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# FITSI Certification Candidate Handbook



Policies and  
Processes for the  
Federal IT Security  
Institute (FITSI)  
Sponsored  
Certifications

Version 3.3

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# 1. Overview

## A. Introduction

Welcome to the Federal IT Security Professional (FITSP) Certification Program. FITSP is a personal certification program developed and managed by the Federal IT Security Institute (FITSI). The *FITSI Certification Candidate Handbook* provides important policies and procedures regarding the FITSP Certification Program. FITSI Certification Candidates and Certification Applicants pursuing a FITSI certification will find relevant information in this Handbook.

Published by FITSI, Certification Candidates can obtain this *FITSI Certification Candidate Handbook* at <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsidocuments.html>.

This Handbook may be forwarded to professional colleagues but must be kept in its original form.

## B. Statement of Purpose

The Federal IT Security Institute (FITSI) is a 501c6 non-profit certification body accredited by the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB) under ISO 17024:2012. FITSI manages and administers the FITSP Certification Program. FITSP stands for the Federal IT Security Professional and is broken into four individual IT security certification programs targeted at the Federal workforce based upon role. The four roles are Auditor, Designer, Manager, and Operator.

The significance of the FITSP Certification Program is expressed in the mission statement of FITSI:

***FITSI's Mission –***

***"To help secure the Nation's Federal Information Systems by certifying that Federal Workforce members understand and can apply appropriate Federal IT security standards."***

FITSP measures Certification Candidates based on standards and guidelines promulgated by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and other relevant Federal statutes and regulations. These Federal documents comprise a unique Federal Body of Knowledge (FBK) for the IT security workforce.

Mastery of the FBK provides a detailed framework for synergistically applying the technical knowledge and expertise acquired through other security certifications. Through certification as a Federal IT Security Professional (FITSP), military, civilian, and contractor personnel demonstrate their understanding of the interrelationship of Federal requirements that define the physical and logical security control objectives necessary to protect and defend Federal information systems.

The four FITSP certification designations - Auditor, Designer, Manager, and Operator - represent certification roles from the FBK that are specifically tailored to fit the job

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requirements of every person in the Federal workforce with significant IT security responsibilities.

FITSI does not restrict candidacy based on membership in any society, undue financial conditions, or other conditions not relevant to the scope of this certification. FITSI is a non-discriminatory certification body compliant with Federal and State Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations.

FITSI is committed to high ethical, moral, and legal business conduct standards. All personnel (including employees, consultants, and volunteers) must practice honesty, integrity, and impartiality in fulfilling their responsibilities to FITSI and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. FITSI also adheres to the principles of fairness and due process as outlined in the FITSI Code of Ethics which can be found at <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsicodeofethics.html>.

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## **2. Applicability**

This Handbook applies to all Certification Candidates and Certification Applicants who desire to pursue a FITSP certification. It includes an overview of the FITSP Certification Program, information about the certification scope, details about the certification processes, and several logistical and procedural requirements that must be met to apply for, be granted, and maintain the Auditor, Designer, Manager, or Operator certifications.

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### 3. Overview of the FITSP Certification

#### A. FITSP-Auditor-NG

The FITSP-Auditor-NG certification is designed to demonstrate the federal workforce member (civilian personnel, military, and contractors) possess the knowledge of federal information technology (IT) security requirements necessary to successfully *audit and assess* the management, operational, and technical IT security controls for systems owned by or operated on behalf of, the federal government of the United States.

The following list highlights, but may not comprehensively capture, the commonly articulated roles characterized within federal statutory, regulatory, standards, and guidance documents that relate to the FITSP-Auditor-NG certification.

- Assessor
- External IT auditor
- Evaluator
- Internal IT auditor
- Reviewer
- Risk/Vulnerability Analyst

#### B. FITSP-Designer-NG

The FITSP-Designer-NG certification is designed to demonstrate the federal workforce member (civilian personnel, military, and contractors) possess the knowledge of federal information technology (IT) security requirements necessary to successfully *design and develop* the management, operational, and technical IT security controls for systems owned by or operated on behalf of, the federal government of the United States.

The following list highlights, but may not comprehensively capture, the commonly articulated roles characterized within federal statutory, regulatory, standards, and guidance documents that relate to the FITSP-Designer-NG certification.

- IT Security Engineer
- Programmer
- Security Engineer
- System Designer
- System Developer

#### C. FITSP-Manager-NG

The FITSP-Manager-NG certification is designed to demonstrate the federal workforce member (civilian personnel, military, and contractors) possess the knowledge of federal information technology (IT) security requirements necessary to successfully *manage and oversee* the management, operational, and technical IT security controls for systems owned by or operated on behalf of, the federal government of the United States.

The following list highlights, but may not comprehensively capture, the commonly articulated roles characterized within federal statutory, regulatory, standards, and guidance documents that relate to the FITSP-Manager-NG certification.



- 
- Authorizing Official
  - Chief Information Officer
  - Senior Agency Information Security Officer
  - Chief Information Security Officer
  - Chief Technology Officer
  - Freedom of Information Act Official
  - Information Resource Manager
  - Information Assurance Manager
  - Information Security Manager
  - Information Security Program Manager
  - Information Systems Security Officers
  - IT Security Compliance Officer
  - Mission or Business Owner
  - Privacy Act Official (Privacy Officers)
  - Program and Functional Managers
  - Procurement Officers
  - Risk Executive
  - Senior Accountable Official for Risk Management
  - Senior Agency Official for Privacy
  - Senior/Executive Agency Leader
  - System Owner

#### **D. FITSP-Operator-NG**

The FITSP-Operator-NG certification is designed to demonstrate the federal workforce member (civilian personnel, military, and contractors) possess the knowledge of federal information technology (IT) security requirements necessary to successfully ***implement and operate*** the management, operational, and technical IT security controls for systems owned by or operated on behalf of, the federal government of the United States.

The following list highlights, but may not comprehensively capture, the commonly articulated roles characterized within federal statutory, regulatory, standards, and guidance documents that relate to the FITSP-Operator-NG certification.

- Data Center Manager
- Database Administrator
- IT Security Operations
- Maintenance Professional
- Network Administrator
- Network Security Specialists
- Security Administrator
- System Administrators
- System Operations Personnel
- Technical Support Professionals
- Telecommunications Personnel

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## 4. Scope of the FITSP Certification

### A. Overview

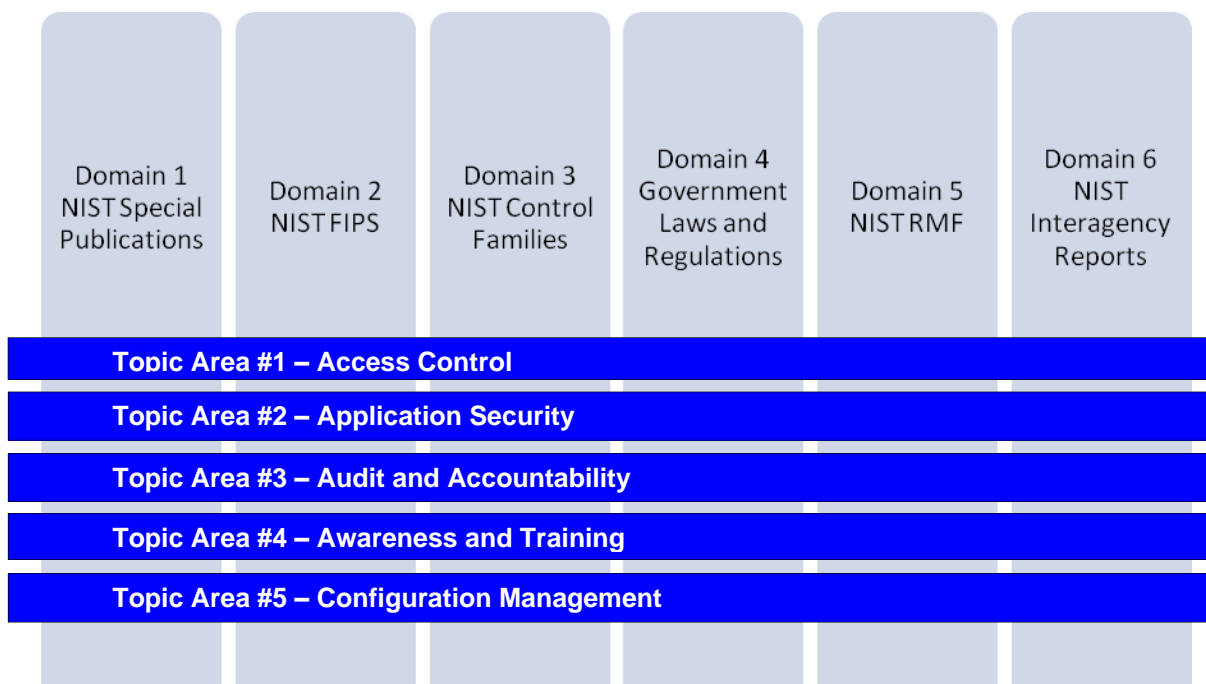
Certification Candidates for all four certification roles (Auditor, Designer, Manager, and Operator) are tested on a comprehensive Federal Body of Knowledge (FBK), consisting of a library of federal statutes, regulations, standards, and guidelines. The FBK consists of 6 domains and 18 IT security topic areas.

