

NIMS Credentialing FAQs *(Frequently Asked Questions)*

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Contact NIMS Support

NIMS Support is available Monday through Friday, 9AM – 5PM Eastern.

By email support@nims-skills.org

By phone (703) 352-4971

By fax (703) 352-4991

Subject Area: Credentialing (Testing)

Q: My school/company is new to NIMS. How do we get started?

- ✓ Watch the [NIMS Credentialing 101 Video Tutorial](#), available 24/7 via YouTube
- ✓ Read the *Complete Guide to Credentialing* found in the **Downloads Box** on the [Credentialing info tab of the NIMS Online Testing Center website](#)

Q: Who needs to be registered before my students/trainees can test?

Several parties need to register before testing may begin. View [Who's Who in Credentialing](#).

Q: How do I register my school/company with NIMS?

FIRST verify that your organization is not already registered [by checking the organization name drop-list on this registration form](#).

- ✓ If your school/company does appear on that list, **STOP** and [contact NIMS](#).
- ✓ If your school/company does NOT appear on that list, please [complete the \(free\) NIMS Organization Registration](#).

Q: I registered my school/company with NIMS. Now what?

Now that you are registered you can log into the NIMS Online Testing Center with your username and password. Once logged in, you can visit the *Resources Page* to view, download, or print any and all NIMS standards, testing materials, study guides (where available), apprenticeship guides, accreditation information, and more. Use these items to learn more about the credentials that you are pursuing.

Q: What is the difference between credentials and accreditation?

Credentials certify people's skills. Accreditation certifies a training program as a whole. Accreditation is not required for students/trainees to start earning credentials.

Q: Who is eligible to earn NIMS credentials?

Anyone, anywhere! As long as you have access to the appropriate machine tools.

For Example: If you want to earn the CNC Milling Operator credential, then you need access to a CNC milling machine.

To date credentials are being earned by students, trainees, apprentices, employees, and military personnel nationwide and globally.

Q: Can people under the age of eighteen (18) earn NIMS credentials?

Yes, as long as they are

Q: I want my students/trainees to earn NIMS credentials. As their instructor/trainer, do I need to earn NIMS credentials first?

No. Students/trainees can start earning credentials anytime.

Q: I want my students/trainees to earn NIMS credentials. Does my training program need to be accredited by NIMS first?

No. Accreditation is voluntary and not required to start testing.

Q: What is the cost to register someone who wants to earn credentials?

Candidate registration costs \$40 per person and is required only once (per person) because registration is valid for a lifetime.

This way if a student is registered in high school, whether he or she goes on to college, an apprenticeship, or straight to the working world, he or she can continue to earn NIMS credentials along the way without needing to re-register.

This fee applies to anyone who plans to earn NIMS credentials: students, trainees, apprentices, employees, instructors, trainers, etc.

Q: How much does it cost to earn a NIMS credential?

That depends on which credential is being pursued:

- ✓ Level I tests are \$35 each
- ✓ Level II and III tests are \$50 each

Programs that are seeking NIMS accreditation receive a 20% discount on tests.

Q: How long are credentials valid before they expire?

NIMS credentials do not expire! They are valid for life.

Q: How can I pay registration and/or test fees for myself?

All fees can be paid on-screen with a valid credit card. You will need your credit card's billing address.

Q: How can I pay registration and/or test fees for my students/trainees?

You have several options for this:

- ✓ Pay-as-you-go by having a credit card on hand when registering or purchasing tests
- ✓ Pre-pay using one of the following:
 - Calculate expenses and send a check, made out to NIMS, for total anticipated spending. Include your contact information and when the check is received a NIMS rep will contact you with an account code. From that point forward, the

account code is to be entered the NIMS Online Testing Center requests payment.

- Calculate expenses and send a purchase order to NIMS via email or fax (703-352-4991). Include your contact information and when the check is received a NIMS rep will contact you with an account code. From that point forward, the account code is to be entered the NIMS Online Testing Center requests payment.
- Calculate expenses and call NIMS (703-352-4971) to pay by credit card. When the transaction is complete the NIMS rep who assisted you will provide you with an account code. From that point forward, the account code is to be entered the NIMS Online Testing Center requests payment.

Q: Who is the sponsor?

View [Who's Who in Credentialing](#) for information on sponsor roles, responsibilities, and registration information. Sponsors can also be organization administrators, however sponsors cannot be proctors.

Q: Who is the proctor?

View [Who's Who in Credentialing](#) for information on proctor roles, responsibilities, and registration information.

Q: Are all NIMS tests online?

Yes. NIMS staff can provide tests on paper for accommodate IEDs or other special circumstances. If this applies to you or your student/trainee then please [contact NIMS](#) to make arrangements.

