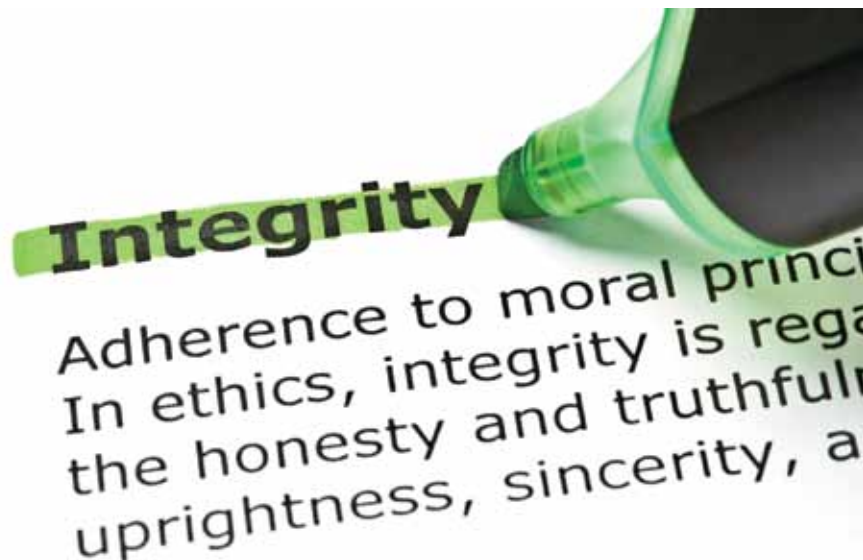


## ACFRE to Increase Ethics Requirement

BY JILL A. PRANGER, ACFRE, AND ERIK J. DAUBERT, MBA, ACFRE



The ACFRE credential stands for the highest and best among us—including ethical practice. Certificate holders exhibit their commitment to the fundraising profession, leadership and ethical practice every day, and each knows the value of having not only a strong code of ethics but also ongoing ethical education as the basis of that practice.

One component of the ACFRE credentialing process is a demonstration of senior-level continuing education in management, leadership and ethics. Since its inception more than 20 years ago, applicants have been required to have a minimum of five hours of advanced ethics education to be considered for the credential.

To put it plainly, this is no longer adequate.

James Greenfield, ACFRE, FAHP, states, “To break an ethics tenet is to break the bond of trust with the public” (*Fundraising Fundamentals*, Wiley, 2002, p. 515). Recognizing the critical nature of ethical practice and behavior to developing and sustaining trust within our organizations and with our donors, the ACFRE Certification Board has increased the required number of hours of advanced ethics education. After Jan. 1, 2013, applicants to the ACFRE program will be required to show participation in a minimum of 10 hours of advanced ethics education in order to be considered for the credential.

In an effort to make this learning more available, the ACFRE board is

### New ACFRE Policies Effective Jan. 1, 2012

Candidates for the Advanced Certified Fundraising Executive (ACFRE) credential should be aware of the new policies and fees required to earn the ACFRE that take effect Jan. 1, 2012. Candidates already in the process on that date will be required to pay the new fees and comply with the new policies for whatever phase or phases they have yet to complete at that time.

1. The ACFRE process comprises four sequential components (application, written exam, portfolio review and oral peer review), each of which must be successfully completed before moving to the next step.
2. An ACFRE candidate has two years to complete the process.
3. Each candidate’s “calendar” begins upon formal acceptance of the application.
4. The written exam must be taken within one year of approval of the application.
5. The cost for each component is \$400. Payment for the portfolio review and the oral peer review is expected in one lump sum of \$800.
6. Should a component need to be redone, the candidate will pay an additional \$400 for the second attempt.
7. The written exam, portfolio review and oral peer review may be taken up to three times each.
8. If a candidate fails a phase of the ACFRE process (after three attempts), he or she must wait one year before submitting a new ACFRE application.
9. A candidate may request one, one-year extension to his or her “calendar” at any time during the process.