1. Domains
  - a. Domain 1 – NIST Special Publications (SPs)
  - b. Domain 2 – NIST Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS)
  - c. Domain 3 – NIST Control Families (CFs)
  - d. Domain 4 – Governmental Laws and Regulations
  - e. Domain 5 – NIST Risk Management Framework (RMF)
  - f. Domain 6 – NIST Interagency Reports (NISTIRs)
2. IT security topic areas
  - a. Access Control
  - b. Audit and Accountability
  - c. Awareness and Training
  - d. Configuration Management
  - e. Contingency Planning
  - f. Identification and Authentication
  - g. Incident Response
  - h. Maintenance
  - i. Media Protection
  - j. Personnel Security
  - k. Physical and Environmental Protection
  - l. Planning
  - m. Program Management
  - n. Risk Assessment
  - o. Security Assessment and Authorization
  - p. System and Communications Protection
  - q. System and Information Integrity
  - r. System and Services Acquisition

The domains are the boundaries of knowledge applicable within the federal government. The IT security topic areas include themes and skills that IT security professionals are expected to understand. *The FITSP certification exams include questions covering the intersection between the six domains and the 18 IT security topic areas (see illustration below).*

Seventeen of the 18 IT Security topic areas are derived directly from the minimum control requirements defined in Federal Information Processing Standard 200 (FIPS 200), and one is from NIST SP 800-53.

The interwoven nature of the domains and topic areas is represented below. Five of the 18 topic areas are listed for illustration purposes.



The following are the approximate areas of focus on which Certification Candidates for the four certification roles are tested:

Role	NIST Special Publications	NIST FIPS	NIST Control Families	Laws and Regulations	NIST RMF	NIST Interagency Reports
Auditor	31-33%	6-8%	30-32%	14-16%	12-14%	1-3%
Designer	23-25%	11-13%	24-26%	20-22%	15-17%	1-3%
Manager	26-28%	10-12%	23-25%	16-18%	17-19%	2-4%
Operator	33-35%	17-19%	24-26%	9-11%	10-12%	1-3%

## B. Domains

The FITSI FBK represents the FITSP Certification Program. The FBK contains six domains, and a domain is considered an area of knowledge.

- 
- NIST Special Publications. This domain focuses on the full range of NIST 800 series Special Publications.
  - NIST Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS). This domain focuses on roughly a dozen FIPS depending upon the role-based certification pursued (i.e., FIPS 140, FIPS 180, FIPS 197, etc.).
  - NIST Control Families. This domain focuses on the 20 Control Families defined in NIST SP 800-53. Certification Candidates are expected to be familiar with the 18 Control Families and the corresponding controls from each family.
  - Government Laws and Regulations. This domain focuses on the memorandums, circulars, executive orders, and laws established by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Congress, and Presidential Directives. Examples include the Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA), OMB Circular Number A-130 Appendix III, Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-12, etc.
  - NIST Risk Management Framework (RMF). This domain focuses on the NIST RMF in support of system authorization. NIST SP 800-37 Revision 2 and supporting documents are used in this domain.
  - NIST Interagency Reports. This domain focuses on several key NISTIRs.

### **C. Federal Body of Knowledge**

FITSI publishes a formal *Federal Body of Knowledge (FBK) Guide*. The most current version of the FBK Guide can be found at the following website:

<https://www.fitsi.org/fitsidocuments.html>.

### **D. Exam Objectives**

The exam objectives for each of the four roles can be found at <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsidocuments.html>. The FITSI Exam Objectives include task and knowledge statements and the objectives of each of the 18 IT security topic areas that a Certification Candidate is expected to understand and apply.

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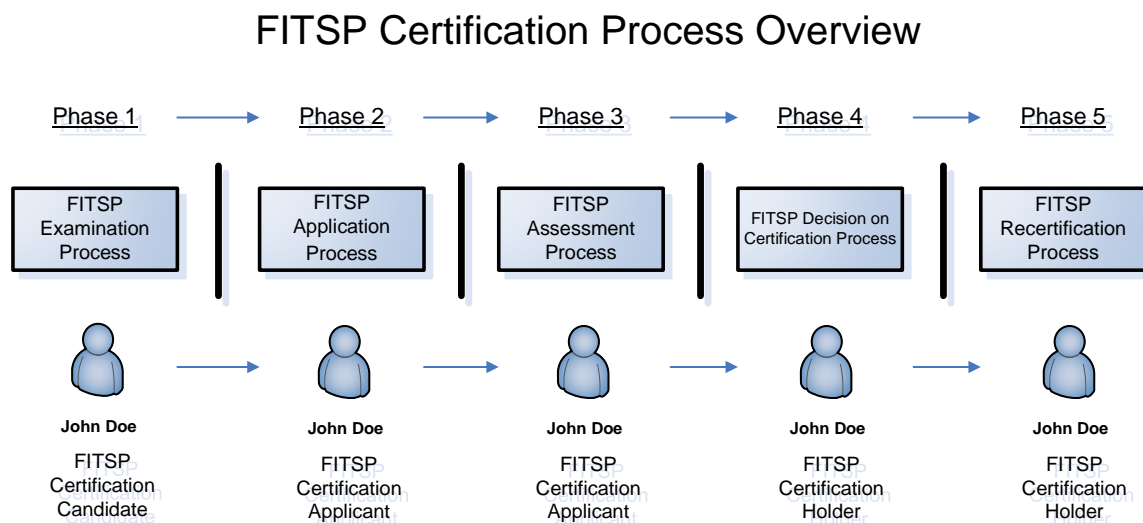
## 5. FITSP Certification Process

### A. Overview

FITSI uses several processes to manage the FITSP Certification Program. These processes include:

1. An examination process
2. An application process
3. An assessment process
4. A certification decision process
5. A recertification process

The diagram below illustrates how these processes work together. Depending upon where the person seeking certification is in the process, they are either considered a Certification Candidate, Certification Applicant, or a Certification Holder.



**Figure 1: FITSP Certification Process Overview**

As part of earning a Federal IT Security Professional (FITSP) certification, FITSP Certification Candidates must successfully pass a certification exam (Phase 1) and submit a formal FITSI Certification application and supporting documentation (Phase 2). Once the FITSP Certification Application Package is submitted, FITSI will conduct an assessment of all the items in the application (Phase 3) and render a formal certification decision (Phase 4). During this formal certification decision phase, a determination is made on whether the FITSP certification will be granted to the individual. Certification Applicants who become Certification Holders in Phase 4 move to Phase 5, where they must meet certain criteria to be recertified. This process is visually represented in Figure 1 above.

