

Handbook for the
**In-house Counsel
Certification Program**

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Introduction

The ACC Credentialing Institute (“ACCCI”) is the credentialing arm of the Association of Corporate Counsel (“ACC”). ACCCI’s offering is the ACC In-house Counsel Certification Program (“Program”). The Program confers the ACC In-house Counsel Certified (“ICC”) designation.

ACC established ACCCI with a mandate to 1) set standards to advance the in-house practice of law, and 2) provide the education and training necessary to meet those standards. In fulfilling this mandate, the Institute leverages the decades of experience that the broader ACC organization enjoys.

The ACC In-house Counsel Certification is administered independently following the accreditation standards for professional certification programs. The ACC is a member of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence and based its policies and procedures to ensure professional competence.

Advisory Board

The ACC Certification Advisory Board serves as a technical advisory committee for the certifying activities of ACCCI. The Commission is responsible for ensuring the quality and impartiality of the Program, which is designed to meet the highest standards in the industry.

The Board oversees all technical aspects of the Program. Its responsibilities include review and approval of such aspects as eligibility, assessment specifications and scoring, certification maintenance criteria, and consideration of appeals and complaints.

The Board is comprised of members who have extensive corporate counsel experience from industries and organizations around the world. Board members do not receive financial compensation for their service on the Advisory Board. Members are reimbursed for their fair and reasonable expenses that are directly

related to Advisory Board business.

Certification Program Value

The Program confers the ICC designation. The ICC designation is intended to signify that the holder has the essential skills relevant to the in-house practice of law and that the holder, through training and assessment, has demonstrated proficiency across [three core areas](#): stakeholder relationships, law department management, and legal services.

Certification Curriculum

The Program’s training schedule and curriculum are located online at www.acc.com/credentialing/certify/curriculum. Please note that ACCCI reserves the right to modify program content at its discretion.

Applying for the Certification Program

Applicants to the ACC In-house Counsel Certification Program must select the specific “training event” that they wish to attend. For a list of training events please visit the ACCCI website, www.acc.com/credentialing/apply-certification.

For purposes of this handbook, a “candidate” is an individual who has applied to ACCCI for the Program, but who has not yet met all the requirements to obtain the ICC designation.

Minimum Eligibility Requirements

The ACC In-house Counsel Certification Program is open to licensed or unlicensed (Depending on requirements of a law jurisdiction) attorneys who either:

a) are currently employed as in-house counsel (no minimum experience required), or

b) previously have been employed as in-house counsel (for a minimum of one year).

An in-house counsel is an individual who is engaged in the active practice of law employed by an organization in either the private or public sector, does not have regulatory, enforcement, or policymaking responsibilities; nor works in an institution with such authority; and does not hold himself/herself out to the public for the practice of law.

The following are ineligible for the ACC In-house Counsel Certification Program:

- a) Individuals whose responsibility may include selling or providing services to individuals or organizations who are not their employer. This would include individuals who work for companies that provide legal services such as headhunters, contract attorneys, law firms, and temporary agencies.
- b) Individuals whose responsibilities include sales, marketing, and business development in the legal market.

It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that they meet these minimum eligibility requirements before applying for and submitting payment to the Program. If ACCCI subsequently determines that any of the eligibility requirements had not been met at the time of application, the applicant may forfeit related fees (see Refunds).

Fees

The Program currently accepts all major credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express). Payment must be in U.S. currency. Tuition and fees for the Program are outlined at www.acc.com/credentialing/certification-fees.

Application Process

To apply for the Certification Program, candidates must follow the below process.

1. Review this handbook carefully, verify eligibility, and understand that certification requires maintenance through continuing education and an annual fee.
2. Visit www.acc.com/credentialing/apply-certification and navigate to the page to see all available programs.
3. Select the training event to attend, and carefully review the information.
4. Complete the application, including the required acknowledgment.
5. Submit payment for the Program.

Candidates will be enrolled in the Program, subject to space availability and verification of eligibility.

Application Deadlines

Applications to attend a training event will be accepted and processed on a rolling basis until the registration deadline. No individual will be accepted to the training event before submitting a completed application and payment.

Application Denials

An application will not be accepted, and/or a candidate's authorization to participate in the Program may be revoked for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- a) Failure to meet the minimum eligibility requirements (see Minimum Eligibility Requirements).
- b) Application is not submitted by the corresponding deadline (see Application Deadlines).
- c) Failure to comply with an audit (see Application Audits).
- d) Falsification of information on the application.
- e) Misrepresentation of work experience or other information on the application.
- f) Violation of testing procedures (see Conduct Requirements).

