

# Certification Criteria for Contracted Virginia Real Estate Assessment Professionals

Assessors, Supervisors, and Appraisers

Effective January 1, 2025

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## Introduction

Every assessor, supervisor, and appraiser who contracts with a Virginia locality or a Board of Assessors to perform real property assessment or reassessment, is required by the Code of Virginia to hold a valid certification issued by the Virginia Department of Taxation (“Virginia Tax”) (§ 58.1-3258.1 & § 58.1-3276, Code of Virginia).

This document provides the certification criteria for contracted assessors, supervisors, and appraisers performing real estate assessment valuation work in Virginia under contract. The certification process is administered by the Virginia Tax’s Property Tax Unit (PTU).

## Assessors, Supervisors, and Appraisers

The Code of Virginia uses the terms “assessor,” “supervisor,” and “appraiser” to describe persons engaged in the valuation of real property for tax assessment purposes. Relying on state law and industry best practices, such persons are to make informed and unbiased decisions on data to be collected and analyzed for estimates of assessed value. “Assessors” are responsible for completing the appraisal assignment and certifying final values for tax assessment to local officials. “Supervisors” possess the qualifications to oversee the work of less qualified appraisal staff. The term “appraiser” applies to qualified persons making critical decisions on value.

## Certification Criteria

### Appraisal License

The assessment and reassessment appraisal of local tax parcels is considered a fee appraisal assignment when performed by a contractor rather than an employee of the locality. Virginia law establishes the requirement for appraiser licensure in Virginia Code § 54.1-2011. Licensure is administered by the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR). With few exceptions, it is unlawful to engage in the appraisal of real property for compensation or valuable consideration in the Commonwealth without first obtaining a real estate appraiser's license from DPOR. Licensure is different from the certification described within this document, but it is an important component of the certification process.

Contracted assessors, supervisors, or appraisers seeking certification from Virginia Tax, must first have the appropriate Virginia appraiser’s license for the property to be valued, and the license must be in good standing. A Virginia Certified General Real Estate Appraiser’s license provides for the appraisal of all types of real property and is required for a contractor designated as the locality’s assessor. Unlicensed individuals may assist in assessment valuation if they are under the direct supervision of a assessor, supervisor, or appraiser certified by Virginia Tax.

## Virginia Tax Certification

Once an appraiser has obtained a license from DPOR, they must receive certification from Virginia Tax before contracting with a locality to perform assessment services. The certification from Virginia Tax runs concurrently with the license from DPOR. When the license expires, the certification must also be renewed.

In addition to licensure requirements, certification applicants are expected to:

- ▶ Be capable of performing appraisals of certain multi-unit real estate (§ 58.1-3295, Code of Virginia)
- ▶ Follow generally accepted appraisal practices
- ▶ Have obtained minimum levels of education and experience (See “Table 1. Certification Criteria” chart below)
- ▶ Adhere to standards of professional and ethical conduct following USPAP
- ▶ Possess a good working knowledge of Virginia law and local ordinances, as they pertain to real estate assessment
- ▶ Meet continuing education requirements established by Virginia Tax (§ 58.1-3258.1, Code of Virginia) (See “Table 1. Certification Criteria” chart below)

## Role of the Contracted Assessor

The contracted appraisal assignment can be a long and arduous process in determining all real property assessments within a locality. The assessor must follow accepted appraisal practices and produce fair and equitable assessments. It is recommended that contracted assessors utilize the practices outlined below in the appraisal assignment to produce professional results.

### Appraisal Problem & Scope of Work

An appraiser who has a contract with a locality to perform a general reassessment should:

- ▶ Develop and communicate a general reassessment plan to local officials
- ▶ Determine the initial assessment level with a market analysis
- ▶ Develop a field manual to guide staff on property inspections and data revisions for equalization
- ▶ Retain adequate field and data personnel for the reassessment project
- ▶ Maintain technical skills to manage and update local CAMA systems
- ▶ Utilize mapping resources and network with the contracted jurisdiction
- ▶ Provide public notice of the reassessment program and site visitations
- ▶ Develop an assessment manual with cost tables, land rate tables, depreciation schedules, land valuation tables, etc.
- ▶ Develop market neighborhoods or divisions to stratify sales analysis
- ▶ Provide new construction and/or new parcel assessments

- ▶ Provide appraisals for unique properties; industrial, commercial, mining, data centers, affordable housing, etc.
- ▶ Periodically illustrate and report current assessment statistics, sales studies, and ongoing revaluation updates to local officials

