

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING IC&RC EXAMS

In December 2011, IC&RC will begin using pretest items on our exams. Pretesting will allow IC&RC to streamline our exam development process, provide much needed data on questions, and increase the security of our exams.

Pretesting will begin in December 2011 for the Alcohol & Drug Counselor (ADC), Advanced Alcohol & Drug Counselor (AADC), and Clinical Supervisor (CS) exams. In March 2012, we will implement pretesting for the Prevention Specialist (PS), Certified Criminal Justice Addictions Professional (CCJP), and Certified Co-Occurring Disorders (CCDP) exams.

On each IC&RC exam there will be 25 “unweighted” items that will not count toward the candidate’s final score. Unweighted items are also called pretest items. Pretest items will not be identified on the exam, and will appear randomly on all exam forms. All exams will be 150 questions in length, including Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor (AADC). The AADC exam was previously 175 questions.

It is important to include pretest items on an examination because items should be piloted to ensure quality before they contribute to a candidate’s score. Pretesting items provides verification that the items are relevant to competency and contribute toward measuring a candidate’s proficiency in the material. The statistical data received from pretesting is analyzed to determine if an item performs within an acceptable range. For example, item statistics tell us if an item is too difficult and possibly outside the candidates’ scope of knowledge or practice, if an item is too easy and does not measure competency, or if the correct answer is misidentified. If an item exhibits acceptable statistical performance, the item can be upgraded to “weighted” status and included on future examinations as a scored item.

In a larger context, the need to stay current with industry standards and the existence of incentives for cheating are the most compelling reasons to include pretest questions on examinations. Pretesting items allows the examination to stay current with the profession. The field is constantly evolving, and it is important that the examination reflect current practice and the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of competent practitioners. Including pretest items also allows IC&RC to produce more test forms which increases the security of our examinations.

Overall, pretesting items is in the best interest of candidates as it will help ensure the quality of future examinations. Pretest items have absolutely no effect on a candidate’s score. For example, if two candidates both answer the same number of weighted items correctly, and one answers all of the pretest items correctly and the other answers none of the pretest items correctly, they both receive the same score and pass/fail status on the exam. In fact, candidates will be protected against poorly-performing items adversely affecting their scores, while at the same time taking an examination that is current with professional trends.