



ASP CERTIFICATION HANDBOOK

For Certification as a:

- »»» Strategic Management Professional (SMP) — Level II
- »»» Strategic Planning Professional (SPP) — Level I

For Designation as a:

- »»» Strategic Planning Associate (SPA)



ASSOCIATION FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

ASP CERTIFICATION HANDBOOK, SECOND EDITION, NOV 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Intention and Acknowledgements.....	iv
1.0 ASP CERTIFICATION PROGRAM INTRODUCTION	1
1.01 Orientation to the Handbook and the Program	1
1.02 2012 Vision and Objectives	2
1.03 Governance and Operations	2
1.04 Contact Information.....	3
1.05 Non-Discrimination Statement	3
2.0 ASP CERTIFICATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW	4
2.01 Family of Credentials.....	4
2.02 Exam Fee Structure	6
2.03 Exam Calendar & Deadlines.....	6
3.0 CERTIFICATION PROCESS AND FORMS	8
3.01 Certification Process Steps and Responsibilities.....	8
3.02 Qualifying Application.....	9
3.03 PTC Test Center Application	10
3.04 Exam Candidate Eligibility Notice	10
4.0 APPLICATION PROCEDURE	11
4.01 Overview	11
4.02 Submit Qualifying Application	11
4.03 Special Requests.....	12
4.04 Eligibility Review Of Qualifying Application.....	12
4.05 Business Acumen.....	13
4.06 End of Limited Grandfathering.....	13
5.0 EXAMINATION PROCEDURES	13
5.01 Exam Frequency And Format.....	14
5.02 ASP Notice To Successful Exam Candidates.....	14
5.03 PTC Test Center Application and Eligibility Notice	14
5.04 Test Center Locations	15
5.05 Scheduling A Test Center Exam Appointment.....	15
5.06 Procedures To Reschedule An Examination Appointment.....	15
5.07 Rules For Examination	16

6.0 EXAMINATION RESULTS & NOTIFICATION	17
6.01 Exam Scoring.....	17
6.02 Reporting Of Exam Results	17
6.03 Confidentiality Of Test Results.....	17
6.04. Certification Notification.....	17
6.05 Appeals On Eligibility	17
7.0 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE	18
7.01 Ethical Behavior.....	18
7.02. Revocation Of Certification	18
7.03 Other Discipline.....	18
8.0 RECERTIFICATION PROCESS	19
9.0 EXAM PREPARATION RESOURCES	20
9.01 Exam Practice: PTC Testing Software & ASP Sample Questions.....	20
9.02 Educational Programs	20
9.03 How to Prepare to Pass the ASP Examination	21
9.04 Reference And Support Materials & ASP Website Links	22
APPENDIX I :	
<i>Detailed Individual Credential Requirements and Expectations</i>	25
APPENDIX II:	
<i>How To Develop Exam Questions For Recertification</i>	27
APPENDIX III :	
<i>Summary of Important Administrative Information For ASP Certification</i>	29

Intention and Acknowledgements

The ASP Certification Handbook is intended for those interested in the ASP Standards and Certification Program for credentialing strategy professionals.

The purpose of this edition is to:

- provide an accurate overview of the current Certification Program process, current details of the Application and Exam Procedures, and other information relevant to prospective and current Certification Program Applicants and Candidates
- correct inconsistencies and inadvertent omissions in the first Edition (which was published before the actual Certification process and procedures were implemented)
- reflect a more user-friendly format, with a revised and detailed Table of Contents, and active links to Certification webpages

See Appendix III for a **Summary of Important Administrative Information**.

As the *ASP Professional Standards and Certification Program for Strategic Planning and Strategic Management* continues to evolve, this Handbook will be updated periodically. The overall ASP website will be revamped in 2012 and webpage links listed may change, but all relevant information will remain available from the ASP website Certification pages at www.strategyplus.org.

There is a separate *ASP Handbook for Registered Educational Providers (REPs)* for those wishing to learn more about the ASP REP Program that can be downloaded from the REP pages of the ASP Website.

The original Certification Handbook was first developed under the leadership of Stephen Haines in collaboration with members of the ASP Core Certification Program Team, and designed and produced by Jenna Murobayashi, Senior Graphic Designer of the Haines Centre for Strategic Management. For original contributors, see [The ASP Certification Body of Knowledge Development Overview](#) .

This Second Edition was revised in Fall of 2011 by Joyce Reynolds-Sinclair, Ph.D., in consultation with Richard Condit, Janice Laureen, and Marie Muscella, and with feedback from other members of the ASP Certification Operations, Application, and REPs Teams, Sherry Frier of Professional Testing Corporation, and numerous ASP members who volunteered to review earlier drafts. Kay Redditt of My Virtual Assistant provided administrative services.

Note: The entire Standards and Certification Program is sponsored and copyrighted by the Association for Strategic Planning. This product is available for use as a FREE unlimited reproduction item. Users are authorized to reproduce and share pages as needed but must follow all copyright laws. Copies cannot be resold and must carry the Association for Strategic Planning name, logo, and www.strategyplus.org website.

1.0 ASP CERTIFICATION PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

1.01 Orientation to the Handbook and the Program

Welcome to the **Association for Strategic Planning (ASP) Certification Handbook**, Second Edition, Nov.2011, which reflects current information about the *ASP Professional Standards and Certification Program for Strategic Planning and Strategic Management*. This Handbook contains all information needed by Applicants and Exam Candidates for an ASP Credential or Designation, including available credentials and eligibility requirements, testing periods and deadline dates, forms to complete, administrative and examination procedures, and other resources. To access the ASP Certification webpages and related materials, go to www.strategyplus.org and select the Certification link.

The ASP Certification Program is based on the **ASP Standards, Competencies and Body of Knowledge Framework (BOK Framework)** which was developed by leaders in the field of strategic planning and management to guide the professional certification of strategic planning and management professionals in the United States as well as internationally. ASP envisions this framework emerging as the professional foundation for the fields of Strategic Planning and Strategic Management. For history and conceptual background of the ASP Standards and Certification Program, see the see [The ASP Certification Body of Knowledge Development Overview](#).

ASP offers two certifications, the Level I **Strategic Planning Professional (SPP)** and the Level II **Strategic Management Professional (SMP)**, and a designation, the **Strategic Planning Associate (SPA)**. All are described in the [ASP Family of Credentials](#) matrix on the ASP Certification home page and in individual credential level pages in Appendix I of this handbook and also on the ASP website ([SPP](#), [SMP](#), [SPA](#)). The Association also qualifies Registered Educational Providers (REPs) to offer courses and programs in strategic planning and management that align with ASP's BOK Framework, including but not limited to courses to prepare individuals for passing the certification exams. See current REPs and their offerings at [Qualified List of ASP REPs](#).

The certification exams and program offerings from the qualified ASP REPs are based upon the competencies contained in the [BOK Framework](#), which contains 164 core task statements organized by specific competency in the four foundational areas of Lead, Think, Plan and Act. The complete BOK Framework and other supporting material are available for immediate download from the [Body of Knowledge \(BOK\)](#) page of the ASP Certification webpages.

The **BOK and Best Practices Self-Assessment Workbooks** for both the [SPP Level I](#) (with 84 foundational task statements) and [SMP Level II](#) (with 80 higher-level task statements) have extensive background information in addition to the task statements, and are now available electronically for complimentary download direct from the ASP Certification [New Association](#)

[Products](#) webpage, where hardcopies of these Assessment Workbooks may also be purchased directly from ASP.

