International Society of Arboriculture

ISA QUALIFICATIONS TREE RISK ASSESSMENT™

# ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification

## PROGRAM GUIDE

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## What Is the ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (ISA TRAQ)?

The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) offers ISA TRAQ as an instructor-led training and assessment program that allows professionals to gain knowledge and skills and demonstrate proficiency in industry-accepted standards and methodologies in tree risk assessment. The ISA TRAQ program offers tree care professionals the opportunity to expand their knowledge of the fundamentals of tree risk assessment by learning a standardized, systematic process for assessing tree risk and providing information to tree owners and risk managers for making informed decisions that will promote the safety of people and property and enhance tree benefits, health, and longevity.

## Which Areas of Study Does the ISA TRAQ Program Include?

The training and assessment is based on ISA's Tree Risk Assessment Manual and is divided into nine modules:

1. Introduction to Tree Risk Assessment
2. Levels of Assessment
3. Target Assessment
4. Site Assessment
5. Tree Biology and Mechanics
6. Tree Inspection and Assessment
7. Data Analysis and Risk Categorization
8. Mitigation
9. Reporting

### CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS (CEUS) FOR ISA CERTIFICATION HOLDERS

If you hold an ISA certification, you can earn 14.5 ISA CEUs if you complete the ISA TRAQ course, attending at least 80 percent of the training portion of the program.

## What Are the Program Objectives?

ISA's objectives for offering this professional credential:

- Comprehension of the fundamentals of limited-visual and basic tree risk assessment as defined in the ISA Best Management Practices: Tree Risk Assessment;
- Knowledge of the principles of advanced diagnostic techniques for assessing tree risk;
- Mastery of methods for gathering and evaluating information to assess tree risk; and
- Development of reasoned judgments and recommendations for mitigating identified risk.

## What Does the Program Entail?

The standard ISA TRAQ course is a two-day, in-person training course followed by a half-day examination. Lectures, discussions, small-group activities, applied case studies, and field activities are all a part of the training process. Because the eligibility requirements are designed to ensure a foundational knowledge of tree structure and biology, the focus of the ISA TRAQ program is the tree risk assessment methodology. The program and examinations are offered in the English language and successful candidates should have enough knowledge of the language to allow them to understand main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in the field of arboriculture (see Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR Level B2 for more information).

The examination consists of two parts:

- Written exam: 110 multiple-choice questions. Each question has four answer choices, and only one is correct. You will have two hours to complete the written exam.
- Performance-based exam: An actual, outdoor tree assessment will test your ability to apply tree risk principles to a tree at the training site. You will have one hour to complete the performance-based exam.

### WRITTEN EXAM CONTENT & PRETESTING OF EXAM QUESTIONS

The written exam content is divided into three areas of knowledge, and the percentage next to each area reflects the percentage of questions associated with that area. These are subject to change when a new job task analysis is complete.

1. Assessment Methodology 61%
2. Basic Tree Assessment and Risk Analysis 21%
3. Reporting Assessment Findings and Recommendations 18%

Within the written exam, there will also be 10 new questions that have not been used on previous exams. Responses to these questions are not used in determining individual exam scores. These 10 questions are not identified and are scattered throughout the exam so that candidates will answer them with the same care as the questions that make up the scored portion of the exam. This methodology assures candidates that their scores are the result of sound measurement practices and that scored questions reflect current practice.

## Who Is Eligible to Apply for the ISA TRAQ Program?

ISA recognizes a variety of credentials and designations that fulfill the eligibility requirement to enroll in an ISA TRAQ program. ISA credential holders with the following credentials are readily eligible in ISA's system and are ready to enroll for a program.

- ISA Certified Arborist®
- ISA Board Certified Master Arborist®
- ISA Certified Urban Forest Professional
- ISA Certified Arborist Utility Specialist®
- ISA Certified Tree Climber®

Other eligibility paths for the program include:

- a degree in arboriculture, urban forestry, traditional forestry, or horticulture that is part of a national qualifications framework or from a college/university;
- a national certification or certificate in arboriculture; and
- an approved arboriculture licensing or certification granted by a state/province.

A complete listing of recognized credentials can be viewed in the TRAQ Prerequisite Eligibility Catalogue. If you have one of the credentials listed or another credential that meets the requirements for the program, your application for eligibility must be reviewed and approved by ISA prior to enrollment deadlines for an ISA TRAQ program.

