

CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION FOR RESEARCH ADMINISTRATORS

Handbook for Candidates

EXAMINATION DATES		
Spring 2017		
Application Deadline	Testing Window	
April 10, 2017	Begins:	May 6, 2017
	Ends:	May 20, 2017
Fall 2017		
Application Deadline	Testing Window	
October 2, 2017	Begins:	November 4, 2017
	Ends:	November 18, 2017



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PLEASE NOTE

RACC is going to include questions referencing the Uniform Guidance into the examinations on a slight delay and over a period of time/phases. This decision was based on the fact that one of our eligibility requirements is that a research administrator needs to have at least three years of experience in the profession, so we are essentially testing information which should have been acquired from working during the last three years. Additionally, many of the changes to the annual audit requirements do not take place immediately and are implemented over time.

RACC has decided to phase the new regulations into our examinations gradually, so that by the end of three years the examinations will be totally based on the new Uniform Guidance and the resulting agency positions in the management of their awards. We believe that this phased approach will also mirror how research administrators will be implementing the regulations in daily decisions and in our roles.

The CRA Examination will consist of items based entirely on 2 CFR 200 (Uniform Guidance) by 2018.

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This handbook contains necessary information about the Certification Examination for Research Administrators (CRA). Please retain it for future reference. Candidates are responsible for reading these instructions carefully. This handbook is subject to change.

CERTIFICATION

The Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC) promotes the concept of voluntary certification by examination for all research and sponsored programs administrators. After passing this exam, an individual earns the Certified Research Administrator (CRA) designation. Certification is just one part of a process called "credentialing". It focuses specifically on the individual and is one indication of current competence in this specialized field. Certification in research and sponsored programs administration is highly valued and provides formal recognition of basic knowledge in this field.

REASONS FOR CERTIFICATION

1. To provide documented evidence to a current or potential employer that an individual has been examined by an independent professional certifying organization and found to possess a certain level of basic knowledge of research and sponsored programs administration.
2. To provide personal and professional satisfaction of achievement of meeting established criteria indicating the attainment of a level of basic knowledge that is customary to be a professional in the field of research and sponsored programs administration.
3. To demonstrate commitment to the profession and to one's peers that an individual has taken the time and effort, beyond job experience, to learn the Body of Knowledge, thus exhibiting a significant responsibility to working in the profession of research or sponsored programs administration.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Bachelor's Degree and three (3) years of professional experience in research or sponsored programs administration either in a sponsoring or recipient organization or the equivalent in a self-funded organization;
OR
2. An Associate's Degree and five (5) years of professional experience in research or sponsored programs administration either in a sponsoring or recipient organization or the equivalent in a self-funded organization;
OR
3. No degree and six (6) years of professional experience in research or sponsored programs administration either in a sponsoring or recipient organization or the equivalent in a self-funded organization. *

* Petitions for approval of this option are available on the RACC website at: <http://www.racc-cert.org/CRApetition.htm>.

ADMINISTRATION

The Certification Program is administered by the Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC). The Certification Examination for Research Administrators is conducted by the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC), 1350 Broadway - 17th Floor, New York, New York 10018, (212) 356-0660, <http://www.ptcny.com>. The Professional Testing Corporation is an organization whose services are focused on the measurement aspects of human resources, including the design, development, and administration of test and testing programs for professional organizations. Questions concerning the examination should be referred to PTC.

ATTAINMENT OF CERTIFICATION

Eligible candidates who pass the examination will be certified for a period of five years, are eligible to use the registered designation CRA after their names, and will receive a certificate from the RACC. A registry of Certified Research Administrators is maintained by the RACC and may be reported in its publications. Further information concerning the CRA credentialing program and information regarding preparation for the examination may be found at the RACC Home Page, <http://www.racc-cert.org>. An annotated list of RACC's Body of Knowledge may be found at: <http://www.racc-cert.org/BodyOfKnowledge.html>.

To maintain the CRA designation beyond the initial five years and every five years thereafter, CRAs will need to show evidence of continuing professional development. Recertification guidelines and the application are available on the RACC homepage, <http://www.racc-cert.org/application.html>.

