

An **ACCREDITED ESTATE PLANNER®** applicant must meet **ALL** of the following requirements as established by the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils:

1. **Credential requirement.** To be eligible to be considered for the AEP® designation, the applicant must provide documentation of being licensed to practice law as an Attorney (JD) or to practice as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), or of being currently designated as a Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU), Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC), Certified Financial Planner (CFP®), or Certified Trust & Financial Advisor (CTFA), in any jurisdiction of the United States of America.
2. **Professional discipline engaged in estate planning requirement.** The applicant must be presently and significantly engaged in “estate planning activities” as an attorney, an accountant, an insurance professional and financial planner, or a trust officer.

Estate planning encompasses the accumulation, conservation, preservation, and transfer of an estate through planning and implementation of an estate plan. The overall purpose of the estate planning process is to develop a plan that will maintain the financial security of individuals and their families. Estate planning has come to include lifetime planning that leads to conservation and transfer of assets. Estate planning should also facilitate the intended and orderly transfer of property at death, taking into consideration the family unit and the potential costs of different methods.

Estate planning activities could include the following functions appropriate to the applicant’s respective discipline(s):

- Administering estates and trusts
- Analyzing existing life insurance coverage for continuing relevance
- Analyzing proposed transactions for estate and gift tax implications
- Attending Estate Planning Council Meetings and Other Estate Planning Educational Events
- Business Succession Planning
- Charitable/gifting planning
- Designing estate plans
- Designing Qualified and Non-Qualified Retirement Plans
- Developing strategies to minimize potential estate and gift taxes
- Developing programs to conserve assets during lifetime and at death
- Drafting estate planning documents
- Life Settlements of Life Insurance Policies
- Preparing estate and gift tax returns
- Preparing fiduciary accountings
- Preparing fiduciary income tax returns
- Probating wills & administering estates
- Proposing life insurance solutions consistent with estate plans
- Retirement distribution planning
- Succession planning

Note: A full time professor at a college, university, or school of law who teaches courses in estate planning, estate tax, or business continuation planning will be considered engaged in estate planning activities.

3. **Experience requirement.** A minimum of five (5) years of experience engaged in estate planning and estate planning activities is required in one or more of the professional disciplines described above. To be exempt from the education requirements described below, an applicant must have a minimum of fifteen (15) years of experience engaged in estate planning and estate planning activities in one or more of the professional disciplines described above.
4. **Education requirement.** The National Association of Estate Planners & Councils (NAEPC) has designated The American College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, as the primary provider of the education courses required to earn the AEP® designation. Applicants for the AEP® designation must successfully complete two graduate courses through the Richard D. Irwin Graduate School of The American College as follows:

Required course:

GS 815 – Advanced Estate Planning I

One elective course selected from:

GS 812 – Business Valuation

GS 816 – Advanced Estate Planning II

GS 836 – Business Succession Planning I

GS 839 – Charitable Giving

GS 842 – Executive Compensation

If the applicant has completed any one (1) of the following listed courses prior to March 31, 2004, it will be accepted as an approved course. These courses are:

GS 814 – Advanced Pension Planning and Retirement Planning I

GS 817 – Personal Tax Planning

GS 838 – Business Succession Planning II

Except as stated in the prior paragraph, there is no requirement that courses must be taken within any prescribed time period. As long as the applicant has kept current through continuing education, it does not matter when the courses were originally completed.

The applicant must provide either a copy of a grade report or a transcript from The American College. For more details concerning the coursework offered through The American College, please visit their Web site at:

<http://www.theamericancollege.edu/subpage.php?pageId=1265>.

“Challenge Exam” Alternative. As an alternative to taking the above-mentioned courses, an applicant may elect to sit for the two “challenge exams”. Each exam has a two-hour time limit, and the exams may be taken at different times. The first exam is comprised of the course material for GS 815, Advanced Estate Planning I, and the second exam is comprised of the course material for GS 816, Advanced Estate Planning II. This alternative option is recommended only for those applicants who have previously taken advanced, graduate level courses elsewhere and have advanced knowledge in the field of estate planning. An applicant who fails an examination is then required to take the underlying course upon which that examination was based.

The applicant must provide either a copy of a grade report or a transcript from The American College. For Challenge Exam information, please contact Joanne Patterson at The American College.