If you need to submit an application to become eligible, application submission fees will apply. Candidates who are members of ISA receive a standard 20% discount. The application fee is $40 USD for ISA members and $50 USD for all others.

Applications are reviewed in the order they are received, overall review timelines may vary depending on the documentation provided by the applicant. We recommend that applicants submit their application with all required information and documentation as early as possible.

### NONDISCRIMINATION

The ISA Qualifications Program does not discriminate in determining eligibility on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

### SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

It is the intent of ISA to provide accessibility to ISA exams to any qualified participant with a documented disability or condition upon reasonable notice. If you have a special need and require an accommodation for an exam, please complete the Special Accommodations Request Form and submit the form with each enrollment request. Your request for accommodation will be reviewed, and you will be notified of a determination and/or if additional information is required. In certain situations, ISA cannot provide a requested accommodation to participants with a disability if it is determined that the accommodation fundamentally alters what the exam is intended to measure, risks exam security or causes undue hardship to ISA or the testing center. ISA will work with you to identify alternative accommodations that are reasonable and effective.

## How Do I Apply for an ISA TRAQ Program in my Area?

### DATES AND LOCATIONS

Qualification courses are offered through ISA via ISA TRAQ Hosts. Eligible applicants will be able to view all upcoming ISA TRAQ Program offerings through ISA's credentialing system.

## FEES

Only eligible applicants may enroll in an ISA TRAQ program. Program registration costs, cancellation terms, and refund policies vary by program Host. To find the price for a specific program, eligible applicants should log in to their ISA account, view the list of available ISA TRAQ program offerings, select the program of interest, and follow the links to the registration details.

## SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

The first step in enrolling for an ISA TRAQ course is to submit an application. An application can be submitted by those who believe they have met eligibility requirements for the program. If you are an ISA member and/or credential holder or if you have purchased any ISA products in the past, you have an online account with ISA.

Simply log in at credentialing.isa-arbor.com and look for the ISA credential you are interested in applying for and click 'Apply Now' to start the process.

Only fully completed applications can be submitted for review. Submitted applications will be reviewed within five (5) US business days. You will be notified by ISA of your application approval by email. If our team requires more information for approval, you will also be notified by email. You may review application status at any time through ISA's credentialing management system. You will only be able to enroll in an ISA TRAQ program once you have an approved application in the system for the program.

## CONFIRMATION

You will be notified via email when your application is received and when it is approved.

Digital access to materials will be provided upon confirmation of registration with ISA. These materials will include all items necessary for participants to prepare for the program.

If your registration has been confirmed for a program and you have not received digital access to the program materials three weeks prior to the course date, please contact ISA at qual@isa-arbor.com to report as soon as possible. ISA offers the printed ISA TRAQ Manual and clipboard at a discounted rate for those who are enrolled for a program. A discount code for use in the ISA Web Store is provided when those enrolled in the program receive access to digital materials. Some ISA TRAQ Hosts/Chapters also have printed ISA TRAQ Manuals and/or clipboards available for their program participants. Participants are advised to check with their local ISA TRAQ Host/Chapter on availability and price of these materials, which may differ from the discounted price offered by ISA.

## CANCELLATION

Cancellation requests must be received by the local ISA TRAQ Host before the program enrollment deadline. If requests are not received before the deadline, a refund may not be issued. The contact information and refund policy for each program is provided by the relevant local Host.

## PRIVACY

By applying, you authorize the release of any information for the purpose of verifying your application. ISA has the right to contact any person or organization as part of the review and to notify appropriate organizations if your application contains false information.

You also authorize ISA to provide your contact information to your local ISA TRAQ Host. Your name, ISA credentials and related digital certificates will be available to members of the public on the ISA Find An Arborist Directory.

Credential holders may update and include more information associated with their profiles by logging into their account with our digital badge provider. Those who do not wish to be listed in the ISA Find An Arborist Directory and have their digital certificates available publicly can also choose to make their account and/or certificate(s) private. ISA maintains the right and responsibility to verify a credential holder's qualification status to the public or to other interested parties.

## ISA RECORDS RETENTION POLICY

ISA recognizes the need to maintain books and records that facilitate operations and comply with record retention needs for its certification program, while also acknowledging the adverse impact excessive records and record keeping duties can have on the organization.

