



**HEALTHCARE
STERILE PROCESSING
ASSOCIATION**



CERTIFICATION HANDBOOK
Revised October 2022



HSPA CERTIFICATION HANDBOOK

PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING & MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AN OVERVIEW OF HSPA CERTIFICATION

The Importance of Certification	2
Accreditation	2
The HSPA Certification Council	2
What is Certification	3
How to Obtain & Maintain Certification	3

CERTIFIED REGISTERED CENTRAL SERVICE TECHNICIAN (CRCST)

How to Prepare for the Examination	4
Certification Scope	4
Content & Composition of the Examination	5
Requirements for the Examination:	
Full & Provisional Certification	6

CERTIFIED INSTRUMENT SPECIALIST (CIS)

How to Prepare for the Examination	8
Certification Scope	8
Content & Composition of the Examination	8
Requirements for the Examination	9

CERTIFIED ENDOSCOPE REPROCESSOR (CER)

How to Prepare for the Examination	10
Certification Scope	10
Content & Composition of the Examination	11
Requirements for the Examination	11

CERTIFIED HEALTHCARE LEADER (CHL)

How to Prepare for the Examination	12
Certification Scope	12
Content & Composition of the Examination	13
Requirements for the Examination	13

CERTIFIED CENTRAL SERVICE VENDOR PROGRAM (CCSVP)

How to Study for the Examination	14
Certification Scope	14
Content & Composition of the Examination	14
Requirements for the Examination	15

EXAM & TESTING PROCESS

Completing & Processing Exam Applications	16
Verification of Examination Requirements	17
Falsified & Misleading Application Documentation	17
Refunds & Forfeiture of Exam Fees	17
Change of Name and/or Address	17
Non-Disclosure Agreement	18
Use of Personal Information	18
Applicants with a Disability	18

EXAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Scheduling Your Exam	19
----------------------	----

Rescheduling Your Appointment	19
Missed Exams	19
Reapplying for Examination	19
Examination Administration	20
What to Bring to the Test Center	20
Personal & Prohibited Items	20
Taking the Test	20
Cancellation of Examinations Due to Bad Weather or Other Emergencies	21
Cheating & Misconduct	21
Examination Results	22
Determination of a Passing Score	22
CRCST, CIS, CER & CHL Examination Results	22
CCSVP Examination Results	22
Duplicate Examination Result Reports	23
Re-Testing	23
Examination Irregularities	23
Verification of Computer Examination Results	23
Appeals of Examination Results	23
Release of Scores to Program Officials	23
Maintaining Certification	24
Re-Certification Requirements	24
Types of Continuing Education Accepted	25
Revocation of Certification	25
Falsified & Misleading Renewal Documentation	25

CERTIFICATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Code of Conduct	26
Use of Certification Credentials	26
Certification Verification	27
Complaints & Disciplinary Actions	28
Confidentiality	30
Statement of Nondiscrimination	31
Certification Complaints	32
Test Development	33



CERTIFICATION OVERVIEW

Founded in 1958, the International Association of Healthcare Central Sterile Materiel Management, now the Healthcare Sterile Processing Association (HSPA), is the only full service Association for Sterile Processing (SP) professionals. We represent more than 40,000 SP professionals who value the highest standards in education and certification.

Certification helps ensure that SP technicians possess the essential knowledge and skills necessary for managing critical departmental duties safely, effectively and consistently. What's more, the ongoing education required for SP professionals to maintain their certification status helps ensure that these professionals stay on top of ever-evolving instrumentation, technology, standards and best practices to keep SP departments functioning at peak performance.

For those reasons, and many more, it is essential that SP staff have the knowledge, skills, and training to provide consistent, reliable and quality-focused service.

The Importance of Certification

Patients rarely meet SP professionals, but they rely on them just the same. They count on technicians for clean, sterile, well functioning instruments. They count on them to follow best practices and stay ahead of the technology curve. They count on them to provide safe, quality service - on time, every time.

SP certification can help meet each of those expectations, and more. Whether it's attaining Certified Registered Central Service Technician (CRCST) status, Certified Endoscope Reprocessor status (CER), taking the next step to Certified Instrument Specialist (CIS), improving management skills through Certification in Healthcare Leadership (CHL), or developing vendor relations as a Certified Central Service Vendor Partner (CCSVP), HSPA has you covered.

Certification drives knowledge and competency. It helps ensure that SP professionals stay current with regulations, standards, and best practices. It gives them the confidence in knowing they have both the tools and skills needed to overcome the most challenging obstacles. Above all, certification demonstrates that quality care and safety are the driving forces behind the SP department.

Certification exams go beyond training by providing a tangible measurement of a technician's knowledge of specific functions and products. Certification programs establish standards for education and play an important role in developing a qualified workforce. Your achievement of HSPA certification documents your expertise and recognizes your personal commitment to professional development.

HSPA Certification Programs help you to:

- **Gain practical skills you can use on the job**

HSPA certification programs focus on the knowledge and skills needed to perform real-world job responsibilities.

- **Build your supervisory skills**

Increase your personal effectiveness in general healthcare management and improve your key leadership skills.

- **Become more effective**

When you make professional certification part of your personal training program, you acquire the skills you need to stay current.

Accreditation

HSPA's CRCST certification is accredited by both the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB) and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).



The HSPA Certification Council

HSPA is a non-profit organization governed by a Board of Directors. The HSPA Board has established the Certification Council and granted authority to the Certification Council to independently make essential decisions related to standards, policies, and procedures of the certification program. These decisions are made independently of, and under no influence by, any other individual or business entity within or outside of HSPA.

The Certification Council is responsible for the development of the requirements for eligibility, examination, and recertification for the certification programs as established in the HSPA Bylaws. The Certification Council has developed the certification program to increase the quality of patient care by recognizing competent SP technicians, endoscope reprocessors, instrument specialists, and healthcare leaders.

The Certification Council is solely responsible for essential decisions related to the development, administration, and ongoing maintenance of the certification programs. The Certification Council ensures that all application and eligibility requirements, examination development and administration, recertification requirements, and all certification program policies and procedures are directly related to the scope of the certification programs as stated above. Issues that fall outside of the scope and purpose of the certification programs fall outside of the authority of the Certification Council.

CERTIFICATION OVERVIEW

What is Certification

Certification is the process by which a non-governmental agency or association grants recognition of competence to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications, as specified by the agency or association. HSPA provides a mechanism for individuals to be recognized as having the necessary competence to perform the SP department roles they seek. This mechanism is called certification.

HSPA offers five certifications:

- Certified Registered Central Service Technician (CRCST)
- Certified Instrument Specialist (CIS)
- Certified Endoscope Reprocessor (CER)
- Certified Healthcare Leader (CHL)
- Certified Central Service Vendor Program (CCSVP)

To remain valid, certification must be maintained annually through the renewal process detailed on page 24.

How to Obtain & Maintain Certification

STEP 1 – REVIEW

Review the Certification Handbook and the application for the specific certification you wish to achieve.

STEP 2 – PREPARE

Prepare for the exam through self-study, taking a certification course, or based on your personal knowledge from working in the SP field.

STEP 4 – SUBMIT

Submit the completed application and fee when you are ready to test and be granted an exam window.

STEP 3 – REQUIREMENTS

Meet the eligibility requirements for the selected examination before submitting your application.

STEP 5 – EXAMINATION

Take the examination at the Prometric testing center of your choice. A preliminary pass/fail will be issued at the testing center.

STEP 6 – VERIFICATION

The results of your examination will be mailed within two weeks. Upon passing, your certification will be valid for one year. If you fail, you may submit a retake application to take the exam again after 6 weeks.

MAINTENANCE

You must maintain your certification annually by submitting Continuing Education credits and certification renewal fees.

CRCST

CERTIFIED REGISTERED CENTRAL SERVICE TECHNICIAN

The Sterile Processing department provides vital support to all areas of patient care, and interacts with personnel from all areas of the hospital. It is the center of all activity involving supplies and equipment needed for surgery and other patient care areas.

As an SP technician, your primary responsibility is to ensure that all instruments used by the medical personnel in your healthcare facility are clean and sterile. This entails performing manual cleaning prior to sterilization, placing cleaned instruments in sterilizers such as autoclaves, and starting and monitoring sterilizers. You also examine equipment for defects and report problems to staff, test autoclaves and record the results, order supplies, assemble instrument trays, distribute supplies, and ensure that sterile supplies are within their expiration date.

HSPA's CRCST certification is accredited by both the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB) and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

CRCST Certification Scope

The Certified Registered Central Service Technician (CRCST) certification program is designed to recognize entry level and existing technicians who have demonstrated the experience, knowledge, and skills necessary to provide competent services as a central service technician. CRCST's are integral members of the healthcare team who are responsible for decontaminating, inspecting, assembling, disassembling, packaging, and sterilizing reusable surgical instruments or devices in a health care facility that are essential for patient safety.

To earn CRCST certification, candidates are required to successfully demonstrate skills through completion of hands-on work experience as well as successful completion of an examination developed to measure the understanding of general central services and infection prevention topics. CRCST certifiants are required to recertify annually through completion of continuing education requirements.

How to Prepare for the Examination

Those interested in becoming a CRCST can prepare in one of the following ways:

- **Online/Distance Learning Course:** Purdue University offers an online or by mail course designed to help prepare individuals for the CRCST exam. You can find out more about the course by calling Purdue at 800.830.0269 or visiting their website distance.purdue.edu/training/cssp/
Please Note: Courses are preparation for the exam; passing a course does not equate to Certification.
- **Self-Study:** You may purchase reference materials and choose to study on your own to prepare for the CRCST exam. For the current exam, you may utilize either the *CS Technical Manual, 8th Ed (2016)* or the *SP Technical Manual, 9th Ed (2023)*. These, along with ANSI/AAMI's *ST79 (2017)*, and AORN's *Guidelines for Perioperative Practice (2023)* were used for reference in creating the CRCST exam. You can order these publications through myHSPA.org and aornstandards.org

Please Note: HSPA's education department developed the material referenced above as an optional method to assist individuals in preparing for the CRCST exam. The material was developed and produced independently from the Certification Council, which does not develop, require, approve, or endorse any specific training materials.

- **Work Experience:** You may take the exam based on your personal knowledge from experience in the field; it is not required that you take or pass a preparatory course nor study materials on your own. Applicants can apply directly to take the exam without purchasing study materials or enrolling in a course.

CRCST certification requires that you pass the certification exam and complete 400 hours of hands-on experience in a SP department. These hours can be completed before testing (full CRCST) or after testing (Provisional CRCST). HSPA recommends completing, or at least beginning, your hours of experience before testing. Hands-on experience provides an invaluable resource with which to better understand the standards, knowledge, and practices needed to be successful in an SP department and on the CRCST exam. More information on the accumulation of these hours can be found in the following Requirements for the Examination: Full & Provisional Certification section.

