

Jones, Thomas W. *Mastering Genealogical Proof*. Arlington, Virginia: National Genealogical Society, 2013.

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Cyberspace to Artifacts*. 2d ed. revised. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2012.

## SPECIAL FOCUS AREAS

### RESEARCH

Family history is an immensely complex subject. Most serious genealogists develop specialties, usually based on locality, ethnicity, subject, or time period. Successful applicants demonstrate thorough knowledge of the holdings, customary content, and evidentiary value of records within that specialty. They demonstrate the ability to collect data from each source accurately, thoroughly, efficiently, and to cite sources fully.

### ANALYSIS AND CORRELATION OF EVIDENCE

A sound understanding of evidence analysis principles is important to excellence in genealogy. Evidence ranges widely in quality and credibility. Successful applicants know the strengths and shortcomings of all significant sources in their areas of special interest.

### COMPILATION

The ability to report research results in a professional manner is a vital skill, whether the project is simple or complex and whether the work is done on a personal or commissioned basis. Successful applicants have studied a variety of professional reports and well-crafted essays in scholarly genealogical journals. Many attend instructional lectures and writing workshops in genealogical forums. Above all, they put the principles they learn from those resources into practice on a daily basis.

## DO YOU WONDER . . . ?

- How to better prepare for a successful application?
- How to strengthen your knowledge of records?
- Where to learn the latest research methodology?
- What educational programs exist beyond introductory courses?
- If specific academic degrees are necessary?
- What guidebooks offer sound advice?
- What qualities successful applicants typically display?

EDUCATIONAL  
PREPARATION FOR  
CERTIFICATION



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# EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION

## EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION

*Success in almost every field is built upon four cornerstones: specialized education, practical experience, a desire to excel, and a determination to do a superior job of every task. The successful applicant for certification exhibits these traits.*

Curiosity about the rewards of certification indicates desire and determination. Those considering certification also tend to possess a measurable amount of experience. This leaflet emphasizes the first of the four cornerstones—educational preparation.

*No specific program of education is required for a successful application.* Yet candidates who pursue one or more of the suggestions in this leaflet—whether by self-education or a formal program—typically submit applications exhibiting deeper knowledge and stronger skills.

## FORMAL EDUCATION

Many superb programs exist nationwide. The following spotlights programs whose quality instruction has endured. Most offer “certificates of completion,” but their programs and certificates are *not* to be confused with actual *certification*.

## Guided Study

### ***American Genealogy: A Home Study Course***

National Genealogical Society, Arlington, VA. Students pursue lessons at their own pace. NGS offers thorough instruction and hands-on experience with major resources and records analysis. Online mini-courses are available.

### ***Independent Study (various programs)***

Brigham Young University, Provo, UT. Students select specialized courses centering upon geographical areas or ethnic groups.

## SEMINARS AND WEBINARS

*Local and state societies* nationwide sponsor lec-

tures and one- and two-day seminars taught by the nation’s leading genealogists either in-person or as webinars. Notices of these events can be found online at society and other websites.

## INSTITUTES

***Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research (IGHR)***, Samford University, Birmingham, AL. Five-day program held each June on the Samford campus, with 10 to 12 courses, including beginning, intermediate, advanced, and specialized topics that vary annually. Limited enrollment. Co-sponsored by BCG.

***National Institute on Genealogical Research (NIGR)***, Washington, D.C. Intense five-day program held each July at the National Archives focusing on NARA holdings. Limited enrollment. Co-sponsored by BCG.

***Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh (GRIP)***, LaRoche College, Pittsburgh, PA. Five-day program held each July on the LaRoche campus with numerous courses on topics that vary annually. Limited enrollment.

***Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG)***, Salt Lake City, UT. Five-day program held each January with 10 to 12 courses on topics that vary annually. Limited enrollment.

## MAJOR CONFERENCES

**Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) Annual Conference.** Held in late summer or early fall at various sites nationwide since 1978, the FGS conference offers multiple tracks of widely varied instruction over a four-day span.

**National Genealogical Society (NGS) Annual Conference.** Held in late spring or early summer at various sites nationwide since 1981, the NGS conference offers multiple tracks of instruction in genealogy, history, technology, and genetics over four days.

**Association of Professional Genealogists (APG), Professional Management Conference.** Held annually, the PMC focuses on the practical facets of professional genealogical endeavors. APG, a membership organization, publishes a quarterly periodical that is essential reading for progressive genealogists.

## SELF-INSTRUCTION

Access to formal advanced classes may be restricted by travel or financial limitations, but learning opportunities are open to everyone who can subscribe to a good periodical, visit an area library, or attend a webinar.

## STUDY MAJOR JOURNALS

Serious genealogists learn new methodology and resources by reading journals offering well-crafted, well-documented essays or case studies of difficult problems that were resolved. Recommended publications include the following:

- *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*
- *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*
- *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*
- *The American Genealogist*
- *The Genealogist*

## STUDY MAJOR GUIDE BOOKS

The personal libraries of successful applicants include major guides to sources, methods, and repositories—and *successful applicants have absorbed the contents of these works!* Knowledge gleaned from guides such as those below is evident in all phases of a well-prepared certification application.

Board for Certification of Genealogists. *Genealogy Standards*. Nashville, Tennessee: Ancestry.com, 2014.

Greenwood, Val D. *The Researcher’s Guide to American Genealogy*. 3d ed. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2000.