ESD Professional Credential
Exam Handbook

April 2025

Join us in shaping the future of the ESD Industry.

International Association of ESD Professionals
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www.ESDProfessionals.org

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Version April 2025

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About the Association

The International Association of ESD Professionals ("Association" or "IAESDP") is a professional association created to elevate the Empowerment Self Defense industry, expand the reach of the industry, engage the community, and support instructors, instructor-trainers, researchers, writers, advocates, and other violence-prevention professionals who adhere to the principles of Empowerment Self Defense.

The Association is an independent organization upholding a global standard for ESD Professionals. It was formed, in part, to promote a common, well-recognized, global standard of what constitutes professionalism and competence for Empowerment Self Defense ("ESD"). The Association acknowledges ESD Professionals around the world embrace a shared purpose and core principles.

Mission & Vision

The Association mission is to engender trust and public safety in and within the broader Self Defense Industry through standards-setting in Self Defense practice. We accomplish this by providing support services to the ESD Community—including credentialing and continuing education, public awareness campaigns focusing on the benefits of Empowerment Self Defense Practice and increased global reach through official agency funding.

Our vision is to establish Empowerment Self Defense as a key tool in the international work of violence prevention.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Association of ESD Professionals does not discriminate against any applicant or Credential candidate on the basis of race, color, creed, age, sex, gender, national origin, religion, disability, marital status, parental status, ancestry, sexual orientation, military discharge status, source of income, or any other status protected by law. All Credential candidates will be considered solely on impartial criteria developed by the Association, which receives input from the Board, Advisory Council, and members from the international ESD community.

About the ESDP Credential

Credential Definition

A credential is a comprehensive and holistic evaluation of a person's knowledge, skills, and experience in a specific field, including education, training, work history, professional competence, and ethical considerations. A credential is administered by an independent oversight body (such as the IAESDP).

A credential is not the same as a certificate or certification. A certificate program is an education program that provides instruction for a specific aspect of a field and is rooted in one training system. A certificate is granted upon assessment of understanding of that specific methodology (such as going through the ESD Global levels or being a certified IMPACT instructor after evaluation).

A certification is a process that assesses and validates an individual's qualifications that were previously acquired, and assures they meet baseline competencies. Certifications can be granted by professional organizations (such as NWMAF).

ESDP Credential

The ESD Professional Credential is a formal credential that will recognize the ESD practitioner as an ESD Professional ("ESDP" or "Credential"). The Credential is earned upon successful completion of the Credentialing Exam with a passing score and maintained by meeting the requirements set by the ESD Credentialing Committee ("ECC" or "Committee"), an independent body. Neither the Association nor the ECC have a stake in the outcome of any one candidate's Exam results, and all systems and processes are designed to maintain the integrity of the Credential Exam. The Association maintains a register of all professionals holding the Credential.

The Credentialing Program has been developed and maintained through research, consultation, and engagement with the worldwide ESD community, and it continuously follows best practices in credential exam development and maintenance. The ESDP Credential aims to establish a recognized standard in ESD practice, adapts to diverse cultures and training systems, and serves to elevate the professional recognition of ESD-aligned individuals and organizations of all types and sizes.

Achieving the ESDP signals that the candidate's practice is in accordance with globally recognized principles of ESD, and the candidate has demonstrated professional competence, a commitment to social change and violence prevention, and high standards of ethical practice. A Credential also distinguishes Empowerment Self Defense instruction from other types of self-defense offerings.

The Association does not train ESD instructors. The ESDP coexists with existing certificate, certification, and training programs, and gaining the Credential can only enhance an ESD instructor's qualifications and the worldwide recognition of ESD as an established, research-based, and trustworthy system of education.

Scope of Practice

The practice of ESD overlaps with related and tangent professions such as martial arts, healing arts, victim support and advocacy, restorative justice, social work, physical fitness, physical and mental health professionals, human resources, and law enforcement. ESD instructors and practitioners will often use knowledge, skills, and experience in these associated fields to inform or enhance their individual processes and teaching methods.

The Credential awarded by the Association certifies ESD Professionals to practice ESD within the scope of practice described in the statement below.

Scope of Practice Statement:

The ESD professional demonstrates knowledge, skills, and experience in the following areas:

- Instructs participants in multiple emotional, verbal, and social skills useful in creating a sense of empowerment, agency, and self-determination.

- Instructs participants in multiple responses to threatening or harmful interactions with others, including emotional, psychological, mental, and verbal interactions.

- Instructs participants in multiple physical techniques useful for responding to violence against them or others.

- Teaches and advocates for a violence-free world and brings awareness of larger social and violence-prevention issues.

The Association Credentialing Program will not test or recognize knowledge, skills, experience, or material outside the Scope of Practice as outlined above. While an ESD professional may incorporate other related material or knowledge into their practice, those areas of expertise are administered by their own governing bodies.

The ESD Credentialing Committee

The Empowerment Self Defense Credentialing Committee ("ECC" or "Committee") is an independent committee of ESD Professionals, related industry experts, and representatives of the public. The ECC is the decision-making body tasked with making policy decisions related to the Credentialing and Accreditation Programs of the Association. This includes determining best

practices, minimum program curriculum requirements, and conflict resolution pathways for the ESD industry.

The Committee is maintained following the strict guidelines set by the National Committee for Credentialing Agencies and the Institute for Credentialing Excellence. The Committee also meets the requirements set by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). It is through the work of this Committee that the IAESDP aims to establish the ESD methodology as the standard for all self-defense instruction.

