



## **Security Awareness and Culture Professional (SACP) Certification Handbook**

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## Table of Contents

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<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>ABOUT SACP CERTIFICATION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
SACP Certification.....	3
<b>NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>GOVERNANCE</b> .....	<b>3</b>
The SACP Certification Council.....	3
<b>DEFINITIONS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>SACP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>REGISTERING FOR THE EXAMINATION</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Application Process .....	5
SACP Certification Fees .....	5
Scheduling the Examination with Pearson VUE.....	5
Availability of CBT sites .....	5
Appointment Changes.....	6
Missed Appointments and Forfeitures (No Show Policy) .....	6
<b>PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Examination Content.....	6
Suggested Study Materials.....	8
<b>TAKING THE EXAMINATION</b> .....	<b>10</b>
At the Pearson VUE Test Center .....	10
During the Examination.....	10
<b>AFTER THE EXAMINATION</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Examination Results .....	11
Information about Passing Scores and Scaling .....	12
Establishing the Passing Score .....	12
Indeterminate Scores .....	13
Retests.....	13
<b>MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Annual Maintenance and Recertification Requirements.....	13
<b>SACP CODE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY</b> .....	<b>14</b>
The Code.....	15
Enforcing the SACP Code of Professional Responsibility .....	15
<b>ADDITIONAL POLICIES</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Special Accommodations .....	15

## INTRODUCTION

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H Layer Credentialing was established with the mission of advancing the occupational roles, functions and professional identity of security awareness professionals through industry-recognized credentials of value. H Layer Credentialing developed the Security Awareness and Culture Professional (SACP)<sup>™</sup> Certification to recognize professionals who work in the development, management and maintenance of Security Awareness Programs.

## ABOUT SACP CERTIFICATION

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### SACP Certification

The Certified SACP is an educator and communicator who applies human centric methods to create communication, processes, practices, and strategies to improve the security knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors of the audience. This leader advocates for best practices, monitors compliance with mandated awareness training objectives, and reports program effectiveness to stakeholders. The professional communicates ongoing program efficacy to stakeholders by identifying a content and testing strategy and communications plan while collecting and monitoring relevant metrics. The security awareness and culture professional supports the mission and goals of the organization to keep it secure and reduce risk by building and sustaining a high functioning security culture.

## NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

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H Layer Credentialing does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, gender, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, sexual orientation or marital status.

## GOVERNANCE

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### The SACP Certification Council

The SACP Certification Program is governed by the SACP Certification Council. The SACP Certification Council was established to oversee the SACP certification program. The SACP Certification Council operates independently to establish and uphold high standards of competence for certified SACPs and to evaluate certified SACPs against those standards.

The SACP Certification Council:

- Establishes and implements policies and procedures that guide certification decisions, including the granting, maintaining, recertifying, expanding, and reducing the scope of the certification, and suspending or withdrawing the certification.
- Reviews potential infractions of the *SACP Code of Professional Responsibility* and imposes sanctions on certified SACPs found to be in violation.
- Oversees the development and maintenance of a valid, reliable, and legally defensible assessment.

- Assures the trust of the public is served through the certification program.
- Acquires, develops, disseminates, and preserves data and other valuable information that informs the SACP Certification Program.
- Represents the interests of stakeholders affected by the SACP Certification.

## DEFINITIONS

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**Applicant:** An individual who has submitted the application for SACP Certification

**Candidate:** An individual who has submitted an application and is approved by H Layer Credentialing to schedule their examination.

**Certified Individual:** An individual who has earned and maintained the SACP Certification and is authorized to use the (SACP)<sup>®</sup> mark.

## SACP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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There are no eligibility requirements for the SACP certification. However, H Layer Credentialing recommends that candidates interested in obtaining SACP certification have the following experiences in security awareness and culture:

- establishing or administering security awareness or education programs;
- possessing an understanding of how to define program success criteria to organizational management;
- identifying and administering metrics and providing narrative evidence to report the outcomes; and,
- understanding how success criteria maps to the overall corporate risk management goals and outcomes.

Candidates with backgrounds in cybersecurity, behavioral science, marketing, communications, general IT, legal, HR, training, or organizational development can increase the likelihood of successfully passing the SACP certification examination by comparing their experiences to the [SACP certification content outline \(Table 1, page 6\)](#) to determine study areas.

