

# **Preparing to write the CKE1 or CKE2: Advice from the Registrar**

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The Registrar is responsible for the conduct of all examinations pursuant to the *Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2013* and the HRPB By-laws



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# Housekeeping

- Webinar will be recorded and posted online
- This webinar is NOT eligible for CPD

# Questions Involving Specific Individual Circumstances

- This webinar is not the appropriate place and time to address specific individual circumstances
- Sometimes the correct answer depends on details that are not provided with the question
- Please contact the Office of the Registrar [registrar@hrpa.ca](mailto:registrar@hrpa.ca) with questions involving specific individual circumstances

# Agenda

1. Go to the source
2. Understand how the exams were developed
3. Develop a plan
4. Choose exam prep methods that are right for you
5. Develop multiple-choice test-taking skills, but avoid 'tricks'
6. Learn to manage exam anxiety
7. Remote proctoring or test centre?

# Advice #1: Go to the source

- The first piece of advice is to get your information about the exams from the *source*—this means HRPA’s website or Office of the Registrar staff
- We know that many exam candidates get their information from course instructors and others. Although these individuals are well-meaning, we have found that some of their advice is either outdated or incorrect.
- We know that many exam candidates get their information from social media groups i.e. facebook groups. Although these individuals are well-meaning, we have found that some of their advice is incorrect. Exam candidates who have written exams are bound by a non-disclosure agreement and cannot reveal the content or provide hints about content of any exams to anyone on a study group
- The reality is that anyone who has anything to do with the content of the exams is bound by a non-disclosure agreement

# Who really knows what is on the exam?

- HRPA's psychometrician John Wickett of Wickett Measurement Solutions, Inc.
- Members of the CHRP and CHRL Exam Validation Committees
- Kelly Morris, HRPA's Exams Manager

# Confidentiality agreement

- All exam candidates agree to maintain the confidentiality of the exams as one of the terms and conditions of writing the exam and sign a non-disclosure agreement
- There are multiple forms of the exam in each administration window
- The content of the exam is refreshed for each administration
- Hearing what previous exam candidates might remember of the exam is not likely to be useful to you and violates this agreement

# Be wary of those who offer advice

- HRPAs provide a lot of information on its exams
- There is no 'insider information'
- No one or no organization has better or more accurate information than you do
- So, be careful out there

## Advice #2:

### Understand how the exams were developed

- The CKE1 and CKE2 measure basic knowledge in HR—the kind of knowledge candidates would be expected to have in order to be able to demonstrate the competency
- Basic knowledge... not competence

# HRPA publishes a lot of information about its exams

- HRPA Human Resources Professional Competency Framework
- Exam blueprints
- Question-writing style guidelines
- Technical manuals for previous administrations
- Webinars on exam development process
- Webinars on eligibility requirements for exams
- Webinars on remote proctoring

# Where do the questions come from?

- The questions are written by subject matter experts that can include course instructors—diploma course instructors for the CKE1 and degree course instructors for the CKE2 and HR Professionals who currently practice in the field
- The questions are referenced to the competencies in the *HRPA Human Resources Professional Competency Framework*. Question writers start from a given competency and then consider the knowledge would be required to be able to demonstrate the competency

# Style guide

- All questions are in the same four-option multiple-choice format
- No '*all of the above*'
- No '*none of the above*'
- No '*a and b are true*'
- No '*best answer*'
- No double negatives
- No negative questions
- No trick questions

# Multiple layers of review

- All CKE1 and CKE2 questions are reviewed for adherence to *style guidelines*
- All CKE1 and CKE2 questions are reviewed for having one and only one correct answer. All questions are *fact checked* independently, meaning that correctness of the correct option and the incorrectness of the incorrect options is verified against commonly used textbooks
- Questions are reviewed by a *copy editor* for consistency of grammar and style
- Questions are reviewed by a panel of Human Resources professionals to ensure that the question is *relevant* to Human Resources practice
- Questions are then validated by HRPA's Exam Validation Committee
- As a final step all exam forms are reviewed by members of HRPA's Validation Committee

