

Becoming an IAF Certified™ Professional Facilitator (CPF)

A Facilitator is a content neutral person who uses effective processes to enable a group to make effective decisions and accomplish their task while supporting a collaborative and respectful environment that encourages full participation and helps groups overcome barriers to reaching their goal.

An IAF Certified™ Professional Facilitator (CPF) is a credentialed Facilitator who has demonstrated evidence of meeting the IAF Core Facilitator Competencies.

CPF Overview

In response to the needs of IAF members and their clients, IAF established the Professional Facilitator Certification Program. The Professional Facilitator Certification Program provides successful candidates with the professional credential “**IAF Certified™ Professional Facilitator**” (CPF), as signified by a Certificate. This credential is the leading indicator that the Facilitator has demonstrated each of the Core Facilitator Competencies.

The IAF is the only internationally recognized Facilitator association and the CPF is the only internationally recognized professional credential for Facilitators. You can only receive the CPF designation from the IAF. As of June 2007, the IAF has certified CPFs in 35 countries.

Why is it Important?

Becoming a CPF gives a Facilitator the opportunity to be assessed and receive valuable feedback from his or her peers. The IAF also becomes a valuable network resource. In addition, CPFs receive professional recognition that provides a competitive advantage. *Some organizations will not hire Facilitators unless they are a CPF.*

How?

To become a CPF requires a process as outlined below as well as meeting the Core Facilitator Competencies defined by the IAF.

The Process

The process to become a CPF is:

1. Get Trained.
2. Gain Experience.
3. Apply for Assessment (you have to be a member of the IAF to apply).
4. Be Assessed.

To maintain certification:

5. Maintain membership with the IAF.
 6. Continue Learning.
 7. Be recertified after 3 years.
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**1. Get Trained**

In being assessed, the candidate CPF has to document his or her training. Training may have taken place at any time. The Assessors are looking to see what type of training the candidate CPF has received – this helps determine what breadth of knowledge he or she may have gained. *Those who facilitate without having been trained often make too many mistakes, which affect the outcome, develop too many bad habits, which hinder the process, and lack sufficient tools to deal with Participants and reach consensus.*

Note: *Facilitation students should evaluate facilitator-training programs to ensure that they teach the IAF Foundational Facilitator Competencies and what students need to do to achieve them.*

2. Gain Experience

In being assessed, the candidate CPF also has to document his or her facilitation experience. It is required that the candidate CPF has facilitated at least 7 workshops during the past 3 years. This experience is important in applying what was learned and knowing how it works in practice. A properly trained Facilitator should be able to apply for assessment after the first 7 workshops.

3. Apply for Assessment

This is the easy step. The candidate CPF must be a member of the IAF to request the assessment application forms from their website – www.iaf-world.org. Assessment events are scheduled periodically around the world. The assessment application requests contact information, training, experience, and resume. The candidate CPF must describe 7 workshops briefly and 1 in detail. The assessment application is submitted with the fee and is then put through the first assessment.

4. Be Assessed

This is a 2-step process:

- Documentation Review – initial assessment.
- Assessment Day.

First Step - The Documentation Review is an initial assessment of the application submitted. The application is assigned to 2 Assessors. The Assessors look for evidence of training, experience, and having demonstrated the Core Competencies. The result is either a “pass” with an invitation to the Assessment Day, or a “defer” with feedback as to why the Assessors feel the candidate CPF was deferred. *One common reason for deferral is that many candidate CPFs are actually trainers who use the label “facilitator” and their experience shows that they have trained rather than facilitated.*

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**4. Be Assessed, continued**

Second Step – The Assessment Day. This generally occurs at an IAF conference usually 2 or 3 days prior to the conference. When invited to Assessment Day, candidates are given information regarding a Case Study and 2 assigned Assessors – this is sent weeks in advance of Assessment Day. Each candidate is responsible to prepare a Case Study as if this is a real workshop and contact the designated Assessor as if he or she is the client.

During Assessment Day, all of the candidates and Assessors meet for a morning briefing and the schedule for the day. The assessment begins with an initial interview. Assessors interview each candidate for 30 minutes. They are looking for clarification and evidence regarding the application ensuring that each candidate has not missed anything and that the candidates have demonstrated the Core Facilitator Competencies required.

After the interview, the candidates participate in the Case Study workshops facilitated by each other. Candidates are divided into groups of 5 to 7 candidates with 4 Assessors. The other candidates and 2 of the Assessors participate in each workshop. The remaining 2 Assessors evaluate the candidate's facilitation performance. Each candidate facilitates for 30 minutes. At the end of that time, the Assessors discuss the candidate's performance while another candidate sets up.

The final portion of the day is a second interview. The Assessors are looking for answers to any seemingly missed competency or clarification regarding what was done in the workshop. This lasts 30 minutes. At the end of the second interview, each candidate is told whether he or she receives a "pass" or a "defer" along with verbal feedback. *If deferred – he or she may reapply and be reassessed during the next three years.*

About 3 weeks after the assessment event, all candidates receive written detailed confidential feedback on his or her performance along with their certificate.

