

The Pathway to Success Begins with



Security Professional Education Development

# Security Fundamentals Professional Certification Candidate Handbook

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Defense Security Service  
Center for Development of Security Excellence  
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Linthicum, MD 21090  
<http://cdse.dss.mil>

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# SPēD Certification Program Overview

## *Introduction*

This *Candidate Handbook* provides individuals with an overview of the Security Professional Education Development (SPēD) Certification Program, including benefits and objectives. The Defense Security Service (DSS) administers the SPēD Certification Program under the direction of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD(I)).

The Security Fundamentals Professional Certification (SFPC) is one certification in the SPēD Certification Program. This *Candidate Handbook* provides information regarding SFPC eligibility, registration, and assessment.

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## *What is the SPēD Certification Program?*

The SPēD Certification Program is part of the Department of Defense's (DoD) initiative to professionalize the security workforce. The SPēD Certification Program ensures that certified security practitioners can demonstrate proficiency in a common set of competencies. The purpose of the SPēD Certification Program is to promote interoperability, facilitate professional development and training, and develop a workforce of certified security professionals.

# SPēD Certification Program Overview

## *Governance*

The Department of Defense Security Training Council (DSTC), in its role as the governing body for SPēD, has approved the design as well as the policies and procedures necessary to establish the SFPC as a key element of the SPēD Professional Certification Program. DoD Instruction 3305.13, “DoD Security Training,” December 18, 2007, establishes the DSTC as an advisory body on DoD security training, responsible for promoting certification programs for the security workforce. The DSTC reports to the Defense Intelligence Training and Education Board (DITEB), which has established the DoD-wide security and intelligence community certification requirement. On August 18, 2009, the DSTC agreed to develop and govern the SPēD Certification Program. The DSTC is responsible for:

- Certification Administration Oversight
- Technical Development Oversight
- Certification Governance

The DSTC is composed of security professionals and managers from 23 DoD Components. The DSTC represents the shared interests of all members in the design, management and maintenance of certification.

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## *Benefits of SPēD Certification*

*For individuals:*

- Fosters understanding of the concepts and principles deemed critical to protect DoD assets
- Promote professional development

*For employers:*

- Provides a reference point for determining an individual’s understanding of the concepts and principles deemed critical to protect DoD assets
- Identifies competent professionals in this discipline

*For the profession:*

- Defines standards and drives professional accountability
- Assures continuing competency of certificants

# SP̄D Certification Program Overview

## *SP̄D Certification Program Structure*

The SP̄D Certification Program is an essential element of the overall SP̄D program for the professional development of security professionals. The SP̄D Certification Program is comprised of four core certifications described below and multiple specialty certifications that target more narrow security disciplines.

The SFPC serves as a valid and reliable indicator of a security practitioner’s mastery of facts, concepts, and principles the DoD security community deems critical to successfully perform functions, implement programs, and pursue missions necessary to manage risks to and protect DoD assets.

Certification	Acronym	Certification Description
Security Fundamentals Professional Certification	SFPC	The individual understands foundational security concepts, principles, and practices.
Security Asset Protection Professional Certification	SAPPC	The individual applies foundational security concepts, principles, and practices.
Security Program Integration Professional Certification	SPIPC	The individual understands and applies risk management and security program management based on security concepts, principles, and practices.
Security Enterprise Professional Certification	SEPC	The individual understands and applies concepts, principles, and practices for managing enterprise-wide security.

This *Candidate Handbook* addresses ONLY the description and related policies and practices associated with the SFPC.

## SFPC Policy Matrix

The certification policy matrix summarizes the essential characteristics and design requirements of SFPC.

<b>Security Fundamentals</b> <i>Professional Certification</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Security Fundamentals Professional Certification is open to all personnel affiliated with a Federal Agency and/or the National Industrial Security Program. Volunteers who submit to and subsequently meet the SFPC program requirements can be conferred the SFPC.</li> <li>The Security Fundamentals Professional Certification is ideal for:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personnel who will be or are already performing security functions as an additional and/or embedded duty on behalf of (and as specified by) a DoD Component</li> <li>Personnel who are working toward or already occupy full-time security positions for which attainment of this certification has been deemed a requirement or professional development milestone</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<b>To obtain the Security Fundamentals Professional Certification, the individual must:</b>		<b>Waivers</b>
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Be in “good standing” by having his or her employment status and/or affiliation confirmed by Component’s or Agency’s SPeD Program Management Office (PMO) Point of Contact (POC)	NONE
<b>Requirements:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successfully meet the certification assessment’s qualifying score</li> <li>Be designated by his or her employing Component or Agency as a candidate of “good standing”</li> </ul>	NONE
<b>To maintain the Security Fundamentals Professional Certification, the certificant must:</b>		<b>Waivers</b>
<b>Requirements:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successfully meet approved continuing professional development units biennially</li> <li>Continue to be an employee in “good standing” in the employing Component and Agency</li> </ul>	As specified in Component’s or Agency’s Implementation Plan
<b>The certificant holder will need to re-test if:</b>		<b>Waivers</b>
<b>Conditions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Department of Defense Security Training Council (DSTC) concludes that the content addressed by the certification’s assessment modules is significantly out-of-date</li> <li>The individual fails to meet the certification maintenance requirements within the designated two-year certification period</li> </ul>	NONE

# The SFPC Credential

## *SFPC Eligibility*

An individual is considered eligible for the SFPC if they are assigned to any security position identified by the DoD Component as requiring an SFPC-certified person (these positions are referred to as indexed positions). After the DoD Component determines that the person is an employee in “good standing,” as defined on page 7 of this Handbook, they forward his or her name to the SPēD PMO. Individuals affiliated with a Federal Agency and/or the DoD may also volunteer to pursue the SFPC. These individuals must coordinate with their Federal Agency or DoD SPēD POC before contacting the SPēD PMO. The SFPC is available to DoD contractor personnel if they are performing security duties directly for a DoD Component. They must contact the DSS SPēD PMO to verify their eligibility. Facility Security Officers and National Industrial Security Program affiliated security professionals performing security duties on behalf of their respective companies are also eligible for SFPC. These individuals should e-mail the DSS SPēD PMO at [sped@dss.mil](mailto:sped@dss.mil) to schedule testing.

