

Smooth Sailing or Underwater?

BY VALERIE SMITH Credentialing Analyst



Whether you have been thinking about taking a certification exam for a job requirement or a personal goal, think of it as an investment in yourself.

Exams are stressful for most people. If you add time constraints, studying, and papers, in addition to full-time jobs, families, and real life, not being equipped with the proper information can feel like you are sinking.

To avoid drowning, here are the **Top 5 Tips** to equip you with the information needed to make your exam experience as smooth as possible.

1. STUDY FIRST

Be prepared to take your exam before you register. For most of our exams, once you register, it only takes a couple business days to receive your clearance. Once you receive clearance, you have only six months to take the exam up to three times (twice at a reduced fee). If you register and then study, six months will fly by and before you know it, you are at the end of your registration period.

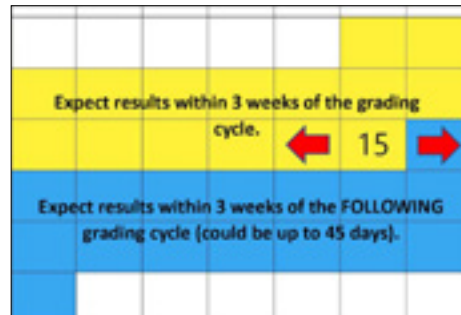
Mark a date on the calendar for when you want to take your exam. Be sure to have all eligibility requirements prepared to submit, including your technical paper if registering for the Certified Cost Professional (CCP exam). You can open an application collection for your exam and upload documents as you get them. Once you are ready to take the exam, just checkout and pay.

2. DON'T WAIT TO SCHEDULE YOUR EXAM

Most exams have a written component (memos or essays) during the exam, which must be sent out to graders for evaluation. Memos/ Essays are assigned in cycles every month on (or around) the 15th and it generally takes about 2-3 weeks for the memos to be evaluated by the graders, compiled by the coordinators, and then calculated and entered into your profile by Certification Department staff.

Being mindful of when you take your exam in relation to the grading cycle is vital in planning your exam. We recommend scheduling your exam soon after receiving clearance to take advantage of your full registration period, especially if you need to take the exam again. Here are two examples:

- A. If John takes his Planning & Scheduling Professional (PSP) exam on May 13th, his memo will be included in the May 15th grading cycle. He should receive his results around the end of May or the first week of June.
- B. If Amy takes her EVP exam on June 17th, her memo will be included in the July 15th grading cycle. She won't receive her results until the end of June or the first week of July.



3. KNOW AACE POLICIES

It is essential to be knowledgeable of the policies that will affect you before the exam.

First, AACE has a strict no-refund policy. If you suddenly decide you want to back out of your exam, you can, but a refund will not be given.

Second, if you need to reschedule the exam, be sure to do it at least 72 hours prior to your scheduled time. This is a strict Kryterion policy based upon contractual terms with testing centers. *If you reschedule with less than 72 hours' notice, cancel, or no show, AACE is still charged for your exam since the testing center reserved a seat and made the necessary staff and space preparations.*

Third, it is important to know what to do in case your exam has a disruption or if something is wrong with the equipment or environment. The first action is to notify the proctor immediately. It is the proctor's responsibility to try and remedy the issue and resume your exam as quickly as possible. However, sometimes the issue cannot be fixed by the proctor and Kryterion must be contacted.

If you are dissatisfied with the proctor's actions or inaction, or if there was an outage or proper protocol was not followed, report your experience to AACE Headquarters as soon as possible. You may be asked to file a formal complaint for tracking purposes.

Here are the policies. Read them. Become familiar with them.

- [Cancellations, No Shows & Rescheduling Policies](#) – *what is the difference, and what to do if you need to make a change in your scheduled exam*
- [Examination Disruption Policy](#) – *what you need to do in case you experience a disruption during your exam*

4. KNOW WHAT HAPPENS THE DAY OF YOUR EXAM

When you registered for your exam, you probably glanced over exam information on the website. Maybe you didn't read all the information in your emails from the Certification Staff. However, before you arrive at your exam, knowing what to expect is critical.

- You must take two (2) IDs (one government-issued picture ID) and your exam confirmation email with you to your exam.
- You will be required to empty your pockets and turn them out as well as have your glasses inspected.
- If you are taking an exam with a memo or essays during the exam, you will not be able to use common keystrokes like CTRL+C or CTRL+V while you are typing your memo/essay for security reasons.
- You may use any type of calculator, even programmable, if it is stand-alone and battery-operated.
- Unless your exam is open-book (CCT, CST, and CFCC exams), the only thing you may take into the exam with you is your calculator. Check the website for specific resources allowed.
- The CCT and CST are each three (3) hours and the rest of the exams are five (5) hours, so make sure you eat a good meal prior to going in to your exam.

- The exam timer will continue to count down if you take a bio break. Be swift!
- Only the CCT and CST will receive their results immediately because the exams are straightforward multiple choice. For the rest of the exams, there are parts to compile for your overall grade. You will need to refer to the AACE Expected Results Calendar you received with your clearance email for when you should receive your results.

Here are the links to the pages on our website that have this information:

- [Certifications Offered](#) – *be sure to review the exam structure for your certification – includes time allotted, calculator information, etc.*
- [What to Expect on Exam Day](#) – *when to appear for your exam and what to take for identification*

5. KNOW WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE EXAM

Besides knowing when to expect your exam results (see #2), you will receive a survey invitation via email to provide valuable information about your exam experience. It is important to complete the survey, so we know what we're doing well, what we need to improve upon, and how to better serve examination candidates and certificants.

Then, it's a matter of waiting. Once all examination data is received and compiled at headquarters, your examination results are released via email.

Studying for the exam, scheduling sooner than later, being prepared for potential problems, being informed about policies and procedures, and providing feedback is the perfect recipe to make your exam experience smooth sailing. Keeping these 5 points in mind will help you chart the course for exam success.

Of course, if you have any questions along the way, you can contact us here at AACE Headquarters at certification@acei.org or 304.296.8444.

Sara Peters Completes Credentialing Specialist Certificate Program

BY PENNY WHOOLERY

The Certification Board and AACE Headquarters want to congratulate Sara Peters, Certification Administrator, on completing the Credentialing Specialist Certificate Program through the Institute of Credentialing Excellence (ICE).

The Credentialing Specialist program is an assessment-based certificate program that uses instructional design principles to deliver best in class education and was developed by ICE in conjunction with leading industry experts.

The comprehensive 8-course curriculum was designed for the individual who wants to gain insights into the eco-system of certification from a program's conception, through its development and delivery, to maintenance and improvement. The course topics include: Needs Assessment, Accreditation Standards, Certification Administration, Certification Operations, Key Psychometric Concepts, Exam Development, Governance, and Legal Issues.



Sara joins over 600 industry professionals to complete the course, including AACE's Credentialing Analyst, Valerie Smith. When asked about her experience, she states, "The Credentialing Specialist Certificate program was extremely valuable for my role in the certification department. The hands-on experience I have gained since working for AACE built the foundation of my certification knowledge. After the completion of the program, I have a broader knowledge of accreditation standards as well as policies and procedures. This learning experience is not only beneficial to my day-to-day tasks, but has also given me the skills and knowledge to assist in the further maintenance, development and growth of the certification department."

Please join us in congratulating Sara and celebrating this exciting accomplishment.