



**CANDIDATE APPLICATION HANDBOOK
FOR THE
PARALEGAL ADVANCED COMPETENCY EXAMINATION**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Independent and Fair</u>	1
<u>PACE Credential</u>	2
<u>The PACE Application</u>	2
SECTION II	3
EXAMINATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	3
<u>Work Experience Requirement</u>	4
<u>Character and Fitness Requirements</u>	4
<u>Retaking PACE</u>	5
MAINTENANCE OF PACE REGISTERED PARALEGAL CREDENTIAL	6
SECTION V	6
EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE, DEVELOPMENT, AND COMPOSITION	6
SECTION VI	8
APPLICATION PROCEDURES	8
<u>Application Instructions</u>	8
<u>Affidavit of Work Experience Instructions</u>	9
<u>Fees for Reprocessing, Dishonored Checks and Ineligible Applications</u>	10
<u>Examination Registration</u>	11
<u>Special Accommodations</u>	11
APPLICATION PROCESSING	12
INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTERIZED TESTING	13
<u>Common Questions on Computerized Testing</u>	13
GENERAL	14
<u>Suspension Revocation</u>	14
<u>Requests for Exceptions and the Appeals Process</u>	15
APPENDIX A Summary of Education and Work Experience Criteria	17
APPENDIX B PACE Test Specifications	19
APPENDIX E CLE Guidelines	27
Appendix G Sample Employment Verification and Reference Letters	29

SECTION I PACE

The legal service industry is facing a great deal of change. While containing costs, it is trying to respond to an increased number of pending cases, rapid changes in technology, and increased demands from consumers for a higher level of client service.

As an active and vital part of the legal service industry, the paralegal profession is facing possible regulation through certification, licensing, or other means.

As a member-driven organization, the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (“NFPA”) is directed by its membership—each member association has one vote in the future of the national organization and the profession. During NFPA’s 1994 Mid-Year Meeting, the membership voted overwhelmingly to develop an examination to test the competency level of experienced paralegals.

This significantly positive decision to develop this exam was a conscientious effort by these paralegals to direct the future of the paralegal profession. It acknowledges the vital role of paralegals within the legal service industry. It is also a direct response to states that are considering regulation of the paralegal profession and seeking a method to measure job competency. Although NFPA believes in the criteria the members established to take this examination, it recognizes that any state may adopt the examination and modify the criteria.

The Paralegal Advanced Competency Examination (“PACE”) contains general paralegal practice, ethics, and technology questions. Requirements for a paralegal to take PACE include work experience and education.

The paralegal profession receives two major benefits by taking the examination:

- ★ A fair evaluation of the competencies of paralegals across practice areas; and
- ★ Creation of a professional level of expertise by which all paralegals can be evaluated.

PACE has generated considerable interest since the resolution to develop it was passed. Based on the interest and the large number of paralegals who may apply to take the exam (a number reported by the U.S. Department of Labor to exceed 150,000), the need existed for global grandfathering.

As a result, the eligibility requirements for PACE were modified to include a grandfathering period for paralegals who had four years of substantive paralegal experience on or before December 31, 2000. If paralegals do not meet the grandfathering provision, then they must meet the education and experience requirements outlined in Section II below:

Independent and Fair

NFPA strongly believes PACE must produce legitimate and verifiable results and consistently pass only paralegals who demonstrate an established advanced level of knowledge, skills, and competency. Therefore, PACE was developed with the assistance of an independent examination development firm, Professional Examination Service Inc. (“PES”).

PES was selected through an extensive proposal process and a personal interview with the NFPA Board of Directors. PES has developed professional examinations for more than 50 years for groups such as the Federal Reserve System, the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc., the Environmental Protection Agency, and Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics. PES currently works with more than 75 professional associations and more than 300 licensing boards in 62 jurisdictions in the United States and Canada.

But PES did not work on PACE alone. An independent task force of paralegals, paralegal educators, attorneys, and members of the public

assisted in every step, from the preparation of the initial job analysis for paralegals through creation of the examination and ongoing revisions.

To ensure that examination results are valid, the examination is administered independently by Prometric. While all paralegals are encouraged to take PACE, successful completion of the examination is not currently required by any state or bar association to be employed as a paralegal.

PACE Registered Paralegal Credential

After you pass PACE, you will receive a certificate from NFPA authorizing you to use the credential “PACE Registered Paralegal” and the acronym “RP” behind your name in addition to your title of paralegal, legal assistant, etc.

The PACE Application

THIS CANDIDATE APPLICATION HANDBOOK IS COPYRIGHTED AND MAY NOT BE PHOTOCOPIED. The Application and Affidavit of Work Experience may be photocopied.

Submitting an Application

To submit an application, go to the NFPA website, www.paralegals.org, and follow the link to apply for the PACE Exam.

To access the application, candidates will need to log in by providing an email address (username) and password. If you do not have an email address, you can obtain a free email address through Internet sites such as gmail.com, yahoo.com, hotmail.com, etc. **Make sure that you enter your email address accurately when you submit your application since this address will be used to send confirmation and other correspondence related to the exam.**

Candidates will create a user profile that includes their personal and contact information. **Note: The name you use on your application must match the name that appears on the ID you will use as proof of identity to take the exam.** Therefore, when you apply for the exam, please make sure to enter your name exactly as it is appears on your current, government-issued photo ID.

Candidates can only have one open application at a time. To complete the application, candidates will need to indicate their eligibility route, the education (both school and level) they received, their application status (first-time or retake) and whether they are requesting special testing accommodations. In addition, candidates will need to indicate their agreement to a certifying statement before the application can proceed. Finally, payment must be made by credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express) at the time of application.

Once an application has been submitted, no changes other than contact information (address changes) can be made.

You must obtain a letter from **each** employer specifically stating the dates of employment to verify the number of years of experience claimed as your eligibility prerequisite. Substantive paralegal work experience is defined below in Section II.

The eligibility requirements, including the work experience listed above, must be recorded on the Application and on the Affidavit of Work Experience.

The cost to take the exam depends on whether the candidate is a NFPA member. The exam fee for non-NFPA members is \$250; for NFPA members the exam fee is \$225. **In addition**, all candidates must include a \$25 application processing fee.

