



Application for Level 2C Certification in the Paul-Elder Framework for Critical Thinking™

Revised September 18, 2025

This application is for Level 2C: Certification for Consultants, Employers, and Trainers. If you are seeking a different form of certification, please download the appropriate application from our [certification webpage](#).

Instructions:

1. Before submitting this application, please ensure you have read through and understand the [White Paper on Certification](#). If you have questions on the White Paper, please contact us at cct@criticalthinking.org or at 1-800-833-3645.
2. Please complete and submit this application after successfully completing your certification training and assessments.
3. Upon approving this application, the Foundation for Critical Thinking will provide an invoice for the certification fee. You will receive documentation that confirms your certification after completing payment.
4. If you have questions or concerns not addressed in the [White Paper on Certification](#) or this application, please contact us at cct@criticalthinking.org or at 1-800-833-3645. (Please leave a voicemail if no one is available to take your call.)

Last Name:	First Name:	Date:
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Street Address & City:	State/Province:	ZIP or Postal Code:
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Country:	Email Address:	
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Phone Number(s):		
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Educational Institutions Attended	Year of Graduation	Subject(s) Studied	Degree Acquired
Current Place(s) of Work and Job Title(s)			

Mutually-Agreed Terms of Certification

The purpose of the Foundation for Critical Thinking is to advance fairminded critical thinking in human societies across the world and in every part of human life. We assume that those interested in certification in our approach share this goal and will use our work in keeping with this philosophy.

We also want to ensure that the Paul-Elder Framework for Critical Thinking (also known as the Paul-Elder Approach to Critical Thinking, Paul-Elder Framework, Paul-Elder Approach, Paulian Critical Thinking, etc.) is not taken out of context and misapplied. Again, we are fundamentally concerned with advancing a fairminded conception of critical thinking: *strong-sense critical thinking*, rather than weak-sense critical thinking. In other words, we do not support our work being used to foster critical thinking without concern for the rights and needs of people and other sentient creatures across the world.

Given these premises, by signing this application, you (the applicant) agree 1) to all provisions and requirements described in this document, and 2) that you have read the **latest version** of our [White Paper on Certification](#) in full and agree to all of its provisions and requirements. Among these provisions and requirements are the following:

- 1) You understand that after your application is approved, the Foundation for Critical Thinking will email an invoice*, to be paid within thirty (30) days, for either of the following amounts:
 - a) A **\$500** certification fee, if this is your first time being certified at Level 2C.
 - b) A **\$95** renewal fee, if you are choosing to renew your existing Level 2C Certification, or if you are regaining certification after a lapse in your certification status..
- *If you are using the Paul-Elder Framework in consulting work, you will instead be invoiced per **#13f** below.
- 2) You understand that after you have completed the certification or renewal payment, the Foundation for Critical Thinking will supply documentation confirming your certification status. This documentation will typically be provided within three (3) business days after payment is complete, although extenuating circumstances may require additional time.
- 3) You understand that after you have completed the certification or renewal payment, the Foundation for Critical Thinking will digitally supply a manual of activities to help facilitate critical thinking understandings with your clients, employees, trainees, etc. This will typically be provided within three (3) business days after payment is complete, although extenuating circumstances may require additional time.

- 4) You understand that your certification will remain in effect for one year from the date that you receive the documentation mentioned in above, unless you are decertified per the provisions in #15 below.
- 5) You understand that in order to remain valid, certification must be renewed annually, conditional on the following:
 - a) Maintenance of an active subscription in the [Center for Critical Thinking Community Online](#).
 - b) Your continuation of training directly under Foundation for Critical Thinking Scholars and/or Fellows, which entails engaged attendance* at at least one Foundation for Critical Thinking live event, [online course](#), [guided study group](#), [tutoring program](#), or on-site or online custom [professional development programs](#) per year.

**Engaged attendance* means you are actively participating in the sessions and completing the assignments (both in-session activities and homework where applicable) to the satisfaction of our instructor(s).
 - c) Submission of a new certification application. This is required whether you choose to remain certified at Level 1 or advance your certification status to Level 2E or 2C.
 - d) Payment of a **\$95** certification renewal fee once per year.
- 6) Roughly once every six (6) months while certified, you will video-record yourself leading a session on critical thinking and submit this video to the Foundation for Critical Thinking for review. This is to ensure that you are adhering to the concepts and principles in the Paul-Elder Framework.

If you cannot meet this requirement – for example, due to conducting fewer than two critical thinking workshops per year – you will notify the Foundation for Critical Thinking by email at your soonest availability. You further understand that the Foundation may then or thereafter request video footage of mock training sessions to offset the shortfall in real training videos.

