



IAAPA
Certification

IAAPA CERTIFICATION APPLICATION GUIDEBOOK



Ver 2.0 March 2015

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This section contains notes and explanations on each section of the application form.

Certification Resources

Click on the links below to access these online resources

[IAAPA Certification Application Form](#)

Use this form to complete and submit your IAAPA Certification application

[IAAPA Credit Hour Estimator](#)

Use this online tool to estimate the credit hours that you think you have earned. It also lists the courses, events and activities that can earn credit hours for IAAPA certification.

[IAAPA Education Subjects and Domains](#)

This link contains a list of the IAAPA domains and subject areas.

[Courses Pre-approved for Credit Hours](#)

This link contains a list of industry courses that IAAPA recognizes and has pre-approved for credit hours.

This handbook contains all the policies and procedures related to application and candidacy for the IAAPA Certified Attraction Manager, (ICAM) Leader (ICAL) or Executive (ICAE) Designation.

It is the responsibility of each applicant or candidate to be aware of these guidelines and to meet all required deadlines.

This version of the IAAPA Certification Handbook was released on March 31st 2015 and supersedes all previous versions.

Contact Information and Advice

International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions

For questions about the IAAPA Certification program on:

- General Inquiries (e.g., deadlines, documentation)
- Specific Application Inquiries (e.g., confirm receipt)
- Financial (e.g., payment receipts, refunds)
- Course validation Questions
- Calculating Continuing Education Credit Hours

Please contact:

Eamon Connor

Director, Education and Certification Programs

Email: econnor@iaapa.org

Address

IAAPA Certification

1448 Duke St

Alexandria VA 22314

Tel: 703-836-4800

Office Hours

IAAPA office hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (09:00 – 17:00) U.S. Eastern Time.

Website

The IAAPA website, www.IAAPA.org, is a valuable resource for IAAPA Certification candidates. In addition to certification program information, the site includes information on other IAAPA events and programs many of which are eligible for credit hour recognition.

Policy changes, date changes and new programs will be updated on the IAAPA website.

About IAAPA Certification

About This Guidebook

This guidebook explains the steps that an applicant needs to take to earn one or more of IAAPA's three designations: IAAPA Certified Attractions Manager (ICAM), IAAPA Certified Attractions Leader (ICAL), and IAAPA Certified Attractions Executive (ICAE). It also contains the application form, answers to frequently asked questions, a list of programs, events, activities by which a candidate can earn credit hours, and a list of industry courses pre-approved by IAAPA for credit hour recognition.

About IAAPA Certification

Professional certification is an important step in the career track of leaders in all industries. It enhances professional stature among one's peers and recognizes those who have gone beyond expectations to be the best that they can be. It makes a statement to those with whom we do business, provides a leveraged position from which to negotiate, helps build career success, and sets higher standards for the attractions industry.

IAAPA's Certification Program

The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) launched its certification program in 2012 to enhance the knowledge and performance of attractions professionals, to promote the status and credibility of the attractions profession, and to advance uniform standards of practice.

Earning one of IAAPA's certification designations is the mark of professional achievement in the attractions industry. It helps drive professional self-confidence, opens doors, creates connections, and offers widespread value and recognition for certification holders.

Those who obtain the IAAPA Certification designations experience:

Recognition: As the premier industry recognition, IAAPA certification distinguishes holders as career professionals who have demonstrated a high level of experience, skill and knowledge.

Competitive Advantage: The designations convey credibility to an attraction professional's opinions and ideas, both at work and in the greater attractions, amusement, and leisure industry.

Peer Acceptance: Holders of IAAPA Certification are immediately recognized by their peers as fellow professionals committed to the advancement of the profession.

Salary Enhancement: Certified attractions professionals can use the certification as a competitive advantage when it comes to negotiating salaries and other business.

Personal Achievement: Being awarded one of the three levels of IAAPA certification provides a sense of personal and individual achievement as a skilled professional.

What is IAAPA Certification?

