# CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION FOR RESEARCH ADMINISTRATORS

## Handbook for Candidates

| EXAMINATION DATES | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Spring 2012** | | |
| Application Deadline | Testing Window | |
| March 30, 2012 | Begins: | May 12, 2012 |
| | Ends: | May 26, 2012 |
| **Fall 2012** | | |
| Application Deadline | Testing Window | |
| October 15, 2012 | Begins: | December 1, 2012 |
| | Ends: | December 15, 2012 |





PROFESSIONAL TESTING CORPORATION ®

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

This handbook contains necessary information about the Research Administrators (CRA) Examination. Please retain it for future reference. Candidates are responsible for reading these instructions carefully. This handbook is subject to change.

## CERTIFICATION

The Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC) promotes the concept of voluntary certification by examination for all research and sponsored programs administrators. After passing this exam, an individual earns the Certified Research Administrator (CRA) designation. Certification is just one part of a process called "credentialing". It focuses specifically on the individual and is one indication of current competence in this specialized field. Certification in research and sponsored programs administration is highly valued and provides formal recognition of basic knowledge in this field.

## REASONS FOR CERTIFICATION

1. To provide documented evidence to a current or potential employer that an individual has been examined by an independent professional certifying organization and found to possess a certain level of basic knowledge of research and sponsored programs administration.

2. To provide personal and professional satisfaction of achievement of meeting established criteria indicating the attainment of a level of basic knowledge that is customary to be a professional in the field of research and sponsored programs administration.

3. To demonstrate commitment to the profession and to one's peers that an individual has taken the time and effort, beyond job experience, to learn the Body of Knowledge, thus exhibiting a significant responsibility to working in the profession of research or sponsored programs administration.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Bachelor's Degree and three (3) years of professional experience in research or sponsored programs administration either in a sponsoring or recipient organization or the equivalent in a self-funded organization;
<div align="center">OR</div>
2. An Associate's Degree and five (5) years of professional experience in research or sponsored programs administration either in a sponsoring or recipient organization or the equivalent in a self-funded organization;
<div align="center">OR</div>
3. No degree and six (6) years of professional experience in research or sponsored programs administration either in a sponsoring or recipient organization or the equivalent in a self-funded organization (this requires completion of a Petition Application, which can be found at www.cra-cert.org/whatiscertification.html).

## ADMINISTRATION

The Certification Program is administered by the Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC). The Certification Examination for Research Administrators is conducted by the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC), 1350 Broadway - 17th Floor, New York, New York 10018, (212) 356-0660, http:// www.ptcny.com. The Professional Testing Corporation is an organization whose services are focused on the measurement aspects of human resources, including the design, development, and administration of test and testing programs for professional organizations. Questions concerning the examination should be referred to PTC.

## ATTAINMENT OF CERTIFICATION

Eligible candidates who pass the examination will be certified for a period of five years, are eligible to use the registered designation CRA after their names, and will receive a certificate from the RACC. A registry of Certified Research Administrators is maintained by the RACC and may be reported in its publications. Further information concerning the CRA credentialing program and information regarding preparation for the examination may be found at the RACC Home Page, http://www.cra-cert.org. An annotated list of RACC's Body of Knowledge may be found at http://www.cra-cert.org/BodyOfKnowledge.htm.

To maintain the CRA designation beyond the initial five years and every five (5) years thereafter, CRAs will need to show evidence of continuing professional development. Recertification guidelines and the application are available on the RACC homepage, http:// www.cra-cert.org.

## REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION

Certification may be revoked by the RACC for any of the following reasons:

1. Falsification of an Application.
2. Misrepresentation of certification status.
3. Breach of existing ethical standards of professional practice.

An appeals mechanism for challenging revocation of Certification is available.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Request additional Handbooks and Applications for the Certification Examination for Research Administrators from the Professional Testing Corporation, 1350 Broadway  17th Floor, New York, New York 10018, (212) 356-0660, http:// www.ptcny.com.

## COMPLETION OF APPLICATION

Complete the application by providing ALL information requested on the Application form. Mark only one response unless otherwise indicated. Print carefully, as the forms are optically scanned.

NOTE: The name you enter on your Application must match exactly the name shown on your current government-issued photo ID such as driver's license or passport. Do not use nicknames or abbreviations.

CANDIDATE INFORMATION: Starting at the top of the Application, print your name (as shown on your current government-issued photo ID), your name as desired on the certificate, position title, department, work and home addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses in the appropriate row of empty boxes. Notification of success on the examination will come to your home address; you may elect "office" or "home" for further RACC communications. Your address information will only be available to PTC and RACC.

