

Accreditation Program Gains Traction Across the U.S.

IRWA's centralized program streamlines process

BY KARINNE ELSON



Real estate acquisition, appraisal and law are highly regulated in the United States. IRWA members are required to obtain and renew their real estate-related license by attending courses pre-approved by their state licensing board. Thanks to IRWA's Accreditation Program, more members are now using our courses to satisfy their state requirements.

The goal of IRWA's Accreditation Program is to certify IRWA courses for continuing education hours that can be credited toward state license renewal requirements in the United States. This year alone, we have received approval in 26 states for appraisers, 10 states for real estate brokers and three states for legal continuing education.

In the past, IRWA Chapters worked independently in submitting courses to their state licensing boards for review. However, in the last few years, the education accreditation requirements have become more complicated and the consequences for non-compliance more severe for licensees and education providers. As a result, IRWA centralized the program at Headquarters as a way of providing more support to the Chapter volunteers leading these efforts.

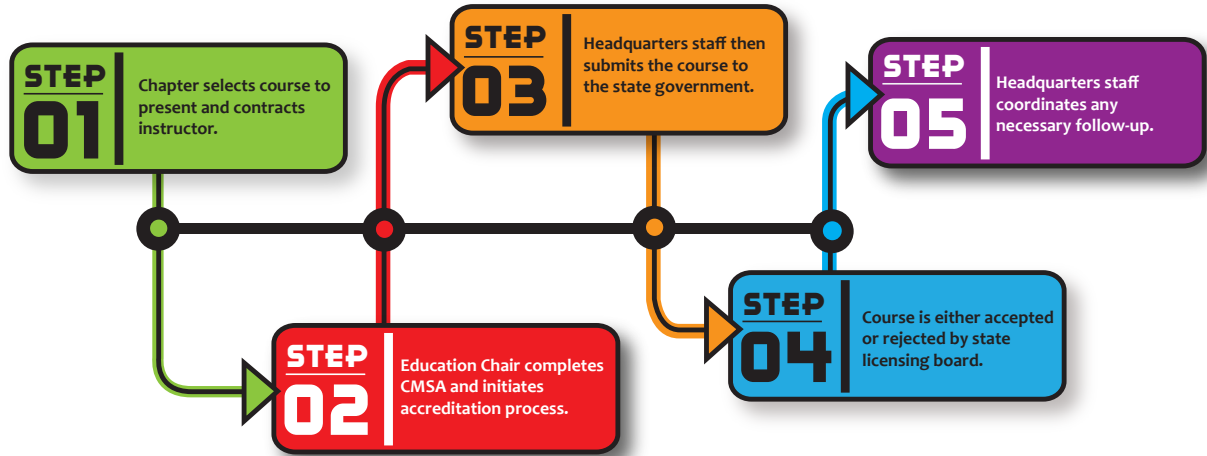
Matching Up Courses

Accreditation is used by outside organizations to monitor, control and improve the quality of education offered as part of a professional development program that leads to credentials or licensing. It is similar to the process that IRWA uses in determining the kind of education can be applied to our professional development program. For example, IRWA's Credentialing Manager, Francis Vicente, reviews outside courses and Chapter seminars to make sure they are relevant to the right of way profession. If so, they can be applied for credit toward the SR/WA Designation and certifications.

In response to the demand, we have primarily focused on certifying IRWA courses so that they can be approved for continuing education required for U.S. licensed real estate appraisers and real estate acquisition agents. Some of our chapters also certify courses for legal continuing education credit.

Each profession has its own state licensing board, and each state has its own requirements as to what is acceptable for continuing education credit. We now submit IRWA courses for review to the state governments to ensure they are a good fit for the state's license program. Once an IRWA course is approved

A Centralized Process



by a particular state board, our members can attend that course for continuing education hours creditable towards their state’s license renewal requirements. This not only expands IRWA’s reach, but also simplifies license renewals for our members.

How the Accreditation Process Works

Once a Chapter selects a course to present and contracts with an instructor, the Education Chair completes the Course Sponsorship and Marketing Agreement Form (CSMA). In Section 3 of the form, Education Chairs can indicate if they want to initiate the course approval process with their state licensing board. Once the CSMA form is received, IRWA staff contacts the Chapter Education Chair to process the request and coordinate any follow-up required by the state.

The turnaround time for course approval depends on many factors. Every state and licensing board has different requirements and timelines. Some states have entire departments dedicated to education compliance, while others have one person who reviews applications from all providers a few times per year. To further complicate the process, requirements can change and often

without warning. This is why we request as much time as possible and no less than 90 days from date the course is to be held.

Since IRWA’s body of knowledge is so professionally diverse, not all courses are deemed relevant to every real estate-related profession. For example, a course may be found to be appropriate for attorneys in one state, but not fitting for appraisers in that same state. The rulings depend on who is reviewing our course materials and on the state’s interpretation of what is appropriate subject matter for that particular profession.

Recognizing that this is a complex process, Education Chairs are encouraged to contact me anytime for additional information at kelson@irwaonline.org. ✪



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