How To Earn Your CSP®
A GUIDE FOR NATIONAL SPEAKERS ASSOCIATION
CERTIFIED SPEAKING PROFESSIONAL™ APPLICANTS 2021
National Speakers Association

Introduction
Thank you for your interest in the Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation as issued by the National Speakers Association (NSA) of the United States.

This Guide sets forth the application timelines and deadlines for applying for the CSP, outlines the processes that will be used in the CSP application process, and details the necessary requirements in order to move forward in each phase of the selection process.

This Guide is also accompanied by the three required recorded sessions: *How to Earn Your CSP, Business Ethics, and Professional Competencies,* which must be viewed by all candidates for the CSP.

The CSP designation indicates that the profession of speaking has a detailed, thorough, and comprehensive certification process with both external and internal reviews. It also raises the expectation for excellence by its holders through indicating competency as a certified professional as a speaker, trainer, facilitator, consultant, or coach.

Application Timelines & Deadlines
Here are the timelines and deadlines for applying for this year's Class:
- September 4, 2020. Applications can be submitted beginning September 4, 2020, when the online application becomes available. Applications submitted before September 4, 2020, will not be considered.
- January 11, 2021. Applications are due no later than Monday, January 11, 2021, by 11:59 p.m. PST. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

Application Process (General Overview)
Here is a brief explanation of the CSP application process, which uses multiple assessments and evaluations in each of its four review Phases:

Phase 1 - includes a review of the following areas: Completion of the requisite number of presentations during five out of the last 10 years, the necessary income levels derived from these presentations, and verification of your presentations.

Phase 2 - gathers information and assessments from a minimum of 20 external reviewers/clients who will independently complete an online and standardized evaluation of your speaking presentations.

Phase 3 - evaluates your video submission by a number of internal reviewers who currently hold the CSP designation and who will independently complete an online and standardized evaluation of your video.

Phase 4 - is the final decision and vote by the NSA Board of Directors.

In order to reach the final Phase, your application must pass each of the prior Phases. If you do not meet the requirements of a Phase, your application will not be advanced to the next Phase for consideration. You will be notified throughout the process to let you know if you have been advanced to the next Phase or if you did not meet the requirements to be advanced to the next Phase.

This review process typically takes months to complete as there are multiple assessments and evaluations that must be gathered and reviewed. So please be patient during this time. If additional information is needed, you will be contacted.

Application Process (Detailed Overview)

As noted above, your application must pass each of the Phases to ensure you have met the requirements and in order to be put forward to the next Phase. Here is a detailed explanation of each of the Phases that are utilized in the CSP application and selection process:

Phase 1 - is administrative in nature and ensures the following: that you are in good standing with your member association/organization, your membership has been continuous, the professional education requirements have been met, and documentation on the presentation spreadsheet (see below) satisfies the presentation count and income requirements.

During this Phase, the following occurs:
- Initial Approval of Application - You must be in good standing to apply for and maintain a CSP. The NSA CSP Committee reviews the applicant list to rule out speakers facing ethics violations.
- Application Review - NSA will notify you when your application has been received. The application is then reviewed to ensure that all prerequisites and requirements are satisfied.
- Clarification - NSA will email you if there are any questions regarding your application.
- Verification - Randomly selected clients will be emailed or called to verify your presentation data.
- Notification - You will be notified whether your application is being put forward or is not being put forward to the next Phase.

Phase 2 - is external in nature and ensures that your reviewers/clients independently complete an online and standardized evaluation of your speaking presentations. There is a minimum requirement of 20 external reviewers.

During this Phase, the following occurs:
- External Reviewer/Client Evaluation - You will send evaluation requests (template provided with embedded link) to the reviewers/clients whom you have selected to provide evaluations, as indicated on your presentation spreadsheet.
- Client Evaluation Progress Updates - You will be provided with a deadline by which your external reviewers/clients must complete their online evaluation. Two weeks prior to that deadline, you will be given a status report indicating the number of reviewer/client evaluations received and a follow-up template that you can send to your clients who have not completed the online evaluation. The first 20 online evaluations received must satisfy the minimum score requirement to move your application forward.
- Notification - You will be notified whether your application is being put forward or is not being put forward to the next Phase.