IAAPA offers three levels of certification:

- IAAPA Certified Attractions Manager (ICAM)
- IAAPA Certified Attractions Leader (ICAL)
- IAAPA Certified Attractions Executive (ICAE)

Who is Eligible to Apply for IAAPA Certification?

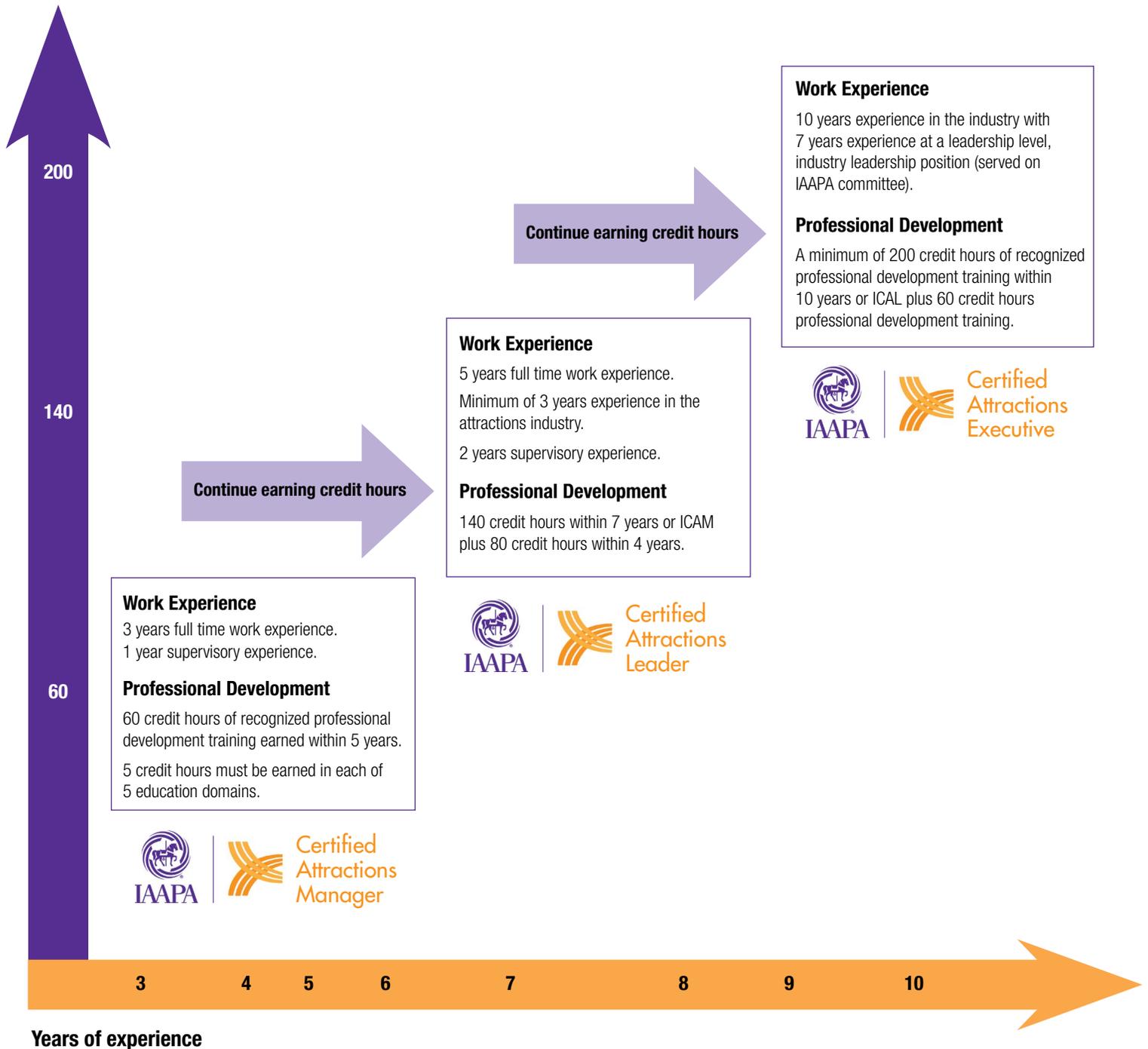
Eligibility for certification is determined by a combination of years of experience gained in the attractions industry and by earning professional development credit hours. Credit hours can be earned through a variety of channels including formal education, completing IAAPA professional development courses, attendance at many IAAPA educational events and programs, as well as serving on IAAPA committees or by taking a leadership role in the association or in the industry. In addition, IAAPA recognizes other amusement industry professional development and training programs for credit hours purposes. Many of these courses have already been pre-approved. [A list of these courses is available here.](#)

