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## Insurance Regulator Professional Designation Program

# Frequently Asked Questions

Updated July 1, 2009

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**Q: Why another Designation?**

**A:** NAIC’s Insurance Regulator Professional Designation Program seeks to provide a series of structured learning experiences that will establish a firm foundation on which individuals can build a career in insurance regulation. It is a designation unlike any other currently available in that it provides professional development paths for all insurance regulators regardless of their roles within NAIC’s member departments. NAIC Designees hold positions as varied as Consumer Service Representatives, Staff Counsel, Analysts, Examiners, and Assistant Commissioners. The Designees may have earned credentials within their own specialty areas as well. However, an NAIC Designation signifies that a regulator has mastered a broad range of regulatory competencies—defined by the membership in collaboration with NAIC staff—at all stages of his or her career. The Designation Program itself demonstrates to Congress, consumer advocates, and others, that state-based regulators have access to a formal, centralized professional curriculum. But most importantly, the Program provides regulators with the skills and confidence they need to meet the immediate demands of an increasingly demanding regulatory marketplace.

**Q: Who is eligible to participate in this program?**

**A:** The NAIC Designation Program is designed to provide state insurance regulators at all staff levels of the department with an opportunity for professional growth through completion of specific educational requirements and examinations. To qualify for a designation, you must currently be an employee with a state insurance department. State contract employees cannot receive an insurance regulator professional designation. While it is open to all state insurance department employees, we encourage people interested in the Program to look at the requirements and the coursework involved to determine whether or not it is a good fit for them.

**Q: How do I enroll in the NAIC Designation Program?**

**A:** There is a \$200 enrollment fee that covers administrative costs and initial exam fees (To retake an exam an additional fee will be assessed). Enrollment can be completed online at the following NAIC Designation Website [www.naic.org/education\\_designation.htm](http://www.naic.org/education_designation.htm). Registration instructions are available in a downloadable PDF format at the site. Select “Click Here to Become a Candidate.” This link will take you to a secured site where you will enroll and track your courses, exam scores and other completed requirements for the designation you are working on.

**Q: What methods of payment are accepted?**

**A:** Payment may be made by credit card, Zone or Grant funds, DeAngelo Scholarship funds, Designation Scholarship funds or you may request billing to your state department. When paying by credit card, this can be done directly at the secured enrollment site. If paying by Zone or Grant funds, DeAngelo Scholarship funds or Designation Scholarship funds, you should submit a completed, signed copy of the expense form to the Education & Training Department. They may be faxed to 816-460-7544 or emailed to [education@naic.org](mailto:education@naic.org). These expense forms can be found under NAIC Scholarship Expense Report Forms [www.naic.org/education\\_home.htm](http://www.naic.org/education_home.htm). A request for billing may be emailed to [education@naic.org](mailto:education@naic.org) with your name and state department. All enrollments are pending until payment has been received.

**Q: I just started with the department; can I start working on my APIR Designation now?**

**A:** You may enroll and begin taking the required courses and exams. The designation will not be officially awarded until you have met the one (1) year employment requirement for the APIR Designation.

**Q: What are the benefits to regulators of obtaining the designation?**

**A:** The designation program provides insurance regulators with an NAIC-sponsored professional designation recognizing their expertise in insurance regulation. Benefits include;

- The opportunity to explore other areas of regulation you may not encounter in your job
- A chance to manage your own learning – and to obtain tools to help you learn
- Recognition from other regulators that you have achieved a higher level of competence in your field and the credibility that comes with it
- Become a member of an elite group of regulators with shared learning experiences and success stories
- Ability to network with colleagues and regulatory leaders from around the country
- Build your own professional development library with the resources, texts, and learning supplements you collect through the coursework

**Q: What are the various designation levels and what do they signify?**

**A:** Associate Professional in Insurance Regulation (**APIR**)

-A designee has been exposed to an array of regulatory concepts in the areas of market, solvency, and rate and form regulations

Professional in Insurance Regulation (**PIR**)

-A designee has learned regulatory concepts in more specialized areas

## Senior Professional in Insurance Regulation (SPIR)

-A designee has, through training and experiential learning activities, acquired basic competencies in the area of regulatory leadership.

