Certified Fundamental Swim Instructor
Candidate Handbook

Examination Session
On Rolling Basis live Proctored

Applications Accepted
On Rolling Basis

Computer-Based Exam available worldwide with active internet connection and minimum technical requirements for PC/MAC. Must be completed within application approval.

Last Revision December 2024

Certification Checklist

Before you begin the certification application process, be sure to:

1. **Read the entire Certified Fundamental Swim Instructor Candidate Handbook.**
   The Certification Guide contains all the information you need to know about the exam, so please be sure to read it in full. You are required to attest to having read this information when submitting an exam application.

2. **Verify Your Membership Status**
   In order to take advantage of the reduced member rate you must be an active member before beginning the application process. Visit www.usswimschools.org and look up your swim school to verify your swim school's member status. If your swim school owner wants to join before applying for your exam, join online at www.usswimschools.org. Once your swim school is a member, you will need an individual account added to the swim school membership to login and receive the discounted member rate. If you do not wish to become a U.S. Swim Schools Association member or are not eligible to join, proceed with the application process.

   Participation in the certification program is voluntary and open to anyone meeting the eligibility requirements. Membership in the U.S. Swim Schools Association is not required.

3. **Submit Your Application Once**
   Please submit your application to the USSSA at https://usswimschools.org/cfsi/. Initial application and full payment must be submitted together at the same time, with all the required documentation submitted as step three in the application process.

4. **After You Submit Your Application**
   1) For initial application, you will receive an email confirmation of payment receipt within 24 business hours
   2) For pre-requisite submissions, you will receive an email within 10 business days regarding your application status.

   To ensure you receive your notification, we recommend you add dnette@usswimschools.org, and certification@usswimschools.org, to your email safe senders list.

Purpose

The purpose of the Certified Fundamental Swim Instructor Certification (CFSI) is to ensure that a swim instructor has the ability to demonstrate the knowledge of the following fundamentals:

- Safety (for them and their students)
- Foundation of swimming development and readiness
- Basic foundation of child development as it relates to learning to swim
- A brief overview of children with special abilities
- Professionalism within the learn to swim industry
- Swim class management

Nondiscrimination Policy

The U.S. Swim Schools Association does not discriminate among applicants on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or marital status. The Certified Fundamental Swim Instructor (CFSI) Certification examination will be offered to candidates in environments that meet the standards established by the American Disability Act (ADA).

Privacy Policy

United States Swim School Association (USSSA) is serious about protecting your privacy and recognizes that you care how information about you is used and shared. We appreciate your trust that we will do so carefully and sensibly. This notice (Privacy Policy) describes how we may collect personal information about you, how we may use it, what choices you have regarding it, and how we protect it. This Privacy Policy is incorporated into and is a part of the Terms of Use of this USSSA Web site and we encourage you to become familiar with the terms and conditions contained herein. By accessing and using this Site and membership in the USSSA, you agree that you have read and agree to this Privacy Policy, and that you accept and consent to the privacy practices described in this Privacy Policy.

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1. General Information

1.1 What is Certification?

Certification is a voluntary process by which a nongovernmental agency formally recognizes specialized knowledge, skills, and experience in a designated area. Certification establishes minimum competency standards in the specialty and offers recognition for those who have met the standards. A primary purpose of certification is the protection of the public through a means of measurement of current skills and knowledge through a standardized comprehensive examination.

Professionals working as a Certified Fundamental Swim Instructor can demonstrate mastery of specialized knowledge by meeting criteria and passing the examination offered by the U.S. Swim Schools Association.

1.2 Benefits of Certification

Certification offers potential benefits for the professional, employer and public and may include:

- Creating a standard for professionals in a particular discipline.
- Identifying professional achievement
- Offering validation of skills and knowledge and increasing professional credibility
- Furthering knowledge in targeted area
- Assuring employers and the public that the certificant has met rigorous requirements in areas of practice
- Potential of higher wages for employees
- Employment advantage over non-certified job applicants

1.3 How Was the Certification Exam Developed?

After several years of exploration and demands of the swim school community for a certification that recognizes the fundamental swim instructors' roles as distinct specialized functions within the swimming instruction industry, the U.S. Swim Schools Association (USSSA) has developed a certification program. This program awards Certified Fundamental Swim Instructor (CFSI) certification to those who pass the exam, thus providing a verified proof of expertise. The USSSA engaged subject matter experts to help identify areas of competency for testing, develop appropriate test questions, and assist with the validation of the exams. The USSSA Fundamental Swim Instructor Certification Program is dedicated to the validation of experience and a specialized body of knowledge for all professionals working as Swim Instructors.