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## *SFPC Credentialing Process*

There are four stages in the certification process:

1. **Eligible Applicant** - An individual is eligible for certification after gaining approval from the DoD Component, Agency, or SPēD PMO.
2. **Applicant** - The eligible applicant registers for SPēD Assessment and establishes or updates his or her Security Training, Education and Professionalization Portal (STEPP) account.
3. **Candidate** - The applicant registers to take the SPēD Certification Assessment.
4. **Certificant** - The individual meets the requirements and a certification is conferred.

## *SFPC Registration Process*

The list below outlines the steps eligible applicants follow to participate in the SFPC.

- Create or update STEPP account through <https://stepp.dss.mil/index.html>. STEPP is the SPeD system of record. If your STEPP account is not current, your results may be delayed.
- Choose your testing date and location from SPeD web site testing schedule and register for the testing event as indicated by the schedule.

Once an applicant's status is confirmed with the Center for Development of Security Excellence (CDSE) Registrar's Office, the candidate will be notified by e-mail of registration. The candidate can review the resource documents and frequently asked questions online.

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## *Using SFPC Credentials*

Those persons who have been granted the Security Fundamentals Professional Certification are authorized to use the SFPC designation on business cards, resumes, and signature lines. SFPC certificants may use this designation as long as they maintain active status. The designation "SFPC" should appear in all capital letters after a comma following the certificant's name. For example, John Dough, SFPC.

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## *Conferral and Revocation of Credentials*

DoD Instruction 3115.11, "DoD Intelligence Human Capital Management Operations," designates the USD(I) as the accreditation and certification official for the Defense Intelligence Components Department Level programs. This empowers the USD(I) to confer or revoke SFPC credentials. Specifics regarding this conferral and revocation authority can be found in DoD Manual 3305.13-M.

Candidates meeting the required assessment scores and eligibility requirements will be recommended by the Director, DSS, to the USD(I) for conferral of the SFPC. The USD(I), upon recommendation from the Director, DSS, may also revoke the individual's SFPC designation. Revocation of the SFPC credential will be considered when a certificant is removed from their position for misconduct or poor performance.

# The SFPC Credential

## *Topic Areas of Expertise*

The SFPC Assessment measures the applicant's breadth of knowledge across the DoD security landscape. Although a security professional's current work may primarily be in one of the core security disciplines, the results of the practice analysis performed by DoD demonstrated evidence that it is important to have awareness and a fundamental body of knowledge across the core security disciplines. The SFPC is not only valuable to security professionals as their careers advance, but also strengthens DoD's confidence in its security professionals' general knowledge.

The areas of expertise specified in the chart were identified during practice analyses as critical domains that should be addressed by the SFPC. The weights indicated were derived from importance ratings provided by subject matter experts (SMEs) during the development process.

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## *SFPC Examination Development*

The initial step in the development of a fair and objective test is to measure the fundamental knowledge and skill required of a DoD security professional. A job/practice analysis was conducted to assure that the knowledge and skills identified were representative of those required by professionals from across all of DoD, including tasks and functions performed by civilian, military, and contractor personnel. The job/practice analysis was designed and facilitated by technical experts contracted by DSS, engaged DoD Leaders, and SMEs from the uniformed Services and multiple DoD Agencies who participated in each of four job/practice analysis phases. These phases included a detailed review of studies that had been performed before, defining specific work performed and required knowledge and skills necessary to perform that work, and verifying the results with SMEs and the DSTC. The job/practice analysis led to creation of the Defense Security Skill Standards (DS3), which clarifies the Department's expectations of what security professionals must know and be able to do to successfully perform responsibilities that support the Department's security functions. This information was then used to generate the certification test outline (blueprint) that specifies objectives associated with the 48 knowledge and skill topics and sub-topics that are to be measured with the SFPC test.

The test questions were developed by a process that included (1) developing draft questions that assess mastery of selected and codified objectives that are based on these knowledge and skill requirements (2) facilitating Senior SME review of draft assessment items for accuracy and relevance to the objectives, and (3) piloting the resulting test for effective and accurate measurement in order to generate the final version of the test.

The DSS will continue to monitor "change factors" (e.g., policy change, system change) on a continuing basis to identify those changes that could affect test questions used within the certification test and result in adjustments as required. The test questions themselves will also be reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure that they continue to function as intended. The review involves generating and reviewing question and test level statistics to gauge continued effectiveness.

# The SFPC Credential

Area of Expertise (AOE)	
Information Security	Exam Weight (28%)
Classification Considerations for Critical Program Information (CPI)	1%
Classification Levels and Types	2%
Classification Markings	2%
Disposition and Destruction Procedures	1%
Duration	1%
Handling Incidents of Potential and Actual Compromise	3%
Handling Special Types of Information	1%
Information Assurance Concepts	2%
Information Protection Concepts	3%
Procedures in a Classified Workplace	6%
Safeguarding	1%
Transmission and Transportation Procedures	2%

Note: Sum of sub-topic area percentages may not be equal to AOE exam weight due to rounding.

