



# International Association of Facilitators

## Professional Facilitator Certification Process Overview

### Background

The International Association of Facilitators (IAF™) is the world-wide professional body established to promote, support and advance the art and practice of professional facilitation through methods exchange, professional growth, practical research and collegial networking. In response to the needs of members and their customers, IAF established the Professional Facilitator Certification Program. The Program is managed by the IAF Director of Certification Operations, and assisted by the Program Administrator.

The Professional Facilitator Certification Program provides successful candidates with the professional credential “Certified Professional Facilitator™” (CPF™), as signified by a Certificate. This credential is the leading indicator that the facilitator is competent in each of the basic facilitator competencies, as outlined in Foundational Facilitator Competencies<sup>1</sup>. This competency structure was developed over several years by IAF with the support of IAF members and facilitators from all over the world. The competencies reflected in the document and assessed in the Certification Process form the basic set of skills, knowledge, and behaviors that facilitators must have in order to be successful facilitating in a wide variety of environments. Copies of this document are available free of charge from the IAF web site (<http://www.iaf-world.org>) or from the certification Program Administrator, at [certify@iaf-world.org](mailto:certify@iaf-world.org).

The CPF credential is granted for a three-year period, after which the facilitator must renew the credential through demonstration of continued professional growth and development. Membership in IAF is a prerequisite for maintenance of the credential.

A list of current CPFs is available from IAF via the IAF Website.

### Certification Process Overview

To successfully complete their professional certification, candidates must demonstrate practical proficiency in all competency areas. The intent of the Certification Process is to provide each candidate with ample opportunities to provide evidence supporting their competency in each of the competency areas. The candidate provides evidence of their competency through written documents, verbal explanations, and a facilitation demonstration. Each candidate’s evidence is carefully evaluated by a team of two Assessors who are assigned to the candidate for the

---

<sup>1</sup> *Foundational Facilitator Competencies*, © IAF™, 2003

duration of the process. The Assessors use a set of competency indicators based on the **Foundational Facilitator Competencies** to evaluate the candidate’s evidence. Throughout the process the Assessors inspect the evidence to insure that the candidate understands the foundation of facilitation and can apply the competencies actively in their work.

The Certification Process is made up of two stages.