Do I need to be an IAAPA member to apply for certification?

No. There is no membership requirement to apply for the IAAPA certification. IAAPA members and nonmembers will be evaluated equally on the application.

Path to IAAPA's Certification

Credit Hours





IAAPA Certified Attractions Manager (ICAM)

This certification is designed for people who have at least 3 years work experience and who are planning to make the attractions industry their career. Candidates for ICAM should possess at least one-year of supervisory experience as well as demonstrate a basic understanding of five core areas of the attractions industry:

- a) Marketing – public relations, advertising, social media, etc.
- b) Revenue operations – food & beverage, games, retail, etc.
- c) Finance – accounting, P&L, per-caps, etc.
- d) Leadership/Human Resources – personnel management, supervisory skills, guest relations, etc.
- e) Safety/Operations – safety standards, safe ride operations and maintenance, etc.

Who do we envisage will apply for the IAAPA Certified Attraction Manager Designation?

The types of employees who IAAPA envisages would apply for this level of certification are as follows:

- Employees newly promoted to full-time status from part-time or seasonal status.
- New hires to a park or attraction.
- Employees have entered the industry laterally from other industries, for example from the hotel industry.

To achieve ICAM designation you will need to have:

Work Experience

- 3 years' full time work experience. The work experience can be in any industry not necessarily the attraction industry.
- 1 year supervisory experience.

Professional Development

- A minimum of 60 credit hours of recognized professional development training earned within 5 years.

Note:

5 credit hours must be earned within each of the following domains:

- a) Marketing
- b) Revenue operations
- c) Finance
- d) Leadership/Human Resources
- e) Safety/Operations



Certified
Attractions
Leader

IAAPA Certified Attractions Leader (ICAL)

This level of certification is designed for someone who has chosen the attractions industry as their profession. The candidate for this level of certification will have demonstrated a deeper understanding of all operations within an attraction. In addition, the candidate for this certification will have been involved in the creation and execution of a business development strategy for their team, division, organization or industry.

The second level of certification focuses on a candidate's ability to analyze information and make sound decisions within the attractions industry.

Who do we envisage will apply for IAAPA Certified Attraction Leader Designation?

The types of employees who IAAPA envisages would apply for this level of certification are as follows:

- Current ICAM holders.
- Employees newly promoted into a leadership position.
- Department heads, Directors, Vice Presidents, etc.
- Employees who have made the industry their career choice.

To achieve ICAL designation you will need to have:

Work Experience

- 5 years' full time work experience.
- Minimum of 3 years' experience in the attractions industry.
- 2 years' supervisory experience.

Professional Development

- 140 credit hours within 7 years.

or

- ICAM plus 80 credit hours within 4 years.

Note:

5 credit hours must be earned within each of the following domains:

- a) Marketing
- b) Revenue operations
- c) Finance
- d) Leadership/Human Resources
- e) Safety/Operations



Certified
Attractions
Executive

IAAPA Certified Attractions Executive (ICAE)

The IAAPA Certified Attractions Executive (ICAE) is the highest level of IAAPA certification. This certification is for people who have built their career in the attractions industry. The candidates for this level of IAAPA certification are seen as leaders in the attractions industry.

Who do we envisage will apply for IAAPA Certified Attraction Executive Designation?