Please note that the following record retention policies apply to records retained by ISA concerning applications, continuing education unit (CEU), and special accommodations records:

- Pending application records: 1 year following processing
- Approved Continuing Education Unit (CEU) attendance records received: 5 years
- Examination sheets: 5 years
- Special accommodation records: 2 years

## What Are the Rules and Policies for Participating in ISA TRAQ?

### ADMISSION

- Arrive at the program site 30 minutes before the program's start time on the first day of the program.
- The local ISA TRAQ host will check your government-issued photo ID and have you sign a check-in sheet. If you do not have a photo ID with you at the start of the course, you must produce one by the exam day or you will not be allowed to sit for the exam.

### ITEMS TO BRING WITH YOU

- A government-issued photo identification card, such as a driver's license, passport, or military ID
- Writing utensil(s), including at least one #2 pencil
- Clipboard
- Appropriate attire for both indoor and outdoor activities
- High-visibility vest, coat, or clothing
- Hard hat

### SITE RULES

- Follow all regulations and directions provided by the instructor.
- Dress appropriately for both indoor and outdoor activities. Indoor temperature and outdoor weather conditions may vary.
- Visitors are not permitted in the training or exam areas.

The following are not permitted during the exam and may result in score invalidation or confiscation of exam materials:

- The manual, workbook, and/or any notes you have taken
- Cell phones, pagers, PDAs, or other electronic devices
- Writing on the exam booklet
- Looking at others' exams or talking

### INAPPROPRIATE APPLICATION AND EXAM CONDUCT

Participation in the ISA TRAQ program is intended to be a professionally relevant, informative, and rewarding experience for all candidates. All participants are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate and professional manner during the course and exam.

When ISA or an ISA-designated representative finds that a candidate has engaged in inappropriate conduct or behavior, ISA reserves the right to respond with actions including, but not limited to, the following:

- Rejecting an application for qualification
- Prohibiting or precluding a person from participating in a course
- Prohibiting or precluding a person from participating in an examination, including removing a person from the testing site
- Invalidating or nullifying examination results
- Issuing and enforcing any other lesser response or action determined to be appropriate or necessary

Inappropriate conduct or behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Misrepresentation
- Failure to disclose requested information
- Cheating
- Unauthorized possession, use, or distribution of copyrighted or legally protected material
- Verbal or physical disturbances of the course and/or examination
- Failure to pay fees in a timely manner
- Any other objectionable, improper, or unprofessional actions by a person participating in the ISA qualification process

By submitting an application for qualification, candidates acknowledge their understanding and agreement to the terms of this policy.

### FAILURE TO ATTEND OR COMPLETE THE COURSE AND EXAMINATION

You must attend at least 80 percent of the instructional portion of the program to be eligible to take the written and performance examinations. **No refunds or discounts will be issued if you do not attend or complete the course and examination.**

## How Will I Find Out if I Have Passed or Failed the Exam?

### COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

To obtain the Tree Risk Assessment Qualification, you must complete the training course and achieve a passing score of 75 percent for the written exam component and a passing mark on the performance-based exam component.

### EXAM SCORING

ISA Headquarters grades written exams through electronic scanning and scoring to ensure the most reliable grading. The performance-based exam is scored by an ISA-Approved Instructor and Evaluator. Your scores are then reported to ISA Headquarters. ISA will notify you of your overall results.

### EXAM RESULTS AND NOTIFICATION OF QUALIFICATION

Your formal results will be posted on your web account within six weeks of your examination date. You will be notified via email when your results are available on your dashboard. You will be notified of your pass/fail result; for exam security purposes you will not receive a list of questions that were answered correctly or incorrectly. Your results are confidential and your score will not be disclosed to any third party. Results cannot be obtained over the phone, by fax, or by email.

If you have questions concerning your exam results, direct them in writing to the ISA Credentialing Department at qual@isa-arbor.com. Because of the need to maintain test security, exam questions and answers cannot be made available for review, and the ISA Credentialing Department does not provide a list of questions that were answered correctly or incorrectly.

## Can I Retake the Exam if I Fail?

### RETAKING THE EXAM

To obtain the qualification, you must pass both the written and performance-based components of the exam. If you do not achieve a passing score on both sections, you will need to retake the component you did not pass until you obtain an overall passing score.

Seats for exam retakes are limited in upcoming ISA TRAQ programs. To enroll for a retake, you must log in to your ISA account and enroll before the published registration deadline for the ISA TRAQ program in which you wish to retake the exam. The fee for each examination (written and performance-based) is $120 USD for up to one year from the original ISA TRAQ program start date. If you do not pass both examinations within one year of participating in the training portion of the program, you will be required to re-enroll and complete the full ISA TRAQ program again.

