



---

CERTIFIED ADMINISTRATOR  
OF SCHOOL FINANCE  
AND OPERATIONS

---

# ASBO International



## SFO<sup>®</sup> Candidate Handbook

Tel: 866.682.2729 x7079 • Email: [certification@asbointl.org](mailto:certification@asbointl.org)

*Updated February 2023*

# Contents

- Overview** .....
- About ASBO International .....
- Benefits of SFO Certification .....
- Statement of Non-Discrimination .....
- Statement of Impartiality .....
- Application Process** .....
- Overview .....
- SFOs Demonstrate Professional Competency .....
- Become an SFO in 3 Easy Steps .....
- Exam Fees .....
- Examination .....
- Exam Format .....
- Language .....
- Special Accommodations/Test Administration Modifications .....
- Preparing for the Examination: Examination Content Outline .....
- Policies and Procedures** .....
- Application Eligibility, Retest, and Cancellations .....
- Postmark Deadlines .....
- Personal Information Changes .....
- Applicant Ineligibility .....
- Test Eligibility Period .....
- Reapplying for Eligibility .....
- Extension .....
- Cancellation and Refund .....
- Audit** .....
- Authority .....
- Remote Proctored Exam Rules .....
- Violating Rules .....
- Misconduct During the Examination .....
- Dismissal .....
- Violation of Code of Conduct .....
- Unforeseen Circumstances Preventing Testing .....
- Examination Irregularities .....
- Handling of Tests .....



<b>Exam Results Notification, Retesting, and Appeals</b>	.....
Notification of Test Results	.....
Results – Passing	.....
Results – Failing	.....
Retesting: Candidate Fails	.....
Retesting: Candidate Passes	.....
Appeals Policy	.....
<b>Recertification and Lapsed Designation</b>	.....
Purpose of Recertification	.....
Recertification Process	.....
Contact Hours	.....
Guide for Structured and Unstructured Learning	.....
Filing a Recertification Extension Request	.....
Notice of Recertification and Reminders	.....
Loss and Reinstatement of Certification	.....
<b>Certification Mark Usage Policies and Procedures</b>	.....
Appropriate Use of the Certification	.....
ASBO International Certification Code of Conduct	.....
<b>Forms</b>	.....
Test Modification Request Form	.....
Documentation of Disability-Related Needs by Qualified Provider	.....
Recertification Extension Request Form	.....
Candidate Agreement	.....

# Overview

## About ASBO International

Founded in 1910, the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) is a nonprofit organization that, through its members and affiliates, represents approximately 30,000 school business professionals worldwide. ASBO International is committed to providing programs, services, and a global network that promote the highest standards in school business. Its members support student achievement through effective resource management in various areas ranging from finance and operations to food services and transportation. Learn more at [asbointl.org](https://asbointl.org).

### **Mission and Purpose of Certified Administrator of School Finance and Operations Certification® (SFO®)**

The SFO® program is the first nationally recognized certification for school business officials that provides an independent, respected assessment of core industry knowledge requirements. Its mission is to provide a pathway for career recognition by conveying real-world, practical expertise that every school business professional should possess.

The purpose of the certification is to enable governing educational authorities to **objectively** and **readily** identify professionals with proven knowledge and experience in fiscal and operational school business management. Those who have earned the respected credential continue to demonstrate their professionalism and commitment to ongoing learning through recertification.

## Benefits of SFO Certification

School business administrators who have earned the SFO credential elevate their professional stature and earn the respect of their peers. They also have the confidence of knowing their SFO certification is portable nationwide.

Employers can objectively identify professionals with the required knowledge, skills, and experience during their hiring process. They can also readily confirm those employees who have the competitive edge and readiness for career advancement.

## Statement of Non-Discrimination

ASBO International endorses the principles of equal opportunity. Eligibility criteria for examination and certification as a Certified Administrator of School Finance and Operations are applied equally to all individuals regardless of age, race, religion, gender, national origin, veteran status, or disability.

## Statement of Impartiality

ASBO International's certification program is governed by the Certification Commission, a semi-independent certifying body of the Association of School Business Officials International. In adherence to best practices for certifying bodies, Certification Commission volunteers and certification staff are not involved in the development of any preparatory program; also, no preparatory program is endorsed by the Certification Commission nor is it a prerequisite to earn the certification. The Certification Commission and its staff are solely responsible for the policies and administration of the certification program, including application procedures and qualification requirements.

# Application Process

## Overview

Participation in the SFO certification program is voluntary and open to anyone meeting the eligibility requirements. Membership in the Association of School Business Officials International or any of its affiliate organizations is not required.

## SFOs DEMONSTRATE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY

Candidates for the SFO designations hold various titles and are representatives of the scope of educational institutions: public, private, and charter schools, and colleges and universities.