The types of employees who IAAPA envisages would apply for this level of certification are as follows:

- Current ICAL holders
- General Managers, Owner Operators, Park Presidents, Senior VPs

To achieve ICAE designation you will need to have:

Work Experience

- 10 years' experience in the industry with 3 years experience at a leadership level.
- Assumed an industry leadership position (served on IAAPA committee).

Professional Development

- A minimum of 200 credit hours of recognized professional development training within 10 years.

or

- ICAL plus 60 credit hours professional development training.

Note:

5 credit hours must be earned within each of the following domains:

- a) Marketing
- b) Revenue operations
- c) Finance
- d) Leadership/Human Resources
- e) Safety/Operations

Professional development, training or education must come from a source recognized as credible by IAAPA. The training could come from attending IAAPA expo sessions, IAAPA webinars or IAAPA on-line courses.

Steps to Become IAAPA Certified

STEP 1

Visit the IAAPA website for information on certification:

iaapa.org/events-education/education/iaapa-certification-program

Download or read this guide-book: The IAAPA Certification Application Guidebook (v2.0).

STEP 2

Download and complete the IAAPA Credit Hour Estimator.

Use this to calculate how many credit hours that you think you may have earned. IAAPA can provide a transcript of courses, programs, and events that you may have attended including the credit hours that participation in each event has earned. To order an IAAPA Transcript of Participation, contact IAAPA at: econnor@IAAPA.org.

This data is for IAAPA related programs only and is available for the years 2010-2014.

Note:

- Use of the credit hour estimator is for estimating purposes only. The intention is to provide you with an estimate of the number of credits hours that you may have earned and can use towards certification.
- Completion of the credit hour estimator does not guarantee recognition or approval of any of programs or courses.
- Participation in and successful completion of all programs will be verified by and approved during application processing.
- Credit hours applicable to individual courses are subject to change.

For individual programs and courses that you participated in before 2010, contact IAAPA at: econnor@IAAPA.org.

Please provide the following information:

- Title of program or course you attended
- Year of program
- Location (e.g. IAAPA Attractions Expo Orlando 2005)

If you believe that you have earned enough credit hours to meet one of the three levels of certification and meet the other certification criteria, then download, complete, and submit the IAAPA Certification Application Form.

If you find that you do not have the required hours to be eligible for a particular level, [review the list of current IAAPA education programs and events](#). Eligible events will display the credit hours that can be earned by participating.

  Certified Attractions Manager	  Certified Attractions Leader	  Certified Attractions Executive
60 credit hours	ICAM plus 80 credit hours or 140 credit hours	ICAL plus 60 credit hours or 200 credit hours
A minimum of 20 hours earned from IAAPA programs	A minimum of 50 hours earned from IAAPA programs	A minimum of 70 hours earned from IAAPA programs
5 credit hours must be earned in each domain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing • Finance • Revenue Operations • Safety • Human Resources 	5 credit hours must be earned in each domain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing • Finance • Revenue Operations • Safety • Human Resources 	5 credit hours must be earned in each domain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing • Finance • Revenue Operations • Safety • Human Resources

STEP 3

Complete and Submit the IAAPA Certification Application Form to IAAPA.

See next section, "Explanation of Application Form," for notes and guidance with completing the application form.

IAAPA will acknowledge receipt of your application and provide you with a certification reference number (CRN). This reference number is also your IAAPA member number and it will give you access to the members-only section of the IAAPA web-site amongst other benefits.

IAAPA may request further information or clarification from you as it processes your application.

STEP 4a

Yes, you meet the certification criteria

If you successfully meet all the criteria, IAAPA will confirm that via email. You will be eligible to use one of the designations: ICAM, ICAL or, ICAE and you will be provided with a certification logo of that designation that you can add to your email signature, letter-head or, business card.

Notifications of IAAPA certification status are emailed to applicants monthly.

STEP 4b

No, you do not meet the certification criteria

If you do not meet all the criteria, IAAPA will confirm that to you via email along with an explanation as to what criteria that you did not meet.

