

The CSI CCS Exam Candidate Handbook

Fall 2016

CERTIFIED CONSTRUCTION SPECIFIER PROGRAM



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SUMMARY

Summary

The objective of the **Certified Construction Specifier Program** is to improve construction specifications and to accomplish the following:

- Provide a means for construction specifiers to demonstrate their knowledge in these areas:
 - Contractual relationships
 - Document organization
 - Document preparation
- Encourage the elevation of competence of construction specifiers
- Enhance the image of construction specifiers
- Encourage specifiers to become familiar with the principles of specification writing and construction document organization as recommended by CSI

People who pass the Certified Construction Specifier (CCS) exam have proven their skill in:

- Understanding of agreements, conditions of the contract, Division 01, and their relationships to specifications
- Specification organization, development and production
- Researching and sourcing products

A **Certified Construction Specifier (CCS)** is a person who has successfully completed both the Construction Documents Technology (CDT) and CCS examinations, and has demonstrated the minimum knowledge and ability to administer a contract for construction as prescribed by CSI.

Eligibility Requirements

Candidates for the CCS examination must meet the following pre-requisites:

- Hold a CDT certificate
- Have prepared or coordinated either Division 00 – Procurement and Contracting Requirements or Division 01- General Requirements actually in construction
- Have a minimum of two (2) years' experience in the preparation and coordination of specifications actually used in construction.
- Have five (5) years' experience, attested to by two people experienced in the field, in the preparation of contract documents

Membership in CSI is not required; however, CSI members have access to a number of exam taking benefits including reduced rates for exam registration, study material purchase, and CSI event registration. For more information on membership benefits, visit: www.csinet.org/membership

Candidate Profile

REQUIREMENTS	
Education	No specific educational requirements.
Experience	Minimum of two (2) years' experience in the construction contract administration process.
CAREER INFORMATION	
Typical Job Titles	Architect, Engineer, Designer, Assistant or Associate Designer, Field Engineer, Product Sales/Technical Representative, Commissioning Agent, Project Manager, Construction Manager, Specifier, or Construction Attorney.
Related Experience	Construction Field Experience, Development of Contract Documents, Performance of Contract Administration or Project Engineering, Project Management, Product Representation, A/E/C Office Experience, Construction Arbitration.
Typical Education Paths	Most qualified candidates will have a degree in architecture, engineering, interior design, construction management, or a related field.

EXAM APPLICATION

Application Period

Fall 2016 Exam Dates:	September 26th – December 10, 2016
Fall 2016 Early Registration:	June 30 th , 2016 – July 17 th , 2016
Fall 2016 Standard Registration:	July 18 th , 2016 – August 28 th , 2016
Fall 2016 Final Registration:	August 29 th , 2016 – September 6 th , 2016

Application Extension/ Special Exam Arrangements

Please contact CSI directly by calling 1-800-689-2900 or email certification@csinet.org to discuss application extensions or special exam arrangements.

Exam Application Fees

Member Price: **Early - \$280/ Standard - \$345 / Final - \$550**

Non-Member Price: **Early - \$415/Standard - \$480 / Final - \$615**

Registration includes the exam application fee.

It does not include the CCS Preparation Materials, Construction Specifications Practice Guide (CSPG), or the AIA A-201 or EJCDC C-700 exam source materials, which may be purchased separately.

Applying for an Exam

1. Exam applications are completed online at portal.csinet.org
2. **To register online:**
 - A. Login to the CSI website. If you are a new user, create a user name and password or register without joining.
 - B. Complete the demographic information form and select the next button.
 - C. In the Apply for New Certifications box, click "Apply for Certified Construction Product Representative."
 - D. Agree to the terms and conditions, click "Continue."
 - E. Select the Application Fee, click "Continue."
 - F. Optionally, enter total years of experience, click "Continue."
 - G. Enter information on your two references, click "Continue."
 - H. Pay by Credit Card and submit the payment. See receipt page.
 - I. If you click "Home," you will see that the application has been "Submitted."
3. You will be sent your Authorization To Test (ATT) Notification via email within 2-3 weeks of your processed application. Be sure to provide a valid email address when applying for an exam.

Scheduling an Exam with Prometric

The CCS is a computer-based exam administered at Prometric test centers throughout the US and Canada.

Once your application is approved by CSI, you will receive an email notification with instructions how to schedule your exam at a Prometric test center using your individual authorization number.

Go to the Prometric website: www.prometric.com/CSI. Select "Locate A Test Center" to view the available Prometric test centers and schedule an exam.

EXAM FORMAT

Format

The CCS exam is a computer-based test that contains 200 multiple-choice questions. Candidates have four (4) hours to complete the exam.

