

ELIGIBILITY

I. POSITION

1. The following persons may apply for certification:
 - a. A person who is the finance officer of a local government or public authority, appointed pursuant to G.S. 159-24.
 - b. A person who holds some other supervisory or professional position in a local government or public authority with administrative responsibility for one or more financial functions, such as internal audit, investments, budget, or accounting.
2. For *initial hires* in North Carolina local government that occur January 1, 2010, and after, an Associates degree or higher will be required to apply for certification.
3. If a person has qualified for certification but has left government employ, they shall be considered to be in inactive status.

Source: Status report; meeting of March 13, 1990; meeting of January 19, 1996; meeting of December 17, 2009; meeting of August 24, 2018.

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II. ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

To be eligible to apply for certification, a person must be a member of :

The North Carolina Government Finance Officers' Association.

Source: Status report; meeting of January 19, 1996.; Updated to reflect merging of the North Carolina Government Finance Officers Association and the North Carolina Association of County Finance Officers in March 2011.

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III. EXPERIENCE

1. To be eligible to apply for certification, a person must have the following experience in governmental finance:
 - a. At least one year's experience as the legally designated finance officer of a local government or public authority in North Carolina and one additional year of responsible financial management experience in governmental finance in North Carolina; or
 - b. At least two years' experience in North Carolina governmental finance and at least two additional years of responsible financial management experience in North Carolina.
2. The experience required by paragraph 1 must have occurred within the 60 months immediately preceding the date the person applies for certification.
3. The experience required by paragraph 1 may be completed after the person successfully completes the certification examination.
4. A master's degree or a valid certificate as a certified public accountant may each be substituted for one year of the required additional experience required in 1.a. or 1.b. above.
5. If a person passes all four parts of the examination requirements but leaves local government employment before meeting the experience requirement set out above, the person's status upon returning to local government employment will be as follows:
 - a. If the person returns to local government employment within five years after passing the examination requirements, the time period within which the person must meet the experience requirement is extended by the amount of time the person was not in local government employ.
 - b. If the person returns to local government employment five or more years after passing the examination requirements, he or she must begin the certification process again, including passing the examination again.

Source: Status report; meeting of 13 December 2004; meeting of August 24, 2018.

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IV. CORE COURSE EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENT

1. To be eligible to apply for certification, a person must (except as provided in Sections IV and VI) have completed at least four of the five core courses (one of the four must be An Introduction to Local Government Finance).

2. The Certification Committee has approved the following core courses offered by the UNC School of Government.

- a. An Introduction to Local Government Finance.
- b. Governmental Accounting and Financial Reporting.
- c. Budgeting in Local Government and Capital Financing in North Carolina (separate courses but counts collectively as one requirement).
- d. Cash Management and Investment of Public Funds.
- e. Effective Supervisory Management Program.

3. If a person successfully completes Municipal and County Administration offered by the UNC School of Government, that person will be given credit for having completed An Introduction to Local Government Finance.

4. In the following circumstances a person is entitled to waive the requirement of completing one or more core courses:

- a. If a person has had between three and six years consecutive experience in a North Carolina government finance position, the holder of which is eligible to apply for certification, that person may substitute that experience for any single core course.
- b. If a person has had more than six years consecutive experience in a North Carolina government finance position, the holder of which is eligible to apply for certification, that person may substitute that experience for any two core courses.

5. The Certification Committee must approve or have approved each course submitted as a core course alternative by an applicant for certification. Upon application by any person, the Committee may approve the substitution for any core course listed in paragraph 2 above of a course given by an institution of higher education, a professional association, or some other organization, if the course offered for substitution covers substantially similar material as the core course and was satisfactorily completed by the applicant.

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Source: Status report; meeting of August 3, 1985; meeting of January 7, 1986; meeting of November 17, 1993; meeting of December 17, 2009; meeting of August 24, 2018.

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V. ELECTIVE COURSE EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENT

Source: Status report; meeting of June 6, 1984; meeting of March 4, 1986; meeting of June 26, 1986; meeting of July 17, 1987; meeting of January 19, 1996; Elective Requirements eliminated effective January 1, 2010, as per meeting of December 17, 2009.