Candidate Eligibility Recommendations

The Association recognizes that ESD practitioners enter the profession with a broad range of personal and career experiences; with a variety of differing skills, knowledge, and abilities; and with outlooks formed by varying international and cultural contexts. In addition, the Association is an independent organization that does not promote or align to any one ESD practice or methodology. For these reasons, candidates do not need to have completed any particular training course or certification, nor have a specific job-type in the industry to be eligible to apply for the Exam.

However, it is strongly recommended that candidates both have a clear understanding of ESD principles and practices (that are normally gained through a certificate-granting program of education, mentorship, or other training system) and have experience teaching ESD. The Association suggests candidates have at least two years or 100 hours of ESD education and teaching experience combined prior to taking the exam.

Recommended Education and Experience

Training & Education

The Association recommends that ESD education involve the supervision or mentorship of suitable experts in the field. This training may be supplemented by additional independent practice, study, research, or work in ESD or adjacent fields. ESD education may be obtained from any individual or organization capable of providing it. Regardless of the educational source, candidates should thoroughly review the Core Competencies covered in the Exam.

Martial arts education is not required, though a thorough understanding of physical techniques and their execution is strongly recommended for candidate success.

Experience

To have the most success with the Exam, experience should involve time spent as an ESD instructor, as an assistant to an ESD instructor, or otherwise engaging with ESD participants. Hours of experience may be of any sort and carried out in any capacity, but experience in managing groups of at least ten students would be highly beneficial. Instructional experience can be paid or unpaid.

Specialty experience such as working with certain age groups like seniors or children, or populations like LGBTQ+ is not necessary for successful completion of the Credentialing Exam. Program or curriculum development experience is also not necessary for successful completion of the Exam.

Application and Registration Process

Candidates will find the Credential Exam Application at the Credentialing section of ESDProfessionals.org. Candidates should read the Application and instructions carefully, as incomplete Applications may delay the registration process, which could result in the candidate being unable to take the Exam in their preferred Exam Session.

Applications for all Exam Sessions are accepted on a continuous basis. Incomplete or late applications may cause a candidate's Exam to be delayed to the next Exam Session.

Application Materials

Candidates should have the following ready prior to filling out the Application. Instructions are also provided in the Application:

- ESD training, teaching, and mentorship history

- Professional Resume or Curriculum Vitae

- Headshot to be used in promotional materials, high resolution.

- Action shot to be used in promotional materials (if available), high resolution. This action shot should only include the applicant, unless the other person's face(s) cannot be seen.

- Short biography, written in third person ("She studied at…") and under 250 words. This also will be used in promotional materials.

- Review the exam pricing section of the Association website for the most up-to-date Credential Exam costs. Tiered pricing and scholarships are available, and everyone is encouraged to apply no matter their financial state.

- Background Check **for US Residents only**. For people located outside the United States, a background check is not required at this time. If it is still in progress, candidates may email the completed background check after submitting the application. If they do not have a background check source, the Association recommends candidates use this affordable option: BackgroundReport.com/self (choose the "Check Yourself" option and select "Basic").

- Association Code of Ethics Acknowledgement. Please read The Association Code of Ethics prior to filling out the application.

- Confidentiality Agreement. Please read the Confidentiality Agreement prior to filling out the application.

- To request any accommodations for taking the Exam, indicate preferences and needs in the accommodations section of the application. Please see the Exam Accessibility Policy below for more information.

- To request financial assistance, please have ready: current employer and dates, annual income in US dollars, the amount the Candidate could pay for the exam, the reason

forapplying to receive financial assistance, and a document ready to upload with proof of income and expenses. This upload can be tax documents, paystubs, or as simple as a letter, on letterhead, explaining financial need.

- Names of two references who will be submitting Letters of Recommendation.

Letters of Recommendation

It is required that each candidate request two (2) Letters of Recommendation from individuals who can provide a character reference ("reference"). References could include: ESD colleagues, mentors, trainers, co-instructors, or students; and/or colleagues, supervisors, clients, mentors, or mentees *in any other field*. The aim is to find someone who can speak to the candidate's integrity and has general knowledge of their teaching, empowerment, trauma-informed, social justice, martial arts, or similar experience.

References need to be over 18 and not someone the candidate has a direct familial or romantic relationship with such as a spouse or relationship partner (long or short-term), parent, sibling, or child. **References only need to fill out a short online form, they should not send a letter.**

Exam Registration Process

- Apply on the Association Website and include all supporting documents and acknowledgements. If aiming for a specific Exam Session, please make sure to have the Application in by the due date.

- Ask references to submit Letters of Recommendation as soon as they can, and no later than the application due date.

- The Application and 2 Letters of Recommendation will be reviewed by the credentialing program staff. They will request additional information or documents if needed.

- When the Application is complete, candidates will be sent confirmation that the Application has been accepted, and they may take the Credentialing Exam at the indicated Exam Session.

- Candidates will be sent an Invoice link to provide payment for the Credential Exam upon Application acceptance.

- Before the Exam Session opens, candidates will receive an email with the link to a couple of short systems tests. It is recommended the candidate complete the tests prior to taking the Exam to make sure they understand how to navigate the software and ensure device compatibility.

- Prior to the Exam Session, the candidate will receive an email with instructions for how and when to access the Exam.

