APPALACHIAN SEARCH AND RESCUE CONFERENCE

Questions:

1. What about Groups who add standards above the ASRC minimum? Will they have to develop their own testing for this? Can they be added to the PTB? Can they be added to the written test? Examples: MSAR adds a lot to CQ, AMRG adds MRA standards to FTM and FTL. What is someone meets the ASRC CQ or FTM standards but fails the MSAR or AMRG standards? A disjunction between Group and ASRC credentialing would be bad.
2. Discussed in the Medical Committee:
   a. Medical Committee is working on some recommended additions to the FTM and FTL standards dealing solely with wilderness first aid issues relevant to their roles, probably not enough to meet WMS WFA standards. This would be more relevant than "Standard First Aid" which doesn't exist, nor "Basic First Aid" either. It would eliminate the need for external first aid certification.
   b. Could we offer additional evaluation to meet the WMS WFA standards and offer our own WFA competency certification? Would be a great service for members.
   c. Can we offer evaluation for medical levels, such as WFA, WFR, WEMT-B, to get away from outside certifications?

CREDENTIALING POLICY MANUAL

Edition 2015-10-23 DRAFT
October 2015

Contents

I. Reference Documents

- ASTM F3068 - 14
- http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1832-25045-2087/fqs_guide_2012dec.pdf
- ASRC FTM PTB
- ASRC FTL PTB

II. Definitions

- Applicant - person applying for an ASRC certification
- ASRC Credentialing Board – A group charged with maintaining the ASRC Credentialing System as defined in this document.
- ASRC Examiner - a member of the ASRC Evaluation and Training Cadre.
- Group Training Officer (GTO) - the group training officer responsible for developing the training program for an ASRC team. For the purposes of this document, this refers to the training officer responsible for the group to which the applicant belongs, unless otherwise specified.
- Member - a member of an ASRC team
- Qualified Evaluator (QE) – A person holding an ASRC certification of FTM, FTL, or SM-I through SM-IV. By definition, any ASRC Training Officer is a qualified evaluator.
- Subject Matter Block – A broad grouping of skills whose functions are related. For example, "Navigation" includes use of a map-, compass-, and GPS-related skills.

III. Initial Certification Process

1. The Group Training Officer for each ASRC group shall be responsible for developing a training curriculum that ensures that each team member is compliant with the ASRC training standards.
2. The GTO shall issue the appropriate Position Task Book (PTB) to each team member for each ASRC certification that the team member wishes to, and are eligible apply for.
3. At any time mutually agreeable time, a member may demonstrate mastery of a skill before a Qualified Evaluator. If the QE determines that the member's mastery of the skill is in compliance with the ASRC training standard, the QE shall sign and date the member's PTB.
4. A member shall begin the application process for an ASRC Certification by submitting a completed PTB to their GTO. All skill sign-offs must have been completed within the 36 months immediately preceding the completion and submission of the PTB.
5. The GTO shall review the PTB to ensure that all skill sign-offs are complete and current. If any deficiency is found, the PTB shall be returned to the applicant. If the PTB is complete and correct, the GTO shall:
   5.1. Sign and date the GTO approval form in the PTB.
   5.2. Send the PTB to the ASRC Credentialing Board.
   5.3. Issue a temporary certification to the applicant and notify the Credentialing Board of issuance
   5.4. Schedule a third-party examination, to take place within 60 days.
6. ASRC Examiners (either as individuals or as a group) will administer an evaluation to the applicant.

6.1. If the examination is not passed, the Examiner(s) will indicate areas in which the applicant needs to again demonstrate mastery to a Qualified Evaluator (Return to step 3, above). ASRC examiners shall not require applicants to demonstrate mastery of material in subject matter blocks that have been successfully completed.

6.2. If the examination, is passed, the Evaluator(s) will notify the applicant, sign and date the Examiner Approval Report in the PTB, and submit the form to the ASRC Credentialing board.

7. When the Credentialing Board receives a completed recertification packet with the GTO and Examiner approvals, the ASRC Credentialing Board shall review the packet, issue a decision on the applicant's recertification, and notify the applicant and GTO within 14 days.