# The SFPC Credential

Area of Expertise	
Personnel Security	Exam Weight (31%)
Adjudicative Guidelines	3%
Civilian Employment Investigative Requirements	2%
Designation of Position Sensitivity Types	1%
Military Appointment, Enlistment, and Induction Investigative Requirements	1%
Personnel Security Clearances	3%
Personnel Security Investigation Requests	1%
Personnel Security Investigations, Limitations, and Restrictions	2%
Safeguarding Personnel Records	3%
Security Systems	5%
Special Personnel Security Clearance Requirements	1%
Standards - Access to Classified Information/Sensitive Duty Assignment	2%
Types of Personnel Security Investigations	2%
Unfavorable Administrative Actions	1%
Waivers of Investigative Requirements	4%

Note: Sum of sub-topic area percentages may not be equal to AOE exam weight due to rounding.

# The SFPC Credential

Area of Expertise	
<b>Physical Security</b>	<b>Exam Weight (10%)</b>
Facility Access Control Procedures	2%
Lock and Key Systems	1%
Physical Security Concepts	2%
Protective Barriers	2%
Secure Rooms, Containers, and Vaults	1%
Security Systems and Devices	1%
Site Lighting	1%
Area of Expertise	
<b>Industrial Security</b>	<b>Exam Weight (13%)</b>
Contracting Process	1%
Facility Security Clearance	1%
FOCI	1%
Industrial Security Basics	5%
Visits and Meetings	1%

Note: Sum of sub-topic area percentages may not be equal to AOE exam weight due to rounding.

# The SFPC Credential

Area of Expertise	
GENERAL SECURITY	Exam Weight (18%)
Basic Security Forms	2%
Counterintelligence Concepts	2%
OPSEC Concepts	1%
Research and Technology Protection Concepts	2%
Risk Assessment and Management	2%
SAP Basics	2%
Security Briefings	1%
Security Education and Training	2%
Security Policy Landscape	4%

Note: Sum of sub-topic area percentages may not be equal to AOE exam weight due to rounding.

## *Scheduling an SFPC Assessment*

Prior to registration, candidates must contact their supervisor for coordination and, if required, approval and adhere to their organization's policies regarding SFPC participation. SFPC candidates must have an active and up-to-date STEPP account to register for the certification assessment. STEPP is the system of record for the SPēD certification program.

After registering for the certification assessment, candidates will receive a notification e-mail from STEPP informing them their registration is pending approval. Approval to take the test is granted from the Registrar's Office after candidates are approved by the DSS SPēD PMO and/or respective DoD Component.

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## *Procedures*

Once the candidate has registered as a SFPC candidate in STEPP, the SPēD PMO will send an e-mail to the candidate which includes the test site address, report date and time, the registered exam, the candidate ID, and items the candidate needs to bring to the testing site, including the following:

- Registrar e-mail notification
- Government-issued photo identification (DoD Common Access Card (CAC), passport, or driver's license) OR
- Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code (if employer is a DoD contractor)

For testing outside the continental United States, candidates must bring two forms of identification. One form of identification must be a CAC and the other can be a driver's license, passport, or military ID.

# Assessment Administration

## *Assessment Security and Confidentiality*

The questions and answers that comprise the SFPC Assessment are for official use only and are not subject to public release.

Prior to beginning the SFPC Assessment, the Candidate is asked to accept the terms and conditions of the SPēD Certification Assessment Notice (found in this handbook). Among other things, this notice states: “By accessing and participating in this assessment, you accept the responsibility to protect the integrity of this assessment by not disclosing, disseminating, copying, publishing, or transmitting any parts of this assessment in any form to any person.”

The SPēD Certification Assessment will be proctored. Proctors are responsible for ensuring consistent testing environments across the DoD for the SPēD certification program and protecting the integrity of the SPēD certification program.

The SPēD Certification Assessment is password-protected and hosted on a secure server. The assessment cannot be accessed, copied, printed, or distributed without approval from the DSS SPēD PMO.

Pass/fail information will be provided to the Primary Office of Responsibility for the candidate’s owning Component or Agency. A candidate may access his or her results via STEPP, the SPēD system of record.

Except as described above or elsewhere in this Handbook, individual information and results are confidential and will not be disclosed without candidate consent, necessary to comply with mandatory legal demand or court order. The written request must state the specific data that may be released and specifically identify any third party to receive the data. Data distributed with SFPC studies and reports will be aggregated and personally identifying information will be redacted.

## *SP̄D Terms and Conditions*

Prior to taking the certification assessment, candidates will be asked to accept the following terms and conditions.

<b>SP̄D Certification Program Notice Security Fundamentals Professional Certification Terms and Conditions</b>
<p>Your participation in the Certification Program is subject to the following terms.</p> <p>The Security Fundamentals Professional Certification Assessment (including, without limitation, questions, answers, datasets, files, designs, or content in or related to the certification assessment) is the property of the U.S. Department of Defense and access is reserved to authorized users only.</p> <p>The assessment is for internal U.S. Government use only and is not publicly releasable.</p> <p>By accessing and participating in this assessment, you accept the responsibility to protect the integrity of this assessment by not disclosing, disseminating, copying, publishing, or transmitting any parts of the assessment in any form to any person.</p> <p>You may be disqualified from participating in the assessment or the certification program as a whole and your certification may be revoked if you:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Participate in the assessment under false identity.</li><li>2. Circumvent or violate the program's procedures or security mechanisms.</li></ol> <p><input type="radio"/> Accept</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Not Accept</p>

# Assessment Administration

## *Materials Provided at the Assessment Location*

- Blank paper or worksheets, as applicable
- Computer
- Assessment(s) to be taken

See Appendix A for Accommodations for Disabilities.

