

Technical Paper Handbook

Certified Cost Professional (CCP)



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The Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook is provided to assist candidates in preparing and submitting the technical paper requirement for the Certified Cost Professional (CCP) Certification exam.

The handbook was compiled by the AACE International Certification Headquarters Staff solely as a guide and should not be used as a guarantee for passing the technical paper.

What is a Certified Cost Professional?

A CCP is an experienced practitioner with advanced knowledge and technical expertise to apply and communicate the broad principles and best practices of Total Cost Management (TCM) in the planning, execution and management of any organizational project or program.

The Certified Cost Professional (CCP) certification was established in 1976 and is independently accredited by the Council of Engineering & Scientific Specialty Boards (CESB) since 2000.

The Purpose of the CCP Technical Paper

The purpose of the CCP technical paper is to evaluate the candidate's ability to communicate ideas, statements and recommendations, or solutions in a logical and reasonable manner. The technical paper is used as a gauge to measure the candidate's professional knowledge and how well they can articulate it.

It is not intended that the candidate write a thesis-quality paper or a paper describing some unique and innovative approach to a work-related situation; however, the technical paper should be well-organized, coherent, and exemplify professional-level knowledge.

The technical paper is considered part of the CCP exam. Both the paper and the multiple-choice portions of the exam must be passed in order to receive certification.

The Topic of the CCP Technical Paper

The topic of the technical paper must pertain to some aspect of [Cost Engineering/Total Cost Management](#). Topics can include, but are not limited to, quantity surveying, planning and scheduling, estimating, cost controls, project management, claims consulting, engineering, etc. The specific topic is at the discretion of the candidate. Certification Headquarters Staff and Certification Board Members do not provide topic suggestions or dictate or approve specific topic categories.

A common thought is that the technical paper must represent a complex project, innovation, or research. However, history has shown that candidates tend to write a successful technical paper when selecting a topic in which they have a great deal of expertise or experience. This can range from successful use of a software program for document control to designing a life saving device.

While AACE does not offer examples of technical papers written specifically for the CCP exam, there is a vast collection of technical papers that have been either published or presented, available to review in the [Virtual Library](#). Candidates must be a member to gain access to the library.

Tips on Writing the Technical Paper

As mentioned in the previous section, most candidates write successful technical papers when they write about a topic in which they have a great deal of expertise or experience.

It is helpful for candidates to ask themselves: “Do I have a specialty?” “Have I worked on a project?” “Have I given a presentation?”

It is always important to pick a target audience and write the paper to consistently meet that experience level. For example, if writing to those who are experts in the field, do not regurgitate basic concepts; even those who are new to the industry may already know the basics.

Technical paper graders must remain unbiased when evaluating technical papers. Therefore, candidates should not use their name or any other identifying information on the technical paper (this includes acknowledgements). **The only identifying item to be used is the candidate’s AACE ID number.**

The purpose of the abstract is to “draw in” the reader – make the audience want to read the paper. Abstracts shouldn’t be too lengthy, but should be interesting. Keep in mind, an abstract is different from the introduction or problem statement. If a candidate were to decide to submit the paper for publication at a later time, the abstract is usually what is submitted. Make it good!

While it is not mandatory to include figures, tables, or equations in the technical paper, if any of those can enhance the reader's understanding of the subject, it is recommended to include them. Just make sure to cite the source if borrowing from someplace or someone else.

When composing the body of the paper, candidates should think about what point they are trying to make. Start by asking: "What am I trying to tell people, or make them understand?" or "What makes my work different from everyone else's?" or "What is the resolution?"

Sometimes it helps to start with the resolution or conclusion to focus on what was learned.

There should always be a conclusion to wrap up the paper – anything that was promised in the abstract and identified in the introduction or problem statement.

One of the most important things to remember is this: Work **MUST** be cited properly with references and a bibliography. References are any sources where specific words, phrases, or sentences were used. The bibliography contains any material used to prepare the paper, whether cited or not, including background reading material. If there is confidential or proprietary information included in the paper, permission must be received from the company prior to submission. Candidates are required to review and adhere to the statements of the [Technical Paper Affidavit](#) before completing registration.

Candidates are evaluated on their ability to communicate. Therefore, using complete sentences, proper grammar, and spelling is of great importance. It is imperative to make sure sentences, paragraphs, and ideas transition well. This helps convey the idea in a clear and concise manner and is essential for good communication. Not only is it difficult to understand a paper if there are grammatical errors, misspellings, and poor sentence structure, it is unprofessional. When finished writing the paper, asking a colleague to proofread has proven helpful. This is especially helpful for candidates where English isn't their native language.

Technical papers are valid for three years from the date written. If candidates use a previously presented or published paper, it must have been presented or published within three years of exam registration. In cases where a candidate passes the paper but fails the exam, the passed paper is still valid for three years from the date written.

For more hints about writing a technical paper, click here to read [How to Write a Technical Paper](#) by James D. Whiteside, II PE.

The Technical Paper and Plagiarism

Having a strong anti-plagiarism policy is important for professional certification organizations and congruent with credentialing industry best practices. AACE has contracted with CheckForPlagiarism.net to provide plagiarism check services for all technical papers of the association.