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Alternative Equivalent Education Provided Through Other Colleges and Universities. As an alternative to successfully completing two graduate level courses from the list referenced above through The American College, applicants may complete the graduate educational course requirements through other colleges, universities and schools of law, provided such colleges, universities and schools of law, and the educational courses through such institutions, meet the following criteria:

Academic Accreditation: For graduate courses through a school of business that are part of an MBA degree, in general, or MBA degrees with a concentration in finance, financial planning, insurance, we require graduate school of business accreditation by AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business). For graduate courses through a school of business (sometimes these programs are referred to as schools of accountancy) that are part of an MBA in accounting degree, or, MS degrees in accounting or taxation, we require graduate accounting degree accreditation by AACSB. For graduate courses through a school or department of a college or university that are part of a M.S. or Ph.D. in financial planning or financial services degree, we require that the graduate or Ph.D. program be a Registered Program with the Certified Financial Planner™ Board of Standards. For any courses through a School of Law as part of an LL.M. or J.S.D. degree, we require accreditation by the American Bar Association of the law school.

Courses that Lead Towards a Graduate Level Degree. Our second requirement is that any courses taken in estate planning and estate planning-related topics must be graduate level courses that are approved by the offering school, college or university as counting toward course credit for either a master's or doctoral degree. The course, or courses, can either be required courses or electives but must count toward the graduate degree. We are not requiring the applicant to complete the graduate degree; we are only requiring the applicant to take courses that would count toward a graduate degree.

Courses earned toward securing one of our underlying "gateway" designations or degrees may not qualify for the AEP® coursework requirement.

Courses that are Similar to Current Courses Through The American College. These courses in estate planning and estate planning-related topics must be similar and equivalent to the courses we now approve through The American College. This is a twofold test. First, the course would have to be of

the same length as The American College courses. That is, each course would have to be the equivalent of a graduate three-hour semester credit course or the total number of hours earned must equal six hours of graduate level coursework. It is acceptable to have completed 2 three-hour semester courses or 3 two-hour semester courses. Second, the course content and material would have to be comparable to the current courses through The American College. Specifically, the coursework must be equivalent to that offered in Advanced Estate Planning I and that offered in one or more of the electives offered by The American College. Applicants must provide a copy of the official transcript and a detailed description/syllabus of the course(s). Applicant must have earned a grade of "B" or better for the course(s).

15 Years Experience Exemption. AEP® applicants who have at least fifteen (15) years of experience engaged in estate planning and estate planning activities in one or more of the professional disciplines described above are not required to take the educational course work and are exempt from the education requirements described in this section.

5. **Membership requirement.** AEP® applicants are required to be members of, and continuously maintain membership in, an affiliated local or regional estate planning council where such membership is available. Where no affiliated local council membership is available, the applicant is required to continuously maintain an At-Large individual membership in the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils.

While it is the policy of NAEPC to require membership in the affiliated local or regional affiliated estate planning council where such membership is available, it is recognized that this membership may not always be available for all AEP® applicants due to: geographical location (within 50 miles or 60 minutes driving time); local affiliated estate planning council limits on the number of members from each discipline; unaffiliated local estate planning councils; or other local estate planning council membership criteria that prevent the AEP® applicant from belonging to an affiliated local estate planning council. If affiliated local estate planning council membership is not available for any of the foregoing reasons, then NAEPC requires that AEP® applicants obtain, and maintain, individual membership in NAEPC until such time as they can become a member of an affiliated local or regional estate planning council. The current dues for the At-Large individual membership in the NAEPC are \$80.00 a year. The individual NAEPC membership dues are in addition to the annual dues for AEP® membership that is required to maintain, and use, the AEP® designation.

6. **Professional reputation and character requirement.** First, an applicant must continuously be in good standing with the applicant's respective professional organization and/or license authority (e.g., State Bar Association for attorneys, etc.).

Second, an applicant must provide the names and addresses of three professional individuals as references. The applicant must also provide each individual referrer a copy of the Reference Form to be returned to the NAEPC. **Each reference form**

must be completed in its entirety in the referrer's own handwriting or by using his or her own typewriter or word processor. Forms completed by the applicant will not be accepted. At least two of the professional references must be from individuals who primarily practice in **two** different professional disciplines from the applicant, and one of the professional references must be from an individual who primarily practices in the same professional discipline as the applicant. No references may be from either (1) persons who work for the same company or firm as the applicant, or (2) who are related within the fourth degree of consanguinity to the applicant. Professional references should be from individuals with whom the applicant has worked on estate planning cases and assignments (except for the reference from the individual in the same primary discipline), individuals who are familiar with the applicant's professional capabilities and experience and who are currently actively engaged in estate planning. Professional disciplines are limited to attorneys (JD), accountants (CPA), insurance and financial planners (CLU, ChFC or CFP®), and trust officers (CTFA).

Finally, in addition to the three (3) professional references, the applicant must secure a completed Affiliated Local Estate Planning Council Membership Verification Form signed by the president of the council and one other council officer who will be asked to provide information on the applicant's professional capabilities, reputation and experience. As with the reference forms above, this form should also be completed in its entirety in the handwriting of the officers of the Council or by using their typewriters or word processors.

