

# AFP® Certification Renewal Policy and Guidelines on CE Requirements

## A. CERTIFICATION RENEWAL AND ONGOING CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

All AFP® certificants are required to renew their certification annually in order to continue using the AFP trademarks. To renew their certification, they must maintain technical competence and fulfill ethical obligations. They must complete a minimum of 15 credits of continuing education (CE) every year (2 of which must be obtained from CE programs on compliance or ethics), in order to stay current with developments in the financial planning profession and better serve clients. Certificants who receive their certification on or after 1 July may complete a minimum of 7.5 CE credits to meet the renewal requirement for the first year (1 of which must be obtained from CE programs on compliance or ethics). That is,

Certification Date	CE Requirements for Renewal for Year 2026
On or before 30 June 2025	15 CE credits, including 2 CE credits on compliance or ethics
On or after 1 July 2025	7.5 CE credits, including 1 CE credit on compliance or ethics

In addition to the annual continuing education requirement, all AFP certificants voluntarily disclose any public, civil, criminal or disciplinary actions that may have been taken against them during the previous year as part of the renewal process.

With the consent of all AFP certificants, IFPHK is able to disclose AFP certificants' certification status, date of certification, professional standing and history of disciplinary actions as an AFP certificant and the date of ceasing to be an AFP certificant (if applicable) to the public.

### Renewal Period

The one year certification period is by calendar year, from 1 January to 31 December. All current AFP certificants must submit their completed and signed certification renewal application forms with appropriate fees to IFPHK before 31 December each year.

### Late Application and Late Fee

AFP certificants who miss the renewal deadline on 31 December can still apply for renewal before 31 January in the following year without seeking reinstatement by paying a late fee (please refer to the fees table for latest information).

### Reinstatement Policies

- ❑ The maximum lapsed period for AFP certification is 3 years with reinstatement fee of HK\$500 for the first year, HK\$1,000 for the second year and HK\$1,500 for the third year.
- ❑ If the AFP certifications have been lapsed for more than 3 years, the former AFP certificants are required to fulfill all the 4Es requirements again in order to regain the AFP certifications.

## B. SUSPENSION OF CERTIFICATION AFTER ANNUAL RENEWAL DEADLINE

If a completed application is not received before the extended renewal deadline by 31 January in the following year, the AFP certificant will be considered as not having satisfied the renewal requirements and the certification will automatically be suspended.

## C. VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL

An AFP certificant may declare voluntary withdrawal by submitting a written request to IFPHK any time before the current certification expires.

Reinstatement of voluntarily withdrawn certifications can be granted by IFPHK if the former certificants choose to do so within the first three years that they withdraw their certifications, and they must:

- Submit a completed AFP® Certification Reinstatement Form
- Pay appropriate certification fee for the year(s) lapsed
- Pay prevailing reinstatement fee
- Fulfill the continuing education requirement for the year(s) lapsed
- Continue to adhere to IFPHK's Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility

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## D. CERTIFICATION RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS

Certificants who cannot comply with the renewal requirements for health reasons or other circumstances beyond their control can submit a written request to IFPHK for consideration. Such requests must include an explanatory letter and all applicable supporting documentation. These cases will be considered by the IFPHK on a case-by-case basis. The IFPHK may grant an extension of the deadline for fulfilling the CE requirements (i.e. 31 December) for a maximum period of six months.

In the event of hardship, concessionary fees will also be considered upon requests by certificants.

## E. GUIDELINES ON CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE) REQUIREMENTS

### Preamble

Continuing education (CE) is a form of recertification and is required for AFP certificants to renew their AFP certifications and continue using the AFP trademarks. AFP certificants must meet the renewal standard of 15 CE credits every year (2 of which must be obtained from CE programs on compliance or ethics). They are required to retain and provide such records and supporting documentary evidence upon request from IFPHK. These records should be kept for a minimum of three years.

### Objectives

1. To maintain, deepen and extend professional competence and technical knowledge;
2. To keep track with the development of financial industry;
3. To acquire the updated knowledge of the trend in financial planning field; and
4. To support financial planners' effort in keeping the professional knowledge up to date.

