

Certification Examination for Pre-Award Research Administrators



Candidate Handbook 2024

Application Deadline*	Testing Window
January 24, 2024	February 17 – March 2, 2024
July 17, 2024	August 17 – August 31, 2024

***Applications will not be accepted after 11:59pm Eastern on this date**

Administered by:



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www.ptcnyc.com/contact

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This Handbook contains necessary information about the Certification Examination for Pre-Award Research Administrators. Please retain it for future reference. Candidates are responsible for reading these instructions carefully. This Handbook is subject to change.

CONTACT INFORMATION

<p>Professional Testing Corporation (PTC)</p> <p>www.ptcny.com</p> <p>(212) 356-0660</p> <p>www.ptcny.com/contact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply for the examination• Obtain general application information• Obtain information about testing policies• Transfer to a new testing period• Request Test Accommodations• Request Hand Score• Questions about score reports• Miscellaneous inquiries
<p>Prometric</p> <p>www.prometric.com/RACC</p> <p>(800) 741-0934</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule test appointment• Reschedule test appointment (within a testing period)• Cancel test appointment• Find directions to test site• Questions regarding testing sites and appointments
<p>Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC)</p> <p>www.racc-cert.org</p> <p>(303) 433-4446</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Body of Knowledge Review sessions• Eligibility Petition Form• Recertification Information

ATTENTION CANDIDATES

- This handbook contains necessary information about the RACC Certification Examination for Pre-Award Research Administrators.
- It is required reading for those applying and taking the examination.
- All individuals applying for the examination must comply with the policies, procedures, and deadlines in this Handbook and attest to this by signing the Candidate Attestation found on the application. Please retain this handbook for future reference.
- This handbook is subject to change. See www.ptcny.com for handbook updates.

ACCESSING CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES AT ANY TIME WHILE YOU ARE TAKING THE EXAM IS PROHIBITED. YOU CAN ONLY REMOVE SNACKS, DRINKS, MEDICINE, OR PERSONAL HEALTHCARE ITEMS FROM YOUR LOCKER- NO BACKPACKS, BAGS, POCKETBOOKS OR CLOTHING CAN BE REMOVED WHILE YOUR EXAM IS IN SESSION.

CERTIFICATION

The Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC) promotes the concept of voluntary certification by examination for all pre-award research and sponsored programs administrators. After passing this examination, an individual earns the Certified Pre-Award Research Administrator (CPRA®) 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 pre-award research and sponsored programs administration is highly valued and provides formal recognition of basic knowledge in this field.

REASONS FOR CERTIFICATION

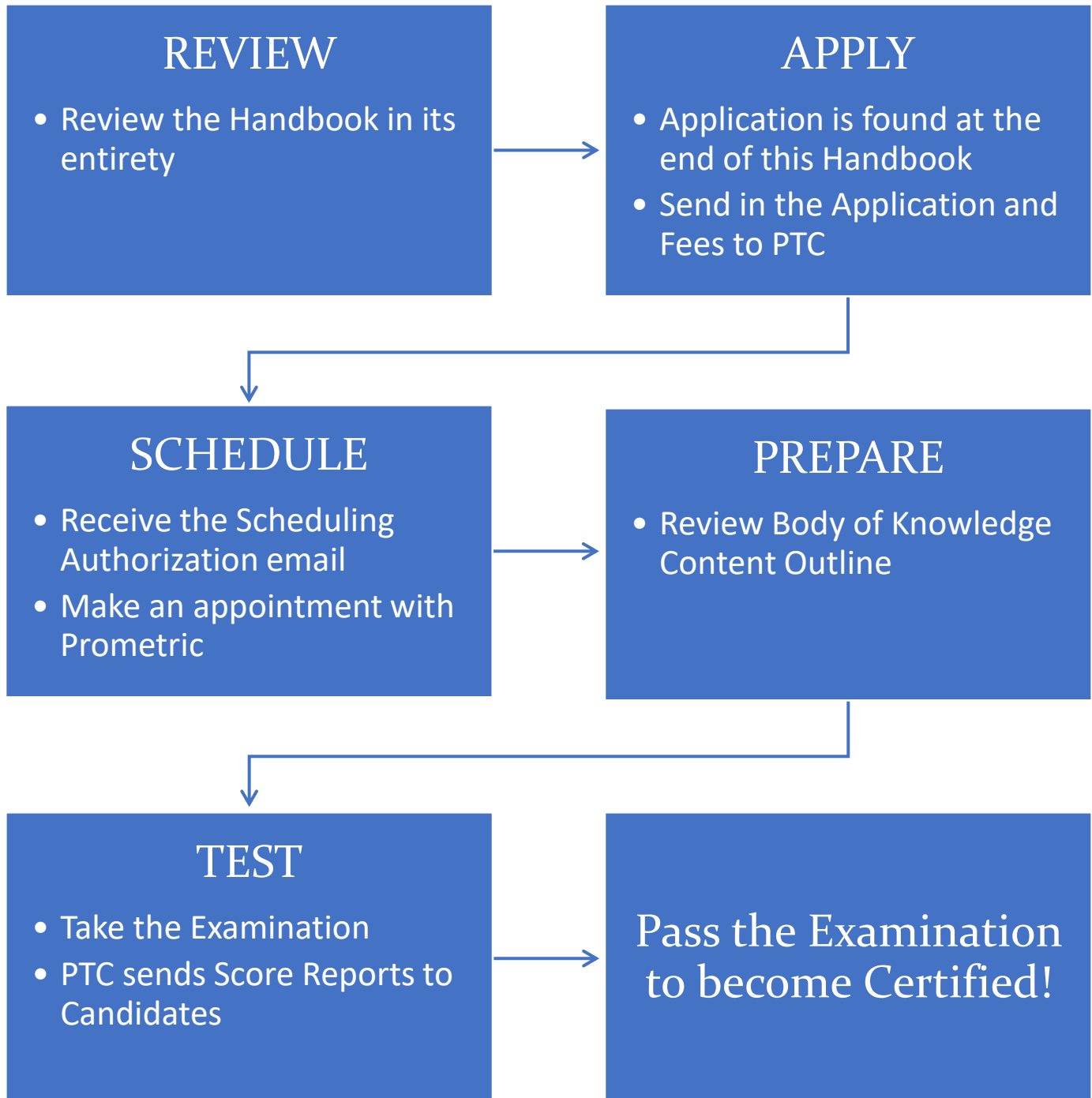
1. To provide documented evidence to a current or potential employer that an individual has been examined by an independent professional certifying organization and found to possess a certain level of basic knowledge of pre-award research and sponsored programs administration.
2. To provide personal 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 pre-award 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 Pre-Award Body of Knowledge, thus exhibiting a significant responsibility to working in the profession of pre-award research or sponsored programs administration.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS*