Phase 3 - is internal in nature and ensures that your video submission is independently evaluated by a number of internal reviewers (who currently hold the CSP designation) by completing an online and standardized evaluation of your video.

During this Phase, the following occurs:
- Video Submission - You will submit a video of one of your presentations.
- Video Evaluations - Your video will be viewed and evaluated by a number of internal reviewers who currently hold the CSP designation. These reviewers will independently complete an online and standardized evaluation of your video submission. The online evaluations must satisfy a pre-set cutoff score in order to move your application forward.
- Notification - You will be notified whether your application is being put forward or is not being put forward to the next Phase.

Phase 4 - is the final review and decision by the NSA Board of Directors.

During this Phase, the following occurs:
- Decision - The decision to award the CSP is reached by a vote of the CSP Committee and by approval of the NSA Board.
- Notification - You will be notified of the final decision by the NSA Board of Directors.

Application Requirements

Here are the prerequisites and requirements in order to apply for the CSP designation as issued by NSA:

Membership. Twelve months of continuous membership (between January 10, 2020, and

January 10, 2021) in NSA or one of the Global Speakers Federation (GSF) member associations is required. Lapsed NSA/GSF membership will result in your application being denied or not put forward. Please ensure that your membership is current before applying. Questions may be directed to NSA by email (CSPadmin@nsaspeaker.org) or by phone (1-480-968-2552).

Continuing Education Credits. In-person attendance at one live NSA or GSF national event is an application requirement. Like most professionals, speakers have continuing education requirements. These are essential to personal and professional growth as well as industry trend awareness.

Required CSP Educational Sessions. Applicants must also watch the video recordings of the three required CSP educational sessions: *How to Earn Your CSP*, *Business Ethics, and Professional Competencies,* presented by panels of experts. Proof of completion is integral to the application process. A post-test will follow the three sessions and must be successfully completed (pass/fail) before advancing to the next stage. Please note that only the virtual programs specifically developed for the Class of 2021 will qualify.

Application and Fee. The 2021 non-refundable application fee is $375 (US). The application form and fee must be submitted online at https://www.nsaspeaker.org/csp/. The next-year re-submission fee is $100.

Presentation Spreadsheet/Client Form. This completed and supporting form must be emailed to NSA. Applicants may download the presentation/client spreadsheet template at https://www.nsaspeaker.org/csp/. As an eSpeakers.com user, you can monitor your progress online and generate the event portion of your application. The following data are required:
- Date
- Client organization name
- Client contact name
- Client contact email and phone
- Topic/title of presentation
- Notation of audience size
- Notation if live presentation is virtual
- Fee paid or same-day sales income
- Total income (fee paid + same day sales)
- Contact information for a minimum of 20 clients

Qualifying presentations that are paid will count toward your presentation numbers. Documenting a total of 250 paid presentations is critical for demonstrating professional competence. Unpaid or very low-paid presentations do not qualify.

Fees must be consistent with your usual fee. To meet the presentation count, a 10-year span from January 1, 2011, through December 31, 2020, may be used. Years do not have to be consecutive. Presentation spreadsheets must show:

- Income of $50,000 per year for at least five of the eligible years (not an average) must be achieved.
- Presentations must be at least 30 minutes in length.
- At least 75% of content must be your own spoken word.
- Podcasts, webinars, teleconferences, videoconferences, and/or hologram sessions qualify if the number of live viewers is known and documentable.