CODE OF ETHICS

Certificants are expected to practice and uphold the following principles in the discharge of their professional responsibilities. A candidate is required to sign the following statement as part of his/her application process:

I agree that I shall:

- perform my duties with honesty, diligence, and responsibility
- conduct myself free of personal and professional conflicts or the appearance of impropriety
- remain mindful as a steward of the funds I assist in requesting and managing have been provided fundamentally for the public good
- be prudent in the use and protection of sensitive information/data
- act in good faith promoting ethical integrity in all of our actions
- in public forums, maintain respectful communication about others in the profession

REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION

Certification may be revoked by the RACC for any of the following reasons:

1. Falsification of an application.
2. Misrepresentation of certification status.
3. Breach of existing ethical standards of professional practice.

An appeals mechanism for challenging revocation of certification is available.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. Read and follow the directions on the application and in this handbook. All applications must be completed online. The application can be found on Professional Testing Corporation's website at www.ptcny.com/clients/RACC.
2. The online application and appropriate fees for the examination must be received on or before the appropriate deadline listed in this handbook.

COMPLETION OF APPLICATION

Candidates must complete the examination application in full, using your name exactly as it appears on your current government issued photo ID, such as your driver’s license or passport. The completed application, with all documentation (if required), must be submitted online with the examination fee. If payment is being made by check or money order, complete the online application and mail payment to:

RACC EXAMINATION
Professional Testing Corporation
1350 Broadway, 17th Floor
New York, NY 10018

NOTE: Be certain payment clearly indicates candidate name and appropriate examination and testing period.

FEES

Application Fee for the Certification Examination for Research Administrators \$375.00
Special Test Center Fee \$100.00

MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: PROFESSIONAL TESTING CORPORATION

Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are also accepted. Please complete and sign the credit card payment form on the application.

DO NOT SEND CASH.

REFUNDS/TRANSFERS

There will be no refund of fees. A candidate who applies to take the examination but then wishes to take it during a different testing period may be granted a one-time deferment to the immediate next testing period if the candidate requests the deferment in writing and submits the transfer fee of \$220 to Professional Testing Corporation. Only one deferment will be permitted. The candidate is responsible for contacting PSI and canceling the examination appointment, if one has been made.

EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION

The Certification Examination for Research Administrators is administered during an established two-week testing period on a daily basis, Monday through Saturday, excluding holidays, at computer-based testing facilities managed by PSI. PSI has several hundred testing sites in the United States, as well as Canada. Scheduling is done on a first-come, first-serve basis. To find a testing center near you, visit www.ptcny.com/cbt/sites.htm or call PSI at (800) 733-9267. Please note that hours and days of availability vary at different centers. **You will not be able to schedule your examination appointment until you have received a Scheduling Authorization from PTC.**

TESTING SOFTWARE TUTORIAL

A Testing Software Tutorial can be viewed online. Go to www.ptcny.com/cbt/demo.html. This online testing software tutorial can give you an idea about the features of the testing software.

SCHEDULING YOUR EXAMINATION APPOINTMENT

Once your application has been received and processed and your eligibility has been verified, you will be sent a postcard from PTC confirming receipt. Within six weeks prior to the first day of the testing period, you will be sent a Scheduling Authorization by email from notices@ptcny.com. Please add the 'ptcny.com' domain to your email spam filter safe list.

Your current government-issued photo identification must be presented in order to gain admission to the testing center. PTC suggests you bring a paper copy of your Scheduling Authorization and your PSI Appointment Confirmation. If you do not receive a Scheduling Authorization or other correspondence at least three weeks before the beginning of the testing period, contact the Professional Testing Corporation at (212) 356-0660.

The Scheduling Authorization will indicate where to call to schedule your examination appointment as well as the dates during which testing is available. Appointment times are first-come, first-serve, so schedule your appointment as soon as you receive your Scheduling Authorization in order to maximize your chance of testing at your preferred location and on your preferred date.

After you make your test appointment, PSI will send you a confirmation email with the date, time and location of your exam. Please check this confirmation carefully for the correct date, time, and location. Contact PSI at (800) 733-9267 if you do not receive this email confirmation or if there is a mistake with your appointment.

- It is your responsibility as the candidate to contact PSI to schedule the examination appointment.
- It is highly recommended that you become familiar with the testing site.
- Arrival at the testing site at the appointed time is the responsibility of the candidate. Please plan for weather, traffic, parking, and any security requirements that are specific to the testing location. Late arrival may prevent you from testing.