## Become an SFO in 3 Easy Steps:

### STEP 1: Meet Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility requires a combination of education and experience; however, candidates who are seasoned practitioners may request eligibility based on experience only. Your eligibility guide:

#### Eligibility Through Education and Experience

A Bachelor's degree in a field related to school business + 2 years of experience, or completion of an ASBO International or ASBO affiliate workshop covering the SFO® Exam Competencies + 3 years of experience. Experience is defined as a school business official in a K-12 or college system, with overall responsibilities that correlate to the exam competencies. See adjacent competency requirements.

#### OR

#### Eligibility as a Seasoned Practitioner

The seasoned practitioner review process allows individuals to use only work experience to meet the eligibility requirement. **To be granted the seasoned practitioner status, an applicant must have been employed as a school business official for a minimum of seven years.**

## Who Should Become An SFO:

- Budget Managers
- Business Managers
- Chief Financial Officers
- Deans/Directors of Finance Operations
- Directors of Finance
- Finance Associates
- State Board Representatives
- Superintendents
- Vice Presidents
- Assistant Superintendents
- Assistant Business Administrators
- Associate Superintendents
- Board Secretaries/Treasurers
- Business Managers
- Business Operations Personnel
- Business Services Personnel
- Chief Business Officers
- Chief Financial Officers
- Chief Operations Officers
- Chief School Finance Officers
- Comptrollers
- Directors of Administrative Services
- Directors of Fiscal Operations
- Executive Directors of Financial Services
- Finance Directors
- Financial Services Supervisors
- Fiscal Officers
- School Business Administrators

## Experience Eligibility Requirements

### Mandatory Competencies

- Managing accounting systems
- Managing accounting functions
- Conducting financial planning and analysis
- Conducting budgeting and reporting activities



### Knowledge in at Least Three Competencies

- Risk management activities
- School facilities
- Information systems
- Human resource functions
- Ancillary services

For more information about each of the above competencies, view the exam content outline.

**Note:** Eligibility documentation is submitted online during the application submission process.

## STEP 2: Submit an Application Online

- Create a profile in the [SFO Access \(Prolydian\)](#) online portal.
- Provide education and/or experience requirements. Applicants may use their experience as a seasoned practitioner in lieu of education.
- Agree to the terms of use and Code of Conduct.
- Pay the application and test fee (**\$550 members; \$650 non-members**).

ASBO International does not accept mailed or faxed application forms unless otherwise specified. Application fees are non-refundable. Test fees may be refunded under certain conditions.

- Look for an authorization email to arrive within 2 business days of submitting your SFO application.
- Make sure [support@prolydian.com](mailto:support@prolydian.com) is an allowed sender for your email provider!

### HELPFUL TIP

To have 24/7 access to your application status and to review or make changes to contact details, candidates must create a profile and sign terms of usage agreements. Once an application is approved, the candidate will receive an authorization to test email that confirms eligibility status and provides further instructions about scheduling their exam. Application fees are non-refundable.

### **STEP 3: To Schedule a Remote-Proctored Exam**

- Log into your SFO Access (Prolydian) account.
- Choose the “Schedule” button on your Exams dashboard to select an exam date and time.
- Wait for an appointment confirmation email listing your test date, testing time and instructions for setting up your Examity profile (You must set up your Examity profile before taking the SFO exam!).
- Contact [support@prolydian.com](mailto:support@prolydian.com) if you encounter problems scheduling your exam or if you need to modify your Prolydian or Examity account profile name to match your Photo ID.

#### **Please Note!**

You may cancel or reschedule up to 48 hours before your appointment at no cost. If, however, you cancel your appointment with less than 48 hours notice, or if you miss your appointment, show up late or provide inadequate identification, you will not be able to make a new appointment without paying an additional testing fee. Prolydian will send you a confirmation email each time you reschedule or cancel an appointment.

### **Please Review Important Instructions to Ensure a Smooth Exam Experience!**

#### **Before your exam**

Prior to beginning your exam you must complete your Examity profile setup, including the upload of a government issued Photo ID. You **MUST** complete the profile setup and computer requirements check prior to beginning your exam. Follow the steps below to complete your profile setup:

- Log into your Prolydian account at <https://app.prolydian.com>.
- Click the “Access my examity account” button from your Prolydian exams dashboard.
- Click the “My profile” button.
- Click the “Edit” button in the Account Information section, add your phone number, and then click Save.
- Upload a photo of your government issued ID in the examiSHOW section and then click the Upload button.
- Click the “Edit” button in the examiKNOW section. Select your security questions, provide your responses, and then click Save.
- Click the “Edit” button in the examiKEY section. Provide the required typed input and then click Save.

## On the day of your exam

You may access your exam up to 15 minutes before the scheduled start time. To access your exam:

- Log into your Prolydian account at <https://app.prolydian.com>
- Click the “Access my examity account” button from your Prolydian exams dashboard
- Click the “Start exam” button
- Install the Examity extension by following the instructions on the exam start page
- Click the “Connect to proctor” button

You will be notified of your results via email 24-72 hours after completing the exam.