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## B. Certification Candidate vs. Certification Applicant vs. Certification Holder

In this document, three different terms define individuals involved in the FITSP Certification Program. They represent an individual based on their stage in the certification process. These terms are:

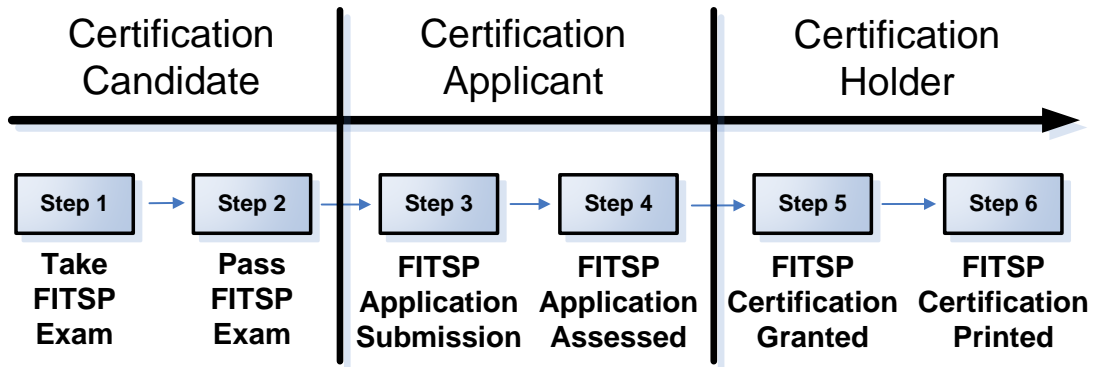
- Certification Candidate
- Certification Applicant
- Certification Holder

A Certification Candidate is an individual who is planning to take, has taken, or even passed a given FITSP examination, but they have not yet applied for or been granted a FITSP Certification.

A Certification Applicant is an individual who has taken and passed a FITSP examination and has either submitted their FITSI Certification Application Package or is having the FITSI Certification Application Package assessed by FITSI. They have not been granted a FITSP Certification.

A Certification Holder is an individual who has gone through all the steps as a Certification Candidate and Certification Applicant and has received formal notice that they have been granted the FITSP certification.

Below is a visual representation of how these terms are used:



**Figure 2:** Relationship between a Certification Candidate, a Certification Applicant and a Certification Holder

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## 6. Obtaining the FITSP Certification

### A. Types of FITSP Exam Deliveries

FITSI Exams are conducted in two different ways. The two exam deliveries are:

1. In-Person Testing - In-person exam testing uses a dedicated room with a dedicated proctor and computer equipment. FITSI provides the hardware and software, and these events allow multiple Certification Candidates to take the FITSI exam simultaneously.
2. Remote-Proctored Testing - Remote-proctored testing uses an online platform to deliver the exam to Certification Candidates at their home, office, or other private location while being monitored by a FITSI Exam Proctor. The Certification Candidate will provide their own personal computer. The Certification Candidate will install the exam software application onto the personal computer to access the online platform. Certification Candidates will use a secondary device such as a smartphone or tablet to connect to an online meeting space where the FITSI Exam Proctor will monitor their activities while they take the exam.

### B. FITSP Examination Format and Details

There is a unique exam for each FITSP certification role. The exams are computer-based and consist of 150 multiple-choice questions. The exams deal with subjects and themes found in the six FITSP domains based upon the respective certification role (Auditor, Designer, Manager, Operator).

Certification candidates must obtain the minimum passing score to pass a given FITSP exam successfully. (Each certification role has a different passing score). Exams are offered in English only. When a Certification Candidate ends the exam, they will know if they passed or failed. A formal notice with the Certification Candidate's score is emailed 3-5 business days after taking the exam.

### C. FITSP Exam Registration

Certification Candidates complete the following steps to register for the FITSP exams:

1. Submit an online registration for a given certification role at: <https://www.fitsi.org/fitspexamregistration.html>. The Certification Candidate will be asked to provide their name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number during the registration process. Payment must be made during registration to cover the exam fees, and this payment can be made with a major credit card or exam voucher code.
2. Certification Candidates can register for either In-Person Testing or Remote-Proctored Testing at the link above. In-Person Testing and Remote-Proctored Testing have locations, dates, and time restrictions. Certification Candidates can determine current availability for locations, dates, and times for both In-Person Testing and Remote-Proctored Testing at this link above.

### D. FITSP Certification Application Process

Certification Candidates become Certification Applicants when they submit a FITSI Certification Application. This submission includes a formal *FITSI Certification*

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*Application Form* and supporting documentation. Necessary items include 1) the *FITSI Certification Application Form* filled out (all 17 pages), 2) the FITSP Certification Applicant's current resume or curriculum vitae (CV), and 3) two separate third-party endorsements. All of these documents in total, constitute the FITSI Certification Application Package. This Certification Application Package provides evidence for the Certification Applicants to demonstrate they meet the Certification requirements prerequisites as listed in Section 6E below.

Certification Applicants who successfully pass the certification exam have five years to submit a FITSI Certification Application (and supporting documentation).

The application can be found at <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsidocuments.html>. Certification Applicants should email the completed FITSI Certification Application to [applications@fitsi.org](mailto:applications@fitsi.org).

As part of the certification application, Certification Applicants must submit two endorsement forms from professional colleagues who can verify the stated work experience and a current professional resume or curriculum vitae (CV). See the *FITSI Certification Application Form* for endorsement requirements. The professional endorsement forms are available for download on the same site as the *FITSI Certification Application Form*: <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsidocuments.html>.

Certification Applicants will be notified of the certification decision within 60 days of submitting a completed FITSI Certification Application Package.

## **E. FITSP Certification Prerequisites**

A minimum of five years of information security experience is required to qualify for any FITSP certification. This experience can be obtained from employment in the federal government or civilian sector. FITSI Certification Applicants can waive portions of the experience requirements if the Certification Applicant possesses other complimentary security certifications or education.

- Educational waivers – Certification Applicants may waive one year of experience for a bachelor's degree in any discipline. Certification Applicants may waive one year of experience for a bachelor's degree and a second year with a master's degree with an IT or information assurance focus. Each degree allows for one year of experience to be waived. Degrees must be issued by a fully accredited institution.
- Complimentary security certifications – Certification Applicants are eligible to waive one year of experience by possessing one or more of the following IT security certifications:
  - CompTIA Advanced Security Practitioner (CASP+)
  - CompTIA Cybersecurity Analyst (CySA+)
  - CompTIA Security+
  - EC-Council Certified Ethical Hacker Security+ (CEH)
  - Global Information Assurance Certified (GIAC)
  - ISACA Certified Information Security Manager (CISM)



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- ISACA Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA)
  - ISC2 Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)
  - ISC2 Certified Authorization Professional (CAP)
  - ISC2 System Security Certified Practitioner (SSCP)

Certification Applicants may not waive more than three years of experience with any combination of education and complimentary security certifications. All FITSP Certification Applicants must provide documented details of experience after passing the exam through the *FITSI Certification Application Form* (and supporting documents).

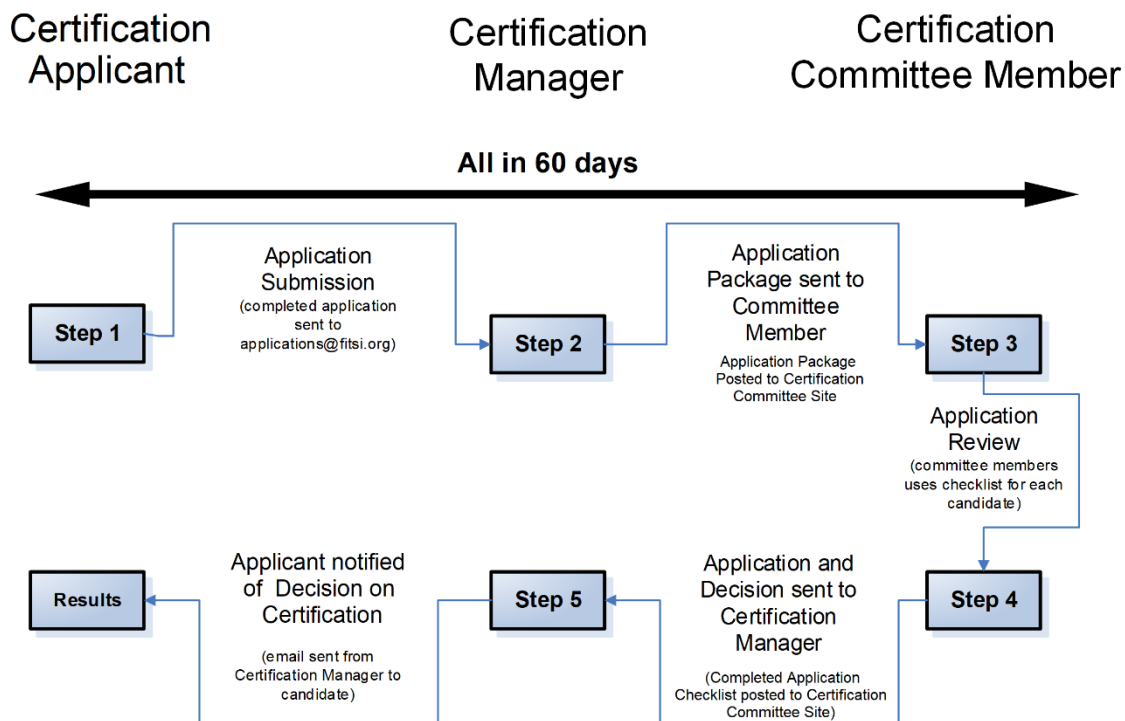
## **F. Description of the FITSI Certification Assessment Process**

