



ISA Qualifications

Tree Risk Assessment Qualification Candidate Handbook

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Purpose and Scope of the ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification

International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) qualifications are centered on training. Earning an ISA qualification is voluntary and provides recognition of the professional knowledge gained by taking the relevant training course and passing the accompanying exam.

The ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) program provides an opportunity for professionals in the arboriculture industry to expand their knowledge through education and training in the fundamentals of tree risk assessment. This qualification promotes the safety of people and property by providing a standardized and systematic process for assessing tree risk. The results of a tree risk assessment can provide tree owners and risk managers with the information to make informed decisions to enhance tree benefits, health, and longevity.

Course Content and Objectives

The course content is based on the new *Tree Risk Assessment Manual* and is divided into nine modules:

1. Introduction to Tree Risk Assessment
2. Levels of Assessment
3. Target Assessment
4. Site Assessment
5. Tree Biology and Mechanics
6. Tree Inspection and Assessment
7. Data Analysis and Risk Categorization
8. Mitigation
9. Reporting

Through education and training, arborists will learn strategies to systematically identify and assess tree risk. The qualified professional will:

- Comprehend the fundamentals of limited-visual and basic tree risk assessment as defined in the *ISA Best Management Practices: Tree Risk Assessment*
- Understand the principles of advanced diagnostic techniques for assessing tree risk
- Gather and synthesize information to assess risk
- Make reasoned judgments and recommendations for mitigating identified risk

Participant Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must have earned at least one of the following credentials to be eligible to take a TRAQ course:

- ISA Board Certified Master Arborist®
- ISA Certified Arborist®
- ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualified
- A degree in arboriculture, urban forestry, traditional forestry, or horticulture that is part of a national qualifications framework or is from a college or university that is accredited or recognized under a system that is substantially similar to accreditation.
- AHC30810 Certificate III in Arboriculture (Australia)
- ASCA Registered Consulting Arborist (RCA) status
- Connecticut Arborist License
- European Tree Technician
- European Tree Worker
- Fachagrarwirt Baumpfleger
- Louisiana Arborist License
- Manitoba Arborist Training and Licensing Program
- Maryland Tree Expert
- Massachusetts Certified Arborist
- New Hampshire Arborists Association Certified Arborist
- New Jersey Certified Tree Expert
- New Zealand National Certificate in Horticulture (Arboriculture) (Level 4)
- Rhode Island Arborist License
- Society of American Foresters Certified Forester
- United Kingdom Qualifications and Credit Framework Level 2 Certificate or Diploma in Arboriculture

ISA maintains records of its own credentials.

Applicants must provide valid documentation of any other credentials to demonstrate their eligibility. If you held an ISA credential that expired in 2001 or earlier, you may be required to submit documentation of it. Instructions for submission of documentation vary by event host and are provided as part of the event registration process.

If you hold a credential or have completed a program of study that is not listed above, go to www.isa-arbor.com/certification/resources/cert_Cred_TRAQ_EligibilityAppeal.pdf for information on appeals.

Course and Examination Format

The standard ISA TRAQ event consists of a two-day course followed by a half-day examination. Under certain circumstances, instructors may extend the time length of the course.

The course's instructional design is based on best practices for adult education. Learning activities include lectures, discussions, small-group activities, applied case studies, and field activities. These activities are intended to cater to a variety of learning styles and foster adult learning and application of course content.

The examination consists of two parts:

- The written portion is made up of 100 multiple-choice questions. Each question has four choices listed, only one of which is correct. You will have two hours to complete the written exam.
- The performance-based part of the exam is an outdoor tree assessment practicum. The performance-based exam will test your ability to apply tree risk principles to a tree at the training site. You will have one hour to complete it.

Application Process

Course Dates, Locations, and Fees

Qualification courses are offered through ISA, ISA chapters and associate organizations, and other hosts. For information on dates and locations of qualification courses in your area, contact ISA or visit the ISA Events Calendar at www.isa-arbor.com/events/eventsCalendar/index.aspx.

