



Water Loss Specialist (WLS) Certification Candidate's Guide



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Certification Overview

Restoration Industry Association (RIA)'s [Water Loss Specialist \(WLS\) Advanced Certification Program](#) is one of the four pillars of the enhanced [Certified Restorer \(CR\) program](#). This is the final course for those pursuing their RIA advanced certification, the Water Loss Specialist, and incorporates lectures, specialized presentations from subject matter experts in their field, case studies and group study work.

WLS incorporates a wide variety of vetted industry-related courses representing the four major Domains of Knowledge as part of its pre-requisite course requirements. Like all RIA advanced certification programs, the WLS includes a rigorous course of self-study, combined with live instruction from well-known industry leaders.

The Water Loss Specialist (WLS) Advanced Certification Program is recognized by insurance companies, building owners and managers, as well as the public and governmental authorities as the premiere achievement of excellence.

Pre-Qualifying Experience

Candidates must have the following pre-qualifying experience in order to take the certification training course and exam:

- High school diploma or equivalent education; OR active RIA CMP or CR Certification
- Five (5) years of verifiable work experience or three (3) of verifiable supervisory experience (Experience can include: restoration worker, project supervisor, estimator, consultant, inspector, restoration company manager, facility manager, restoration instructor)

Note: This pillar program is recommended for those with 5 years or more of active experience in the Restoration Industry.

Prerequisites

To be eligible to receive the WLS certification, candidates must complete the course requirements in each of the following domains. A certificate of completion will be required as verification that each domain requirement has been satisfied. **Due to interruptions in course offerings due to COVID-19, 2020 and 2021 course candidates will have until February 25, 2022 to complete the required prerequisites in order to become certified. Moving forward in 2022, all participants must complete their prerequisites 30 days PRIOR to the course start date.**

Once you have completed the prerequisites, submit your prerequisite documentation to RIA via email at jhall@ahint.com. You must provide a certificate of completion for each domain requirement.

Domain	Prerequisite Courses
Domain #1 Basic Skills in Water Damage Restoration (minimum of 12 contact hours)	<u>IICRC Water Restoration Technician Course (WRT)</u>
Domain #2 Hands on Water Damage, Restoration & Drying Training (minimum of 18 contact hours)	<u>IICRC Applied Structural Drying (ASD)</u> <u>ACAC CSDR / CSDS Certification</u>
Domain #3 Microbial Remediation (minimum of 18 contact hours)	<u>IICRC Applied Microbial Remediation Technician (AMRT)</u> <u>IAQA mold training courses of at least 3-days in length</u> <u>American Council for Accredited Certification (ACAC) mold or higher level</u> <u>IEQ training courses of at least 3-days in length</u>
Domain #4 Health & Safety Training (minimum of 12 contact hours)	<u>IICRC Health and Safety Technician (HST) course</u> <u>OSHA Haz-Com Course</u>

	Other <u>OSHA/Red Cross</u> training equivalent (PPE, Respiratory Training, Confined Space, Lock-Out/TagOut, Bloodborne Pathogens, Fall Protection, etc.)
Domain #5 Building Science (minimum of 7 contact hours)	RIA Building Science Course
Domain #6 Project Management & Commercial Loss Training (minimum of 12 contact hours)	RIA Project and Risk Management course <u>IICRC Commercial Drying Specialist Course (CDS)</u>

Have questions about prerequisites? Contact RIA’s Education Manager, Jess Hall at jhall@ahint.com or [856-380-6841](tel:856-380-6841).

Training Course

Candidates must apply and register for the WLS Prep Course & Exam. This is the final course for those pursuing their RIA advanced certification, the Water Loss Specialist, and incorporates lectures, specialized presentations from subject matter experts in their field, case studies and group study work.

Course Format, Schedule & Registration

Currently, the course is offered as a three (3) day virtual online training course with live instructors. Click the link below to review the course dates and to register online. RIA will continue to add additional courses throughout the year for each pillar designation program.

[VIEW TRAINING COURSE SCHEDULE](#)

Be prepared to upload the following documents with your application when registering online for the training course:

- Resume
- Prerequisite certificates of completion for each domain (if you have completed any at this time)
- Letter of Recommendation (from immediate Supervisor)

Course Materials

Once you register for the course, you will receive emailed instructions for how to access the online training course along with the course manual. ***Participants are encouraged to review the manual in advance of the training course.***

What to Expect

RIA uses Zoom as the online platform for our training courses. You will be required to keep your camera on for the duration of the online course. Instructors will engage in interactive discussion and will answer questions throughout the course. RIA instructors are the industry's best with many years of experience in the restoration industry. Upon registration, you will be sent a link prior to the course to "RSVP" through Zoom to receive your personal Zoom link to enter the Virtual course for all (3) three days.