Content & Composition of the Examination

The CRCST exam will test your proficiency in these areas:

1. Cleaning, Decontamination & Disinfection
2. Preparation & Packaging
3. Sterilization Process
4. Patient Care Equipment
5. Sterile Storage & Inventory Management
6. Documentation & Record Maintenance
7. Customer Relations

Each of these 7 knowledge domains is comprised of a series of sub-domains which further detail the type and amount of content covered in each section, as well as its weight on the certification exam. For information on the development of the CRCST exam please see page 32, and for the full CRCST exam Content Outline please visit myHSPA.org/certification.

The CRCST exam has a total of 150 multiple choice questions. This includes 125 scored and 25 unscored (pretest) questions. Pretest questions are delivered randomly throughout the exam and cannot be distinguished from those that are scored, so it is important that you answer all questions to the best of your ability. Result reports will not include your performance on pretest questions, nor will these pretest questions be used to determine your pass/fail status.

The exam is computer based and no writing instruments are needed (a paper and pencil version of the exam is not available.) Candidates have 3 hours to complete the exam. An optional 15- minute tutorial describing how to take the computer-based test precedes the exam and is also available online at myHSPA.org/prometric-online-sample-tutorial.html (the test clock does not begin until after the tutorial is ended.) While testing, questions can be marked for review and answered or changed later in the exam. For more information regarding the testing process please see the Examination Administration section on page 20.

CRCST CERTIFICATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is the CRCST for?

The CRCST is for technicians who are responsible for surgical instruments or devices in a healthcare facility.

How many questions are on the exam?

The CRCST exam has 150 multiple-choice questions, 125 of which are scored. You will have three hours to take the exam.

How much does the initial certification examination cost?

The certification examination costs \$140.

What is the timeframe to take the CRCST examination?

The examination is offered throughout the year. Once your application is approved, you have a 120-day period to schedule and sit for your exam.

Where is my closest Prometric testing center?

Visit <https://www.prometric.com/test-takers/search/hspa> to locate your nearest center.

How often do I need to renew my CRCST certification?

Recertification must successfully be completed annually.

Requirements for the Examination

As well as passing the certification exam, 400 hours of hands-on experience are required in order to obtain CRCST status. Because of the complex nature of the SP department, firsthand experience is essential to supplement an individual's understanding of SP knowledge and concepts and to illustrate their practical use. The following categories of experience, the tasks that comprise them, and the percentage of time required for each was calculated through a SP Job Task Analysis.

To apply for the CRCST examination you must satisfy the requirements of one of following options:

Option 1: Full Certification (Recommended)

Complete and provide a supervisor's documentation (on the exam application as indicated) of a minimum of 400 hours of hands-on experience in a Sterile Processing department, on a paid or volunteer basis, prior to testing. These hours must be broken down into the following areas of experience (as fully detailed on the exam application, available at myHSPA.org):

- Decontamination (120 Hours)
- Preparing & Packaging Instruments (120 Hours)
- Sterilization & Disinfection (96 Hours)
- Storage & Distribution (24 Hours)
- Quality Assurance Processes (24 Hours)
- Equipment (16 Hours)

Option 2: Provisional Certification

Complete and provide a supervisor's documentation of a minimum of 400 hours of hands-on experience in a Sterile Processing (SP) department, on a paid or volunteer basis, within 6 months of passing the certification exam. These hours must be broken down into the areas of experience outlined above (and as fully detailed on the exam application, available at myHSPA.org).

Documentation of the completed hours of hands on experience must be submitted to HSPA prior to the 6-month expiration date. Failure to submit these hours within this designated time frame will result in a forfeiture of your provisional CRCST certification and successful completion of a retake exam will be required. All applicable fees will apply to this retake examination.

A one-time, 2-month extension is available to those who are currently working or volunteering within a SP department and approaching the end of their 6 month provisional certification period. An extension request must be made prior to the expiration of your provisional status, by the supervisor of the department in which you are completing your hours. Extensions are not available to those who are not currently volunteering or employed within a SP department.

Please be aware that HSPA does not provide placement services; it is your responsibility to find a department in which to complete your hours.



CIS

CERTIFIED INSTRUMENT SPECIALIST

Technologies change, standards update, and instrumentation evolves. The learning curve for Sterile Processing professionals is steep and ever-changing, and the demands placed on them ever-growing. To help professionals stay abreast of rapidly changing medical technology, HSPA offers the Certified Instrument Specialist (CIS) exam, which tests knowledge and recognition of medical instruments, as well as reviewing instrumentation practice skills. The CIS exam will test your proficiency in the identification and cleaning of medical instruments; upon completing and passing the exam you will hold the designation of Certified Instrument Specialist (CIS).

Full CRCST certification must be obtained prior to taking the CIS exam, and must be kept current in order to maintain CIS certification.

CIS Certification Scope

The Certified Instrument Specialist (CIS) certification program is designed to recognize individuals who have demonstrated the experience, knowledge, and skills necessary to provide competent services as an advanced instrument specialist in the Sterile Processing department. CIS's are essential members of the healthcare team who are responsible for demonstrating the knowledge and recognition of medical instruments and instrument support system functions necessary to help ensure the safe and timely delivery of surgical instruments to patients.

To earn CIS certification, candidates are required to successfully demonstrate skills through the completion of hands-on work experience as well as the successful completion of an examination developed to measure the understanding of all instrument reprocessing functions (including instrument support system functions, instrumentation practice skills, knowledge and recognition of medical instruments, plus SP tech responsibilities.) CIS certificants are required to recertify annually through completion of continuing education requirements.

How to Prepare for the Examination

Those interested in becoming a CIS can prepare in one of the following ways:

- **Self-Study:** You may purchase reference materials and choose to study on your own to prepare for the CIS exam. For the current exam, you may utilize HSPA's *Instrument Resource Manual*, 1st Ed (2018) and either the *CS Technical Manual*, 8th Ed (2016) or the *SP Technical Manual*, 9th Ed (2023). These, along with Rick Schultz's *The World of Surgical Instruments* (2018), and ANSI/AAMI's *ST79* (2017), were used for reference in creating the CIS exam. You can order these publications through myHSPA.org and aornstandards.org
- **Work Experience:** You may take the exam based on your personal knowledge from experience in the field; it is not required that you take or pass a preparatory course nor study materials on your own. Applicants can apply directly to take the exam without purchasing study materials or enrolling in a course.

Please Note: HSPA's education department developed the material referenced above as an optional method to assist individuals in preparing for the CIS exam. The material was developed and produced independently from the Certification Council, which does not develop, require, approve, nor endorse any specific training materials.

CIS certification also requires the completion of 200 hours of hands-on experience in a SP department prior to testing. Hands-on experience provides an invaluable resource with which to better understand the standards, knowledge, and practices needed to be successful in a SP department and on the CIS exam. More information on the accumulation of these hours can be found in the following Requirements for the Examination section.

Content & Composition of the Examination

The CIS exam will test your proficiency in these areas:

1. Instrument Cleaning & Decontamination Processes
2. Instrument Identification
3. Instrument Inspection, Testing & Assembly
4. Preparation & Packaging
5. Sterilization & High-Level Disinfection (HLD)
6. Human Factors Impacting Instrument Systems

Each of these 6 knowledge domains is comprised of a series of sub-domains which further detail the type and amount of content covered in each section, as well as its weight on the certification exam. For information on the development of the CIS exam please see page 32, and for the full CIS exam Content Outline please visit myHSPA.org/certification.

The CIS exam has a total of 150 multiple choice questions. This includes 125 scored and 25 unscored (pretest) questions. Pretest questions are delivered randomly throughout the exam and cannot be distinguished from those that are scored, so it is important that you answer all questions to the best of your ability. Result reports will not include your performance on pretest questions, nor will these pretest questions be used to determine your pass/fail status.

The exam is computer based and no writing instruments are needed (a paper and pencil version of the exam is not available.) Candidates have 3 hours to complete the exam. An optional 15-minute tutorial describing how to take the computer-based test precedes the exam and is also available online at myHSPA.org/prometric-online-sample-tutorial.html (the test clock does not begin until after the tutorial is ended.) While testing, questions can be marked for review and answered or changed later in the exam. For more information regarding the testing process please see the Examination Administration section on page 20.

Requirements for the Examination

To apply for the CIS examination, current CRCST status is required. The application itself is available at myHSPA.org. Additionally, you must complete and provide documentation (on the exam application as indicated) of a minimum of 200 hours of hands-on experience in a SP department, on a paid or volunteer basis, prior to applying to take the exam. These hours must be broken down into the following areas of experience (as fully detailed on the exam application, available at myHSPA.org):

- Instrument Decontamination (92 hours)
- Instrument Assembly (92 hours)
- Instrument Information System Management (12 hours)
- Surgery Observation (4 hours)

CIS CERTIFICATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is the CIS for?

The CIS is for instrument specialists working in a healthcare setting.

How many questions are on the exam?

The CIS exam has 150 multiple-choice questions, 125 of which are scored. You will have three hours to take the exam.

How much does the initial certification examination cost?

The certification examination costs \$140.

What is the timeframe to take the CIS examination?

The examination is offered throughout the year. Once your application is approved, you have a 120-day period to schedule and sit for your exam.

Where is my closest Prometric testing center?

Visit <https://www.prometric.com/test-takers/search/hspa> to locate your nearest center.

How often do I need to renew my CIS certification?

Recertification must successfully be completed annually.

CER

CERTIFIED ENDOSCOPE REPROCESSOR

In recent years, few areas of sterile processing have seen such rapid, and necessary, change as endoscope reprocessing. To help insure that endoscope reprocessing professionals have the knowledge and skills necessary to handle this rapidly evolving specialty, HSPA has developed the Certified Endoscope Reprocessor (CER) exam.

The Certified Endoscope Reprocessor exam will test your proficiency in regard to the pre-cleaning, testing, decontamination, inspection, disinfection and/or sterilization, transport, and storage of endoscopes in accordance with industry standards, guidelines and regulations, and manufacturers' instructions for use.

CER Certification Scope

Certified Endoscope Reprocessor (CER) certification is designed to recognize individuals who have demonstrated the knowledge and skills necessary to pre-clean, test, decontaminate, inspect, disinfect and/or sterilize, transport, and store endoscopes in accordance with industry standards, guidelines and regulations, and manufacturers' instructions for use. CER's are crucial members of the healthcare team who are responsible for endoscope preparation, which is critical for patient safety in a healthcare facility.

To earn CER certification, candidates are required to successfully demonstrate skills through completion of hands-on work experience as well as successful completion of an examination developed to measure the understanding of endoscope care and handling and infection prevention. CER certificants are required to recertify annually through completion of continuing education requirements.

How to Prepare for the Examination

Those interested in becoming a CER can prepare in one of the following ways:

- **Self-Study:** You may purchase reference materials and choose to study on your own to prepare for the CER exam. HSPA's *Endoscope Reprocessing Manual*, 2nd Ed (2022) was used as a reference in creating the CER exam, along with ANSI/AAMI's *ST91* (2022), the CDC's *Essential Elements of a Reprocessing Program for Flexible Endoscopes* (2017), and the following articles by the Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates (SGNA): *Standard of Infection Prevention in the Gastroenterology Setting* (2019), and *Standards for Infection Prevention in Reprocessing Flexible Gastrointestinal Endoscopes* (2018), and *Guidelines for Use of High-Level Disinfectants & Sterilants in the Gastroenterology Setting* (2017).