If you experience any issues that require technical assistance, please contact Prolydian support at [support+asbo@prolydian.com](mailto:support+asbo@prolydian.com). All other inquiries should be directed to [certification@asbointl.org](mailto:certification@asbointl.org).

## Exam Fees

<b>Member</b>	<b>Non-Member</b>
Application \$150	Application \$250
Exam \$400	Exam \$400
Retesting \$250	Retesting \$250
Extension Requests \$200	Extension Requests \$200

## Recertification

Once certified, SFOs are required to recertify every 3 years via the [SFO Access \(Prolydian\)](#) online portal by:

- Earning and documenting 45 contact hours.
- Agreeing to the Code of Conduct.
- Paying a \$350 fee.

See Recertification Guide under Policies and Procedures.

### HELPFUL TIP

All application and recertification forms are available and maintained online via [SFO Access \(Prolydian\)](#). ASBO International will not accept mailed or faxed application forms unless otherwise specified.

## Examination

### REMOTE PROCTORED EXAM

The SFO certification exam is administered as a computer-based test (CBT) administered via Examity throughout the United States and Canada.

### EXAM FORMATS

The SFO exam consists of 150 multiple-choice questions covering accounting and school business management competencies. Candidates are presented with a question and are asked to choose the correct answer from the four options provided. Only one answer is correct. There is no penalty assessed for an incorrect answer; points are scored only for correct answers. An exam form may or may not contain pre-test items (unscored test questions), which are allotted for in the exam duration time.

### LANGUAGE

The examination is offered in English only.

### SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS/TEST ADMINISTRATION MODIFICATIONS

Special accommodations to test administration shall be provided to candidates with a disability (as defined by Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Canadian Federal Disabilities Act, and the Canadian Charter of Human Rights) who submit with their certification application, a written explanation of their needs, along with appropriate medical documentation. Requests must be submitted no less than 6 weeks prior to test date. This is required to allow sufficient time for adequate arrangement to be made on behalf of the test candidate.

Application forms for accommodations are included under the **Forms** section later in this Handbook and provided online under the [SFO Access \(Prolydian\) portal](#).

## PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION: EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

<b>Knowledge: Accounting</b>	<b>43% of Exam</b>
<b>Management of Accounting Systems</b>	14 %
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain accounting software through standards, procedures, and policies that preserve the integrity of financial data for reporting to all stakeholders</li><li>• Formulate and administer the chart of accounts based on local, state/provincial, and federal guidelines to document the consistent classification of balance sheet accounts, revenues, and expenditures; to enable comparison of financial data; and to provide a framework for controlling budget expenditures.</li><li>• Analyze the accounts using statements and/or financial reports to determine the accuracy of the general ledger, and verify that all transactions have been properly recorded in the financial records.</li><li>• Document and record district assets using policies and procedures to mitigate risk of loss through proper insurance coverage to safeguard the investments of the district.</li></ul>	
<b>Management of Accounting Functions</b>	29%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administer the payroll functions according to regulations, contracts, and district procedures to meet district employment responsibilities (e.g., timeliness, accuracy, prevention of fraud).</li><li>• Facilitate the accuracy of district billings and collections of district accounts receivable in order to meet financial obligations and be good stewards of public funds.</li><li>• Facilitate timely, accurate payments to vendors for goods and services and proper accounting of accounts payable transactions with fiduciary responsibility.</li><li>• Establish procedures that conform to local policies and state/provincial and federal statutes regarding the procurement of goods and services in order to provide the best value for district resources.</li><li>• Create and monitor annual budgets adhering to the parameters established by local policies and guidelines and state/provincial and federal statutes.</li><li>• Prepare financial reports for internal and external stakeholders that accurately reflect the financial condition of the district.</li><li>• Manage cash flow by monitoring the current period receipts and disbursements, as well as projecting future trends to maximize resources and minimize borrowing, and be able to discharge liabilities as they arise to avoid any crises of liquidity.</li><li>• Control capital and fixed assets through policies set forth, which protect the district assets and provide accurate and transparent reporting.</li><li>• Manage grant activities by researching and implementing grant requirements, including tracking and financial reporting, to maximize expenditure of grant funds in compliance with grant regulations.</li><li>• Prepare for the annual audit by gathering organizational data, closing of the books in a timely manner, and preparing reports (e.g., working papers, schedules) to facilitate an efficient and accurate audit process.</li></ul>	