1.02 Program Vision and Objectives

The vision for the ASP Certification Program is to be:

- A rigorous and prestigious global-level Standards, Competencies and Body of Knowledge for Strategic Planning and Strategic Management, and certification for individual strategic planning and management professionals, both ASP members and non-members.
- Recognized as preeminent in the Strategic Planning and Strategic Management field, and clearly distinguishable from any other certification or certificate program.

The ASP Board launched the ASP Certification Program in 2010 with the following objectives:

1. Establish Strategic Planning and Management as a recognized professional discipline with Lead-Think-Plan-Act as its essential competencies.
2. Provide an objective criterion for organizations to assess the competence of Candidates for staff or consultant positions requiring Strategic Planning and Management expertise.
3. Establish “THE” Body of Knowledge (BOK) in outline form for the profession of Strategic Planning and Management.
4. Establish a robust set of educational programs for assisting individuals in their preparation for initial certification, professional career growth and recertification by current “best in class” experts and providers in the “industry”.
5. Establish ASP as the premier association in Strategic Planning and Strategic Management for both internal and external strategy planning and management professionals, worldwide.

1.03 Governance and Operations

The four entities involved in the governance and operations of the ASP Certification program are:

- The **ASP Board**, which oversees the certification program’s policy decisions, operations and budget.
- The **Certification Operations Team**, which is the managing entity of the certification program and responsible for granting credentials and maintaining the integrity of the

program. A minimum of two Board Members must serve on the Operations Team and REPs cannot serve on the Team.

- The **Certification Application Team**, which has primary responsibility for review and scoring of certification applications. A minimum of two Board Members must serve on the Application Team. Members must be certified Strategic Management Professionals, and any member of the Team closely involved with an applicant must recuse him/herself from any decision-making for that application.
- The **REP Qualification Team**, which has primary responsibility for the active recruitment of new REPs, the review of REP applications as the basis for identifying new REPs, and the provision of quality educational programs. A minimum of two Board Members must serve on the REP Qualification Team. REPs cannot form a majority of the team membership.

The **Program Coordinator**, who is the day-to-day Administrator of the entire Certification Program, reports to the Operations Team. Questions concerning eligibility for the examination and/or status of your application should be directed to the Program Coordinator. Send all ASP Certification inquiries to: CertificationProgram@strategyplus.org.

Professional Testing Corporation (PTC) (www.ptcny.com) is the independent testing company that manages the ASP Exam Testing Program. PTC uses computer test centers run by PSI Testing.

1.04 Contact Information

Association for Strategic Planning (ASP) www.strategyplus.org
12021 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 286, Los Angeles, California 90025-1200
Phone: 877-816-2080 Fax: 323-954-0507

Certification Program email: CertificationProgram@strategyplus.org
Voicemail may be left at the ASP phone: 877.816.2080.

Registered Educational Professional (REPs) Program email: CertificationREPs@strategyplus.org
Voicemail may be left at the ASP phone: 877.816.2080.

Professional Testing Corporation (PTC) www.ptcny.com
1350 Broadway – 17th Floor, New York, New York 10018, (212) 356-0660

1.05 Non-Discrimination Statement




The Association for Strategic Planning does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, marital status or handicapped condition.

2.0 ASP CERTIFICATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

2.01 Family of Credentials

The following matrix (located on the ASP [Certification Home](#) page) provides a comprehensive summary of the two credentials and one designation associated with the ASP Certification Program.

ASP CERTIFICATION FAMILY OF CREDENTIALS (updated October 2011)

<u>Credential Logo</u>			
<u>Credential Title</u>	SMP: Strategic Management Professional Level II	SPP: Strategic Planning Professional Level I	SPA: Strategic Planning Associate
<u>Role</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works with C-Level Executives and their Teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works with Executives Managers, and their Teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student, Apprentice, or New to Strategic Planning
<u>Eligibility Requirements</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 years (minimum) as an experienced internal Executive or external Consultant leading multiple Strategic Planning assignments College Graduate or 10 years work experience Holds SPP credential or meets all of its requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 years (minimum) in an internal planning role or as a junior external planning consultant College Graduate with relevant degree or 5 years work experience in strategic planning or related field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet ASP criteria for Student membership⁴ & in last year of a degree program (Undergraduate or Graduate), currently serve in an apprentice role, OR has recently transferred into a planning role Has a senior planning professional mentor, preferably ASP certified No prior experience in Planning nor demonstration of Business Acumen Agree to apply for SPP within 3 years
<u>Application Process: Steps to Obtaining Credential</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit ASP Qualifying Application and pay Application Fee Upon qualification, submit PTC Test Center Application and pay Exam Fee Take and pass Exam Level II for SMP <p><i>Note: ASP Pioneers were Exam Exempt as they created the Exam Questions.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit ASP Qualifying Application and pay Application Fee Upon qualification, submit PTC Test Center Application and pay Exam Fee Take and pass Exam Level I for SPP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit ASP Qualifying Application and pay Application Fee Upon qualification, submit PTC Test Center Application and pay Exam Fee Take and pass SPP exam to demonstrate knowledge of the field prior to gaining requisite professional experience Partial scholarship may be available
<u>Exam Information:</u> <i>Exam administered for ASP by PTC¹</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 hours and 160 questions SMP Exam covers Level II in ASP BOK Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 hours and 160 questions SPP Exam covers Level I in ASP BOK Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 hours and 160 questions SPA candidate takes SPP Exam, which covers Level I in ASP BOK Framework
<u>Recertification Requirements²</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every five years, submit an Intention to Recertify Retake Exam or submit 9 CEUs³ Provide 10 potential SMP Exam Questions on Level II competencies Pay Recertification fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every three years, submit an Intention to Recertify Retake Exam or submit 6 CEU³ Provide 10 potential SPP Exam Questions on Level I competencies Pay Recertification fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designation good for up to 3 years No renewal Must apply for SPP exam within 3 years to achieve SPP credential

¹ ASP contracts with Professional Testing Corporation (PTC), an independent testing company, www.ptcny.com .

²Recertification requirements and fees are currently under review and may be revised as of 2012.

³Contact Hours Calculation: 1 CEU = 10 contact hours. ASP REPs hours are double credit (5 REP contact hours = 1 CEU). ASP REPs (i.e. Registered Educational Providers) are independent vendors qualified by ASP to teach its Body of Knowledge.

⁴ For student membership criteria, see ASP [Student Discount Policy](#) on the ASP Membership/Application webpage.

2.02 Exam Fee Structure

ASP CERTIFICATION FEE STRUCTURE

Fee Structure (payable only in USD)	For Members	For Non-Members
Qualifying Application Fee:	\$100	\$150
Candidate Exam Fee: To be paid ONLY after Certification Application is approved	\$300	\$400
International Test Center Surcharge: To set up Exam Location outside of US & Canada; Included in Exam Fee when home country not US or Canada	\$100 surcharge	\$100 surcharge
Testing Period Transfer Fee To be paid ONLY AFTER ASP approval for test period transfer.	\$150	\$150
Recertification Fee for SMP and SPP*:	Under review	Under review

2.03 Exam Calendar & Deadlines

ASP Certification Exam Testing Calendar & Deadlines

SPRING 2012 TESTING

Period #12-1A: only on Wednesday, May 2, 2012, 3-6 p.m.

Exam Option A: A paper and pencil exam on the last day of the ASP Conference.

Period #12-1B: Saturday, May 5 – Saturday, May 19, 2012

Exam Option B: Candidates take exam electronically at a monitored testing center.

Deadlines:

Friday, Feb. 24, 2012: for ASP Qualifying Application

Friday, Mar. 30, 2012: for PTC Test Center Application (a two-page scannable document)

Fall 2012 TESTING

Period #12-2: Saturday, October 6 – Saturday, Oct 20, 2012

Candidates take exam electronically at a monitored testing center.