You can order the HSPA and ANSI/AAMI publications through the myHSPA.org and download the SGNA articles at SGNA.org/Practice/Standards-Practice-Guidelines.

Please Note: HSPA's education department developed some of the materials referenced above as an optional method to assist individuals in preparing for the CER exam. They were developed and produced independently from the Certification Council, which does not develop, require, approve, or endorse any specific training materials.

- **Work Experience:** You may take the exam based on your personal knowledge from experience in the field; it is not required that you take or pass a preparatory course nor study materials on your own. Applicants can apply directly to take the exam without purchasing study materials or enrolling in a course.

CER certification also requires the completion of three months of hands-on experience reprocessing endoscopes prior to testing. Because of the complex nature of endoscopes, first-hand experience is essential to supplement an individual's understanding of the necessary knowledge and concepts of reprocessing, and to illustrate their practical

use. More information on the accumulation of these hours can be found in the following Requirements for the Examination section.

Content & Composition of the Examination

The CER exam will test your proficiency in these areas:

1. Microbiology and Infection Control
2. Endoscope Purpose, Design & Structure
3. Work Area Design
4. Endoscope Reprocessing Steps
5. Endoscope Handling, Transport & Storage
6. Endoscope Tracking, Repair & System Maintenance
7. Human Factors That Impact Endoscope Systems

Each of these 7 knowledge domains is comprised of a series of sub-domains which further detail the type and amount of content covered in each section, as well as its weight on the certification exam. For information on the development of the CER exam please see page 32, and for the full CER exam Content Outline please visit myHSPA.org

The CER exam has a total of 150 multiple choice questions. This includes 125 scored and 25 unscored (pretest) questions. Pretest questions are delivered randomly throughout the exam and cannot be distinguished from those that are scored, so it is important that you answer all questions to the best of your ability. Result reports will not include your performance on pretest questions, nor will these pretest questions be used to determine your pass/fail status.

The exam is computer based and no writing instruments are needed (a paper and pencil version of the exam is not available.) Candidates have 3 hours to complete the exam. An optional 15- minute tutorial describing how to take the computer-based test precedes the exam and is also available online at myHSPA.org/prometric-online-sample-tutorial.html (the test clock does not begin until after the tutorial is ended.) While testing, questions can be marked for review and answered or changed later in the exam. For more information regarding the testing process please see the Examination Administration section on page 20.

Requirements for the Examination

As well as passing the certification exam, you must complete and provide documentation (on the exam application as indicated) of a minimum of three months of hands-on experience prior to applying to take the exam. These hours must include the following areas of experience (as also detailed on the exam application, available at myHSPA.org).

CER CERTIFICATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is the CER for?

The CER is for individuals who are responsible for processing and preparing endoscopes for use in healthcare facilities.

How many questions are on the exam?

The CER exam has 150 multiple-choice questions, 125 of which are scored. You will have three hours to take the exam.

How much does the initial certification examination cost?

The certification examination costs \$140.

What is the timeframe to take the CIS examination?

The examination is offered throughout the year. Once your application is approved, you have a 120-day period to schedule and sit for your exam.

Where is my closest Prometric testing center?

Visit <https://www.prometric.com/test-takers/search/hspa> to locate your nearest center.

How often do I need to renew my CIS certification?

Recertification must successfully be completed annually.

CHL

CERTIFIED HEALTHCARE LEADER

org/certification): pre-cleaning, testing, decontaminating, inspecting, disinfecting and/or sterilizing, transporting, and storing endoscopes.

A safe, efficient, quality-driven Sterile Processing department cannot be maintained without a skilled and knowledgeable leader at the helm. Those in SP leadership positions have the power – and the responsibility – to ensure that their department is poised to tackle that critical goal effectively, consistently, and responsibly.

The Certified Healthcare Leader exam will test your proficiency in management and supervisory skills, and upon completing and passing the exam you will hold the designation of Certified Healthcare Leader (CHL).

Full CRCST certification must be obtained prior to taking the CHL exam, and must be kept current in order to maintain your CHL certification.

CHL Certification Scope

The Certified Healthcare Leader (CHL) program is designed to recognize individuals who have demonstrated the management and supervisory skills necessary to provide effective leadership in the Sterile Processing department. CHL's are indispensable members of the healthcare team who are responsible for managing the daily operations of the Sterile Processing department including standards and regulation compliance, finance, reporting, staffing, human resource management, and inter- and intra-departmental communications.

To earn CHL certification, candidates are required to demonstrate skills through the successful completion of an examination developed to measure the understanding of general sterile processing, infection prevention, and management topics. CHL certificants are required to recertify annually through completion of continuing education requirements.

How to Prepare for the Examination

Those interested in becoming a Certified Healthcare Leader (CHL) can prepare in one of the following ways:

- **Distance Learning Course:** Purdue University offers a correspondence course by mail designed to help prepare individuals for the CHL exam. You can find out more about the course by calling Purdue at 800.830.0269 or visiting their website distance.purdue.edu/training/cssp/
Please Note: Courses are preparation for the exam; passing a course does not equate to Certification.
- **Self Study:** You may purchase reference materials and choose to study on your own to prepare for the CHL exam. For the current exam, you may utilize HSPA's *CS Leadership Manual* 3rd Ed (2020) and either the *CS Technical Manual*, 8th Ed (2016) or the *SP Technical Manual*, 9th Ed (2023). These, along with ANSI/AAMI's *ST79* (2017) and AORN's *Guidelines for Perioperative Practice* (2023) were used for reference in creating the CHL exam. You can order these publications through myHSPA.org and aornstandards.org

Please Note: HSPA's education department developed the materials referenced above as an optional method to assist individuals in preparing for the CHL exam. The materials were developed and produced independently from the Certification Council, which does not develop, require, approve, or endorse any specific training materials.
- **Work Experience:** You may take the exam based on your personal knowledge from experience in the field; it is not required that you take or pass a preparatory course nor study materials on your own. Applicants can apply directly to take the exam without purchasing study materials or enrolling in a course.

Content & Composition of the Examination

The CHL exam will test your proficiency in these areas:

1. Planning and Decision Making
2. Organizing
3. Leading
4. Controlling

Each of these four knowledge domains is comprised of a series of sub-domains which further detail the type and amount of content covered in each section, as well as its weight on the certification exam. For information on the development of the CHL exam please see page 32 and for the full CHL exam Content Outline please visit myHSPA.org

The CHL exam has a total of 150 multiple choice questions. This includes 125 scored and 25 unscored (pretest) questions. Pretest questions are delivered randomly throughout the exam and cannot be distinguished from those that are scored, so it is important that you answer all questions to the best of your ability. Result reports will not include your performance on pretest questions, nor will these pretest questions be used to determine your pass/fail status.

The exam is computer based and no writing instruments are needed (a paper and pencil version of the exam is not available.) Candidates have 3 hours to complete the exam. An optional 15- minute tutorial describing how to take the computer-based test precedes the exam and is also available online at myHSPA.org/prometric-online-sample-tutorial.html (the test clock does not begin until after the tutorial is ended.) While testing, questions can be marked for review and answered or changed later in the exam. For more information regarding the testing process please see the Examination Administration section on page 20.

Requirements for the Examination

To apply for the CHL examination current CRCST status is required. The application itself is available at myHSPA.org/certification.

CHL CERTIFICATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is the CHL for?

The CHL is for individuals responsible for managing the daily operations of a Sterile Processing department.

How many questions are on the exam?

The CHL exam has 150 multiple-choice questions, 125 of which are scored. You will have three hours to take the exam.

How much does the initial certification examination cost?

The certification examination costs \$140.

What is the timeframe to take the CRCST examination?

The examination is offered throughout the year. Once your application is approved, you have a 120-day period to schedule and sit for your exam.

Where is my closest Prometric testing center?

Visit <https://www.prometric.com/test-takers/search/hspa> to locate your nearest center.

How often do I need to renew my CRCST certification?

Recertification must successfully be completed annually.

CCSVP

CERTIFIED CENTRAL SERVICE VENDOR PARTNER

As a vendor, it can take a long time to set an appointment with a Sterile Processing (SP) management team, and you are lucky to receive a few precious minutes of their undivided attention. Having in-depth knowledge of SP operations, procedures, and terminology can be your key to establishing a professional link with the department's decision-makers. One of the best ways to improve your SP knowledge is to become a Certified Central Service Vendor Partner (CCSVP).

Completing the CCSVP course and obtaining your certification will help to open doors for you in SP. The management team will know that as a Certified Vendor you are well versed in the departmental operations and the difficulties their staff encounter daily. The CCSVP course will give you an inside look at SP, building your knowledge from decontamination all the way to the key decision-making protocols. You will achieve a deeper level of connection and credibility with your customers. When you are CCSVP certified, you are more than a salesperson. You are a solution provider.

CCSVP Certification Scope

The Certified Central Service Vendor Partner (CCSVP) certification program is designed to recognize vendors who have demonstrated knowledge of Sterile Processing concepts and processes including the decontamination, inspection, assembly, packaging, and sterilization of reusable surgical instruments.

To earn CCSVP certification, candidates are required to successfully demonstrate knowledge through the completion of an online course, specific Sterile Processing department observations, and successful completion of an examination developed to measure the understanding of general sterile processing and infection prevention topics. CCSVP's are required to recertify annually through completion of continuing education requirements.

How to Prepare for the Examination

To study for the CCSVP certification, the following course is required:

- **Online Course:** HSPA offers an online course that is designed to prepare vendors for the CCSVP exam. You can find out more about the course by calling 800.962.8274 or by visiting myHSPA.org

Please Note: The course is preparation for the exam; passing the course does not equate to Certification.

Content & Composition of the Examination

The CCSVP exam will test your proficiency in these areas:

- Introduction to the Central Service Department
- SP Processes: Decontamination
- SP Processes: Assembly & Packaging
- SP Processes: Sterilization
- Inventory Management/Distribution Systems & Vendor Relationships
- The Impact of Regulations & Standards on SP

The exam is computer based, and no writing instruments are needed (a paper and pencil version of the exam is not available.) The test is comprised of 150 multiple choice questions and you will have 2.25 hours to complete the exam. Questions can be marked for review and answered or changed later in the exam. A 15 minute tutorial describing how to take the exam on the computer precedes the test and is also available online by visiting myHSPA.org/prometric-online-sample-tutorial.html. For more information regarding the testing process please see the Examination Administration section on page 20.

Requirements for the Examination

To sit for the CCSVP examination two rounds of clinical observation are required. You must complete and provide documentation (on the exam application as indicated) of a minimum of 32 hours of observation prior to applying to take the exam. The hours must be split equally between the two healthcare facilities and broken down into the following areas of experience at each (as fully detailed on the exam application, available at myHSPA.org/certification):

- Decontamination (5 Hours)
- Inspection, Assembly, and Packaging (5 Hours)
- Sterilization (4 Hours)
- Sterile Storage & Distribution Systems (2 Hours)

All hours of observation must be completed in full before applying to take the exam. Please Note: The cost of the online CCSVP course includes one attempt at the CCSVP certification exam. Any necessary retake exams would be subject to the full exam fee of \$140 USD.