1.4 Certification Mark Use

Certified Fundamental Swim Instructor is a professional certification for swimming instruction professionals. The Certified Fundamental Swim Instructor credential signifies that an individual has passed an examination that has been designed to meet stringent certification industry standards and best practices. USSSA grants limited permission to individuals who have met the certification eligibility

criteria, passed the exam, and received notification of certification from USSSA to use the Certified Fundamental Swim Instructor (CFSI) designation that has been granted to them. Use of the Certified Fundamental Swim Instructor credential by individuals who have not been granted certification, or who have failed to properly maintain certification in good standing, is prohibited. Improper use of the credentials may result in disciplinary action and/or legal and civil action.

1.5 Eligibility Criteria

While there are several pathways to certification to accommodate professionals with a variety of backgrounds, working experience in the swim instructor role is required – please refer to the knowledge and skills described in the content outline. Each candidate should assess their own body of knowledge, skills, and understanding of the specialty in deciding when to sit for the exam.

Candidates will take the exam online via a live, online, proctored testing environment.

Certification candidates must complete and then attest they meet the criteria:

Eligibility Requirement to Take CFSI Exam	**Rationale/Justification/Reason for Requirement**
● At least 15 years of age ● IF 18 or older you passed a background check * ● Current CPR/First Aid Certification * ● At least 30 hours of in water swim instructor training, demonstrating desired instructor behaviors and teaching competency as verified by learn to swim program director/manager/owner via completion of CFSI Attestation Form * ● Successful completion of courses assigned with registration: o USSSA Fundamental Swim Instructor Online Training Course o USSSA Infant Toddler Online Course o USSSA Play with Purpose Online Course	This is for all swim instructors. Newly hired swim instructors with little to no previous experience that meet the eligibility requirements will benefit in learning from the online trainings included. It is also for experienced swim instructors and provides a solid reinforcement of knowledge through online trainings. It is also for swim instructors with previous experience and certifications as the online training include content not currently included in other certification programs.

* Supporting documents must be submitted with pre-req application.

Note-This certification is NOT intended for non-CFSI functions within a company. All candidates must **legally attest** that they meet all above requirements, which is subject to verification by the staff of the USSSA.

1.6 Eligibility Appeal

Candidates who believe that they have met the eligibility requirements as stated may appeal decisions of ineligibility. However, the eligibility requirements themselves may not be appealed. Appeals letters requesting reconsideration of applications must indicate the specific findings of ineligibility being

contested and provide evidence of meeting those findings. Email must be received by USSSA with 30 days of notification of ineligibility. A complete copy of the Appeal Policy may be obtained by contacting USSSA at certification@usswimschools.org.

2. Examination Application Process

Before candidates can test, they must:

1. Submit an application via the USSSA Portal and pay for the exam online. (https://my.usswimschools.org/examreg/)

2. Complete courses and submit the prerequisite upload form with supportive documents. (https://my.usswimschools.org/examreg/prereqform.php)

3. Receive their Authorization to Test (ATT) e-mail.

4. Schedule an appointment to take the exam.

2.1 Examination Fees

Description	USSSA Member Fee	Non-member Fee
CFSI Certification (includes required courses and one take of exam)	$110	$330
Retake exam (2nd or 3rd exam attempt) or Cancelled/No Show Exam Reschedule Fee	$55	$55
Recertification via CE (every 3 years)	$75	$175
Recertification via exam (every 3 years)	$100	$200
Recertification late fees	$30	$30

3. Examination Application Procedure

3.1 Application

The application must be complete with electronic signature on the Candidate Application and Confidentiality Statement. If applying online "yes" must be checked off on the "Candidate Application and Confidentiality Statement". Completing the online application indicates that you have read and understand the entire candidate handbook to include all policies.

Submit Your Application

To begin the process submit your application with payment online. Once all required coursework is completed, gather and upload exam prerequisite documentation for review and approval.

- All communication with applicants will be handled via e-mail only.
- Applications must be completed online.
- An acknowledgement of receipt of the candidate's application will be provided via e-mail within 24hours of receipt.
- The application must be complete with registration fee and agreement of the Application and Confidentiality Statement. Incomplete applications are unable to be submitted.
- Once the candidate's prerequisites have been reviewed and accepted, candidates will be sent an Authorization to Test (ATT) email. Instructions on how to schedule an online exam and date will be included with the ATT email.
- Candidate will have a 3-month timeframe to sit for the exam from their pre-req documentation approval date.

Candidates must possess a webcam and high-speed internet connection in a quiet room seated at a hard surface like a desk or table in order to take the certification examination. Details on computer equipment requirements to take the exam can be found HERE.

3.2 Special Accommodations

USSSA will provide reasonable accommodations for test candidates with disabilities that are covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Candidates requesting special accommodations must indicate Special Accommodations Request on their online application.

