

Conversation with a Certified Licensing Professional (CLP)

Donald P. Taylor, PhD, MBA, CLP, University of Pittsburgh

Donald P. Taylor, PhD, MBA, CLP, is Assistant Vice Chancellor, Health Sciences Translation, and Executive Director of sciVelo at the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) where he activates, funds, develops, and connects university-based life sciences technologies to their impact through translation.

Dr. Taylor is responsible for leading commercial translation across the six Pitt Schools of the Health Sciences. His role also involves collaboration with Pitt's partner, UPMC (a \$20B global healthcare provider and insurer) in order to help activate university-based research towards clinical and commercial implementation as well as working across Pittsburgh's regional innovation ecosystem including other universities such as Carnegie Mellon University and accelerator firms.



Dr. Taylor is a Director on the CLP Board of Governors and began his first term in January 2021.

In what stage of your licensing career did you initially earn CLP certification in 2018?

I earned my CLP certification after nearly 25 years in life sciences innovation and entrepreneurship. My career had involved many components of licensing and intellectual property such as out-licensing machine learning-based software platforms to biopharma companies, in-licensing bioreagents for a drug discovery platform, evaluating the intellectual property portfolio of a biotools company, and negotiating collaboration agreements for joint product development. I was a co-inventor on a patent application and licensed a university-based technology through a licensed spinout company.

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application. I know that every 3 years I must recertify my CLP credential by completing and reporting continuing education and other professional development in the field. While many foundational principles of the CLP knowledge base remain consistent, there are evolutions of these principles that require ongoing learning to maintain currency.

How did you prepare for the CLP exam?

Although I had extensive licensing experience, I brought a beginner's mindset to the CLP certification process and set a course of openness, enthusiasm, and dropping preconceptions about what I already knew. I wanted to understand my knowledge gaps, so I took the exam without any additional preparation and did not pass.

How did your career experiences influence and motivate your decision to pursue the CLP credential? What value do you see in maintaining it?

It was important to me that my perception of my licensing skills and experience were commensurate with an independent assessment of those skills. In essence, I wanted to know what I didn't know, fill that knowledge gap, and demonstrate that my knowledge met a high standard of excellence.

The greatest value in maintaining my CLP credential is knowing that this discipline involves life-long learning and

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For me it was to ensure that I reached a high bar of licensing knowledge and was exposed to areas where I wanted to go even deeper. I knew that the CLP certification would require ongoing training and education to both maintain my credential and to excel in areas that were of most interest and value to my professional career.

Also, my advice is to stick with it – do a little bit each day in preparing for the exam – and bring a beginner's mindset to the process.

In some of the CLP content areas I excelled, and in other areas I had some clear gaps in my knowledge. Armed with this information, I made a plan to fill those gaps. I studied related materials and sought content area experts to learn from them directly. Over six months I implemented this focused approach then took the exam again – and passed. I did more than just pass a challenging exam – I intentionally filled gaps in my professional knowledge that have since made my work more fulfilling, and I've set a course for life-long learning in this important field.

What is your advice for other individuals who are considering pursuing specialty certification, specifically CLP certification?

Establish a clear purpose for earning the CLP certification.