



'Succeeding on the NKE'

Questions and Answers for the webinar

July 28, 2010

Below are the questions and answers to questions submitted in the context of a webinar on the October 2010 NKE held on July 28, 2010.

1. *Will we get a copy of this presentation?*
2. *Can I get this webinar notes in a hard copy?*
3. *Where could I find information from 1st and 2nd webinars?*
4. *Can we get copies of slides from the other three?*
5. *Can you remind us where these slides will be posted online?*

Yes. There are two other webinars in this series. You can download the slides, a recording of the webinar, and answers to all the questions asked during the webinar. All of this can be downloaded from the following page: <http://www.hrpa.ca/OfficeOfTheRegistrar/Pages/registrarwebinars.aspx>

6. *If you are a guest today, will I have access to the website, slides etc. when they are posted?*

Yes—the slides and recording of the webinar are posted within a day or two, the Q & A shortly after that. They are posted in a part of the web site that is open to all.

7. *Is there any max number of times the NKE exams are allowed for a person?*
8. *Is there a limit to the number of times the exam can be written?*

There is no maximum number of times you can write the NKE; however, you must continue to qualify to write the exam (e.g., coursework must be within the last 10 years if that is how you are qualifying for the exam). The maximum number of times someone has written the NKE is seven times.

9. *I am finishing my HR Certification on Aug. 16; can I still sit in NKE this October?*

You likely meant 'HR certificate.' The coursework requirement consists of nine courses which must be completed with an average of 70% with no single course grade below 65%. Some certificate programs cover all nine required courses, some do not. Given that 2010 is the last year before the implementation of the degree requirement, HRPA introduced its late transcript policy. Before the introduction of the late transcript policy, it was required that all supporting documentation be submitted at the time of registration. With the late registration policy, you are able to register for the exam without supporting documentation provided that some official documentation (not necessarily a transcript) attesting to your final grade(s) arrives at HRPA by end-of-business

September 17, 2010. For details, please refer to the late transcript policy which is posted on the HRPAs Office of the Registrar page.

10. *I am re-writing the exam in October do I need to provide my transcripts again?*
11. *I wrote in May, when I register for the October sitting, do I need to send transcripts again?*
12. *Do we need to re-submit our transcripts again if you've already submitted during the May exam sitting?*
13. *If you wrote in May 2010 but have to rewrite in October 2010. Since you qualified for the May sitting can you assume you don't need to confirm transcripts etc...?*
No. Transcripts will already be on file.
14. *Where is the exam going to be held?*
There is no single location. The exam will be administered at approximately 30 sites across Ontario. Your exam location will be communicated to you through your authorization to write letter.
15. *How is your exam location determined? By the chapter you belong to?*
At the time of registration, you are asked to indicate a preference as to where you would like to write the exam. We are able to give exam-writers their first choice in nearly all cases. For those that do not indicate a preference, we assign the exam location that is closest to the home address that we have on record.
16. *When will we know the venue for the exam?*
The authorization to write letter, which confirms all this information, is emailed the first week in September.
17. *Are all of the testing sites at a College or University?*
Yes.
18. *Can I change my choice of where I write the exam from my original choice?*
Yes, but let us know before August 30th.
19. *What was the ID number you were talking about? Is this the membership number?*
20. *What is your ID #?*
It refers to your HRPAs membership ID number. Your HRPAs membership ID number is very important because it is the only link between you and your exam results. If you bubble-in the incorrect ID number, it may be impossible to figure out what your exam results are.
21. *For Alternate Route applicants, can one get a refund if in the August meeting one is not allowed to sit for the exam?*
Yes, the exam fee is refunded except for a \$50 administrative fee. The same is true for all disqualifications.

22. *What is the authorization to write letter?*

The authorization to write letter is just that—it is your authorization to write the exam.

23. *Should we have the authorization to write letter now?*

Not yet—authorization to write letters will be issued the first week of September.

24. *What if you suffer from test anxiety and you have doctor's approval to write in a disability room. Is that allowed with the NKE?*

Yes, it is called accommodation—but there are specific criteria to be met and certain procedures which must be followed. Go to the HRPA Office of the Registrar page on the HRPA web site and look up 'Accommodation Policy' for all the details. You need to advise HRPA that you would like to be considered for an accommodation at the time of registration.

25. *How can we figure out the approx. number of questions per section? Ex. multiply .25 by 150?? Wasn't quite clear...*

The table below gives the approximate number of questions for each functional area.

Content Domain	Number of RPCs	Percent of RPCs	Actual Test specifications	Approximate Number of Questions
Professional Practice	24	25.0%	24.0%	36
Organizational Effectiveness	8	8.3%	8.3%	12
Staffing	18	18.8%	19.8%	30
Employee & Labour Relations	10	10.4%	10.4%	16
Total Compensation	10	10.4%	10.4%	16
Org. Learning & Training	18	18.8%	18.8%	28
Occupational Health & Safety	8	8.3%	8.3%	12
Total	96	100.0%	100.0%	150

26. *I understand there were problems with the calculations of the exams for the last sitting resulting in delayed results for the exam writers. Knowing this, how valid and reliable is this system?*

The problem was with one of the formulas used to calculate results. The error was discovered before any results were communicated to the provincial associations. As a result of the error, all results were double-checked and triple-checked. It is this double-checking and triple-checking of results that lead to the delay. It is also because of this double-checking and triple-checking of results that we are absolutely confident that the results reported are valid and reliable.

