


FITSI Certification Holder Handbook



Certification Holder
Handbook
Outlining the
FITSI Certification
Benefits

Version 1.0

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1. Overview

Congratulations on earning your FITSI Certification! We welcome you to the Federal IT Security Institute (FITSI) certification program. FITSI was founded in 2009 to help secure the Nation's Federal Information Systems by certifying that Federal Workforce members understand and can apply appropriate Federal IT security standards. FITSI has many certification holders and members around the world and we are pleased you are a part of this exciting group. While not a requirement to become a FITSI member to hold a FITSI certification we recommend you consider looking into the benefits of membership. More information can be found at the FITSI website: <http://www.fitsi.org>.

In this Certification Holder Handbook, you will find pertinent information regarding the management and maintenance of your FITSP Certification.

The most up to date Certification Holder Handbook can be downloaded from the following URL: <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>.

FITSI is a 501(c) (6) membership non-profit organization that is supported by exam and annual maintenance fees from its certification holders and members. Founded in 2009, FITSI was established to help provide a certification scheme for federal IT security workers in the United States. Candidates can pursue up to four certification roles that are commonly found in Federal agencies in the United States government (Manager, Designer, Operator, and Auditor).

2. Ongoing Certification Requirements

Your FITSI certification is valid for 3 years from the date it was issued. The issue date can be found on your Certification or on your FITSI ID Card.

To maintain currency with your FITSP certification, the certification holder must:

- Log 20 Continuing Professional Credits (CPEs) per year (60 total CPEs for the 3 year certification cycle) via the FITSI Portal. These CPEs must be earned and reported within 30 calendar days of the anniversary date of certification. See section below detailing CPEs for more information.
- Pay an Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF). See FITSI Fee Schedule for the most current fee schedule at the following web address:
<http://www.fitsi.org/documents>.

The FITSI auditing team will conduct audits of reported CPEs as part of an oversight and validation program to ensure that reported CPEs are relevant to the industry and appropriately quantified. All certification holders must possess sufficient supporting documentation as discussed in Section 4 of this Certification Holder Handbook to validate reported CPEs. Though all certification holders must retain this documentation, not all certified persons will be audited during any given certification cycle. Appropriate supporting documentation will enable the auditing team to quickly and efficiently complete their review.

When selected for an audit, the credential holder will be notified via email and asked to email or fax appropriate documentation for review. Upon successful completion of the CPE audit the FITSI certification holder will be notified of the findings. If additional documentation is necessary the auditor will solicit supporting documentation from the credential holder.

3. Using the FITSI Portal

As a certification holder of a FITSP credential you will now have access to the FITSI private portal. If necessary, you will receive your unique login information to the portal around the time you receive your Certification Holder welcome packet via email. The login information will be electronically sent to the email address that was entered at registration. If you fail to receive this email, please contact FITSI at contactus@fitsi.org with the words PORTAL LOGIN in the subject area. You will need to provide the following information:

- Full Name
- Address used for registration
- FITSI ID and Certification numbers (found on your FITSI ID card)
- Email address where portal log on information is to be sent

Once you receive your Portal log on information, you can access the FITSI Portal via the Login Section of www.FITSI.org. The login screen will look like this:

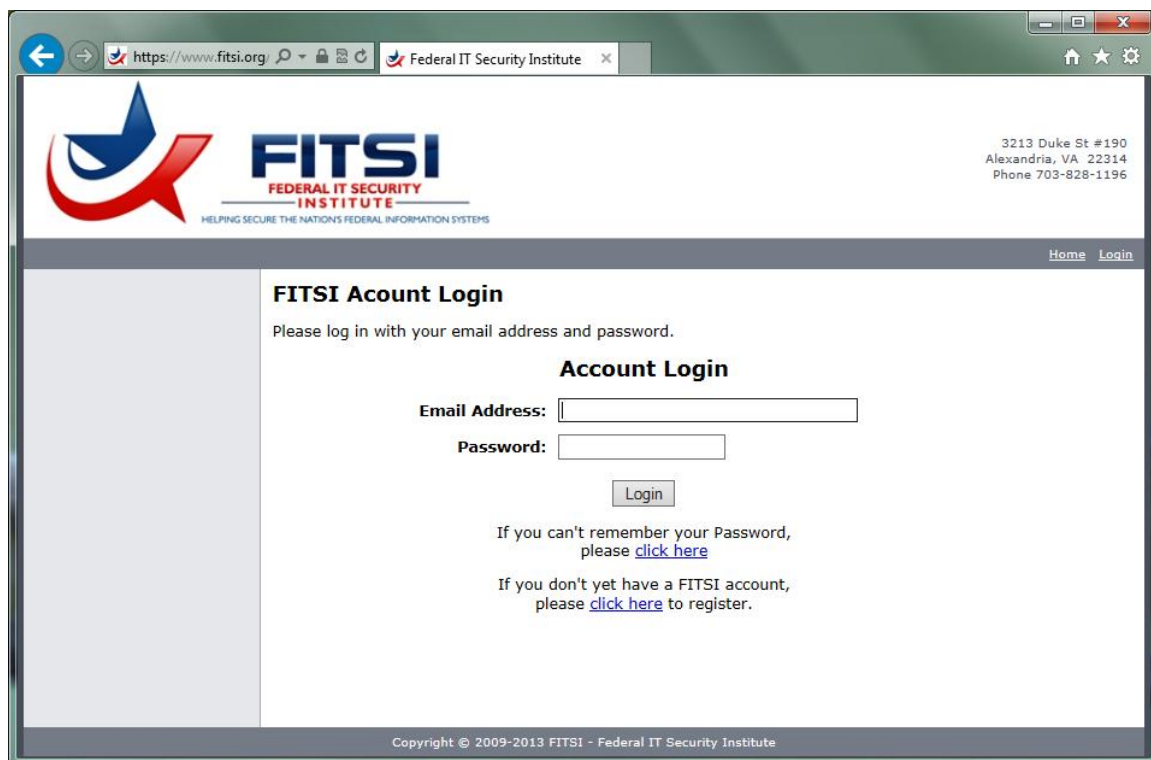


Figure 1: The FITSI Portal Login Screen

Certification holders will utilize the FITSI Portal to update personal information and to log relative Continuing Professional Education Credits (CPE's). CPE's are used in the evaluation of Certification renewal.

Under the *Member and Certification Holder Services* section, Certification Holders can complete a host of Services items. Such items include, but are not limited to:

-
- Update Profile Information
 - Log CPEs
 - Join the FITSI evangelist program

If you choose not to have your information published in a FITSI directory, please go to “My Profile” tab and click indicate what information you do not want in the FITSI directory.

FITSI may, from time to time, employ a third party vendor to provide information to the FITSI Certificant base. In this event, FITSI will only authorize the vendor a one time use privilege regarding certificant data. FITSI will not sell, rent or distribute personal information at any time.

No person may solicit for, or use the official certificant list of FITSI for any commercial purposes. This is in direct violation of the FITSI Privacy Policy. Failure to follow these directives will result in a revocation of Certification. The FITSI Privacy Policy can be found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>

Individuals who feel personal information has been misused by a fellow FITSI individual should contact FITSI Corporate Offices immediately. Contact information for FITSI can be found at the end of this Certification Holder Handbook.

4. Certified Professional Credits (CPEs)

As stated above, each FITSI certification holder must earn and log 60 CPE credits per certification lifecycle (3 years). The following section meant to clarify details regarding CPEs and FITSI certification.

A. What is a CPE?

Professional Education (CPE) credits are units obtained through the completion of activities that demonstrate growth and development of skills related to one's profession. Typically one CPE is equivalent to one hour of activity in pursuit of additional industry knowledge and/or experience.

It is important to understand that CPEs are earned outside of one's day-to-day employment activities. Activities that are directly related to a job do not qualify as CPEs. If a FITSI certification holder conducts the activity within the scope of his or her 9-to-5 job, then that activity cannot be used to earn CPEs.

While the activities that demonstrate CPE need to be outside the scope of the individual's day-to-day work, this does not mean the activity must occur outside of work hours. For example, a FITSI certification holder's employer may send the employee to a security-related conference that is conducted Monday-Friday from 9:00am-5:00pm. In this situation, the certification holder can use this as an opportunity to earn CPEs. While the activity is done during normal working hours, because it is outside the scope of normal employment and contributes to the professional development of that FITSI certified person, this activity can be used to earn CPEs.

