIC Board and the Discipline Committees. Course sizes are provided on ACA course outlines published on the ACA website.
 - a. For skills courses: when determining maximum course size using ratios, Instructors may use qualified assistants to increase skills course sizes up to the maximum amount established by the discipline and as provided on ACA course outlines published on the ACA website.
 - b. For assessment courses: when determining maximum course size using ratios, Instructors may use qualified assistants to increase course sizes up to the maximum amount established by the discipline and as provided on ACA assessment course outlines published on the ACA website. For additional assessment participants beyond the course maximum, another separate course would need to be created by another appropriately certified Instructor or Instructor Trainer. The 2 courses could be run in conjunction.
 - a. Note: Instructor(s) and qualified assistants are NOT included in the assessment course size maximum. However, all in attendance must be listed on the course roster in the ACA Course Management System (CMS).
 - b. Note concerning practice students:
 - a. If the course lead is an Instructor, practice students MUST be included in the course size maximum.
 - b. If the course lead is an Instructor Trainer or Instructor Trainer Educator, practice students may be added beyond the course size maximum at the discretion of the IT/ITE. When using practice students beyond the published maximum course size, the IT/ITE must include explanation in course notes on the ACA Course Management System (CMS).

2. Instructor Development Workshop and Certification Exams:

Instructor Development Workshops (IDWs) are intended to develop the skills and knowledge of Instructor Candidates. The IDW is a prerequisite to an Instructor Certification Exam (ICE) for new ACA Instructor Candidates. ITs may issue participation cards or award appropriate skills assessments to all IDW participants. Instructor Certification Exams (ICEs) test the knowledge, skills, and proficiency of Instructor Candidates. Upon successful completion of an ICE, candidates are awarded Instructor certification. *Instructor Trainers may offer stand-alone IDWs or ICEs, and also may offer certification workshops where IDWs and ICEs are combined (known as an ICW). In addition, ITs may mentor individual instructor candidates according to the process outlined below in Chapter 6.2.e.*

- a. The SEIC has established minimum IDW and ICE hours to provide adequate workshop content coverage, to provide appropriate evaluative feedback, to maintain safety, and to allow ample opportunities for numerous candidates to practice teaching and assessing. These course time requirements appear on official course outlines, and include on and off water instruction, but not logistical, management, or travel time.
- b. Each IDW or ICE shall have a **minimum of three** candidates enrolled, to allow practice in class management and to provide adequate exchange of teaching ideas. In IDWs, ICEs, or ICWs with student: instructor ratios lower than 3:1, each IDW, ICE or ICW shall have a minimum of two candidates and a maximum up to the number allowed by student: instructor ratios as stated on the relevant instructor criteria documents. The SEI Department may authorize an exception to allow an IDW, ICE, or ICW to occur with a course minimum of fewer than three participants. **As used herein, the term "candidate(s)" includes any participant attending for the purpose of obtaining a new certification, update a current certification, or upgrade a current certification.**
- c. When determining maximum course size using ratios, ITs and ITEs may use qualified assistants to increase course sizes up to the maximum amount established by the discipline and as provided on ACA instructor criteria documents published on the ACA website.
 - a. Practice students may be added beyond the course size maximum at the discretion of the IT/ITE. When using practice students beyond the published maximum course size, the IT/ITE must include explanation in course notes on the ACA Course Management System (CMS).
- d. Instructor Workshops shall combine no more than 2 consecutive levels of certification. For example, L1-L2, L2-L3, or L3-L4 would be permitted. However, L1-L4 would not be permitted.
- e. Official Instructor Certification Report Forms are available in the CMS and shall be completed within 30 days of the course completion.
- f. ITs may mentor Instructor Candidates while co-teaching skills courses. Instructor Candidates who pursue certification via mentoring must meet all instructor performance objectives outlined within the published instructor criteria documents. In addition, Instructor Candidates must meet all prerequisites for certification, and must co-teach at least three skills courses with the mentoring IT at the desired level of certification.
- g. Multi-discipline IDWs, ICEs, ICWs, or updates must have an appropriately certified IT for each represented discipline. ITs certified in multiple disciplines may lead multi-discipline IDWs, ICEs, ICWs, and Updates, but all appropriate performance goals must be met for each represented discipline.
- h. Requests for exceptions to IDW, ICE, or ICW requirements must be made prior to the start of the course. Requests for exceptions must be made in writing to the SEI Department.
- i. Course evaluations must be completed within the CMS and will later be collected by the SEI Department. Course evaluations are required for all IDWs, ICEs, ICWs, and updates.

