

# Certification Application Packet

**Certified Professional  
Secretary® (CPS®)**

– and –

**Certified Administrative  
Professional® (CAP®)  
Examinations**



## **Benefits of Certification**

- Improve your professional qualifications
- Increase your skills and knowledge
- Earn a higher salary
- Raise your professional self-esteem
- Obtain college credit

### **Find it Fast:**

Deadlines	pg 2
Fees	pg 2
Exam Dates	pg 2
Time limits	pg 2
Withdrawal/Refund policy	pg 2
Application	pgs 3–4
Employer's verification	pgs 5–6
Qualifications	pg 7
Exam locations	pg 7
Exam preparation	pg 8
After the exam	pg 8

For more information:  
Call 816.891.6600, ext. 2225 or 2248  
Visit our Web site: [www.iaap-hq.org](http://www.iaap-hq.org)  
E-mail: [cps@iaap-hq.org](mailto:cps@iaap-hq.org)



International Association of  
Administrative Professionals®

## Applying for the CPS or CAP Exam?

These frequently asked questions will assist you in submitting your application.

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- Q** What is the application deadline?  
**A** Applications must be postmarked by February 15 for the May exams; August 15 for the November exams.
- Q** What are the dates of the exams?  
**A** The CPS and CAP exams are administered the first consecutive Friday and Saturday of May and November.  
Parts 1–3 of the CPS and CAP exams are administered all day Saturday and Part 4 of the CAP exam is administered Friday afternoon. (Certain Sabbatarian centers have been approved to give the exams on Thursday and Friday due to religious beliefs of those testing). Exam dates are posted on the IAAP Web site ([www.iaap-hq.org](http://www.iaap-hq.org)) under “Events & Conferences.”
- Q** What is the cost for a new three-part CPS candidate?  
**A** IAAP members pay a processing fee of \$40 plus a \$150 examination fee. Nonmembers pay a \$65 processing fee plus a \$200 examination fee.
- Q** What is the cost for a new four-part CAP candidate?  
**A** IAAP members pay a processing fee of \$40 plus a \$200 examination fee. Nonmembers pay a \$65 processing fee plus a \$250 examination fee.
- Q** What methods of payment are accepted?  
**A** Check, credit card, or a bank draft. Do not send cash. We do not accept postal money orders.
- Q** If I take the four-part CAP exam will I also gain the CPS rating?  
**A** **No.** New candidates have the option of applying for **either** the three-part CPS exam and achieving that rating, or applying for the four-part CAP exam and achieving that rating.
- Q** How does a new candidate attain both ratings?  
**A** Enroll as a CPS candidate first, pass the exam and meet the experience requirements, and then enroll as a CAP candidate (taking Part 4 only).
- Q** How does a current CPS holder earn the CAP rating?  
**A** By applying for and passing Part 4 of the CAP exam.
- Q** What is the cost for a CPS holder taking Part 4 of the CAP exam?  
**A** IAAP members pay \$110; non-members pay \$135; there is no processing fee.
- Q** What is the cost for retaking a part of the CPS or CAP exam I previously did not pass?  
**A** The cost per retake is \$50 per part for IAAP members, \$75 per part for nonmembers.
- Q** How do I submit the fees and application?  
**A** **Mail** application and backup documents, along with check payable to IAAP, to 10502 NW Ambassador Dr., PO Box 20404, Kansas City MO 64195-0404.  
**A** **Or fax** application and backup documents with credit card authorization and expiration date to 816.891.9118 or 816.801.1378.  
If faxing application with credit card authorization, *do not* mail original.
- Q** How will I know if my application has been received and approved?  
**A** You will be notified by e-mail when the Certification Department has reviewed and processed the application. Those who do not have e-mail will be notified by mail.  
**NOTE:** Due to the large number of applications coming in at one time, the Certification Department is not able to confirm receipt of each application as we receive it. If you have not received a confirmation after 4 weeks, please contact the Certification Department.

## Are you wondering how often you can take the exams?

These frequently asked questions will assist in understanding the IAAP time limit regulations.

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- Q** How many parts do I have to take on my first attempt?  
**A** New CPS candidates must take all three parts. New CAP candidates must take all four parts.
- Q** How many opportunities do I have to pass all parts?  
**A** You may use six consecutive attempts (three years), if necessary, to pass all parts of either the CPS or CAP exam. The three-year time limit starts the first time the examination is taken, and ends six exams later (whether or not the exam has been taken at each administration).
- Q** What happens if I do not pass all parts in the three-year time limit?  
**A** If all parts are not completed in the three-year time limit, you may submit a new application and fees and start over. Credit for parts previously passed will not be carried over.