The items submitted by the Certification Applicant are referred to as the FITSP Certification Application Package. At this point, the Certification Applicant is going through the assessment process. The assessment process is where the FITSI Certification Committee will review the FITSI Certification Application and either approve or deny the Certification Application Package. The FITSI Certification Manager will grant or deny the certification to the Certification Applicant.

The assessment process is broken into six distinct steps, all of which are conducted over 60 days:

- Step 1 – The Certification Applicant submits the *FITSI Certification Application Form* and supporting documentation (known collectively as the Certification Application Package) to [applications@fitsi.org](mailto:applications@fitsi.org).
- Step 2 – The Certification Manager sends the Certification Application Package (with the *FITSI Certification Application Form*) to a FITSI Certification Committee member for review by posting it to the FITSI Certification Committee site.
- Step 3 – The FITSI Committee member assesses the Certification Application Package (with the *FITSI Certification Application Form*) using the *FITSI Certification Application Checklist*. The *FITSI Certification Application Checklist* uses a point system to determine whether to approve or deny the Certification Application Package.
- Step 4 – The FITSI Committee member sends the Certification Application Package back to the FITSI Certification Manager by posting the updated *FITSI Certification Application Checklist* to the FITSI Certification Committee site.
- Step 5 – The FITSI Certification Manager notifies the Certification Applicant of the Decision on Certification via email.
- Step 6 – The FITSI Certification Manager grants or denies the Certification Applicant the FITSP Certification.

All of this is displayed below in Figure 3.



**Figure 3:** Visual of the FITSI Certification Assessment Process

### G. FITSP Certification Applicant's Rights During the Assessment

Certification Applicants have the following rights as it relates to the assessment process:

1. A Certification Applicant has the right to be evaluated fairly and impartially.
2. A Certification Applicant has the right for FITSI to use a measurable and traceable process that provides accountability for the certification decision.
3. A Certification Applicant has the right for FITSI to confine its decision on certification to those matters specifically related to the requirements of the FITSP Certification Program (as defined by its scheme).
4. A Certification Applicant has the right that other unrelated information should not be brought into the assessment (or review) by FITSI for the certification decision.
5. A Certification Applicant has the right that the certification decision shall be made solely by FITSI.
6. A Certification Applicant has the right that the certification decision shall be based only on the information contained in the FITSI Certification Application Package.
7. A Certification Applicant has the right to appeal any decision on certification through the FITSI Appeals and Complaint Process identified later in this Handbook.

### H. All Related Certification Fees

Certification fees are published by FITSI on the FITSI Fees webpage and can be found at the following: <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsifees.html>. Any adjustment in certification fees will be posted on the FITSI website.

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## I. FITSP Certification Packet

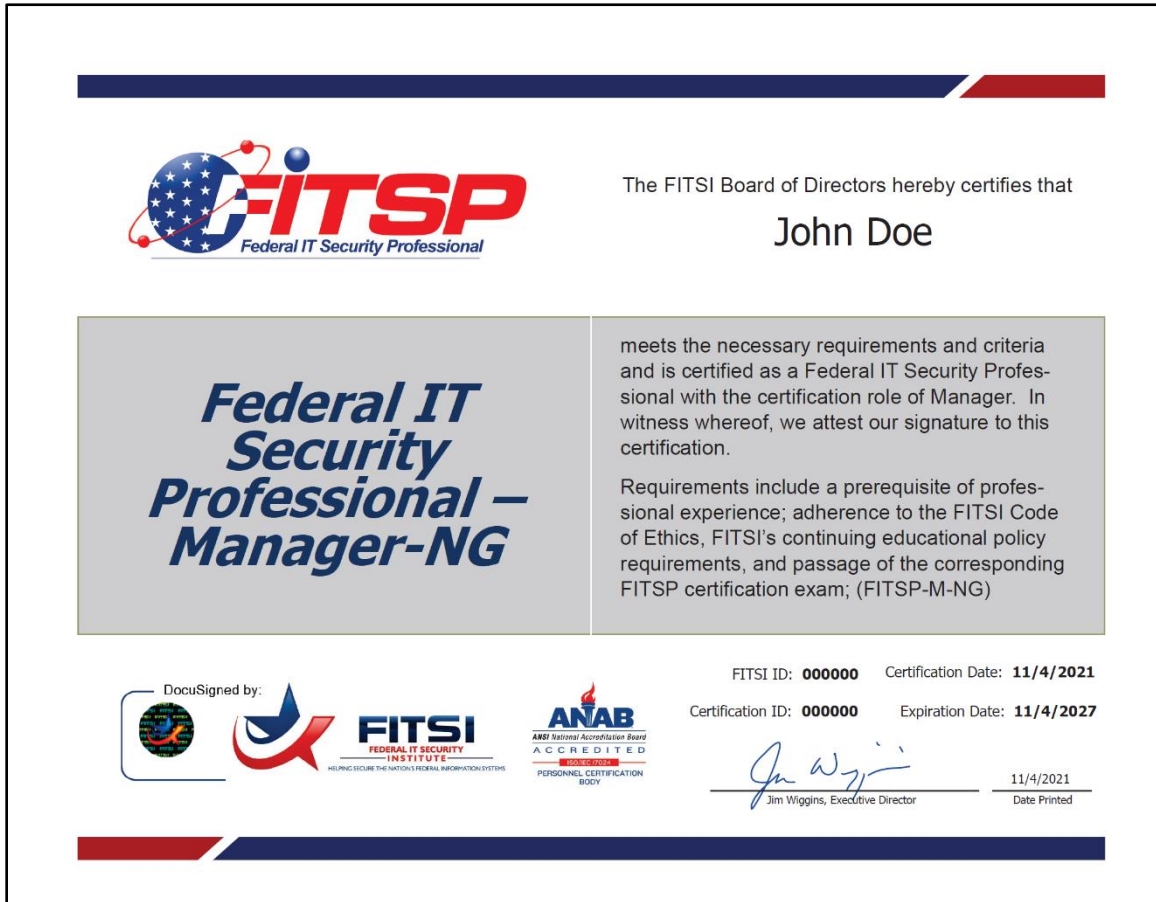
FITSI endeavors to provide approved FITSP Certification Holders a FITSP Certification Packet within 30 days of notification of the granting of certification. The FITSP Certification Packet includes the following:

- FITSI Certification Welcome Letter
- FITSP Certification Certificate (Printed), including the FITSI Security Hologram
- FITSP Certification Certificate Holder (frame)
- FITSI Identification (ID)/Certification Card
- FITSP Challenge Coin
- FITSI Marketing Folder
- Paperboard Mailers (Industrial Envelope)
- FITSI Logo Mailing Label
- *FITSI Certification Holder Handbook*
- *Earning CPE Units for FITSI Certifications Handbook* (if applicable)

FITSI provides the Certification Packet via US mail to the address reflected on the private portal site at <https://www.fitsi.org> and a digitally signed electronic version of the FITSP Certificate via email. All contents of the Certification Packet remain the property of FITSI. FITSI may suspend or withdraw the certification for just cause as outlined in the *FITSI Certification Holder Handbook*.

