

AMERICAN CONCRETE INSTITUTE

Policy on Sponsoring Groups for Certification

Approved by the ACI Board of Direction
March 21, 1991

Revised by the ACI Certification Programs Committee
March 26, 2019

In developing certification exams for the concrete construction industry, the American Concrete Institute (ACI) has set forth minimum criteria by which an individual's proficiency is to be judged. Typically, ACI is not in a position to deliver certification exams directly to participants; therefore, it is necessary for ACI to have the ability to delegate this authority. However, if the need arises, ACI reserves the right to conduct exam sessions itself according to each program Policy.

In order to allow others to deliver its certification exams, ACI has adopted the "Sponsoring Group" concept. Sponsoring Groups act as agents of ACI in the delivery of ACI certification exams. Therefore, prior to being selected as an ACI Sponsoring Group, and for the duration of the period in which the group is authorized to act as a Sponsoring Group, such groups are subject to the following policies:

1. Sponsoring Groups shall be approved, in writing, by ACI's Certification Department (hereafter referred to as ACI) before they will be permitted to conduct an ACI¹ certification exam session. In all cases, approval of Sponsoring Groups shall be at the sole discretion of ACI.
2. In reviewing applications, ACI will consider, among other factors, the following:
 - A) The ability and willingness of the applicant to include in their constituency segments of the concrete construction industry impacted by the exams which they have applied to conduct. This includes individuals involved in the specification, production, design, construction, testing and inspection of concrete and concrete products. The applicant must establish a governance structure with representation appropriate to all of the exams for which the applicant has applied.²
 - B) The interest, experience and technical expertise necessary to conduct exam sessions exhibited by the applicant and/or their certification governance structure.
 - C) The legitimate need for the applicant to conduct a specific ACI certification exam within their approved operational jurisdiction.
 - D) The primary objective of the applicant in applying for sponsorship, which

must coincide with ACI's overall mission of improving the quality of concrete construction within the political, social, and cultural dynamics of the intended operational jurisdiction.

3. Sponsoring Groups are required to maintain a governance structure to oversee the delivery of ACI exams. The governance structure shall consist of a committee of at least three (3) individuals, each working for a different employer and each producing a different product or service related to the concrete construction industry. At all times, at least one (1) member of the committee shall be a member of ACI. Further, ACI shall be furnished with a complete and accurate listing of contact information for all committee members including names, employers, type of businesses, physical addresses, email addresses, and both office telephone and cell phone numbers as available.
4. The certification committee shall obtain the services of ACI-approved examiners. The examiners shall operate under the direct supervision of the certification committee to conduct ACI certification exam sessions. Examiners are permitted to conduct ACI certification exam sessions only under the auspices of ACI or ACI-approved Sponsoring Groups; and they must comply with all ACI certification policies and procedures.³
5. At the time of approval, ACI shall assign Sponsoring Groups specific geographical areas within which they will have authority to conduct ACI certification exam sessions. This area is the approved operational jurisdiction for the Sponsoring Group.
6. ACI shall approve each Sponsoring Group on a calendar year basis for a period not to exceed two (2) years. Prior to the conclusion of this period, all groups shall reapply to ACI for approval to continue to act as an ACI Sponsoring Group.
7. In the U.S., in areas where no Sponsoring Group is actively administering a specific ACI examination, the local ACI chapter (not a student chapter) shall have first rights to administer that specific exam. International sponsorship for any ACI examination will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
8. If an existing Sponsoring Group or ACI Chapter is solicited to administer an examination and participation is declined, or if a sponsor does not request an examination upon initial availability from ACI, or if a requested examination is not administered within two years following approval, administration of said examination may become available to other potential sponsors.
9. If more than one applicant wishes to sponsor an ACI certification exam in the same operational jurisdiction and there is documented need for more than one group to conduct the examination in that jurisdiction or portion thereof, a system of coordination between those groups shall be established. A description of this system shall be considered along with any new Sponsoring Group application and must be included in the governance system for any existing Sponsoring Group. In all cases, ACI reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to select a delivery system that in its judgment is best able to serve the interests of ACI.⁴