## Do you have questions about refund and withdrawal policies?

These frequently asked questions will assist you in answering those questions.

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- Q** If I apply for a given exam and decide to not take it, what happens to my fees?  
**A** Candidates withdrawing up to 15 days prior to the exam for which they are registered may receive a refund of one-half the examination fee paid. No refund is given in case of absence without written notice to the IAAP Certification Department.
- Q** What happens to the processing fee?  
**A** The processing fee is non-refundable.
- Q** If I apply for a given exam and decide I really won't be prepared until the next exam, what happens to my fees?  
**A** Examination fees are not transferable to future exams for this reason. You would need to withdraw from the given exam and re-register for the next exam, paying all exam fees.

## HEADQUARTERS USE ONLY

<input type="checkbox"/> Centers	Year	Education	Qualifying Status
<input type="checkbox"/> Program		Experience Required	
<input type="checkbox"/> Event	Exam Type	Verified	HQ Initials

## APPLICATION TO TAKE THE CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL SECRETARY® OR CERTIFIED ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONAL® EXAMINATION

New Candidates Only—Not to be used by Existing Candidates

Individualized registration forms are mailed to all eligible retake candidates prior to each examination

✓ **Check One:**  **CPS Exam Applicant**                      **OR**                       **CAP Exam Applicant**

**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY (All applicants)**

IAAP ID# (if known) \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

First Name and Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
STREET CITY

STATE/PROVINCE ZIP/POSTAL COUNTRY UPU/PUAS

Bus Tel (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Res Tel (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Bus Fax (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### CPS Exam Applicants – 3 part exam

Have you previously filed a CPS Examination application?  No  Yes

If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Name if different when applied \_\_\_\_\_

OR

### CAP Exam Applicants – 4 part exam

Have you previously filed a CAP Examination application?  No  Yes

If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a CPS holder?  No  Yes

Date certified \_\_\_\_\_

Name if different when certified \_\_\_\_\_

**CAP candidates do not receive the CPS rating.**

**Month you would like to take exam (Check Preference)**

 MAY (postmarked by February 15) NOVEMBER (postmarked by August 15)

Applications postmarked after the deadline will be processed for the next exam.

### EXAM CENTER CHOICES

(Select 3 Choices from Center Listing found on [www.iaap-hq.org](http://www.iaap-hq.org), Professional Certification – Forms)

1st	2nd	3rd
_____	_____	_____

### Payment:

 Check or money order enclosed payable to IAAP Please charge \$\_\_\_\_\_ to my Visa  MasterCard  Discover  AmEx

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### Fees:

#### CPS Exam Applicants (select one)

<input type="checkbox"/> IAAP member:	Processing Fee	+ \$ 40	
	Examination Fee	+ \$150	
			Total Amount \$_____

OR

<input type="checkbox"/> Nonmember:	Processing Fee	+ \$ 65	
	Examination Fee	+ \$200	
			Total Amount \$_____

OR

#### CAP Exam Applicants (select one)

<input type="checkbox"/> IAAP member:	Processing Fee	+ \$ 40	
	Examination Fee	+ \$200	
			Total Amount \$_____

OR

<input type="checkbox"/> Nonmember:	Processing Fee	+ \$ 65	
	Examination Fee	+ \$250	
			Total Amount \$_____

OR

**CPS holder applying for CAP Exam-Part 4 only**

Processing Fee \$ 0.00

 IAAP member (\$110) \_\_\_\_\_ Nonmember (\$135) \_\_\_\_\_

(Exempt from Pt. #1-3)

Total Amount \$\_\_\_\_\_

**ALL APPLICANTS**

**Experience and Education Verification**

- Attach Job Function and Employer’s Statement to verify **all** needed experience.
- Provide copy of transcript or diploma to verify college degree earned.
- Include resume showing all education and experience.

(NOTE: Current CPS holders applying for Part 4 only of the CAP exam are not required to submit verification of experience and education.)