Exam Specifications

The proportion of the exam dedicated to each subject matter area is as follows:

Domain 1:	Coordination	15%
Domain 2:	Planning/Development/Organization	5%
Domain 3:	Research	5%
Domain 4:	Analysis and Evaluation	35%
Domain 5:	Production	40%

Exam Content Outline

Domain 1: Coordination

- A. Collect, track, coordinate information.
- B. Coordinate A/E team proposed choices with project brief from client.
- C. Direct and coordinate consultant's input into content of PPD
- D. Coordinate product information with Project Team
- E. Obtain Owner bid forms, contract forms and documents
- F. Coordinate Owner-provided procurement and contract documents
- G. Coordinate Division 01 items among disciplines
- H. Coordinate submittal process
- I. Coordinate substitution processes
- J. Coordinate sustainable design and construction requirements
- K. Coordinate selected products with the use of other products
- L. Coordinate installation procedures with the particular conditions of the project
- M. Coordinate RFI review
- N. Coordinate the documents of the interdisciplinary team members
- O. Perform interdisciplinary review
- P. Coordinate consultant files to compile the Project Manual for submission
- Q. Coordinate project manual deliverables
- R. Maintain version control of specifications including those edited by others
- S. Collect and coordinate information for addenda

Domain 2: Planning/Development/Organization

- A. Evaluate scope of program and coordinate into SD process
- B. Develop and maintain a Product Notebook of systems, products, and materials being proposed for use on the project
- C. Determine project's measurement and payment approach
- D. Develop tracking tools for logging information, changes, revisions, and questions
- E. Develop tracking system for questions, substitutions and related bidding items
- F. Track and document project closeout items

Domain 3: Research

- A. Conduct research on materials and systems for product selection
- B. Research sourcing, availability, and lead time for selected products
- C. Research applicable legal requirements to develop of specifications
- D. Evaluate product performance for project conditions

Domain 4: Analysis and Evaluation

- A. Identify project delivery method and schedule
- B. Evaluate program to coordinate future needs, expansion, and impacts of changing technologies
- C. Review program process and suggest strategies to identify potential building systems
- D. Analyze systems and assemblies being propose for the project
- E. Consult with the program team on appropriateness of systems, assemblies, and materials being considered or implied by the project requirements
- F. Analyze drawings for primary building systems, assemblies, and material configurations
- G. Evaluate products for code requirements
- H. Assess climate information for impact on materials and methods
- I. Evaluate products and systems for constructability in project locale
- J. Evaluate project sustainable design criteria with propose project systems and assemblies
- K. Evaluate and select products for compliance with design intent
- L. Obtain and evaluate standards and information from technical and professional
 - a. societies
- M. Review references standards, i.e. ASTM standards, for appropriateness
- N. Verify that necessary reference standards options have been selected
- O. Discuss product selection with Product Representatives
- P. Review cost estimates for coordination issues
- Q. Participate in value engineering process
- R. Evaluate the acceptability of substitution request submittal

Domain 5: Production

- A. Organize project documents according to CSI Formats

- B. Develop Preliminary Descriptions (PPD), outline specification, and project manuals
- C. Integrated design narratives into specification development process (UniFormat to MasterFormat)
- D. Translate graphic information presented in drawings into succinct written form
- E. Assist in the development of procurement and contracting requirements
- F. Incorporate project-specific requirements into Division 01 sections
- G. Prepare or edit measurement payment descriptions, when required
- H. Determine means of (resource for) quality control and quality assurance
- I. Determine what submittals are required to ensure quality installation and adequate project documentation (i.e. record documents)
- J. Document sustainable design and construction procedures into specifications
- K. Determine preparatory and finishing requirements for the product
- L. Prepare and edit specifications sections and compile, review, and edit specification sections written by others
- M. Prepare addenda
- N. Prepare documents for printing and archive electronic files
- O. Develop and maintain Office master guide specifications

Exam Development

The CCS exam reflects the results of a professional Body of Knowledge Analysis (BoKA) that determined the subject matter areas (knowledge domains) that are important for a Construction Specifier to master. The purpose of a BoKA is to thoroughly review and update the definition of the subject matter to be tested on the exam so that it reflects the current state of the industry and evolving trends in project delivery, design, construction documentation, construction contract administration, and facility management.

The current CCS test forms represent a significant commitment by CSI to provide an examination that reflects current practice and cutting edge developments that affect construction documents.

EXAM REFERENCE MATERIALS

Exam Reference Materials

CSI Publications

- Construction Specifications Practice Guide (CSPG)
- Project Delivery Practice Guide (PDPG)
- MasterFormat™
- UniFormat™

- SectionFormat™
- PageFormat™

Many of the CSI documents have been updated in recent years. Candidates are cautioned that older versions, such as *MasterFormat 1995*, are no longer supported by CSI and should not be relied upon in preparing for the exam.

