

# PREPARE TO TAKE A CERTIFICATION EXAM STUDY TIPS



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## REVIEW THE CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

Download your Candidate Handbook from the [HPCC website](#). It provides crucial information about the exam, fees, eligibility, application deadlines, and testing windows as well as a Detailed Content Outline (DCO), references used to validate the questions on the exam, and sample test questions.

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## SELF-ASSESS YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Use the examination's Detailed Content Outline to identify which areas on the test are your strengths and which areas you will need to concentrate your study. Be honest with your self-assessment so you can plan your study.

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## BUILD A PERSONAL STUDY PLAN

Give yourself at least six months to study. Review the Candidate Handbook to plan when to apply and schedule your test date. Develop a formal study schedule that includes establishing a timetable; obtaining the resources; identifying study methods that work for you; and, addressing the exam areas you identified as needing additional knowledge. Be sure to schedule regular times to study in one-hour increments. Avoid cramming.

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## OBTAIN YOUR STUDY RESOURCES

HPCC examinations are not based on the content of any one reference. Review the Primary and Secondary reference lists which have been used to validate the items in your examination. You may want to use one or two of the references for overall review and supplement with references that address your knowledge gaps.

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## IMPLEMENT YOUR STUDY PLAN

Stick to your study plan schedule! Take regular breaks. If you feel overwhelmed or have trouble concentrating, adjust your plan as you learn where you need to focus.

Consider various study methods – a study group, study buddy, or join an online community. Different study methods can augment your study plan. Be realistic. Do not expect to gain knowledge in all topics of the Detailed Content Outline. Break overwhelming tasks into smaller tasks that you know you can do.

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## INVESTIGATE REVIEW COURSES

Taking a review course is an excellent way to assess your knowledge of the test content. Schedule the course well before your exam date so you have time to master unfamiliar content. Concentrate on areas where your knowledge is not as strong. *HPCC is not able to conduct or recommend specific review courses.*

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### PREPARE THE DAY BEFORE THE EXAM

Review the PSI testing center information. Assemble the items you are required to have for the testing center – two acceptable forms of identification. Be sure to bring a valid, unexpired, government-issued ID card (with photo). Confirm that your name matches your IDs on your examination information. Review the directions to the PSI testing center.

You have finished studying for the exam. Now take time for yourself. Relax! Get a massage, do light exercise, practice yoga or meditation. Visualize success. Eat and hydrate properly throughout the day. Get a good night's rest.

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### PREPARE TO TAKE THE EXAM

Eat a nutritious breakfast. Dress comfortably. Review the testing center guidelines:

- Bring your IDs.
- No food or drink is allowed in the testing room.
- No study materials are allowed in the testing room.
- There are lockers where you can secure your valuables.
- There are no breaks scheduled during the exam. You will not be able to make up time if you leave the testing room.

Before you leave, check the status of your testing center location on the [PSI website](#). Give yourself plenty of time to get to the testing center to avoid any unforeseen circumstances. Arrive at the test center rested and alert and no later than your scheduled time.

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### TAKE THE EXAM

Pace yourself throughout the exam. Your first answer is usually the best answer. Do not overthink a question. If you find you are taking too long on a question, flag it and go back to it later. When you have answered all the questions review your test for incomplete items or those you flagged for review.

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### RECEIVE YOUR SCORE REPORT

When you finish your examination, you will see your results on-screen and receive your score report when leaving the test center. Your report will include your picture and your score for each area of the Detailed Content Outline. You will not see items you answered incorrectly (doing so would compromise test security).

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### IDENTIFY THE NEXT STEPS

When you pass the examination, you are eligible to use the respective registered designation (credential) after your name. You will receive your official certificate within 90 days after the testing window closes. Your certification expires four years from the date you successfully tested. You will receive regular notices regarding renewing your certification. If you are not successful in passing the exam, you can reapply for the next testing window or any subsequent window by filing a new application and paying the application fee.