

1: **Paralegal CORE Competency Exam** (Credential earned upon successful completion of the exam is CORE Registered Paralegal (CRP))

CORE stands for:

- **Competent**
- **Organized**
- **Responsible**
- **Ethical**

This exam was developed and rolled out in November 2011 to assess the knowledge, skills and ability of early-entry and entry level paralegals. Candidates will find the handbook as PDF download on the NFPA website www.paralegals.org. Both the PCCE and PACE exams are administered at Prometric Test Centers throughout the US and Canada. To find the closest Prometric Testing Center to you, please review the link below:

<https://www.prometric.com/en-us/clients/nfpa/Pages/landing.aspx>

The study guide is now available for order on the NFPA website.

The PCCE Handbook can be found at http://www.mcamgmt.com/NFPA/PCC_Handbook.pdf

The application link can be found at <https://www2.proexam.org/NFPA/Candidate/>

You will have 90 days to take the test from the date your application is accepted so you should study for the exam, possibly join a study group, so you are prepared for the exam.

Once you have completed the exam, you will learn whether you passed the exam or not before you leave the building! You will receive a more detailed explanation of your results per domain by mail a short time after you have completed the exam. This is very helpful so you are not waiting for the results to be delivered by mail to you.

Scoring runs for the exam are processed quarterly, with individuals receiving their certificates and score reports approximately six to eight weeks after the scoring run is processed.

I have been told by Law Office Managers that they do consider candidates who have taken certification exams over those who have not. They support those who have voluntarily taken a certification exam to test

paralegal competencies so this may be the difference in securing a paralegal position!

For those who want to follow a self-study course, there is an on-line PCCE Review Course is jointly offered by NFPA and the Advanced Paralegal Institute (API). This is provided through Computer Mediated Distance Learning. The seven week on-line course prepares candidates to sit for the PCCE. A link and more information for this course are found on the NFPA website.

Once you have passed this exam, there are CLE requirements in order to maintain your credential. This information can be found in the comparison chart below for both exams.

2: PACE Registered Paralegal (Credential earned upon successful completion of the exam is RP)

A comparison chart for these exams is listed below.

Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam®:

This exam was an NFPA Agenda topic in 1994 and NFPA membership voted to develop an exam that could be used by state legislative bodies to gauge the competency level of experienced paralegals. This exam was rolled out in 1996.

Questions consist of 200 multiple-choice questions and, although, 4 hours are provided for completing the exam, many complete it within 2 hours.

What you will find with this exam is that the questions are hypothetical issues that test the advanced application of a paralegal's general knowledge, experience and analysis to determine the correct answer. The domains covered are identified in the Comparison Chart below.

Study manuals (6th edition) can be purchased from Pearson Education. Currently the cost is \$82.20 plus shipping and handling (may vary depending on where you live). The study manual purchase is separate from the fee for the exam application/handbook and application submission fee. You will find the 6th edition as does the 5th, contains chapters on bankruptcy, corporate law, intellectual property, family law, etc. tested on the exam. Older editions will help you prepare for the exam but you should also consult other resources identified in the study manual. If you have text books from paralegal classes you have taken, they will also be helpful in preparing for the exam.

As with the PCCE exam, I would encourage you to study for this exam prior to submitting your application since you have a specific period of time to take the exam once you are approved. The application is available on the NFPA website. The application and handbook for PACE are downloadable and can be found at <http://paralegals.org/default.asp?page=90>

There are some sample questions in the PACE Handbook so you can get an idea as to the types of questions you will be required to answer.

COMPARISON OF NATIONAL LEVEL PARALEGAL CERTIFICATION EXAMS

Credential:	
CORE Registered Paralegal (CRP) Established 2011	PACE Registered Paralegal (RP) Established 1996

<p>Exam Eligibility/Education:</p> <p>Bachelor's degree in any subject, a paralegal certificate , no experience or continuing legal education (CLE); OR Bachelor's degree in paralegal studies, no experience or CLE; OR Bachelor's degree in any subject, no paralegal certificate, six months of experience and 1 hour of ethics taken in the year preceding the examination application date; OR Associate's degree in any subject, no experience or CLE required; OR Associates degree in paralegal studies, no experience or CLE required; OR</p>	<p>Associate's degree in paralegal studies obtained from an institutionally accredited and/or ABA approved paralegal program and six years of substantive paralegal experience; OR Bachelor's degree in any course of study obtained from an institutionally accredited school and three years of substantive paralegal experience; OR Bachelor's degree and completion of a paralegal program within an institutionally accredited school (which may be embodied in the bachelor's degree) and a minimum of two years substantive paralegal experience; OR Four years of substantive legal experience on or before December 31, 2000.</p>
<p>Paralegal certificate from a program that meets or exceeds the requirements set forth in NFPA's Short Term Paralegal Program Position Statement, 1 year of experience, and six hours of CLE, including one hour of ethics taken in the year preceding the examination application date; OR Active duty, retired or former military personnel qualified in a military operation specialty as a paralegal and 1.0 hour of Ethics CLE within</p>	

<p>the year preceding the exam application; OR Candidates who are within two months of graduating and registered for the PCCE by a Paralegal Studies Program Director participating in the PCCE Assurance of Learning (AoL) Program at the Partner level; OR High school diploma or GED, five years of experience and 12 hours of CLE, including one hour of ethics taken in the two years preceding examination application date.</p>	
<p>Exam Fee: \$215</p>	<p>Member: \$225 Non-member: \$250 Plus \$25 non-refundable application fee</p>
<p>Test Length: Two and one-half (2.5) hours allowed</p>	<p>Four (4) hours allowed</p>
<p>Delivery Method: Computer Generated</p>	<p>Computer Generated</p>
<p>Composition of Exam:</p> <p>Domain 01: Paralegal Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Paralegal Practice ◆ Ethics and Professional Practice ◆ U.S. Legal System ◆ Branches of Government ◆ Legal Research ◆ Legal Writing and Critical Analysis ◆ Communication ◆ Law Office Management and Legal Technology ◆ Civil Litigation <p>Domain 02: Substantive Areas of Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Business organizations 	<p>Domain I: Administration of Client Legal Matters</p> <p>Domain II: Development of Client Legal Matters</p> <p>Domain III: Factual and Legal Research</p> <p>Domain IV: Factual and Legal Writing</p> <p>Domain V: Office Administration Exam based on Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, related to the following substantive areas of law:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Contracts ◆ Criminal ◆ Estates, Wills and Trusts ◆ Family ◆ Real Estate ◆ Torts <p>Exam based on Federal Rules of Civil Procedure</p> <p>For detailed information, please see Appendix A of the PCCE Candidate Handbook available at www.paralegals.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bankruptcy <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate law - Civil Litigation <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal <input type="checkbox"/> Estates, Wills and Trusts <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Property <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate <input type="checkbox"/> Torts
<p>Renewal Requirements:</p> <p>Eight hours of CLE every two years, including at least 1 hour of ethics (based on anniversary date).</p>	<p>12 hours of CLE every two years, including at least 1 hour of ethics (based on anniversary date).</p>
<p>Renewal Fee: \$25.00</p>	<p>\$25.00</p>
<p>Number Certified: 206 (3/31/13)</p>	<p>887 (2/15/13)</p>

Save the dates in September and October and join our study groups to prepare for a certification exam! A schedule of topics and area specialty speakers will be sent out on the RIPA email list as well as the RIPA website! Please send an email to Pat Lyons, RP® at pelyons1@yahoo.com to reserve a space! Make your 2013 resolution to earn a credential!