Deadlines:

Friday, Jul. 27, 2012: for ASP Qualifying Application

Friday, Aug. 31, 2012: for PTC Test Center Application (two-page scannable document)

Fall 2013 Testing is anticipated to follow the same Spring/Fall schedule. Specific dates will be set in mid-2012, once ASP Annual Conference date is established.

Note: for International and Special Needs Applicants

Deadlines for applications requesting a non-US or Canada testing location or special accommodations are due no less than FOUR WEEKS BEFORE standard deadlines. Therefore, ASP Qualifying Applications must be submitted no less than TWELVE weeks before the requested testing period and the Test Center Applications submitted no less than EIGHT weeks before the requested testing period. See Section 4.03 of ASP Certification Handbook for details.

Note: Rescheduling Assigned Examination Appointment

Once ASP forwards Test Center Application forms to Professional Testing Corporation, Candidates approved by ASP become formal PTC Candidates for the next upcoming testing period. PTC Candidates may reschedule to a different date within this two-week testing period, free of charge. However, to transfer to a different two-week testing period, Candidates must pay a transfer fee of \$150. This fee is based on cost and is not punitive. There are no refunds of application or exam fees. See Section 5.06 of the ASP Certification Handbook for procedure details.

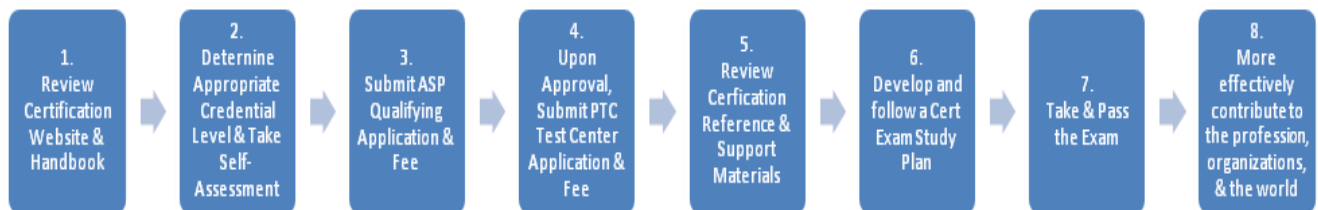
ASP Certification Exam Testing Period History:

Listed below for reference are all past and planned dates of ASP Certification Exam Testing Periods. All exams are taken electronically at proctored testing centers during a two-week period, unless otherwise noted.

- Feb 2010 program launched
with certification of the 25 ASP Pioneers, who created the exam questions
- #10-1 June 2010
- #10-2 Oct 2010
- #11-1 Feb 2011 (paper & pencil exam on last day of ASP Annual conference)
- #11-2 June 2011
- #11-3 October 2011
- #12-1a May 2012 (paper & pencil exam on last day of ASP Annual conference)
- #12-1b May 2012
- #12-2 October 2012

3.0 CERTIFICATION PROCESS AND FORMS

3.01 Certification Process Steps and Responsibilities



Above is a summary of key steps for Certification Applicants and Exam Candidates, and below is a list of specific responsibilities by role.

1. Potential Applicants:

- a. Review Certification Handbook and Website Resources, especially the Self-Assessment Workbooks or BOK Framework.
- b. Determine credential for which meets ASP Professional Certification Eligibility Requirement.
- c. Complete appropriate Self-Assessment(s) and prepare a Certification Study Plan to address areas identified.
- d. Contact Program Coordinator as needed for information or advice.
- e. Complete Qualifying Application.
- f. Submit to ASP the Qualifying Application and Application fee by appropriate deadline, including as needed special requests for International Location or Special Testing Accommodations.

2. ASP:

- a. Program Coordinator reviews Qualifying Applications for completeness and forwards each one for review to two members of the Application Team.
- b. Application Team members review Qualifying Applications to assure sufficient education/experience necessary to be recognized by ASP as a credentialed strategic planning or management professional.
- c. Program Coordinator:
 - May request additional information when such information could make a difference for those who are not approved on first review.
 - Informs Applicants who are not approved of reasons, resources & options.
 - Sends congratulatory email to approved Exam Candidates, with the two-page, scannable Testing Center Application needed by Professional Testing Corporation (PTC) for exam registration.

3. Exam Candidates:
 - a. Complete PTC Test Center Application and submit to ASP by appropriate deadline.
 - b. Submit the Examination Fee to ASP by deadline from appropriate Candidate Exam Fee link on the ASP Certification Application Payment webpage.
4. ASP Program Coordinator forwards Test Center Applications to PTC for processing of exam registration in indicated testing period for exam for which Candidate was approved.
5. PTC will, within SIX weeks prior to the start of the testing period, send via US mail to each Exam Candidate (who returns to ASP a Test Center Application for that Testing Period) the Eligibility Notice necessary to schedule an exam appointment. **If Candidates have not received their Eligibility Notice THREE weeks before the testing period begins, call PTC at 212.356.0660.**
6. Exam Candidates:
 - a. Contact PSI, the firm that runs the testing centers for PTC, to schedule exam appointment using the phone number on the Eligibility Notice.
 - b. Continue execution of Certification Study Plan.
 - c. Take their exam as scheduled, or reschedule per procedure.
 - d. Receive notice of outcome (with total test score and area scores) from PTC within FOUR weeks of close of Testing Period.
7. ASP:
 - a. Sends congratulatory letter and a framed ASP credential certificate and certification pin to newly credentialed professionals, posts their names on the ASP website, and lists them in the upcoming ASP e-newsletter.
 - b. Advises on support resources for Candidates who do not pass.
 - c. Solicits feedback from Examinees on the Certification Process strengths and areas for improvement.
8. Credentialed Professionals more effectively contributes to the profession, associated organizations, and the world.

3.02 Qualifying Application

ASP has a two-part application process that includes a review of a Qualifying Application followed by processing of a PTC Test Center Application. The purpose of the **ASP Certification Qualifying Application** is to determine an Applicant's eligibility to test for the indicated Certification Exam. While the Exam tests for strategic planning and management knowledge based on experience, the Qualifying Application reflects the professional experience/education

necessary for the Applicant to qualify to be recognized by ASP as a credentialed professional upon passing the exam.

In Fall 2011 and per applicant feedback, ASP updated the original Certification Application form with improved instructions and for greater ease of completion by Applicants, and renamed it as a Qualifying Application to better reflect its purpose. The four key components have not changed; they are:

- **Qualifying Application Form:** a writable/savable pdf application form (downloadable from the ASP Certification [Application and Handbook](#) webpage)
- **Case Study (Section 7):** up to 1000 words or two standard pages, following a set format outlined in the application; required for SMP Level II and optional for SPP Level I, but recommended if not strong in educational background. SPA applicants use the Case Study section for an essay describing their motives and interests in obtaining the SPA designation.
- **Professional References (Section 8):** Three (3) references for SMP and two (2) for SPP. At least one must speak to Applicant's ethics. For SPA, submit a statement from Applicant's strategy professional mentor re: the focus of professional development
- **Career Bio(Section 9):** Current professional resume, career bio, curriculum vitae or other description of professional education and experience, especially that related to strategy work

Only complete Qualifying Applications are eligible for review and must be submitted electronically in a single email with Applicants name in the subject and received no later than the established deadline. The revised **ASP Certification Qualifying Application Form** is available on the [Application and Handbook](#) webpage as of Nov. 2011.

3.03 PTC Test Center Application

Only Applicants whom ASP notifies as approved Exam Candidates will receive a PTC Test Center Application form (a two-page scannable document). Upon its return, ASP submits this form to PTC to authorize Candidates to register for their desired Exam Testing Period. The deadline for returning the PTC Test Center Application to ASP is approximately FOUR weeks prior to the Testing Period.

