PHAP Credentialing Program

# Candidate Handbook

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# 2 Glossary of terms

**Accreditation**
A formal process by which a recognized body assesses and recognizes that **an organization** meets applicable pre-determined and published standards.

**Appeal**
Request by applicant, candidate, or certified person for reconsideration of any decision made by the certification body related to her/his desired certification status. (ISO 17024:2012)

**Assessment**
Process that evaluates a person's fulfilment of the requirements of the certification scheme, which may include an examination measuring a candidate's competence by one or more means, such as written, oral, practical, and observational, as defined in the certification requirements.

**Assessment blueprint**
The content areas of the assessment and statements of knowledge, skill, and ability, as well as the percentage of the assessment covering each area.

**Assessment item**
A component of an assessment, such as a multiple-choice question, an essay question, etc.

**Candidate**
Applicant who has fulfilled specified prerequisites and has been admitted to the certification process (ISO 17024:2012)

**Certification holder/certified person**
Individual person who has fulfilled the certification requirements and whose certification is currently valid.

**Certificate**
Document issued by a certification body indicating that the named person has fulfilled the certification requirements. (ISO 17024:2012 [modified])

**Certification/professional certification**
Voluntary process by which a nongovernmental entity grants a time-limited recognition to an individual after verifying that he or she has met predetermined and standardized criteria.

**Certification Commission**
The independent commission whose purpose it is to establish and monitor the certification schemes and scheme-related policies and decide on all essential certification-related questions.

**Certification interval**
Certifications are granted for a time delimited period after which certification holders must re-certify. The certification interval specifies this period.

**Certification process**
Activities by which a certification body determines that a person fulfils certification requirements, including application, assessment, decision on certification, re-certification, and use of certificates and logos/marks. (ISO 17024:2012)

**Certification requirements**
Set of specified requirements, including requirements of the scheme to be fulfilled in order to establish or maintain certification. (ISO 17024:2012)

**Certification scheme**
Competence and other requirements related to specific occupational or skilled categories of persons. (ISO 17024:2012)

**Code of ethics and conduct**
Professional standards which individual certification holders must agree to uphold and abide by. It is frequently an agreed-upon statement of principles and expected behavior of the certification holders. Commonly referred to as codes of professional conduct, the standards are subject to enforcement, and certification holders found in violation of the code of ethics may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

**Complaint**
Expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, by any individual or organization to a certification body, relating to the activities of that body or a certified person, where a response is expected. (ISO 17024:2012)

**Continuing education (CE)**
Continuing education consists of educational activities which serve to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and ability of a certification holder in the areas of the certification.

**Credential**
Generic term for qualifications or achievements, including professional certifications, academic degrees, certificate programs, licensure, etc.

**Credentialing body/certification body**
Body certifying persons against specific requirements, and includes the development and maintenance of a certification scheme for persons. (ISO 17024:2012)

**Diagnostic test**
A test that provides an indication of how a candidate would perform in the certification assessment.

**Domain**
The major categories of a certification assessment blueprint resulting from a job task analysis.

**Examiner**
Person competent to conduct and score an examination, where the examination requires professional judgement. (ISO 17024:2012)

**Practice analysis**
A study that may be conducted to identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for professional competence in a particular field, role or functional area. A practice analysis is frequently conducted to determine the content and competencies that should be included in the certification assessment.

**Passing score/cut score**
The pre-determined score required to pass an assessment. For certification, the passing score is identified through a criterion-referenced approach such as the Modified Angoff technique. A

criterion-referenced passing score applies a minimum performance standard for competent practice to all candidates regardless of the form of the test they take and regardless of the performance of other candidates.

**Proctor/invigilator**
Person authorized by the certification body to administer or supervise an examination but who does not evaluate the competencies of the candidate. (ISO 17024:2012 [modified])

**Psychometrician**
A professional who works in the field of psychometrics, or measurement. Specifically, psychometrics refers to the measurement of individuals' psychological attributes, including job-related knowledge, skills, and abilities.

**Re-certification**
The process of fulfilling the requirements for certification renewal within the certification interval.

**Reinstatement**
Fulfilling the special requirements for certification renewal that may be applicable for certification holders who have let their certification lapse (having not fulfilled the re-certification requirements within the certification interval).

**Reliability**
Indicator of the extent to which assessment scores are consistent across different examination times and locations, different assessment forms, and different examiners. (ISO 17024:2012 [modified])

**Self-assessment**
An exercise through which a candidate estimates his or her own knowledge and abilities in the areas of an assessment blueprint.

**Statement (of knowledge, skill, or ability)**
Expression used in an assessment blueprint indicating what an individual needs to demonstrate in terms of knowledge, skill, or ability within a specific area.

**Validity**
Evidence that the assessment measures what it is intended to measure, as defined by the certification scheme. (ISO 17024:2012)

# 3 Overview

## 3.1 About PHAP

PHAP is the first professional association for those engaged in humanitarian action across the full spectrum of professional specializations, organizations, and geographical contexts. Founded in 2010, PHAP is dedicated to increasing the effectiveness of humanitarian practitioners at all levels and empowering them to transform how humanitarian action is carried out.

With its global membership, PHAP identifies and certifies against key competencies for humanitarian practitioners, and conducts a range of other activities and services for members and the wider humanitarian community, including networking opportunities, an online community for exchange of peer advice, and educational programs, including the Core Training on Humanitarian Law and Policy as well as a wide variety of live online offerings in collaboration with other organizations in the sector.

In all its programs, PHAP is focused on advancing humanitarian action and ensuring that the humanitarian community has access to information, resources, and tools needed to pursue their humanitarian aims.

## 3.2 About the PHAP Credentialing Program

The PHAP Credentialing Program, launched in March 2017, provides avenues for humanitarian practitioners and others to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities – including knowledge and abilities gained on the job – in particular, through certification. The Program is responsible for creating, publishing, and regularly updating standards, policies, and procedures for the development, integrity, and maintenance of PHAP's certification assessments. It is also responsible for developing valid, reliable, and fair exams that can assess capabilities for understanding and applying knowledge in the defined areas of certification. It also sets the guidelines for certification holders to engage in continuing professional education and conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner.

Six certification areas are currently offered:

- **Understanding the humanitarian ecosystem (UHE)**
- **International legal frameworks for humanitarian action (ILFHA)**
- **Applying humanitarian principles in practice (AHPP)**
- **Cash and voucher assistance (CVA)**
- **Monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) – Core and Advanced certifications**
- **Humanitarian needs assessment (HNA) – Core and Advanced certifications**

Distinguished by their global development and application, PHAP certifications are transferable across all aspects of humanitarian work and geographic borders. Reflecting cross-sectoral applicability, hundreds of humanitarian practitioners from all parts of the sector have volunteered and contributed to this effort to develop the certifications and contribute to their ongoing improvement.

The PHAP Certification Commission, composed of individual humanitarian practitioners, and operating independently of the PHAP Board of Directors, decides on all essential certification-

related questions. They ensure that the credentials meet the highest standards of ethical and professional practice for the humanitarian sector. The staff of the PHAP Credentialing Program is responsible for management and administration.

A certification program, in accordance with the ISO 17024 standard, assesses individuals against peer-developed standards and competencies and provides a credential that is time-bound. A certification assessment must be independent of any specific course or curriculum. In addition, continued competency is enhanced through ongoing renewal requirements and through adherence to a code of ethics. The requirements are demanding, and consequently, when someone holds a PHAP certification, we can be confident that they have a certain level of knowledge and understanding in that area. Earning a certification from PHAP conveys to your peers, employees, and employer that you possess a substantial, relevant understanding of an important area and the ability to apply that understanding in relevant scenarios.

PHAP is working together with the *Humanitarian Leadership Academy* to promote wider usage of the certifications and ensure complementarity with other initiatives. The certifications, voluntary in nature, offers a structure around which individuals, employers, and training providers can organize themselves for these competency areas. In particular, the certifications provide a means for organizations to live up to Commitment 8 of the Core Humanitarian Standard and a concrete tool that maps to various competency frameworks, including the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework (CHCF).

## 3.3 Purpose of the certifications

The certifications offered under the PHAP Credentialing Program allow experienced and well-prepared humanitarian practitioners to demonstrate a certain level of knowledge – and ability to apply that knowledge – and commit to a long-term standard of professional accountability. They are voluntary, targeted primarily to practitioners who wish to communicate their dedication to their work and to professional standards.

The purpose of a certification program is to ensure that an individual possesses the knowledge and skills required to perform work effectively when that work requires the competencies defined in the certification scope. The PHAP Credentialing Program certifications are designed to assess practitioners at all levels – not just entry-level or top management and leadership. The program aims to break down barriers within the sector and help equalize access to opportunities that otherwise depend more on informal criteria.

The PHAP Certification Commission has set these standards with the expectation of continuous learning over time. The continuing education and re-assessment options for re-certification serve to assist in the advancement of professional accountability in the global humanitarian community.

## 3.4 International standards and accreditation

Accreditation is a voluntary process in which a third party verifies that an organization's certification program meets international standards and best-practice guidelines. This verification requires an extensive review and audit process to ensure all certification and re-certification requirements are goal-driven, based on objective data, and follow the organization's policies and procedures.

PHAP chose to develop its certification program to meet the International Organization for Standardization's (ISO) standard; ISO/IEC 17024 conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification.

In 2020, the PHAP Credentialing Program was also accredited as conforming to the HPass Assessment Standard. You can read more about this standard and accreditation on https://hpass.org/for-humanitarian-organisations-and-learning-providers/quality-standards/

## 3.5 Purpose of this guide

The purpose of this guide is to walk you through the process of applying for and taking the assessment leading to PHAP Credentialing Program certification. This guide is the first step to help you achieve the credential.

## 3.6 How to use this guide

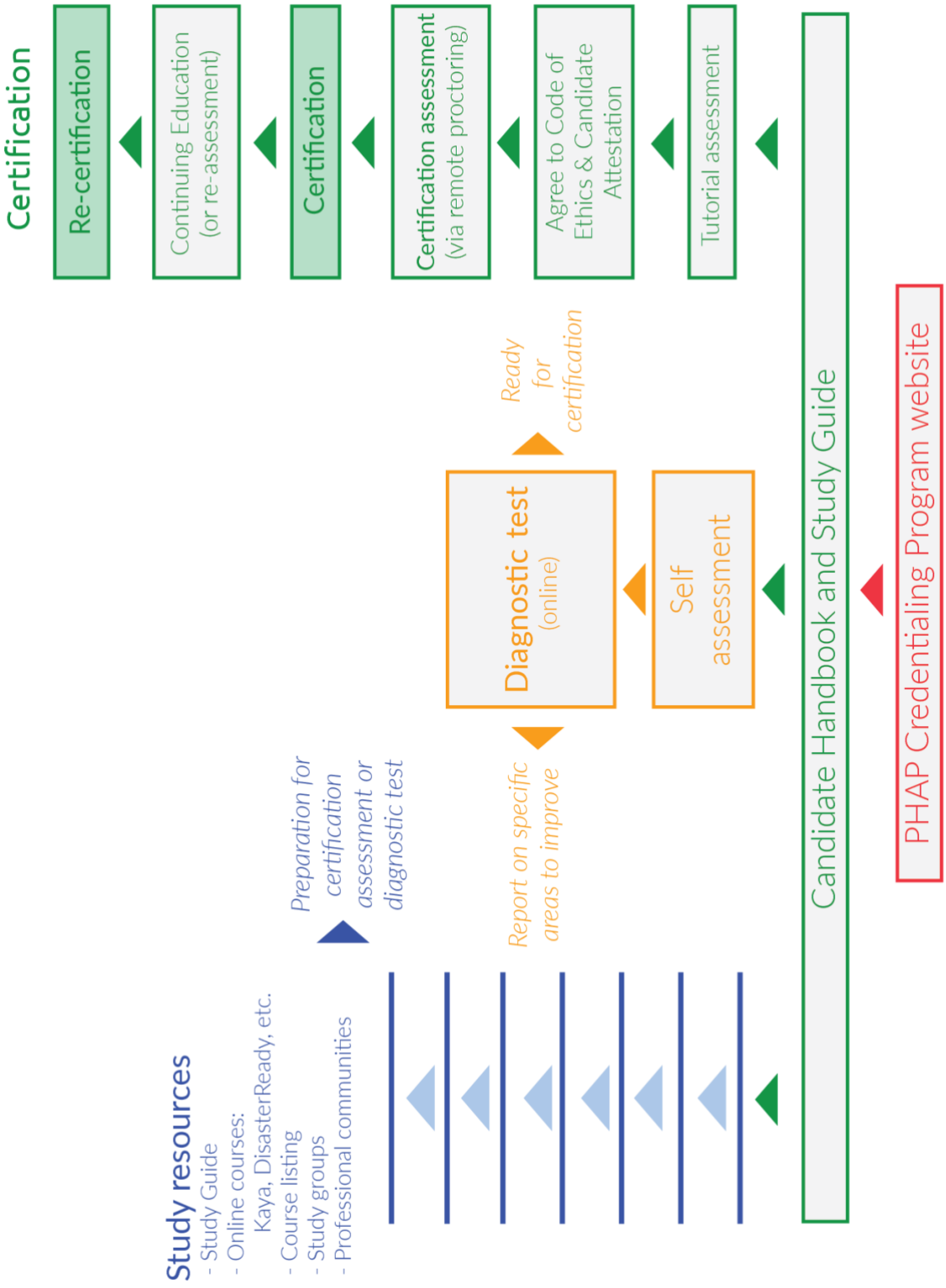
This guide provides you with in-depth information regarding the application process, assessment process, and the rules and procedures essential in retaining certifications under the PHAP Credentialing Program after you achieve them. Reading and following the suggestions and rules in this guide will help you navigate your path to the CSP certification.

## 3.7 Important information

For the most current version of this publication, please visit https://phap.org/credentialing-program

As a candidate or certification holder, you are responsible for keeping PHAP informed of your current mail and email address. If either address changes, you must notify PHAP. Otherwise, you could lose your credential or eligibility status if you miss important notifications related to your credential.

## 3.8 Overview of credentialing process and support services



# 4 Statement of impartiality, fairness, and non-discrimination

PHAP and its Certification Commission endorse the principles of impartiality, fairness, and equal opportunity and commit to act impartially, fairly, and equitably in relation to applicants, candidates, and certification holders, including but not limited to 1) applying its standards and requirements for assessments and certifications equally to all individuals regardless of gender, age, disability, occupation, ethnic origin, cultural background, marital status, sexual status, sexual orientation, religion, or political opinion, 2) implementing its policies and procedures impartially and fairly, and 3) not allowing commercial, financial, or other pressures to compromise impartiality in certification activities.

All certification processes performed by the PHAP Credentialing Program are independent of training. While PHAP may offer relevant training for preparing for the certification, or list other providers of relevant training, it does not state or imply that certification is simpler or easier if any specified education or training services are used.

# 5 Available certifications

## 5.1 Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem (UHE)

This certification is designed for humanitarian practitioners for whom understanding the components and dynamics of the international humanitarian ecosystem is one of the required competencies in their work.

The body of knowledge includes 25 statements in the following four domains:

1) **The Big Picture:** The totality of the actors and organizations involved in humanitarian work, the mechanisms and processes that connect them, and the wider environment that shapes their functioning.
2) **Key Actors:** The key organizations and entities and their different mandates.
3) **Key Mechanisms and Processes:** Efforts to coordinate the humanitarian ecosystem.
4) **The Shaping Environment:** Pressures, criticisms, and debates that influence humanitarian action.

For more information about the certification in Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem, visit https://phap.org/credentialing-program-uhe

## 5.2 International Legal Frameworks for Humanitarian Action (ILFHA)

This certification is designed for humanitarian practitioners for whom having an understanding of the fundamentals of international legal frameworks for humanitarian action is one of the required competencies in their work.