Each Certification Candidate will be assigned a unique FITSI ID number and a unique Certification Number.

Examples of a FITSP-Manager-NG Certification, the FITSI ID/Certification Card, and the FITSP Challenge Coin are below. Material is similar for Designer-NG, Operator-NG, and Auditor-NG Certifications.



**Figure 4:** Example of a FITSP-Manager-NG Certification



**Figure 5:** Example of a FITSI ID/Certification Card



**Figure 6:** Example of a FITSP Challenge Coin

## **J. Other Associated Fees**

Other associated certification fees or membership fees are published by FITSI on the FITSI Fees webpage and can be found at the following:

<https://www.fitsi.org/fitsifees.html>.

## **K. FITSP Exam Preparation**

The following resource can help Certification Candidates study for the FITSI certification exams. FITSI does not intend the list to imply endorsement of the specific references nor guarantees that using these resources will result in passing the exam.

- The FITSI Federal Body of Knowledge Guide - FITSI publishes an FBK used as the exam criteria. All the exam questions are derived from sources found in the FBK. The FBK is updated as necessary and can be found at <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsidocuments.html>.
- FITSI Authorized Courseware – FITSI has partnered with 30 Bird Media to develop and distribute Authorized Courseware for the FITSP Certification Program. The courseware is developed by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) who use the FBK as the source for the courseware content. Links to the courseware can be found at <https://www.fitsi.org/fitspauthorizedcourseware.html>.

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## 7. Duties of the FITSP Certification Holder

### A. Complete Requirements

The FITSP Certification Holder's requirements are detailed in the *FITSI Certification Holder Handbook*. This Handbook is available for free at the following website: <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsidocuments.html>.

Below are some common requirements that a Certification Candidate may be interested in understanding before pursuing certification.

### B. FITSI Code of Ethics

All Certification Holders who possess a FITSP certification must agree to abide by the FITSI Code of Ethics, which can be found in the *FITSI Code of Ethics Handbook* at <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsidocuments.html>. Violations of any tenet of the FITSI Code of Ethics may be grounds for suspension or withdrawal of a Certification Holder's FITSP certification(s) and possibly FITSI membership (where applicable).

### C. Certification Maintenance Requirements

Certification Holders are required to pay an annual maintenance fee (AMF).

All FITSP Next Generation certifications are valid for six years but can be revoked by FITSI for violations of the FITSI Code of Ethics or other egregious acts that undermine the good character required by a Certification Holder of a FITSP certification. The FITSI Code of Ethics can be found in the *FITSI Code of Ethics Handbook* at <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsidocuments.html>.

### D. Recertification Requirements

Federal standards are constantly changing, requiring a Certification Holder to maintain knowledge currency. The FITSP certification will expire and requires recertification. The details below define the requirements for recertification.

The FITSP-NG certifications are valid for six years. During those six years, Certification Holders must meet the following requirements to be eligible for recertification:

- Abide by the FITSI Code of Ethics
- Pay an Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF). The annual fee is published by FITSI on the FITSI Fees webpage and can be found at the following: <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsifees.html>.
- Retest every six years at the end of the certification cycle

Certification Holders that meet the first two requirements above can retest at no charge up to six months before expiration. If the Certification Holder does not retest in the six months before the expiration date, they are not considered certified after the expiration period has passed. At that point, they will have to retest and reapply for the FITSP certification as if they were a new FITSI Certification Candidate.

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## **E. Certification Suspension and Certification Withdrawal (Revocation)**

FITSP Certification Holders must keep their certifications in good standing for the entire six-year cycle. A FITSP certification can be suspended or withdrawn (revoked) for a Certification Holder due to non-compliance with the certification maintenance requirements.

Certification may be put into a suspended state for the following reasons:

- Failure to stay current with AMF
- Having an active complaint for violation of the FITSI Code of Ethics

The suspension period can last for up to 90 days. During this time, the Certification Holder must refrain from promoting the certification while suspended. To remove the certification from a suspended state, the Certification Holder must address the issue causing the suspension.

If the Certification Holder does not address the issue causing the suspension after 90 days, the certification will be withdrawn (revoked).

Reasons for withdrawal (revocation) of the certification are:

- Continued failure to bring outstanding AMFs current after 90 days
- Substantiated violation of the FITSI Code of Ethics as determined through the FITSI complaint process

## **F. Certification Reinstatement**

A request to reinstate a withdrawn (revoked) certification can be submitted up to 18 months from the withdrawal date by submitting a *FITSI Certification Reinstatement Application Form*. Additional fees and penalties apply. This form can be found at <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsidocuments.html>.

A Certification Holder who has had their certification withdrawn for violation of the FITSI Code of Ethics cannot have their FITSP certification reinstated.

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## 8. Examination Process Details – In-Person Testing

### A. Prior to Exam Day

Certification Candidates will receive the FITSP Exam In-Person Testing Details email, including the in-person testing location and exam start time.

### B. Day of the Exam

#### 1. Exam Check-In

Certification Candidates must report to the designated exam location at least 30 minutes before the posted exam start time. Certification Candidates arriving after the exam start time must reschedule the exam and pay the rescheduling fee. Certification Candidates must present a copy of the *FITSP Exam In-Person Testing Details* email and two forms of ID (one must be a photo ID; both must contain a signature).

Certification Candidates must sign a *FITSI Exam Regulations – In-person Testing Form*, which outlines the exam center rules and regulations. Certification Candidates should read and understand all the stated rules and regulations. This form is provided to all exam Certification Candidates at the FITSI-hosted exam event.

Certification Candidates who arrive later than the posted exam start time or do not have a copy of the *FITSP Exam In-Person Testing Details* email or the required two forms of ID will not be permitted to enter the exam room. These Certification Candidates must reschedule the exam and pay the rescheduling fee if they wish to take the exam at another time. Otherwise, the Certification Candidate will forfeit the full exam fee.

#### 2. Taking the Exam

Seating in the exam room is not assigned. Certification Candidates are to be seated and store all personal items in the designated area before the exam starts. Such personal items include but are not limited to backpacks, briefcases, papers, computers, cell phones, calculators, drinks, and food. Notes may be taken in the Notepad application portion of the exam platform. No other notes may be taken. The FITSI Exam Proctor will instruct the Certification Candidates on the exam format and initiate the exam. The FITSI Exam Proctor may not answer any exam content-related questions before, during, or after the exam.

Certification Candidates have three hours from the exam's start time to complete the exam. No additional time will be allotted, and there are no scheduled breaks. Escorted bathroom breaks are permitted on an as-needed basis. Exam time will not be extended to accommodate bathroom breaks. Certification Candidates may choose to end an exam early but will not be allowed to re-enter the exam room.



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### 3. Exam Center Rules

The following rules are enforced at all exam locations:

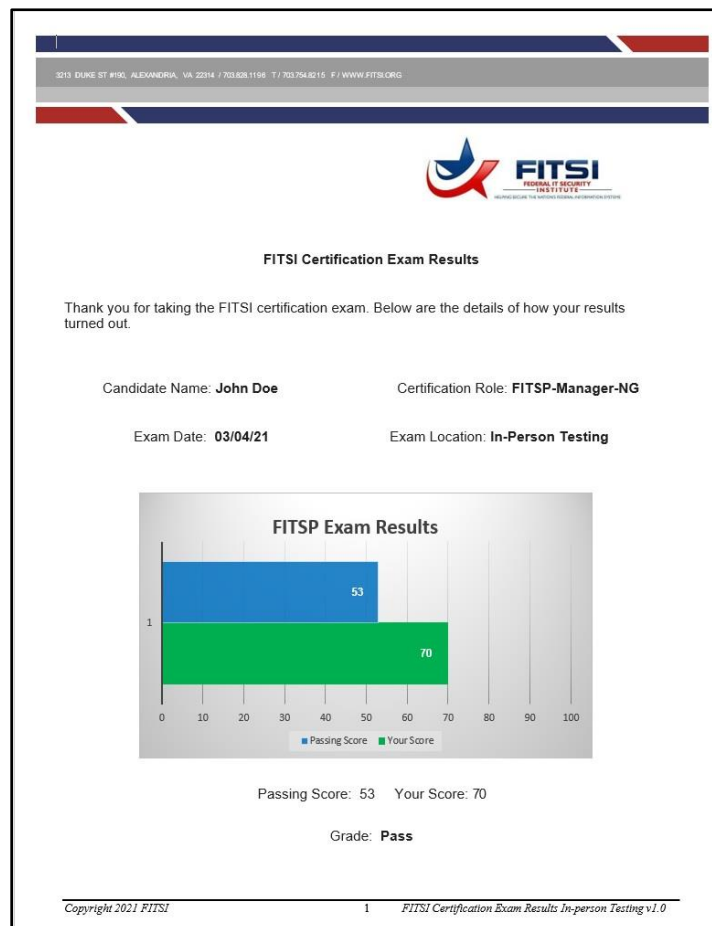
- All Certification Candidates must show two forms of ID (one must be a photo ID; both must contain a signature) and a copy of the *FITSP Exam In-Person Testing Details* email to be admitted to the exam room.
- Certification Candidates must arrive at least 30 minutes before the posted exam start time.
- Certification Candidates arriving after the posted exam start time will not be permitted in the exam room. These Certification Candidates must reschedule the exam and pay the rescheduling fee if they wish to take the exam at another time. Otherwise, the Certification Candidate will forfeit the full exam fee per Section 8.B.1 above.
- No guests are permitted in the exam room.
- All reference material, books, papers, or personal items must be stored in the designated area.
- Electronic devices must be turned off and stored in the designated area. Such items include but are not limited to cell phones, recording devices, cameras, computers, calculators, music devices, pagers, or personal digital assistants.
- No weapons or instruments that may be reasonably used as weapons are permitted in the exam room.
- No test material, documents, etc., may be taken from the exam room.
- Certification Candidates may not communicate with anyone during the exam. FITSI Exam Proctors are authorized to maintain a secure and proper testing environment and are permitted to ask Certification Candidates to move to achieve such.
- No questions concerning the exam content may be asked before, during, or after the exam. The FITSI Exam Proctor will not, at any time, respond to questions regarding exam content.
- Food, drink, tobacco, or gum are prohibited in the exam room.
- There are no scheduled breaks during the three hours allowed for the exam. Certification Candidates are permitted breaks individually, but no additional time will be allotted. Certification Candidates who request a break must be escorted at all times.
- Certification Candidates are not permitted to talk or communicate during an individual break. Those who do so will not be permitted back into the exam room and will forfeit any associated exam fees. The Certification Candidate's exams will not be scored.
- Certification Candidates may not copy in writing or otherwise record for transmission to others any exam questions or answers or other aspects of the exam.
- Certification Candidates may not offer, assist, or solicit assistance from another exam Certification Candidates, the FITSI Exam Proctor, or others responsible for administering the exam.

- Certification Candidates may not engage in any other conduct or inappropriate behavior that is harmful to the integrity of the exam or the other Certification Candidates taking the exam.

Failure to abide by these exam rules will result in the Certification Candidate's dismissal from the exam. Such Certification Candidates may be banned from any future exam. FITSI Exam Proctors are authorized to take immediate and appropriate measures against Certification Candidates caught violating exam rules. The Certification Candidate can appeal the dismissal to the Appeals Committee following FITSI's appeals policy.

### C. Notification of Results

After completing the FITSP certification exam, the Certification Candidate will be notified of exam results (pass or fail). Certification Candidates will receive the FITSI Certification Exam Results sheet indicating their exam score by email within 3-5 business days. An example of the FITSI Certification Exam Results is shown below.



**Figure 7:** Example of *FITSI Certification Exam Results – In-Person Testing*

Additionally, Certification Candidates will receive a FITSI Exam Certification Candidate Comments link to provide feedback on their exam experience.

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Certification Candidates that want a more detailed breakdown of how they did in each domain can submit a request via the *FITSI Certification Exam Results –Breakdown - Request Form* and send it to [contactus@FITSI.org](mailto:contactus@FITSI.org). FITSI will assemble a second FITSI Certification Exam Breakdown Results – In-Person Testing sheet and send it to the Certification Candidate within 14 days of the request.

#### **D. Retesting**

Certification Candidates who fail to achieve the minimum cut-score will be eligible to retest, for a retesting fee, after a waiting period of 21 calendar days. This retesting fee is only available for one attempt at testing at a reduced rate. Certification Candidates who fail to retest within one year of the initial exam date will be charged the initial exam rate. Certification Candidates who wish to retest must notify FITSI via email at [contactus@FITSI.org](mailto:contactus@FITSI.org).

#### **E. Exam Irregularities**

The FITSI Exam Proctor will determine how best to proceed if an exam is interrupted for an unforeseen reason (power outage, an act of God, or other unforeseen events). The FITSI Exam Proctor can cancel the exam, restart the exam, or continue the exam.

- **Canceling an Exam due to Weather or any Other Unforeseeable Event**  
The Certification Manager can cancel an exam due to weather, issues at the exam location, or any other unforeseen event that would prohibit testing. If an exam is canceled, it will be rescheduled as soon as possible. The Certification Manager will attempt to notify exam Certification Candidates promptly of such cancelation. Certification Candidates will not be required to pay a rescheduling fee in this instance. While the Certification Manager will attempt to reschedule the exam for the same location, this is not guaranteed.
- **Canceling an Exam that was Interrupted**  
The FITSI Exam Proctor can cancel an exam in progress if necessary (in a power outage, an act of God, or other unforeseen events). Each Certification Candidate will be eligible to register for another exam for no additional fee. In this case, the Certification Candidates' answers and current scores will not be saved.
- **Restarting an Exam that was Interrupted**  
If time allows, the FITSI Exam Proctor can restart an interrupted exam for the above reasons. Certification Candidates will be allotted three hours to complete the exam. If a Certification Candidate chooses not to restart the interrupted exam, the Certification Candidate may register for another scheduled exam for no additional fee. In this case, the Certification Candidate's answers and current score will not be saved.
- **Continuing an Exam that was Interrupted**  
If conditions allow, the FITSI Exam Proctor may continue an interrupted exam for the above reasons. The time of the interruption will not be counted towards exam time. Any individual who does not wish to continue the exam may register for another scheduled exam at no additional charge. In this case, the Certification Candidate's answers and current score will not be saved.
- **Lost or Unreadable Exams**

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FITSI takes all available precautions to prevent loss and or unreadable exam results. In the rare and extreme case in which a Certification Candidate's completed exam is lost or unreadable, the Certification Candidate must retest. No additional exam fees will be charged in this case.

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## 9. Examination Process Details – Remote-Proctored Testing

### A. Prior to the Exam Date

1. FITSI will email Certification Candidates requesting three dates and time slots for the remote-proctored test following the Certification Candidate's registration. Available test periods are Monday – Saturday, 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM, or 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM. (All time zones are Eastern Time).
2. Once the remote-proctored testing date and time are selected, FITSI will send the *FITSI Exam Regulations – Remote-Proctored Testing Form*, which outlines the exam rules and regulations, for the Certification Candidate's signature. Certification Candidates should read and understand all the stated rules and regulations and sign the form using DocuSign.
3. Upon receipt of the signed *FITSI Exam Regulations – Remote-Proctored Testing Form*, FITSI will provision Certification Candidate access to the online exam delivery platform for the scheduled date and time.
4. Finally, FITSI will send the *FITSI Exam Remote-Proctored Testing Details* email with the scheduled date and time, detailed preparatory steps, and instructions for the remote-proctored testing process.
5. It is highly recommended that Certification Candidates access the exam delivery platform to run system checks in advance of the scheduled date and time to ensure the Certification Candidate's computer system can support the remote-proctored testing. Additionally, FITSI recommends that Certification Candidates take advantage of the exam delivery platform's "Take the Test Tutorial" to prepare for the exam fully.

### B. Day of the Exam

On the exam day, the Certification Candidate will receive an email at least two hours before the scheduled time with two links to use during the remote-proctored testing.

