CERTIFIED

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Candidate Handbook

PPA.com/CPP

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Introduction

What is a Certified Professional Photographer?

The Certified Professional Photographer credential was created in 1977 to identify professional photographers who have demonstrated technical competence through a written exam and photographic evaluation. The CPP Program empowers photographers to be more knowledgeable, successful, and technically equipped professionals in the industry.

Certification can give you an edge in:

- **Advertising:** Competition is very often fierce among professional photographers and differentiating yourself from the masses is crucial. Becoming a CPP instantly distinguishes you as someone who is serious about the business of photography.

- **Pricing:** One significant challenge often faced by professional photographers is justifying prices. Clients don't always understand how or why your prices are set the way they are. However, being a CPP allows you to easily explain the value in choosing your services.

- **Confidence:** When prospective clients learn about the effort that goes into becoming a CPP and that you must recertify every three years, they will quickly understand how seriously you take continued education and training when compared to the competition.

> *"Earning my CPP designation has been a bucket-list item for me for several years. I wanted to complete the process for confidence in my skill set. Being self-taught, success in the CPP process has increased my confidence as a professional photographer. Additionally, I was able to gain clarity and further my education on topics that I was uncertain on or had little knowledge in. I highly recommend the process as a great tool for continued learning, personal growth, and increased professionalism and look forward to the new opportunities that will be afforded to me as a certified professional photographer."*
>
> Darren J. Thompson, CPP
> Thompson Photography + Design
> Eastover, NC

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Steps to Becoming Certified

1. **Join Professional Photographers of America (PPA)** if you are not already a member.

2. **Declare your candidacy.** To do this, simply fill out the candidacy form. In this step, you will also need to pay the $200 application fee. Your candidacy will be valid for two years.
   Sign up using this form!

3. **Prepare for the exam.** There are many resources provided to help you prepare for your Certification exam. Take advantage by visiting the CPP Exam Resources section of our website. We suggest downloading the CPP Test Outline which has the exam sections and number of questions in each section. You can test your knowledge with the CPP Keywords, browse the suggested reading material, review the CPP Flashcards and take a Sample CPP Exam.

4. **Take the exam.** Once you feel confident you are ready to take the exam, you will need to register for the online exam through ProctorU. To pass the exam, a score is a 70% or above is needed. Score notifications are sent via email approximately 24-72 hours after the testing date.

5. **Submit images for the Technical Image Evaluation.** Once you have passed the exam, you are eligible to submit. Each Image Evaluation will demonstrate three images. Please use the Technical Image Evaluation Guide and Sample Images to set up your evaluation. Make sure to reference the Equipment List for required and suggested equipment. You can submit your images as many times as needed within your TWO (2) year candidacy period. *Should you not pass the technical image evaluation within your candidacy period, you can reapply for a one-year candidacy extension for the cost of $100.*

6. **Celebrate!!** Once you get your certification, give yourself a break and celebrate…
   You'll deserve it!

CPP Exam Overview

Once you have declared your candidacy to become a Certified Professional Photographer, it is time to get ready to take your exam. Use the resources below to help you prepare!

Online Study Resources

- Sample tests
- CPP Exam Prep Videos
- Flash Cards
- CPP Keywords
- Suggested Reading
- CPP Exam FAQ's
- Detailed Test Specifications

Exam Sections:

Camera, Lenses, and Attachments
Items relating to this category will include digital cameras as well as the various lenses, menu settings, and attachments that might be utilized.

Exposure and Meters
Items measuring this set of specifications will include: (1) how to meter for the correct exposure; and (2) the relationship between shutter speed and f-stop.

Lighting
This portion of the examination will measure (1) how to best light the subject; (2) possible types of lighting (Studio, Ambient, Flash, Daylight); (3) lighting design; and (4) lighting equipment.

Composition and Design
Items relating to this area will focus on the following topics: (1) Subject placement within image area; (2) Special effects, including props; (3) location; (4) clothing; (5) posing; (6) color harmony/ color wheel; and (7) coordination of background and subject.

Digital Post Production
Items measuring this specification will include: (1) color space; (2) file formats and resolution; (3) color management; (4) digital manipulation; and (5) storage. Basic knowledge of post-production software will be necessary.

Image Capture and Output
Items included in this section will measure image capture and output options (paper, electronic, web, etc.).

Technical Image Evaluation Overview

Once you have passed your exam, the next step is submitting your images to the Technical Image Evaluation. Use the online resources to help you navigate the Technical Image Evaluation process and get your images ready!

