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# The Accounts Payable Certification Programs

Developed and Administered by  
**IOMA and The Accounts Payable Network**  
for Payables Managers, Staff, and Departments

*The best programs available for Accounts Payable Professionals*

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Dedicated to the highest level of payables management in businesses worldwide, and the professional advancement of achieving members of the payables community

*Developed and administered by:*  
**IOMA, Inc. and The Accounts Payable Network**  
[www.ioma.com/apcertification](http://www.ioma.com/apcertification)

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## About This Certification Handbook

■ This handbook contains complete information about the Accredited Payables Specialist (APS) and Accredited Payables Manager (APM) Certifications and Examinations, and the requirements for Accredited Payables Department (APD) certification. It explains the eligibility requirements that you must meet to take the examination and provides information about taking an examination either online or at a testing location. In addition, this handbook provides a suggested bibliography, study guide, and a general content outline of the examination. **Please read this handbook carefully. It is critical that you strictly adhere to all procedures and deadlines in this handbook.**

You may obtain additional copies of this handbook by calling Eric Fink at (212) 576-8742, email: [efink@ioma.com](mailto:efink@ioma.com), or by downloading it from the IOMA Web site ([www.ioma.com/apcertification](http://www.ioma.com/apcertification)).

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## About Accounts Payable Certification Programs

■ Much of what is done in accounts payable today has been developed in the last 10 years—some of it in the last three years. Today’s payables professional uses the latest electronic processing technologies, works closely with nearly every system within the organization, and is the last line of defense in the purchasing cycle, thereby controlling the largest portion of corporate expense. Automation investment, supply chain review, and Sarbanes-Oxley are near the top of a long list causing top management to scrutinize accounts payable much more closely. The profession has largely kept pace, much to its credit, but accounts payable has had few ways to demonstrate their expertise.

Responding to numerous requests, IOMA, Inc., publishers of *Managing Accounts Payable*, and The Accounts Payable Network (TAPN) have pooled their collective knowledge of the field and resources to develop the Accounts Payable Certification Programs. Both IOMA and The Accounts Payable Network are committed to:

- enhancing the quality of the payables profession by offering educational opportunities
- fostering the exchange of payables expertise
- raising public awareness of payables professionalism
- offering programs to support the needs of payables managers, staff, and departments.

Given the ongoing pressures over the years on accounts payable organizations to reduce costs and increase productivity, AP has a rich history of implementing innovative solutions. The Accounts Payable Certification Programs now provide a way for accounts payable professionals and their departments to get the recognition they deserve for those efforts.

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## Mission of the Accounts Payable Certification Programs

■ The TAPN/IOMA Accounts Payable Certification Programs were established to disseminate information to the accounts payable professional as well as raise the level of awareness in the rest of the financial and accounting community of the wide diversity of knowledge necessary to work in AP.

The APS and APM set the standard in the profession and are symbols of individual excellence. They signify that an individual has demonstrated the knowledge and skills required to excel in today's complex business environment. Similarly, the APD certification conveys the message of superior performance at the accounts payable department level, both inside and outside the organization.

## Eligibility For Certification

■ APM and APS Certifications are open to all persons and departments in payables. The certification is administered by IOMA and The Accounts Payable Network, and their selected agents, to those who: (1) meet the eligibility requirements for admission to the examination as set forth in this handbook; (2) successfully complete the examination; and (3) maintain continuing professional education standards. Certification is granted for a two-year period, automatically renewable for those who continue to meet these standards.

The prerequisites for eligibility are:

### Accredited Payables Manager (APM)

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no degree	5 years related work experience
2-year degree	4 years related work experience
4-year degree	2 years related work experience
Advanced degree	1 year related work experience

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## **Accredited Payables Specialist (APS)**

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no degree	3 years AP experience
2- year degree	2 years AP experience
4-year degree	1 year AP experience

## **Accredited Payables Department (APD)**

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A minimum of 60% of the members of an accounts payable department, excluding clerks\*, must hold their APS or APM certification. Departments which achieve an 85% certification rate may hold Platinum Certification.

The Application for Certification appears in Appendix A, and is available for download at [www.ioma.com/apcertification](http://www.ioma.com/apcertification).

\*A clerk is anyone who performs general office work.