3.3 Examination Schedule

USSSA utilizes a live online proctoring service that allows you to take your exam from the comfort of your home. You will need to schedule your proctoring session at least 72 hours in advance to avoid premium fees. If you are unable to attend your scheduled exam time, you need to cancel at least 48 hours in advance to avoid paying a rescheduling fee.

To take your exam you will need a high-speed internet connection, a webcam (internal or external), a Windows or Apple operating system, and a government-issued photo ID.

You should expect the startup process with the proctor to take about 10-15 minutes. However, this time will not affect your exam time. Please feel free to direct any questions to the test taker support team via the live chat within your account.

Candidates must sign onto the testing portal no later than 15 minutes before the scheduled time of the exam. You have two hours to take the exam. There are no scheduled breaks.

3.4 Required Identification

Candidates must present a valid, non-expired form of government-issued identification prior to being admitted into the certification online portal. The identification document **must:**

- Be government-issued (e.g., driver's license, passport, state-issued identification card or military identification card);
- Contain **both** a current photo and the candidate's signature; and
- Have a first and last name that **exactly matches** the name on the confirmation ticket (including designations such as "Jr." and "III").
- Candidates who are under 18-years of age without government ID may use a valid school identification card in lieu of a government-issued identification card.
- For Test-takers that are under the age of 18, we require one of the following verification methods must be provided (Unless an accommodation is listed on the account):
    - School Photo ID
    - Government Issued Photo ID
    - Test-taker's birth certificate AND a guardian Photo ID to confirm the identity of the test-taker.

Candidates who cannot provide the identification listed above, should contact USSSA before scheduling their exam appointment to arrange an alternative way to meet this requirement.

Important: Failure to provide appropriate identification at the time of the exam is considered a missed appointment. If a candidate misses an appointment they will be required to register again and pay a rescheduling fee. ***If your name changes for any reason prior to your scheduled exam, you must contact USSSA BEFORE logging into the testing center, failure to do so will result in a missed appointment.***

3.5 Remote Proctor Rules:

To ensure that all candidates are tested under equally favorable conditions, the following regulations and procedures will be observed during the examination process. Failure to follow any of these security procedures may result in the disqualification of the candidate's examination.

The following are the testing rules enforced at all the test administrations:

1. **Talking aloud:** Unless you have an approved accommodation, talking or whispering aloud during the exam is not permitted.

2. **Being out of camera view:** Your face, chin to forehead, needs to be in the camera view at all times.
3. **Anyone entering your testing area:** You may not have anyone else in your testing location with you.
4. **Anyone talking to you while you're in your testing area:** Additional noises, including other people talking to you, while you're in your exam are not allowed.
5. **Looking off-screen:** You aren't allowed any materials, so your eyes should stay on the screen at all times while testing.
6. **Utilizing materials that are not allowed:** No additional materials are allowed during the exam..
7. **Taking pictures or screenshots of the exam:** Taking pictures while in your exam, including screenshots, is not permitted. If you're on a Mac and have a live human proctored launch, your proctor will even turn off the ability to use your keyboard screenshot hotkeys.
8. **Copying and pasting any elements of the exam:** In most cases, our system will not allow you to copy and paste any content from your exam. Regardless of whether you can or cannot perform this function, our system will capture all events of copy and paste that occur.
9. **Utilizing a virtual machine:** Virtual machines can be detected through the pre-exam system check, and are not permitted.
10. **Utilizing a secondary monitor:** You are only allowed to use one monitor attached to one computer during your exam.

If questions arise.

If at any time during the test a candidate has a problem with his or her computer or needs the proctor for any reason, the candidate should immediately ask for assistance. Proctors are not allowed to answer any questions pertaining to the test content. If a candidate does not understand a question on the test, he or she should answer the question to the best of his or her ability.

3.6 Withdrawal Policy/ Requesting a Refund

If a candidate has not accessed or begun any of the assigned course material, they may contact our office to request one of the following options:

Reassign to Another Candidate: The courses and exam can be removed from the current candidate's learning plan and reassigned to another candidate.

Code for Future Use: A code may be issued to be used in the future by a team member.

If any course material has been accessed, it is non-transferable.

Please contact our office for assistance with either option. certification@usswimschools.org

3.7 No Show/Late Arrival

It is recommended that Candidates present themselves ten (10) to fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled start time. Candidates who do not appear for their scheduled examination appointment on

time or who do not cancel their appointment within the specified time frame (at least 48 hours before the scheduled appointment) will be considered no-shows and will be charged a fee to reschedule their exam.

3.8 Emergencies

Every attempt will be made to administer all examinations as scheduled. However, should any problems occur due to the testing vendor, the exam will be rescheduled at no cost to the candidate.
If the exam is unable to be administered or if any candidate is unable to arrive at a designated exam site because of inclement weather, terrorist acts, a natural disaster or other unforeseen emergencies beyond control of the candidate as determined by the USSSA, the candidate may receive an extended testing window (to be determined on an individual basis) and be allowed to reschedule the examination without being charged a re-examination fee. Candidates must contact USSSA as soon as possible if they are unable to take the exam due to an emergency.

