

CICS / CICP

Differentiated from Auditing Certifications

Internal control abuses in organizations are no longer acceptable, nor are poorly designed control systems. The need for improved and more reliable internal control systems necessitates professionals who can not only “audit” or “monitor” internal controls but must be able to effectively design, assess, and use internal controls effectively. Such individuals must include general business managers, system designers, information technology professionals, production and quality staff. Essentially, candidates for certification include any individual in the organization with internal control responsibilities from the Board of Directors down through the entire organization. Professional Certification is a means to define the Common Body of Knowledge for the practice of organizational control, and to evaluate an individual’s ability to apply that knowledge in practice.

The Internal Control Institute’s CICS / CICP programs were developed by leading internal control professionals as a means of recognizing those individuals who demonstrate a predefined level of internal control competency. The CICS certification is the original internal control certification internationally, and is held by numerous individuals worldwide. The CICS certification includes an educational and testing program that measures the level of competence in the principles and practices of internal control in the business world. This has been followed by the CICP certification for highly experienced and qualified internal control professionals.

These certifications are recognized worldwide as the standard for internal control professionals. The CICS and CICP Certifications identify an individual as a leader. These designations are a formal acknowledgement that the recipient has an overall understanding of the disciplines and skills represented in a comprehensive Common Body of Knowledge (CBOK) for the internal control discipline.

The certifications are based on: 1) the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations (COSO) definition of internal control; 2) the COSO internal control model; and 3) the internal control provisions of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.

When comparing internal control certifications it is important to assure that the certification addresses the broad COSO definition of internal control which is:

“Internal control is broadly defined as a process, affected by an entity’s Board of Directors, management and other personnel, designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives in the following (three) categories. These distinct but overlapping categories address different needs and allow a directed focus to meet separate needs.

- Effectiveness and efficiency of operations
- Reliability of financial reporting
- Compliance with applicable laws and regulations”

Appropriate internal control auditing skills continue in importance. It has been a long accepted practice that internal auditing involves “professionals reviewing, auditing, and certifying on a year-round basis the soundness of the entity's financial statements.” But the internal control activity involves attaining and maintaining knowledge and skills in **internal control design, implementation and managing internal control activities** that are essential for insuring effective organizational control. The ICI Common Body of Knowledge includes all of these important functions. Internal auditing does not traditionally encompass “design,” “implementation” and “managing” internal control activities. Auditors are principally charged with unbiased reporting that an activity or organization is adhering to prescribed procedures and practices.