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currently reviewing existing ethics education offerings at the AFP International Conference on Fundraising, in several regional conferences and at a number of institutions of higher education across the country to “preapprove” courses and to encourage the development and offering of appropriate courses. If you are involved in a conference or other education program and would like the board to consider “preapproving” a course for ACFRE credit, please contact Cathlene Williams, Ph.D., CAE, ACFRE program consultant, at 703-794-2178 or [cathlene.williams@cox.net](mailto:cathlene.williams@cox.net).

“Relativity applies to physics, not ethics,” Albert Einstein once said, and the ACFRE Certification Board couldn’t agree more. The importance of ethics to the fundraising profession simply cannot be overstated. “Ethics” can be defined as a set of conditions, filters or values that inform and facilitate our decisions—and lead us to the best actions possible.

As a basis for decision making, ethics are useful. As a basis for trust, they are critical.

The ACFRE Certification Board encourages you to demonstrate your commitment to your profession, to leadership

and to ethical practice by completing the requirements and application to be considered a candidate for the ACFRE. You will benefit, your organization will benefit, your donors will benefit and our profession will be made better by your decision. Join us! 📞

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## About the ACFRE Program

Certification as an ACFRE requires successful completion of a four-stage process, which must be completed sequentially.

**1. A written application.** All candidates must complete a written application that requires information in three areas: employment, education and service to the profession or other nonprofit organizations. All candidates for the ACFRE process must agree, in writing, to uphold the *AFP Code of Ethical Principles and Standards* in addition to *A Donor Bill of Rights*.

**2. A written examination.** After demonstrating minimum requirements on the written application, the candidate must pass a 100-item, multiple-choice examination that measures knowledge of general development, management, leadership and fundraising skills.

**Examination note:** ACFRE exams may be scheduled individually either at the AFP office in Arlington or at a time and place convenient for the candidate and an ACFRE member willing to proctor. To learn more or to schedule an exam, please contact Cathlene Williams, Ph.D., CAE, ACFRE program consultant, at 703-794-2178 or [cathlenewilliams@cox.net](mailto:cathlenewilliams@cox.net).

**3. A portfolio review.** Candidates present a portfolio of fundraising materials personally developed within the past five years: a planning document; a case statement; and two examples of competency in writing, creativity, management and teaching/training.

**4. An oral peer review.** Candidates articulate a mastery of advanced-level knowledge and understanding, both experientially and theoretically based, of fundraising ethics, management, leadership, planning and problem solving in the broad field of fundraising and in at least two specialty areas. Oral peer reviews take place in January and August at the AFP office in Arlington, Va., and at other times through special arrangement, such as at the AFP International Conference on Fundraising or at Leadership Academy.

### Eligibility for Application

Individuals interested in the ACFRE program must meet all minimum eligibility requirements. Those requirements include:

- Currently works in the profession
- Currently holds a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) credential or is a current Fellow, Association for Healthcare Philanthropy (FAHP)
- Adherence to AFP’s *Code of Ethical Principles and Standards* and *A Donor Bill of Rights*
- A minimum of 10 years of full-time professional fundraising experience at the time of application
- A BS/BA degree or equivalent experience
- Participation within the previous five years in at least 15 contact hours of senior-level management and 15 contact hours of senior-level leadership seminars and/or courses. Academic courses and/or writing for the profession may be considered
- Participation within the previous five years in at least 10 hours of continuing education in fundraising ethics (effective Jan. 1, 2013)
- Membership and active participation in a field-related professional organization, with demonstrated volunteer service to nonprofit organizations

The Advanced Certified Fundraising Executive program is administered by the ACFRE Certification Board, which is independent in decision making in all matters pertaining to the implementation of the certification process. The ACFRE Certification Board includes four AFP members and one public member, each of whom is elected by ACFRE certificants. Nominations are made by the AFP Executive Committee from current ACFREs who meet the ACFRE board qualifications.

What is it like preparing for the ACFRE? Read “Demystifying the ACFRE Process” by Linda Lysakowski, ACFRE, and Alice Ferris, ACFRE, in the July/August 2011 *Advancing Philanthropy*.

For more information about the ACFRE program visit the AFP website, [www.afpnet.org](http://www.afpnet.org), and select “professional advancement” and “certification.”