



# **Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support Instructor Candidate Workbook**

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# Contents

Background .....	4
Introduction .....	4
AHA Mission .....	4
AHA Global Mission .....	4
ECC Mission .....	5
Turning Science Into Training .....	5
The Instructor-AHA Partnership .....	6
Part 1: Prepare .....	7
Preparing Yourself .....	7
Glossary .....	7
How to Find Information .....	8
The Role of TCs and TC Faculty .....	9
Preparing Your Materials .....	10
How to Get the Forms You Need to Teach .....	10
How to Get the Other Materials You Need to Teach .....	10
How to Get Exams and When to Use Them .....	10
How to Get Skills Testing Documents .....	11
How to Get Course Completion Cards .....	11
Preparing the Room and Equipment .....	11
Part 2: Teach .....	12
Using Lesson Plans .....	12
How You Should Identify and Correct Weak Skills .....	12
Feedback .....	13
Debriefing .....	14
Part 3: Testing .....	15
Testing Accurately .....	15
Remediation .....	15
Keep Current .....	17
Resources for Science Updates .....	17
Maintaining Instructor Status .....	17
Conclusion .....	18
Useful Information .....	19
Quick Self-Quiz .....	20

FAQ..... 21

## Background

- Introduction
  - AHA Mission
  - AHA Global Mission
  - ECC Mission
  - Turning Science Into Training
  - The Instructor-AHA Partnership
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**Introduction** Welcome to the American Heart Association (AHA) Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Instructor Course.

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**AHA Mission** Our mission is to build healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. That single purpose drives all we do. The need for our work is beyond question.

The AHA is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary health organization dedicated to saving people from heart disease and stroke, America's number 1 and number 5 killers. The AHA is the trusted leader in emergency cardiovascular care (ECC) and trains people around the world in how to save lives with cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.

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**AHA Global Mission** AHA Global Training has set up International Training Centers (ITCs) to provide quality ECC training across the world. Through collaboration with global partners and through knowledge transfer of its proven programs and strategies, the AHA strives to reduce the global burden of cardiovascular disease and stroke. This mission will contribute to the World Health Organization's goal of reducing chronic illness by 20% by 2020.

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**ECC Mission** The ECC Programs department is responsible for implementing program initiatives, and providing guidance and support to the ECC Training Network. The ECC mission supports this responsibility.

The mission of the AHA's ECC Programs is to reduce disability and death from acute circulatory and respiratory emergencies, including stroke, by improving the Chain of Survival in every community and in every healthcare system.

#### ECC Guiding Philosophy

- Improve the Chain of Survival in every community
- Increase quality and timeliness of materials
- Identify and expand training
- Document effectiveness
- Improve efficiency

The goal of the ECC Programs department specifically is to be the world's premiere resuscitation organization and serve the global community of scientists, healthcare providers, and citizens as a critical leader in discovery, processing, and transfer of resuscitation science. Its programs, products, and services focus on maximizing survival from life-threatening cardiovascular emergencies.

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#### **Turning Science Into Training**

The *2015 AHA Guidelines Update for CPR and ECC* is based on an extensive review of resuscitation literature and many debates and discussions by international resuscitation experts and members of the AHA ECC Committee and Subcommittees. The International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR) *2015 International Consensus on CPR and ECC Science With Treatment Recommendations* summarizes the international consensus interpreting tens of thousands of peer-reviewed resuscitation studies.

The 2015 AHA Guidelines Update contains the expert recommendations for application of the International Consensus on CPR and ECC Science With Treatment Recommendations with consideration of their effectiveness, ease of teaching and application, and local systems factors.

The AHA leads the charge in the evaluation process, and it is this evidence-based science that goes into every product we create.

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**The  
Instructor-  
AHA  
Partnership**

The process for developing course materials is elaborate. After consensus is reached at the ILCOR meetings, the AHA writes its guidelines, and then a wide array of volunteer medical professionals work together with AHA staff and discipline-specific consultants to produce the texts and videos used in courses.

Courses are tested by members of the AHA and AHA Training Network, and feedback from the test courses is incorporated into the final product.

The Instructor-AHA partnership is critical to the success of the courses. The AHA develops the videos and texts that teach students the science. The instructors are the hands-on implementers: they evaluate, coach, remediate, and help students learn the skills.

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# Part 1: Prepare

## Preparing Yourself

- Glossary
- How to Find Information
- The Role of TCs and TC Faculty

## Preparing Your Materials

- How to Get the Forms You Need to Teach
- How to Get the Other Materials You Need to Teach
- How to Get Exams and When to Use Them
- How to Get Skills Testing Documents
- How to Get Course Completion Cards

## Preparing the Room and Equipment

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# Preparing Yourself

## Glossary

**Course Completion Card:** The card given to students who pass the provider course. You get it from your Training Center Coordinator.