4. The CFSI Examination

4.1 Structure

The test consists of 115 test questions. Of these, 100 questions will be used to calculate your test score. The remaining 15 items serve as pretest questions, and do not affect your score. Pretest questions are administered to evaluate the item's difficulty level for possible inclusion as a scored question in future exams. These pretest questions are dispersed throughout the exam and cannot be identified by the candidate. The test content outline identifies the areas that are included in the examination. The percentage and number of scored questions in each of the major categories is shown below.

Domain	Domains of Practice	Percentage of Items
A	Safety and Health Concerns	13%
B	Standards and Professionalism	13%
C	Teacher Training for USSSA Water Competencies	55%
D	Special Abilities	12%
E	Teens and Adults	7%

A detailed content outline serves as the basis for the development of the examination and its test specifications. A valid examination accurately reflects the knowledge and skills required for competent

practice. All questions appearing on the examinations have been validated using accepted psychometric rating scales. Content expert volunteers from the CFSI field develop the questions on the examination, review, and finalize all questions for the examination. Each stage of the CFSI examination development is an intensive peer review process. Each scored examination question has been verified for accuracy and referenced to a United States published source that is not more than five years old. Information found in references that may be slightly older than five years have been deemed to still be current and relevant.

4.2 Content Outline

The current CFSI certification examination is based on a content outline developed from the practice analysis completed in 2021. The content outline is presented here in its entirety.

Domain
A. Safety and Health Concerns
1. Emergency Action Plan (EAP) (e.g., fecal, vomit, first aid, major health crisis, water emergencies, drowning processes, safety guidelines, policies, and rules, safe and unsafe behaviors
2. common knowledge of child illnesses and health concerns
3. common swim instructor health concerns (e.g., hydration, skin issues, hair, food) 4. body positioning, proximity, and instructor positioning hazards (where you are in relationship to the student and physical objects, visual/touch supervision [hand on-eyes on])
5. pool safety (e.g., safe chlorine and PH levels, water clarity, hazardous objects in or around the pool, external conditions around the pool including weather conditions)
6. goggles (e.g., reasons to use, reasons to take them away, dependency)
7. redirecting skills
8. reach or throw don't go method
B. Standards and Professionalism
1. USSSA's code of ethics
2. USSSA's Stance on Treatment of Children in Swim Lessons (USSSA Website under Who We Are and What We Believe; USSSA Statement on Trauma)

3. USSSA's "Safety We C.A.R.E" (USSSA Website under About>Safety We C.A.R.E)
4. Safe Sport Act (https://uscenterforsafesport.org/)
5. instructor professionalism (e.g., punctuality, responsibility, professionalism, consistent attendance, positive attitude, body language (e.g., smiling face), "leave your own life at the door", phone use appropriate conversations while teaching, social media content)
6. USSSA's basic swimming definition
7. ADA (e.g., overview, access to instruction)
C. Teacher Training For USSSA Water Competencies
1. reflexes (e.g., moro reflex (startle reflex), righting reflex, palmer grasp) infant reflexes relevant to swim instruction/drowning prevention
2. the Griffith study
3. developmental areas of the whole child; connection between sensory motor development and cognitive development (e.g., sensory stimulation of the water; impact of achieving developmental milestones including physical growth spurts on teaching
4. teaching strategies related to developmental areas (e.g., chronological and developmental age) with an emphasis on individualization and adapting communications
5. play-based teaching include the role in how children learn (their play is their "work")
6. age-based modalities of learning (e.g., visual, kinesthetic, reading/writing)
7. initial overview or orientation of the infant and/or toddler lessons
8. process of sensory integration
9. trust triangle - parent-teacher-student
10. characteristics of a positive learning environment (e.g., positive reinforcement, students feel physically & emotionally safe, valued and respected, ownership and input, behaviors are established and consistent and equitably enforced, positive rapport between teachers and students)

