

## Become a prevention and addiction treatment professional

*Tay Bian How<sup>1</sup>, Josephine Choong Lean Keow<sup>1</sup>.*

*<sup>1</sup>International Centre for Credentialing and Education of Addiction Professionals.*

Correspondence email: [bian.howtay@colomboplan.org](mailto:bian.howtay@colomboplan.org)

Does your present job require you to develop, coordinate and implement educational programmes to prevent substance use and other related risk behaviours in your school, workplace and community? Or, are you presently working as a social worker, counsellor, peer helper or health staff in a drug treatment and rehabilitation setting?

Do you know whether your current practices are science-based or evidence-based?

Do you aspire to be recognised as a professional in your field of expertise? In other words, are you aiming to be credentialed in your professional work?

If so, we are sure that you have several questions that you would like to have answers to.

**Question 1:** Which credentialing agency can help me achieve my aspiration to be a certified Drug Demand Reduction Professional?

**Answer:** Have you heard of the International Centre for Certification and Education of Addiction Professionals (ICCE) of the Colombo Plan? ICCE was established in February 2009 as the training and credentialing arm of the Drug Advisory Programme. In addition, ICCE has a prominent role in the global initiative funded by the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), the US Department of State to develop, expand, and professionalise the field of drug demand reduction.

With the status of an International Certified Education Provider of the United States National Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counsellors (NAADAC) and National Certification Commission of Addiction Professionals (NCCAP), ICCE, through the assistance of NAADAC, has developed three levels of credentialing for treatment professionals and two levels of credentialing for prevention specialists. In its effort to effectively manage the certification examinations for these five levels, ICCE has contracted the services of the Professional Testing Centre (PTC), New York, USA, to manage examinations for the various certification levels.

**Question 2:** Is there an autonomous body to regulate the policy and standards in the credentialing of addiction professionals?

**Answer:** Yes. The ICCE Commission which consists of representatives who are professionals in the field, policy makers from participating countries and education providers, meet twice a year to regulate the policies and procedures for certification, approve the relevant training curricula for both prevention and treatment, and enforce a set code of ethics for addiction professionals.

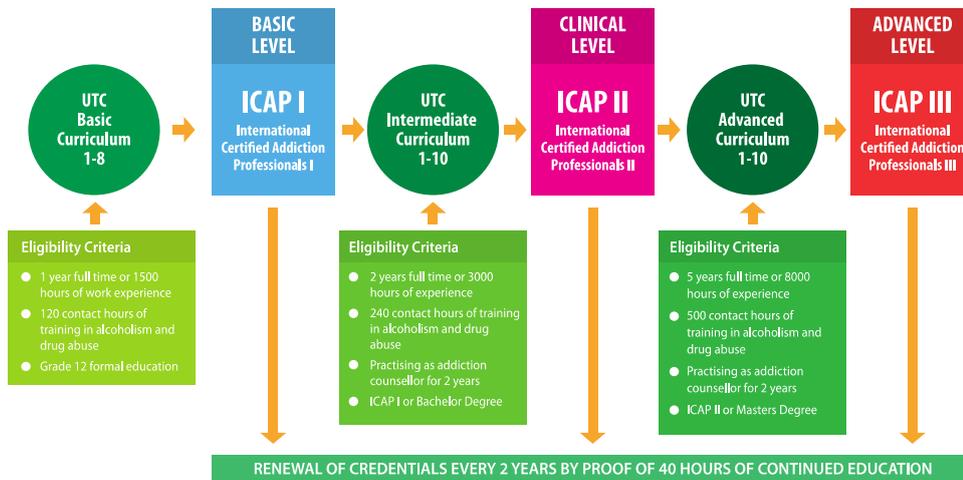
**Question 3:** What credentials are currently available? Do they cater for prevention and treatment?