CHANGING YOUR EXAMINATION APPOINTMENT

If you need to cancel your examination appointment or reschedule to a different date within the two-week testing period, you must contact PSI at (800) 733-9267 no later than noon, Eastern Standard Time, of the second business day PRIOR to your scheduled appointment. **PSI does not have the authority to authorize refunds or transfers to another testing period.**

SPECIAL NEEDS

RACC and PTC support the intent of and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). PTC will take steps reasonably necessary to make certification accessible to persons with disabilities covered under the ADA. Special testing arrangements may be made upon receipt of the Application, examination fee, and a completed and signed Request for Special Needs Accommodations Form, available from www.ptcny.com or by calling PTC at (212) 356-0660. This Form must be uploaded with the online application at least EIGHT weeks before the testing period begins. Please use this Form if you need to bring a service dog, medicine, food or beverages needed for a medical condition with you to the testing center.

Information supplied on the Request for Special Accommodations Form will only be used to determine the need for special accommodations and will be kept confidential.

CANDIDATES OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES AND PARTS OF CANADA

It may be possible to establish a special testing center to take a paper and pencil examination in your own country for an additional fee of \$100.00. A Request for Special Testing Center Form is available at www.ptcny.com and must be submitted along with payment to PTC upon submission of application EIGHT weeks before the testing period begins.

The Special Testing Center Fee will be waived for groups of five or more testing at the same time and location.

Please note that all examinations are administered in English.

RULES FOR THE EXAMINATION

1. All electronic devices that can be used to record, transmit, receive, or play back audio, photographic, text, or video content, including but not limited to, cell phones, laptop computers, tablets, Bluetooth devices; all wearable technology such as smart watches; MP3 players such as iPods, pagers, cameras and voice recorders are not permitted to be used and cannot be taken into the examination room.
2. Simple, non-programmable calculators are permitted, except for calculators included in cell phones and other mobile devices. A calculator is also available on screen if needed.
3. No questions concerning content of the examination may be asked during the examination session. The candidate should carefully read the directions that are provided on screen at the beginning of the examination session.
4. No test materials, documents, or reference materials of any sort are to be taken from the examination room or brought into the examination room.
5. Candidates are prohibited from leaving the testing room while their examination is in session, with the sole exception of going to the restroom.

REPORT OF RESULTS

Test results are not released at the testing center but will be sent via mail approximately one month following the close of the testing period. This is necessary to allow for the psychometric review and administrative time required to ensure accurate and reliable scores. Scores on the major areas of the examination and on the total examination will be provided. Successful candidates will also receive certificates from the RACC.

REEXAMINATION

The Certification Examination for Research Administrators may be taken as often as desired upon filing of a new application and payment of the applicable fee. There is no limit to the number of times the examination may be repeated.

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. The RACC will release the individual test scores ONLY to the individual candidate.
2. Any questions concerning test results should be referred to the RACC or PTC.

CONTENT OF EXAMINATION

1. The Certification Examination for Research Administrators is a written examination composed of a maximum of 250 multiple choice, objective questions with a total testing time of four (4) hours.
2. The content for the examination is described in the Content Outline, beginning on page 7.
3. The questions for the examination are obtained from Certified Research Administrators, individuals with expertise in research administration, and are reviewed for construction, accuracy, and appropriateness by the RACC and PTC's psychometricians.
4. The RACC, with the advice and assistance of PTC, prepares the examination.
5. The Certification Examination for Research Administrators will be weighted in approximately the following manner:
 - I. Project Development and Administration 30%
 - II. Legal Requirements and Sponsor Interface 30%
 - III. Financial Management..... 25%
 - IV. General Management..... 15%

CONTENT OUTLINE: The RACC "Body of Knowledge"

For an annotation giving sample resources, see <http://www.racc-cert.org/>.

RACC is going to include questions referencing the Uniform Guidance into the examinations on a slight delay and over a period of time/phases. The CRA Examination will consist of items based entirely on 2 CFR 200 (Uniform Guidance) by 2018.