STEP 5

Apply for the next certification level

If you've successfully reached one level of IAAPA certification, then continue to earn credit hours and work towards earning the next level.

How to Complete the IAAPA Certification Application Form

The IAAPA certification application form consists of five sections. Each section must be completed in full.

Section 1 **Applicant Information**

This section is for general application information. The IAAPA Membership ID # is optional. If you do not have an IAAPA member ID number, a certification reference number (CFN) will be created for you.

Section 2 **Payment**

Yes, there is a fee. Acceptable methods of payment include check, bank draft, money order, credit card, or wire transfers.

All fees must accompany the application. The application fee is US\$200 for IAAPA members and US\$400 for nonmembers. Make checks payable to IAAPA.

The application fee includes a \$100 non-refundable processing fee. Application fees, less the non-refundable processing fee, will be refunded only if your application does not meet the eligibility requirements for IAAPA certification.

Section 3 **Industry Employment Experience**

Use this section to document your work experience. Begin with the most recent employer. Verification of supervisory experience must be completed in full.

Section 4 **Professional Development Activities**

Section 4.1 **Formal Education**

Use this section to document your formal education. College under graduate degree and post-graduate degrees earn 10 credit hours and assumes completion of a 4-year college program. Industry relevant degrees earn 15 hours of credit. Examples of industry relevance would include:

- Tourism Studies
- Recreation Management
- Hospitality
- Hotel Management
- Special Events Management
- Facilities Management

What do I need to include with my application?

Include a college transcript, diploma, or certificate of completion for each degree submitted.

You can earn a maximum of 30 hours credit in section 4.1 Formal Education.

Section 4.2

IAAPA Programs, Courses, and Events

Use this section to document your participation in IAAPA courses, programs, and education events.

How many credit hours do I need?

You must earn minimum credit hours, courses and events as follows:

ICAM	ICAL	ICAE
60 credit hours	ICAM plus 80 credit hours or 140 credit hours	ICAL plus 60 credit hours or 200 credit hours
A minimum of 20 hours earned from IAAPA programs	A minimum of 50 hours earned from IAAPA programs	A minimum of 70 hours earned from IAAPA programs
5 credit hours must be earned in each domain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing • Finance • Revenue Operations • Safety • Human Resources 	5 credit hours must be earned in each domain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing • Finance • Revenue Operations • Safety • Human Resources 	5 credit hours must be earned in each domain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing • Finance • Revenue Operations • Safety • Human Resources

Credit hours per event vary (and may vary by year.) A sample list of events is given below.

IAAPA Programs	Credit Hours
Expo Conference Education Sessions Credit hours can be earned by attending the education conference program at IAAPA's expos. Assume the following credit hours per year: IAAPA Attractions Expo 19 credit-hours Euro Attractions Show 10 credit-hours Asian Attractions Expo 8 credit hours	19/10/8
IAAPA Monthly Webinar Program (credit hours per session)	1
IAAPA Institute for Attractions Managers (IAM)	16
IAAPA Leadership Conference	15
FEC Leadership Program	11
Safety Institute - 1 day program	6
IAAPA Expos Off-site Facility Tours	3
IAAPA 1-Day Regional Event	6
Tools of the Trade Midway Games Event	12
Change to IAAPA Institute for Executive Education	30
IAAPA Executive Education Program in Latin America	30
IAAPA Online Learning Course (minimum 1 hour course)	1

How do I know how many hours I may have earned?

If you attended or participated in an IAAPA program or event since 2010, you may order a transcript of your participation from IAAPA. Contact IAAPA at econnor@iaapa.org. This will give you a list of programs attended and the credit hours associated with each along with its educational domain.

For individual programs and courses that you participated in before 2010, contact IAAPA at: econnor@iaapa.org

Please provide the following information:

- Title of program or course
- Year of program
- Location (e.g. IAAPA Attractions Expo Orlando 2005)

What is an education domain?