**Answer:** Currently, ICCE has credentials for both prevention and treatment practitioners. Basically, prevention professionals fall into two categories, i.e. Prevention Specialists who implement prevention interventions and/or policies, and Prevention Coordinators who coordinate and supervise prevention interventions in the community or country. ICCE is currently developing two levels of credentials and certification examinations, namely, (i) Implementer Level - International Certified Prevention Specialist I (ICPS I); and (ii) Coordinator Level - International Certified Prevention Specialist II (ICPS II).

Interested candidates for the ICPS I or ICPS II are required to complete the full UPC - 1 training series comprising nine curricula. If they so wish, they may then proceed to take the endorsement examinations in any one of the seven prevention tracks offered in the UPC - 2 training series. The figure below illustrates the ICPS certification process.

On the other hand, the three levels of credentials and certification examinations available for treatment professionals are: (i) Basic Level – International Certified Addiction Professionals I (ICAP I); (ii) Clinical Level – International Certified Addiction Professionals II (ICAP II); and (iii) Advanced/Master Level – International Certified Addiction Professionals III (ICAP III) as shown in the figure below.

**Figure 1. Advanced/Master Level – International Certified Addiction Professionals III (ICAP III)**



In addition, ICCE also offers a credential named Recovery Coach (RC), which is shaped after the Peer Recovery Specialist credential of NCCAP. Endorsements related to Clinical Supervision will soon be made available for those qualified at the Clinical Level.

**Question 4:** What kind of training should I attend to be part of the certification process?

**Answer:** Aligned with the two types of credentialing available, ICCE offers two curricula, namely the Universal Prevention Curriculum for Substance Use (UPC) for prevention specialists and the Universal Treatment Curriculum for Substance Use Disorders (UTC) for treatment professionals.

Prevention specialist candidates who are sitting for the ICPS 1 or ICPS 2 will be tested on the UPC - 1 consisting of the following: (i) Introduction to Prevention Science (35 hours); (ii) Physiology and Pharmacology for Prevention Specialists (20 hours); (iii) Monitoring and Evaluation of Prevention Interventions and Policies (35 hours); (iv) Family-based Prevention Interventions (32 hours); (v) School-based Prevention Interventions (35 hours); (vi) Workplace-based Prevention Interventions (32 hours); (vii) Environment-based Prevention Interventions (20 hours); (viii) Media-based Prevention Interventions (20 hours); and (ix) Community-based Prevention Implementation Systems (35 hours). For the Endorsement, certified ICPS 1 or ICPS 2 prevention professionals can register for one of the seven tracks contained in the UPC - 2, viz: (i) Monitoring and Evaluation Prevention Specialist (100 hours); (ii) Family-based Prevention Specialist (140 hours)

(iii) School-based Prevention Specialist (140 hours); (iv) Workplace-based Prevention Specialist (130 hours); (v) Environmental Prevention Specialist (110 hours); (vi) Media Prevention Specialist (115 hours); and (vii) Community-based Prevention Specialist (150 hours).

In comparison, treatment professionals candidates can start with the Basic Level UTC comprising the following: (i) Physiology and Pharmacology for Addiction Professionals (20 hours); (ii) Treatment for Substance Use Disorders-The Continuum of Care for Addiction Professionals (35 hours); Community Outreach (30 hours); (iii) Common Co-Occurring Mental and Medical Disorders-An Overview for Addiction Professionals (20 hours); (iv) Basic Counselling Skills for Addiction Professionals (35 hours); Psycho-education for Clients and their Families (30 hours); (v) Intake, Screening, Assessment, Treatment Planning and Documentation for Addiction Professionals (35 hours); (vi) Case Management for Addiction Professionals (16 hours); (vii) Crisis Intervention for Addiction Professionals (16 hours); and Ethics for Addiction Professionals (32 hours). They can also sign up for the Intermediate/Clinical Level or the Advanced/Master Level, if they so wish.

The UTC intermediate level is a set of 10 curricula, which is currently being developed to provide a more comprehensive and theoretical foundation in the clinical practice of substance use disorder treatment. It is a specialised training that aims to provide an in-depth continuing education with the latest information and skills-based activities to further enhance the capacity of the treatment workforce and standardise the quality of care and services they provide for their clients.