**Financial Planning, Budget Planning, and Analysis**

23%

- Serve as a school leader by having a shared vision for the organization and translating that vision into a comprehensive financial plan, based on integrity and commitment, for the educational mission to inspire and motivate others to achieve a common goal.
- Review the financial impact of strategic planning goals by analyzing and quantifying relevant data for optimal decision-making that leads to successful educational outcomes for the district.
- Develop short-and long-term financial goals by evaluating relevant data to support district programmatic needs, instructional objectives, and good stewardship of financial resources.
- Evaluate financing options, including debt repayment strategies, with lenders to optimize funding for capital projects and other initiatives.
- Develop outside funding sources by identifying, soliciting, and marketing potential areas of revenue to support overall educational goals.
- Analyze relevant economic and demographic data by identifying, collecting, and monitoring all available sources of pertinent information to effectively and efficiently allocate limited resources.
- Develop multi-year forecast by gathering/analyzing historical data in conjunction with future assumptions/indicators (e.g., projected program changes, economic factors, demographic data) to effectively plan for future resource requirements.
- Estimate revenues by evaluating historical data, current local economic conditions, trends, and regulatory changes to predict future cash inflows.
- Project student enrollment by using scientific methodology (e.g., cohort survival rates) to establish reasonable budget assumptions in order to properly align resources (e.g., human and capital) with estimated funding levels.
- Evaluate instructional program costs by reviewing financial data to determine if program outcomes have met desired objectives.
- Develop annual budgets through collaborative efforts that provide resources for student and program needs that are consistent with the assumptions, goals, and objectives of the district to produce parameters and guidelines for the expenditures of funds.

**Risk Management Activities**

7%

- Evaluate existing risks by performing an audit of district resources to discover weaknesses that may exist to minimize losses.
- Address results of risk audit by investigating areas of weakness and developing a corrective action plan to mitigate loss.
- Conduct annual evaluation of insurance plans by comparing existing coverage against risk assessment to determine adequate coverage, and evaluate costs to obtain the best value and minimize loss exposure.
- Manage insurance plans by actively monitoring and handling claims and implementing loss prevention strategies to mitigate and prevent future losses.

---

**Management of School Facilities**

7%

- Develop and/or update the facility master plan in cooperation with fellow administrators and pertinent stakeholders (e.g., community, board of education, skilled professionals) through the collection and analysis of relevant data to provide a list of short- and long-term capital needs for a safe and effective instructional environment.
- Oversee the operation and maintenance of school campuses using established metrics to provide a clean, safe, and comfortable instructional environment including energy- and cost-efficient operations.
- Oversee new construction and renovations, within established timelines and budgets, working with stakeholders (e.g., administrators, architects, engineers, construction manager, building committees, special interest groups), to provide adequate facilities for student learning.
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive safety and security plan utilizing local, state/provincial, and federal resources to provide a safe and secure learning environment.

---

**Management of Information Systems**

5%

- Assist in developing a technology plan by prioritizing district needs and budgeting for short- and long-term costs to account for new and changing technology.
- Maintain technology systems (e.g., hardware, software, peripheral, networking) by selecting, evaluating, and purchasing components in order to control access, provide ease of use, and protect data integrity.
- Oversee communication systems in order to provide reliable and appropriate access by selecting and evaluating providers, software, equipment, and planning for short- and long-term costs.

---

**Management of Human Resource Functions**

11%

- Manage hiring new employees by maintaining compliance with applicable laws and regulations and using best practices to attract and retain talented staff.
  - Develop a comprehensive compensation structure using job and salary/benefit analysis which properly matches job description and responsibility to maintain equity and competitiveness.
  - Facilitate staff development and training programs by assessing current knowledge and skills of staff, identifying needs, providing relevant opportunities (both internal and external), and evaluating the effectiveness of programs offered to provide personal and professional development.
  - Manage evaluation process by setting clear and consistent evaluation criteria, maintaining evaluation tools, utilizing goal-setting to define expected outcomes, and using timely and constructive feedback to evaluate and improve employee performance and job satisfaction.
  - Manage personnel administration by maintaining systems, forms, and processes, in order to follow current laws and regulations; to prepare timely local, state/provincial, and federal reporting; and to keep sensitive information secure and confidential.
-

- 
- Manage employee benefit programs that provide proper fringe benefit levels for employees while utilizing best practices to contain costs and to attract and retain quality employees.

---

**Management of Ancillary Services**

4%

- Manage transportation services using best practices to provide safe and reliable student transportation.
  - Manage food service programs using best practices, proper financial systems, and timely reporting to provide nutritional meals to students to support classroom learning.
-

### **SFO Exams Are Developed via Nationally Recognized Industry Standards.**

The SFO examination conforms to a content outline based on a job task analysis of school business management. A job task analysis is an industry-wide survey that identifies the areas of work-related functions required for effective and efficient performance as a school finance administrator. It must detail and rank the knowledge and skills that are of relative importance in the profession. Exam questions are based on this analysis and it is pivotal in identifying required expertise and performance standards.

## **Policies and Procedures**

ASBO International is committed to excellence in the administration and maintenance of its SFO certification. Please review the [Certification Policies and Procedures Manual](#) and use as a guide to ensure an optimum certification experience.

### **Application Eligibility, Retest, and Cancellations**

#### **POSTMARK DEADLINES**

All SFO program materials should be submitted through the [SFO Access \(Prolydian\)](#) online portal, unless otherwise noted by ASBO International. All deadlines set by ASBO International are postmark deadlines. If there is a discrepancy between a metered postmark and an official United States Postal Service or Canadian equivalent postmark, the latter will be considered official. ASBO International does not verify receipt of applications by telephone. If candidates are required to mail materials to ASBO International, they are strongly encouraged to use express or certified mail with return receipt requested.

