

What is Professional Certification?

By Michael Gladstone, CBAP, Vice President Certification and CIO

Many individuals and their employers seek recognition for the skills, experience, and expertise they have gained within their field. Professional certification is a designation earned by an individual identifying that the individual has the requisite skills, experience, and expertise. Certifications are generally earned from a professional society with a certifying body, and are usually granted based on a combination of education, experience, and knowledge, rather than solely by passing an exam. In addition, the process of developing, administering and maintaining the certification is done to international standards. Finally, many professional certifications are used as 'post-nominal letters', meaning that they are included after the person's name (e.g. Joe Smith, ABC).

Tell me about the IIBA® certifications

Both the Certified Business Analysis Professional™ (CBAP®) and Certification of Competency in Business Analysis™ (CCBA™) designations are professional certifications.

- IIBA has a Certification Body, whose responsibility is the development and oversight of the organization's professional certifications. The Certification Body is independent of IIBA, in order to eliminate conflicts of interest between the certifying body and IIBA.
- The CBAP® and CCBA™ designations are granted only when individuals have met educational, experience, and knowledge requirements, rather than being strictly knowledge-based (i.e. passing an exam). We decline a large number of CBAP® applicants because they don't meet the experience requirement, before they even have the opportunity to test their knowledge.
- The IIBA certification program has been developed in line with ISO 17024 requirements. ISO 17024 is the international standard for bodies certifying individuals. By aligning with this standard (and, we plan to seek ISO 17024 certification ourselves), IIBA demonstrates its commitment to running a professional, equitable certification program.
- As these are professional certifications, our certification recipients can use the CBAP® or CCBA™ (as applicable) letters after their names.

What about all those other certifications, certificates, programs, etc.?

With the high demand for recognition for business analysts (as in other fields), many organizations offer programs leading to a form of recognition. For the most part, these are

training providers (including both college/university continuing education programs, and corporate training providers) who offer “certificates”. The certificate denotes that the individual has completed a course of study, but makes no representation to the individual’s professional experience—a key component of professional certification. While the individual certainly gains knowledge through such programs, and are rightly recognized for having gained that knowledge, this is not professional certification. (Please note: there are a small number of training providers who do have experience requirements as part of the requirements for their recognition programs.)

Why choose professional certifications from IIBA?

As the global, not-for-profit professional association for business analysis, IIBA is interested in the recognition and on-going support to individuals and the larger BA community. As IIBA is a global organization, you can have confidence that your IIBA professional certification will be recognized wherever you go, not just where a particular training provider is known. As a not-for-profit organization, you know that we are here to recognize and support your career in business analysis, not to make a profit from you. By becoming certified by IIBA, you are not only being recognized for your accomplishments, you are also demonstrating your commitment and support to the global business analysis community, as represented by IIBA.