Any questions concerning any step of the application or registration process should be directed to credentials@esdprofessionals.org.

Confidentiality of the Exam

It is critical to the integrity of the Exam and the Association Credentialing Program that the Exam and all its contents remain confidential. All Exam candidates read and sign the Association Confidentiality Policy when they submit their application. This protects the integrity and confidentiality of the IAESDP Credentialing Exam before, during, and after the Exam process. In the rare instance that a candidate violates the Confidentiality Policy, the ECC will consider whether nullification of exam scores, revocation of Credentials, or a ban on future Credential application and exam opportunities is appropriate.

Exam Accessibility Policy

Accommodation Requests

The Association believes in equality of opportunity and access through a commitment to interacting with all people in a way that honors dignity and independence. The Association endeavors to maintain an environment in which everyone feels safe and welcome.

Submit Accommodation requests on the Application form. The Association will work with individuals to remove barriers to accessibility and provide individualized support as needed. Accommodations are available for both virtual and in-person test-takers. No negative consequences or penalties in scoring will be imposed upon candidates who request accommodation.

The Association will do its best to honor all accessibility and accommodation requests, with the caveat that the Exam is hosted on a third-party software that the Association does not have design or programming control over.

The following outlines some of the provisions available:

- Additional breaks to access medications, nutrition, hydration, or movement
- Additional time to complete the exam
- Designated support person, translator, or interpreter
- Option to take the Exam in more than two sittings
- Use of approved assistive devices

The Exam administrator will work with candidates to create individualized accessibility plans based on the needs of the candidate and working within the limitations of the software platform.

Language Accessibility

Currently the Exam content, Exam materials and handbook, communications about the Exam, and software interface are only available in English.

The Association is committed to ensuring the Credentialing Exam is available in multiple languages. The Association is in the process of translating the Exam, please check the website or contact the Credentialing Program (credentials@esdprofessionals.org) for more information.

Exam Schedule and Timing

Exam Session Schedule

The Association of ESD Professionals holds exams at least four times each year. Virtual Exam Sessions will consist of a one-week window of time in which candidates can take the exam. No matter the candidate's time zone, the candidate can choose when to take each Section of the Exam that is at a convenient time for them.

In any year, the Virtual Exam Sessions are generally scheduled:

- Session One: First Quarter, held in January, February, or March

- Session Two: Second Quarter, held in April, May, or June

- Session Three: Third Quarter, held in July, August, or September

- Session Four: Fourth Quarter, held in October, November, or December

The Association also may hold special Exam Sessions at any time, virtually or in person, for specific groups, during events, or to accommodate other needs of the ESD community.

Exam Timing

As of this writing, the Exam has been split into two separate sections to allow for flexibility for candidates.

The entire Exam takes approximately 3 to 5 hours to complete, with each Section taking about 1.5 to 2.5 hours. For some, the Exam may take more time. If a candidate is concerned that they may take more than 5 hours *for each section* (10 hours total), please let the administrator know before starting the Exam so they can provide timing accommodations in the software.

The time it takes to complete the Exam is not taken into account when scoring.

During the week-long exam session window, candidates may choose to take the Exam in two ways:

- Option 1: By taking each section at separate times during the week. This allows for flexible scheduling, especially for those that may need more time to take the Exam or who have busier schedules. The candidate needs to ensure they do not forget to take the second section.

- Option 2: By sitting for both sections at the same time. This would mean the candidate can finish the exam all at once. The candidate can take a break of any length between sections. The candidate needs to ensure they allow for enough time to finish the entire exam in the session, because the Exam cannot be restarted if closed out.

For both options: Once the section has been started, it cannot be restarted. Should the candidate exit out, close the browser, or fail to complete the Exam section in the time given, the Association cannot guarantee their responses will be saved, that they can restart the Exam, or that the Exam can be graded. If the test taker needs to take a short break, they are to leave the browser open; there is no way to pause the test clock.

If there is an emergency and the test taker has to leave a test session before finishing, they should reach out to the Exam administrator as soon as possible.

Administration of Exam

The ESDP Credential Exam is held online in a cloud-based software platform designed to be accessible for people around the world and which allows proctoring for virtual Exam takers.

Currently, the Exam is hosted in <u>Mercer | Mettl.</u>

Proctoring

The Credential Exam is "proctored," which means the exam-taking is supervised by a person or software to ensure integrity, prevent cheating, and verify the identity of the exam-taker.

Currently, virtual Exams use remote AI (recorded artificial intelligence) proctoring through the test-taking software to monitor the candidate's:

- Screen: to prevent accessing websites and other documents
- Webcam: to identify cheating via looking at phone, notes, or other sources
- Audio: to identify if the test-taker is talking to someone
- Verify identity: through taking a screenshot of the test taker and their ID before the start of the Exam.

Virtual proctoring data is not shared with any third parties. The data is reviewed by the credential program administrator. If there is suspected cheating, the relevant screenshots or data will be shared with the ECC to review for disciplinary actions.

In person Exam proctoring will involve a designated and trained person in the testing room overseeing the Exam process, verifying identities, and monitoring candidates.

Technical Considerations

The following technical considerations will help produce a smooth test-taking procedure:

Device: The Exam is best taken on a laptop or desktop computer that has a webcam and microphone, either built-in or separate hardware. Candidates should contact the Credentialing Program as soon as possible if they do not have access to a desktop or laptop or if the device doesn't have a microphone and webcam.