H Layer Credentialing recommends candidates have at least one year of experience establishing or administering a security awareness and culture program including facilitating security awareness and education; communicating with persons to create a culture of awareness; and evaluating and validating security awareness program alignment with an organization's culture and risk tolerances.

## REGISTERING FOR THE EXAMINATION

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### Application Process

To apply for SACP certification, an applicant must complete an application, pay the appropriate fees and schedule their examination. The application for SACP certification is available on H Layer Credentialing's web site at [www.TheHLayer.com](http://www.TheHLayer.com).

All candidates will be notified via email once their application for the SACP certification program has been processed and approved. The email will contain specific information regarding scheduling the SACP examination at a Pearson VUE Computer-Based Testing (CBT) center.

### SACP Certification Fees

The fee for applying the SACP Certification is \$369. This fee includes both the application fee (\$100) and the examination fee (\$269). Payment may be made by credit card when applying for SACP certification. Other fees are as follows:

- Reapplication Fee (if not examined within 6 months) \$369
- Retest Fee \$269
- Annual Renewal Fee \$65

Application fees are not refundable.

### Scheduling the Examination with Pearson VUE

All candidates will receive an *Authorization to Test* email from H Layer Credentialing authorizing the candidate to schedule the SACP examination at a Pearson VUE CBT center within 3 to 5 business days of submitting their application. Candidates should contact H Layer Credentialing if they do not receive their *Authorization to Test* email within 7 days at [certification@theHLayer.com](mailto:certification@theHLayer.com).

Candidates may schedule their examination with Pearson VUE either online or by telephone however it is recommended to schedule the examination online. *Authorizations to Test* are valid for a period of six (6) months. Candidates who do not test within six (6) months will be required to reapply for the examination.

### Availability of CBT sites

Pearson VUE test center appointments are available on a first-come, first-served basis. To increase the likelihood of candidates receiving their first choice of date, time, and location, it is recommended that candidates schedule at least 45 days before their desired examination date.

A candidate may schedule their examination for any available appointment time within their authorization period. If the examination is not scheduled within the authorization time period,

the *Authorization to Test* will expire and the candidate will be required to reapply. Neither H Layer Credentialing nor Pearson VUE will be responsible if the candidate fails to schedule an appointment before authorization expires.

A current listing of Pearson VUE test center locations may be viewed by visiting the Pearson VUE website: [www.pearsonvue.com/SACP](http://www.pearsonvue.com/SACP) under “Find a test center.”

Pearson VUE Schedule Information:

- To schedule online go to: [www.pearsonvue.com/SACP](http://www.pearsonvue.com/SACP)
- To call phone: 888-876-5064

### Appointment Changes

Candidates may make changes to their Pearson VUE Test Center appointment by going online to the Pearson VUE website, or calling Pearson VUE 24 hours prior to their scheduled appointment. Candidates may reschedule when they contact Pearson VUE or later. Candidates may not reschedule their appointment within 24 hours of their scheduled appointment time.

### Missed Appointments and Forfeitures (No Show Policy)

Candidates who miss their appointments will forfeit their examination fee and will be required to complete a [retest application](#) and pay the examination fee of \$269 to schedule another CBT appointment at Pearson VUE. Candidates who forfeit the examination fee and reschedule a new appointment will not need to wait 30 days to reschedule. They may schedule immediately.

## PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION

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### Examination Content

A Job/Task Analysis was conducted to determine the content of the SACP examination. The SACP examination consists of 7 Sections and 120 questions relating to the development, implementation, and monitoring of a security awareness program. Following is the breakdown of the content of the examination and the number of test questions appearing on the examination for each content area:

*Table 1- Examination Content Outline*

Content	# on Exam
<b>Define Organization’s Security Awareness Strategy</b>	<b>13</b>
Review Organization's Mission and Goals	
Review Risk Assessment Reports	
Review Risk Management Reports	
Document and Validate Compliance Objectives	
Review Previous Threats and Incidents	
Identify and Communicate with Stakeholders	