The body of knowledge includes 30 statements in the following six domains:

1) **What is International Law and Why is it Relevant to Humanitarian Action?** The key elements of how international law is created, whom it binds, and its relevance to humanitarian action; the relevance of both international law and domestic law for humanitarian action; and the further self-regulation of humanitarian actors by mandate or sectoral/organizational policies.

2) **International Human Rights Law:** The fundamental principles of international human rights law (IHRL), how it binds States, how it creates rights claims for individuals, and how it is relevant to humanitarian action in situations of armed conflict or disaster.
3) **International Humanitarian Law (Law of Armed Conflict):** The fundamental principles of international humanitarian law (IHL) (also called the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC)), when it applies, how it binds States and non-State actors, how it protects those not or no longer taking part in hostilities, how it regulates the means and methods of warfare, and key elements of the law specifically relevant to humanitarian action in situations of armed conflict.
4) **International Refugee Law and Laws Protecting Internally Displaced Persons:** The fundamental rules of international refugee law, how international refugee law relates to national refugee and asylum laws, and when refugee law and status may be relevant to humanitarian operations (including protection activities); and how internally displaced persons (IDPs), while not covered by international refugee law, are protected by IHRL and, when applicable, IHL.
5) **Implementation and Enforcement of International Law:** The variety of mechanisms for preventing violations and enhancing respect for international law; how rules of international humanitarian law and international human rights law (where relevant) are enforced in situations of alleged violations relevant to humanitarian action and protection of civilians; and the multiple layers of enforcement may be involved (domestic, regional, international).
6) **Implementation and Enforcement of International Law:** The ways that humanitarian actors can and do utilize legal frameworks to further humanitarian aims.

For more information about the certification in International Legal Frameworks for Humanitarian Action, visit https://phap.org/credentialing-program-ilfha

## 5.3 Applying Humanitarian Principles in Practice (AHPP)

This certification is designed for humanitarian practitioners for whom understanding and being able to apply the four core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence is one of the required competencies in their work.

The body of knowledge includes 25 statements in the following four domains:

1) **Knowledge Foundation – The Meaning and Status of the Principles**
2) **Applying the Principles in Humanitarian Operations**
3) **Key Challenges to the Humanitarian Principles**
4) **Applying the Principles in the Institutional Environment**

For more information about the certification in Applying Humanitarian Principles in Practice, visit https://phap.org/credentialing-program-ahpp

## 5.4 Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA)

This certification, developed in partnership with CaLP, covers the essential knowledge and skills needed by everyone involved in cash transfer programming regardless of their specific job role. Taking its starting point in the CaLP competency framework, the certification competency outline has drawn on the input of hundreds of cash practitioners.

The body of knowledge includes 22 statements in the following eight domains:

1) **Situating CVA**
2) **Cash concepts and definitions**
3) **Assessment / Situation analysis**
4) **Response analysis**
5) **Set-up and implementation**
6) **Monitoring and evaluation**
7) **Organizational CVA preparedness**
8) **Global CVA policy**

For more information about the certification in Cash and Voucher Assistance, visit https://phap.org/credentialing-program-cva

## 5.5 Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)

The PHAP Credentialing Program offers two certifications in Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) for practitioners in humanitarian and development contexts. The **Core MEAL Certification / MEAL DPro** is targeted at practitioners at all levels that wish to demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental aspects of MEAL systems and activities needed by all practitioners engaged in MEAL activities in humanitarian and development contexts. The Core MEAL Certification is designed for program and project management staff with MEAL-related responsibilities, as well as a first step for specialized MEAL staff pursuing the Advanced MEAL Certification.

The **Advanced MEAL Certification** can be pursued after having achieved Core MEAL Certification. It is targeted at MEAL specialists and project/program managers that wish to demonstrate that they have an advanced understanding of how MEAL systems and activities are

designed and applied in practice across different types of situations, including in in humanitarian response and development contexts.

The body of knowledge includes 26 statements for the Core Certification and 29 for the Advanced Certification in the following four domains:

1) **Understanding the components, concepts, and principles of MEAL**
2) **Planning, designing, and implementing MEAL activities**
3) **Data management and quality**
4) **Analysis, interpretation, and communication**

For more information about the certifications in Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning, visit https://phap.org/credentialing-program-meal

## 5.6 Humanitarian Needs Assessment (HNA)

The PHAP Credentialing Program offers two certifications in Humanitarian Needs Assessment (HNA). The **Core HNA Certification** is targeted at practitioners involved in humanitarian needs assessments at all levels who wish to demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental aspects of needs assessments. It is also designed as the first step for those with higher-level responsibilities in the area of needs assessments pursuing the Advanced HNA Certification. This certification is designed to be independent of specific frameworks a practitioner may be using (such as MIRA or HNO), focusing on the underlying core competencies, while ensuring a familiarity with all types of frameworks commonly used.

The **Advanced HNA Certification** can be pursued after having achieved Core HNA Certification. It is targeted at needs assessment specialists and general practitioners who wish to demonstrate that they have an advanced understanding of how humanitarian needs assessments are designed and carried out in practice, as well as a basic understanding of needs assessments in seven key technical areas: nutrition, food security, health, WASH, shelter, education, and protection. The Core HNA Certification is a prerequisite for the Advanced HNA Certification.

The body of knowledge includes 21 statements for the Core Certification and 33 for the Advanced Certification in the following five domains:

1) **Understanding humanitarian needs assessments**
2) **Planning needs assessments**
3) **Data collection for needs assessments**
4) **Analytical frameworks and assessment reporting**
5) **Sector-specific needs assessments (Advanced only)**

For more information about the certifications in Humanitarian Needs Assessment, visit https://phap.org/credentialing-program-hna

# 6 Certification process

## 6.1 Summary of steps for achieving and maintaining certification

The steps of the application process for PHAP Credentialing Program certifications are as follows:

### 6.1.1 Step 1: Is certification right for you?

The certifications have been designed for (and by) experienced humanitarian practitioners whose positions require competency in the defined areas of the certifications. They are meant to be a mark of distinction for *all* those whose work calls for competency in the defined areas, at all levels. Senior management and leadership are encouraged to lead by example in pursuing and maintaining relevant certifications. The certifications are also accessible to those who are new to the sector, although they may require further preparatory work to pass the certification assessments.

The certifications are intended to recognize on-the-job learning, supplemented by study to fill in any gaps. No specific courses are required – you can use different learning paths depending on your needs and preferences. There are no specific experience or education prerequisites for these certifications, and therefore any interested person is welcome to apply for the certifications.

To ensure that knowledge and abilities remain up-to-date, the certifications are valid for a period of three years, at which time certification holders may renew their certification through either re-assessment or approved continuing professional education activities.

All certification holders must agree to the PHAP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (see Appendix A). Please read this carefully to ensure that you are willing to uphold this Code.

### 6.1.2 Step 2: Decide which certification(s) you wish to pursue

There are currently six certification areas offered by the PHAP Credentialing Program:

- Understanding the humanitarian ecosystem (UHE)
- International legal frameworks for humanitarian action (ILFHA)
- Applying humanitarian principles in practice (AHPP)
- Cash and voucher assistance (CVA)
  Monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) – Core and Advanced certifications
- Humanitarian needs assessment (HNA) – Core and Advanced certifications

The certifications are designed to be complementary – you may choose to pursue one, two, or more, depending on your preferences and the relevance to your current and future work.

Note that each certification has its own maintenance requirements through either continuing education or re-assessment.

More information about the certifications can be found in Chapter 5.

### 6.1.3 Step 3: Prepare as needed and according to your preferences

Prepare as needed using a variety of available tools and resources. See the relevant Study Guide for each certification area for tips, resources, and pointers.

Again, note that there are no specific requirements for how to prepare (there is no required course). Choose which way to prepare is the best for you depending on your specific situation.

The recommended path for preparation is to start with a self-assessment (available in the Study Guide), take a free online Diagnostic Test and compare the results, and then focus your preparations on the specific areas (statements) of the body of knowledge where you have gaps. For this purpose, we suggest using the free resources mentioned in the Study Guide or any number of available online or face-to-face courses.

More information about preparation options can be found in Chapter 8.

### 6.1.4 Step 4: Register with the PHAP Certification Assessment Center

To register, you just need to enter your name and identifying information. This is to ensure that you can be properly identified later when you sit for the assessment.

Once you register, you have access to a free tutorial assessment to help familiarize yourself with the official assessment platform. Note that, unlike the certification assessment, the tutorial assessment is not proctored (i.e., not invigilated), so you will not be connected to a live remote proctor.

Before registering, be sure to read carefully in this Candidate Handbook about the entire process so that you understand all of the steps and requirements. This includes the fact that you will need to agree to a Candidate Agreement (see Appendix B) before you can take the assessment.

More information about the registration process can be found in Chapter 9.

### 6.1.5 Step 5: Purchase your assessment(s)

Purchase your certification assessment with a credit card directly in the PHAP Certification Assessment Center. You may purchase the different certification assessments individually ($80 each for non-members, $65 each for PHAP members) or in a package with multiple certification assessments for a small discount. For a complete list of current fees, visit https://phap.org/credentialing-program

If you do not have a credit card, have difficulty with the payment processing through the PHAP Certification Assessment Center, or are an employer wishing to purchase a larger number of assessment credits, you may contact the PHAP secretariat at certifications@phap.org to arrange payment by other means.

Before purchasing your assessment(s), you should review once more the Candidate Agreement and PHAP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (see Appendixes A and B), to ensure that you are prepared to agree to them.

Note that each assessment purchase comes with one free re-take in case you do not pass the first time. For your first re-take, you will need to wait for one week. In case you require another re-take, you will need to wait for three months from the date of your first attempt.

More information about how to purchase your assessment can be found in Chapter 9.

### 6.1.6 Step 6: Sit for your assessment(s)

Once your fee has been received, you will be able to take the assessment. If you purchased your assessment directly in the PHAP Certification Assessment Center platform, you will see it listed immediately under My Assessments. Otherwise, if you purchased an Enrolment Key from the PHAP secretariat or received one from your employer, you can redeem your Enrolment Key by typing it in the My Assessments section of the PHAP Certification Assessment Center.

PHAP Credentialing Program certification assessments are currently delivered as computer-based assessments with a live remote proctor connecting to your computer to monitor you using your webcam. To take the assessment, you will need a computer with a webcam, access to the Internet, two hours of time, and a private room where you can be undisturbed for the duration.

You may sit for the assessment "on-demand," whenever the moment is right for you (24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year). In most cases, the waiting time for a proctor is less than fifteen minutes. After the proctor has verified your computer and testing environment meet requirements, you will be asked to agree to the Candidate Agreement, and then begin the 90 minutes allotted for the assessment.

More information about scheduling and sitting for your assessment, including the technology requirements, can be found in Chapters 10 and 11.

### 6.1.7 Step 7: Receive your results

You will receive your results immediately upon completing your assessment, including your overall score and your score in each of the domains of the body of knowledge.

### 6.1.8 Step 8: Display your certification(s)

All successful candidates who pass their certification assessment will be issued a secure, verifiable, shareable digital badge, through PHAP's partnership with HPass. PHAP's digital badges allow you to provide your peers and employers, as well as the crisis-affected people you serve, with easy, valid verification of your credentials, while positioning you at the forefront of this new technology for communicating professional commitment and skills.

You may also mention your certification on business cards, on your website, etc. It is important to follow the specific rules about this.

More information and rules regarding displaying your certification can be found in Chapter 13. More information about the PHAP digital badges is available at https://phap.org/digital-badges

### 6.1.9 Step 9: Maintain your status

For **each** certification they are maintaining, individuals certified under the PHAP Credentialing Program have two options available to them for maintaining their certified status and remaining up-to-date with changes in professional practice and required competencies in the defined areas.

- **Option 1:** Earn 12 Continuing Education (CE) credits every three years (for each certification that they are maintaining through this option).
- **Option 2:** Pass a new multiple-choice assessment in the same format as the assessment for initial certification (for each certification that they are maintaining through this option).

Additional information regarding re-certification can be found in Chapter 14 of this Candidate Handbook.

# 7 Format and content of assessments

This chapter presents an overview of the three certification assessments, along with the three respective assessment blueprints.

## 7.1 General description of the certification assessments

All candidates for certification under the PHAP Credentialing Program must pass the relevant certification assessment to earn the credential.

Each assessment consists of 60 multiple-choice items with four possible answers and only one correct answer. Each item is independent and does not rely on the correct answer to any other item.

Of the items, 50 count toward the score. The remaining 10 are not scored but are included for a practice known as "pre-testing." Pre-testing means that these items are being evaluated for potential inclusion on future assessments as scored items. To ensure that PHAP assessments are up-to-date, secure, and always improving, new items must be continuously introduced and evaluated. Pre-testing is an accepted testing practice that helps ensure high quality and consistent scoring. The scored and unscored questions are spread throughout the assessment; candidates should answer all 60 questions to the best of their ability.

Candidates have 90 minutes to complete the assessment, which is administered through a personal computer connected to the Internet and with a webcam. The testing program allows candidates to move freely through the assessment, change answers, mark questions for later attention, skip questions, and review questions. Taking the assessment requires little or no computer experience or expertise. When you register in the PHAP Certification Assessment Center, even before purchasing an official certification assessment, you can take a free tutorial to familiarize yourself with the testing platform.

An assessment appointment will last two hours. At the beginning of the assessment, candidates have up to five minutes to agree to the Candidate Agreement and the PHAP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. If candidates do not agree to the Candidate Agreement and the PHAP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, they are not allowed to take the assessment and forfeit the assessment fee. Therefore, we suggest familiarizing yourself with these two documents prior to purchasing an assessment, to ensure that you will be prepared to agree to them on the day of the test.

## 7.2 PHAP Credentialing Program assessment blueprints

PHAP Credentialing Program certification assessment blueprints are based on formal practice analysis of humanitarian practitioners need to know and be able to do in practice, within the defined scope of each certification scheme.

The content of each certification assessment blueprint is divided into a number of main sections, called domains. Within each of these domains is a set of statements expressing required knowledge or ability. Each domain heading is accompanied by a percentage label which represents the proportion of the actual assessment devoted to that domain. The following pages describe the subject matter covered by the three certifications offered under the PHAP Credentialing Program.

The assessment blueprints for the three certifications currently offered by the PHAP Credentialing Program are presented in Appendix C.

## 7.3 Assessment development

Development of PHAP's certifications is based on practice analysis: a study of the roles and responsibilities of humanitarian practitioners within the defined scope of the three certification schemes. The studies, guided by industry leaders in certification standards and psychometric services, included three surveys with in total 1 023 active humanitarian practitioners. In this survey, humanitarian practitioners identified and ranked the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to be effective in the defined areas. From this, an assessment content outline was developed, and assessment items (questions) were developed according to this outline.

The PHAP Certification Commission is the oversight group responsible for approving the current content outlines, as well as future content outline additions or revisions. A new practice analysis will be conducted periodically as a part of the certification review process.

Content experts are invited to be on PHAP's item-writing committees, which are responsible for developing the assessment questions. These experts represent all different parts of the humanitarian sector, and bring expertise specific to the three defined areas of certification. They also are trained to develop items that meet assessment industry standards. The items undergo extensive review by these committees and the Certification Commission to ensure that they are technically accurate, unambiguous, and clearly stated. After initial testing, and periodically thereafter, the results are subject to statistical analysis to ensure quality.

## 7.4 Assessment content development and revision

PHAP continuously updates the assessments. Most items are provided by current humanitarian practitioners. Before items are accepted into item banks, they go through rigorous technical, psychometric, and grammatical editing. Also, a certain number of the items on the PHAP certification assessments are experimental pre-testing items, and do not contribute to a candidate's pass/fail decision. PHAP analyses the performance of these experimental pre-testing items prior to including them as scored items.