1. Install the application using the link provided in the email 30 minutes before the scheduled exam time.
2. Connect a smartphone to the Zoom link provided in the email 30 minutes before the scheduled exam time. The FITSI Exam Proctor will provide further instructions using the Zoom link.
3. Exam Check-In  
Certification Candidates must be connected to the Zoom link 30 minutes before the scheduled exam start time. Certification Candidates connecting after the scheduled exam start time must reschedule the exam and pay the rescheduling fee. Certification Candidates must present two forms of ID (one must be a photo ID; both must contain a signature) to the FITSI Exam Proctor using the webcam to begin the remote-proctored exam.

Notes may be taken in the Notepad application portion of the exam platform. No other notes may be taken. The FITSI Exam Proctor may not answer any exam content-related questions before, during, or after the exam.

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Certification Candidates who connect later than the posted exam start time or do not have the required two forms of ID will not be permitted to take the exam. These Certification Candidates must reschedule the exam and pay the rescheduling fee if they wish to take the exam at another time. Otherwise, the Certification Candidate will forfeit the full exam fee.

4. Remote-Proctored Testing Environment Security

The FITSI Exam Proctor will conduct various checks to ensure the environment is suitable and secure and monitor the Certification Candidate for the entire exam duration. Additionally, the FITSI Exam Proctor will have access to the Certification Candidate's exam screen and will be able to assist with technical difficulties.

Certification Candidates must position the computer webcam or smartphone to show the Certification Candidate's face, hands, and workspace view for clear visibility throughout the entire remote exam session.

The FITSI Exam Proctor will conduct a room scan to view the Certification Candidate's workspace, desk or tabletop, and general surrounding area.

5. During the exam, no personal items can be accessible to the Certification Candidate, such as backpacks, briefcases, papers, calculators, drinks, and food. Notes may be taken in the Notepad application portion of the exam platform.

The Exam Protector will instruct the Certification Candidate on the remote exam format and when to initiate the exam. The FITSI Exam Proctor may not answer any exam content-related questions before, during, or after the exam.

Certification Candidates have three hours from the exam's start time to complete the exam. No additional time will be allotted, and there are no scheduled breaks. Bathroom breaks are permitted on an as-needed basis. Exam time will not be extended to accommodate bathroom breaks.

6. Remote-Proctored Testing Rules

The following rules are enforced for all FITSI exams:

- All Certification Candidates must show two forms of ID (one must be a photo ID; both must contain a signature) to begin the online exam.
- Certification Candidates must connect 30 minutes before the assigned exam start time.
- Certification Candidates connecting after the assigned exam start time will not be permitted to take the online exam. These Certification Candidates must reschedule the exam and pay the rescheduling fee if they wish to take the exam at another time. Otherwise, the Certification Candidate will forfeit the full exam fee per Section 9.B.3 above.
- No guests are permitted in the room with the Certification Candidate.
- All reference material, books, papers, or personal items must be stored out of reach of the Certification Candidate.

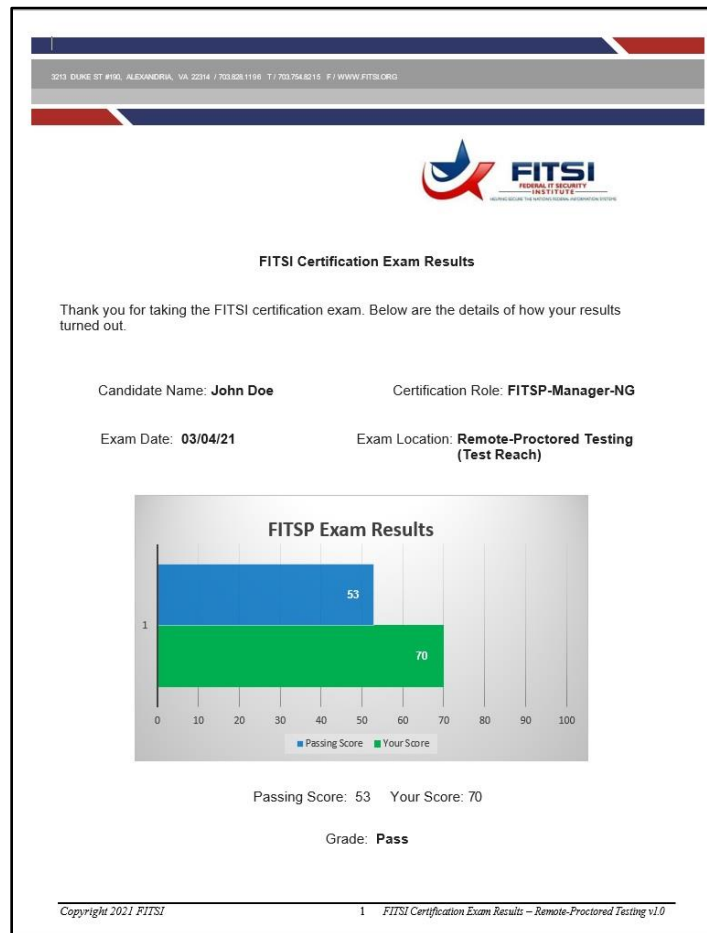
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- Except for the computer and smartphone needed for the online exam, all other electronic devices must be turned off and stored out of reach of the Certification Candidate. Such items include but are not limited to cell phones, recording devices, cameras, computers, calculators, music devices, pagers, or personal digital assistants.
  - No weapons or instruments that may be reasonably used as weapons are permitted in the room with the Certification Candidate.
  - No test material, documents, etc., may be taken from the room.
  - Certification Candidates may not communicate with anyone during the exam. FITSI Exam Proctors are authorized to maintain a secure and proper testing environment.
  - No questions concerning the exam content may be asked before, during, or after the exam. The FITSI Exam Proctor will not, at any time, respond to questions regarding exam content.
  - Food, drink, tobacco, or gum are prohibited in the Certification Candidate's room.
  - There are no scheduled breaks during the three hours allowed for the exam. Certification Candidates are permitted breaks individually, but no additional time will be allotted. The FITSI Exam Proctor will rescan the Certification Candidate's environment upon the Certification Candidate's return.
  - Certification Candidates are not permitted to talk or communicate with anyone during an individual break. Those who do so will not be permitted to continue the exam and will forfeit any associated exam fees. The Certification Candidate's exam will not be scored.
  - Certification Candidates may not copy in writing or otherwise record for transmission to others any exam questions or answers or other aspects of the exam. Notes may be taken in the Notepad application portion of the exam platform.
  - Certification Candidates may not offer, assist, or solicit assistance from others, the FITSI Exam Proctor, or others responsible for administering the exam.
  - Certification Candidates may not engage in any other conduct or inappropriate behavior that harms the integrity of the exam.

Failure to abide by these exam rules will result in the Certification Candidate's dismissal from the exam. Such Certification Candidates may be banned from any future exam. FITSI Exam Proctors are authorized to take immediate and appropriate measures against Certification Candidates caught violating exam rules. The Certification Candidate can appeal the dismissal to the Appeals Committee following FITSI's appeals policy.

### **C. Notification of Results**

After completing the FITSP certification exam, the Certification Candidate will be notified of exam results (pass or fail). Certification Candidates will receive the FITSI

Certification Exam Results indicating their exam score by email within 3-5 business days. An example of the FITSI Certification Exam Results is shown below.



**Figure 8:** Example of *FITSI Certification Exam Results – Remote-Proctored Testing*

Additionally, Certification Candidates will receive a FITSI Exam Candidate Comments link to provide feedback on their exam experience.

Certification Candidates that want a more detailed breakdown of how they did in each domain can submit a request via the *FITSI Certification Exam Results –Breakdown - Request Form* and send it to [contactus@FITSI.org](mailto:contactus@FITSI.org). FITSI will assemble a second FITSI Certification Exam Breakdown Results – Remote-Proctored Testing sheet and send it to the Certification Candidate within 14 days of the request.

#### **D. Retesting**

Certification Candidates who fail to achieve the minimum cut-score will be eligible to retest, for a retesting fee, after a waiting period of 21 calendar days. This retesting fee is only available for one attempt at testing at a reduced rate. Certification Candidates who fail to retest within one year of the initial exam date will be charged the initial exam rate.



