

ACADEMIC POLICIES

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1. ABOUT OUR ACADEMIC POLICIES

These academic policies are in place to provide structure and guidance to help ensure the success of CIAO Candidates, CIAO designation holders, and other individuals seeking professional development through the IPAI. This document was developed to provide course attendees with clear and transparent information about IPAI policies concerning course registrations, transfers, classroom behavior, exams, and more. These policies are updated periodically as academic needs arise.

2. COURSE TRANSFERS, CANCELLATIONS, VOUCHERS, & REFUNDS

2.1 Registration Deadlines

Registration generally closes one week before the start of a course, but deadlines do vary from course to course. Students should check the IPAI Student Portal or IPAI website for exact registration deadline dates.

2.2 Transferring from Exam to Seminar or Seminar to Exam

There is no charge to transfer from the exam section of a course to a seminar, or from the seminar section to an exam of the same course. Students transferring from seminar to exam after the course has already begun may be required to take their exam online for an additional fee. Students may not transfer from exam to seminar after the course has concluded; they must take the exam.

2.3 Transferring from One Course to Another

Before registration for a course closes, students may transfer from one course to another by logging on to their profile in the IPAI Student Portal. After registration for a course closes, students wishing to transfer to a different course will be assessed a \$250 administrative fee. Contact the IPAI Registrar to make the transfer. Transfers from one course to another are not allowed once the course has begun.

2.4 Cancelling a Course Before Registration Closes

Before registration closes, students should cancel their course registration by logging on to their profile in the IPAI Student Portal and clicking the dropdown arrow next to the course name. If students have already paid for the course, they may request a refund or credit voucher to be used at a future date by completing the "Course Voucher and Refund Request" form. A link to this form is included in your cancellation confirmation e-mail.

2.5 Cancelling a Course After Registration Closes

After registration closes, students needing to cancel a course must contact the Registrar. They must immediately transfer their registration to another course in the current program year or request a credit voucher for a future course. Both an immediate transfer and a credit voucher will incur an additional \$250 administrative fee. No refunds will be issued for course cancellations after registration closes.

2.6 Course Refunds and Vouchers

Eligible students cancelling a course before the registration deadline may request a refund or course coupon voucher to be used at a future date by completing the "Course Voucher and Refund Request" form. A link to this form is included in your cancellation confirmation e-mail. Vouchers are only valid for the current and proceeding program years. Any voucher not used by December 1 of the following year will be automatically forfeited (For example, a voucher issued April 19, 2024, may be used during 2024 or 2025, but must be redeemed by December 1, 2025).

Refunds for courses paid for via check will be refunded via check to the issuing body or individual. Courses paid by credit card will be refunded to the original card used for payment. Credit card refunds more than six months after the original purchase will be refunded via check. All refunds will be assessed a \$25 per course administrative fee.

2.7 Course No-shows

Students enrolled in a course who do not attend said course without prior communication to the IPAI office will be considered a "no-show" and will not be granted credit nor issued a refund or course voucher. Students who no-show a course but had not yet paid for it will be required to pay the full course fee before registering for future courses. Failure to do so will, at a minimum, result in the individual's Student Portal account being locked until payment is made.

3. ATTENDANCE, CLASSROOM CONDUCT, IDOR CREDIT REPORTING

3.1 Registration Responsibility

In advance of taking a course, students are expected to know 1) what course they are registered for, 2) the location of the course, and 3) the date(s) the course is taking place as well as the beginning and ending times of the course. This information is available on our website, as well as within the IPAI Student Portal. Unawareness of this information will not be considered justification for an excused absence and will result in the student receiving a "no show" or "fail" without issuance a course refund or voucher.

3.2 Attendance Policy

Students must attend 90% of class hours to achieve the full number of continuing education hours offered for the course. Anything less than 90% attendance will result in zero hours of CE credit with no refund. The IPAI does not issue partial CE credit. Attendance will be taken at least twice daily for each day of instruction. Students may not leave until dismissed by the instructor.

3.3 Student Emergencies

A student who is unable to attend class due to a verifiable emergency should contact the IPAI office as soon as possible to discuss their options. If you do not show up for a course and never contact the Registrar within 48 hours of the course beginning, you will not receive a refund or credit voucher.