## 7.5 How the minimum passing score is established

The PHAP Credentialing Program uses a widely accepted criterion-referenced procedure (the "modified Angoff technique") to establish minimum passing scores for its certification assessments. This procedure ensures that the passing score is independent of scores for other candidates sitting for the assessment and involves having a panel of experts rate each assessment item with respect to the minimally qualified candidate. As assessments are modified on a regular basis, the minimum passing score is adjusted for the difficulty of items on the assessment. Item performance is also evaluated regularly to ensure that PHAP Credentialing Program certification assessments maintain the highest testing standards.

## 7.6 Assessment forms

Each certification assessment form follows the assessment blueprint provided here in Annex C.

Candidates will be randomly assigned an assessment forms at the time of assessment, with each form remaining statistically equivalent in the competencies assessed and difficulty level.

The Certification Commission and item writing committees engage in ongoing review of the assessment content and development of new assessment forms to reflect updates in the latest standards of humanitarian practice in the defined areas of the certification schemes.

## 7.7 Computer-based testing

The PHAP Credentialing Program uses computer-based assessments, with one item appearing on the screen at a time. You will simply use a mouse to point to the desired answer and click on it to select it. Answers can be changed the same way.

You can bookmark items to return to later or simply skip them and move to the next item. At the end of the assessment, you will be reminded to go back to any items that you bookmarked or skipped. You can return to any item simply by clicking on the item number.

Prior to beginning the actual assessment, there is a tutorial available to you to familiarize yourself with the testing platform. You may access the tutorial at any time after you complete your registration on the PHAP Certification Assessment Center platform. You do not need to purchase an assessment in order to access the tutorial.

When taking the actual assessment, you will be connected via the Internet to a proctor – a real person who will communicate with you via video and chat, and who is in charge of administering the assessment. Your proctor will work with you to ensure that your system is set up properly before you begin the official assessment. Your count-down clock begins after when you officially commence the assessment proper.

You will have 90 minutes to complete the assessment. **All PHAP Credentialing Program certification assessments are closed book, and accessing external reference materials during your assessment is not permitted.** You will have a notes field in the testing platform in which you can type notes during the assessment, if this is helpful to you in thinking through the answer options for an item.

Refer to Chapter 10 for details on the technology requirements for the assessment.

## 7.8 Language

The assessments are currently offered only in English.[1]

The purpose of the assessments is not to test English reading ability. As a majority of individuals taking the certification assessments do not speak English as a first language, the assessment question reviewers have paid attention to make the language straightforward.

In addition, the allowed time for the assessment has been increased to 90 minutes (up from the 60 minutes initially recommended by the psychometrician) to reduce the degree to which English reading capability will impact the scores. The result may be that some candidates with stronger English reading ability will finish far ahead of the 90-minute limit.

The assessment items are written in British English.

[1] Plans to offer the assessments in other languages are currently under consideration.

## 7.9 Disabilities accommodations

Special arrangements shall be provided to candidates with a disability who submit with their registration a written explanation of their needs along with appropriate medical documentation. Forms for applications for accommodations are available for download from https://phap.org/credentialing-program-forms.

To cater for special arrangements, we will need to receive the special application form at least seven weeks prior to the planned assessment date.

## 7.10 Assessment integrity

A key to a successful and respected credentialing program is assessment security. In addition to using state-of-the-art item banking, test delivery, and remote proctoring methods and technology, PHAP relies on the ethical behavior of candidates and certification holders to maintain the security of PHAP assessments.

When those who hold credentials or those who are pursuing credentials reveal information about the content of PHAP assessments, they violate the agreement all candidates accept when they apply for certification and when they take an assessment. Applicants, assessment candidates, or certification holders who reveal confidential information about the content of PHAP assessments through any means also violate the PHAP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct located at https://phap.org/code-of-ethics.

PHAP pursues actions against organizations and individuals who reveal information about the content of PHAP assessments, and individuals who fraudulently claim or misrepresent their intent to seek certification. Penalties include permanently barring individuals from pursuing PHAP credentials and revoking the certifications and interim designations of those who have status with PHAP.

# 8 Preparing for the assessments

This chapter provides information about PHAP Credentialing Program assessments and suggestions for preparation. You may download the most current version of this chapter as well as the full *Candidate Handbook* from the PHAP website at https://phap.org/credentialing-program.

## 8.1 Preparing for the assessments

You may use various approaches to prepare for the assessment:

- Complete the Self-Assessment
- Complete the Diagnostic Test
- Perform individual study
- Participate in informal study groups
- Follow free online resources from various providers
- Attend formal paid courses from various providers

Some keys to success include:

1) Knowing your strengths and weaknesses
2) Having an assessment preparation plan
3) Familiarizing yourself with the online testing platform
4) Developing a test-taking strategy

## 8.2 Having an assessment study plan

The assessment blueprint (see Appendix C) shows how the items on an assessment are distributed across domains and topics. The percentage of items per domain is noted on the assessment blueprint. Converting your subject strengths and weaknesses into a study plan is likely to increase your overall assessment score. Use the Self-Assessment and Diagnostic Test to prepare your individual plan.

Note that knowledge and understanding of the topics in the blueprints, as well as the ability to apply this knowledge to different situations, is essential in passing an assessment. Relying only on simulated assessment items (as in the Diagnostic Test) is not the best way to increase knowledge and understanding. Use the Diagnostic Test to provide insight into the areas in which you should engage in additional study, and then use other methods to strengthen your capacities in those areas (reviewing key concepts, reading resources, discussing study questions with colleagues, taking courses, etc.).

For further recommendations and tools for creating your study plan, see the Study Guide for the specific certification(s) you are pursuing.

## 8.3 Strategies for taking the assessment

Knowing how to take the assessment, and being familiar with the testing platform, will also help improve your score. The assessment uses multiple-choice items with only one correct answer and three incorrect answers. Remember, the goal is to get as many items correct as possible.

There is no penalty for selecting an incorrect answer. However, only correct answers count towards reaching the passing score.

Here are some strategies to consider during the assessment:

1) Read each item thoroughly and carefully. Understand what the item is asking and attempt to anticipate the answer before looking at the available choices.
2) Take each item at face value. There are no items that are intended to be misleading, and there is only one correct answer for each item. Choose the best answer option available.
3) Use the tools in the testing system to flag questions for review and return to them later if unsure of an answer. Do not spend excessive time on one item at the expense of others. Each item is weighted equally.
4) With any remaining time at the end, provide answers for any items left blank.
5) Work quickly but not carelessly. The time limit to complete 60 questions is 90 minutes. Budget the time wisely.

In addition, take the tutorial assessment in the testing system prior to taking the certification assessment, to gain hands-on experience of how it works in practice. This is available to you as soon as you create an account in the PHAP Certification Assessment Center, even before you have purchased an assessment.

It is recommended to read the Candidate Agreement and PHAP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct prior to commencing the assessment, as you will need to agree to these in order to initiate the assessment.

## 8.4 Making use of the PHAP Study Guides

The Study Guide for each of the three certifications provides a concise, yet detailed guide to informative articles, books, websites, free online courses, etc., as well as key points and study questions for each topic in the certifications. It serves as a valuable tool for all working in humanitarian action, especially those preparing for one or more of the certifications.

These Study Guides are intended for use as study aids only. The assessment questions are not necessarily taken directly from these sources. Thus, rather than memorizing, candidates should attempt to understand the concepts presented and be able to apply them to other scenarios.

In case you have additional suggested key points, references, or study questions that you believe are within the scope of one of the certifications and would help individuals to prepare themselves, please feel provide this input via the online input form for further development of the Study Guides at https://phap.org/credentialing-program-study-guide-contribute. All such submissions will be reviewed by experts and the Study Guides will be updated continuously taking these into account.

For all of the study material listed in the Study Guides and elsewhere on the PHAP website, the PHAP Credentialing Program does not intend the list to imply endorsement of these specific references.

## 8.5 Making use of the Self-Assessment and Diagnostic Test

It is essential for you to compare your knowledge against what is contained in the assessment blueprint.

We recommend that you start with the Self-Assessment, which you will find in the Study Guide for the certification you are pursuing. This is a simple worksheet in which you rate your own current level of knowledge and skills in each area of the assessment blueprint.

Then, as a next step, take a free Diagnostic Test. PHAP has developed free online Diagnostic Tests for all certifications under the PHAP Credentialing Program. Each Diagnostic Test is based on the blueprints described in this guide and contains the same number of scored items as the official certification assessment. The Diagnostic Test produces for you a customized report of your performance in each of the domains, detailing the specific statements in the assessment blueprint for which you answered an item incorrectly.

Compare the results of the Diagnostic Test with the Self-Assessment. If you have either rated your knowledge and skills low for a topic in the Self-Assessment **OR** received a low score for it in the Diagnostic Test, you should consider preparing further in this area.

The Diagnostic Tests are available at:

- *Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem:* https://diagnostics.phap.org/s3/uhe
- *International Legal Frameworks for Humanitarian Action:* https://diagnostics.phap.org/s3/ilfha
- *Applying Humanitarian Principles in Practice:* https://diagnostics.phap.org/s3/ahpp
- *Cash and Voucher Assistance:* https://diagnostics.phap.org/s3/cva
- *Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (Core Certification):* https://diagnostics.phap.org/s3/meal-core
- *Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (Advanced Certification):* https://diagnostics.phap.org/s3/meal-advanced
- *Humanitarian Needs Assessment (Core Certification):* https://diagnostics.phap.org/s3/hna-core
- *Humanitarian Needs Assessment (Advanced Certification):* https://diagnostics.phap.org/s3/hna-advanced

## 8.6 Other review and study resources

A number of humanitarian agencies, training providers, colleges, universities, and private companies offer study courses, software, and materials that may assist candidates when preparing for PHAP Credentialing Program certification assessments. Some of these are freely available and others are fee-based.

Because candidates for PHAP Credentialing Program certification assessments often ask where to locate review courses and materials, PHAP maintains an online list strictly as a courtesy at https://phap.org/credentialing-program.

PHAP neither endorses the providers shown on the online list nor evaluates the providers or the providers' materials for consistency with PHAP assessment blueprints or with any aspect of any PHAP assessment.

Candidates must contact these other providers directly about materials, course schedules, fees, or matters related to satisfaction with their products or services.

# 9 Register, purchase, and schedule an assessment

## 9.1 Scheduling an assessment

You need to purchase an assessment from our designated testing provider, Yardstick Measure. Make sure that you first understand the technical requirements (see Chapter 10) and that you are willing to agree to the Candidate Agreement and Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

1) Go to the PHAP Online Assessment Center at https://assessments.phap.org
2) Click on "Sign Up" to create an account. Complete the contact information
   ***NOTE:*** *When you sit for the assessment, you will need to present a government-issued photo ID with your name on it. The name on the photo ID must match the name in your registration and in the confirmation email that you receive. Therefore, please ensure that the name you enter at registration matches exactly the way your name appears on your government-issued photo ID.*
3) Click on "Purchase" to buy an assessment. Make sure to choose the correct assessment, as there are three different ones. Included in this fee is one retake in case you do not pass the first time – you can re-take the assessment after the seven-day waiting period between the first try and the second try.
   ***NOTE:*** *If the payment function doesn't work for you, go to the main PHAP website or email certifications@phap.org for information on how to purchase an enrolment key instead.*
4) When you are ready, set up your appointment from "My Assessments." This can be done with as little as 5 minutes' advance notice. Make sure that you have your computer set up with your webcam in a space where there are no other people or notes and other written material around.
   ***NOTE:*** *Tests – including re-tests – must be taken within 180 days (six months) of purchase. Therefore, you should take your first test no later than three months after purchase, to allow time for a re-take three months later if needed.*
5) You will be prompted to download the remote proctoring software and launch it once you click "Book/Write assessment." Follow the proctor's instructions to start your assessment.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the booking, please contact the Yardstick Assessment team at testingsupport@getyardstick.com

## 9.2 Fees

*Fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.*

| **Assessments** | |
|---|---|
| Single assessment fee (includes one free re-take) | $80 for non-members<br>$65 for PHAP members[2] |
| Package of three assessments | $225 for non-members<br>$185 for PHAP members |
| Bulk purchase of enrolment keys (batches of 20, 50, 100, or more) | Contact PHAP for more info |
| **Re-certification** | |
| For confirmation of continuing education | $50 for non-members<br>$40 for members |

[2] This lower cost for members is made possible by the membership fee paid by PHAP members that contributes to the development and maintenance cost of the certifications.

| | |
|---|---|
| For re-assessment option (includes one free re-take) | Same as assessment fees above |

## 9.3 Security considerations

Candidates are encouraged to evaluate if undergoing the assessment may pose a security risk. In particular, consider the following:

- Candidates are asked to remove phones or other electronic means of contacting them from the room that they use for testing. A colleague, family member, and/or friends should be notified that the candidate will not be reachable with normal means for the duration of the assessment so that they can alert them in person in case of a life-threatening emergency.
- As described in section 13.4, the names of successful candidates will be published unless otherwise requested by the candidate, and PHAP will also respond to information requests regarding the certification status of an individual. Candidates living under a protected identity or otherwise sensitive to having their name published should consider whether or not certification is suitable for them.

# 10 Technology requirements

At this time, all certification assessments for the PHAP Credentialing Program certifications are delivered via the Internet, using your own computer and webcam, with live remote proctoring/invigilation.

This provides a very flexible solution, as you can choose to take the assessment wherever and whenever is suitable for you – at home, at your office, or in a private meeting room.

For this service, PHAP is collaborating with a company called ProctorU, a partner of Yardstick Measure. ProctorU provides live remote proctoring/invigilation services globally, 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

Additional options for assessment delivery are currently under consideration. For more information, contact the PHAP secretariat at certifications@phap.org.

## 10.1 How to set up your remote proctored testing session

In preparation for the assessment, please ensure you have read the following information as well as tested your computer station PRIOR to purchasing the assessment. This is critical and will save you time on assessment day.

### 10.1.1 What technology is required?

You will only need the following:

- A Windows or Mac computer[3]
- A compatible browser: Google Chrome (preferred), Mozilla Firefox, or Safari with Adobe Flash enabled

[3] While it is possible to take the Diagnostic Test on a smartphone or tablet, the security requirements of the official remote proctored certification assessment require a Windows or Mac laptop or desktop. Note also that you cannot take the assessment running inside a virtual machine.

- An internet connection
- A webcam and microphone (a microphone is often built into your computer or webcam)

The specific requirements are the following:

| Type | Minimum | Recommended |
|---|---|---|
| Web Camera | 640×480 resolution | 1280×720 resolution |
| PC Users | Windows Vista | Windows 10 (10 S mode is not supported) |
| Mac Users | OS X 10.5 or higher | OS X 10.13 High Sierra |
| Internet Download Speed | .768 Mbps | 1.5 Mbps |
| Internet Upload Speed | .384 Mbps | 1 Mbps |
| RAM | 1024 MB | 2 GB |
| Ports | 1935, 843, 80, 443, 61613, UDP/TCP | 1935, 843, 80, 443, 61613, UDP/TCP |

You will be asked to download a browser plugin and launch it to allow the proctor to view what is on your computer screen during the assessment. This is a simple applet, similar to many online conferencing applets. The proctor will not have direct control over your computer or have access to your file system.

The webcam is used to monitor the immediate surroundings and ensure you are taking the assessment by yourself. You will be asked to rotate your webcam to validate the security of your surroundings. If you are not able to move your webcam, you may also use a large handheld mirror to demonstrate that there is no one else in the room – please ensure in advance that you are able to show all parts of the room using either by rotating the webcam or using a mirror.