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Certification Candidates who wish to retest must notify FITSI via email at [contactus@FITSI.org](mailto:contactus@FITSI.org).

### **E. Exam Irregularities**

The FITSI Exam Proctor will determine how best to proceed if an exam is interrupted for an unforeseen reason (power outage, an act of God, or other unforeseen events). The FITSI Exam Proctor can cancel the exam, restart the exam, or continue the exam.

- b. **Canceling an Exam due to Weather or any Other Unforeseeable Event**  
The FITSI Exam Proctor can cancel an exam due to weather, issues at the exam location, or any other unforeseen event that would prohibit testing. If an exam is canceled, it will be rescheduled as soon as possible. The Certification Manager will attempt to notify exam Certification Candidates promptly of such cancelation. Certification Candidates will not be required to pay a rescheduling fee in this instance. While the Certification Manager will attempt to reschedule the exam for the same location, this is not guaranteed.
- c. **Canceling an Exam that was Interrupted**  
The FITSI Exam Proctor can cancel an exam in progress if necessary (in a power outage, an act of God, or other unforeseen events). Each Certification Candidate will be eligible to register for another exam for no additional fee. In this case, the Certification Candidates' answers and current scores will be erased.
- d. **Restarting an Exam that was Interrupted**  
If time allows, the FITSI Exam Proctor can restart an interrupted exam for the above reasons. Certification Candidates will be allotted three hours to complete the exam. If a Certification Candidate chooses not to restart the interrupted exam, the Certification Candidate may register for another scheduled exam for no additional fee. In this case, the Certification Candidate's answers and current score will be erased.
- e. **Continuing an Exam that was Interrupted**  
The FITSI Exam Proctor may continue an exam interrupted for reasons stated above if conditions allow. The time of the interruption will not be counted towards exam time. Any individual who does not wish to continue the exam may register for another scheduled exam at no additional charge. In this case, the Certification Candidate's answers and current score will be erased.
- f. **Lost or Unreadable Exams**  
FITSI takes all available precautions to prevent loss and or unreadable exam results. In the rare and extreme case in which a Certification Candidate's completed exam is lost or unreadable, the Certification Candidate must retest. No additional exam fees will be charged in this case.

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## 10. The Appeals Process

Any decision rendered by a FITSI committee, FITSI Personnel (consultant, employee or volunteer) that impacts a FITSI member, Certification Candidate, Certification Applicant, or Certification Holder may be appealed through the FITSI Appeals Committee. All appeals must be made within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the decision being appealed.

Appealable decisions include:

- Certification Denial
- Certification Revocation
- Refund Refusal
- Other decisions or issues

An appeal must be filed by submitting the *Appeals Form* in the *FITSI Appeals and Complaint Application* found at <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsidocuments.html>. The completed form should be emailed to FITSI at [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org).

Once an *Appeals Form* is received, FITSI will carry out the following steps:

1. **Initial Appeal Acknowledgement.** The Appeals Committee will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 30 calendar days of receipt. The email acknowledgment will include the following:
  - Explanation of the appeals process for the issue at hand
  - The Appeals Committee member's point of contact
  - A timeline for response and decision by the Appeals Committee
2. **Appeals Review.** The Appeals Committee will render a decision within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal unless additional information is required. In the event additional information is required, the Appeals Committee will render a decision within 30 calendar days of receipt of the required information. The decision will be provided via email to the appellant.
3. **Appeals Decision/Response.** The Appeals Committee's response will be either appeal accepted or appeal denied. All responses will include a detailed explanation of the decision.
4. **Appeals Escalation.** All decisions made by the Appeals Committee are considered final.

The appeal submission and subsequent investigation and decision shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

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## 11. The Complaint Process

Complaints can be lodged against FITSI for the following areas:

- Complaints regarding examination items
- Complaints regarding the examination process
- Complaints regarding specific exam circumstances
- Complaint against any FITSI committee, FITSI Personnel (consultant, employee, or volunteer), FITSI member, Certification Candidate, Certification Applicant or Certification Holder the complainant feels is in violation of any FITSI policy
- Other issues

A complaint can be filed by submitting the *Complaint Form* in the *FITSI Appeals and Complaint Application*, found at <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsidocuments.html>. The completed form should be emailed to FITSI at [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org).

The Appeals Committee will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 30 calendar days of receipt. The email acknowledgment will include the following:

- Explanation of the complaint process for the issue at hand
- The Appeals Committee member's point of contact
- A timeline for response and decision by the Appeals Committee

All complaints must be submitted with supporting information. The FITSI Appeals Committee will review the nature of the complaint and render a decision on the complaint within 60 calendar days of receipt. FITSI will provide the complainant with progress reports during the 60 calendar days and an outcome. Each complainant will receive the Appeals Committee's decision or recommendation.

The response from the Appeals Committee will be one of the following:

- Complaint denied
- Complaint accepted
- Request for more information

Responses may include a detailed explanation of the response. All decisions made by the Appeals Committee are considered final.

In the event a complaint against a certified person is substantiated by the Appeals Committee, the Certification Director will send a memo notifying the subject of the complaint about the complaint within 30 days of the Appeals Committee's decision.

Any information provided to FITSI will be treated confidentially, and the complainant's identity will not be revealed to the accused without prior permission of the complainant.

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## 12. Special Accommodations, Cancellations, and Extreme Circumstances

### A. Requesting Special Accommodations for Exams

Certification Candidates who have special needs may request special accommodations for the exam. Examples of Certification Candidates who can request special accommodations are Certification Candidates with a documented disability (as defined by Title III of the ADA) or those who need to take an exam on an alternate date for religious purposes.

Certification Candidates requiring special accommodations must email the *FITSI Certification Candidate Special Accommodation Request Form* to [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org) with SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION in the subject line. This form can be found at <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsidocuments.html>. FITSI must have the FITSI Certification Candidate Special Accommodation Request Form and supporting documentation 30 calendar days before the scheduled exam date. Once FITSI has received the proper documentation, FITSI will consider the accommodations request. Certification Candidates will be notified at least ten calendar days before their exam date as to FITSI's decision regarding the request.

FITSI makes every attempt to honor special accommodation requests. However, because FITSI utilizes third-party locations for testing, a Certification Candidate's request may not be feasible at the exam location requested. If this is the case, the Certification Candidate may be allowed to choose a more appropriate testing location.

### B. FITSP Exam Cancellations/Rescheduling

Fully processed exam fees are non-refundable. Failure to attend the exam will result in a forfeiture of the exam fee. After a Certification Candidate is registered, rescheduling the date/location/or time will require an exam rescheduling fee. Rescheduling requests must be emailed to FITSI at [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org) a minimum of 72 hours before the originally scheduled exam date. Once the exam rescheduling fee is paid, FITSI will reschedule the Certification Candidates to an alternate date and time of the Certification Candidate's choosing. The exam rescheduling fee is published by FITSI on the FITSI Fees webpage and can be found at the following location: <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsifees.html>.

### C. FITSP Exams and Extreme Circumstances

If a Certification Candidate has missed the exam due to an emergency or hardship, including, but not limited to, serious illness, death in the immediate family, traffic accident, court appearance, jury duty, or military duty, the Certification Candidate may be permitted to reschedule the exam at no additional charge. To avoid a penalty, the Certification Candidate must submit written verification and supporting documentation of the situation by email to FITSI at [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org) within 30 calendar days of the original exam date. The Certification Manager will notify the Certification Candidate of FITSI's decision within 30 calendar days of receiving the required documentation.

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The Certification Candidate will forfeit the full exam fee if such a request is not made. At that point, the Certification Candidate must complete the entire registration process and pay the full exam fee.

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## 13. Forms

The most current version of the forms referenced in this Handbook can be found at <https://www.fitsi.org/fitsidocuments.html>.

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## 14. Appendix A, FITSI Contact Information

### **FITSI Mailing Address:**

Federal IT Security Institute (FITSI)  
3213 Duke St. #190  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: 703-828-1196

Web site: <https://www.fitsi.org>

General email: [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org)