

A large, light green, stylized plant logo is centered on the page. It features a central vertical stem with several radiating lines representing branches or roots. The top part of the logo consists of several overlapping, pointed shapes that resemble leaves or petals. The bottom part of the logo shows a textured, horizontal band, possibly representing soil or a cross-section of a crop.

CCA
POLICY AND PROCEDURES
MANUAL

CERTIFIED
CROP ADVISER

CCA
POLICY & PROCEDURES
MANUAL
(Revised December 2016)

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Foreword

This manual contains the policies and procedures for the International Certified Crop Adviser's (ICCA) program as of 2016. Members of local boards will find information in this manual that they need to administer the program.

As this manual is used, please let us know if corrections or revisions are needed. The ICCA Manual is revised and updated as needed. Board members should work with the most current manual found on certifiedcropadviser.org.

**American Society of Agronomy
Certification Department**

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DEFINITIONS

The following terms and their definitions are provided to assist the reader in the interpretation and use of this manual.

Policies—Standards by which the Certified Crop Adviser program operates. The CCA – International Council sets policies and the CCA – National Boards ratify the policies. The CCA – North American Board (comprised of USA, Canada, Mexico) functions as the CCA – Council and CCA – National Boards until additional countries outside of North America join the program.

Procedures—Means by which policies are carried out and implemented.

Guidelines—Examples or aids used to illustrate policies and procedures. Guidelines may be followed at the discretion of the local board.

Local—Describes boards, actions or activities at the state, region or province level.

Mailing List—The CCA mailing list can be rented. See the Promotional Materials section of the Marketing part of the web site for more details.

CCA Logo—The logo can be used by CCAs after signing a usage guidelines agreement. It can be downloaded at <https://www.certifiedcropadviser.org/marketing/promotional-materials>. The official logo is shown below and is trademarked.

Applicant-Anyone who has initiated the procedures for becoming a Certified Crop Adviser and who has been issued an identification number by the Certified Crop Adviser program, but who has not yet completed all the requirements for becoming certified and been issued a certificate.

Certified Crop Adviser (CCA)-Anyone who has met all the requirements and been issued a certificate by the Certified Crop Adviser program identifying that person as being a CCA.

Candidate CCA-Anyone who has met all the requirements with the exception of experience.

Retired CCA-A CCA who no longer works or practices as a CCA and has received the CCA Retired designation from their local board.



CHAPTER I

International CCA Program

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1.1 CERTIFIED CROP ADVISER (CCA) PROGRAM

Over 13,000 men and women serve our farmers, ranchers and other agricultural entities as crop advisers providing information and expertise on crop production, crop protection and natural resource management. This profession of commercial, public and independent advisers plays an important role in modern agriculture.

Crop advisers provide advice and counsel to farmers, ranchers and other agricultural entities in their decision making process. This responsibility requires a proficient understanding of crop production science, food safety, technology, economics and the environment. Crop advisers combine their knowledge in these disciplines as well as their local experience to provide sound recommendations to their clients.

Together in 1991, agribusiness leaders, government and university personnel, under the leadership of the American Society of Agronomy (ASA), began discussions that led to the creation of the Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) program. The purpose of this discussion was to develop a voluntary, professional program for crop advisers that:

1. Established standards for knowledge, experience, ethical conduct and continuing education;
2. Enhanced professionalism; and
3. Promoted dialogue among individuals involved in agriculture and natural resource management.

The CCA program is coordinated by ASA and administered by state, regional or provincial boards at the local level. Volunteers with agricultural and natural resources backgrounds provide leadership to the local boards. Board members represent universities, agribusiness and governmental agencies. The collective effort has improved communication between groups active in agriculture and natural resource management and helped improve understanding of the crop advising profession to the public.

Any public, commercial or independent adviser who counsels farmers, ranchers or other agricultural entities and meets the rigorous standards of the program is encouraged to participate in the CCA program. To become a CCA an individual must:

1. Pass the comprehensive international exam and the local exam, which evaluates an applicant's knowledge of nutrient management, soil and water management, integrated pest management and crop management;
2. Have at least two to four years of crop advising experience (depending on the individual's educational background);
3. Document his or her education and crop advising experience with transcripts and supporting references; and
4. Sign and agree to uphold the CCA Code of Ethics.

To maintain their certified status CCAs must complete 40 hours of continuing education in each two-year certification cycle. Their local certification board monitors CCAs regarding their activities in continuing education and their ethical conduct.

CCAs play a critical role in the future of agriculture as they advise agricultural producers. Through their skills, they will keep agriculture competitive in a global economy, while aiding the process of sustaining our natural resources and protecting our environment.

1.2 RELATIONSHIP OF ICCA TO ASA

The American Society of Agronomy provides professional support, financial backing, representation in Washington, DC and liability protection to the ICCA Program. The ICCA program is an activity of ASA.

The Relationship of the American Society of Agronomy, the International Certified Crop Adviser Program and the Alliance of Crop, Soil and Environmental Science Societies

The American Society of Agronomy (ASA) is a scientific and professional society that promotes both the science and practice of agronomy. ASA is a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation that is governed by a board of directors responsible for the financial, management, policy and operation of the society. The International Certified Crop Adviser (ICCA)

Program is a certification program of ASA that was developed for the purpose of demonstrating competency for individuals providing crop production advice, and for promoting the value of the credential to industry, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations. The ICCA program is administered locally by state, regional and provincial (local) boards and internationally by the CCA – International Council (also called ICCA board). The ICCA board is responsible for developing and assuring certification standards, developing educational programs in support of certification, and working with the state, regional, and provincial boards, as well as industry, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations to promote and improve the value of the certification credential.

Management of the ICCA program is a collaborative effort involving interactions among the ASA board of directors, the ICCA board, and local boards. The ICCA board consists of members elected by each of the local boards. The ASA and ICCA executives' committees provides strategic oversight to the program. Fiduciary responsibility lies with the ASA board of directors which delegate authority to the ICCA board. Support services including staff, accounting, and other business activities are provided by the Alliance of Crop, Soil and Environmental Science Societies (ACSESS) through a contract with ASA. A Director of Certification Programs employed through ACSESS has responsibility for providing necessary support for the ICCA program as directed by the ICCA Board and the ASA Board. Funding for the ICCA program is self-supporting through exam fees, annual dues, and income derived from continuing education and other ASA-ICCA sponsored programs.

ASA and ICCA Financial Relationship

Approved by the ASA Board on February, 6, 2008

There are two board components that make up the ICCA Program, the International and the local boards. ASA has fiduciary responsibility for the ICCA Program but designates related funds to the program. The program has individual budget centers that show revenues and expenses associated with each local board and the international board. The local boards develop and submit their budget to ASA ICCA on an annual basis. These budgets direct the designated money for each local board according to the policies and procedures of the ICCA Program.

The ICCA part of the ICCA Program has always been part of the ASA overhead distribution and pays its appropriate allocated share of overhead annually. The ICCA budget center pays for all direct expenses including designated staff plus contributes to several supporting ACSESS staff according to time allocation. The local boards of the ICCA Program have not been and are not a part of the ASA overhead distribution. The local boards do not require direct services or demands on ASA resources since they have local offices that administer the program and each local board has its own budget to cover their direct expenses.

All local boards pay an annual administrative fee (\$250 for 2016) for ASA accounting services, which is not a charge from the ICCA Program. This annual fee is re-examined on an annual basis. Though the local boards were not part of the ASA overhead distribution they were initially charged an administrative fee of \$120 annually, with the proviso that this fee would be re-examined periodically. The \$120 fee was determined by the ASA accounting department as appropriate for the level of work that was performed beyond what ICCA was paying. Assessing local boards the full overhead charge did not seem appropriate when considering the level of burden the local boards generate. At this time, it is recommended that the best approach is to maintain a flat rate fee that fairly represents the level of burden beyond what the ICCA Program is paying. Through careful consideration of the number of checks processed and other burdens generated per annum, it is recommended that the rate of \$120 increase to \$200 annually, per local board, to offset the expense of providing services to the local boards.

Note: The annual fee local boards' pay is for ACSESS accounting staff to manage the local boards' funds including processing at least quarterly but no more than monthly invoices. Additional services may be requested and additional fees will be assessed.

1.3 ICCA PROGRAM POLICY AND GUIDELINE DEVELOPMENT

In 2010, the ICCA Program Board structure was changed to the following:

CCA – International Council – sets overall policies for the program and deals with issues that impact the entire program regardless of international boundaries. The Council is comprised of the three ICCA executives, ICCA representative to the ASA board, ASA Board executive committee representative and a representative from each CCA - National Board. The Council meets as needed.

CCA – National Board – sets policies and deals with issues that are unique to an individual country. It also ratifies policy decisions made by the CCA – International Council. Each CCA – Local Board has one representative on its respective CCA - National Board along with representatives from the appropriate government agencies associated with agriculture, resource management and environmental protection. The National Boards meet as needed.

CCA – Local Board – administers the ICCA Program at the state, regional or provincial level.