Content	# on Exam
Assess Threat Landscape	
Establish Business Needs and Benefits	
Build Business Case for Security Awareness Strategy	
Obtain Authorizations for Program (e.g., Legal, HR, Executives)	
Establish the Security Awareness Program Charter	
Evaluate Organizational Security Culture to Identify Areas of Alignment or Possible Disconnect	
Participate in Developing Policies Pertaining to Non-compliance	
<b>Provide Security Awareness Training and Education to End Users</b>	<b>22</b>
Establish Target Audience	
Determine Key Learning Objectives	
Determine the Delivery Method	
Define Content Based on Audience (e.g., Social, Environmental, Regional)	
Determine Schedule and Cadence for Training	
Create and Curate Content	
Conduct Training	
Track Training Compliance Against Target(s)	
Measure Learning Outcomes	
Implement Improvements Based on Feedback and Previous Run Cycles	
<b>Reinforce Security Awareness with Communications</b>	<b>22</b>
Identify Key Content/Messaging	
Adapt Communication to Target Audience	
Align Communication with Brand/Company Culture	
Determine Modality and Channel of Communication	
Coordinate Scheduling of Communications with Stakeholders	
Research and Deliver Applicable Security Awareness Subject Matter (e.g., incidents, solutions, preventions, statistics, reinforcement)	
Identify Potential Cultural/Organizational Misalignment	
Draft Communications for Stakeholder Review and Approval	
Finalize Communications	
Distribute Communications	
Validate and Report Efficacy (e.g., Reach, Engagement, Behavior Change, Culture)	
<b>Assess User Behavior</b>	<b>22</b>
Define Learning Objectives	
Determine and Validate Baseline Level of Awareness	
Select Appropriate Behavioral Interventions Based on Contextualized Factors (e.g., Environmental, Social Factors)	
Select and Implement the Most Effective Testing Tool(s) for the Environment	
Determine Schedule and Cadence for Testing	

Content		# on Exam
	Design an Assessment to Measure User Behavior	
	Run the Assessment(s)	
	Provide Feedback to Users	
	Report Results to Stakeholders (e.g., track, disclose)	
	Monitor Behavioral Risks (e.g., secure shredding, password practices, badging, reporting)	
<b>Define and Validate Awareness Metrics</b>		<b>12</b>
	Define Participation Metrics	
	Compare Pre and Post Behaviors	
	Align Awareness Methods with Risks	
	Define Compliance Metrics (e.g., policies, procedures, laws/regulations, contractual)	
	Manage Program Budget (e.g., budgeting, program, administration)	
<b>Monitor Effectiveness of Security Awareness Program</b>		<b>12</b>
	Collect Results of Awareness Initiatives (e.g., training completion, simulation results)	
	Compare Awareness Initiative Results with Goals	
	Identify Gaps Between Results and Program Goals	
	Identify and Implement Activities for Continuous Improvement to Close Gaps	
	Evaluate Returns on Investment (e.g., Financial, Behavioral, Time, Level of Effort, Risk Reduction)	
<b>Report Status of Compliance and Outcomes</b>		<b>7</b>
	Identify Impact of and Remediation for Non-compliance	
	Identify Categories of Reporting (e.g., individual, department, entity)	
	Identify and Report Data Needs by Stakeholder (e.g., customization of reports, formatting)	
	Report User Activity to Stakeholders (e.g., upper management, auditors)	
	Provide Evidence to Support Compliance Metrics (e.g., policies, procedures, laws/regulations, contractual)	
<b>Total Number of Scored Items on Test</b>		<b>110</b>

Of the 120 questions on the examination ten (10) questions are experimental and candidates will not be scored on those questions. Candidates will be scored on 110 questions.

### Suggested Study Materials

As a vendor-neutral certification body, H Layer Credentialing does not require, sponsor, or endorse any specific training courses or study materials nor does it provide education or training. H Layer Credentialing is also not involved in assisting candidates to prepare for examinations.



In addition to reviewing the examination content outline presented in Table 1 candidates may find the list of references below helpful when studying for the SACP examination. These references were used in the development of the examination test questions. H Layer Credentialing does not endorse any specific books or references nor is this a comprehensive list.