**If applying as Student or Business Educator—CPS Exam only—Attach letter from college/university attending or employed by. Student’s letter must include degree program and scheduled date to complete requirements. Business Educator’s letter must include dates employed and courses being taught.**

**ALL APPLICANTS:** I certify that I have read and understand the Applying and Qualifying regulations, that the information supplied is correct and in accordance with the instructions, and that I am responsible for submitting information to keep my file current. I further certify that my experience as submitted conforms to the IAAP definition of an administrative professional and that the Certification Department reserves the right to obtain further verification of information provided in this application. I understand and agree that all examination materials, answers, and test scores are the exclusive property of International Association of Administrative Professionals. I also agree to accept the scores as final as reported by the Institute for Certification. I agree that IAAP may at its discretion release information contained in this application, my examination results, and my test scores to researchers selected by IAAP to study testing issues for the IAAP examination program under appropriate conditions of confidentiality established by IAAP. Aside from such research purposes, I understand that my individual examination results and test scores will be considered by IAAP to be confidential unless authorized by me and will not be released to others except pursuant to legal process. I understand that any material misstatement in connection with this application will automatically void it. I also understand that answer sheets and applications are maintained by IAAP for a three-year period.

✓ **Signature of Applicant** \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
The Institute for Certification reserves the right to refuse the acceptance of any application.

CPS and CAP Exams administered first consecutive Friday and Saturday of May and November		
CPS Exam	Parts 1–3	Administered Saturday
CAP Exam	Parts 1–3	Administered Saturday
CAP Exam	Part 4	Administered Friday afternoon

- New candidates must take all parts.  
3 parts if taking CPS Exam  
4 parts if taking CAP Exam

 Reasonable accommodations will be made for candidates with disabilities. Please describe specific needs and submit medical documentation at time of application.

IAAP is not responsible for lost, damaged, misdirected, incomplete, illegible or postage-due applications.

**MAIL APPLICATION (pages 3 and 4) WITH FEES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS TO:**

International Association of Administrative Professionals  
 Certification Department  
 10502 NW Ambassador Drive • PO Box 20404  
 Kansas City MO 64195-0404  
 816.891.6600, ext. 2225, 2248, or 2227  
 Fax 816.891.9118

**JOB FUNCTION AND EMPLOYER'S STATEMENT**



Certification Department  
10502 NW Ambassador Drive  
PO Box 20404  
Kansas City MO 64195-0404  
Tel 816.891.6600 x2248 or 2225  
Fax 816.891.9118  
Email: cps@iaap-hq.org

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY

**To be submitted with application  
to verify experience required.**

Name, current address, and telephone number  
of employer:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of CPS or CAP Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Complete Address of CPS or CAP Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name while Employed

Your cooperation is needed so that I may submit my application to take the Certified Professional Secretary or Certified Administrative Professional Examination.

The Institute for Certification requests verification of my experience and the duties I perform(ed). My comments are made where applicable, and to the best of my ability I have supplied pertinent information regarding my position. If I have made an error, it is not intentional. The facts indicated by you and/or your company records should be accepted as official.

I appreciate you completing the employer's portion of this form and returning it to me promptly.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

**EMPLOYER'S STATEMENT**

Please complete all questions in this section.

A. Administrative professionals are defined by IAAP as  
"individuals who are responsible for administrative tasks and coordination of information in support of an office-related environment and who are dedicated to furthering their personal and professional growth in their chosen profession."

B. Name of Firm where employed:

\_\_\_\_\_ Applicant's Statement Employer's Verification  
From (month, day, year) To (initial)

C. Employed in an administrative position by your firm \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

D. Employed as your secretary/admin Full-time \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Part-time \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

If part-time, how many hours per week? \_\_\_\_\_

**Employers, please initial confirmation of dates provided in Sections C and D, complete Sections E-G (page 6), and sign and date this form.**

**TO BE COMPLETED BY EMPLOYER**

E. All of these duties do not apply to all administrative positions. Those listed are merely examples of the types of duties performed under the Job Functions listed. Please check below job functions performed by applicant.