1. Bachelor's or advanced degree and three (3) years of professional experience in pre-award research administration 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 pre-award research administration 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 the pre-award research administration or sponsored programs administration either in a sponsoring or recipient organization or the equivalent in a self-funded organization.

* If you do not have the required experience for your level of education, you may petition for a waiver to take the exam. To do so, access the examination Petition on RACC's website [HERE](#).

THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS



COMPLETION OF APPLICATION

Step 1 – Fill Out the Application

- Go to <http://www.ptcny.com/test-sponsors/RACC> or www.racc-cert.org
 - View testing periods and application deadlines
 - Fill out online application completely and upload supporting documentation.
 - Use your first and last name exactly as it appears on your current driver's license, passport, state issued non-driver ID or military ID.
 - Applications are not complete until all information, documentation, and payment has been provided.
 - When you start a new application, you will be asked to create a PIN number. This PIN will be used if you need to come back to the application to finish it later. Keep the link to the application and your PIN number for later use.

Step 2 – Submit Exam Fee and Application for Review

PTC will send you an email that says that your payment and application have been received and are being reviewed. Please allow up to 10 business days for review.

Step 3 – Receive Application Status Update

- After your application is reviewed PTC will update you with another email.
 - **REOPENED FOR MORE DOCUMENTS**
 - This means we are missing the required documentation. Follow the directions in the email.
 - Applications that are incomplete as of 14 days before the start of the testing window will be refunded minus the administration fee (see fees page 8).
 - **REJECTED**
 - This means you are not eligible to take the exam. The reason will be explained in the email.
 - Rejected applications will be refunded minus the administration fee (see fees page 8)
 - **APPROVED**
 - This means your application is approved. You will move on to Step 4.

Step 4 – Receive Scheduling Authorization and Schedule Testing Appointment

- Approved candidates will receive an email with their Scheduling Authorization within 11 weeks before the start of the testing window. Scheduling Authorization emails come from notices@ptcny.com. Do not lose this email.
- If you don't receive your Scheduling Authorization email 3 weeks before the start of your testing window, contact PTC.

The Scheduling Authorization includes important information including:

- Your PTC Candidate ID number
- Instructions on how to make your Exam appointment with Prometric.

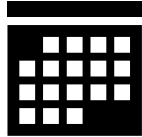
Applicants who are not approved to sit for the examination or whose applications are incomplete 21 days prior to the first day of the testing window will receive a refund of their application fee minus the \$75 administrative fee. Refunds will be processed approximately 30 days after the end of the testing period.

EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION AND SCHEDULING

The RACC Certification Examination for Pre-Award Research Administrators is administered during an established two-week testing window daily, excluding holidays, at computer-based testing facilities managed by Prometric.

Scheduling Examination Appointments

Follow the steps on your Scheduling Authorization to schedule your examination appointment with Prometric.



- Appointment times are first-come, first-served, so schedule your appointment as soon as you receive your Scheduling Authorization.
- **Candidates who wait until the last minute run the risk of missing out on their preferred date, time, and/or testing center. Candidates unable to schedule an appointment will forfeit their fees.**
-

After you make your test appointment, Prometric will send you a confirmation email with the date, time, and location of your exam. Check this confirmation carefully and contact Prometric at (800) 741-0934 if you do not receive this email confirmation or if there is a mistake with your appointment.

Note: International candidates may also schedule, reschedule, or cancel an appointment online [HERE](#).

IMPORTANT!

You **MUST** present your current driver's license, passport, or U.S. military ID at the test center. Expired, temporary, or paper driver's licenses will **NOT** be accepted.

The first and last name on your Scheduling Authorization **MUST** exactly match the first and last name on your photo ID.

Fees will not be refunded for exams missed because of invalid ID.

Rescheduling Examination Appointments within a Testing Period

Candidates can reschedule their examination appointments within the same testing period as long as the request is submitted within the timeframe described below. Reschedule within the permitted time frame by calling or going to the Prometric website [HERE](#).

Time Frame	Reschedule Permitted?	Stipulations
Requests submitted 30 days or more before the original appointment	Yes	None
Requests submitted 5 to 29 days before the original appointment	Yes	Candidate must pay Prometric a rescheduling fee of \$50.
Requests submitted less than 5 days before the original appointment	No	Candidates who do not arrive to test for their appointment will be considered a no-show and all their examinations fees will be forfeited. Candidates will need to reapply and pay full examination fees for a future testing period.

Transferring to a New Testing Period

Candidates unable to take the examination during their scheduled testing period may request a **ONE-TIME** transfer to a future testing period. **There is a transfer fee of \$235.00.** After you have transferred once by paying the \$235.00 fee, you will need to pay the full examination fee in order to transfer a second time; so, ***please plan carefully.***

Please note: requests to transfer to a new testing period must be received within 30 days of your originally scheduled testing period.

Candidates wishing to transfer to a new testing period need to follow the steps below.

1. Go to PTC's [Online Applications System](#).
2. Click "Start New Application."
3. Choose RACC-CPRA in the first drop-down menu; then choose the new examination period in the second drop down menu and fill out the rest of the information on the page.
4. Fill out the application making sure you answer yes to the question asking if you are transferring.
5. When you have finished the application, click "Submit Transfer Request."
6. PTC Support will send you an email letting you know your transfer application was approved and that you can log back into your application and pay the one-time \$235.00 transfer fee.

Call PTC at 212-356-0660 if you have any questions regarding the transfer process.

If candidates are unable to attend the examination on the date for which they registered and elect not to transfer to another testing period, the application will be closed and all fees will be forfeited. There will be no refund of fees.

The transfer fee is based on costs and is not punitive in nature. The transfer fee must be paid at the time the request is approved.

Note: Transferring your Examination only refers to instances when a candidate is unable to take their exam during a testing period for which they have already applied. Candidates who did not pass their examination and are retaking the examination need to pay the full Examination Fee.

Failing to Report for an Examination



If you fail to report for an examination, you will forfeit all fees paid to take the examination. A completed application form and examination fee are required to reapply for the examination.

EXAMINATION FEES

Fee Type	Amount	Details
Application Fee	US \$395.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-refundable• Non-transferable• Includes testing center fees• Includes non-refundable \$75 administrative fee
Transfer Fee (Moving to a new testing window; see page 7)	US \$235.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies to candidates who need to move to a new testing period• Must submit new application & fee to PTC
Rescheduling Fee (29-5 days prior to scheduled appointment; see page 7)	US \$50.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies to candidates who need to move their appointment within their current testing period• Payable directly to Prometric• Reschedule with Prometric online or over the phone



- There will be no refund of fees unless applicants are ineligible for the examination.
- Ineligible candidates will be refunded their fees minus an administrative fee.
- No refunds will be issued for applying for the incorrect examination or testing period, for failing to make an examination appointment, or for failing to appear at your scheduled appointment.

Be advised: Prometric does not have the authority to grant transfers to another testing period or refunds.

TEST ACCOMMODATIONS

RACC and PTC support the intent of and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will take steps reasonably necessary to make certification accessible to persons with disabilities covered under the ADA. According to the ADA, an individual with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity (such as seeing, hearing, learning, reading, concentrating, walking) or a major bodily function (such as neurological, endocrine, or digestive system).