Becoming a Certified Cost Professional (CCP) carries a high degree of distinction and respect in the industry. Therefore, it demands all candidates to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the title. Plagiarism has no place in the AACE International Certification Program, and will not be tolerated.

Plagiarism is considered unethical behavior and there are serious penalties applied if found in a technical paper. Click [here](#) to read the full Plagiarism Policy and penalties.

Candidates may opt to check their technical paper before submitting it. Click [here](#) to use our recommended plagiarism software for a minimal fee.



CCP Technical Paper Template

The CCP Technical Paper Template should be used as a formatting, layout, and pagination guide in preparing an original 2,500-minimum word paper. While this template may be useful in ensuring the technical paper will incorporate all structural areas to be evaluated by technical paper graders, candidates are responsible for demonstrating professional content, clarity, and relevance through topic selection and writing skills, which are also evaluated by the graders.

The suggested technical paper outline includes the following:

- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables
- List of Formulas
- List of Equations
- Abstract
- Introduction
- The Problem or Introduction Statement
- Paper content
- Conclusion
- Bibliography and/or References

The technical paper does not necessarily have to have formulas, equations, or tables; however, if it can enhance the presentation of an idea to the audience, including one or all of them is beneficial. If inserting a table, formula, graph, etc.

that was created by someone else, it will need to be properly cited and referenced.

To review and download the template, click [here](#).

Please note: The minimum word count for the technical paper specifically written for the Certified Cost Professional (CCP) exam is 2,500. If submitting a presentation, publication, thesis or dissertation used within the last three years, it must not exceed 5,000 words and must be reformatted to the specifications of the AACE certification program.

Submitting the Technical Paper

Once received, AACE has up to 45 days to process and submit a technical paper for evaluation. Grading cycles are on or around the 15th of each month; candidates should plan registration accordingly and allow plenty of processing time for headquarters.

Once papers have been graded, candidates will receive clearance to sit for the exam via email, including instructions on how to schedule the exam. Candidates have up to six months to schedule and take the exam from the original clearance date.

Please note: Candidates will have up to three attempts (two at a reduced fee) to take the exam within the six-month registration period. We recommend scheduling the exam as soon as possible after receiving clearance in order to take advantage of the reduced-fee resits, if necessary.

Technical Paper Pass/Fail Scenarios

A successful candidate has to pass the technical paper as well as the exam itself to receive the CCP designation. Since the result of the technical paper is not provided until the result of the multiple-choice portion of the exam is received, there are a number of scenarios that can happen.

1. Pass the technical paper and pass the exam: Candidate passes and receives the CCP designation.
2. Pass the technical paper and fail the exam: Take the exam again. The passing technical paper will be valid for three years from the date written.
3. Fail the technical paper and pass the exam: Candidate is provided grader feedback on ways to improve the paper and is given 30 days in which to revise and resubmit the paper.
 - a. If the candidate passes the revision, s/he will receive the CCP designation.
 - b. If the candidate fails the revision, s/he will be required to take the exam again as well as submit a revised or new technical paper. Note: If this happens close to the end of the six-month registration period, it may be possible there will not be enough time left to have the paper evaluated, to be cleared for the exam, and to schedule and sit for the exam. In this circumstance, any payment made for the resit fee will be applied to a new registration period.
4. Fail the technical paper and fail the exam: Candidate fails and must take the exam again and submit a revised/new technical paper. Note: If this happens close to the end of the six-month registration period, it may be possible

there will not be enough time left to have the paper evaluated, to be cleared for the exam, and to schedule and sit for the exam. In this circumstance, any payment made for the resit fee will be applied to a new registration period.

FAQs

Question

Answer

How long does my paper have to be?

Your paper must be at least 2,500 words and shouldn't be more than 5,000.

When is the best time to register and submit my technical paper?

Our grading cycles run on or around the 15th of each month. If you register a week or so prior to the 15th, your paper should be able to be included in the following grading cycle.

May I use my thesis or dissertation for my submission?

You may, but the paper must not be more than 5,000 words and must be formatted to fit the [Technical Paper Template](#).

What should the topic of my paper be?

Your topic can be on anything as long as it pertains to Cost Engineering/Total Cost Management. Still need help? Members can view hundreds of papers that have been published or presented in AACE's publications or meetings in the [Virtual Library](#).

Why does the CCP have a technical paper requirement?

All professional-level and expertise-level certifications have a written component of the exam that tests the candidate's ability to communicate professional knowledge. The CCP's written component is in the form of the technical paper.

How long is my paper valid?

Your technical paper must be current and written within the last three years. If your paper passed but you are retaking the exam, your passed paper is valid for three years from the date written.

Resources

[*How to Write a Technical Paper*](#) – James Whiteside, AACE International

[*How to Present a Technical Paper*](#) – James Whiteside, AACE International

[The Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) (for non-Purdue students)

[How to Navigate the New OWL](#)

[Professional, Technical Writing](#)

[Reports, Proposals, and Technical Papers](#)

[Writing Report Abstracts](#)

[Research & Citation Resources](#)

[*How to Write a Technical Paper*](#) – Georgios Varsamopoulos, Department of
Computer Science and Engineering, Arizona State University