The test takers are not permitted to bring electronic communications devices, including smart phones, into the testing area.

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## *Assessment Completion Time*

The SFPC Assessment has a two-hour time limit.

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## *Rescheduling an SFPC Assessment*

If needed, candidates may cancel and reschedule their assessment date. Log onto STEPP, then view and select a new assessment date and location.

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## *Retaking an SFPC Assessment*

If a candidate does not obtain a passing score on the SFPC Assessment or does not complete the assessment, he or she can retake it after a 90-day waiting period. This waiting period is applied after each sitting, regardless of whether the assessment was completed. Sitting for the assessment occurs when the candidate enters the proctor-provided user ID and password. It is recommended that the candidate refer to the website for suggested courses addressing the topic areas to improve performance when retaking the exam.

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## *Scoring the SFPC Assessment*

The candidate must earn a score that is equal to or higher than the passing score in order to be considered to have passed the assessment. Candidates can access their pass/fail results in STEPP within 15 days after taking the SFPC.

## *Determination of Passing Scores*

The Angoff method was used to set the minimum passing score for the SFPC. The Angoff method has a well-established history of determining creditable passing standards for multiple-choice examinations and is easily adapted for use with the SFPC Assessment. The method involves two basic elements: conceptualization of a minimally competent examinee and using SMEs to estimate whether a minimally competent examinee will answer an item correctly or incorrectly. Minimally competent examinees are examinees who demonstrate behaviors that are sometimes correct, but often not. They have a 50:50 probability of passing or failing the exam, which places them just at the cut-off score for an assessment. SMEs define the characteristics of a minimally competent examinee and then try to estimate if a minimally competent examinee is likely to successfully perform each of the items on the assessment. A panel of SMEs made predictions for each item (represented as a percentage) and the average of the SMEs ratings on the items sets the minimum passing score for the assessment. Results of the Angoff method inform the provisional cut score. The provisional cut score is then calibrated using data collected during the beta test phase.

# Appeals Policy and Procedures

## *Appeals Policy*

The appeals policy governs the process for reviewing decisions made about registration, eligibility, assessments, and other registration/assessment-related certification issues and/or challenges.

A SPēD Certification appeal can be filed based on all decisions relating to:

1. Examination results, criteria for obtaining a passing score on the SFPC Assessment or the candidate registration and test-taking protocols
2. Certification renewal requirements, such as completion of approved professional development units (PDUs) or timeliness of completing and reporting PDUs
3. Eligibility evaluations. Appeals regarding eligibility requirements should be filed with the DoD Component that made the eligibility decision.

The test taker can request a rescoring of the test as part of their appeal process

Appeals regarding any matters not described above are not within the purview of the SPēD Certification Assessment, including the following decisions:

- DoD Component employment policy
- DoD Component eligibility criteria for identifying billets or individuals for SPēD Certification conferral
- DoD Component affiliation

Contact the appropriate Component SPēD PMO (check the “Contacts” list in the SPēD website) with questions or appeals of decisions outside the purview of the SPēD Certification Program.

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## *Appeal and Review Process*

Individuals must submit an appeal request within 90 calendar days of receiving notice of an appealable decision.

In order to be accepted, an appeal must be in writing and must include: (1) a description of the decision being appealed, (2) any evidence or argument as to why the decision should be overturned, and (3) the individual’s name and contact information.

The appellant must send the appeal statement in an e-mail or letter to SPED@dss.mil or to the following address (appeals must be postmarked or e-mailed no later than 30 calendar days from the date the candidate first received notice of the decision being appealed):

Defense Security Service  
Center for Development of Security Excellence  
SPēD Program Management Office  
938 Elkridge Landing Road  
Linthicum, MD 21090

# Appeals Policy and Procedures

Appeals, reviews, and decisions will be made by two authorities: the SPēD PMO and the DSTC SPēD Appeals Board (DSAB). The DSAB will consist of five people: three members (elected by the DSTC) serving a two-year term, a fourth member appointed by the DSTC to represent the candidate's employing organization, and the fifth member is the DSTC Chair. The DoD Inspector General will be requested to represent appeals from contractor or industry personnel.

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## *First Decision*

The DSS SPēD PMO will conduct the initial review of the appeal request. It will first determine if the event is within the jurisdiction of the SPēD PMO. If it is not, the Office will forward the appeal to the appellant's employing organization.

If the appeal request is within the jurisdiction of the SPēD PMO, the SPēD PMO will review the appeal and render a written decision on the appeal within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal, if practicable.

The DSS SPēD PMO will provide the appellant with the Office's written decision. The PMO will compile recommendations to be reviewed by the DSAB as required.

SPēD PMO appeal decisions become final when 30 calendar days have passed after the appellant's receipt of the SPēD PMO decision, unless the appellant has submitted an appeal of the PMO decision with the DSAB within those 30 days.

# Appeals Policy and Procedures

## *Second Decision*

Appellants who are dissatisfied with the SPēD PMO decision on the appeal may pursue a second appeal to the DSAB.