3.04 Exam Candidate Eligibility Notice

PTC sends via US Mail an Eligibility Notice to each registered Exam Candidate. Candidates must have this document before they can schedule a Certification Exam appointment at an available Testing Center within assigned Testing Period. **On the day of the exam, Candidates MUST bring this Eligibility Notice (and current government-issued photo identification) to the Testing Center.**

The **Eligibility Notice** indicates:

- designated Exam and Testing Period
- assigned Eligibility Number
- phone number to call to schedule an examination appointment

If Candidates have not received their Eligibility Notice THREE weeks before the testing period begins, call PTC at 212.356.0660.

4.0 APPLICATION PROCEDURE

4.01 Overview

ASP has a two-part application process that includes review of Applicant's ASP Qualifying Application followed by processing of the PTC Test Center Application. We strongly recommend that Applicants submit their complete Qualifying Application at least **TWO TO FOUR WEEKS IN ADVANCE OF THE DEADLINE** to assure sufficient time to revise if additional information is needed.

To be eligible to take an exam in a specific test period, both the ASP Qualifying Application and PTC Test Center Application must be emailed to CertificationProgram@strategyplus.org and the application and exam fees paid no later than their respective deadlines.

The **ASP Certification Handbook, Second Edition** and the **ASP Qualifying Application** are available as of Nov. 2011 from the [Application and Handbook](#) page of the ASP Certification website.

4.02 Submit Qualifying Application

Submit a complete Qualifying Application in a single email to CertificationProgram@strategyplus.org no later than the deadline date of the preferred testing period, and make application fee payment in US Dollars from the appropriate Application Payment link at the bottom of the ASP [Certification Home](#) page (at <http://www.eventling.com/index.php?file=certificate&companyId=7>).

- For accurate document management, the email's subject line AND all attached documents must include Applicant's full name and the name of the item
- Applications that do not qualify for the requested exam level on a first review are eligible for one rewrite and re-review at no additional fee.
- Qualifying Applications and rewrites arriving after the established deadlines become eligible for the following testing period.

After reviewing a Qualifying Application for completeness, the Program Coordinator forwards it for eligibility review.

- Incomplete Qualifying Applications are returned to the Applicant for correction and re-submittal.
- If an Applicant does not resubmit requested information within 30 days, the application fee will be forfeited.

ASP will assist Applicants in all ways possible to be approved as an Exam Candidate. The Qualifying Application requires thoughtful completion, and Candidates must allow sufficient time to complete the Qualifying Application and collect all required documents prior to submission deadline. Qualifying Applications that are incomplete or have missing documentation are not eligible to be forwarded for review.

4.03 Special Requests

- **International Test Centers (for Non-US/Canada locations):**

It may be possible to establish a special testing center to take a paper and pencil examination in an Exam Candidate's own country for a surcharge of \$100 USD to cover administrative costs. A written request must accompany the PTC Testing Center Application and specify preferred city and country. International Exam Candidates requesting a non-US or Canada testing location must submit their PTC Test Center Application to ASP no less than EIGHT weeks before the testing period to provide the additional time necessary to set up an international location. An International Exam Candidate's ASP Qualifying Application must therefore be submitted no less than TWELVE weeks before the testing period.

- **Special Needs Individuals:**

Special Testing arrangement will be made for Candidates with special needs. With the Test Center Application, submit a completed and signed Request for Special Accommodation Form, available from www.ptcny.com or by contacting PTC at 212.356.0660. Requests for special testing for individuals with special needs must be received no less than EIGHT weeks before the testing period begins. A Special Need's Applicant's ASP Qualifying Application must therefore be submitted no less than TWELVE weeks before the testing period. There is no surcharge to request special test accommodations for special needs individuals.

4.04 Eligibility Review Of Application

Qualifying Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis throughout the year by members of the ASP Certification Application Team. Those arriving after the published deadline become eligible for the following testing period.

Each Qualifying Application is independently reviewed by two members of the Application Team who assess the extent and relevance to strategy work of the Applicant's education and

experience (as documented in the Qualifying Application) to determine eligibility for the requested credential level. The application and its component sections should reflect the full range of Applicant's education and experience, but Applicant does not need entries in every section to qualify. Section weightings are distributed to allow the reviewer to assess for different backgrounds (i.e. academics, consultants, executives/managers, entrepreneurs/business leaders, government, non-profit, and other); per decision of the Certification Operations Team, the section weightings used for scoring are not available to Applicants. Upon conclusion of the review of each Qualifying Application, the Program Coordinator notifies Applicant of application action and next steps.

Applicants are encouraged to submit their Qualifying Applications at least two to four weeks before the desired testing period deadline to assure sufficient time for application revisions, if needed. Allow FOUR weeks from submission date for notification of application status.

4.05 Business Acumen

Professional planners must have a high degree of business acumen and technical/content knowledge about the industry and sector in which they are working. However, this business acumen is not a simple and universal set of standards common to every organization, industry, and sector (public—private—non-profit—international—etc).

Therefore, ASP has elected NOT to attempt to build a common set of business acumen standards, but rather to have a section of the Qualifying Application deal with this important factor in the Applicant's work life and career experiences.

To help Applicants understand and address Business Acumen (Section #6 of the Qualifying Application), ASP's illustrative list of Business Acumen Areas can be found as an independent document on the [Application and Handbook](#) pages of the ASP website as well as in the revised **Qualifying Application** (Section #6), in both of the **ASP Self Assessment Workbooks**, and in the **BOK Overview and Development** document (p. 15-17). Find links to these documents in Handbook Section 9.04.

4.06 End Of Limited SMP Grandfathering

Holders of the SMP Certification are to have mastered the competencies in the entire *ASP Body of Knowledge Framework*. However the BOK has been split into Level I and Level II examinations, and the SMP exam only tests the more advanced Level II competencies in the BOK. During the initial implementation of ASP's Standards and Certification Program, a "grandfathering" provision was established so that experienced professionals would not need to take both exams.

In Oct. 2011, the ASP Board eliminated this limited "Grandfathering" provision and voted that all applicants who qualify for the SMP certification exam can take the SMP exam directly. Therefore, all experienced strategy professionals who meet eligibility criteria may directly apply for the SMP Level II credential without first holding the SPP Level I.

5.0 EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

5.01 Exam Frequency And Format

Both the Level I SPP and Level II SMP ASP Certification Exams are administered twice a year at computer-based testing facilities during established two-week testing periods, and once a year as paper & pencil exams on the last afternoon of the annual ASP conference. While there is just one two-week, Saturday to Saturday Testing Period in the fall, there is a two-part Testing Period in the Spring: a paper and pencil exam at the end of the annual ASP conference, and then electronic exam in the two-week period following the conference.

5.02 ASP Notice To Successful Exam Candidates

Upon Applicant's qualifying to take an ASP Certification Exam, the Program Coordinator forwards an email extending congratulations on becoming an Exam Candidate and specifying next step details; this email has the two-page, scannable PTC Test Center Application attached. Candidates are eligible to take the Certification Exam for the level at which they were approved in any of the upcoming three testing periods after their notification.

Test Center Applications may be submitted immediately for the upcoming Testing Period, or for either of the following two successive periods, i.e. a Candidate approved for Fall 2011, can apply for Testing Periods in Fall 2011, Spring 2012, or Fall 2012.

Any Candidate who does not pass the first exam administration retains Exam Candidate status and eligibility to retake the exam for the remaining one or two periods; however the Candidate must complete a new Test Center Application and submit a new Exam Fee.