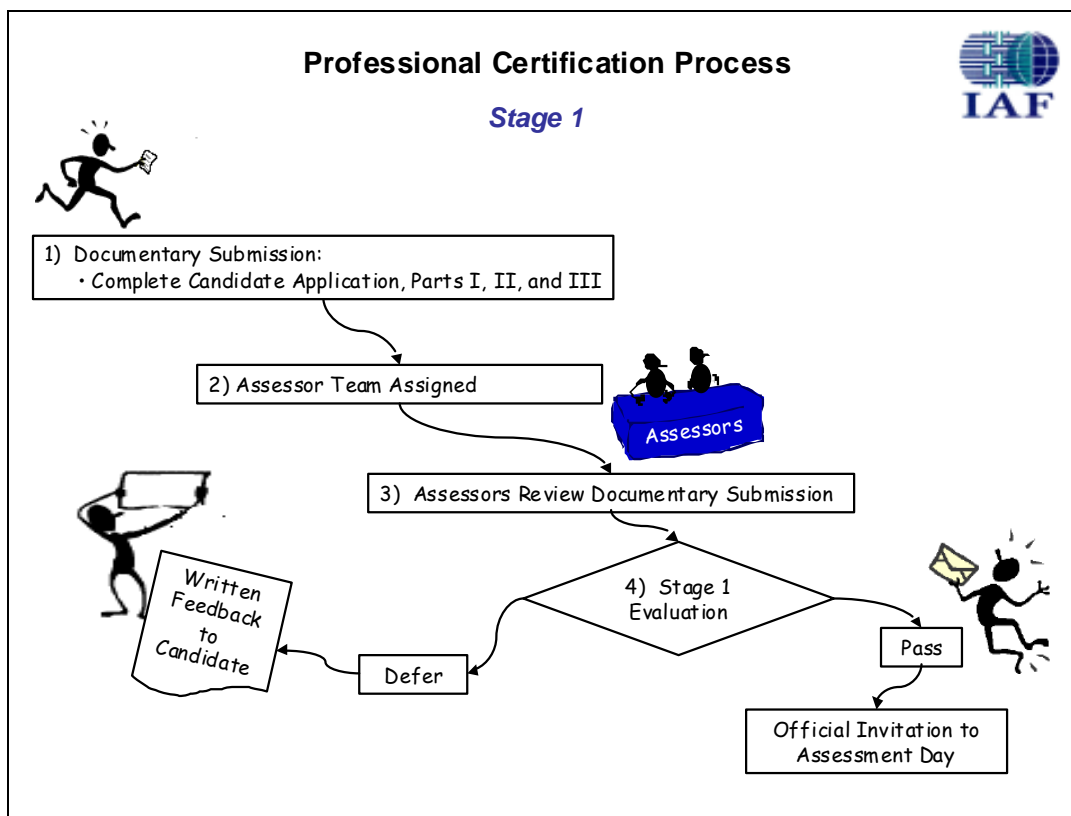
Stage 1: Documentary Submission

Stage 2: The Assessment Day

A result of “Pass” at the end of Stage 1 is required for admission to Stage 2. The final evaluation (pass or defer) is provided at the conclusion of the Stage 2 Assessment Day. The entire process, from application to completion, typically spans a period of approximately three months. A description of the process is provided below.

### Stage 1: Documentary Submission

Stage 1, Documentary Submission, includes the submission of a series of documents by the candidate, a review of the documents by the Assessors assigned to the candidate, and an evaluation of either “pass” or “defer.” The culmination of Stage 1 for successful candidates is a formal notification of invitation to attend the Stage 2 Assessment Day.



Documentary Submission consists of the component parts.

- Part I: Candidate Information
- Part II: Career Resume
- Part III: Statement of Qualifications and Experience

Part I and Part II are forms provided to the Candidate by the Program Administrator via email or the IAF Website. The forms include detailed instructions to assist in their completion. The Documentary Submission is completed with the submission of Part III, the Career Resume. When complete, the candidate submits all required documents to the Program Administrator by email.

### **Part I: Candidate Information**

This form is a simple itemization of Candidate contact information. It includes an entry regarding the candidate's preference for Assessment Day location and timing. The candidate preference regarding Assessment Day location and timing will lead to the assignment of Assessors to the candidate, and will pace the completion of the Certification Process.

### **Part II: Career Resume**

The candidate must provide a standard Career Resume as a part of the Documentary Submission. Most standard resume formats are acceptable for this purpose. The specific requirements for this part of the Documentary Submission are included in the instructions for Part II.

### **Part III: Statement of Qualifications and Experience**

The Statement of Qualifications and Experience is the first opportunity for candidates to provide evidence supporting their competency. It includes a listing of the candidate's facilitation-related training, a listing of representative workshops facilitated by the candidate, and a detailed description (between 1500 to 2500 words) of one of those workshops. This document typically takes between 1 to 3 hours to complete.

As each event is established, deadlines for Documentary Submissions are also established. At a predefined time prior to the preferred Assessment Day, the Assessor Team will review all candidate documentary submissions and conclude, based on the evidence of competency provided, that the candidate will receive either a Stage 1 "Pass" or "Defer" evaluation. Candidates who receive a "Pass" result at the end of Stage 1 are formally invited to Stage 2, the Assessment Day event. This marks the conclusion of Stage 1.

Candidates who are deferred by their Assessors in Stage 1 are provided written feedback describing the deficiencies found in their Documentary Submission, and are invited to re-submit all/partial documents (depending on the deficiency) for a future certification event. In some cases, depending on the situation, the candidate may be able to resubmit acceptable documents in time to attend the Assessment Day originally proposed.