Defense Security Service  
Center for Development of Security Excellence  
SPēD Program Management Office  
ATTN: DSAB  
938 Elkridge Landing Road  
Linthicum, MD 21090

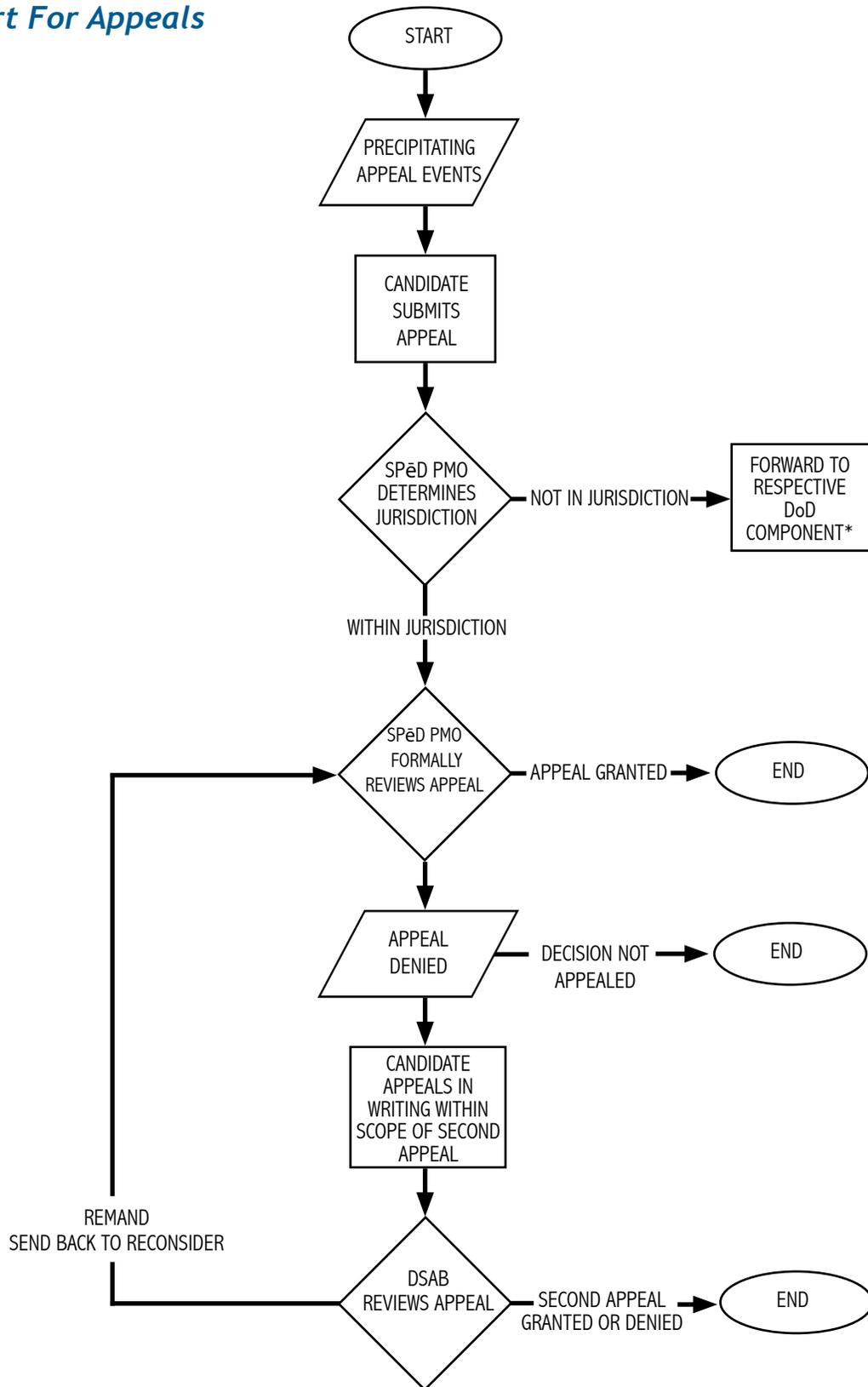
The DSAB will not consider an appeal unless the DSS SPēD PMO has rendered a decision. Appeals to the DSAB of a SPēD PMO decision must be supported by written statements that identify how and why the appellant believes the SPēD PMO's decision was erroneous or contrary to established procedures, regulations or laws. Appeals to the DSAB must be submitted no later than 90 days following the appellant's receipt of the SPēD PMO decision on the first appeal.

DSAB members receive recommendations from the SPēD PMO on submitted second appeals for the current quarter on December 7, March 7, June 7, and September 7, or on the closest duty day to these dates if these dates fall on a non-duty day. DSAB members will have one week to accept or not accept recommendations. Accepted recommendations are sent back to the SPēD PMO.

DSAB decisions will be made by majority vote. The DSAB will provide its decision to the SPēD PMO, and the SPēD PMO will notify appellants of the final decision. The DSAB is the final decision authority and there are no further appeals from a DSAB decision.

# Appeals Policy and Procedures

## Flowchart For Appeals



\* Referred back to candidate in case of industry with explanation

# Disciplinary Policy and Procedures

## *Disciplinary Policy and Procedures*

SPēD certification candidates and credentialed individuals must understand that unethical or unprofessional behavior may be cause for the SPēD Certification Office to deny entry into the SPēD certification process, to terminate participation during an examination, to invalidate the result of an examination. As a result of any of these actions, the individual may be required to retake an entire step in the process (or portions thereof), or to have their certification(s) revoked.