Browser Settings:
- Candidates should take the test in the most recent version of Chrome, Firefox, or Safari.

- Turn off the pop-up blocker or permit pop-ups for the software platform in browser settings, otherwise the test window may fail to open.

- Disable plugins such as Grammarly or LanguageTool before beginning the Exam as they may prevent saving.

- Close all tabs and other programs on the device before beginning the Exam. Navigating outside of the Exam window at any time will result in a warning. If the activity persists, the Exam will be closed and may not considered for scoring.

- Don't refresh the webpage at any time, as it will submit and close out the Exam.

Internet: Ensure a stable internet connection with a minimum speed of 512 kbps. Test internet connection speeds here: https://fast.com/. **Exam responses are automatically saved. If there is a brief disconnection due to internet connectivity issues, the candidate will be able to resume the exam without contacting the Credentialing staff.**

Permissions: Candidates will be monitored via video/screen feed, and audio during the session. Candidates will need to allow webcam, audio, and screen sharing with the software. When prompted, allow screen capture, and select "entire screen."

Identity Verifications: Before taking each section of the Exam, the software will ask to take a screenshot of the candidate's face and another of an identity card to verify the identity of the individual taking the Exam. The identity card can include a government issued ID, a student or military ID, a workplace security badge, or other. If this is a hardship or if there are concerns about this requirement, please reach out to the Credentialing program.

Exam Links: Candidates will be emailed two Exam links, one for each Section. Each Exam link is single use. Once the candidate begins the Exam section, it cannot be rescheduled. Should the candidate exit out of the exam, close the browser, or fail to complete the exam, the Association cannot guarantee the Exam can be validated.

If the candidate has trouble with internet connection, software, or other problems, the candidate does have a short period of time in which they can attempt to restart the Exam after a crash or technical issue. If the issue is longer-lasting (hours to days), the candidate should contact the Credential program. Staff will respond as soon as possible, taking into consideration time zone differences. Every effort will be made to reschedule uncompleted sections.

Breaks: Candidates are allowed to take brief breaks during the exam. The AI proctoring software will track the length of time the test taker is not present.

Rescheduling, Cancelation & Refund Policy

Rescheduling the Exam

After applying, Candidates may reschedule to the next Exam Session up to a week before the opening of the Session by notifying the Association. If something comes up within seven days or after the start of the Exam Session, the Association will work with the candidate to find a solution.

Cancellation

After submitting an Application, candidates may cancel their Exam Session at any time *prior to payment*. Once cancelled, the candidate can either withdraw their Application or keep the Application held for up to one year after the submission date.

Refunds

The Association will consider refund requests on a case-by-case basis prior to the start of the candidate's chosen Exam Session. Please contact the Association to discuss the circumstances.

Exam Structure & Overview

Exam Sections & Modules

The exam consists of five modules. The Association has currently split the five modules into two sections in order to allow for more flexible test taking.

Exam Section One

- **Module 1: Emotional, Verbal, and Social Skills.** The purpose of ESD; how to differentiate ESD from other forms of self-defense; communication; intuition; boundaries; spectrum of violence; intimate partner violence; sexual assault; emotional manipulation; and other related topics.

- **Module 2: Physical Skills.** When it is appropriate to use physical techniques; context and risk evaluation; goal to escape safely; choosing effective physical techniques; how to execute and teach common techniques such as palm heel strike, eye strike, groin strike, rear elbow strike, strangulation response; misconceptions about physical attacks and responses; what to do after a physical confrontation; and other related topics.

Exam Section Two:

- **Module 3: Safety and Trauma-Sensitivity**. Physical safety in the teaching environment; safety equipment; safety flaws; accommodating student injuries or limitations; safe behavior with physical interactions; emotional safety; trauma sensitivity; and other related topics.

- **Module 4: Ethics and Social Change.** Differentiating ethics, morality, expected behaviors; inclusion and equity; appropriate touch; confidentiality; sexual harassment; intimate relationships; child abuse; reporting; recognizing own bias; intersectionality; gender/identity-based violence; IAESDP Code of Ethics; and other related topics.

- **Module 5: Classroom Management.** Class plans and curriculum development; setting up role play; emergency reporting; time management; co-teaching; body positivity; movement; and other related topics.

Question Types

The Exam consists of multiple choice and open response questions.

Multiple Choice questions may appear too complicated to easily answer or may appear to have more than one correct answer. Candidates are encouraged to select their answers based on the concept being tested in the question and the module topic (found at the top left of each page or in the section instructions). There will always be one option that best addresses the concept and topic, according to current, widely accepted ESD practices.

Open Response questions can usually be answered with a paragraph or two. Candidates are also welcome to provide answers in list form when appropriate. Lengthy responses are not required. **All open response questions will be graded on content alone and *there are no penalties for style, grammar, or spelling*.** Test takers are not required to explain the reasoning for responses. The Exam is intended to test the "what" and not the "why".

Sample Question

The Exam is designed to evaluate a candidate's understanding and knowledge of the core subject areas listed in the Core Competencies and how those concepts are put into practice.

ESD concepts can be highly nuanced, dependent on many variables, and subject to the context of each individual situation. Some questions, especially single-select multiple choice, may present more than one answer that seems to be correct. These types of questions often leave a candidate wishing they could respond with, "it depends." The Exam questions are designed to test knowledge of concepts, not to provide specific prescriptions or outcomes. Candidates are encouraged to select their answers based on the concept being tested and which of the possible answers best illustrates that concept.