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

- A. Collection and Dissemination of Information
 - 1. Marketing - Internal and External
 - a. Identification of funding opportunities
 - b. Identification of internal capabilities
 - 2. Resource Documents, Application Materials, and Information
 - 3. Dissemination of Information/Publications
 - 4. Liaison
 - a. Internal
 - b. Funding sources
 - c. Cooperative arrangements
 - 5. Public Relations
 - 6. Agency Structure and Practice
- B. Proposal Development
 - 1. Proposal Writing
 - 2. Budget Preparation
 - 3. Documentation to Meet Sponsor Requirements
 - 4. Internal Proposal Processing
 - 5. Negotiation Techniques
 - 6. Contracting Basics
- C. Administration of Awards
 - 1. Monitoring Activity
 - 2. Reports on Progress and Financial Status
 - 3. Continuation Funding
 - 4. Close Out
 - 5. Changes in Project Status
 - 6. Award Instruments
- D. Ethics and Professionalism
 - 1. Conflict of Interest
 - 2. Bioethics
 - 3. Human Subjects
 - 4. Animal Care
 - 5. Professional
- E. Intellectual Property
 - 1. Patents
 - 2. Copyrights
 - 3. Licensing
 - 4. Commercialization
 - 5. Data
 - 6. Proprietary Information
- F. Electronic Research Administration

II. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND SPONSOR INTERFACE

- A. Regulations and Statutes
 - 1. Overview of Regulatory and Legislative Process
 - 2. Governmental Relations
 - 3. Mandated Requirements
- B. Compliance - Federal Sponsors and General Management Practices
 - 1. Representations and Certifications
 - a. Federal Drug-Free Workplace and Drug-Free Schools
 - b. Federal Debt Delinquency
 - c. Federal Debarment/Suspension
 - d. Lobbying
 - e. Conflicts of interest
 - f. Scientific misconduct
 - g. Other
 - 2. Federal Management Requirements
 - a. Federal Acquisition Regulations
 - b. Federal Assistance Administrative Regulations
 - c. 2 CFR (Uniform Guidance and OMB Circulars)
 - 3. Institutional Committees
 - a. Institutional Review Board
 - b. Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
 - c. Other
 - 4. Federal Disclosure Requirements
 - 5. Institutional and Sponsor Publication Requirements
 - 6. HIPAA Health
 - 7. International Traffic in Arms Regulation (ITAR)/Export Administration Regulations (EAR)
- C. Federal/Sponsor Appeal Procedures

III. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- A. Budgeting/Accounting
 - 1. Proposal Development
 - 2. Accounting Management
 - a. Accounting systems/management information systems
 - 1. Sponsor documents
 - 2. Internal documents
 - b. Accounting processes
 - 1. Effort reporting
 - 2. Service centers
 - 3. Program income
 - 4. Internal controls
 - c. Cost transfers
 - 3. Rebudgeting
- B. Costs
 - 1. Direct Costs
 - 2. Indirect Costs
 - 3. Indirect Cost Rates
 - a. Development
 - b. Negotiation
 - 4. Cost Sharing

- C. Sponsor Financial Reporting
- D. Audit
 - 1. Types
 - 2. Internal and External Requirements
 - 3. Allowable Costs

IV. GENERAL MANAGEMENT

- A. Facility Management
 - 1. Specialized Facilities
 - 2. Property, Utility, and Equipment Management
 - a. Inventory control
 - b. Sale/disposal of equipment and property
 - c. Lease vs. purchase
 - d. Capital expenditures
 - e. Sharing/pooling
 - f. Central services
 - 3. Safety and Health Requirements and Procedures
 - 4. Hazardous and Nonhazardous Materials
 - 5. Security
 - 6. Renovation and Construction -Differentiation & Impact analysis
 - 7. Biohazards
 - 8. Other
- B. Contracts and Purchasing
 - 1. Basic Legal Concepts
 - 2. Management of Contracts and Purchasing
 - 3. Termination and Appeals
- C. Records Management
- D. Human Resource Management
 - 1. Employee/Labor Relations
 - 2. Career Development/Training
 - 3. Staffing
 - 4. Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity
 - 5. Compensation

ONLINE PRACTICE TEST

WHAT IS IT

A practice test consisting of 75 questions with a testing time of 2 hours taken over the Internet

WHY TAKE IT

To experience taking a computerized exam, to review content included in Certification Examination for Research Administrators, and to learn more about question format, style, and level of difficulty

SCORE REPORT

After completing the online practice test, you will receive an instant score report showing test performance in each of the content areas. The score report does not provide correct answers or indicate which questions were answered correctly and incorrectly.

