

# MaRC

## Candidate Handbook 2017 Edition



Understanding Influencing, and Winning Today's Shopper

Shop! gratefully acknowledges Menasha Corporation's generous sponsorship of Shop!'s professional development program.



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## INTRODUCTION

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### ABOUT SHOP!

Shop! is the global non-profit trade association dedicated to enhancing retail environments and experiences. Shop! represents more than 2,000 member companies worldwide and provides value to the global retail marketplace through our leadership in: Research (consumer behavior, trends, futures), Design (customer experience design, store design, display design, fixture design), Build (manufacturing, construction, materials, methods, logistics, installation), Marketing (in-store communications, in-store marketing, technology, visual merchandising), and Evaluation (ROI, analytics, recognition/awards).

For questions regarding the program, textbook or credentialing process, please contact:

Madeline Baumgartner  
Shop! Director of Education & Research  
mbaumgartner@shopassociation.org  
312-863-2917

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE

Shop!'s overarching objective is to be the trusted source for quality professional development activities and credentials for professionals in the retail environment and experiences industry.

### STATEMENT OF FAIRNESS

Shop! adheres to principles of fairness and due process and endorses the principles of equal opportunity. In administering the credentialing programs, Shop! shall not discriminate or deny opportunity to anyone on the grounds of gender, age, religion, national or ethnic origin, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, or disability.

### IMPARTIALITY

Shop! pays the utmost attention to the importance of impartiality in carrying out its certification activities, manages conflict of interest and ensures the objectivity of its certification activities.

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## OVERVIEW

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### MARC CERTIFICATION

The Shop! MaRC Program is the industry's only globally recognized credential that keeps retail individuals current on retail environments and experiences. This extensive and intense certification program encompasses the strategic and tactical aspects of being a supplier to the retail industry to give participants a competitive edge.

### SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION

The certification program recognizes professionals whose practice reflects a high degree of knowledge about the components of the Shop! Value Map. Achieving MaRC Certification indicates that certification candidates have demonstrated a broad knowledge skill-set in the specific certification area. Examinations are offered in American English only.

### MARC CERTIFICATION COMPETENCIES

This extensive and intense certification program encompasses the strategic and tactical aspects of being a supplier to the retail industry to give participants a competitive edge. The competencies, based on Shop's Value Map, focus on its five domains: Research, Design, Build, Market, Evaluate and attempt to exam the candidate's knowledge and skills associated with each area.

#### **Research**

Candidates will gain a broad-based understanding of consumer and shopper behavior as it applies to the retail environment. Additionally, candidates will exhibit knowledge of global trends and the future of all facets of shopper/consumer experience.

#### **Design**

Key to the goal in this section is a knowledge and understanding of the consumer design experience. Additionally, candidates will exhibit an understanding of store and fixture design, POP display design, and in-store marketing.

#### **Build**

In addition to demonstrating a fundamental knowledge of the issues associated with manufacturing methods and construction of both POP and store fixtures, candidates will also show specific competencies in materials and sustainability. Candidates will also gain knowledge of the logistics and installation of retail environments and POP displays.

#### **Market**

In Marketing, candidates will demonstrate a knowledge of key concepts in visual merchandising, signage, mobile technology, promotions, packaging and sensory media.

#### **Evaluate**

Central to this domain is exhibiting an understanding of analytics and return-on-investment as well as the legal issues associated with intellectual property, OSHA and ADA issues. Additionally, candidates will show an understanding of issues related to compliance.

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## APPLICATION PROCESS

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The candidate must submit the completed program application, exam registration form and appropriate fees at least six weeks in advance of the examination date. Examinations are delivered through a computer-based, secured server website during the four designated testing windows throughout the year.

### CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY

There are no pre-requisites for the credential. Shop membership is not a requirement for certification.

### REGISTRATION

The application forms can be found and submitted via the Shop! website, [www.shopassociation.org/marc](http://www.shopassociation.org/marc). Applications are reviewed to verify information and documentation to determine eligibility and will be kept confidential. Candidates will not be discriminated against based on race, religion, creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin or ancestry.

