Law Enforcement Analyst - Foundational (LEAF)

Certification Program Outline

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The Purpose of IACA Certification

The IACA has developed criteria and an examination process that will allow applicants to obtain two certifications as a law enforcement analyst. A certification program provides the foundation on which a profession demarcates the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for successfully meeting the job duties and responsibilities within its given field. Crime analysis, intelligence analysis, investigative analysis, geographic profiling, police research and planning units and personnel all share a common skill set. In many cases, individual staff members are expected to provide analytical support to public safety agencies across the globe without formal training or instruction.

The IACA is committed to providing a comprehensive training and credentialing program to provide analysts, as well as agencies, both the framework for excellence and the mechanism for achieving it. The IACA published its program for all entities, private and public, local and international, to use. The IACA encourages local associations, training programs, colleges and universities to build educational programs around this model, and encourages local, state, federal and provincial agencies to adopt these standards of excellence.

The IACA Certification Program is a result of the desire to reach the following six goals:

- ☐ To recognize the professional abilities and accomplishments of individual law enforcement analysts.
- ☐ To promote and encourage professional development opportunities in the field of law enforcement analysis.
- ☐ To provide the employers of law enforcement analysts a reliable measure of professional competence.
- ☐ To provide employers of law enforcement analysts with a basis on which to establish job descriptions.
- ☐ To promote the profession of law enforcement analysis to police chiefs, administrators and the entire criminal justice community.
- ☐ To better define law enforcement analysis as a legitimate and unique career.

The IACA believes that a diverse, well-rounded, multifaceted analyst makes for the most productive staff member. While every agency has specific, unique and ever-changing analytical needs, the IACA believes that every analyst should possess a full understanding of the different techniques and methods used throughout the field.

The IACA wants to offer a multitude of ways in which analysts learn and gain experience necessary for their jobs, and therefore we want to offer a program that rewards this wide spectrum of learning and understanding. In light of this, the IACA has designed a certification program that acknowledges education, work experience, competencies, skills and abilities, and contributions that advance the profession.

Anyone using the LEAF competencies for conceptualizing presentations, creating curriculum, designing examinations, or writing articles/books should keep in mind that these competencies and skills reflect the professional viewpoint of crime analysts across the globe. While this effort reflects a consensus, it should be clear that a great deal of debate, discourse and critical thought went into the process that resulted in these competencies. Crime analysis professionals have come to realize that the analytical work we do is very diverse, and includes peripheral areas of concentration (i.e., crime analysis, intelligence analysis, investigative analysis, geographic profiling, psychological profiling, operations research, problem analysis and problem solving, community policing, police accountability, research and planning and financial/budget analysis). Also, the IACA recognizes that these competencies are dynamic and will change as new skills and tools are created and designed to accomplish our professional task.

While the IACA will provide formal certification to the qualifying members, the IACA views this process more as an assessment of one's credentials than as an authority verifying one's actual level of competence. The IACA does not take responsibility for the hiring authority to verify the knowledge, skills and abilities specific to the position being offered. The IACA certification program is designed to assist analysts and agencies in identifying proficiencies and deficiencies in each competency or skill set item, and to assist analysts in reaching higher standards for job performance. It should not be used as the sole standard for hiring or promotion, or for differentiating salary ranges. The IACA firmly believes that this is the responsibility of the hiring authority and that many factors must be taken into account when making various employment-related decisions.

Background

In 2019, during the IACA annual conference, held in Oxon Hill, Maryland, the IACA Executive Board hosted a stakeholders meeting to discuss the need for a new, basic level of IACA certification, targeted to those entering the field of crime analysis. Representatives from various IACA committees assembled with the board to discuss the idea, as well as the current state of the CLEA certification. Each representative was provided with the current CLEA program outline and skills set study guide.

Upon conclusion of the meeting, it was decided that a subcommittee would be formed to "develop a process and structure for a basic-level certification process sufficient to certify that an individual is ready for an entry-level position in the crime analysis field." In addition, it was decided that the subcommittee would review and update the CLEA examination, as needed, and prepare both exams for international translations.

Eleven IACA members were appointed to the redevelopment committee. They consisted of the following individuals:

Alex Schneider (Co-Chair)	Jenny Zawitz	Anthony D'Abrrazzo	Yarisa Walsh
Jason Elder	Steve Hawthorne	Jason Paynich	Cabell Hintz
Angela Backer-Hines	Carola Jeronsky	Kimm Barnes (Co-Chair)	

Beginning in January, 2020, the committee established a set of eight core competencies to serve as study material for the new exam. These competencies were developed as a compliment to the 19 skill sets that comprise the CLEA exam. Some material from the CLEA skill sets were not included in the new, foundational exam as they were determined to be too advanced for entry-level application.

Throughout 2020, the committee worked together through the use of team management software (Basecamp), conference calls, emails and surveys, in order to develop a working model of what was officially titled as the "Law Enforcement Analyst – Foundational Certification", otherwise known as the "LEAF Certification". The committee created the LEAF certification in a manner that reflects the basic structure of the CLEA certification.

Key issues and decisions included:

- Developing a set of core competencies
- Number and type of questions for exam
- Eligibility to test
- Pass/Fail scoring procedure
- Number of exam attempts
- Exam proctoring options (recorded and live)
- Development of certification logo
- Development of program outline
- Exam question development and review*
- Creation of focus group and testing protocols
- Administration of online proctored exam w/focus group
- International translations of exam

The Certification Committee presented the IACA LEAF certification to the IACA Board for approval in the fall of 2020, and officially launched the certification in February, 2021

Validity of the Exam

The development of the LEAF certification exam involved several key steps. Committee members were tasked with writing questions for each of the eight LEAF competencies. A smaller team of five committee members then reviewed the proposed questions for content and duplication, while considering fairness and design objectivity. Based on their review, the team made decisions to accept, reject, or modify the proposed questions. The review cumulated in a question bank of 180 questions, plus four practical exercises. The question formats consist of multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank and short answer, all designed to be objective in nature.