Applicants and candidates who submit falsified or misrepresented information, or who fail to comply with an audit or violate testing procedures, forfeit all fees (see Refunds).

Appeals Provisions

Applicants who are denied authorization to participate in the Program will be notified via e-mail at the address on file with ACCCI. It is each applicant's responsibility to ensure that his/her email address is up to date. Applicants may appeal the decision to ACCCI.

The appeal must:

- a) be in writing.*
- b) include the specific reason for the appeal,*
- c) be accompanied by evidence or other pertinent information refuting the original decision,*
- d) be sent no later than 10 business days after the date on the denial notification, and*
- e) be sent via e-mail to certification@acc.com*

Medical or Personal Emergencies

For purposes of the ACC In-house Counsel Certification Program, medical or personal emergencies are defined as unplanned events affecting the candidate or immediate family member(s) (spouse, child, or parent), which arise within five days of a training event's scheduled start date and prevent the candidate from attending or rescheduling the training event.

An event that can be anticipated is not considered a medical or personal emergency. A candidate's inability to attend a training event due to work commitments or insufficient or inappropriate preparation is not considered a personal emergency.

Candidates with medical or personal emergencies within five days before a training event's scheduled start date may request a tuition credit. Such credit may be applied to a future training event or other program offered

by ACCCI and must be used within one year of the date the credit is issued, or such credit shall become invalid.

A tuition credit request must be submitted to certification@acc.com no later than 10 days after a training event's scheduled start date and must include supporting documentation as to the nature of the medical or personal emergency. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

No-Show Candidates

For purposes of the ACC In-house Counsel Certification Program, "no-show" candidates are defined as those who do not appear for a training event on that training event's scheduled start date. No-show candidates forfeit all program fees.

Reasonable Accommodations for Testing

ACCCI reaffirms ACC's policy of equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, orientation, age, or disability. If you require reasonable accommodation, please contact certification@acc.com at the time that you submit your application to the Program.

Refund Policy

Refunds are provided as follows:

- a) An applicant determined ineligible for certification before attending a training event will receive a full refund, less a US\$150.00 processing fee.*
- b) An applicant who attends a training event but is subsequently determined to be ineligible for certification will not be refunded.*
- c) Where an application is submitted too late to attend a training event or is incomplete by the start of the training event, the applicant may request credit for the tuition paid. Such credit may be applied to a future training event or other program offered by ACCCI and*

must be used within one year of the date the credit is issued, or such credit shall become invalid. A tuition credit request must be submitted to certification@acc.com no later than 10 days after a training event's scheduled start date. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

- d) Candidates with medical or personal emergencies within five days before a training event's scheduled start date may request a credit of tuition paid. Such credit may be applied to a future training event or other program offered by ACCCI and must be used within one year of the date the credit is issued, or such credit shall become invalid. A tuition credit request must be submitted to certification@acc.com no later than 10 days after a training event's scheduled start date and must include supporting documentation as to the nature of the medical or personal emergency. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- e) Unless otherwise provided in this handbook, an applicant who cancels his/her participation 30 days or more before a training event's scheduled start will receive a full refund, less a US\$150.00 processing fee. Any cancelation made less than 30 days before a training event's scheduled start will be eligible for credit. Such credit may be applied to a future training event or other program offered by ACCCI and must be used within one year of the date the credit is issued, or such credit shall become invalid. A tuition credit request must be submitted to certification@acc.com no later than 10 days after a training event's scheduled start date. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Refunds will not be provided under circumstances including, but not limited to, the following:

- a) Applicants and candidates who submit falsified or misrepresented information, or who fail to comply with an audit or violate testing procedures, will not be issued a refund or credit.

- b) Candidates who do not appear for a training event on that training event's scheduled start date will not be issued a refund or credit.

Certification Assessment

Candidates will be evaluated through daily in-class exercises and a final assessment after training. The in-class exercises are designed to assess candidates' proficiency in the subject matter being instructed.

The final assessment will be administered online through a system designated by ACCCI. Candidates will have up to two hours to complete the final assessment which consists of 50 multiple-choice questions. If the program is virtual, you will be required to show your camera during the entire examination period and keep your audio on mute.

Conduct Requirements

All candidates are expected to conduct themselves professionally, appropriately, and ethically during training events and assessments.

Irregularities observed or identified by subsequent analysis of your answers on the assessment may result in your removal from participation in the assessment or invalidation of your score. Irregularities include but are not limited to, misconduct or creating a disturbance, giving, or receiving unauthorized information or aid to or from other assessment takers, or attempting to remove materials from the testing environment. ACCCI reserves the right to investigate each incident of irregularity.

