AICP Exam Overview

April 6, 2022

Cristina Pastore
Georgia Planning Association
Professional Development Officer
Overview Session Agenda

- One Path to AICP Process
- Eligibility Pre-Check
- Certification Support
- Preparing for the Exam
- After the Exam
- Questions/Comments
One Path to AICP
One Path to AICP

- Can sit for the exam without meeting experience requirements
  - Previously, needed experience to be eligible to take the exam
- AICP Candidate Pilot Program was a success (PAB accredited students)
- Three-step process to certification now for all candidates
One Path to AICP

Registration: $255
Transfer: $100

1. REGISTER

Register for the certification program and schedule exam

SPRING CYCLE: April
FALL CYCLE: October

Opens: April 4 at 9:00am CST
Closes: April 29 at 3:00pm CST
Transfer Deadline: May 26 at 3:00pm CST
One Path to AICP

Registration: $255
Transfer: $100

1. **REGISTER**
   - Register for the certification program and schedule exam

2. **TEST**
   - Pass AICP exam and become AICP Candidate

**SPRING CYCLE**
- April

**FALL CYCLE**
- October
- November

**Opens:** April 4 at 9:00am CST
**Closes:** April 29 at 3:00pm CST
**Transfer Deadline:** May 26 at 3:00pm CST

**Exam Window:** May 2-27
One Path to AICP

**Registration**: $255
**Transfer**: $100

1. **REGISTER**
   - Register for the certification program and schedule exam
   - **SPRING CYCLE**: April
   - **FALL CYCLE**: October

2. **TEST**
   - Pass AICP exam and become AICP Candidate
   - **MONTH**: May

3. **APPLY**
   - Provide educational and professional experience
   - **MONTH**: July

**Exam Window**: May 2-27

**Opens**: April 4 at 9:00am CST
**Closes**: April 29 at 3:00pm CST
**Transfer Deadline**: May 26 at 3:00pm CST

**Registration**: $255
**Initial Dues**: $100

**Opens**: July 5 at 9:00am CST
**Closes**: July 29 at 3:00pm CST
Eligibility Pre-Check
Eligibility Pre-Check

- AICP Certification Guide
- Planning Experience Assessment Worksheet
- Professional Planning Experience Worksheet
- Interactive Experience Calculator
- Planning Curriculum Worksheet
AICP Certification Guide

- Updated in December 2021
- Step-by-step guide for preparing to take the AICP
  - Eligibility pre-check
  - Scheduling the exam
  - Transfers
  - Taking the exam
  - Experience assessment
### How Much Experience Do I Need?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Required Years of Professional Planning Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree in planning from a PAB-accredited program(^1)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree in planning from a PAB-accredited program(^2)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree in planning from a program not accredited by the PAB(^3)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other post-graduate, graduate, or undergraduate degree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No college degree/no degree information provided</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning Experience Assessment Worksheet

- Help to determine if your professional planning experience meets criteria for AICP Certification (similar to official submittal after exam)
- Three overarching criteria
  - Demonstrate a professional level of responsibility and resourcefulness while applying a planning process appropriate to the project or situation.
  - Evaluate multiple impacts to a community when implementing professional planning tasks.
  - Influence public decision making in the public interest.

Areas of Practice
In the entirety of my verified professional planning experience, I have worked in the following areas of planning practice (select all that apply):

Area of Planning Practice
- Climate adaptation or mitigation planning
- Community advocacy and equity planning
- Community development planning
- Comprehensive planning
- Current planning (e.g., zoning, development review)
- Economic development planning
- Environmental and natural resources planning
- Federal planning
- Food systems planning
- Hazard mitigation or resiliency planning
- Health planning
- Historic and cultural resources planning
- Housing planning
- Infrastructure planning
- Institutional planning (e.g., airport, military, educational)
- International planning
- Land-use planning
- Neighborhood planning
- Parks, recreation, and open space planning
- Planning law
- Regional planning
- Rural and small-town planning
- State planning
- Sustainability planning
- Tribal planning
- Transportation planning
- Urban design

*Other (if your professional planning experience has included areas of planning practice not listed above, list those additional areas of planning practice in 20 words or less)*
Professional Planning Experience Worksheet

- Yes/No checklist to help you evaluate your various experiences and if they count toward AICP eligibility
- Identify if new experience may still be needed
- Walk through the worksheet for each position you plan to submit
  - Experience may need to be prorated - use the Interactive Experience Calculator

CRITERION 1: Demonstrate a Professional Level of Responsibility and Resourcefulness While Applying a Planning Process Appropriate to the Project or Situation

Professional urban, rural, and regional planners apply multistep processes related to managing change in communities. Typical process steps include defining a problem or opportunity, setting goals and objectives, generating alternative strategies, selecting a preferred alternative, implementing the preferred strategy, and monitoring and evaluating strategy performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Planning Processes</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan making (e.g., regional, comprehensive, functional, subarea)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory or incentive program design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning administration or development review</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis (e.g., economic, environmental, health, transportation, land use, housing, historic preservation, community development)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development project or land-use site selection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development project or land-use entitlement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research program or project design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research program or project execution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan, program, or project evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning-related technical assistance or training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning-related course or curriculum development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning-related course or curriculum evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interactive Experience Calculator

▲ Online tool that helps you to determine the amount of experience needed based on your highest/most relevant degree

