

TRAINEES AND SUPERVISORS: PREPARE FOR CHANGES

In December 2011, the Appraiser Qualifications Board (AQB) of The Appraisal Foundation adopted changes to the Real Property Appraiser Qualification Criteria that will become **effective January 1, 2015**. These changes represent minimum national requirements that each state must implement no later than January 1, 2015.

Many of these changes will not affect certified appraisers and licensed appraisers in Pennsylvania; however there are four changes that are considered significant. The Pennsylvania State Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers (the Board) has written this article to make trainees and supervisors aware of these important changes to qualification criteria.

1. For trainees, undoubtedly the most significant revision is the increased college degree requirements and the elimination of the "in lieu of" option for those who do not have college degrees. Individuals seeking to become certified residential or certified general appraisers after January 1, 2015 will be required to have a Bachelor's degree or higher (in any field) from an accredited college or university. Currently, residential applicants are only required to have an Associate's degree or 21 semester credit hours of college coursework. General applicants without degrees currently have the option of accumulating 30 semester credit hours of college coursework in lieu of a Bachelor's degree. Beginning on January 1, 2015, the "in lieu of" option will go away, and all new applicants will be required to possess a Bachelor's degree. This is particularly important for current trainees who do not have a Bachelor's degree and plan to use the "in lieu of" option. These prospective "in lieu of" applicants are hereby notified that they must complete their education, experience, and successfully pass the comprehensive exam before January 1, 2015, or else they will be required to obtain a Bachelor's degree.

2. Beginning in January 2015, all candidates for a real property appraiser certification undergo a criminal background check from state and federal agencies. This means that new applicants for appraisal certification will be required to obtain a criminal background check from the Pennsylvania State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Board has decided not to require existing certificate holders to obtain a criminal background check.

3. Also beginning in January 2015, both licensed trainees and supervisory appraisers shall be required to complete a course that, at a minimum, complies with the specifications for course content established by the AQB. The course will be oriented toward the requirements and responsibilities of supervisory appraisers and expectations for trainees. The course must be completed by the trainee appraiser prior to obtaining a trainee appraiser credential, and completed by the supervisory appraiser prior to supervising a trainee appraiser. The AQB is currently drafting the content specifications for this course, and it is expected that course providers will have this course ready to offer within the next 12-18 months.

4. A licensed appraiser trainee will be required to complete all qualifying education (75 hours, which includes 30-hour Basic Appraisal Principles, 30-hour Basic Appraisal Procedures,

and 15-hour National USPAP Course or equivalent) within the five (5) year period prior to the date of submission of an application for a Trainee Appraiser credential. This new requirement will also go into effect on January 1, 2015.

As a final reminder, Pennsylvania is ending the “segmented approach” to criteria implementation as of January 1, 2013 (i.e., at the end of this year). This means that applicants for appraisal certification after this date will be required to meet all of the 2008 AQB criteria for education, including the college coursework requirements.

The Board will continue to monitor developments and changes in appraiser qualification criteria. A certified appraiser or licensed appraiser trainee has an obligation to remain current and up-to-date on qualification criteria. The Board urges professional associations and appraisal education providers to inform their members and students and include these developments and requirements for discussion.