ELIGIBILITY AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION: All questions must be answered. Mark only one response unless otherwise indicated.

OPTIONAL INFORMATION: These questions are optional. The information requested is to assist in complying with equal opportunity guidelines and will be used only in statistical summaries. Such information will in no way affect your test results.

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE: When you have completed all required information, sign and date the Application in the space provided.

Mail the Application with the appropriate fee (see FEES below) in time to be received by the deadline shown on the cover of this Handbook to:

<div align="center">

RACC EXAMINATION
PROFESSIONAL TESTING CORPORATION
1350 Broadway – 17th Floor
New York, New York 10018

</div>

## FEES

Application Fee for the Certification Examination for Research
Administrators ................................................................................$350.00

MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO:
RACC EXAMINATION

Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are also accepted. Please complete and sign the credit card payment form on the application.

DO NOT SEND CASH.

## REFUNDS/TRANSFERS

There will be no refund of fees. A candidate who applies to take the examination but then wishes to take it during a different testing period may be granted a one-time deferment to the immediate next testing period if the candidate requests the deferment in writing and submits the transfer fee of $210 to Professional Testing Corporation. Only one deferment will be permitted. The candidate is responsible for contacting PSI and canceling the examination appointment, if one has been made.

## EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION

The Certification Examination for Research Administrators is administered during an established two-week testing period on a daily basis, Monday through Saturday, excluding holidays, at computer-based testing facilities managed by PSI. PSI has several hundred testing sites in the United States, as well as Canada. Scheduling is done on a first-come, first-serve basis. To find a testing center near you, visit www.ptcny.com/cbt/sites.htm or call PSI at (800) 211-2754. Please note: Hours and days of availability vary at different centers. You will not be able to schedule your examination appointment until you have received an Eligibility Notice from PTC.

## TESTING SOFTWARE DEMO

A Testing Software Demo can be viewed online.

Go to http://www.ptcny.com/cbt/demo.htm

This online Testing Software Demo can give you an idea about the features of the testing software.

## SCHEDULING YOUR EXAMINATION APPOINTMENT

Once your Application has been received and processed and your eligibility verified, you will be sent a postcard from PTC confirming receipt. Within six weeks prior to the first day of the testing period, you will be sent an Eligibility Notice. The Eligibility Notice plus current government-issued photo identification must be presented in order to gain admission to the testing center. If you do not receive an Eligibility Notice or other correspondence at least three weeks before the beginning of the testing period, contact the Professional Testing Corporation by telephone at (212) 356-0660.

The Eligibility Notice will indicate where to call to schedule your examination appointment as well as the dates during which testing is available. Appointment times are first-come, first-serve, so schedule your appointment as soon as you receive your Eligibility Notice in order to maximize your chance of testing at your preferred location and on your preferred date.

It is your responsibility as the candidate to call PSI to schedule the examination appointment.

It is highly recommended that you become familiar with the testing site.

Arrival at the testing site at the appointed time is the responsibility of the candidate. Please plan for weather, traffic, parking, and any security requirements that are specific to the testing location. Late arrival may prevent you from testing.

## CHANGING YOUR EXAMINATION APPOINTMENT

If you need to cancel your examination appointment or reschedule to a different date within the two-week testing period, you must contact PSI at (800) 211-2754 no later than noon, Eastern Standard Time, of the second business day PRIOR to your scheduled appointment.

## SPECIAL NEEDS

Special testing arrangements will be made for individuals with special needs. Submit the Application, Examination Fee, and a completed and signed Request for Special Accommodations Form, available from www.ptcny.com or by calling PTC at (212) 356-0660. Requests for special testing for individuals with special needs must be received at least EIGHT weeks before the testing date.

Please notify PTC at least two weeks prior to your examination appointment if you need to bring a service dog, medicine, food, or beverages necessary for a medical condition with you to the test center.

## RULES FOR THE EXAMINATION

1.  Electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, pagers, voice recording devices, cameras, Blackberries, Bluetooth type devices, and MP3 players (IPOD, I-Touch, etc.), cannot be operative during the examination.

2.  Simple, non-programmable calculators are permitted, except for calculators included in cell phones, Blackberries, and other such devices. A calculator is also available on screen if needed.

3.  No questions concerning content of the examination may be asked during the examination session. The candidate should carefully read the directions that are provided on screen at the beginning of the examination session.

4.  No test materials, documents, or reference materials of any sort are to be taken from the examination room nor brought into the examination room.

