Instructor Essentials
Instructor Candidate Workbook

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Part 1: Background

- Introduction
- AHA Mission
- AHA Global Mission
- ECC Guiding Philosophy
- Turning Science Into Training
- The Instructor-AHA Partnership

Introduction

Welcome to the American Heart Association (AHA) Instructor Essentials Course. At the end of the Instructor Essentials Course, you will be able to

- Identify the prerequisites to becoming an AHA Instructor
- Describe the usability of the *Program Administration Manual* (PAM)
- Describe the core competencies of an AHA Instructor
- Describe the 5 steps of the AHA Instruction Cycle: prepare, teach, test and remediate, close, and keep current
- Identify resources available to an AHA Instructor
- Describe how to use discipline-specific AHA Instructor materials: the instructor manual, lesson plans, course videos, and skills testing checklists
- Identify discipline-specific course formats available to students for completion of the course
- Describe discipline-specific course completion requirements
- Describe discipline-specific flexibility options available to an AHA Instructor within the course
- Describe the requirements for how to maintain an AHA Instructor status
- Describe effective AHA Instructor feedback and remediation techniques
- Demonstrate the administration of skills testing with the use of the skills testing checklists
- Describe the use of a CPR Coach (Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support [ACLS] and Pediatric Advanced Life Support [PALS] only)
- Identify the need to measure chest compression fraction and the effect on team choreography (ACLS and PALS only)
- Demonstrate prebriefing and structured debriefing skills (ACLS and PALS only)
- Describe how to facilitate the learning and testing stations (ACLS and PALS only)
- Demonstrate facilitating the Bradycardia and Megacode learning stations (ACLS only)
- Demonstrate facilitating the case scenario skills testing (PALS only)

AHA Mission

Our mission is to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. That single purpose drives all we do. The need for our work is beyond question.

The AHA is the United States' oldest and largest voluntary health organization dedicated to saving people from heart disease and stroke. Heart disease is the No. 1 killer worldwide, and stroke ranks second globally. The AHA is the trusted leader in emergency cardiovascular care (ECC) and trains people around the world in how to save lives with cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.

AHA Global Mission

The AHA is a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. Through collaboration with global partners, our network of training centers and knowledge transfer of proven programs and strategies, the AHA strives to reduce the

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global burden of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. This mission contributes to the World Health Organization's global fight against noncommunicable diseases and the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of reducing premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases by one third through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.

ECC Guiding Philosophy

- Improve the Chain of Survival in every community
- Increase quality and timeliness of materials
- Identify and expand training
- Document effectiveness
- Improve efficiency

The goal of the ECC Programs department is to be the world's premier resuscitation organization and serve the global community of scientists, healthcare providers, and citizens as a critical leader in discovery, processing, and transfer of resuscitation science. Its programs, products, and services focus on maximizing survival from life-threatening cardiovascular emergencies.

Turning Science Into Training

The *2020 AHA Guidelines for CPR and ECC* is based on an extensive review of resuscitation literature and many debates and discussions by international resuscitation experts and members of the AHA ECC Committee and Subcommittees. The International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR) *2020 International Consensus on CPR and ECC Science With Treatment Recommendations* summarizes the international consensus interpreting tens of thousands of peer-reviewed resuscitation studies.

The 2020 AHA Guidelines contains the expert recommendations for application of the *2020 International Consensus on CPR and ECC Science With Treatment Recommendations* with consideration of their effectiveness, ease of teaching and application, and local systems factors.

The AHA leads the charge in the evaluation process, and it is this evidence-based science that goes into every product we create.

The AHA writes the Guidelines as recommendations. There are no requirements for any country or organization to follow the Guidelines. It is the decision of individual organizations to determine what to follow. Globally, local protocols and regulations can dictate what organizations must do.

The Instructor-AHA Partnership

The process for developing course materials is elaborate. After consensus is reached at the ILCOR meetings, the AHA writes its guidelines, and then a wide array of volunteer medical professionals work together with AHA staff and discipline-specific consultants to produce the text and videos used in courses.