In case your electricity and/or internet is prone to cuts, make sure to use a computer with a battery (such as a laptop) and a backup mobile internet connection.

In preparation, you can test your computer and connection by logging in to your account at https://assessments.phap.org and clicking on "Test Your System." You will be prompted to download the ProctorU browser extension, which is also used for the assessment proctoring.

### 10.1.2 What does the virtual proctor do?

The proctoring software allows the proctor to see what is happening on the candidate's computer at all times. This allows us to prevent the use of dual monitors, other web sites, or the broadcasting of the questions to a remote device. Through the audio and video the proctor can tell if the candidate is the correct person and if there is any behavior which may indicate cheating. The proctor does not have access to the candidate's file system, but the candidate should ensure that any sensitive documents are closed before launching the assessment.

In order to ensure fair assessments, the invigilated/proctored assessment sessions are recorded so that they may be reviewed in case of issues reported by the candidate or proctor/invigilator. Recordings are only accessible by authorized PHAP Credentialing Program staff and by the proctor/invigilator. Unless there are ongoing investigations of complaints, recordings are deleted after one month.

### 10.1.3 Important rules about your workstation

You must follow these rules for your assessment set up:

- **No people** are allowed around you[4]
- Your **physical workspace must be completely cleared** from any notes or objects
- **All applications and web pages** except those used to launch the assessment must be closed (and kept closed during the assessment)[5]
- You are only allowed to have **one monitor** connected to your computer during the assessment[6]

[4] Any eventual tech support colleagues are allowed in the room while you are connecting to the proctor, but must leave before the assessment begins.
[5] The remote proctor will close any remaining programs before allowing you to start the assessment.
[6] If you use more than one monitor, disconnect it and make sure that it is facing away from you.

# 11 On the day of the assessment

## 11.1 ID check at start of assessment session

At the beginning of the assessment, we use visual identification to authenticate a candidate. We require a government issued photo ID for verifying the student. The ID is checked by the proctor and recorded.

The name that appears on your photo ID must match the name under which the candidate is registered to take the assessment. **Do not register under a nickname or with alternative spelling!** If a name change is needed, candidates must contact certifications@phap.org a minimum of one week before they intend to take the assessment to change the name on the record.

Candidates without a photo ID at the start of the test will not be permitted to take the test and their assessment fees will be forfeited.

Proctors are only able to verify photo IDs with Roman script. If you do not have access to photo ID with Roman script, please contact certifications@phap.org before sitting for the assessment

## 11.2 Timing

The total computer-based testing time is 90 minutes. Additional time has been allowed for instructions. You can plan to be finished with the assessment two hours after the scheduled start time. There are no scheduled breaks.

## 11.3 Assessment day policies (general rules)

- **No people** are allowed around you
- Your **physical workspace must be completely cleared** from any notes or objects
- Your **mobile phone and any additional computers must be in a different room**.
- If you have a **second screen** on your computer, it must be disconnected and turned away from you.
- You are **not permitted to talk out loud** (no reading the questions and answer choices out loud) or talk to or receive any assistance from other people while taking the assessment.
- We ask that you **keep your eyes focused on your computer** and work area only – no looking around the room.
- You **must remain seated**, and will not be able to leave the assessment room during the session. Ensure to take a washroom break PRIOR to starting your assessment. We are not able to 'Pause' your assessment.
- Following very **brief breaks in the connection** during the assessment, the system will automatically reconnect you to your proctor. Longer connection breaks will lead to the assessment being stopped.

If any behavior that indicates cheating is observed, the proctor has the authority to discontinue your assessment and flag it for review (see section 12.4).

## 11.4 Dismissal

Any candidate who is observed engaging in any misconduct will be subject to dismissal from the assessment, may be barred from future assessments for a period ranging from one year to permanent dismissal, and may be required to forfeit his or her current assessment fee and/or period of eligibility. Remote proctors are authorized to take immediate, appropriate measures against candidates who are caught violating testing rules. The candidate is entitled to appeal the dismissal determination.

## 11.5 Handling of completed tests

PHAP will take all available precautions to ensure the appropriate and secure handling of completed tests. In the rare and extreme case in which test results data become lost or unreadable, candidates will be required to undergo re-testing, without being charged a re-assessment fee. Candidates will be responsible for their own travel-associated expenses for future testing.

In order to ensure fair assessments, the invigilated/proctored assessment sessions are recorded so that they may be reviewed in case of issues reported by the candidate or proctor/invigilator. Recordings are only accessible by authorized PHAP Credentialing Program staff and by the proctor/invigilator. Unless there are ongoing investigations of complaints, recordings are deleted after one month.

## 11.6 Special circumstances and fees

### 11.6.1 Cancellation

Assessment fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

### 11.6.2 No-shows

If a candidate do not attend their scheduled assessments, no refund or rebate will be provided. A no-show uses up that assessment credit. If the candidate has another assessment credit (what would normally be the "re-take") that comes with the original assessment purchase, he or she may reschedule immediately using the re-take credit, without having to complete the seven-day waiting period.[7] If he or she does not have any assessment credit remaining, he or she will need to purchase another one.

### 11.6.3 Extreme circumstances

If a candidate has missed the assessment due to emergency or hardship such as serious illness of either the candidate or an immediate family member; death in the immediate family; disabling traffic accident; court appearance or jury duty; or military duty, he or she will be permitted to reschedule the assessments at no additional charge as long as the following requirement is met: Candidate submits written verification and supporting documentation of the situation to PHAP within 20 days of the original assessment date. If such a request is not made, the candidate will forfeit the full assessment fee and be considered a no-show. Note that since assessments are available without booking in advance, any such extreme circumstances which should reasonably

[7] In case the system has recorded your no-show as having sat for the assessment, your access will need to be manually activated. Please contact certifications@phap.org for assistance.

have been known by the candidate prior to starting the assessment will mean that normal cancellation procedures are in place.

# 12 After the assessment

## 12.1 Notification of results

Candidates are notified of their preliminary results directly in the assessment system immediately upon completing the assessment. They are also notified at the same time by e-mail (to the e-mail address they provided at registration).

Candidates who do not pass the assessment will receive a brief report containing an outline of their performance in each of the assessment domains. Each domain is weighted differently, as indicated by the percentages documented in the assessment blueprints. This means that participants cannot average scores across subject areas to determine a specific score. Subject area analysis is provided solely for the purposes of preparing for the next assessment.

Due to issues of assessment item security, PHAP, its staff, and other representatives cannot provide information on the exact items that were answered incorrectly.

## 12.2 Certification

Candidates who pass a PHAP certification assessment will be awarded a certificate in the form of a verifiable digital badge within seven days of passing the assessment.[8] All certificates and badges are non-transferrable.

See Chapter 13 for more information about the badges and other means of displaying and communicating about your certification(s).

## 12.3 Re-testing

**UHE, ILFHA & AHPP:**
In the event that a candidate fails his or her first attempt to pass the certification test, PHAP requires a waiting period of at least one week (seven days) between the first and second re-test attempts. The candidate will be assigned a different test form for their second attempt.

One free re-take is included in each assessment purchase. For additional re-takes, a candidate must purchase a new assessment and wait at least three months (90 days) from their first attempt.

**MEAL, HNA & CVA:**

In the event that a candidate fails his or her first attempt to pass the certification test, PHAP requires a waiting period of at least three months (90 days) between the first and second re-test attempts.

One free re-take is included in each assessment purchase. For additional re-takes, a candidate must purchase a new assessment and wait at least three months (90 days) from their last attempt.

[8] In case the assessment was flagged by the remote proctor for possible cheating, the certificate or badge will not be awarded until the case has been reviewed by the PHAP Credentialing Program secretariat.

## 12.4 Appeals policy

Candidates may appeal the results of eligibility determination or the assessments within 30 days of the date of the results. An appeal is defined as a formal request to PHAP for special consideration of accommodation related to an individual's certification status. Appeals will be considered for:

- Denied eligibility requirements
- Assessment irregularities
- Suspension/revocation of certification

A sound rationale (logical basis) regarding the need for special consideration must be provided by the applicant. ***Note:*** *An appeal is not an avenue for requesting a passing score on a failed assessment.*

The appeals process and an application for submitting an appeal can be found in Chapter 15.2.

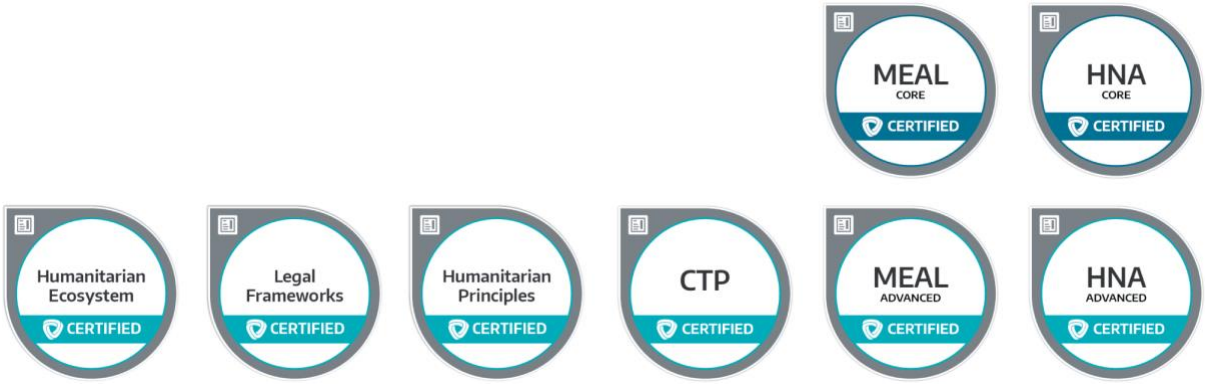
## 12.5 Complaints policy

In the event that candidates are dissatisfied with any element of the certification process, a formal complaint may be submitted. Read more in Chapter 16.2.

# 13 Displaying your certification

The following chapter contains an overview of the approved ways of displaying and communicating about your certification.

## 13.1 Digital badge as primary proof of certification




All individuals who become certified in an area by the PHAP Credentialing Program are issued a digital badge via the HPass digital badging platform.

PHAP digital badges are your proof of certification. With digital badges, you can easily showcase your achievements and capabilities on social media, emails, personal websites, and resumes. Digital badges protect the integrity of your credential by providing a link to verified data from PHAP that cannot be falsified. PHAP's digital badges allow you to provide your peers and employers, as well as the crisis-affected people you serve, with easy, valid verification of your credentials, while positioning you at the forefront of this new technology for communicating professional commitment and skills.

You will receive your badge invitation within seven days of successfully passing your certification assessment.[9] If you have not received your badge invitation within this timeframe, first check your spam filter before contacting certifications@phap.org

For more information about PHAP's digital badges, including how to share them on social media and in your email signature, visit https://phap.org/digital-badges

## 13.2 Appropriate use of the certification

It is important to know how to display and communicate about your certification correctly. An individual who has been granted a certification under the PHAP Credentialing Program may list the certification on stationary, social media, websites, business cards, and other promotional materials.

The certifications should only be communicated for the period for which the use is authorized. Use of these designations beyond the authorized period (without complying with re-certification requirements) constitutes unauthorized use of the credentials.

[9] In case the assessment was flagged by the remote proctor for possible cheating, the certificate or badge will not be awarded until the case has been reviewed by the PHAP Credentialing Program secretariat.

Should the certification be suspended or withdrawn for any other reason, the individual must immediately cease the use of the certification designation and acronym (for example on stationary, websites, business cards, and any and all promotional materials).

**Single certifications**
For a single certification (in this example the certification in Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem or UHE), examples of correct use include the following:

1) Firstname Lastname, holding PHAP certification in Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem
2) Firstname Lastname, certified by PHAP in Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem
3) Firstname Lastname, PHAP UHE certified[10]
4) Firstname Lastname, certified through the PHAP Credentialing Program in Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem

**Multiple certifications**
For two or three certifications issued by the PHAP Credentialing Program and held by the same person, they can be combined in communications as follows:

1) Firstname Lastname, holding PHAP certification in Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem, International Legal Frameworks for Humanitarian Action, and Applying Humanitarian Principles in Practice
2) Firstname Lastname, certified by PHAP in Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem, International Legal Frameworks for Humanitarian Action, and Applying Humanitarian Principles in Practice
3) Firstname Lastname, PHAP UHE, ILFHA, and AHPP certified
4) Firstname Lastname, certified through the PHAP Credentialing Program in Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem, International Legal Frameworks for Humanitarian Action, and Applying Humanitarian Principles in Practice

**Organizational use**

The PHAP Credentialing Program certifications are awarded to individuals, not organizations, and should generally only be used together with individuals' names. However, there are proper methods for organizations to refer to staff holding certifications.

Examples of PROPER organizational use include:

- International Aid Organization (IAO) operates in 20 different countries providing humanitarian assistance to those in greatest need when disaster strikes. IAO leadership holding PHAP certifications include Jane Doe and John Doe.
- All staff in position X hold PHAP certifications in Y.
- All staff of IAO hold PHAP certifications in Y.

Examples of IMPROPER company use include:

[10] The approved acronyms for the PHAP Credentialing Program certifications are:
1) Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem: UHE
2) International Legal Frameworks for Humanitarian Action: ILFHA
3) Applying Humanitarian Principles in Practice: AHPP

5) International Aid Organization (IAO), holding PHAP certification in Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem, International Legal Frameworks for Humanitarian Action, and Applying Humanitarian Principles in Practice
6) International Aid Organization (IAO), certified by PHAP in Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem, International Legal Frameworks for Humanitarian Action, and Applying Humanitarian Principles in Practice
7) International Aid Organization (IAO), PHAP UHE, ILFHA, and AHPP certified
8) International Aid Organization (IAO), certified through/under the PHAP Credentialing Program in Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem, International Legal Frameworks for Humanitarian Action, and Applying Humanitarian Principles in Practice

## 13.3 Request for paper certificate

The primary official proof of certification is the digital badge issued via the HPass digital badging platform. The verifiable badge can be printed, with all relevant details, if needed.

If needed, PHAP can also provide an original paper certificate for a fee of USD 20.

Any certification holder may make a request for a paper certification document. Requests must be made in writing to PHAP and may be made at any time. The paper certificate will be sent by regular first class postal service, or DHL when the regular postal service is not an option. PHAP cannot take responsibility for it actually reaching the certification holder within a certain time period, or at all. The fee of USD 20 must be paid together with the request. You can access the request form at https://phap.org/credentialing-program-forms-paper-certificate.

## 13.4 Public information

An individual who has passed a PHAP Credentialing Program certification assessment and been granted certification will have their name listed in a directory on the PHAP website as certified in that defined area. Please notify certifications@phap.org if you would NOT like your name publicly listed.

Note that regardless of whether you choose to be included in the public directory, PHAP will verify and provide information, upon request, as to whether an individual holds a current, valid certification and the scope of that certification, except where the law requires such information not to be disclosed. Only an indication of whether an individual is certified or not and certification date and/or term is provided (not the score a candidate achieved in an assessment or whether a candidate has attempted but not passed an assessment).

## 13.5 Changing your name

If you change your name through marriage or other court proceedings, you may request a name change by contacting certifications@phap.org and including proof of your name change.

## 13.6 Individuals using PHAP Credentialing Program certifications without authority

PHAP has established procedures for challenging individuals known to use certifications issued under the PHAP Credentialing Program without having obtained it or after they lapsed for failure to meet re-certification requirements.

In order to establish that someone is using a certification without authority, PHAP must be provided with the document (or a copy) showing where the individual is mentioning the certification. Most often the unauthorized use occurs online, on a business card, resume/CV, business letterhead, brochure, or similar publication, or with a signature.