Application forms and supporting documentation that are incomplete, not legible, or lacking the required supporting documentation will be returned to you along with the exam fee. You will be required to resubmit all documentation with the appropriate exam fee (\$225 or \$250) plus an additional application processing fee of \$25.

**Do not mail your application and fee to Prometric.
ALL APPLICATIONS AND FEES**

Once your application has been processed, you will receive a letter from NFPA advising you that you are a successful candidate to take PACE. You must schedule and take PACE at a Prometric testing center (f/k/a Sylvan Technology Center) within 90 days from the date on the NFPA confirmation letter. Upon completing the exam, candidates will receive instant results.

Candidates who successfully pass PACE will receive a congratulatory letter, commemorative certificate and wallet card from NFPA within six to eight weeks of passing the exam.

**SECTION II
EXAMINATION ELIGIBILITY
REQUIREMENTS**

To satisfy the eligibility requirements, you must meet one of the education and/or work experience requirements mentioned above. To avoid rejection of your application to take PACE, you must be eligible according to the following criteria at the time the application is postmarked.

- ★ A minimum of four years of substantive paralegal experience obtained on or before December 31, 2000;

OR

- ★ An associate's (2-year) degree in paralegal studies obtained from an institutionally accredited **and/or** American Bar Association ("ABA")-approved paralegal education program **and** at least six years of substantive paralegal experience;

OR

- ★ A bachelor's degree in any course of study **and** at least three years of substantive paralegal experience;

OR

- ★ A bachelor's degree in paralegal studies from an institutionally accredited or ABA-approved school, **and** at least two years of substantive paralegal experience.

Degrees obtained outside the United States must be evaluated by a professional evaluation service for their equivalence to United States degrees. Paralegal certificates obtained outside the United

States must be evaluated by the Certification Standards Committee (the “Committee”).

To determine whether an educational program is institutionally accredited, see the listing of recognized accrediting agencies in Appendix D.

Documenting the Substantive Paralegal Work Experience Requirement

Before you complete the Affidavit of Work Experience, make sure your work experience meets the criteria listed below.

Minimum work experience is defined as full-time employment performing the duties of a paralegal: defined as “the performance of substantive legal work that requires knowledge of legal concepts and is customarily, but not exclusively, performed by a lawyer.” The paralegal may be retained or employed by a lawyer, law office, governmental agency or other entity or may be authorized by administrative, statutory, or court authority to perform this work.

An Affidavit of Work Experience is included in the Candidate Application and Affidavit of Work Experience. The Affidavit must indicate the number of years or hours worked, the specific dates of employment, the employer’s name, and the name of the supervisor. Detailed instructions for completion of this form are included in Section VI .

Substantive paralegal work experience must be verified by your employer (or previous employers, if necessary). The employer must verify your work experience as a paralegal (as defined above) and the time during which the work was performed. This letter must be on the

employer’s letterhead and specify dates and capacity of employment.

You must also submit a letter of reference from a member of the legal community, defined by the Certification Standards Committee as a lawyer, judge, or PACE Registered Paralegal (“RP”). The letter must be on the individual’s stationery and verify his/her knowledge of your paralegal work. The original of this letter must be submitted with your application. The letter must state the number of years the individual has been familiar with your paralegal work and detail the type of work you have performed. Sample employment verification and reference letters are included in Appendix G.

The letter of reference and employer’s letter verifying work experience can be submitted in one letter provided all the required information is included. The letter should state that it is meeting the requirements of both documents.

Character and Fitness Requirements

Candidates making application to take PACE may be disqualified for any one of the following reasons:

1. Conviction of a felony or comparable crime as defined by an individual state that does not have a felony designation;

OR

2. Currently under suspension, termination, or revocation of a certificate, registration, or license to practice by a professional organization, court, disciplinary board, or agency in any jurisdiction.

If an application is denied based on items 1 or 2, the applicant has the right to appeal the denial through voluntary, independent, binding arbitration within 60 days from the date of denial.

SECTION III SCORING

Examination Scoring

PACE is scored on a scale score. The scale is an arithmetic conversion of the raw score. Because PACE has multiple exam forms, and the exam forms may vary slightly in their level of difficulty, the scale score is used to ensure the different forms have the same meaning.

Candidates are provided “instant results” of their examination.

Passing Score

PACE is electronically scored with instant results; you will receive your preliminary score at the time you complete the exam. The scale for PACE ranges from 300 points to 700 points. **The passing score is 550 points.** Candidates should request and retain a copy of the instant examination results before leaving the testing center.

While the passing score of 550 does not change, the number of questions answered correctly to achieve a score of 550 can change. If an exam form is slightly easier, the candidate will be required to answer more questions correctly to achieve the 550 score. Conversely, if the exam form is more difficult, the candidate will be required to answer fewer questions correctly to achieve the 550 score. Candidates are not

unfairly rewarded or penalized because the exam form was easier or more difficult.

The exams are periodically updated and the passing score and weighting of the questions is set with each new exam form.

Retaking PACE

Effective January 1, 2016 if you fail the PACE exam, you are eligible to submit a new application together with the appropriate exam fee (\$225 or \$250 depending on whether you are an NFPA member) and the \$25 application processing fee no earlier than six (6) months after the date of the failed examination.. The applicant may apply to waive the six (6) month waiting period and retest at their own risk no earlier than four (4) weeks after the original exam date and before the next scheduled scoring run. Appendix H. The additional testing fees would be submitted at the applicant’s own risk and will not be refunded. There is no limit on the number of times you may retake PACE.

If you reapply within two years of the date of your exam, you do not need to resubmit copies of your supporting documentation. You do need to complete and submit a new application indicating that you are retaking PACE.

SECTION IV MAINTENANCE OF PACE REGISTERED PARALEGAL CREDENTIAL

To maintain your PACE Registered Paralegal credential, you must obtain 12 hours of continuing legal education (“CLE”) in a legal or specialty field every two (2) years from the date the exam was taken and successfully passed. At least 1 hour of the 12 required CLE hours must be in legal ethics. Dual credentialed paralegals in good standing holding both the CRP™ and the RP® credentials may use the same CLE hours required in the renewal process, as long as it is within the two year time period according to their renewal date. *See* the links about an RP’s CLE requirement at www.paralegals.org (click on Maintaining Your Credentials under Paralegal Education and Certification).