Grounds for disciplinary action include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Falsification of information on any document needed to acquire a SPēD certification.
2. Actions that compromise the integrity of the SPēD assessment instrument, including but not limited to unauthorized possession of or access to real assessment questions; copying a SPēD certification assessment; or the receipt of assessment information before, during, or after the assessment session that gives the tester an unfair advantage over other candidates.
3. Revocation or denial of security clearance due to misconduct.
4. Request by the certificant's parent organization that the certification be revoked.
5. Misrepresentation or false statements regarding conferral of a SPēD credential when the credential has not been conferred or the certification has not been renewed in accordance within the SPēD Certification Assessment guidelines.
6. Non-compliance with the DoD Component's Code of Ethics, standards of conduct, rules, or professional behavior.

Inquiries into suspected violations of the SPēD Certification Assessment disciplinary policy will be characterized by fair and equitable inquiry into the facts.

Cheating on an assessment consists of willfully consulting a notebook, textbook, or any other source of information not specifically authorized by the proctor during the assessment; willfully aiding, receiving aid, or attempting to aid or receive aid from another candidate before, during, or after an examination; obtaining or attempting to obtain copies of the examination before it is given; or any act which violates or attempts to violate the stated conditions governing the administration of an examination.

The DSTC is responsible for establishing and implementing standards of conduct, and policies and procedures governing disciplinary action for the SPēD Program.

# Disciplinary Policy and Procedures

Suspected violations may be submitted by any interested party. The complainant's name, witnesses, and the content of the complaint will remain confidential, unless legal requirements mandate disclosure. Notices of suspected violations will be sent to the owning candidate's Component, and/or organization where the alleged violation occurred for investigation. The appropriate officials should notify the SPēD PMO/DSTC of their assessment and action taken so the DSTC can determine if DSTC action is required or if additional information is needed.

On disciplinary matters, the DSTC may only address the certification aspects of the violation. The SPēD Certification Program will address violations of its code of ethics within 60 days of being informed that a violation has occurred and the investigating official has made a decision regarding the event.

The DSTC may impose sanctions that include, but are not limited to, the following:

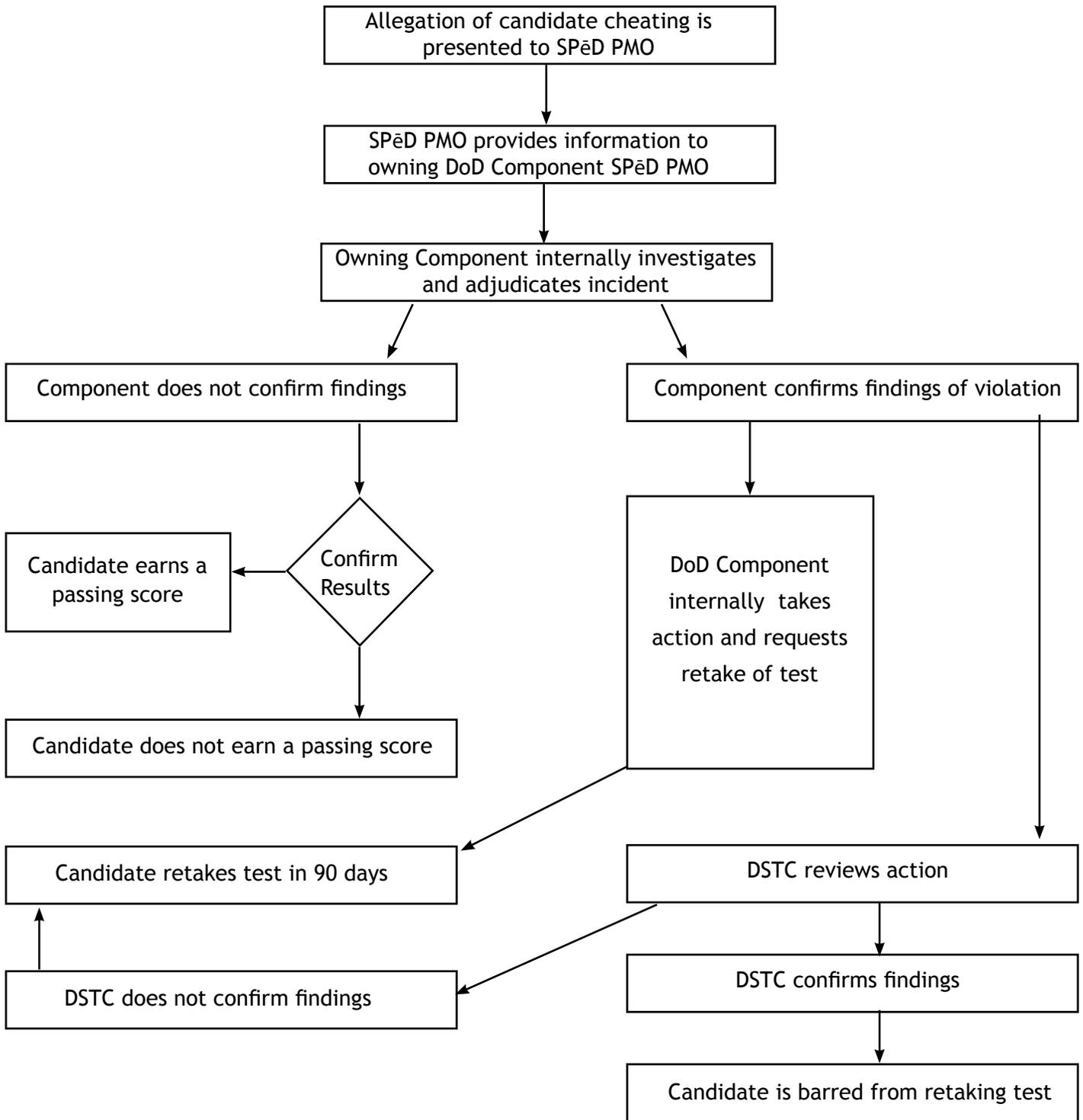
1. Written reprimand to the violator, copy furnished to his or her commander/senior official
2. Correction of the record
3. Probation