PHAP relies on those finding potential unauthorized uses to report them and provide the documentation showing the use of these certifications. Reports may be submitted anonymously – PHAP will not disclose the name of the person or organization reporting potential unauthorized uses. Submit a report of unauthorized use at https://phap.org/credentialing-program-forms-unauthorized-use.

After receiving documentation of a potential unauthorized use case, PHAP takes steps to challenge that individual and seeks to correct any record-keeping error on the part of PHAP. Legal counsel for PHAP may participate in the procedures.

Those who have used PHAP certifications without authority may be barred from pursuing PHAP Credentialing Program certifications for up to two years. Their names may also be published on the PHAP website. Other penalties may be applied. PHAP reserves the right to use the courts in protecting use of PHAP certifications.

## 13.7 Promoting the PHAP Credentialing Program

PHAP uses several methods to promote the PHAP Credentialing Program certifications and to encourage humanitarian practitioners to pursue them. You may volunteer to assist in these activities. Please contact PHAP or visit the PHAP website to find available materials.

### 13.7.1 Promotional materials

There is a variety of literature about all of the PHAP Credentialing Program certifications. Most PHAP Credentialing Program publications are available on the PHAP website as downloadable PDFs.

# 14 Maintaining your certification

The validity of PHAP Credentialing Program certifications is time limited. To ensure that those holding certifications maintain and are up to date with current developments in their field, maintaining their certification requires fulfilling re-certification requirements. To combine this rigor with the flexibility needed for those working in the humanitarian sector, the PHAP Credentialing Program certifications allows for a choice between following a continuing education program or completing a new assessment.

## 14.1 Certification interval

Each certification that you obtain through the PHAP Credentialing Program is initially valid for a period of three full calendar years after the year in which you first obtain the certification.

In order to maintain your certification status after this initial interval, you will need to complete the re-certification requirements before the initial certification interval is over, i.e. before the end of the third full calendar year after you first obtain your certification.

***Example:*** You pass the assessment for the certification in Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem on 17 April 2017. This certification will remain valid until 31 December 2020. In order to maintain your certification status after 2020, you need to complete the re-certification requirements BEFORE 31 December 2020. Being aware of this, you complete your re-certification requirements in good time, on 2 September 2020. Then your certification will remain valid for another three whole calendar years, until 31 December 2023. Then you need to complete the re-certification requirements again BEFORE 31 December 2023. And thus it repeats for as long as you wish to maintain your certification status.

## 14.2 Re-certification requirements

The re-certification program helps certified individuals keep up with changes affecting humanitarian practice in the defined areas of their certifications.

The term of the certifications offered under the PHAP Credentialing Program is three years. In order to maintain his or her certification, before the end of the certification term, the certification holders must:

- Re-commit to the PHAP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
- Complete ONE of the following two requirements:
    - Either complete 12 continuing education (CE) credits
    - Or complete a re-assessment (same format as the initial certification assessment)

For re-certification fees, see section 10.2.

All certification holders are also required to verify their contact information. Verification of contact information is critical for communication regarding PHAP Credentialing Program information and updates. Certification holders should update all contact information prior to the end of the re-certification interval in order to ensure timely transfer of information. You can submit change of address, phone number, or email address on the PHAP website.

## 14.3 Continuing education option for re-certification

Under the continuing education option, you must complete 12 Continuing Education (CE) credits every three years, for **each** of the certifications you are maintaining.

There are several different categories of activities that provide CE credits. Keep in mind that there is no limit to the number of credits that can be earned in some categories, while other categories do have annual and/or total credit limits.

Categories of activities for CE credit include:

- Directed self-study through reading articles, participating in webinars, etc., combined with free quizzes in the PHAP CE system
- Pre-approved courses (onsite, online, hybrid) from a variety of training and education providers
- Certain volunteer service to the PHAP Credentialing Program (including item writing)

You can keep track of your earned credits through the online CE management tool available at https://phap.org. It is also important that you keep you own records to verify your re-certification activities, so that you can be sure to have proof of the credits you claim.

Additional details of the re-certification program appear in the Re-certification and Continuing Education Guide, which will be published in the second half of 2017. You may download the Re-certification and Continuing Education Guide on the PHAP website to help you through the process. You will want to refer to the PHAP website regularly for the most up-to-date information.

## 14.4 Re-assessment option for re-certification

Under the re-assessment option, you must take a new assessment in the same format as your initial certification assessment in each area of certification.

You must successfully pass the re-assessment before the end of your certification interval (i.e. before the end of the third full calendar year after you passed the initial certification assessment and earned the certification).

The fee for the re-assessment option is the same as an initial assessment (see section 10.2).

## 14.5 Reinstatement

If you fail to achieve re-certification before the deadline, PHAP will send you a notice that your certification has been invalidated and you no longer hold certified status in the specified area with the PHAP Credentialing Program.

In this case, you may seek reinstatement of your certification online. Reinstatement must be carried out within 12 months of the date your certification expired (i.e. by 31 December in the year after your certification expired). Reinstatement includes paying a reinstatement fee and complying with the current re-certification requirements. Otherwise, you will be required to apply as a new candidate and meet all of the requirements in place for new candidates at the time of your new application.

## 14.6 Failing to comply with PHAP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

PHAP authorizes individuals to use PHAP certifications when they meet requirements for achieving and retaining the certifications. PHAP also has a responsibility to withdraw that authorization if individuals fail to meet re-certification requirements or violate PHAP's Certification Candidate Agreement or PHAP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

## 14.7 Maintaining your mail and email address

You are solely responsible to keep PHAP informed of your current mail and email address. If either address changes, you must notify PHAP. You could lose your certification status under the PHAP Credentialing Program if renewal notices and other important information do not reach you. To update your mail and email address, log in to your PHAP Certification Assessment Center account or send an email to certifications@phap.org.

## 14.8 Overview of certification status requirements

An individual certified in a defined area must meet all re-certification requirements to maintain an active status in relation to this certification.

**Active** – Certification is in good standing. Individuals with an Active status may represent themselves as certified in the defined area. Active certification holders will be listed in the directory.

**Expired** – Certification is voluntarily resigned for reasons unrelated to disciplinary proceedings, or certification is forfeited due to non-compliance with the re-certification requirements. Individuals with an Expired status will not be listed in the directory and may not represent themselves as certified. Within one year of moving to Expired status, an individual make act to reinstate their certification by following the procedure described above (under "Reinstatement").

**Suspended** – Certification is not in good standing as a result of the imposition of a disciplinary action. Individuals with a Suspended status will be notified by the PHAP Credentialing Program by email of their suspension and its cause. Upon Certification Commission determination, individuals will be listed as "Suspended" in the PHAP directory and may no longer represent themselves as certified in the defined area. Suspended individuals must apply for reinstatement under the appeals process within one month from the date of the notice of suspension. If an individual fails to submit an appeal within this timeframe, the certification will be revoked.

**Revoked** – Certification is permanently revoked after individual is suspended and an appeal for reinstatement has been denied by the Certification Commission or has not been submitted within the one-month window for appeals. Upon Certification Commission determination, individuals will be listed as "Revoked" in the PHAP directory and may no longer represent themselves as certified in the defined area.

# 15 Comments, appeals, and complaints

## 15.1 General feedback

If you have general feedback or comments (positive or negative) about the PHAP Credentialing Program please use the online form at http://surveys.phap.org/s3/credentialing-program-forms-feedback. For general feedback, you can also send an email to certifications@phap.org or call us at +41 22 518 04 58.

PHAP will send an initial response to queries within five working days.

For appealing decisions regarding your certification, please follow the procedure described in 15.2. For program complaints in which you are requesting corrective action, please follow the procedure described in 15.3.1. For complaints against certification holders, please follow the procedure described in 15.3.2.

## 15.2 Appeals

You may appeal decisions related to earning and maintaining PHAP certifications. Requests for appeal must be submitted using the appropriate online form, including all required information, and within the required timeframe, in accordance with the current appeals policy.

An appeal must be lodged no later than 30 days after notification by PHAP of the adverse decision by submitting an Appeals Application via the designated form on the PHAP website. It must include all required information in order to be considered. Appeals are only accepted via the online form at https://phap.org/credentialing-program-forms-appeals.

### 15.2.1 Initial review

PHAP Credentialing Program staff shall review appeals within 10 business days of receipt. A response will be sent to the appellant via email.

### 15.2.2 Initial response

The response will be one of:

1. Appeal Granted by the Credentialing Program, along with further instructions for the appellant as needed.
2. Appeal Denied by the Credentialing Program, along with an explanation for the denial and/or information on an alternate course of action if applicable. The denial will include information on appellant's further recourse if appellant wishes to pursue the appeal.
3. Appeal Forwarded to the Appeals Panel, with information for the appellant about how he/she will be contacted to present the appeal.
4. Appeal Delayed to provide time to gather further information. Within 30 days appellant will be sent a Denial or Appeal Forwarded notification.

### 15.2.3 Appeals Panel composition

The Appeals Panel shall consist of:

- Three individuals holding PHAP Credentialing Program certification
- PHAP legal counsel, if desired by PHAP

Upon receipt, the PHAP Credentialing Program staff shall review the appeal. If the matter is administrative and can be handled at the staff level, a decision will be made and the appellant informed. If further action is required, the Credentialing Program staff shall request evaluation of the appeal by the appeals Panel. The individuals must be impartial and have no conflict of interest with the appeal. Where conflict of interest exists, or is perceived to exist, it will be disclosed, and the Appeals Panel member will recuse him- or herself from the case. The Credentialing Program Manager will then appoint another certification holder to evaluate the appeal.

The Appeals Panel shall meet by teleconference within 30 days of receipt of the appeal. All determinations regarding appeals shall be made by simple majority vote of the Appeals Panel. Appeals Panel decisions are final.

Written notice of the Appeals Panel determination shall be provided to the candidate via email.

## 15.3 Complaints

A complaint is defined as a communication submitted to PHAP in which an individual explicitly expresses dissatisfaction regarding another individual certified in a defined area under the PHAP Credentialing Program or any aspect of the certification programs offered by PHAP.

A complaint must be submitted in writing to the PHAP Credentialing Program within 60 days of the occurrence of an incident. The complaint shall be submitted via an online form designated for this purpose on the PHAP website at https://phap.org/credentialing-program-forms-complaints. The submission shall include all of the information required on the form, including sufficient objective evidence to substantiate the claim(s) and, for Credentialing Program complaints, appropriate action to be taken. The submission must take place via the designated form on the PHAP website. Dissatisfaction based on hearsay shall not be considered as a complaint. Anonymous complaints shall not be considered. Complaints will be handled in an unbiased and timely manner.

### 15.3.1 Credentialing Program complaints

The PHAP Credentialing Program will investigate the circumstances of any valid complaint and determine and implement corrective action, or escalate it to the PHAP Certification Commission for review.

The staff will communicate the resolution to the complainant within a period of no longer than 30 days. If a complaint is found to warrant escalation, the Certification Commission is notified. The complaint will be reviewed by the Certification Commission and a decision shall be communicated to the complainant within a period of no longer than 60 days. The determination of staff or the Certification Commission is appealable and the Appeals Policy shall apply.

### 15.3.2 Complaints against certification holders

Any complaint against a certification holders must be:

- Specific to a section of the PHAP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct;
- In writing by the individual lodging the complaint;
- Supported by definitive and specific evidence of such accusation; and
- Made against a current holder of PHAP certification in a defined area.

The complaint and all related documentation shall be dealt with in a strictly confidential manner.

Once a complaint is filed, the complainant agrees to hold in strict confidence, and will not announce or promote in any manner, or use personal or organizational channels to announce filing of a complaint.

If it is determined that additional information and evidence is required, this will be requested from the complainant and a specific timeframe needed to receive such information. If this additional information is not received, a decision will be rendered based on what information was initially provided.

If it is determined that no further action is warranted, the complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome of the initial assessment.

If the initial investigation supports the complainant, an independent investigation will commence, and the information will be handed over to the PHAP Certification Commission to perform a formal investigation into the allegation.

The communications with the subject of a complaint are made as follows:

1. If a preliminary investigation of the information/evidence reveals a valid complaint, the individual(s) named in the written complaint will be sent a "Notice of Complaint" via email. The Certification Commission will also request any additional information needed.
2. The Certification Commission will submit a written report of its findings within sixty (60) working days of receiving all further requested supporting information.
3. Within ten working days of the written report findings being accepted, the findings of the Certification Commission will be communicated to the subject of the complaint.

### 15.3.3 Potential disciplinary actions

If a complaint is found to have valid grounds, the PHAP Certification Commission could recommend one of the following disciplinary actions depending on the severity of the infraction:

1. **Warning** – A written warning and notice of such shall remain in the certification holder's file and articulate clearly the consequences if the situation occurs again, or if there is another violation.
2. **Suspension** – PHAP certification or eligibility to become certified could be suspended for a period of up to three years.
3. **Revocation of Certification** – PHAP certification(s) could be revoked.

The subject of the complaint may appeal the disciplinary actions. The PHAP Credentialing Program Appeals Policy shall apply.

# Appendix A: PHAP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

*Approved by the PHAP Board of Directors on 2 March 2017*

## Preamble

The ethical framework of the International Association of Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection (PHAP) begins with recognition of the value of all human life. During crisis situations in which normal systems are not functioning, there is a need for humanitarian action to protect and uphold human life and dignity. It is for the sake of all crisis-affected people, now and in the future, that we uphold this Code.

In additional to myriad practical challenges, humanitarian action continually faces obstacles resulting from other powerful interests. Achieving humanitarian aims in this complex world depends on the credibility and reputation of humanitarian work, which is shaped by the collective conduct of the individuals involved in it. This provides the incentive for us to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of consistent ethical conduct.

Humanitarian action is inherently confronted with ethical considerations and dilemmas at every turn – often with life or death implications. Furthermore, even with the best of intentions, humanitarian action has the potential to cause harm if assistance and protection are misused, politicized, or coopted by other interests, or if dependencies are inadvertently created. This Code does not aim to provide specific guidance for all, or even most, of these issues, but it provides a common basis for ethical deliberation. Questions related to ethical dilemmas are best answered by thoughtful consideration of fundamental principles, rather than reliance on detailed regulations.

This Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct must be embraced and upheld by all members of the Association, as well as those applying for or holding certifications issued by the Association, whether they are practitioners, supporters, facilitators, or partners of humanitarian action. Members and certification holders promise to uphold this Code and act ethically and professionally above and beyond the baseline requirements of law.

Without violating the Code, each member and certification holder also supplements the values and rules specified in the Code based on guidance drawn from personal values, culture, and experience.

## Shared understanding of humanitarian action

Members and certification holders have and promote a shared understanding of the core principles, central focus, limits, and duties of humanitarian action.

### Core principles

Members and certification holders recognize that the practice of humanitarian action is rooted in a set of core principles, which form the foundation of the unique role and value of humanitarian action and distinguish it from other forms of assistance and protection. These principles define and guide, but must also be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

**Humanity:** Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for the human being.

**Impartiality:** Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class, or political opinions.

**Neutrality:** Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious, or ideological nature.

**Independence:** Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military, or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

### Central focus

Members and certification holders recognize that the principle of humanity, which defines the purpose of humanitarian action, underscores that people are at the heart of humanitarian action and that respect for the dignity of crisis-affected people underpins all humanitarian activities. They recognize that upholding human dignity requires supporting the agency of crisis-affected people in all respects.

### Limits

Members and certification holders recognize the limits of humanitarian action as an extraordinary activity in situations when the authorities responsible for addressing identified needs are unable to do so.

### Duties

Members and certification holders recognize the duty of humanitarian action to avoid jeopardizing lasting improvements of a situation or bringing about any other negative effects. Humanitarian action should avoid creating dependencies and other impediments to recovery and development efforts, and should where possible facilitate such efforts.