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V. EXAMINATION

1. To be eligible to apply for certification, a person must have satisfactorily completed four examination requirements. The examination requirements will cover topics from the core courses and will fairly represent the materials covered in the courses as well as any reading assignments.

2. Details about the examination and examination process are set out in the next section, headed "EXAMINATION."

Source: Status report; meeting of December 17, 2009; meeting of August 24, 2018.

VI. THE TESTING-OUT OPTION

1. Each person eligible for certification will have one opportunity during his or her career to waive all core course and elective course educational requirements by examination. In order to successfully test-out of the educational requirements, a person must sit for and pass all four parts of the examination in a calendar year's examination cycle.

2. If a person takes the examination under this testing-out option and does not pass all four parts of the examination, he or she will receive core course and examination credit for those parts passed. However, to be eligible for certification, such a person must meet the remaining core course educational requirements.

Source: Status report; meetings of January 8, 1986; March 4, 1986; June 25, 1986; and December 17, 2009, meeting of August 24, 2018.

EXAMINATION

I. PREPARATION

1. The Certification Committee, with staff assistance from the UNC School of Government, is responsible for preparation of the examinations each year.
2. The examinations will cover topics from these four core courses:
 - Governmental Accounting and Financial Reporting
 - Budgeting in Local Government and Capital Financing in NC
 - Cash Management and Investment of Public Funds
 - Effective Supervisory Management Program

The examinations will fairly represent the materials covered in the courses along with any reading assignments. Questions and answers will be developed from recommendations of the course instructors and from publications approved by the Certification Committee.

3. The examinations will be offered in an online format only and will have fifty multiple choice questions, each with worth 2 points. Questions shall cover both knowledge of fundamental principles and their application. Questions concerning application shall reflect to the extent possible experiences of local governments of varying size.
4. All questions should be answered in the North Carolina context.
5. The Certification Committee will publicize reading materials helpful for the examination.

Source: Status report; meeting of December 6, 1984; meeting of December 17, 2009; meeting of August 24, 2018.

II. TAKING THE EXAMINATION

1. The examinations will be offered online three times per year (January, May, and September) beginning in calendar year 2019. The examinations will be offered for a 48-hour period in each of the aforementioned months on the fourth successive Thursday and Friday of the respective examination month.
2. During the examination offerings, the online platform will be accessible via passwords/codes provided prior to the examination period. Once an individual examination is opened, the candidate will have two hours to complete the examination. The two-hour time window can not be adjusted nor paused and then resumed. If not completed within the two-hour time limit, the examination will automatically close and the candidate will only be given credit for those questions successfully answered.
3. The four examinations that will be offered during the 48 hour testing timeframes are identified as follows:
 - a. Cash Management and Investments
 - b. Accounting and Financial Reporting
 - c. Budgeting and Capital Finance
 - d. Financial and Supervisory Management
4. Only one examination may be accessible by a candidate at a time.
5. Candidates will be required to sign an honor pledge before initiating an examination. Any proven offense of the honor code related to any of the examinations will result in the candidate being deemed permanently ineligible for certification.
6. During the examination, candidates may use calculators. Reference materials and notes should not be used in accordance with the aforementioned honor code.
7. Each examination will be unique to the individual as the questions are randomized from a test bank.

Source: Status report; meetings of February 27, 1985, January 27, 1988, January 29, 1996, February 17, 1999; and December 17, 2009; meeting of August 24, 2018.

III. SATISFACTORY COMPLETION

1. Examinations will be graded on a 100 point scale. In order to pass an individual examination, a candidate must earn at least 70 percent of the total 100 points possible.
2. A person may pass one or more parts of the examination in any one year. However, a person must pass all four parts within four years after the date he or she first sits for any one part of the examination. If a person does not pass all four parts within the four year period, that person must begin the certification process anew.
3. Multiple choice questions will be worth two points each.
4. The examinations will be automatically graded, but the results will not be immediately available to the candidate. The Certification Committee, in partnership with the faculty and staff of the UNC School of Government, will verify the results, check for any errors or trends that should be adjusted, and release results to all candidates as soon as is practical.
5. Examination results will be communicated by e-mail. Results will be communicated only as a Pass or Fail for each examination taken. No numerical grades will be given or be made available.