If the application is incomplete, the candidate will receive a letter or e-mail explaining what is missing and will have a 30-day time period to respond. If the candidate does not respond, the candidate must then submit in writing a request for a refund minus the application fee. The application may be deemed incomplete for reasons such as: application is not completely filled out, application is not signed, and appropriate fees are not submitted

Applications must be completed at least six weeks in advance of desired examination date. Upon receipt of application, candidates will be invoiced for the Application Fee and will be directed to purchase the MaRC Exam Prep book.

### 2017 FEES

	Shop! Member	Non-Member
1. One Time Application Fee	\$150	\$250
2. MaRC Exam Prep book (Digital Format/PDF)	\$150	\$250
3. Initial Exam Fee	\$300	\$400
4. Re-exam Fee	\$150	\$250
5. Triennial Recertification Fee	\$300	\$400

### SCHEDULING THE EXAM

After the application has been approved, and the examination registration fee has been paid, the candidate will receive an e-mail with logon information and instructions on how to take his/her examination.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

Shop! complies with the provisions of the Americans With Disabilities Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000e. et. seq.) in accommodating disabled candidates who need special arrangements. The request must be submitted in writing with supporting documentation from a physician or other qualified professional reflecting a diagnosis of the candidate's condition and explanation of examination aids or modifications needed. Please contact Shop! at [credentialing@shopassociation.org](mailto:credentialing@shopassociation.org), if the candidate has any questions concerning ADA arrangements.

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## PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION

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At present, self-study is the only path to certification. The MaRC Exam Prep Book can aid in the preparation for the MaRC Exam and can be purchased from the MaRC website at <http://www.shopassociation.org/marc/>.

### EXAMINATION DAY

After the initial six week waiting period Candidates will be able to take the MaRC Exam. **Candidates will have two hours to complete the 100 question, closed book exam.** The exam consists of questions based on the learning competencies from the five domains of the Shop's Value Map: Research, Design, Build, Market and Evaluate.

### POLICIES DURING EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION

The following policies will be maintained during the testing session:

- Candidates are allowed to take the exam only during their assigned timeframe.
- Once a exam has been started, a Candidate cannot stop and restart the exam.
- During the exam, the Question Mark testing program will disable the Candidates' computer ability to; open additional browsers, copy materials on the screen and capture screen shots.
- Candidates are prohibited from using the following items during the exam; an exam proxy, reference materials, books, papers, notes, visual aids, translation aids, cameras, or other electronics devices (including, but not limited to: e-readers, smart watches, computers, cellphones, etc.).

### SECURITY VIOLATIONS/CHEATING

The performance of all candidates is monitored and may be analyzed to detect fraud. At any time after the examination administration should there be a question about score validity or the identity of an examination candidate, Shop! staff will investigate and determine whether it is appropriate to void the examination score. The Shop! maintains and adheres to a security policy which is available to board members and staff for the administration of examinations and maintaining the certification program.

### FAILURE TO APPEAR

If a candidate does not to take a scheduled examination, the candidate will forfeit all fees. All fees will need to be paid again if the candidate decides to reschedule at a later date.

### WITHDRAWING AN APPLICATION

All application changes must be made in writing and sent to the attention of Shop! by mail, 440 N. Wells St., Suite 740, Chicago, IL 60654, or email, [credentialing@shopassociation.org](mailto:credentialing@shopassociation.org)

### CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION

It is the certified professional's responsibility to ensure that Shop! has his/her most current contact information including, mailing address, phone number and email address.



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## SCORING AND RESULTS SCORING PROCESS

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Examinations are scored making every effort to ensure that the score is reported within a reasonable time period and that the score accurately reflects the points received by the candidate.

### NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Preliminary results will be reported immediately following the completion of the examination and within 24 hours of completing their examination via email. Results are reported as “pass” or “fail.” **The passing grade for the exam is 80%.** Candidates who pass an examination and achieve a certification will be notified officially via postal service letter of their passing status within 30 days. They will receive an official Shop! certificate.

Candidates who fail an examination will be provided with diagnostic information. The analysis of performance identifies the knowledge areas in which the candidate’s performance is deficient and is intended to help the candidate become better prepared before sitting for the examination again.