**Emergency Cardiovascular Care (ECC):** A global business unit of the AHA, responsible for publishing the official AHA Guidelines for CPR and ECC and providing lifesaving CPR, first aid, and advanced cardiovascular care training.

**Faculty:** The person who teaches Instructor Courses. Faculty may be Training Center (TC) Faculty or Regional Faculty.

- **TC Faculty:** The people who serve as quality assurance and educational leaders for the TC. They are appointed by the TC.
- **Regional Faculty:** The people who serve as science and curriculum experts to the TCs and instructors. These are appointed by the AHA.

**Instructor:** The person who meets the AHA requirements for teaching a specific provider course. (Requirements vary, depending on the course.)

**Instructor Candidate:** A person in the process of becoming an AHA Instructor.

**Instructor Network (IN):** Once you complete your instructor training, you'll join the IN. This website contains a wealth of information, from how to order materials you need to science updates. All instructors are required to join the IN.

**Instructor Number:** The unique number assigned to you once you register on the IN. This number will be on the back of your instructor card as well. You can also find your instructor number on your home page (“dashboard”) when you log into the IN. You should have only one instructor number, regardless of how many disciplines you teach.

**Program Administration Manual (PAM):** This book is a guide to the rules, regulations, and requirements for instructors, TCs, faculty members, and other people involved in AHA ECC programs.

**Provider Courses:** These are the courses that teach a defined set of skills and knowledge for a specific audience. Examples are Basic Life Support (BLS), ACLS, and Heartsaver®.

**Student:** Anyone taking a provider course.

**Training Center (TC):** The AHA has established a network of TCs. These centers’ goal is to help deliver ECC educational courses and strengthen the Chain of Survival. All instructors must be aligned with a TC.

**Training Center Coordinator (TCC):** The person who can answer your questions related to the teaching and administration of AHA courses. The TCC is your first resource for information about AHA training programs.

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## How to Find Information

The AHA is a large organization and has a number of departments, guides, and manuals. If you need to know something specific or have questions, there are several resources you can use. Check these resources in the following order, and you’re most likely to find what you want quickly and easily:

1. Your Instructor Manual
2. Your TCC
3. Your TC Faculty
4. The IN
5. The PAM

The PAM provides information about how to administer courses in general. It has all the overall rules and guidance. The Instructor Manual tells you what you need for a specific course.

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## Preparing Your Materials

### **How to Get the Forms You Need to Teach**

All instructors are required to have their own copy of the Instructor Manual for the course they will be teaching. The Instructor Manual has a checklist of everything you'll need to prepare for and teach a course. However, the Instructor Manual doesn't always define the different kinds of paperwork. Here is a quick summary:

**Course rosters:** Course rosters are used to keep track of students. After each course, you'll need to turn one in. The rosters are available on the Instructor Network or from your TCC and are available as electronic forms. Your TCC or TC Faculty will provide more information on what you should use.

**Course evaluations:** Every instructor is required to give course evaluations to students to complete at the end of the course. Course evaluation sheets are available on the Instructor Network or from your TCC and are available as electronic forms. Your TCC or TC Faculty will provide more information on what you should use.

**Other forms:** Nearly every form you'll need is available on the Instructor Network. Many are also available in the Instructor Manual.

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### **How to Get the Other Materials You Need to Teach**

As an instructor, you are also required to have your own copy of the required student materials for the course you are teaching. You will also need all of the equipment on the equipment list in your Instructor Manual. Your TCC can provide you with a list of the authorized AHA distributors in your area.

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### **How to Get Exams and When to Use Them**

Get exams from your TCC. Follow your TC's procedures about how and when to get the exams. Have the exams ready before you teach the class.

Exams should be secured. Follow your TC's policies and the AHA guidelines for maintaining exam security. Refer to your Instructor Manual for more information on exam security.

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**How to Get Skills Testing Documents**

The documents you need for skills testing can be found in your Instructor Manual and on your instructor CD (if applicable). You can also find them on the IN or get them from your TCC.

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**How to Get Course Completion Cards**

Your course completion cards will come from your TCC. They may be electronic cards or paper cards. Learn your TC's process and policy for securing cards. Write the information below to refer to later.

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**Preparing the Room and Equipment**

Your Instructor Manual has information about how to set up a room and equipment for a specific course.

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## Part 2: Teach

- Using Lesson Plans
  - How You Should Identify and Correct Weak Skills
  - Feedback
  - Debriefing
- 

### Using Lesson Plans

As with many classes taught at the national and international levels, ensuring consistency is a challenge. To help with this challenge, a set of Lesson Plans has been designed to indicate which material needs to be covered when. The Lesson Plans aid instructors and, along with the video, ensure consistency from class to class.