The information you provide and any documentation regarding your disability and test accommodations is confidential and is not included in scoring or reporting.

All approved testing accommodations must maintain the psychometric nature and security of the examination. Accommodations that fundamentally alter the nature or security of the exam will not be granted.

To request test accommodations, follow these 4 steps:

1. Download the Request for Test Accommodations Form, available from www.ptcnyc.com or by calling PTC at (212) 356-0660.
2. Complete Test Accommodations Form with your doctor/healthcare professional.
3. Upload the completed and signed Test Accommodations Form with the online exam application.
4. Submit fully both the Test Accommodations Form and the application at least 8 weeks prior to the start of your chosen testing period.

NOTES:

- Only those requests made and received on the official Request for Test Accommodations Form will be reviewed.
- All requests must be made at the time of application. Accommodations cannot be added to an existing exam appointment.
- If you miss the 8-week deadline, you may not be able to test during your chosen testing period and you will be subject to rescheduling or transfer fees.
- Do not go to www.prometric.com or contact Prometric to request test accommodations as they are not authorized to approve accommodations. All requests for test accommodations must be submitted on the PTC Request Form.
- If you need to use your cell phone or another electronic device to monitor a medical condition, such as diabetes, please be sure to include this on Part 1 of the Request for Test Accommodations Form so that we can notify Prometric in advance.
- Only pre-approved test accommodations will be permitted on the day of the examination. Test center personnel are not authorized to make any changes to the test accommodations on the day of the testing session and any such change may result in your examination score being canceled.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION

- Check your driver's license, passport, non-driver state issued ID or U.S. Military ID.
 - Is it expired?
 - Does the first and last name on your ID match the first and last name on your Scheduling Authorization email?
 - Proctors at the Prometric testing center will refuse admission to candidates with expired ID, IDs with names that do not match their records, and temporary paper IDs. Candidates will be marked as no-shows and will forfeit their exam fees.
- Check your PTC Scheduling Authorization email and Prometric Appointment Confirmation email to make sure everything is accurate (i.e., your first and last name, exam name, appointment date, time and location).
- Make yourself familiar with the location of your test center and parking options and check the weather and traffic conditions before you leave for the test center. Allow plenty of time as late arrival may prevent you from testing.
- In the event of inclement weather, check the Prometric website for [site closures](#).
- Prometric's website provides information on what you can expect on your test day, including a walkthrough of [check in and security procedures](#).
- This Handbook provides the Content Outline for the Examination (see appendix). Use this to help you start studying for the examination.

Review What to Expect at the Test Center and Rules for the Examination on the next pages before your appointment.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE TESTING CENTER

- Candidate Check-In
 - Candidates will be asked to:
 - present their IDs.
 - empty and turn out their pockets.
 - walk through a metal detector or get "wanded".
 - Eyeglasses, jewelry, and other accessories will be inspected.
 - Jewelry other than wedding and engagement rings is prohibited.
 - Leave these at home or place them in your locker.

- Religious headwear may be worn into the testing room; however, it is subject to inspection by test center staff.
- Prometric provides lockers to store purses, backpacks, mobile phones, jackets, food, drinks and medical supplies.
- Water in a clear plastic containers (no labels) may be brought into the testing room.
- During the Exam
 - No breaks are scheduled during the exam.
 - Candidates are only permitted to leave the testing room to use the restroom or access food, drink, or medicine from their assigned locker. The exam timer will NOT be paused.
 - Smoking is prohibited at the testing center.
 - All examinations are monitored and may be recorded in both audio and video format.
- Keep in mind:
 - Other exams will be administered at the same time as your examination.
 - You may hear ambient noises such as typing, coughing, or people entering and exiting the testing room that cannot be avoided.
 - Prometric is unable to provide a completely noise-free environment.
 - Headphones may be requested to minimize the impact of ambient noise.
 - Proctors will periodically walk through the testing room as part of their monitoring process.
 - See [Prometric's website](#) for more information about what to expect on testing day.

RULES FOR THE EXAMINATION

Read the information below carefully. You are responsible for adhering to the examination rules while at the testing center.

- DO NOT BRING

These items are strictly prohibited at the testing center. Leave these items in your car or your assigned locker.

- Cell phones and all other electronic devices
- Watches
- Jackets/coats/bulky clothing such as sweatshirts
- Hats (except hats worn for religious reasons)
- Jewelry, including watches and wearable technology.



- ⇒ You may NOT access the following at any time during your exam or breaks: papers, books, any reference materials; electronic devices including your cell phone. Candidates may access the following items from their locker: snacks, drinks, medicine, or other personal healthcare items.
- ⇒ No questions concerning content of the examination may be asked during the examination session. Carefully read the directions that are provided on screen at the beginning of the examination session.
- ⇒ You are prohibited from leaving the testing room while your examination is in session, except for going to the restroom. Candidates who do go to their lockers or the restroom will need to repeat the security screening before being permitted to reenter the testing room. **Candidates who leave the center will have their examinations terminated.**
- ⇒ See [Prometric's statement on Test Center Security](#) for more information.