CCSVP CERTIFICATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is the CCSVP for?

The CCSVP is for vendor representatives who sell services or products to SP departments.

How many questions are on the exam?

The CCSVP exam has 150 multiple-choice questions. You will have two and one-quarter hours to complete the exam.

How much does the initial certification examination cost?

The certification course and initial examination costs \$325.

What is the timeframe to take the CCSVP examination?

The examination is offered throughout the year. Once your application is approved, you have a 120-day period to schedule and sit for your exam.

Where is my closest Prometric testing center?

Visit <https://www.prometric.com/test-takers/search/hspa> to locate your nearest center.

How often do I need to renew my CCSVP certification?

Recertification must successfully be completed annually.

EXAM & TESTING PROCESS

COMPLETING & PROCESSING EXAM APPLICATIONS

HSPA has contracted with the Prometric Testing Company to provide our certification exams worldwide. Exam appointments cannot be made with the testing company without first submitting an application and payment to HSPA and then receiving your scheduling information. Applications must be submitted to HSPA by mail, fax or online. Once received, your application will be reviewed to determine completion of all eligibility requirements. You will be notified if any documentation or information is missing that requires you to resubmit your application.

The exam application process works like this:

- **Make sure you have the appropriate and most current application form.**

Each HSPA certification exam has its own specific application, valid only for that particular examination. Carefully review the eligibility requirements for your exam (as detailed on pages 5- 10) to ensure that you meet all the requirements as specified. An application and fee must be submitted every time you wish to sit for a certification test.

- **HSPA does not impose any deadline dates for the submission of applications.**

Complete and submit an application only when you are ready to be granted a 120 day testing eligibility. No testing eligibility extensions are available, so please do not submit your application until you are ready to take the certification exam.

- **All sections of the application must be completed (unless otherwise specified.)**

Be sure to clearly print all information on the application. Illegible or cursive writing will lead to delays and may result in an inability to process your request to take an exam. Any mandatory sections submitted as blank or missing information will result in your application being returned to you.

- **Payment must be rendered, in full, at the time of the submission of your application.**

The full exam fee is required for every exam taken (including any retake attempts.) Exam applications received without payment cannot be processed and will be returned.

If paying by credit/debit card, you may scan and email (certification@myHSPA.org), fax (1.312.440.9474), or mail your completed application with payment information. If paying by check or money order, you must mail your completed application with payment to the following address **(do not send cash)**:

HSPA
55 W Wacker Dr, Suite 501
Chicago, IL 60601
Attn: Examinations

Please Note: All Canadian and other non-US payments must be made by either credit/debit card or money order made out in US funds (HSPA cannot accept checks drawn on non-US currencies).

- **Once your application and payment have been received in our office, processing will take approximately 3-4 weeks.**

Information on scheduling your exam, available testing dates and locations, and the testing process details will be emailed to the address provided on the application. You may also request the information be sent to you via USPS. Email notifications will be sent within 24 hours of application processing. Scheduling information cannot be given by phone.

- **Once you receive your scheduling letter or email it is your responsibility to schedule your exam.**

Information will be provided for you to schedule your exam, online or by phone, at the nearest Prometric testing site. Further, it is your responsibility to arrange your own transportation to/from the testing site, arrive on time, and provide acceptable forms of identification. For more information regarding the testing process please see the Examination Administration section on page 20.

EXAM & TESTING PROCESS

Verification of Examination Requirements

If hands-on experience (CRCST, CIS, and CER) or clinical observation (CCSVP) is required for your examination then documentation of that experience must be provided on the exam application as indicated. No other documentation is necessary or acceptable.

The sections of the application documenting your experience must be completed by the department's supervisor who directly oversaw your work, and must be accrued within the past 3 (CER) or 5 (CRCST, CIS, CCSVP) years. An individual in a leadership role within the department **cannot** document their own experience. They are still required to have their immediate supervisor complete all required documentation.

Provided they are in a position above your own then experience hours can be documented by:

- Lead Techs, Coordinators, or Supervisors
- Managers, Chiefs, Directors, or Administrators
- Hospital-Based Educators or Trainers

Hours **cannot** be documented by technicians or private instructors. In order to verify experience, all contact information provided for the manager or supervisor documenting your hours must be current or your application will be rejected.

Hands-on hours can be accumulated on a paid or volunteer basis and you need not be currently employed or volunteering with a facility in order to test. All hours must be completed prior to testing, with the exception of those testing provisionally for the CRCST exam (see the CRCST Requirements for the Examination: Full & Provisional Certification section on page 6).

Applications requiring hands-on experience may be subject to verification before processing. Once selected for verification, an application cannot be processed further until the supervisor documenting the applicant's hours of experience can be contacted and the experience confirmed. If the listed supervisor cannot be reached for confirmation, the application will be returned unprocessed. If the supervisor is reached but refutes the information submitted in any way, the application will be sent to the Certification Council for further investigation and review (see the following Falsified & Misleading Application Documentation section.) Applicants who have submitted a completed application and who are notified that they do not meet the eligibility requirements may appeal this decision by sending a written notice of the appeal to the Certification Council within 30 days of the time stamp on the eligibility decision. Appeals that cannot be resolved to the applicant's satisfaction will be forwarded by the Director of Certification to the Council for review along with any relevant information from the initial review of the application. Written notice of the

final decision will be sent to the applicant within 30 days of the review. The decision of the Certification Council will be final.

Falsified & Misleading Application Documentation

All information provided by and about you on the exam application (and any other subsequent forms submitted in relation to the application) must be accurate and correct. If any information provided on an exam application or any other document relating to your certification is determined to be false or purposefully misleading, HSPA can reject your application and disqualify you from future testing. The HSPA Certification Council will review all such instances and determine the appropriate recourse, including the invalidation of test results, the revocation of any certifications which have been granted, and/or the denial of recertification.

Refunds & Forfeiture of Exam Fees

All requests for refunds must be made within 30 days of the start of your testing eligibility and before an exam appointment has been made.

Failure to schedule and take an exam within the allotted 120-day testing eligibility, missing or arriving late for an appointment, or presenting ID that is unacceptable, expired, or does not match your registered name (as provided on your exam application), will prohibit you from testing and effectively end your exam eligibility period. Your exam fee will be forfeited and you will not be eligible for any refund. The application process must be repeated and full payment submitted, when you are ready to have a new test eligibility granted.

Change of Name and/or Address

Any name changes due to marriage, divorce, or other reasons, as well as any corrections needed due to typos/misspellings, must be made with HSPA before scheduling an exam. Legal name changes must be accompanied by a photocopy of a marriage license, divorce decree, or other court order. Documentation may be submitted using the online form found at myHSPA.org, submitted by email to certification@myHSPA.org, faxed to 312.440.9474, or mailed to HSPA, 55 W Wacker Dr, Suite 501, Chicago, IL 60601. Failure to change or correct your name prior to testing may result in an inability to test and a forfeiture of all exam fees.

If your address changes or needs corrected from what appears on your scheduling information please contact HSPA prior to your test date by calling 800.962.8274 or emailing certification@myHSPA.org

All changes must be made directly with HSPA, name and/or address changes cannot be made at the test center.

EXAM & TESTING PROCESS

Non-Disclosure Agreement

All HSPA examinations are confidential and proprietary. They are made available to you, the examinee, solely for the purpose of becoming certified in the technical area referenced in the title of the exam. You are expressly prohibited from recording, copying, reproducing, disclosing, publishing, or transmitting this examination, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, verbal or written, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose, without the express written permission of HSPA.

Use of Personal Information

The information provided to HSPA on your exam application, and in regard to your certification exam, will be used in accordance of HSPA's **Confidentiality Policy** on page 30. If you request and are granted special testing accommodations (see the following **Applicants with a Disability** section) HSPA will disclose personal information to third parties as necessary to administer your examination. This may include such information as your disability status, medical condition, or any political, religious, or philosophical beliefs which require accommodation.

Applicants with a Disability

Please notify HSPA in writing at the time of application if you wish to request testing accommodations.

In accordance with the "Americans with Disabilities Act" (ADA), HSPA will arrange to provide special testing accommodations for those individuals with a condition or disability as defined under the ADA. Accommodations will be provided at a designated testing center at no additional cost to the applicant. If you believe that you qualify for an accommodation pursuant to the ADA, the Special Accommodations Request form can be found online at myHSPA.org

Documentation from an appropriate professional who has made an assessment of the applicant's condition or disability must be included with the form and must identify the condition or disability and the need for the requested accommodation.

Americans with Disabilities Act Policy Statement

HSPA is committed to complying with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (the "ADA, as amended"). It is HSPA's policy not to discriminate against any qualified applicant with regard to any term or condition associated with any examination administered by HSPA. Consistent with this policy, HSPA will offer and conduct all examinations in a place and a manner in compliance with the ADA, as amended, to assure accessibility to qualified

persons with disabilities. HSPA also will provide a reasonable accommodation to a qualified person with a disability, as defined by the ADA, as amended, who has made HSPA aware of his/her disability, provided that the accommodation does not fundamentally alter the measurement of the skills or knowledge associated with the examination and does not constitute an undue hardship on HSPA.

HSPA also will not discriminate against any person because of his/her known association or relationship with any person with a known or perceived disability.

HSPA encourages any examination applicant with a disability to come forward and request a reasonable accommodation. Any examination applicant with a disability who believes he/she needs a reasonable accommodation to participate in the examination should contact the HSPA Exams Department.

Procedure for Requesting an Accommodation

Upon receipt of a request for an accommodation, HSPA's Exams Department will contact the examination applicant, or his/her authorized personal representative, to discuss and identify the precise limitations resulting from the disability and the possible accommodation that HSPA might provide to help overcome those limitations.

The determination regarding what might be a reasonable accommodation for an applicant claiming to have a disability in order to assure equal and fair access to the examination being administered will be made on a case-by-case basis. HSPA will determine the feasibility of any accommodation, including the specific accommodation requested by the applicant, taking into account all relevant circumstances including, but not limited to: the nature of the claimed disability; the nature and cost of the accommodation; HSPA's overall financial resources and organization; and the accommodation's impact on certification operations and security. Based upon the circumstances of the case, HSPA may provide: appropriate auxiliary aids or services for an applicant with a sensory, manual, or speaking impairment; and/or modifications to the manner in which the test is administered. HSPA will seek to determine an accommodation that best ensures that the test is administered: to reflect the aptitude, achievement level, or whatever other factor the examination purports to measure, rather than the disability of an applicant; to assure accessibility in the facility where the examination is administered.

HSPA will inform the applicant of its decision pertaining to the accommodation request. If the accommodation request is denied, the applicant may appeal the decision by submitting a written statement to HSPA's Certification Council explaining the reasons for the request. If the request on appeal is denied, that decision is final.

EXAM & TESTING PROCESS

Procedure for Reporting Discrimination

An applicant who has questions regarding this policy or believes that he/she has been discriminated against based upon a disability should notify HSPA's Certification Council. All such inquiries or complaints will be treated as confidential to the extent permissible by law.