5.03 PTC Test Center Application and Eligibility Notice

Candidates submit a completed PTC Test Center Application form and Exam Fee payment to ASP by the Test Center Application deadline for the upcoming Testing Period. Upon receipt of both form and payment, ASP forwards Test Center Applications to PTC for processing.

Once PTC receives and processes Candidate's PTC Test Center Application and verifies eligibility, Candidate is officially registered in the PTC system and obliged to take the designated Exam within the testing period requested.

PTC sends via US mail an Eligibility Notice to each registered Exam Candidate, who must have this document before scheduling a Certification Exam appointment at an available Testing Center within the assigned Testing Period. **This Eligibility Notice plus current government issued photo identification must be presented to gain admission to the testing center.** If Candidate has not received an Eligibility Notice or other correspondence at least THREE weeks before the first day of the Testing Period, contact PTC directly at 212.356.0660 and inform ASP.

5.04 Test Center Locations

To find the nearest Testing Center, go to <http://www.ptcny.com/cbt/sites.htm>. While anyone may look for possible Test Center locations at any time, Candidates CANNOT request a specific site location without the Eligibility Number given on the **PTC Eligibility Notice**. This notice is only sent to Candidate after the **Test Center Application** is processed by ASP and then PTC. Candidates should allow up to TEN days from date of submitting PTC Test Center Application and paying Exam fee before initiating a follow-up inquiry about the receipt of Eligibility Notice; however Eligibility Notices are not sent until SIX weeks before the beginning of the testing period.

5.05 Scheduling A Test Center Exam Appointment

The Eligibility Notice indicates:

- designated Exam and Testing Period
- assigned Eligibility Number
- phone number to call to schedule an examination appointment

Important Note:

Appointment times are first-come/first-serve, so Applicants should schedule their appointment to take the exam as soon as possible upon receipt of the Eligibility Notice to maximize likelihood of testing at a preferred location and on a preferred date. PSI is the firm with which PTC contracts to run the testing centers; its phone number is provided on the PTC Eligibility Notice or can be obtained by contacting PTC or ASP.

5.06 Procedures To Reschedule An Examination Appointment

To Change an Exam Date once Testing Period has been assigned:

Once ASP forwards the PTC Test Center Application form to Professional Testing Corporation, ASP Exam Candidate becomes a formal PTC Candidate for the next upcoming testing period. After calling PSI to schedule a testing appointment, Candidate may reschedule to a different date within this two-week testing period, free of charge, by calling PSI at least two business days before the originally scheduled testing date. However, to transfer to a different two-week testing period, Candidate must pay a Transfer Fee of \$150. This rescheduling fee is based on cost and is not punitive. There are no refunds of application or exam fees.

- **No Fee to CHANGE WITHIN assigned testing period**

To cancel an examination appointment or reschedule to a different date or location within the two-week testing period, call PSI using the phone number on the Eligibility no later than noon, Eastern Standard Time, of the second business day PRIOR to the scheduled exam appointment to see if a change is possible, and inform ASP of any changes that are made.

- **\$150 Fee to TRANSFER to a later Testing Period**

To request a transfer to the next testing period, a transfer request should be submitted to ASP with the Transfer Fee of \$150. Both the transfer request and the fee must be received within 30 days after the original examination date for the transfer to be granted. The rescheduling fee is based on cost, and is not punitive in nature. Candidate is responsible for calling PSI in advance of the date to cancel any original examination appointment.

- If Candidate is unable to attend the examination on the registered date and elects not to reschedule to the next testing period, the Testing Center application will be closed and all Exam fees will be forfeited. There is no refund of fees.

5.07 Rules For Examination

1. No books or other reference materials may be taken into the examination room. Pen and blank paper may be brought in; no papers may leave the exam room with Candidate.
2. Electronic devices, including but not limited to, cell phones, pagers, palm pilots, voice recording devices, cameras, Blackberries, Bluetooth type devices, and MP3 players (IPOD, I-Touch, etc.) cannot be operative during the examination.
3. Test documents and notes must remain in the examination room. Removing any test material by any means is prohibited.
4. No questions concerning content of the examination may be asked during the examination. The Candidate should listen to the instructions given by the Examiner and read the instructions provided on the computer screen.
5. Anyone giving or receiving assistance of any kind will have the computer-based testing terminated and be asked to leave the room.
6. Visitors are not permitted in the examination room.
7. ASP prohibits certain behaviors, including (but not limited to) the activities listed below:
 - A. Copying test questions
 - B. Copying answers
 - C. Permitting another to copy answers
 - D. Falsifying information required for admission to an examination
 - E. Impersonating another examinee
 - F. Taking the examination for any reason other than for the purpose of seeking accreditation
8. To initiate submission of complaints and challenges, email the Program Coordinator or call the ASP Executive Director in the ASP office.

6.0 EXAMINATION RESULTS & NOTIFICATION

6.01 Exam Scoring

Each Certification Exam has 160 questions covering the 84 and 80 competency task statements in the SPP and SMP exams, respectively. ASP sets the passing standard as the number of test questions it determines to be necessary for Candidates to answer correctly in order to be considered at least minimally competent.

ASP is concerned with reporting only valid scores. On rare occasions, misconduct or circumstances beyond the individual's control may render a score invalid. If doubts are raised about a score because of these or other circumstances, ASP reserves the right to cancel any examination score, if in the sole opinion of ASP there is adequate reason to question its validity.

6.02 Reporting Of Exam Results

PTC will notify Candidates of their score on the certification exam and whether or not they passed or failed within FOUR weeks of the close of the testing period. This report will include scores on major areas of the exam and the total score. Candidates may request rescoring of the examination by contacting PTC in writing and providing their complete name, address, and stating the reason for the request, the name of the examination, and testing date.

6.03 Confidentiality Of Test Results

ASP will release individual test scores in writing only to the individual Candidate. Any questions concerning test results should be referred to ASP or to PTC.

6.04 Certification Notification

Successful Candidates will receive an ASP Credential Certificate reflecting the level of certification attained, and are authorized to use all ASP and Certification Program logos on their business cards and materials. ASP publishes on its website the names and chapter and organizational affiliation of certified professionals. The certified professional is responsible for contacting ASP to initiate changes to this information.

6.05 Appeals On Eligibility

Applicants who have been deemed ineligible to sit for an examination may appeal in writing to the Association for Strategic Planning. The letter must be accompanied by supporting documents. The appeal must be received within 10 days after the notice of ineligibility is sent to the non-approved Applicant. The Association for Strategic Planning will review the appeal and

notify the Applicant in writing of its decision within 10 days of receipt of the written appeal. To re-apply after 90 days, Applicants must re-submit their Qualifying Application with a new Application Fee.

7.0 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

7.01 Ethical Behavior

ASP expects recipients of its certifications to behave in ways consistent with commonly held characteristics of ethical behavior, and will eventually offer a simple self-test in this area. Ethical behavior is what ASP members would want family and friends to read about their own behavior in the morning paper or on Google. Documented breaches of ethical behavior are the bases for revocation of certification.

7.02 Revocation Of Certification

The following is a summary of behaviors which may lead to disciplinary review.

- A. Conviction in a court of law of a felony which may affect public health or safety.
- B. Fraud or deception in attempting to obtain a certification.
- C. Misrepresentation of certification status.
- D. Irregularity in connection with any Board examination.
- E. Failure to pay recertification fees or provide information required by the ASP Board.
- F. Misuse of ASP credentials, examinations, and other intellectual property.

