

Conversation with a Certified Licensing Professional (CLP)

Benjamin Dibling, Ph.D., CLP, University of Pennsylvania



Benjamin (Ben) Dibling, Ph.D., CLP, is Deputy Managing Director for the Penn Center for Innovation (PCI) at the University of Pennsylvania. He leads a team responsible for working in partnership with Penn faculty, staff and students to advance scientific breakthroughs and technological advances resulting from Penn research activities towards new products, services and/or businesses that provide benefits back to Penn, its innovators and society. Whether the result is a technology license, R&D alliance, launch of a new venture, sponsored research or other creative business development structure, PCI serves as a dedicated one-stop shop for commercial partnering with Penn.

Dr. Dibling is Chair of the CLP Board of Governors and has served on the Board since 2018.

When not leading his team at PCI or heading the CLP board, you might find Ben turning out loaves of freshly-baked bread.

You are a new certificant. What drove your pursuit of the CLP credential?

Yes, I earned the credential in July 2020. I have been in the licensing profession for around 16 years, and the CLP certification is something I had been planning to pursue for several years. The CLP standard is recognized across many different industry sectors, and it provides credibility when you are having conversations with potential industry partners and collaborators. I also have several individuals in my licensing team that are CLP credential holders, and I thought it was important that I earned this credential given my leadership role.


In your experience, what role does professional certification play in the licensing field?

Individuals enter the licensing field with different backgrounds. For example, I have a scientific training, but many of my licensing colleagues have a business or legal background. Earning the CLP demonstrates a level of competency and understanding in the field of licensing that cannot always be gleaned from an individual's qualifications, education and work experience. It is a hallmark of experience and competency in licensing. I strongly advise individuals to pursue CLP certification irrespective of where they are in their career or how they entered the field.

Budgets permitting, I encourage employers investing in their licensing team to support pursuit of CLP certification. Passing the exam takes some work, and this shows a commitment on the part of the employee to our profession, which should be supported wherever possible.

You took the exam while restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic were in effect. What impact did this have on your test scheduling?

Given the global pandemic, I decided to take the exam using the remote proctoring option that CLP introduced in 2019. Scheduling the exam was easy, convenient and flexible. There were plenty of available time slots, and I was able to schedule my appointment just 24 hours before I took the test. The proctor was well-organized and polite, and we were able to efficiently go through the necessary checks related to my identity, computer and designated test area.



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Maintaining the CLP credential requires commitment to one's own professional development. Why do you value your team's ongoing professional development?

"I AM A BIG PROPONENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR THE LICENSING TEAM...LICENSING IS AN EVER CHANGING FIELD – ONE OF THE REASONS I ENJOY IT SO MUCH."

I am a big proponent of continuing education for the licensing team. We send members of the team to professional meetings and webinars as part of their professional development. Licensing is an ever changing field – one of the reasons I enjoy it so much. We can look back at license agreements we negotiated five years ago and, although the bundle of rights may be the same, the way we structure specific terms and conditions in a license agreement today would be very different. For the seasoned members of the team, it provides an opportunity for keeping abreast of new trends and best practices. For junior members, ongoing professional development can serve to solidify the on-the-job training they receive in our office.