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(ABAs) are exempt from the requirement to take an Annual Federal Tax Refresher (AFTR) course and exam that is part of the new Internal Revenue Service (IRS) voluntary Annual Filing Season Program (AFSP).

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Sep. 02, 2014

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Accredited Tax Preparers (ATPs) and Accredited Business Accountant/Advisors (ABAs) are exempt from the requirement to take an Annual Federal Tax Refresher (AFTR) course and exam that is part of the new Internal Revenue Service (IRS) voluntary Annual Filing Season Program (AFSP).

The Accreditation Council for Accountancy and Taxation (ACAT) is a non-profit, independent testing organization that accredits professionals with the ATP and ABA credentials.

ABAs and ATPs will automatically receive the AFSP-Record of Completion and be included in a public database of tax return preparers scheduled to launch on the IRS website by January 2015. This Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with

Credentials and Select Qualifications will include the name, city, state, zip code, and

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“We are thrilled that the IRS has recognized the experience, comprehensive ongoing education requirements, and stringent exams that are required for a tax preparer to earn the ATP and ABA credentials,” says ACAT President Roy Frick, EA, ABA, ATA, ARA, LPA. “All ATPs and ABAs in good standing are exempt from taking the annual AFTR course and exam. So why would any tax preparer take the Annual Federal Tax Refresher course and exam each year when they can earn a prestigious credential they can use after their name every year?”

The ATP is a leading national credential for tax practitioners who have a thorough knowledge of the existing tax code and the preparation of individual tax returns. To become an ATP, candidates must pass the ATP exam, which is offered twice per year at testing centers around the country and have three years of work experience in tax preparation, two of which may be satisfied through college credit.

The ABA is a prestigious professional accounting credential for accounting professionals who possess a thorough knowledge and proficiency in financial accounting, financial reporting, financial statement preparation, taxation, managerial accounting, business law, and ethics for small- to medium-sized businesses. To become an ABA, candidates must pass the Comprehensive Examination for Accreditation in Accountancy and have three years of related work experience, up to two of which may be satisfied through college credit.

The ATP and ABA exams will be offered at testing sites around the country between November 29 – December 22, 2014, just in time for tax season and in time for tax preparers to get their IRS Annual Filing Season Record of Completion.

For more information about ACAT and the ATP and ABA credentials and registering for an ACAT exam, visit www.acatcredentials.org.

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