Review the Technical Image Evaluation: Overview and Resources and Evaluation FAQs.

- ☐ Order your Technical Image Evaluation Kit from BlickU
- ☐ Submit your Technical Image Evaluation during any evaluation period – they take place five (5) times a year.
- ☐ Each image must satisfy all the criteria listed in the Technical Image Evaluation Checklist and ALL THREE images must pass for you to obtain your certification. **If one or more of your images does not pass, you will only need to resubmit the failed image(s) in another evaluation period.**
- ☐ You will be notified via email when an evaluation period opens or you can log on to your MyPPA dashboard and navigate to the myAchievements tab; select "Certifications" to expand the selection where you can view the option to “Upload Evaluation”.
  - You may upload your evaluation during any open evaluation period. Please note: the upload evaluation button will only be visible during the two-week period the evaluation is open.
- ☐ Results will be sent approximately 3 weeks from the Technical Image Evaluation deadline.

<u>Resources:</u>

- BlickU Ordering Guide
- Setup Guide
- Equipment List
- Evaluation Criteria Checklist
- Electronic Flash Lighting Setup Guide
- Continuous Light Setup Guide
- Natural Light Setup Guide
- Electronic Flash Lighting Diagram
- Continuous Light Diagram
- Natural Light Diagram
- FAQs

Watch the Technical Image Evaluation videos to help you through the process.

- Setup Guide for CPP Technical Image Evaluation Video
- Metering Basics for CPP Technical Image Evaluation Video
- Tips for CPP Technical Image Evaluation Video

Select a lighting scenario to complete your evaluation:

- Electronic Flash Scenario for CPP Technical Image Evaluation Video
- Continuous Light Scenario for CPP Technical Image Evaluation Video
- Natural Light Scenario for CPP Technical Image Evaluation Video

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Technical Image Evaluation – Quick Guide

You've passed the CPP Exam and are now ready to submit your 3 images for the Technical Image Evaluation. Here's your quick guide for the evaluation process. For more resources visit PPA.com.

① ORDER

Order your Technical Image Evaluation Kit from BlickU.

Item	Quantity
Canson Mi Teintes drawing papers: 19" x 25", gray, single sheet	3
Styrofoam blocks and shapes – ball	1
Crayola crayon – set of 8 crayons	1
Sharpie marker – black	1
Blick hardwood manikin – 12"	1

② PREPARE

Select a lighting scenario. Choose one lighting setup to create the three assigned images. Read each lighting setup closely to meet image requirements.

Three Assigned Images:

Image 1 – Straight on
Image 2 – Minimum depth of field
Image 3 – Maximum depth of field

Lighting Scenarios (choose 1 option):

Option 1: Electronic flash
(speed lights, studio, location strobes)
Option 2: Continuous light (modeling, tungsten, LED)
Option 3: Natural light (window, natural, available light)

③ PHOTOGRAPH

Set up your materials and lights per evaluation guidelines and photograph your 3 images. Use your Evaluation Checklist and other resources for help!

④ SUBMIT

To submit images, log on to your MyPPA account and navigate to myAchievements and select Certification, to upload your images during a scheduled Technical Evaluation period. All three images must pass to earn your CPP!

Remember: Submit all images in RAW format.

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Certification Technical Image Evaluation Checklist

After you have created your images for evaluation, make sure you check your work before uploading. Your submission must meet all the following requirements in order to pass this portion of the evaluation and to acquire your certification. **All the images will be checked against the following criteria**:

- ☐ **All approved kit items are used.**
- ☐ **All images are submitted unedited in RAW format.**
- ☐ **Layout/Composition**:
  1. Manikin is placed in the center of the composition with arms down at side standing straight, set of 8 crayons out of the box (black crayon required) are on the left-hand side of image, styrofoam ball on the right slightly in front of manikin, and black Sharpie (cap removed and placed on the end of the marker) in front of the Styrofoam Ball. This must match the example images.
  2. All items are within the frame and no items are cropped from the image. All kit items are placed in the center of the composition.
  3. Gray paper acts as background.
- ☐ **Images fill the frame**: There should not be any floor space showing outside of the gray paper.
- ☐ **Camera Angle**: Angle of view and orientation of the set up should match the example image.
  1. Image 1 – Straight on, Portrait orientation
  2. Image 2 – Overhead, Landscape orientation
  3. Image 3 – Overhead, Landscape orientation
- ☐ **White Balance**:
  - For lighting scenario 1 white balance is within 5000-6000K.
  - For lighting scenario 2 or 3 white balance is custom set.
- ☐ **Exposure:** Submitted files should be properly exposed with minimal clipping of shadows or highlights.
  - Acceptable highlight range: 220-250
  - Acceptable midtone range: 195-230
  - Acceptable shadow range: 5-35
- ☐ **Direction of Light:** The main light should be on camera-left side of all images and each image should show proper light direction and dimension.
- ☐ **Sharpness:** Each image will be checked for correct sharpness.
  1. Image One: The set of items should be acceptably sharp with the background appearing softer as shown in the example images.
  2. Image Two: The top point of the manikin's head should be acceptably sharp, and the rest should fall off in sharpness.
  3. Image Three: The entire image should display acceptable sharpness all the way through.
- ☐ **Metadata:** All submitted files will be checked for the following in the metadata.
  1. Camera settings match the written instructions for *f*/stop.
  2. The lens focal length should be between 70-105mm or equivalent.
  3. The date created should time stamp within 90 days of submission.