## **Analysis & Reconciliation**

When performing the assessment work, the assessor should:

- ▶ Verify and/or validate arm's length sales, and identify outliers
- ▶ Use in-person observations of sold properties
- ▶ Use aerial photography, topographical maps, and other mapping resources
- ▶ Conduct interviews and data surveys
- ▶ Stratify properties for sales ratio analysis
- ▶ Provide market area delineation, and analyze market data for adjustments
- ▶ Develop an initial reassessment book, and revise the cost manual, to ensure a stratified property sales report supports it
- ▶ Verify that sold and unsold properties are appraised at the same level and in the same manner
- ▶ Perform model calibration
- ▶ Use sales trimming with International Association of Assessing Officers ("IAAO") standards, if warranted
- ▶ Finalize sales analysis and statistical reports
- ▶ Property values are as of the locality's effective date of value

## **Reporting and Appeals**

When the assessor has completed their work, the assessor should:

- ▶ Provide assessment modeling for distinct property classes
- ▶ Communicate reports to local officials and Virginia Tax, with sales studies and work files available for review
- ▶ Publicly meet with the local Board of Supervisors or City Council with a summary report(s)
- ▶ Sign and record the reassessment book
- ▶ Ensure mailing of real estate assessment notices to taxpayers
- ▶ Provide a recapitulation sheet to Virginia Tax
- ▶ Schedule, organize, and provide administrative reviews with taxpayers
- ▶ Mail subsequent re-evaluation notices
- ▶ Support the Board of Equalization and/or Board of Assessors as requested, including preparing valuation reports.
- ▶ Follow any court decisions or orders

## Ratio Studies Standards

The assessment practice of performing and utilizing ratio studies provides for fair and equitable assessments. It is a method for evaluating appraisal models to ensure compliance with USPAP Standard Rules 6.6 and 6.7 and the IAAO Standard on Ratio Studies. Ratio studies are used to determine if assessment models require further adjustment. Competent ratio studies performed by the locality will aid in producing acceptable assessment levels and equitability.

The IAAO Standard on Ratio Studies, Parts 1, 2, and 3, articulate the key uses of ratio studies as measurements and evaluations of:

- ▶ The level and uniformity of mass appraisal needs
- ▶ Internal quality assurance and identification of appraisal priorities
- ▶ Whether administrative statutory standards have been met
- ▶ Time trends
- ▶ Adjustment of appraised values between reappraisals.

Section 2.4 of the IAAO standards provides that local jurisdictions should use ratio studies as a primary mass appraisal testing procedure and as their most important performance analysis tool. The ratio study can assist such jurisdictions in providing fair and equitable property assessments.

Ratio studies performed at the local level require an adequate sample size, stratification, data reliability, a statistical analysis, and the evaluation of results. Ratio studies should be used to establish a base before assessment or model changes are made. They should also be employed to check for deficiencies during the reassessment process, and for evaluation after the completion of the final values. Real estate transfers should also be closely analyzed for property record data accuracy as well as verified to ensure the sample includes only sales that are considered fair-market-value sales.

Statistical measures of appraisal level include median, arithmetic mean, and weighted mean. The median is generally the preferred measure of central tendency because it divides the data into two equal parts and is less affected by extreme ratios than the other measures of central tendency.

Another important statistical tool is variability, measured by the coefficient of dispersion (COD), which is generally the most useful measure of uniformity. Other measures of variability include the coefficient of variation (COV) and price-related differential (PRD).

Ratio study analysis performed by the contracted assessor should be communicated with the local assessing office and the results of the final assessed values should be within IAAO standards based on the effective date of valuation. As noted, certified assessors are responsible for achieving valuation results within IAAO's Standard on Ratio Studies as of the effective date of valuation on the year of a general reassessment, as shown in Appendix A. Repeated failure may result in a revocation of certification or denial of recertification.

## Importance of Proper Assessment Practices

Proper assessment of real estate is a critical function of local government. The fiscal health, the services provided, and the level of confidence in the local government all rely in part on accurate real estate assessment valuations. Improper assessment practices can result in inequitable and/or outdated values. To ensure equalized valuation across the Commonwealth, Virginia Tax performs ratio studies based on IAAO guidelines for oversight agencies. These ratio studies are passed on to various agencies including the Department of Education and the State Corporation Commission. Additionally, bond ratings may be based on assessment levels or the total assessed value of real estate.