Courses are tested by members of the AHA and AHA Training Network, and feedback from the test courses is incorporated into the final product.

The instructor-AHA partnership is critical to the success of the courses. The AHA develops the text and videos that teach students the science. The instructors are the hands-on implementers: they evaluate, coach, remediate, and help students learn the skills.

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Part 2: Prepare

Preparing Yourself

- Glossary
- How to Find Information
- The Role of TCs and Training Faculty

Preparing Your Materials

- How to Get the Forms You Need to Teach
- How to Get the Other Materials You Need to Teach
- How to Use Exams
- How to Get Skills Testing Documents
- How to Get Course Completion Cards

Preparing the Room and Equipment

Preparing Yourself

Glossary

Course Completion Card: This card is given to students who pass the provider course. Only an AHA Training Center (TC) can issue course completion cards.

Emergency Cardiovascular Care (ECC): This global business unit of the AHA is responsible for publishing the official *AHA Guidelines for CPR and ECC* and providing lifesaving CPR, first aid, and advanced cardiovascular care training.

Faculty: These are the people who teach Instructor Essentials Courses.

- Training Faculty (TF): These people serve as quality assurance and educational leaders for the TC. They are appointed by the TC. TF perform instructor courses and then monitor and mentor the instructors at the TC.
- Regional Faculty (RF): Internationally, these people serve as science and curriculum experts to the TCs and instructors. They are appointed by the AHA. The United States does not have RF.

Instructor: This person meets the AHA requirements for teaching a specific provider course. (Requirements vary, depending on the course.)

Instructor Candidate: This is a person in the process of becoming an AHA Instructor.

Instructor Community: This online community is exclusively for the AHA Training Network to network with peers, share best practices, and provide feedback to the AHA. The Instructor Community can be accessed through the Instructor Network.

Instructor Network: Once you complete your instructor training, you'll join the Instructor Network. This website contains a wealth of information, from how to order materials you need to science updates. All instructors are required to join the Instructor Network.

Instructor Number: This unique number is assigned to you once you register on the Instructor Network. This number will be on the back of your instructor card as well. You can also find your instructor number on your home page ("dashboard") when you log in to the Instructor Network. You should have only one instructor number, regardless of how many disciplines you teach.

PAM: This is a guide to the rules, regulations, and requirements for instructors, TCs, faculty members, and other people involved in AHA ECC programs. The PAM is an online document on the Instructor Network and is updated regularly. Please always refer to the Instructor Network for information in the PAM.

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Provider Courses: These are intended for healthcare professionals and other personnel who need to know how to perform CPR and other life support skills in a wide variety of in-facility and prehospital settings. Examples are Pediatric Advanced Life Support and Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support.

Student: This is anyone taking a course with little or no medical training who needs a course completion card for job, regulatory (for example, OSHA), or anyone who wants to be prepared for an emergency in any setting.

TC: The AHA has established a network of TCs. These centers' goal is to help deliver ECC educational courses and strengthen the Chain of Survival. All instructors must be aligned with a TC.

Training Center Coordinator (TCC): This person can answer your questions related to the teaching and administration of AHA courses. The TCC is your first point of contact for information about AHA training programs.

How to Find Information

The AHA is a large organization and has a number of departments, guides, and manuals. If you need to know something specific or have questions, there are several resources you can use. Check these resources in the following order, and you're most likely to find what you want quickly and easily:

- Your instructor manual
- The Instructor Network
- The PAM
- Your TCC
- Your TF

The PAM provides information about how to administer courses in general. It has all the overall rules and guidance. The instructor manual tells you what you need for a specific course.

The Role of TCs and TF

TCs administer and run the courses and manage instructors. They support the instructors by offering information, updates, course materials, and AHA course completion cards. TCs also make sure that the AHA courses taught through the TC meet AHA standards and are taught as intended.

Each TC has at least 1 TF member in each discipline. The faculty member is an expert in the subject and is an excellent resource for instructors.