### General Guidelines

- AFP certificants have the obligation to fulfill and maintain CE requirement. If AFP certificants fail to comply with the CE requirement, it may lead to refusal of certification renewal.
- AFP certificants are required to declare meeting the CE requirement upon certification renewal.
- AFP certificants are required to maintain and provide CE records and supporting documentary evidence upon request from IFPHK during the random audit. These records should be kept for a minimum of three years.
- CE credits documentation may be a grade report or transcript for programs involving an examination, or attendance evidence such as certificates issued by the course providers. The certificate of attendance should include: AFP certificant's name, name of program, name of CE sponsor, date of program, location, number of CE credits and signature of sponsor representative.
- In general, for each hour's participation in recognized CE programs, one CE credit can be granted.
- Excess CE credits gained within the year cannot be carried forward to the following year.
- AFP certificants should file the declaration of compliance with integrity. All filings are subject to random audit. Disciplinary actions would be taken upon proof of violations.
- During the audit, randomly selected AFP certificants are required to submit the CE attendance records and supporting documentary evidence that cover the following to IFPHK for assessment and record:
  - ✓ Name of AFP certificant
  - ✓ Name of CE program
  - ✓ Content of CE program
  - ✓ Organizer of CE program
  - ✓ Date of CE program
  - ✓ Number of CE credits or participation hours of each CE program

### Recognized CE Programs

- The programs should be tied directly to professional knowledge, skills and abilities that are covered in the certification process, and be relevant to professional development of a personal financial planner.
- The CE programs should be of significant intellectual and practical content which in general involves interaction with other individuals.
- Content of CE programs should be topics covered in the CFP Certification Examination Syllabus including:
  - Asset management
  - Estate planning
  - Financial management
  - Financial planning principles
  - Insurance planning
  - Investment planning
  - Retirement planning
  - Risk management
  - Tax planning

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- Programs on communication skills are also accepted. In addition, at least 2 CE credits must be obtained from CE programs on compliance or ethics.

The programs should be presented in structured format. Structured CE programs include:

- Studies for a relevant post-graduate degree
- Studies for professional qualifications such as:
  - CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst)
  - ChFC (Chartered Financial Consultant)
  - CLU (Chartered Life Underwriter)
  - ACII/FCII (Associate or Fellow of the Chartered Insurance Institute)
  - FLMI (Fellow of the Life Management Institute)
  - CPCU (Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter)
  - LUTCF (Fellow of the Life Underwriter Training Council)
  - CPA (Full Member of Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants)
  - Member of Hong Kong Bar Association
  - Member of the Law Society of Hong Kong
  - Fellow Member of the Actuarial Society of Hong Kong
- Studies in relevant correspondence (distance learning) courses which require face-to-face participation by the member
- Studies in relevant and well structured online learning courses that require participants to pass a build-in test as one of the completion criteria (For online learning courses, the general rule of one hour participation equals to one CE credit may not be applied)
- Studies in relevant courses offered by universities or other tertiary institutions
- Studies in relevant courses/seminars/workshops offered by professional bodies
- Attending relevant conferences organized by professional bodies
- Writing of relevant technical articles, papers or books
- Working as a lecturer, instructor or discussion leader on a structured CE course (repeated presentations of the course should not be considered for this purpose)
- Preparation of training materials for a structured CE course
- Participation in relevant conferences, briefing sessions, discussion groups or comprehensive research studies
- Serving as a member of committees and working groups of a professional body or a technical committee of an individual firm in the financial planning field
- Undertaking technical research in the financial planning arena for a new piece of work provided the research is subsequently applied to an engagement
- CE program presenters should be technically competent.
- CE program organizers should have good track record of delivering quality programs.
- Trainings on general management which are not directly related to financial planning will not be considered as recognized CE programs.
- Programs which do not have proof of attendance or examination record, generally cannot be accepted as CE programs.

Examples:

1. Reading financial press, business or financial literature and professional literature;
2. Subscription to professional or business publications;
3. Self-study, e.g. watching financial related television programs or videos.

### **F. UPDATES AND CHANGES**

AFP certificants should observe and follow the current renewal policies and procedures set out in the AFP® Certification Renewal Application Form in use.

IFPHK will review and update the re-certification requirements and policies as and when needed. Therefore, AFP certificants are advised to closely observe the latest announcements on IFPHK website, and pay specific attention to notices sent to them by IFPHK.