SCHEDULING YOUR EXAM

All HSPA certification exams are administered by the Prometric Testing Company. Once your exam application has been received and processed by HSPA you will be sent the information necessary to schedule an exam date with Prometric, either by phone or online.

When you receive your scheduling letter/email verify all information for accuracy. If any changes need to be made to your name they must be done before scheduling an appointment. Your first and last name(s) as listed on your letter/email must match exactly the name presented on your identification at the testing center. Middle names/initials are not important and will not be checked. For example:

If the Name on Your ID is: Then it Should Appear as:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| • John A. Doe | • John Doe |
| • Jane B. Doe-Smith | • Jane Doe-Smith |
| • John C. Doe Jones | • John Doe Jones |
| • Jane Ann D. Doe | • Jane Ann Doe |
| • John E. Doe Jr | • John Doe Jr |
| • J. Francine Doe | • J. Francine Doe |

You may schedule an appointment to take the examination at your convenience any day the testing center is open (typically at least 6 days a week) within your 120-day testing eligibility. **Please be aware that no extensions will be granted, regardless of circumstance.**

You must schedule an exam a minimum of 48 hours prior to your desired test time. Seating is available on a first come, first served basis, and it is strongly recommended to schedule all appointments at least 45 days earlier than your eligibility expiration. If you wait to schedule until the end of your eligibility you may face seating limitations and even run the risk of your local center not having any openings, thereby forfeiting your exam fee.

A confirmation letter can be printed or emailed from the Prometric website after you make your appointment. The confirmation letter is for your records and is not required in order to take the examination. Applicants are solely responsible for making and keeping their scheduled examination appointment date. Your exam appointment can be verified via Prometric's website or toll free number.

Rescheduling Your Appointment

An appointment can be rescheduled no later than noon EST, two (2) business days in advance of your test date. (For example: an appointment on Wednesday cannot be rescheduled after 12:00 noon EST on Monday; an appointment on Saturday, Sunday, or Monday cannot be rescheduled after 12:00 noon EST on Thursday.)

Appointments can be rescheduled online (available 24 hours a day) or by phone (available Mon-Fri, 9am to 5pm EST.) In order to reschedule an exam you will need your Prometric confirmation number. **Any additional fees are paid directly to Prometric at the time of rescheduling.**

Missed Exams

Candidates who fail to show for a scheduled exam will be considered a No-Show and will forfeit their application and payment. A new application and additional exam fee must then be submitted to HSPA before a new appointment can be scheduled.

Candidates who arrive later than their scheduled exam start time are subject to availability, and may not be able to take their exam. They will then be considered a No-Show and required to reapply and repay for a new testing eligibility.

Candidates who appear at the testing center without valid identification (see Examination Administration, page 20) will not be permitted to test. Likewise, candidates whose first and last names, as listed on their identification, do not match the information they registered with will not be permitted to test. If you are unable to test due to invalid identification you will then be required to reapply and pay the full fee for another examination period.

Reapplying for Examination

If for any reason you need to retake an exam you may do so by submitting a retake application (available at myHSPA.org/certification and sent with your exam results) and full exam fee. For more information please see the Retesting & Maximum Number of Exam Attempts section on page 23.

EXAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION

All HSPA certification exams are administered exclusively through Prometric Testing, the global leader in technology enabled testing and assessment services for information technology certification, academic admissions, and professional licensure and certifications. Prometric has a global network of site-based testing facilities, giving convenient access, as well as a wide selection of times and dates for testing, to test takers anywhere in the world. With more than 20 years of experience, Prometric has unrivaled reach and industry experience. Each year, Prometric delivers an average of 10 million exams for more than 400 organizations around the world. Of those more than 65 of the world's leading healthcare organizations trust Prometric to provide secure, reliable testing and assessment solutions on their behalf. The partnership between HSPA and Prometric offers the only secure, daily examination process within the Sterile Processing field.

For information regarding international testing and a list of international locations please visit www.prometric.com/hspa.

What to Bring to the Test Center

When arriving to take your exam, the Prometric representative on site will ask for **one** form of ID showing both your current photo and signature. Any form of ID presented must be current and non-expired, and **exactly** match the first and last name(s) provided on your application and appearing on your scheduling letter. Any typos/misspellings or change of name(s) due to marriage, divorce, or other reasons must be made with HSPA prior to scheduling an exam.

Make sure to bring at least one form of identification from the following **List of Acceptable Identification** (all of which must have **both a current photo and signature**):

- Non-expired Driver's License
- Non-expired State/Federal Government ID Card
- Non-expired Passport
- Non-expired Employee ID Card
- Non-expired Military ID card
- Non-expired Student ID card

All other forms of identification (credit cards, check cashing cards, voter registration cards, social security cards, etc.) are not valid, and if presented will not be accepted. Likewise, the above acceptable identifications will not be accepted if they are expired or do not contain your photo, signature and matching name.

Failure to have the necessary identification on site for scheduled appointments, or if the photo identification shown does not match **exactly** to the records submitted

from your original application (or updates made before an exam was scheduled), will prohibit you from sitting for the exam, forfeiting the application and fees. The application process will then have to be repeated for further certification attempts including the submission of another full exam fee.

Please remember, failure to schedule and take an exam within the allotted 120 day window, missing or arriving late for an appointment, or presenting ID that is unacceptable, expired, or does not match your registered name, will all prohibit you from testing and effectively end your exam eligibility period. Your exam fee will be forfeited and the application process must be repeated.

Personal & Prohibited Items

Wear comfortable, layered clothing as test center temperatures may vary. Any clothing or jewelry items allowed to be worn in the test room must remain on your person at all times. Removed clothing or jewelry items must be stored in your locker. If you are noise sensitive, earplugs or noise-blocking headphones may be available at the testing center (ask the test administrator for a pair.)

No personal belongings are allowed into the testing lab. A private locker will be provided for you in which to store your personal effects including, but not limited to: outerwear, hats, food, drinks, purses, wallets, briefcases, notebooks, pagers, cell phones, keys, coins, recording devices, and photographic equipment. You are not permitted to bring anything but your ID and locker key into the testing lab. Calculators will not be necessary, but writing material will be provided to you for any notes you wish to make while testing. All writing material is collected at the end of your exam and may not be removed from the testing center.

While you are welcome to take as many breaks as you wish while testing, the clock will keep running on your exam and you cannot access any cell phones, notes, or study materials, nor leave the testing facility.

Taking the Test

You must arrive for your test a minimum of 30 minutes prior to your scheduled start time. Candidates who arrive later than their scheduled exam start time, for any reason, are subject to availability and may not be able to take the exam, resulting in a No-Show, thereby forfeiting the exam fee. If someone else is transporting you to the testing center please be aware that persons not scheduled to take a test are not permitted to wait in the test center.

You will be given a list of test center rules and regulations and be asked to check all personal belongings in a private locker. You must keep your ID and locker key with you at all

EXAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

times, and nothing else. If you need access to an item stored in your locker during a break, such as food or medicine, you must inform the test proctor before you retrieve the item. You are not allowed to access any prohibited items, such as cell phones, notes, or study materials.

Prior to every entry to the testing lab you will be scanned with a metal detector wand and asked to empty and turn your pockets inside out to confirm that you have no prohibited items. If you refuse, you cannot test. You will be continuously monitored by video, physical walk-throughs, and the observation window during your test. All testing sessions are video and audio recorded.

You may take unscheduled breaks at any time during your exam, but the test clock will continue to run. Repeated or lengthy departures from the test room will be reported by the test center administrator.

Once seated in the testing lab the computer will have a screen asking you to verify that you are the person whose name is listed. Click "Yes" to launch the test, unless you are not the person whose name appears. Clicking "No" will end the exam.

A 15 minute tutorial describing how to take the computer based exam precedes the test and is also available online at myHSPA.org Time spent reviewing the tutorial does not affect the allotted time for the actual examination. When finished with the tutorial click "End" to launch your exam.

All questions are multiple choice and can be marked for review and returned to later. You can move forward and backward through the exam using the "Previous" and "Next" buttons. You can select a question to return to later with the "Mark" button and return to marked or unmarked questions at any time during the exam. When you are completely finished you can conclude the exam by selecting "End". Once you have ended the exam it cannot be re-launched, so please be sure you are finished before doing so.

A brief, optional survey follows the exam after which you will receive a pass/fail notification (both on screen and from the test administrator.)

Cancellation of Examinations Due to Bad Weather or Other Emergencies

Sometimes unforeseen circumstances, such as bad weather, electrical failure, or other emergencies, may require a test center to unexpectedly close. Should this happen, Prometric will make every effort to contact you in advance of your appointment. Prometric will try contacting you by e-mail and by telephone, so please make sure that the

contact information you provide during the scheduling and registration process is accurate. You may also check for test site closures by calling Prometric.

Should your test center unexpectedly close for any reason, you will be contacted by the Prometric rescheduling department within 48-72 hours to reschedule your appointment.

If a testing center is open for testing and you choose not to appear for your appointment, your fee will be forfeited. You must then reapply for your examination and pay another full examination fee.

Cheating & Misconduct

If a Prometric test proctor suspects or determines that you have engaged in inappropriate conduct during the examination (such as, but not limited to, giving or obtaining unauthorized information or aid; accessing cell phones, notes, or study materials; unauthorized exiting of the testing facility; attempting to test for someone else; removing or attempting to remove note paper from the testing center; abusive or inappropriate behavior towards a test center employee or fellow test taker; etc) your examination session can be terminated and you will be unable to complete your examination. Any and all suspicious behavior will be reported to HSPA and reviewed by the Certification Council.

Candidates are expressly prohibited from recording, copying, reproducing, disclosing, publishing, or transmitting any HSPA examination, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, verbal or written, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose. Anyone caught or suspected of violating these guidelines will be reported to HSPA and reviewed by the Certification Council.

The HSPA Certification Council will review all such instances of misconduct, cheating, or alleged cheating. As described in the disciplinary policy, the Certification Council will determine the appropriate recourse, up to and including the invalidation of the results of your examination, the revocation of any certifications which have been granted, and/or your temporary or permanent disqualification from future testing with HSPA.

EXAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Upon completion of your exam you will be notified at the test center whether you have passed. Upon passing your exam a certification package, containing your new certification documents, will be mailed to you within two weeks. If you do not pass, an exam result report, along with information on retesting, will be mailed to you within a week. For security purposes test results cannot be given by email or phone.

Upon becoming certified, and with every annual renewal, you will be issued a certificate for each certification you hold. The certificate(s) will detail the scope and dates of your certification(s), and can be verified online at <https://verify.myHSPA.org>

Determination of a Passing Score

The CRCST, CIS, CER, and CHL exams each have a total of 150 multiple choice questions. Each examination includes 125 scored (operational) questions and 25 unscored (pretest) questions. The pretest questions cannot be distinguished from those that are scored, so it is important that you answer all questions to the best of your ability. When an exam is scored, candidates are awarded one point for every correct answer and zero points for incorrect answers to produce a raw score. Your pass/fail status is determined by the total number of scored questions you answer correctly. (Pretest questions are analyzed for statistical and psychometric performance prior to their use as operational questions and are not used for scoring purposes.)