3. Instructor Updates:

Instructor Updates are conducted to provide instructors with a forum for continuing education, updates on ACA policies and procedures, and to ensure ongoing maintenance of ACA standards. Instructor Updates are not intended to be ICEs. However, during an update, Instructors should be prepared to appropriately demonstrate or teach any skill they are certified to teach.

- a. Updates may be coordinated by the SEIC, Discipline Committees, the ACA National Office or individual ITs. Updates must include an appropriately certified IT for each discipline represented.
- b. Updates must be reported via the CMS within 30 days of completion.
- c. Updates may be conducted individually or in groups less than the IDW/ICE minimums. Updates may be offered in conjunction with skills courses if ITs include an additional module that reviews ACA policies and procedures. ITs are strongly encouraged to place update courses on the ACA calendar to maximize opportunities for Instructors' continuing education.

4. Instructor Trainer Updates:

Instructor Trainer Updates are conducted to provide Instructor Trainers with a forum for continuing education, with updates on ACA policies and procedures, and to ensure ongoing maintenance of ACA standards.

- a. IT Updates may be coordinated by the SEIC, Discipline Committees, the ACA National Office or individual ITEs. IT Updates must include an appropriately certified ITE from each represented discipline.
- b. IT Updates must be reported via the CMS within 30 days of completion.

5. Instructor Trainer Development Workshops (ITDWs):

ITDWs are conducted by ITEs only, and provide a pathway for the development of new Instructor Trainers. Within the IT certification process, ITDWs may replace the co-teach requirement as described in Chapter 3.3.d. ITDWs are most often are conducted in new or small disciplines.

ITDWs shall be coordinated by the SEIC and SEI Department, as needed for discipline development. ITDWs must include an appropriately certified ITE for each discipline represented.

6. Instructor Endorsements:

Instructor Endorsements allow certified instructors who have completed a specific endorsement course to offer additional skills courses and utilize ACA insurance to do so. Examples include but are not limited to: kayak or canoe Rolling, kayak or canoe camping, paddlecraft fishing, SUP yoga, etc. Instructor Endorsements are offered to certified instructors by appropriately credentialed ITs or ITEs who have met at least one of the following requirements:

- a. Have successfully completed the relevant endorsement program provided by another qualified IT or ITE who holds the endorsement being offered.
- b. Hold current IT or ITE certification in a discipline and level in which the endorsement material is a standard component of the ICW process *Example: Kayak Rolling is a standard instructor criteria for all River Kayak and Coastal Kayak Instructors at Level 4 and Level 5, therefore all L4 and L5 Instructors automatically hold the kayak rolling endorsement and can offer the kayak rolling skills course.* Likewise, all River Kayak and Coastal Kayak Level 4 and Level 5 ITs and ITEs may offer the Kayak Rolling endorsement to Instructors.

- c. ITs pursuing an endorsement within a newly developed discipline or program may apply for a waiver to the SEIC Standards Committee to operate provisionally, in accordance with the corresponding program roll out plan, to encourage discipline development.

Additionally:

- Endorsement courses must be reported via the CMS within 30 days of completion.
- Endorsements generally do not have specific maintenance requirements and remain valid as long as the Instructor Certification to which they are attached remains valid. However, the Adaptive Paddling and Advanced Communications Endorsements do have specific maintenance requirements; refer to the relevant Endorsement Criteria document for more information.