7.03 Other Discipline




ASP fully endorses the US copyright and intellectual property code of conduct and regulations. Violation of the ASP Board's policies may lead to disciplinary action, including (but not limited to) the actions listed below:

- A. Denial or suspension of eligibility;
- B. Revocation of certification;
- C. Non-renewal of certification;
- D. Reprimand; and
- E. Suspension of certification.

8.0 RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

The ASP recertification requirements are currently under review by the ASP Operation Team, for approval of a revised process by the ASP Board in the Winter 2012.

Below are the requirements as listed on the ASP Website as of Sept. 2011:

SMP	SPP	SPA
		
SMP: Strategic Management Professional Level II	SPP: Strategic Planning Professional Level I	SPA: Strategic Planning Associate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every five years, submit an Intention to Recertify • Retake Exam or submit 9 CEUs³ • Provide 10 potential SMP Exam Questions on Level II competencies • Pay Recertification fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every three years, submit an Intention to Recertify • Retake Exam or submit 6 CEUs³ • Provide 10 potential SPP Exam Questions on Level I competencies • Pay Recertification fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credential good for up to three (3) years • No Recertification
<p>³ Contact Hours Calculation: 1 CEU = 10 contact hours. ASP REPs hours are double credit (5 REP contact hours = 1 CEU). ASP REPs (i.e. Registered Educational Providers) are independent vendors qualified by ASP to teach its Body of Knowledge.</p>		

9.0 EXAM PREPARATION RESOURCES

9.01 Exam Practice: PTC Testing Software & ASP Sample Questions

PTC offers a testing software demo accessible at <http://www.ptcny.com/cbt/demo.htm>. This demo software lets you become familiar with and experience the features of the testing software, independent of exam content.

Under the “Sample Questions” link on the ASP Certification webpages, ASP has sample test questions for both levels of the Certification Exam. To help with better understanding the relationship between the competencies and the exam questions, above each sample question is the BOK competency task statement associated with that question. These competency references are NOT on the Certification Exam.

- For **SMP** Sample Questions:
http://www.strategyplus.org/asp-certification/pdfs/ASP_SMP_Sample_Questions.pdf
- For **SPP** Sample Questions:
http://www.strategyplus.org/asp-certification/pdfs/ASP_SPP_Sample_Questions.pdf

9.02 Educational Programs

Support from ASP REPs (Registered Educational Providers)

ASP qualifies Registered Educational Providers (REPs) to offer courses and programs in strategic planning and management that align with ASP’s BOK Framework, including but not limited to courses to prepare individual for passing the certification exams. REP programs are based upon the competencies contained in the **ASP Standards, Competencies and Body of Knowledge (BOK) Framework**.

Exam preparation resources, including ASP Exam Preparation Study Guides from ASP REPs, can be found on the ASP Certification New Association Products page at [New Association Products](#). Current ASP Registered Educational Providers and their program offerings are listed in the ASP Cert Pages at [Qualified List of REPs](#).

Support from ASP Chapters

Several ASP chapters sponsor chapter study programs using the resources of one or more of the ASP REPs. For up-to-date details on existing programs or advice on how to start a group within one’s chapter, check with the Program Coordinator. Many chapters now ask speakers to explicitly focus on the Lead-Think-Plan-Act rubrics and their associated competencies.

9.03 How to Prepare to Pass the ASP Examination

To prepare a Certification Study Plan, see available material on the ASP website (also listed in next section), download the appropriate BOK Self-Assessment Workbook (~60 pages each), and conduct a Self-Assessment to identify needed learnings and where to focus study efforts. If focus is SMP, download the BOK Framework Overview (28 pages) to be able to see all 164 certification competencies upon which both exams are based, grouped into the four rubrics of LPTA, as compared to the Self-Assessment workbooks which have the competency statements only for their own focus level.

Build a specific Study Plan and study for this Exam just as one would for any other important degree. It should include the following:

1. Review the [Sample Exam Questions](#) on the ASP Website to gain familiarity with the kinds of questions for which to prepare.
2. Review the ***Recommended Bibliography for ASP Certification Examination Preparation-2011 (v3)*** which has a condensed list of eight core books as well as the original list organized by the four rubrics of Lead-Think-Plan-Act; this is a 6-page document. Look for books with Executive Summaries at the chapter endings. See Section.9.04.G of the ASP Certification Handbook for additional bibliography resources.
3. Consider attending ASP REP programs or purchasing their books and training materials to fill in learning needs. The Certification Exam Prep Guides developed by ASP REPS and on the [New Association Products](#) webpage have sample 160-question Practice Exams for both the SPP and SMP levels. See the [Qualified List of REPs](#) webpage for details of webinars, workshops, books and materials, as well as certificate programs that can help with exam preparation.
4. Prepare for the Examination by forming Chapter Study Groups using the Lead-Think-Plan-Act Framework. Have Chapter speakers and meetings focus on the Lead-Think-Plan-Act, and check with REPs for availability as speakers.
5. Use the [PTC Testing Software Demo](#) at <http://www.ptcny.com/cbt/demo.htm> to experience without content the features of the electronic testing software.

9.04 Reference And Support Materials & ASP Website Links

In the **ASP Body of Knowledge**, LTPA stands for Lead-Think-Plan-Act, the four rubrics upon which the BOK Framework is organized, the first set for Level I SPP and the second set, for Level II SMP:

SPP: Strategic Planning Professional Level I	SMP: Strategic Management Professional Level II
1.0 Lead	1.0 Strategic Leader
2.0 Think	2.0 Strategic Thinking
3.0 Plan	3.0 Strategic Planning
4.0 Act	4.0 Strategic Actions



The BOK competency framework therefore has three rungs, plus a Foundation for each level consisting of Business Acumen and 5.0 Professional Roles:

- 1. First rung:** the four LTPA Rubrics plus the Foundation
 - SPP Level I: Lead-Think-Plan-Act
 - SMP Level II: Strategic Leader--Strategic Thinking--Strategic Planning--Strategic Actions
- 2. Second rung:** SPP and SMP have 12 Competency Areas each, as found in both the [ASP BOK Statements Summary](#) and [ASP-BOK Certification Outline](#):
 - Two competencies for the SPP Lead and three competencies for SMP Strategic Leader
 - Nine competencies each for the Think, Plan & Act and Strategic Thinking, Planning and Actions, and these are organized as Content, Process, & Infrastructure competencies.
- 3. Third rung:** 164 BOK task statements; found in the [Body of Knowledge Framework](#)
 - SPP has 84 statements, which yield 160 Level I Exam Questions
 - SMP has 80 statements, which yield 160 Level II Exam Questions

To help with exam preparation, the following ASP Certification materials are available for complimentary download from the [Body of Knowledge \(BOK\)](#) and [New Association Products](#) pages of the ASP Certification webpages (title of document is followed by existing document filename):

A. [**Standards, Competencies, and Body of Knowledge Framework**](#)

BOK_Framework_v9_ContentDetails_2011Revision-final.pdf

This 28 page document is the heart and soul of the Body of Knowledge for the strategic planning and management field. It lists all 84 SPP and all 80 SMP BOK task statements organized in a three-rung hierarchy. Unlike the Self-Assessment Workbooks, the tasks are listed in numerical order within each rung, rather than separated by SPP and SMP levels. This is especially useful for SMP Candidates because although questions on the SMP exam are only sourced from the 80 SMP competencies, the 84 SPP competencies are considered foundational and it is therefore useful to review.

B. [**The ASP Certification Body of Knowledge Development Overview**](#)

BOK_9_Overview-final_50_pages+.pdf

This 50+ pages document provides a history of the development of the ASP Certification Program and Body of Knowledge, several foundational models, and background about certification framework.

NOTE: This document has not been revised from the original, so this handbook has the accurate information for sections included in both documents.