Sample Question & Answer

Question: Sam and Alex enjoyed dinner and several alcoholic drinks at Sam's apartment and are now relaxing on the sofa. Sam would like to initiate sexual intimacy. Which of the following best demonstrates respect for consent in this situation?

    A. A subtle stroke on Alex's thigh, then waiting for a response.

    B. Leaning over to kiss Alex.

    C. Saying, "I would like to have sex with you tonight."

    D. Saying, "I would enjoy being intimate with you, but we have had too much to drink."

Answer and Reasoning: Option D is the correct answer because, of those provided, it best demonstrates the concept of consent. Within the context of the relationship between Sam and Alex, each of these various ways of initiating sexual intimacy might be accepted or even welcomed. One or more answers may have initiated a strong reaction. However, there is only one best answer based on understanding the broad concepts of consent. Answer B may be understood as an acceptable invitation in Sam and Alex's relationship, but because it is unilateral, it does not allow for the possibility of mutual consent. Answers A and C provide for Alex's response and thus demonstrate at least the possibility for mutual consent. Only answer D provides for the complete understanding that consent is not possible when one (or both) partners may be incapacitated. Answer D demonstrates the broadest knowledge of the concept of consent and is the best answer.

Exam Content: Core Competencies

The Association recommends candidates have a comprehensive knowledge of the following subject matters which have been identified as Core Competencies for the profession. The Core Competencies List (otherwise known as Subject Matter List) was created through an interactive process involving lively discussions among Advisory Council members, consultation with additional ESD experts from around the world, and staff research.

Module 1: Emotional, Verbal, and Social Skills

- Abuse and intimate partner violence
- Active disengagement (Run principle)
- Active sharing (Tell principle)
- Assertiveness, passivity, aggression, including impact on interactions with others
- Boundaries including preparation, flexibility, setting, violations
- Communication formula
- Confident body language
- Consent
- De-escalation
- Differentiating ESD from other forms of self-defense or self-protection
- Effective confrontation (Fight principle)
- Emotional awareness (Think principle)
- Emotional manipulation
- Grooming
- Intervention
- Intuition
- Micro-aggressions / Identity-based aggressions
- Positive affirmations
- Purpose of ESD
- Sexual assault
- Situational awareness
- Spectrum of violence
- Stalking
- Street harassment
- Two sides to every story mythology
- Use of voice (Yell principle)

Module Two: Physical Skills

- Choosing effective physical techniques
- Defensive or ready stance
- Effective physical tools of the body
- Evaluation of context and risk

- Front elbow strikes
- Front/rear rotating elbow strikes
- Goal in a physical altercation to escape safely
- Knee strike
- Misconceptions about physical attacks and responses
- Palm heel strike
- Pinch finger eye strike
- Principles of fighting from the ground
- Rear elbow strikes
- Release from wrist grab
- Response to a hair or scarf grab
- Response to body grab from behind
- Side fist strike (Hammer fist)
- Soft techniques and appropriate use of them
- Steps to take after a physical confrontation ends
- Strangulation response
- Techniques not recommended
- Tools of surroundings
- Vulnerable targets
- When it is appropriate to use physical techniques

Module Three: Physical and Emotional Safety

- Adaptive/stress response
- Alternate movements to accommodate participant injuries or limitations
- Emotional safety for inclusive practice
- Emotional safety in the teaching environment
- Emotional safety when sharing and receiving personal stories
- Emotional safety with role-play
- General plan to address trauma in the classroom
- Holding pads safely
- How to promote stable and safe relationships
- Importance of ice-breaker or get-to-know-you exercises
- Importance of opening circle
- Managing vicarious and personal trauma
- Modeling safe behavior with physical interactions
- Physical safety in the teaching environment
- Physical signs/symptoms of trauma response
- Principles of sensitivity to trauma
- Safety equipment
- Safety flaws when practicing physical technique
- Specific plan to address an individual trauma-response event

- Warm-ups
- Window of tolerance

Module Four: Ethics and Social Change

- Appropriate touch
- Child abuse
- Confidentiality
- Cultural sensitivity/cultural humility
- Differentiating ethics, morality, expected behaviors
- Ensuring your own health
- Ethical financial practice
- Gender-based violence
- IAESDP Code of Ethics
- Identity-based violence
- Importance of having an ethics policy
- Inclusion and equity
- Intersectionality
- Intimate partner violence
- Intimate relationships with colleagues and peers
- Intimate relationships with participants
- Instructor self-care
- On-going education
- Physical abuse
- Recognizing your own biases
- Reporting
- Research and evidence-based practice
- Sexual harassment
- Statistics and laws (local)
- Teaching what you do not know

Module Five: Classroom Management

- Adaptability
- Body positivity and movement
- Collaboration in curricula development
- Contingency planning
- Co-teaching
- Creating exercises and games that are relevant
- Emergency reporting
- Energy level and pacing

- How to adapt class plans for different groups
- How to create class plans
- Layering of concepts
- Record-keeping
- Scope of practice
- Setting up role-play
- Teacher v. authority
- The purpose and use of games and play
- Time management
- Updating curriculum on a regular basis
- Value of scenarios and role-play

Exam Security Policy

To keep the ESDP Exam fair and to make sure all candidates have the same chance to demonstrate their knowledge without an unjust advantage, the Association asks all Exam takers to ensure they follow best ESD practices of confidentiality, ethics, and integrity.

