



AQUATIC FITNESS PROFESSIONAL (AFP) EXAMINATION CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About AEA	3
Aquatic Fitness Professional Certification	3
AEA Code of Ethics & Conduct	3
AEA COC / Independent Testing & Scoring	4
AEA Examination	4
Examination Specifications	4
Certification Domain	5
Exam Preparation	5
Eligibility	6
Statement of Nondiscrimination	6
Special Assistance	6
Cancellation/Refund Policy	6
Examination Scoring & Appeals	6
Examination Retakes	6
Reasons for Disciplinary Action	6
Cancellation of Exam Scores	7
Confidentiality/Privacy Policy	7
Records Retention	7
Certification Renewal Requirements	7

About AEA

The Aquatic Exercise Association (AEA) is a nonprofit organization committed to the advancement of aquatic fitness, health and wellness worldwide.

For over 34 years, AEA has been the largest organization dedicated to improving the quality of the aquatic fitness industry both domestically and in over 49 countries. AEA provides the highest level of education, information, and networking to ensure consumer safety and industry growth.

Akwa Magazine, 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 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 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.

AEA Aquatic Fitness Professional Code of Ethics & Conduct

All AEA Certified 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 certification 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 Certification;
- Maintain training and certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated 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 healthcare providers 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 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 (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 policy and procedures regarding Certification and acts independently of the AEA Board of Directors.

Testing & Scoring

Professional Testing, Inc. and Gauge.com are the third parties contracted by AEA to assist in development, management and administration for the examinations based upon criteria approved by the AEA COC.

AEA Aquatic Fitness Professional Certification Examination

The 100-question, multiple-choice 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 2 hours allotted for completion, approximately 1 minute per question. Currently, Candidates must receive a minimum score of 68% in order to obtain AEA Certification.

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 that outline the knowledge, tasks, and skills required to effectively perform the role of an aquatic fitness professional.
- 2. Validation and Test Specifications:** The exam objectives are sent to a large sample of fitness professionals who currently hold the certification or to supervisors that employ fitness professionals. This procedure validates and weighs the objectives for professional practice to determine test specifications. Test specifications determine the number of questions to be used on the examination from the various objectives.
- 3. Item Writing:** An item writing committee of subject matter experts develops, reviews, and analyzes 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 examinations are constructed using the exam question database developed by question writers and reviewers following the exam 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/learning objectives)

PART I: Foundations of Fitness and Exercise

Physical Fitness	9 Questions
Exercise Anatomy	8 Questions
Exercise Physiology	6 Questions
Movement Analysis	18 Questions
Exercise Motivation and Behavior	3 Questions

PART II: The Aquatic Environment

The Physical Laws as Applied to the Aquatic Environment	9 Questions
The Pool Environment and Design	6 Questions

PART III: Instruction and Programming

Shallow-Water Exercise	6 Questions
Deep-Water Exercise	6 Questions
Aquatic Exercise Leadership	7 Questions
Exercise Programming	4 Questions
Special Populations	7 Questions

PART IV: Safety, Scope of Practice, and Legal

Safety, Emergencies, Injuries, and Instructor Health	4 Questions
Basic Nutrition and Weight Management	4 Questions
Business Issues and Legal Considerations	3 Questions

Certification Exam Preparation

AEA highly recommends that all certification candidates have a minimum of 8 to 12 weeks of advance study, in addition to a minimum of 6 months practical experience, regardless of educational background. AEA highly recommends the AEA Online Prep Course to assist candidates in preparing for Certification.

Suggested Preparation Timeline

6-8 Months Prior: Read the Certification Learning Objectives available at the AEA website under the Certification menu to review the examination content based upon the *Seventh Edition Aquatic Fitness Professional Manual (AFP Manual)*. Read the manual and use the key chapter concepts and review questions provided each chapter to test comprehension of the information.

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. 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.

Minimum 3-6 Months Prior: Intently review the AFP Manual, focusing on areas of difficulty. Optional, participate the AEA Online Prep Course. The Practical Applications Skill in-person workshop can assist some candidates in learning the practical side of being a professional and the wrote knowledge essential to being certified.

Eligibility

- Candidates must be 18 years of age or older. Candidates between the ages of 15-18 require legal guardian or parental written consent prior to taking examination.
- Candidates must have current CPR/AED certification.

Online Exam Registration

Start the process at aeawave.com

Go to Certification Menu and select the Cert Course Page.

Pop-up window blockers must be turned off in your browser.

Register for the Examination Online by completing the required information.

Purchase Exam for \$165 with the payment options provided.

Click "Start the Exam" when ready to begin. You cannot start and stop and must complete the exam in one sitting or it will time out.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

AEA does not discriminate among examination Candidates 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 Certification Examination Disability Form. Please contact AEA directly by email or phone to request the Disability Form. The form and requested documents must be received no later than 30 days prior to taking the examination. 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 Examination cancellations must be submitted in writing and received within 30 days of purchase of examination. No refund will be issued if the examination was initiated or attempted or incomplete without due and viable reason or cause. Should it be necessary for AEA to cancel an examination, candidates will be notified by email or phone and issued a full refund on examination fees paid*. (*if the exam fees were included in a bundle purchase package, the exam fees discounted price will be refunded.)

Examination Scoring

Candidates must receive a minimum score of 68% in order to obtain AEA Certification. Candidates who pass the examination will be emailed their certificate from AEA within 3 weeks. Candidates who fail will receive a letter with their exam results outlining retake options available.

Examination Scoring Appeals

A candidate receiving a failing score on the exam may request hand scoring of his/her exam. A request must be submitted in writing to AEA, attention Executive Director, email to angie@aeawave.com or by postal mail to Angie Proctor, AEA, PO Box 1695, Brunswick, GA 31521-1695

Examination Retakes

Candidates scoring below the minimum exam requirement may retake within 18 months. The retake fee of \$65.00. Personalized exam scores indicate the general objective areas where the candidate should concentrate studies in order to improve performance.

Reasons for Disciplinary Action

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

- Using falsification, 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.

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. All Candidates affected will be notified and provided an opportunity to retake the examination at a future time free of charge.

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 current certification, written consent from the Candidate is required prior to the release of any information from the individual's certification records.

Records Retention

AEA will retain records of all Examination Candidates as long as they remain current with AEA or until they request (in writing) that their information be removed. AEA retains failed or incomplete examination candidate records for a period of 5 years from date of examination.

Certification Renewal Requirements

- AEA Certified Aquatic Fitness Professionals are required to renew their certification every two years. Early renewals can be submitted within 3 months prior to certification expiration if all renewal requirements are met. The printable Certification Renewal Form is available at www.aeawave.com under the Certification menu.
- Certified Professionals must obtain a minimum of 15 AEA Approved Continuing Education Credits (CECs) to obtain recertification. If you earn more than 15 CECs, they do not carry over to the next 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 Certification at all times. 3 CECs per renewal period are issued for CPR/AED courses.
- The certification renewal fee is \$55.00. 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 your certification renewal within 60 days of expiration.