The deadline for submitting proof that you have obtained the required CLE credits is the date of the two-year anniversary of the date you took and passed the exam – not the date you received your official results. You should plan on submitting your renewal statement and CLE evidence approximately 60 days prior to the anniversary date of your exam. NFPA will send an email to the email address for you in the RP database before your deadline. Please make sure to keep your email address current. Obtaining the required 12 CLE credits and **submitting your Renewal Affidavit with the required supporting documentation is your responsibility.** RPs have an obligation to notify NFPA if their email address changes so that accurate contact information can be maintained. Failure to receive a reminder email from NFPA is not an excuse – calendaring this important date is the responsibility of every RP.

Evidence of meeting the continuing education requirements must be submitted with the PACE Registration Statement and Affidavit of Continuing Education, Appendix F. The credential renewal process is now completed entirely online. Proof of continuing education must be submitted for seminars. Seminars that have not been approved by NFPA, a bar association, or other NFPA-approved provider must be submitted and approved by the NFPA CLE Coordinator first, together with a fee of \$10. (*See* NFPA CLE guidelines for more information). **DO NOT submit a CLE approval request and your renewal at the same time.**

Your RP Renewal containing your Affidavit and supporting documentation as well as a letter from the CLE Coordinator verifying any CLE that required approval, must all be submitted at one time to NFPA with the \$50 registration fee. CLE approval requests must be submitted at least 90 days prior to your renewal anniversary to allow adequate time for review and approval and providing a letter verifying the CLE which is included with your renewal package. An additional fee of \$50 will be required to request an extension of up to 60 days or assessed as a late fee if the recertification is not received prior to the deadline. Questions about renewing your RP status should be directed to the Paralegal Certification Coordinator for PACE Renewals or you can simply e-mail info@paralegals.org with your question.

SECTION V EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE, DEVELOPMENT AND COMPOSITION

Appendix B contains the exam specification for the PACE program. This specification is the result of a survey of advanced level paralegals

across the United States and were verified by PES. These core activities cut across practice lines and are not state-specific. The skills were further verified by practicing paralegals, attorneys, and paralegal educators with guidance from the testing specialists at PES. Examination questions for PACE were developed by practicing paralegals and other content specialists under the guidance of testing specialists from PES.

PACE consists of 200 multiple-choice questions.

You will have four (4) hours to complete the exam.

PACE sample questions can be found in Appendix C.

Each question on the exam was tested, verified, and the correct answer can be traced back to a widely available and reputable source.

Study Reference Guides

The following are suggested study reference guides. They are by no means an all-inclusive list. A more substantial list can be found in the *PACE Study Manual*.

NFPA's *PACE Study Manual*. 6th Ed. 2011.

American Bar Association. *Model Rules of Professional Conduct*. ABA,

A Systems Approach, 2nd Edition. West Publishing Company.

Barron's Law Dictionary. Barron's.

Black, Henry Campbell. *Black's Law Dictionary*, West Publishing Company.

Blanchard, R.D. *Litigation and Trial Practice for the Legal Assistant*, West Publishing Company.

Bruno, Carole A. *The Paralegal's Litigation Handbook*, West Publishing Company.

Cannon, Therese A. *Ethics and Professional Responsibility for Legal Assistants*. Aspen Publishing.

Cohen, Morris L. *How to Find the Law*. West Publishing Company.

Eimermann, Thomas. *Fundamentals of Paralegalism*. Aspen Publishing.

Elwell and Smith, *Practical Legal Writing for Legal Assistants*. West Publishing Company.

Everett, Pamela. *Fundamentals of Law Office Management*. West Publishing Company.

Federal Rules of Civil Procedure; Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. West Publishing Company.

Fogel, Suzanne K. *Practical Techniques for Legal Assistants*, Legal Search and Management.

Mauet & Maerowitz. *Fundamentals of Litigation for Paralegals*. Aspen Publishing.

McCord, James. *The Litigation Paralegal*. West Publishing Company.

Miller, R.L. & Urisko, M.S. *Paralegal Today: The Legal Team at Work*. West Publishing Company.

NALA Manual for Legal Assistants. West Publishing Company.

Procedures and Forms, 2nd Edition, Wiley & Sons.

Statsky, William. *Introduction to Paralegalism*, West Publishing Company.

Statsky, William. *Case Analysis and Fundamentals of Legal Writing*, West Publishing Company.

Teppler, Pamela. *Basic Legal Writing*, Glencoe.

Bar charts: www.barcharts.com

SECTION VI APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Read all instructions in this Handbook thoroughly before you attempt to complete the Candidate Application and Affidavit of Work Experience forms. Complete all sections of the Application that apply to you and all sections of the Affidavit of Work Experience.

Incomplete applications and applications with incorrect payments will be returned for resubmission, and you will be required to submit an **additional \$25** reprocessing fee. The time needed for resubmission will delay application processing and may restrict your choice of dates for taking the examination. Please be sure that the application is completed in full and that the fee you submit is correct. If you have any question as to the current fee, please contact NFPA Headquarters at info@paralegals.org.

Application Instructions

The Application must be online at www.paralegals.org. The sections of the online Application are outlined below.

Section 1 - Personal Information

On page 1, enter your **first name, middle initial and last name** in the top line. Enter your full **home** address. Enter your **home and work telephone numbers (including area codes) and e-mail address(es)**. If applicable, **provide a fax**

number. Enter your social security number in the appropriate spaces.

Section 2 - Specialty Areas

Check all specialty areas in which you have at least six months of experience. Enter the total number of years of paralegal experience you have. *This information is used for statistical purposes only and is not used to verify your years of experience for qualification purposes.*

Section 3 - Eligibility

Indicate the eligibility prerequisite you meet for PACE. A complete listing of the eligibility requirements for PACE is in SECTION II of this Handbook. You must meet the eligibility requirement that you indicate or your application will be returned for resubmission.

Section 4 - Education

Please indicate the highest education level you have attained by selecting the appropriate option.