Each TC will have specific instructions and ways of meeting AHA goals. The PAM outlines all AHA policies, but your TC may have policies that expand on those found in the PAM while still meeting the PAM's requirements. TCs may have specific policies about how to

- Set up, register, and advertise classes through the TC
- Communicate with students
- Properly clean CPR manikins
- Resolve disputes with students or with the TC

Preparing Your Materials

How to Get the Forms You Need to Teach

All instructors are required to have their own copy of the instructor manual for the course they will be teaching. The instructor manual has a checklist of everything you'll need to prepare for and teach a course. However, the instructor manual doesn't always define the different kinds of paperwork. Here is a quick summary:

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Course rosters: Course rosters are used to keep track of students. After each course, you'll need to turn one in. The rosters are available on the Instructor Network or from your TCC and are available as electronic forms. Your TCC or TC Faculty will provide more information on what you should use.

Course evaluations: Every instructor is required to give their students a course evaluation to complete at the end of the course. Course evaluation sheets are available on the Instructor Network or from your TCC and are available as electronic forms. Your TCC or TC Faculty will provide more information on what you should use.

Other forms: Nearly every form you'll need is available on the Instructor Network.

How to Get the Other Materials You Need to Teach

As an instructor, you are also required to have your own copy of the required student materials for the course you are teaching. You will also need all the equipment on the equipment list in your instructor manual. Your TCC can provide you with a list of the authorized AHA distributors in your area.

How to Use Exams

The AHA offers online exams. Online exams improve exam security and allow the AHA to collect key performance data. See the AHA Instructor Network or your TCC for more information about how to use online exams.

Although administering exams online is the preferred method, there may occasionally be a need to administer a paper exam. Get paper exams from your TCC. Follow your TC's procedures about how and when to get the exams. Have the exams ready before you teach the class.

Exams should be secured. Follow your TC's policies and the AHA guidelines for maintaining exam security. Refer to your instructor manual for more information on exam security.

How to Get Skills Testing Documents

The documents you need for skills testing can be found in your instructor manual, or you can get them from your TCC. Electronic versions of skills testing checklists are also available on the Instructor Network.

How to Get Course Completion Cards

Your course completion cards will come from your TCC. Learn your TC's process and policy for securing cards, and write it in the Useful Information section of this guide to refer to later.

Course completion eCards have several benefits:

- eCards are more secure than printed cards, and a 3-point verification by the TCC, instructor, and students is required to issue and claim eCards.
- eCard information is populated electronically by the TCC or instructor and can be altered by only the TCC or AHA Customer Service by using the AHA's My Cards at heart.org/cpr/mycards.
- eCards can also be easily verified by employers at heart.org/cpr/mycards to prove issuance by a valid TC and instructor aligned with that TC.

Preparing the Room and Equipment

Your instructor manual has information about how to set up a room and equipment for a specific course.

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Part 3: Teach

- Instructor Core Competencies
- Using Lesson Plans
- How to Identify and Correct Weak Skills

Instructor Core Competencies

The following instructor core competencies are reviewed in the online portion of the Instructor Essentials Course and need to be exhibited by AHA Instructors while teaching provider courses:

- Skills: Instructors need to be proficient in all the skills of the disciplines they teach.
- Course delivery: Instructors need to teach AHA materials correctly and as they were intended.
- Testing: Instructors need to be able to test instructor candidates effectively.
- Professionalism: Instructors need to maintain a high standard of ethics and professionalism when teaching AHA courses.
- Program administration: Instructors need to be able to manage time, space, materials, and paperwork in compliance with AHA guidelines.

Using Lesson Plans

As with many classes taught at the national and international levels, ensuring consistency is a challenge. To help with this challenge, a set of lesson plans has been designed to indicate which material needs to be covered and when. The lesson plans aid instructors and, along with the videos, ensure consistency from class to class.

You'll learn more about how to use lesson plans when you have practice sessions and role-play in the classroom portion of this course.

