



Which Certification is Right for You – Right Now?

A cross comparison of AP and P2P certification
and what it can do for your career.

Certification is an important part of career planning.

The question is not should I get certified? For those not yet certified the question is – which certification program, AP or P2P, is the best choice for me? And for those who have already attained AP certification (congratulations!) the question is – what would a P2P certification do for me?

IOFM’s most recent survey indicates that the percentage of AP operations which are involved in or with purchasing, or that are organized in a P2P structure has increased over prior years, with a total of 53% of respondents indicating that this is indeed the case at their organizations. For larger organizations, in particular those with over \$1 billion in annual revenue, purchasing and AP work collaboratively.

This first chart offers a bird’s eye view of the content for both the AP and P2P certification programs and what topics are covered and the emphasis and focus of each subject.

CONTENT	APS	APM	APPS	APPM
Alignment of Purchasing & AP – why P2P	Mentioned	Mentioned	In depth	In depth
Purchasing	Brief overview	Brief overview	Solid coverage	Solid coverage
Receiving	~	~	Solid coverage	Solid coverage
Accounting Terminology	Considerable depth	Considerable depth	~	~
Managing Invoices	In depth	In depth	Overview of methods & applicability	Overview of methods & applicability
Managing Payments	In depth	In depth	Overview of methods & applicability	Overview of methods & applicability
International Payments	Solid coverage	Solid coverage	Overview	Overview
Purchasing Cards	In depth	In depth	In depth	In depth
T&E	In depth	In depth	Brief overview	Brief overview
Controls & Risk Management	Solid coverage	Solid coverage	Overview, focus on supply chain	Overview, focus on supply chain
Fraud	Focus on prevention, particularly employee and payment fraud	Focus on prevention, particularly employee and payment fraud	Focus on prevention, particularly vendor fraud	Focus on prevention, particularly vendor fraud
Preventing Errors	In depth	In depth	Overview	Overview
Discount & Cash Management	Solid coverage	Solid coverage	Solid coverage, focus on negotiation	Solid coverage, focus on negotiation
Vendor Master File Management	In depth	In depth	In depth	In depth
Compliance – 1099 & 1042S/FATCA	Solid coverage	Solid coverage	Overview	Overview

First chart continued

CONTENT	APS	APM	APPS	APPM
Compliance – Sales & Use Tax/VAT	Solid coverage	Solid coverage	Overview	Overview
Compliance – Escheatment	Solid coverage	Solid coverage	Overview	Overview
Compliance – OFAC, et al.	Overview	Overview	Overview	Overview
Compliance – SOX & Other Governmental Regulations	Solid coverage	Solid coverage	Overview	Overview
Record Retention	Brief overview	Brief overview	Brief overview	Brief overview
Automation	Solid coverage	Solid coverage	Solid coverage	Solid coverage
Leadership	~	In depth	~	In depth, emphasis on the team
Communication	~	Solid coverage	Solid coverage	Solid coverage
Change	~	Overview	Solid coverage	In depth
Effectiveness (metrics, spend analysis)	~	In depth	~	In depth

This second chart looks at the value of certification based on where you find yourself in your current career and your career planning.

Current Position	Relatively New in Position	Comfortable in Position	Getting Antsy to Move to a Position with More Responsibility	Actively Seeking a New Position with More Responsibility
AP Staffer Small Organization	APS – Gain an understanding of AP, where it fits in the organization and all the things you may not realize go into getting the job done.	APS – Don't let comfortable become complacent. Get the in depth knowledge that will help you improve performance and gain recognition.	APM – Gain the management skills necessary to run an effective AP department in today's world while increasing knowledge and understanding that can help you analyze shortcomings and inefficiencies in order to make changes that will make superiors stand up and listen.	APM – Add depth to your understanding of AP and improve your managerial skillset. The emphasis on leadership in the program will help you show superiors that you are ready to take on more responsibility and succeed.
AP Staffer Medium to Large Organization	APS – Gain an understanding of AP, where it fits in the organization and all the things you may not realize go into getting the job done, particularly when many AP functions in a large organization are managed by other departments such as tax.	APS – Don't let comfortable become complacent. Get in depth knowledge that will help you improve performance, gain recognition, and stand out in the crowd.	APM – Transitioning to management is not easy – get a leg up by increasing your knowledge of the nuts and bolts of AP as well as how to go about juggling people and tasks effectively. The focus on the management skills necessary to lead others successfully is a true benefit of the program.	APM – In depth knowledge of AP, how it is affected by and affects other departments plus improved managerial and leadership skills are benefits of the program. But don't stop there – consider APPS or APPM as well. Larger organizations are more likely to move to a P2P environment. Get ahead of the game by preparing to transition to this new way of doing business.