#### **PERSONAL INFORMATION CHANGES**

The [SFO Access \(Prolydian\)](#) online portal is the primary method used for communication regarding eligibility, exam confirmations, exam results, and recertification. Candidates and certificants have 24/7 access to exam-profile details and are responsible for ensuring their information is current.

#### **APPLICANT INELIGIBILITY**

**An applicant may be determined ineligible for the following reasons:**

- Insufficient documentation to assess eligibility
- Lack of required experience
- Non-payment of application fee

If it is determined that the information provided is inadequate to assess eligibility, the applicant will be notified and provided a two-week deadline by which to respond with necessary documentation. If documents are not received by the given deadline and/or there is no follow-up action taken by the applicant, the application will be denied. No subsequent applications will be processed under the original fee.

## **TEST ELIGIBILITY PERIOD**

Candidates who are approved to test have one calendar year in which to sit for their examination without incurring additional fees. After one calendar year, individuals must reapply.

## **REAPPLYING FOR ELIGIBILITY**

Once candidates have exhausted their one-year application period, they can reapply for eligibility to test by submitting a new application, subject to the prevailing policies, complete with supporting documentation and required fees.

## **EXTENSION**

Candidates who are unable to test within their eligibility period due to adverse or unforeseen circumstances may submit a request for extension. Extension requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and if approved are subject to a \$200 fee.

## **CANCELLATION AND REFUND**

Application fees are non-refundable. Exams can be rescheduled with the test provider with no penalty, up to 48 hours before the scheduled exam time. Candidates who fail to appear for an examination forfeit all fees and must pay appropriate fees for subsequent examinations.

Under extreme circumstances (medical emergency or death of an immediate family member) late cancellations may be accepted. Extreme circumstances must immediately precede or coincide with the exam, and documentation must be provided in writing within seven days of the original examination date. Approvals will be made on a case-by-case basis.

# Audit

ASBO International may audit a portion of the applications that are submitted for compliance with the certification program requirements. It is the candidate's/certificant's responsibility to keep all documentation necessary to support program compliance. For further information about the audit process, view the *Certification Policies and Procedures Manual*.

## Authority

ASBO International reserves the right to ask applicants to furnish additional information and to make inquiries as may be deemed appropriate to identify the nature and extent of the applicant's education, experience, competency, or moral character.

## Remote Proctored Exam Rules

The following are the rules enforced during all test administrations:

- All candidates must have proper government issued photo ID to be admitted to test.
- Candidates are admitted only to their assigned time.
- Candidates arriving more than 15 minutes late will have to reschedule the examination.
- No guests are permitted in the candidate's examination room.
- No reference material, books, papers, or personal items (purses, briefcases, coats, etc.) are allowed on the candidate's examination desk.
- No questions concerning the content of the examination may be asked during the testing period.
- Food and beverages are not permitted.
- Breaks are not scheduled during the exam.
- Candidates may not engage in any conduct or inappropriate behavior that is injurious to the integrity of the examination.

## VIOLATING RULES

If a candidate is caught violating testing rules, which are explained to all exam candidates, the candidate's scores may be invalidated and the candidate may be barred or permanently prohibited from participating in the certification program. Proctors are authorized to take immediate, appropriate measures against candidates who are caught violating testing rules.

## MISCONDUCT DURING THE EXAMINATION

**It is improper for examination candidates to engage in any of the following activities:**

- Fail to observe any rules of conduct as outlined by the proctor.
- Copy in writing or otherwise record or transmit to others any examination questions and/or answers or other aspects of the nature or content of the examination.
- Bring any unauthorized answering agent of any nature (e.g., books, notes) to their exam room.

- Engage in any other conduct or inappropriate behavior that is injurious to the integrity of the examination.

## **DISMISSAL**

Any candidate who is observed engaging in any misconduct will be subject to dismissal from the examination, may be barred from future examinations for a period ranging from one year to permanent dismissal, and may be required to forfeit his or her current examination fee and/or period of eligibility. Proctors are authorized to take immediate, appropriate measures against candidates who are caught violating testing rules. The candidate is entitled to appeal the dismissal determination.

## **VIOLATION OF CODE OF CONDUCT**

If it is determined that a candidate has violated the Certification Code of Conduct, the candidate may be barred from taking the exam for a timeframe that is determined by the Certification Commission, if determined necessary or appropriate based upon the seriousness of the incident or violation .

## **UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES PREVENTING TESTING**

If for any reason the exam is unable to be administered or if any candidate is unable to test due to inclement weather, terrorist acts, natural disasters, or other unforeseen emergencies beyond the control of the candidate as determined by ASBO International, the candidate may receive an extended testing window (to be determined on an individual basis) and will be allowed to reschedule the examination without being charged a re-examination fee.