B. CPE Requirements

Each certification holder must earn a minimum of 60 CPEs during each three-year cycle for each FITSI certification. A minimum of 20 CPEs must be earned each year. These CPEs must be earned and reported within 30 calendar days of the anniversary of the original date of certification.

For example, if John Doe earned the FITSP-Manager credential on January 1st, 2011, his certification will be valid until January 1st, 2014. He has until January 30th, 2012 to earn and report 20 CPEs for year number 1, January 30th, 2013 year two, and January 30th, 2011 for year three.

C. Where to Log CPEs

CPEs are reported at the private FITSI Portal. (See Section II – The FITSI Portal for more information on the FITSI Portal). Under the *Member and Certification Holders* Section you can link to “Manage CPEs.” Figure 2 illustrates this process.

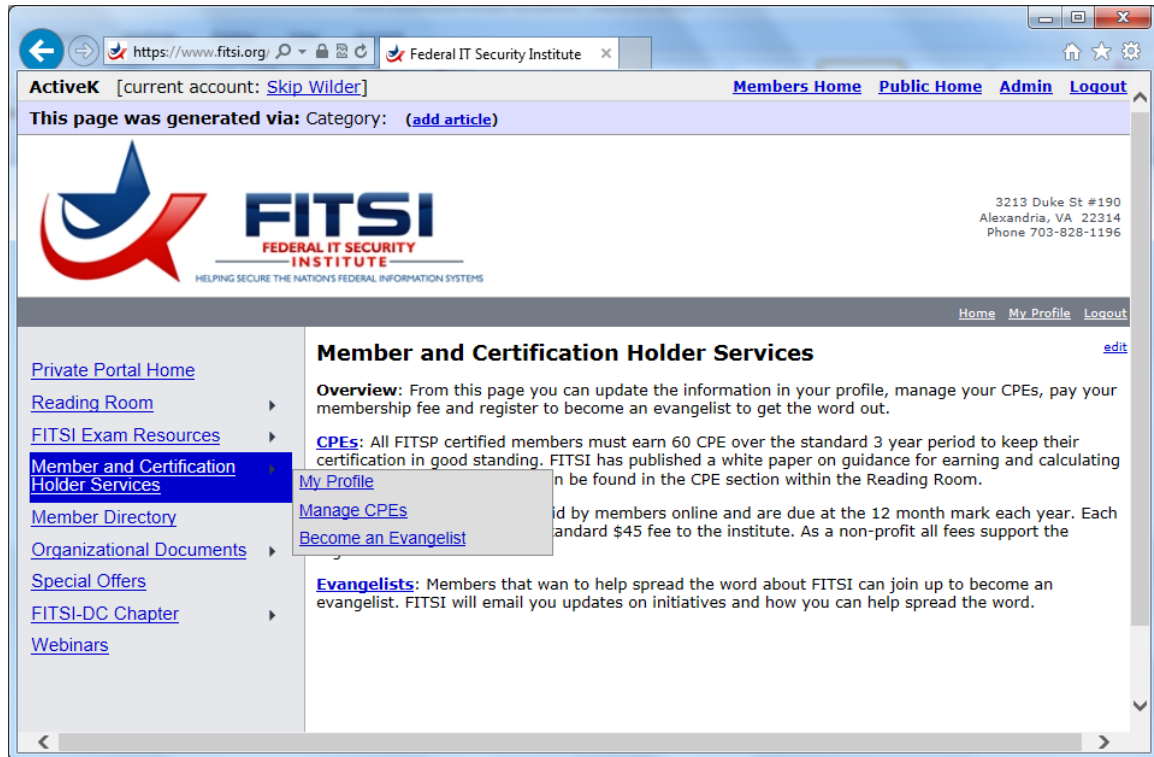


Figure 2: Logging CPEs on the FITSI Portal

Using this interface, certification holders may perform CPE management actions. Figure 3 shows an overview of this interface. Reminder: certification holders should plan on logging 20 CPEs per year through this interface to keep each FITSI certification current.