NOTE: Performance on the online practice test may differ from actual performance on the Certification Examinations. Thus, there is no guarantee that taking this practice test will help you pass the Certification Examinations. Participants may, however, find it helpful to review content in any areas of weakness indicated on the score reports prior to taking the Certification Examinations.

CONTENT INCLUDED

- I. Project Development and Administration
- II. Legal Requirements and Sponsor Interface
- III. Financial Management
- IV. General Management

FEES

\$60, paid by credit card.

HOW TO APPLY

Go to <https://secure.ptcny.com/webtest> and follow the directions to apply.

SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

In the following questions, choose the one best answer.

-
1. Which of the following government publications serves as a comprehensive handbook of current federal government funding programs?
1. Federal Yellow Book
 2. Annual Register of Grant Support
 3. Guide to Funding in Higher Education
 4. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
-
2. Which of the following is NOT a recognized indicator that a college or university has an audit management system which evidences that the institution is well managed?
1. Financial objectives, goals, and control procedures that are established and maintained
 2. Systems of controls that adequately safeguard and account for the assets of the college or university
 3. Systems of controls that adequately measure and ensure that resources are used economically and efficiently
 4. A process to confirm that appropriate purchased insurance and bonding provisions are incorporated into grant and contract documents
-
3. If a grant includes items of equipment which came to the grantee institution as part of the award, the grantee institution
1. has legal responsibility for the equipment.
 2. is not entitled to use, retain, or dispose of the equipment.
 3. must transfer equipment if principal investigator leaves grantee institution.
 4. is required to have a maintenance contract.
-
4. Which of the following is the document which deals specifically with patent rights and responsibilities currently applicable to universities under federally sponsored projects?
1. 37 CFR 401
 2. FAR 52.209-5
 3. OMB Circular A-110
 4. OMB Circular A-124
-
5. Which of the following is most closely responsible, on a day-to-day basis, for enforcement of the Federal Animal Welfare Act?
1. Office of Human Research Protection
 2. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
 3. Department of Health and Human Services
 4. American Association for Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care

CORRECT ANSWERS TO SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. 4 2. 4 3. 1 4. 1 5. 2

REFERENCES

The following references may be of some help in preparing for the examination. The list does not attempt to include all acceptable references, nor is it suggested that the Certification Examination for Research Administrators is based entirely on these references. In some cases, individual experience is the best reference.

TEXTBOOKS

Beasley, K.L., et al. Administration of Sponsored Programs -- Handbook for Developing and Managing Research Activities and Other Projects. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982.

Belcher, J.C., and Jacobsen, J.M. From Idea to Funded Project, Grant Proposals That Work. Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1992.

The Foundation Center's Guide to Proposal Writing, 4th Edition, The Foundation Center, ISBN 1-931923-92-2

See also <http://fdncenter.org/>

Getting Funded: The Complete Guide to Writing Grant Proposals by Mary S. Hall, Susan Howlett (Paperback - July 2003)

PERIODICALS (available on line)

Research Management Review, Washington, DC: National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA).

The Journal of Research Administration, Washington, DC: SRA International Executive Office.

MAJOR PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS' on-line sources with a broad range of information:

SRA International

<http://www.srainternational.org/sra03/index.cfm>

National Council of University Research Administrators

<http://www.ncura.edu/>

Council on Governmental Relations

<http://www.cogr.edu/>

Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable

<http://www7.nationalacademies.org/quirr/index.html>

Association of University Technology Managers

<http://www.autm.net/index.cfm>

SOME MAJOR FEDERAL FUNDING AGENCIES

See their Guides, Manuals, etc. available by drilling down from their home pages

DHHS: <http://www.hhs.gov/>

NIH: <http://www.nih.gov/>

NSF: <http://www.nsf.gov/>

NASA: <http://www.nasa.gov/home/index.html?skipIntro=1>

ED: <http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>

OMB CIRCULARS (Now codified in 2 CFR)

2 CFR 220 (OMB A-21): Cost Principles for Educational Institutions.

2 CFR 215 (OMB A-110): Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations: Uniform Administrative Requirements.

OMB A-133: Audit of Institutions of Higher Education and Nonprofit Organizations.

DATABASES/ONLINE SERVICES

www.grants.gov

www.fedbizopps.gov