Non-qualifying presentations will not count toward your presentation numbers. No matter how entertaining, effective, or innovative, "professional speaking" has its limitations as it pertains to qualifying for a CSP. The following do not count as paid presentations:
- Emceeing
- Coaching
- Radio or TV broadcasting
- Board and manager meetings
- Vistage Chair facilitation
- More than 25% of the time is spent entertaining (i.e., singing, dancing, juggling, auctioneering)
- Recorded presentations

On the Presentation Spreadsheet/Client Form, indicate a minimum of 20 clients willing to complete an online evaluation of your work. Clients should be familiar with your work and hold the decision-making authority to hire you for future presentations.
- Attendees of self-sponsored presentations or public seminars may be included if the attendee roster(s) from the event(s) is included when submitting one's application. The hiring authority must appear on the roster.
- Applicants are encouraged to include more than 20 clients to ensure that 20 completed evaluation forms are received by the due date.
- Applicants should have their clients' consent to list them as an evaluator.

Clients are more likely to complete the online evaluation if you call or email them. Explain that you are applying for a certification of speaking excellence. Let them know they will be emailed an online survey about your presentation that should take about five minutes to complete. (Please note that many speakers have been surprised to find that this call, followed by a thank you email or note, has resulted in new contracts.)

The online survey typically asks for evaluations in the following areas:
1. Demonstrated eloquence when presenting and/or performing.
2. Displayed professionalism from platform.
3. Conveyed topic in a way that was believable and meaningful to the audience.
4. Demonstrated a unique perspective on their topic.
5. Reflected expertise and knowledge on the topic area.
6. Displayed an overall performance that would be enthusiastically recommend to others.

Video Submission. Your video should represent your best work. If you are a keynoter, submit a video of your keynote. If you are a trainer, submit a video of your training session. Videos that do not successfully demonstrate platform skills, expertise, or ethics are the most frequent reason for an application not being put forward to the next Phase.

One of biggest hurdles in this application process is when an applicant's video does not show the candidate in context. Choose a video that shows you engaging the audience with a point that supports the key concepts of your presentation. Presentations read from prompters or slides and staged videos with a fake audience fall flat and do not represent CSP-worthy speaking skills.

For the Class of 2021, there are two video options. For *Option 1*, submit two 30-minute videos. For *Option 2*, submit one 60-minute video. Videos can be raw footage, unedited, and show an audience. Long introductions of you as the speaker do not count toward the 30-minute or 60-minute limits. It is essential that the individuals reviewing your video can see and hear you speaking. The audio track must be easily understood.

The audio track must be continuous with one exception: You may cut audience portions if you make a statement on the video, note this in the description section when uploading your video to YouTube, and indicating that the camera and audio will be off while the audience engages in an exercise. For example, if you give directions to the audience, such as, "You have 10 minutes of work time," then cut back in when you say, "It's been 10 minutes. Let's discuss your work." Making note of audio cuts avoids the chances of your video being disqualified and dispels any questions of possible ethics violations.

The visual portion may be shot using multiple camera angles to show the speaker, the audience, and the slide deck or other visual aids, if the audio is uninterrupted.

Non-English speakers must provide a written transcript in English of the audio track. Videos will be reviewed by speakers of your language whenever possible.

It is wise to ask a seasoned speaker (or two) to review your footage prior to submission but beware of asking friends and new CSPs. The first can be too generous and the latter can be too harsh. Choose seasoned CSPs who can be direct and offer constructive feedback.

Video Evaluation. Each video submission is independently evaluated by a number of internal reviewers who currently hold the CSP designation and who will complete an online and standardized evaluation of your video. Reviewers are selected by NSA from a pool of volunteers who hold the CSP and are members of NSA/GSF.

Video Scoring. The questions that are evaluated during the video evaluation focus on the Professional Competencies of Expertise, Eloquence, and Ethics. An applicant must receive a total average video score that is greater than a pre-set cutoff score.

Speaker Business Income Models. Speakers may use various business models to qualify to become a CSP. Guidelines are provided below to assist applicants with documenting income from various business models such as individuals who put on their own events, salaried speakers, and contracted speakers.

If your salary or compensation model is unique, submit a brief written description of your business model to NSA to request a review and a ruling by the CSP Committee before you apply to ensure the work that you do qualifies for purposes of the CSP application.