Section 5 - Application Status

Select only one.

Section 6 - Demographic Information

You can assist NFPA in complying with federal equal opportunity guidelines by responding to the three (3) **optional** questions addressing ethnic origin, age, and gender. *This information will be used for statistical purposes only and will in no way affect your examination eligibility or results.*

Section 7 – NFPA Membership Information

If you are a member of a state, national or local paralegal association that is a member of NFPA, you should log in before starting the application and verify the name of the association to which you belong is correct. *This information is for statistical purposes and to determine the application fees and has no bearing on your eligibility to take PACE.*

Section 8 - Special Accommodations

Complete this section **only** if you are an applicant with disabilities and are requesting special accommodations for the exam.

Each applicant with disabilities requesting special accommodations must submit a separate letter with the Application explaining the need for the accommodations. In addition, the applicant must include a letter documenting the nature of the disability and supporting the requested accommodations on official stationery from an appropriate professional who is knowledgeable about the applicant's disability.

Section 9 - Fees

The examination fee is \$225 for NFPA members and \$250 for non-members. All candidates must also pay a \$25 application processing fee. NFPA does not provide waivers of either fee due to health or economic situations. Fees are paid at the time of application via secure checkout by credit card.

Section 10- Transcripts

If you are eligible to take PACE based on education with work experience, you must provide a copy of your college diploma and a copy of your official transcript, by uploading with your application. If you are relying on

paralegal work experience alone, you are not required to provide a copy of your college diploma or a transcript.

If your college transcript is issued under a different name, please note that on the application.

Section 11 – Notice of Passing PACE

NFPA will assume that you agree to allow NFPA to publish limited information as to your name, city state and association affiliation on the NFPA webpage and the NFPA Facebook and LinkedIn pages as a result of your successfully passing PACE. If you do not want NFPA publish or post any information be sure to provide written notification to NFPA Headquarters.

Section 12 – Signature and Acknowledgements

Read the acknowledgment statement, then electronically sign and date the statement. **An unsigned application will not be accepted.**

USE THE CHECKLIST TO VERIFY THAT YOU HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED YOUR APPLICATION!

Affidavit of Education and Work Experience Instructions

Both pages of the Affidavit of Education and Work Experience must be filled in completely as instructed. Attaching a copy of your resume is not acceptable. Affidavit must be signed and notarized, then upload it with your application.

Starting on Page 1, enter your name and full work address (include telephone number). Next, identify the college from which you graduated, if applicable. Be sure to indicate your major, degree obtained, and date of degree (month and year). Remember to list work experience

beginning with your current or most recent employer. Provide the specific time period you worked for each employer as a paralegal.

Provide the name, telephone number, and address of each employer you list, including all former employers. This form provides space for information from three employers. You may make and use a photocopy of the blank form for any additional employers. Remember that you only need to document the required number of years of experience, not your entire career.

If you were employed part-time by any of the employers you list, the amount of work experience attributable to the qualifying work experience will be assessed on a prorated basis. In other words, if you worked part-time for 4 years at an average of 20 hours per week, this four-year period would account for 2 years of work experience.

Full-time volunteer paralegal work is acceptable as if paid. If the volunteer paralegal work is on a part-time basis, the applicant must have performed this work for at least three months. Part-time experience will be prorated as stated above.

On Page 2 of the Affidavit of Work Experience, continue to list additional experience. Once Page 2 is completed, sign your name in **INK** and fill in the date where requested. You must have the Affidavit of Education and Work Experience notarized.

When the **Application and Affidavit of Education and Work Experience** have been completed, upload supporting documentation to the via the online application form at www.paralegals.org

NOTE: An application that is incomplete, or submitted without supporting documentation will be rejected. **A resubmitted application will require an additional processing fee of \$25.**

Once your application has been processed, you will receive a letter from NFPA advising you that you are a successful candidate to take PACE. You have 90 days from the date on the NFPA confirmation letter to schedule a date and time at your choice of Prometric testing facilities and complete the exam.

Please NOTE: PACE may only be taken at Prometric Testing Centers (formerly Sylvan). Not all Prometric Centers are able to provide testing facilities for PACE.

Fees for Reprocessing, Dishonored Checks, and Ineligible Applications

The \$25 application processing fee along with the \$225/\$250 examination fee is due at the time you submit your application to NFPA and is payable by credit card (VISA, MasterCard and American Express). *An application received without the examination fee will be returned directly to you for resubmission, which will mean sending a reprocessing fee of \$25 when you resubmit your application.* **No exceptions are made to this policy.**

All applications returned because of incomplete information on application forms, incomplete supporting documentation or missing examination fees will require an additional \$25 reprocessing fee.

A separate \$25 service charge will be imposed for invalid credit cards and dishonored checks.

If your application is *not* approved by NFPA because of ineligibility (failure to meet the stated eligibility prerequisites), your application will be returned along with your \$225/\$250 examination fee. **The \$25 application processing fee will not be returned.**

To avoid reprocessing fees or rejection of your application, be sure to read the Candidate Application Handbook Checklist. To avoid having your application rejected, you must be eligible to take the examination *at the time* you submit the application.

Examination and application fees will be forfeited in entirety if you have been approved to take the examination, but fail to do so within 90 days from the date of your candidate notification letter. If an emergency situation arises where you cannot make your appointment within this time frame, contact NFPA headquarters immediately.

Scheduling Your Exam

Once processing of your application is complete, and you have received a candidate notification from NFPA, you may contact a Prometric Center to schedule a time to take the examination. The NFPA candidate notification letter will contain a toll-free telephone number for contacting Prometric Centers as well as a website address where you can schedule your exam on-line.

You must schedule your appointment so that you take your examination within 90 days from the date printed on your candidate notification. Failure to do so will result in

forfeiture of your application fee and examination eligibility status.

When calling Prometric or accessing their on-line appointment system, you must be prepared to provide your name, social security number, address, and telephone number. You will then be able to schedule your examination time. You will be able to select the testing facility you prefer, and the date and time of your exam. Upon making an appointment to take an examination, you will be given instructions regarding the appointment, cancellation procedures, identification requirements, and Prometric location.

