CERTIFIED
PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Candidate Fact Sheet

The Certified Professional Photographer designation acknowledges and validates a consistent standard by which professional photographers can achieve and maintain a recognizable mark of excellence.

What Is Certification?

The certification of specialized skill-sets affirms a knowledge and experience base for practitioners in a particular field, their employers and the public at large. Certification represents a declaration of a particular individual's professional competence.

Why become a Certified Professional Photographer?

Certification helps show your potential clients the value in hiring a qualified professional. Consumers might not know much about professional photography, but they understand that certification means professional-quality goods and services. Anyone can buy a camera and take some pictures, but a Certified Professional Photographer (CPP) designation shows clients that you are a true professional.

Clients in every industry seek out credentialed professionals, as the public recognizes certification as a sign that one is an authority in the field. The CPP designation offers potential clients an assurance, not just of quality, but of technical skill and artistic expertise.

"It can sometimes be difficult for a consumer to know which photographer to choose and being a CPP is something that sets me apart from the hundreds of other 'photographers' in our area. The way that I look at it is if I were going to get my hair cut by a new hairdresser for the first time, I am going to look for someone who has been to beauty school and who has the license to prove it, not just some random person who says, 'Oh I've been cutting hair for years. Who needs a beautician license?' Combined, my partner and I have been full-time professional photographers almost 30 years AND we have a studio that sets us far apart from most of our competition. We still felt that getting our CPP was the way to differentiate ourselves even more."

– Tracy McGee, CPP

The CPP Advantage

1 Advertising Edge
Trust is key in any relationship. Potential clients want a photographer they can count on, and certification gives them that extra level of confidence. With countless photographers advertising in the same markets, it's not always easy to get them through your studio doors. Your CPP designation will help you stand out from the crowd.

2 Pricing Justification
The digital era has made it much easier for inexperienced photographers to throw their hat into the ring, undercutting professionals with rock-bottom prices. The Certification designation helps consumers understand and appreciate your level of experience and talent.

3 Peer-Validation
You can't just declare yourself certified. Certification is granted by PPA. That speaks volumes to potential clients about your skill. When potential clients become aware that CPPs must recertify every three years, they understand that education, training and the latest industry techniques and skills are important to you and your images.

4 Confidence Boost
Perhaps most importantly, you'll gain a massive confidence boost in yourself as a photographer and businessperson. This will carry over to your clients as well!

How to Become a CPP? 4 Easy Steps:

1 **Declare your candidacy**
Simply fill out the candidacy form. The form, fee information, timelines and all other certification-related information including lots of FAQs can be found on: ppa.com/cpp.

2 **Prepare for the exam**
All candidates have access to a hefty online library of resources! Once you have declared your candidacy, check them out at: ppa.com/cpp/resources.

3 **Take the exam**
Once you feel confident you are ready, register for an exam. The exam schedule is updated weekly and you can register online directly from: ppa.com/cpp/exam.

4 **The Image Submission follows the exam**
You will receive a set of email instructions to help you submit your portfolio. Plenty of information is online to help you along the way. Simply go to ppa.com/cpp/resources.

Certified Professional Photographer Exam

The exam is comprised of 100 multiple choice questions each worth one point. The material is pulled from test specifications found at ppa.com/cpp.

You will have two hours to complete the exam and must answer at least 70% correctly to pass.

You may take the exam as many times as you wish (once every 30 days) at no extra cost, within your two-year candidacy period.

The resources available online to you to help you prepare for the exam consist of:

- Test specifications
- Flash cards
- Keywords
- Exam FAQs
- Sample test
- Suggested reading list
- CPP Prep classes

Certified Professional Photographer Image Submission

After you have passed the CPP exam, you will be eligible to submit your portfolio for review. There are five Image Submission periods per year, each opened for two weeks at a time.

In this process, you will be required to submit a 15-image portfolio. The first six images must fit within the compulsory guidelines showing your standardized technical proficiency. The remaining nine images must each come from different paid job assignments from the last 24 months.

You will be able to submit your portfolio for review up to three times until it passes, without incurring any extra charges. During the process you will have access to useful preparation resources such as:

- Image Submission requirements & sample images
- Image Submission compulsory videos
- Image Submission articles & tips
- Image Submission prep class
- Image Submission FAQs

Certified Professional Photographer Recertification

Once you've earned your CPP designation, you will need to recertify every three years.

To recertify, 15 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are required, along with a payment of $100. The $100 recertification fee is waived if you attend Imaging USA three years in a row.

The CEU system involved in the CPP recertification process is there to encourage you to continue your journey in photography education and the photographic community.

Once you become Certified

You will have access to the CPP-only section of **ppa.com/cpp**. This private area has all the marketing, social media and branding tools you will need to start letting your clients know you are certified!

Resources in this CPP-only section include:

- How to use your CPP video
- CPP marketing tool kit
  - CPP logo
  - Logo templates for your social media accounts, business cards and email signature
  - Sample press release
  - How to use your Certification materials
  - Why Hire a CPP? flyer
  - 10 Ways to Market your CPP article
  - Social Media tips
- See the Difference® marketing campaign
  - Video: See the Difference® a CPP Makes
  - Editable brochure: See the Difference®
- Additional video resources (also downloadable!)
- CPP-only communities on theLoop and Facebook
- Landing page for your own website's use: Why Hire a CPP?

Questions about getting Certified?
Call or email us:
800.786.6277 • cppmailbox@ppa.com

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