7.1. If any defects are found, the PTB will be returned to the appropriate level of review. Guidance: As a rule, defects should be addressed in the way that requires the least remedial effort necessary. (For example: It shall not be necessary to repeat an examination after a defect in a single skill is addressed).

7.2. Upon acceptance of the Applicant's Completed PTB, the ASRC Credentialing Board shall issue a certificate as provided in Section VI.

IV. Initial Certification Examination Process

A. General

1. In order to be eligible for examination, an applicant must fulfil the following conditions:
   a. The applicant must have submitted a completed PTB to the applicant's GTO, and
   b. The GTO must have reviewed the applicant's submitted PTB for completeness, and approved the applicant for examination.
   c. If the applicant has previously been subject to an examination for the desired certification, the results of that examination must be submitted with the PTB. In this case, the exam will be targeted to areas in which the applicant had difficulty previously.

2. The applicant will be subject to a written exam and a practical exam (See sections B and C, below)

3. Both written and practical exams will be comprised of material drawn from "subject matter blocks" as specified for the certification being sought.

4. Once the applicant completes a subject matter block has been successfully with a passing score, the examiner shall sign-off that block. This endorsement shall be valid for 120 days

5. Once all subject matter blocks (written and practical) are completed and have valid endorsements, the examiner shall process the PTB as described in section III of this document.

6. If an applicant's score for a subject matter block is less than the minimum passing score, then the examiner shall not endorse the relevant portion of the applicant's PTB, but shall return the PTB to the applicant.

7. The practical exam shall require that at least 50% of the scenarios are administered and scored by an ASRC examiner who is not a member of the applicant's team.

B. Initial Certification Written Examination

1. A pool of multiple choice questions shall be maintained for each subject matter block.

2. When an exam is requested for an applicant, questions shall be randomly selected from the pool of questions maintained for each block according to the exam generation matrix (see Appendix A - Exam Generation Matrix).
3. The written test may be administered by any ASRC Examiner, including the GTO.
4. No test materials may remain in the possession of the applicant after the test is completed.
5. A key will be provided to the Examiner to ensure that the applicant receives prompt feedback following the test.
6. Irrespective of the applicant's score, a copy of the Applicant's exam answer sheet shall be signed by the examiner and sent to the ASRC Credentialing Board.
7. If the applicant wishes to challenge their score on the examination, they may submit a request in writing to the ASRC Credentialing Board. The Credentialing Board review shall be limited to: rescoring the exam and verifying the validity of questions which the applicant has specifically challenged.
   a. If a question is determined to be invalid, the score shall be updated as though that question were never part of the exam.
8. Every examination will be accompanied by a feedback form with instructions for the applicant to discuss any issues with any aspect of the examination. These forms shall be submitted to the ASRC Credentialing Board with the applicant's answer key.

C. Initial Certification Practical Examination

1. A pool of testing scenarios shall be maintained for each subject matter block.
2. When an exam is requested for an applicant, 2 scenarios shall be randomly selected from the pool of scenarios maintained for each block
3. Test scenarios for each subject matter block may administered by any ASRC Examiner, including the applicant's GTO, so long as no less than 50% of scenarios are scored by an Examiner from outside the applicant's group.
4. No test materials may remain in the possession of the applicant after the test is completed.
5. Examination instructions and grading criteria shall be provided to the instructor for each scenario
6. A key will be provided to the Examiner to ensure that the applicant receives prompt feedback following the test.
7. Irrespective of the applicant's score, a copy of the scoring sheets for each scenario shall be signed by the examiner and sent to the ASRC Credentialing Board.
8. If the applicant wishes to challenge their score on the examination, they may submit a request in writing to the ASRC Credentialing Board. The Credentialing Board review shall be limited to: rescoring the exam and verifying the validity of the scenario and relevant subcomponents which the applicant has specifically challenged.
   8.1. If a scenario is determined to be invalid, the applicant shall be asked to complete a replacement scenario from the same block.
   8.2. If a subcomponent of a scenario is determined to be invalid, the scenario shall be rescored as though that component did not exist.
9. Every examination will be accompanied by a feedback form with instructions for the applicant to discuss any issues with any aspect of the examination. These forms shall be submitted to the ASRC Credentialing Board with the applicant's answer key.

