

# **ARIZONA STATE ESCROW ASSOCIATION PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION**

## **Answers to the Most Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How often are the tests given?**

The ASEA Bylaws provide for the test to be offered at least once per year. Currently, the Professional Designation Committee makes every effort to offer the tests twice a year, in April and October. The location of the test varies and is announced on the informational flyer that is mailed to the general membership 90 days prior to the test.

### **How do I apply for the test?**

You must complete a standardized application form. The application contains Article 12 of the ASEA Bylaws and Article 10 of the ASEA Standing Rules, which address matters regarding Professional Designation. The application also contains authorization for the committee to contact your current and prior employer(s) to verify your years of experience in the escrow profession. The committee will also verify your educational credits and membership status.

Note that the application states, "years experience in the escrow profession", not time on a particular job. Each company defines the levels of escrow secretary, assistant (Technician), officer and so forth according to their own company standards, which is exactly how it should be. However, for designation purposes, the Professional Designation Committee establishes the criteria for each level based on overall standards of the industry throughout the state. You select the level you wish to test for; the committee simply verifies the information.

The test results give us the best indication as to whether or not you tested at the appropriate level.

### **Do I have to be a member in order to test?**

Yes! In fact, you must also be a member in order to receive credits for the educational events you attend. There can be no exceptions to this requirement. The ASEA Bylaws read as follows: "No credits shall be awarded to any person for educational events or seminars attended prior to that person's membership in this Association."

If you rely on your company to pay your membership dues, make certain the dues have actually been paid. We have found in the past that some applicants believed their employer had sent in the dues, but the dues in fact had never been paid. If in doubt, we suggest that you pay your own dues and get reimbursed by your employer. That way you know for certain that your dues are paid.

You may want to contact the Education Chairman and the Membership Chairman **now** to verify that their records match your records.

### **Where do I earn educational credits:**

You may earn your educational credits by attending any class sponsored by the ASEA or by the American Escrow Association. One hour of education equals one credit. You may also earn one credit hour by attending any ASEA board meeting. Our meetings are not closed and we would welcome your attendance.

Traditionally, the Escrow One class has not been a "credit hour" class and could only be used as a replacement for the "years of experience in the business" portion of the application. Breaking that tradition for the first time this year, ASEA will now give you the option of choosing between the two; you may apply a passing grade on Escrow One (or the upcoming Escrow Two) to offset a lack of time on the job, or you may take it as credit hours; one or the other; not both. Should you choose to apply Escrow One or Escrow Two toward credit hours, you will earn one credit for each 3-hour class you attend except for the final test. No credit hours will be earned for taking the test.

### **How long are my educational credits good for?**

Educational credits must be earned during the 12-month period immediately preceding the date of the application.

For example, if you attended a seminar in 2010, the credits would not count for testing in 2012.

### **When do I apply?**

All applications must be submitted to the committee at least 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date.

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### **What does the test consist of?**

There is a single Vocabulary test and a single Question and Answer test that is given to everyone; HOWEVER, each level (CEA, CAEO, CEO, CSEO and CEI) has an increasingly higher percentage required for passing:

CEA Vocab	58%	Q & A	58%
CAEOVocab	66%	Q & A	66%
CEO Vocab	79%	Q & A	79%
CSEOVocab	86%	Q & A	86%
CEI			86%

**Must Hold a CSEO designation**

There are 155 words on the Vocabulary test. You are given an alphabetized sheet of words and a list of definitions. You must match up the words on the list with the definitions.

There are 165 Questions & Answers. These consist of True/False, fill in the blanks, multiple choice and some calculations.

### **What does the CEI test consist of?**

The CEI test, unlike the other designation tests, is not directed at determining your level of knowledge of escrow, but rather your basic understanding of the principles and practices of teaching.

We all know that knowledge of a subject in and of itself does not guarantee the ability to relay that knowledge to another person. The CEI test consists of a class designed to equip you with important tools, methods and techniques to help you succeed as an instructor. Whether you are teaching one seminar, a series of classes, or co-workers within your office setting, the class covers general information on the art of teaching. The class is followed immediately by a test, which consists of True and False; Fill in the Blank and Multiple Choice questions covering the information discussed in the class.

The passing grade for CEI is the same as for CSEO, 86%.

### **The Escrow Problem:**

You will be given a contract and/or general instructions regarding an escrow. You will be asked to prepare a file including all supporting documents required to close the escrow as well as complete a settlement statement and disbursement

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sheet. Calculators, blank forms and paper are provided. In the

past we have tried to provide typewriters but this has become increasingly difficult for the larger test groups. It seems that typewriters are going the way of the dinosaurs. Most offices now just have "community" typewriters. So you may expect to hand-write your escrow documents (which many applicants prefer, anyway. You are welcome to bring your own calculator and/or typewriter if it would make you feel more comfortable. Often, under a test situation, something as minor as an unfamiliar calculator can be extremely distracting.

### **The Oral Exam:**

Sometime during the session you will be called in to take the Oral portion of the test. You will be asked to select 5 numbers and in turn will be asked the corresponding questions. There could be follow up questions asked by the proctors if they feel it would help them decide your knowledge level or if they think you need to elaborate on a particular answer. These questions range from some technical questions for which there is only one specific answer to questions on how you would handle a certain situation.

### **How long is the test?**

The test is given all day Saturday. You will have 1½ hours to complete the Vocabulary portion and then 1½ hours to complete the Q & A, with a short break in between. The Problem portion and the Oral interview will take up the balance of the day.

### **What type of problem can I expect?**

The Professional Designation Committee is reluctant to suggest the specific type of escrow problems that you can expect.

Existing tests are frequently updated and/or modified, new tests are being written and some tests are being retired. There are at least three different tests for each level. If you are testing for the first time, you will be asked to draw a number, which will determine the particular test you will receive for your level.

### **When do I get notified of my results?**

Please do not expect to get your test results the day of the test. This will not happen! All test results are mailed out at the same time, usually within three weeks following the test.

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While every effort is made to get the test results out as soon

as possible, the time period will vary from test to test, depending on the number of applicants and the level of the tests being graded. Passing notices are also sent to your employer.

### **When do I get my plaque?**

You are presented with your Designation Plaque at the next annual state conference following your test.

### **What if I fail only a portion of the test?**

If you fail a particular section you are permitted to re-test that section, provided you do so within the 12 months following the original testing. You do not have to re-apply or pay any additional fee during this 12-month period; you simply notify the Professional Designation Committee 30 days prior to the test so a space can be reserved for you.

### **What if more than 1 year passes and I haven't re-tested?**

If you have not passed all portions of the test for the designation originally applied for within 1 year from the original test date, then you must reapply and pay the full fee.

All passing scores are valid for a period of 3 years. If you pass any portion with a score that meets the minimum passing grade for a higher designation, then that score may be applied to a higher designation as long as you apply within the three-year period. After 3 years, you must pay the fee, complete and pass all portions of the test for any higher designation.

### **What study materials are available?**

Escrow I Book

The Escrow I Book has a recommended Glossary/Vocabulary for you to study. The book also has reviews at the end of each chapter, which are great study guides.

Vocabulary study cards/books are available for purchase through the Association.

Attending any educational event or seminar sponsored by the Arizona State Escrow Association is a great way to increase your knowledge of the industry and help you prepare for the test. As part of the registration fee, such events often include

workbooks that contain handouts and materials that are excellent study aids. Some of the classes that are offered are focused specifically on preparing for the test itself, reducing test anxiety and increasing confidence.

We hope this answers most of your questions. Thanks for asking!