## **EXAMINATION IRREGULARITIES**

Any problems, suspected instances of cheating, alleged inappropriate examination administration, environmental testing conditions severe enough to cause disruption of the process, or other irregularities related to test administration will be addressed to the onsite proctor. All such matters will be reported, investigated, and subject to further action based on policies and procedures adopted by the Certification Commission.

Cheating or other violations of the Certification Code of Conduct or matters that may constitute grounds for disciplinary action will be handled under the disciplinary procedures adopted by the Certification Commission, but other issues in the nature of examination irregularities are not subject to appeal.

## **HANDLING OF TESTS**

ASBO International will take all available precautions to ensure the appropriate and secure handling of completed test data. In the rare and extreme case in which the test data become lost or unreadable, candidates will be required to undergo retesting without being charged a re-examination fee.

# Exam Results Notification, Retesting, and Appeals

## Notification of Test Results

Candidates taking the remote-proctored, computer-based test are notified within 24-72 hours of their examination results. For security reasons, initial results will not be given over the phone or sent by fax.

### RESULTS – PASSING

Candidates who successfully complete the examination and whose credentials and application entitle them to certification will be notified by email and granted a Certified Administrator of School Finance and Operations (SFO) certification.

The certification remains the property of ASBO International, which may withdraw, cancel, revoke, or otherwise annul the certification for cause.

### RESULTS – FAILING

Candidates who do not successfully complete the examination will be able to access their official score report online via the [SFO Access \(Prolydian\)](#) portal.

This report will indicate the candidate's overall pass/fail status. Failing candidates will also receive a scaled score. The scaled score indicates how close the candidate came to passing the examination. The minimum scaled score required to pass is 600.

The score report will also include an indication of the candidate's relative strengths and weaknesses by examination topic or domain. The percentage of the test addressing each domain is indicated in the exam content outline presented earlier in this Handbook.

Candidates pass or fail the test as a whole. There are no pass/fail scores calculated by domain. The score report feedback about the candidate's performance by domain is provided solely for the purposes of preparing for the next exam.

### RETESTING: CANDIDATE FAILS

A candidate may take the examination only two times during a one-year period. Candidates who reapply must submit a new application, pay all applicable fees, and fulfill all requirements stipulated by the Certification Commission for that year.

### RETESTING: CANDIDATE PASSES

A candidate who passes any SFO certification test is prohibited from retaking the same certification test.

### APPEALS POLICY

Candidates may appeal the results of eligibility determination or the examinations within 30 days of the date of the results. The appeals process can be found in the [Certification Policies and Procedures Manual](#).

# Recertification and Lapsed Designation

## Purpose of Recertification

Active SFOs demonstrate their commitment to stay abreast of industry best practices by ensuring their knowledge and expertise remain current via recertification. It is these stringent requirements that make the SFO program highly sought after and respected by school business management professionals, their employers, and the constituents they serve.

[View the complete renewal and recertification guide.](#)

## Recertification Process

Certificants must recertify every three years to maintain an active SFO status. Recertification requires:

- Continued agreement and compliance with the ASBO International Certification Code of Conduct.
- Submission of 45 contact hours of professional development.
- Payment of \$350 recertification fees.

There is a 45-day grace period for late submissions and reinstatement, which are subject to a \$200 late fee.

## CONTACT HOURS

ASBO International uses contact hours to define a unit of continuing education where 1 contact hour equals 50 minutes of educational content. Certificants must ensure that at least 30 of the 45 required contact hours are in a structured learning environment.

**Note:** *As part of the 30 unstructured contact hours, a candidate can count one year of experience on the job as 3 contact hours. Contact hours are entered online via the [SFO Access \(Prolydian\)](#) online portal.*

## GUIDE FOR STRUCTURED AND UNSTRUCTURED LEARNING

### Structured Learning Environment

Structured contact hours may include traditional instructor-led classrooms or e-learning formats that contribute to the certificant's knowledge and understanding of the profession: university/college courses (one credit = 15 contact hours), workshops and seminars, conferences, and online courses.

### Unstructured Learning Environment

Unstructured contact hours can be obtained through self-directed activities that contribute to the certificant's knowledge and understanding of the profession. Activities may fall into two categories:

1. **Research and publishing:** For each year or single activity, certificants can earn three contact hours (e.g., one article published = three contact hours).

2. **Instruction, leadership, and service:** For instruction activities, certificants earn three contact hours for prep and one contact hour for each 50 minutes of content delivered. These activities should be conducted on a part-time basis and not be considered the certificant's full-time job. Experience on the job may be included in this category with one year equaling three contact hours.