Contact PTC [HERE](#) or at (212) 356-0660 with any questions about the examination rules.

Irregular or improper behavior that is observed, made apparent by statistical analysis, or uncovered by other means before, during or after the examination will be considered a violation of these rules and may constitute grounds for invalidation of a candidate's examination. RACC will initiate an investigation and request suitable analyses and appropriate documentation.

TESTING CONDITIONS OR EXAMINATION FEEDBACK

Any candidate who feels that the examination effort was negatively impacted by the test center conditions should notify the proctor immediately. The situation should also be reported to PTC [HERE](#) at within 15 days of the test appointment. Any comments about the test itself should also be reported to PTC [HERE](#) within 15 days of the test appointment.

EXAMINATION SECURITY

Candidates seeking admission to take the examination do so for the purpose of pursuing registration, and for no other purpose. Because of the confidential nature of the examination, candidates may not make or keep copies, excerpts, or notes of examination materials, and to not use or divulge information learned from the examination. The examination is the exclusive property of RACC and candidates may not use examination information in any way without the express prior written consent of RACC.

The CPRA examination is confidential. Candidates are required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to the start of the examination.

Candidates agree to abide by the testing rules in effect at the time of their test appointment. RACC, PTC, and/or Prometric staff may refuse a candidate admission to the examination if they do not have the proper identification as detailed in the Candidate Handbook. Candidates who do not abide by the testing rules may have their exam terminated during the exam administration in order to maintain a secure and proper exam administration and/or exam scores invalidated.

REPORT OF RESULTS

Test results are not released at the testing center but will be sent via email 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 an e-certificate from the RACC via email.

Scoring Procedure

The passing score for the Certified Pre-Award Research Administrator Examination has been reviewed and approved by RACC and has been determined using a criterion-referenced methodology.

Confidentiality of Examination Scores

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

Requesting a Handscore

Candidates who fail the examination may request a hand scoring of their data file. Hand scoring is a manual check of the data file by the testing service to determine if there have been any errors in scoring. Although the probability of such an error is extremely remote, this service is available. Requests for hand scoring must be received by PTC no later than 90 days after the date of the examination by completing and returning the Request of Handscore form on www.ptcny.com with payment of \$25. Candidates who fail the examination will not be permitted to see the examination questions. For reasons of test security, no candidate is allowed to review the examination or any of its items.

To ensure correct reporting of results, PTC automatically performs handscores of examinations of candidates who score within 3 points of passing as a quality control measure. Thus, it is extremely doubtful that any examination results will change from “fail” to “pass” through handscoring.

Reexamination

The Certified Pre-Award Research Administrator Examination may be taken as often as desired upon submission of a new application and payment of the applicable fee. There is no limit to the number of times the examination may be repeated.

ATTAINMENT OF CERTIFICATION & RECERTIFICATION

Eligible candidates who pass the examination will be certified for a period of three years, are eligible to use the designation CPRA® after their names and will receive a certificate from the RACC. A registry of Certified Pre-Award Research Administrators is maintained by the RACC and may be reported in its publications. Further information concerning the CPRA® credentialing program and information regarding preparation for the examination may be found at the [RACC website](#). An annotated list of the CPRA® Body of Knowledge may be found in the [CPRA® Body of Knowledge](#) section of the website.

The CPRA® designation is awarded for a period of three (3) years, at which time a CPRA® must recertify for an additional three (3) years by one of two methods:

1. Earning 42 contact hours of education credits during the preceding 3 years, 80% of which (34 credits) must be taken in topics related specifically to pre-award activities and submitting an online CPRA® recertification application.
2. Re-taking and passing the CPRA® examination.

Reminders about recertification will be sent by way of email, beginning approximately three (3) months before the dates of recertification.

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

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

The Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC) and its Board of Directors recognizes, values, and celebrates diversity of persons and experiences in its mission to certify and uphold research administration standards to advance the profession. RACC is committed to promoting a culture of integrity, competency, and inclusion. Every person meeting RACC's minimum qualifications has a right to take a certification exam or recertify their credential, without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, social class, sexual orientation, ability, personality, or background. Each RACC certificate holder has a right to fair and respectful treatment, equal access to RACC resources, and equitable opportunities to contribute to RACC's success.

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.

CONTENT OF THE EXAMINATION

The RACC Certification Examination for Pre-Award Research Administrators is a computer-based examination composed of a maximum of 250 multiple-choice, objective questions with a total testing time of four (4) hours. The content for the examination is described in the Body of Knowledge on the next page.