SEIC Policy Manual Addenda & Appendices

Addenda: Approved Changes to the Policy Manual

Date of Change	Policy Manual Change	Approval
3/18/2009	Complete revision of policy manual	ACA Board - Exec Committee
6/14/2009	First Aid & CPR Requirements	ACA Board of Directors
6/25/2009	Addition of Appendix II and related wording	SEIC - Exec Committee
9/16/2009	Addition of Appendix III and related wording	ACA Board - Exec Committee
10/2/2011	Addition to First Aid & CPR Requirements	ACA Board of Directors
9/29/2013	IT Upgrade - Chapter 3.3.g	ACA Board of Directors
9/11/2014	Modification of Chapter 6.2.b and 2.4.e	SEIC - Exec Committee
2/22/2015	Changes to Chapters 3.2.b.iii, 2.4.b, 3.4.a, 4.4.a, 5.1.a and 5.2.a	ACA Board of Directors
10/22/2015	Changes to Chapters 3.3, 6.1.c, 6.2.b & EEC	ACA Board of Directors
2/10/2016	Simplification of EEC	ACA Board of Directors
3/1/2019	Addition to Chapter 6: Section 6	SEIC - Exec Committee
10/4/2019	Acceptance of digital copies of waivers submitted for insured ACA instructional programs	ACA Board of Directors
10/4/2019	Removal of Chapter 2.D.6 regarding use of Endorsements as Instructor Updates. Effective January 1, 2020: Endorsements may no longer be used as an instructor update as related to certification maintenance requirements	SEIC Board, ACA Board of Directors
2/23/2020	Addition of Chapter 1.5	ACA Board of Directors
10/16/2020	Procedures for voluntary downgrades and certification retirements. Also, only one ITC may claim co-teach IDW/ICE credit	SEIC Board
10/30/2021	Revision of Chapter 1.1	SEIC Board
3/19/2022	Revision of Chapter 6.2., subsections b and c	SEIC Board, ACA Board of Directors
12/3/2022	Revision of selection criteria for Instructors, Instructor Trainers, and Instructor Trainer Educators, and additional wording regarding course size maximums	SEIC Board, ITE Leadership Group

3/27/2023	Addition of mentorship framework criteria for ITE applicants and renewals: Chapter 4.3.d, 4.3.e, 4.4.c, and 4.4.d.	SEIC Board
3/1/2025	Revision to definition of "candidate" in a certification course, as outlined in Chapter 6.2.b.	SEIC Board, ACA Board of Directors

Appendix I. Glossary of Common Terms

- ACA: American Canoe Association
- EEC: Essential Eligibility Criteria
- PSF: Paddlesports Safety Facilitator
- CPL: Community Paddlesports Leader
- TL: Trip Leader
- IC: Instructor Candidate
- IDW: Instructor Development Workshop (mandated prerequisite to ICE participation)
- ICE: Instructor Certification Exam (required for certification - may not be waived)
- ICW: Instructor Certification Workshop (both IDW and ICE)
- IT: Instructor Trainer: person authorized by the ACA to certify an Instructor within a discipline at a specific level
- ITC: Instructor Trainer Candidate: person who aspires to become an IT and has properly registered with the SEI Department
- ITE: Instructor Trainer Educator: a person authorized by the ACA to mentor IT Candidates. ITEs are the highest tier within the ACA certification structure, and they are good will ambassadors of the ACA and paddlesports
- ITDW: Instructor Trainer Development Workshop
- SEI: Safety Education and Instruction Department of the ACA National Office
- SEIC: Safety Education and Instruction Council: a compilation of various ACA committees and individuals, the SEIC is advisory to the ACA Board of Directors, the SEIC Chair has a seat on the ACA Board of Directors
- CMS: Course Management System: Required online tool for the registering and reporting of ACA courses as well as submission of additional related course documentation

Appendix II: First Aid and CPR Requirements

1. ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, and Instructor Trainer Educators are required to maintain venue appropriate first aid and age appropriate CPR training from a nationally recognized first aid and CPR provider throughout the term of their ACA certification. First aid and CPR courses must include hands-on practice and skills demonstration. Online-only first aid and CPR certification is NOT permitted.
2. If an Instructor, Instructor Trainer, or Instructor Trainer Educator's first aid or age appropriate CPR certification expires during the period of his or her ACA certification, the ACA certification is no longer valid. Instructors, Instructor Trainers, and Instructor Trainer Educators whose certifications are not valid are not eligible for ACA insurance coverage.