Pricing may vary by event. To find the price for a specific event, go to the ISA Events Calendar, click the event date you are interested in, and follow the links to the registration information.

In cases where ISA Headquarters co-hosts a course, the fee is set at \$625 USD for ISA members and \$750 USD for nonmembers. You do not need to be a member of the local chapter or associate organization to qualify for the member price.

ISA qualification fees are separate and distinct from ISA certification fees, ISA membership dues, and ISA chapter dues.

Submission of Application

To apply for an ISA qualification course, go to the ISA Events Calendar at www.isa-arbor.com/events/eventsCalendar/index.aspx, click the event you are interested in attending, and follow the links through the registration process.

A complete application and payment in the correct amount must be received on or before the deadline for your application to be accepted. There are no exceptions to this policy.

If there is a problem with the application or payment, the event host will contact you. You must correct the problem or you will not be able to attend the training. If you have questions or difficulties with the application, contact the event host.

Due to the complexity of the application process and the need to review course materials ahead of time, onsite registrations are not available for TRAQ courses.

ISA has the right to contact any person or organization as part of the review of your application. By applying, you authorize the release of any information requested by ISA for the purpose of reviewing your application. ISA has the right to notify appropriate organizations if your application contains false information.

Confirmation

You will be notified when your application is received. After your application is approved, you will receive a confirmation packet with a letter containing the date and time of the course and the name of the appropriate contact person. Confirmation packets are shipped three weeks prior to the date the course begins.

The confirmation packet includes one copy each of the *Tree Risk Assessment Manual* and *Tree Risk Assessment Workbook*. No refunds or discounts are given if you already own the *Tree Risk Assessment Manual*.

Cancellations

Cancellation requests must be received by the event host before the course registration deadline. If requests are not received before the deadline, a refund may not be issued. The host's contact information and refund policy will be detailed with each event listing. Registrations are not transferrable to another person.

Preparing for the Course

Before You Leave

Thoroughly review the *Tree Risk Assessment Manual* and complete the pre-work activities in the *Tree Risk Assessment Workbook* before attending the course.

Items to Bring with You

Bring the following items with you to the event:

- A government-issued photo identification card, such as a driver's license, passport, or military ID
- *Tree Risk Assessment Manual* (included in your confirmation packet)
- *Tree Risk Assessment Qualification Workbook*, included in your confirmation packet; the workbook is required to complete the course
- Writing utensil(s), including at least one #2 pencil
- Clipboard or hard surface to write on outdoors
- Appropriate attire for both indoor and outdoor activities
- High-visibility vest, coat, or clothing
- Hard hat

At the Event

Admission

To be admitted for the course, you must arrive at the course site 30 minutes before the course starts. The event host will check your government-issued photo ID and have you sign a check-in sheet. If you do not have a photo ID with you at the start of the course, you will have up to the time of the exam (i.e., two days) to obtain one. If you have not produced a photo ID by the exam day, you will not be allowed to sit for the exam.

Site Rules

- The exact time, date, and location of the course will be enclosed in your confirmation packet. You must be on time, as the course will begin promptly. Report to the event site at least 30 minutes before the course starts.
- Dress appropriately for both indoor and outdoor activities. While every attempt is made to provide a comfortable classroom atmosphere, heating or cooling systems may not function properly. Outdoor weather conditions may vary.
- Visitors are not allowed into the training or exam.

- During the exam:
 - » The manual, workbook, and any notes you have taken will not be allowed.
 - » No cell phones, pagers, PDAs, or other electronic devices are allowed.
 - » Writing on the test booklet is not allowed.
 - » If you are caught looking at other individuals' exams or talking during the exam, scores may be invalidated or exam materials confiscated.
- It is of utmost importance that you carefully follow all directions and regulations. Listen carefully to all instructions given by the instructor, and follow the directions completely.