In 2013, the ICCA Program moved from a standing committees' structure to a task force structure. Task Forces are appointed by the ICCA Board Chair, serve as needed and for the time needed to complete their task. Rapid Response Teams (RRT) were enacted for the four competencies' areas: Nutrient Management; Soil and Water Management; Integrated Pest Management; and Crop Management comprised of members from the ASA Communities by the same name. RRTs serve as needed. The ICCA executive committee serves as the Budget and Finance Committee.

Each voting member of the ICCA Board representing a local CCA board will need to be a CCA and a current member of the local board. The representative automatically in this position is the local CCA board chair unless the local board designates another member and notifies the ICCA office.

In 2015, the program included the three countries of North America (USA, Canada, Mexico) and began meeting as such under the title of ICCA Board. It will continue to do so until additional countries are added to the program.

Agenda Item Process:

The ICCA Board (comprised of USA, Canada and Mexico) will meet one time per year unless changed by the Board.

Proposed agenda items along with any supporting documents need to be sent to the ICCA Board Chair via the ICCA office at least 60 days prior to the scheduled ICCA Board meeting. Items received after the deadline will not appear on the agenda but attempts will be made to accommodate late arriving topics. Otherwise, items will be placed on the following meeting agenda list.

The ICCA Executive Committee will review all requested agenda items in developing the meeting agenda and related supporting materials. The agenda and related documents will be sent to the ICCA Board members at least 30 days prior to the meeting date.

1.4 ICCA STANDING COMMITTEES

Executive Committee (EC): This committee is responsible for setting the agendas for the board meetings, creating task forces to address issues as needed, acting as the budget and finance committee, acting as the nominating committee and addressing questions. The EC provides general, operational oversight and brings policy matters to the ICCA Board.

ICCA Board Executive Committee Composition:

Current chairs and members are listed at: <https://www.agronomy.org/about-society/committees/A092.3/members/>

1. Past Chair of ICCA Board
2. Current Chair of ICCA Board
3. Vice Chair of ICCA Board
4. ICCA Board representative to the ASA Board
5. ASA Director, Professional Development and Business Relations (ex-officio)

Exam and Procedures Committee (EPC):

Current chair and members can be found at:

www.agronomy.org/about-society/committees/A092.6/members/

This committee is responsible for the construction and administration of the international exam, including: editing the international exam, ensuring security of the international exam, revising the international performance objectives and setting the passing score for the international exam. It is also responsible for the overall quality control and standard operating procedures for all CCA exams.

Communications & Promotions Committee:

Current chair and members can be found at:

www.agronomy.org/about-society/committees/A092.15/members/

This committee is responsible for developing a comprehensive annual marketing plan and providing oversight to the marketing efforts of the ICCA Program.

1.5 CCA NOMINATION AND ELECTION PROCEDURES

PROCEDURE: The governmental agencies and Standing Chair positions are appointed by the International CCA Board Chair.

Each year the Board elects a Vice-Chair from the ICCA Board members. All positions should have at least two nominees and nominations can be solicited from the floor. In the event that a board member cannot complete his/her term, it is at the discretion of the Board Chair to hold a special election or appoint someone to complete the existing term.

1.6 STATE, PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL BOARDS

POLICY: *The local boards shall consist of at least seven members. Each member shall serve a three-year term and cannot serve more than two consecutive three-year terms. At-large members must be active CCAs and elected by the CCAs in the board's jurisdiction. The board chair appoints all other board positions.*

An executive committee elected by the current board members will consist of vice-chair, chair and past-chair of the board. The vice-chair will rotate to chair and the chair will rotate to past-chair. Chairs cannot serve more than one two-year term nor can they serve consecutive terms.

The chair appoints the standing committee chairs to three-year terms. The committee chair selects the committee members. The standing committees are: exam and procedures; continuing education; standards and ethics. The executive committee serves as the budget and finance committee or the chair can appoint a budget and finance committee chair. The vice-chair serves as the marketing committee chair or the chair can appoint a marketing committee chair.

A nominating committee, chaired by the past-chair of the board will create a slate of candidates to fill open board positions each year.

Volunteer or paid administrative agents selected by the local board may not serve in a voting capacity nor hold officer or committee leadership positions. The administrative agent of the board should serve the board in an advisory/ex-officio position.

The structure of the local board:

1. One representative-Environmental Regulatory Agency, such as the State/Provincial Environmental Protection Agency or Department of Natural Resources
2. One representative-Extension Service
3. One representative-President or an officer of the State/Province Agriculture Business Association
4. One representative-State/Province Agricultural regulatory agency and/or Natural Resource Conservation Service.
5. Chair, Exam and Procedures Committee

6. Three representatives At-Large (minimum) – elected by the CCA membership
7. Others as deemed appropriate by the local board

The duties of the local boards include the following:

1. Administer CCA program in its jurisdiction including actively marketing and promoting the program
2. Assure adequate CEU opportunities are available
3. Enforce the Code of Ethics
4. Rule on work experience and educational summaries
5. Develop state/provincial exam
6. Administer international and local board exams in its jurisdiction
7. Grant certification
8. Approve Local Board expenses consistent with ASA bylaws
9. Local board chairs must keep ICCA office staff informed of board changes

GUIDELINES: It is a goal of the ICCA Program that the majority of the local board members are CCA/CPAg certified and that the board members who are not appointees be elected by the certificants in the state, region or province.

1.7 POLICY FOR LOCAL BOARD NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ICCA BOARD POLICIES

Should a local board be deemed to be out of compliance with ICCA board policies, the following process will be implemented to work with the board to regain compliance.

1. *Every attempt will be made to communicate and explain the ICCA Board Policy decisions including three written requests to comply with the stated policy. The ICCA Executive Committee will provide oversight and the ICCA Board Chair will sign appropriate letters and communicate with the local board chair. The local board will have 30 days post original deadline to implement the stated ICCA policy and notify the ICCA office.*
2. *If #1 does not bring the local board into compliance, then a letter of warning will be sent to every board member on the local board explaining the need to comply with the stated policy and outlining the consequences of non-compliance. The letter will be approved by the ICCA Executive Committee and signed by the ICCA Board Chair. The local board will have 30 days to comply and notify the ICCA office.*
3. *If #2 does not bring the local board into compliance, then a letter outlining what has taken place and the consequences of non-compliance will be sent to all of the CCAs within the local board's jurisdiction. The letter will be approved by the ICCA Executive Committee and signed by the ICCA Board Chair. The local board will have 30 days to comply.*
4. *If #3 does not bring the local board into compliance, then the local board funds will be frozen. This step will first be reviewed and approved by the ICCA Executive Committee with a recommendation to the full ICCA Board. The ICCA Board must produce a majority vote in favor before this step is implemented. The local board will have 30 days to comply. Once the local board complies with the stated policy, the funds will be made available. The local CCA board has the right to appeal this decision to the American Society of Agronomy (ASA) Executive Committee.*
5. *If #4 does not bring the local board into compliance, then the local board will be dissolved and the administrative agent dismissed. A new board will be organized from the local CCA membership. This step will first be reviewed and approved by the ICCA Executive Committee with a recommendation to the full ICCA Board. The ICCA Board must produce a majority vote in favor before this step is implemented. No members of the existing local board may serve on the newly formed local board for five years from the date of termination. The ICCA Board will provide services and leadership until the new local board is selected.*

1.8 LIABILITY INSURANCE COVERAGE

POLICY: *Local Board members and the ICCA Board of Directors are covered by the ASA directors' and officers' liability insurance. To assure continued eligibility for this coverage, it is imperative that all certification procedures be consistent with the bylaws of ASA and the policy and procedures of the ICCA Program. The ICCA Program is an ASA program. All fees charged in regard to certification (i.e.: application, exam, renewal, etc.) are payable to ASA. These conditions are necessary for ASA to accept liability for the ICCA Program.*

PROCEDURE: All boards must keep ASA updated with any board member changes.

1.9 ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTIFICATION

POLICY: *Applicants for CCA certification must submit the CCA Application including credentials that describe their work experience, educational background, sign the code of ethics and pass both the International and local exams.*

Applicants must satisfy one of the following eligibility requirements to qualify for ICCA certification:

1. A BS degree in Agriculture with two years of crop advising experience;
2. An Associate degree in Agriculture with three years of crop advising experience; or
3. Non-degree or non-related degree with four years of crop advising experience.

GUIDELINES: Students enrolled in a degree program, who have participated in an internship or supervised summer crop production work experience may apply this experience to the CCA work experience eligibility requirement. Applicants may submit farming work experience. Regardless of the applicant's duration of farming, the local board may only grant up to one year for farming experience.

1.9.1 Required Submissions for Certification

1. Agricultural work summary form detailing work experience in crop production advising.
2. Education summary and official transcripts if applying with an Associates or Bachelor's degree.
3. Two completed reference forms (One from a current employer and one from a client or individual who is familiar with the applicant's work experience in crop production). *Self-employed applicants may substitute a letter of recommendation from a colleague (not a subordinate) or a second client for employer's letter.*
4. Signed Code of Ethics.

1.9.2 Deadline for Credential Submission

POLICY: *Applicants must submit all required credentials directly to the ICCA Office in Madison, Wisconsin within six months of successfully completing both the International and local exams.*

PROCEDURE: Exam results will be invalidated, requiring the applicant to retest, if the applicant's credentials are not received in the prescribed six-month time period that begins when the applicant has successfully passed both the International and local exams. Applicants may appeal to the appropriate local board for an extension.