Furthermore, while a commitment to neutrality endeavors to ensure that humanitarian action is not driven by positions of a political, racial, religious, or ideological nature, this does not mean that humanitarian actors should be disengaged from policy discussions in general. On the contrary, members and certification holders recognize the duty of humanitarian actors to understand and engage in the discussion and formation of policies that affect their ability to pursue humanitarian aims, and through doing so seek to maintain and expand space for humanitarian action to be carried out.

## Shared standards of professional conduct

Regardless of whether they are themselves directly engaged in humanitarian activities as defined above, members and certification holders adhere to the following general standards of professional conduct:

- **Handling power responsibly**

I am conscious of the power I have and use it responsibly.

- **Supporting the agency of others**

I recognize the fundamental equality of all people.

I strive to support the agency of others in all aspects of my work.

I do not unnecessarily or inappropriately impose my will on others.

- **Having high standards for myself and others**

I adhere to the highest possible standards according to the situation, whether I am engaged in a volunteer or paid capacity.

- **Being conscious of the commitments I make**

I recognize the limitations of my expertise and, to the extent possible, only undertake tasks that I am confident I can adequately fulfil.

I accept responsibility for my work.

I follow through on my commitments.

- **Improving my own capacities and those of people around me**

I take responsibility for continually acquiring needed knowledge, skills, and abilities for the local and international contexts of my work.

I assist colleagues to strengthen their capacities when needed.

I strive to use all appropriate resources available, including consultation with peers.

- **Respecting others and promoting ethical behavior**

I take measures to discourage, prevent, and correct any unethical conduct of colleagues.

I value the diversity of actors within and supporting the humanitarian sector and show respect for others in the professional community even when I disagree.

I strive to be collegial, but I do not allow collegiality to outweigh shared responsibility for ethical behavior.

- **Avoiding conflicts of interest**

I avoid having my professional judgment compromised by conflicts of interest.

- **Avoiding bias**

I strive to be aware of my own biases and work to overcome them.

I strive to make judgments based on evidence and objective analysis rather than assumptions.

- **Promoting awareness and understanding of principled humanitarian action**

Whether or not I am engaged in humanitarian work myself, I promote public awareness and understanding of principled humanitarian action.

# Appendix B: Candidate Agreement

As an applicant for PHAP Credentialing Program certification:

- I attest that the information I provided when registering for this certification assessment is true and accurate.
- I understand that I am undertaking the assessment for one or more of the PHAP Credentialing Program certifications. This certification is designed for humanitarian practitioners for whom understanding and being able to apply the four core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence is one of the required competencies in their work.
- I understand and agree to comply with the PHAP Credentialing Program requirements and agree to provide any additional information PHAP needs to determine my compliance.
- I understand that the fee for this certification assessment is non-refundable.
- I understand that if I fail the exam, I must wait for a minimum of one week before retaking it. (If this is my second attempt and I fail the exam, I must wait for a minimum of three months counted from my first attempt before retaking it).
- I understand I am personally responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of the examination content and I agree that I will not discuss or document the exam content in any format or participate in any fraudulent test taking practices.
- I understand that I have the opportunity to request special accommodation for the examination with appropriate documentation of a disability.
- I understand and agree that PHAP reserves the right to use my examination score and certain data from my examination application to prepare summary statistical analyses, some of which may be published, but that my individual data will not be made public.
- I understand and agree that in order to ensure fair assessments, this assessment session will be recorded and may be reviewed in case of issues reported by the candidate or proctor/invigilator. Recordings are only accessible by authorized PHAP Credentialing Program staff and by the proctor/invigilator. Unless there are ongoing investigations of complaints, recordings are deleted after one month.
- I understand that the PHAP certification is valid for a period of three (3) years.

**Should I be granted PHAP Credentialing Program certification:**

- I agree to comply with and uphold all policies and requirements of the PHAP Credentialing Program, including agreeing to the PHAP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.
- I agree to make claims about the certification only in the manner specified as appropriate by PHAP. I further agree that I will not make misleading or unauthorized statements about the certification, not use the issued certificate/digital badge in a misleading manner, and not use the certification in such a manner as to bring PHAP or its Credentialing Program into disrepute.
- I acknowledge the certification and all associated marks or logos are the property of PHAP and I agree to discontinue use of all references to certified status should my certification be suspended or withdrawn. Also, I agree to return the certificate (if a paper one is issued) if the certification is revoked.
- I understand that if I seek re-certification, it is my responsibility to a) demonstrate evidence of my continued competence through either continuing education or retaking

the examination, b) agree to continue to comply with the Code of Ethics, and c) pay the re-certification fee. Further, I agree to voluntarily and immediately report to PHAP any conditions that affect my capability to continue to fulfil the certification requirements, for example if I am not longer willing or able to comply with the Code of Ethics.

# Appendix C: Assessment blueprints

## Understanding the Humanitarian Ecosystem (UHE)

**Domain 1: The Big Picture**
*The totality of the actors and organisations involved in humanitarian work, the mechanisms and processes that connect them, and the wider environment that shapes their functioning.*

**Percentage of assessment**: 32%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 16

*Humanitarian practitioners must be able to:*

1.1 Identify approaches to describing the scope and defining characteristics of humanitarian action.
1.2 Recognize how the current humanitarian ecosystem emerged, including key historical milestones and turning points.
1.3 Identify the basic types of crisis that may call for humanitarian response and the essential differences between them, according to commonly used typologies.
1.4 Identify key ways in which humanitarian action is distinct from, and connected to, other forms of assistance and protection.
1.5 Identify key contemporary reform and review processes in the humanitarian ecosystem.
1.6 Identify major contemporary international policy frameworks in related areas and their relevance for humanitarian action.
1.7 Recognize the main forms of accountability among different stakeholders in the context of humanitarian action.
1.8 Recognize how the concepts of vulnerability and resilience are used in the context of humanitarian action.

**Domain 2: Key Actors**
*The key organisations and entities and their different mandates.*

**Percentage of assessment**: 32%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 16

*Humanitarian practitioners must be able to:*

2.1 Recognize the key ways in which crisis-affected people are both the focus of humanitarian action and play an active part in its planning, implementation, and assessment.
2.2 Identify the key types of governmental actors (civilian and military) that are likely to be involved in domestic crisis response and typical divisions of responsibility among them.
2.3 Identify the key UN agencies active in humanitarian action, their mandates, and their positions in the UN system.
2.4 Recognize how the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement emerged and identify the mandates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
2.5 Identify the key functional differences among non-governmental organizations involved in humanitarian action.

2.6 Identify the main kinds of donors contributing to humanitarian action and the main types of funding mechanisms and relationships.
2.7 Identify purposes for which humanitarian actors engage with armed actors, both State and non-State, in situations of international or non-international armed conflict.
2.8 Identify the mandates and roles of peacekeeping and political missions in crisis response.

**Domain 3: Key Mechanisms and Processes**
*Efforts to coordinate the humanitarian ecosystem.*

**Percentage of assessment**: 28%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 14

*Humanitarian practitioners must be able to:*

3.1 Identify essential components, roles, and responsibilities of the UN-led humanitarian coordination mechanisms.
3.2 Identify essential components, roles, and responsibilities of the main examples and types of NGO and Red Cross/Red Crescent networks and coordination mechanisms.
3.3 Identify essential components of, and tools related to, the Humanitarian Programming Cycle.
3.4 Identify key standards and codes for humanitarian action and their scope.
3.5 Recognize the main international legal frameworks that apply to humanitarian action in situations of armed conflict and in other crisis situations.
3.6 Identify the mandates of key intergovernmental decision-making bodies as they relate to humanitarian contexts.
3.7 Identify the primary IT tools and platforms for humanitarian information management and coordination and their scope and purpose.

**Domain 4: The Shaping Environment**
*Pressures, criticisms, and debates that influence humanitarian action.*

**Percentage of assessment**: 8%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 4

*Humanitarian practitioners must be able to:*

4.1 Identify key enduring and emerging examples of political and related pressures and why they require consideration by humanitarian actors.
4.2 Recognize the reasoning behind common contemporary criticisms of humanitarian action and actors.

# International Legal Frameworks for Humanitarian Action (ILFHA)

**Domain 1: What is International Law and Why is it Relevant to Humanitarian Action?**
*The key elements of how international law is created, whom it binds, and its relevance to humanitarian action; the relevance of both international law and domestic law for humanitarian action; and the further self-regulation of humanitarian actors by mandate or sectoral/organizational policies.*

**Percentage of assessment**: 23%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 11

1.1 Identify the key sources of international law and how it is formed.
1.2 Recognize that there are four main bodies of public international law that are relevant for international humanitarian action, as well as efforts to develop an additional body of international law specifically addressing responses to natural disasters.
1.3 Recognize the distinction between hard law and soft law.
1.4 Identify the ways in which international law binds States, intergovernmental organizations, non-State armed groups, and individuals.
1.5 Identify the ways in which international law binds or does not bind UN agencies, NGOs, and their staff.
1.6 Recognize the existence of key areas of domestic law that may be relevant to humanitarian actors in their work and that they normally continue to apply even in armed conflicts and natural disasters.
1.7 Distinguish between laws and policy or principles.

**Domain 2: International Human Rights Law**
*The fundamental principles of international human rights law (IHRL), how it binds States, how it creates rights claims for individuals, and how it is relevant to humanitarian action in situations of armed conflict or disaster.*

**Percentage of assessment**: 13%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 7

2.1 Identify the main international and regional treaties and other sources of IHRL.
2.2 Identify the key aspects of IHRL applicability in crisis situations.
2.3 Identify key provisions of IHRL relating to the right to life, freedom from torture and other inhumane and degrading treatment or punishment, arbitrary detention, and freedom of movement, as well as State obligations to investigate and hold violators accountable.
2.4 Identify key provisions of IHRL related to economic, social, and cultural rights that obligate States to provide or secure access to goods and services.

**Domain 3: International Humanitarian Law (Law of Armed Conflict)**
*The fundamental principles of international humanitarian law (IHL) (also called the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC)), when it applies, how it binds States and non-State actors, how it protects those not or no longer taking part in hostilities, how it regulates the means and methods of warfare, and key elements of the law specifically relevant to humanitarian action in situations of armed conflict.*

**Percentage of assessment**: 23%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 11

3.1 Identify the main treaties and other sources of international humanitarian law (IHL).
3.2 Recognize the fundamental purpose of IHL, to limit the effects of armed conflict, for humanitarian reasons, by protecting persons who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities and restricting the means and methods of warfare.
3.3 Distinguish between the laws that regulate the resort to the use of force (*jus ad bellum*) and the laws that regulate situations of armed conflict (*jus in bello*).
3.4 Determine the applicability of IHL and the information necessary to determine whether IHL applies and what rules bind parties to armed conflict.
3.5 Recognize the principles of IHL related to the conduct of hostilities and how these rules both regulate the use of lethal force and also serve to protect civilians and those no longer participating in hostilities (*hors de combat*).
3.6 Identify key types of weapons restricted and prohibited by international law.
3.7 Identify key rules of IHL relevant to humanitarian assistance and access in international and non-international armed conflicts.

**Domain 4: International Refugee Law and Laws Protecting Internally Displaced Persons**
*The fundamental rules of international refugee law, how international refugee law relates to national refugee and asylum laws, and when refugee law and status may be relevant to humanitarian operations (including protection activities); and how internally displaced persons (IDPs), while not covered by international refugee law, are protected by IHRL and, when applicable, IHL.*

**Percentage of assessment**: 17%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 9

4.1 Identify the rules determining who is a refugee under international refugee law.
4.2 Recognize the process by which refugee status is determined, including the roles of States, key State institutions, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
4.3 Recognize the principle of non-refoulement and its applicability to refugees and others.
4.4 Identify other key obligations of States related to refugees under international law.
4.5 Recognize the relevance of IHRL, IHL, the Guiding Principles on Internally Displaced Persons, and the Kampala Convention, in preventing arbitrary displacement and protecting individuals who are displaced within the territory of their own State.

**Domain 5: Implementation and Enforcement of International Law**
*The variety of mechanisms for preventing violations and enhancing respect for international law; how rules of*

*international humanitarian law and international human rights law (where relevant) are enforced in situations of alleged violations relevant to humanitarian action and protection of civilians; and the multiple layers of enforcement may be involved (domestic, regional, international).*

**Percentage of assessment**: 16%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 8

5.1 Recognize that respect for international law applicable to humanitarian action relies primarily on voluntary respect, persuasion, preventative measures, and incorporation into domestic law.
5.2 Identify key UN and regional bodies and mechanisms, including inquiries and fact-finding mechanisms, to monitor for and respond to serious violations of IHRL and IHL.
5.3 Recognize that international law relevant to humanitarian action may give rise to State responsibility for violations of international law as well as individual criminal responsibility for international crimes.
5.4 Define war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, and identify the roles of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and ad-hoc tribunals.
5.5 Identify key concepts regarding the roles of domestic and international mechanisms to pursue violations of international law by individuals.

**Domain 6: Implementation and Enforcement of International Law**
*The ways that humanitarian actors can and do utilize legal frameworks to further humanitarian aims.*

**Percentage of assessment**: 7%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 4

6.1 Identify examples of humanitarian actors contributing to procedures related to monitoring compliance or investigating alleged breaches of international law, as well as the potential risks involved.
6.2 Identify ways in which international law is employed by humanitarian actors *outside* of courts and other formal legal institutions.

# Applying Humanitarian Principles in Practice (AHPP)

## Domain 1: Knowledge Foundation – The Meaning and Status of the Principles

**Percentage of assessment**: 47%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 24

*Humanitarian practitioners must know:*

1.1 The definitions of the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence.
1.2 The function of the principles in inspiring, defining, and guiding humanitarian action, rather than as formulas or dogma.
1.3 The function of humanity and impartiality as goals or ends in their own right, and neutrality and independence as pragmatic tools or means to an end.
1.4 How the four principles form an integral set, with each one having its own distinct purpose.
1.5 The ways in which the principles can both reinforce and be in tension with one another.
1.6 The differing perspectives in the humanitarian sector related to the interpretation of and commitment to neutrality.
1.7 The distinction between actual and perceived adherence to the principles.
1.8 How the principles are inspired by ethics and practices that can be found across different cultures, religions, and belief systems in history.
1.9 The modern foundation and history of these four principles as well as the basic content and history of the main other existing codes or sets of principles.
1.10 The references to impartial humanitarian actors in international humanitarian law (IHL) and the implications for different actors in situations of armed conflict.
1.11 The various ways in which the four principles have been incorporated into other standards, agreements, resolutions, etc., so as to establish guidance, policy, or obligations.
1.12 The practical operational relevance of the four principles in various contexts, including situations of armed conflict, natural disasters, and other complex political and militarized environments.

## Domain 2: Applying the Principles in Humanitarian Operations

**Percentage of assessment**: 28%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 14

*Humanitarian practitioners must be able to:*

2.1 Employ the principles to steer operational planning, decision-making, and activities.
2.2 Recognize the rationale behind specific operational plans, policies, decisions, and activities in terms of the principles.
2.3 Identify appropriate responses to key existing and/or potential compromises/challenges to principled action in a given context.
2.4 Communicate to colleagues and to external stakeholders the core concepts behind each principle, their importance to humanitarian action, and the organization's commitment to them.
2.5 Employ the principles in negotiations with external stakeholders.
2.6 Employ the principles in negotiations or discussions within the humanitarian sector.
2.7 Employ the principles to protect the organization against external pressure or security risks.

## Domain 3: Key Challenges to the Humanitarian Principles

**Percentage of assessment**: 12%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 6

*Humanitarian practitioners must be able to:*

3.1 Identify the key conceptual challenges to the principles.
3.2 Recognize common external challenges to the implementation of the principles, such as contextual factors or political and military actions.
3.3 Recognize common internal challenges to the implementation of the principles, including both sectoral and institutional issues.