- Carpenter, Perry (2020). *Transformational Security Awareness*. Indianapolis, IN: John Wiley and Sons
- Ciampa, Mark (2016). *Security Awareness: Applying Practical Security in Your World*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning
- Dimov, Daniel (2015, December 10). *Budgeting for Security Awareness: Who – What – When – Where – Why – How much*.  
<https://resources.infosecinstitute.com/topic/budgeting-for-security-awareness-who-what-when-where-why-how-much/>
- Gardner, B. & Thomas, V. (2014). *Building an Information Security Awareness Program*. Waltham, MA: Syngress
- Grimes, Roger (2019). *A Data-Driven Computer Defense: A way to improve any computer defense*. Independently published
- Hadnagy, C. & Schulman, S. (2021). *Human Hacking: Win Friends, Influence People, and Leave Them Better Off for Having Met You*. New York, NY: Harper
- Hayden, Lance (2016). *People-Centric Security: Transforming Your Enterprise Security Culture*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill
- Herold, Rebecca (2011). *Managing an Information Security and Privacy Awareness and Training Program*. Boca Raton, FL: Taylor and Francis
- KnowBe4, (2021, February 12). *Comprehensive Anti-Phishing Guide (e-book)*,  
<https://info.knowbe4.com/comprehensive-anti-phishing-guide>
- Roer, Kia (2015). *Build a Security Culture*. Cambridge, UK: IT Governance Publishing
- Schober S. & Schober C. (2019). *Cybersecurity Is Everybody's Business: Solve the Security Puzzle for Your Small Business and Home*. Metuchan: Scottschober.com Publishing
- Schroeder, Jordan (2017). *Advanced Persistent Training: Take your security awareness program to the next level*. Apress

## TAKING THE EXAMINATION

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### At the Pearson VUE Test Center

Candidates should plan to arrive at the Pearson VUE Test Center early and dress comfortably. Candidates will be required to provide two forms of valid identification, one primary with a photo and signature and one secondary with a signature. The following table provides information on acceptable primary and secondary forms of identification.

*Table 2 - Primary and Secondary Identification*

Primary	<p>The following IDs meet the primary identification requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government-issued driver’s license</li> <li>• State/national identification card</li> <li>• Passport*</li> <li>• Military ID*</li> <li>• Alien registration card (green card, permanent resident visa)</li> <li>• U.S. Passport card</li> <li>• U.S. Dept. of State Driver’s License</li> </ul> <p>* The primary ID must contain a photo and signature unless the signature is embedded in the identification. When this occurs, candidate must present another form of signature identification from the primary or secondary list.</p>
Secondary	<p>The following IDs meet the secondary identification requirements:</p> <p>Any ID on the primary list</p> <p>Social Security card</p> <p>Credit/bank ATM card (signature required).</p>

### During the Examination

At the Pearson VUE Test Center, candidates will not be allowed to bring personal items into the testing room. Consideration is made for comfort items (such as a pillow, crutches, and tissues), which the testing center administrator will inspect. A designated area will be provided in the testing environment for all personal belongings, but neither Pearson VUE nor H Layer Credentialing will be responsible for any personal belongs left in the area before, during or after the examination. During the examination candidates will receive an erasable note board to use as scratch paper.

If candidates experience problems that affect their ability to take the examination, they should notify a test administrator immediately.

Test administrators cannot answer any questions about test items or the content of the examination. However, if candidates have a procedural question, the testing staff will do their best to assist them. If a candidate has questions or concerns about test items during the examination, they may leave a comment by clicking the “comment” button in the upper left-hand corner of the computer screen.

The Test Administrator will keep the official time and ensure that the candidate is given the allotted time of 2.5 hours for the examination. If the candidate leaves the room to take a restroom break the examination time will not stop. Candidates are not permitted to leave the examination area to go to their cars, to speak to anyone, or make personal calls.

The Test Administrator may dismiss a candidate from the examination for any of the following reasons:

- If the candidate's admission to the examination is unauthorized.
- If a candidate creates a disturbance or gives or receives help.
- If a candidate attempts to remove examination materials or notes from the testing room.
- If a candidate attempts to take the examination for someone else.
- If a candidate has in his or her possession any prohibited item.
- If a candidate exhibits behavior consistent with memorization or copying of examination items.

All examination questions are copyrighted property of H Layer Credentialing. It is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute or display these examination questions by any means, in whole or in part. Doing so may subject the candidate to severe civil and criminal penalties and actions by the H Layer Credentialing.