**Use of Certification** ■ The APM or APS Examination is voluntary, and certification is conferred by the Accounts Payable Certification Programs solely for the purposes stated in this Certification Handbook. Those persons or organizations who choose to incorporate the APM or APS Examination as a condition of employment or advancement do so of their own volition.

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## The Content of the APM or APS Exam

The APM or APS Examination is weighted in approximately the following manner:

Category	APS	APM
Processing Functions (1)	20-25%	8-12%
Controls—cash management/fraud	8-12%	10-15%
Technology (2)	17-22%	15-18%
Tax & Regulatory	3-7%	7-10%
T&E	8-12%	8-12%
Customer Relations	8-12%	12-14%
P-cards	4-8%	6-10%
Other (3)	3-7%	8-12%
Ethics and Professionalism (5)	2-4%	3-7%
Management (4)	0%	8-12%

(1) including check handling, invoice processing, the 3-way match and alternatives to the 3-way match

(2) including e-commerce, EDI, ERS, e-invoicing, encryption and digital signatures, imaging, workflow, document management, software, XML and e-Marketplaces

(3) including accounting terminology, benchmarking, disaster recover, outsourcing, post audits and shared services

(4) including leadership, employee relations, motivation, morale, managing the staff, etc.)

(5) in management section of training manual

Sample questions appear in Appendix B.

## How the Exam Is Developed

■ Relying on their extensive knowledge of the leadership of the accounts payable profession, IOMA and The Accounts Payable Network assembled the Expert Advisory Group (EAG) to create questions for possible inclusion in the bank of payables examination questions. The questions are reviewed by experts at IOMA's *Managing Accounts Payable*, TAPN, and by testing experts, to ensure

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compliance with accepted question-writing techniques. Approved questions are then included in the examination bank; a subset of these are selected randomly to create new examinations. Candidates who take tests at “live” testing sites will receive the same exam as others in the room; those who take the test on-line will receive their own version of the exam from the bank of approved questions. Each exam is comprised of 100 multiple choice questions. Periodically, 5-10 “pre-test” questions may be added. The pre-test questions are not counted in the scoring of the examination. They are distributed among the scorable questions and will be used for analytical purposes only.

You will have 90 minutes to complete the exam.

**Passing Scores** ■ The Accounts Payable Certification Programs, upon receipt of examination results, will notify you of certification via e-mail if you successfully completed the examination

Anyone who fails the test may retake it within 60 days at no charge. Contact IOMA to arrange on-line retesting.

If you pass the APM or APS Examination you will receive a framed certificate and other materials by mail. You will be entitled to use the letters “APM” or “APS” after your name, as dictated by professional circumstances.

We will also keep department-level records to notify managers of the status of their Accredited Payables Department (APM) certification.

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**Renewed  
Certification  
Through  
Continuing  
Education Units  
(CEUs)**

■ Current APM or APS holders retain their certification by meeting Continuing Education Unit (CEU) requirements. We will make every effort to help members maintain their CEU requirements, though **it is the responsibility of each APM or APS to contact IOMA to report their professional training activities.** The CEU Request Form appears in Appendix C, and is also available at [www.ioma.com/apcertification](http://www.ioma.com/apcertification). Both IOMA and The Accounts Payable Network award CEUs for all of its programs and seminars. APM or APS holders may also attend approved local educational activities, various seminars or educational events (sponsored by organizations other than TAPN/IOMA or its affiliates), college/university courses or other training opportunities. Each of these will be adjudicated to award maximum CEU credits toward renewed certification.

Payables Managers require 30 (36 for Distinction) CEUs every 24 months to automatically renew their APM certification. Payables Specialists need 20 (26 for Distinction) CEUs every 24 months to automatically renew their APS certification.

Department managers will be notified if non-renewal status of members of their department falls below the required 60% level for Accredited Payables Department certification.

These are the CEU values of some typical payables training activities (there is no charge to have CEU values assessed for other payables training activities).