Real estate values also play an important role in the distribution of state school funding for K-12 public education. This funding is distributed by a formula known as the Composite Index of Local Ability-to-Pay ("the Composite Index"), which considers both localized needs and local tax efforts.

## Application for Certification

An application must be approved by Virginia Tax before any assessor, supervisor, or appraiser may contract with a locality for appraisal services. All applications for initial certification must provide proof of Virginia appraiser licensure, required education, training, and appraisal experience. Specific licensure, education, and experience requirements are listed in Virginia Tax’s “Appraiser Qualification and Certification Requirements Checklist” in Table 1. Additional educational courses may be required in the future by Virginia Tax or as a result of legislative action. The timeframe for completing these courses will be implemented by Virginia Tax or DPOR, depending on specific circumstances.

### Recertification

Applicants for recertification will still be required to complete an application. However, the applicant will only be required to submit documentation of their DPOR license status and continuing education. Any change in certification level will be regarded as an initial certification. The Contractor Certification Application can be found at the end of this document. For licensed appraisers, certification will expire with the DPOR license’s expiration date.

- ▶ **Please allow up to 90 days for approval of a certification or recertification application.**

### Grounds for Denial or Revocation of Certification

Virginia Code (§ 58.1-3258.2) permits Virginia Tax to require remedial education, suspend, revoke, or deny renewal of certification for any supervisor, assessor, or appraiser who violates regulations established by Virginia Tax. In addition, Virginia Tax does not consider or evaluate the contractor’s business license, insurance, financial capability or stability, or other non-appraisal-related status. Local governing officials are encouraged to fully assess a contractor’s ability to satisfy the terms and conditions of their contract.

### Adherence to Virginia Law and USPAP

All certified contractors are to conform to all applicable Virginia laws and regulations, including those of DPOR, Virginia Tax, and the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP). Reported failure to do so is subject to review by Virginia Tax and may result in disciplinary action, which may include the revocation of certification or denial of recertification.



## Certification Criteria

Table 1.

Virginia Tax - Appraiser Qualification & Certification Requirements Checklist				
Experience	Source	Assessor	Supervisor	Appraiser
General Appraisal and Mass Appraisal Experience	Any	5 years with at least 1 year in mass appraisal supervisory role or senior position required	3 years with at least 1 year working in mass appraisal required	1 year working in mass appraisal or possessing an active real estate appraiser license
Courses or Equivalent	Provider	Assessor	Supervisor	Appraiser
USPAP National 15-hour	The Appraisal Foundation approved	Required	Required	Required
IAAO 101/CRAV C210	IAAO/CRAV	Required	Required +3 courses below:	Required +1 course below:
IAAO 102	IAAO	Required	Preferred	Preferred
IAAO 112	IAAO	Required	Preferred	Preferred
IAAO 201	IAAO	Required	Preferred	Preferred
IAAO 300	IAAO	Required	Preferred	Preferred
IAAO 331/CRAV C220	IAAO/CRAV	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred
One of the following: IAAO 311, 332, 333, 334	IAAO	Required	Preferred	Preferred
IAAO 400/CRAV C420	IAAO/CRAV	Required	Preferred	Preferred
IAAO Workshop 452	IAAO	Required	Preferred	Preferred
Professional Certification	Provider	Assessor	Supervisor	Appraiser
Certified General RE Appraiser, Certified Residential RE Appraiser, Licensed Residential RE Appraiser, Appraiser Trainee	DPOR	Certified General required, active, and in good standing in Virginia	Any Real Estate Appraiser's License active and in good standing	Any Real Estate Appraiser's License, active and in good standing
Professional Designation IAAO - CAE, AAS, MAS, RES Appraisal Institute - MAI, SRA, AI-GRS, AI, RRS	IAAO/ Appraisal Institute	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred
Continuing Education	Provider	Assessor	Supervisor	Appraiser
Any mass appraisal-related course, concurrent with the appraiser's license	Any DPOR-approved educator, IAAO, VAAO, Appraisal Institute, Virginia Tax	19 hours	10 hours	4 hours

**Table 1. cont.**

Future Course Requirements	Provider	Assessor	Supervisor	Appraiser
As determined by the Virginia Tax or Legislation	Any DPOR-approved educator, IAAO, VAAO, Appraisal Institute, Virginia Tax	Required	Required	Required

## Supporting Documentation and Submission

The burden of proof of qualifications is on the applicant to provide sufficient documentation to Virginia Tax for review. For equivalent courses, courses should be equivalent in content, level, and learning outcomes. The PTU may find the following documentation useful in determining an applicant's qualifications.