Before taking the assessment, you will be asked to confirm your agreement that you will not disclose, reproduce, or in any way distribute assessment items.

Conduct rules include but are not limited to:

- Late arrivals will not be permitted.

- *The use of audible beepers, mobile phones, or memory-capable devices is prohibited in the testing room.*
- *No breaks are scheduled during the assessment.*
- *Candidates who must leave the testing room to take a break will not be given extra time on the assessments.*

How the Assessment is Scored

The final assessment for the Program is designed to identify candidates with proficiency in the skills and competencies that are essential to the successful in-house practice of law.

Your performance in the assessment will be measured against a predetermined standard. The standard for this Program is a demonstration of the skills and competencies that can be reasonably expected of early- to mid-career in-house counsel and are based on global best practices. Your performance will not be measured against the performance of the other individuals taking the assessment. This means that if everyone who takes the assessment meets the skills and competencies standard, everyone will pass.

Receiving Your Results

Participants will see their provided pass/did not pass results immediately after completing the final assessment. candidates who pass the assessment will receive an official congratulatory email and credential certificate acknowledging their successful completion of the certification process.

Revocation of Certification

Certification may be revoked under circumstances including, but not limited to, the following:

- Falsification of information on the application form.*
- Misrepresentation of work experience or other information on the application form.*

- Violation of testing procedures (see Conduct Requirements).*
- Failure to meet certification maintenance requirements (see Certification Maintenance Requirements later in this document)*

Verification of Certification

The names of all professionals holding the ACC In-house Counsel Certified (ICC) designation will be publicly displayed on the ACCCI website in a manner prescribed by ACCCI for verification of the professional's good standing.

Digital Badge

The digital badge allows certificants to electronically display their earned and verified credentials. Information on how to access and display the digital badge is sent via email to qualified candidates following the release of their final assessment results.

Professionals holding the ICC designation are encouraged to share their digital badges on social networking sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook. The digital badge can also be added to resumes and e-mail signatures, making it easy for potential employers to instantly verify a certificant's credentials.

Using Your Credential

Professionals who have met the certification standards defined by the ACCCI and who maintain their credentials through the certification maintenance process are authorized to use the credential's designation.

Adding the credential to your professional profile will draw special attention to your achievement, and to the time and discipline involved in pursuing and attaining your goal. You may include your credentials on business cards, in resumes, on your web pages (e.g., LinkedIn or Facebook), in bylines for articles or blog posts, and in e-mail signatures.

Protect the integrity of your credentials by following these guidelines:

- Do not use your credential until you have received your final assessment results.
- Where you use your credential with your name, place the designation immediately after your name or postgraduate degree (e.g., Ph.D.). (e.g., “Jane Smith, Ph.D., ICC”)
- You may use your credential in a promotional text (e.g., “Jane Smith has satisfied the requirements for the ACC In-house Counsel Certification Program prescribed by the ACC Credentialing Institute.”).
- You may use your credential in a digital badge provided by the ACC Credentialing Institute that will allow others to verify your credential.
- If your certification has expired, immediately discontinue using the credential.

Maintaining the Certification

The ICC designation is valid for one year from the month that a candidate passes the final assessment of the In-house Counsel Certification Program. After the first year, ICC credential-holders are required to maintain their certification by engaging in Continuing Legal Professional Development (CLPD) activities related to the skills and competencies noted in the certification program’s curriculum and by paying an annual fee (see fees).

For purposes of this handbook, a “certificant” is an individual who has passed the certification assessment and has obtained the ICC designation.

It is the certificant’s responsibility to fulfill the educational requirements and submit payment before the certification cycle ends. Though the ACC Credentialing Institute may provide a reminder, it is ultimately up to the certificant to stay informed of the deadlines and ensure timely payment to maintain their certification.

Continuing Legal Professional Development (CLPD)

Currently, 10 hours of CLPD are required annually to maintain the ICC designation. CLPD hours must be distributed across the following areas:

- A minimum of four (4) hours must pertain to education in any of the following categories:
 - Stakeholder relationships
 - Law department management
 - Legal services
- The remaining education hours may be of any substantive areas of law towards fulfilling the total of 10 hours annual requirement (for example, ethics, employment law, intellectual property, data privacy, etc.).