27. *Are exam questions and answers checked for spelling and grammar beforehand?*

CCHRA says that they are, and there is no reason to believe that they are not. HRPA does not see the questions either before or after the exam is administered.

28. *How many people proof read the test questions? I heard that there were quite a few grammar mistakes? Are questions in the exam with each of the functional area or are they scattered everywhere?*

I do not know how many people proof read the test questions. There is a post-exam review of the functioning of individual exam questions based on psychometric indices. It is not uncommon that this post-exam review would identify flawed items. Grammatical irregularities are one of the possible reasons why an item may be flawed. In the May 2010 NKE, two items were deemed flawed as a result of the post-exam review. This means, on the other hand, that whatever grammatical issues there may have been with the retained items, these did not stop the item from functioning adequately.

29. *How often do they change the people who write the exam questions?*

Interesting question. I do not know what the turnover is among NKE item writers.

30. *Thank you for the reference guidance, I would like to know if questions reflect the latest HR knowledge.*

The exam questions and the response options are reviewed for currency for every exam.

31. *If you don't see the exams, how do you know that the questions change each time? What processes are in place to ensure this?*

Because CCHRA has told us that this is the case, and we have no reason to doubt that this is indeed the case. With certification exams, a certain number of questions that have appeared in previous forms are included for equating (calibration) purposes.

32. *Why are the questions very subjective? Instead of being straight forward? For example: give me a definition of Recruiting?*

Let's tackle things one at a time. The example you give couldn't be right—"give me a definition of Recruiting" would be a short-answer question. There aren't any of those on the NKE.

The problem with 'subjective' is that it too is subjective. One person's subjective question may be another person's straightforward question. Psychometricians have developed more objective indices by which to evaluate items (questions). For example, an important characteristic is called 'item discrimination.' Item discrimination indices reflect the extent to which responses to an item are related to ability. The pattern of responses across distractors (incorrect response options) is also investigated. Indeed, in a test the size of the NKE, it is not surprising to find a few questions that did not perform as expected. You could say that these questions were 'ambiguous,' although psychometricians would prefer the labels 'non-performing' or 'flawed.' An 'item analysis' is conducted after every exam. In the May 2010 NKE, two questions were deemed flawed and discarded. But that also means that the remaining 148 questions showed no sign of being ambiguous.

33. *Has CCHRA ever tested the exam on CHRP practitioners to see how well they would score?*

Not that I am aware of. This would not change the situation for the NKE but would likely have implications for recertification. The NKE is there to ensure that entrants to the profession have at least the minimum knowledge to practice as HR professionals. The whole idea behind recertification is that certificants (the term used for those individuals who are certified) need to maintain (at least) this minimum knowledge. If it were shown that knowledge of certificants falls below the level that is required for competent practice in HR, then it would be necessary to institute better processes to ensure that certificants maintain this minimum level of knowledge.

34. *Who marks the tests initially - CCHRA or HRPA?*

CCHRA develops the exams, establishes the cut-score, and scores the exams. HRPA prescribes the exams under the authority of the *Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario Act, 1990*, and is ultimately responsible and accountable for the exams.

35. *I have heard that the NKE is changing its format from previous exams? Will this October still be multiple choice questions or situational questions?*

The NKE is not changing its format. This October the NKE will have the same four-choice multiple-choice format it always had.

36. *The full exam is multiple choice correct? No true false etc?*

All 150 questions are four-option multiple-choice questions.

37. *Are any of the choices "All of the above" or "none of the above"?*

As I mentioned before, I have not seen the exam that will be used in October. I do not know whether 'all of the above' and/or 'none of the above' options will be used. Somehow, I would expect some across the 150 questions that make up the NKE.

38. *Are there questions based on the many different theories?*

There could be.

39. *In reference to the point that this is a fact-based exam, does one need to study statistical information and percentages as part of the factual information?*

Yes, but if there were, it would not be splitting hairs.

40. *Is the exam broken down in sections, i.e. all Health and Safety questions lumped together, next section is staffing, etc.?*

41. *Are the questions in the exam written in topic sections or are they numbered random?*

CCHRA has not made a statement on this issue one way or another—so don't count on the exam being one way or the other.

42. *How long for the NKE exam?*

The NKE is three hours long.

43. *You talk about power vs. speed. I wrote the NKE in October 2010 and felt extremely rushed. 3 hours is not a significant amount of time. Do you think there is a chance that more time will be given to complete the exam?*

In May 2009, CCHRA surveyed those who had written the exams to see if the time allowed for the exam needed adjustment. At the time, CCHRA decided to extend the time allowed for the NPPA to 3 ½ hours but that the time allotted for the NKE was sufficient. Therefore, I don't see the time allotted for the NKE changing anytime soon. I would suggest that you work on your pace; this is something that can be improved with practice.

44. *If someone has taken the exam in the past will the one this October is similar?*
45. *How often is the exam changed? Are they changed every exam time or every year, etc..*
46. *I wrote the test in May and did not pass by 1 mark! Can I expect the same exam or do they change it every time.*
47. *Do the exam questions change each time the NKE is written?*
48. *Will the exam in October be the same as May's?*

The NKE is a new exam (a new 'form') every sitting, although there are 'bridge' questions in common with previous forms for purposes of equating (calibration). Yes, similar but not identical. The format is the same, some of the questions will have appeared in previous forms, the rest will be new questions.