## REPORT OF RESULTS

Test results are not released at the testing center but will be sent via mail within three weeks following close of the testing period. This is necessary to allow for the psychometric review and administrative time required to ensure accurate and reliable scores. Scores on the major areas of the examination and on the total examination will be provided. Successful candidates will also receive certificates from RACC.

## REEXAMINATION

The Certification Examination for Research Administrators may be taken as often as desired upon filing of a new Application and payment of the applicable fee. There is no limit to the number of times the examination may be repeated.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

1. The RACC will release the individual test scores ONLY to the individual candidate.

2. Any questions concerning test results should be referred to RACC or the Professional Testing Corporation.

## CONTENT OF EXAMINATION

1. The Certification Examination for Research Administrators is a written examination composed of a maximum of 250 multiple choice, objective questions with a total testing time of four (4) hours.

2. The content for the examination is described in the Content Outline on page 7.

3. The questions for the examination are obtained from Certified Research Administrators, individuals with expertise in research administration, and are reviewed for construction, accuracy, and appropriateness by the RACC and PTC's psychometricians.

4. The RACC, with the advice and assistance of the Professional Testing Corporation, prepares the examination.

5. The Certification Examination for Research Administrators will be weighted in approximately the following manner:

   I. Project Development and Administration......................................30%
   II. Legal Requirements and Sponsor Interface....................................30%
   III. Financial Management ................................................................25%
   IV. General Management ..................................................................15%

# CONTENT OUTLINE:  The RACC "Body of Knowledge"

For an annotation giving sample resources, see
http://www.cra-cert.org/BodyOfKnowledge.htm

## I.   PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

- A.  Collection and Dissemination of Information
    1. Marketing - Internal and External
        a. Identification of funding opportunities
        b. Identification of internal capabilities
    2. Resource Documents, Application Materials, and Information
    3. Dissemination of Information/Publications
    4. Liaison
        a. Internal
        b. Funding sources
        c. Cooperative arrangements
    5. Public Relations
    6. Agency Structure and Practice
- B. Proposal Development
    1. Proposal Writing
    2. Budget Preparation
    3. Documentation to Meet Sponsor Requirements
    4. Internal Proposal Processing
    5. Negotiation Techniques
- C. Administration of Awards
    1. Monitoring Activity
    2. Reports on Progress and Financial Status
    3. Continuation Funding
    4. Close Out
    5. Changes in Project Status
    6. Award Instruments
- D. Ethics and Professionalism
    1. Conflict of Interest
    2. Bioethics
    3. Human Subjects
    4. Animal Care
    5. Professional
- E. Intellectual Property
    1. Patents
    2. Copyrights
    3. Licensing
    4. Commercialization
    5. Data
    6. Proprietary Information
- F. Electronic Research Administration

## II.   LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND SPONSOR INTERFACE

- A. Regulations and Statutes
    1. Overview of Regulatory and Legislative Process
    2. Governmental Relations
    3. Mandated Requirements
- B. Compliance - Federal Sponsors and General Management Practices

1. Representations and Certifications
   a. Federal Drug-Free Workplace and Drug-Free Schools
   b. Federal Debt Delinquency
   c. Federal Debarment/Suspension
   d. Lobbying
   e. Conflicts of interest
   f. Scientific misconduct
   g. Other
2. Federal Management Requirements
   a. Federal Acquisition Regulations
   b. Federal Assistance Administrative Regulations
   c. OMB Circulars (see 2 CFR)
3. Institutional Committees
   a. Institutional Review Board
   b. Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
   c. Other
4. Federal Disclosure Requirements
5. Institutional and Sponsor Publication Requirements
6. HIPAA Health
7. International Traffic in Arms Regulation (ITAR)/
   Export Administration Regulations (EAR)
C. Federal/Sponsor Appeal Procedures

## III. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A. Budgeting/Accounting
   1. Proposal Development
   2. Accounting Management
      a. Accounting systems/management information
         systems
         i.   Sponsor documents
         ii.  Internal documents
      b. Accounting processes
         i.   Effort reporting
         ii.  Service centers
         iii. Program income
         iv.  Internal controls
      c. Cost transfers
   3. Rebudgeting
B. Costs
   1. Direct Costs
   2. Indirect Costs
   3. Indirect Cost Rates
      a. Development
      b. Negotiation
   4. Cost Sharing
C. Sponsor Financial Reporting
D. Audit
   1. Types
   2. Internal and External Requirements
   3. Allowable Costs