The passing points for the CRCST, CIS, CER, and CHL exams were established using a criterion-reference technique. The methodology used to set the minimum passing scores for each exam was the Angoff procedure, supplemented by the Beuk Relative-Absolute Compromise method. This universally accepted psychometric procedure uses content experts to estimate the passing probability of each question on the examination. These estimates and difficulty predictions are analyzed by psychometricians to provide a recommended passing point to HSPA's Certification Council for approval.

CRCST, CIS, CER & CHL Examination Results

After you have finished an exam and completed the survey evaluating your testing experience, you will receive an on-screen Pass/Fail notification for the CRCST, CIS, CER, and CHL. Within an hour of completing the test, this notification will also be emailed to the address you provided to the testing company when scheduling your appointment.

If you achieve a passing result, within two weeks HSPA will mail you a passing notification, certificate, and information on maintaining your new certification. If you do not achieve a passing result, HSPA will mail you a result report and retake information. Result reports include an overview of each of an exam's knowledge domains. These section scores will show your performance as "At or Above", "Below", or "Well Below" in order to indicate your areas of strength and weakness.

For more information regarding what areas each of the section scores cover please see the CRCST, CIS, CER, and CHL Content & Composition sections on pages 4-15, and the Exam Content Outlines, available online at myHSPA.org/certification.

Please Note: Section score diagnostic information on a failing result report should be interpreted with caution. The knowledge domain area scores are not used to determine Pass/Fail decision outcomes; they are only provided to offer a general indication regarding your performance in each knowledge domain. The examination is designed to provide a consistent and precise determination of a candidate's overall performance and is not designed to provide complete information regarding a candidate's performance in each knowledge domain.

CCSVP Examination Results

The CCSVP exam has a total of 150 multiple choice questions, all of which are scored (operational.) When an exam is scored, candidates are awarded one point for every correct answer and zero points for incorrect answers to produce a raw score. Your pass/fail status is determined by the total number of scored questions you answer correctly.

After you have finished the CCSVP exam and completed the survey evaluating your testing experience, you will receive an on-screen Pass/Fail notification. Within an hour of completing the test, this notification will also be emailed to the address you provided to the testing company when scheduling your appointment.

If you achieve a passing result on the CCSVP exam you will receive a passing notification, certificate, and information on maintaining your new certification. If you do not achieve a passing result, HSPA will mail you a result report, showing the percentage of questions you answered correctly, and retake information.

For more information regarding what areas the CCSVP exam covers, please see the CCSVP Content & Composition section on page 14.

EXAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Duplicate Examination Result Reports

Current certificants may request a duplicate Examination Result Report within 7 years of their original test date. Non-certified or lapsed certificants may request a duplicate report within 3 years of their original test date.

Re-Testing

An applicant who fails any HSPA exam must wait a minimum of 6 weeks before being allowed to retest. The applicant may submit a retake application as soon after testing as they wish, but their eligibility will begin 6 weeks after their last exam date.

The rationale for this waiting period is to ensure that there are a sufficient number of test forms available on an annual basis so that candidates will not be exposed to any given form more than twice before it is retired. HSPA updates examination forms annually.

When you are ready to test again simply submit the retake application provided with your exam score report, along with the \$125 exam fee.

Examination Irregularities

If you believe one or more items on the test to be incorrect or in some way invalid, a written/electronic appeal must be submitted within 30 days of taking the examination. You must provide as much detail as you remember about the item(s) in question and your reason for challenging their accuracy.

All item appeals will be reviewed by the HSPA Certification Council. A thorough review of the item(s) in question will be conducted and a written synopsis of the board's findings will be issued. If one or more items are found to be in any way inaccurate they will be corrected or replaced on the certification exam and your score will be adjusted accordingly.

Verification of Computer Examination Results

If you do not achieve a passing score on your exam you may request that your test be re-graded to verify the reported results. However, you should note that every Prometric record is scored twice before releasing the results. Therefore, the likelihood of misscoring is remote. Requests must be made within 30 days of taking the examination and accompanied by a \$50 processing fee, payable directly to the Prometric testing company.

Appeals of Examination Results

Candidates who fail the exam may file an appeal of exam results based on: examination procedures that fail to comply with the Certification Council's established policies or alleged testing conditions severe enough to cause a major and significant disruption of the examination process.

Appeals must be made in writing within 30 days of the date on the individual's score results. Appeals that are not resolved by the Director of Certification to the candidate's satisfaction will be forward to the Certification Council for review along with any other relevant information. Written notice of the final decision will be sent to the applicant within 30 days of the review. The decision of the Certification Council will be final.

Release of Scores to Program Officials

HSPA will only release exam results directly to you, in written format, at the home address provided on your exam application. Scores are not available orally or electronically, and can take up to two weeks to be delivered. Exam scheduling information, results, and pass/fail notifications will not be provided to 3rd parties without your prior express written consent. Upon request HSPA will verify an individual's current certification status (including their certification effective and expiration dates) to any inquiring party, but will not release further details of your examination(s), including exam scores or the number of exam attempts, without your consent. For more information please see HSPA's Confidentiality Policy on page 30.

EXAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION

Certification maintenance is required for all HSPA certification holders in order to promote ongoing learning and education. Thanks to frequent advances in medicine and instrumentation, the Sterile Processing profession, like most medical fields, is rapidly evolving. As such all HSPA certifications are time-limited to one year, during which the certification holder must show they have pursued continuing education and development.

To remain valid, each certification must be maintained through the certification renewal process of submitting Continuing Education (CE) credits and applicable renewal processing fees. Certification renewals must be received no later than the last day of the anniversary month of your CRCST certification. Any additionally held certifications will also renew that same month (and will require additional CE credits, but no additional fees.)

Recertification Requirements

In addition to an annual \$50 renewal fee, all certified individuals are responsible for submitting the following in order to renew each of their certifications annually:

CRCST recertification requires 12 CE credits per year; credits must focus on information and advancements relevant to the SP field and be of a technical nature.

CIS recertification requires current CRCST status, plus 6 additional CE credits per year; credits must focus on information and advancements relevant to instrumentation and be of a technical nature.

CHL recertification requires current CRCST status, plus 6 additional CE credits per year; credits must focus on information and advancements relevant to management or supervisory topics.

CER recertification requires 6 CE credits per year; credits must focus on information and advancements relevant to endoscopes and be of a technical nature.

CCSVP recertification requires 6 CE credits per year; credits must focus on information and advancements relevant to the CS field and be of a technical nature.

FCS recertification requires ongoing CRCST recertification.

ACE* recertification requires ongoing CRCST recertification, and attendance at HSPA's annual Educator's Update at least once every two years.

CHMMC* recertification requires 6 CE credits per year; credits must focus on information and advancements relevant to materials management and be of a technical nature.

*ACE and CHMMC certifications are no longer offered by HSPA, but can be maintained by anyone possessing the credentials, as long as their recertification requirements are met annually.

Please Note: All CE credits must have occurred within the year prior to your renewal date and be dated after your most recent renewal/certification date. Renewals cannot be processed until all required credits and fees have been received.

Certificants who have submitted a completed renewal application and who are notified that they do not meet the recertification requirements may appeal this decision by sending a written notice of the appeal to the Certification Council within 30 days of the date of the adverse decision. Any appeals that cannot be resolved to the certificant's satisfaction will be forwarded by the Director of Certification to the Certification Council for review along with any relevant information from the review of the renewal application. Written notice of the final decision will be sent to the certificant within 30 days of the review. The decision of the Certification Council will be final.

EXAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Types of Continuing Education Accepted

There are several ways of achieving Continuing Education (CE) credit and you may use any combination of hours accumulated. The following are the four categories of CE available, and further detailed information on each category can be found on the CE Submission Form online at myHSPA.org/certification.

CE credit is to be accrued in hour increments: 1 hour equals 1 CE credit, ½ hour equals ½ CE credit, and ¼ hour equals ¼ CE credit.

1. Self-Study Lesson Plans

- a. Online scoring of HSPA CRCST, CIS, CER, or CHL quizzes by HSPA
- b. Written or online scoring of CRCST & CIS quizzes by Purdue University
- c. Written scoring of HSPA quizzes by a manager or supervisor
- d. Written or online scoring of Non-HSPA quizzes by a vendor or alternate agency

2. HSPA Annual Conference; Chapter or Regional Meetings; Conferences or Seminars

- a. Attendance at an HSPA conference or meeting
- b. Attendance at a pre-approved non-HSPA conference or seminar

3. Technical, Community, or Secondary College Courses

Completion of a college course applicable toward SP or job performance with a grade of "C" or better

4. In-Services or Staff Meetings

In-services or staff meetings relevant to SP or job performance

Revocation of Certification

If all required CE documents and fees are not received by your certification expiration date, your certification(s) will be suspended and you will be considered non-certified. HSPA allows for a 6 week grace period during which you may submit your past-due CE credits and fees. During this suspension period you are not considered certified and cannot use the title of CRCST, CER, CIS, CHL, CCSVP, or any other designation you may normally hold with HSPA.

If all required past-due CE credits and certification fees are received within the 6 week grace period your certification(s) will be reinstated. If you fail to submit all necessary renewal fees and credits during the 6 week grace period you will no longer be able to renew. No further extensions will be available. You would then be required to retake any and all certification exams in order to re-obtain your certification(s).

Falsified & Misleading Renewal Documentation

All information provided by and about you in regard to your certification maintenance must be accurate and correct. If any information provided in relation to your certification renewal or any other document relating to your certification, is determined to be false or purposefully misleading HSPA can reject your recertification and disqualify you from future certification. The HSPA Certification Council will review all such instances and determine the appropriate recourse, including the revocation of any certifications which have been granted and the denial of recertification.

CERTIFICATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

CODE OF CONDUCT

The HSPA Certification Council supports appropriate, professional standards designed to serve the central service technicians, their employers, and the public. First and foremost, certificants give priority to providing central services in a manner that promotes safety, reflects positively on the profession, and is consistent with accepted moral, ethical, and legal standards. Certificants have the obligation to:

Section 1: Adherence to HSPA Policies & Requirements

1. Adhere to all laws, regulations, policies, and ethical standards that apply to the practice of providing sterile processing and related activities.
2. Follow all certification program policies, procedures, requirements and rules. This includes the obligation to be aware of and understand these policies and requirements.
3. Provide accurate and complete information to HSPA concerning certification and recertification.
4. Keep confidential all HSPA examination information; including preventing unauthorized disclosures of exam information.
5. Cooperate with HSPA and the Certification Council regarding matters related to the Code of Conduct and complaint and/or disciplinary investigations.
6. Properly use HSPA certification titles, marks, and logos.
7. Report violations of the Code of Conduct by HSPA certificants to the Certification Council.

Section 2: Professional Performance

1. Maintain high standards of integrity and conduct, and accept responsibility for their actions.
2. Be accountable and responsible for their actions and behaviors.
3. Foster excellence in Sterile Processing by continually seeking to enhance their professional capabilities through continuing education and regular on-the-job training.
4. Maintain the confidentiality of private and sensitive information, unless there is mandate to report or other legal obligation to disclose the information.
5. Act professionally, and practice with integrity and honesty.