JOB FUNCTIONS	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
Interpersonal Communications (phone calls, direct visitors, update management, etc.)			
Written Communication (compose correspondence, edit documents, respond to e-mail, etc.)			
Information Distribution (communicate office policies and procedures, etc.)			
Document Production (create documents using word processing, spreadsheet, presentation software, etc.)			
Scheduling and Planning (maintain calendar, schedule appointments/meetings, etc.)			
Records Management (set up/maintain/update file system, etc.)			
Financial Records Management (budgeting, invoices, financial software, etc.)			
Meeting Management (arrange meetings, facility contracting, travel arrangements, etc.)			
Managing Physical Resources (inventory/order supplies, etc.)			
Conducting Research (gather information for reports/managers, etc.)			
Supervising and Managing Human Resources (prioritize staff work, train others, personnel, etc.)			
Leadership (serve as team leader, develop liaisons [internal and external], conduct meetings, etc.)			
Computer Hardware, Systems, and Configuration (execute basic commands on an operating system, back-ups, networking, etc.)			

F. If there are (were) other major duties performed, please list below. Also, include any additional comments you may wish to make concerning applicant's performance.

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G. If you are (were) not the applicant's immediate supervisor, please state circumstances and relationship.

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please Type or Print Legibly

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Firm \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone Number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Business Fax Number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## What qualifications are needed to be approved to take the exams?

These frequently asked questions will assist you in making that determination.

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- Q** How much experience do I need to be approved to take the CPS or CAP exam?
- A** The amount of experience needed is determined by educational background. An applicant with a bachelor's degree needs two-years administrative experience. An applicant with an associate degree needs three years administrative experience. And an applicant with no college degree needs four years administrative experience. If using a degree to reduce the work experience requirement, please submit a copy of the degree with your application.
- Q** Must all of the experience be complete before I apply to take the exams?
- A** CAP exam applicants must have all experience complete and verified at the time they submit their application. CPS exam applicants may apply prior to having all experience complete, as long as they are currently working in an administrative position, or are a full-time student in a degree granting program. Business educators with 12 months administrative experience in the past 15 years may also apply for the CPS exam.
- Q** If I am currently employed in an administrative position, but have not met all experience requirements, how much time do I have to complete the balance?
- A** CPS exam applicants have six years to complete the remaining experience. However, the CPS rating will not be granted until the candidate has fulfilled the experience requirements and submitted verification to the Certification Department.
- Q** Is only full-time administrative experience acceptable?
- A** No. Administrative experience of at least 20 hours per week is also considered. Each segment of experience must be at least 2 months continuous.
- Q** Am I required to be a member of IAAP before taking the CPS or CAP exam?
- A** No, though members of IAAP do receive discounts on exam fees and some study materials. Details on all member benefits are on the IAAP Web site ([www.iaap-hq.org](http://www.iaap-hq.org)).
- Q** Must I have a college background to take the CPS or CAP exam?
- A** No. However, based on your administrative experience, a combination of courses may be helpful. Candidates may need three to six hours of course work at community college level in the areas tested on Parts 1–3 of the CPS and CAP exams. For Part 4 of the CAP exam, 6–9 hours of upper division management courses are recommended (or the equivalent in on-the-job management training courses).
- Q** How far back can I go to support my administrative experience?
- A** All experience submitted must be within the past 15 years. Also, all experience must be at least two months continuous.
- Q** Does all experience have to be with one employer?
- A** No. However, total experience submitted must include 12 months continuous with one employer in the past five years.
- Q** How is experience verified?
- A** Administrative experience should be submitted using the Job Function & Employer's Statement (included in the Application Packet) or a letter from the supervisor listing dates of employment, job title, and job duties.
- Q** Is a resume sufficient documentation of experience?
- A** No. A resume provides clarification of work experience history, but does not verify work experience.
- Q** If I have proctored the exam may I apply for approval to take the exam?
- A** An examination proctor may take the exam after two years have lapsed since proctoring and when all other criteria are met.
- Q** What employment verification does a CPS holder need to submit when applying to take Part 4 only of the CAP exam?
- A** A CPS holder applying to take Part 4 only of the CAP exam is required to submit only the completed application and fee. No employment verification is needed.

## Do you have questions about where you can take the exam?

These frequently asked questions will assist you in determining a location near you.

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- Q** How do I find out where the exams are given?
- A** The center listing can be found on the IAAP Web site ([www.iaap-hq.org](http://www.iaap-hq.org)), under Professional Certification and then Forms. Not all centers listed are used for each exam, so candidates are asked to make three choices of possible centers.
- Q** How will I know what center I've been assigned to?
- A** An admission ticket is sent to each approved candidate prior to the exam. The admission ticket provides the location of the exam center, directions, and the proctor's name and phone number.
- Q** What if I am military personnel or a military dependent?
- A** IAAP has an agreement with Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) to administer the exams to military and civilian personnel in military installations overseas. You need to include the name and contact information of the base test control officer with your application for approval to take the exam.
- Q** What if I am a U.S. citizen working abroad?
- A** We do have some examination centers overseas open to all candidates. For others where there is no center, the applicant can check with the U.S. Embassy to see if they are able to proctor the exams. If so, the applicant will include the name and contact information of that individual with their application for approval to take the exam.