49. *What is the passing grade?*
50. *What score do you need to pass?*
51. *What is a passing grade?*

The cut-score refers to the score required to pass the exam. Starting October 2009, CCHRA started using what are known as 'Angoff panels' to set the cut-scores for the exams.

An Angoff panel refers to a specific approach to setting the cut-score for an exam to ensure that exam difficulty is consistent across forms of the exam. Angoff panels got their name from William Angoff, who was a psychometrician at ETS for over 40 years and who developed the method.

The intent, of course, is that the exams be of the same difficulty from one sitting to the next; nevertheless, some differences in exam difficulty can occur. One way of thinking about exam difficulty is in terms of the cut-score: a relatively easier exam will have a higher cut-score and a relatively more difficult exam will have a lower cut-score.

Conducting Angoff panels is a more systematic and precise way of setting the cut-score for a particular form of an exam.

An Angoff panel is a method which makes use of the combined judgment of panel members to establish the probability that a candidate at the threshold of competence would be able to answer the question correctly.

Because the cut-score for the test is derived by adding the probabilities of a correct answer for each question, the cut-score will vary depending on the particular set of items that make up the test. Each version of the NKE will have its own cut-score. An exam that is made up of somewhat more difficult questions will have a somewhat lower cut-score; an exam that is made up of somewhat easier questions will have a somewhat higher cut-score.

The problem with a fixed cut-score is that it doesn't take into account the relative difficulty of the exam. Starting May 2010, CCHRA is moving to what is called a 'floating cut-score.' Using a floating cut-score means that the cut-score could vary from one administration of the exam to the next—for a more difficult exam the cut-score would be lower; for an easier exam, the cut-score would be higher.

52. *The passing grade is 70%. Does this mean that I have to get 70% in each topic? Or can I get 80% in staffing?*

A few things here. (1) The cut-score, or passing score, is a floating cut-score. This means that, based on the characteristics of the questions that are included in a given form of the test, the cut-score may vary. In other words, it may not be 70%. (2) The cut-score is applied to the total score, this means that a higher score in one functional area will compensate for a lower score in another.

53. *No pass rate? I thought you needed a 70%?*

The statement was that, as a criterion-referenced test, there is no *pre-established or targeted* pass rate for the NKE.

The pass rate is the proportion or percentage of exam-writers who pass the exam. This is the number of exam-writers that scores at or above the established cut-score. The cut-score for the NKE used to be fixed at 70%; but starting with the May 2010 exam, CCHRA moved to a floating cut-score—that is, instead of adjusting the scores such that a 70% cut score is appropriate, the scores are left as they are and the cut-score is adjusted. For more details about this, please refer to the first webinar in this series entitled '*How the national exams are developed and scored.*'

54. *Will the pass mark remain at 67% or will it be lower or higher based on the low pass rate this time?*

It depends on the specific questions that will make up this form of the NKE—it could be 67%, or it could be a bit higher or lower. The cut-score is set before the exam is scored.

55. *Does it make any difference whether you get 70% or 90%?*

Assuming that 70% is at or above the cut-score in the exam, it doesn't make a difference to us. Perhaps it makes a difference in terms of bragging rights for exam-writers but it makes no difference in terms of obtaining the designation.

56. *What is the pass/fail rate for the NKE on a general level?*

57. *What is the average fail rate/pass rate?*

58. *What percentage of test writers passed in May 2010 sitting of the NKE?*

Sitting	Number of Exam-Writers	Mean Rounded Percentage Score	Rounded Percentage Score Standard Deviation	Cut-score	Pass Rate
September 2003	175	68.98	6.84	70	45%
May 2004	109	71.02	7.32	70	65%
October 2005	236	76.76	9.07	70	81%
May 2005	240	72.69	9.50	70	62%
October 2005	548	73.79	9.57	70	71%
May 2006	408	73.31	10.19	70	64%
October 2006	632	72.81	9.67	70	72%
May 2007	556	73.80	10.11	70	68%
October 2007	810	74.63	10.08	70	70%
May 2008	697	71.85	11.87	70	59%
October 2008	953	73.92	8.87	70	68%
May 2009	912	73.45	10.56	70	63%
October 2009	1501	71.69	11.27	70	57%
May 2010	1805	63.43	12.02	67	40%

59. *Isn't it concerning that only 40% passed in May, would they review the exam to see what the problem areas are, this is the lowest pass score?*
60. *To what do you attribute such a low pass rate on the NKE? -Lack of effective student prep? Inadequate course materials? - Test not in sync with courses offers? - Test poorly constructed? - Other?*

There is no evidence to suggest that the May 2010 NKE exam was more difficult than previous NKEs were in the past. In fact, given the introduction of Angoff panels in October 2009, and the fact that an external psychometrician oversaw the scoring process, we are confident that the standards have been set appropriately.

So what explains the big drop in the pass rates?