## ***Stage 2: The Assessment Day***

Stage 2 of the Certification Process is the Assessment Day. The Assessment Day is a day-long event held in various locations around the world. The Assessment Day consists of four parts:

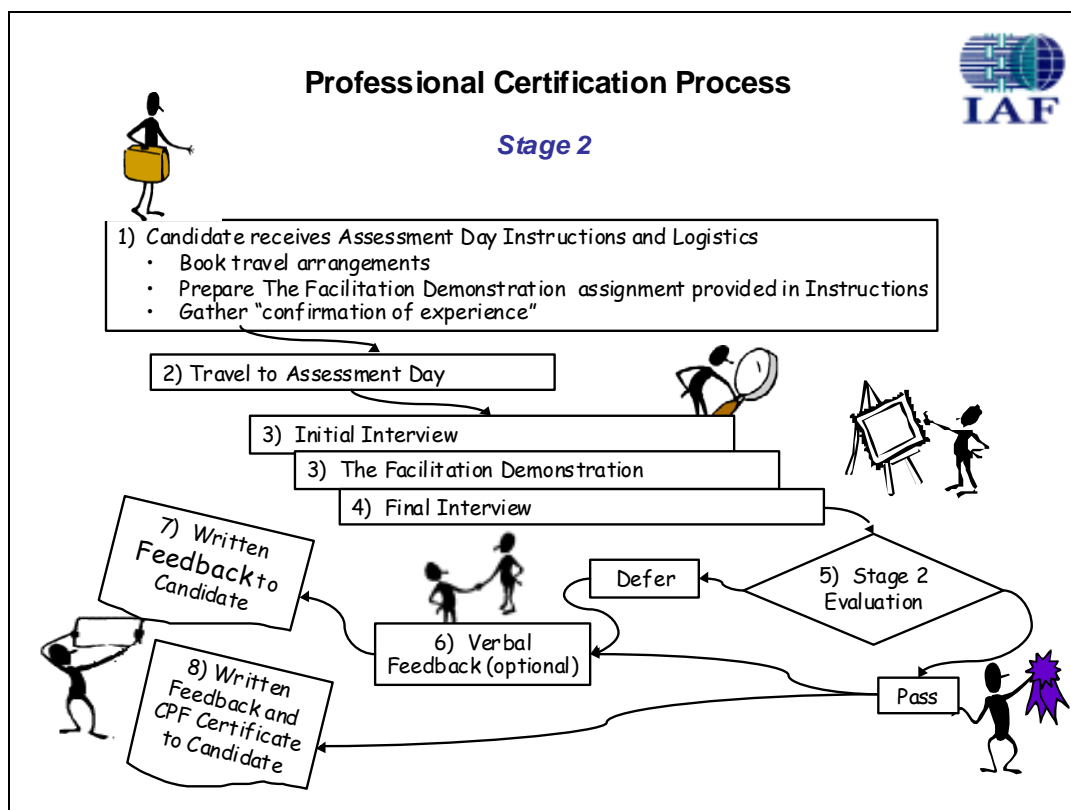
- Initial Candidate Interview
- The Facilitation Demonstration
- Final Candidate Interview
- Certification Result

Twelve candidates are typically assessed on a single Assessment Day by four Assessor teams. At the conclusion of the day each candidate is provided with their Certification Result, Pass, Defer, or Fail.

Specific instructions regarding preparation for the Assessment Day are provided by the Program Administrator at the time of invitation to the event. The preparation includes two basic activities:

1. Gathering confirmation of Training and Experience for those items listed in Part III, the Statement of Qualifications and Experience, within the Documentary Submission. These confirmation documents are to be hand-carried by the candidate to the Assessment Day. Instructions for this activity are included in Part III of the Documentary Submission.
2. Preparation of a Facilitation Demonstration (see below.)

Preparation for the Facilitation Demonstration, using basic tools and equipment, typically takes two-to-four hours. (Specific instructions provided for candidates in *Workshop Guidelines*.) The Assessment Day is described briefly below.