## Domain 4: Applying the Principles in the Institutional Environment

**Percentage of assessment**: 12%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 6

*Humanitarian practitioners must be able to:*

4.1 Employ the principles in long-term planning to improve the organization.
4.2 Situate the principles within an organization's mission and core strategies.
4.3 Use the principles as guidance in the establishment of internal policy.

# Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA)

## Domain 1: Situating CVA

**Percentage of assessment**: 14%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 7

*Humanitarian practitioners involved in CVA must be able to:*

1.1 Recognize the overall relevance of CVA for humanitarian response.
- 1.1.a Describe the overall purpose of CVA across different sectors.
- 1.1.b Describe how CVA can support in each phase of humanitarian response in different types of contexts.
- 1.1.c Describe the key factors determining the overall appropriateness of CVA in humanitarian response in different types of contexts and situations.

1.2 Describe key steps for CVA across the Program Cycle.
- 1.2.a Describe key steps related to CVA across the Program Cycle.

1.3 Recognize standards related to CVA in humanitarian response.
- 1.3.a Identify types, sources, and key examples of standards focusing on CVA in humanitarian response.
- 1.3.b Recognize how CVA relates to other organizational and technical standards in the humanitarian sector.

## Domain 2: Cash concepts and definitions

**Percentage of assessment**: 8%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 4

*Humanitarian practitioners involved in CVA must be able to:*

2.1 Define key terms in CVA.
- 2.1.a Define key terms in CVA.

2.2 Recognize the job functions and roles involved in CVA and how they relate to each other.
- 2.2.a Describe the different job functions and roles relevant for CVA.
- 2.2.b Recognize when segregation of duties is appropriate in CVA.

## Domain 3: Assessment / Situation analysis

**Percentage of assessment**: 22%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 11

*Humanitarian practitioners involved in CVA must be able to:*

3.1 Recognize how CVA relates to humanitarian needs and vulnerability assessments.
- 3.1.a Identify CVA-relevant information to be collected during needs assessments.
- 3.1.b Describe CVA-related vulnerabilities of beneficiaries and related protection concerns.

3.2 Describe factors affecting market performance and their relevance for CVA.
- 3.2.a Recognize the differences between CVA and Market-Based Programming and how CVA contributes to broader Market-Based Programming.

3.2.b Identify concepts in market performance relating to the viability and appropriateness of CVA.
3.2.c Describe factors that can affect market performance and how these influence response.
3.2.d List types of data needed to assess market performance.

3.3 Recognize when and how to carry out different types market analysis.
3.3.a Explain why market analysis is a critical step in making recommendations for response options.
3.3.b Describe key actions involved in market analysis.
3.3.c Identify common market analysis tools and the appropriate contexts for the use of each.

3.4 Recognize key considerations in selecting delivery mechanisms.
3.4.a Recognize key considerations for selecting delivery mechanisms.

3.5 Identify different types of risk related to CVA and risk mitigation strategies.
3.5.a Recognize different types of risk related to CVA and how they compare with risk related to in-kind assistance.
3.5.b Recognize the steps required for rating and classifying risk.
3.5.c Identify mitigation strategies for different types of risk related to CVA.

## Domain 4: Response analysis

**Percentage of assessment**: 4%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 2

*Humanitarian practitioners involved in CVA must be able to:*

4.1 Identify the steps and considerations for modality selection.
4.1.a Recognize how the findings from needs assessment, market assessment, risk analysis, and service provider assessment inform CVA feasibility analyses.
4.1.b Recognize considerations informing modality selection.
4.1.c Recognize the audit and reporting requirements of each modality.
4.1.d Describe the decision-making process for modality selection.

## Domain 5: Set-up and implementation

**Percentage of assessment**: 34%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 17

*Humanitarian practitioners involved in CVA must be able to:*

5.1 Recognize how transfer value is determined in CVA.
5.1.a Describe the meaning of transfer value and related concepts.
5.1.b In the context of Multi-Purpose Cash Grants (MPGs), recognize alternative ways for how to outline a minimum expenditure basket and how this relates to determining transfer value.
5.1.c Identify key considerations by which a transfer value is determined and justified.

5.2 Recognize organizational processes and procedures that need to incorporate CVA and their appropriate contextual applications.
5.2.a Identify the organizational processes and procedures that need to incorporate CVA.
5.2.b Identify key elements related to CVA to be included in organizational processes and procedures.

5.2.c Identify considerations for modifying CVA-related elements of organizational processes and procedures according to context.

5.3 Recognize the considerations for assessing and contracting service providers for CVA.
- 5.3.a Identify relevant types of service providers for CVA.
- 5.3.b Recognize key considerations for assessing and contracting financial service providers.
- 5.3.c Recognize the key considerations for assessing and contracting other service providers for CVA.

5.4 Recognize the steps and considerations for beneficiary targeting and registration in CVA.
- 5.4.a Identify CVA-specific targeting considerations.
- 5.4.b Identify considerations for beneficiary registration for CVA.

5.5 Recognize cash delivery, encashment, and reconciliation processes and principles.
- 5.5.a Recognize principles and considerations for different CVA delivery processes.
- 5.5.b Identify the elements requiring reconciliation and steps required in a CVA reconciliation process.
- 5.5.c Recognize considerations for accountability and staff and beneficiary safety and security, which need to be addressed throughout the delivery and reconciliation process.

5.6 Recognize principles and best practice for data protection and data sharing in CVA.
- 5.6.a Recognize principles and best practice relating to data protection in CVA.
- 5.6.b Recognize principles and best practice for data sharing in CVA.

5.7 Recognize ways to promote community participation and accountability to communities in CVA.
- 5.7.a Recognize key principles and considerations for strengthening accountability to communities and increase community participation in CVA.
- 5.7.b Identify common methods for strengthening accountability to communities and increase community participation in CVA.

5.8 Describe key CVA collaboration and coordination considerations.
- 5.8.a Describe key elements of the preparedness, assessment, analysis, design, and implementation processes which particularly benefit from collaboration and coordination.
- 5.8.b Recognize strategic, technical, and operational level CVA coordination needs.

## Domain 6: Monitoring and evaluation

**Percentage of assessment**: 10%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 5

*Humanitarian practitioners involved in CVA must be able to:*

6.1 Identify information needs when monitoring and evaluating CVA.
- 6.1.a Identify monitoring and evaluation needs for CVA in different types of contexts.
- 6.1.b Recognize considerations when selecting modalities, tools, and methodologies for monitoring CVA.
- 6.1.c Identify commonly used process and output indicators for monitoring of CVA.
- 6.1.d Identify commonly used outcome indicators for monitoring of CVA.
- 6.1.e Describe how to select indicators for CVA.
- 6.1.f Recognize how monitoring and evaluation results are used to inform decision-making.

6.2 Recognize the steps and considerations of market monitoring for CVA.
- 6.2.a Identify the purpose of market monitoring.

6.2.b Identify steps and considerations for market monitoring.
6.2.c Identify common market monitoring tools.

## Domain 7: Organizational CVA preparedness

**Percentage of assessment**: 4%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 2

*Humanitarian practitioners involved in CVA must be able to:*

7.1 Recognize the key components of analyzing and strengthening organizational CVA preparedness.
- 7.1.a Identify the main self-assessment tools for gap analysis and preparedness planning and the key steps in implementing them.
- 7.1.b Describe key actions that can strengthen CVA preparedness in different types of organizations.

## Domain 8: Global CVA policy

**Percentage of assessment**: 4%
**Total number of items for this domain:** 2

*Humanitarian practitioners involved in CVA must be able to:*

8.1 Describe global policy priorities for advancing the scale and quality of CVA.
- 8.1.a Describe global policy priorities for advancing the scale and quality of CVA.

# Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)

## Domain 1: Components, concepts, and principles of MEAL/Situating MEAL

**Percentage of assessment**: 26% (Core) / 14% (Advanced)
**Total number of items for this domain:** 13 (Core) / 7 (Advanced)

*MEAL practitioners must be able to:*

1.1 Identify the purposes, differences, and interdependencies of monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning.
- 1.1.a Identify commonly used definitions of monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning.
- 1.1.b Identify the main shared objectives of monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning.
- 1.1.c Differentiate between the main objectives of monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning.
- 1.1.d Identify the interdependencies of monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning. *[Advanced only]*

1.2 Distinguish between commonly used terms for different types of monitoring and evaluation.
- 1.2.a Differentiate evaluation and monitoring type by their timing and purpose.
- 1.2.b Differentiate monitoring and evaluation type by who conducts them. *[Advanced only]*

1.3 Identify ways in which organizations structure monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning roles and responsibilities.
- 1.3.a Distinguish the roles and responsibilities between MEAL specialists and project/program managers in MEAL design and implementation.
- 1.3.b Identify situations in which external MEAL expertise may be needed.
- 1.3.c Identify common approaches to MEAL in organizational structures, and the respective advantages/disadvantages of such alternatives. *[Advanced only]*

1.4 Employ ethical principles relevant to monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning.
- 1.4.a Identify the relevant ethical principles to MEAL and the purpose of each.
- 1.4.b Identify ethical challenges regarding objectivity in MEAL.
- 1.4.c Identify relevant ethical considerations related to data collection practices. *[Advanced only]*
- 1.4.d Identify best overall practices to minimize the risk of doing harm in MEAL activities. *[Advanced only]*
- 1.4.e Identify commonly used ethical frameworks for MEAL. *[Advanced only]*
- 1.4.f Apply the relevant ethical principles to MEAL in common types of situations and dilemmas faced by MEAL practitioners. *[Advanced only]*

1.5 Identify common criteria used in evaluations.
- 1.5.a Define the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria.
- 1.5.b Identify commonly used Value for Money (VfM) criteria. *[Advanced only]*
- 1.5.c Identify commonly used criteria for real-time evaluations. *[Advanced only]*
- 1.5.d Identify other common criteria and organizational standards used in evaluations. *[Advanced only]*

1.6 Identify challenges of, and methods for, carrying out MEAL activities in complex contexts. *[Advanced only]*
- 1.6.a Recognize the need for "good enough" MEAL programming in complex contexts. *[Advanced only]*
- 1.6.b Identify challenges relating to access and remote monitoring. *[Advanced only]*

1.6.c Identify challenges regarding data quality in complex contexts. *[Advanced only]*
1.6.d Identify challenges relating to unpredictable and rapidly changing situations. *[Advanced only]*
1.6.e Identify challenges relating to higher levels of insecurity. *[Advanced only]*
1.6.f Identify methods for dealing with complexity. *[Advanced only]*

## Domain 2: Planning, designing, and implementing monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning activities

**Percentage of assessment**: 40% (Core) / 58% (Advanced)
**Total number of items for this domain:** 20 (Core) / 29 (Advanced)

*MEAL practitioners must be able to:*

2.1 Identify the key components of a MEAL system.
- 2.1.a Identify the key components of a MEAL system.
- 2.1.b Recognize how different types of contexts require different MEAL system designs. *[Advanced only]*
- 2.1.c Recognize how a stakeholder analysis can inform the MEAL system. *[Advanced only]*

2.2 Identify the constitutive components of commonly used logical planning frameworks.
- 2.2.a Identify the main types of logical models, the terms used to refer to them, the assumptions they make, and their distinguishing features.
- 2.2.b Identify the components of logical models and key variations between models.
- 2.2.c Distinguish between indicators, targets, and outputs/outcomes/impact.

2.3 Create logical planning frameworks for projects and programs.
- 2.3.a Recognize the main benefits and limits of using logical models.
- 2.3.b Create logical planning frameworks for projects and programs following the most commonly used types of logical models. *[Advanced only]*

2.4 Identify methods for designing appropriate indicators for monitoring and evaluation of process, outputs, outcomes, and impact.
- 2.4.a Describe the different kinds of indicators used in a MEAL system.
- 2.4.b Explain the SMART indicator criteria, neutral indicators, and other common criteria for designing indicators.
- 2.4.c List factors to consider when setting indicator targets. *[Advanced only]*

2.5 Adapt standard indicators used in development and humanitarian contexts.
- 2.5.a List standard sets of common indicators and the kinds of indicators covered by them.
- 2.5.b Describe the reasons for using common indicators.
- 2.5.c Identify how common indicators should be adapted for specific contexts. *[Advanced only]*

2.6 Identify the main quantitative methods of data collection and their advantages and disadvantages in different situations.
- 2.6.a Define quantitative data.
- 2.6.b Identify the main overall advantages and disadvantages of using quantitative data.
- 2.6.c Identify the main quantitative methods for data collection and the primary advantages and disadvantages of each. *[Advanced only]*

2.7 Recognize the main qualitative methods of data collection and their advantages and disadvantages in different situations.
- 2.7.a Define qualitative data.
- 2.7.b Identify the main overall advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative data.

2.7.c Identify the main methods of qualitative data collection and the primary advantages and disadvantages of each. *[Advanced only]*

2.8 Combine quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection.

2.8.a Describe the benefits of mixing quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection.

2.8.b Identify approaches to combining quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection. *[Advanced only]*

2.8.c Select data collection methods for different contexts and situations. *[Advanced only]*

2.9 Identify appropriate sampling methodologies.

2.9.a Define sampling.

2.9.b Explain key sampling concepts.

2.9.c Identify sampling approaches for quantitative data.

2.9.d Identify sampling approaches for qualitative data.

2.9.e Describe key factors to consider when selecting a sample design. *[Advanced only]*

2.9.f Identify strengths and weaknesses of different sampling approaches. *[Advanced only]*

2.9.g Describe key factors that are used to determine sample sizes for quantitative and qualitative data collection. *[Advanced only]*

2.9.h List dimensions that may need special consideration in the choice of sampling methodology due to equity concerns. *[Advanced only]*

2.10 Identify ways in which ICT tools can assist the collection, recording, and visualization of data. *[Advanced only]*

2.10.a Identify the ways in which ICT tools can assist the collection, recording, and visualization of data. *[Advanced only]*

2.10.b Identify considerations for selecting and using ICT tools in MEAL. *[Advanced only]*

2.10.c Identify hardware considerations regarding using ICT tools in MEAL. *[Advanced only]*

2.11 Facilitate a stakeholder analysis. *[Advanced only]*

2.11.a Identify the components of a stakeholder analysis. *[Advanced only]*

2.11.b Distinguish different purposes and approaches to stakeholder analysis. *[Advanced only]*

2.11.c Identify the different types of stakeholders relevant to MEAL planning and their overall interests related to MEAL. *[Advanced only]*

2.12 Identify different mechanisms for community engagement and feedback in monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning.

2.12.a Identify the underlying purposes of community engagement and feedback.

2.12.b Identify key principles for designing systems of feedback.

2.12.c Identify the advantages and disadvantages of different community feedback mechanisms and their appropriateness in different contexts.

2.12.d Identify different methods and considerations to ensure that feedback is responded to in a timely manner. *[Advanced only]*

2.12.e Identify ways of involving communities in MEAL activities. *[Advanced only]*

2.13 Identify approaches to manage coordination challenges for MEAL activities.

2.13.a Recognize the advantages and disadvantages of joint/collaborative approaches.

2.13.b Identify common MEAL coordination structures used in different types of contexts.