▲ After degree information, include start/end dates for work and the approximate hours per week toward planning-related activities
Planning Curriculum Worksheet

- Only needed if you attended a non-PAB graduate degree program
- Helps you to determine how many years of experience you may need (3 or 4 years)
- Yes/no responses for eligibility

### Planning Curriculum Required Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Did my master's degree curriculum address this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning Values and Ethics</td>
<td>Equity, Diversity, Social Justice, and Inclusion (e.g., key issues of equity, diversity, and social justice, including planners’ role in expanding choice and opportunity for all persons; planning for the needs of disadvantaged groups; reducing inequities through critical examination of past and current systems; and promoting racial and economic equity)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Values and Ethics</td>
<td>Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Justice (e.g., environmental, economic, and social/political factors that contribute to sustainable and resilient communities, mitigating and adapting to climate change)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Values and Ethics</td>
<td>Professional Ethics and Responsibility (e.g., serving the public interest, achieving high standards of professional integrity, proficiency, and knowledge; ethics of public decision-making, research, and planning practice)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Planning Knowledge</td>
<td>Planning History and Theory (e.g., the evolution and current practice of planning in communities, cities, regions, and nations; how planning has hindered and advanced the attainment of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion; expectations about planning outcomes in different local and national contexts; conceptual models about what planning is and how it works)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Planning Knowledge</td>
<td>Planning Law and Institutions (e.g., processes and structures available to bring about sound planning outcomes; mechanisms and practices for ensuring equitable and inclusive decision making; legal and institutional contexts within which planning occurs in the U.S. and internationally)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Certification Support
Certification Support: Employer Assistance

- Does your employer pay for some/all of the costs associated with earning certification?
  - Costs of the exam
  - Costs to maintain your certification (must have membership in APA to maintain AICP)
Certification Support: Diversity Scholarship

- Certification Diversity Scholarship
  - Diversity is an inclusive concept which encompasses, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexuality, ability, educational attainment, spiritual beliefs, creed, culture, tribal affiliation, nationality, immigration status, political beliefs, and veteran status.
  - GPA receives one scholarship per calendar year
  - Submit letter to PDO discussing how you identify with the diverse populations listed - Spring submittal by Friday April 15, 2022
  - Final decision rests with the PDO and is strictly confidential
Preparing for the Exam
Exam Content and Changes

- 170 multiple choice questions (20 are unidentified research questions)
- Content has been reorganized - balance of questions by topic differs from previous exams
- Scenario-based questions where 3-5 questions relate to one scenario
- Spring 2022 test takers don’t receive their score immediately
Tips and Recommendations

- Planning has had a big influence on our country’s development
  - Knowing the history and law that came before us is important in the exam
  - More standard “memorization” for these types of questions would be helpful
- Exam is geared toward a public-sector practicing planner who has a few years working the front counter under their belt
  - Questions are focused on a national level, so do not focus on local policies and topics too heavily
- You should have a basic understanding of planning statistics - mean, median, mode, Floor Area Ratio (FAR), how to read a graph, etc.
  - No hard equations or questions that need a calculator
- Practice, practice, practice - take practice exams, but do not rely on them for knowledge base
Exam Prep Training

- GPA-hosted review sessions - currently including the following topics:
  - History and Theory - Monday April 11th, 1:00-2:30 PM
  - Ethics - Wednesday April 13th, 2:30-4:00 PM
  - Law - Tuesday April 19th, 10:00-11:30 AM
  - Administration and Management - being scheduled
  - Other topics pending
- APA topic overview videos - recorded February 2022
- Archived presentations from GPA review sessions
- Study groups - make sure to sign up!
APA Online Resources

- Valuable resources available on APA’s website
- Some documents must be purchased (i.e., Chapter Presidents Council Study Manual)
- Some documents may follow the previous exam format/weighting, but the content is still valid

The following resources are useful starting points:

- Chapter Presidents Council AICP Exam Study Manual
- Chapter Presidents Council Exam Prep History Timeline
- Selected Resources: AICP Certification Exam
- AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
  Note: All ethics questions are based on the Code of Ethics valid through December 2021. Refer to that version of the Code.
- Planning and Law Division Foundational Land Use Law Cases
- APA Policy Guides
- PAS Reports
- Planning magazine
- American Planning History Since 1900
  This free resource was developed for individuals interested in the planning field. Although it is an engaging and useful resource, be aware that it is not a comprehensive list of historical milestones in planning.
After the Exam
After the Exam

- After passing the exam, you are known as an AICP Candidate until the experience portion is completed. The designation will be added to your APA profile and can be added to your name where relevant.
  - You must maintain your APA membership during this time.
  - You must abide by the AICP Code of Ethics.
- Submit your Education, Employment, Experience
  - Education history and verification
  - Employment history
  - Planning experience assessment
- APA will notify you within four weeks of submission of your status
- After completion of the experience portion, you become AICP
  - Initial dues required at this time
Certification Maintenance

- Reporting periods are two years in length
- You must earn 32 credits (1 training hour = 1 credit) in that window. Credits are flexible, but some are required. As of January 2022, must have:
  - 1 hour - AICP Ethics
  - 1 hour - Law
  - 1 hour - Equity
  - 1 hour - Sustainability and Resilience
- You can carry over a maximum of 16 credits per reporting period
Questions/Comments?

Good Luck!