



MEMORANDUM

To: Representative, Dallas Heard

From: Elizabeth Boxall, Administrator *eb*

Cc: LCB Chair, Bull Bumgardner and Vice Chair, Loren Radford

Date: January 12, 2016

Re: Practical Skills/Hands-On Testing Update

The first Practical Skills Exam was held on July 22, 2016 and from LCB's perspective was an overall success. The planning and coordination of LCB staff for our portion as well as OLCA was fairly seamless.

Candidates by Test Type:

- Of the 16 registrants, 15 tested (one withdrew a couple days before due to extenuating circumstances).
- Seven (7) tested for Irrigation and Eight (8) tested for Planting (which included Design, Grading & Drainage).
- Seven (7) registrants took the exam in Spanish, three (3) requested extended time (e.g.; to take the exam in English when English is not their first language).

Hands-On and Mini-Written Exam Pass/Fail Rates: *(OLCA Pass rates include LCB candidates **and** OLCA retakes)*

IRRIGATION (Full Written Pass Rate Avg. for this Section 2016 YTD = 55%)						
Test Section	# Taken	# Failed	% Failed	# Passed	% Pass	% OLCA Pass Avg.
Lateral Repair and Head Adjustment	9	1	11%	8	89%	82%
Lateral Installation	9	6	67%	3	33%	44%
Mainline Installation	9	7	78%	2	22%	31%
Valve Repair	9	5	56%	4	44%	50%
Valve Wiring	9	9	100%	0	0%	31%
Written Mini Irrigation Test	7	7	100%	0	0%	N/A
Total	52	35	69%	17	31%	48%

PLANTING (Full Written Pass Rate Avg. for this Section 2016 YTD = 58%)						
Test Section	# Taken	# Failed	% Failed	# Passed	% Pass	% OLCA Pass Avg.
Plant Identification	6	5	83%	1	17%	20%
Tree Planting and Staking	6	5	83%	1	17%	38%
Sod Installation	6	1	17%	5	83%	92%
Plant Layout	6	1	17%	5	83%	92%
Written Mini Plants and Turf	6	6	100%	0	0%	N/A
Total	30	18	60%	12	40%	61%

DESIGN, GRADING & DRAINAGE (Full Written Pass Rate Avg. for this Section 2016 YTD = 56%)						
Test Section	# Taken	# Failed	% Failed	# Passed	% Pass	% OLCA Pass Avg.
Grading and Drainage	6	3	50%	3	50%	64%
Instruments	6	2	33%	4	67%	82%
Written Mini Design, Grading & Drainage	6	5	83%	1	17%	N/A
Total	18	10	55%	8	45%	73%

Mini-Written Exam Score Averages:

Metric	Number of Tests	Average Score
Irrigation	7	59.00%
Plants and Turf	6	39.33%
Design, Grading & Drainage	6	53.00%
Spanish	8	40.50%
English Second Language (Extended Time)	4	37.00%
English / No Accommodations	7	60.29%

Business Course:

On July 23, 2016, thirteen (13) people total attended the Business Courses held (5 in the Spanish class and 8 in the English class). The total average score went from a 42% on the pre-test to an 82% on the post-test. April Chastain from Clackamas Community College (CCC) said that both groups were very engaged, asked a lot of great questions and brought up good examples. Attendees came from as far as Ontario, Bend, and Astoria as well as here in the Portland metro region. Two attendees were not candidates and attended for CEH.

Testing Retake Update:

The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals (WALP) offered hands-on testing through the same certification process as OLCA and agreed to allow LCB candidates to retake sections that were not passed. LCB Staff called all 16 participants from the July 2016 testing to ensure they were aware of this option. WALP testing was held on September 17, 2016 and three (3) candidates from the original OLCA testing retested in the WALP testing. Two additional candidates intended to participate but missed the cut off date for registration.

A total of seven (7) section retakes were completed and 4 of the 7 sections were passed. One candidate has now passed all sections of the hands-on portion and has one mini-written version test to take that when passed would be complete requirements for licensure.

Testing Retake Workshops:

Clackamas Community College offered two 8-hour workshops prior to the WALP testing; one focusing on Irrigation and one on the Planting to help prepare candidates for the practical skills/hands-on portion.

Candidates who did not pass the mini-written version of an exam can retake that at any PSI location anytime throughout the year just as traditional test takers. Candidates also have the option of switching to the full traditional written exam if they wish to pursue that route.

Next Steps:

- LCB is currently working on the 2017 contract with OLCA. OLCA will have no fee increases and LCB staff is proposing to the board a one time registration fee of \$100 per applicant to cover coordinating and administrating costs (to be discussed at the January 27, 2017 board meeting). The board opted not to charge any fees for the first year until we knew what work would be involved in facilitating ongoing and wanted to ensure it was not cost prohibitive to applicants which we did not find to be the case.
- LCB is working on refining the mini-written portion to better align sub-topics and avoid any duplication from areas covered in the hands-on portion. This is also being discussed at the January 27, 2017 board meeting.
- LCB and OLCA are coordinating with CCC to plan a workshop (English and Spanish) for the 2017 testing cycle that will help better prepare candidates for what to expect for testing. There were not enough OLCA registrants in 2016 so that workshop was canceled. There will be an emphasis on studying and what specifically to study. We believe this will help improve pass rates as a couple candidates mentioned to LCB staff on the day of testing that they thought they could “just come up and do what they typically do for their job” and found that the study component was important for the hands-on portion as well.