Q: What is a MET-TEC Committee?

View the [Who's Who in Credentialing](#) for a short description. View the [Guide to Establishing a MET-TEC Committee](#) for a full description (includes registration forms).

Q: Do I need a MET-TEC Committee?

That depends on which credentials are being pursued. View the **Do I Need a MET-TEC Committee?** chart at the end of this document. [Take me there.](#)

Q: What is a performance affidavit?

The affidavit is documentation to state that a candidate successfully passed the performance project for the credential that he or she is pursuing. Affidavits are emailed, faxed, or mailed to NIMS so that corresponding online theory tests may be unlocked by NIMS staff. Online tests are not available until affidavits are received (with the exception of the *Measurement, Materials,*

and Safety credential, which does not require a performance project at all).

- ✓ For performance projects the use prints: the performance affidavit may be downloaded or printed from the NIMS Resources page (requires login).
- ✓ For performance projects using CARs: use the *Affidavit of Successful Completion*, located in the back of the CAR booklet.

Q: I've passed the online test, how soon will I receive my credentials?

- ✓ If you tested with a group (i.e. with a class) then credentials will be printed and mailed as a set to your sponsor within one week.
- ✓ If you tested alone, credentials will be printed and mailed (to the address listed on your candidate profile) within one week.

Q: Why should I get credentials?

- ✓ To demonstrate that your skills meet the industry established standards
- ✓ To stand out from the pack when applying for jobs
- ✓ To earn a national industry certification
- ✓ To work towards a competency-based apprenticeship
- ✓ To earn college credits (where credential-to-credit articulation is established)

Q: What is the passing score or percentage for NIMS tests?

The "cut-score" or percentage passing rates vary by test and are set by the Technical Work Groups that establish and pilot NIMS standards and credentialing tests. This information is confidential and not available to the public.

Q: What do I do if I lost my username or password?

- ✓ Visit the [NIMS Online Testing Center](#) and use the *Forgot Username* and/or *Forgot Password* buttons located below the login boxes.
- ✓ [Contact NIMS Support.](#)

Q: Is there a time limit for the online theory tests?

Yes, each online testing session is limited to 90 minutes per person, per test. An on-screen timer is present during all testing.

If a candidate has to stop mid-test (or if a computer freezes or if a power outage occurs) then the Online Testing Center will save the candidate's testing progress including time remaining.

Q: What is allowed during online testing?

Candidates may have ONLY the following during online testing:

- Machinery's Handbook OR the Shop Reference for Students & Apprentices
- A non-programmable calculator (scientific calculators are OK)

- Blank paper and pen or pencil

Q: If my candidate stopped mid-test, how can he or she continue the online theory tests?

With a proctor present, log into the [NIMS Online Testing Center](#) and on the *Candidate Welcome* screen click *Take Test*. Follow on-screen prompts from there. No fees will be assessed but a proctor code will be required.

Q: Is there a time limit between when a candidate registers and when a candidate can take the tests?

- ✓ For the *Measurement, Materials, and Safety* credential: A candidate must be registered with NIMS before this test is available to take. Once registered, this test is available to purchase and take (if the candidate so chooses).
- ✓ For ALL other NIMS credentials: A *performance project* must be completed before the online theory test is available. *Projects* are available to view, print, or download on the *NIMS Resources* page (requires login).

When a project is complete and has passed inspection, send an affidavit to NIMS Support via [email](#) or fax (703-352-4991). This will inform NIMS staff to unlock the online theory test ASAP.

Q: Can I retake the online tests?

Yes. Retakes may be taken any time. Proctor presence is required for all retakes and test fees are reassessed.

Q: Is there a waiting period before I can retake an online test?

No, but we do recommend taking time to review before retaking an online test.

Q: Do you have to earn NIMS credentials in any specific order?

No. You can earn any credential any time as long as you have access to the relevant equipment and inspectors, and a proctor to monitor the online testing.

Q: Can I start with Level II credentials, and skip Level I?

Yes, you can start with Level II. However, if you do not pass a Level II online test then before you can retake the Level II test, you must first pass the Level I version before you can retake the Level II tests.

For example: Michelle takes the Grinding II online test but does not pass. Michelle must take and pass the Grinding I test before she can retake the Level II version.

Q: How do I earn the Machining Level I credential?

NIMS does not offer a Machining Level I credential. NIMS has a Machining Level I Skill Standard and based on that national standard, NIMS offers eleven (11) different credentials. Individuals may earn any combination of the level one credentials, however a “Machining Level I credential” is not offered.

Q: What is the “Certificate of Special Merit?”

This is an award given by NIMS to any candidate who earns seven of the Level I Machining credentials.

Q: I don’t see a part for Level I CNC operator?