CLPD hours to report may be from education activities offered by ACC, ACC Chapters, or independent providers if they meet the content requirements. Education towards the maintenance of certification may be completed in different modalities such as online, self-paced programs, and in-person. CLPD hours do not have to qualify for CLE, but certainly, CLE-approved programs will qualify for CLPD hours. The descriptions below may assist you in selecting continuing education:

Stakeholder Relationships- The competency addresses the “art” of the in-house practice of law, emphasizing the need for in-house counsel to effectively communicate legal issues and risks to non-lawyers; to be capable of building strong relationships with stakeholders both inside and outside the organization, and to understand the business and industry in which the organization operates to balance legal risks with business needs and goals.

Law Department Management - This competency addresses the managerial aspects of the in-house practice. This competency includes creating value for—and demonstrating value to—the greater organization. At the core of

this competency is an awareness of how the legal department impacts the organization's bottom line, and to be able to develop and implement legal strategies that support the organization's overall goals and objectives.

Legal Services - *This competency addresses the legal function of the in-house practice of law. The focus here is not to emphasize substantive law, nor to identify all of the legal knowledge an in-house attorney must possess to serve a particular client. Rather, this competency highlights the generalist nature of the in-house practice of law and the responsibility a lawyer has to stay up to date on the law and regulations affecting the organization, the ability to analyze complex legal issues; to identify potential risks and opportunities for their organization, and the ability to use legal analysis to guide decision-making.*

Annual Fee

Certificants pay an annual fee of US\$ 95 for ACC members and US\$150 for non-members. Payment must be done directly online. Invoices are not generated for this purpose. The Program currently accepts all major credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express). The certification maintenance fee is not refundable.

Application Deadlines

Once a candidate passes the certification assessment, their certification cycle begins the following day and ends on either June 30th or December 31st of the following year, depending on when they obtain their credentials. See below:

- a) *If the certificant passes the assessment during the **first semester** of the year (January to June), their cycle ends on **June 30th of the following year.***
- b) *If the certificant passes the assessment during the **second semester** of the year*

*(July to December), their cycle ends on **December 31st of the following year.***

Certificants who fail to comply with the certification maintenance requirements will automatically lapse 30 days after the conclusion of the cycle.

Renewal Cycle example:

1. *The certificant takes and passes the assessment on March 10, 2023*
2. *The initial certification cycle begins on March 11, 2023*
3. *The certificant must demonstrate continuing education and pay the annual fee on or before June 30, 2024.*
4. *If the certificant completes the requirements, their next deadline to maintain certification is June 30, 2025*
5. *If the certificant does not complete renewal requirements, their certification will automatically lapse on July 30, 2024*

Certificants may report requirements and pay the fee within three (3) months before the end of the cycle.

Application Audits

After completing a renewal, certificants are randomly selected for audit. If a certificant is selected for audit, they will be notified via email to provide supporting documentation. Certificants will be provided with 15 days to submit their documentation to certification@acc.com.

Failure to comply with the audit, and/or falsification or misrepresentation of the requested information, will result in denial of the application and their certification will immediately lapse. Failure to comply with the audit will result in forfeiting all fees.

Certificants will not be required to submit proof of completion of continuing education at the time of renewal, they should have supported

documentation ready in case they are selected for audit.

Lapse Status

Certificates that let their certification expire by not complying with their maintenance application will automatically be considered as lapse status. The certificant must refrain from using the initials ICC next to their name and they will be removed from the Certification Verification page.

Renewal Denials

Maintenance of certification will not be accepted for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- a) Failure to meet the minimum eligibility requirements (see *Eligibility Requirements*).
- b) Application is incomplete. No report or payment was received.
- c) Application is not submitted by the corresponding deadline (see *Application Deadlines*).
- d) Failure to comply with an audit (see *Application Audits*).
- e) Falsification of information on the application.

Applicants and candidates who submit falsified or misrepresented information, or who fail to comply with an audit or violate testing procedures, forfeit all fees.

Privacy Policy

All participants in the ACC In-house Counsel Certification Program must abide by ACCCI's Privacy Policy as found on its website, www.acc.com/certification.

Confidentiality

Performance on assessments shall remain confidential unless otherwise stipulated by the assessment taker or as required by law. ACCCI reserves the right to disclose the name of individuals holding certifications to the public.

ACCCI will not disclose the names of individuals who do not pass the assessments. Specific details about candidates or their assessment performance shall remain confidential unless otherwise stipulated by the assessment taker or as required by law. The names of all professionals holding the ACC In-house Counsel Certified (ICC) designation will be publicly displayed on the ACCCI website in a manner prescribed by ACCCI for verification of the professional's good standing.



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