Source: Status report; meeting of December 7, 1985; meetings of January 21, 1997; February 17, 1999; and December 17, 2009; meeting of August 24, 2018.

EXAMINATION

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IV. APPEALS

Source: Status report. Option for appeals removed with meeting of August 24, 2018.

EXAMINATION

V. FEES

1. An application to take the examination must be accompanied by a N.C. Finance Officers Certification Program examination fee, according to the following schedule:
 - a. One part -- \$50.00
 - b. Two parts -- 80.00
 - c. Three parts -- 110.00
 - d. Four parts -- 140.00

These fees include a \$10 School of Government Administrative fee *per exam*. The entire fee due and payable will be duly noted on the examination application.

Payment should be made electronically when registering to take one or more exams.

2. Re-examination fees follow this same schedule.
3. The examination application should make clear that refunds will not be given if a person does not take the examination. Rather, the fee may be applied to a future examination.

Source: Status report; meetings of April 19, 1985; January 19, 1996; and December 17, 2009; August 24, 2018.

CERTIFICATION

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Source: Status report; meeting of January 19, 1996; section deleted meeting of December 17, 2009.

CERTIFICATION

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I. FEES

1. A fee of \$50.00 must accompany an application for certification. Both the application for certification and the payment will be made electronically.

Source: Status report; meeting of January 19, 1996; meeting of December 17, 2009; meeting of August 24, 2018.

CERTIFICATION

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II. DELIVERY AND NOTIFICATION

1. At the spring conference of the NC Government Finance Officers Association, the Committee will present a certificate to each person whose application for certification has been approved since the preceding spring conference. The five-year period of each person's certification begins the January 1 preceding the spring meeting at which the certification is awarded. (If a person is not present at the banquet, the certificate will be sent to them; that person's five-year period of certification also begins on the January 1 preceding the spring meeting.)

2. The Committee will also send an appropriate letter to the chief executive officer of the applicant's unit and to local news media if the applicant wishes it. To the latter end, the application form will include a space for listing those news media to which an announcement should be sent.

Source: Meeting of April 19, 1985; meeting of January 9, 1986; meeting of February 17, 1999; meeting of December 17, 2009; meeting of August 24, 2018.

MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION

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I. REQUIREMENTS

1. Certification is only valid for five years and therefore must be renewed at the end of each five-year period.
2. The requirements for renewal are as follows:
 - a. The person is a member of the NC Government Finance Officers Association.
 - b. The person holds a position the holder of which is eligible for certification.
 - c. The person has accumulated at least 100 hours of professional training, which can include credit for contributions to the profession, within the five-year period beginning on the January 1 upon which the person's period of certification or renewal of certification begins. One hour equates to 50 minutes of actual training. Refer to Section II of Maintenance of Certification for guidelines related to professional training credit.

At least 75 hours must be in continuing education; no more than 25 hours may be earned from professional contributions during each five year certification period..
3. If a person who is certified becomes inactive, and then re-enters government employment, he or she may seek renewal as follows:
 - a. If the person re-enters government employment during the period of certification, his or her certification may be renewed in the regular course if he or she meets the requirements for renewal.
 - b. If the person re-enters government employment during the period of certification but cannot meet the maintenance point requirement within the original five-year period, or if the person re-enters government employment after the period of certification has expired, then the person has two years from re-employment in which to qualify for renewal. To qualify, a person must accumulate the necessary professional training credits. In determining hours, he or she may count any qualifying activity from the time of certification, but at least 40 hours must be earned in the two years immediately before the person applies for renewal.
 - c. If a person's certification has expired, and the person is seeking renewal pursuant to paragraph 3b, the person shall be considered to be on inactive status until his or her certification is successfully renewed.

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4. If a person who is certified does not renew his or her certification because he or she has not accumulated a sufficient number professional training credits, that person may renew certification by meeting the following professional training requirements:

- a. The person must accumulate the remaining hours necessary to reach the 100 hours required for renewal (the person will not be eligible to have certification re-established until the hours are properly accumulated. Once those hours are properly accumulated, the person will be eligible for recertification the following January 1.)
- b. The person must also meet the other requirements of paragraph 2, above.

5. When a person renews his or her certification, the renewal certificate shall show the date of initial certification and the date that the current renewal period concludes.

