

# Approved Provider Program

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## Overview

The IFMA Approved Provider Program is designed to provide FMP (Facility Management Professional designation) candidates and CFMs (Certified Facility Manager certification) and FMPs with a variety of educational opportunities in facility management. Once approved, organizations can offer the FMP candidate with a variety of course offerings that assist in completing the FMP designation and provide CFM/FMP Maintenance Points for recertification\*. The approved provider program will provide FM professionals with the "IFMA quality seal of approval" that the programs under the approved provider label will contribute to their professional expertise. The approved provider program may also be a pathway that allows IFMA to review FM-related programs as they develop, ensuring content quality and assurance that the course will be approved for credit for the completion of the FMP and for recertification.

*\*CFM's are required to provide 120 recertification points every three years for recertification and FMP's are required to provide 60 recertification points every two years for recertification.*

## Benefits

### Benefits of Becoming and IFMA Approved Provider

Approved Providers:

- IFMA competency courses offered through the provider receive continuing education units (CEUs) and are approved for the FMP and CFM/FMP maintenance.
- Courses offered by provider are approved for satisfying areas of the FMP and CFM/FMP maintenance.
- Provides the IFMA "seal of approval" to indicate product quality.
- A certificate acknowledging their approved provider status and the time span for which the approved provider status has been granted. Listing on the IFMA website with a link directly to the provider's homepage, allowing FMP candidates a ready reference to quality education programs to complete their designation or CFM/FMP recertification.
- Simple process to administer for FMP applicants.

Students:

- Guarantee of quality program standards.
- Easy access to programs to maintain credentials.
- Ability to apply for the FMP designation by submitting transcripts or certificates of completion.
- Simple application process. (Without Approved Provider status, students are required to submit syllabus, and/or other supporting documentation.)

IFMA will award approved provider status on a 3 (calendar) year basis (January 1-December 31). Unlike the IFMA Approved-for-Credit Form, the Approved Provider application is not available as an online form. The form is available, however, in MSWord version and can be printed.

In designing the program, IFMA used the International Association for Continuing Education (IACET) authorized provider criteria for awarding continuing education credit. IFMA also benchmarked with other certification programs offering approved or preferred provider programs. IACET has established criteria for approved provider programs. The criteria, "represents a systematic approach to cause learning to occur." By using these established criteria, IFMA can ensure that IFMA approved providers meet the essential criteria for optimal learning to occur. For more detailed information about the IACET standards, please visit that organization's Internet page at [www.iacet.org](http://www.iacet.org).

## Application Process

To be considered as an approved provider, organizations should:

- Submit a completed application to IFMA.
- Send a detailed syllabus for each course that is being approved.
- Complete an IFMA Competency Matrix Worksheet that maps course content to competencies.
- Sign the pledge to adhere to the established criteria (see below).
- Agree to participate in periodic monitoring requirements (see below).
- Pay the appropriate fee.

## Auditing Process

IFMA reserves the right to randomly audit approved providers to ensure compliance with the established criteria during the year and to investigate allegations of violations. The audit may take a variety of forms. IFMA may:

- Request to review an authorized provider's records, including but not limited to documents related to needs assessments, planning, evaluations, and record keeping requirements.
- Request to review a detailed syllabus for any approved course.
- Visit and assess specific educational events.
- Investigate allegations of violation.

When the audit has been completed, IFMA will forward a copy of the written report to the provider.

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## Authorization Process

The authorization process begins when IFMA receives a completed application packet and required fee of \$7,500. The fee is based upon group rates for administration of CEUs and will pay for three years of approved provider status.

The authorization process takes approximately four to six weeks from the time the application is received to completion. Applications that are incomplete will be returned to the contact person listed on the application form.

After reviewing the application, IFMA will make a decision to either: Approve or Deny. If approved, the approved provider is notified and given the "Approved Provider" seal and all benefits outlined above. The approved provider's name, brief description of the services they offer, and a link to their homepage will be posted online at our website in the Directory of Approved Providers. Approved Providers will also be provided with a certificate indicating the start and end dates of their Approved Provider cycle.

IFMA approved providers are encouraged to use the "Approved Provider" seal on their marketing and other promotional materials where appropriate. It is required for documentation purposes that the seal appear in either the on-site materials or a certificate of successful completion. The seal will be provided to the approved provider electronically in a .jpg file. Language to use near the seal will also be provided to the approved provider.

If IFMA determines that the applying organization is in noncompliance with the established criteria, IFMA will deny the application. The reasons for the denial will be specified in written form to the applicant and the applicant will be given two weeks (the date will be specified in the communication) from the date of the denial to appeal the decision. If, after the two week period, no resubmission has occurred, applicants will be refunded \$7,000. *\*There is a non-refundable \$500 application processing fee.* Applicants denied approved provider status, are welcome to resubmit an application and supporting materials, up to one year from the date of the denial notification.