When the DSTC determines that a violation(s) to its standards has occurred, that warrants revocation of the certificate, the DSTC will forward a recommendation to the USD(I) for recommendation of revocation.

Documentation of the disciplinary process and record of action will be placed in the individual's STEPP file and will be available for review by the DSTC or other authorized official parties should circumstances warrant.

Actions taken under this policy do not constitute enforcement of law, although referral to appropriate agencies may occur. Individuals found in violation of the SPēD Program code of ethics or honor are not entitled to relief or damages by virtue of this process and complaints requesting such relief will not be considered. No one who has personal involvement in the potential violation(s) or conflict of interest will be permitted to participate in the adjudication of the matter.

# Disciplinary Policy and Procedures



# Certification Renewal and Maintenance

## *Certification Renewal*

Obtaining an SFPC is a significant achievement in an individual's career in the DoD. An SFPC indicates the individual has demonstrated understanding of the knowledge, skills, and abilities measured by the SFPC. However, the SFPC is not the end of an individual's professional development.

The DoD has a professionalization goal of establishing a systematic approach for fostering learning and professional growth of the security workforce. The SPêD Certification Renewal Policy is the long-term strategy for meeting this goal. This approach allows DSS and the DSTC to enable DoD to meet National Intelligence Strategy Enterprise Objective 6 and USD(I) Human Capital Goals and Objectives for the security workforce.

The Renewal Policy for the SFPC was initially drafted by the Policy and Procedures Working Group and approved by the DSTC, acting in their role as the Governing Board. Refinements were made regarding PDUs in February 2012.

The PDU point count policy and the two-year maintenance cycle was based on several significant factors: the two-year probation cycles for professionals in new positions for which these certifications are relevant, the typical training budget adjustment period required for professional development, turnover patterns, and a judgment about typical policy and practice adjustment cycles. In an effort to assure continuing competence, maintenance and recertification must be defined. Maintenance and recertification are essential elements of the renewal of the SFPC certificate.

## *Certification Maintenance*

As defined by the SPêD Certification Renewal Policy, a SPêD certification holder must (1) continue to be an employee in "good standing" with the certificant's Component and (2) successfully obtain approved continuing PDUs biennially. To accrue PDUs, you must participate in and successfully complete professional development activities that fall under one of the approved professional development categories. The categories are as follows: Certification Programs (SPêD and pre-approved non-SPêD certifications), Certificate programs, Non-Credit Bearing Training and/or Education Courses, Credit-Bearing Training and/or Education Courses, Conferences/Workshops, Joint-Duty Assignments, and SPêD Program Projects. A point matrix for PDUs associated with the seven categories is available on the SPêD website.

# Certification Renewal and Maintenance

Candidates conferred the SFPC between 2010 and March 13, 2012, will have their renewal clock start on March 14, 2012, with the two-year period ending March 14, 2014.

Failure to meet renewal requirements will result in the immediate termination of the SFPC. Termination, in turn, will result in the loss of all rights and privileges that comes with holding a SPēD certification. Security professionals whose certifications have been terminated must successfully meet all applicable certification requirements in order to renew those certifications.

See Policy Matrix on page 7 regarding waivers.

**Recertification/Retest:** The SPēD Certification Program will define recertification policies and procedures for each certification. Recertification may be required if:

1. Conditions and/or events trigger the need for certification holders to recertify in one or more topic area of the assessment, or
2. An individual fails to meet the certification renewal requirements.

# Sample Assessment Item Formats and Tips

## Sample One

Theme: DoD Security Programs and Program Areas

Options:

- A. Foreign Disclosure
- B. Industrial Security
- C. Information Security
- D. International Security
- E. Personnel Security
- F. Physical Security
- G. Research and Technology Protection
- H. Sensitive Compartmented Information

Item:

1. Practitioners of this program area(s) train Original Classification Authorities in the application of the process for making classification determinations.
  2. Practitioners of this program area(s) are involved with processes that monitor employees for new information that could affect their security clearance eligibility status.
  3. Practitioners of this program area(s) work with a facility's Antiterrorism Officer to deploy defensive measures that reduce the facility's vulnerability from terrorist attacks.
- 

## Sample Two

Two security professionals - Jo and Chris - are discussing procedures for safeguarding classified information in a classified workplace.

Jo says that working papers may contain pieces of classified information and must be handled in the same manner as classified documents.

Chris says that an individual needs to determine if a document has a reproduction control notice prior to reproducing that document.

Who is correct?

- A. Jo is correct
- B. Chris is correct
- C. Jo and Chris are both correct
- D. Jo and Chris are both incorrect

# Sample Assessment Item Formats and Tips

## *Sample Three*

Two security professionals - Jo and Chris - are discussing factors that adjudicators consider when evaluating the relevance of an individual's conduct or behavior.