TIP: view all three of your images together in compare mode to make sure exposures are consistent throughout your evaluation. Please double check your images prior to submission to ensure that you have met all requirements. Good luck!

CONGRATULATIONS
You are a Certified Professional Photographer (CPP)!

Once you have passed your CPP Exam and your Technical Image Evaluation, you will officially be a ***Certified Professional Photographer***! WOOHOO! Certification shows your commitment to provide a comprehensive client experience and demonstrate continued professional development. Remember, it will be up to you to educate your clients and prospects about what certification is and why they should hire a CPP. We want to help by providing you with a bunch of **FREE** resources!

You worked hard to earn your designation, so we want you to show it off! In the mail you will receive your coveted gold tube which will include your CPP Certificate as well as your CPP pin, decal, and sticker! You will also have access to the CPP-only section of PPA.com. This section is exclusive to CPPs and has all your marketing goodies including:

- See the Difference Marketing Campaign
  - Landing page and editable flyers
- Video Resources
- CPP Branded Apparel
- CPP Facebook page
- CPP Marketing Toolkit
  - Logos & Buttons
  - CPP Logo (HTML) for posting on web sites
  - CPP Logo Templates for business cards, Facebook, Twitter and email
  - Sample Press Release
  - Recertification Sample Press Release
  - How to Use Your Certification Materials
  - Certification Flyer
  - 10 Ways to Market Your CPP
  - Social Media Tips
  - Certification for LinkedIn

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Recertification

Every 3 Years, CPPs must recertify by submitting 15 Continuing Education Units (CEU's) or retaking the CPP Exam.

Please review the chart below to learn how to earn CEUs or where CEUs may fall under the CEU point structure.

Units Earned	Continuing Education Unit Options
8	• Imaging USA • International Convention (hosted outside of the U.S of at least 3 days)
5	• Any face-to-face professional photographic development program lasting 5 days • Teaching or speaking any PPA affiliated seminar/workshop lasting 5 days
4	• Any face-to-face professional photographic development program lasting 4 days • Teaching or speaking any PPA affiliated seminar/workshop lasting 4 days
3	• Any face-to-face professional photographic development program lasting 3 days • Teaching or speaking any PPA affiliated seminar/workshop lasting 3 days
2	• Any face-to-face professional photographic development program lasting 1.5 - 2 days • Teaching or speaking any PPA affiliated seminar/workshop lasting 1.5 - 2 days
1	• Any face-to-face professional photographic development program lasting 1 day (6+ hrs) • Teaching or speaking any PPA affiliated seminar/workshop lasting 1 day (6+ hrs)
0.5	• Any face-to-face professional photographic development program lasting ½ day (3+ hrs) • Teaching or speaking any PPA affiliated seminar/workshop lasting ½ day (3+ hrs)
0.25	• Any face-to-face professional photographic development program lasting 1 – 2.5 hrs • Teaching or speaking any PPA affiliated seminar/workshop lasting 1 – 2.5 hrs
0.25	• PPA or PPA affiliate online content - 1 hour of content = 0.25* (videos, webinars, Facebook Live) *Maximum of 10 CEUs may be submitted for online education

To Recertify:

Fill out and submit with payment the CPP Recertification Form. Recertification CEUs can be any professional development or industry-related education.

The $100 recertification fee is waived if any of the following requirements are met:

- CPP has attended Imaging USA for the past three consecutive years

No CEUs?

You have the option of retaking the CPP exam if you have not accumulated the 15 CEUs required to recertify.

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