11. regression and plateauing (e.g., definitions, differences, and solutions)
12. the signs of swim readiness (e.g., physically, emotionally, USSSA "Stance on Treatment of Young Children")
13. developmental stages of submersions including physical and verbal cues for submersions
14. self-rescue activities, practices, and scenarios
15. safe entry/exit practices and ability to personally demonstrate
16. breath control, balance, buoyancy, and movement
17. holds, supports, challenges, and maneuvers in the water
18. behavioral techniques and classroom management (e.g., positive reinforcement, clearly communicate expectations, providing choices, establishing boundaries, guidance for correcting undesirable behaviors, recognize signs of distress, benefits of ending on a positive notes, methods to manage overstimulations, one direction commands, fun in lessons, age-appropriate games)
19. fading assistance techniques (e.g., teaching aides, instructor support)
D. Special Abilities
1. stroke technique progressions
2. special ability (e.g., fundamentals, traits, behaviors, common special abilities (e.g., autism, ADHD, Downs Syndrome, hearing and visual impairments, Spinal Bifida)
3. methods to connect with special ability students (e.g., meet each individual where they are, realistic expectations, inclusion methods and practices [include special ability students into group classes] (e.g., creating an inclusive environment)
4. safety practices (e.g., rescue scenarios, safe entry and exit points in the water, lack of awareness with special ability swimmers)
E. Teens and Adults

1. swimming safety (e.g., safe swimming area criteria (e.g., pool, lake, river, ocean), safe swimming equipment for conditions (e.g., hazards, flags, shepherds hook, PFD [lifejacket], first aid equipment), points of safety, reach or throw, don't go, physical awareness in relation to others (e.g., where other people are in relation to student to avoid collision), strokes
2. communication (e.g., talk before touching, permission if switching to a new position for that student, sensitive touch areas (e.g., communication), consent and trust building)
3. survival floating techniques
4. common phobias and traumatic experiences (e.g., non-fatal drowning, witnessing a drowning, sensory, fear of aquatic creatures, long term effects of aquatic phobias and traumatic experiences)
5. types of goals (e.g., initial, progression)
6. demonstrations and explanations of purpose(s)
7. positional transitions (e.g., float to standing, standing to float), balance techniques (e.g., while walking), maneuvering techniques (e.g., different depths of water)
8. physical development and injuries limitations

4.3 References

Selected References for the USSSA Examination

These references were used to develop test items; this list is not intended to be all-inclusive. This reference list contains journals, textbooks, and web sites that include information of significance to the CFSI field. Exam questions are written from the core references. Use of the references does not guarantee a passing score on the test.

Core References

USSSA Code of Ethics	https://usswimschools.org/our-standards-code-of-ethics/

USSSA Sexual Harassment document	https://lawkm.com/what-is-not-harassment-in-the-workplace/
USSSA Infant Toddler guidelines	https://my.usswimschools.org/index.php?option=com_fabric&view=course&courseid=63
USSSA Basic Swimming Definition	https://usswimschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/USSSA_OnePagers-3-1.pdf
USSSA Stance on Treatment of Children in Swim Lessons	https://www.usswimschools.org/usssa-stance-on-treatment-of-children-in-swim-lessons/
USSSA Play with Purpose training	https://my.usswimschools.org/register/payment-course.php?courseid=81&userids[]=980
USSSA Intro to Swim Lessons	https://www.usswimschools.org/2021/04/what-to-look-for-when-visiting-a-swim-school/
USSSA Instructor Standards	https://my.usswimschools.org/examreg/
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)	https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/143/5/e20190850/37134/Prevention-of-Drowning https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Swim-Lessons.aspx
CDC guidelines for safer swimming	https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-swimming/prevention/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/swimmers/steps-healthy-swimming.html
CDC Guidelines on Parasites	https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/children/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/children.html
CDC Drowning Facts	https://www.cdc.gov/drowning/data-research/facts/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/drowning/facts/
Eunice Shriver National Institute of Health Study in 2009	https://www.nichd.nih.gov/newsroom/releases/030209-Drowning-Risk
The Griffith Study	https://news.griffith.edu.au/2013/08/13/swimming-a-smart-move-for-children/
Red Cross Reach or Throw, Don't Go Resource	https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDFs/Take_a_Class/Reach_or_throw_dont_go.pdf

Stop Drowning Now	https://www.stopdrowningnow.org/
USA Swimming Safety Action Plan	https://www.usaswimming.org/articles-landing-page/2017/02/27/safety-action-plan-information
US Center for SafeSport Guidelines	https://uscenterforsafesport.org/response-and-resolution/policies-and-procedures/ https://uscenterforsafesport.org/about/faqs/
Epilepsy Foundation Seizures in Water	https://www.epilepsy.com/article/2020/2/seizures-water
Emergency Medicine News - Definition of Drowning	https://journals.lww.com/em-news/blog/BreakingNews/pages/post.aspx?PostID=377
Columbia University Study on Injury Deaths for individuals with Autism	https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/public-health-now/news/individuals-autism-substantially-heightened-risk-injury-death

5. Studying for the Exam

5.1 Examination Preparation

Candidates should prepare thoroughly prior to taking the CFSI examination. To help prepare for the examination, candidates should review the test structure in section 4.1 and the content outline in section 4.2.