### **Q: Who was involved in designing the NAIC Designation Program?**

**A:** An Advisory Board comprised of regulators representing each of the four NAIC zones, designed the NAIC Designation Program. This Board which is chaired by a state insurance Commissioner continues to oversee the program and establishes and enforces program policies.

### **Q: Can I receive credit toward an NAIC Designation for courses I take through other organizations?**

**A:** There are elective credits awarded from other organizations at the PIR and SPIR level. Courses that have been approved for credit by the Designation Advisory Board are listed in our Catalog of Electives.

Please note: To qualify for credit, non-NAIC courses must have been successfully completed within the last three years prior to application for the designation.

### **Q: Will NAIC courses I completed prior to enrolling in the NAIC Designation Program be accepted as meeting the requirements of a designation?**

**A:** If you enroll and complete the applicable course exam within 60 days following the final day of the course, you may earn credit towards your designation. Enrollment completed outside of the 60 day deadline will not allow credit for previous courses.

### **Q: What are the departments of insurance out-of-pocket costs for the NAIC? Designation Program?**

**A:** Expenses include a designee's enrollment fee of \$200, tuition for education courses and travel costs for classroom courses. The enrollment fee must be received by the NAIC before enrollments will be processed. In the case of applicants requesting admittance to the program at the SPIR level, requests will not be submitted to the Board for approval prior to receipt of such fee. If the Board does not approve an enrollment at the SPIR level, the enrollment fee will not be refunded. The candidate will be entered at the APIR or PIR level, as deemed by the Board. In 2009, the program has been re-structured in an effort to offer more online choices, therefore minimizing or in many cases eliminating the necessity of travel costs. A \$25 fee is charged for retaking a course examination. Every effort has been made to ensure regulators can successfully complete the requirements for the designations. The program consists of a blended learning approach incorporating self-directed study courses, Web-based learning, and classroom instructor-led courses. Every effort is made to keep tuition costs at reasonable levels.

**Q: Can a Candidate earn a Designation without taking courses?**

**A:** Candidates are required to complete coursework to earn the PIR and SPIR Designations. As of July 1, 2009, the Designation Program Advisory Board has permitted regulators desiring to earn an APIR Designation to do so either through coursework or by passing a comprehensive exam over the APIR materials.

Candidates seeking to earn an APIR Designation by “testing out” of the material must pay a \$200 Designation Program enrollment fee as well as a non-refundable \$500 exam fee to schedule the Comprehensive Exam for the APIR level. If the exam is successfully completed, the candidate will be awarded the APIR Designation. However, if they fail the exam, they must complete all of the required coursework and related course exams to obtain the APIR Designation. The Comprehensive Exam is rigorous, addressing concepts in the areas of market regulation, rate and form regulation, and solvency regulation. Candidates will be given one opportunity to take the exam (no retakes are permitted for this exam). If they fail, they must enter the Program as an APIR Candidate, take the required APIR courses, and pass an exam for each course in order to earn the APIR. Tuition and related course costs are the responsibility of the candidate.

**Q: How soon after completion of a course can I take the required exam?**

**A:** In most cases, examinations are offered immediately upon course completion or may be taken at any time within 60 days of course completion.

**Q: Is there a waiting period to retake an exam?**

**A:** No, there is no waiting period to retake an exam. There is no limit to the number of times an exam may be taken by a participant; however an examination retake fee will apply.

**Q: Once I obtain the designation, what is the renewal process?**

**A:** Designations are required to be renewed every three years. At least one NAIC education course must be completed every three years. Various activities such as coursework, participation in zone retreats or NAIC National Meetings, chairing an NAIC task force or working group, and special projects will also be applicable to designation renewal. Points are required to be earned to qualify for renewal.

**Q: Are there ways to earn credit toward the designation other than taking courses?**

**A:** Yes, activities such as teaching an NAIC education course, researching and authoring a Journal of Insurance Regulation article that is published, or acting as the lead in a mentoring relationship for six months, may qualify for credit toward the SPIR designation. However, you must officially be enrolled at the SPIR level prior to the activities taking place.

**Q: Who has access to my test scores and other records?**

**A:** The application for designation and all related forms, reports, test scores, and records will be held by the NAIC Education & Training Department in strict confidence. Applicants will have access to all information in their file.



**Didn't find the answer to your question?**

**Contact us at [designation@naic.org](mailto:designation@naic.org)**