Jo says that adjudicators consider factors such as the nature, extent, and seriousness of an individual's conduct or behavior.

Chris says that adjudicators consider consider factors such as the individual's age and maturity at the time of the conduct or behavior.

Who is correct?

- A. Jo is correct.
  - B. Chris is correct.
  - C. Jo and Chris are both correct.
  - D. Jo and Chris are both incorrect.
- 

## *Sample Four*

This system allows applicants to electronically enter, update, and transmit their personal investigative data over a secure internet connection to their employing agency or security office for review and approval of the personnel security investigation request.

- A. e-QIP
- B. JAMS
- C. JCAVS
- D. Scattered Castles
- E. Live Scan

# Sample Assessment Item Formats and Tips

## *Tips for Success on the SFPC Assessment*

### Preparing for the Assessment

- Although no courses or training is required to take the assessment, it is recommended that you familiarize yourself with courses addressing the topic areas listed on pages 11 to 14 of this Handbook. The following courses have been helpful to many preparing for the assessment:
  - Introduction to Industrial Security Course IS011.16
  - Introduction to Information Security Course IF011.16
  - Introduction to Physical Security Course PY011.16
  - Introduction to Personnel Security Course PS113.16
  - Introduction to DoD Personnel Security Adjudication Course PS001.18
  - Introduction to Critical Program Information Awareness Course CI120.16
  - Special Access Program (SAP) Overview Course SA001.16
- Access “Resources for SP&D” at <https://go.usa.gov/5We> or through STEPP. Use the diagnostics to help you gauge your level of knowledge in the various security topic areas. Based on your results, download and review the appropriate recommended resources to increase your proficiency. Please note: The diagnostic tools merely help you to gauge your level of understanding in the security topic areas covered on the assessment. The diagnostic tool does NOT contain the actual assessment questions.

### Study Suggestions

- Recognize that the material cannot be memorized in its entirety; use memory techniques only to help recall key points.
- Focus on the application of accepted principles, practices, and theories, not on memorizing facts, dates, and names.
- Consider studying in pairs or starting or joining a face-to-face or virtual study group.
- Review sample test questions.

### Test Taking Tips

- Do what is needed to feel comfortable and relaxed before the test: check out the test site in advance and make sure to get enough rest and nourishment prior to taking the exam.
- Arrive early—at least 20 minutes before the scheduled test time.
- Trust first impressions; do not over-analyze answers.
- If uncertain about a question, return to it later, and if you are still uncertain, make an educated guess.
- Do not look for answer patterns.
- Do not select an answer based on length; it may contain a false clue.
- Do not rush. Consider each choice before selecting the best one.
- Use time well. Extra points are not awarded for finishing early.
- Each item is worth one point and there is no penalty for guessing wrong answers, so make every attempt to answer all the questions.

# Appendix A

## *Accommodations for Disabilities*

The SPēD Certification Assessment will provide reasonable accommodation in its testing process in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Rehabilitation Act, and DoD Policy for individuals requesting accommodation.

In general, an accommodation is made when a disability is relieved by an auxiliary aid or a procedural change in the administration of the assessment. Reasonable accommodations will be made for known physical or mental limitations of a candidate who is a qualified individual with a disability.

It is the responsibility of the candidate to seek accommodation from the DSS SPēD PMO by emailing [SPeDCert.Registration@dss.mil](mailto:SPeDCert.Registration@dss.mil) at least four weeks in advance of the assessment.

A request for reasonable accommodation is a verbal or written statement from a candidate requesting an adjustment or change in the testing for a reason related to a disability. A request does not have to use any special words, such as “reasonable accommodation,” “disability,” or “Rehabilitation Act.” An individual with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation whenever he or she chooses, even if he or she has not previously disclosed the existence of a disability.

Documentation, from an appropriate health care or rehabilitation professional, about an individual’s disability and functional limitations may be requested when the disability and need for accommodation is not obvious. Appropriate professionals include, but are not limited to, doctors (including psychiatrists), psychologists, nurses, physical therapists, vocational rehabilitation specialists, and licensed mental health professionals. The documentation should identify the disability, state clearly that the disability necessitates an accommodation, and identify the specifics of the accommodation.

The need for reasonable accommodation is determined on an individual basis depending on the unique circumstances involved and taking into consideration the candidate’s specific disability and the existing limitations in completing the certification process.

DSS will make reasonable efforts to accommodate the candidate’s request, including offering an alternative means of access to take the SFPC Assessment. If DSS SPēD PMO determines that it would impose an undue burden on either the DSS SPēD PMO or the DoD Component to provide the required testing environment, and the candidate’s sponsoring Component cannot provide the necessary accommodation, the candidate will be notified with a written explanation of the denial and a statement of the reasons for the denial. Denied accommodations can be grieved to the DSS Office of Equal Employment Opportunity at [eeo@dss.mil](mailto:eeo@dss.mil) or 571-305-6726.

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## *Non-Discrimination Policy*

The SPēD Certification Assessment does not discriminate on the basis of any of the following: race, color, national origin, sex (including pregnancy or childbirth), religion, age (40 or over), disability (physical or mental), sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, genetic information or retaliation for participating in protected activities.



The Pathway to Success Begins with



Security Professional Education Development

Visit <http://www.dss.mil/seta/sped/sped.html>

Send questions to [SPED@dss.mil](mailto:SPED@dss.mil)

To access STEPP, go to <https://stepp.dss.mil>.