5.2 References

Section 4.3 of this handbook contains a list of core references used to develop the questions and that can be used to prepare for the examination. These references should not be considered the only possible study option, nor should examination candidates feel like they need to read *all* of the references. After carefully reviewing the test structure and identifying individual learning needs, examination candidates should identify additional references and study opportunities as necessary.

5.3 Review Courses

USSSA does not endorse or sponsor any review courses for the CFSI examination. USSSA is not affiliated with any organizations sponsoring examination review courses. USSSA is not responsible for misinformation provided by third party Review Courses.

6. Examination Results

6.1 Examination Scores

Examination Review Following the administration of the examination, all question data will be reviewed to ensure that questions meet best practice standards for high stakes examinations. If some questions do not meet such standards, they will be reviewed by a panel of subject matter experts to determine the most appropriate course of action to ensure examination fairness. This may include the exclusion of certain items from the calculation of the candidates' final scores. Examination Results will be provided following the examination marking review, and the determination of the passing score. The passing score for the examination will be determined through a modified Angoff standard setting process. The time between the end of the examination administration period and the release of scores to candidates will be approximately 4-6 weeks. Please do not contact the testing agency – candidates will receive email notification when their results are available to view in their online record. For reasons of privacy and confidentiality, examination results are released to the candidate only. Individual score reports will contain an indication of "pass" or "fail" for the overall examination, based on the passing standard set by the Certification Services Council. Each candidate will also be provided with an indication of their performance in each of the content domains. Each score report will include instructions for interpreting results, in particular the meaning of performance in each domain.

Due to the need to maintain test security, examination questions and answers will not be released to candidates.

6.2 Passing Score

How is the cut-score (the passing score) determined for a test?

A criterion-referenced or standard-setting procedure and expert judgment are used to identify the passing point. A candidate's ability to pass the exam depends on the amount of knowledge he or she displays, not on the performance of other individuals taking the exam. The reason for calculating **scaled** scores is that different forms or versions of the exam may vary in difficulty. As new versions of the exams are introduced, a certain number of questions in each content area are replaced by new questions. These changes may cause one version of the exam to be slightly easier or harder than another version. To adjust for these differences in difficulty, a statistical procedure called "equating" is used. The goal of equating is to ensure fairness to all candidates. In the equating process, the minimum raw score (number of correctly answered questions) required to equal the passing scaled score is statistically adjusted (or equated). For instance, if the exam is determined to be more difficult than the base form of the exam, then the minimum raw score required to pass will be slightly lower than the base passing raw score. If the exam is a bit easier, then the passing raw score will be slightly higher. Equating helps ensure that the passing scaled score represents the same level of knowledge, regardless of which version of the exam a candidate takes.

6.3 Canceled Scores

USSSA is concerned with only reporting valid scores. On rare occasions, circumstances may invalidate test scores. USSSA retains the right to cancel or withhold any exam scores. Invalid scores fall into two categories:

1. Doubts may be raised by the proctor or another candidate of suspected misconduct or cheating by a candidate. A candidate is expected to cooperate with any investigation to determine if the score is invalid.

2. In rare instances, there may be a problem with the examination materials or the test site; such situations will be investigated. The exam will not be invalid in these instances.

In addition, USSSA may cancel or invalidate any candidate's score if, upon investigation, violation of the testing and/or candidate validation policies is established.

6.4 Re-examination

Anyone who does not pass the examination may retake the exam twice. However, if you do not pass after your third attempt, you will be required to restart the entire process. This means you will need to repay the full course fee, retake all required courses, resubmit any necessary prerequisites, and attempt the exam again.

Please make sure you are fully prepared before each attempt to avoid having to restart the process.

Such registration will be subject to the current guidelines and fees established by USSSA.

6.5 Exam Score Appeals

The procedure for appeals of examination scores is as follows:

- All appeals must be filed with USSSA within 15 business days of receipt of the score report.

- An e-mail stating the concern and reason for the appeal must be forwarded to: certification@usswimschools.org.

USSSA will review the letter. A response from the USSSA will be forwarded within 15 business days of receipt of the appeal letter. The response will detail the reasons the request has been approved or not approved.

A complete copy of the Appeal Policy may be obtained by contacting USSSA.

7. Recertification Guidelines

These guidelines are intended to promote professional responsibility related to maintaining the Fundamental Swim Instructor certification.

7.1 General Guidelines

Upon earning the CFSI credential, certification remains valid for the following three complete calendar years (one recertification cycle). Certificants have two options for recertifying, either retaking the exam or recertifying through continuing education credits.

ALL Certificants must continue to meet certification eligibility criteria

Certificants may recertify every three years by retaking the exam.