CECs

Upon completion of the training course, 19.5 credits will automatically be added to your RIA profile and you will also receive a total of 14 CECs with the IICRC that will be automatically added to your profile as well.

Have questions about training courses? Contact RIA's Education Manager, Jess Hall at jhall@ahint.com or [856-380-6841](tel:856-380-6841).

Exam

Candidates have **90 days** from the completion of the course to take the exam.

Steps for registering for the exam:

1. Pay the \$250 exam fee through IICRC

You will receive a link at the completion of your course to make your exam fee payment directly to IICRC.

2. Take the Exam through ProctorFree

Once you have paid the exam fee to IICRC, you will receive an e-mail with your login details to ProctorFree (exam portal), the ProctorFree Student's Guide, and all supporting documents/instructions within 1-2 business days of paying for your exam through IICRC. The Student's Guide is also located at the end of this document. Please note, you will be able to take the exam at your leisure online once you are ready (you do not have to pre-register online), but you do have 90 days to complete the exam from the date of your course completion.

About the Exam

The exam is comprised of 100 multiple choice questions. You will have three (3) hours to complete the exam. You will be allowed to use scratch paper if needed, however, there are no other study aids or materials allowed during the test.

Results

You will receive your exam results via email within 1-2 business days of taking your exam. If you pass the exam, you will be able to continue on to the formal report phase of the certification process. If you do not pass the exam, you will be able to reschedule a retake exam (additional fee applies). The retake must be at least 30 days after the initial attempt and within 180 days of the course completion.

Have questions about exam registration? Contact IICRC's RIA Helpdesk Representative, Mona Gaspar at RIAHelpdesk@iicrcnet.org or 844-742-3762.

Formal Report

You must submit a formal report to complete the process. The written portion of the report should be at least 2000 words double-spaced. Candidates must submit the report **within 180 days** from completion date of the training course. While Formal Reports may be submitted at any time within the designated timeframe, **if a candidate wants to participate in the formal Induction Ceremony held at RIAs annual convention, they must submit their report no later than 60 days before the convention starts. If you do NOT submit your formal report to RIAHelpdesk@iicrcnet.org within the 180-day timeframe, you will need to retake the course.** All reviews are done on an “as-submitted basis” throughout the year with credentials given upon acceptance. All Formal Reports become the property of RIA.

Reports must be submitted via email to IICRC at RIAHelpdesk@iicrcnet.org. The report will then be reviewed, and you will receive an email notification as to whether or not it has been approved.

As an advanced credential holder, you are entering a stage in your career whereby you will encounter opportunities to consult ... *and you will need to know how a formal written report should be assembled*. While a simple letter can sometimes suffice, you should know how to produce a comprehensive report suitable to be given in a court of law.

That's... why this is an important exercise.

Please be sure to understand what is expected in your report by reviewing this list – and then referencing this list when the reviewer indicates a needed correction. (The comment might simply reference the number only.)

RIA CERTIFICATION FORMAL REPORT GUIDELINES

TOPIC SELECTION

1. Topic must be on an actual restoration project and be approved in advance by the Pillar designation Program Adviser.
2. The Formal Report must be based on a project the Candidate has completed.
3. The Formal Report must follow the Scope and Submission Guidelines listed below.

SCOPE

1. The Formal Report should document the entire incident and the cost of repairing the damage or adjustment.
2. Names and addresses of the subject property, the true owners, and names of other individuals or business firms should be blanked out or replaced with respectable fictitious names and addresses.
3. In preparing the report, Candidates are required to develop and present the Formal Report as if it would be submitted as an exhibit in a trial, and be read and evaluated by persons who have no knowledge of the specific case or of damage repair in general. As such, the language should be expressed in a "third person" format.
4. The Report must be complete, authoritative, and convincingly substantiate the scope of damage and the cost of the repairs.
5. While the formal report is usually derived from the Candidates own project, the Report should be composed in a fashion that it can objectively reflect the industry standard of care performed by a competent restoration contractor.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

6. The Formal report must include all 15 components detailed below. Reports submitted that do not include all 15 components will be returned without review.
7. The Formal Report must be professionally presented and phrased, free of spelling, grammatical, typographical or any other errors.
8. The Formal Report must be free of public relations (PR) and/or self-promotion of any kind.
9. The Formal Report must be free of unsubstantiated opinions or self-proclaimed assessments.
10. Sweeping and / or absolute statements will be rejected unless true.
11. Formal Reports should not exceed 100 pages unless pre-approved by the Program Adviser.
12. Estimates or Invoices are not a required component. To maintain size of overall report, pictures can be embedded within the body of the Report, near the applicable text and must include captions or reference points.
13. Formal Reports must include page numbers.
14. Formal Reports should not exceed 10 Megs.
15. Formal reports must be submitted to RIA / IICRC in *.pdf format.
16. Formal Reports submitted as part of the pillar designation requirements become the property of RIA and may be used by the association for purposes of promoting the Program.
 - a. Authors seeking copyright on their reports shall have their reports returned to them without evaluation.

