AQUATIC FITNESS PROFESSIONAL (AFPC) CERTIFICATION CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

This *AFPC Candidate Handbook* contains information for individuals seeking the Aquatic Fitness Professional Certification offered by the Aquatic Exercise Association.

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About AEA

The Aquatic Exercise Association (AEA) is a not-for-profit 501(C)(3) educational organization committed to the advancement of aquatic fitness worldwide.

For over 25 years, AEA has been the largest organization dedicated to improving the quality of the aquatic fitness industry both domestically and in over 36 countries. AEA provides the highest level of education, information, and networking to ensure consumer safety and industry growth.

AKWA, published by AEA, is the most comprehensive magazine in the industry and provides research updates, current programming formats and professional development articles for all AEA members.

AEA is not only committed to aquatic fitness, but also to each individual within the industry and strives to make everyone successful through increasing awareness, education and networking opportunities. With AEA, achieving healthy lifestyles through aquatic fitness is a team effort and is supported worldwide.

AEA Aquatic Fitness Professional Certification

The Aquatic Fitness Professional Certification (AFPC) is an intermediate level certification designed to test a standard level of theoretical and practical competence and skill. The AEA Certified Professional is qualified to teach Aquatic Fitness to general populations where participants are approved by their physician for independent exercise. Thus, selecting an instructor or trainer who holds the AEA Aquatic Fitness Professional Certification helps ensure that participants will meet their health and fitness objectives through safe, effective and enjoyable water exercise.

The AEA Aquatic Fitness Professional Certification (AFPC) is based upon the Aquatic Fitness Professional Manual. The AFP Manual, published by Human Kinetics, features some of the most recent research in aquatic fitness, in addition to recently revised industry standards and guidelines.

AEA examination procedures follow guidelines set forth by CLEAR (The Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation). AEA aims to increase consumer safety and confidence in Aquatic Fitness Professionals. The Aquatic Fitness Professional Certification provides a higher level of service to the community by establishing a standard level of competency for the aquatic fitness professional.

Code of Ethics & Conduct

All AEA Certified Aquatic Fitness Professionals will:

- Maintain high standards of professional conduct at all times;
- Remain aware of current AEA Standards & Guidelines for Aquatic Fitness Programming and not knowingly contradict current accepted industry standards;
- Maintain AEA Certifications through Continuing Education to stay abreast of the industry. A minimum of 15 hours of continuing education is required for each 2-year renewal period of the AEA Certification;
- Maintain training and certification in Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and obtain and maintain training in the use of an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED);
- Maintain recommended levels of training in First Aid and Water Safety;
- Acknowledge skills and limitations as an Aquatic Fitness Professional, practice ethically and properly represent qualifications;
- Maintain clear and honest communications with clients and students and uphold confidentiality at all times;
- Respect and cooperate with all health care and fitness professionals to promote the betterment of the aquatic fitness industry;
- Contribute to the health, safety and welfare of clients and students to assure continued respect for the aquatic industry;
- Uphold the standards, policies and procedures as outlined by the employing aquatic facility;
- Dress in a professional and appropriate manner when representing the aquatic fitness industry;
- Refrain from using any mind-altering drugs, alcohol, or intoxicants when conducting classes or instructing clients;
- Provide the highest quality of service possible to clients and students in keeping with the standards, guidelines and objectives of the Aquatic Exercise Association.

Certification Oversight Committee & Testing Company

Certification Oversight Committee (COC)

The Certification Oversight Committee (COC) is a voluntary committee comprised of professionals from the aquatic fitness industry and other industry related professions to represent public health and safety and the individual seeking Certification.

The committee is responsible for overseeing the affairs and matters regarding Certification and acts and votes independently of the AEA Board of Directors.

Independent Testing & Scoring Agency

Fitness Learning Systems (FLS) is the independent testing company contracted by AEA to develop, administer, score and analyze the AFPC Examination based upon criteria approved by the AEA COC.