Yes, non-degree exam-writers do not do as well as exam-writers with degrees; and yes, the proportion of non-degree exam-writers has increased dramatically over the last few administrations, but this does not provide a complete explanation. There is more to it than that. We see the following two factors as being more important:

First, May 2010 exam-writers appear to have been less well prepared than previous cohorts. For example, in Ontario, 450 individuals availed themselves of the late transcript policy. A quarter of the exam-writers, who wrote the NKE in May 2010, would not have been able to do so in previous years. This 'rush to write the exams' impacted both degree and non-degree applicants. Even

individuals with degrees didn't seem to want to wait and were making use of the late transcript policy.

The second reason isn't as obvious because it is statistical. Because the cut-scores fall in the 'lump' of the distributions, small changes in the scores give rise to big changes in pass rates. When looked at as scores, the differences are not so large; it is just that these small differences have a big impact on pass rates.

61. *The pass rate for the NKE was 45% including Ontario. What would the pass rate have been for Canada if Ontario's results were not included?*

The pass rate for the other provinces combined, including Quebec, was 50%.

62. *I have heard that the exam questions get harder and harder, would this be the correct assumption as questions are written by various writers?*

I don't see the connection between the fact that the questions are written by various question writers and the difficulty of the exam. The exam questions were always written by various writers. The exams are intended to be of similar difficulty from one sitting to the next. With the use of Angoff panels, any differences in the difficulties of the exams that would remain would be taken care of by adjusting the cut-score. If an exam happened to be a bit easier, the cut-score would be adjusted upwards; if an exam happened to be a bit harder, the cut-score would be adjusted downwards.

63. *When will the exam results be declared and how?*

64. *How are we notified of our final mark and approximately how long will it take to receive our mark?*

The exams are scored by CCHRA. Going by previous exam sittings, it takes about 8 weeks to get the results. This means that you will be getting the results on about December 3rd, 2010. All the provincial associations have agreed to release the exam results at the same time. On the agreed upon date, HRPAs posts the results on the Educational Profile page in the individual Member Profile. Shortly thereafter, an email is sent to all exam-writers with the results broken down by functional area.

65. *Do you get a refund for the test fees if you fail?*

No.

66. *How does the manual re-score work?*

In a manual rescore, your Scantron sheet would be re-scored by hand. Scantron machines are very accurate. Where they can go wrong is when the marks are improperly made, this can happen when marks are not completely erased when an answer is changed. The result of the hand score will be sent to you.

67. *A recount can be administered for \$25, how often is an error found in the original scoring of the exam?*

Rarely. The staff at HRPAs Office of the Registrar can recall only one instance where a manual rescore made a difference. What happened in this instance was that the exam-writer had changed their answer on a number of questions. The original mark on one of these answers had only partially erased. The Scantron machine had seen two answers and had marked the answer as incorrect.

68. *If so confident in the test scores, why were offered to pay money to have it scored again??*

It has nothing to do with confidence. It has to do with due process. As a matter of policy, HRPAs provides the opportunity for review of all assessments. The \$25 fee for a manual re-score is the fee set by CCHRA. HRPAs absorbs the administrative costs of processing manual re-score requests. If it were found that there had been an error in the scoring of your exam, the \$25 re-score fee would be refunded.

69. *Do we get a reference check on previous exam papers?*

I must admit that I am not sure I understand the question. It is HRPAs policy not to allow exam-writers to view their marked exams under any circumstance. It is a matter of test security and fairness. There is no limit on the number of times a candidate may write the exam; provided, of course, that other eligibility requirements continue to be met. It is also the case, that for purposes of equating test forms, a certain proportion of items will be repeated from previous forms of the test. In order to ensure the fairness of the test, it is important that item content remain secret. Allowing exam-writers to view their marked exams would give these candidates an unfair advantage in subsequent administrations of the test; it would also expose the test to additional risk of disclosure.

70. *If you are not successful during the October sitting, from my understanding you will need a university degree to write the exam again?*

This is not correct. The degree is not now, nor will it be after January 2011, a requirement to write the exam. After January 1, 2011, a degree (which could be granted by a college under ministerial consent) will be a requirement for the designation. You may ask 'if someone has no intention of getting a degree, why would they write the NKE?' That is a different matter, however. Any member in good standing that has met the coursework requirement will be eligible to write the NKE.

71. *For those individuals that do not pass the next NKE seating and whom do not have a degree, is there anything being offered to allow these individuals to re-write the exam in 2011?*

The issue is not re-writing the exam, it's the exemption to the degree requirement. Even after the degree requirement takes effect, individuals without degrees will still be able to write the NKE. Having a degree will be a requirement for the designation, not to write the exam. There are no plans to make changes to the degree requirement, or to the exemption to the degree requirement.

72. *For someone who attempts to write the NKE before Jan. 2011 and does not have a Degree and does not pass what are their options after that date?*

The only option will be to get a degree.

73. *Will there be a second chance for those who do not qualify for the degree requirement but who are writing the NKE this October 2010? It would be nice since the new degree requirement was exposed not even a year ago and those who don't have a degree but who have only started the HR program are pressed for time.*

As noted in the previous question, there are no plans to make changes to the degree requirement, or to the exemption to the degree requirement. The degree requirement was approved by the HRP Board of Directors in September 2002 and the Board decision was ratified by the membership at the February 2004 Annual General Meeting. This represents a seven-year notice of the implementation of the degree requirement. It is also the case that only Ontario has an exemption to the degree requirement for those who pass the NKE before December 31, 2010. The reason why Ontario has this exemption is because this exemption was already in place by the time the other provinces approved the degree requirement, which was June 2004. In all other provinces, any individual who has not completed his or her certification process by December 31, 2010, will be subject to the degree requirement. In fact, in Quebec, the degree requirement was implemented on January 1, 2007.