V.   Recertification Process

There are two pathways for recertification, both overseen by the Credentialing Board, and applicants may select whichever path best suits their needs.

A. Recertification by Continuing Education

Eligibility

1.   In order to be eligible for recertification by continuing education, the applicant must fulfil the following conditions:
    1.1.   The applicant must hold an unexpired, ASRC-issued certification, equivalent to the level at which recertification is being requested, that expires in one year or less from the present date.
    1.2.   The applicant must hold the required number of current Continuing Education Credits for recertification. In order to be considered current, Continuing Education Credits must have been earned since the applicant's most recent successful certification/recertification.

Process

1.   The applicant must submit a recertification packet containing proof of having completed the appropriate number of Continuing Education Credits to the applicant's training officer.
2.   The applicant's Group Training Officer shall review the recertification packet for completeness.
    2.1.   In the event that the packet does not meet the necessary requirements for recertification, the GTO shall return the packet to the applicant for revision.
    2.2.   If all requirements for recertification by continuing education are complete, the GTO will submit the recertification packet to the Credentialing Board.
3.   When the Credentialing Board receives a completed recertification packet with the GTO's approval, the ASRC Credentialing Board shall review the packet, issue a decision on the applicant's recertification, and notify the applicant and GTO within 14 days.
    3.1.   If any defects are found, the recertification packet will be returned to the appropriate level of review.
    3.2.   Upon acceptance of the Applicant's completed Recertification Packet, the ASRC Credentialing Board shall issue a certificate to the applicant indicating that they have successfully renewed their certification.

B. Recertification by Testing

Eligibility

1.   In order to be eligible for recertification by examination, an applicant must fulfil the following conditions:
    1.1.   The applicant must hold an unexpired, ASRC-issued certification, equivalent to the level at which recertification is being requested, that expires in one year or less from the present date.
    1.2.   The applicant must present a recertification form (found in the relevant PTB)
    1.3.   If the applicant's most recent recertification test for the current certification was not passed, the results of that examination must be submitted with the PTB. In this case, the exam will be targeted to areas in which the applicant had difficulty previously.

<u>Process</u>
1. The applicant will be subject to a practical exam (See section IV.C)
2. Practical exams will be comprised of material drawn from "subject matter blocks" as specified for the certification being sought.
3. Once the applicant completes a subject matter block has been successfully with a passing score, the examiner shall sign-off that block. This endorsement shall be valid for 120 days
4. Once all subject matter blocks are completed and have valid endorsements, the examiner shall process the PTB as described in section III of this document.

<u>Recertification Practical Examination</u>
1. A pool of testing scenarios shall be maintained for each subject matter block.
2. When an exam is requested for an applicant, 1 scenario shall be randomly selected from the pool of scenarios maintained for each block
3. Test scenarios for each subject matter block may be administered by any ASRC Examiner, including the applicant's GTO, so long as no less than 50% of scenarios are scored by an Examiner from outside the applicant's group.
4. No test materials may remain in the possession of the applicant after the test is completed.
5. Examination instructions and grading criteria shall be provided to the Examiner for each scenario
6. The Examiner shall provide prompt feedback to the applicant about their performance following the test.
7. Irrespective of the applicant's score, a copy of the scoring sheets for each scenario shall be signed by the examiner and sent to the ASRC Credentialing Board.
8. Every examination will be accompanied by a feedback form with instructions for the applicant to discuss any issues with any aspect of the examination. The feedback form shall be submitted to the ASRC Credentialing Board with the applicant's answer sheet.
9. If the applicant wishes to challenge their score on the examination, they may submit a request in writing to the ASRC Credentialing Board. The Credentialing Board review shall be limited to: rescoring the exam and verifying the validity of the scenario and relevant subcomponents which the applicant has specifically challenged. Requests to challenge the score must specify why the scenario or subcomponent is invalid, or specify the defect in grading that, when corrected, would result in a passing grade.
    9.1. If a scenario is determined to be invalid, the applicant shall be asked to complete a replacement scenario from the same block.
    9.2. If a subcomponent of a scenario is determined to be invalid, the scenario shall be rescored as though that component did not exist.