## IV.  GENERAL MANAGEMENT

- A.  Facility Management
    - 1.  Specialized Facilities
    - 2.  Property, Utility, and Equipment Management
        - a.  Inventory control
        - b.  Sale/disposal of equipment and property
        - c.  Lease vs. purchase
        - d.  Capital expenditures
        - e.  Sharing/pooling
        - f.  Central services
    - 3.  Safety and Health Requirements and Procedures
    - 4.  Hazardous and Nonhazardous Materials
    - 5.  Security
    - 6.  Renovation and Construction -Differentiation & Impact analysis
    - 7.  Biohazards
    - 8.  Other
- B.  Contracts and Purchasing
    - 1.  Basic Legal Concepts
    - 2.  Management of Contracts and Purchasing
    - 3.  Termination and Appeals
- C.  Records Management
- D.  Human Resource Management
    - 1.  Employee/Labor Relations
    - 2.  Career Development/Training
    - 3.  Staffing
    - 4.  Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity
    - 5.  Compensation

## SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

In the following questions, choose the one best answer.

---

1. Which of the following government publications serves as a comprehensive handbook of current federal government funding programs?

    1. Federal Yellow Book
    2. Annual Register of Grant Support
    3. Guide to Funding in Higher Education
    4. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

---

2. Which of the following is <u>NOT</u> a recognized indicator that a college or university has an audit management system which evidences that the institution is well managed?

    1. Financial objectives, goals, and control procedures that are established
    and maintained
    2. Systems of controls that adequately safeguard and account for the assets of the college or university
    3. Systems of controls that adequately measure and ensure that resources are used economically and efficiently
    4. A process to confirm that appropriate purchased insurance and bonding provisions are incorporated into grant and contract documents

---

3. If a grant includes items of equipment which came to the grantee institution as part of the award, the grantee institution

    1. has legal responsibility for the equipment.
    2. is not entitled to use, retain, or dispose of the equipment.
    3. must transfer equipment if principal investigator leaves grantee institution.
    4. is required to have a maintenance contract.

---

4. Which of the following is the document which deals specifically with patent rights and responsibilities currently applicable to universities under federally sponsored projects?

    1. 37 CFR 401
    2. FAR 52.209-5
    3. OMB Circular A-110
    4. OMB Circular A-124

---

5. Which of the following is most closely responsible, on a day-to-day basis, for enforcement of the Federal Animal Welfare Act?

    1. Office of Human Research Protection
    2. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
    3. Department of Health and Human Services
    4. American Association for Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care

> CORRECT ANSWERS TO SAMPLE QUESTIONS
> 1. 4  2. 4  3. 1  4. 1  5. 2

# REFERENCES

The following references may be of some help in preparing for the examination. The list does not attempt to include all acceptable references, nor is it suggested that the Certification Examination for Research Administrators is based entirely on these references. In some cases, individual experience is the best reference.

## TEXTBOOKS

Beasley, K.L., et al. Administration of Sponsored Programs -- Handbook for Developing and Managing Research Activities and Other Projects. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982.

Belcher, J.C., and Jacobsen, J.M. From Idea to Funded Project, Grant Proposals That Work. Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1992.

The Foundation Center's Guide to Proposal Writing, 4th Edition, The Foundation Center, ISBN 1-931923-92-2
See also http://fdncenter.org/

Getting Funded: The Complete Guide to Writing Grant Proposals by Mary S. Hall, Susan Howlett (Paperback - July 2003)

## PERIODICALS (available on line)

Research Management Review, Washington, DC: National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA).

The Journal of Research Administration, Washington, DC: SRA International Executive Office.

MAJOR PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS' on-line sources with a broad range of information:

SRA International
http://www.srainternational.org/sra03/index.cfm

National Council of University Research Administrators
http://www.ncura.edu/

Council on Governmental Relations
http://www.cogr.edu/

Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable
http://www7.nationalacademies.org/guirr/index.html

Association of University Technology Managers
http://www.autm.net/index.cfm

## SOME MAJOR FEDERAL FUNDING AGENCIES

See their Guides, Manuals, etc. available by drilling down from their home pages

DHHS: http://www.hhs.gov/

NIH: http://www.nih.gov/

NSF: http://www.nsf.gov/

NASA: http://www.nasa.gov/home/index.html?skipIntro=1

ED: http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml

## OMB CIRCULARS  (Now codified in 2 CFR)

2 CFR 220 (OMB A-21): Cost Principles for Educational Institutions.

2 CFR 215 (OMB A-110): Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations: Uniform Administrative Requirements.

OMB A-133: Audit of Institutions of Higher Education and Nonprofit Organizations.

## DATABASES/ONLINE SERVICES

Grants.gov

Fedbizopps.gov

PTC11174