Questions selected for the exam had multiple sources and were based on well-established, professional techniques. No proprietary sources were used as a basis for the test questions, and every effort was made to identify multiple sources for any given question. The IACA Training Series and the book, *Exploring Crime Analysis: Essential Skills,* are not the only places that this knowledge can be found. To ensure this, the committee developed an extensive list of reading resources.

In October, 2020, the LEAF exam was distributed to two focus groups. One group consisted of college students, with no law enforcement experience or study preparation, who took the exam "cold" for extra credit. The second group consisted of five working crime & intelligence analysts, all of whom had three years or less of law enforcement experience and were current members in the IACA. The analysts were given a study guide ahead of the exam and were proctored "live" during the exam. After all testing was concluded for each group, the LEAF exam was then reviewed a second time, based upon the feedback. Of the five analysts who took the exam, two successfully passed the exam with scores 80% or higher and were awarded the LEAF certification.

ADA Accommodations

The IACA supports inclusion for applicants with disabilities and works to create an environment that is responsive to all variations of ability.

When applicable, prior to their examination, applicants are asked to inform the Certification Committee that they have a disability and require an adjustment to their exam. The applicant will be asked to provide documentation that includes the following: a diagnosis of the applicant's current disability, including the date of diagnosis, and the credentials of the diagnosing professional. Also to be included are: information on how the disability affects a major life activity and how the disability affects academic performance.

Taking the LEAF Exam

In general, certification exams will be offered at least twice per year, in conjunction with state and regional association conferences and the annual IACA Training Conference. The LEAF exam is offered electronically via a learning management system and requires the use of either a remote proctoring service or a pre-approved in-person exam proctor.

The Certification Committee is responsible for scheduling each exam and reviewing the scores of each test, which will first be electronically scored by the learning management system. The committee will then notify the applicant by providing an IACA Letter of Certification or, upon failure, a letter of information on any areas of deficiency. An applicant can appeal a negative decision by the Commission to the IACA President, who will then take the appeal to the IACA Executive Board for final decision (see Failure Protocol).

If an exam is taken with an in-person proctor, the proctor cannot offer any assistance to the applicant, and is directed not to answer any questions during the exam.

The following documents must be completed and returned to the certification committee prior to the start of the exam: IACA Examination Acknowledgement (prohibits the applicant from copying, recording or otherwise sharing exam information) and the Proctor Agreement (proctor's acknowledgment to

administer the exam as set forth in the IACA guidelines), if applicable.

During all exams - NO outside materials can be used during the exam, as it is a closed-book format. Once an exam has begun, the candidate may not leave the exam or open new windows/tabs unless specifically told to do so as part of the directions of the exam. Each candidate will be given 2 hours to complete the exam. It is estimated that a well-prepared individual will be able to complete the exam in approximately 1 ½ hours.

Certified Law Enforcement Analyst (CLEA) Certification Program - Outline

The exam will include multiple-choice, true-false, fill-in-the-blank and short answer questions, all designed to be objective in nature. The candidate can expect to make computations on scratch paper, and use the computer's calculator. Each exam will consist of 100 questions – ten (10) randomly selected questions from each of the 8 competencies that were identified by the committee and approved by the executive board, as well as four practical exercise question sets worth 5 points each. An overall score of 80% must be answered correctly in order to receive a passing score. A list of crime analysis trainings and publications are available on the IACA website and a study guide is available to assist in preparing for the examination.

Once the exam is passed with 80% or higher, the applicant will earn the certification of Law Enforcement Analyst – Foundational (LEAF). They will receive a certificate and recognition from the IACA.

Any questions or concerns can be directed to the Certification Committee in writing (e-mail or regular mail), who will review the submission and reply to the applicant within 30 days of receipt of the letter.

The fee for the examination is $150 USD. The first retake fee is $50 USD and all subsequent retakes are $150 USD. The funds will go into the IACA general account, allowing for the continuation of the certification program, the IACA Training Series, and the textbook, "Exploring Crime Analysis: Essential Skills".

Failure Protocol

If the candidate does not pass the exam, they will be sent a letter identifying the sections in which they were deficient. 100% of the certification fee will be kept to cover costs of the testing process.

The candidate will have a one-year grace period to retake the exam at a reduced cost of $50 USD. During this one-year period, the candidate must take the entire examination over again. If the second attempt to pass the exam is unsuccessful, the candidate will be required to wait for a one-year period before retaking the exam again. The one-year period will start on the date of the second attempt testing date. After the one-year period expires, the candidate will be required to pay the $150 USD fee again and retake the entire exam.

There is no limit to the number of attempts one can take the exam; however, any subsequent attempts will require payment of the $150 USD fee and the candidate must wait for a one-year period in between exams.

Appeal Process

All appeals concerning the Certification process will first be directed to the Certification Committee at

certification@iaca.net. Any further appeals will be directed, in writing, to the President of the IACA. The President will converse with the IACA Executive Board, whose decision will be returned in writing and will be considered final.

Appeals may be directed to the Certification Committee and then the IACA President concerning three issues: (a) minimum requirements, (b) tabulation of points and (c) the grading of the exam.