6. Strive to fairly and objectively represent the principals of SP and encourage others to act in the same professional manner consistent with certification standards and responsibilities.

Use of Certification Credentials

After receiving notification of CRCST, Provisional CRCST, CIS, CER, CHL, CCSVP or FCS designation, the credential may be used only as long as certification remains valid and in good standing. Individuals may not use any of the above credentials (or retired credentials such as the CHMMC and ACE) until they have received specific written notification that they have successfully completed all requirements, including passing the relevant exam. Certificants must comply with all recertification requirements to maintain use of the credential(s).

The use and/or display of the CRCST (or Certified Registered Central Service Technician), Provisional CRCST (or Provisionally Certified Registered Central Service Technician), CIS (or Certified Instrument Specialist), CER (or Certified Endoscope Reprocessor), CHL (or Certified Healthcare Leader), CCSVP (or Certified Central Service Vender Partner), FCS (Fellow), CHMMC (Concepts in Healthcare Materiel Management Certificant), or ACE (Approved Certified Educator) acronyms, except as permitted by this policy, is prohibited. Individuals who fail to maintain certification / recertify or whose certification is suspended or revoked must immediately discontinue use of the relevant CRCST, Provisional CRCST, CIS, CER, CHL, CCSVP, FCS, CHMMC, or ACE certification mark(s) and are prohibited from stating or implying that they hold the certification(s).

Acceptable Use

Individuals who have earned the CRCST credential may identify themselves as a "Certified Registered Central Service Technician" or "CRCST". Individuals who have earned the Provisional CRCST credential may identify themselves as a "Provisionally Certified Registered Central Service Technician" or "Provisional CRCST". Individuals who have earned the CIS credential may identify themselves as a "Certified Instrument Specialist" or "CIS". Individuals who have earned the CER credential may identify themselves as a "Certified Endoscope Reprocessor" or "CER". Individuals who have earned the CHL credential may identify themselves as a "Certified Healthcare Leader" or "CHL". Individuals who have earned the CCSVP credential may identify themselves as a "Certified Central Service Vender Partner" or "CCSVP". Individuals who have earned the FCS credential may identify themselves as a "Fellow" or "FCS". Individuals who have earned the CHMMC credential may identify themselves as a "Concepts in Healthcare Materiel Management Certificant"

CERTIFICATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

or "CHMMC". Individuals who have earned the ACE credential may identify themselves as an "Approved Certified Educator" or "ACE". These names and acronyms may only be used in connection with a certified individual and not with a facility, department, or other group.

These names and acronyms may be used only as long as the relevant certification is valid and in good standing. Certification is a non-transferable, revocable, limited, non-exclusive license to use the certification designation and is subject to compliance with the policies and procedures of the Certification Council.

Certified individuals may not make misleading, deceptive, or confusing statements regarding their certification status. Certificants may not suggest that they have expertise outside of the scope of their professional licenses, credentials, and training.

Certificate

Each certificant will receive a certificate specific to each certification. Each certificate will include, at a minimum, the following information:

- Name of the certified individual
- Unique identification number
- Signatures of the HSPA President and Director of Certification
- Reference to the scope and limitations of the certification
- Effective date
- Expiration date
- Disclaimer stating that HSPA retains sole ownership, and that the certificate is a copy verifiable online at <https://verify.myhspa.org>

Individuals who renew their certification will receive a new certificate.

The care and issuing of uniquely numbered certificates shall be the responsibility of the Director of Certification .

Security

Certificates include the HSPA certification seal, two signatures, a unique ID number, and are verifiable online to prevent fraud, forgery, and counterfeiting.

Ownership

HSPA retains sole ownership of all certificates.

Complaints & Investigations

Incidents of alleged misuse of the CRCST, Provisional CRCST, CIS, CER, CHL, CCSVP, FCS, CHMMC, or ACE names and/or acronyms by a certificant, candidate, or other individual will be investigated by the Director of Certification and referred to the Certification Council Chair for action under the Disciplinary Policy as required. Individuals who are found to be in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Policy.

Certification Verification

The Director of Certification maintains a database of all active applicants and certificants.

The names of certified individuals and their certification status are not considered confidential and will be published by HSPA in the online verification system. The HSPA headquarters office will also verify certification status upon request – information released will include the certificant's name, certification effective and expiration dates, certification type, and certification status (certified or not certified.)

An up-to-date database of all certificants is maintained under the oversight of the Director of Certification. The online verification system will be promptly updated to reflect individuals whose certification has expired or has been suspended or revoked.

HSPA will not release further details of your certification(s), such as exam scores or the number of exam attempts, without your prior written consent. In order to verify your certification through HSPA, online or in writing, the requesting party must have your full name and HSPA ID number. HSPA will not release your ID number without your consent; employers or other prospective parties would need to obtain that information directly from you.

Upon becoming certified, and with every annual renewal, you will be issued a certificate for each certification you hold. The certificate(s) will detail the scope and dates of your certification(s) and can be verified online at <https://verify.myhspa.org>

CERTIFICATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Complaints & Disciplinary Actions

In order to maintain and enhance the credibility of the certification program the Certification Council has adopted the following procedures to allow individuals to bring complaints concerning the conduct of individuals who are certificants or candidates for certification of the Certification Council.

In the event an individual candidate or certificant violates the Code of Conduct, certification rules, or certification program policies the Certification Council may reprimand or suspend the individual or may revoke certification.

The grounds for sanctions under these procedures may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

1. Violation of the Code of Conduct.
2. Violation of established certification policies, rules and requirements.
3. Conviction of a felony or other crime of moral turpitude under federal or state law in a matter related to the practice of, or qualifications for, sterile processing.
4. Gross negligence, willful misconduct, or other unethical conduct in the performance of services for which the individual has achieved certification from HSPA.
5. Fraud or misrepresentation in an initial application or renewal application for certification.
6. Obtaining, or attempting to obtain, certification or recertification through false or misleading statement, fraud, or deceit including but not limited to an application or renewal application for certification.
7. Misrepresentation or falsification of material information in connection with an application, credentials, certificates, continuing education documents, or any other document associated with obtaining or maintaining certification status.
8. Unauthorized possession or misuse of HSPA credentials.

Information regarding the complaint process will be available to the public without request via the HSPA web site and/or other published documents. A complete copy of this policy will be published.

Actions taken under this policy do not constitute enforcement of the law, although referral to appropriate federal, state, or local government agencies may be made about the conduct of the candidate or certificant in appropriate situations. Individuals initially bringing complaints are not entitled to any relief or damages by virtue of this process, although they will receive notice of the actions taken.

Complaints

Complaints may be submitted by any individual or entity. Complaints should be reported to the Director of Certification in writing and should include the name of the person submitting the complaint, the name of the person the complaint is regarding along with other relevant identifying information, a detailed description of factual allegations supporting the charges, and any relevant supporting documentation. Information submitted during the complaint and investigation process is considered confidential and will be handled in accordance with the Certification Council's confidentiality policy. Inquiries or submissions other than complaints may be reviewed and handled by the Certification Council or its staff members at its discretion.

Upon receipt and preliminary review of a complaint involving a certificant the Director of Certification in consultation with the Certification Council Chair may conclude, in their sole discretion, that the submission:

1. contains unreliable or insufficient information, or
2. is patently frivolous or inconsequential.

In such cases, the Director of Certification and Certification Council Chair may determine that the submission does not constitute a valid and actionable complaint that would justify bringing it before the Certification Council for investigation and a determination of whether there has been a violation of substantive requirements of the certification process. If so, the submission is disposed of by notice from the Director of Certification and Chair to its submitter, if the submitter is identified. All such preliminary dispositions by the Chair are reported to the Certification Council at its next meeting.

This preliminary review to determine if the complaint is valid and actionable will be conducted within 30 calendar days of receipt of the complaint.

If a submission is deemed by the Chair to be a valid and actionable complaint, the Chair shall see that written notice is provided to the candidate/certificant whose conduct has been called into question. The candidate/certificant whose conduct is at issue shall also be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint. The Chair also shall ensure that the individual submitting the complaint receives notice that the complaint is being reviewed by the Certification Council.

Complaint Review

For each complaint that the Chair concludes is a valid and actionable complaint, the Certification Council authorizes an investigation into its specific facts or circumstances to whatever extent is necessary in order to clarify, expand, or corroborate the information provided by the submitter.

CERTIFICATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The Chair refers the complaint to the Review Committee to investigate and make an appropriate determination with respect to each such valid and actionable complaint. The Review Committee initially determines whether it is appropriate to review the complaint under these Procedures or whether the matter should be referred to another entity engaged in the administration of law. The timeline for responses and for providing any additional information shall be established by the Review Committee. The review and investigation will be completed in an appropriate amount of time, not to exceed 6 months, unless there are extenuating circumstances that require an extended time period. The Review Committee may be assisted in the conduct of its investigation by HSPA staff or legal counsel. The Certification Council Chair exercises general supervision over all investigations.

Both the individual submitting the complaint and the candidate/certificant who is the subject of the investigation (or his or her employer) may be contacted for additional information with respect to the complaint. The Review Committee, or the Certification Council on its behalf, may at its discretion contact such other individuals who may have knowledge of the facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint.

All investigations and deliberations of the Review Committee and the Certification Council are conducted in confidence, with all written communications sealed and marked "Personal and Confidential," and they are conducted objectively, without any indication of prejudgment. An investigation may be directed toward any aspect of a complaint which is relevant or potentially relevant. Formal hearings are not held and the parties are not expected to be represented by counsel, although the Review Committee and Certification Council may consult their own counsel.

Determination of Violation

Upon completion of an investigation, the Review Committee recommends whether the Certification Council should make a determination that there has been a violation of HSPA Certification Council policies and rules. When the Review Committee recommends that the Certification Council find a violation, the Review Committee also recommends imposition of an appropriate sanction. If the Review Committee so recommends, a proposed determination with a proposed sanction is prepared under the supervision of the Chair and is presented by a representative of the Review Committee to the Certification Council along with the record of the Review Committee's investigation.

If the Review Committee recommends against a determination that a violation has occurred, the complaint is dismissed with notice to the candidate/certificant, the candidate/certificant's employer, the individual or entity who submitted the complaint, and the HSPA Board of Directors.

The Certification Council reviews the recommendation of the Review Committee based upon the record of the investigation. The Certification Council may accept, reject, or modify the Review Committee's recommendation, either with respect to the determination of a violation or the recommended sanction to be imposed. If the Certification Council makes a determination that a violation has occurred, this determination and the imposition of a sanction are promulgated by written notice to the candidate/certificant, and to the individual submitting the complaint, if the submitter agrees in advance and in writing to maintain in confidence whatever portion of the information is not made public by the Certification Council.