- ▶ Experience
  - ▶ Resume, Appraisal Reports, Case Files, Appeals, Reference Letters, Contracts
- ▶ Education and Continuing Education
  - ▶ College Transcripts, Professional Organization Transcripts, Certificates of Completion
  - ▶ Equivalent course material may be from multiple or expired courses. Please include course outlines, materials, and dates.
- ▶ Professional Certifications
  - ▶ Real Estate License, Professional Organization Certification

**Submit applications with supporting documentation to:**

Virginia Department of Taxation  
 Attn: Property Tax Unit  
 PO Box 565  
 Richmond, Virginia 23218

## Disclosures

Information provided within this document, *Certification Criteria for Virginia Real Estate Contracted Assessment Professionals*, is offered as a public service to the taxpayers of the Commonwealth of Virginia, local officials, and other interested parties. The information provided is governed by Title 58.1 of the Code of Virginia and in the event of any conflict between the information presented herein and the laws governing taxation, the Code of Virginia prevails.

This document is not to be interpreted as furnishing any personal, legal, or tax advice to taxpayers, and no abatement of any tax, interest, or penalty may be sought by taxpayers (§ 58.1-1835, Code of Virginia) in conjunction with the provision of this public service. In no event shall the Virginia Department of Taxation, the Tax Commissioner, or the Commonwealth be liable for any loss, expense, or other adverse effect caused by reliance on any information appearing in this document. In no event shall the Virginia Tax be liable for any errors or omissions with respect to any information in this document. If you find any errors or omissions, we encourage you to report them to us.

## Resources

### Virginia Department of Taxation – Property Tax Unit

- ▶ Assessment advisory aid, qualifications, certification, and education.

Virginia Department of Taxation  
Attention: Property Tax  
PO Box 565  
Richmond, Virginia 23218-0565

Property Tax Director 804.786.4091  
Assessor School Administrator 804.404.4064

### Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR)

- ▶ Virginia real estate appraisal licensure.

DPOR  
9960 Mayland Drive  
Suite 400  
Richmond VA 23233-1485

Licensing Section 804.367.2039  
Email REAppraisers@dpor.virginia.gov  
Website: www.dpor.virginia.gov

### The Appraisal Foundation

- ▶ USPAP, education, professional designations, and regulations.

The Appraisal Foundation  
1155 15th Street, NW  
Suite 1111  
Washington, DC 20005

Headquarters 202.347.7722  
Email info@appraisalfoundation.org  
Website www.appraisalfoundation.org

### International Association of Assessing Officers

- ▶ Standards, mass appraisal education, professional designations, articles, and forums.

International Association of Assessing Officers  
314 West 10th Street  
Kansas City, Missouri 64105

Telephone 816.701.8100  
Email info@iaao.org  
Website www.iaao.org

### Virginia Association of Assessing Officers

- ▶ Virginia locality assessment, education, articles, etc.

Contact www.vaao.org/contact-us/  
Website www.vaao.org

### Commissioners of the Revenue Association of Virginia

- ▶ Local Commissioner offices, assessment information, and resources.

Website www.vacomrev.com/

## Appendix A

IAAO Table 2-3. Ratio study uniformity standards indicating acceptable general quality*		
General Property Class	Jurisdiction Size/Profile/Market Activity	COD Range
Residential improved (single family dwellings, condominiums, manuf. housing, 2-4 family units)	Very large jurisdictions/densely populated/newer properties/active markets	5.0 to 10.0
	Large to mid-sized jurisdictions/older & newer properties/less active markets	5.0 to 15.0
	Rural or small jurisdictions/older properties/depressed market areas	5.0 to 20.0
Income-producing properties (commercial, industrial, apartments)	Very large jurisdictions/densely populated/newer properties/active markets	5.0 to 15.0
	Large to mid-sized jurisdictions/older & newer properties/active markets	5.0 to 20.0
	Rural or small jurisdictions/older properties/depressed market areas	5.0 to 25.0
Residential vacant land	Very large jurisdictions/rapid development/active markets	5.0 to 15.0
	Large to mid-sized jurisdictions/slower development/less active markets	5.0 to 20.0
	Rural or small jurisdictions/little development/depressed markets	5.0 to 25.0
Other (non-agricultural) vacant land	Very large jurisdictions/rapid development/active markets	5.0 to 20.0
	Large to mid-sized jurisdictions/slower development/less active markets	5.0 to 25.0
	Rural or small jurisdictions/little development/depressed markets	5.0 to 30.0