If you have scheduled your exam date online at the Prometric website, they will send an email confirmation with instructions reaffirming the examination center location, directions, examination date, and time.

Note that NFPA is not involved in scheduling your appointment with Prometric. If you want to change or cancel your appointment to take PACE, you must do so by contacting your Prometric Center.

Special Accommodations

Arrangements will be made to enable any applicant with a disability to take the examination, provided the applicant meets the educational and experience prerequisites for the examination requested.

If you cannot take the examination under standard conditions (on computer), you may request special accommodations. Indicate your request in the appropriate space on the Application and provide required documentation.

In considering a request from an applicant for special accommodations, NFPA is guided by a sense of equity. Special accommodations are granted to give an approved candidate the opportunity to be examined in a manner equivalent to candidates, but not to provide an advantage over other candidates

Extensions, Cancellations, and No-Shows

You will be required to pay a rescheduling/cancellation fee if you cancel or reschedule your testing appointment less than 31 days before your scheduled test date. If you reschedule or cancel during the 5-30 day period before the scheduled test day, the fee will be \$50.00 per reschedule/cancellation. If you reschedule or cancel less than 5 days before the scheduled test date, the full candidate testing fee will be charged. You must reschedule by midnight Eastern Standard Time (EST) at least five (5) days before the scheduled test date, the full candidate testing fee will be charged. You must reschedule by midnight Eastern Standard Time (EST) at least two (2) calendar days prior to your appointment to avoid paying the full candidate testing fee. This fee will be assessed online if you reschedule or cancel online at www.Prometric.com/NFPA, or by Prometric customer service if you cancel over the phone.

If a timely cancellation is made, you will be permitted to reschedule the examination date **within the same 90-day window following your confirmation notice.**

If you fail to cancel as outlined above, do not appear, or arrive late for the scheduled examination, you will forfeit the examination fee. A candidate who forfeits the examination fee will be required to reapply and submit another application processing fee of \$25 along

with the appropriate examination fee (\$225 or \$250, depending on whether you are an NFPA member) to be eligible to take the examination.

If a sudden or unforeseen emergency occurs, contact NFPA headquarters via telephone or via e-mail immediately.

SECTION VII APPLICATION PROCESSING

If your application is approved after processing by NFPA, you will be designated as a “candidate.” NFPA will then send you a confirmation notice stating that you may now contact the Prometric Center Registrar to schedule an appointment to take the exam.

There are no application filing deadlines. From the time an application is received by NFPA, the applicant approval process will take approximately a month to process. This is a general approximation, and your exact processing time might be longer or shorter. If your application is approved, you will receive notification of your eligibility to register for PACE by letter from NFPA. If there are questions about your application, you may be contacted by NFPA for clarification or to provide additional information. However, if processing cannot be completed, your application will be returned with instructions for resubmission.

SECTION VIII INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTERIZED TESTING

When you arrive at the Prometric Center to take your examination, you will be allowed up to 15 minutes for a computerized tutorial in the form of a sample examination. The purpose of the tutorial is to familiarize you with selecting answers and using testing features such as “Item Review” and “Help.” NFPA recommends that all PACE candidates take this extra time to focus on the computer screen and to ensure that you are fully aware of the features of computerized testing that will apply to your exam.

This sample examination should allow you to concentrate on *how* to operate the computer in order to complete the examination. You do not need to be concerned with which answers you select during the sample examination. There is no penalty for incorrect answers during the tutorial.

Your computerized testing workstation will be equipped with a mouse. You will complete the actual examination by selecting an answer to each question, also referred to as an item, and by choosing actions represented by various command buttons on the computer screen or monitor.

Each question is presented in a multiple-choice format, with one correct answer and three incorrect answers. You may change your answers at any time before ending your examination. You may mark questions to which you wish to return, select “Help” for on-screen instructions, or review any items you wish before ending the examination session. The time remaining on your examination also appears on the screen. (**NOTE:** any time you spend using

the on-line “help” function during your examination is deducted from the total examination time.)

Be sure to notify the proctor if you have any difficulties with your computer.

Once you have answered all items to your satisfaction, you end the examination by choosing “End Test.” This takes you out of the examination and you may not return.

At the end of your test, you will receive instant results of your exam score. You will also be given the opportunity to provide feedback and comments to NFPA which will help in the evaluation of the testing program.

Passing candidates will receive a commemorative certificate from NFPA at the address provided in your application. If your mailing address changes after you have submitted your application, it is important that you notify NFPA headquarters of the change of address. Prometric will provide the scoring results report to NFPA at the time of the scoring run. Successful candidates will also receive a congratulatory letter, certificate and wallet card from NFPA.

Common Questions on Computerized Testing

1. *Where are Prometric Centers located?*
There are over 200 centers nationwide (located in all 50 states), which means that 80% of the United States population is within one hour’s drive of a Prometric Center.
2. *How much computer experience is needed to test at a Prometric Center?*

None. You will become familiar with the testing process through a 15-minute, on-screen tutorial lesson. On-Screen “help” is always available.

3. *Can I review my answers during the test?*

Yes, you may review your answers and mark questions for review. If sufficient examination time remains, you may return to those items marked “for review.” If the examination time expires before you complete the review of marked items, those items will be graded and will count toward your total score. You will be scored on the number of questions you answered correctly; **there is no penalty for guessing** so be sure you answer all the questions.

4. *What should I bring to the testing center?*

You must arrive at the testing center to sign in at least 15 minutes before your scheduled examination time. You must bring two signed forms of identification (one must be a picture ID, such as a driver’s license or company ID) and the confirmation letter you received from Prometric. **No examination material will be allowed in the testing area.** Prometric will provide pencils and scratch paper. You will not be allowed to take in water bottles, or food. You will be assigned a locker for your personal belongings and given a key which you can take into the exam room with you.

5. *How much time will I have at the testing center to complete my examination?*

You will have up to 4 hours to complete the 200 multiple-choice questions on the examination. This time is in addition to the 15-minute, on-screen tutorial allowed for the examination.

6. *What if I’m unsure of how to operate the computer?*

A proctor, or Prometric Center attendant, will be available for assistance before you begin your examination and throughout the 15-minute tutorial. Once you exit the tutorial, however, you may not return to it. Once your examination begins, the proctor cannot assist you with examination questions.

