



# Program Description and Syllabus

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Administration

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### A. Program Overview

IACIS is an independent, non-profit, peer-review organization that has been recognized as a leader in computer forensics training since 1991. Each year IACIS offers several courses of study, at various locations worldwide, including a variety of advanced and specialized courses and programs that are specifically targeted to a topical focus or a sub-specialty within the field of computer forensics.

Of the programs offered by IACIS, the Basic Computer Forensic Examiner (BCFE) Training Program is at the forefront.

The IACIS BCFE Training Program is a 76-hour course of instruction that is offered over a period of two (2) consecutive weeks, and which is designed to provide students with the foundation knowledge necessary to enter the IACIS Certified Forensic Computer Examiner (CFCE) certification process. Through a combination of lectures, instructor-led and independent hands-on practical exercises, and independent laboratory activities students will learn the underlying principles of computer forensic examination and how to apply them in practice.

While this program might seem to be primarily for those students who are new to or just starting out in the field of computer forensics, it is equally suitable for more advanced students and those who are long-time practitioners. IACIS espouses, and the BCFE program champions, a forensic tool neutrality and an independent methodology approach to learning computer forensics. This enables IACIS to provide students with a deeper exploration of underlying principles than might be afforded in other programs, which are designed to teach students how to use a forensic tool to complete a task.

Approximately 90% of what is needed for students to successfully complete the BCFE program and the subsequent certification process is provided during course program

lectures and practical exercises, and so students are expected to do additional outside reading and to perform additional independent research.

The program schedule includes substantial laboratory time (optional) for students who need or want additional assistance on forensic topics.

## **B. Prerequisites**

While there are no prerequisites for entry into the BCFE program beyond the applicable IACIS membership requirements, students are expected to be comfortable using a computer and working with electronic devices; and students should have an appropriate interest in the field of computer forensics generally.

And while students are also expected to be familiar with the Windows family of operating systems, no advanced level knowledge of the various Windows versions or editions is expected or required. That said, the student whose experience with Windows is limited to Windows 7 versions and earlier may find the BCFE program very challenging.

Finally, while knowledge of and experience working within different operating system environments such as DOS, various versions of Apple/Mac/iOS, and various flavors of the Linux operating system can be helpful for students, such knowledge and experience are by no means required for successful completion of the BCFE program or the CFCE process.

It is important to note that the BCFE program does not distinguish between someone who has very basic computing skills and who is just starting out in the field of computer forensics, and one who has more advanced knowledge of computers or prior training in general information technology topics or in computer forensics.

Certainly, one who has more extensive experience will initially be more comfortable with some of the foundational course material, but as the program advances whatever “knowledge gap” there might be at the start of the program will quickly close.

In the end, all students are considered at the same level, as it were; and individual courses are constructed with this in mind.

## **C. Automated Forensic Tools, Forensic Hardware, and Software**

IACIS espouses a forensic tool-independent and forensic methodology-independent approach to teaching computer forensics. IACIS does not endorse or support any forensic software tool, forensic hardware device, or any software program.

Students are not required or expected to have any knowledge of any forensic software or automated tool suite; and there is no expectation that students in the BCFE program be familiar with or have any experience using any software program.

Similarly, students are not required or expected to have any knowledge of any forensic hardware device or component.

The above notwithstanding, automated and manual forensic software tools will be used during instructional modules to illustrate teaching points and to facilitate MANUAL study of data structures and data recovery by using a limited functionality of tool or suite of tools. Similarly, forensic hardware devices might also be used to teach students about forensic processes.

In cases where use of any hardware item or software program of any type is required for an instructor-led activity, in-class practical exercise, or independent laboratory exercise, students will be provided access to the hardware item or software program, and there will be instruction as to the use of that hardware item or software program for the limited purpose of the activity at hand.

#### **D. Required Equipment and Supplies**

Students will be supplied with all the materials needed to successfully complete the BCFE program.

This includes a student manual that includes instructor-led practical and independent laboratory exercises, various hardware and software tools/items, and other items and resources that are needed for courses or that might be of benefit later, in the field.

Students are not required to bring a computer with them to the training program. With participation in the BCFE training event, IACIS provides each student a laptop computer for their use during the event and to take home with them and use. Along with the laptop, student will also receive a write-blocker amongst other equipment. The BCFE Training manual is contained in multiple printed manuals. Students should be aware that they will be returning home with more baggage than they came with and should plan for this.