1.9.3 Annual Renewal Fee

POLICY: *A non-refundable renewal fee (in US Dollars) is required annually to maintain certification. Local boards may also charge annual renewal fees.*

1.10 EXAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

POLICY: *The ICCA Program requires successful passing of both the International and local exams for all applicants.*

PROCEDURES: The international exam is divided into four sections: Nutrient Management; Soil and Water Management; Integrated Pest Management and Crop Management. Under the oversight of the ICCA Exam and Procedures Committee, an independent psychometrician is contracted to design, construct and manage the International exam. An independent psychometrician scores, scales and validates all CCA exams.

The committee is responsible for oversight of the International Exam. The local exam is developed under the direction of the local board and follows the same procedures as the International Exam.

1.10.1 CCA Exam Procedures

1. The international and local exam along with specialty exams are offered each year on the first Friday in February. In addition, local boards may opt to offer the international and local exams on the first Friday in August.
2. The international and local exams are offered on the same day. The international exam is given in the morning and the local exam in the afternoon.
3. The international and local exams are scored separately and have separate cut scores.
4. The international and local exams are all scored by ICCA.
5. International and local exams must be taken and passed independently.
6. Local boards must provide an exam with 100 questions using a multiple-choice format with one correct answer.
7. Local boards will participate in setting a passing score for their exam by completing an Angoff Analysis.
8. Each board must send a copy of their exam to the International CCA Office no later than November 1.
9. The four sections of each exam are rolled into one total score. The passing score for each exam is based on the total score.
10. Local boards control the content of the local exam. Local exams emphasize local nutrient management, weeds, insects, diseases, IPM system, regulatory requirements, crop management and physiology, etc.
11. Local boards may additionally require applicants to pass applicable state/province licensing or certification exams to become certified.
12. Local boards may choose to use their state/province licensing or certification exams in lieu of a portion or the entire CCA local exam. However, local boards must request a waiver from the EPC to use a part or all of a licensing or certification exam in this way and the EPC will require applicants to be examined on all four sections.
13. The local board needs to review licensing or certification exam standards every five years to ensure that the exam is still valid and supports the knowledge required by the ICCA Program.

1.11 CODE OF ETHICS

All individuals certified under the ICCA Program must subscribe to the ICCA Code of Ethics. The ICCA Program periodically reviews the Code of Ethics and the complaint investigation procedures.

CODE OF ETHICS

Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) Code of Ethics

All individuals certified under the International Certified Crop Adviser (ICCA) program must subscribe to the CCA Code of Ethics. The ICCA Standards & Ethics Committee periodically reviews the current Code of Ethics.

Article I. Preamble

1. The privilege of professional practice imposes obligations of responsibility as well as professional knowledge. The ICCA program certifies the credentials of individuals through state/provincial certification boards.
2. When using the CCA designation, a CCA shall use professional conduct in all communications relating to this vocation including but not limited to emails, blogs, and social media.

3. The ICCA program will award the title of Certified to individuals who meet the experience, testing requirements and the continuing education requirements of the ICCA program. The ICCA program does not require college level education. A college education will substitute for part of the ICCA work experience requirement as provided for in the ICCA guidelines.

4. Certified Crop Advisers (hereafter called CCAs), at the request of a client or employer, must disclose the information used to gain certification. CCAs who knowingly misrepresent their credentials will face disciplinary action.

Article II. Relation of Professional to the Public

1. A CCA shall avoid and discourage sensational, exaggerated, or unwarranted statements that might induce participation in unsound enterprises.

2. A CCA shall not give professional opinion, or make a recommendation, without being as thoroughly informed as might reasonably be expected considering the purpose for which the opinion or recommendation is desired; and the degree of completeness of information upon which it is based should be clear.

3. A CCA shall not issue a false statement or false information even if directed to do so by employer or client.

Article III. Relation of Professional to Employer and Client

1. A CCA shall protect, to the fullest extent possible, the interest of the employer or client insofar as such interest is consistent with the law and professional obligations and ethics.

2. A CCA who finds that obligations to the employer or client conflict with their professional obligation or ethics should work to have such objectionable conditions corrected.

3. A CCA shall not use, directly or indirectly, employer or client's information in any way that would violate their confidentiality.

4. A CCA shall not divulge information given in confidence.

5. A CCA retained by one client shall not accept without the client's written consent, an engagement by another if the interests of the two are in any manner conflicting.

6. A CCA who has made an investigation for any employer or client shall not seek to profit economically from the information gained, unless written permission to do so is granted, or until it is clear that there can no longer be a conflict of interest with the original employer or client.

7. A CCA shall engage, or advise employer or client to engage and cooperate with other experts, specialists and government agency staff.

8. A CCA protects the interest of a client by recommending only products and services that are in the best interest of the client and public.

9. A CCA protects his/her credibility by disclosing to clients how he/she will be compensated for providing recommendations to the client.

Article IV. Relation of Professionals to Each Other

1. A CCA shall not falsely or maliciously attempt to injure the reputation of another.

2. A CCA shall freely give credit for work done by others, to whom the credit is due, and shall refrain from plagiarism of oral and written communications and shall not knowingly accept credit rightfully due another person.

3. A CCA shall not use the advantage of public employment (e.g. university, government) to compete unfairly with other certified professions.

4. A CCA shall endeavor to cooperate with others in the profession and encourage the ethical dissemination of technical knowledge.

Article V. Duty to the Profession

1. A CCA shall aid in exclusion from certification, those who have not followed this Code of Ethics or who do not have the required education and experience.

2. A CCA shall uphold this Code of Ethics by precept and example and encourage, by counsel and advice, other CCAs to do the same.

3. A CCA having positive knowledge of deviation from this Code by another CCA shall bring such deviation to the attention of the CCA's Local Board.

Approved by International CCA Board of Directors 07/97

Edited and approved by ICCA Board of Directors 09/2016

1.12 SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION

POLICY: *Certification may be revoked or suspended if a CCA.*

- A. *Provides false information to the local board,*
- B. *Violates the Code of Ethics;*
- C. *Does not maintain the required CEUs; and/or*
- D. *Does not pay the annual renewal*

PROCEDURE:

The ASA ICCA Program complaint investigation procedures outline the process that the State/Province (Local) CCA Certifying Board will use in conducting a review of a CCA. It is based upon the potential violation of the ICCA Program's code of ethics. Anyone can file a complaint. The complaint and rebuttal must be written (electronic communication is acceptable) and include as much detail as possible including but not limited to pictures, video, lab reports and eye witness testimonials. The complaint investigation process is conducted by fellow CCAs. They will not know the complainant or defendant personally.

The complaint review process does:

- include an evaluation of whether or not the defendant should have been qualified to be involved with the agronomy work described in the complaint based on but not limited to the defendant's certification records, training, continuing education and work experiences.

The complaint review process does **not**:

- include an evaluation of the defendant's recommendation on a specific job or project,
- determine fair pricing, how or how much the complainant should have been charged for the work done by the CCA.

Steps that will be followed:

1. Anyone may file a complaint for ethics violations. A complaint must be written and signed to be considered for investigation. Electronic communication (Email) is acceptable and considered valid.
 - a. Complaints are filed with either the CCA's local certifying board's office or the ICCA board's office. The office receiving the complaint then notifies the other office that a complaint has been received. The CCA's local certifying board's Standards and Ethics Committee (SEC) will investigate the complaint.
 - b. The ASA will confirm the certifying board chair is aware of the complaint. The board chair will be an ex-officio member of the SEC and will participate in all the activities related to the complaint investigation. The full local certifying board will not be involved in the initial investigation because they will serve as the appeal body if necessary.
 - c. The ASA Director of Professional Development and Business Relations will notify the person who filed the complaint (complainant) that it has been received.
2. The SEC must decide in 120 days if the filed complaint has enough merit to warrant an investigation. The SEC will base their decision on what the complainant has provided as evidence with the written complaint. It is strongly advised that the complainant provide as much detail about the potential violation as possible including but not limited to witness' written testimony, lab results, pictures and/or video.
 - a. If yes, the SEC must establish the grounds for an investigation. They must decide which section of the Code of Ethics or other reason they will investigate. Go on to 3.

- b. If no, they must notify complainant they found insufficient grounds to investigate. Investigation stops here.
3. Once the grounds are established for an investigation, the defendant (CCA) and complainant are notified.

Note: All correspondence to the defendant and complainant will be handled through the ASA Director of Professional Development and Business Relations.
4. The defendant (CCA) will be provided a copy of the written complaint along with all supporting materials and be given 60 days to respond to the complaint and to provide rebuttal information in writing. Failure to respond within this time period shall be considered a waiver of the right to provide rebuttal information. During this period, the SEC will conduct an audit of the defendant's certification maintenance program.
5. The SEC upon review of the rebuttal information and the audit of the defendant's CEU maintenance program in 60 days must:
 - a. exonerate the defendant
 - b. write a letter of warning
 - c. suspend the defendant
 - d. revoke certification
 - e. extend the investigation
6. If b, c, or d, are selected, the defendant may request a hearing (personal appearance) by the full CCA – Local Board. The time and place will be set by ASA.
 - a. To overrule the SEC, a two-thirds majority vote of the full CCA-Local Board is required.
7. If 5e is selected, the committee may involve board members to assist the investigation which may be extended in 30 day increments. Funds may be requested from ICCA to assist the investigation.
 - a. Upon the completion of the investigation, a decision must be reached regarding 5a-d.