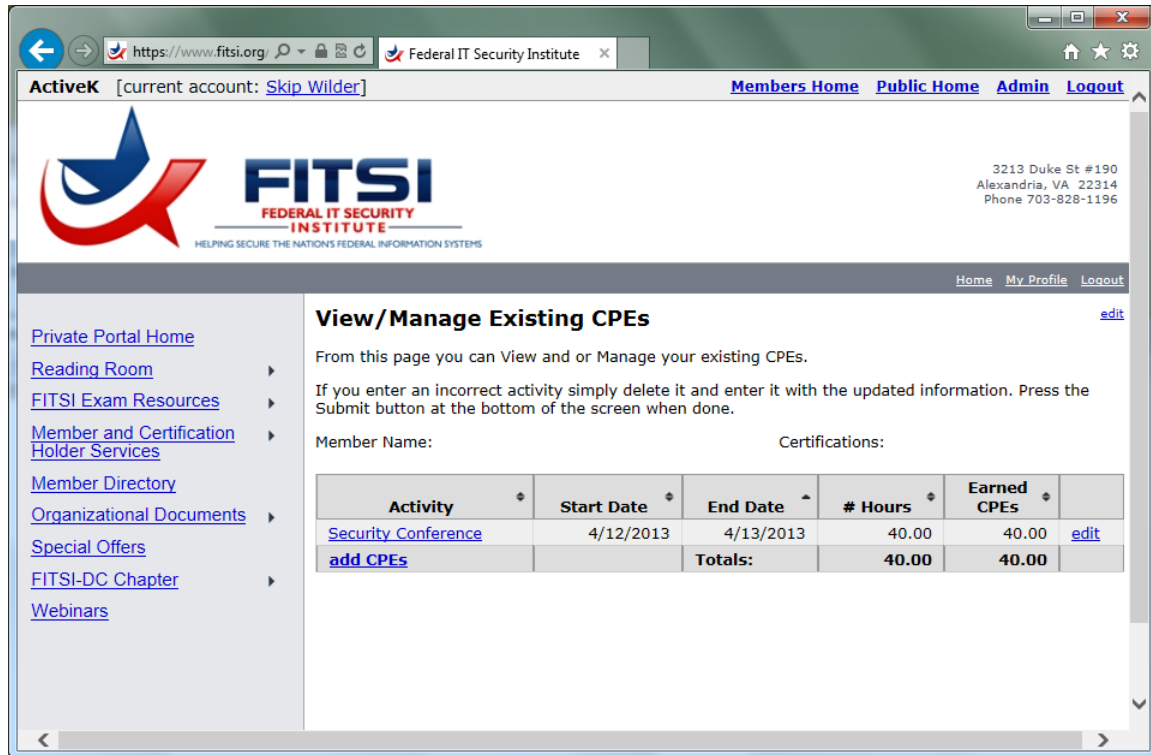


Figure 3: CPE Management Page

D. Qualifying Activities

Certification holders can pursue a wide range of activities to earn CPEs. All professional activities must be done outside of normal employment and must contribute to professional development in the IT security space. One CPE can be earned for each hour of related activity.

Below is a list of activities that certification holders can use to qualify for CPEs:

- Attend security conferences - 1 CPE for each hour of IT security discussion covered in the conference
- Attend security training classes – 1 CPE for each hour of instruction. These classes can be instructor lead (ILT), online or computer based training modules (CBTs).
- Publish security whitepapers - 1 CPE for each hour writing a whitepaper not to exceed 5 CPEs per published whitepaper
- Publish security books – 1 CPE for each hour writing a book not to exceed 30 CPEs per published book
- Provide IT security training classes – 3 hours of prep time for each hour of in-class time need to clarify...no CPEs for actual teaching time?
- Read IT security books – 1 CPE for each hour of reading a book – not to exceed 5 CPEs per book
- Provide NIST commentary on draft documents – 1 CPE for each hour of working on submitting commentary – not to exceed 5 CPE per activity

Examples:

1. Example #1 – Attending a security conference. Conference time is broken down into the number of hours of the conference. For a 35-hour conference (5 day) the FITSI certification holder can report 35 CPEs for this activity.
2. Example #2 – Taking a college level course worth 4 credits – College level courses are based upon in-class time. If a semester class meets one day a week for 10 weeks and includes 1.5 hours of instruction, this would result in 15 CPEs (10 X 1.5 = 15).
3. Example #3 – Reading an IT security book – If a certification holder reads an IT security book he or she can report one CPE for each hour reading up to a maximum of 5 CPEs.