## Criteria for Becoming a Provider

By completing the approved provider application form and pledge, approved providers are agreeing to adhere to the IFMA approved provider criteria described in more detail below. Before completing the application, then, it is vital that prospective approved providers thoroughly read and understand the criteria. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the IFMA Certification Department at 713-623-4362.

IFMA established the following criteria based on recommended IACET criteria. Criteria noted with an asterisk (\*) are required, criteria noted with (\*\*) are required for the FMP courses only.

- 1. Organization\*:** The provider must have an identifiable continuing education or training unit or group with responsibility for administering events.
- 2. Responsibility and Control\*:** The provider, through its continuing education or training unit, ensures that IFMA's criteria are met. IFMA requires that one person from the organization be identified and held responsible for ensuring that IFMA's criteria are met.
- 3. Record Keeping\*:** It is required that providers retain records documenting attendance for seven years and that a written policy is in place on record retention and the releasing of records that ensures privacy and security of participant's continuing education activities. IFMA places the responsibility of tracking and documenting attendance at FM-related events on the person attending the event. It is required, then, that the "Approved Provider" seal appear either in the on-site materials or on a certificate of successful completion.
- 4. Learning Environment\*:** The provider must ensure that the environment is conducive to learning. For online activities, the provider must clearly inform participants prior to registration of software, hardware or minimum modem needs.
- 5. Needs Identification\*:** The provider has assessed and identified needs of the target audience. Needs identification processes may include focus groups, questionnaires, surveys, participants' comments and suggestions, tests, reports, self-assessments, observations, print media and work samples.
- 6. Learning Outcomes\*:** The provider has clear and concise statements of intended learning outcomes based on the needs identification process. Learning outcomes must be written and inform learners what they will achieve by the end of the learning experience. Learning outcomes must be communicated to participants prior to the event.
- 7. Planning and Instructional Personnel\*:** The provider ensures that all instructors and presenters are qualified and involved with planning and conducting the learning event. Instructors and/or presenters should be competent in the subject matter, understand the learning event's purpose and learning outcomes and have knowledge and skills in instructional methods and learning processes. Instructor qualifications should be clearly communicated to participants before the event takes place. Participants should have the chance to provide an assessment of the instructor's performance at the conclusion of the learning event.
- 8. Content and Instructional Materials\*:** Content and instructional materials are appropriate for the learning outcomes of each event.
- 9. Assessment of Learning Outcomes\*\*:** The provider must establish procedures during the planning phase to assess achievement of learning outcomes during the event itself. Assessments can take many forms, from a written examination, completion of a written report, to a self-assessment. Learners should be informed of the assessment in advance of the event. Assessments are required for completion of the FMP designation and strongly recommended for continuing education courses.

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**10. Calculating Course Credits\*:** The provider must establish procedures for calculating course credits and continuing education units. In accordance with the criteria set by IACET, one CEU is equal to ten contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education/training experience under responsible, qualified direction and instruction. In addition, one CFM/FMP Maintenance Point is equal to one hour of participation in an organized continuing education/training experience under responsible, qualified direction and instruction. Please see Addendum A for more information on calculating CEU's and CFM/FMP maintenance points.

**11. To offer credits for the FMP designation:**

- Area 1 courses must be 30 hours or two credits.
- Courses must be 15 hours or 1 credit for areas 2, 3, and 4
- To complete area 5, you must either complete the online application available from IFMA or purchase a CD which will provide the guidelines for completion of the project. IFMA is the only provider of area 5 for the FMP.

**12. Post-Event Evaluation\*:** The provider ensures that all events are evaluated. Post-event evaluations should be established during the planning process. Post-event evaluations should be compiled and a written report summarizing the event should address, at a minimum, if the learning experience and the instructional methods used accomplished the stated learning outcomes and if the learners felt the learning outcomes were appropriate for the stated event. The report should also indicate if the learners felt that the event execution was effective and efficient. Evaluation results should be incorporated into future program improvements. Approved providers should be prepared to provide copies of those reports to IFMA upon request.

## Changes to Program Content

When courses are updated or changes in content have been made, the approved organization must submit those changes to the IFMA Certification Department. They should also include said changes in content on the IFMA Competency Matrix Worksheets. IFMA reserves the right to approve or deny said changes

## Recertification

Upon expiration of the three year approved provider agreement, approved providers are required to re-apply for the approved provider status with IFMA.

## Revocation

### Approved Provider Revocation Process

In cases where an allegation of a violation or violations of the criteria is found plausible or if there are complaints of ethical misconduct, IFMA reserves the right to revoke the authorized provider agreement.

IFMA may revoke the authorized provider agreement if it is determined that the authorized provider:

- Provided false information on the application.
- Failed to conduct educational or training activities in compliance with the established IFMA authorized provider criteria.
- Failed to maintain the organizational and recordkeeping requirements necessary for authorization.

In case of revocation, IFMA will notify the approved provider that their authorization has been revoked and the duration of that revocation. Providers whose authorization has been revoked should contact IFMA directly about any appeal process.