### APPEAL OF EXAMINATION RESULTS

Candidates may request a verification of their score. Any scoring alteration found as a consequence of an appeal of examination results will be applied to all candidates whose pass-fail status was affected; not just the candidate requesting the appeal. All requests should be made in writing within 30 days of receiving examination results to Shop! by mail, 440 N. Wells St., Suite 740, Chicago, IL 60654, or emailed to [credentialing@shopassociation.org](mailto:credentialing@shopassociation.org).

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## RESCHEDULING & RETAKING PROCESS

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### RESCHEDULING AN EXAMINATION

Candidates who would like to reschedule a certification examination within five business days of their scheduled examination date must do so in writing and send to the attention of Shop! by mail 440 N. Wells St., Suite 740, Chicago, IL 60654, or email, [credentialing@shopassociation.org](mailto:credentialing@shopassociation.org). A rescheduling fee will be assessed to the candidate who would like to reschedule an examination.

### RETAKING THE EXAMINATION

No retake examination may be scheduled by anyone in the examination process until the candidate has been officially notified of the results of his/her previously taken examination. No candidate will be allowed to retake an examination until 90 days have passed. There is no refund for failed examinations. A candidate will be allowed to take the examination no more than three times within a one-year period. If unsuccessful on the third attempt, the candidate must wait one year before he/she will be allowed to re-apply to the program and take the examination.

### CANCELLATION POLICY

A cancellation fee will be assessed to the candidate who fails to cancel a scheduled examination at least five business days before the examination date. Cancellations must be made in writing and sent to the attention of Shop! by mail, 440 N. Wells St., Suite 740, Chicago, IL 60654, or email, [credentialing@shopassociation.org](mailto:credentialing@shopassociation.org)

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## USE OF CERTIFICATION MARKS AND DESIGNATIONS INTRODUCTION

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After receiving notification of earning a MaRC designation, the credential granted may be used only as long as the individual's MaRC certification remains valid and in good standing. Individuals may not use the credential until they have received specific written notification that they have successfully completed all requirements, including passing the required examination. Certificants must comply with all recertification requirements to maintain use of the credential.

The use and/or display of the official MaRC acronyms or designation names, except as permitted by this policy, is prohibited. Individuals who fail to maintain MaRC certification/recertify or whose MaRC certification is suspended or revoked must immediately discontinue use of the certification mark(s) and are prohibited from stating or implying that they hold the MaRC certification.

### ACCEPTABLE USE

Individuals who have earned the credential(s) may identify themselves as a "MaRC Certified Professional" and use the honorific, MaRC, after their name. For Example: Jann Rosenquist, MaRC. The name and official acronym may be used only as long as the individual's certification is valid and in good standing. MaRC certification is a non-transferable, revocable, limited, non-exclusive license to use the certification designation and is subject to compliance with the policies and procedures of the Shop! Board. Certified individuals may not make misleading, deceptive, or confusing statements regarding their MaRC certification status.

### CERTIFICATE

Each certificant will receive a certificate for each credential granted. Each certificate will include, at a minimum, the following information:

- Name of the credential
- Name of the certified individual
- Unique certification number
- Signature of the Shop! Board Chair and signature of the Shop's CEO.
- Reference to the scope and limitations of the certification, including that the individual has met all of the requirements of the designated certification program.
- Effective date
- Expiration date
- Disclaimer stating that the Shop! retains sole ownership of the certificate

Individuals who renew their certification (recertify) will receive a certification renewal card with a new expiration date.

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## MAINTAINING YOUR CERTIFICATION

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Shop!'s goals for recertification are to ensure that MaRC certified professionals remain current with best practices, broaden their understanding of the industry, and continue to be recognized as competent practitioners. Shop! believes a three-year recertification cycle is appropriate.

### INTRODUCTION

In a profession that regularly undergoes change, the importance of certification is growing rapidly. The purpose of this program is to ensure that those who are actively certified maintain a level of professional knowledge and skill, that is consistent with the standards according to which certification was initially conferred.

Certification is only as valuable as the standard it represents, if the standard is maintained. Recertification programs are extremely important because they require holders of the credential to present evidence that they are maintaining the established standard. This, in turn, enables certification to retain meaning and value for every individual who achieves it, particularly as the years pass after the credential is issued.