7. *When will I receive my examination score?*

You will receive results of your PACE score immediately after you complete the exam. Remember to request a print out from the Prometric Center attendant.

Candidates who successfully pass PACE will receive a certificate from NFPA. This can take up to three months.

SECTION IX GENERAL

Suspension and Revocation

The RP® credential can be suspended or revoked for failing to meet continuing education requirements, or making false representations on the Candidate Application and supporting documents, or disclosing test questions.

For more detailed information on suspension and revocation procedures, contact the Vice President and Director of Paralegal Certification (info@paralegals.org).

Requests for Exceptions and the Appeals Process

Requests for exceptions to any of the policies stated within this Candidate Application Handbook should be addressed to:

Vice President and Director of Paralegal Certification
NFPA Headquarters
9100 Purdue Rd., Ste. 200
Indianapolis, IN 46268
Phone Number: (317) 454-8312

You may also submit your request through NFPA headquarters by e-mailing info@paralegals.org.

If you are not satisfied with the decision of the Vice President and Director of Paralegal Certification, you may request a review of the Request for Exception by the Paralegal Certification Standards Committee (the "Committee") within 30 days from the date the Vice President and Director of Paralegal Certification renders an opinion. The Committee's decision may be appealed to the Board of Directors of NFPA within 30 days from the date the Committee renders a decision.

If you are communicating with the Vice President and Director of Paralegal Certification with the intent that your communication constitute an official appeal, your communication, whether in writing or via e-mail must state that the communication constitutes a formal appeal of a decision.

The appeal must be in writing and provide all evidence that the Committee and or the NFPA Board should consider. The NFPA Board shall review the appeal at the next regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting and respond to appellant, in writing, within 10 days of such meeting. Appellants do not have the right to appear in person, bring witnesses, or be represented by counsel.

Should the Board of Directors uphold a denial of waiver or eligibility, the appellant has the right to submit a request for binding arbitration within 60 days of the date of the notice of denial of appeal.

Requests for arbitration must be filed with the Seattle, Washington office of the American Arbitration Association pursuant to its Commercial Arbitration Rules, along with the appropriate fee, to the following address:

American Arbitration Association
701 Pike Street, Suite 950
Seattle, WA 98101
Telephone 206-622-6435
Website: www.adr.org

Arbitration applications and rules may also be obtained at the above address.

Arbitration Clause

Any controversy or claim arising out of or relating to the PACE application shall be settled by arbitration administered by the American Arbitration Association in accordance with its Commercial Arbitration Rules. Judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof. Any such arbitration shall be conducted in Seattle, Washington, unless another place is

selected by mutual agreement of the candidate and the NFPA President.

The arbitrator will be selected from a panel of persons having experience with and knowledge of the U.S. legal system.

The scope of arbitration shall be limited to whether the applicant is eligible to take PACE.

REMINDER -

Do not submit the application, fee, and supporting documents without reviewing the checklist included with the Candidate Application and Affidavit of Work Experience.

APPENDIX A

Summary of Education and Work Experience Criteria

Requirements are:

- An associates degree in paralegal studies obtained from an institutionally accredited school, and/or ABA approved paralegal education program; and six (6) years substantive paralegal experience; OR
- A bachelor's degree in any course of study obtained from an institutionally accredited school and three (3) years of substantive paralegal experience; OR
- A bachelor's degree and completion of a paralegal program with an institutionally accredited school, said paralegal program may be embodied in a bachelor's degree; and two (2) years substantive paralegal experience; OR
- Four (4) years substantive paralegal experience on or before December 31, 2000.

To read this chart, first identify the appropriate education category in the first column. The amount of paralegal experience you will need to be eligible to take PACE is in the second column. Please note that you may NOT substitute post-graduate education for the experience requirement.

Education (institutionally accredited institution) (see note #1)	PLUS	Substantive Paralegal Experience (see note #2)
NO Bachelor's degree or Paralegal Certificate		4 years of substantive paralegal experience obtained on or before December 31, 2000 (Grandfather Exception)
Bachelor's Degree in any field (no paralegal certificate)	+	3 years of substantive paralegal experience
Bachelor's Degree in Legal Assistant Studies or Paralegal Studies	+	2 years of substantive paralegal experience
Bachelor's Degree in any subject plus a Paralegal Certificate	+	2 years of substantive paralegal experience
Associate's Degree in any topic except Paralegal or Legal Assistant Studies; no Bachelor's Degree		Not eligible unless you meet the Grandfather Clause (4 years of substantive paralegal experience obtained BEFORE December 31, 2000.
Associate's Degree in Paralegal or Legal Assistant Studies	+	6 years substantive paralegal experience

¹Original transcripts must be provided for all degrees. Degrees obtained outside the United States must be accompanied by a professional evaluation of equivalency to United States degrees.

²Experience gained as a part-time paralegal will be counted hour-for-hour against experience requirements. Work experience must be directly related to the role of a paralegal. An applicant may combine experience from more than one employer to meet the experience requirements. See Section II, Work Experience Criteria, for additional details.

APPENDIX B

PACE Test Specifications

Tasks in Domain I. <i>Administration of Client Legal Matters - 23%</i>
Task Statements
Conduct a conflicts check.
Develop, organize and maintain a client file.
Develop and maintain a calendar/"tickler" system.
Develop and maintain databases.
Coordinate events, activities, and services related to client matters.

Tasks in Domain II. <i>Development of Client Legal Matters - 30%</i>
Task Statements
Interview prospective client.
Analyze facts and information gathered from client.
Serve as liaison among client, counsel, and other resources.
Collaborate with counsel, client, consultants, and other resources on an ongoing basis.
Prepare and/or coordinate the preparation of legal and factual documents, exhibits, evidence, and/or other information related to client matter.
Prepare, file, and serve documents related to client matter.
Prepare client, witnesses, experts, counsel and other individuals for legal proceedings and events.
Assist client, counsel, and other individuals.
Facilitate disposition of client legal matters.