74. *Does the Degree have to be an HR degree or it can be a general Business Degree?*

It does not have to be an HR degree.

75. *As far as courses are concerned, shall I take them in Ontario colleges or which is the best place? Are online courses are best?*

If you haven't started your coursework yet, thinking about the exam is getting ahead of the game. It depends on whether you have a degree or not. If you have a degree, there are many options open to you including challenge exams, HRP Evening Academic Program, executive programs in HR. If you do not have a degree, you may want to look into programs that grant degrees (which include applied degrees granted by some colleges). Other than approving courses as applicable towards the coursework requirement, HRP does not endorse any specific program as being better than others.

76. *What does RPC stand for?*

77. *What is RPC?*

'RPC' refers to Required Professional Capability. They are the building blocks for the HR Body of Knowledge. They are the most useful level to describe the test specifications. Note that not all RPCs are relevant to the NKE. This is explained in the *HRP Certification Handbook*. The *Handbook* is located on the Office of the Registrar section of the HRP website at www.hrp.ca

78. *Where can I find information about RPC?*

A few places: (1) on the CHRP web site, and (2) in the *HRP Certification Handbook*.

79. *Are the RPCs on the HRP website the same as on the CCHRA website.*

Yes. However, the table on the CCHRA website gives all the RPCs. The table in the *HRPA Certification Handbook* gives only those RPCs that are relevant to the NKE.

80. *Can you advise additional information on going through the RPCs—they are very confusing.*
The *HRPA Certification Handbook* has a section on the HR Body of Knowledge which may help in the sense that it explains how the RPCs came about. The best use of the RPCs is to make sure that you haven't neglected an area that may be covered in the exam.

81. *With respect to having questions on the exam that are not in our course work, I've seen some references to Project Management questions on the HRwrx. This was not in any of the 9 classes I took and In this case, I also haven't seen anything on Project Management in any of the texts..., so how would you recommend finding study materials for this?*

Let's tackle this important question. By and large, there is a great deal of overlap between the required coursework and the specifications for the NKE, but the overlap isn't perfect. For instance, to be approved for the coursework requirement, courses need to cover 80% or more of the topics on the standard course outlines which are based on the HR Body of Knowledge (the RPCs). That leaves 20%. The specifications for the NKE are published and widely available. If there is a topic, such as project management, that is found in the test specifications but was not taught in one of the classes you took, the answer is not to argue with the test specifications, or textbook writers, or HR program coordinators, or course instructors, or HRPAs; the best approach to take here if one's goal is to pass the NKE is to learn some basic information about project management. As noted above, the gaps are relatively small and may depend on the particular course you took, or even the instructor who taught the course.

This suggests a good strategy, however. Take the list of RPCs that are relevant to the NKE (which can be found as Appendix C of *HRPA's Certification Handbook*) and specifically identify those RPCs that may not have been touched upon in the courses you have taken. Make sure that find appropriate material for those areas.

Now with respect to project management—you will find that 'project management' is actually a group that covers RPC:25 to RPC:28; of which RPC:25, RPC:27, and RPC:28 have been deemed relevant to the NKE. Then you can look at the sub-RPC detail for each. With respect to a reference for project management, the idea is to find a source that covers the basics. There are many books that give an overview of project management, each just as good as the other with respect to covering basics. The choice will likely be a pragmatic one depending on what you may find at your local library.

82. *I have heard that there are project management questions from the May 10 exam?*

A few comments here. It should be no surprise that there might have been questions on project management in the May 2010 NKE, project management is within the specifications for the NKE. For the same reason, there could be some questions on project management in the October 2010 NKE. A second comment would relate to rumours regarding exam content. No one has seen the

October NKE—that is, no one outside the exam development group. Thirdly, I would take this opportunity to remind exam-writers that they have agreed not to discuss the content of the exam as part of the terms and conditions agreed to by exam-writers. It is understood that it is an aspect that is difficult to enforce, but this doesn't make it OK to discuss the content of the exam after having written the exam.

83. How do you link RPC to the course?

It's more the other way around—the courses are linked to the RPCs. Based on the RPCs, HRPA has developed standard course outlines. To count towards the coursework requirement, courses must have an 80% overlap with the standard course outline. This means, however, that the overlap between courses and RPCs not necessarily 100%.

84. What does professional practice cover?

85. How do you define "professional Practice"?

86. Since Prof Practices is the bulk of the exam, how do you suggest we study for this? Other areas such as H&S, I can refer back to a textbook. But with Prof Practices, it is not that easy. Any recommendation?

87. Is there a particular resource/text/guide you recommend using for preparing for the "Professional Practice" section of the exam?

88. Under the current domain content, can you provide more detail on what is the Professional practice, i.e. what course(es) does it relate to?