**See Recertification Guide for more detailed information about contact hours activities and assessment.**

## **FILING A RECERTIFICATION EXTENSION REQUEST**

Keeping your credential active requires annual renewal. An SFO may apply to ASBO International for a filing extension due to the following conditions:

1. Unemployment
2. Appointment or election to full-time public office on the local, state, or national level or service in the military

The request for the filing extension must be submitted in writing to ASBO International within three months of their post-recertification date. Extensions are not granted for more than one year and are subject to the review of the Certification Commission. There may be an extension fee of \$60 applied to each request.

## **NOTICE OF RECERTIFICATION AND REMINDERS**

Approximately six months prior to the expiration of the certificant's certification, ASBO International will send certificants a notice and information about their current recertification application. This notice will be sent to the certificant's last address on file with ASBO International's online SFO Access (Prolydian) portal.

It is the professional responsibility of each certificant to notify ASBO International of a change of address, to be aware of his or her certification expiration date, and to complete the application by the specified deadlines. Failure to receive notice from ASBO International does not excuse the certificant from complying with all recertification deadlines.

## **LOSS AND REINSTATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION**

Individuals who do not meet recertification requirements will lose certified status. To reinstate certified status, individuals must re-establish eligibility and pass the certification examination.

# Certification Mark Usage Policies and Procedures

## Appropriate Use of the Certification

An individual who has been granted the Certified Administrator of School Finance and Operations (SFO) certification may list the certification on stationery, websites, business cards, and other promotional materials as:

- First name, Last name, Certified Administrator of School Finance and Operations
- First name, Last name, SFO

Should the certification be suspended or withdrawn for any reason, the individual must immediately cease the use of the title “Certified Administrator of School Finance and Operations” and acronym designation on stationery, websites, business cards, and any and all promotional materials.

## ASBO International Certification Code of Conduct

The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) is a professional organization that supports and promotes school business management practitioner certification.

The Certification Code of Conduct enables ASBO International to define and clarify the professional responsibilities for present and future ASBO International certificants, i.e., Certified Administrator of School Finance and Operations (SFO).

It is vital that ASBO International certificants conduct their work in an appropriate and professional manner to earn and maintain the confidence and respect of colleagues, employers, students, and the public, and that they also work to promote the highest standards of the profession, conducting business honestly, openly, and with integrity.

To be qualified for ASBO International SFO certification, individuals shall act in a professional manner and in accordance with the ASBO International Certification Code of Conduct as follows.

Applicants for ASBO International SFO certification and ASBO International SFO certification holders must

- Not participate in negligent, harmful, and/or intentional misconduct in their professional work;
- Report to ASBO International in writing of any conviction of a crime, except misdemeanor traffic offenses or traffic ordinance violations unless such offense involves the use of alcohol or drugs, or of any professional suspension within 10 calendar days after the date on which the certificant is notified of the conviction or suspension;
- Comply with all local, state/provincial, and federal laws, regulations, and statutes governing the practice of school business management;
- Neither accept nor offer nor make any substantial compensation or gifts with the intent of influencing the judgment of any individual or business entity in connection with the work of the certificant or the certificant’s employer, nor accept any substantial compensation from a supplier of materials or services in exchange for recommending or promoting the supplier;

- Not engage in conduct involving fraud or the wanton disregard of the rights of others and shall not have been convicted of a crime, the circumstances of which substantially relate to the practice of school business management or indicate an inability to engage in the practice of school business management safely and/or competently, including but not limited to crimes against children, sexual abuse, civil rights violations, embezzlement, theft, etc.;
- Not obtain or attempt to obtain certification by misrepresentation, bribery, fraud, or deception;
- Not make misrepresentations regarding ASBO International SFO certification or renewal of ASBO International SFO certification; and
- Not engage in cheating or other dishonest behavior that violates exam security, including memorization, reproduction or distribution of secure test content, and tampering with the contents of the exam.

In addition, no person shall be permitted to maintain ASBO International SFO certification if, in the judgment of ASBO International's Certification Commission, the person's professional competence is substantially impaired by physical or mental disabilities such as drug or alcohol addiction, accidents affecting the brain, or mental health issues.

# Forms

All forms submitted are confidential.

## Test Modification Request Form

Candidates with disabilities covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Canadian Federal Disabilities Act, or the Canadian Charter of Human Rights must complete this form and have an appropriate licensed professional complete the Documentation of Disability-Related Needs form in order for their accommodations request to be processed.

### Applicant Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Special Testing Modifications

Exam Date for which you are requesting accommodation:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to request the following testing modification(s):

- Extended testing time (time and a half)
- Large-print test. Point size: \_\_\_\_\_
- Reader
- Other special accommodations (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

APPLICANT SIGNATURE

# Candidate Agreement

All candidates must sign the Candidate User Agreement and agree to all policies, procedures, and terms and conditions of certification in order to be eligible for the respective credential. The statement follows.

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information on this certification application is true, complete, and accurate. I authorize ASBO International to verify the accuracy of any information contained in, or supplied in support of the application from any person(s) having knowledge of such information.

