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Certifications

Offered by Cost Estimating Organizations

Donald S. Remer, Ph.D., P.E., Karen M. Ahle, Kevin J. Alley, John F. Silny, and Karen Hsin

There has been an increasing trend in professional and engineering circles to place greater emphasis on official credentials. These credentials commonly come in the form of certificates – documented recognition by a professional body that an engineer or other professional has the qualifications and technical knowledge to be a practitioner in that field. These certificates are somewhat analogous to merit badges in scouting – the certification is evidence that the holder has a certain minimum level of competence in the subject area. This review will help you decide what certifications are applicable to you and the requirements to obtain a certification.

Cost Estimating Certifications Offered in the U.S.

(1) Certified Professional Estimator (CPE) — The Certified Professional Estimator (CPE) certificate is offered by the American Society of Professional Estimators (ASPE). The CPE certificate is targeted specifically at construction estimators, and requires a rigorous course of study. Construction estimates for the state of California must be prepared by, or under the direct supervision of, a Certified Professional Estimator. To be eligible to take the CPE certification test, the applicant must have at least five years experience in one discipline of professional estimating (mechanical, electrical, landscaping, etc.) The certification process consists of an educational workshop, writing a 2500 word acceptable technical paper on estimating, and completing two examinations. The educational workshop can be taken either at the ASPE Chapters during November and early December, or online. The first exam, a General Knowledge Exam, is designed to test project management and business knowledge. It is a four-hour exam with over 500 multiple choice and true/false questions on construction topics. A passing grade is 70%. The second exam is a Discipline Specific Test, which tests a specific area of expertise. The ASPE is currently offering exams in: General Estimating, Earthwork, Concrete, Roofing, Drywall Systems, Painting, Plumbing, HVAC Piping, HVAC Sheet Metal, and Electrical. These are eight-hour exams and consist of true/false, multiple choice, and estimating problems. The exams are given throughout the country in March, July, and November. (ASPE, 2006)

(2) Certified Cost Estimator/Analyst (CCE/A) — The Certified Cost Estimator/Analyst (CCE/A) certificate is offered by the Society of Cost Estimating and Analysis (SCEA). The Certified Cost Estimator/Analyst certificate is much more general than the Certified Professional Estimator certificate. The body of knowledge required includes estimating in all fields of engineering, not just construction. To be eligible to take the CCE/A exam, the applicant must fit in one of three categories: having (1) a college degree (in cost estimating/analysis or with more than 10 courses in cost estimating and analysis) and two years experience in cost estimating/analysis in a position specifically identified as requiring such; (2) an associate's degree and five years experience as described above; or (3) seven years of experience as described above with submission of a biographical sketch demonstrating education, experience and relevant performance. The exam focuses on various methods of analyzing the cost of a project such as cost-benefit analysis and present worth analysis, as well as estimating models such as parametric estimating and comparison estimating. The exam is four hours long and consists of two parts. The first part is 80 to 100 multiple choice and true/false questions focusing mostly on terminology and concepts. The second part consists of 50 multiple choice questions focusing on calculations and problem solving. A passing score is 70% or more correct. The exam is given twice a year in the spring and fall at the SCEA National Education Conference & Workshop. (SCEA, 2006)

(3) Certified Parametric Practitioner (CPP) — The Certified Parametric Practitioner certification is a new certificate offered by the International Society of Parametric Analysts (ISPA). This certificate provides professional recognition of a practitioner's education, job experience, knowledge, and skills. The first certification test was offered at the May 2002 ISPA Annual Conference in San Diego. To be eligible to take the written examination, the applicant must either have a college degree in a field of study directly related to parametric analysis (or at least ten courses related to estimating) and two years experience performing parametric analysis; an associate college degree and five years of experience in parametric analysis; or seven years of experience in parametric analysis with the submission of a brief biographical sketch demonstrating the applicant's ability or knowledge to pass the examination. The three-hour exam consists of 100 multiple-choice, fill in the blanks, and true/false questions. A passing grade is 75%. The exam is given once annually at the ISPA Conference. (ISPA, 2006)

4) Certified Cost Engineer/Consultant (CCE/CCC) — The Certified Cost Engineer/Consultant certification is offered by the Association for the Advancement of Cost Engineering, International (AACEI). The AACEI was formerly known as the American Association of Cost Engineering (AACE). There are 793 CCE/CCC certified professionals, making this the largest cost estimating certification in our study. This certification is intended to provide official and public recognition of expertise in the most current skills and knowledge of the cost estimating profession. To be eligible to take the CCE/CCC certification test, the applicant must have at least eight full years in the cost engineering profession (up to four can be substituted for by an engineering degree or a PE license.) To become a Certified Cost Engineer or Consultant, the applicant must pass a 7-hour test, as well as writing a 2,500 word minimum technical paper. The exam consists of 100 multiple-choice and compound questions. A passing grade is 70%. The exam is given twice a year in the summer and winter in various locations around the U.S.