89. Which HR courses does "Professional Practice" and "Organizational Effectiveness" relate to?

Indeed, the Professional Practice area is the miscellaneous category for the HR Body of Knowledge. For the Professional Practice area, I found the 'group' level to be more useful for this functional area. Many of the topics are found in textbooks with 'Human Resources Management' in the title, but some of the groups are found elsewhere.

- Strategic contribution to organizational success
- Planning and Implementing HR Strategies
- Measuring Strategic Organizational Results
- Business Acumen
- Human Resource Information Management
- Manages Outside HR Contractors and Other Specialists
- Project Management
- Legal/Legislative Framework—General Employment Relationship
- Human Rights
- Managing Client Relationships
- Professionalism
- Governance

For Professional Practice it is a good thing to use multiple textbooks and sources, no one source covers all areas.

90. *What does organizational effectiveness cover?*

Again the best way of answering that question is to refer to RPCs. Go to the HRPA Office of the Registrar web page, download the *HRPA Certification Handbook*, go to *Appendix C: Required Professional Capabilities Relevant to the National Knowledge Exam (NKE®)*. They are organized by functional area.

91. *Which area of test specifications does managerial accounting fall into, if any?*

RPC:25	Applies principles of project management to HR activities.	25.05	Budgetary control and responsibility accounting (including issues of static vs. flexible budgets; variance analysis; control systems)
RPC:27	Monitors expenditures and timelines.	27.05	Fundamentals of budgeting and managerial accounting
		27.06	Budgetary control and responsibility accounting (including issues of static vs. flexible budgets; management control systems)
RPC:128	Provides for delivery of payroll services in compliance with applicable legislation, company policy and advises the organization on related matters.	128.07	Fundamental accounting principles and practices
RPC:140	Administers the reporting, funding and fiduciary aspects of the pension plan(s).	140.06	Foundations and techniques of financial and management accounting
RPC:143	Ensures pay records are accurate and complete.	143.05	Fundamental accounting principles and practices

92. *Will the exam cover questions only pertaining to Ontario & federal legislation or do we have to know each province's legislation?*

The same exam is used for all provinces, including Quebec. You do not need to know each province's legislation. Any questions on legislation on the NKE would be on matters that apply to all provinces.

93. *Where do you refer for HR terminologies?*

Many textbooks will have a glossary at the back. HRwrx has an extensive glossary as well.

94. *For those taking the NKE as part of the Alternate Route (and no previous courses taken) do you recommend purchasing all the textbooks?*

95. *For those who have graduated over 6 years ago a lot of that academic knowledge has been lost there are numerous text books listed it is unreasonable to purchase all these books can the list not be narrowed down per section?*

96. *You listed the top 2 resources as textbooks & notes, I have been out of school for several years & don't have access to those resources, what are my alternative options?*

These questions are all about strategies for exam-writers that have been out of school for a while. Clearly, textbooks are the best primary resource. I would recommend *reading* the textbooks. It would be ideal to get access to the textbooks without having to buy them. By joining a study group, you may be able to borrow the textbooks without having to purchase them. Let's say that one did not have access to the textbooks, what would be the alternatives? The various prep programs would be helpful.

97. *What qualifications do the people who write the NKE items possess?*

For the May 2010 NKE, the qualifications of exam-writers were as follows:

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Certificate (not post-diploma certificate as listed below, open-enrolment program)	160	30.2	30.2
Four semester diploma	37	7.0	37.2
Six-semester diploma (Advanced Diploma)	68	12.8	50.0
Post-diploma certificate (two semesters but diploma or degree is a pre-requisite)	102	19.2	69.2
Applied Bachelor's Degree (a degree granted by a college under Ministerial consent)	6	1.1	70.4
Baccalaureate/Bachelor's degree (six to eight semesters)	43	8.1	78.5
Baccalaureate/Bachelor's degree: Honours (eight semesters or more)	42	7.9	86.4
Master's Degree	13	2.5	88.9
Ph.D.	0	0.0	88.9
None of the above	59	11.1	100.0
	350	100.0	

98. *Is there any correlation between those with more professional experience and a passing grade?*

99. *Is it possible to pass the exam without any professional experience, only with 3 year HR college program completed?*

There is no statistically significant relation between years of experience in HR and exam score.

100. *How many hours per week do you suggest studying in the weeks leading up to the exam?*

101. *How far in advance would you advise someone to study for the NKE?*

102. *How many hours on average should one study?*

103. *How much time should be spent studying for the NKE?*

104. *What be an ideal preparation strategy in terms of study hours?*

One of the questions on the demographic questionnaire was "How many hours on average did you spend studying for this exam session?" Scores on the exam increased up to the 31-40 hours category but levelled off after that. These are aggregate results, however, and may not reflect

what would be best for you. How far in advance of the exam exam-writers began studying did not show any statistically significant differences.

105. *Is there any assistance with preparing for multiple choice exams - this is my worst method of testing?*

There are a few books on the topic; as well there are many web sites with advice in regards to taking multiple-choice exams. The key here is practice. When you work through practice exams, think about how well you have been able to put the advice into practice.

106. *What did you mean by "most topics have 2 books"? where do we find those books?*

The textbook industry is a competitive one. Publishers such as Pearson Education, Prentice Hall, and Thomson Nelson have series in Human Resources Management for the Canadian market. These textbooks can be found at most college and university bookstores.