The Exam is intended to be an assessment of an ESD practitioner's knowledge, skills, and abilities at the moment in time in which they take the Exam. This is not something that can be studied for. Sharing Exam questions or answers or cheating on the Exam compromises the credibility of the Exam for all ESD Professionals. It also harms the ESD experts around the world who contribute(d) to the creation, grading, and maintenance of the Exam; and it harms the integrity of ESD as a practice.

Cheating on the Exam includes, but is not limited to:

- Doing "live" research during the Exam by accessing webpages, books, notes, making calls, talking to someone in the room, asking a smart speaker or virtual assistant (Alexa, Echo, Siri) or using other sources in any way.
- Leaving the test-taking screen for a "break" but using that time to conduct research or ask someone the answer to a question.
- Obtaining or attempting to obtain information about specific questions on the Exam from other test-takers or Credentialed Professionals.
- Taking screenshots, videos, or photographs of the Exam questions, or writing down the questions and/or answer options to purposely share with another candidate.
- Submitting the writing of another test-taker or a published or unpublished source without citation.
- Taking the Exam for someone else.
- Using AI (such as chat.gpt) to answer multiple choice questions or draft answers for open response questions.
- Purposefully sabotaging connection to the Exam software such as unplugging a device, stopping internet connection, or closing the browser window in order to allow time to research an answer.

Cheating will be reviewed by the ECC Review Committee who will determine the consequences. Consequences of cheating may include the removal of or not granting of a Credential at any time.

Exam Results

Scoring / Grading Process

To receive an overall passing grade, the candidate must receive a passing score on each of the five Modules of the Exam.

Multiple choice questions are graded against pre-determined answers using an automated process.

Open response questions are graded by Credentialed ESD peers following a detailed scoring rubric in a blind process. The blind marking process means graders do not know who wrote the open response answers, and candidates will not know who graded their exam.

Maintaining the integrity of grading is a key component of the ECC and IAESDP. Because most people know of one another in the current ESD industry, the following processes are in place to preserve confidentiality:

- Credentialed ESD Professionals are eligible to be graders if they do not have knowledge of the test takers through their specific role working or volunteering with the IAESDP or by providing a reference for one of that Exam Session's candidates.

- Graders follow a scoring rubric that allows for nuance and cultural context. They are instructed to ignore style, spelling, and grammar, and to be aware of personal biases.

- All exams are graded a minimum of two times, and ideally three to five times. This addresses the idea that some graders might be too "easy" or too "hard" on the candidate.

- Test takers are encouraged to not reveal who they are, their affiliations, or their location when answering open response questions.

- To maintain the integrity of other test-takers, candidates may not reveal test components to anyone after taking the exam, including exam questions and answers.

- Only the IAESDP Credentialing staff member manages the blind grading process and score calculations.

Notification of Results

Candidates can expect to be notified of Exam results by email within 30 to 45 days of the final day of the Exam Session. Because the open response questions are graded by people with their own busy ESD lives and organizations, the IAESDP asks for patience while waiting for Exam results.

The Exam is pass/fail, and the results provided will indicate a pass or fail for each Module and for the Exam overall. A candidate needs to pass all five Modules to pass the Exam and be granted the Credential.

Re-Taking the Exam

Full Exam: When a candidate does not pass two or more Modules, they may re-take the full Exam. Candidates are strongly encouraged to complete additional study, education, mentorship, or experience before attempting the Exam a second time. When re-taking the full Exam within one year, candidates need not reapply or pay a second time. When re-taking the full Exam after one year, candidates need to apply and pay again. Candidates who fail the Exam twice consecutively will be required to demonstrate additional education, experience, mentorship, or similar investment in their practice.

One Module: Candidates receiving an unsuccessful score on only one Module will not be required to retake the entire exam. Instead, candidates will be allowed to re-take just the Module which they failed to receive a passing score and gain the full Credential. These candidates are encouraged to acquire more education in the Core Competencies of that specific topic area before re-attempting the Module. If re-taking one Module within one year of the original attempt, candidates need not reapply or pay a second time. If re-taking the one Module after one year, further payment may be required by the IAESDP but will not be equal to the full Exam cost originally paid.

Grievances & Appealing Exam Results

All appeals must be filed within 90 days of the Exam result notification. Appeals will be adjudicated by the Review Panel assigned by the ESD Credentialing Committee. The Review Panel will not include graders of the Exam in question. The Review Process will be conducted in as fair and impartial a manner as possible.

Celebrating the Credential

Awarding Credentials

Upon gaining a passing score on the Exam, candidates will be sent their digital ESDP Credential through Accredible, an online badging and Credential Certificate platform. Through Accredible, candidates can download their Credential Certificate in PDF form to be shared online or printed. They can also download their Credential Badge, which can be placed on sites like LinkedIn to showcase their achievement.

The Association does not print Certificates and send them to ESD Professionals.

Announcing Credentials

The Association will announce new Credentialed ESD Professionals on the website and social media. ESDPs are asked to also share with their networks.

Citing the Credential

Successful candidates are awarded an ESD Professional Credential ("ESDP"). Once a candidate has earned an ESDP, they may place "ESDP" after their name to indicate their qualifications. Example: Hana Devi-Smith, ESDP. It is the responsibility of all credentialed professionals to maintain their Credential through the Association's continuing education program and fulfill the continuing education requirements. Should a candidate fail to do so, they will no longer be permitted to use the ESDP mark.