The CCE certification is limited to those with a 4-year degree from an accredited engineering program. Additionally, in some states CCE certified people who are not licensed Professional Engineers (PEs) are not allowed to advertise themselves as having any engineering title (including that of Certified Cost Engineer). This is the purpose of the CCC certificate – to indicate that the holder has met all other requirements for being a Certified Cost Engineer, but either does not have a 4-year accredited engineering degree or is not permitted to use the CCE designation due to not being a licensed Professional Engineer (AACEI, 2006).

In Table 1, we summarize the general information about each certification. The CCE/A certificate, offered by SCEA, has been available since 1990. There are 432 people with this certificate. (Ceshire, 2006) AACEI

Table 1. General information about the certificates.

Certification	Organization Offering Certification	Members in Organization	People with Certification	Certifications Issued (2004)	Certifications Issued (2005)	First Year Certification Offered	Online Registration
Certified Professional Estimator (CPE)	American Society of Professional Estimators (ASPE)	2200	587	48	37	1976	No
Certified Cost Estimator / Analyst (CCE / A)	Society of Cost Estimating and Analysis (SCEA)	1222	432	21	42	1990	No
Certified Parametric Practitioner (CPP)	International Society of Parametric Analysts (ISPA)	280	21	4	NA	2002	No
Certified Cost Engineer / Consultant (CCE / CCC)	Association for the Advancement of Cost Engineering International (AACEI, formerly American Association of Cost Engineers)	5032	570 / 342	34 / 67	161 / 46	1976	https://www.aacei.org/certification/certapplication.shtml

and ASPE have been offering certifications since 1976, much longer than the other organizations. However, these certifications still have relatively small membership, with 912 CCE/CCC certificate holders (Williard, 2006) and 587 CPE certificate holders (Parrish, 2006). The newest certification, Certified Parametric Practitioner (CPP), is offered by ISPA, with the first certification test held in 2002, and currently has only 21 certificate holders. (Brown, 2005)

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Table 2. Contact information for organizations with headquarters inside the United States.

Certification	Organization Offering Certification	URL	Phone	Fax	Address	Email Address
Certified Professional Estimator (CPE)	American Society of Professional Estimators (ASPE)	www.aspenational.org	+615-316-9200	+615-316-9800	ASPE 2525 Perimeter Place Dr. Suite #103 Nashville, TN 37214	certification@aspenational.org
Certified Cost Estimator / Analyst (CCE / A)	Society of Cost Estimating and Analysis (SCEA)	www.sceaonline.org	+703-751-8069	+703-461-7328	SCEA 101 South Whiting St. Suite 201 Alexandria, VA 22304	scea@sceaonline.net
Certified Parametric Practitioner (CPP)	International Society of Parametric Analysts (ISPA)	www.ispa-cost.org	+858-592-5382	+858-592-5420	ISPA CPP Program Fred Tucker P.O. Box 9699 Canoga Park, CA 91309	douglas.druley@baesystems.com
Certified Cost Engineer / Consultant (CCE / CCC)	Association for the Advancement of Cost Engineering International (AACEI, formerly American Association of Cost Engineers)	www.aacei.org	+800-858-2678	+304-291-5728	AACE International 209 Prairie Ave. Suite 100 Morgantown, WV 26501	info@aacei.org

Table 3. Contact information for organizations with headquarters outside the United States.

Certification	Organization Offering Certification	URL	Phone	Fax	Address	Email Address
Certified Cost Engineer (CCE)	Dutch Association of Cost Engineers	www.napdace.nl	31 33 247 3460	31 33 246 0470	PO Box 1058 3860 BB Nijkerk The Netherlands	napdace@mos-net.nl
Certified Cost Engineer (CCE)	Association of Cost Engineers (United Kingdom)	www.acoste.org.uk	+44 (0)1270 764798	+44 (0)1270 766180	Lea House 5 Middlewich Rd. Sandbach Cheshire CW11 1XL United Kingdom	enquiries@acoste.org.uk
Practicante in Ingegneria Economica (PIE)	Associazione Italiana d'Ingegneria Economica (Italy)	www.aice-it.org	39 02 58304164	39 02 58300106	Via Luigi Castiglioni 120123 Milano ITALY	info@aice-it.org
Ingeniero en Costos (ICC)	Sociedad Mexicana de Ingenieria Economica, Financiera y de Costos (Mexico)	www.smiefc.com.mx	52 56 39 54 25	52 56 39 11 45	Anaxagoras No. 17-101, P.B. Col Narvarte Deleg. Benito Juarez Codigo Postal 03020 Mexico DF MEXICO	smiefc@prodigy.net.mx