An education domain is a concentration of subject matter in a particular field of study. IAAPA has identified 5 education domains within the attractions industry:

- Marketing and Public Relations
- Human Resources and Leadership
- Revenue Operations
- Facility Operations and Safety
- Financial Management

A list of the subject matter related to each domain is on the [IAAPA Domains and Subjects webpage](#). You must earn a minimum of 5 credit hours in each domain.

What do I need to include with my application?

If you have ordered and received an IAAPA Transcript of Participation please submit it with your completed application.

For individual events and programs you attended before 2010, submit a certificate of completion or registration confirmation.

There is no maximum number of hours that you can earn from IAAPA Programs, Courses, and Events.

Section 4.3

Attractions Industry Continuing Education

Section 4.3.1

Pre-approved courses

IAAPA has pre-approved professional development courses offered by IAAPA member facilities, allied attractions industry associations as well as other organizations and academic institutes. A list of courses is available on a [pre-approved course list](#). Applicants who have successfully completed these courses can apply credit hours earned to the IAAPA certification program.

What do I need to include with my application?

Include a certificate of completion or transcript for each course submitted.

Section 4.3.2

Other Programs and Courses

IAAPA will recognize for credit hours many other attractions industry and continuing education courses. Use this section to document participation these types of programs. Examples of such courses would include:

- National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials (NAARSO)
- Ellis and Associates
- Amusement Industry Manufacturers & Suppliers, International (AIMS Int'l)
- World Water Park Association (WWA) programs
- Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)
- In-house professional development programs

What do I need to include with my application?

Include a certificate of completion or transcript for each course submitted.

You can earn a maximum of 20 hours credit in this section 4.3.2 Other Programs and Courses.

Section 5

Association and Industry Service

Section 5.1

IAAPA Service

You can earn credit hours by serving in a variety of capacities within IAAPA. Use this section to document this service.

Examples of service include:

- Serving on an IAAPA committee, sub-committee or taskforce can earn 1 credit hour per year of service.
- Serving as a committee chair can earn 5 credit hours per single term. A term is defined as 1 year of service.
- Serving on the IAAPA board of directors can earn 5 credit hours per single term regardless of length of term.

What do I need to include with my application?

You do not need to include anything. Just complete the table in the application form.

You can earn a maximum of 20 hours credit in Section 5.1 IAAPA Service

Section 5.2

Professional Service to the Industry

You can earn credit hours by making professional contributions to the industry or serving in a variety of capacities within the attractions industry.

Examples of service include:

- Presenting a **webinar or a workshop program** at one of the IAAPA expos can earn **5 credit hours**. Calculate each session separately.
- **Teaching an IAAPA Institute course** or other program more than 3 hours in length can earn **10 credit hours**. Calculate each course separately.
- Presenting a webinar or a workshop program at **another industry related event** can earn **3 hours**.
- **Authoring an article** for an industry publication can earn 5 credit hours. Authoring multiple articles can earn **2 credit hours per article**.
- **Serving on the board** of a convention and visitors' bureau or chamber of commerce can earn **2 credit hours per term**.
- Receipt of industry or peer **recognition awards** can earn **2 credit hours**.

What do I need to include with my application?

Include reasonable documentation to support your submission.

- Title of IAAPA presentation and year it was made.
- Title of IAAPA webinar and year and month it was made
- Title of other industry presentation, year it was made, location and organization.
- Title and copy of article in industry publication.
- Letter of confirmation from CVB.
- Letter of confirmation from awards body.

You can earn a maximum of 20 hours credit in Section 5.2 Professional Service to the Industry.

Section 6

Credit Hour Total and Applicant Agreement

Use this section to calculate the total credit hours you have earned.

When the application form is complete, initial each page and mail, fax, or email a PDF of your completed application to:

Mail: IAAPA Education / Certification Program, 1448 Duke St., Alexandria VA 22314 | **Fax:** +1 703/836-6742 | **Email:** econnor@IAAPA.org

Receipt of your application will be acknowledged via email within ten business days.