The questions for the examination are obtained from Certified Pre-Award Research Administrators, individuals with expertise in pre-award research administration and are reviewed for construction, accuracy, and appropriateness by the RACC.

RACC, with the advice and assistance of the Professional Testing Corporation, prepares the examination.

The RACC Certification Examination for Pre-Award Research Administrators will be weighted in approximately the following manner:

I.	Research Partnership and Funding	25%
II.	Project Development and Proposal Submission	30%
III.	Budget Design and Development	30%
IV.	Awards and Pre-Award Compliance Considerations	15%

CPRA BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

Current as of October 1, 2017

I. RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP AND FUNDING

- A. Settings for research administration
- B. Roles and responsibilities
 - 1. Research administrator (facilitator, gatekeeper, resource locator, team builder, motivator)
 - 2. Sponsored programs office
 - 3. Principal investigator and other key personnel
 - 4. Institution
 - 5. Sponsor
- C. Perspectives for seeking and awarding sponsored funding (institutions, sponsor's, principal investigator's, interdependency, common goals, relationships)
- D. Collaborations (role, determining criteria, required proposal documentation)
 - 1. Multiple/Collaborating PIs
 - 2. Subrecipients
 - 3. Independent contractors
 - 4. Teaming agreement
- E. Professional skills development for research administrators (customer service, project management, multi-tasking, time management, training for career development)
- F. Funding and research development
 - 1. Funding opportunities (characteristics, key features)
 - a. Solicited
 - b. Unsolicited/PI-initiated
 - c. Limited submissions
 - 2. Funding information (background, content, best practices)
 - a. Sources (characteristics, key features)
 - i. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)
 - ii. Federal Register
 - iii. FedBizOpps.gov
 - iv. Grants.gov
 - v. FedConnect.net
 - vi. Agency websites
 - vii. Foundation directories and reports
 - viii. Other
 - b. Use of expertise databases and funding search tools
 - 3. Announcements/solicitations
 - a. General components included in funding announcements
 - b. Types and traits of funding announcements/solicitations(RFA/RFP)
 - c. Identification of key points from announcements and communication to investigators
 - d. Communication methods and delivery to appropriate audience (newsletters, electronic tools, listserv)

4. Funding programs (key purposes, characteristics, requirements, restrictions)
 - a. Research
 - b. Fellowships and training
 - c. Equipment/instrumentation
 - d. Program project/center
 - e. Career development
 - f. Internal
 - g. Other
- G. Overview of grants regulatory framework and legislative process (statutory requirements, program requirements, administrative requirements)
 1. Federal budget process
 2. Congressionally directed funding (distinguishing features, lobbying implications)
 3. OMB circulars (OMB A-133, OMB A-102) (purpose, requirements, Implementation, and Uniform Guidance)
 4. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) (2 CFR Part 215, 2 CFR Part 220, 2 CFR Part 230, 2 CFR Part 225)
 5. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) (purpose, requirements in contracts)
 6. Statutory requirements (NIH salary cap)
 7. America COMPETES Act (requirements, implementation)
 8. Other
- H. Sponsors
 1. Types and characteristics of sponsors
 - a. Federal government
 - i. Structure and agency missions (executive departments, independent agencies)
 - ii. Types of funding programs and award mechanisms
 - b. State and local government
 - c. Private foundations and associations
 - d. For profit business and industry
 2. Differentiation between public and private sources of funding
- I. Identification of internal capacity
 1. Identification of space needs (survey)
 2. Assessment of institution's facilities, resources, and unique internal/institutional capabilities
 - a. Animal research facilities
 - b. Specialized facilities
 - c. Central services (recharge centers)
 - d. Availability of institutional matching funds
- J. Public relations
 1. Freedom of information (FOIA)
 2. Public records laws
 3. Media relations and interactions with special interest groups
 4. Environmental concerns/impacts (chemical hazardous waste, Material Safety Data sheets [MSDS], environmental safety, management of public relations associated with potential hazards)