## Wondering what to study? How to prepare?

These frequently asked questions will assist you in directing your course of study.

- Q** What are the parts of the CPS Exam?
- A** Office Systems and Technology, Office Administration, and Management.
- Q** What are the parts of the CAP Exam?
- A** Office Systems and Technology, Office Administration, Management, and Advanced Organizational Management.
- Q** What does each part cover?
- A** Office Systems and Technology (CPS and CAP exams) covers computer hardware, systems, and configuration; document layout, design, and reproduction; software; and managing physical resources.
- Office Administration (CPS and CAP exams) covers records management and communication.
- Management (CPS and CAP exams) covers human resources; accounting procedures and analysis; time management; and communication.
- Advanced Organizational Management (CAP exam only) covers organizational planning; advanced administration; team skills; and advanced communication.
- Q** What do I study?
- A** The *Certification Review Guide* should be used to direct any course of study for these examinations. The *Guide* includes examination outlines, sample questions, bibliography of recommended study materials, and suggestions on exam review.
- References listed in the *Certification Review Guide* are actual college texts used to write examination questions. It is recommended that candidates use the latest edition of at least one textbook listed in each of the major areas tested.
- Q** Where do I get the *Certification Review Guide*?
- A** It is available free of charge on the IAAP Web site ([www.iaap-hq.org](http://www.iaap-hq.org)). Go to Professional Certification and then Forms to download and print the *Certification Review Guide*.
- Q** Are there review materials available specific to the CPS and CAP exams?
- A** Several review materials are available from which to study. These are listed in the *Certification Review Guide* under "References for Broad Overview." Each of these materials is intended for use as a review of materials previously learned. They should be used in conjunction with the bibliographic references listed in the *Guide*.
- Keep in mind that no one source is intended to provide all materials tested on the CPS or CAP examination. Each candidate must decide which method or methods of preparation work best for them.
- Q** Where do I find the materials listed in the *Certification Review Guide*?
- A** Materials to assist candidates are available from various sources, such as public or college libraries, bookstores, publishers, Web sites such as [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), etc.

## Do you have questions about what happens after you take the exams?

These frequently asked questions will address those concerns.

- Q** How soon will I be notified, after the exams, if I have passed?
- A** Performance Reports are mailed from Kansas City MO approximately 45 days after the administration of the exam.
- Q** What does the Performance Report tell me?
- A** A "Pass" or "Need" will show on Performance Reports.
- Q** How is the passing score set?
- A** Starting with the November 2004 exams, the pass/fail cut-score will be determined using a criterion-referenced method.
- Q** What is the criterion-referenced method?
- A** This is a method where candidates' performance is measured based on a predetermined standard or set passing score.
- Q** Who determines what cut-score will be used for the CPS and CAP exams?
- A** The Educators on the Institute for Certification, using psychometric data from the current exam and psychometric history, set the cut-score. A psychometric consultant is included in this process.
- Q** What do I receive if I have passed all parts?
- A** A certificate plaque, dated for five years, and pin are received after meeting all requirements and passing all examination parts.
- Q** Why is the certificate dated for five years?
- A** CPS and CAP holders are required to recertify every five years to keep their certification active.
- Q** How is recertification achieved?
- A** Recertification is achieved by earning 90 points every five years in the categories of education and experience, leadership, and an elective category. Complete details on recertification can be found on the IAAP Web site ([www.iaap-hq.org](http://www.iaap-hq.org)), under Professional Certification and then Recertification.
- Q** Is it possible to attain college credit after passing the CPS or CAP exams?
- A** The American Council on Education (ACE) does recommend college academic credit for those who have passed the exams. Complete details can be found on the IAAP Web site ([www.iaap-hq.org](http://www.iaap-hq.org)), under Professional Certification and then Forms.

The certification exams are constantly evolving. In January 2003, a new exam blueprint was introduced that will be used effective with the November 2004 administration. All candidates taking the exams May 2004 and before will continue with the previous outline and will be graded using the norm-reference method.