How to Identify and Correct Weak Skills

This is one of the most important parts of an instructor's job. The AHA goes to great lengths to create the science-based materials. However, no matter how good the research and science are, only good hands-on skills will save lives. Instructors are the ones responsible for helping students learn these critical skills.

To help students learn, practice in situations that closely resemble real life. For example, if you are training emergency medical technicians, have them practice CPR on the floor because that's where they often have to perform CPR.

To Identify Weak Skills

Use the critical skills descriptors and the skills testing checklists for the skills tests. The critical skills descriptors list all the things that a student needs to know how to do. Pay close attention not only to what is described but also to the order of the actions. You should know these skills by heart before you start teaching so that you will know exactly when a student misses an important step during skills practice.

The same is true for other skills. It is also very important to pay attention not just to how each person performs the skills on the "patient" but also to how each team member communicates and functions within the team.

To Improve Student Performance

While students are practicing, offer positive and corrective feedback. Begin with what students are doing well. Describe what they are doing right. Then, offer suggestions for how they can improve.

You may also consider using a skills testing checklist while students practice. Fill it out or simply show it to the student. Be clear about exactly what they are being tested on because this helps students improve performance.

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The AHA requires the use of an instrumented directive feedback device or manikin in all AHA courses that teach the skills of adult CPR. According to the *2020 AHA Guidelines For CPR and ECC*, use of feedback devices can be effective in improving CPR performance during training by providing objective feedback to learners and instructors during practice. These recommendations are made by balancing the potential benefit of improved CPR performance with the cost of using such devices during training.

Part 4: Test and Remediate

- Testing Accurately
- Remediation

Testing Accurately

The skills tests are conducted in person. You will test students one at a time, using the skills testing checklist. For more specific instructions, see the instructor manual, which describes in detail how to test students. The Instructor Essentials Course video also shows how to conduct a skills test.

Instructors can be under pressure to pass students who have not demonstrated the skills successfully. Sometimes, an instructor may have his boss or a friend in a class. Other times, an instructor may be worried about the repercussions for the TC or business if the client or student isn't happy. Or a student may not be able to work without a course completion card—a situation that can evoke sympathy in an instructor. There are a number of complicated reasons why an instructor may be inclined to pass the student before the student is ready.

However, it's important to make sure the students are properly prepared and can perform high-quality CPR in addition to advanced techniques. CPR feedback devices are required because they provide objective information about the student's performance, help encourage the student to do more practice, and indicate when a student is ready for skills testing. Being able to perform high-quality CPR improves the student's chance of saving a life.

Issue course completion cards only to students who have successfully completed all the AHA course completion requirements.

Remediation

If a student takes a skills test or exam and doesn't perform all the steps correctly, then the student needs remediation. Remediation is the student's chance to go back over the material immediately after the test or exam. You guide students during remediation to help them learn the pieces they were missing. Then, the students take the skills test or exam again, either immediately or at a later date.

Some of the ways you may provide skills testing remediation include

- Assisting students to identify and resolve weaknesses
- Requesting additional skills practice
- Explaining information in a different way
- Assigning additional reading of specific sections in the materials
- Referring students to other courses or instructors

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Part 5: Keep Current

- Resources for Course and Science Updates
- Maintaining Instructor Status

Resources for Course and Science Updates

When AHA materials are updated, you will need to complete an update on the changes to continue teaching. Your TCC will tell you how to complete mandatory updates. This information will also be available on the Instructor Network.

The AHA publishes a newsletter for instructors, the *ECC Beat*, located on the Instructor Network. Your dashboard on the Instructor Network will show you anything new that's been posted to the Instructor Network, including training memos and bulletins.

Reading updates, memos, bulletins, and the *ECC Beat* will keep you up-to-date as an instructor.

Maintaining Instructor Status

To teach provider courses, instructors need to maintain their instructor status. If you want to know more about maintaining status, refer to your TCC, the PAM, or the instructor manual because all have detailed information on the subject.

Part 6: Conclusion

Thanks for taking this course. We look forward to your joining the AHA Instructor Network.

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Useful Information

My TCC is _____.

The best way to contact my TCC is _____.