10. Applicants wishing to sponsor ACI certification examinations on a "national" or "regional" basis will, in appropriate circumstances, be approved to conduct exams under specific conditions at the discretion of ACI.
11. Approved Sponsoring Groups are responsible for:
 - A) Maintaining control over the administration of ACI Certification exams offered within their operational jurisdiction. This includes, but is not limited to, maintaining control over the ethical and professional integrity of every sponsored examination session and providing ongoing oversight of exam session coordinators, examiners, and other exam delivery personnel.
 - B) Conducting a sufficient number of exam sessions and providing equitable access to those exam sessions for all individuals seeking ACI Certification within the group's operational jurisdiction.
 - C) Conducting all ACI exams in a manner which complies with the intent of ACI's policies and procedures governing certification.
 - D) Formulating, publishing, and enforcing consistent and equitable pricing for ACI Certification exams offered by the Sponsoring Group within their operational jurisdiction.
 - E) Developing and implementing participant registration processes that satisfy the policy requirements of each exam offered by the Sponsoring Group and verifying that each participant has met the eligibility requirements of the program before being allowed to participate in an ACI exam session.
 - F) Collecting exam fees from participants, paying materials invoices to ACI within 30 days of receipt, and distributing compensation to examiners and other program delivery personnel as warranted.
 - G) Developing a program delivery process that establishes separation between the education/training and testing divisions of the Sponsoring Group.
12. ACI has the right to revoke a Sponsoring Group's authority to conduct an ACI certification exam at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice.
13. Appeals resulting from the denial or revocation of Sponsoring Group status will be reviewed by ACI Staff for determination of appropriate action on a case-by-case basis.
14. This policy shall become effective sixty (60) days after its approval by the ACI Certification Programs Committee, and shall render all previous Policy versions null and void. Sponsoring Groups shall be notified of this new policy in writing within thirty (30) days after it is approved by the ACI Certification Programs Committee.

15. The Certification Programs Committee shall review, revise as necessary, and reapprove this Policy at intervals not exceeding two years in length.

¹ For the purposes of this policy, references to "ACI certification" and "ACI certification program(s)" include all programs administered by ACI, including those with cosponsors.

² *ACI Chapter applicants* – ACI Chapters are open to all individuals with an interest in any aspect of concrete construction. This makes ACI Chapters ideal Sponsoring Groups for the growing number and variety of ACI Certification programs, provided they can organize and assemble the infrastructure and secure the expertise needed to effectively execute these programs. When populating their certification committee, ACI Chapters should be sensitive to the needs of their members and approach appointments in a fair and balanced manner, avoiding the appointment of individuals who have agendas not consistent with ACI's interests or the objectives and efforts of the Chapter.

Non-ACI Chapter applicants – Applicants that are not ACI Chapters may represent a smaller segment of concrete construction, and membership in the organization may not be as accessible as an ACI Chapter. Non-ACI Chapter applicants should organize their operations to address the needs of individuals and companies not typically represented within their organization's membership but impacted by the ACI programs they plan to offer.

³ *Outsourcing* – Some SGs employ partial outsourcing of their certification programs to ensure regular scheduling and consistency in programs offered. This model may include compensation to a third-party vendor who conducts the programs as a business. While this is an acceptable arrangement to ACI, the following items must be adhered to:

- The SG maintains full responsibility of all programs.
- The SG will review and consider proposals from multiple potential vendors.
- The SG must approve the selection of and the contract with selected vendor.
- The SG develops, reviews, and approves a pricing structure for each program offered.
- The SG performs annual audits of each program offered.
- Contract must contain an "out" clause for the SG.

⁴ *Accommodating Government Agencies* – In some cases, multiple SGs are approved within local, regional, or State government boundaries. If an opportunity arises to secure participation from a governmental agency within one of these boundaries, but consistent administration requires coordination between multiple SGs, contact ACI for guidance.