1.13 CONTINUING EDUCATION AND RECERTIFICATION

POLICY: *CCAs must participate in continuing education to maintain their certification. Continuing education progress for recertification will be measured by continuing education units (CEUs).*

PROCEDURES: The local boards, following guidelines set up by the ICCA Board, set the amount of credit issued for workshops, meetings and other educational materials.

1.13.1 Certification Renewal

PROCEDURE: CCAs may renew their certification annually by payment of the appropriate fees. At the end of the certification continuing education cycle, renewal requires evidence of completion of the 40 hours of CEUs and the payment of the appropriate fees. Renewal is due annually on 1 January and is considered delinquent if not paid within 30 days after the annual date. The CCAs name is dropped from the active registry if the fee is not paid before 1 February.

POLICY: *A CCA who leaves the program in good standing, voluntarily withdrawals or by mistake will have up to two years after leaving the program to be reinstated without having to retest as long as they make up any required CEUs (within the next two-year cycle) and renewal fees. After two years' time, the individual is required to retest and reapply for certification.*

1.13.2 Continuing Education Procedures for Maintenance of Certification

To maintain certification, CCAs must adhere to the Code of Ethics and participate in continuing education. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in suspension or revocation of certification. The primary purpose for continuing education is to further enhance the skills of a CCA and routinely update their knowledge as new information and technologies become available. To ensure that the primary purpose of continuing education is achieved, specific requirements have been adopted that must be followed by a CCA to receive credit for continuing education activities.

Continuing education activities are measured in CEUs, which are defined as the equivalent of one hour of quality contact time in training or other qualifying activity on such topics as contained in or related to the CCA Educational Areas Document. These requirements will ensure that the quality of continuing education meets high standards. A CCA must devote the equivalent of an entire work week (40 hours) to obtain 40 CEUs in every two-year cycle. The quality of continuing education is subject to review by the local boards. CCAs may report CEUs using the online form as long as the required minimum of 20 CEUs are board approved. CEUs are subject to random audit and will be reviewed in conjunction with any complaints.

Two-year CEU cycles begin on 1 January of each year. The continuing education requirements for maintaining certification are:

1. A minimum of 40 CEUs every two years with a minimum of five CEUs in each of the four competency areas. ***Please note: The category—Professional Development—is not a required category.***
2. A minimum of 20 CEUs must be pre- or post-Board approved in each two-year cycle.
3. Applicants may begin accumulating CEUs on the day their CCA certificate is dated. CEUs obtained on or after the date on the certificate, but prior to 1 January, will count towards the first year.

POLICY: A CCA who does not earn the required amount of CEUs by the stated deadline may write a letter of appeal to their local CCA board explaining any extenuating circumstances that prevented them from earning the CEUs.

Extenuating circumstances include: loss of job, health condition, maternity leave, active military service, changes of locale and position. The CCA needs to file the appeal (within the appropriate timeframe) in writing to the ICCA office, which will forward the written appeal to the local board.

The local CCA board can do one of the following upon review of the appeal letter:

1. Waive the deficient CEUs and allow the CCA to continue to their next CEU cycle;
2. Add the deficient CEUs to the CCA's next CEU cycle; or
3. Deny the appeal and uphold the termination of the CCA's certification.

The ICCA Board believes the continuing education requirements outlined above are sufficiently rigorous to reinforce and steadily upgrade the skills of CCAs. These continuing education requirements are minimums. The CCA is encouraged to exceed them whenever possible. The ICCA Board will routinely examine the continuing education requirements for the ICCA Program to ensure continued excellence.

1.14 Specialty Certifications

The ICCA Program structure provides for Specialty Certifications. The option has been added to provide structure for specific niche needs that build upon the core ICCA program but the content is deemed as not all CCAs need to know. The following information is required in order for the ICCA board to assess the need for such a Specialty Area, the funding support and mechanisms for maintenance of the Specialty Certification.

1. **General Description:** Describe the need for a Specialty Area, and a general description of the overall work or services to be performed by the Specialty Area-certified CCA for an individual grower/farmer. Specific description is preferred, including all expected deliverables produced by the proposed specialty-certified CCA.
2. **Funding:** Describe the funding provided from the requester for development of this specialty area certification, the funding process and any delivery of funds to ICCA.

3. Target audience to receive services by Specialty Area-certified CCA: Describe geographic region, estimate number of farms, type of farm(s), acreage, crops. Identify provider(s) that currently deliver needed services (in item #1) to target audience.
4. Capabilities: Describe why current ICCA performance objectives are not sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed Specialty Area Certification. Is any specialized training course or materials suggested or required? Describe the maintenance of capabilities. Is the CCA CEU process, to document educational fulfillment in a specific subject matter area, satisfactory to accomplish specialty capabilities updates? For future program continuity and coordination, a periodic review process is proposed, to review specialty area performance objectives (every 4 years), to consider inclusion of those objectives into the core ICCA performance objectives.
5. Proof of Specialty Competency: In addition to training (CEUs) is proof of specialty capability required by the requester? Various options – completion of a special project, interview, case study report, exam, some combination of these, etc. Explain the process, identifying who develops and evaluates the “proof”. If an exam is requested, is participation by ICCA in exam development needed or requested? If yes, provide details of exam development, administration and maintenance.
6. Timeframe: What is the general timeframe during which this specialty area needs to be made available (country, region, state, watershed, province)? Detail any requester deadlines. Identify geographic priorities, if any. Applicants are encouraged to inform ICCA headquarters at least six months in advance of any deadlines.
7. Assistance: Does the applicant need or require assistance from the ICCA Program to develop certain aspects of this program? Describe where assistance is desired and expectations for cooperation both initially and into the future. ICCA will administer all specialty certifications and maintain a current roster of specialty certified CCAs.

1.14.1 Specialty Certification Programs

4R Nutrient Management Specialist (4R NMS) Certification

Description and Identification of Responsible Parties:

1. This is a voluntary, specialty certification available to a CCA in good standing. The ICCA Program developed the 4R NMS Certification to meet the growing demand for qualified advisers with focused knowledge and skills in nutrient management. The 4R concept of nutrient management has been developed and is being implemented world-wide by industry, researchers, government agencies, and farmers and their advisers. It is centered on the goal of building a nutrient management plan that puts the right nutrient sources, at the right rate, in the right place, and at the right time---the 4Rs of nutrient management. 4R Nutrient Management considers the integration of agronomic practices with economic analysis and environmental interaction, all considered at the local field level, as well as social impacts for the community, and for downstream stakeholders. The CCA 4R NMS Certification builds upon the nutrient, soil and water components of the International CCA Certification. It demonstrates the CCA’s proficiency in working with the 4R concepts and building it into nutrient management planning.
2. The candidate must pass the 4R NMS Certification exam. The specialty certification exam committee will participate in setting a passing score for the exam by completing an Angoff Analysis.
3. To renew the 4R NMS Certification, the CCA must earn 7.5 CEUs every two years in each of the Nutrient Management and Soil and Water Management categories. The requirement of 40 total CEUs every two years and the minimum of 5 CEUs in each of the Integrated Pest Management and Crop Management categories is unchanged.
4. ICCA fees for the exam will be set by the ICCA Office including an amount for the local board.
5. ICCA fees for the renewal will be set by the ICCA Office including an amount for the local board.
6. The exam will be administered on the same day and location as the International CCA and Local Board exams.
7. The ICCA Office will score and evaluate the exams using methods in place for the ICCA Program exams.

Resistance Management Specialist (RMS) Certification

Description and Identification of Responsible Parties:

1. This is a voluntary, specialty certification available to a CCA in good standing. The ICCA Program developed the RMS Certification to meet the growing demand for qualified advisers with focused knowledge and skills in pest and resistance management. The CCA RMS Certification builds upon the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) components of the International CCA Certification. It demonstrates the CCA's proficiency in working with resistance management and building it into a holistic, IPM management plan. The RMS Certification allows those CCAs who advise on pest management to become more visible and recognized for their integrated systems thinking and approach to avoid development of resistance or alleviate resistance problems in order to meet the need for improved environmental stewardship.
2. The candidate must pass the RMS certification exam. The specialty certification exam committee will participate in setting a passing score for the exam by completing an Angoff Analysis.
3. To renew the RMS Certification, the CCA must earn 10.0 CEUs every two years in Integrated Pest Management. The requirement of 40 total CEUs every two years that must include 5 CEUs in each of the Nutrient Management, Soil and Water Management and Crop Management categories is unchanged.
4. ICCA fees for the exam will be set by the ICCA Office including an amount for the local board.
5. ICCA fees for the renewal will be set by the ICCA Office including an amount for the local board.
6. The exam will be administered on the same day and location as the International CCA and Local Board exams.
7. The ICCA Office will score and evaluate the exams using methods in place for the ICCA Program exams.