You'll learn more about how to use Lesson Plans when you have practice sessions and role-play in the classroom portion of this course.

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### How You Should Identify and Correct Weak Skills

This is one of the most important parts of an instructor's job. The AHA goes to great lengths to create the science-based materials. However, no matter how good the research and science are, only good hands-on skills will save lives. Instructors are the ones who are responsible for helping students learn the critical skills.

To help students learn, practice in situations that closely resemble real life. For example, if you are training EMTs, have them practice CPR on the floor, because that's where EMTs often have to perform CPR.

#### *To identify weak skills:*

Use the critical skills descriptors and the skills testing checklists for the BLS skills tests. The critical skills descriptors list all the things that a student needs to know how to do. Pay close attention not only to what is described but also to the order of the actions. You should know these skills by heart before you start teaching so that you will know exactly when a student misses an important step during skills practice.

The same is true for other skills. It is also very important to pay attention not just to how each person performs the skills on the "patient" but also to how each team member communicates and functions within the team.

***To improve student performance:***

While students are practicing, offer positive and corrective feedback. Begin with what students are doing well. Describe what they are doing right. Then offer suggestions for how they can improve.

You may also consider using a skills testing checklist while students practice. Fill it out or simply show it to the student. Sometimes being clear about exactly what they are being tested on helps students improve performance.

It also helps to watch for common errors, which vary from course to course. Some examples of common errors in ACLS courses include

- Incorrect BLS skills for compression depth, chest recoil, or compression rate
  - Not following algorithm steps correctly
  - Relying too heavily on team members during the Megacode Skills Test
- 

**Feedback**

Constructive feedback during hands-on practice can help students improve their skills. Feedback targets students' actions, letting students know which actions need to be continued or changed. For example, you might say, "Compressions should be 100 to 120 beats per minute. Your compressions were at 90 beats per minute. Push faster." Feedback should be positive and specific, letting the students know exactly what they should do to improve.

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## Debriefing

Debriefing is a discussion that you facilitate. Students are asked to reflect on their actions and rationale, how performance could be improved in the future, and what they've learned through the practice. Debriefing helps students identify and change errors in their thinking. After a practice session or role-play, ask students how they thought the session or role-play went. The goal is for students to analyze their team and individual performances and determine how to improve.

As the instructor, your job is to listen to the student's analysis and provide guidance:

- Confirm when his analysis is right: "I agree, Tim. You did an excellent job of coordinating the team, particularly at the beginning when Mary wasn't sure what to do."
  - Offer concrete suggestions for ways he could further improve: "During the switch from rescuer 1 to rescuer 2, there was a lapse of 14 seconds between compressions. Working to minimize the interruptions in compressions will give the patient the best chance for survival."
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## Part 3: Testing

- Testing Accurately
  - Remediation
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### Testing Accurately

The skills tests are conducted in-person. You will test students one at a time, using the skills testing checklist. For more specific instructions, see the Instructor Manual, which describes in detail how to test students. The Instructor Course video also shows how to conduct a skills test.

Instructors can be under pressure to pass students who don't necessarily have the skills to pass. Sometimes an instructor may have his boss or a friend in a class. Other times, an instructor may be worried about the repercussions for her TC or business if the client/student isn't happy. Or a student may not be able to work without a course completion card—a situation that can evoke sympathy in an instructor. There are a number of complicated reasons why an instructor may be inclined to pass the student before the student is ready.

However, it's important to make sure the students are properly prepared and can perform high-quality CPR in addition to advanced techniques. High-quality CPR improves the chance of survival.

Issue course completion cards only to students who have successfully completed all the AHA course completion requirements.

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### Remediation

If a student takes a skills test or exam and doesn't perform all the steps correctly, then the student needs remediation. Remediation is the student's chance to go back over the material immediately after the test or exam. You guide students during remediation to help them learn the pieces they were missing. Then the students take the test or exam again, either immediately or at a later date.

Some of the ways you may provide skills testing remediation include

- Monitoring and mentoring students to identify and resolve weaknesses
- Requesting additional skills practice
- Assigning additional reading

- Referring students to other courses or assessment stations to your satisfaction

If a student scores less than 84% on the written exam, he must receive remediation. The student can take another version of the written exam, or you can orally go over each incorrect answer, allowing the student to show that he understands the correct answers.

You can find more information about skills testing and remediation in your Instructor Manual. Another great resource is your TCC.

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## Keep Current

- Resources for Science Updates
  - Maintaining Instructor Status
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### **Resources for Science Updates**

When AHA materials are updated, you will need to complete an update on the changes to continue teaching. Your TCC will tell you how to complete mandatory updates. This information will also be available on the Instructor Network.

