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Overview of Recommended Industry Certifications

Students in the Graphic Design Diploma and Associate’s degree programs are highly encouraged to sit for one specific, designated industry certification: the Adobe Certified Associate (ACA) Visual Communication – Photoshop exam. Students are eligible to sit for the certification exam and request reimbursement after successful completion of NM230/GRA2390C Digital Photography prior to graduation. The college will reimburse students for the recommended certification fee, as well as up to two additional optional certifications. Payments will be made only once per certification. For additional information regarding the reimbursement process, please refer to the Enrollment Agreement.

Optional Certifications Information

Optional certifications target additional software packages that are industry standard but are not as widely significant as the ACA Photoshop exam. They do, however, still hold industry credibility and are great proof points of third party software knowledge validation, and Rasmussen College will reimburse students for up to two optional approved certifications as listed below. Optional certifications are also only eligible for attempt and reimbursement once specific courses have been completed at Rasmussen College.

Please note that while certifications are not graduation requirements, the time limit for reimbursement post-graduation is six months (180 days) from the date of the conferred degree. Additionally, if a student transfers in a course that is tied to a certification, reimbursement is not permitted; in order to receive reimbursement for a certification, the course tied to the certification must be completed at Rasmussen College.

The Significance of Certifications

Certifications lend validity from a third party to a designer’s proven skills and usage of the software packages used in the industry. Additionally, they provide relevant proof of skills with that software that, when combined with a conferred degree and outstanding portfolio, help a candidate stand out from the other job applicants. Software is a major component of the workplace for the field of design, and while a degree and portfolio are the two most important components for future success, certifications prove that the designer is professionally trained and nimble with the work tools expected of them.

Best Practices for Certifications

Certifications are challenging but absolutely attainable. While courses at Rasmussen College are tied to specific certifications, this does not mean that a course will prepare a student 100% for the exam; it simply means that students should have enough
knowledge and training in that area by the time the specific course is completed to be able to initiate self-study to lead up to completing the certification exam. It is extremely important for the student to practice using the software outside of class as much as possible. Additional study time and materials are necessary in order to secure success in passing a certification. Many free test preparation materials are available through both the software manufacturers’ websites as well as the test vendors’ websites (such as Certiport). Additional support material can be found through the online library or through commercial bookstores.

School of Design Industry Certifications List

Each industry certification, whether recommended or optional, has a targeted course that must first be successfully completed by the student with a passing grade in order to be eligible to sit for the certification exam. The lists of recommended and optional certifications are below, along with the courses that must be passed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Certification:</th>
<th>Required Course Completion:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adobe Certified Associate (ACA) in Visual Communication: Photoshop</td>
<td>NM230/GRA2390C Digital Photography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optional Certification:</th>
<th>Required Course Completion:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adobe Certified Associate (ACA) in Graphic Design &amp; Illustration: Illustrator</td>
<td>NM210/GRA2133C Print Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adobe Certified Associate (ACA) in Print &amp; Digital Media Publication: InDesign</td>
<td>NM210/GRA2133C Print Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adobe Certified Associate (ACA) in Video Communication: Premiere Pro</td>
<td>NM251/GRA2522C Digital Media Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adobe Certified Associate (ACA) in Web Communication: Dreamweaver</td>
<td>NM290/GRA2936C Mobile Web Design (Web &amp; Interactive Design specialization only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autodesk Certified User: 3DS Max</td>
<td>NM270/GRA2754C Character Modeling (Animation &amp; Motion Graphics specialization only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Certification Process

The following process will be used for both the required and optional certifications:

1. The student must pass the required course.
2. The student must be in good standing with Financial Aid.
3. The student will spend adequate time practicing with the software and referring to any practice materials (when available) from various resources.
4. After practicing and studying, the student will log into the test center website, purchase an exam voucher, and schedule an exam sitting.
   a. The student will need to create an account on the related site: Certiport.com
   b. The student will need to purchase the appropriate exam voucher from the website. The student will need to pay for the exam sitting, to be reimbursed later.
      i. **Proof of purchase needs to be saved for the reimbursement process.**
      ii. Students should contact Financial Aid to see what additional funding options might be available, if any.
      iii. An Industry Certification Resource folder will be available in School of Design online courses and a landing page for certification information and reimbursement will be available via the Student Portal.
   c. The student will schedule the exam at a test center in the area. The Certiport website will offer information on finding the closest available test centers.
   d. After the student has taken the exam, the student will then need to upload the exam results and submit reimbursement information on Rasmussen’s reimbursement website located here.
      i. This reimbursement website is also available via the Student Portal, as a side navigation menu item upon log in.
      ii. A step-by-step guide is located at the end of this certification manual with further explanations and screenshots of the use of this reimbursement website. Click here to go to that section.
   e. Rasmussen College will issue funds to reimburse the exam sitting.
      i. Upon submission and verification of the exam results and receipt of payment of the exam sitting, notification will go to Accounts Payable to initiate reimbursement.