Sustainability Specialist (SSp) Certification

Description and Identification of Responsible Parties:

1. This is a voluntary certification available to a CCA in good standing. The CCA program is predicated on the concept that there is a basic set of knowledge and experience that one must know in order to provide sound advice to producers. The role of the CCA in agricultural production and their relationship to producers has grown over the life of the certification program and continues to grow alongside ever-evolving agricultural standards and practices, which include economic, environmental, and social considerations. With that in mind, the CCA program, with support from the United Soybean Board, has undertaken development of a Sustainability Specialty to meet the growing demand for information and advice from producers facing requests to utilize and document sustainable practices. The purpose of implementing a Sustainability Specialty is to utilize CCAs to help farmers to become better acquainted with and adopt more sustainable management practices within their operations.
2. The candidate must pass the Sustainability specialty certification exam. The specialty certification exam committee will participate in setting a passing score for the exam by completing an Angoff Analysis.
3. To maintain the Sustainability Specialty Certification, the CCA must earn 5.0 CEUs every two years in Sustainability. The requirement of 40 CEUs every two years, which must include 5 CEUs in each of Nutrient Management, Soil and Water Management, Integrated Pest Management and Crop Management remain unchanged.
4. ICCA fees for the exam will be set by the ICCA Office. An additional amount will be added for the local board for local administration.
5. ICCA fees for renewal will be set by the ICCA Office. An additional amount will be added for the local board for local administrative expenses.
6. The exam will be administered on the same day and location as the International CCA and Local Board exams.
7. The ICCA Office will score and evaluate the exams using methods in place for existing exams.

California Only – Manure Management Specialty Certification Program

Description and Identification of Responsible Parties:

1. This is a voluntary certification available to a California CCA in good standing. It is offered as a tool to build clientele in the dairy industry and to demonstrate CCA competency in a regulated category of nutrient management.
2. The candidate must pass the Manure Management specialty certification exam. The CCA CA Board will participate in setting a passing score for the exam by completing an Angoff Analysis.
3. To maintain the Specialty Certification, the CCA must earn 5 CEUs every two years in Manure Management. The requirement of 40 CEUs every two years, which must include 5 CEUs in each of Nutrient Management, Soil and Water Management, Integrated Pest Management and Crop Management remain unchanged.
4. The CA CCA Board will approve Manure Management CEUs using procedures in place for approving other CEUs.
5. ICCA fees for the exam will be set by the ICCA Office. An additional amount will be added by the CA CCA Board for local administration.
6. ICCA fees for renewal will be set by the ICCA Office. An additional amount will be added by the CA CCA Board for local administrative expenses.
7. The Manure Management exam will be administered on the same day and location as the International CCA and Local Board exams.
8. The ICCA Office will score and evaluate the exams using methods in place for existing exams.
9. The CA CCA Board will publicize the Specialty Certificate and the exam dates. The CA CCA Board may provide pre-exam training to applicants.

1.15 CCA and CPAg Retired

A CCA may apply for “retired” status to their local board if they have met the following requirements:

1. To be eligible for “retired” status, a person had to be a CCA in good standing for 10 years or more and fully retired (not receiving compensation) in any field related to crop advising.
2. “CCA Retired” is exempt from CEU requirements.
3. If a “CCA Retired” decides to become an active CCA again, he/she has two years to do so without taking the International and local board exams again. After two years, they must take the exams again.
4. Application and approval for the “CCA Retired” status is completed through the local boards. The ICCA Office will facilitate this process by providing information and forms at the time dues notices are sent out.
5. A “CCA Retired” may complete his/her terms on local and international boards as a voting member. Once their term(s) are up, they are eligible to serve as an ex-officio board member.
6. A minimum fee for the International CCA will be set. Local boards have the discretion to also charge a fee. A “CCA Retired” receives all normal correspondence from International and local programs including Crops and Soils Magazine.

CHAPTER II

Exam Procedures

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2.1 ICCA EXAM TIMELINE

Date	Description
August 1	Draft performance objective document due at ICCA
November 1	All exam final documents due at ICCA
2 months prior	ICCA sends request for exam proctor(s) and locations(s)
6 to 8 weeks prior	Exam registration deadline
3 weeks prior	List of exam proctor(s)/location(s) due
5 weeks prior	Exams ready for printing
2 weeks prior	Send confirmation emails to participants
1 ½ weeks prior	Send exams to exam sites

EXAM HELD

Within 1 week after	Receive answer sheets and exam materials from exam sites
1 week after	Answer sheets sent to psychometrician for scoring
3 weeks after	Item analysis reports emailed to local board exam contacts
3 weeks after	International passing score set
Within 1 month after	Suggested local passing scores received from psychometrician
5 weeks after	Local passing scores set by local boards
6 weeks after	Exam results emailed to participants

2.2 EXAM SITES AND PROCTORS

POLICY: *ICCA is responsible for paying expenses of one location and proctor per local board to give the CCA exam. Additional exam locations or proctors may be arranged at the local board's expense.*

2.3 EXAM REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

1. Exam registration is posted for online registration the first Monday in May for the August exams and the first Monday in October for the February exams.
2. The registration deadline is six to eight weeks prior to the exam date. No exceptions are allowed.
3. Once the deadline has passed, exam rosters are printed and sent to each local board to help determine an exam site to accommodate the participants.
4. Confirmation emails are sent to participants two weeks prior to the exam date. The confirmation email includes the exam location, start time and directions to the exam site. A note is posted on the confirmation webpage regarding materials the examinees must bring with them the day of the exam and what is not allowed.

5. Exam booklets are printed and sealed for each exam. Labels are affixed to the front of the exam booklets for each participant.
6. One to two weeks prior to exam date, the exam materials are sent by courier service to the exam proctors. Instructions follow on the proctors' handling of the exam materials.

2.4 EXAM DISABILITY PROCEDURES

Individuals with disabilities, must notify the ICCA Office regarding their disability and needs within three weeks of exam date. The individual must provide official papers showing that their disability is documented. The ICCA Office and the Local Board will accommodate reasonable requests.

2.5 EXAM RESCHEDULING PROCEDURES

1. An exam site may be postponed due to weather. This decision is to be made by the CCA Local Board. If the exam site is postponed, the exam must be rescheduled within two weeks of the original date. The ICCA office must be informed of the postponement and the rescheduled date and times.
2. Examinees must be contacted regarding the postponement and given the information for the rescheduled date and times. The phone numbers and emails of the examinees are listed on the exam rosters. An email will be sent by the ICCA office to all examinees but the CCA Local Board office should also call all examinees to ensure each examinee finds out about the change. Please coordinate these efforts with Michele in the ICCA office.
3. If an individual cannot attend the rescheduled date, we will issue a full refund. Please have the individual contact their certification representative
4. All exam materials must be kept in a secure location until the scheduled time of the exams and returned to the ICCA office using the same procedure after the new exam date. Do not return the exams until after the exam is held on the new date.

These policies and procedures may also apply to other situations that come up with exam sites if there is a need for postponement.

2.6 PROCEDURES TO PROMOTE CCA EXAM SECURITY

POLICY: *Each exam booklet is sealed to ensure exam security before the exam is given.*

PROCEDURE: The exam booklets are sent sealed to the proctor who distributes them to the examinees on the day of the exam with instructions not to break the seal until told to do so. This prevents examinees (or anyone else) from being able to look through the exam or discuss questions before the start of the exam.

2.7 PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING EXAM RESULTS TO PARTICIPANTS

1. Answer sheets are returned to the ICCA office. Answer sheets are not sent to be scanned until all answer sheets have been received from all participating locations. Answer sheets must be grouped by exam. A scanable answer key is placed on top of each group and is delivered for scanning.
2. The psychometrician provides the International CCA office with an e-mail file of the item analysis report for each exam scanned. This information includes a roster of the number of questions answered correctly by each examinee. Local exam item analysis reports are sent to the local board exam contact with information for setting their exam cut scores. The international exam item analysis is posted on a password protected secure webpage only accessible by the Exam & Procedures Committee to review and determine the international exam passing score, based upon recommendations of a privately contracted psychometrician.
3. Once ICCA has been notified of the local exam passing score, the psychometrician reruns the original exam data to determine the final pass/fail listing. The results are uploaded to ICCA's database. These results are hand checked against the listing provided by psychometrician to ensure accuracy. Once the results have been verified as correct, the exam results emails are sent to the examinees. Participants generally receive their scores within six weeks after taking the exams.

4. Exams results are reported online to examinees as pass/fail only. For individuals who failed, the online page will display any of the four competency areas (Nutrient Management, Soil and Water Management, Integrated Pest Management or Crop Management) that fall below a set threshold indicating that these are areas that can use improvement.