E. CPE Documentation

FITSI certification holders should retain backup documentation proving the activity they reported at the FITSI CPE site. It is important to retain a full set of documentation so that, should the certification holder's CPE be audited, he or she can substantiate the time and activities indicated. Below is a list of documents that should be retained for each type of activity:

1. Attend security conferences

- a. Receipt showing payment of conference and name of attendee
- b. Conference guide provided to attendee detailing speakers and topics discussed – should also include number of days and time spent in the conference sessions
- c. Conference completion certificate (if provided)

2. Attend security training classes

- a. Receipt showing payment for course and name of attendee (free classes need confirmation email or communication without receipt)
- b. Course name and description
- c. Course syllabus
- d. Document detailing number of hours spent in class
- e. Course completion certificate

3. Publish security whitepapers

- a. Whitepaper name
- b. Detailed log of time spent preparing the whitepaper
- c. A copy of the published whitepaper and reference for where it can be located (such as a website URL)

4. Publish security books

- a. Book name, author, publication date and ISBN number
- b. Detailed log of time spent writing and editing the book

5. Provide IT security training classes

- a. Course name and description

-
- b. Course syllabus
 - c. Course timeline indicating time spent in class conducting class (CPEs are calculated based upon three times the total hours spent conducting class) clarify with section above

6. Read IT security books

- a. Book name, author, publication date and ISBN number
- b. Detailed log of time spent reading the book
- c. A summary of lessons-learned from the book related to the reader's FITSI certification area

7. Provide NIST commentary on draft IT security documents

- a. List and title of draft document reviewed
- b. Copy of commentary provided to NIST via email
- c. Detailed log of time to complete analysis and write up

These documents are not to be sent to FITSI but each certification holder should retain them for full accountability in the event of a CPE audit. Upon completion of the three-year cycle and recertification of qualifications by FITSI, the documentation for the previous three-year cycle need not be retained.

F. Non-Compliance

Failure to report the requisite CPEs each year may result in revocation of a certification holder's certification(s). For this reason it is important that all FITSI certified persons submit at least 20 CPEs each year for each FITSI certification.

Additionally, if a certification holder is audited and unable to provide appropriate backup documentation for reported CPE activities this may also result in revocation of that certified person's certification(s).

When a certification holder is determined to be in a non-compliant state the certification holder is given 90 calendar days to rectify the non-compliant state. Failure to rectify the non-compliant state after the 90 calendar days will result in revocation of the certification. After the 90 days has passed FITSI will not re-instate the certification status even if the certified person is able, at that point, to achieve compliance. FITSI may make exceptions to this policy for documented hardship cases.

FITSI will notify certification holders who enter a non-compliant state due to a failure to submit CPEs or non-payment of annual dues.

5. Use of the FITSI Certification Logo

An individual who has been granted a certification from FITSI may list the specific certification on stationary, websites, resumes, business cards and other promotional materials. Certification shall appear as:

First name, Last name, Federal IT Security Professional – *Role*

Or

First name, Last name, FITSP - *Role*

Where *role* indicates the area of expertise certified in: Designer, Operator, Manager or Auditor.

For example, if Mary Jones earned her FITSI certification role as an Operator, she would indicate it by

Mary Jones, Federal IT Security Professional –Operator

Or

Mary Jones, FITSP - Operator

6. Request for Certification Duplicates

A Certification holder may request additional copies of his or her Certification Certificate or their FITSI ID card. Please see *FITSI Fee Schedule* for a list of the most current duplicate copy fees. Duplicate Challenge Coins cannot be provided. The request for a duplicate Certification material can be facilitated by emailing contactus@fitsi.org.

Requests for duplicates will be fulfilled within 30 calendar days of receipt.