OR

Certificants may recertify every three years by obtaining 24 Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Credits. Non-CEU credit hours may be accepted on a case-by-case basis via self-attestation. All credits must be related to the role of the Swim Instructor. Credits must be distributed throughout the certification cycle. The Continuing Education credits encompass a wide spectrum of activities that USSSA believes reflect continual learning opportunities. These activities validate the professional's knowledge; strengthen the Swim Instructor by reinforcing essential skills and developing new skills. These opportunities not only lead to enhanced knowledge for the certified CFSI professional but ultimately, to high quality outcomes.

NOTE: Continuing Professional Education (CEU) credits must come from nationally approved or recognized continuing education providers to include national professional organizations or the U.S. Swim Schools Association. Any other CEU entity should be approved by the USSSA to ensure compliance with the renewal policy. Certificants should send information on educational programs to the USSSA for review in advance.

- Credits must be distributed throughout the three-year certification cycle. Continuing education credits must be earned from Swim Instructor related conferences; seminars or workshops; online courses are acceptable.
- Continuing education credits are defined in the Activity Matrix below.
- Renewal applications and activity logs are due 30 days before the end of the certification cycle

CFSI Recertification Categories

Category	Activity-Continuing education may include any of the following:	Continuing Education Units (CEU) Credits
1	**Current CPR/First Aid certification from a nationally recognized organization**	Required
2	**Current Background Check** https://usswimschools.org/background-check-faqs/	Required
3	**CEUs from Sponsor Organization list** Up to 24 hours from attending education programming from the following: ● Infant Toddler online ● USSSA online courses ● USSSA conferences and workshops ● Lifeguard recertification (StarGuard, Red Cross, etc.) ● National Drowning Prevention Alliance (NDPA) ● StarGuard ● Starfish Aquatics Institute (SAI) ● Swim America ● American Swimming Coaches Association (ASCA) ● Australia Swim School Association (ASSA) ● Canada Swim School Alliance (CSSA) ● Learning and Brain conference ● Accredited Early Childhood Education and/or Child Development ● Special Needs – USSSA Special Abilities courses or Swim Angelfish ● World Wide Swim School (WWSS) ● up to five (5) hours from quality in-house training/education 1 hour = 1 CEU	Up to 24 CEUs

4	**Other:** • Presenter at annual conference • Author of an article for USSSA newsletter • Subject matter expert that results in course creation for USSSA	Up to 24 CEUs

It is the responsibility of each certificant to maintain records documenting contact hour activity within USSSA Portal.

7.2 CE Record Retention

- Documentation for all activities submitted for CEU credit must be retained by the certificant for a period of three years following submission.
- USSSA reserves the right to audit a certificant's records; any CEU credit that cannot be documented during the audit process may be disqualified.
- During any three-year recertification cycle, it is the responsibility of a certificant to maintain a current address and contact information with the USSSA office.

7.3 Recertification Fees

Recertification by continuing education credits	
Member	$75
Non-member	$175
Recertification by Testing	
Member	$100
Non-member	$175

8. Code of Ethics for Swim Instructors

The U.S. Swim Schools Association sets forth this Code of Ethics to delineate the professional and personal conduct of Certified Fundamental Swim Instructor (CFSI). A certification holder shall exhibit a commitment to professional and ethical behavior by abiding by the code of ethics found here: https://usswimschools.org/our-standards-code-of-ethics/

Certified Fundamental Swim Instructors who fail to comply with this Code of Ethics shall be subject to disciplinary measures which may result in sanctions.

9. Policies

9.1 Fraudulent Use of CFSI Credential

USSSA shall thoroughly investigate all reports of an individual fraudulently using the CFSI credential. If proof is obtained that an individual who is not authorized to use the CFSI credential has used the credential, USSSA shall write a letter to the individual stating that USSSA has documented proof that the individual has used the CFSI credential, and that USSSA has no record of the individual's certification or renewal of expired certification. The individual shall be requested to provide proof of current USSSA certification (e.g., prove that certification was obtained under a different name) or immediately discontinue use of the credential. The individual shall be informed that if fraudulent use of the credential continues, USSSA shall take the appropriate action against the individual.

9.2 Discipline and Complaints

USSSA enforces the Code of Ethics for Swim Instructors for all CFSI certificants and individuals in the process of obtaining CFSI certification. USSSA will investigate reported violations of the Code of Ethics for Swim Instructors. Complaints regarding alleged violations should be reported to USSSA in writing and should include a detailed description of factual allegations supporting the charges and any relevant supporting documentation. Information submitted during the complaint and investigation process is considered confidential and will be handled in accordance with USSSA's Confidentiality policy. Adverse disciplinary decisions made by USSSA (or its sub-committees) may be appealed. A complete copy of the Discipline and Complaints policy and procedure and the Appeal policy and procedure may be requested by contacting the USSSA.