Inappropriate Application and Examination Conduct

ISA intends that participation in its qualification programs be a professionally relevant, informative, and rewarding experience for all candidates. All participants in ISA qualifications courses and exams are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate and professional manner and to refrain from any objectionable, improper, or unprofessional conduct. To ensure fairness and an effectual learning and examination environment, the following policy and rules apply:

- When ISA or an ISA-designated representative finds that a candidate has engaged in inappropriate conduct or behavior, ISA reserves the right to respond with actions including but not limited to the following:
 - » Rejecting an application for qualification
 - » Prohibiting or precluding a person from participating in a course
 - » Preventing or precluding a person from participating in an examination, including removing a person from the testing site
 - » Invalidating or nullifying examination results
 - » Issuing and enforcing any other lesser response or action determined to be appropriate or necessary
- Inappropriate conduct or behavior includes but is not limited to misrepresentation; failure to disclose requested information; cheating; unauthorized possession, use, or distribution of copyrighted or legally protected material; verbal or

physical disturbances of the course and/or examination; failure to pay fees in a timely manner; and any other objectionable, improper, or unprofessional actions by a person participating in the ISA qualification process.

- By submitting an application for qualification, each participant acknowledges that he or she understands and agrees to the terms of this policy.

Failure to Attend or Complete the Course and Examination

No refunds or discounts will be issued if you do not attend or complete the course and examination. If you do not complete the course and examination, you will need to retake both in order to obtain the credential.

Obtaining the Qualification

Requirements for Completion

Because ISA qualification programs are centered on training, candidates must complete both the course and the exam to earn the credential; taking the exam alone is not sufficient. The TRAQ exam includes both written and performance-based components. To obtain the credential, you must achieve the required passing scores for both parts of the examination. The passing scores are 75 percent for the written component and 80 percent for the performance-based component.

Once qualified, you will receive a certificate.

Your qualification is personal to you and may not be transferred or assigned to any other individual, organization, or entity. When publicizing your credential, you must comply with the requirements in the *ISA Branding and Style Guide*, found at www.isa-arbor.com/BrandingGuide.

Exam Scoring

To ensure the most reliable grading on your written examination, ISA Headquarters grades written exams through electronic scanning and scoring. The TRAQ performance-based exam is scored on site by the instructor administering the exam. Your score report is then sent to ISA Headquarters. ISA will notify you of your overall results.

Examination Results and Notification of Qualification

Your results will be mailed approximately six weeks after your exam date. You will be notified of your pass/fail result; no percentages or numeric scores will be given. Those who pass will receive a certificate. Your results are confidential, except as noted in the “Privacy” section of this handbook. Results cannot be obtained over the phone, by fax, or via e-mail.

If you have questions concerning your exam results, direct them in writing to the ISA Certification Department at cert@isa-arbor.com. Because of the need to maintain test security, exam booklets cannot be made available for review of the questions and answers, and the ISA Certification Department does not provide a list of questions that were answered correctly or incorrectly.

Retaking the Examination

If you do not pass both the written and performance-based portions of the exam, you will receive a failure notification and details for retaking the exam. If you want to obtain the qualification, you will be required to retake both the written and performance-based portions of the exam, even if you failed only one of them.

A limited number of seats are available at upcoming TRAQ events for those who need to retake the TRAQ exam. You must file an application for a retake prior to the registration deadline for the scheduled course where you will retake your exam. Event details are posted on the ISA Events Calendar at www.isa-arbor.com/events/eventsCalendar/index.aspx. You must contact ISA at +1-217-355-9411 to schedule a retake.

There is a \$150 USD fee per retake up to one year from the original date that you took the course. If you do not attain passing scores within one year of the original test date, you will be required to complete the entire course, retake both portions of the exam, and pay the full amount.

What May Be Stated About Qualification Holders

By participating in training and passing the exam, holders of ISA qualifications have demonstrated knowledge of the material covered in the relevant qualification course. The material covered is considered relevant for the term of validity of the qualification. No other conclusions may be drawn concerning qualification holders.

ISA qualifications do not represent licensure, registration, or other authorization to practice or to conduct business activities for a fee or otherwise.