However, credentialed professionals who are no longer practicing ESD may use the mark indefinitely, as long as they follow it with "emeritus," like this: Hana Devi-Smith, ESDP, Emeritus.

Credential Renewal

Credentials must be renewed every three years. To renew credentials, ESD professionals will fulfill continuing education requirements. Development of the Continuing Education component of the Credentialing Program is ongoing.

An Invitation to Participate

The Association has ongoing opportunities available for those wishing to participate in the continuing development, evaluation, and growth of the Credentialing and Accreditation Programs.

ECC

The ESD Credentialing Committee ("ECC") is an independent body made up of volunteers from the international ESD community. The ECC is instrumental in the development of the Credentialing Program, including the Exam, Continuing Education, and Accreditation Programs. The ECC maintains strong links of communication between the Association, Credentialed Professionals, and the ESD community.

The Advisory Council positions are volunteer and require a commitment of approximately 25 hours per year.

Credentialing Pool

Members of the Association's Credentialing Pool participate in exam question development and review and grading of exams. Members of the Credentialing Pool volunteer to help with these tasks as needed and as their availability allows.

To be eligible to join the Credentialing Pool, an individual must have earned a Credential. The Credentialing Program will reach out to Credentialed Professionals periodically to gauge their availability and interest in grading exams or assisting with other projects.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much does the Exam cost?

Please check the Credentialing section of the [Association website](#) for the most current Exam prices. The Association is committed to making the Exam as accessible as possible for internationally located practitioners in all income levels and all economic situations. Tiered pricing levels, scholarships, and Assocation member discounts are all available to help *every* candidate achieve their goals of being Credentialed. If there is a concern about pricing, please contact the Credentialing Program to discuss options.

I am just starting out my ESD career, is this Exam for me?

The Association strongly recommends, but does not require, that candidates apply when they have completed at least two years or 100 hours of ESD experience and education, combined. Another way to assess readiness is that a candidate should be able to discuss or define at least 90% of the [Core Competencies List](#) before applying.

The Association recognizes that many ESD practitioners may have taught themselves, learned from fellow professionals outside of formal certificate programs, or are the trailblazers who created and developed their own Empowerment Self Defense programs. Therefore, we do not have a blanket recommendation with regard to ESD education. However, for those who are newer to ESD, we may recommend some formal training or mentorship with ESD instructors or organizations, especially those with Accredited instructor training programs.

How do I study for the Exam?

The Exam is designed to test a candidate's ESD-based Knowledge (factual or theoretical understanding), Skills (practical proficiencies developed through training and experience), and Abilities (the practice or the capacity to perform the tasks related to the work). Therefore, the way to prepare for the Exam is to have experience learning and teaching ESD practices.

Since candidates really want to study, the Association also suggests, but in no way requires, that candidates go through the Core Competencies List and think about, talk through, or write a short description, definition, or experience related to each. If there are gaps in knowledge of terms, the candidate can reach out to fellow instructors to discuss. Candidates who know 90% or more of the Core Competencies are probably ready to take the Exam.

How do I pass the Exam?

The Exam is pass/fail. A candidate must pass each module to pass the entire exam, but a perfect score is not required.

The Exam is graded in two ways: 1) multiple-choice questions are graded by the software, and 2) open response questions are graded by Credentialed ESD peers who are members of the Credential Pool. They will use an answer key, and all Exams are graded by multiple people.

What happens if I fail the Exam?

The Association and the ECC want every candidate to succeed—with the Exam and in their ESD career. Therefore, a candidate may always re-take if they do not pass the whole Exam or redo one Module if they only failed to pass one of the five. There is no limit to how many times a candidate can retake the exam, but the Association doesn't expect this to happen very often.

Is it true I'm going to be recorded while taking the Exam online?

Who is watching the recordings? Integrity is a core value for the IAESDP as for the entire ESD industry. The Association and ECC have extensively researched exam-taking protocol to find the right solution for offering an Exam to a global ESD community who reside in various time zones and have busy lives. To accurately test an ESD practitioner's *own* knowledge, skills, and abilities, it's vital the Exam and processes be free from cheating or ethics violations.

Virtual Exam sessions, therefore, are *proctored* by the test administration software. Proctoring is a cheating reduction system that records testing and flags issues through artificial intelligence. The test-taker's screen, audio, and video are recorded, and the software also performs simple identity checks. ONLY the Association Exam Administrator will review concerning activity flagged with the AI proctoring software. No one at the software company is reviewing Association materials.

If any unethical behavior is identified, it will be reviewed by the ECC Review Panel.

In person Exam sessions will be proctored through the observation of a trained individual who will be in the room while the testing is taking place.

Feel free to reach out if there are any questions about how the Exam is administered and proctored.

I have a disability or health issue, can I ask for accommodations to more successfully take the Exam?

Accessibility is a high priority for the Association. Accommodations can be made for exam takers who suffer from test anxiety, speak English as a second language, or need accommodations for health or disability, or for any other reason.

Please indicate on the Exam Application the accommodation needed. If there isn't a procedure in place, the Association will work with the applicant to find a solution.

Does the Credentialing Exam compete or interfere with existing ESD Certificate Programs?