2.8 PROCEDURES FOR RETURNING EXAM MATERIALS TO ICCA

A. Exam Materials and Answer Sheets

Returning the Answer Sheets and Exam Materials Within one business day of the exam, place completed answer sheets in one of the envelopes provided and all remaining exam materials (exam booklets and the proctor's envelope) in the box. Attach the FedEx Return Service bar coded label to the box, and either take to a FedEx store or arrange for the box to be picked up by FedEx. This can be dropped in a FedEx box, taken to a FedEx store, or you can arrange for a pickup by calling FedEx at 800-463-3339. DO NOT return the answer sheets by US Mail. The address label should read:

ASA/ICCA
5585 Guilford Road
Fitchburg, WI 53711-5801

POLICY: *Exam results will not be released until ICCA has received all exam materials.*

2.9 PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH EXAM IMPROPRIETIES

POLICY: *To preserve the integrity of the ICCA Program and the CCA registrant's credentials as well as ensure fairness for all examinees during the ICCA exams, ASA has developed the procedures to ensure ICCA exam security and proper handling of improprieties that may occur with respect to the ICCA exams. These procedures have been reviewed and approved by ASA's Executive Committee.*

Proctor Responsibilities During Exam If a proctor observes an examinee engaging in any of the improprieties described below, the proctor shall take actions as he or she deems prudent to confirm the impropriety and/or prevent its continuation. The impropriety can be explicit or suspected.

Proctor Reporting Responsibilities The proctor who witnessed the improprieties shall send details of the incidents to ASA on the Impropriety Reporting Form.

Improprieties include any action by an examinee that compromises the security of the exam, constitutes cheating, or interferes with other examinees, or any event that might interfere with an examinee taking the exam, including:

- A. Removal of pages from exam booklets inside or outside the exam room.
- B. Removal of exam materials from the exam site.
- C. Exchange of any unauthorized material inside or outside the exam room between examinees, including but not limited to pages from exam booklets, answer sheets, scratch paper, notes, reference pages, pens and pencils, digital watches, electronic devices, computers, wallets, purses, medications, and clothing.
- D. Copying of any material from exam booklets inside or outside the exam room.
- E. Use of unauthorized devices inside or outside the exam room, including but not limited to tape recorders, radios, cell phones, electronic devices, computers and fax machines.
- F. Conversations between examinees inside the exam room.
- G. Disruption of assigned seating order or unauthorized movement of exam booklets by examinees.
- H. Substitution by an examinee of another person to sit in the exam room and write one or more of the exam questions.
- I. Missing exam booklets.
- J. Personal behavior inside the exam room that severely disrupts other examinees.
- K. Other actions that support a conclusion that the examinee is cheating on the exam.

- L. Notification by one examinee that another examinee appears to be engaging in the activities specified in items A-K above.
- M. Power failures, natural disasters, and other like occurrences.

Filing and Scoring Exams: Submission of Reports. The proctor shall forward completed exams from examinees suspected of engaging in exam improprieties to ASA Headquarters, along with all reports of exam improprieties. Exams shall be forwarded prior to scoring.

Initial Determination. Within 30 days of receiving the report of the exam irregularity, ASA will make an initial determination as to the veracity of the report(s).

If ASA determines that the examinee did not engage in the improprieties or that the improprieties did not undermine the integrity of the exam, ASA shall score the exam and respond to the examinee in the standard manner.

If ASA determines the examinee engaged in the improprieties or that the improprieties did undermine the integrity of the exam, ASA will so advise the examinee. ASA will simultaneously advise the examinee in writing that the examinee has the right to appeal ASA's initial determination. The examinee has the right to a hearing at which the examinee may be represented by counsel. The exam will not be scored unless it is determined that the examinee did not engage in improprieties and, until such time, the exam result will be recorded as not scored.

Right to Appeal to Exam and Procedures Committee. The examinee has 30 days from the date of ASA's initial determination letter to submit a written report for an appeal to the Exam and Procedures Committee.

In the request for an appeal, the examinee shall indicate whether the appeal will consist of Exam and Procedures Committee's review of written materials submitted by both parties or a hearing conducted by Exam and Procedures Committee. If a written review is requested, all written materials shall be submitted within 30 days. If a hearing is requested, the examinee may request that the hearing be closed to the public.

The appeal shall be considered at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Exam and Procedures Committee, but in no event later than 90 days from the date that the request for an appeal is received.

If the examinee fails to file a timely request for an appeal or fails to timely submit written materials, the initial determination shall be the final and binding determination on all parties. In such cases, the exam shall not be scored. The result reported shall remain not scored. The examinee is not eligible to retake the CCA exam for two years from the date of the final determination, and the reports of improprieties shall remain in the applicant's credential file for five years from the date of the final determination.

Final Determination by Exam and Procedures Committee. Following consideration of the evidence and such inquiry as the Exam and Procedures Committee deems desirable or necessary, the Exam and Procedures Committee shall meet in executive session to consider the evidence to determine whether there is clear and convincing evidence that the examinee engaged in the improprieties.

If the Exam and Procedures Committee determines that such evidence exists, the Committee shall simultaneously determine the penalty for engaging in such improprieties.

If the Exam and Procedures Committee determines that such evidence does not exist, the exam shall be scored and the result released. If necessary, the examinee may also take the next regularly scheduled CCA exam, in the same manner as other examinees. The record of the alleged improprieties shall be expunged from the examinees credential file.

The Exam and Procedures Committee shall notify the examinee of its final determination within 10 days of the meeting at which the evidence was considered.

Penalties for Engaging in Exam Irregularities. If the Exam and Procedures Committee reaches a final determination that the examinee engaged in improprieties, the Exam and Procedures Committee shall impose any or all of the following penalties in its discretion:

- The examinee will not be eligible to take the CCA exam for at least two years, and for up to five years from the date of the final determination.
- A failing grade or not scored grade will be reported on all or some of the sections of the exam.
- The CCA exam will not be scored or otherwise released.

The report of improprieties will remain in the CCA credential file for at least five years from the date of final determination. It will only be expunged at some later point if directed by the Exam and Procedures Committee. Additional penalties may be imposed at the discretion of the Exam and Procedures Committee if they deem it appropriate under the particular circumstances presented.

Repeat Offenses. If an examinee has received a final determination that he or she engaged in improprieties during an exam, and is found to engage in improprieties during a subsequent exam, he or she will be barred from retaking the CCA exam for a period of 10 years from the most recent final determination.

2.10 PROCEDURES TO PROMOTE SECURITY OF THE ICCA EXAM

Local Boards shall select exam proctors for each exam site. ICCA will provide instructions to each exam proctor to insure that exams are provided in a standardized manner and will detail security measures to be taken at each exam site.

Exam proctors shall be provided with a form that they may report any improprieties that occur during the exam. If any improprieties do occur during an exam, the exam proctor shall provide the impropriety report in the manner described. To the extent that there is a conflict between the instructions and these procedures, the procedures shall govern.

2.11 SCORING QUALITY CONTROL

1. Any errors that are flagged in the item fields during the scanning operation will be edited by the psychometrician. ICCA edits the following fields: last name, first name, contact number and site code.
2. Hand scoring of selected answer sheets is conducted to make certain that errors in scanning did not contribute to improperly reducing candidates' scores. The following are measures taken in this regard:
 - a. The ICCA staff hand-scores selected answer sheets for all CCA exams. Candidates' score information is available and is used to select the answer sheets to be hand-scored by the ICCA staff. These measures help ensure that scoring errors do not occur.

2.12 Attempts to pass the ICCA and Local Board Exams

There is a five year time limit to pass both the international and local board exams. This time limit begins with the first testing date of the first exam scores being reported. If the five year time limit is exceeded without both exams being passed, exam scores are nullified and the applicant starts over in year six.

CHAPTER III

Credentials Review

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3.1 APPLICATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The application process begins with registering for and taking the ICCA international and local exams. After successfully passing both exams, the applicant receives the ICCA credentials application information via email.

POLICY: *The applicant must complete the application and return it within six months of passing both the international and local exams. Applicants are informed of this policy when they receive their passing scores from the exams. They are also informed that materials received after six months are no longer accepted and their exam scores are invalidated at that time. If an applicant's scores are invalidated, he or she must pay the appropriate fees and retake the exams.*

POLICY: *All application credential forms are to be sent to ASA Headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin.*

The date materials are received is logged into the applicant's record in the database. After all credentials have been received, the credentials are sent to the local board. Local boards set their own review schedule; however, completed credential packages are sent to the board at least quarterly. Local boards may request that completed credential packages be sent more frequently if deemed necessary, but not more than monthly.

POLICY: *The applicant's inaugural date of certification is the date on the certificate signed by the Board Chair. Certificates will not be issued without a signed copy of the Code of Ethics from the registrant.*

3.2 CCA and CCA CANDIDATE REVIEW of EDUCATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE POLICY:
There are three areas reviewed. 1) Educational background; 2) Work experience; and 3) References. All three areas must be satisfied to become certified, in addition to passing the exams.

Certified Crop Adviser Applicant has passed both exams and meets all the requirements listed above.

Certified Crop Adviser Candidate Status Applicant has passed both exams but does not meet the experience requirement. CCA Candidate status is granted to an applicant who has passed both exams and has met all requirements as reviewed by the local CCA board but does not meet the experience requirement. The local board will confer CCA Candidate Status and note the number of months or years that are needed to meet the experience requirement. The applicant will be notified by the ICCA office of the board's decision. The applicant will be designated as a CCA Candidate for the number of months or years that are required to fulfill the experience requirement. At that time, the applicant will need to update their experience form and resubmit it to the local board for review, requesting full CCA status.

