



Board Director Education Course & Certification Comparison Worksheet

Compare other courses & certifications here

IBDC.D

A. Credential & Market Credibility

Full certification (vs. certificate)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International Recognition (not single-jurisdiction)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing professional standing required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. Audience & Applicability

Serves aspiring AND experienced Directors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applicable to public, private, nonprofit, PE, VC, family office, government, & NGO Boards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Global Board applicability (not country-specific)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Designed for real Board appointments (not academic only)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C. Curriculum Depth & Rigor

Modern Board operations taught	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modern Board candidate packaging taught	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course teaches both modern Board operations AND modern Board candidate packaging simultaneously?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course provides Board candidate packaging templates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of expert instructors	20+			
Practical vs. academic emphasis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

D. Outcomes & Career Enablement

Graduates serving on Boards internationally	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Board role opportunities provided*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost to access Board role opportunities	\$0			
Alumni ecosystem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* when available

E. Cost Transparency & Commitment

Course registration price range offered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, cost range?	\$599 - \$7,500			
Time allowed to complete course	1 year			
Annual membership required?	No			
If yes, how much per year?	\$0			
Credential recertification renewal period	3 years			
Organization offers free renewal CPE credit opportunities?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization allows unaffiliated education course completion for CPE credit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recertification cost under \$1,500?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recertification cost?	\$499			
Options to have recertification fee waived?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What This Comparison Commonly Reveals:

- Most programs are certificates, not certifications
- Few are internationally recognized
- Fewer still provide post-certification Board access
- Almost none teach Board candidate packaging + Board operations simultaneously
- Overall costs can be hidden in membership fees



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Category Descriptions

A. Credential & Market Credibility

- Certification Programs: Be sure to look for *certification* programs and not *certificate* programs! Certification programs require ongoing education and send the message that you are keeping your knowledge current. This carries much more weight than a “one-and-done” certificate program where concepts learned quickly become irrelevant. Interviewers and evaluators know this. You should, too. Send the message that you are a continuous learner and up-to-speed on current trends and modern Board practices by prioritizing certification programs over certificate programs.
- International Recognition: Most Board Director education and certification programs are considered “*regional*” or “*local*.” They are easily identified by the word “*National*” or have the country/jurisdiction in which they originated displayed in the organization or certification name. In an evaluator or interviewer’s eyes, this identifies you as a “*micro-Director*” instead of the more important “*macro-Director*.” Why? Modern Directors are expected to see the bigger picture, which typically is a global viewpoint, regardless of organization size or geography. Small private companies as well as international public conglomerates are all affected by global supply chains, international workforce expertise, geopolitical climates, emerging technologies in foreign regions, etc. Hence the importance of being educated and having a certification as a *macro-Director*.
- Ongoing Professional Standing: Continuous learning applied to your professional certification is paramount. Having an ongoing professional standing with a meaningful certification shows your commitment to your profession and that you view Board Directorship as a discipline.

B. Audience & Applicability

- Aspiring & Experienced Directors: Education programs catering to both aspiring Directors AND experienced Directors simultaneously have a profound advantage over other program approaches. Why? Many so-called experienced Directors have picked up bad habits or outdated, ineffective processes along the way. Sometimes a little deprogramming/reprogramming through effective education is good! The best Director education programs are able to combine modern concepts for first-time learners (aspiring) and those honing their skills (experienced). Also, great courses following this concept should feel “*not too fast*” for aspiring Directors and “*not too slow*” for experienced Directors. This balance creates memorable lessons and applicable concepts for implementation.
- Entity Type: Although there are many similarities between public, private, nonprofit, PE, VC, family office, government, & NGO Boards, there are also some important differences. Even when targeting a specific market or organization type, knowing these differences can be enlightening. Also, many Board candidates create portfolios of organizations they serve as a Director, so gaining the appropriate knowledge is important.



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Category Descriptions

B. Audience & Applicability (continued)

- Global Board Applicability: Above and beyond simply credential recognition, ask yourself if your Board education & certification can be applied to Boards across multiple regions and jurisdictions. What if you are asked to serve on a Board in one region and the headquarters is based in another region? What about multi-layered organizations with Boards by business line or geography? How about targeting a Board appointment outside of the region in which you live? Learning about Board operations and decorum across all regions is important to show your depth as a viable and effective Board Director.
- Designed For Real Board Appointments: For those wanting to attract real opportunities for Board service, it is important to learn the components of packaging yourself correctly as a modern Board candidate. Most Board education programs load up content with case studies and siloed learning topics leaving registrants unprepared to find and land Board seats. Courses which balance academic learning with practical, real world packaging concepts enable their graduates to not only have the knowledge to serve as effective and efficient Directors, but also attract and land the Board roles they deserve.

C. Curriculum Depth & Rigor

- Modern Board Operations: For those who have participated in numerous Board education courses, it becomes painfully clear that *“this is how we have always done it”* doesn’t cut it in today’s modern world of Board Director expectations. The speed of change and increasing expectations of Boards is noticeable on a quarterly basis. Select courses that not only teach you where we are at exactly at this moment, but also show you how to keep current on trends and changes in the future.
- Modern Board Candidate Packaging: There are countless “*Board-ready*” candidates out there who will never land a Board seat. Additionally, there are many experienced Directors who will never land additional Board roles. Why? Because they haven’t packaged themselves properly. Modern submission criteria is important to make yourself stand out amongst a growing candidate pool. Do this right as it makes a significant difference in the percentage of candidates making it to the interview phase. One of the biggest differences at a candidate early stage is submitting proper *“Board Documents”* and not resumes or CVs. Be sure to check that the education you are considering teaches modern Board Document concepts and provides robust templates for you to create your own. In many cases, making it to the interview has become more difficult than getting the appointment – proper packaging is paramount.
- Operations and Packaging Simultaneously: It has become painfully clear that separating modern day Board operations learning from modern day Board candidate packaging approaches is a mistake. They are inextricably linked and the education you choose needs to recognize this. Ensure that the course you ultimately select clearly makes this linkage and runs these areas in parallel for most impact.