- 7) If significant errors in your presentation of the Paul-Elder Framework are discovered in our review of the aforementioned videos, we may require you to submit new video footage presenting the relevant material to a satisfactory standard. If this is required, a **\$25** processing fee will apply.
- 8) If errors in your presentation of the Paul-Elder Framework are determined to be so extensive that they require direct training to rectify, you may be required to

repeat certification training at your expense.

- 9) At the end of each year of certification, you will submit a report of the groups and individuals with which you utilized the Paul-Elder Framework during the preceding year.

If you are using the Paul-Elder Framework in consulting work, you will instead submit a report as described in #13e below.

- 10) You will conduct yourself ethically in professional dealings and in representing the Paul-Elder Framework for Critical Thinking.
- 11) You understand and agree that copyright laws apply to the use of our intellectual property. You will not create unauthorized copies of our [books](#), [Thinker's Guides](#), or other Foundation for Critical Thinking Materials.

In teaching the Paul-Elder Framework to clients, colleagues, students, or trainees, those certified at this level will ensure that participants do one or both of the following:

- a) Purchase (or have purchased for them) copies of whatever [books](#) and/or [Thinker's Guides](#) are necessary for facilitating the relevant activities,
- OR-
- b) create membership accounts (or have accounts created for them) in The [Center for Critical Thinking Community Online](#). (The cost of this can be reduced immensely by using [classroom or institutional memberships](#).)

- 12) You will never misrepresent the spirit, principles, or other contents of the Paul-Elder Framework for Critical Thinking, such as by:

- a) Mixing in critical thinking approaches or theories of mind other than the Paul-Elder Framework when leading classes, workshops, sessions, etc. on critical thinking.
- b) Adding to, subtracting from, or modifying the spirit, principles, or other contents of the Paul-Elder Framework for Critical Thinking.

- 13) If you are teaching critical thinking as a consultant, professional coach, professional development trainer, etc., you agree that:

- a) You will use only the Paul-Elder Framework when teaching critical thinking in your work. You will never substitute or mix in other critical thinking methodologies.
- b) When teaching critical thinking in your work, you will use only those activities approved by The Foundation for Critical Thinking, most of which

are contained in the manual that will be given to you.

- c) When teaching critical thinking in your work, you will use only Foundation for Critical Thinking materials, such as [books](#) and [Thinker's Guides](#). These materials may be purchased in print or digital format, or by having clients establish subscriptions in [The Center for Critical Thinking Community Online](#).
- d) When using books or materials in training on other subject matters, such as leadership books, you will have these approved by the Foundation for Critical Thinking to ensure that they do not contradict best critical thinking practices and theory.
- e) In place of #9 above, you will submit an annual report in which you detail the workshops that you have conducted throughout the year under the concept of "critical thinking." This will include remuneration received for each critical thinking workshop conducted and what Foundation for Critical Thinking materials were used in the workshop (e.g., [books](#), [Thinker's Guides](#), subscriptions to [The Center for Critical Thinking Community Online](#), etc.)
- f) You will enter a customized affiliate agreement with the Foundation for Critical Thinking, which among other things will require that a percentage of net income acquired through facilitating critical-thinking workshops will be paid to the Foundation for Critical Thinking.

Upon reading and returning a signed, dated copy of the affiliate agreement, the Foundation for Critical Thinking will email an invoice for the **\$500** certification fee, to be paid within thirty (30) days.

- 14) You understand that if you allow your certification to lapse, you can renew it by submitting an application within one year of the lapse. Beyond this one-year grace period, you must attend certification training again to regain your certification status.
- 15) Certificate holders who violate the requirements for maintaining certification, and who are determined by the Foundation for Critical Thinking to have done so in bad faith, may be decertified. Decertified facilitators may or may not be allowed to regain certification after any period of time determined by the Foundation for Critical Thinking.

The Foundation reserves the right to publish the name of a decertified facilitator on www.criticalthinking.org, and in correspondence with its email list, if it finds that the decertified facilitator 1) has violated the requirements for maintaining

certification in bad faith, *and* 2) is likely to falsely represent himself or herself as a certified facilitator.

To be completed by applicant:

"I have read and understood the policies and responsibilities for Certification in the Paul-Elder Framework for Critical Thinking, which appear on this application and in the Foundation for Critical Thinking's [White Paper on Certification](#). If the Foundation for Critical Thinking finds that I have violated these responsibilities after I am certified in its approach, I understand that my certification can be immediately revoked. I further understand that if I am decertified, I will not be allowed in any way to say that I am affiliated with the Foundation for Critical Thinking, nor that I have been certified by the Foundation for Critical Thinking, since this would be misleading to the public. In the event that I am decertified, I understand that I will no longer be authorized to use the work of the Foundation for Critical Thinking in my work as a consultant, or otherwise, for financial remuneration."

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed name: _____