Second chart continued

Current Position	Relatively New in Position	Comfortable in Position	Getting Antsy to Move to a Position with More Responsibility	Actively Seeking a New Position with More Responsibility
AP Manager Small Organization	APM – Transitioning to a leadership position even if the team is small can be challenging, especially for those who have been promoted from within. Increase your knowledge of all aspects of AP while learning the applicable managerial and leadership skills that will serve you well as you acclimate to your new position.	APM – Don't let comfortable become complacent. Continued learning is the secret to increased job satisfaction and can help you perform at a higher level – more efficiently and more effectively on a personal and managerial level.	APM – In some cases there doesn't seem to be much difference between an AP staffer and an AP manager at a small organization. Yet the skills managers need are quite different from those needed by a staffer. Taking the time to learn these skills can pay off not just in future promotions but right now in terms of improving efficiency and effectiveness – keys to success in both small and large AP shops.	APM – Small or large, managing AP is no picnic. And the knowledge and skillset required can be hard to come by. The program offers the opportunity to gain both in a focused manner that can fit into even the busiest of schedules.
AP Manager Medium to Large Organization	APM – Even if you have been promoted up through the ranks, there are many aspects of AP that, because they are handled by other departments, may be unfamiliar to you. Understanding the big picture can improve performance. Learning management and leadership skills is a must in order to be successful at leading the team.	APM – Busy is the word of the day, every day. The program provides the opportunity to gain in depth knowledge of the AP process as well as improve your leadership and managerial skills in a focused manner that fits into even the busiest of schedules.	APM – The opportunities to increase your knowledge of all aspects of the AP function are not easily found. The program enables you to accomplish this while also increasing your knowledge of the skills high functioning leaders possess so that you can demonstrate increased skills in your current position that will also show your readiness to move ahead.	APM – Increasing your knowledge of all aspects of the AP function plus improved managerial and leadership skills are benefits of the program hard to find anywhere else. But don't stop there – consider APPM as well. Larger organizations are more likely to move to a P2P environment. Get ahead of the game by preparing to transition to this new way of doing business.
Purchaser	APPS – Focusing on more than just purchasing – understanding the big picture – and what happens after the PO has been completed can help avoid errors and rework as well as rocky internal relationships.	APPS – The purchasing department is not totally in control of the vendor relationship. AP has the ability to significantly affect that relationship. Understanding where AP is coming from can assist in eliminating panic situations making your job easier, more efficient, and more effective.	APPM – Whether or not your organization has a move to P2P on the horizon the trend in many organizations is to push AP and purchasing closer together – moving toward collaboration if not outright consolidation. Understand the thinking behind this trend and equip yourself with the broad knowledge needed to succeed in this new world.	APPM – Leading a purchasing organization is not the same as it was even a few short years ago. P2P may not be on the drawing board right now but if current trends continue it may well be in the not too distant future. Prepare yourself for success by gaining an understanding of why this trend is so strong as well as broaden your horizons into the other areas P2P encompasses.

Second chart continued

Current Position	Relatively New in Position	Comfortable in Position	Getting Antsy to Move to a Position with More Responsibility	Actively Seeking a New Position with More Responsibility
Purchasing Manager	APPM – Focusing on more than just purchasing – understanding the big picture – and what happens after the PO has been completed is a must if the purchasing department is to be successful. This understanding will contribute to avoiding errors and expensive and time consuming rework as well as to a solid working relationship with AP.	APPM – The job is not done once the purchase agreement has been made. So much that contributes to a successful vendor relationship and successful completion of the purchasing mandate depends on what comes after – receipt and payment. Understanding those aspects of the process are major contributors to a successful purchasing organization.	APPM – Competition and tight budgets are causing many organizations to look at moving from separate purchasing and AP departments to a closer relationship. Be ready for this change by gaining broader knowledge of the purchasing to AP continuum.	APPM – Leaders of the new P2P departments that many organizations are implementing must come from somewhere. And the purchasing department is a likely source. Taking the time to increase your leadership and managerial skills as well as to gain insight into the issues facing the other departments that comprise P2P can pay off when your organization decides to make the move.
P2P Staffer	APPS – Working in a P2P department is not the same as working in the purchasing or AP departments of the past. It is critical to have more than a cursory understanding of all the functions involved in order to be successful. The program offers the opportunity to learn what you need to know quickly so you can get up to speed.	APPS – In many organizations the move to P2P has been relatively recent. Learning the ins and outs of the various functions in an organized manner rather than on the fly can pay off in improved efficiency, effectiveness, and, in general, a smoother operation that is more rewarding for all staffers.	APPM – Understanding the requirements of working in the P2P environment can be challenging for those new to this concept. While basic skills are still required, those who understand the collaborative nature of P2P are likely to become more productive faster and be recognized as prime leadership material.	APPM – Managing a P2P department is not the same as managing a purchasing department. The emphasis on broad knowledge of multiple functions as well as the need to lead collaboratively are absolute requirements. The program offers the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skillset required.
P2P Manager	APPM – Understanding the requirements of working in the P2P environment can be challenging for those new to this concept. The mindset is different from that of a purchasing or AP manager. Collaboration does not always come easy to those used to working in independent departments. New and improved leadership skills as well as increased knowledge of a broad base of functions is the basis for success.	APPM – Increase your knowledge of all the functions that go into a successful P2P department while increasing your managerial and leadership skills. Fewer errors, smoother operations, and increased efficiency and effectiveness will be the reward.	APPM – The skillset required to effectively manage a P2P organization is easily transferable to other leadership roles. The program focuses on that skillset so that you can be prepared when an opportunity arises.	APPM – The skillset required to effectively manage a P2P organization is easily transferable to other leadership roles. The program, with its emphasis not only on the nuts and bolts of processes inherent to P2P but on the collaborative leadership skills required can help you demonstrate readiness to take on new challenges.