Earning An AEA Certification

Preparation

AEA highly recommends that all certification candidates have a minimum of 2-3 months of advance study, in addition to a minimum of 6 months practical experience, regardless of educational background.

Additional study recommendations:

6-8 Months Prior: Read the Certification Examination Objectives available at the AEA website under the Certification menu to review the examination content based upon the *Sixth Edition Aquatic Fitness Professional Manual* (AFP Manual). Read the manual and use the key chapter concepts and questions provided at the end of the each chapter to test comprehension of the information. The ability to correctly answer these questions demonstrates the necessary level of understanding to move to the next stage in the preparation process.

6 Months: A minimum of 6 months practical aquatic fitness experience is recommended. Those seeking certification should participate or apprentice in classes led by AEA Certified Professionals. The AFPC Practical Applications DVD also provides an in-depth practical demonstration reinforcing information found in the Manual. Candidates should understand and practice skills in the areas of: choreography, cueing and deck teaching; moving to music and various water tempos; monitoring participant safety; and maximizing the training benefits in the

water by mastering concepts such as inertia, acceleration, frontal resistance and levers.

3-6 Months Prior: Offered by Human Kinetics, the AEA Certification Prep Course, Version 1.1, is an interactive online educational course for candidates preparing for the examination. It includes a course pre-test, unit quizzes and a course test to confirm your understanding of the material and assist you with the examination. Course content includes exercise anatomy & physiology, applied anatomy, physical fitness, aquatic environment, physical laws, aquatic fitness equipment, aquatic fitness choreography, deep water exercise, exercise programming & leadership as well as other related topics pertaining to exercise instruction.

Candidates should expect a minimum of 30 hours to complete this course and there are no prerequisites. The course allows one to start and stop as desired as well as the ability to repeat units in order to focus on areas of difficulty. For more information: www.aquaticeducationcenter.com

0-3 Months Prior: Intently review the AFP Manual, focusing on areas of difficulty, and the AFPC Practical Applications DVD to practice deck instruction skills and program design.

The AFP Practical & Skill Applications Course may be completed at anytime, but candidates often choose to attend the course the same day as taking the Certification Examination in order to tie together the theoretical and practical concepts. This course reviews the practical and skill related aspects of aquatic fitness leadership, including deck instruction, applied anatomy, physical laws and muscle actions, as related to aquatic fitness equipment.

Eligibility

- Candidates must be 18 years of age or older. Candidates under the age of 18 must contact AEA for registration information and requirements.
- Candidates must have current CPR and AED certifications.

Registration

- Exam locations can be found on the AEA website under the "Calendar" menu.
- Candidates must complete the AFPC questionnaire when registering for the exam.
- It is recommended to register at least 30 days prior to the exam date.
- Candidates must bring their registration confirmation to the exam site.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

AEA does not discriminate among examination candidate3s on the basis of gender, age, religion, race, national origin, marital status or disability.

Special Assistance

AEA will assist with special arrangements for Candidates who have a medical and/or learning disability that may prevent taking the examination under standard conditions. Candidates requiring special assistance must request and complete the AFPC Examination Assistance Form.

During the examination registration process, you will be prompted to select AFPC Examination Assistance and the form will then be emailed to you separately for completion. The form and requested documents must be received no later than 30 days prior to the examination date. In accordance with the ADA, documentation of the disability from a qualified health care provider must be provided. AEA will make every effort to provide the requested accommodations or provide acceptable alternatives to assist the Candidate.

Cancellation/Refund Policy

All AFPC Examination cancellations or transfers must be submitted in writing and received 14 days prior to the scheduled examination. The cancellation fee is $50.00. The Examination transfer fee is $25.00. NOTE: Only one (1) transfer is permitted within 18 months of original examination date.

Should it be necessary for AEA to cancel an examination, all candidates will be notified by email or phone. Candidates will be given the opportunity to transfer to another location or issued a full refund for examination registration fees paid.

Candidates who "no show" to take the examination at their confirmed date and location and have not cancelled in writing as required, will forfeit their registration fee.