Qualifications are not subject to ongoing requirements such as adherence to a code of ethics or participation in continuing education activities.

Term of Validity and Requalification

The ISA TRAQ credential is valid for five years. To reinstate your qualification after each five-year period, you must retake the full course and successfully complete the exam. There is no continuing education (CEU) component or maintenance associated with ISA qualifications. A reminder will be sent near the end of your validity period. We recommend that at that time you look for an upcoming date and location to requalify.

Notify ISA promptly if your contact information changes. We are not responsible for undeliverable notifications.

Invalidation of a Qualification

Your qualification may be invalidated for any of the following reasons:

- Falsification of application
- Violation of testing procedures
- Misrepresentation of your identity or other information

In the event that your ISA qualification is invalidated, you must immediately stop using and/or displaying the ISA qualification credential and any other designation indicating an affiliation with the ISA Qualification Program. You must comply with any additional directives of the ISA Qualification Program.

Continuing Education Credit for ISA Certification Holders

If you complete the ISA Tree Risk Assessment course, you can earn 14.5 ISA CEUs for the instructional portion of the program. These CEUs can be applied to any ISA Certified Arborist® credential. For an ISA Board Certified Master Arborist®, 6 CEUs go to practice, 6 to management, and 2.5 to science.

Nondiscrimination

The ISA Qualifications Program does not discriminate in determining eligibility on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Accommodations for Participants with Disabilities

It is the intent of ISA to provide accessibility to ISA courses to any qualified participant with a documented disability, upon reasonable notice and without requiring ISA to take action which would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the course or an undue financial burden to ISA or the event host.

If you have a special need and require an accommodation for a course, please complete the Special Accommodations Request Form at www.isa-arbor.com/Accommodations and submit it to qual@isa-arbor.com. Your request will be reviewed and you will be notified of a determination.

Appeals and Complaints

Complaints and appeals are accepted and resolved in accordance with the ISA Credentialing Appeals and Complaints policy, available at www.isa-arbor.com/certification/resources/cert_Credential_Appeals.pdf.

If you believe that an error was made in the grading of your exam, you may request a regrade of your results. Contact the ISA Certification Department at cert@isa-arbor.com. A fee of \$35 applies to each regrade.

Privacy

By applying for an ISA qualification, you authorize ISA to make your contact information available to your local chapter/associate organization and our four professional affiliates so they can share information with you about educational seminars and other events.

ISA shares your contact information, pass/fail exam result, term of validity, and other relevant details with the event host and your ISA chapter/associate organization so that they may monitor your credential status and administer credential-related services.

Your name, location, and credential will be available to members of the public on the ISA website.

Some credential holders do not wish their names to be distributed to the public or to other interested parties (vendors, potential employers, etc.). If you do not wish to have your name included on the ISA website or in lists for distribution, contact the ISA Certification Department at cert@isa-arbor.com.

You will be notified of whether or not you passed the qualification examination, but your score will not be disclosed to you or to any third party. Where relevant, you will learn whether or not your score was high enough to meet one of several eligibility requirements for becoming an instructor. Again, the score itself will not be disclosed to you or any third party.

Qualifications of TRAQ Instructors

TRAQ instructors have recognized expertise in the field of tree risk assessment as evidenced by teaching experience, presentations, authorship, and/or experience conducting risk assessments. They obtain their TRAQ credential with a significantly higher exam score than is required to pass the test. Instructors have completed a minimum of one course that covers adult learning principles and other aspects of training. They have apprenticed with experienced instructors prior to teaching on their own.

Liability Disclaimer

Practitioners of the skills taught in ISA qualifications courses practice at their own risk. Neither the International Society of Arboriculture nor the authors of the course and related materials accept any responsibility, explicit or implied, for liability, loss, or consequential damage arising from the manner in which the materials presented in the course are used in the field. The instruction and training materials provided are considered to be reasonable and sufficient to provide the user with a thorough understanding of when and how to practice the relevant skills. The contents of the course and related materials are provided “as is” and “where is” and may change without notice as research and understanding of the subject matter evolve.