



Frequently Asked Questions about ACA Instructor Certification

Question:

What is the value of ACA Instructor Certification?

Answer:

The reasons to pursue certification are vastly different for each Instructor Candidate; however, what every person takes away from the certification workshop is remarkably similar. First, there is simply the experience gained and knowledge shared by fellow Candidates throughout the class. A lot of participants say they just want to be a “sponge” and absorb all kinds of teaching ideas and paddling information and skills. Second, through the certification process you’ll learn a specific and proven standard of practice. The Instructor Trainers will demonstrate and teach a central model to which you can add your own creativity and personality.

Question:

In what paddlesport disciplines does the ACA offer Instructor Certification?

Answer:

Instructor certification workshops are offered in a variety of craft and venues including river canoeing, touring canoeing, river kayaking, coastal (sea) kayaking, surf kayaking, rafting, and swiftwater rescue. There are also certificate endorsements for Adaptive Paddling for teaching those with physical disabilities, for rolling, canoe camping, sea kayaking traditional skills, and a variety of others.

Question:

How can I be sure I’m getting a good Instructor Trainer?

Answer:

All ACA Instructor Trainers (ITs) are evaluated by very high standards. ACA certification is about having a full grasp of the fundamentals of safe boating. Further, certification workshops are co-taught by at least one Instructor Trainer and one assistant who must also be a Certified Instructor or IT. This allows you two sets of approaches and personalities to “borrow” from while filing your own bag of teaching tricks.



Question:

Are the certification workshops small enough so that I can get adequate personal attention?

Answer:

Certification workshops usually consist of five to ten Instructor Candidates. You'll be given the opportunity to teach and to practice within a group environment yet still benefit from proven student-to-teacher ratios for safety and teaching effectiveness.

Question:

Does the ACA require Instructors to maintain any additional certification such as CPR?

Answer:

All ACA Instructors are strongly advised to obtain and maintain basic First Aid and CPR or a higher level of first responder qualifications.

Question:

What do I have to do to become an ACA Certified Instructor?

Answer:

In order to become an ACA Instructor, you must take both the Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) and the Instructor Certification Exam (ICE) from an Instructor Trainer (IT). IT's hold certification workshops in all disciplines and levels year round.

All certification courses are run on a pass/fail basis. You do not have to take any specific ACA courses as a pre-requisite for the IDW/ICE. All participants of IDW/ICE's **must** be current ACA members.

Once you have completed the ICE, you must register with the Safety Education & Instruction Council (SEIC) in order to receive your certification. Your Certification is not valid without both a current membership **and** current registration with the SEIC.



Question:

How much time does it take to become certified?

Answer:

The number of hours required for completion of the full certification workshop, including both the Instructor Development phase (IDW) and Certification exam (ICE) classroom and on-water segments varies depending upon the level of the course and type of certification. The minimum number of hours required for the “Introduction to Canoe” or “Introduction to Kayak” is sixteen hours, while more advanced certification levels may require more than 40 hours. Additional preparation time is usually necessary in advance or outside of the workshops.

Question:

How do these time requirements equate to course length in days?

Answer:

Over the years, we have learned that effective learning does not occur beyond 8 to 10 hours per day. Some levels of certification (such as the Intro to Canoe or Intro to Kayak) may be completed over an extended weekend. More advanced certifications, such as Whitewater or Open Water levels, may require 5 to 6 days. These workshops are often taught in two parts, the Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) followed by the Instructor Certification Exam (ICE). In these cases, participation in an IDW is required prior to the ICE. In some cases, there may also be a prerequisite that a Candidate have taken a basic workshop at the same level of intensity as the certification workshop he/she is pursuing.

Question:

What do I need to prepare to demonstrate during a certification workshop?

Answer:

Although each discipline has specific skills requirements, all Instructor Candidates are evaluated and tested on teaching ability, interpersonal skills, attention to safety, modeling skills and general paddlesport knowledge. Certification workshops require the ACA’s Instructor’s Manual, as well as discipline-specific materials.



Question:

How can I find an Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) and or an Instructor Certification Exam (ICE) in my area?

Answer:

There are a couple of ways to find either or both an IDW/ICE. You can check the ACA Instructor Course Calendar (use the “Calendars” button on the ACA webpage) to see if there will be any certification workshops in your area in the future.

If you don't see any courses scheduled for your area, you can contact the Divisional Instructor Facilitator (DIF) for your division and ask for their assistance in finding an Instructor Trainer (IT) in the discipline and level of your interest. A list of the DIFs can be found on the ACA Division webpage.

<http://www.americancanoe.org/divisions/divisions.lasso>

You can also contact the National office at instruction@americancanoe.org or call 703-451-0141 for further assistance.

Question:

How much does it cost to become a Certified Instructor with the ACA?

Answer:

Instructors pay both membership dues (\$40) and registration fees to the SEI Committee (\$25) annually. Costs for the Instructor Development Workshop and or Instructor Certification Exam vary and are set by the Instructor Trainer and host facility.

Question:

How long is my certification valid?

Answer:

ACA Instructor Certifications are valid through December 31st of the fourth year after passing the Instructor Certification Exam as long as the Instructor maintains current membership and SEIC registration. For example, if you became a certified Instructor during any month in year 2006, your certification is valid until December 31st, 2010. This is dependent on keeping both your ACA Membership and registration with the Safety Education & Instruction Committee current.



Question:
What do I need to do to renew my certification?

Answer:
During your four (4) years as an Instructor, you need to teach and report two (2) courses as well as take an Update course from an Instructor Trainer in your discipline. If you are a Whitewater Kayak Instructor, you need to take an Update at the Whitewater level or higher. If you still have questions, please review the SEIC policy manual which is available online at <http://www.americancanoe.org/PDF/seic-policy12-31-01.pdf>.

Question:
Are there any age restrictions?

Answer: Instructor Candidates must be at least 18 years of age to qualify for ACA Instructor Certification

Question:
My certification is about to expire. What can I do to maintain it?

Answer:
If you haven't had a chance to take an Update or teach and report two (2) courses during the four years as an Instructor, you can request a One (1) year Administrative Extension. The Administrative Extension will give you an extra year to complete either or all of the re-certification requirements. You can request only one (1) administrative extension per certification period. So if you were certified until December 31st of 2006 and requested an extension until 2007, you could not request another extension from 2006 to 2007.

You can request the Administrative Extension by emailing instruction@americancanoe.org . Within your email, please include:

- 1) Your Name & ACA #
- 2) Your formal request for the Administrative Extension
- 3) Your immediate plans to meet the re-certification requirements
- 4) Why you could not fulfill the re-certification requirements