VI. Certificates

A. ASRC issued Credentials
Credentials issued by the ASRC shall be accompanied by a certificate that includes the following:
- The full name of the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference
- The ASRC logo
- The name of the member granted the certification

- The name of the certification granted
- Date of issued
- Date of expiration/recertification, which shall be determined according to the ASRC training standards
- The signature of the Conference Training Officer.
- The signature of the Group Training Officer

B. Temporary Credentials

In order to permit applicants to perform up to their maximum level of training in mission settings, Group Training officers may issue temporary credentials for applicants who have completed all requirements for a certification except ASRC administered testing. Such a credential shall be valid for 90 days, and may not be renewed. When a permanent credential is issued, the temporary credential shall be void. Temporary credentials shall take the form of a letter, and shall contain the following language.

> *[Current Date]*
>
> *To whom it may concern,*
>
> *I, [Name of Group Training Officer], currently Group Training Officer of [Group Name], member of the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference, do certify that [Name of Applicant] has completed all the requirements except testing for the certification of [Applicant's Certification Level]. This temporary credential permits [Applicant's Name] to respond to mission activity as [a/an] [Applicant's Certification Level] until [expiration date].*
>
> *[Group Training Officer Signature]*
> *[Group Training Officer Name]*
> *[Group Name]*
> *Appalachian search and Rescue Council*

VII.   Qualifications and Responsibilities

C. Qualified Evaluator

Responsibilities
- When an applicant wishes to apply for a certification, Qualified Evaluator will review the applicant's mastery of skills defined in the training standards.
- When a qualified applicant has demonstrated that their level of mastery complies with the training standards, the Qualified Evaluator will endorse the relevant section in the applicant's PTB.
- The Qualified Evaluator will operate under the authority of, and be supervised their GTO.

Qualifications
- *Guidance for Qualified Evaluator qualifications to be requested from ASRC Board*

D. ASRC Examiner

Responsibilities

- ASRC Examiners will operate under the authority of, and be supervised by the Credentialing Board.
- ASRC Examiners shall follow the operational policies promulgated by the Credentialing Board.

Qualifications

- *Guidance for ASRC Examiner qualifications to be requested from ASRC Board*

E. Credentialing Board

Responsibilities

- The Credentialing Board shall be charged with overseeing the ASRC credentialing system.
- The Chair of the Credentialing Board shall make a regular report to the ASRC Board of Directors. This report shall document all new certifications issued, and cover appropriate metrics about the performance of the Credentialing system, as defined by the ASRC Board of Directors.
- The Credentialing Board may appoint individuals, who may not be members of the board to manage certain functions
- The Credentialing Board shall implement and manage a Continuing Education Credit system.
  - The Credentialing Board may choose to offer Continuing Education Credits for participation in appropriate and relevant ASRC Events (Examples: Classes offered by the ASRC at ASRC AGMs, Participation in ASRC Mock Searches)
  - The Credentialing Board may, at its discretion, permit third-party educators to offer ASRC Continuing Education Credits. Documentation for each such educator, including vetting information and acceptance criteria will be maintained by the Credentialing Board.

Qualifications

- *Guidance for composition of the credentialing board to be requested from ASRC Board*

Appendicies

Appendix A - Exam Generation Matrix

	Number of questions in written examination					
Subject Matter Block:	FTM	FTL	SM-IV	SM-III	SM-II	SM-1
Outdoor Skills & Survival	10	6	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Communications	10	7	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Navigation	10	7	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Evacuation	10	7	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Search tactics	10	9	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Field Team Leadership	-	7	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Briefing/debriefing	-	7	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Total Questions	50	50				
Passing Score	80% (40)	80% (40)	70% (xx)	75% (xx)	80% (xx)	85% (xx)