107. *Are we supposed to read all the 9 course books?*

That is a funny way of putting it—you are not ‘supposed’ to do anything. You can do whatever you want to do. Reading the textbooks is the most widely used preparation method, however.

108. *After having written the NKE for 3 times and being so close to the cut off score each time I would like for someone to critique my approaches which were: self-study, study groups, review of class notes, HRwrx, textbooks, practice tests, Canadian HR Press print study guide, prep courses by different instructors in the field, sample questions from CCHRA website, and review of glossary of terms. This time I have enrolled in the CCHRA online prep course. I am open to any suggestions that you may be able to provide me with. I am looking for any kind of feedback that will help me translate my knowledge and learning into the NKE. Would there be any kind of assessment that I could take so that I get a different direction/perspective. I would like to be challenged in my approaches.*

Boiling things down, there are three aspects to passing the NKE: (1) knowledge of the areas covered by the NKE test specifications, (2) multiple-choice test-taking skills, and (3) execution during the exam. All three are needed. I do not know if you have a particular weakness in one of those three aspects, or if it is a combination of two of these aspects or perhaps all three. I do not know of a diagnostic service that will assess where you are on all three aspects. Most programs touch upon all three aspects because all three are needed to succeed. If in practice exams, when the correct answer is given, you say to yourself ‘but I knew this,’ you should focus more on test-taking skills. If you find yourself surprised by the questions, you should focus more on content. If test anxiety is getting to you, there are things to be done here too. There are resources available that are more generic (not specific to the NKE).

109. *Why is the pre-course so expensive?*

HRPA believes that its HRwrx product is well priced; it also has a money-back guarantee. If you don’t pass the exam, HRwrx will have cost you nothing.

110. *Are you aware of any audio prep material (i.e. CD that can be used in your vehicle)?*

I am not aware of any.

111. *Why doesn't the Toronto Chapter ever have a study group??? I've called and asked many times.*

I have passed on this comment to the chapter executive.

112. *I'm overwhelmed by the number of prep courses offered through various websites. Which prep course would you recommend?*

There are many choices out there. Of course, I would recommend the HRwrx NKE prep program for two reasons: (1) it works, and (2) you get your money back if you don't pass the exam. In May 2010, the pass rate for those who purchased the HRwrx NKE prep program was 60%, the pass rate for those who did not was 23%.

113. *Where do you get the HR Press Print Study guide?*

Try googling 'HR Press Print Study guide.'

114. *If I pay my dues to the HRP and the HRP requires me to write the NKE, why can't the HRP have access to the CCHRA exams to ensure members are getting prep material that is endorsed....?*

There are two issues here: (1) test security, and (2) competitive fairness. Test security requires that test content is known only to those individuals who need to know. The more individuals that have access to the content of the exam, the greater the risk to test security. There are a number of competing products in the marketplace. If CCHRA were to give access to exam content to one vendor, it would have to give access to the exam to all vendors. CCHRA's CHRP web site contains the following statement "We present the listing of resources below for information purposes only. A listing does not constitute endorsement, and CCHRA does not have input on any course content." None of the prep programs, even the one advertised on the CCHRA website, have had any access to the exam content.

115. *CCHRA write the exam, should I use the CCHRA prep course or use HR Press?*

116. *Given that CCHRA write the exam should I use the CCHRA [prep program] instead of the HRP [prep program]?*

The CCHRA NKE prep program is produced by Captus Press, not CCHRA. CCHRA sponsors and promotes the Captus Press program in exchange for a cut of the proceeds. Captus Press has no 'insider knowledge' whatsoever. CCHRA has no involvement whatsoever in the development of Captus Press program, nor any other prep program for that matter. You may choose to purchase the Captus Press NKE prep program but do not do so because of any special connection with test developers, that connection doesn't exist.

117. *Does HRwrx change its material for each exam? i.e., if I'm using the material from last October's exam, is it relevant?*

HRwrx does review its material to make sure that it is relevant to the current exam.

118. *How long does the HRwrx prep go until?*

Access to the prep program continues up to the exam.

119. *Does the content in the HRwrx change? for example if used the HRwrx for the May sitting would the Oct prep course be the same?*

120. *Does the HRwrx test change? I purchased it for May 2010 would it be worth purchasing again?*

Yes, HRwrx does change. For instance, for this sitting we went for an improved interface, there are more options with respect to the practice exams, and the correct answer is given for each question with a textbook reference. On the other hand, the program has an impressive track record; we didn't want to mess with that.

121. *How does the HRwrx money back guarantee work?*

When we get the exam results, we cross-reference the list of names of those who did not pass with the list of names of those who purchased the HRwrx program and we issue refund cheques. It is very straightforward.

122. *You mentioned the % of those who passed using HRwrx and the % of those who didn't pass who did not use HRwrx what is the % of those who failed who used HRwrx.*

The overall pass rate for Ontario for the NKE in May 2010 was 40%. The pass rate for exam-writers who purchased HRwrx was 60%, therefore 40% of those who purchased HRwrx failed the NKE. On the other side, 23% of those who did not purchase HRwrx passed the NKE, therefore 77% of those that did not purchase HRwrx failed the NKE.

123. *Would the participants that do not take HRwrx are a disadvantage then?*

I guess that would be one way of putting it; but it is not an unfair disadvantage in the sense that is an advantage that is made available to all.