C. [**ASP BOK Statements Summary**](#)

ASP-BOK-9_Statements_Summary

This is a one page matrix showing the number of task statements for each competency area of Content, Process and Structure under the four rubrics of Lead-Think-Plan-Act.

D. [**ASP-BOK Certification Outline**](#)

BOK-Certification_Outline-2011.pdf

These two pages (one for SPP and one for SMP) list the number of tasks statements by competency area for each credential. This document does not show the specific task statements associated with each competency. For that, see the BOK Framework.

E. [**SMP Level II Self Assessment Workbook**](#)

Self-assessment_SMP_Level_II.pdf or BOK_SMP_Level_II-3-210

About 60 pages with certification program background materials and the SMP Level II competencies organized in a self-assessment format. This is available for electronic download at no charge on the ASP website (or for purchase as hardcopy by contacting the Program Coordinator).

F. [**SPP Level I Self Assessment Workbook**](#)

Self-assessment_SPP_Level_I.pdf or BOK_SPP_SPA_Level_I3-2010

Same as E above for SPP Level I. Applicants for SPA Designation should use this self-assessment.

G. **Three ASP Bibliography Resources:**

Available on the ASP Certification [Body of Knowledge \(BOK\)](#) webpage, there are two independent Bibliography documents and one in the *Certification Development Overview*:

ASP-CERT-RECOMMENDED_BIBLIOGRAPHY-2011v3.pdf

Six-page document with condensed list of top eight recommended books for Exam Prep, with a longer bibliography of current and classic readings organized by the four core ASP rubrics of Lead-Think-Plan-Act.

RECOMMENDED_BIBLIOGRAPHY.doc

Seven-page original *Recommended Bibliography for Exam Preparation* organized by Current and Classic books, with subsections for Lead-Think-Plan-Act.

There is also a comprehensive 18-pages list of strategic thinking and planning books and articles at the end of the 50-page *ASP Certification Body of Knowledge Development Overview*.

H. **[Sample Exam Questions](#)**

ASP_SMP_Sample_Questions.pdf and *ASP_SPP_Sample_Questions.pdf*

This page has pdf documents with sample questions for both Exam levels: [Sample SMP Questions](#) and [Sample SPP Questions](#). While for demonstration they show the specific competency associated with each question, the related competencies DO NOT show on the actual exam.

While not actual sample exam questions, for prior practice using PTC electronic testing software, go to <http://www.ptcny.com/cbt/demo.htm> to access demo software that anyone considering taking the Certification Exam electronically can use to become familiar with and experience the features of PTC electronic testing software, independent of specific exam content.

I. **[Exam Prep Study Guides](#)**

Links to the new ASP Certification Exam Prep Guides and other ASP REP materials that can help with exam preparation are available for purchase on the [New Association Products](#) webpage.

J. **[ASP 10 Best Practices for Qualifying Frameworks](#)**

SUMMARY-Strategic_Management_Best_Practices_Attributes-Final.pdf

Strategic_Management_Best_Practice_Attributes-Final.pdf

Available on the [Body of Knowledge \(BOK\)](#) webpage, this item includes two documents:

- The first is a **summary list** of the best practices for strategic planning and management frameworks, approved by the ASP Board, that educational programs need to demonstrate to qualify as an ASP REP.
- The second is an **annotated description** of each best practice.

While primarily useful for firms seeking Registered Educational Provider status, understanding the foundations of approved frameworks that underlie the exam may also be of use to Exam Candidates.

APPENDIX I: Detailed Individual Credential Requirements and Expectations

These eligibility requirements & role expectations were updated as of Oct. 2011:

LEVEL I—Strategic Planning Professional ([SPP Certification](#))

1. At least two (2) years experience in a planning role or as a junior external planning consultant
2. College graduate with relevant degree or at least five years work experience in strategic planning or a related field
3. Frequently works with executives and their organizational units such as business unit heads or managers/leaders of major staff units and their teams

Also:

4. Demonstrates mastery of Level I of the ASP Body of Knowledge Framework through passing the SPP exam
5. Ethical, has integrity and knows how and when to maintain confidentiality
6. Manager of themselves first, and able to collaborate with others
7. Interpersonal leadership skills with executives on a one-one basis such as coaching, advising, etc.
8. An accomplished analyst in future environmental scanning and current state assessment (SWOT)
9. Excellent critical thinking skills and a basic understanding of strategic and systems thinking
10. Facilitates actions, execution, and implementation of the strategic and annual plans
11. Working knowledge of change management and the processes and infrastructures that successful change requires

LEVEL II—Strategic Management Professional ([SMP Certification](#))

1. At least five (5) years experience in planning as an experienced internal executive or external consultant participating or leading multiple strategic planning assignments
2. College Graduate with relevant degree or ten (10) years work experience in strategic planning or a related field
3. Holds the Strategic Planning Professional (SPP) credential or meets all of its requirements
4. Works with C-Level Executives and their teams

Also:

5. Demonstrates mastery of the entire ASP Body of Knowledge through passing the SMP exam
6. Uses the full Body of Knowledge and facilitates getting the organization to its desired outcomes
7. A strategic and systems thinker who regularly applies systemic thinking and skills
8. Is an advocate for the full field of Strategic Planning and all its Lead-Think-Plan-Act components
9. Demonstrates strategic leadership in an organization, sector, or the planning field

Strategic Planning Associate ([SPA](#) is a Designation, not Credential)

1. Meets at least one of the following Work Status criteria:
 - a. May be a student if meets ASP criteria for student membership* & is in last year of a degree program (Undergraduate or Graduate)
 - b. May be in an apprentice role, preferably under the coaching of an ASP certified professional.
 - c. May be just starting out in planning or transferring career into planning from another discipline (such as marketing, finance, HR, or OD)
2. Has a senior planning professional mentor, preferably ASP certified
3. No prior experience in Strategic Planning nor demonstration of Business Acumen is required
4. Agrees to apply for Strategic Planning Professional credential within three (3) years.
Note: SPA candidates who pass the Level I Certification Exam are eligible to resubmit a Qualifying Application as soon as they meet SPP criteria and demonstrate sufficient experience and education.

Also:

5. Demonstrates mastery of Level I of the ASP Body of Knowledge Framework through passing the SPP exam prior to gaining requisite professional experience for SPP credential.
6. Develops and successfully implements an SPP professional development program.

*Partial scholarships for ASP student members may be available. To qualify as a student, see [Student Discount Policy](#) and check with Program Coordinator for scholarship details.

Although they have the exam knowledge, SPA Candidates are not expected to yet have the necessary experience to qualify for an SPP credential. They therefore use the standard ASP Qualifying Application and complete two special SPA sections: one in which they confirm their work status, mentor, and commitment to apply for SPP within three years, and the other which specifies that they write an essay rather than a case study. See Qualifying Application for details.

APPENDIX II:

How To Develop Exam Questions For Recertification

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR CREDENTIALLED PROFESSIONALS:

- Recertification includes a requirement to submit TEN new test questions for possible inclusion in the pool of questions for the SPP and/or SMP exam.
- Recertification Applicants should be sure to consider the following best practices in the development of their questions.

Item Writing Instructions: All test questions (items) for the examination are multiple choice, with four choices, only one of which is correct. Items must be based on the test content outline.

Each multiple choice item is composed of a stem, followed by four options; one correct option and three distracters. Example:

Stem	Who invented the light bulb?
Correct option	1. Thomas Alva Edison
Distracter	2. Benjamin Franklin
Distracter	3. Alexander Graham Bell
Distracter	4. Leonardo da Vinci

The stem may also be in the form of an incomplete sentence. Example:

Stem	The light bulb was invented by:
Correct option	1. Thomas Alva Edison.
Distracter	2. Benjamin Franklin.
Distracter	3. Alexander Graham Bell.
Distracter	4. Leonardo da Vinci.

