

Request for ASRC Board Guidance relating to the Credentialing process
Distributed 15 August, 2015
Please send feedback to credentialling@asrc.net

To the ASRC Board,

The Credentialing group has been working on developing a system for certifying individual compliance with the ASRC training standards, and we have found several issues where we feel that guidance by the board would ensure that the final proposal best fits the needs of the ASRC and its groups. As such, I have presented in this document three areas where we would appreciate guidance. For each area, I have presented a number of potential approaches, and we are particularly interested in feedback from the board on the advantages and disadvantages of each approach, and which approach best suits the needs of the ASRC.

Please send feedback to credentialling@asrc.net, and if you wish to speak to me about anything, you are welcome to contact me directly at mccand@gmail.com, or call me at 617-510-5107. (I enjoy phone calls, but I am located in Hawaii at the moment, which is 6 hours earlier than the East Coast – please call me after noon Eastern time.)

Best Regards,
Ben McCandless

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1. Credentialing Board Composition

The ASRC board has expressed a desire to delegate the management of the Credentialing system to another body. Given that the ASRC is composed of groups with many different viewpoints, it follows that the operative body should be a board on which every group has the ability to place a representative. However, there are a number of approaches that could be taken in selecting how the board is structured.

Option 1: Board of GTOs

In this approach, the board would consist of the Group Training Officers, each of which is elected by their group.

An advantage of this approach is that the GTOs are already invested in the training program, are generally highly trained, and are generally quite active within their groups.

A disadvantage to this approach is that the GTO position is frequently one of the most demanding roles in an organization, and adding additional duties to these positions may be a non-starter.

Option 2: Board of Elected Group Members

In this approach, each group that wishes to be represented on the board is responsible for creating an elected position and a group member would be elected to the position on an annual basis.

An advantage of this approach is that it gives the members of each group a voice in the composition and management of the credentialing system.

A disadvantage of this approach is that group elections are frequently uncontested, and positions may go to someone who wants a voice in the process, regardless of their experience.

Option 3: Board of Appointed Group Members

In this approach, some portion of the leadership (the most likely is the Group Chair or the ASRC Representative) of each group that wishes to be represented on the board will appoint a member who meets the relevant minimum requirements for the position. A suggestion would be that the GTO be responsible for appointing an experienced group member to the board.

An advantage of this approach is that it is able to fill each position quickly.

A disadvantage to this approach is that it has an increased risk of abuse and politicization of the board.

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2. ASRC Examiner Qualification Process

The role of ASRC Examiner is a critical one in the new credentialing system. ASRC Examiner will be the members who will be interacting directly with other groups to determine if applicants who have completed their PTBs have sufficient mastery of the material covered in the training standards to be issued ASRC Credentials. Not only must these Examiners have a complete mastery of the material in the standards, able to teach material competently and succinctly, must be professional and consistent in their approach to evaluation, be responsible for reporting to the Credentialing Board promptly and accurately, and must be able to travel as needed to assist in the certification of the members of other groups.

Note: Considering the importance of this role, we strongly suggest that the conference make a point of publicly recognizing the contributions of these individuals on a regular basis. It is our hope that the public recognition will create prestige around the position that will encourage motivated group member to seek it.

Option 1: Relevant ASRC Certification Only

In this approach, any member who has achieved an appropriate certification would be considered to be an ASRC Examiner. For example, a member who is an ASRC FTL or higher might be considered to be acceptable as an examiner for FTM and FTL, and SM-II or higher might be considered acceptable for all Search Manager positions. (Other suggestions are welcome)

An advantage to this approach is that it is familiar: Currently, the possession of an FTL certification is considered sufficient to act as an evaluator within the individual groups.

A disadvantage to this approach is that it assumes that mastery of skills relevant to field or command post are sufficient to produce an acceptable evaluator who can fulfill the requirements listed above - it is not certain that this is the case.

Option 2: Relevant ASRC Certification Plus Appropriate Vetting

In this approach, a relevant ASRC Certification is necessary, but not sufficient. In addition, some application and approval process would be created, allowing the Credentialing Board to have some control over the composition of the corps of evaluators. An option would be limiting the number of evaluators that can be active within one group to some relatively small number, limiting the overall number, or limiting the number of applicants that can be accepted in a 1 year period. This would allow the conference to create an competitive application process, which may improve the quality of the accepted applicants.

An advantage to this process is that it allows the conference to select the best applicants to be examiners

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A disadvantage to this process is that it also does not ensure that the evaluator has the necessary skills to interact effectively with members and leadership of other groups.

Option 3: Relevant ASRC Certification Plus Appropriate Vetting and Training

In this approach, an applicant for the position of ASRC evaluator would need to have the relevant ASRC certification, would need to have passed the vetting process, and would need to take appropriate training relevant to the examiner position. The purpose of the additional training would be to convey the policies that ensure uniformity of action among all examiners and to make sure that the Examiners have the teaching and interpersonal skills that will be needed in the course of evaluating members of other groups.

An advantage to this approach is that it creates the most unified and consistent corps of Examiners of all the options discussed here.

A disadvantage to this approach is that the creation of a vetting process and training program will require significant effort, which will likely fall to the credentialing board.

3. Qualified Evaluator Evaluation process

The Qualified Evaluator serves as the first level of review of a member's skills. These evaluators operate at the group level by reviewing member mastery, and when satisfied, sign off skills in the member's PTB. This role is important to maintain, as these group-level evaluators are a gatekeeper to prevent unprepared applicants from flooding the conference-level evaluation process. Under the current standards, FTLs are considered to be given this role automatically, and their signature is considered proof that a member has demonstrated mastery of a skill without further review.

Note: That both evaluator and evaluatee are members of the same group, and that there is no external review of the evaluatee's conformance to the training standards is the reason that we are developing the new credentialing system in the first place.

Option 1: Appointment by GTO (Appropriate Vetting)

In this approach, the GTO would delegate authority to a number of group members who could serve as Qualified Evaluators within a group. Applicants would approach these appointees to have their PTBs signed off.

An advantage of this approach are that it gives the groups maximum flexibility for controlling the training and approval of their members.

A disadvantage of this approach is that it is difficult to ensure consistency if there is a transition between GTO's in a group. In a group going through a political upheaval, it is possible that good evaluators would be removed from the roles.

Option 2: Relevant ASRC Certification Only

This approach is the closest to the status quo - members who have FTL would automatically be a Qualified Evaluator for field skills. (Some further discussion would be needed to determine what the appropriate ASRC certification should be to approve Command Post skills.) GTO's currently have (and should retain in the future) the ability to review an applicant's skills and require further testing before approval is granted.

An advantage to this approach is that it is very similar to the current system, and so would require little in the way of transition, and is likely to be accepted by the groups.

Option 3: Relevant ASRC Certification Plus Appropriate Vetting

This is a combination of the two approaches above. For example, and FTL would require approval through an intra-group process in order to be permitted to sign off PTBs. It may be appropriate to leave the details of implementing such process to the group.

An advantage to this approach is that it allows a group to ensure that Qualified Evaluators are trusted, while the conference has confidence that the evaluators have demonstrated mastery of the skills themselves prior to evaluating others.

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A disadvantage to this system is that it may limit the pool of Qualified Evaluators significantly, resulting in a higher workload for those members who are Qualified Evaluators