In the past, IACIS has tried to get a package mailing company to stop by the hotel towards the end of the event so that students can ship extra equipment back to their homes or Agencies. This is at the students' own cost. IACIS will try to find a similar vendor for 2018.

Students may bring a laptop computer or other digital device with them for personal use outside of the classroom. Students are not permitted to use their personal laptop computers, pad/tablet computing devices, cellular telephones, and other personal computing devices in the classroom.

#### **E. Attendance and Program Conduct Requirements**

The BCFE program provides approximately seventy-six (76) hours of instruction in various computer forensics courses. The program runs for two (2) consecutive weeks, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM daily each week, with a one (1) hour break for lunch from 12:00 noon to 1:00 PM each day. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the program, the event will conclude by 3:00 PM after closing ceremonies, as noted below.

Courses are timed using the traditional “50-minute hour” to allow for a short break near the top of each hour, whenever possible.

On the first day of the program, the first hour (from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM) is used for administrative purposes such as staff introductions and providing students information about the programming to follow. That hour is considered part of the overall program due to the vital information provided.

The afternoon on the last day of the program (1:00 PM to 3:00 PM) is dedicated to various administrative and IACIS membership services topics. This includes a critical presentation on the Certified Forensic Computer Examiner (CFCE) process. After the presentations, students who meet all requirements for successful completion of the program will be issued certificates of completion for the BCFE program.

The certificate of completion is awarded to students who successfully complete the 76-hour BCFE course of instruction and is not the IACIS Certified Computer Forensic Examiner certificate. The CFCE process is a process unto itself. The CFCE process will be addressed during the BCFE program.

Students are expected to attend **all** training sessions. Classes begin promptly at 8:00 AM, and students are expected to be prepared to begin the instructional day at that time. Classes will **always** continue until 5:00 PM on each class day. On the final day, the program will close by 3:00 PM.

It is important for students to understand that the presentations in the afternoon of the last day, are considered mandatory: The bulk of the afternoon consists of a lengthy session addressing the CFCE process, and it is during this time that all the information regarding that process is presented to students. Vital information is provided on what IACIS services and resources are available to members; and instructions are provided on how these services and resources are accessed. Due to the important information being discussed towards the end of the training event, information that will help you during the CFCE process, please do not book return flights out of Orlando before 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. on Friday to allow for security clearances and traffic to the airport.

IACIS understands that unforeseen circumstances and emergency situations may arise, and so students are permitted to **briefly** leave the classroom to deal with such situations. Students who have prolonged absences from class may not be issued a certificate of completion at the end of the program, and may not qualify for entry into the CFCE process.

While students are encouraged to take notes during classes, activities, and laboratory sessions, students are **not** permitted to use their personal laptop computers or other **personal** computing devices during any classes. Similarly, students are **not** permitted to use any audio or video recording devices, at any time during any classroom or laboratory session.

Students are expected to dress professionally and appropriately for a “business casual” environment (collared shirt, slacks/5.11 style pants, etc.). Shorts, T-shirts, tank tops, sandals, flip-flops, and similar casual apparel will **not** be permitted in the classroom at any time.

Something for students to consider is that the classroom is air conditioned, and the temperature is set lower than what one may typically expect to keep the room comfortable given the heat that can be generated by a large group people and over 200 computers. At times, however, when the computers are idle, the room can become too cold for some students, so one might consider bringing a sweater or light jacket to wear.

Students must be mindful of the fact that the classroom is large, with approximately 325 students and staff. Even small distractions can make it difficult for others to hear or to remain focused on the instructor. So, then, students are asked to be courteous and aware of their fellow students.

During classes, students are expected to be attentive and fully engaged. Cell phones must be put on “vibrate” or “silent” mode, and students should step out of the classroom if it becomes necessary.

The training event takes place at the Caribe Royale Orlando, 8101 World Center Dr., Orlando, FL 32821, Phone 407-238-8000. The hotel is located about 18 miles from the Orlando International Airport (MCO). A taxi ride from MCO to the hotel can cost \$50.00 (US) and up, based on traffic congestion at the time. Towards the start of the training event, you may be able to post to the IACIS Listserv to find cab-share for students.