## AFTER THE EXAMINATION

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### Examination Results

In most cases, candidates will be provided with a printed report of their results at the completion of their examination. When statistical validity evidence is required prior to releasing the scores, instant score reports may not be available, and scores may be delayed for approximately 3-6 weeks.

Anyone that registers to take the SACP Exam will have 180 days from date of approval to pass the exam with a final scaled score of 300 or higher.

H Layer Credentialing provides diagnostic score reports to non-passing candidates. The diagnostic score reports provide data regarding the percentage of items correct in each of the domains. Candidates are cautioned about making inferences based on the diagnostic scores since there may not be sufficient items in each of the domains for accurate inferences.

Candidates who have successfully passed the examination will be notified of their certification status by H Layer Credentialing. Passing candidates are emailed a SACP *Welcome Packet* that will include a digital SACP certificate. Certified SACPs are permitted to use the SACP designation (letters) after their names. The Welcome Packet will include information regarding the use of the SACP mark as allowed by the *SACP Code of Professional Responsibility* and the policies of the H Layer Credentialing.

### Information about Passing Scores and Scaling

H Layer Credentialing uses a scaled score to report results on the SACP examination. A scaled score is a type of score where the raw score (or number of items correct) has been converted into a consistent and standardized scale. For example, if an examination has 100 possible items, a candidate could answer between 0 and 100 items correctly. If the passing point on the examination is 75 items answered correctly, this could be converted to a scaled score as follows:

Raw Score	Scaled Score
0	0
75 (passing point)	375 (passing point)
100	500

On future examinations, where the passing point might need to be adjusted because the new examination form is easier or harder, the scaled score would stay the same:

Raw Score	Scaled Score
0	0
69 (passing point)	375 (passing point)
100	500

Certification Bodies frequently use scaled scores to report candidate scores because the actual number of test questions that a candidate must answer correctly to pass may change based upon the difficulty of the examination. It would not be fair to candidates if some candidates had to obtain a 70% to pass on a very easy test while others had to obtain a 70% to pass on a very hard test. Thus, the passing percentage is adjusted to account for the minor differences in test form difficulty.

To pass the SACP examination, the candidate must obtain a scaled score of 300.

### Establishing the Passing Score

The passing score (raw score and percent score) on the SACP examination was determined by conducting a passing score study on the examination. H Layer Credentialing used a criterion-referenced methodology which looked at the characteristics of the examination and determined how many items a candidate would need to answer correctly to demonstrate a sufficient level of knowledge to award certification. The passing score study considered characteristics of the examination such as the difficulty of the test items and used modified Angoff and Hofstee methodologies in a facilitated SME group meeting. Subsequent forms of the examination will be statistically equated to the previous form to assure a fair passing score regardless of exam form difficulty.

## Indeterminate Scores

H Layer Credentialing is concerned with reporting only valid scores. On rare occasions, circumstances may invalidate exam scores. H Layer Credentialing reserves the right to cancel or withhold exam scores if there is any reason to question their validity. Some scores may be rendered invalid due to circumstances beyond candidates' control, such as faulty exam materials or mistiming. In this event, retesting will be arranged at no additional cost to the candidate.

## Retests

Candidates who do not pass the exam will be required to wait 30 days and submit a retest fee of \$269 to reschedule their examination. Re-tests are taken at a Pearson VUE testing center.

## MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION

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The SACP recertification program was developed to ensure the continuing commitment of SACPs to the credential and to ensure the SACPs' continued competence. Recertification is a vital part of the SACP credentialing program.

Certification is awarded for a period of three years. To maintain the SACP certification, certificants must comply with the annual maintenance and recertification requirements.

### Annual Maintenance and Recertification Requirements

On an annual basis during the three year recertification cycle, SACPs must:

- Complete the online annual maintenance form.
- Pay the annual maintenance fee (\$65.00).

Failure to complete the online annual maintenance form and pay the annual maintenance fee will result in revocation of the certification and the candidate must reapply for SACP certification.

SACP certification is awarded for a period of three (3) years. To recertify, certified SACPs must complete one of two recertification options. They must earn Continuing Professional Education (CPE) (Option 1), or take and pass the certification examination within the last year (year 3) of the certification cycle (Option 2).