Examination Day & Scoring Procedures

- The Exam Administrator will facilitate candidate admittance to the examination. *Absolutely no walk-in candidates will be admitted!*
- Candidates must bring No.2 pencils to complete the examination.
- On-site exam registration area will begin at 3:30. Candidates arriving late may be denied admittance.
- All candidates taking the exam must show government issued photo identification.
- If CPR/AED was not provided with registration, this should be verified at check in.
- Candidates will only be permitted to have the examination booklet and bubble sheet to record answers, non-programmable calculator, pencils and erasers, and water/snacks with them during the examination.
- Candidates are not permitted to leave the examination room while taking the exam.
- No copying of examination questions is permitted.
  Any Candidate found removing or attempting to remove test materials or notes from the exam room, communicating with other candidates, or participating in any form of misconduct, will be denied certification.
- Candidates will have 1 hour and 45 minutes to complete the 100 question multiple-choice exam.
- There is only one correct answer for each question. Indicating more than one response for any question will result in that question being incorrect.
- Candidates MAY NOT ask the Exam Administrator for help with any questions or discuss the examination for any reason during or after the examination.

Exam Scoring & Stats

Candidates must receive a minimum score of 68% in order to obtain AEA Certification. Candidates who pass the examination will be sent their certificate from AEA within 8 weeks. If current CPR/AED Certification verification has not been provided, candidate must provide prior to finalizing requirements to obtaining AEA Certification.

Fitness Learning Systems (FLS) is the independent test administration agency contracted by AEA to administer, score and analyze the AEA Aquatic Fitness Professional Examination. Results will be sent from FLS via mail to the Candidate's address indicated on the Exam Scoring Sheet within 4-6 weeks. *Results cannot be received by phone or via email.*

Candidates who fail the examination will receive a letter from AEA with their exam results outlining options for retaking the examination at a later date.

Examination Scoring Appeals

A candidate receiving a failing score on the examination may request hand scoring of his/her exam. A request must be submitted in writing or via email to Fitness Learning Systems within 60 days of the examination date. Upon receipt of the written request, the candidate's answer sheet will be re-scored by hand and results will be provided in writing via email to the candidate. Requests can be sent to Fitness Learning Systems, 1012 Harrison Ave #3, Harrison OH 45030, or by email to info@FitnessLearningSystems.com.

Examination Retakes

Candidates scoring below the minimum exam requirement may retake the course at a future date and location within an 18-month period.
The retake fee is $65.00. Candidates who do not successfully pass the exam may register to retake the exam within 18 months from the date of the initial exam. The retake fee of $65.00 also allows participation in the AFP Practical & Skill Applications course when offered on the day of the exam (available at most locations). Personalized exam scores provided by FLS indicate the general objective areas where the candidate should concentrate studies in order to improve performance.

AEA Aquatic Fitness Professional Certification Examination

The 100-question, multiple-choice written exam is designed to test a standard level of theoretical and practical competence and skill for aquatic fitness professionals to deliver safe and effective aquatic fitness programming. This is a timed examination with 1 hour and 45 minutes allotted for completion, approximately 1 minute per question.

Examination Specifications

The following process, created in conjunction with psychometrics, are used to develop the Aquatic Fitness Professional Examination:

1. **Job Analysis/ Role Delineation / Certification Objectives:** A group of industry experts review specific job requirements in order to develop a set of objectives which outline the knowledge, tasks, and skills required to effectively perform the role of aquatic fitness professional.

2. **Validation and Test Specifications:** The exam objectives are then sent to a large, random, national sample of fitness professionals who currently hold the certification or to entities that employ fitness professionals to validate the objectives for professional practice and

weight the objective material to determine test specifications. Test specifications determine the number of questions to be used on the examination from the various objective categories.

3. **Item Writing:** A question writer committee of industry and educational experts develop, review, and analyze exam questions. These subject matter experts tie questions to the validated objective criteria and directly reference the questions to the examination study materials approved by AEA.