The *CNC Milling Operator* and *CNC Turning Operator* credentials do not use part prints for the performance projects. Instead these projects use CARs (credentialing achievement records).

Q: What are Credentialing Achievement Records (CARs)?

The Credentialing Achievement Record (CAR) contains a series of skill checks through which you demonstrate that you possess the competency for a particular manufacturing process. NIMS uses CARs for most credentials, excluding the majority of Machining Level I and Level II.

Q: How long are my credentials valid?

NIMS credentials do not expire.

Subject Area: Accreditation

Q: What is NIMS Accreditation and why should my training program seek accreditation through NIMS?

NIMS accreditation is the highest quality benchmark for metalworking training programs within the U.S. and demonstrates a training program's commitment to fulfilling industry's workforce needs. [View Benefits of Accreditation for more information.](#)

Q: How do I get my program accredited?

If this is your program's first time seeking accreditation, [click here](#). If your program wishes to renew an existing accreditation, [click here](#).

Q: How long is the accreditation valid?

Accreditation is valid for five years at a time. Upon expiration, the program is encouraged to renew accreditation. [See more about the renewal process.](#)

Subject Area: Apprenticeship

Q: Where can I learn more about Competency-Based Apprenticeship?

[Watch the NIMS Apprenticeship 101 Video via YouTube](#)

Q: Where can I find a curriculum guide for my apprenticeship program?

Curriculum guides are available on the Resources page of the NIMS website (requires log in).

Q: How do I start an apprenticeship program for my company?

We recommend reading the Guideline Standards for Apprenticeship on the Resources page on our website (requires login), [watching the NIMS Apprenticeship 101 Video via YouTube](#), and then [contacting NIMS Support](#) to request a meeting for further discussion.

Q: I want to be an apprentice. What do I do?

Contact your state apprenticeship office to learn more about opportunities in your region.

Q: Who sets the wage for apprentices? And is there a training wage?

Apprentices are paid on a graduated wages scale that increases to the journey worker level at the end of the apprenticeship. This wage is determined by the company.

Q: Can I tier the progressive wage scale to NIMS credentials?

Yes

Q: Can my apprenticeship program be competency based rather than time based?

Yes. DOL regulations permit this and we have developed a competency based program for that purpose. Please see the [Apprenticeship page](#) of the NIMS website and view the guideline standards on the NIMS Resources page (requires login).

Q: Who delivers the apprenticeship training?

Apprenticeship is a combination of on the job training and related technical instruction. The OJT portion should be delivered by an employee of your company who is a subject matter expert in that field. We highly recommend that person be certified by us as a NIMS OJT trainer. The related technical instruction can be delivered in a variety of ways including distance learning, classroom instruction, or a combination of both. It should be no less than 144 hours in a 12 month period.

Q: Can I get help from NIMs in setting up my apprenticeship program?

We recommend reading the Guideline Standards for Apprenticeship on the Resources page on our website (requires login), [watching the NIMS Apprenticeship 101 Video via YouTube](#), and then [contacting NIMS Support](#) to request a meeting for further discussion.

Q: What are the benefits of an apprenticeship program?

Apprenticeship is structured training in which requirements are known in advance to both the employer and employee. It describes clear and concise expectations through which the apprentice achieves the desired level of competency. Simply stated the guess work is taken out of training. [Learn more.](#)

Do I need a MET-TEC Committee?

Credential(s)	MET-TEC Required?
Machining Level I	
Measurement, Materials, and Safety	No
Job Planning, Benchwork, and Layout	No
Grinding I	Yes
Drill Press I	Yes
Milling I	Yes
Turning Operations: Turning Between Centers I	Yes
Turning Operations: Turning Chucking I	Yes
CNC Milling: Programming, Setup, & Operations I	Yes
CNC Milling: Operations	No
CNC Turning: Programming, Setup, & Operations I	Yes
CNC Turning: Operations	No
Machining Level II	
Milling II (manual)	Yes
Turning II (manual)	Yes
Drill Press Skills II	Yes
Grinding Skills II	Yes
CNC Milling Skills II	Yes
CNC Turning Skills II	Yes
EDM — Wire	Yes
EDM — Plunge	Yes
Machining Level III	
CNC Milling Skills III	No
CNC Turning Skills III	No
Metalforming Level I	No
All Stamping Credentials (Level II and Level III)	No
All Press Brake Credentials (Level II and Level III)	No
All Slide Forming Credentials (Level II and Level III)	No
All Screw Machining Credentials (Level II and Level III)	No
All Machine Building Credentials (Level II and Level III)	No
All Machine Maintenance, Service, and Repair Credentials (Level II and Level III)	No
All Diemaking Credentials (Level II and Level III)	No