The 10 curricula are as follows:

- Curriculum 1: Pharmacology and SUD
- Curriculum 2: Managing Medication Assisted Treatment Programmes
- Curriculum 3: Enhancing Motivational Interviewing Skills
- Curriculum 4: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Curriculum 5: Contingency Management
- Curriculum 6: Working with Families
- Curriculum 7: Skills for Screening Co-occurring Disorders
- Curriculum 8: Intermediate Clinical Skills (and Crisis Management)

- Curriculum 9: Case Management Skills and Practices
- Curriculum 10: Clinical Supervision for SUD Professionals

**Question 5:** Apart from having continuing education hours, what are the other eligibility criteria for certification?

**Answer:** Before a candidate can register to take the ICPS or ICAP examination, he/she must possess the required number of supervised working hours as shown in the chart below.

Credential	Eligibility Criteria
ICPS I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervised working experience of two years in the prevention field (3,000 hours), and possess a Bachelor degree, or</li> <li>• Supervised working experience of five years (7,500 hours) in the prevention field, and possess a High School Diploma</li> </ul>
ICPS II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervised working experience of five years (7,500 hours) in the prevention field, and possess a Masters degree, or</li> <li>• Supervised working experience of seven years (10,500 hours) in the prevention field and possess a High School Diploma</li> </ul>
Endorse-ment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One year working experience in the specialised prevention track or 1,500 hours of supervised working experience</li> <li>• 120 continuing education hours in any of the prevention track</li> <li>• Must possess the ICPS I prior to acquiring the endorsement in a specialised track, such as school, workplace, family, media, etc.</li> </ul>
ICAP I	1 year of full time or 1,500 hours of supervised work experience, High School education, 120 contact hours of education
ICAP II	2 years of full-time or 3,000 hours of supervised experience, Bachelor degree, 240 contact hours of education
ICAP III	5 years of full-time or 8,000 hours of supervised experience, Masters degree, 500 contact hours of education
RC	1 year of supervised work experience in substance use disorders, High School education, 100 contact hours of education

**Question 6:** How do I get to attend the UPC/UTC training courses?

**Answer:** For the purpose of preparing yourself to take the ICPS and ICAP examinations, you have two options, i.e. either attend echo trainings which are fully funded by the host organisation(s) in your home country and conducted by national trainers; or attend Cost-Sharing Initiatives (CSIs) where ICCE will provide the training package and trainers' expenses, while you, as the participant will cover your own travel and accommodation expenses as well as registration fees to cover the training materials provided. CSIs can either be conducted by regional trainers, or a combination of both regional and national trainers. The training period for each training cycle which covers two curricula of either the UPC or UTC, is usually between eight to nine days, but can be shortened where necessary.

**Question 7:** How are the certification examinations conducted?

**Answer:** Certification examinations can be conducted either as a pencil-and-paper examination, or online. The ICCE has upto date conducted four pencil-and-paper examinations for the ICAP I, ICAP II and ICAP III in Jakarta (twice), Bangkok and Johor Bahru, as well as four online examinations in Chennai (twice), and Colombo and Kenya (five centres).

**Question 8:** How is the credentialing process done?

**Answer:** The credentialing process can be summarised in 12 simple steps below:

**Step 1:** Attend UPC/UTC training.

You will need to complete the required number of training cycles for the full curriculum.

**Step 2:** Accumulate an adequate number of continuing education and training hours.

Upon completion of each training cycle, you will receive a Certificate of Completion for the two curricula with the stated number of continuing education and training hours.

**Step 3:** Obtain the required number of supervised working hours.

Check with the ICCE Examination and Certification Coordinator the required number of supervised working hours for each certification level.

**Step 4:** Complete the ICCE application form and provide all required information.

Contact the ICCE Examination and Certification Coordinator for the e-copy to be emailed to you, and return the completed form.

**Step 5:** Send all forms to ICCE along with the examination fee

The examination fee of USD 100 has to be bank transferred to the ICCE for processing.