The AHA publishes a newsletter for instructors, the *ECC Beat*, located on the Instructor Network. Your dashboard on the Instructor Network will show you anything new that's been posted to the Instructor Network, including training memos and bulletins.

Reading updates, memos, bulletins, and the *ECC Beat* will keep you up to date as an instructor.

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### **Maintaining Instructor Status**

To teach provider courses, instructors need to maintain their instructor status. If you want to know more about maintaining status, refer to your TCC or the PAM, which has detailed information on the subject.

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## **Conclusion**

Thanks for taking this course. We look forward to your joining the AHA Instructor Network.

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## Useful Information

My Training Center Coordinator (TCC) is \_\_\_\_\_.

The best way to contact my TCC is \_\_\_\_\_.

My Training Center (TC) ID number, which will be placed on provider cards from courses I teach, is

\_\_\_\_\_.

The best person to contact about course cards and paperwork is

\_\_\_\_\_.

If I have questions about AHA course content, I should contact

\_\_\_\_\_.

These are the steps for getting exams from my TCC:

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

These are the steps for getting course completion cards from my TCC:

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

To renew my instructor card, my TCC needs me to do the following:

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

TCs have agreements with the AHA about where, geographically, they can offer classes. My TC's area is

\_\_\_\_\_.

## Quick Self-Quiz

Write your responses in the space below.

1. What is the PAM?
2. Where do I get skills testing checklists, rosters, and paperwork?
3. How do I maintain instructor status?
4. How does an instructor become a TC Faculty member?
5. Where do I find information on remediation?

## FAQ

*Q: Do I need to have a current provider card to be an instructor?*

A: AHA Instructors are not required by AHA to have a provider card, but it may be a requirement from your TC, your place of employment, and/or any licensing or credentialing agency for your profession or state (such as nursing, EMS, etc).

*Q: What do I need to do if I am scheduled to teach a course but cannot make it?*

A: Notify your TCC or TC Faculty promptly of the issue. Make reasonable attempts to contact the students if no replacement can be found for you.

*Q: What do I do if someone gets an injury during a course?*

A: Contact your TCC promptly for assistance.

*Q: What do I do if someone has a disability?*

A: All reasonable accommodations can be made for persons with disabilities. The AHA will not authorize any core curriculum changes in any course. Each student must be able to successfully perform all course requirements (skills and exams as indicated) to receive a course completion card. For more assistance, contact your TCC or TC Faculty.

*Q: How much do/should we charge for the courses?*

A: The AHA does not set fees for courses. Contact your TCC.

*Q: Is there a dress code for teaching courses?*

A: All AHA Instructors are to have good hygiene and dress appropriate to the course being taught. Your TCC may have specific guidance also.

*Q: Is there an age requirement to become an ACLS instructor?*

A: The AHA has set a minimum age limit of 18 to become an ACLS instructor.

*Q: My instructor card has expired. Is there a “grace period”?*

A: There isn't a “grace period” recognized by the AHA for courses for providers or instructors. There are special exceptions that your TCC can take into consideration.

*Q: I want to use the AHA and/or authorized provider course logo on flyers or other forms for my class. Can I?*

A: Contact your TCC for assistance.

*Q: Can I offer continuing education credit for the courses I teach? Does the AHA offer continuing education credit for all AHA courses?*

A: Contact your TCC for assistance.

*Q: I've moved. How do I find a new TC to teach with in the United States?*

A: Find TCs in your area by using the Find a Course tool at [http://cpr.heart.org/AHA/ECC/CPRAndECC/FindACourse/UCM\\_473162\\_Find-A-Course.jsp](http://cpr.heart.org/AHA/ECC/CPRAndECC/FindACourse/UCM_473162_Find-A-Course.jsp).

- Select “Classroom and Skills Session.”
- Select the class you need from the list or filter your search.
- Contact these organizations directly.

*Q: If I live outside of the United States, how do I find an International TC to teach with?*

A: You may find CPR, first aid, or emergency cardiovascular care courses near you using the ECC Global Connector at **[www.heart.org/internationaltraining](http://www.heart.org/internationaltraining)**.

*Q: Can I teach in Canada?*

A: US instructors are not permitted to teach in Canada unless they are aligned with a Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada training program. See **<http://www.heartandstroke.com>** for more assistance.

*Q: How do I teach internationally (separate from Canada)?*

A: Training outside of the country where your TC is located requires special permission because of the inherent quality assurance challenges, as well as some potential legal complications.

To obtain approval to teach courses internationally, you will need to submit the International Training Application. To submit the application, log on to the AHA Instructor Network, hover over “Additional Tools,” and then select “Training Updates.” Download and read the document titled “Training Memo: Training Outside of Home Country.”