The Assessment Day begins with a Candidate Briefing meant to orient the candidates to the venue, introduce them to their Assessors and other candidates, and provide them with a

schedule for the day. The candidate then formally begins their Assessment Day activities.

#### *The Initial Interview*

The Initial Interview is thirty minutes in duration. The Assessor team assigned to the candidate meets privately with each candidate to discuss the candidate's evidence of competency. The Assessors will ask a series of questions meant to uncover the candidate's ability to implement the competencies in practice.

#### *The Facilitation Demonstration*

Complete instructions for the Facilitation Workshop (Demonstration) will accompany the Invitation to Stage Two. As preparation for the Assessment Day, the candidate will be asked to select a workshop topic from the list provided, and will be given instructions about preparing for the demonstration. The Candidate will then design a 30-minute facilitation meant to deliver a result relevant to their selected topics with the help of a group of six-to-twelve "participants", comprised of other candidates being assessed that day together with some members of the assessor team. Assessors will observe the demonstration, and the candidate will be expected to exhibit their capability to facilitate the session they have designed to a successful conclusion.

#### *The Final Interview*

After all candidates have completed their facilitation workshops, Assessors continue to interview the candidate, seeking any final evidence necessary to confirm the Certification Result. The Final Interview is no more than thirty minutes in length, but may be less if all necessary evidence has been gathered through the prior activities. If sufficient evidence is not collected by the Assessors by the end of the Final Interview, the Certification Result will be "defer."

#### *The Certification Results*

Following the Final Interview the Assessor Team reviews the candidate's results, and provides the candidate with a verbal Certification Result. The Result may be Pass, Defer, or Fail. The designation "Pass" indicates that the candidate has been certified as a Certified Professional Facilitator. "Defer" indicates that the candidate must reapply (within a three year time period) to complete certification after correcting deficiencies in their competencies. A Deferred candidate pays no assessment fee for the second assessment but does incur a \$750 administrative fee to partially offset the cost of re-assessment.\* A candidate will "Fail" only if unsuccessful after a second attempt to certify. All candidates, whatever status they achieve, receive immediate feedback and are given written confirmation of result.

*\*effective June, 2005*

## ***Following the Event***

As noted above, within thirty days following the Assessment Day all candidates will receive extensive written feedback from their Assessors regarding the evidence they presented throughout their Certification Process. In addition, successful candidates will receive a Certificate designating their status as a Certified Professional Facilitator as well as a sample Press Release which they may use to announce their new credential. A congratulatory notice including the successful candidates' names will be posted on the IAF website, and their names will be added to the CPF list. The CPF list is made available to the general public on the IAF

website.

### *Certification Process Timeline*

As noted above, the process typically takes approximately three months to complete depending on the scheduling of Assessment Day events. For each specific event there is a deadline for Documentary Submission to enable sufficient time for the Assessors to complete the Stage 1 review while allowing candidates sufficient time to make arrangements to travel to the Assessment Day. This deadline is typically about 45 days prior to the Assessment Day.

Candidates often provide their Documentary Submissions several months prior to their preferred Assessment Day in order to maximize the likelihood of being assigned to the Assessment day that they prefer. This is particularly wise if the candidate preference is to complete their certification with an Assessment Day held in conjunction with a major IAF conference or other popular event.

A list of Assessment Day venues/dates is available on the IAF website or from the Program Administrator. If an event is not planned in the candidate's preferred geographic area, the Administrator will work with the candidate to assist them in identifying the nearest/best location, including the possibility of establishing a new event in response to candidate demand. New events are continuously being considered and added to the calendar.

### *Re-certification*

A Re-certification Process is currently under development by IAF. CPFs will be informed about the process for continuing their certification beyond the initial three-year certification period. Any CPFs whose certification is due to expire will be notified by the Program Administrator in order to arrange for expedient re-certification.

### *Further Information*

Questions? Further information about the Program is available from the Program Administrator at: [certify@iaf-world.org](mailto:certify@iaf-world.org).