Documented Income. An applicant's presentation spreadsheet must document income of $50,000 per year for at least five years. These five years do not have to be consecutive. This income must be actual earned income and not an average of the total years documented. A speaker may meet the requirements of presentation count and income in five years. Some speakers may need to use up to 10 years to document presentation count and income.

"The speaker fee represents an economic relationship between speaker and client," according to Tim Durkin, CSP. This speaks to the spirit of fee integrity. Fees are to be paid by the client and kept by the speaker.

Paying yourself for a presentation does not qualify nor does asking someone to hire you with the agreement that the money will be returned to them. Qualifying presentations must show fees that are consistent or increasing as a sign of professional growth. Including low fees (e.g., less than $100) calls into question a speaker's presentation count for purposes of the CSP application.

Self-Sponsored Presentations. To show income earned from self-sponsored presentations, use the total gross income from the presentation admission price and/or same-day sales of products and services. Include print or digital promotional items such as flyers, screen shots, or brochures as supporting documentation. These materials must include the date of the event, your name as presenter, the topic of the presentation, and the cost to the attendee.

Same-Day Sales of Products and Services. Regardless of the business income model adopted by an applicant, same-day sales of products and services as a result of speaking count toward the calculation of income for a presentation. This includes digital products, DVDs, coaching, books, or upcoming webinars. Income earned from any service or product purchased the day of the live presentation before midnight may be counted.

Salaried or Contracted Speakers. Speakers who are salaried or contracted employees must document fees by using the percentage of their gross annual salary dedicated to live presenting divided by the number of presentations given per each of the qualifying years. For example, as a professor, if you have $100,000 annual salary and spend 50% of your time on stage during the given year, $50,000 can be applied toward your application. If during that year, you delivered

100 presentations, you would show each presentation had a "fee paid" or income earned of $500 (i.e., $50,000 from speaking divided by 100 presentations=$500 per presentation).

Employer Verification Letter. Salaried or contracted speakers must provide an Employer Verification letter from an immediate supervisor on company letterhead that verifies the following:
- Applicant's position with the company
- Years of employment for each of the qualifying years included in the Presentation Spreadsheet/Client Listing
- Gross salary for each of the qualifying years included in the Presentation Spreadsheet/Client Listing
- Percentage of the employee's time dedicated to *live* presenting in front of *live* audience. Research, travel, and other preparation time do not count toward this percentage.

International Applicants. The income requirement for GSF applicants is based on your home country's income equivalent to $50,000 (US) dollars. This calculation is based on the United Nations' median salary survey for each country. Income is not to be converted to U.S. dollars.

Additional Information

Here is some additional information for you to review as you undertake an application for the CSP designation:

Why Earn The CSP Designation. The CSP credential offers skill validation from clients, peers, meeting professionals, and other CSPs. It adds opportunities to command greater fees, to develop new and sustainable connections, and to open the door to CSP/CPAE-exclusive educational sessions.

It also allows you to stand out from the crowd on paper as much as on the platform, in the training room, or in the virtual studio.

The CSP designation is the speaking profession's highest earned international measure of professional platform competence. Less than 17% of NSA members worldwide have achieved the CSP designation.

With support from NSA's CSP Committee, the CSP is conferred by the NSA Board of Directors upon qualifying members of NSA as well as upon qualifying members of the 16 Global Speakers Federation (GSF) associations.

The CSP Committee ensures the integrity and brand value of the CSP designation, sets policies and application requirements, provides guidance to those individuals who evaluate candidate's video submissions by showing them effective scoring benchmarks, and develops renewal guidelines.

Global Distinction. A global process is being crafted to keep the CSP requirements equivalent and consistent worldwide. This will add to the brand and market value of the CSP in the international community.

In addition to NSA being a conferring body of the CSP designation, the Professional Speakers Australia (PSA) also confers the CSP designation. NSA and PSA are both members of the GSF, which is currently comprised of 16 professional speaking associations from around the world.