### Option 1:

A minimum of thirty (30 CPEs) must be earned within the three (3) year certification cycle, and in accordance with the parameters defined below. Recertification is based on the concept of maintaining competence in the field of security awareness, and CPE earned must relate to the domains (competency requirements) of the SACP certification examination. Certified individuals are encouraged to review the domains of the examination to make sure the CPE activities they

select relate to the domains. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the certified individual to demonstrate the CPE activities relate to maintaining competence as a certified SACP.

CPEs must be earned in the following categories:

- 10 CPEs in cybersecurity
- 20 CPEs in multi-disciplinary domains e.g., behavioral science, communications, general IT, HR, legal, marketing, training and organizational development, and participation as a subject-matter-expert in examination development and maintenance activities.

1 CPE = 50 minutes of participation in a learning event. CPE must be reported in 50-minute increments.

H Layer Credentialing will review and confirm the accuracy and authenticity of all continuing education submitted for recertification by certified persons. The H Layer Credentialing staff, at their discretion, may require additional evidence or documentation to ensure certified persons are meeting continuing education requirements whenever necessary.

To recertify with **Option 1**, the SACP must:

- Earn 30 SACP Continuing Education (CE) credits as specified above.
- Complete a recertification application
- Submit a \$65.00 annual maintenance fee
- Agree to continue to abide by and uphold the Code of Professional Responsibility.

To recertify with **Option 2**, the SACP must:

- Complete a recertification application
- Submit a \$334.00 fee (includes the \$65 maintenance fee and the \$269 examination fee)
- Take, and pass the SACP certification examination.
- Agree to continue to abide by and uphold the Code of Professional Responsibility.

Failure to comply with recertification requirements will result in the expiration of certification and removal of the SACP credential.

A certificate with the dates of renewal is issued to certified individuals upon successful recertification.

## **SACP CODE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

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SACP certified persons must agree to abide by the Code of Professional Responsibility “the Code”. The Code specifies the certified person’s responsibilities to those served, protects the

integrity of the credential and safeguards the public's trust. Agreement to uphold and abide by the Code is a requirement for earning and maintaining certification.

### The Code

Implicit in this agreement is an obligation not only to comply with the mandates and requirements of all applicable laws and regulations, but to act in an ethical manner in all professional services and activities. Failure to comply with the Code may result in disciplinary procedures and certification sanctions. Following is the Code.

As a certified SACP I agree I will

- Perform professional duties in accordance with the laws and with integrity.
- Maintain the privacy and confidentiality of security awareness test results.
- Perform professional duties in a competent and ethical manner.
- Avoid acts or omissions amounting to unprofessional conduct.
- Avoid malicious conduct that would injure the professional reputation or practice of others.
- Provide complete and accurate information when applying for certification and renewing certification.
- Refrain from personal behavior that may compromise the integrity of the credential.
- Abide by and uphold the policies of H Layer Credentialing.
- Safeguard confidential and privileged information about the SACP certification and exercise due care to prevent its improper disclosure.
- Use the SACP logo and certification marks only in an authorized and approved manner.
- Pay all fees and provide information required by H Layer Credentialing.

### Enforcing the SACP Code of Professional Responsibility

H Layer Credentialing enforces the provisions of the *SACP Code of Professional Responsibility*. H Layer will investigate formal complaints lodged against certified SACPs for alleged violations of the Code. H Layer Credentialing will review all complaint cases and will discipline certified SACPs when appropriate.

## ADDITIONAL POLICIES

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### Special Accommodations

H Layer Credentialing complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and shall make reasonable accommodations for candidates with disabilities as defined by ADA. H Layer Credentialing will ensure no individual is deprived of the opportunity to take the certification examination solely by reason of a disability as defined under the ADA.

Candidates must submit a written request and recent (within the last three years) supporting documentation related to disability needs. Requests for special testing accommodations require documentation of a formally diagnosed and qualified disability by a qualified professional who has provided evaluation or treatment for the candidate. The request and supporting documentation must be received at least 30 days prior to the examination.

The Accommodation Request Form can be found online at: [www.TheHLayer.com/contact](http://www.TheHLayer.com/contact). Accommodation requests may be submitted via email to [certification@TheHLayer.com](mailto:certification@TheHLayer.com) or to: mailed to the address below:

H Layer Credentialing  
720 South Colorado Blvd., Suite 750N  
Denver, CO 80246

H Layer Credentialing will evaluate requests for special accommodations, on a case-by-case basis.