# Exam blueprints and exam assembly

- The exam blueprints provide a listing of the major content areas and cognitive levels intended to be included on each exam form. It also includes the number of questions each exam form should include within each of these content and cognitive areas
- All our exam blueprints are published on the HRPA website
- The CHRP and CHRL Exam Validation Committees use the exam blueprints as their guide to assemble exam content
- Care is taken that there are no '*enemy questions*'

# Post-exam review

- Despite all the layers of review, sometimes questions don't work like they are supposed to
- After each administration, questions are reviewed based on psychometric performance criteria by our psychometrician John Wickett
- A panel of the Exam Validation Committee is convened to review the results with our psychometrician—this process is called *key validation*

# Pass scores and pass rates

- HSPA exams are 'criterion-referenced'
- There is no target pass rate
- CKE1 and CKE2 questions are carefully developed and vetted, but what distinguishes these questions the most is that they are *calibrated*
- For the CKE1 and CKE2 every item is calibrated meaning that a panel has established the probability that a minimally qualified candidate will answer the question correctly
- A minimally qualified candidate is a candidate at the threshold of proficiency
- Passing scores are set by adding these probabilities for the questions included in the exam

# Floating pass scores

- The pass score is set for each form of the exam
- This is fine-tuning to ensure that the pass-score is set at the same level of proficiency every time
- As an overall expectation, the percent correct required to pass the exams hovers between 60% and 65%

# Advice #3: Develop a plan

The plan should address content and process

## Content

- Acquiring and retaining the relevant knowledge
- Choosing the exam prep methods that are right for you

## Process

- Processing multiple-choice questions efficiently
- Pacing
- Managing exam anxiety

With the widespread use of *remote proctoring*, I would now add '*managing the test environment*' and '*managing the technology*' and ensuring that your environment is conducive to remote proctoring and that your equipment passes all the system verifications is must if you are going to be taking exams using this delivery method

# Conduct a self-assessment

- What has been your experience with important exams?
- What has worked for you and what hasn't?
- How would you assess your current level of knowledge in each sub-domain?

# Is it possible to study too much?

- Yes, but it is highly variable from person to person and the intensity of the studying and how long ago you completed your coursework
- Three-months may be the optimum

# Knowledge

- It is about facts
- In reviewing textbooks and other materials remember that the exam is about facts
- Coverage is important
- Consider glossaries
  - Perhaps the most underutilized strategy
  - Human Resources has a lot of specialized terminology
  - If you can define all the specialized terms and describe of each relates to other specialized terms

# Acquiring and retaining the relevant knowledge

- Plan to review it all
- But if time is short focus on the areas where you are weakest

## Advice #4:

Choose exam prep method(s) that are right for you

- Self-study
- Study groups
- One-on-one mentoring
- College and university test centres
- Prep programs

# Self-study

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Self-study	Flexible Can be efficient (maximum return for time invested)	Depends on one's study skills Requires self-discipline

# Study groups

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Study groups	Moral support Extra motivation to follow up on commitments Sharing of resources (textbook, notes, etc.) Useful to share workload	Not too big, not too small Develop terms of reference beforehand Careful not to let the social aspects take over Depending on the study group. It may be difficult to address individual needs Sometimes, incorrect information might be shared (" <i>I heard that...</i> ")

# One-on-one mentoring

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
One-on-one mentoring by someone who has passed the exam	Depends on mentor Moral support Extra motivation to follow up on commitments	Depends on mentor Other than the fact that they passed the exam, the mentor may not know more than you do about the exam  What might have worked for mentor may not work for you

# College and university test centres

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
College and university test centres	Some college and university test centres will also provide services to recent graduates  Especially useful for students with accommodations of special learning needs  Great for information on test-taking skills	May not be available to you

# Prep programs

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Prep programs	Not all prep programs are the same None have seen the 'real' exams Focus on content Can include practice exams	Expense \$\$\$ Prep programs cannot do the studying for you The questions on the exam <u>will</u> be different—careful not to develop an expectation that questions on the exam will be similar