Source: Status report; meeting of February 17, 1999. Updated November 2011; meeting of August 24, 2018.

MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION

II. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Certification must be renewed every five years, through accumulation of at least 100 hours of professional training within the five-year period commencing on the January 1 that begins the period of certification or recertification. At least 75 of the 100 hours must be in professional training; no more than 25 hours of the 100 hours may be earned from professional contributions.

Professional training hours are based on the industry standard of one hour per 50 minutes of training. Traditional day-long courses typically equate to 8 hours; half-day courses typically equate to 4 hours. Professional conferences will vary and the amount of hours available for professional credit should either be provided by the conference sponsor or may be calculated on the 50 minute per hour rule.

Professional training hours must be accumulated over the five year certification period. There is no minimum requirement per year as long as the total hours are met during the five year period. Upon application for recertification, applicants will supply a listing of professional training that was attended, along with dates and hours of credit being claimed. The Certification Committee approves the professional training hours claimed.

Up to 25 hours in a five-year period may be earned from professional contributions. Examples of professional contributions, and the related hours that may be claimed, are as follows:

- Serving as an officer or Executive Board member in the N.C. Government Finance Officers Association at any time during the five year period 8 hours
- Serving as an officer or board member of the GFOA or a comparable national organization at any time during the five year period 8 hours
- Serving on a committee of the N.C. Government Finance Officers Association at any time during the five year period 4 hours
- Serving as an officer or board member of the North Carolina Risk Management Association, the N.C. Budget Officers Association, the N.C. Local Government Investment Association, or a regional chapter of the Institute of Internal Auditors 4 hours
- Speaking at a conference, or serving on a panel, related to government finance 4 hours

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- Serving on a committee of GFOA or a comparable national organization 4 hours
- Serving as a State Representative of GFOA or a comparable national organization 4 hours

Upon application, the Certification Committee will award appropriate hours for professional contributions not specially listed.

Source: Status report; meeting of December 17, 2009.; Updated November 2011.

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III. FEES

1. The application fee for renewal of certification is \$50.00.

Source: Status report; meetings of November 17, 1993 and January 19, 1996; meeting of March 9, 2004; meeting of December 17, 2009.

I. CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE

1. The N.C. Finance Officers Certification Program is administered by the Certification Committee, which has eight members, including the chairperson.
2. Appointments to the Committee are made by the president of the N.C. Government Finance Officers Association from a pool of certified candidates.
3. The Committee is comprised of eight members – four municipal members and four county members. The initial term of a member is five years. Committee members may be reappointed, as can the Chair of the committee. Each year in conjunction with the spring NC Government Finance Officer Conference, the Committee selects one of its members as chairperson of the Committee. The Chair of the Committee may call meetings of the Committee as needed, including teleconferences.
4. The Certification Committee will annually review the program and make recommendations for any needed adjustments.
5. The School of Government faculty member who serves as principal staff to the Committee is the secretary of the Committee.

Source: Status report; meetings of June 25 and 26, 1986; meeting of November 17, 1993; meeting of December 17, 2009; Updated November 2011; meeting of August 24, 2018.

II. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Pam Dubois, Cabarrus County - psdubois@cabarruscounty.us
704-920-2107

Paul Fulton, Forsyth County – fultonpl@forsyth.cc
336-703-2051

Amy Davis, Town of Boone – amy.davis@townofboone.net
828-268-6210

Terra Greene, City of Lexington – terrag@lexingtonnc.net
336-248-3925, ext. 3204

Terms ending June 30, 2015

Michael Felts, Granville County – michael.felts@granvillecounty.org
919-693-4182

Lisa Saunders, City of Winston-Salem – lisas@cityofws.org
336-747-6911

Pam Hinson, City of Concord – hinsonp@ci.concord.nc.us
704-920-5220

III. COMMITTEE FINANCES

1. The Certification Committee shall have an account in a bank or other financial institution with a Chapel Hill branch. (Currently the Committee has an account with the Local Government Employees' Credit Union)

2. Meeting expenses of the members of the Committee should be met by the appropriate finance officers' association.

Source: Meeting of February 27, 1985; meeting of January 19, 1996; meeting of December 17, 2009..