1. **Important:** Credit Card invoices / statements are not acceptable forms of receipt for reimbursement.
ii. Reimbursement may take up to 3-5 weeks.

iii. In cases where all supporting documentation is not provided by the student, the student will be notified directly and reimbursement times may take longer.

iv. Reimbursement will be sent directly to the student, not to any campuses, faculty members, coordinators, or deans.

Testing Center Information

All the certification exams must be proctored and taken at a Certiport testing center. Students will need to create an account with Certiport before any vouchers can be purchased.

Once the exam has been scheduled, follow the instructions from the website to locate the test center. Rules for taking the tests are very strict, with the student usually not being allowed to take anything but forms of identification into the room. The room is locked and monitored by video cameras or roving proctors.

The student will pay for this exam sitting. Regardless of passing the exam, the student will then need to upload the score and attach documents confirming the test. At that point, reimbursement will be issued to the student.

Cost of Certifications

Certification exams are currently $95 for both Adobe and Autodesk certifications, but prices are subject to change at any given time by the vendors. Please refer to the Certiport website for the most up-to-date certification costs. It is the responsibility of the student to budget and plan for this expense prior to reimbursement by the college. Students should contact the Financial Aid office for possible funding options.

PLEASE NOTE that only reimbursements for one regular certification voucher will be sent back to students, regardless of whether or not a student purchases the standard test voucher (good for one exam attempt) or the test voucher with a retake option.

Certification Score Uploads

In order to receive reimbursement for exam sittings, students will need to submit a scanned copy of their score sheet via the certification reimbursement request web page on the Student Portal. This link will also be available in a resource folder in all School of Design online courses.
**Additional Information**

- Contact your local School of Design State Program Coordinator or Student Advisor for additional information.
- For problems with the Student Portal reimbursement request form, contact The Rasmussen Personal Support Center: 1-866-693-2211 or help@rasmussen.edu
- For additional questions involving industry certifications, please contact the Design Department Chair.

**Practice Materials**

While there are not any full-scale practice exams for Adobe certifications, there are indeed a handful of sample questions, study packets, and resources available to you as a Rasmussen student. Please explore the following items to help increase your knowledge and confidence:

- Certiport study packets
- Adobe study packets
- Rasmussen Online Library ebook
- Third party sources (aside from Youtube.com and Adobe.tv)
  [https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8&q=+site:weebly.com+passing+the+aca+certification+test](https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8&q=+site:weebly.com+passing+the+aca+certification+test)
Rasmussen Student Reimbursement Website

A certification website is available for students to use in requesting exam cost reimbursement as well as submitting exam score results. This site can be accessed through a link in the Student Portal side navigation menu upon login, or directly at: https://reimbursement.rasmussen.edu/

In order to receive reimbursement for exam sittings, students will need to submit a scanned copy of the printed score sheet, or a saved file of the digital score sheet, and upload a receipt of payment for the exam sitting.

How-To Guides and Tutorials

Below are several examples of how the website looks as well as how to utilize the main features and screens of the site. A tutorial video demonstrating a general overview of the website, important pages, and its interface can be seen here.

Student Home Page
This page shows the most current contact information for the student. This is important to verify for accuracy, as payments will be sent to the address listed here.
Certification Page
This is the page where the student will register a certification score and upload the score sheet. **NOTE: The score sheet can only be .PDF or .JPG/.JPEG file types.** Only one document can be uploaded per score entry. Please combine multiple pages into one file when needed.

To start, click on the “Add New Certification Request” button.

Select the appropriate information and click on “Upload a Certification File...” to upload the digital score sheet. The “Certification Date” should be the date the certification was taken.

Only official certification score sheets will be accepted.

Once the request has been made, it will appear on the Certification Requests page as shown below. When updated by the Program Administrator, the student will be notified. The certification score upload must be approved before reimbursement can be sought.
Reimbursement Page
This is the page where a student uploads the receipt for the cost of the exam voucher. Once the certification score has been approved, the record for reimbursement will automatically appear. Under the receipt heading, click “Click to edit.”

The receipt file can then be uploaded. Note: the score sheet can only be .PDF or .JPG/JPEG file types. Only one document can be uploaded. Please combine multiple pages into one file when necessary.
After the receipt has been uploaded, click in the “Amount” field and record the cost of the exam sitting.

The Program Administrator will then approve or deny the request. Once approved, expect payment in 3-5 weeks.