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Category Descriptions

C. Curriculum Depth & Rigor (continued)

- **Board Candidate Packaging Templates:** Much detail can be lost between learning and implementing. This is why templates along with thorough instructions are important in ensuring you can get the Board roles you desire. Ensure your choice in Board education provides usable templates to create your proper and modern Board Documents. It may just be the difference in getting called to interviews vs. not knowing why your submission is continually being rejected.
- **Experts:** Just one or a handful of experts is not able to cover all of the nuanced and complicated components of Board Directorship. Be sure you are learning from experts in the numerous skill set areas required of modern Directors. Courses with 10 or less experts providing lessons should be avoided as the depth of topics and interconnectedness of relevant concepts cannot possibly be covered. Look for well-structured courses with numerous experts focused in sharing their in-depth knowledge areas.
- **Practical vs. Academic:** So many education courses focus solely on the academic components of Board Directorship. This is not doing any favors for those registered or graduating from these courses. For a well-rounded, robust learning experience, with the ability to implement the teachings, both practical and academic focus areas must be covered. It is the interrelationship between these areas that create the most memorable insights and make the biggest impact. Ensure that the Board Director course you choose integrates these two facets.

D. Outcomes & Career Enablement

- **Graduates Serving on Boards Internationally:** Once again, it warrants repeating – training and education for a single region or locality is not viable for today's modern Directors. Organizations expect more. Boards expect more. Shareholders and investors expect more. The "*macro-Director*" preference is real and a requirement. How can a Board Education program prove they create macro-Directors? By having graduates & certification holders from their program actually serving on Boards around the world. When choosing your Board education & certification program, confirm they are focused internationally, not just regionally or locally.
- **Actual Board Roles & Cost to Access:** Although most Board education & certification programs are not officially also serving as search & placement organizations, a select few do indeed help graduates to get Board appointments. The most common way is through affiliate companies. Look for programs where this service is provided as a no-cost perk of graduation, not an additional revenue stream. Important note: Look for Board education & certification programs that do not receive any fees or compensation for these referrals and appointments, as this commonly indicates the organization has more invested and a deeper focus in the education & certification component rather than selling a service based on placement fees after registrants complete the course.



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D. Outcomes & Career Enablement (continued)

- **Alumni Ecosystem:** Although most Director education & certification providers are not networking associations or membership organizations, this shouldn't mean that credential holders with like interests and passions can't leverage the graduate network! Look for Board education & certification programs where graduates are able to connect and build relationships. Once again, this shouldn't have a cost associated with it and know that the best organizations don't charge for this.

D. Cost Transparency & Commitment

- **Course Registration Price Range:** Courses with price ranges reflect multiple enrollment pathways designed to accommodate different learning preferences and professional objectives. Options may include self-paced on-demand access, cohort-based participation, and personalized 1:1 engagement. Variations in pricing are driven by depth of interaction, level of customization, and access to faculty or advisors. Ensure your Director education & certification program structure ensures participants can select an option aligned with both developmental goals and investment expectations.
- **Course Completion Time:** The time to complete a robust Board Director education & certification course should allow flexibility, reflecting different learning pathways, levels of engagement, and available time to dedicate to the learning materials. Look for courses where participants may progress independently or within structured timelines, allowing alignment with workloads and Board commitments. Additionally, a course that allows up to 1 year of access, either to complete the program or for reference materials, can be extremely helpful.
- **Annual Membership:** Many Board education and certification organizations force you to become a member and pay a yearly membership fee. Remember, for some programs you have to figure this into the *“cost of ownership”* of the certification once graduating the course – forever – or a long as you plan on keeping your credential active. Unfortunately, for many education programs, it's more about ongoing revenue and less so about making an impact. Choose a Board Director education & certification program that doesn't charge an annual membership fee or tack on other unnecessary fees.
- **Recertification Renewal Period:** Yearly or 2-year credential recertification requirements can become cumbersome and overwhelming. Preferably, look for a Board Director education & certification program offering 3-year renewal cycles to lessen the burden of keeping your credential current and active.
- **Free Renewal CPE Credits:** Some organizations charge for all or some of their CPE credits. If this is the case, you can become stuck – either pay for the required credits or lose your certification. In further evaluating your *“cost of ownership”* of the certification once graduating a course, consider if the organization offers free options for gaining CPE credits.



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D. Cost Transparency & Commitment (continued)

- Unaffiliated Education CPE Credits: Some organizations not only charge for all or some of their CPE credits, they also won't allow you to apply outside coursework towards credential renewal. In further evaluating your "*cost of ownership*" of the certification once graduating a course, consider if the organization offers unaffiliated education / outside options for gaining CPE credits.
- Recertification Costs: Similar to the concept of "*the printer is cheap, but the ink is expensive*," be wary of costly credential recertification fees. High recertification fees are unnecessary. Once again, weigh this against your "*cost of ownership*" of the certification after graduation.
- Recertification Fee Waivers: For great Board Director courses, the leaders understand that the best advertising is word of mouth. When graduates are impressed with the course, they tell others. These lead to additional registrants. Those graduates making referrals should be rewarded – look for Board Director education & certification programs where recertification fees can be waived when making verifiable referrals to other registrants to experience the program.

Have questions? Reach out!

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