Second chart continued

Current Position	Relatively New in Position	Comfortable in Position	Getting Antsy to Move to a Position with More Responsibility	Actively Seeking a New Position with More Responsibility
Vendor Maintenance	APS – Gain an understanding of how the vendor master file is used by one of your primary customers – AP. Compliance is a big issue for AP and the information in the vendor master file can make or break compliance.	APPS – Improve your relationship with your primary customers – AP and purchasing – by gaining an understanding of their process. This understanding can help you avoid conflict, become more efficient, and improve the usefulness and value of the file you manage.	APM or APPM – Considering management as your next career goal? Gain an understanding of how the vendor master file is used by both AP and purchasing. Understanding the whys and wherefores can be hugely beneficial. After all, it all starts with the vendor file – AP and purchasing rely on you as the file is the foundation of everything they do.	APM or APPM – Looking to become a manager? Either of these programs will help you not only increase your knowledge of the nuts and bolts of the AP and purchasing processes, but will help you understand the leadership and managerial challenges supervisors and managers in these departments face. The right choice depends on the direction you wish to head.
Controller	APM – So many inputs come from AP that an in-depth understanding of the AP function and its challenges makes the Controller’s job easier. And it never hurts to get a refresher on management skills.	APM – It’s never too late to gain an in-depth understanding of how the AP department functions and the how and whys behind the numbers they deliver to you. Updating your management skills is a bonus that this program can provide – and all in a focused format that can fit into even the busiest schedule.	APPM – P2P might be right for your organization. Understanding of the principles as well as the nuts and bolts will serve you well. Being well informed when the discussion regarding P2P comes up can demonstrate your commitment to the future success of your organization.	APPM – P2P might be right for your organization. And you might be just the person to lead the charge. A good understanding of P2P will be of great value in terms of selling the idea and leading or participating in the transition.

Ready to take that next step in your career path?

Certification places you in the exclusive group of accredited AP and P2P professionals around the world whose skills are recognized and acknowledged – you get the respect you deserve, a stronger resume, and higher earning potential!

Employers seek employees who are not only skilled, but who are responsible and have a credible way of demonstrating their professional and practical knowledge. **Certification is the answer!**

For more information, please speak with one of our training specialists:

Allison Hughes
 ahughes@divcom.com
 207-842-5663

Glenn Dulberg
 gdulberg@divcom.com
 207-842-5694

Gail Robinson
 grobinson@divcom.com
 207-842-5627

About the Institute of Finance and Management:

The Institute of Finance and Management (IOFM) is the leading organization providing training, education and certification programs specifically for professionals in accounts payable, procure-to-pay, accounts receivable and order-to-cash, as well as key tax and compliance resources for global and shared services professionals, controllers and their finance and administration (F&A) teams.

IOFM's membership networks, the AP & P2P Network (<http://www.app2p.com>) and AR & O2C Network (<http://www.aro2c.com>), feature industry research and best practices, metrics and benchmarking data, policies, case studies, tools, templates, and critical compliance and corporate governance resources. The Institute also produces on-demand e-learning resources including video trainings and web-based seminars. IOFM hosts industry-leading conferences designed to facilitate continuing education and peer networking. These events include the Accounts Payable and Procure-to-Pay Conference and Expo, and the Accounts Receivable & Order-to-Cash Conference.

With a universe of over 200,000 financial operations professionals, growing certification and membership programs, and a keen understanding of the issues and content needs critical to the profession, IOFM is the trusted source of information in the evolving field of financial operations.