



## Questions and Answers about the Professional Certification Program

### Why is the Society offering a Certification Program?

The Society has a mandate to be an advocacy agent of behalf of the membership. Advocating higher and uniform standards for security is a positive step in that direction. Previously we had no program for entry-level or mid-career security individuals to be recognized for their training, education and, skills and knowledge. The Certification Program provides recognition and a form of credential that we believe is in demand by employers and, therefore, is an industry leader in Canada.

### Why is the Certification Program not a study program like others offered in Canada?

We believe that the Society does not need to offer expensive training for security professionals when other agencies are doing so. We can rely upon excellent courses now offered by academic institutions to do this. We have set our own standards for each category of Certification. Current courses in security education generally achieve those standards. We only have to rate those courses and personal experience to assure that the applicant has reached and remains at our level of stated and required experience.

### What are Learning Outcomes?

They are the results of learning. Education and training provide a result and that result usually means the graduate can do something to a professional standing that could not be done without training. The outcome is the goal and therefore more correctly states what the supporting training is supposed to achieve. Statements of Learning Outcomes are now generally used in educational institutions to design and organize courses of study. The Ministries of Education also use them.

### Why are there only three categories of Certification?

The design of the Program is to recognize entry-level, enhanced and general professional standing in security knowledge and skills. Three categories were selected and Learning Outcomes established for each one. Actually, there is no barrier to creating additional categories of Certification as the need is identified to formally recognize special security skills and knowledge in the security sector.

### **What is the Canadian Security Certification Authority (CSCA)?**

While the Society is fully responsible for the existence of the Program, an administrative body was created with a suitable name as the Program is available to all security individuals and not just members. The CSCA is responsible for the administration of the Program and is accountable to the Board of Directors. It is useful to remember the Society has other programs as well; one is the Accredited Security Professional or ASP program which is a mid-to end of career fellowship in the security profession; and the Security Supervisor Course, which is a self-study program for junior supervisors. The decision to create the CSCA was to assist in the Program administration while the Society itself manages its other two programs.

### **What is the benefit of being certified with the Society?**

Professional credentials are essential in every profession. The Society is making the security community as professional as any other professional group such as physicians, engineers, police, and accountants etc, all of whom belong to associations that recognize professional standing. This offering by the Society is intended to provide the same type of recognition that other professions have available to them. We know employers are seeking this type of reliability in their staff and we have provided it.

### **Must an applicant start with the most basic of Certification categories?**

No. An applicant can apply for one or more categories in whatever order suits the individual's purpose. Of course, each category has its own standards, and they have to be met in each case.

### **What is Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)?**

Briefly, you can apply to a university or other accredited learning institution to have your accumulated non-academic learning evaluated. When completed, this evaluation will result in your accumulated skills and knowledge being classified at a recognized level of academic standing. The statement of prior learning can then be utilized to establish entitlement to credits in other courses of studies. The CSCA is prepared to recognize, among other achievements, a duly authorized PLA as part of an applicant's bona fides for Certification status.

### **How long will it take to get Certification awarded?**

With uncomplicated cases, Certification can be granted in several weeks. In cases that are not so simple, time is required to verify personal achievement that meet the required Certification Learning Outcomes, and to correspond and work with the applicant until all requirements are met. This could take more than several weeks.

### **How long does a Certification credential last?**

A Certification credential will last for a five year period at which time it will require renewal. For renewal purposes each category of Certification requires a specific number of credits be obtained during the five year period. Some examples of the credits that can be applied for renewal purposes are: seminars on security related topics, educational courses directly related to your position and approved by your employer and, professional development workshops.

### **How is the personal information submitted for Certification status protected?**

The Society and the Canadian Security Certification Authority (CSCA) maintains hard copy as well as electronic records on all applicants to the Program and for those who are granted or renewed. This information is not released without the written permission of the applicant or certified person. A signed release authority is required. It is understood that a person having a certified credential will require that information in regards to the status be made available to enhance their career. The safeguards used to protect the physical and electronic records will be those normally used in the industry with enhanced or special safeguards applied if the risk levels increase and/or unforeseen threats emerge.

### **Can employers and clients contact the CSCA to verify Certification?**

If we have your written permission on file, the CSCA will advise the caller that you are certified with the CSCA and the Society. We will determine the name of the caller; make a note to file and advise you of the contact. We will not normally determine if the caller has a bona fide reason to know if a person is or in what category. No other information will be released to the caller and we will not provide information that would allow the caller to find you.

### **Will all CSCA employees and Managers have a background check completed?**

Yes. All CSCA employees and Manager will be required to undergo a Criminal Background check and personal references will be verified.

### **Can a Certification status be revoked?**

It is possible that a certified person could be involved in a matter that violates our Code of Ethics. If this occurs and we are notified there would be some action taken. This action might include revocation for cause and there would be no reimbursement of fees on a prorated basis in such a case.

### **What happens if an application for renewal is late?**

At least 3 months before the renewal date the certified person will be advised in writing to submit the required criteria for renewal. There is a brief period of grace of up to four weeks during which a certified person whose period of certification has expired will be accepted for renewal. Once the grace period is over, a certified person must reapply for certification, be assessed again and pay the appropriate fee and not just the renewal fee.

### **Can non-Canadians here in Canada and in other countries apply and be granted Certification?**

Yes. Such persons might wait longer for certification especially if their education and work experience took place in another country and has to be verified by the CSCA.

### **How long are records held by the CSCA if a certified person ceases to be certified?**

Records will be kept for a period for 2 years after which they will be destroyed according to the standards set out by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Ontario. If a person wishes to have their records returned they can request to do so in writing.

**Can personal records held by the CSCA be obtained for legal purposes?**

They can be but the proper authorization in order to release them would be required.

**Is certification available to corporations who want their employees to have the status and would this status held by the individual employee become portable?**

Special arrangements can be made for group certifications and once an individual is certified either as part of corporate group or singly, that certification remains in effect until the expiry date. It is the responsibility of the certified person to advise the CSCA of any change of employer or personal mailing and contact information.

**If a new category of Certification is warranted will the CSCA accept a recommendation from a member of the security community?**

We would evaluate the recommendation and probably survey the body of security professionals who might wish to have a new category of certification. If positive this might lead to acceptance. It is, however, the mandate of the CSCA to develop and bring forward new categories of certification.

**What sort of liability does the Society bear for Certification?**

No institution bears liability for its teaching standards if they are misused by a graduate. The same applies to the Society. If the Certification Learning Outcomes are misused, misapplied, misrepresented or changed by someone, the Society and the CSCA bear no responsibility for that.

**If a person applies for Certification and it is not granted can that person reapply?**

Should a person be rejected they may apply and the appropriate fees would be required.

**If an application for Certification is rejected is there an appeal process?**

The applicant can appeal in writing to the Board of Directors of the Society whose decision is final.

**Will the CSCA be in contact with universities and colleges to track the security courses available?**

Yes. The CSCA will also offer our Learning Outcomes to such agencies with the aim that they will build into their course planning and thereby make their graduates eligible for certification upon graduation.

**Is an award of Certification made at some ceremony?**

It can be but not need be as it will be up to the individual who is being certified. Normally a letter together with a certificate will be sent to the successful applicant and if requested, a letter to their employer. The Society would be prepared to make an award at a local regional Chapter meeting or at the annual conference. The Society will make an announcement of the successful applicant and certification granted in its quarterly publication Forum unless we are informed otherwise by the certified person.