4. **Examination Assembly:** The examination questions are then sent to Fitness Learning Systems, where they are stored in a secure test question database. The examinations are constructed using this test question database following the examination specifications determined from the job analysis survey.

5. **Cut Score Determination:** Cut scores for the AEA examination is statistically determined, based on acceptable criteria determined by the fitness industry. Examinations are weighted and equated to an appropriate degree of difficulty.

Certification Domain (based on job analysis/objectives)

Certification Objectives	**Related Exam Questions**
Physical Fitness	9
Exercise Anatomy	8
Movement Analysis	8
Exercise Physiology	8
Aquatic Environment	7
Physical Laws	8
Aquatic Fitness Equipment	7
Program & Leadership	8
Shallow Water Exercise	7
Deep Water Exercise	6
Special Populations	5
Emergency, Injuries	5
Nutrition & Weight Manage.	4
Risk Appraisal & Screening	4
Exercise Behavior	3
Business & Legal Concerns	3

Cancellation of Exam Scores

The AEA Certification Oversight Committee (COC) reserves the right to withhold or cancel examination scores if there is reason to question circumstances of the examination process due to suspected misconduct by the Candidate or examination irregularities beyond the control of the Candidate.

- Suspected Misconduct – if the COC determines that there is sufficient evidence to question the validity of the score, the score may be cancelled and the Candidate notified in writing.
- Examination Irregularity – if the COC determines that a situation jeopardized the validity of the examination scores (i.e. missing page from exam booklet), scores may be cancelled. All Candidates affected will be notified and provided an opportunity to retake the examination at a future time free of charge.

Reasons for Disciplinary Action

The following situations will necessitate disciplinary action, to be taken by the COC. Disciplinary action may involve cancellation of registration or revocation of Certification status.

- Using fraud or deception to obtain, or attempt to obtain, Certification.
- Intentionally assisting another person to use fraud or deception to obtain, or attempt to obtain, Certification.
- Falsification of certification documents.
- Removing, or attempting to remove, test materials or notes from the exam room.

Certification Renewal Requirements

- AEA Certified Professionals are required to renew their certification every two years. Early renewals can be submitted within 6 months prior to certification expiration if all renewal requirements are met. The AFPC Renewal Form is available at www.aeawave.com under the "Cert Renewal" menu.
- Certified Professionals must obtain a minimum of 15 AEA Approved CECs to obtain recertification. If you earn more CECs than the minimum required, *they do not carry over to the next renewal period.* CECs begin at zero (0) with each renewal period.
- A list of Approved Continuing Education Providers can be found at the AEA website.
- AEA may issue CECs to non-approved educational programs; go to the AEA website for current procedures for non-approved course recognition and petition information.

- AEA Certified Aquatic Fitness Professionals must maintain current and valid CPR/AED Certifications throughout the life of certification. CECs allocated given for CPR/AED courses.
- The AFPC on time renewal fee is $50.00. This fee represents on-time renewals (received no more than 60 days past the certification expiration date) with all requirements fulfilled. Late fees will apply if AEA does not receive Certification Renewal within 60 days of expiration; the AEA website lists current procedures and fees for late renewals.

Confidentiality & Record Retentions

Confidentiality / Privacy Policy

AEA is committed to protecting the privacy of information provided during the Certification Examination and renewal procedures. Only authorized employees have access to exam candidate files and are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of that information.

With the exception of verification of certification in good standing, written consent from the Candidate is required prior to the release of any information from the individual's certification records.

No information submitted to AEA or FLS during the certification process, including, but not limited to, examination scores, will be released to a third party without authorization from the Candidate. If you provided an email address upon registration, you will receive notice of AEA sponsored education opportunities and/or product/education promotions from affiliated companies and organizations. To stop receiving email notifications, send an email, a request to AEA, requesting to be removed from the email list and discontinue all notices sent from AEA electronically.

Records Retention

AEA will indefinitely retain records of all candidates and current and former AEA Certified Professionals as long as they remain current with AEA or until they request (in writing) that their information be removed. AEA retains candidate records for a period of 5 years after expiration.