### Additional Notes:

- ▶ \*The COD performance recommendations are based upon representative and adequate sample sizes, with outliers trimmed and a 95% level of confidence.
- ▶ \*Appraisal level recommendation for each type of property shown should be between 0.90 and 1.10.
- ▶ \*Price Related Differential (PRD) for each type of property should be between 0.98 and 1.03 to demonstrate vertical equity. However, PRD standards are not absolute and may be less meaningful when samples are small or when wide variations in prices exist. In such cases, statistical tests of vertical equity hypotheses should be substituted.
- ▶ \*Alternatively, assessing officials can rely on the PRB, which is less sensitive to atypical prices and ratios. PRB coefficients should generally fall between -0.05 and 0.05. PRBs that are statistically significant and less than -0.10 or greater than 0.10 indicate unacceptable vertical inequities.
- ▶ \*CODs lower than 5.0 may indicate sales chasing or non-representative samples.

### Source:

International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO). *Standard on Ratio Studies*. Table 2-3, 2013.  
[https://www.iaao.org/media/standards/Standard\\_on\\_Ratio\\_Studies.pdf](https://www.iaao.org/media/standards/Standard_on_Ratio_Studies.pdf)



Commonwealth of Virginia  
Department of Taxation  
Property Tax Unit  
PO Box 565  
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2475  
804.404.4016  
[www.tax.virginia.gov](http://www.tax.virginia.gov)

## Contractor Certification Application

Assessors, Supervisors, and Appraisers

No Fee.

An application for certification shall be on file with Virginia Tax before any assessor, supervisor, or appraiser contracts with a locality for appraisal services. All certification applications must provide proof of Virginia appraiser licensure, education, training, and appraisal experience per certification level. Please consult the Certification Criteria for Contracted Virginia Real Estate Assessment Professionals for specific certification requirements, expiration dates, and grounds for denial or revocation of certification information. **Please allow up to 90 days for processing.**

1. Please indicate the application type for which you are applying:

Initial Certification       Recertification

2. Please indicate the certification level for which you are applying:

Certified Assessor       Certified Supervisor       Certified Appraiser

3. Do you hold an active license issued by the Virginia Real Estate Appraiser Board?

No  
 Yes      If yes, provide your Virginia License number:

Virginia License Number:

4	0								
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Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Full Legal Name (As it appears on your government-issued ID or other legal documentation.)

\_\_\_\_\_

*Last Name*

*First Name*

*Middle Name*

5. Contact Information:

\_\_\_\_\_

*Mailing Address*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Primary Telephone*

\_\_\_\_\_

*City*

*State*

*Zip Code*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Email*



6. Do you have the required experience to qualify for this certification as referenced in Table 1 of the Certification Criteria for Contracted Virginia Real Estate Assessment Professionals?

- No  
 Yes If yes, provide sufficient documentation.

7. Have you completed the education requirements to qualify for this certification level as referenced in Table 1 of the Certification Criteria for Contracted Virginia Real Estate Assessment Professionals?

- No  
 Yes If yes, provide transcripts of courses completed (Recertification applicants only need to submit continuing education).

8. Have you ever been subject to disciplinary action taken by any local, state, or national regulatory body?

- No  
 Yes If yes, provide the file number, date closed, and disposition.

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By affixing my signature to this application, I, \_\_\_\_\_ affirm the following declarations:  
(Print Name)

- ▶ I acknowledge that submitting inaccurate information or omitting significant details within this application may result in processing delays and could lead to the revocation or denial of certification.
- ▶ I promptly commit to informing Virginia Tax of any alterations to the information furnished in this application before obtaining the requested certification.
- ▶ I hereby grant Virginia Tax the authority to verify information about me or any statement in this application, including contacting individuals or past clients. I also agree to furnish any required credentials or documents as requested by Virginia Tax.
- ▶ I have familiarized myself with, comprehend, and will adhere to all the applicable laws in Virginia on taxation as outlined in Title 58.1 of the Code of Virginia, the Real Estate Appraiser Board Regulations, the Certification Criteria Guide for Contracted Virginia Real Estate Appraisers, and the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice.
- ▶ Furthermore, I attest to possessing good moral character, honesty, unbiasedness, and competency necessary to conduct the business of a real estate appraiser in a manner that safeguards the interests of the public.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_