124. *Is there a deadline to purchase the HRwrx prep course?*

No, you can purchase HRwrx up to the last minute.

125. *What if we are waiting for our alternate route approval and register for HR Works to get started studying, and ultimately are not eligible for the exam? Will we receive a refund for HR Works?*

Yes.

126. *When is the deadline to register for the HRwrx workshop for the Oct 2010 NKE Exam?*

There is no deadline to purchase. You can purchase up to the very last minute before the exam. The HRwrx NKE prep product is not a workshop but a full-featured online program with review modules, practice exams, live webinars, reference materials, and an extensive glossary.

127. *Is HRwrx just a course filled with resources for the NKE prep? Are their tests with score results included?*

There are 600 questions that can be accessed either as functional area specific exams or as exams that mirror the test specifications. These practice exams are an important aspect of the HRwrx NKE prep program.

128. *Could I buy handouts from HRwrx?*

No. HRwrx is a package that cannot be unbundled.

129. *Can we print anything from HRwrx? Like the glossary for example...*

Yes. The modules are pdf documents that can be printed.

130. *For HRwrx, is there a way to get answers after each question, instead of waiting until the end?*

Yes, with this version you get feedback after each question. It tells you which answer is correct and gives a reference to a textbook and page for the information on which the question was based.

131. *How quickly can you expect your money back from HRP if you use the HRwrx?*

The cheques are issued within a matter of weeks.

132. *What do you mean by "recall as opposed to production"?*

Consider the difference between multiple-choice and short-answer questions. In a multiple-choice question, you have to 'recognize' the question. In a short-answer question, you have to 'produce' the answer. It is generally thought that 'producing' an answer is more difficult than 'recognizing' an answer.

133. *Is it true that you should not go back and change answers?*

You should go back and change previous answers if you have a good reason for doing so. Sometimes, working on subsequent questions triggers some recollection which is useful for a question you were struggling with.

134. *Can you give an example of a double-negative question?*

135. *Can you explain what a negative and double negative question is?*

This first question is taken from the CCHRA sample NKE questions. The 'not' in the stem make this a 'negative' question.

1. Which of the following job characteristics is not generally linked to employee motivation and satisfaction?

- Skill variety
- Task identity
- Task significance
- Task complexity

The following is an example of a 'double negative' multiple-choice question. The first negative is in the stem, the second negative is in the options.

2. Which of the following managerial behaviours is not generally linked to employee motivation and satisfaction?

- Not criticising when things go wrong
- Setting 'stretch' objectives
- Not providing clear performance expectations
- Giving recognition for a job well done

136. *What is the website address for the CCHRA website for the 66 negative and double negative?*

The URL is <http://www.chrp.ca/rpc/sample-exam-questions/>. However, I did not say that these were all negative and double negative questions. I noted that there were a number of 'negative questions' among the questions in CCHRA's sample exam. (As an exercise, you could go through the sample exam and identify which are the negative questions.) There are no double negative questions among the questions in CCHRA's sample exam. The main point here is that the NKE may well have negative questions and to be ready for it.

137. *Could you please explain the cover-up strategy again?*

As you start a new question, with one hand, cover the responses. This forces you to read the question, and think of the correct answer, without seeing the options presented. Then, only after you have given thought as to what your answer would be do you uncover the responses.

138. *Can you explain what do you mean by bubble in your answers at the end?*

'Bubbling in' refers to darkening the circle that corresponds to your answer on the Scantron sheet. The advice is to transfer your answers from your exam booklet to the Scantron sheet all at once at the end of the exam (before the end, however).

139. *What do you mean by 'bubbling an answer'?*

'Bubbling-in' an answer refers to darkening the response circle on the Scantron sheet.

140. *What do you mean wait until the end to bubble in your answers?*

Instead of transferring your answer from the exam booklet to the Scantron sheet after each question, wait until the end of the exam and bubble in your answers all at the same time.

141. *What happens if you run out of time and don't get to bubble in all your answers?*

Questions that have no answers will be scored as incorrect. It is a matter of fairness, really. Allowing someone to finish bubbling in their answers after the allotted time would be like giving this person extra time to complete the exam. This would be unfair. The idea is to plan your time accordingly. An alternative strategy is not to wait until the very end. For example, half an hour before the end of the exam you could bubble in the answers to the questions you completed up to that point.

142. *Good point to give would be that the test centre will not allow you to keep your purse by your desk - even on the floor. You have to keep it at the front of the room (which is HUGE!). So only bring items into the room that you would be comfortable leaving up at the front. (Toronto)*

OK.

143. *I am working as an office manager working in a dental office for the past 5 years. Recently I have changed my career towards Human Resources management. I already have a B.Eng. degree and 2 diplomas one in management skills and other in computer field. I have planned to take some human resources courses at the nearest college and finally write the NKE exam. So for earning the CHRP designation, I am going to write the NKE after finishing my HR courses at the college. As an experience in the field to earn my CHRP, can I show my office manager experience? Or Do I have to change my position and get an HR related job to become eligible? I would appreciate your answer?*
Your experience as an office manager would not count towards the experience requirement. For more details as to the kinds of experience that do and do not qualify for the experience requirement, please consult the *HRPA Certification Handbook*.