To Maintain Certification

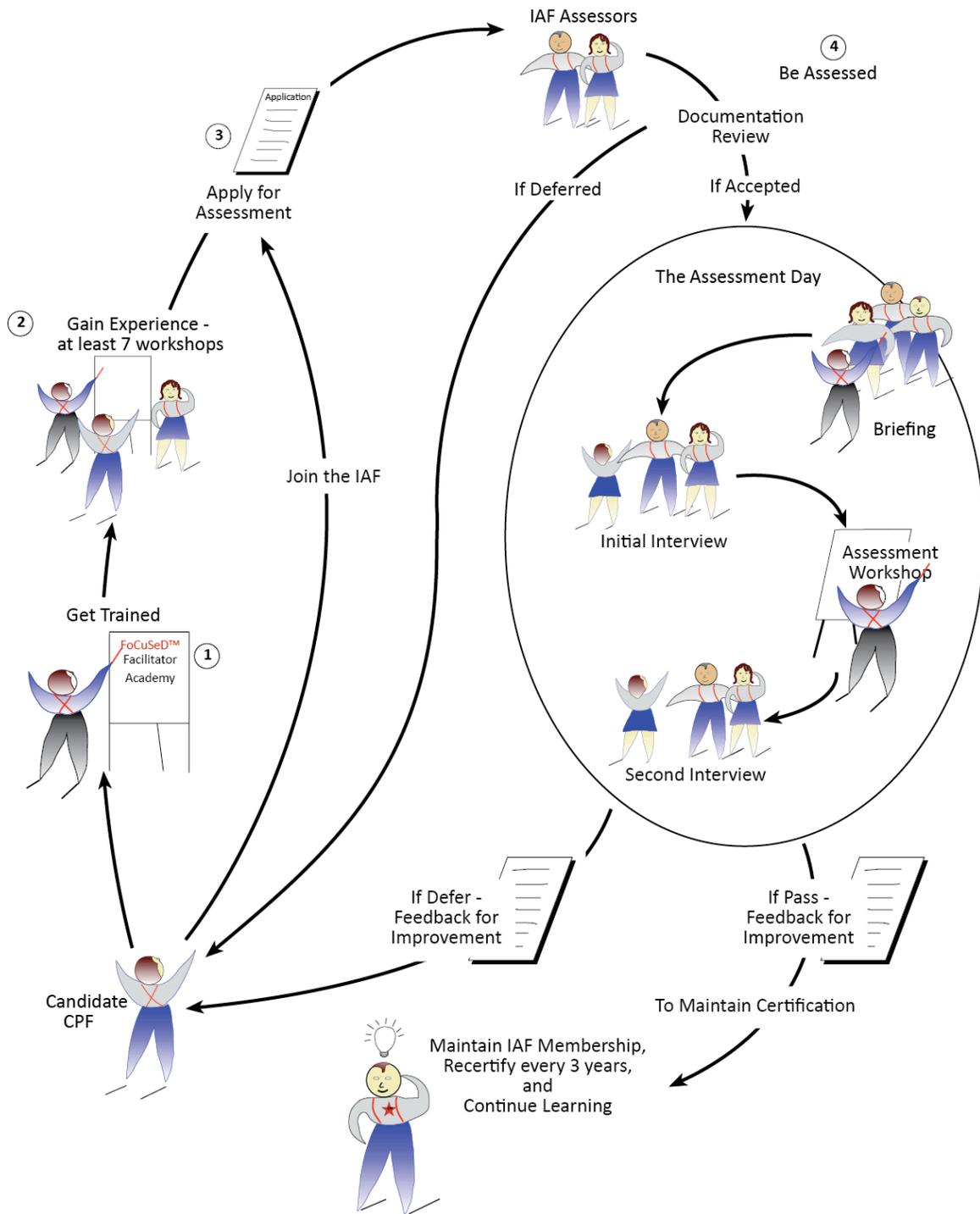
Gaining a CPF designation is only the beginning. To maintain certification, CPFs must also maintain membership with the IAF. Each CPF must be recertified every 3 years. As a CPF, it is important to continue learning, stay involved with and support the IAF and the CPF program, gain knowledge about the profession, and stay abreast of new trends and methods.

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Becoming an IAF Certified™ Professional Facilitator (CPF), continued

Achieving the designation IAF Certified™ Professional Facilitator (CPF) is an exciting and rewarding accomplishment.



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The Competencies

The following are the *Six Core Facilitator Competencies* as defined by the IAF:

- **Create Collaborative Client Relationships** – The Facilitator does proper preparation and designed processes for the client – to meet the client needs.
- **Plan Appropriate Group Processes** – The Facilitator designs appropriate processes and logistics to deliver the outcome and to support the participants.
- **Create and Sustain a Participatory Environment** – The Facilitator is able to manage conflict, communication and encourage participation.
- **Guide Group to Appropriate and Useful Outcomes** – The Facilitator is able to guide the group through the process, stay on track, and achieve the desired outcome.
- **Build and Maintain Professional Knowledge** – The Facilitator does not stop learning – he or she continues to be part of the profession and continues to learn new ideas and methods.
- **Model Positive Professional Attitude** – The Facilitator demonstrates a belief in the value of the group, remains neutral, and models appropriate behavior.

For more detailed information regarding the Six Core Facilitator Competencies, see the IAF website – www.iaf-world.org.

Summary

The IAF Professional Facilitator Certification Program provides an effective way to assess if a Facilitator can demonstrate meeting the Core Facilitator Competencies. Achieving the designation of IAF Certified™ Professional Facilitator (CPF) is an exciting and rewarding accomplishment.
