

IRC READINESS GUIDE



NIRI: The Association for Investor Relations
www.niri.org/certification

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the Investor Relations Charter (IRC®). This Toolkit can answer some of the most frequently asked questions about the purpose and benefits of the program, and describe how you, your supervisor and your company may benefit if you decide to pursue the IRC certification.

What is certification all about and why is it needed?

A professional certification is a time-limited, revocable, and renewable credential awarded by an authoritative body for demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform specific tasks or an occupation.

What is Investor Relations?

Investor Relations (IR) is a strategic management responsibility that integrates finance, communication, marketing and securities law compliance to enable the most effective two-way communication between a company, the financial community, and other constituencies, which ultimately contributes to a company's securities achieving fair valuation. (Adopted by the NIRI Board of Directors, March 2003).

Why consider earning the Investor Relations Charter (IRC)®?

Professionals in many fields benefit from certifications. Statistics from Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce show that over 1 million certifications are granted annually, making professional certifications the second most common post-secondary award in the United States. And 38 million workers have either earned a certification or a license.

The IRC is the only certification for investor relations in the world. But to know if the IRC certification is right for you, it's important to understand your current professional status and your professional aspirations.

Many of those who have attained the IRC have done so to help achieve their ultimate career goal.

“Achieving the Investor Relations Charter (IRC®) is a great way to culminate my many years of practice, both as an in-house IRO and a consultant, and to demonstrate my commitment to the profession.”



Deb Ann Wasser, IRC, 2018 NIRI Volunteer of the Year
Head of Investor Relations & ESG Engagement, *Etsy, Inc.*

Others feel that the IRC helped to make them more marketable to potential employers, especially as IR continues to evolve and change.











Still others found that earning the IRC helped them to achieve a personal goal, or gave them a sense of distinction and professional pride. The IRC may also help raise awareness about the investor relations profession and can elevate your status as an IR professional. And IRC holders are seen by many as role models for future professionals.

The objective of the Investor Relations Charter (IRC®) certification program is to assist the investor relations community and employers to identify IR professionals who have demonstrated that they have attained the fundamental knowledge of investor relations. Moreover, earning the IRC signifies that the holder has the skills and ability to apply the underlying principles to the practice of investor relations.

JUSTIFICATION

Complete the following questionnaire to determine if the Investor Relations Charter (IRC®) is the right credential for you.

What are the IR Core Competencies?

IR Competencies By Domain	
	Domain 1. IR Strategy Formulation
	Domain 2. IR Planning, Implementation and Measurement
	Domain 3. Corporate Messaging Development
	Domain 4. Marketing and Outreach
	Domain 5. Corporate Financial Reporting and Analysis
	Domain 6. Business Insight
	Domain 7. Strategic Counsel and Collaboration
	Domain 8. Capital Markets and Capital Structure
	Domain 9. Corporate Regulatory Compliance
	Domain 10. Corporate Governance

What is the cost of earning the IRC certification?

- Exam Fee
Taking into consideration the pricing study, we have set the exam fee to be in line with other major NIRI programs.
- Preparation Materials
 - o The suggested non-exhaustive online list of References & Bibliography includes books that you may have already on hand. This list also includes website links that you can refer to when preparing for the IRC exam.
 - o The online NIRI Resource Library includes is another valuable resource, which includes templates, plans, and policies provided by members as a point of reference for IR professionals. This library can be accessed by NIRI members at no additional cost.
 - o The primary IRC reference book, Investor Relations Body of Knowledge, is based on the IR Competency Framework. The book has devoted chapters to the ten core domains of the IR competency framework.
 - o The IR Competency Suite is a series of online modules that are based on the Investor Relations Body of Knowledge. The 10 modules, which are each designed to be completed in an hour or so, conform to the 10 domains that provide the framework for the IRC exam. The IR Competency Suite was published by NIRI in 2019.
- Miscellaneous/additional cost (e.g., travel expenses to testing center)
 - o Additional costs can be determined based on personal needs.

What is the required preparation time?

Test takers have reported an average of 30 hours of preparation time.

What positions this credential holders have?

As of December 2020, 54% of the IRC credential holders have a VP, Investor Relations or higher title. 35% have a Director, Investor Relations or Manager.

Have IRC holders earned other credentials?

Approximately 20% of the IRC holders have 2 or more designations, including but not limited to CFA, CMA, CPA, CTP, ICIR, CCEP, ACMA, and CGMA.