My TC ID number, which will be placed on provider cards from courses I teach, is

_____.

The best person to contact about course cards and paperwork is

_____.

If I have questions about AHA course content, I should contact

_____.

These are the steps for administering exams at my TC:

_____

_____.

These are the steps for getting course completion cards from my TCC:

_____

_____.

To renew my instructor card, my TCC needs me to do the following:

_____

_____.

TCs have agreements with the AHA about where, geographically, they can offer classes. My TC's area is

_____

_____.

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Quick Self-Quiz

Write your responses in the spaces below.

1. What is the PAM?

_____

2. Where do I get skills testing checklists, rosters, and paperwork?

_____

3. How do I maintain instructor status?

_____

4. How does an instructor become a TF member?

_____

5. Where do I find information on remediation?

_____

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FAQ

Q: What are the 5 steps of the AHA Instruction Cycle?

A: The 5 steps of the AHA Instruction Cycle are prepare, teach, test and remediate, close, and keep current. More information can be found on each step of the AHA Instruction Cycle in the online portion of the Instructor Essentials Course.

Q: Do I need to have a current provider card to be an instructor?

A: AHA Instructors are not required by AHA to have a provider card, but it may be a requirement from your TC, your place of employment, or any licensing or credentialing agency for your profession or state (such as nursing or emergency medical services).

Q: What do I need to do if I am scheduled to teach a course but cannot make it?

A: Notify your TCC or TF promptly of the issue. Make reasonable attempts to contact the students if no replacement can be found for you.

Q: What do I do if someone gets an injury during a course?

A: Contact your TCC promptly for assistance.

Q: What do I do if someone has a disability?

A: All reasonable accommodations can be made for persons with disabilities. The AHA will not authorize any core curriculum changes in any course. Each student must be able to successfully perform all course requirements (skills and exams as indicated) to receive a course completion card. For more assistance, contact your TCC or TF.

Q: How much should we charge for the courses?

A: The AHA does not set fees for courses. Contact your TCC.

Q: Is there a dress code for teaching courses?

A: All AHA Instructors should have good hygiene and dress appropriately for the course being taught. Your TCC may also have specific guidance.

Q: Is there an age requirement for students?

A: The AHA does not set an age requirement for provider courses. Students must be mature enough emotionally and physically to perform the necessary requirements for courses.

Q: Is there an age requirement to become an AHA instructor?

A: The AHA has set a minimum age limit of 18 to become an AHA Instructor.

Q: My instructor card has expired. Is there a grace period?

A: There isn't a grace period recognized by the AHA for courses for providers or instructors. There are special exceptions that your TCC can take into consideration.

Q: I want to use the AHA or authorized provider course logo on flyers or other forms for my class. Can I?

A: Contact your TCC for assistance.

Q: Can I offer continuing education credit for the courses I teach? Does the AHA offer continuing education credit for all AHA courses?

A: Contact your TCC for assistance.

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Q: I've moved. How do I find a new TC to teach with in the United States?

A: Find TCs in your area by using the Find a Course tool at heart.org/findacourse.

- Select Classroom or Skills Sessions.
- Select the class you need from the list or filter your search.
- Contact these organizations directly.

Q: If I live outside of the United States, how do I find an International TC to teach with?

A: The first step is to complete the International Training Application and have your International TC send a letter or email of support for your training. The application can be located and completed at cpr.heart.org/en/international.

Q: Can I teach in Canada?

A: US instructors are not permitted to teach in Canada unless they are aligned with a Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada training program. See www.heartandstroke.com for more assistance.

Q: How do I teach internationally (separately from Canada)?

A: Training outside of the country where your TC is located requires special permission because of the inherent quality assurance challenges as well as some potential legal complications.

To obtain approval to teach courses internationally, you will need to submit an International Training Application. To submit the application, log in to the AHA Instructor Network, and select the PAM drop-down menu. Then, select Boundaries and Recognition of Status and scroll to the Training Outside of Home Country section. Access the International Training Application via the link provided in that section.

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