Characteristics of a good stem are:

- It presents a problem situation clearly
- It is stated positively rather than negatively
- It avoids the use of the pronouns “it,” “he,” “she,” and “you.”
- It is presented as simply as possible, including only information that is necessary to understand the problem
- It includes any words that would have to be repeated in each option
- It specifies the authority or standard upon which the correct option is based, if the item calls for a judgment
- It poses a problem to which the correct answer is not likely to change over time
- It focuses on important learning objectives and avoids testing trivia

Characteristics of good options are:

- Correct options are unquestionably correct and distracters are unquestionably wrong
- All four options are grammatically related to the stem
- The four options are homogeneous in terms of structure as well as content
- The correct option is similar in length to the distracters
- Absolute terms have been avoided (do not contain words like “all,” “none,” “always,” and “never”)
- Options are mutually exclusive
- Do not use “none of the above” or “all of the above”

APPENDIX III:

Summary of Important Administrative Information For ASP Certification

(Adapted from revised ASP Certification handbook and developed as summary for and original posted to ASP website, Sept., 2011; updated Oct, 2011.)

1. Program Administration:

Send all ASP Certification inquiries to CertificationProgram@strategyplus.org. Professional Testing Corporation (PTC) (www.ptcny.com) manages the ASP testing program and is the independent third party that manages the ASP Exam Testing Program.

2. Exam Frequency, Format and Location

Both the Level I SPP and Level II SMP ASP Certification Exams are administered twice a year at computer-based testing facilities available during established two-week testing periods, and once a year as paper & pencil exams immediately following the annual ASP conference. Click <http://www.ptcny.com/cbt/sites.htm> to check for possible Testing Center locations.

3. Submitting Your Application

ASP has a two-part application process that includes a review of a Qualifying Application followed by processing of a PTC Test Center Application. As of Nov. 2011, ASP has updated the original Certification Application form with improved instructions and for greater ease of completion by Applicants.

The **Qualifying Application** consists of the following, and only complete **Qualifying Applications** are to be submitted:

- **Qualifying Application Form:** a writable/savable pdf application form (downloaded from the ASP Certification [Application and Handbook](#) webpage)
- **Case Study (Section 7):** up to 1000 words following a set format; required for SMP Level II and optional for SPP Level I, but recommended if not strong in educational background. SPA applicants use the Case Study section for an essay describing their motives and interests in obtaining the SPA designation.
- **Professional References (Section 8):** both contact information for named references and the actual letters: 3 for SMP and 2 for SPP
- **Career Bio (Section 9):** Current professional resume, career bio, curriculum vitae or other description of professional education and experience, especially that related to strategy work

To be eligible to take for an exam in the upcoming testing period:

- Submit a complete **ASP Qualifying Application in a single email** to CertificationProgram@strategyplus.org no later than the deadline date, and make Application Fee payment

- For accurate document management, the email's subject line AND all attached documents should include your full name and the name of the item.
- Applications that do not qualify for the requested exam level on a first review are eligible for one rewrite and re-review at no additional fee.
- Qualifying Applications arriving after the established deadline-become eligible for the following testing period.

Only Applicants whom ASP notifies as approved Exam Candidates will receive a **PTC Test Center Application** form (a two-page scannable document). This form is not otherwise available.

4. Exam Fees

Test Center Exam Fees are due concurrent with their respective Applications. Payment is to be made in US Dollars via the appropriate Application Payment link at the bottom of the ASP [Certification Home Page](#).

5. End of Limited SMP Grandfathering

Holders of the SMP Certification are to have mastered the competencies in the entire *ASP Body of Knowledge Framework*. However the BOK has been split into Level I and Level II examinations, and the SMP exam only tests the more advanced Level II competencies in the BOK.

During the initial implementation of ASP's Standards and Certification Program, a "grandfathering" provision was established so that experienced professionals would not need to take both exams.

In Oct. 2011, the ASP Board eliminated this limited "Grandfathering" provision and voted that all applicants who qualify for the SMP certification exam can take the SMP exam directly. Therefore, all experienced strategy professionals who meet eligibility criteria may directly apply for the SMP Level II credential without first holding the SPP Level I.

6. International Exam Candidates (for Non-US-Canada locations)

It may be possible to establish a special testing center to take a paper and pencil examination in Exam Candidate's own country for a surcharge of \$100 USD to cover administrative costs. A written request must accompany the Testing Center Application and specify preferred city and country. International Exam Candidates requesting a non-US or Canada testing location must submit their PTC Test Center Application to ASP no less than EIGHT weeks before the testing period to provide the additional time necessary to set up an international location. An International Applicant's ASP Qualifying Application must therefore be submitted no less than TWELVE weeks before the testing period.

7. Special Needs Individuals:

Special Testing arrangement will be made for Candidates with special needs. With the Test Center Application, submit a completed and signed Request for Special Accommodation Form, available from www.ptcny.com or by contacting PTC. Requests for special testing for

individuals with special needs must be received no less than EIGHT weeks before the testing period begins. A Special Need's Applicant's ASP Qualifying Application must therefore be submitted no less than TWELVE weeks before the testing period. There is no surcharge to request special test accommodations for special needs individuals.

8. Scheduling a Test Center Exam Appointment

Upon processing of Test Center Applications, Candidates are obliged to take their Exam within the testing period on their Test Center Application. PTC sends via US mail an Eligibility Notice to each registered Exam Candidate, who must have this document before scheduling a Certification Exam appointment at an available Testing Center within the assigned Testing Period. **This Eligibility Notice plus current government issued photo identification MUST be presented to gain admission to the testing center.**

The **Eligibility Notice** indicates:

- designated Exam and Testing Period
- assigned Eligibility Number
- phone number to call to schedule an examination appointment

Important Note:

Appointment times are first-come/first-serve, so Applicants should schedule their appointment to take the exam as soon as possible upon receipt of the Eligibility Notice to maximize likelihood of testing at a preferred location and on a preferred date. PSI is the firm with which PTC contracts to run the testing centers; its phone number is provided on the PTC Eligibility Notice or can be obtained by contacting PTC or ASP.

9. Testing Software Demo

Use the *PTC Testing Software Demo* at <http://www.ptcny.com/cbt/demo.htm> to experience without content the features of the testing software.

10. Rescheduling an Exam Date once assigned a Testing Period

Once ASP forwards the Test Center Application form to Professional Testing Corporation, the ASP Exam Candidate becomes a formal Candidate for the next upcoming testing period. Candidate may reschedule to a different date within this two-week testing period, free of charge. However, to transfer to a different two-week testing period, Candidate must pay a Transfer Fee of \$150. This rescheduling fee is based on cost and is not punitive. There are no refunds of application or exam fees.

- **No Fee to CHANGE WITHIN assigned testing period**
To cancel an examination appointment or reschedule to a different date or location within the two-week testing period, contact PSI using the phone number on the Eligibility notice to see if a change is possible, and inform ASP of any changes that are made.
- **\$150 Fee to TRANSFER to a later Testing Period**
To request a transfer to the next testing period, a transfer request should be submitted

to ASP with the Transfer Fee of \$150. Both the transfer request and the fee must be received within 30 days after the original examination date for the transfer to be granted. The rescheduling fee is based on cost, and is not punitive in nature. Candidate is responsible for canceling the original examination appointment.

If Candidate is unable to attend the examination on the registered date and elects not to reschedule to the next testing period, the Testing Center application will be closed and all Exam fees will be forfeited. There is no refund of fees.