Did any highly regarded IR professionals earn this credential?

Some of the well-regarded IR professionals who have earned the IRC credential include members of the NIRI Board of Directors, NIRI Fellows, “40 under 40” award winners, and others. In addition, IRC holders are employed by several S&P 500 companies and from 9 countries.

Are there any testimonials?

Testimonials can be found at www.niri.org/certification.

What is the exam passing rate?

As of December 2020, the average passing rate is 76%.

You gain:

- ✓ Recognition
- ✓ Validation
- ✓ Affirmation
- ✓ Advancement
- ✓ Mobility
- ✓ Awareness
- ✓ Standards and Compliance
- ✓ Connections and Community
- ✓ A shared Body of Knowledge

Your supervisor benefits from:

- ✓ A credentialed IR professional An IR practitioner who has demonstrated an understanding of the best practices and ethics in the field;
- ✓ A team member with enhanced knowledge and skills;
- ✓ A colleague who is committed to enhancing their performance and to career-long learning.

Those who achieve the IRC help the IR profession to gain:

- ✓ Broader understanding of the core competencies of IR;
- ✓ A stronger benchmark for the IR profession;
- ✓ Growing awareness of the value of IR within the C-Suite.

“The Investor Relations Charter really highlights how unique the IR role is in a company – it reaches into many departments – from FP&A to legal to marketing and communications. IR is truly a strategic partner and advisor.”



*Karen Blomquist, IRC
Director, Investor Relations and Treasury, C&S Wholesale Grocers*

Pre-IRC Assessment

Use this tool to assess your readiness for the IRC process and consider your next steps:

What is your current job position/title?

.....
.....
.....

What are your future professional plans?

.....
.....
.....

What is your ultimate professional goal?

.....

How will certification support your plans?

.....
.....
.....

What new experiences will you seek as a result of this effort?

.....
.....

Are there any comparable IR credentials that you can pursue instead?

- Yes No

Will pursuing these helps you reach your ultimate professional goal?

- Yes No

If yes, what are the pros and cons of pursuing them?

Pros

Cons

Who can you partner with to prepare for the IRC exam?

- Private study
- Office colleague
- Other?
- Partner from IR field
- Partner from NIRI Chapter

Which of these tools will you use to prepare for the IRC exam?

- Dedicate time for preparation
- Review recommended resources
- Practice sample tests
- Create flash cards
- Discuss content with colleagues
- Seek guidance from other test takers
- Think positively
- Other?

"Having IRC on my business card has generated some great conversation about the credential, NIRI, and skills needed to excel as an IRO."



Lee M. Ahlstrom, IRC
President, Viasat Energy Services

Post-IRC Assessment

After you have achieved the IRC, take the time to answer the following questions and reflect on your achievement and plan for your next steps:

What are the tangible things you have earned from preparing for the exam?

Key findings:

.....
.....
.....

Areas to improve:

.....
.....
.....

What are the tangible things you have learned from taking the exam?

.....
.....
.....

How do you value your experience?

.....
.....
.....

How can you promote your new designation?

- Share the NIRI press release with your employer and colleagues;
- Send a personal press release using the template provided by NIRI National;
- Upload the IRC digital badge to +150 professional and social medial platforms;
- Add the IRC digital badge to your email signature block.

Will you recommend it to others?

Yes No

What's the best story you can tell from this experience?

.....
.....

Can you share your story with NIRI?

Contact Iman Hannon, Chief Credentialing & Governance Officer for details.

“What the IRC brings is a comprehensive and consistent understanding of what it really takes to do investor relations well.”



Lisa Rose, IRC
President, DIX & EATON

Your Career-Long Commitment

The renewal requirement is the main differentiator between credentials. The purpose of a credential renewal program is to promote the continued competence of professionals throughout their career.

Achieving the IRC is not the end of the IRC experience. By achieving the IRC, you have made a career-long commitment to continuous learning and professional development:

What are the requirements to maintain the IRC certification?

- Abide by the IRC Code of Conduct and the NIRI Code of Ethics
- Complete 30 Professional Development Units (PDUs) within the 3-year renewal cycle by completing a variety of IR related professional development education and activities
- Submit a minimal renewal fee

What are your thoughts on the above requirements? are they:

- Easy to meet
- Require some effort
- Very challenging

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only. It does not guarantee the successful passing of the IRC examination or the successful renewal of certification. Contact Iman Hannon, Chief Credentialing & Governance Officer for questions and further assistance.