2.13.c Recognize tools and guidelines for data sharing. *[Advanced only]*

2.13.d Recognize how MEAL relates to major inter-agency planning frameworks. *[Advanced only]*

2.14 Identify the human resources, financial resources, and time needed to carry out MEAL activities. *[Advanced only]*

2.14.a Identify the factors determining the human resources, financial resources, and time needed for common MEAL activities. *[Advanced only]*

2.14.b List key line items for inclusion in a MEAL budget. *[Advanced only]*

2.14.c Describe key factors for determining sufficiency of MEAL human resources. *[Advanced only]*
2.14.d Define tasks, roles, and responsibilities for decision-making and implementation related to MEAL activities. *[Advanced only]*

## Domain 3: Data management and quality

**Percentage of assessment**: 14% (Core) / 12% (Advanced)
**Total number of items for this domain:** 7 (Core) / 6 (Advanced)

*MEAL practitioners must be able to:*

3.1 Identify methods for minimizing and mitigating different types of bias.
- 3.1.a List different types of bias.
- 3.1.b Identify methods for strengthening objectivity and minimizing and mitigating different type of bias. *[Advanced only]*

3.2 Identify the main different methods for data quality assurance in data collection and data entry.
- 3.2.a Define data quality and data quality standards.
- 3.2.b Explain different kinds of data errors. *[Advanced only]*
- 3.2.c Identify best practices for minimizing data collection errors. *[Advanced only]*
- 3.2.d Identify best practices for minimizing data entry errors. *[Advanced only]*
- 3.2.e Create a system of checks and balances for data collection and entry. *[Advanced only]*
- 3.2.f Identify methods for validating data reducing threats to validity. *[Advanced only]*
- 3.2.g Explain different methods for cleaning data. *[Advanced only]*
- 3.2.h Explain the implications of data cleaning on outcomes. *[Advanced only]*

3.3 Identify the main types and components of databases and database management systems and how to interact with them.
- 3.3.a Identify key purpose(s), features, and components of a database.
- 3.3.b Define key database-related terminology.
- 3.3.c Identify the main types of databases and their advantages and disadvantages. *[Advanced only]*
- 3.3.d Identify the main database management systems used for MEAL. *[Advanced only]*
- 3.3.e Identify the main stakeholders in designing and managing a database. *[Advanced only]*

3.4 Identify principles and protocols for data storage, maintenance, sharing, and security.
- 3.4.a Identify protection risks related to data security and confidentiality and the main data protection principles for addressing them.
- 3.4.b List key sources of regulations and guidance on data protection and data privacy.
- 3.4.c List key international standards for data transparency and sharing. *[Advanced only]*

## Domain 4: Analysis, interpretation, and communication

**Percentage of assessment**: 20% (Core) / 16% (Advanced)
**Total number of items for this domain:** 10 (Core) / 8 (Advanced)

*MEAL practitioners must be able to:*

4.1 Identify the main methods and tools for quantitative analysis.
- 4.1.a Identify the main methods for quantitative data analysis.
- 4.1.b Identify the ways to avoid errors and potential pitfalls when analyzing quantitative data.

4.1.c List types of software solutions that might be used for quantitative analysis and their main advantages and disadvantages.
4.1.d Describe the characteristics of common classifications of variables and the most appropriate analytic procedures related to the variables. *[Advanced only]*
4.1.e Identify key descriptive statistics and when to use them. *[Advanced only]*
4.1.f Interpret the results of descriptive statistics. *[Advanced only]*

4.2 Identify the main methods and tools for qualitative analysis.
4.2.a Identify the main methods for qualitative data analysis.
4.2.b Identify the ways to avoid errors and potential pitfalls when analyzing qualitative data. *[Advanced only]*

4.3 Interpret quantitative and qualitative data.
4.3.a Identify methods for triangulating between quantitative and qualitative data.
4.3.b Interpret quantitative and qualitative data collected.
4.3.c Identify methods for involving stakeholders in the interpretation and analysis of results. *[Advanced only]*

4.4 Communicate findings and information to different stakeholders.
4.4.a Describe key principles for communicating.
4.4.b Recognize how a stakeholder analysis can indicate information needs. *[Advanced only]*
4.4.c Identify the most appropriate ways to present information for different stakeholders. *[Advanced only]*

4.5 Identify ways that MEAL results are translated into organizational learning.
4.5.a List the ways in which MEAL contributes to organizational learning.
4.5.b Identify the organizational channels/outputs which MEAL can feed into.
4.5.c Describe knowledge management, its purpose, and how it links with organizational learning and decision-making. *[Advanced only]*

# Humanitarian Needs Assessment (HNA)

## Domain 1: Understanding humanitarian needs assessments

**Percentage of assessment**: 40% (Core) / 4% (Advanced)
**Total number of items for this domain:** 20 (Core) / 2 (Advanced)

*Humanitarian practitioners conducting needs assessments must be able to:*

1.1 Recognize the definitions, objectives, and components of humanitarian needs assessments.
- 1.1.a Recognize the main ways of defining humanitarian needs assessments.
- 1.1.b Formulate the aim of a needs assessment (the research objective).
- 1.1.c Recognize common components in different approaches to humanitarian needs assessments.
- 1.1.d Recognize the components of the "assessment cycle."

1.2 Recognize types of needs assessments and their appropriate uses.
- 1.2.a Recognize the types of needs assessments by timeframe, scope, and level of coordination.
- 1.2.b Recognize the main types of joint needs assessments.
- 1.2.c Recognize the main differences in approach between organizational assessments and cluster/multi-cluster/inter-agency assessments.

1.3 Recognize global standards that guide and inform humanitarian needs assessments.
- 1.3.a Recognize global standards that guide and inform humanitarian needs assessments.

1.4 Recognize the ways that core humanitarian principles (humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence) inform needs assessments.
- 1.4.a Recognize the overall role of humanitarian principles in guiding humanitarian needs assessments.
- 1.4.b Recognize common types of dilemmas related to humanitarian principles faced in humanitarian needs assessments.
- 1.4.c Identify other common principles and ethical considerations in humanitarian needs assessments.

1.5 Recognize the relationship between timeliness and accuracy in needs assessment and how this impacts decision-making.
- 1.5.a Recognize the relative need for accuracy in information at different stages of an emergency.
- 1.5.b Recognize differences in approach for needs assessments for sudden onset, slow onset, and protracted crises.
- 1.5.c Recognize the implications of conducting a "good enough" assessment.

1.6 Recognize ways in which preparedness can strengthen needs assessment processes.
- 1.6.a Identify information management tools that can strengthen preparedness for needs assessments.
- 1.6.b Identify other measures that can strengthen preparedness for needs assessments.

1.7 Identify common criticisms of humanitarian needs assessment and how these criticisms can be addressed.
- 1.7.a Identify the main criticism related to lack of coordination, bias, relevance, unsound methodologies, and accountability and ethics.
- 1.7.b Identify strategies to address the criticism related to lack of coordination, bias, relevance, unsound methodologies and accountability and ethics.

## Domain 2: Planning needs assessments

**Percentage of assessment**: 32% (Core) / 18% (Advanced)
**Total number of items for this domain:** 16 (Core) / 9 (Advanced)

*Humanitarian practitioners conducting needs assessments must be able to:*

2.1 Recognize which data is essential or non-essential for a specific research objective.
- 2.1.a Recognize which data is essential or non-essential for a specific research objective.
- 2.1.b Estimate time and resources required to collect and analyze different kinds of data. *[Advanced only]*

2.2 Identify the roles of stakeholders involved in needs assessments.
- 2.2.a Recognize the roles of the main types of stakeholders relevant to needs assessments.
- 2.2.b Recognize stakeholder identification tools. *[Advanced only]*

2.3 Identify the main types of secondary data relevant to a needs assessment and the support services for secondary data review.
- 2.3.a Identify common categories and sources of secondary data.
- 2.3.b Identify support services for secondary data review. *[Advanced only]*
- 2.3.c Recognize factors that affect the trustworthiness of secondary data. *[Advanced only]*

2.4 Recognize the uses for historical data, trends, and baselines in humanitarian needs assessments.
- 2.4.a Recognize the uses for historical data, trends, and baselines in humanitarian needs assessments.

2.5 Recognize techniques for primary data collection and their purposes, strengths, and limitations.
- 2.5.a Identify the main techniques for primary data collection in humanitarian needs assessments.
- 2.5.b Recognize the purposes, strengths, and limitations of different techniques. *[Advanced only]*
- 2.5.c Recognize the main challenges in reconciliation of data from different techniques. *[Advanced only]*

2.6 Identify the financial and human resources necessary for data collection, analysis, and dissemination. *[Advanced only]*
- 2.6.a Identify the financial and human resources required for primary data collection, secondary data collection, analysis, dissemination, and community engagement and feedback. *[Advanced only]*

2.7 Recognize common categories for disaggregating data and the implications for data collection and analysis.
- 2.7.a Recognize common dimensions for disaggregating data and how they can be operationalized.
- 2.7.b Recognize the impact of the disaggregation approach on both data collection/analysis timing and required resources.

2.8 Identify methods to involve stakeholders in the design, data collection, and analysis.
- 2.8.a Identify methods to involve stakeholders in assessment design, data collection, and analysis.

## Domain 3: Data collection for needs assessments

**Percentage of assessment**: 22% (Core) / 12% (Advanced)
**Total number of items for this domain:** 11 (Core) / 6 (Advanced)

*Humanitarian practitioners conducting needs assessments must be able to:*

3.1 Identify relevant ICT tools for humanitarian needs assessments and their implications for data collection.
- 3.1.a Identify commonly used data collection platforms and the critical factors related to platform choice.

3.2 Recognize appropriate sampling techniques for humanitarian needs assessments.
- 3.2.a Identify the different types of sampling used in humanitarian needs assessments and their implications for data collection and analysis.
- 3.2.b Recognize key considerations for mapping out and selecting key informants.

3.3 Recognize implementation considerations when conducting direct observation data collection.
- 3.3.a Recognize which data needs are suitably addressed by direct observation.
- 3.3.b Recognize the different forms of direct observation for data collection and the main considerations for carrying them out.
- 3.3.c Recognize considerations when triangulating direct observation results. *[Advanced only]*

3.4 Recognize the main considerations for carrying out interviews.
- 3.4.a Recognize which data needs are suitably addressed by different types of interviews.
- 3.4.b Identify different interview types and their implications.
- 3.4.c Recognize the risk of bias in interviews and methods for minimizing this risk. *[Advanced only]*
- 3.4.d Recognize the risk of gate-keepers and methods to avoid them. *[Advanced only]*
- 3.4.e Recognize considerations in triangulating interview results. *[Advanced only]*
- 3.4.f Recognize best practice for seeking consent and respecting confidentiality in interviews. *[Advanced only]*
- 3.4.g Recognize the appropriateness of questions for specific research objectives. *[Advanced only]*

3.5 Recognize the different forms of participatory assessment methods and the associated considerations.
- 3.5.a Recognize which data needs are suitably addressed by participatory assessment methods.
- 3.5.b Identify different types of participatory assessment methods.
- 3.5.c Identify tools to assist with participatory assessments. *[Advanced only]*
- 3.5.d Recognize considerations in triangulating participatory assessment results. *[Advanced only]*

3.6 Recognize methods for compiling and organizing data.
- 3.6.a Recognize best practice for compiling and organizing data.
- 3.6.b Identify methods for consolidating datasets using different indicators and levels. *[Advanced only]*

## Domain 4: Analytical frameworks and assessment reporting

**Percentage of assessment**: 6% (Core) / 14% (Advanced)
**Total number of items for this domain:** 3 (Core) / 7 (Advanced)

*Humanitarian practitioners conducting needs assessments must be able to:*

4.1 Summarize data and compare subgroups using descriptive analytics. *[Advanced only]*
- 4.1.a Identify key descriptive statistics and when to use them. *[Advanced only]*
- 4.1.b Develop an analysis plan for quantitative data. *[Advanced only]*

4.2 Recognize methods for interpreting and analyzing results. *[Advanced only]*
- 4.2.a Recognize how explanatory, interpretive, and anticipatory analysis can be used to interpret assessment results. *[Advanced only]*
- 4.2.b Recognize methods for involving other stakeholders in the analysis and interpretation of results. *[Advanced only]*

4.3 Recognize methods for validating assessment results with those affected by crisis. *[Advanced only]*
- 4.3.a Recognize methods for validating assessment results with those affected by crisis. *[Advanced only]*

4.4 Describe an analysis in an easily understandable manner. *[Advanced only]*
- 4.4.a Recognize different audience needs and modify presentation and analysis accordingly to maximize effective communication. *[Advanced only]*
- 4.4.b Recognize appropriate ways for simplifying descriptions of methodology and limitations for different audiences and different types of assessments. *[Advanced only]*

4.5 Recognize appropriate channels for dissemination of results.
- 4.5.a Identify common opportunities for dissemination.
- 4.5.b Recognize how results can feed into online data sharing platforms.

## Domain 5: Sector-specific needs assessments *[Advanced only]*

**Percentage of assessment**: 0% (Core) / 40% (Advanced)
**Total number of items for this domain:** 0 (Core) / 20 (Advanced)

*Humanitarian practitioners involved in CVA must be able to:*

5.1 Recognize key terminology, indicators, thresholds and methodologies for assessing needs related to nutrition. *[Advanced only]*
- 5.1.a Identify key terminology and concepts related to nutrition needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*
- 5.1.b Identify key sources of information relevant to indicators, thresholds, and methodologies for assessing needs related to nutrition. *[Advanced only]*
- 5.1.c Identify key sources of expertise for nutrition needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*
- 5.1.d Recognize common challenges related to nutrition needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*

5.2 Recognize key terminology, indicators, thresholds and methodologies for assessing needs related to food security. *[Advanced only]*
- 5.2.a Identify key terminology and concepts related to food security needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*
- 5.2.b Identify key sources of information relevant to indicators, thresholds, and methodologies for assessing needs related to food security. *[Advanced only]*
- 5.2.c Identify key sources of expertise for food security needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*
- 5.2.d Recognize common challenges related to food security needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*

5.3 Recognize key terminology, indicators, thresholds and methodologies for assessing needs related to health. *[Advanced only]*
- 5.3.a Identify key terminology and concepts related to health assessments. *[Advanced only]*
- 5.3.b Identify key sources of information relevant to indicators, thresholds, and methodologies for assessing needs related to health. *[Advanced only]*
- 5.3.c Identify key sources of expertise for health needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*
- 5.3.d Recognize common challenges related to health needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*

5.4 Recognize key terminology, indicators, thresholds and methodologies for assessing needs related to water, sanitation, and hygiene. *[Advanced only]*

5.4.a Identify key terminology and concepts related to WASH assessments. *[Advanced only]*
5.4.b Identify key sources of information relevant to indicators, thresholds, and methodologies for assessing needs related to WASH. *[Advanced only]*
5.4.c Identify key sources of expertise for WASH needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*
5.4.d Recognize common challenges related to WASH needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*

5.5 Recognize key terminology, indicators, thresholds and methodologies for assessing needs related to shelter. *[Advanced only]*
5.5.a Identify key terminology and concepts related to shelter assessments. *[Advanced only]*
5.5.b Identify key sources of information relevant to indicators, thresholds, and methodologies for assessing needs related to shelter. *[Advanced only]*
5.5.c Identify key sources of expertise for shelter needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*
5.5.d Recognize common challenges related to shelter needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*

5.6 Recognize key terminology, indicators, thresholds and methodologies for assessing needs related to education. *[Advanced only]*
5.6.a Identify key terminology and concepts related to education. *[Advanced only]*
5.6.b Identify key sources of information relevant to indicators, thresholds, and methodologies for assessing needs related to education. *[Advanced only]*
5.6.c Identify key sources of expertise for education needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*
5.6.d Recognize common challenges related to education needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*

5.7 Recognize key terminology, indicators, thresholds and methodologies for assessing needs related to protection. *[Advanced only]*
5.7.a Identify key terminology and concepts related to protection. *[Advanced only]*
5.7.b Identify key sources of information relevant to indicators, thresholds, and methodologies for assessing needs related to protection. *[Advanced only]*
5.7.c Identify key sources of expertise for protection needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*
5.7.d Recognize common challenges related to protection needs assessments. *[Advanced only]*