3. Failure to maintain these certifications could lead to a liability claim if a participant is injured in an ACA course. The ACA and its insurance company reserve the right to deny insurance coverage to Instructors, Instructor Trainers, and Instructor Trainer Educators who have not properly maintained their first aid and CPR certifications.
4. Proof of current first aid and CPR certification must accompany each insurance request. Copies of current first aid and CPR documentation are accepted within the CMS only.
5. Insurance requests will not be processed or approved if an ACA Instructor, Instructor Trainer, or Instructor Trainer Educator's first aid or CPR certification expires before the completion date of the proposed course.
6. The term "appropriate level" means that the individual Instructor, Instructor Trainer, or Instructor Trainer Educator will have a level of first aid and age appropriate CPR training that is prudent for the venue in which they are teaching. For example:
 - a. *If you only teach adults in a swimming pool with lifeguard supervision, then some type of basic First Aid training and adult CPR might be appropriate.*
 - b. *If you teach in a remote river or coastal environment several hours from definitive medical care, then some level of wilderness First Aid training and more extensive CPR training might be appropriate.*
7. At a minimum, all ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, and Instructor Trainer Educators must have American Red Cross Standard first aid and age appropriate CPR, or its equivalent from another nationally recognized provider.
8. When applicable, ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, and Instructor Trainer Educators should verify what is an acceptable first aid and CPR certification for the area where they are teaching. For example: *Certain state or federal entities/agencies might require a certain level of first aid and CPR training in order to legally operate within the properties they manage.*
9. ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, and Instructor Trainer Educators are encouraged to become certified in advanced levels of first aid and CPR training.
10. If first aid or CPR certification lapses, Instructor, Instructor Trainer, and Instructor Trainer Educator certification can be reinstated by renewing the First Aid and CPR certification.
11. To determine if First Aid and CPR courses or certifications meet the standards requirements, contact the ACA's SEI Department.
12. Implementation Plan:
 - a. Starting 1/1/2010, all newly certified ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, and Instructor Trainer Educators must have and maintain first aid and age appropriate CPR.
 - b. Starting 1/1/2011, all ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, and Instructor Trainer Educators certified prior to 1/1/2010 must have and maintain first aid and age appropriate CPR.
13. At the October 2, 2011 SEIC and ACA Board of Director's meeting, the phrase "First Aid and CPR courses must include hands-on practice and skills demonstration," was approved to be added appropriately throughout the SEIC Policy Manual.

Appendix III - Essential Eligibility Criteria

ACA courses are open to all individuals who acknowledge the ability to perform the following Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC):

1. Breathe independently (i.e., not require medical devices to sustain breathing)
2. Independently maintain sealed airway passages while under water
3. Independently hold head upright without neck / head support
4. Manage personal care independently or with assistance of a companion
5. Manage personal mobility independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance
6. Follow instructions and effectively communicate independently or with assistance of a companion
7. Independently turn from face-down to face-up and remain floating face up while wearing a properly fitted life jacket*
8. Get on / off or in / out of a paddlecraft independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
9. Independently get out and from under a capsized paddlecraft*
10. Remount or reenter the paddlecraft following deep water capsize independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
11. Maintain a safe body position while attempting skills, activities and rescues listed in the appropriate Course Outline, and have the ability to recognize and identify to others when such efforts would be unsafe given your personal situation*

To participate in adaptive programs, participants must acknowledge only the first six EEC listed above.

Adaptive Paddling Endorsed Instructors are trained to work with individuals who need or wish to learn skills required for ACA EEC#7-#11.

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