7. **Commitment to NAEPC Code of Ethics requirement.** The applicant must sign a declaration statement to continuously abide by the NAEPC Code of Ethics.
8. **Dedicated to team concept requirement.** The applicant must acknowledge a commitment to the team concept of estate planning by signing a declaration statement.
9. **Continuing education requirement.** The applicant must satisfy a minimum of thirty (30) hours of continuing education during the previous two calendar years, of which at least fifteen (15) hours **MUST** have been in estate planning. Applicants may be requested to produce documentation to substantiate any activity claimed.
10. **Annual dues and re-certification requirement.** Designation holders are required to continuously maintain annual membership in order to use the AEP® designation. (Annual AEP® membership dues are currently \$100.00.) Failure to maintain annual membership or failure to meet or comply with the re-certification requirements described below will result in the revocation of the AEP® designation, until such time as the requirements are met.

On an annual basis, designation holders must certify or re-certify that:

- (1) They are continuously engaged in estate planning activities in their professional discipline;

- (2) They are in good standing with their respective professional organizations and/or license authorities and are not subject to any disciplinary misconduct or investigation;
- (3) They maintain membership in an affiliated local or regional estate planning council where such membership is available; otherwise they must be an individual, At-Large member of the NAEPC and maintain that membership;
- (4) They have abided by and will continue to abide by the NAEPC Code of Ethics;
- (5) They are dedicated to the team concept of estate planning; and
- (6) They have currently satisfied the continuing education requirements of their designated professional discipline and have maintained a minimum of thirty (30) hours of continuing education during the previous twenty-four (24) months, of which at least fifteen (15) hours were in estate planning.

11. **Annual audit of certification requirements.** On an annual basis, the AEP® Committee will determine, with the approval of the NAEPC Board of Directors, the percentage of active designation holders to be audited. If an active designation holder is chosen for audit, a letter from the Chairperson of the Audit Committee will be sent via Certified Mail asking for verification that the designation holder is in good standing with his or her respective professional organization and/or licensing authority; current with the continuing education requirements of thirty (30) hours, fifteen (15) of which must have been in estate planning, for the prior twenty four (24) months; and verification of membership from the appropriate affiliated local estate planning council of which the AEP® is a member. If the audited AEP® is not a member of an affiliated local estate planning council, a reason for this must be provided. Failure to comply with the audit request results in a “cease and desist” letter sent to the AEP® via US Certified Mail with a delivery confirmation stating that the AEP® is considered inactive and ineligible to use the designation or promote oneself as an AEP® until such time as the audit information has been submitted to and approved by the NAEPC national office.

Special Circumstances

Estate Planning Law Specialist Designation Holders. Since the EPLS designation is a more difficult designation to obtain, a newly-designated EPLS in good standing will be offered the opportunity to opt in to the AEP® designation with no annual AEP® membership dues for the first year. They will be subject to all AEP® annual membership requirements, including certification and re-certification, thereafter.

AEP® Emeritus. AEP® Emeritus Status is defined as: substantially retired or disabled; age 60 or older; 15-years of continuous and significant involvement in estate planning; and previous 5-years of continuous AEP® in good standing. Forms can be found at the following web address: http://www.naepc.org/AEP_emeritus.pdf.

Council AEP® Candidate Nominees. Each year, an affiliated local or regional estate planning council in good standing may nominate candidates for the AEP® designation in each of the four (4) professional disciplines of attorney, accountant, insurance and financial planning, and trust officer. The maximum number of nominees for affiliated local or regional estate planning councils in good standing with 100 members or less will be one AEP® candidate in each of the four (4) professional disciplines specified above, plus one (1) additional candidate from any of the four (4) named disciplines. The maximum number of nominees for affiliated local or regional estate planning councils in good standing with more than 100 members will be two (2) AEP® candidates in each of such four (4) professional disciplines, plus two (2) additional candidates from any of the four (4) named disciplines.

These AEP® candidates must have fifteen (15) or more years of experience engaged in estate planning and estate planning activities and will be subject to the current AEP® qualifications and requirements, except that the requirements for professional references and affiliated local or regional estate planning council membership verification will be waived. The application fee for Council AEP® candidate nominees will be fifty percent (50%) of the regular application fee. (The current AEP® application fee is \$250.00; therefore, the current application fee for Council AEP® candidate nominees is \$125.00.) Council-nominated candidates are subject to the annual AEP® membership dues and re-certification requirements.

Nominations for these AEP® Candidates must be in the form of a board of director's resolution signed by the president and one other officer of the affiliated local or regional estate planning council. A form can be found at the following web address: http://www.naepc.org/doc_17.web.