IPC Certification Weekly Update – COVID-19

03/19/2020

IPC recognizes the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is creating on the electronics manufacturing industry and the training community. We are working diligently to address issues as they arise, and to ensure that the industry has the information and resources needed to press through these challenging times.

We are urging our education community to use their best judgement when determining the appropriateness and safety of in-person training or proctoring. While we understand that Shelter-in-Place orders and quarantines are making in-person training and proctoring more difficult, this does not abdicate our responsibilities to ensure the integrity and value of IPC Certification Programs.

IPC is currently monitoring all certification exams, and we strongly urge all trainers and training centers to follow the current Policies and Procedures. Any certifications issued in violation of the Policies and Procedures will be made null and void by IPC. Instructors or Certification Centers found in violation of the Policy and Procedures risk losing their certifications and licenses.

Below are additional updates and developments to support current and future training needs:

**Remote proctoring** for IPC Certification is currently not allowed in any form. In order to provide a secure remote proctoring environment, that both secures the exam questions while eliminating student cheating, a remote proctoring solution must be integrated into the testing platform.

The IPC Education Team has made significant progress towards a remote proctoring solution. While taking longer than anticipated, the project is moving forward. We have completed initial internal testing and hope to start Beta testing soon. Work is underway on re-creating all certification exams for online proctoring and updating CQI.

The new solution will allow certification candidates to attempt certification exams remotely. The remote proctoring solution utilizes a combination of AI proctoring (integrated into the IPC EDGE platform) that monitors the student’s computers (both their actions and any software they may be running) and highly trained remote proctors that observe the students while taking the exams.

Our goal is to make the proctoring solution available to all trainers as soon as possible. We do not have an exact timeline now, but we are hoping to announce a launch date next week. We will be providing a weekly update on our progress. After we have completed the implementation and updating of CQI, we will host a training session for instructor and release a “How To” guide for instructors and students.

Below are some of the steps IPC is taking to help the education community address the present challenges:

**Remote Training Webinar.** We recognize that the current global situation is necessitating many members of our education community to adopt remote training. IPC will be hosting a webinar to provide guidance and best practices for instructors interested in transitioning to a virtual training environment. The webinar will run on Thursday, March 26 at 10:00 am Central Time, USA.

During the webinar, the IPC Education Team will review:
• Virtual conferencing software options and how they work
• Online resources for Trainers
• Best practices to maximize engagement and learning in a virtual environment

Register for the Webinar

CQI Credits. As you know, all CQI credits expire after one calendar year. Effective immediately, all CQI credits that expire in March and April will automatically be extended for four months respectively (i.e. March credits will now expire in July and April credits will expire in August). This extension will occur automatically. There is no need to request the extension. You will be notified in the future if expiring credits for the months of May and June are extended.

Certificate Extensions. Effective immediately, if you have an expiring certificate, IPC will authorize a 90-day extension if you make your request to IPC. CITs and MITs need to request an extension to an expiring certification through the Certification Help Desk. When completing the form, please select the “Extension Request” in the Request Type field.

CISs that are seeking an extension should make a request to CIT or MIT that conducted their training. The CIT or MIT will complete the CIS Extension Form that has been added to the Training Resources sections on IPC EDGE.
Forms must be filled out completely and emailed to certification@ipc.org.

The certification expiration date will still follow the current policy for all certifications that were obtained by the temporary extension.

We are currently only processing extensions for certifications that expire within the months of March and April. IPC will reevaluate the situation in early April.

If you are experiencing any challenges not addressed in this email, please reach out to the IPC Education Team for aid through the Certification Help Desk. We are actively working to ensure that the critical services you provide the electronics manufacturing industry continues in a safe, efficient, and secure manner.

We plan to send updated emails weekly or as needed to address changing conditions. Please also visit IPC EDGE or IPC Certification for the latest updates.

Please stay safe.

David Hernandez
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