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## CEU Credits Awarded for Maintenance of Accreditations<sup>689</sup>

● College courses (accounting, finance, etc.)	1/cr
● Passing the IOMA/TAPN certification exam	3
● Passing the IOMA/TAPN certification exam with distinction	4
● Achieving a perfect score on IOMA/TAPN certification exam	5
● Giving a one-hour talk at an AP conference	3
● Participating on a panel discussion at a conference	1
● Attending an AP conference/seminar	3-10 <sup>1</sup>
● Annual subscription to Managing Accounts Payable	5 <sup>2</sup>
● Annual subscription to TAPN	5 <sup>3</sup>
● Participating in IOMA Benchmark survey	3
● Participating in IOMA Operations survey	2
● Participating in a TAPN survey	2-3 <sup>4</sup>
● AP-related audio conferences	2 <sup>7</sup>
● Writing an AP-related article	1
● Attending an AP luncheon with guest speaker	1
● Participating in departmental benchmarking	1-4 <sup>5</sup>
● Self-study with online quiz of AP-related books, etc.	7
- AP: Guide to Running An Efficient Dept. (2nd edition)	5
-AP Best Practices (latest edition)	3
- other books to be added as available and reviewed by IOMA/TAPN	
● Community Service	1

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- <sup>1</sup> depending on length and content
  - <sup>2</sup> site license earns credit for all employees nominated by company
  - <sup>3</sup> earns credit for all employees nominated by company
  - <sup>4</sup> depending on type of survey
  - <sup>5</sup> depends on depth and participation; i.e., a manager might get 4, while the staffers who helped out in different parts might be assigned 1-2
  - <sup>6</sup> subject to change and additions
  - <sup>7</sup> AP related refers to topics covered in the Training manual
  - <sup>8</sup> seminars and other training events given by vendors to demonstrate how products work and sales presentations not eligible for CEU
  - <sup>9</sup> training on software, accounting packages, Excel, etc not eligible for CEU

**For Questions or  
Further  
Information**

■ For assistance in applying, test-taking, determining eligibility, earning CEU points, or any other information needs, you are welcome to call IOMA during normal working hours at 212-576-8742, Eric Fink. Or, you can e-mail your questions to [efink@ioma.com](mailto:efink@ioma.com). We will be glad to help you.



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## APPENDIX B:

### SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- 1) Reconciliation of materials received in the receiving department with prices on the purchase order is commonly referred to as:
- A. ERS
  - B. EDI
  - C. JIT
  - D. IVR
- 2) An ACH debit:
- A. Allows the seller to debit the purchaser's bank account
  - B. Allows the seller to credit the purchaser's bank account
  - C. Allows the purchaser to debit the seller's bank account
  - D. Allows the purchaser to credit the seller's bank account
- 3) A clean desk policy in accounts payable is a best practice when it means that:
- A. All invoices that have been received have been paid
  - B. All invoices that have been received have been reviewed and scheduled for payment
  - C. All invoices that have been received have been reviewed and sent out for approvals. They will be paid if and when the approvals are given.
  - D. All invoices and other papers have been filed away or put in a draw somewhere.
- 4) After the check is printed it should be:
- A. Returned to the person requesting the check
  - B. Return to the person who authorized the issuance
  - C. Mailed to the intended recipients
  - D. Sent to the Bank

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- 5) A design that is not clearly visible until the check is copied is called a:
- A. Watermark
  - B. Void Pantograph
  - C. Micro printing
  - D. Special Ink
- 6) Since invoices are received in all different sizes, shapes and colors, the most critical aspect of a document imaging system is:
- A. Storage
  - B. Indexing
  - C. Scanning
  - D. Retrieval
- 7) When a company is looking to preserve cash, the most frequently used and potentially damaging strategy the company can employ is to:
- A. place smaller orders
  - B. talk to vendor
  - C. stretch payment date
  - D. stop paying bills

**Answers:**

1. a      4. c

2. a      5. b

3. b      6. c

7. c

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**APPENDIX C:**

**CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT (CEU) REQUEST FORM**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

EXACT JOB TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT EMPLOYER: \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET OR PO BOX ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP/MAIL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTRY: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS PHONE: (      ) \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS FAX: (      ) \_\_\_\_\_

By submitting this information, I grant IOMA, The Accounts Payable Network, and the Accounts Payable Certification Programs permission to contact me.

DATE OF CEU ACTIVITY: \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION (attach brochure is available): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Submit this Application to: Accounts Payable Certification Programs,  
c/o IOMA, Inc, 3 Park Ave., 30th floor New York, NY 10016 fax 212-239-  
0461 or email [efink@ioma.com](mailto:efink@ioma.com)

For Office Use Only: CEU's Approved (Initial) \_\_\_\_\_ Units: \_\_\_\_\_

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## NOTES