7. FITSI Code of Ethics

All FITSI Certification Holders must adhere and subscribe to the following Code of Ethics:

- Endeavor to protect the nation's citizens, information systems, information, processes and facilities.
- Maintain a high level of personal integrity in any and all transactions with customers, stakeholders, colleagues and acquaintances.
- Maintain the confidentiality of all sensitive information (i.e., Personally Identifiable Information) such that it does not create unnecessary risk for people and organizations.
- Refuse to engage in intentional activities that affect the availability of any and all IT systems and processes; both personally and professionally.
- Promote research and sharing of ideas and information that are worthy of such action. Give back to the community by adding value when possible.
- Refuse to foster FUD (Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt) in any and all interactions with both personal and professional relationships.
- Avoid conflicts of interest and recuse oneself when appropriate.
- Mentor and teach whenever possible.
- Be truthful in all information provided to FITSI to obtain certification.
- Uphold professionalism while participating in a certification exam. Individuals agree that no outside help was used to pass a certification.
- Protect the content of all FITSI exam material. Individuals agree not to share, distribute or sell any FITSI exam information.

Violations of any of this Code of Ethics can be grounds for revocation of a FITSI certification(s).

FITSI can only be as good as its representative base. If you believe a FITSI Certification holder is not abiding by the Code of Ethics, you may file a complaint to the FITSI Corporate Office. Individuals may file a complaint against a certified individual at any time. FITSI will take all necessary measures to ensure anonymity of the complainant, but cannot guarantee it. The complaint shall be reviewed by the Certification Director to ascertain if the criteria for acceptance of a complaint are met. The acceptance criteria are as follows:

1. Complainant must have personal knowledge of the alleged violation or misbehavior and must be in a position to supply relevant and reliable documentation.
2. Complainant must demonstrate by documentation and factual evidence that the complaint involves an issue directly related to the certification standards or FITSI Code of Ethics. Matters of personal nature not related to the criteria will not be considered.

Complaints can be submitted by filling out the Appeals and Complaint Application found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>. Full instructions are found within this application package.

8. Renewing an Existing Certification

The FITSP certification is valid for 3 years. Persons holding a FITSI certification that is at the end of the 3 year cycle may opt to re-new the certification for an additional 3 year cycle.

Candidates must meet the following requirements to be eligible for renewal:

1. Renewal candidates must have earned and registered a total of at least 60 CPE (per certification role) over that certification's three year life cycle.
2. Renewal candidates must have passed FITSI internal surveillance audit (if chosen).
3. Renewal candidates must not be in violation of any part of the FITSI Code of Ethics or have an active complaint filed in his or her name.
4. Renewal candidates must be current with their Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF).

9. Reinstatement after a Voluntary Lapse

An individual who has voluntarily let their certification lapse is not certified and may not use any certification designation. These individuals may reinstate to certified status through one of the following scenarios:

Scenario 1: The certification lapse is within the 3 year re-certification cycle

- Submit the *Reinstatement Application* and associated fees
- 1 additional CPE penalty for every 6 months of certification lapse

Scenario 2: The certification lapse spans over the re-certification cycle date (3 years from the original certification date)

- Submit the *Reinstatement Application* and associated fees
- 1 additional CPE penalty for every 6 months of certification lapse

Scenario 3: The Certification lapse spans over the re-new cycle (6 years from original certification date)

- Candidate must reapply under the original application and examination process

The *Reinstatement Application* can be found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>

10. Resignation or Termination of Certification

Any FITSI certification holder may resign by filing a written resignation with the FITSI Corporate Offices. Resignation shall not relieve an individual of unpaid dues, or other charges previously accrued. Any person resigning or terminating their certification may be required to return his or her FITSI ID card, challenge coin and/or certification certificate.

11. Appeals

Any FITSI Certification Holder has to the right to appeal a revoke in certification by the FITSI Appeals committee. An Appeals Form must be filed with the Appeals committee within 30 days of receiving notification of a revoke in certification. The Appeals Form can be found at the following site: <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>.

The Appeals committee will respond to the appeal within 30 calendar days of receipt. The Appeals committee can accept the appeal, reject the appeal or request more information.

12. Forms

Following are all forms and/or contact information for FITSI Certification Holders.
The latest version of the forms can be found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents>

13. FITSI Contact Information

FITSI Corporate web site address:

www.FITSI.org

FITSI Corporate Contact Information:

FITSI

Federal IT Security Institute

3213 Duke St.

Suite 190

Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: 703-828-1196

Fax: 703-754-8215

Web site: www.FITSI.org

Email: contactus@FITSI.org