Can I still take the Exam if I have a Certification through one or more organizations like NWMAF, ESD Global, IMPACT, ASSERT, or others? The ESDP Credential in no way interferes or competes with existing programs. In fact, the Association wants to drive more participants to the many existing Certificate Programs to help expand the reach of ESD and make ESD the self-defense industry standard around the world. **Gaining the Credential only adds to the qualifications of an ESD instructor or trainer.**

Part of the mission of the IAESDP and the Credentialing Program is to bring attention, more clients, and more financial success to ESD practitioners. For those relatively new to ESD, it is recommended that credential candidates *first* train and earn a certificate from ESD instructor-trainers and organizations prior to taking the Association's Credential Exam.

ESD certificate programs (such as NWMAF, ESD Global, ESD organizations worldwide, IMPACT chapters worldwide, ASSERT, and the other organizations and individuals training people how to teach ESD) are to the Association credentialing program what law schools are to the bar exam. One must FIRST go to law school, THEN they take the bar exam. Being trained in ESD first prepares individuals for teaching ESD, and training provides the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful instructors in the field. It is not an either-or equation.

The Association strives to create a higher demand for certificate and training programs through the Credentialing program. The Exam will not interfere or compete with certificate and training programs. Everyone benefits as everyone in the field works together to broaden the reach of ESD to the millions of people throughout the world who need it.

Why should I bother to get the ESDP Credential?

Through Credentialing and other programs, the Association shows the world the value of ESD and makes it more broadly sought as a legitimate and effective way to combat and reduce violence. The Association strives to promote a common, well-recognized, global standard of what constitutes professionalism and competence for ESD instructors and other

ESD Professionals. Gaining the Credential signals that an ESD Professional behaves in accordance with globally recognized principles of ESD, and they demonstrate professional competence, a commitment to social change and violence prevention, and high standards of ethical practice.

The Credential provides the ESD industry (including instructors, trainers, and certificate programs) with an objective, standardized measure of competency. Policymakers, ESD clients, and institutions (such as schools, universities, NGOs, governments, and corporations) will see that an ESD professional has been tested by an independent body. They don't need to sort out what qualities, experience, or training indicate competence in ESD; they can simply look to a universal Credential.

In addition, the existence of the Association, the Credentialing program, Accreditation Program, and Code of Ethics helps institutions justify sponsoring ESD courses and helps policymakers propose violence-prevention programs. Credentialing protects the reputations of ESD instructors and organizations by issuing credentials only to those who understand and practice the principles and ethics of ESD.

The ESDP Credential is trustworthy because the Association is an independent industry organization, meaning the Association does not offer ESD training and has no stake in the outcome of any one Credential Exam. The IAESDP and the independent ESD Credentialing Committee adhere to the strict guidelines set by the National Committee for Credentialing Agencies, the Institute for Credentialing Excellence, and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). The IAESDP continuously partners with industry leaders, new instructors, international consultants in related fields, and the general public to better programs and help the ESD industry as a whole.

Ultimately, earning a Credential will help an ESD Professional find more work, gain recognition, and achieve more success in their ESD career than they would without the Credential.

Acknowledgements

Thank you for participating in the IAESDP Credentialing Program. The Association believes the ESDP Credential will help ESD professionals build their client base and enjoy great success in their ESD practices. As the Credentialing Program grows, so too will the reach of ESD worldwide.

The Association wishes to thank Sheila Watson who worked tirelessly for two years to create the Credentialing Program. Watson educated herself about credentialing rules, practices, and procedures, consulted with a psychometrician, and consulted with ESD experts from all over the world through her work with the original Credentialing Advisory Council and the group of exam testers who became the first members of the Credentialing Pool. Watson did all this according to the highest ethical standards while conducting herself with exemplary decorum and integrity. This program would not exist without Watson.

The Association also wishes to thank past and present members of the Association's Board of Directors and ECC for championing the Credentialing Program and the Exam.

The success of the Credentialing Exam could not be possible without the work of the founding Credentialing Advisory Council and the numerous volunteers from around the globe who participated in the development, review, and testing of the Exam and Core Competencies.

The Association would also like to thank consulting psychometrician Amanda Dainis with Dainis & Company, Inc.

Finally, the Association would like to thank Yehudit Zicklin-Sidikman for her vision, her perseverance, and her incredible generosity. Without her, none of this would be possible. Her work to further the ESD mission to prevent violence is unparalleled. We talk about saving the world; Zicklin-Sidikman makes it happen.

Our Member Services

ESDP Credentials

International ESD Standards Credentials give your clients peace of mind, knowing that you are a member of a highly skilled industry.

International Directory

ESD Instructors, Certificate Programs, and Events from around the world, all in one easy to navigate, lead-generating online listing.

The Idea Bridge

A continuing Education & Community Platform for ESD Professionals that functions like SkillShare but focuses on the training that matters most to you.

WebESD

Low-cost website and email hosting services for ESD Professionals, starting as low as $10/ month.

Business Toolkits

From legal templates to easy-to-follow How-Tos guide you through some of the most asked questions as you start your ESD Career.

Liability Insurance

Affordable liability insurance for the ESD Professional is now available with your very own, dedicated Insurance Consultant.

Become a Member Today

We welcome everyone working in the ESD profession, whether you are an instructor, instructor-trainer, business owner, or volunteer. If you are working in the violence-prevention arena and believe in the principles of ESD, the IAESDP is your home!