In certain circumstances, the Certification Council may consider a recommendation from the Review Committee that the candidate/certificant who has violated the certification program policies or rules should be offered an opportunity to submit a written assurance that the conduct in question has been terminated and will not recur. The decision of the Review Committee to make such a recommendation and of the Certification Council to accept it are within their respective discretionary powers. If such an offer is extended, the candidate/certificant at issue must submit the required written assurance within thirty days of receipt of the offer, and the assurance must be submitted in terms that are acceptable to the Certification Council. If the Certification Council accepts the assurance, notice is given to the candidate/certificant's employer and to the submitter of the complaint, if the submitter agrees in advance and in writing to maintain the information in confidence.

Sanctions

Any of the following sanctions may be imposed by the Certification Council upon a candidate/certificant whom the Certification Council has determined to have violated the policies and rules of its certification program(s), although the sanction applied must reasonably relate to the nature and severity of the violation, focusing on reformation of the conduct of the individual and deterrence of similar conduct by others:

1. written reprimand to the candidate/certificant;
2. suspension of the certificant for a designated period; or
3. suspension of the candidate's application eligibility for a designated period; or
4. termination of the certificant's certification; or
5. termination of the candidate's application eligibility for a designated period.

For sanctions that include suspension or termination, a summary of the final determination and the sanction with the candidate/certificant's name and date is published by the Certification Council. This information will be published only after any appeal has either been considered or the appeal period has passed.

CERTIFICATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Reprimand in the form of a written notice from the Chair normally is sent to a candidate/certificant who has received his or her first substantiated complaint. Suspension normally is imposed on a candidate/certificant who has received two substantiated complaints. Termination normally is imposed on a candidate/certificant who has received two substantiated complaints within a two year period, or three or more substantiated complaints. The Certification Council may at its discretion, however, impose any of the sanctions, if warranted, in specific cases.

Certificants who have been terminated shall have their certification revoked and shall not be considered for certification in the future. If certification is revoked, any and all certificates or other materials requested by the Certification Council must be returned promptly to the Certification Council.

Appeal

Within thirty (30) days from receipt of notice of a determination by the Certification Council that a candidate/certificant violated the certification program policies and/or rules, the affected candidate/certificant may submit to the Certification Council Chair in writing a request for an appeal. Any candidate/certificant receiving such adverse decision will receive a copy of this policy along with notification of the appeal period.

Upon receipt of a request for appeal, the Chair of the Certification Council establishes an appellate body consisting of at least three, but not more than five, individuals. This Appeal Committee may review one or more appeals, upon request of the Chair. No current members of the Review Committee or the Certification Council may serve on the Appeal Committee; further, no one with any personal involvement or conflict of interest may serve on the Appeal Committee.

The Appeal Committee may only review whether the determination by the Certification Council of a violation of the certification program policies and/or rules was inappropriate because of:

1. material errors of fact, or
2. failure of the Review Committee or the Certification Council to conform to published criteria, policies, or procedures.

Only facts and conditions up to and including the time of the Certification Council's determination as represented by facts known to the Certification Council are considered during an appeal. The appeal shall not include a hearing or any similar trial-type proceeding. Legal counsel is not expected to participate in the appeal process, unless requested by the appellant and approved by the Certification Council and

the Appeal Committee. The Certification Council and Appeal Committee may consult legal counsel.

The Appeal Committee conducts and completes the appeal within ninety days after receipt of the request for an appeal. Written appellate submissions and any reply submissions may be made by authorized representatives of the member and of the Certification Council. Submissions are made according to whatever schedule is reasonably established by the Appeal Committee. The decision of the Appeal Committee either affirms or overrules the determination of the Certification Council, but does not address a sanction imposed by the Certification Council. The Appeal Committee will confirm receipt of all communications including the initial appeal and will provide notice to the appellant of the end of the appeal handling process.

The Appeal Committee decision is binding upon the Certification Council, the candidate/certificant who is subject to the termination, and all other persons.

Resignation

If a certificant who is the subject of a complaint voluntarily surrenders his or her certification at any time during the pendency of a complaint under these Procedures, the complaint is dismissed without any further action by the Review Committee, the Certification Council, or an Appeal Committee established after an appeal. The entire record is sealed and the individual may not reapply for HSPA certification. However, the Certification Council may authorize the Chair to communicate the fact and date of resignation, and the fact and general nature of the complaint which was pending at the time of the resignation, to or at the request of a government entity engaged in the administration of law. Similarly, in the event of such resignation, the certificant's employer and the person or entity who submitted the complaint are notified of the fact and date of resignation and that Certification Council has dismissed the complaint as a result.

Confidentiality

The Certification Council is committed to protecting confidential and/or proprietary information related to applicants, candidates, certificants and examination development, maintenance, and administration process. The confidentiality policy applies to all HSPA board members, employees, Certification Council members, committee members, contractors, and other individuals who are permitted access to confidential information.

Information about applicants/candidates/certificants and their examination results are considered confidential and may not be disclosed, divulged, or made accessible. Exam

CERTIFICATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

scores and/or other confidential information will be released only to the individual candidate unless a signed release is provided or as required by law. Personal information submitted by applicants/candidates/certificants with an application or recertification application is considered confidential. Personal information retained within the candidate/certificant database will be kept confidential.

Information related to the development, administration and maintenance of the examination is considered confidential.

Confidential materials include, but are not limited to: an individual's application status, personal applicant/candidate/certificant information, exam development documentation (including job analysis reports, technical reports, and cut score studies), exam items and answers, exam forms, and individual exam scores.

HSPA and the Certification Council will not disclose confidential applicant/candidate/certificant information unless authorized in writing by the individual or as required by law. If HSPA is required by law to disclose confidential information, the individual(s) whose information is released will be notified to the extent permitted by law.

Verification of Certification

The names of certified individuals and their certification status are not considered confidential and will be published by HSPA (see the Certification Verification Policy, page 29).

Aggregate Certification

Data Aggregate exam statistics (including the number of exam candidates, pass/fail rates, and total number of certificants) will be publicly available. Aggregate exam statistics, studies and reports concerning candidates/certificants will contain no information identifiable with any candidate, unless authorized in writing by the candidate.

Confidentiality Agreements

Applicants for certification will be required to read and acknowledge a confidentiality statement as part of the application process.

Access to Confidential Information

Access to confidential information will be limited to those individuals who require access in order to perform necessary work related to the certification program. Access will be granted in compliance with the provisions of the security policy. HSPA Board members, employees, Certification Council members, committee members, contractors, and

other individuals will use confidential information solely for the purpose of performing services for HSPA.

This policy is not intended to prevent disclosure where disclosure is required by law.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

HSPA and the Certification Council adhere to principles of fairness and due process, and endorse the principles of equal opportunity.

HSPA and the Certification Council prohibit discrimination against applicants, candidates, certificants, employees and applicants for employment, and volunteers on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, protected genetic information, or any other status protected by law.

Certification Complaints

Complaints about the certification process may be submitted by an individual or entity. Complaints should be reported to the Director of Certification in writing and include the name of the person submitting the complaint and a detailed description of the complaint.

A preliminary review to determine if the complaint is valid and actionable will be conducted by the Director of Certification in consultation with the Executive Director and/or Certification Council Chair within 30 calendar days of receipt of the complaint. If the complaint is deemed valid and actionable the Director of Certification will consult with the Certification Council to address and resolve the issue.

TEST DEVELOPMENT

TEST DEVELOPMENT

To establish the framework for the CRCST, CER, CIS, and CHL exams, several focused workshops – each addressing a different aspect of the test development process – are held. The first workshop, a Job Task Analysis (JTA), involves SP Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) defining the tasks, knowledge, and skill sets most pertinent to each certification. The results of the JTA are used to create and/or validate the content of the exams and ensure that they accurately reflect changes in the profession. A key component of the Job Analysis is the release of a profession-wide survey completed by hundreds of SP professionals. Survey respondents' participation helps to determine the knowledge and skill sets deemed most vital to the profession. The SMEs use the survey findings to finalize the exam blueprints.

Following each JTA, a series of additional workshops are held: a Test Specifications meeting, which documents the relative importance of each exam's content areas and how many items should be written to each objective; Item Writing and Review, which involve the writing of new exam questions, and the review of the newly-created questions and existing exam questions; Form Review, which involves a final review of the test forms and how the questions on the forms work together; and finally, Item Analysis, which involves a statistical and analytical review of exam items to help improve the quality and accuracy of the exams.

In between the Form Review and Item Analysis, a pilot exam is offered for each certification. The performance of pilot exam participants is measured against a predetermined standard. For the CRCST, CER, CIS and CHL standard setting study the Angoff standard setting method, supplemented by the Beuk Relative-Absolute Compromise method, is implemented during a two day standard setting meeting facilitated by the Prometric testing company. These methods use a SMEs panel to first reach a consensus on the acceptable level of knowledge and skill that is expected for passing candidates. SMEs then review each examination item to determine the level of knowledge or skill that is expected. SMEs ratings and difficulty predictions

are analyzed by Prometric to provide a recommended cut score. Lastly, the recommended cut-score is reviewed and approved by the HSPA Certification Council.

The exam Content Outlines, as created through the Job Task Analyses, detail the specific areas of knowledge necessary to perform the duties associated with each certification. The Content Outlines also detail the percentage weight for each of the exam sections. The higher the percentage weight, the more heavily the questions in that area will affect your overall test score.

CRCST

- HSPA's *CS Technical Manual*, 8th Ed (2016) / *SP Technical Manual*, 9th Ed (2023)
- ANSI/AAMI's *ST79* (2017)
- AORN's *Guidelines for Perioperative Practice* (2023)

CIS

- HSPA's *Instrument Resource Manual*, 1st Ed (2018)
- HSPA's *CS Technical Manual*, 8th Ed (2016) / *SP Technical Manual*, 9th Ed (2023)
- Rick Schultz's *The World of Surgical Instruments* (2018)
- ANSI/ AAMI's *ST79* (2017)

CER

- HSPA's *Endoscope Reprocessing Manual*, 2nd Ed (2022)
- ANSI/AAMI's *ST91* (2022)
- CDC's *Essential Elements of a Reprocessing Program for Flexible Endoscopes* (2017)
- SGNA's *Standard of Infection Prevention in the Gastroenterology Setting* (2019), and *Standards for Infection Prevention in Reprocessing Flexible Gastrointestinal Endoscopes* (2018), and *Guidelines for Use of High-Level Disinfectants & Sterilants in the Gastroenterology Setting* (2017)

CHL

- HSPA's *CS Leadership Manual* 3rd Ed (2020)
- HSPA's *CS Technical Manual*, 8th Ed (2016) / *SP Technical Manual*, 9th Ed (2023)
- ANSI/AAMI's *ST79* (2017)
- AORN's *Guidelines for Perioperative Practice* (2023)

Exam Content Outlines are available online at myHSPA.org/certification



HSPA's mission is to promote patient safety worldwide
by raising the level of expertise and recognition for
those in the Sterile Processing profession.

COMMUNICATION | EDUCATION | PROFESSIONALISM
LEADERSHIP | ADVOCACY | EXCELLENCE

HSPA | **HEALTHCARE
STERILE PROCESSING
ASSOCIATION**

55 West Wacker Drive, Suite 501
Chicago, Illinois 60601 | 312.440.0078
www.myHSPA.org