### PDU AUDITS

*The Professional Development Unit (PDU) was established by PMI as the educational metric for project management educational activities. One PDU is earned for each contact hour spent in structured learning, which is relevant to project management. For conversion purposes, one (1) CEU equates to 10 PDUs.<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of maintaining the MaRC certification, Shop! will use a PDU scale.*

At the end of each PDU cycle, random PDU audits consisting of 10 percent of all certified individuals within the cycle will be conducted. The Board may add additional certified individuals, at their discretion, to the randomly chosen list of certified individuals to investigate claims or suspicion of impropriety.

Individuals chosen to participate in the PDU audit will be notified that their renewal submission is being audited to ensure compliance with the recertification policies. Individuals will be notified of their status upon completion of the audit and will be notified of any deficiencies that they may have. Individuals will have an opportunity to resolve any issues by submitting additional hours or further documentation to prove attendance in an event.

Status letters from Shop! will be mailed and emailed on a weekly basis. There are two possible responses: The individual is in compliance and no action is required. Status letter will be mailed regular mail. The individual is not in compliance and will be given 45 days from the date of their status letter to take corrective action.

For those people who do not respond to the corrective action letter, second notices will be mailed requiring a signature. These individuals will have an additional 15 days to respond to the request. There are two possible responses after the second letter is sent.

They are:

- Documentation is received and the individual is in compliance and no further action is required.
- Documentation is received and the individual is not in compliance and will be given 30 days from the date of their letter to take corrective action.

- The individual is in compliance and no action is required. Status letter will be mailed regular mail.
- The individual is not in compliance and will be given 45 days from the date of their status letter to take corrective action.

For those people who do not respond to the corrective action letter, second notices will be mailed requiring a signature. These individuals will have an additional 15 days to respond to the request. There are two possible Shop! Board responses after the second letter is sent.

They are:

- Documentation is received and the individual is in compliance and no further action is required.
- Documentation is received and the individual is not in compliance and will be given 30 days from the date of their letter to take corrective action.

For those individuals who don't respond to the corrective action letter, their certifications will be revoked on December 31 of the year following their deadline. This letter will be mailed requiring a signature receipt to the individual. These individuals will need to retake all examinations, at full price, in order to become certified again. Renewal fees are non-refundable.

#### **PDU AUDIT REINSTATEMENT POLICY**

Any person who was audited but did not respond to the corrective action letter, but submits information prior to February 1 following the calendar year after the certification has been revoked can be reinstated to the program. This late submittal needs to be complete and have no deficiencies in order to be accepted.

A late submittal fee will be required for processing. If there are deficiencies in the submission and the individual ends up with less than the required PDUs for certification renewal, they will lose their certifications. These individuals will need to retake all examinations, at full price, in order to become certified again. This letter will be mailed requiring a signature receipt.

#### **CHANGING SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION**

In the event that a certificant is no longer able to meet the requirements of the certification, the certified person must inform Shop! without delay, of matters that can affect the capability of the certified person to continue to fulfill the certification requirements.

#### **EMERITUS STATUS**

Purpose: To recognize a demonstrated effort through continuing practice, in order to reach new levels of knowledge in the market-at-retail field.

Qualifications for Emeritus Status: Eligible candidates must submit the status change request form and meet one of the following requirements:

- Retired from employment in the profession, whose number of years certified, when added to their years of work experience in the market-at-retail field, is greater or equal to 30 years; or;
- Retired from employment in the field, and held at least 15 years of continuous years of active certification status.
- Individuals earning the Emeritus status will no longer be required to submit a continuing practice journal or recertification fee, and they will be listed in the on-line registry as "Emeritus."

## COMPLAINTS OF DISCIPLINARY VIOLATION

Shop! Professional Development staff will be responsible for implementing disciplinary policies and procedures. Grounds for disciplinary action shall include, but are not limited to the following:

- Evidence of falsification of information provided on documents submitted to the Shop! or its agents.
- Cheating on certification examinations or audits.
- Evidence of non-compliance with the Code of Conduct.
- Evidence of improper use of the Shop! certification status, logos and/or acronyms.
- Violation of established Shop! certification policies, rules and requirements.
- Conviction of a felony or other crime of moral turpitude under federal or state law.
- Gross negligence, willful misconduct, or other unethical conduct in the performance of services for which the individual has achieved certification from Shop!.