17. Reports cannot be returned once they have been accepted by the program.
18. Questions about the Formal Report should be addressed to RIA's Certification and/or Education staff coordinator.
19. Reports that are suspect of plagiarism shall be returned to the author without evaluation, and applicant shall be required to provide an additional report of what plagiarism is and how it should be avoided in the creation of a professional formal report.

REQUIRED COMPONENTS OF THE REPORT

20. Title page (includes title of report, Candidate name and date. Perhaps a photo of the loss. Make it professional.)
21. Table of contents
22. Restorer's Statement (includes things like:...)
 - a. Verifies how this report is to be used and its limitations
 - b. Verifies the project is a "real" job and their own workmanship
 - c. Verifies names and addresses have been changed to protect the Client.
 - d. Verifies the purposes of the Report which is to achieve RIA's certification and will not be used in any manner beyond that purpose.
 - e. Verifies the information found within the Report is not "applicable to all damaged structures" but is a report of the specific needs of this particular structure.
 - f. Verifies the Report is without prejudice.
23. Introduction
 - a. Describe the PURPOSE of your report. What questions is intended to answer?
 - b. Who engaged you on this project?
24. Background of the project
 - a. What was the peril and how did it happen?
 - b. Who, What, Where, When, Why?
25. Investigation
 - a. How is the building assembled? (What kinds of materials?)
 - b. Who accompanied you?
 - c. Photos with descriptions
 - d. Perimeter of damaged areas defined
26. Inspection
 - a. Tools used (full descriptions)
 - b. Qualifications of the individual conducting the inspection
 - c. How the data was recorded
 - d. Interpretation of data
27. Scope of repairs
 - a. Not interested in price. It's about the scope of work.
28. Specifications (Due to size, estimates or invoices should not be included as part of the Formal Report)
 - a. Quality of materials
 - b. Quantity of materials
 - c. Quantity of equipment
 - d. Etc.
29. Price basis
 - a. Again... not interested in prices. We are interested in the methodology in establishing the price. T&M? Cost Plus? Line item? (Caution: the report will be returned if you simply

state how the price will be set in accord with any popular software program. That's inappropriate and probably contrary to how the software company directs users to use their price database.)

30. Conclusion

- a. This is a biggie... and reviewers will be READING this section! It better "conclude" something meaningful.
- b. The Conclusion should VERY CLOSELY compare to the Report's Introduction / purpose. This is your KEY.
- c. Conclusions must be based upon the inspection data.
- d. Statements like, "*The customer was completely satisfied*" will be rejected. (You cannot know how any customer is REALLY feeling.) On the other hand, it is appropriate to include comments like, "*The customer signed a certificate of completion on April 12, 2021, and wrote a letter of recommendation to the company on April 10, 2021. It said in part, 'the contractor really impressed me with their knowledge.'*" Facts... without emotion.
- e. The conclusion could be a declaration of how long the mitigation took from start to finish.
- f. It could be something like, "*The contractor's actions appeared to be in accord with the ANSI / IICRC S500-2015 Standard and Reference Guide to Professional Water Damage Restoration, with the exception of Standard § 13.5.6.2, Controlling Humidity and Determining Initial Dehumidification Capacity.*" Conclude something!

31. Glossary of terms used in the document

- a. Don't expect your readers to understand words like "psychrometric," "HEPA," "IICRC," "dry smoke, v. wet smoke," "mitigation," etc.
- b. Definition sources are appreciated.

32. Photographs (Included in the body of the Report, next to applicable text and must include captions)

33. Diagrams and documents

- a. "Sketch" if you have it. Drying records. Lab reports. Etc.

34. Restorer's professional background & credentials (Include resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV)).

- a. With this RIA Advanced credential... it is time you start creating your CV if you don't already have one. There is a difference between a resume and a CV. Research this difference... and then build yours and include it with your report.