I understand that violation of the ASBO International Certification Code of Conduct may be grounds for disciplinary action and possible denial or revocation of certification. I recognize that admission to take the certification examination, once granted, may be revoked at any time if it is established that information provided for certification or for recertification is not accurate and/or complete; if I engage in illegal or inappropriate conduct during the exam or once certification is conferred; or if I violate the ASBO International Certification Code of Conduct.

By my signature, I attest that I will maintain my certification as required and uphold the ASBO International Certification Code of Conduct.

When creating an account in ASBO International's SFO Access (Prolydian) online portal, all candidates must read and agree to the following terms online:

I hereby release, discharge, and exonerate ASBO International, its directors, officers, certification commission, members, examiners, representatives, and agents, from any actions, suits, obligations, damages, claims or demands arising out of, or in connection with, any aspect of the application process including results or any other decision that may result in a decision to not issue me a certificate.

The Association of School Business Officials International ("ASBO") does not make any representations or warranties with respect to this website, its contents, or the documents, classes, programs, exams and other materials provided hereunder (collectively, the "Materials"). The Materials are provided on an "AS IS" and on an "AS AVAILABLE" basis. ASBO HEREBY DISCLAIMS ALL WARRANTIES OF ANY NATURE, EXPRESS, IMPLIED, OR OTHERWISE, OR ARISING FROM TRADE OR CUSTOM, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, NONINFRINGEMENT, QUALITY, TITLE, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, COMPLETENESS OR ACCURACY.

TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY APPLICABLE LAWS, ASBO SHALL NOT BE LIABLE FOR ANY LOSSES, EXPENSES, OR DAMAGES OF ANY NATURE, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, SPECIAL, INCIDENTAL, PUNITIVE, DIRECT, INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES OR LOSS OF USE, LOST OR DAMAGED DATA OR LOST INCOME OR PROFITS, RESULTING FROM OR ARISING OUT OF APPLICANT'S USE OF THE MATERIALS, WHETHER ARISING IN TORT, CONTRACT, STATUTE, OR OTHERWISE, EVEN IF ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGES.

Applicant makes the following representations, warranties, and covenants:

- A. ~~The information included in this application by Applicant~~ is true and correct and is not false or misleading in any respect;
- B. Applicant will abide by all rules, regulations, procedures

and policies of the Certified Administrator of School Finance and Operations (SFO®) certification program (the "Program"), as amended from time to time, including, without limitation, the Program rules, regulations, procedures, and policies set forth at [asbointl.org](http://asbointl.org); and

- C. Applicant will not engage in unethical behavior or seek an unfair advantage in connection with any certification examination, or assist others in doing so, such as by copying answers from another candidate, providing assistance to another candidate, or using unauthorized materials during the exam, and should Applicant become aware of such conduct by others, Applicant will report it to ASBO.

Applicant understands that failure to abide by these representations, warranties, and covenants will result in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, expulsion from the Program, cancellation of exam scores, revocation of certified status, and/or disqualification from future examinations and programs.

Applicant hereby forever releases from liability, and waives any claim against, ASBO, its directors, certification commission, employees, instructors, and committee members for all acts or omissions, including, without limitation, with respect to disciplinary actions, which may adversely affect me in any way whatsoever, including but not limited to, loss of employment or promotion, inability to obtain a position which requires Program certification, and dismissal from any position.

The Materials (including, without limitation, the exam and course materials) in their entirety are ASBO's confidential material and are protected by copyright and trade secret law. The Materials are made available to Applicant solely for the purpose of becoming educated and certified in the technical area of the Program. Applicant acknowledges and agrees that Applicant is expressly prohibited from disclosing, publishing, reproducing, or transmitting any Materials (including, without limitation, the exam and course materials), in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, verbal or written, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose, without the prior express written permission of ASBO. Any breach of this agreement will result in Applicant's disqualification from the Program and may subject Applicant to civil and/or criminal penalties.

Applicant hereby indemnifies, defends, and holds ASBO, its successors and assigns, and its directors, committee members, officers, employees, members, representatives, and agents, harmless from and against any and all loss, liability, damage, claim, suit, demand and expense, including, but not limited to, taxes, fines, penalties, court costs and attorney's fees, arising in connection with or related to any act or omission (including, without limitation, any breach of this agreement) of Applicant.

Applicant acknowledges and agrees that Applicant will not be entitled to use or display any Program names, designations, marks or logos unless and until Applicant has successfully completed the Program (including, without limitation, passed the exam) and has executed the Program license agreement provided by ASBO.

Sign below to accept these terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE



---

**ASSOCIATION OF  
SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS  
INTERNATIONAL**

---

ASBO International's certification program is governed by the Certification Commission, a semi-independent certifying body of the Association of School Business Officials International.

*In adherence to the best practices for certifying bodies, Certification Commission volunteers and certification staff are not involved in the development of any preparatory program, and no preparatory program is endorsed by the Certification Commission nor is a prerequisite to earn the certification. The Certification Commission and its staff are solely responsible for the policies and administration of the certification program, including application procedures and qualification requirements.*