



## Application for Level 1 Certification in the Paul-Elder Framework for Critical Thinking™

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*Revised September 18, 2025*

**This application is for Level 1: Foundational Certification. 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](mailto: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](mailto:cct@criticalthinking.org) or at 1-800-833-3645. (Please leave a voicemail if no one is available to take your call.)

<b>Last Name:</b>	<b>First Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Street Address &amp; City:</b>	<b>State/Province:</b>	<b>ZIP or Postal Code:</b>
<b>Country:</b>	<b>Email Address:</b>	
<b>Phone Number(s):</b>		

Educational Institutions Attended	Year of Graduation	Subject(s) Studied	Degree Acquired
<b>Current Place(s) of Work and Job Title(s)</b>			

## 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 1.
  - b) A **\$95** renewal fee, if you are choosing to renew your existing Level 1 Certification, or if you are regaining certification after a lapse in your certification status.
- 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 your certification will remain in effect for one year from the date that you receive the documentation mentioned above, unless you are decertified per the provisions in **#8** below.
- 4) 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.
  - e) Submission of video footage once per year showing the certificate holder competently explaining the core concepts in the Paul-Elder Framework. The certificate holder may submit a separate video for each of the four primary dimensions of critical thinking, but each video must be entirely continuous, without any cuts or other editing.
  - f) For any concepts of which the aforementioned videos show significant misunderstanding or insufficient understanding, submission of an additional, unedited video explaining these concepts with greater sufficiency and/or accuracy.
  - g) A **\$25** processing fee **if** the above additional video is required.
- 5) You will conduct yourself ethically in professional dealings and in representing the Paul-Elder Framework for Critical Thinking. You will never intentionally misrepresent the spirit, principles, or other contents of the Paul-Elder Framework for Critical Thinking to others.
  - 6) 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 students, certified educators agree that students will:

- 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](#).)
- 7) 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.
- 8) 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](http://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.

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**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."

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

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

Printed name:\_\_\_\_\_