Tasks in Domain III. <i>Factual and Legal Research - 22%</i>
Task Statements
Obtain factual, procedural, legal and other types of information.
Investigate and compile facts and information from internal or external sources.
Inspect and evaluate relevant evidence and/or information.
Ascertain legal authority.
Analyze relevant legal authorities to determine their applicability to the client's matter.
Validate and update legal research.
Acquire current information.

Tasks in Domain IV. <i>Factual and Legal Writing - 20.5%</i>
Task Statements
Communicate with client, counsel, and other individuals or entities.
Prepare and/or draft documents.
Prepare and/or draft analytical documents.

Tasks in Domain V. <i>Office Administration - 4.5%</i>
--

Task Statements

Coordinate activities to create an efficient and effective work environment

Acquire technology and materials.

Coordinate and utilize vendor services.

Create and maintain a library of legal and factual resources.

Develop and maintain a billing system.
--

Manage workflow.

Educate current and prospective clients.
--

APPENDIX C

Sample PACE Questions

1. Three years ago, a firm represented X's business in a real estate closing. X's spouse is now seeking the firm's representation in a divorce case. The appropriate next step would be to:
 - a. Inform both parties and seek their consent to the firm's representation of both.
 - b. Inform only X's spouse of the firm's previous representation of X's business.
 - c. Seek only X's consent to the firm's representation of X's spouse.
 - d. Inform neither party of the firm's representation of both.
2. Which of the following describes the correct course of action when the results of binding arbitration are unacceptable to any party in a lawsuit?
 - a. Nothing further can be done, and the parties must accept the results.
 - b. An application is made to the court to conference the case with the magistrate.
 - c. A motion for new arbitration is filed within 30 days.
 - d. A *trial de nova* is filed within 30 days to restore the case to the court docket.
3. Which one of the following kinds of deeds offers the most protection to the buyer?
 - a. Quitclaim
 - b. Warranty
 - c. Trustee
 - d. Survivorship
4. The phrase "indemnify and hold harmless" refers to a(n):
 - a. Commitment by one party to the other party to repay in the event of a specified loss.
 - b. Obligor's responsibility to bear all losses in a contract dispute.
 - c. Injured party's ability to recover one-half of its losses from each party to the contract.
 - d. Injured party's ability to recover all losses in unequal shares from both parties to the contract.
5. Which federal statute enables any citizen, upon proper request, to obtain documents from a federal agency?
 - a. Open Records Act
 - b. Freedom of Information Act
 - c. Administrative Communications Act
 - d. Privileged Information Act

6. A paralegal interviews a prospective client on a personal injury matter. The client is accompanied by her boyfriend. The interview takes place in the firm's conference room. A secretary is present to assist in note taking. The attorney decides not to accept the case. Which of the following facts is most likely to cause the conversation *not* to be privileged?
- The presence of the secretary
 - The attorney's declining representation
 - The prospective client's bringing her boyfriend
 - A paralegal's conducting the interview
7. Which of the following is true regarding the production of documents under the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure?
- The plaintiff may not be compelled to produce documents.
 - A person not a party to the suit may be compelled by subpoena to produce documents.
 - Other than documents, no tangible evidence can be compelled to be produced.
 - A written response to a subpoena must be forwarded within 60 days of the request.
8. A paralegal working on a case involving a federal statute becomes aware that the agency that administers the statute just promulgated a regulation that may affect the case. The best place to look for this regulation would be:
- Federal Practice and Procedure.
 - Federal Register.
 - Code of Federal Regulations.
 - United States Code.
9. A letter sent to the defendant's insurer that summarizes the plaintiff's injuries, lost wages, medical treatment, and medical bills and requests monetary compensation is commonly known as:
- A statement of damages.
 - A demand letter.
 - A memorandum of law.
 - An opinion letter.

ANSWERS

- Question 1. a**
Question 2. d
Question 3. b
Question 4. a
Question 5. b
Question 6. c
Question 7. b
Question 8. b
Question 9. b

APPENDIX D

ACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS AND FOREIGN DEGREE EVALUATION SERVICES

Accrediting Organizations

There is no centralized authority in the U.S. that exercises control over postsecondary educational institutions. Each state assumes control over education within the state. However, institutions of higher education are generally allowed to operate with considerable autonomy.

Accreditation has developed as a method of peer evaluation of educational institutions and programs in order to insure a fundamental level of quality. National and regional associations have developed criteria and procedures for evaluating institutions or programs to determine whether or not they are providing basic levels of education.

Types of educational accreditation:

Institutional – applies to an entire institution, demonstrating that each of an institution's parts is contributing to the achievement of the institution's objectives.

Programmatic – applies to programs, departments, or schools that are parts of an institution.

If your bachelor's degree and/or paralegal certificate was awarded by a school accredited by an association or agency not included on this list, you may request a review by the **Certification Standards Committee (the Committee)**. In order to apply for a review, you will need to provide the Committee with a program catalog, institution catalog, and course syllabi. The review process will take 45 days, and the Committee will make the final determination.

Degrees obtained outside the United States must be evaluated by a professional evaluation for their equivalence to U.S. degrees. **See below for foreign degree evaluation services.** Paralegal certificates obtained outside the United States must be evaluated by the Certification Standards Committee.

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
Barbara E. Brittingham, Director
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514
Phone: (781) 425-7700
www.neasc.org
(CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)

Middle States Commission on Higher Education
Elizabeth H. Sibolski, President
3624 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Phone: (267) 284-5000
www.msche.org
(DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA, PR, USVI)

North Central association of colleges and Schools, The Higher Learning Commission
Sylvia Manning, President
230 South LaSalle St., Suite 7-500
Chicago, IL 60604-1413
Phone: (312) 263-0456 or (800) 621-7440
(AZ, AR, CO, IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, NM, ND, OH, OK, SD, WV, WI, WY)

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
Sandra E. Elman, President
8060 165th Avenue, NE, Suite 100
Redmond, WA 98052
Phone: (425) 558-4224
www.nwccu.org
(AK, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA)

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges
Belle S. Wheelan, President
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, GA 30033-4097
Phone: (404) 679-4501 or (800) 248-7701
www.sacscoc.org
(AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, TX, VA)

Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Barbara A. Beno, President
10 Commercial Boulevard, Suite 204
Novato, CA 94949
Phone: (415) 506-0234
www.wascweb.org
(CA, HI, AMERICAN SOMOA, GUAM, REPUBLIC OF PALAU, FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA, COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS)

Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities
Ralph Wolff, President and Executive Director
985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100
Alameda, CA 94501
Phone: (510) 748-9001
www.wascweb.org
(CA, HI, AMERICAN SOMOA, GUAM, REPUBLIC OF PALAU, FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA, COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS)

American Bar Association, Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar
Barry A. Currier
Interim consultant on Legal Education
ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar
321 North Clark Street, 21st Floor
Chicago, IL 60610-4714
Phone: (312) 988-6744
www.abanet.org/legaled

Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools
750 First Street NE, Suite 980
Washington, DC 20002-4242
Phone: (202) 336-6780
www.acics.org

Accrediting Commission for Career Schools and Colleges of Technology
2101 Wilson Blvd., Suite 302
Arlington, VA 22201
Phone: (703) 247-4212
www.accsc.org

Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and training
1722 N Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 955-1113
www.accet.org

Council on Occupational Education
7840 Roswell Rd., Bldg. 300, Ste 325
Atlanta, GA 30350
Phone: (800) 917-2081
www.council.org

FOREIGN DEGREE EVALUATION SERVICES

The following organizations provide evaluations, for a fee, of foreign degrees as to their U.S. equivalent:

American association of Collegiate Registrars & Admissions Officers (AACRAO)
Foreign Credential Evaluation services
Website: www.AACRAO.org
Email: ies@AACRAO.org
Phone: 202-296-3359

World Education Services, Inc.
Website: www.WES.org

APPENDIX E

CLE Guidelines

See also NFPA website

Credit for Attendance at CLE Seminars

Seminar Approved: Seminars sponsored by NFPA or any NFPA member association(s); seminars provided by any of the following professional seminar providers: American Association for Paralegal Education, American Trial Lawyers Association, California Alliance of Paralegal Associations, Halfmoon Seminars, Institute for Paralegal Education, International Trademark Association, International Paralegal Management Association (formerly Legal Assistant Management Association), National Association of Legal Assistants, National Business Institute, Practicing Law Institute, Professional Education Systems, Inc., any bar association, accredited institution of higher education, and/or federal or state regulatory authority. **See NFPA website reference above for an up to date list of approved providers.**

Other consideration: CLE credit shall be submitted by an RP for consideration if it does not meet the above criteria by providing a copy of the seminar brochure, speaker bio and seminar outline. If you need to know whether a seminar will be considered for CLE and it does not meet the criteria in the first paragraph, submit the information to CLE Coordinator, together with a \$10 processing fee, to NFPA headquarters for an opinion. Please allow sixty (60) days for processing of **all** CLE requests.

Contact Hours: A “contact hour” shall be equal to sixty minutes of classroom instruction. One contact hour is equivalent to one CLE credit.

Subject Matter of Seminars: CLE credit will only be accepted if it is for continuing legal education. The subject matter of such seminars must be on substantive law issues or must be oriented to the specific nature of the paralegal profession, such as enhancing computer skills or research techniques, increasing management skills, etc. CLE credit is not given for seminars on resume writing or job interviewing skills. **See NFPA website reference above for a more detailed discussion of other types of CLE credits.**

You must obtain one CLE credit in ethics every two years. It is not enough to say that legal ethics was included throughout the seminar. The seminar brochure must clearly state that the seminar has been approved for a certain number of CLE credits in ethics.

CLE Credit for Instructing, Speaking, Guest Lecturing, Publishing, Self Study and Pro Bono Activities.

RP's may submit CLE credits for hours spent as paralegal instructors, speakers, guest lecturers, or authors. Only those hours that have been submitted and approved for NFPA CLE credit will be accepted. Guidelines for applying for this type of CLE credit are at the NFPA website. Go to the NFPA website at www.paralegals.org and click on “Paralegal Education & Certification” and then choose “NFPA approval for Continuing Legal Education.” **An application fee of \$10 is required to apply for NFPA CLE credit. You may apply for credit for multiple seminars for one \$10 fee.**

Dual credentialed paralegals in good standing holding both the CRP™ and the RP® credentials may use the same CLE hours required in the renewal process, as long as it is within the two year time period according to their renewal date.

A \$50 PACE Renewal Application fee is required when you submit your Renewal Affidavit and supporting documentation to NFPA Headquarters.

Appendix F

Sample Employment Verification and Reference Letters

Must use letterhead

Date

**NFPA
9100 Purdue Rd., Ste. 200
Indianapolis, IN 46268**

Dear Application Approval Manager:

I am writing this letter to describe the paralegal work of Chris Smith.

Describe standing to provide letter-

**I am an attorney (state & bar number)
I am a judge
I am a client
I am a PACE Registered Paralegal**

Describe mechanism of gaining familiarity with Chris' work-

**Through a supervisory capacity, I am familiar with Chris' paralegal work
Through observing Chris during court actions, I am familiar with Chris' paralegal work
Through the work product/services I receive, I am familiar with Chris' paralegal work
As a paralegal co-worker, I am familiar with Chris' paralegal work**

Describe sample tasks performed

Chris specializes in the area of litigation and performs such tasks as drafting complaints, interrogatories, requests for production of documents and defensive pleadings for attorney review. He/she reviews client files, organizes and gathers factual data required for the case, and locates, interviews, and obtains witness statements. Chris indexes and summarizes depositions and prepares trial notebooks and witness files.

Declaration

The assistance that Chris renders is substantive in nature and would otherwise be performed by an attorney.

Signature

Appendix G

Application for Waiver of Six (6) Month Waiting Period to Retake PACE/PCCE

Applicant Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email Address: _____ Phone: _____

Date of Exam: _____

I am requesting a waiver of the six (6) month waiting period to retake

_____ Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam (PACE)

_____ Paralegal Core Competency Exam (PCCE)

_____ (initial) I understand that I am retesting at my own risk before the next regularly scheduled scoring run, but no sooner than four (4) weeks from original exam date.

_____ (initial) I understand that the additional testing fee is being submitted at my own risk and will not be refunded.

Applicant Signature

Date