### RESCHEDULING A COMPUTER BASED WRITTEN EXAM RETAKE OR ADDITIONAL 120-DAY AUTHORIZATION PERIOD REQUESTS

If you need to retake the written examination only, you may enroll for a computer-based examination. To find out if a Pearson VUE testing center is close to you, visit https://www.pearsonvue.com/isa/locate/.

If circumstances change after you have enrolled for a computer-based examination, you may be able to reschedule your exam or request an additional 120-day authorization period. You may reschedule an existing exam appointment, at no additional cost, within your 120-authorization period at any time at least one (1) US business day in anticipation an existing appointment. If you would like to rescheduled the examination appointment on a date outside your 120-day authorization period, a fee of $50 USD will apply to make the change. Additional 120-day, computer-based authorization requests must be received within the candidate's current 120-day authorization period.

Once you are enrolled for an exam, if the request is not received by ISA at the relevant deadlines, as described, or the candidate fails to schedule within the 120-day authorization period, or the candidate does not take the examination at the scheduled appointment, the candidate will be considered a no-show and all retake exam fees will be forfeited. Registrations are not transferable to another person.

### FAILURE TO ATTEND EXAMINATION OR SCHEDULE WITHIN A 120-DAY AUTHORIZATION PERIOD

No refunds or discounts will be issued if you do not attend or complete your examinations. There are no exceptions. If you do not reschedule your retake exam appointment or request an additional 120-day authorization period, or you do not show up to an exam at the scheduled time and location, you will be considered a no-show. This will result in forfeiting any enrollment fees associated with the exam you missed. If this happens, you will have to pay a retake fee of $120 USD to re-enroll in another exam(s).

### APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

Appeals and complaints are accepted and resolved in accordance with the ISA Credentialing Appeals and Complaints policy.

If you believe that an error was made in the grading of your exam, you may request that it be regraded. A fee of $50 USD applies to each regrade. If you request to have your exam regraded, you may not schedule another exam until after you receive the regrading results. If you wish to have your exam regraded after receiving your initial score report, please contact qual@isa-arbor.com.

# I Passed! What Else Do I Need to Know about My Qualification?

## SUCCESSFUL QUALIFICATION

Those who successfully complete all ISA TRAQ program requirements will receive a certificate. Your qualification is personal to you and may not be transferred or assigned to any other individual, organization, or entity. When publicizing your credential, you must comply with the requirements in the ISA Branding and Style Guide.

## WHAT DOES AN ISA QUALIFICATION REPRESENT?

By successfully completing the ISA TRAQ program, you have demonstrated knowledge of the ISA TRAQ methodology and process for tree risk assessment, which is considered relevant for the seven-year term of your qualification. No other conclusions may be drawn concerning qualification holders. ISA qualifications do not represent licensure, registration, or other authorization to practice or to conduct business activities for a fee or otherwise.

Qualifications are not subject to ongoing requirements, such as adherence to a code of ethics or participation in continuing education activities.

## TERMS OF VALIDITY AND RENEWAL

The ISA TRAQ credential is valid for seven years. To reinstate your qualification after each seven-year period, you must retrain and retest. A reminder will be sent within an 18-month window prior to your expiration date, so be sure to notify ISA promptly if your contact information changes. We are not responsible for undeliverable notifications.

An extension past the expiration date will not be available.

## INVALIDATION OF A QUALIFICATION

Your qualification may be invalidated or revoked for:

- Falsification of application
- Violation of testing procedures
- Misrepresentation of your identity or other information

If your ISA qualification is invalidated or revoked, you must immediately stop using and/or displaying any designation indicating an affiliation with the ISA Qualification Program and comply with any additional directives from ISA.

## LIABILITY DISCLAIMER

Practitioners of the skills taught in an ISA TRAQ program practice at their own risk. Neither the International Society of Arboriculture, instructors, nor the authors of the course and related materials accept any responsibility, explicit or implied, for liability, loss, or consequential damage arising from the manner in which the materials presented in the course are used in the field. The instruction and training materials provided are considered to be reasonable and sufficient to provide the user with a thorough understanding of when and how to practice the relevant skills. The contents of the course and related materials are provided "as is" and "where is" and may change without notice as research and understanding of the subject matter evolve.

# Our Mission

Through research, technology, and education we promote the professional practice of arboriculture and foster a greater worldwide awareness of the benefits of trees.

ISA
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Arboriculture

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