MasterFormat, UniFormat, SectionFormat, PageFormat, GreenFormat are available for download with the purchase of the Project Delivery Practice Guide (See back of book for instructions to download).

Contract Documents

The General Conditions of the Contract and Contract Forms common to the following documents are available through the organizations listed:

AIA Document A201-2007 and

AIA Document A101-2007

American Institute of Architects

1735 New York Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20006-5292

Ph: (800) 242-3837 Fax: (202) 626-7547

www.aia.org

OR

EJCDC C-700 – 2007 and C520 - 2007

National Society of Professional

1420 King Street

Alexandria, VA 22314-2794

Ph: (703) 684-2800 Fax: (703) 836-4875

www.nspe.org

UNIFORM LOCATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

AIA A521-2012 and EJCDC N-122, 2012 Edition

Free download at:

www.nspe.org/resources/pdfs/EJCDC/N-122_Uniform_Location_of_Subject_Matter.pdf

EXAM STUDY RESOURCES

Please note, not all materials below will be available at the time of publishing, check [csinet.org](http://www.csinet.org) for the most current products

CCS Study Workbook *Updated for 2015

CCS Study Workbook is available for purchase at www.csinet.org.

The CCS Study Workbook is a guide to help candidates prepare for the CCS Exam. The workbook facilitates a clear understanding of the recommended practices for construction contract administration, and is comprised of exercises, examples, and practice questions that address the development of facilities and the ins and outs of the process. The information in this Study Workbook is based upon a “Practice Analysis of Practitioners in Construction Specifying,” a study conducted by CSI and completed in 2011. This Analysis is the basis for the exam you will be taking. This workbook is organized differently than the CCS Candidate Handbook and the Construction Specifications Practice Guide but covers the same material. We hope that in providing a different view upon the same material, your learning is enhanced and preparation for the exam more complete. It is not a practice exam.

CCS Informational Webinars

View recorded webinars for [CCS](#) at <http://www.youtube.com/user/CSIConstruction> under the Certification, Education and Professional Training Section. *Please note, these were originally recorded for the Spring 2014 exam cycle, refer to the Spring 2015 Candidate Handbook for the most up-to-date information related to exam dates and materials.*

CSI Chapter CCS Courses

Don't hesitate to ask your local chapter to help you prepare for an exam. Many CSI chapters offer CCS prep programs or study groups. Contact your local chapter for information about their prep courses. To find a [Chapter Study Course](#) go to: <http://www.csinet.org/chapterprep>

On-Demand CCS Prep Course

The CCS Prep Course originally presented in 2012, is a retired CCS Prep Course that followed the following content domains:

- Construction Contract Types
- Agreements and Conditions of the Contract
- Construction and Design Document Organization
- Division 01 – General Requirements
- Production Techniques
- Procurement and Contracting Requirements

- Specification Writing

While the Fall 2016 CCS Exam follows an updated domain structure, the source materials **have not changed**. CSI continues to offer this retired course as a resource for those looking for additional educational review on the topics above. CCS (Retired) Prep Course: http://eo2.commpartners.com/users/csi/category.php?cat_id=342

For those candidates preparing for the exam, this content can be used as an auxiliary aid to a study plan based on the 2015 CCS Candidate Handbook and the content domains listed therein.

CSI CERTIFICATION POLICIES

CSI Certification Policies

CSI exam application fees are non-transferable to another individual.

Candidates who are unable to sit for a scheduled exam may request rescheduling within the same exam window or cancellation with the possibility of a full or partial refund of the application fee. Cancellation requests must be submitted to the Institute in writing using the appropriate request form. The form is available at www.csinet.org. Also a scheduled appointment with Prometric must be cancelled separately through Prometric via www.prometric.com/csi or 1-800-503-8991.

Candidates who do not request a cancellation and do not sit for the exam forfeit all fees. Candidates who then wish to sit for the next exam window must submit a new application and fee.

- Cancellation requests received at least 30 calendar days prior to the first day of the test window will be refunded 100% of the exam fee.
- Cancellation requests received less than 30 calendar days prior to the first day of the test window will be refunded 50% of the exam fee.
- Cancellation requests received less than 14 calendar days prior to the first day of the test window will not be refunded any portion of the exam fee.

Those who are not successful in passing an exam may retest during the next exam window. Retests require a new application and registration fee.

A list of passing candidates will be posted at www.csinet.org.

Once the CCS exam is passed and certification is obtained, the certificant will be required to meet continuing education requirements of a minimum of 24 professional development hours (PDH's) over three years, be active in the field, and submit the renewal fee.

Congratulations to all who are participating in the CCS program!