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

- A. Proposal writing
 - 1. Types of proposals (characteristics, key elements)
 - a. Pre-proposal/pre-application/letter of intent
 - b. New, continuation, renewal, resubmission
 - c. Competing, noncompeting
 - d. Seed grant/pilot project/internal
 - 2. Nonfinancial components of a proposal (purpose, key features, essential information)
 - a. Personnel/key persons
 - b. Title/abstract/executive summary/introduction
 - c. Needs/problem statement
 - d. Goals/objectives/statement of work/implementation plan/methods/sustainability/evaluation plan/data sharing plan/letters of support
 - e. Other
 - 3. Characteristics of a successful proposal
 - 4. Unique characteristics of proposals submitted to industry sponsors
- B. Effective management of proposal teams (timeline, organization)
- C. Understanding and interpretation of agency guidelines (key features, requirements, proposal content, other information)
 - 1. Broad Agency Announcement (BAA)
 - 2. Invitation to bid
 - 3. Request for Applications/Proposals (RFA/RFP)
 - 4. Request for Quotation (RFQ)
 - 5. Program announcements (solicited, unsolicited)
- D. Documentation to meet sponsor requirements
 - 1. Subcontractor/collaborator documentation
 - 2. Just-in-Time documentation and process
 - 3. Current and pending support
 - 4. Required proposal components
- E. Institutional clearances and approvals
 - 1. Internal proposal review
 - 2. Approvals and documentation of institutional commitments
 - 3. Records retention
- F. Electronic research administration
 - 1. Institutional capability to electronically submit funding applications
 - 2. Key features of online proposal submission systems
 - 3. Common electronic proposal submission systems
 - a. Grants.gov
 - b. FastLane
 - c. eRA Commons
 - d. NSPIRES
 - e. FedConnect
 - f. proposalCENTRAL
 - g. Other (system-to-system interfaces)

- 4. Other electronic tools related to funding application development and submission
 - a. Research.gov
 - b. NIH RePORTER
 - c. USAspending.gov
 - d. Other
 - 5. System-to-system interfaces
- G. Deadlines and target dates
- H. Unfunded and revised proposals

III. BUDGET DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

- A. Budget preparation
 - 1. Process for developing budget
 - 2. Role of budget in proposal and characteristics of an effective budget
 - 3. Interpretation of sponsor guidelines related to budget limitations and exclusions
 - 4. Understanding of sustainability of project
 - 5. Budget categories
 - 6. Budget justification
 - 7. Budget forms
 - 8. Use of budget template and spreadsheets
 - 9. Budget calculation
- B. Project costs
 - 1. Definitions of direct and indirect costs
 - 2. Definition of major projects and unlike circumstance
 - 3. Understanding of total project costs (sponsor and matching costs)
 - 4. Cost sharing
 - a. Allowable and unallowable costs
 - b. Types of cost sharing (mandatory, voluntary committed, voluntary uncommitted)
 - c. Documentation and institutional approvals
 - 5. Understanding of general cost principles
 - a. Criteria for determining allowable and unallowable costs (2 CFR Part 220, allowable, allocable, reasonable, consistently applied, prudent person test)
 - b. Typical allowable and unallowable costs
 - c. Cost Accounting Standards (CAS)
 - 6. Cost price analysis
 - 7. Program income
- C. Direct costs
 - 1. Personnel
 - a. Salaries and wages (application of salary cap)
 - b. Time and effort (understanding of concept of 100%)
 - c. Fringe benefits (typical components, different types of calculation base pooled, actual)
 - 2. Travel
 - 3. Equipment
 - 4. Other direct costs
 - 5. Subawards
 - 6. Consultant

- D. Facilities and Administrative (Indirect) Costs
 - 1. Components of indirect costs
 - 2. Use of appropriate indirect rate in proposals (purpose code, off/on campus rates, sponsor indirect cost rate limitations)
 - 3. Calculation of indirect costs in proposal budgets (modified total direct costs [MTDC])
 - 4. Unrecovered indirect costs
 - 5. Waivers
 - 6. Indirect rates
 - a. General process for developing indirect rate proposal
 - b. Determination of appropriate indirect rate
 - i. On campus/off campus
 - ii. Purpose code (e.g. research, instruction, other)
 - iii. Negotiation of indirect rates
- E. Budget revisions (review, submission, implications to scope of work)

IV. AWARDS AND PRE-AWARD COMPLIANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Sponsor reviews (characteristics, composition of review committee, outcome)
 - 1. In-house review
 - 2. Peer review
 - 3. Modified peer review
 - 4. Other
- B. Site visits (definition, preparation steps, responsibilities of parties)
- C. Sponsored project awards (definition, purpose, use, key elements, support mechanisms)
 - 1. Grant (assistance)
 - 2. Contract (procurement)
 - 3. Cooperative agreement
 - 4. Subcontract
 - 5. Other
- D. Negotiations
 - 1. Typical negotiation process and sponsor interface
 - 2. Terms and conditions (common preferred positions, implications of restrictive terms)
 - a. Use of name
 - b. Publication
 - c. Warranty
 - d. Indemnification
 - e. Payment
 - f. Other
- E. Intellectual property
 - 1. Applicable regulations (e.g. Bayh-Dole Act, 37 CFR 401)
 - 2. Types and characteristics (copyright, patent, license)
 - 3. Classified research
 - 4. Proprietary information
- F. Assurances, certifications, and disclosures (purpose, key requirements)
 - 1. Institutional registration and identification
 - a. Representations and Certifications (Reps and Certs)
 - b. System for Award Management
 - c. Employer Identification Number (EIN) and DUNS number

2. Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)
 3. Federal drug-free workplace and drug-free schools
 4. Federal debt delinquency
 5. Federal debarment/suspension
 6. Lobbying
 7. Conflict of interest (COI)
 8. Export controls (ITAR, EAR, OFAC)
 9. Other
- G. Research compliance (institutional committees, regulations, training)
1. Human subjects (IRB, CITI training)
 2. Animal subjects (IACUC, animal laboratory training requirements)
 3. Other (radiation safety, institutional biosafety, chemical safety committees)
- H. Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- I. Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) (required institutional policy, relevant regulations, required documentation, agency oversight)

(Note: Information provided in parenthesis is descriptive and not comprehensive.)

SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

In the following questions, choose the one best answer.

-
1. Which of the following is a requirement of a Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grant?
1. The total amount awarded to the partnering research institution normally may not exceed 33% of the total amount requested
 2. The total amount awarded to the partnering research institution normally may not exceed 50% of the total amount requested
 3. The small business concern must perform at least 40% of the work and a nonprofit research institution must perform at least 30% of the work
 4. The small business concern must perform at least 30% of the work and one or more partnering nonprofit research institutions must perform at least 40% of the work
-
2. When cost sharing is a requirement of a grant application, the applicant should FIRST
1. review the sponsor guidelines concerning the amount of cost sharing required.
 2. seek to offer in-kind cost share that has no post-reward certification requirements.
 3. fulfill this requirement through subrecipients as a condition of their participation in the project.
 4. consult with the Principal Investigators and determine the types of cost sharing they can afford to provide.
-
3. Which of the following items is **EXCLUDED** when calculating the modified total direct costs (MTDC)?
1. Materials
 2. Capital equipment
 3. Salary and fringe benefits
 4. Subcontracts less than \$25,000
-
4. Which of the following activities requires Institutional Review Board (IRB) review?
1. Survey of traffic patterns at street corner
 2. Sleep deprivation experiment in chimpanzees
 3. Retrospective review of deidentified medical charts
 4. Audiotaping of a focus group of teachers examining curriculum

CORRECT ANSWERS TO SAMPLE QUESTIONS
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1. 3; 2. 1; 3. 2; 4. 4

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 Pre-Award Research Administrators is based entirely on these references or that RACC endorses these publications. In some cases, individual experience is the best reference.

FEDERAL FUNDING AGENCIES

- Department of Health and Human Services
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- National Institutes of Health
- National Science Foundation:
- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Energy

FEDERAL REGULATIONS

- 2 CFR 200: Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards
- Federal Acquisition regulations

ONLINE SERVICES/DATABASES

- Grants.gov
- FedBizOpps

PERIODICALS

- *Journal of Research Administration*, Falls Church, VA: Society of Research Administrators International.
- *Research Management Review*, Washington, DC: National Council of University Research Administrators.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Association of University Technology Managers
- Council on Governmental Relations
- Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable
- National Council of University Research Administrators
- SRA International

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: The online practice test is an optional tool candidates may use as they prepare for the certification examination. While the practice test may help candidates identify areas of strengths and weakness, it should not be used as the only means to determine candidate preparedness or readiness to test. Since the practice test is NOT intended to be a study guide nor the sole source of preparation for the actual certification examination, candidates are NOT provided with the answer key, rationales for each question, nor notification of which specific items were answered correctly or incorrectly.

Though the specific questions that are on the practice test will not appear on the actual certification examination, it allows candidates to become familiar with the style of questions that may be asked. The instant score report received after practice test submission shows overall test performance as well as performance in each of the content areas. Candidates may find this information useful in determining future study needs. Once the practice test is scored, candidates cannot return to the test to review the questions. Performance on the practice test does not guarantee similar performance on the actual certification examination.

The PTC Online Testing System does not demonstrate the testing software used during the certification examinations. Those who purchase the online practice test should be aware that they will use a different testing platform when they take certification examinations at designated proctored testing centers.

The practice test is not a requirement for certification eligibility nor does it contribute in any way to success on the certification examination. There are many ways candidates should prepare for the certification examination. Candidates should use a variety of resources and consider their own education and experiences. Review the content outline and reference materials listed in the handbook for additional exam-related information.

CONTENT INCLUDED

- I. Research Partnership and Funding
- II. Project Development and Proposal Submission
- III. Budget Design and Development
- IV. Awards and Pre-Award Compliance Considerations

FEE

\$60, paid by credit card.

HOW TO APPLY

Go [HERE](#) and follow the directions to apply.

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