**Step 6:** Receive confirmation of qualification/eligibility for examination from the ICCE

The ICCE Examination and Certification Coordinator will contact you about your eligibility to sit for the examination together with the examination details.

**Step 7:** Sit for examination

You will be informed of the date, time and venue of the examination. Present yourself on the examination day, and sit for the examination that you have registered for.

**Step 8:** Receive detailed examination results from ICCE

You will be notified of your results at least one month after you have sat for your examination.

**Step 9:** If you pass, receive credential and are encouraged to display credential after your name

Congratulations! You are now a certified drug demand reduction professional.

**Step 10:** If you fail, you can try again by repeating Step5.

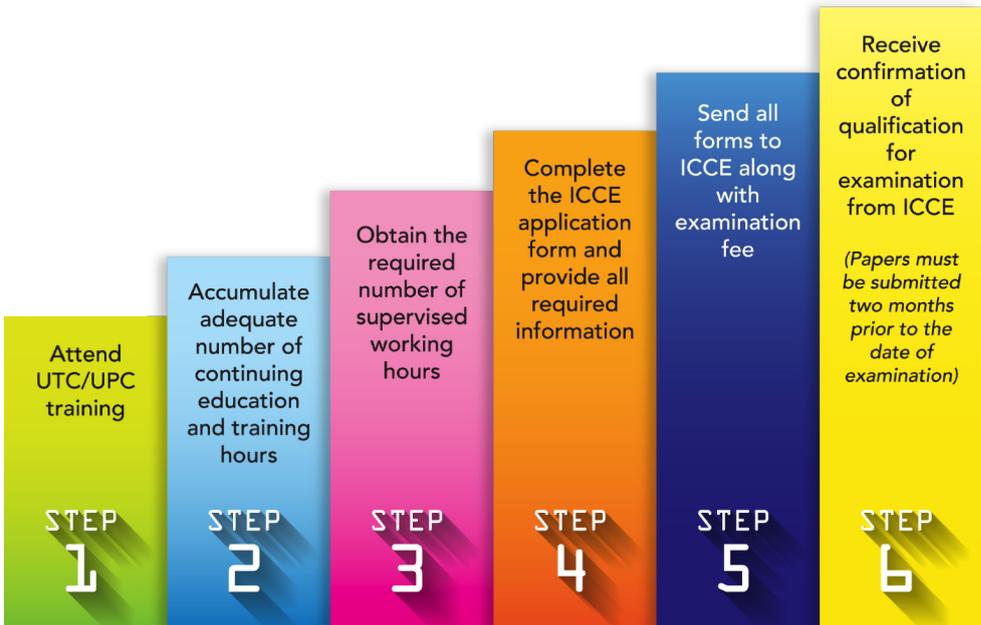
Do not despair! You can always try again.

**Step 11:** Now that you are an addiction professional, you must always conduct yourself as a professional adhering to the Code of Ethics

You will need to abide by the Code of Ethics that you read and signed before you sat for your examination.

**Step 12:** Renew credential every two years – with 40 continuing education hours and renewal fee

Contact the ICCE Examination and Certification Coordinator of your renewal and bank transfer USD 100.



**Question 9:** Are the credentials of ICCE recognised in other countries?

**Answer:** Yes. As ICCE currently has certification training initiatives in 40 countries, the credentials offered are the same. Hence, an addiction professional with an ICAP I credential in Indonesia will have the same level of knowledge, skills and competence of another addiction professional with the same credential in the Philippines. NCCAP in USA will recognise the credentials of ICCE and thus this reciprocity does facilitate addiction professionals to move from one country to another.

So, now that you have got all the answers you need, hesitate no longer! Become a member of the family of internationally credentialed drug demand reduction professionals! Be a professional in your field of expertise.

If you need further information, visit the Colombo Plan website at [www.colombo-plan.org/icce](http://www.colombo-plan.org/icce) or email [icceinfo@colomboplan.org](mailto:icceinfo@colomboplan.org)