# What about writing exam questions and developing practice exams?

- Writing exam questions is a learning experience in its own right. One begins to think (and read textbooks) like a question writer
- Don't develop an expectation that the 'real' questions will be like those you developed or that your performance on the real exam will be like your performance on practice exams

## Advice #5:

# Develop multiple-choice test-taking skills

Your test-taking strategy should consider three aspects:

1. Processing multiple-choice questions efficiently
2. Pacing and stamina
3. Managing exam anxiety

# Processing multiple-choice questions efficiently

All the usual advice

- Read questions completely before answering
- Eliminate options you know to be incorrect
- There is no penalty for incorrect answers, guess from among options you could not eliminate
- But there is also some advice out there that is not correct

# Don't count on 'tricks' to answer questions

<i>"when in doubt pick option b or c"</i>	The order of appearance of the correct answer is randomized
<i>"when there is a typo, the option is incorrect because more care and attention is given to correct the correct response"</i>	Copy editor reviews all options and does not know which is correct
<i>"the longest answer is most often the correct one because the language is more careful"</i>	All questions are reviewed to ensure that this is not the case which is the longest answer is random
<i>"when there is an 'all of the above' option it is usually correct"</i>	HRPA exams do not use 'all of the above' or 'none of the above' options
<i>"the correct answer won't be in the same position more than three times in a row"</i>	The order of appearance of the correct answer is <u>randomized</u> —runs will happen just by chance

# Pacing

- Pacing—making sure that one gets through the exam within the time allotted
- The CKE1 and CKE2 are designed to be ‘all power and no speed’—meaning that candidates should have no problem in completing the exams. Indeed, 95% of the candidates writing the CKE1 and CKE2 have no problem completing the exams within the time limits
- The standard is one minute per multiple-choice question

# Pacing

- The advice here is to learn to pace oneself. For instance, if you have answered 30 questions in the first half hour or 60 questions in the first hour, you know you are on track
- Our computer-based exams, including the CKE! And CKE2, have a timer that counts down so you can pace yourself using this feature. Exam-writers also get 30, 15 min alerts
- But this is an average, not a limit. It is OK to spend more time on a question because you will be spending less than one minute on other questions

# Advice #6: Learn to manage exam anxiety

## Exam anxiety is manageable

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Get accurate information
- Study effectively
- Prepare to write the exam
- Adjust your attitude
- Change unhelpful thoughts
- Use test-taking strategies
- Use anxiety reduction techniques

## Advice #7:

### Remote proctoring or test centre

- With remote proctoring come two new challenges '*managing the test environment*' and '*managing the technology*'

# Managing the test environment

- Quiet environment free of distractions and if possible behind a closed door
- Sources of distraction
  - Deliveries
  - Doorbells
  - Pets
  - Kids
  - Spouses

# Managing the technology

- The quality of internet connections varies tremendously
- Even the same connection will have fluctuations in the quality of the connection
- Bandwidth is important – ensure you have sufficient bandwidth to test in this environment
- If you are using company equipment ensure there are no firewalls in place preventing you from downloading the application and taking your exam
- Avoid having others in your household using the internet connection i.e. streaming, playing video games etc. as this could have an effect on your ability to take your exam
- Many will have a trouble free exam, but many will experience some issues
- Most of the time, these issues will be minor and will not impact the validity of the exam administration
- However, if you are put off by these kind of problems, remote proctoring might not be for you

# Test your system

- It is important to test your system under the same conditions you will write the exam
- You will be provided with detailed instructions as to how to carry out this system readiness check
- Even with testing, problems can sometimes arise

# Test centres

- Make sure you know where the test centre is and work out parking arrangements beforehand if you are going to drive
- Arrive 30 minutes early
- Bring ID for identification
- If you are sensitive to temperature, dress in layers and bring a sweater
- Read through the confirmation of registration email sent by HRPA and the appointment confirmation email sent by Prometric to ensure you are aware of all exam rules and regulations along with the security procedures

# Accommodations

- HRPA will provide accommodations in regard to exams
- By their very nature, accommodations are individualized
- All the information and forms required to request an accommodation are posted on the HRPA website

# Questions