Shop! will establish procedures to fairly and consistently address alleged violations. Disciplinary procedures are designed to ensure that valid and actionable complaints are investigated and considered, and that all parties involved in the complaint have an opportunity to document circumstances warranting the complaint and to respond to the complaint.

All complaints will first be reviewed by the Shop! staff who will then report the complaint to the Shop! Education Council chair. If the complaint can be verified and resolved without further documentation or investigation, staff will notify the Council chair and the complaint will be closed.

If the complaint requires additional information, the complainant will be required to submit request in writing with supporting documents within 30 days of request for further actions to be considered. Upon receipt and review of the complaint and supporting documentation, the Shop! staff may inform, in writing, the accused and/or complainant of the official opening of an investigation. Shop! staff will acknowledge receipt of complaint and supporting documentation. The accused will have the opportunity to respond to the complaint made against him/her within 30 days of notification of the investigation.

Following the investigation, the Education Council Chair will inform the complainant of the decision in writing. The complainant will be notified in writing that a decision was reached. If disciplinary action is imposed, the complainant may submit an appeal of the decision to the full Education Council. This appeal must be submitted in writing to the Shop! Professional Development Manager. A signed appeal must be submitted in writing within 60 days from receipt of the written notification that a disciplinary action is imposed and must clearly state the grounds for appeal

Below are two possible decisions that the Shop! may make in regards to a complaint.

### 1) WITHDRAWAL/REVOCAION

When a complaint is received by Shop! which upon investigation by the policies and processes laid out appears to be due to negligence or intentional malpractice or violation of the code of conduct, Shop! may withdraw certification. In the event of withdrawal, the certified professional must refrain from further use of all references to certified status.

### 2) SUSPENSION

When a complaint is received by Shop! which upon investigation by the policies and processes laid out appears to be due to accidental causes, unintentional negligence or oversight, Shop! may suspend the certificant's certification for a specific period. Shop! may establish monitoring procedures during the

suspension which the certificant must conform to. During the time of suspension the certificant must refrain from further promotion of his or her certification. If the certificant does not remedy the conditions of the suspension, the certificant's certification may be withdrawn.

## APPEALS

In addition to appeals of disciplinary action, an individual or certificant who was denied certification or had his/her certification revoked may file an appeal within 60 days of receipt of notice of the action taken that is eligible for appeal.

### FILING OF APPEAL

The appeal shall state the nature of the objection, including the details, and the specific remedial action that the appellant is requesting. Upon the filing of a properly executed appeal, the original action will be suspended until final action is taken on the appeal.

All appeals must be made in writing and sent to the attention of Shop! by mail, 440 N. Wells St., Suite 740, Chicago, IL 60654, or email, [credentialing@shopassociation.org](mailto:credentialing@shopassociation.org)

Shop! staff will make an initial determination of whether the appeal has been properly filed and includes all needed documentation and rationale. Appellants will be notified within 60 days of Shop!'s receipt whether the appeal has been filed properly for an appealable action.

### APPEALS BODY

Shop!'s Education Council is the body that hears appeals. The full Shop! Education Council is the final body to hear an appeal and there are no further appeals once the full Shop! Education Council has acted. Its ruling is final.

### FEE

The fee for an appeal with the Shop! Board is \$50 (U.S.D.) payable by the individual filing the appeal. The fee for a subsequent appeal to the full Shop! Board is an additional \$150 (U.S.D.). Fees are payable with the filing of the appeal. An appellant may request that Shop! reduce these fees and must provide a rationale for this request (e.g., demonstrable financial hardship). The decision to reduce any appeal fee will be made by the Shop! Board Chair after review of the request and rationale.

### SHOP! BOARD CONSIDERATION OF THE APPEAL

The Shop! Board reviews all properly filed and documented appeals to determine if significant evidence exists of a substantive error or omission in the certification process or outcome. Decisions require a (2/3) two-thirds vote by council members. When the Shop! Education Council reaches a decision, the appellant will be notified in writing within 60 days of such decision being made. The appellant may request a hearing on the appeal, but is responsible for paying all administrative expenses associated with such a hearing (including but not limited to travel expenses of the Shop! Board, if the appellant wishes to have a hearing in person).

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.project-management-prepcast.com/kunena/pdu-questions-and-answers/3082-q-what-is-the-difference-between-ceus-and-pdus>