<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/cv-vs-resume-2058495>

SUBMISSION OF FINAL REPORT

Candidates are required to submit their Final Report in pdf format via email to RIAHelpDesk@iicrcnet.org. All emails should include your name and the following verbiage in the subject line: XXX Formal Report for [Your Name]

1. The document must include all 15 elements of the Final Report and be in compliance with the Guidelines.
2. The Final Report must be created in the Microsoft Office suite of programs, i.e. Word. PowerPoint presentations are not an acceptable format.
3. Deadline for submission: Final Projects should be submitted 6 weeks before the annual convention but **MUST** be in **no later than 60 days before the RIA Convention** in order to allow ample time for the complete review process.

4. Candidates who do not submit the Formal Report in the above stated format forfeit the review process.
5. RIA is not responsible for making copies of the Candidate's Formal Report.

Have questions about submitting the formal report? Contact IICRC's RIA Helpdesk Representative, Mona Gaspar at RIAHelpdesk@iicrcnet.org or 844-742-3762.

Certificate & Pinning Ceremony

Once you have completed all requirements and are officially certified, you will receive your certificate via mail and will be invited to attend RIA's Pinning Ceremony at the RIA Convention + Industry Expo. This is a wonderful opportunity to be recognized in front of your peers for this tremendous accomplishment.

Additional information regarding the Pinning Ceremony will be provided via email.

Have questions about your certificate, please contact IICRC's RIA Helpdesk Representative, Mona Gaspar at RIAHelpdesk@iicrcnet.org or 844-742-3762.

Maintaining Your Certification

Certificants must renew their certification every three years. All RIA certifications require 48 Continuing Education Contact Hours (CECs) within the current 3-year cycle.

- a. CECs can be applied simultaneously to all active RIA certifications held by a single individual.
- b. Certificants must complete the [CEC Tracking Form](#) to IICRC at RIAHelpdesk@iicrcnet.org.
- c. Certificants with more than one certificate expiring in the same year need to complete the tracking form only once.
- d. CEC contact hours exceeding the 48 CEC hour requirements within a 3-year cycle cannot be “carried over” into the next certification cycle.
- e. CEC activity must be documented (ie. certificates of attendance) and must be attached with the CEC Tracking Form.
- f. You will receive a renewal notice and invoice directly from IICRC to submit your certification renewal fee when it is time to renew your certification.

Have questions about certification renewal? Contact IICRC’s RIA Helpdesk Representative, Mona Gaspar at RIAHelpdesk@iicrcnet.org or 844-742-3762.

Certification Checklist

Step 1: Meet the Pre-Qualifying Experience

Step 2: Complete Prerequisites
(You can complete these post-course if needed)

Step 3: Register for Training Course

Step 4: Register for Exam

Step 5: Pass Exam

Step 6: Complete Formal Report

Step 7: Attend Pinning Ceremony

Step 8: Obtain CECs

Step 9: Renew Your Certification Every 3 Years

Frequently Asked Questions

When will WLS Courses be offered?

Courses are currently being offered virtually, online with live instructors. Click [here](#) for a list of dates and times for upcoming offerings.

What if I cannot find any providers offering the required prerequisite courses?

We recognize that COVID-19 has led to some courses not being offered as frequently. If you cannot find a required prerequisite course, please contact RIA's Education Manager Jess Hall at jhall@ahint.com for assistance.

How long do I have to take the exam once I complete the course?

Candidates will have 90 days from the completion of the course to take the exam.

How do I register for the exam?

The first step is to pay the \$250 exam fee to IICRC using the link provided in your course materials. After you have paid the fee, you will receive a pre-registration email prompting you to schedule your exam at either a testing center (recommended) or via online proctored exam.

What can I expect for the exam?

Be sure to review the course manual and any additional materials provided as part of the training course to help prepare for the exam. The exam is comprised of 100 multiple choice questions. You will have three (3) hours to complete the exam. You will be allowed to use scratch paper if needed, however, there are no other study aids or materials allowed during the test. Test takers are allowed to take a few minute break during the exam, but please note these breaks will be monitored and noted in the recordings.

What type of set up is required for taking the online proctored exam?

You will need a camera, microphone and webcam. Please review the Online ProctorFree Student Guide (at the end of this document) for specific details on requirements.

When will I receive my exam results?

You will receive your exam results via email within 1-2 business days of taking your exam. If you pass the exam, you will be able to continue on to the formal report phase of the certification process. If you do not pass the exam, you will be able to reschedule a retake exam (additional fee applies). The retake must be at least 30 days after the initial attempt and within 180 days of the initial attempt. You will need to contact IICRC to schedule a retake exam at RIAHelpdesk@iicrcnet.org.