The Professional Speakers Association (PSA) of the United Kingdom and Ireland bestows upon its members the Fellowship of the Professional Speakers Association (FPSA), which is accepted by the GSF as equivalent to the CSP in order to apply for the Global Speaking Fellow designation.

Both the CSP and the FPSA require considerable evidence that the individual is a professional speaker. Earning the CSP or the FPSA designation is a prerequisite requirement for earning the international designation of Global Speaking Fellow, which is conferred by member associations.

The Global Speaking Fellow (no acronym used) designation certifies a speaker's ability to maintain a speaking business spanning countries, continents, economies, and cultures.

Harmonization. NSA is currently part of a task force to harmonize or equalize the CSP standards and expectations with Professional Speakers Australia (Australia). By elevating the brand globally, we are striving to enhance its value within the global marketplace.

Professional Competencies. The CSP designation is earned through certified competence in four professional categories. NSA Past President, John B. Molidor, PhD, CSP, defines a professional speaker as "Someone who brings expertise, in an eloquent fashion, as part of a business (enterprise), and does so in an ethical manner."

The competencies for professional speakers are known as the Four Es:
1. Eloquence. Eloquent speakers are masters of the art of speaking. They are persuasive and impactful. They connect people to ideas with clarity and imagination.
2. Expertise. Speakers impart knowledge, skill, and experience in their chosen field in a way that educates, inspires, and/or entertains.
3. Enterprise. Enterprising speakers have the business savvy to build and grow a successful speaking business.
4. Ethics. Ethics are the foundation of any credible speaker. Members of the 16-member associations of the GSF demonstrate professional conduct in all they do.

The CSP selection process is designed to measure and assess these competencies at various times in each of the selection Phases.

Code of Professional Ethics. A command of professional ethics for speakers is demonstrated in a variety of direct and subtle ways. The Code of Professional Ethics for speakers includes eight principles: Representation, Professionalism, Research, Intellectual Property (IP), Respect and Collegiality, Confidentiality, Business Practices, and Diversity.

The following two ethical breaches will result in the denial of a CSP application.
- Intellectual Property. The most common violations include the use of others' stories, material, images, and videos without proper credit or permission. Professional speakers must know the legal and ethical requirements for using others' work. Being original serves speakers well. Using other speakers' materials does not serve you well.
- Representation and Business Practices. Asking a client or colleague to pay you to speak and then agreeing to return this fee is a tempting bit of fraud that has tripped up speakers seeking to pad their presentation count in order to qualify for the CSP. Honesty and integrity are measured in all we do, say, don't do, and don't say.

CSP Renewal. Earning the CSP designation is a demanding process. Keeping your CSP designation is much easier than re-applying. So please keep the following in mind:
- Renew every five years.
- Earn 24 NSA/GSF education credits in each five-year renewal period.
- Pay a $200 administrative fee.
- Keep your membership in NSA/GSF member associations continuous.

Lifetime CSP Status is available for speakers age 65 and older, who have renewed their CSP designation at least once, and who continue to maintain NSA/GSF membership without interruption.

Benefits of CSP. There are many benefits of earning your CSP, including:
- The process of contacting clients while applying for the CSP can result in an unexpected increase in speaking contracts through repeat business and referrals.
- The detailed application and review process raise applicant awareness of opportunities for improvement of their craft and business practices.
- The CSP has gained global recognition as an indicator of one's dedication to excellence in the field of speaking.
- Attainment of the CSP opens the door to further education and networking with fellow achievers. CSP-only events and social media platforms offer enriching experiences that are targeted toward further business growth for those at the top of the speaking field.

Spirit of NSA. *"Don't worry about how we divide up the pie; there is enough for everybody. Let's just build a bigger pie!"* - Cavett Robert, CSP, CPAE, NSA Founder

Speakers everywhere do better when each of us shines. NSA Founder, Cavett Robert, CSP,

CPAE, believed everyone can get a piece of an ever-growing pie if we work together. Speakers who demonstrate generous character and respect for NSA/GSF colleagues grow the speaking industry in reputation and brand value.

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