A CCA Candidate applicant needs to provide at least one reference of any type from a non-relative such as former employers from part-time jobs or professors. This reference does not need to be a farmer/grower.

The time frame for "candidate" status correlates with what the board says is needed to fulfill the experience requirement. The time cannot be extended except in the case of extenuating circumstances such as military duty, medical related issues, or unemployment.

A CCA Candidate will not have CEU requirements and will not have to pay the annual renewal fee. CEU and annual renewal fee requirements will begin once the CCA Candidate becomes fully certified and the status changes to CCA as recommended by the local CCA board.

PROCEDURES: Certified Crop Adviser (CCA)

1. Education.

- A. Determine the education level of the applicant.
- B. Determine the number of years of experience needed – either 2 years with a BS degree, 3 years with an associate degree, or 4 years non degree or non-related education.

2. Experience.

Determine the number of years of experience the candidate has in crop production advising.

3. References.

Confirm that the applicant has two completed reference forms (both non-relative, one from the employer and one from a client or individual who is familiar with his/her work experience in crop production). A CCA Candidate is only required to provide one non-relative reference.

3.2.1 Determining Education

1. Determine the education level of the candidate either as non-degree, associate degree, BS degree, MS degree or PhD degree.
2. If the applicant does not have a degree, the applicant only has to complete the experience and reference forms. Four years of crop advising experience is required with this application category.
3. The applicant only needs three years of crop advising experience if he or she has an associate degree in agricultural production. For this provision to apply, the applicant must have a minimum of 15 semester or 23 quarter hours in agricultural production related subjects. This includes basic soils, fertility, crop production, pest management and farm management. If the applicant does not have 15-semester hours or 23 quarter hours of course work in agricultural production he or she will need four years of crop advising experience.
4. If the applicant has a BS degree, review the course work for two components. The first component is course work in biology, chemistry, math and physical sciences. The second component is course work in soils fertility, crop production, pest management and farm management.

If the applicant has both components, two years of experience is required. You may credit one year of experience if one component is missing (i.e. good science background, but no production agriculture). The applicant will need an additional three years of crop advising experience.

If the degree is not related to agriculture in any way, deny the candidate any credit and require four years of advising experience.

Supervised summer work experience or internships, up to a maximum of twelve (12) months, may be included in the work experience as long as the activities performed meet the guidelines used for full-time employment.

3.2.2 Determining Experience

1. To be certified an applicant must have either:
 - a. Four years of crop advising experience working with farmers or crop advisers and an unrelated degree or no degree; or
 - b. Three years of experience and associate degree in an agricultural related field; or
 - c. Two years of experience and a baccalaureate degree in an agricultural related field.
2. Determine the educational level of the applicant using the guidelines above and then determine the years of experience needed by the applicant. Local boards may refuse to accept a transcript if they

have reason to believe the degree from that institution is clearly inferior in content to an accredited U.S. or Canadian degree.

3. A year of experience should be credited for each year of qualified activity, if the applicant indicates that approximately one-third (i.e. at least 30% to 35%) of their time is engaged in one or more of the following activities:
 - a. Advising farmers on crop production;
 - b. Teaching or educating crop advisers about topics that are described in the Exam Performance Objectives or the ICCA Educational Areas Booklet;
 - c. Advising or working with farmers to install soil conservation practices, or to meet state or federal regulations that are related to crop production (such as conservation compliance).

NOTE: If an applicant spends less than 30% of his or her time engaged in the activities described in 3a – c above, partial credit may be assigned based on the following:

Actual Experience	CCA Experience
30%	1.00 year per year involved
25%	0.83 years per year involved
20%	0.66 years per year involved
15%	0.50 years per year involved
<15%	No credit is given. This is not to be retroactive

For example, an applicant spends 20% of his or her time in activities outlined in 3a, b or c and lists 10 years of experience. The applicant should receive 6.6 years credit for experience (i.e; 0.66 x 10 years = 6.6 years)

POLICY: *If an applicant has farm experience, this experience may count up to one year of CCA work experience regardless of experience duration.*

4. If there is not enough detail regarding experience on the application form to determine whether the applicant has the necessary experience, deny certification on the basis that more information is needed.
5. On the CCA Review Worksheet, write in the number of years of experience that has been credited to the candidate. If there is not enough information to make a judgment, a note will be added that more information is needed.
6. **CCA Candidate Status** If it is determined that the applicant meets all requirements but falls short of the necessary minimum experience, CCA Candidate Status is selected and it is noted how many additional years of experience is still required to meet full CCA status. The CCA Candidate status will be granted and be in effect until the experience requirement is achieved.

3.2.3 References

1. Two completed reference forms (non-relative, one from the employer and one from a client or individual who is familiar with the applicant's work experience in crop production). Confirm that the two reference letters are signed and witnessed or notarized. A CCA Candidate is only required to provide at least one non-relative reference.
2. For each reference to be valid, the following two questions must be answered positively:
 - Does the reference recommend the applicant for certification? Is the reference familiar with the applicant's work history?

NOTE: All of the above must be met for the reference(s) to be valid.

3.3 CPAg REVIEW of EDUCATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE

POLICY: *There are three areas reviewed. 1) Educational background; 2) Work experience; and 3) References. No one can be certified without satisfying all three areas.*

Certified Professional Agronomist Applicant is a CCA in good standing and has met all of the additional requirements for education, work experience and references.

The applicant will be notified by the ICCA office of the local board's decision.

PROCEDURES

Certified Professional Agronomist (CPAg)

1. Education.

Determine the education level of the applicant

2. Experience.

Determine the number of years of experience needed – either 5 years with a BS degree, 4 years with a Master's degree, or 3 year with a PhD.

3. References.

A. Confirm that the candidate has the appropriate completed references:

1. If references for the CCA certification are less than 2 years old, 3 additional references must be provided, OR
2. If references for the CCA certification are 2 years old or older, 5 new references must be provided.

3.3.1 Must be a CCA in good standing

3.3.2 Determining Education

1. Determine the education level of the candidate - either BS degree, MS degree or PhD degree. The candidate must possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited United States or Canada institution with a major in agronomy or a closely allied field of science, and meet the minimum core requirements.
2. Review the course work form to make sure all minimums have been met as stated on the form. The transcript should be used to verify courses listed. The GPA in core course work must be a 2.5 or higher. Otherwise the application should be denied based on not meeting course work requirements.
3. On the worksheet, indicate the educational requirement findings.

3.3.3 Determining Work Experience

1. To be certified as a CPAg, an applicant must have five years of professional work experience in agronomy with a BS degree or 4 years with an MS degree or 3 years with a PhD degree.
 - a. Experience while working toward an advanced (Masters, Doctoral) degree does not qualify for professional experience.
 - b. Applicants are required to demonstrate the percentage of work experience in agronomy.
2. Activities such as farm management, consulting, research, extension, and teaching must make up a minimum of 70% of the applicant's time working in agronomy to count fully as work experience.

Work experience less than 70% will be prorated based on actual percentage listed.

<u>Time working in Agronomy</u>	<u>Experience Equivalent</u>
70% and higher	full credit
Less than 70%, actual percent times years of experience in position	

Example: 55% of time listed as agronomy work for 10 years

$$55\% \times 10 = 5.5 \text{ years as CPAG work experience}$$

Work experience must be in agronomy.

3. Determine amount of experience needed based on degree level. Determine total number of years/months listed on experience form, based on the requirements above. If work experience is below the minimum requirements, CPAG certification will be denied.

4. On the worksheet, write in the number of years of experience the candidate has been credited with and if there is not enough information to make a judgment, it will be noted that more information is needed.

3.3.4 References

1. References must be familiar with the candidate's work experience used to meet certification requirements and knowledgeable of agronomy, crops, and soils. The applicant will need to designate the time period for which the reference has personal knowledge of his or her work experience history.

A. At least one individual must be associated with their employment; an immediate supervisor, client, or coworker.

B. CCA references must be less than 2 years old to qualify for CPAG.

C. If reference(s) do not support certification, CPAG will be denied based on no supporting references.

2. Confirm that the candidate has the appropriate completed references:

a. If references for the CCA certification are less than 2 years old, 3 additional references must be provided, OR

b. If references for the CCA certification are 2 years old or older, 5 new references must be provided.

3. Confirm that the reference letters are signed and witnessed or notarized.

For each reference to be valid, the following two questions must be answered affirmatively:

Does the reference recommend the applicant for certification?

Is the reference familiar with the applicant's work history?

4. On the worksheet, indicate reference review.

CPAG status will be granted if the reviewers determine that education, experience and reference requirements, as provided, have been met.

CHAPTER IV

Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Procedures

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4.1 LOCAL BOARD CEU PROCESSING GUIDELINES

1. All boards require a minimum of 20 board approved CEUs.
2. All boards accept all board approved CEUs.
3. The following boards automatically accept Pesticide Applicator* credits:

Local Board	Total Number of Pesticide Credits in Two-Year Cycle
Arizona	20/2 yrs for PCAs
California	25/2 yrs for PCAs
Ohio	10//2 yrs
Pennsylvania	4/2 yrs
Rocky Mountain	6/2yrs
Texas	10/2yrs

*A copy of the Pesticide License showing the license number and expiration date must be sent to the ICCA office in order to receive credit.

