

Test Development Process

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The Competency and Credentialing Institute (CCI) collaborates with our testing partner, PSI, in the test development process. Development and maintenance of the certification examination is the product of a scientifically rigorous process subject to accreditation agency oversight and approval.

Test Development Committees

In addition to the contributions of our testing partner, the participation of nurses providing clinical care is essential to maintain an accredited certification examination. Nurses holding a current certification may apply to serve on test development committees described below. All CCI Test Development Committees are remote, no travel is required in order to participate.

Job Analysis

A job analysis is designed to obtain descriptive information about the tasks performed in a job and the knowledge/skills needed to support the performance. The purpose of the job analysis is to review and revise the list of the tasks and knowledge related to work performed by perioperative registered nurses and to develop test specifications (a “blueprint”) for the certification examination. The Job Analysis defines the exam content areas along with the tasks performed and the knowledge needed for competent performance.

A full survey-based job analysis requires the committees outlined below.

Task Force Committee (in-person)

The purpose of this committee is to determine a set of competencies and skills essential to current perioperative nursing. Participants on this committee will analyze work associated with the perioperative nurse and establish the scope of knowledge to be measured through examination for the credential. This committee requires an extended commitment to ensure continuity throughout the process. A combination of 2 in-person meetings, completion of 2 online surveys, and participation in 3-5 remote phone conferences will be required during a period of 6 months, possibly inclusive of the Test Specifications Committee work as outlined below. CCI provides airfare, meals, and hotel accommodations. Time commitment is 2 days + travel per in-person meeting and 3 hours per remote call.

Survey Completion (remote)

The goal of this activity is to complete and evaluate the first draft of the online Job Analysis survey. This survey is designed to capture knowledge and skills needed by perioperative nurses. The survey is based on work completed by the Task Force Committee, so volunteers who served on this committee are asked to participate. Estimated time commitment is 1-3 hours. This activity is the first step in an extensive survey review and revision process that includes the Survey Review Call, Pilot Survey Review Call, and Subgroup Analysis Call.

Survey Review Call (remote)

This conference call follows online Job Analysis survey completion and requires Task Force Committee volunteers to analyze and discuss survey content, format, and ideas for improvement. Estimated time commitment is 1-3 hours. A second draft of the survey that incorporates this feedback is composed by CCI's testing partner following this call. The updated survey is then distributed to a group of peer pilot reviewers nominated by Task Force Committee volunteers.

Pilot Survey Review Call (remote)

Task Force Committee volunteers review feedback on the online Job Analysis survey provided by the pilot candidate group. Volunteers are tasked with recommending revisions and updates to ensure the final survey will capture all important elements of the perioperative nursing profession. Estimated time commitment is 1-3 hours. A final draft of the survey is then composed by CCI's testing partner and widely distributed to perioperative nurses for data collection.

Subgroup Analysis Call (remote)

The purpose of this activity is to review demographic results from the Job Analysis survey. Task Force Committee volunteers will decide how these results inform the overall data set. Estimated time commitment is 1-3 hours.

Test Specifications Committee (in-person)

This committee concludes the Job Analysis process. Members include volunteers from the Job Analysis Task Force Committee and new volunteers. Notably, individuals may sign up for this committee even if they are not able to participate in the Job Analysis activities occurring in previous months. The goal of this committee is to review the job analysis survey results and create content outlines for the exam blueprint. CCI provides airfare, meals, and hotel accommodations. Time commitment is 2 days + travel.

Crosswalk Call (remote)

Participants in this activity will compare the updated exam content outline with the previous outline. Knowledge and task statements may need to be relocated or "crosswalked" between the prior blueprint and an appropriate section on the new blueprint. Estimated time commitment is 3 hours.

Item Writing Committee

Writers develop items (commonly referred to as exam questions) according to test plan specifications with provided references. Individuals selected for writing items will receive training and materials on how to write a valid, defensible test question. This committee will meet either in person or remotely via webinar. Remote writers will be given a deadline by which to return all questions written and any loaned reference textbooks.

Time commitment is informed by results of proceeding activities and is typically between 5-20 hours.

Item Review Committee

The goal of this committee is to review, and potentially edit, newly written items (i.e., exam questions). Reviewers evaluate an item's relevance to the exam content outline, content accuracy, correctness of answers, potential geographic bias, and language clarity. This committee will meet either in person or remotely via webinar. Time commitment is informed by results of proceeding activities. If remote, this activity ranges from 5-20 hours. If in person, time commitment is 2 days + travel with CCI providing airfare, meals, and hotel accommodations.

Standard Setting Committee

Members of this committee critically evaluate new forms of the exam to determine different cut scores that will be used to measure a candidate's performance on the exam. Part of this process entails taking the new form of the exam just as an examinee would. CCI provides all airfare, meals, and hotel accommodations. Time commitment is 2 days + travel.

Pool Review Committee

This committee reviews categorization of all items (i.e., exam questions) in each exam's subject areas. The goal of this committee is to reassign items and/or assign newly written items to appropriate subject areas. Time commitment is informed by results of proceeding activities; if remote, this activity is typically 3 hours. If in person, time commitment is 2 days + travel with CCI providing airfare, meals, and hotel accommodations.

Form Review Committee

Committee members meet to review all items (i.e., exam questions) selected for the examination form. Such matters as correctness of answers, prevention of geographic bias, language clarity and appropriateness of items are considered during the form review process. References are also reviewed and updated to new editions. This committee review constitutes an ultimate check and balance to validate the final versions of the examination forms. CCI provides airfare, meals, and hotel accommodations. Time commitment is 2 days + travel.

Alternates

Alternates are selected for both in-person and remote committee meetings. These volunteers should be available to attend a meeting or complete an activity on short notice in the event another volunteer becomes unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances. By serving in a standby capacity, alternates ensure test development committees will not be postponed or cancelled due to insufficient participant numbers.

Alternates are awarded points even if not called upon.