9.3 Confidentiality of Records

Candidate and Certificant information is confidential however, if your USSSA learning profile is associated with an organization or school, they may have access to your course and exam history, including your exam scores. The Exam Security Policy provides information on confidentiality.

USSSA maintains all applications, test results and other pertinent information for the certification program. The application, exam format, results and any other pertinent information are considered confidential and privileged information

If a candidate's employer pays for certification, certification staff can verify if application has been approved. No personal information about the applicant or certificant will be revealed unless written permission has been obtained from the certificant or applicant.

9.4 Examination Security

United States Swim School Association (USSSA) and the contracted testing agency maintain examination administration and security standards that are designed to assure that all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. The live remote proctored examination has audio and video surveillance. All examination questions are the copyrighted property of USSSA. It

is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute and/or display these examination questions by any means, in whole or in part. Candidates are not allowed to discuss examination contents or have any examination prep materials accessible during the examination testing period. Doing so may subject a candidate to disciplinary penalties.

9.5 Verification of Certification

Certficants will receive an electronic certificate listing their valid 3-year certification period. USSSA may list certificate holders in good standing on the USSSA website. If the certificant wishes to not be listed on this public list they can email their request to certification@usswimschools.org

Candidate Application and Confidentiality Statement

All candidates must sign the Candidate Application Statement and agree to all policies, procedures, and terms and conditions of certification in order to be eligible for the CFSI credential. Signing the application indicates that you have read and understand the candidate handbook to include all policies.

The statement follows:

I have read the current CFSI Eligibility Requirements and attest that I meet these requirements.

I understand that I and the information I have provided could be audited to verify my eligibility. I understand my certification can be delayed until eligibility is verified. I authorize the U.S. Swim Schools Association (USSSA) to make whatever inquiries and investigations that it deems necessary to verify my credentials and professional standing.

I understand that that submission of false or misleading information to USSSA or any cheating by me at any time may be cause for withdrawal or revocation of this application without refund of any fees paid, loss of credential (if currently held), cancellation of scores, or denial of eligibility as a candidate to take the exam.

I hereby apply for the Certified Fundamental Swim Instructor (CFSI) credential. I understand that my certification depends on my ability to meet all requirements and qualifications. I certify that the information contained in this application is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and is made in good faith. I further understand that, if any information is later determined to be false or misleading, or if I have been determined to have cheated in any way, USSSA reserves the right to revoke any certification that has been granted on the basis thereof or impose discipline at its discretion. Further, I agree to abide by all USSSA policies and procedures, including but not limited to the USSSA code of Ethics and disciplinary policies and actions.

I hereby release, discharge, indemnify, hold harmless, and exonerate USSSA, its directors, officers, members, examiners, representatives, affiliates, employees, and agents, from any actions, suits, obligations, damages, claims or demands arising out of, or in connection with, any aspect of the application process including results or any other decision that may result in a decision to not issue me a certificate.

I further understand, acknowledge and agree:

1. That the questions and answers of the exam are the exclusive, confidential, proprietary, valuable, copyrighted property of USSSA and are protected by the United States Copyright Act and other applicable laws.

2. That I may not disclose the exam questions or answers, in whole or in part, or discuss any content of the exam with any person or in any respect, in any form or media, without prior written approval of USSSA, and that I must report to the proctor or to authorized USSSA personnel any instances where any other person appears to be violating this nondisclosure rule or to have been cheating in any way.

3. Not to remove from the examination system any exam materials of any kind provided to me or any other material related to the exam, including any notes or calculations.

4. Not to copy or attempt to make copies (written, photocopied or otherwise) of any exam material, any exam questions or answers, or any notes or calculations.

5. Not to sell, license, distribute, give away, or obtain from any other source other than USSSA the exam materials, questions or answers.

6. That my obligations in accordance with USSSA's requirements shall continue in effect after the examination and, if applicable, after termination of my certification, regardless of the reason or reasons for termination, and whether such termination is voluntary or involuntary.

7. That any and all uses of the CFSI credential must be consistent with applicable USSSA policies and procedures and that unauthorized use or misuse in any way will constitute grounds for disciplinary action, including but not limited to revocation of my credential, legal action, or other action by USSSA to protect its valuable intellectual property.

8. I attest that I have reviewed and understand this Handbook and agree to the statements above and to abide by all policies and procedures, including the confidentiality and disciplinary rules, of the USSSA. I agree that I am subject to the disciplinary policies and procedures of USSSA.

Changes to Terms and Conditions

Any changes to the CFSI Handbook and/or Terms and Conditions are at the sole discretion of the United States Swim School Association and will be updated in writing in online publication of the CFSI Handbook and/or Terms and Conditions. You acknowledge it is your responsibility to regularly visit our website and check for updates or revisions to these documents and that by using our website or services after any such updates or revisions, you agree to be bound by and subject to such updates or revisions.