Cost Estimating:

Below are cost estimates tracked from February 2015 through August 2016 which include human resource cost estimation. Hard costs to date are \$5,763.75. In addition, a total of \$1,207.50 for legal counsel costs to assist with the initial OLCA contract was accrued. This makes the grand total to date approximately \$33,163.75 as of August 31, 2016. This excludes volunteer time which is counted in hours only at \$0/hr. Ongoing reporting will be tracked in QuickBooks only as the majority of initiation, planning and implementation have occurred (unless the Board wants staff time tracked separately).

Legislation through Implementation

LCB Staff	Feb-15	Mar-15	Apr-15	May-15	Jun-15	Jul-15	Aug-15	Sep-15	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Total Hrs
Administrator	4	2	9	24	23	9	31	15	15	22	15	8	30	16	16	12	12	27	5	295
Program Manager	4	2	9	24	23	9	31	15	15	22	15	18	22	18	12	10	5	22	5	281
Licensing Specialist						2	4	1	1	1	1	2	14	8	7	10	12	31	10	104
Office Specialist								1	1			1	1				2			6
Investigator						2		2	1			1	1	1	1	1	3			13
Committee Volunteers (x8)**						8	64		32	64	64									232
LCB Board Members (x6)				6		18	6	12	6	12	6	12		10		10		5	1	98
OLCA Board Members***				1		2	2			1		2			10	1				19
Contractor/IT												2		1		2	2	2	3	12
Other Volunteer (LCB)													9							9
(based on hrly rates x hrs)	\$340	\$159	\$716	\$1,932	\$1,830	\$870	\$2,556	\$1,320	\$1,271	\$1,861	\$1,296	\$1,361	\$2,496	\$1,685	\$1,373	\$1,337	\$1,238	\$2,899	\$859	1,069
	Total Resource Cost																			\$27,400

**Committee members counted only non-paid volunteers. Administrator and Program Manager are on committee with hours counted in their rate line.

***Some OLCA activities require entire board, some just select members. Does not include other OLCA contributions time such as contract negotiations and preparing for exam to accommodate LCB and exam day.

The table above accounts for activities related to the Practical Skills planning efforts such as:

- **Committee Meetings:** committee formation, meeting preparations and post-work/action items, meeting minutes, written exam review.
- **Communications:** Emails and phone calls with PSIC committee, LCB Board, Rep Heard, OLCA, lobbyist, consult with AAG, exam provider, and all stakeholder updates.
- **Legislative Activities** (includes travel times): PSIC committee meetings, hearings, preparation of testimony, consult with legislative counsel.
- **Administrative:** Staff meeting updates, material preparations, database preparation, website updates, process creation/mapping and marketing.

2016 Practical Skills Test Costs to Applicants
(w/assumptions noted below)

Planting Only Costs	
\$480.00	OLCA All Section Fees Total
\$75.00	Mini-Written (planting) to PSI
\$10.00	Mini-Written (Design, Grading & Drainage) to PSI
\$100.00	LCP Application Fee to LCB
\$100.00	Business Course Fee CCC
\$765.00	TOTAL

Irrigation Only Costs	
\$420.00	OLCA All Section Fees Total
\$75.00	Mini-Written (irrigation) to PSI
\$10.00	Mini-Written (backflow) to PSI
\$100.00	LCP Application Fee to LCB
\$100.00	Business Course Fee CCC
\$705.00	TOTAL

Planting & Irrigation Total Costs if both taken as Practical Skills <i>(over 2 yr period since both cannot be taken in one day)</i>	
\$480.00	Planting - OLCA Section Fees
\$420.00	Irrigation - OLCA Section Fees
\$75.00	Mini-Written (planting) to PSI
\$10.00	Mini-Written (Design, Grading & Drainage) to PSI
\$10.00	Mini-Written (irrigation) to PSI
\$10.00	Mini-Written (backflow) to PSI
\$100.00	LCP Application Fee to LCB
\$100.00	Business Course Fee CCC
\$1,205.00	TOTAL

Important notes/Assumptions about Above Information:

- *Fees above are UP TO the point of licenses.
- *Section Fees to OLCA assume all sections for that license type need to be taken.
- *Fees to OLCA and PSI assume passage on first attempt.
- *PSI sitting fees are \$75 each time with an additional \$10 per section.
- *OLCA subsequent retakes the next year, Admin fee of \$120 + \$60 each for sections not passed.
- *Obtaining All Phase license including *all* assumptions above would require passing Harscaping full written section.