

Certification Program Guidelines

Updated January 2008



Section I: Objective of Program

The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) certification program is designed to recognize individuals who exhibit knowledge and skills necessary to assure quality interpretive services to all audiences in accordance with criteria set forth by the National Association for Interpretation. The certification program supports the mission of NAI “to inspire leadership and excellence to advance heritage interpretation as a profession.”

Section II: Certification Categories

Individuals can be certified in one or more of the following categories:

- Heritage Interpreter
- Interpretive Planner
- Interpretive Manager
- Interpretive Trainer
- Certified Interpretive Guide
- Certified Interpretive Host

Section III: Minimum Qualifications for Certification

For all professional categories (CIP, CIM, CHI, CIT), the following minimum qualifications must be met prior to submitting a request for certification:

AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Completion of a Bachelor's Degree in science, business, or arts with at least 40 semester hours related to natural/cultural/historical sciences, communications, or performing arts.

OR

- Completion of a total of four years (8000 work hours) experience in the category for which certification is requested.

Proof of minimum qualifications will consist of a photocopy of transcript for college degree or proof of employment/volunteerism from the individual's employer or sponsor. A notarized affidavit of self-employment may also be submitted.

For training categories (CIG, CIH), the minimum qualification is age 16 or older.

Section IV: Certification Process

An individual may be granted certification in the professional categories by adhering to the following process:

- A. Submit "Request for Certification" form with proof of minimum qualifications to NAI office and certification fee.
- B. Complete and return certification package provided by NAI office. The certification package will consist of:
 - a) instructions for completion and return
 - b) open book literature review with objective questions
 - c) essay exam with subjective questions appropriate for the category
 - d) requirements for evidence of performance appropriate for the category
- C. Achieve numerical grade averaging at least 80 on certification package evaluations.
- D. If passing grade is not achieved, individuals may see evaluation comments and resubmit improvements on their original submittal for consideration within 90 days of notification. If passing scores are not achieved on the second submittal, the individual may request counsel from a Fellow of NAI to attempt to improve their performance (a list of Fellows who are willing to provide this service will be provided by NAI office). There is no limit on the number of times an individual may attempt certification; however, each attempt must be accompanied by a completed request for certification with the appropriate attachments and fee.

Note: Workshops for professional categories are not required (with the exception of the CIT workshop for those who wish to use NAI's training curricula). Workshops for the training categories are required, along with the testing requirements for those categories.

Section V: Certification Renewal

Certifications will be considered active for four years from the date of receipt of approved certification.

Certifications can be renewed by submitting a "Request for Certification" accompanied by certification renewal fee and proof of continuing education from an accredited college/university or additional training sponsored by a recognized professional organization or employer's agency. Accepted additional training may vary widely. In case of any questions, the certification manager will make the final determination whether the additional training submitted by the applicant is acceptable for renewal. At a minimum, proof of completion of 40 hours related to the applicant's certification category or attendance at two regional, one national, or agency training workshops must be provided. Renewals will be considered active for four years from the date of receipt of approved renewal.

Section VI: Administrative Details

- A. The certification process will be administered by the NAI office in Fort Collins, Colorado.
- B. Cost for certification in the professional categories shall be \$125 for initial certification (members; \$200 for nonmembers) and \$35 (members; \$80 for nonmembers) for renewals. No refunds will be given for unsuccessful applicants. Cost for certification in training categories is \$80 for members, \$130 for nonmembers, with the same requirements and costs for renewals as the professional categories.
- C. A Request for Certification can be submitted at any time; however, completed certification packages will be processed by the NAI office within 30 days of receipt, depending on the volume received. Notifications of acceptance or denial will be sent not later than 60 days after an applicant has submitted evaluation materials.

Section VII: Administrative Process for Professional Categories

- A. The certification program is managed by national office staff under the supervision of the Associate Director.
- B. NAI office distributes Request for Certification forms.
- C. An individual submits a request for certification with appropriate attachments to the NAI office.
- D. The NAI office enters the request into the certification database.
- E. NAI office determines whether minimum qualifications have been met. If not, the request is denied immediately and a letter is sent to the individual explaining why. If the request is accepted, the process continues with the appropriate certification package being sent to the individual.
- F. The individual completes the certification package and returns the required items within one year of receipt of the certification package.
- G. NAI office grades the open book literature review and those with an 80% or better grade will have their materials sent to reviewers. Those with less than 80% are given one chance to resubmit the open book literature review without paying an additional fee or they may request a \$50 rebate and drop out of the certification process at this point.
- H. NAI office distributes one copy of each individual's essay exam and evidence of performance to all three members of the review board by ten days after the deadline date.
- I. Members of the review board separately review the materials and complete scoresheets/evaluations which are returned to NAI office within 45 days.
- J. NAI office tallies scoresheets and determines acceptance based on a numerical score of 80 or denial if 80 score is not met.
- K. NAI office notifies individual of acceptance or denial and returns evaluations to individual within 15 days after receiving reviews from the 3 reviewers. If accepted for certification, a certificate is issued at this time with instructions for renewal. If a second denial is issued, the letter of denial will include a list of Fellows who are available to counsel the individual regarding their performance.
- L. Renewal reminders are sent out by NAI office as needed.

Section VIII: Administrative Process for Training Categories

- A. Certified Interpretive Trainers sanctioned to teach the CIG or CIH workshops are authorized to set up their own classes at their convenience subject to the policies of the program (see CIT instructor's manual).

Section IX. Certification Review Board (CRB) and Certification Task Force (CTF)

The review board will consist of three NAI members in good standing who have been certified by NAI. The review board will reflect a diversity of job titles, employers, and gender. A list and resume_s of certified individuals willing to serve in this capacity will be kept on file in the national office to allow ready access to potential reviewers. Each review board member will be compensated at the rate of \$10 per applicant reviewed.