3.4 Student Conduct and Classroom Decorum

The IPAI understands varying opinions exist within our industry, and thoughtful discussion and informed debate have a place in fostering professional growth and development. However, proper decorum shall be maintained and respect extended to the instructor and other students. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated, and any student disrupting the class will be asked to leave without refund or course credit.

3.5 Use of Mobile Phones, Tablets, and Laptops

Students are expected to be active class participants. Mobile phones should be placed on vibrate, silenced, or turned off. Use of tablets or laptops are allowed, but students should be primarily focused on the course and be an engaged member of the classroom environment.

3.6 Virtual Course Engagement and Location

Virtual course students are expected to be engaged, active participants just like their in-person colleagues. Students should connect to the Zoom environment on a laptop or desktop computer, not a smartphone or tablet. If taking the virtual course in the workplace, students are expected to be in a private office, conference room, or other secluded location to prevent distractions. Students taking virtual courses at home are also expected to be in a room free of other people and potential distractions to themselves or others. Other locations such as a private room in a local library are also acceptable. Students may not connect to the virtual classroom environment while driving or in a motor vehicle.

3.7 Use of Webcams During Virtual Courses

Web cameras must be used and kept on throughout the virtual course. To foster a distraction-free learning environment, students are asked to blur their background, use a virtual background native to the Zoom platform, use a plain wall, or use an IPAI provided background ([download](#)). Students displaying backgrounds other than those detailed here will be asked by the instructor to change their background. Any student who does not comply with the instructor's request will be asked to leave the course without refund or course credit.

3.8 Course Privacy

Recording, screenshotting, or otherwise capturing any portion of a class, including video, audio, or chat, is strictly prohibited. This policy is in place to protect the privacy of all participants and the integrity of course discussion. Any student found violating this rule may be subject to disciplinary action, including removal from the course without refund or credit and referral to the Ethics Committee.

3.9 IDOR Reporting

The IPAI will report successful completion of a course to the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR). Students should not do this on their own.

4. EXAMS

4.1 Exam Conduct

Use of course books, notes, or smartphones during exams are not allowed. You may use your own calculator, but calculators on smartphones or tablets are not allowed. For in-person exams, the IPAI has a limited number of calculators that are first come, first served. No. 2 pencils must be used on all exams. The IPAI will provide you with a pencil. See the "Online Testing" page of our website for a complete list of policies governing online exams.

4.2 In-Person Exam Times

At State Conference and regional conferences: Examinations are conducted the morning of the third day of a course. These dates typically fall on a Friday. For full-week conferences, students who take an exam class on Monday-Tuesday and are registered for an additional class Wednesday-Thursday, must plan to take the exam Friday morning or online. Students will not be permitted to enter their classes late due to taking an exam.

At standalone workshops, in-person qualifying courses, and all virtual courses: All exams for these course offerings must be taken online through our third-party vendor, Test.com. For more information and a full list of online testing policies and fees see the "[Online Testing](#)" page of our website.

4.3 Exam Results & Course Credit

Exam results or seminar course credit will be posted to the Student Portal within seven business days after the conclusion of a course. Students must achieve a passing grade of 70% or greater for credit. Exam results will not be given over the phone or until a course is paid for in full.

4.4 Failed Exams and Re-takes

Students failing an exam (score less than a 70%), may request a re-take (\$50 fee applies). Exam re-takes must be completed within one month of the last day of the course and must be done online unless other arrangements have been made with the IPAI Registrar.

For continuing education courses, students who fail an exam can opt to switch their enrollment to seminar credit. If a student taking a course for continuing education fails the exam a second time, they will automatically receive seminar credit for the course. No further re-takes will be allowed.

CIAO Candidates are required to pass an exam for each course to obtain their designation. Any CIAO Candidate failing their exam on the second attempt must retake the entire course for the full course and testing fees. Seminar credit will not be awarded to CIAO Candidates failing a course on the second exam attempt, including elective courses.

4.5 Online Exam Proctoring

Please see the "[Online Testing](#)" page for a full list of policies and fees.

5. SPECIAL STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS

The IPAI is committed to ensuring students with disabilities and special circumstances are able to participate in our courses. Reasonable requests for accommodation will be considered. All accommodation requests must be approved by the Executive Director. A completed request form and accompanying documentation must be submitted at least one month prior to the course for which the request will accommodate.

[Accommodation Request Form](#)