4.2 INSTRUCTIONS FOR CEU APPLICATION

To apply for CEU credit, you must provide the information requested on the online CCA CEU Application Form, along with any related supporting materials and applications should be submitted as far in advance as possible of the meeting to promote the availability of CEUs. However, post-meeting applications may be submitted but must be done no later than 30 days past the event date. **Please allow up to 30 days for application processing.** To be eligible for CEUs, the meeting must be relevant to the Continuing Education Standards.

Subject matter not eligible for CEUs are: specific product commercial crop input sales training or marketing sessions and award presentations.

CCAs will receive CEUs for attending your meeting by signing in using the pre-assigned QR code and CCA app or signing a sign-in sheet provided at the meeting.

4.2.1 Procedures to Complete the CEU Application Form

The vendor must use the online application found on the CCA website.

CEUs are based on contact time and determined by the following chart:

CEU Conversion Table

Meeting Time	CEUs	Meeting Time	CEUs
30 to 45 minutes	0.5	256 to 285 minutes	4.5
46 to 75 minutes	1.0	286 to 315 minutes	5.0
76 to 105 minutes	1.5	316 to 345 minutes	5.5
106 to 135 minutes	2.0	346 to 375 minutes	6.0
136 to 165 minutes	2.5	376 to 405 minutes	6.5
166 to 195 minutes	3.0	406 to 435 minutes	7.0
196 to 225 minutes	3.5	436 to 465 minutes	7.5
226 to 255 minutes	4.0	466 to 495 minutes	8.0

The vendor completes the online application. The application is reviewed by the CCA – Local Board, once approved a unique tracking number will automatically be assigned and generate the sign-in sheet with the QR Code. Once the completed CEU application has been approved and returned to the appropriate local board, you will be notified of the CEU tracking number assigned to the activity. A CCA sign-in sheet will be forwarded to the vendor with the tracking number indicated at the top. CCA participants at the meeting will have to scan the QR code or indicate their name and CCA certification number on the sign-in sheet. Upon the conclusion of the meeting, the sign-in sheet should be forwarded to the ICCA Office at ASA Headquarters. The credits will be posted to each individual's CCA account from the sign-in sheet. It is very important that each participant record the required information on the sign-in sheet before they leave the meeting if they do not use the QR Code.

For large conferences or multiple day events with concurrent sessions, each session should be evaluated separately. Each session will have a CEU value and a tracking number assigned to it. Sponsors must use the sign-in sheet and QR Code provided.

Note: The International Continuing Education Committee and local boards reserve the right to request more information before awarding CEUs.

4.3 LOCAL CEU PROGRAM

4.3.1 Eligibility

The local CEU review committees are responsible for reviewing CEU applications for meetings that are being held within their state or province. If a sponsor is holding a series of meetings in several locations, they must submit an online application for each location.

4.3.2 Application Procedure

To be eligible for CEUs, a course must be relevant to the [Continuing Education Standards document](#). Subject matter not eligible for CEU credit includes: sales training, marketing sessions and award presentations. Applications should include the proposed breakdown of CEUs requested along with the educational areas: Nutrient Management, Soil & Water Management, Integrated Pest Management, Crop Management, Professional Development and/or Sustainability.

Once the online application form has been completed (including a copy of the agenda and any additional information that will help the review committee evaluate the application for CEUs), the local CEU review committee evaluates and approves the CEU application. The sponsor will then be notified, via email, if the course is approved and will be provided with a course number and the sign-in sheets.

4.3.3 Local Board Responsibilities

CEU Applications: Local CCA boards will appoint a committee to review and approve or deny educational events and materials.

The local CEU committee will assume the responsibility for reviewing CEU applications. They will use the guidelines set forth by the ICCA Program and outlined in Chapter IV of this policy manual. Once approved, tracking numbers and sign-in sheets are automatically sent via email to the contact of the meeting. CCAs: In February/March of each year, the local boards will review the lists of CCAs who have not made the minimum CEU requirements.

4.4 Organization(s) Seeking Credit

Organizations seeking credit for their educational event or materials are strongly encouraged to do so before the event occurs or the materials are released. **No applications will be accepted 30 days past event date.**

4.4.1 Responsibilities of Organization(s) Holding an Approved ICCA/CEU Event

At appropriate timeframes during the event/sessions, the course sponsors should pass out the sign-in sheets for attendees to scan with the app or manually sign. The completed attendance sheet must be forwarded to the ICCA office within 30 days of the meeting date. Sponsors should keep a copy of the sign-in sheet for their records for a minimum of two years.

If the event instructor presents the same meeting at various locations, the instructor may receive the equivalent CEUs that a participant would receive one time only.

4.4.2 Individual CCA's Responsibilities

The CCA should record the course number and keep any course materials for his or her records. A CCA must provide their CCA number when signing the sign-in sheet (not required when using the app). If no CCA number is provided, no CEUs will be issued.

4.5 APPLYING FOR CREDIT FOR COURSES THAT ARE NOT PRE- OR POST-APPROVED BY A CCA BOARD

1. Self-Reported CEUs are continuing education events that meet one or more of the educational areas, but are not pre- or post-approved by a local CCA board.

The CCA applying for self-reported CEUs must use the online form for self-reporting CEUs. Mailed or faxed forms will be returned.

Local CCA boards will have online access to review all CEUs. Local CCA boards will contact CCAs where discrepancies are noted to determine a resolution.

2. Post-secondary education coursework can be self-reported by the CCA and will be considered "board approved".

Requirements include:

- a. Course grade slip indicating a passing grade of "C" or higher.
- b. Course outline or syllabus if course title is not self-explanatory.
- c. CCA CEUs = {15 x semester credits} or {9 x quarter credits}.

This applies to all forms of post-secondary education coursework, on-campus and electronic or distance learning.

CCA: Self-Reported CEUs - Audit Process

1. All CCAs regardless of their board certification may earn CEUs and report them by using the "self-reported CEU" form found on the web site.
2. Self-reported CEUs are reported by the CCA using the online self-reporting form. The event is the same type and contains the same content as a board approved event but no board has reviewed them. A board may choose to review the event and approve it turning it into a board approved event.

3. A CCA must meet the minimum of 20 board approved CEUs. They can use additional board approved or self-reported CEUs to complete their remaining 20 CEUs to reach their 40 minimum total CEUs. There is no limit to the amount of self-reported CEUs a CCA may report but they must have met the minimum of 20 board approved CEUs.
4. A local CCA board may audit a CCA's CEUs at their discretion using the online administrative access. A local CCA board will audit only CCAs in their jurisdiction. The local CCA board will communicate directly with the CCAs being audited.

4.6 PROCEDURE FOR ASSIGNING A SPECIFIC NUMBER TO A CEU EVENT

POLICY: *Each ICCA CEU Board approved event will carry a seven character tracking number.*

PROCEDURE: The first two characters are the two-letter state or province abbreviation for the local board that reviews the CEU event application. This also corresponds to the state, region or province where the event is held. Though rare, if the first two characters are "NA" it means the international committee approved the event. The following five characters are sequentially assigned numbers. They have no meaning other than to identify and track the event. The system is continuous and can provide same day service.

This is the only approved ICCA/CEU numbering system.

GUIDELINE: IL 50025 is an ICCA event number that identifies an Illinois event, which has been assigned number 50025.

4.7 RECORDING AND TRACKING CEUs

The local board is responsible for approving educational events and materials submitted by vendors or certificants offered or produced in their state or province. The ICCA office maintains the official records of all educational events and materials.

Vendors send the sign-in sheet back to ICCA for the CEUs to be put onto the certificants' accounts.

4.8 CEU SELF-STUDY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CEUs granted for self-study (written) and self-paced (videos and webinars) educational materials must be pre-approved by the appropriate local CCA board. ICCA will maintain a master copy of the self-study and self-paced materials.

Approved self-study and self-paced materials shall expire three years from the date of publication or first distribution. These materials may be renewed by the vendor, but must undergo a review and approval process before they expire. ICCA will send out renewal notices. If the vendor does not wish to renew, ICCA will have the option to serve as the vendor, subject to vendor permission.

ICCA will maintain a library of approved self-study and self-paced materials with their date of expiration for renewal notice. Credit for specific self-study and self-paced material will be granted only once to a CCA. Vendors must identify the geographic area of applicability for materials that are not international in scope.

For self-study CEUs, the CCA must complete a quiz on the material and achieve a passing score of 70% or provide proof of successful completion of a correspondence course. For self-paced CEUs, the system used to deliver the content must have a tracking system to verify attendance and attentiveness if it does not, then a quiz is also required. Product specific materials will be granted CEUs when fair and credible performance comparisons are presented. No credit shall be allowed when emphasis is on product sales. No advertising shall be allowed in self-study or self-paced materials, but sponsor recognition and acknowledgment is permitted.

Self-study and self-paced materials should include field application information (i.e. how does a CCA use this information with farmers?). The online CEU application must be used to request CCA CEUs.

ADDENDUM

Supporting program documents

[CCA Credential Worksheet](#)

[CPAg Credential Worksheet](#)

[CCA/CPAg Retired Status Application](#)

[Appeal form](#)