

## TEST TAKING SKILLS

The main purpose of any certification and examination is public and consumer protection, not for protection of the professional. These processes ensure that a professional is competent and knowledgeable to provide services. Examinations are designed to demonstrate competence, therefore not everyone should or will pass.

- Competence vs. Expertise: The purpose of an examination is to identify candidates possessing the necessary competencies to practice in order to protect the public NOT to demonstrate expertise, exceptional talent, or knowledge of obscure topics. All questions must be valid, reliable and fair.
- Multiple-choice, one correct answer. There are no true/false or fill in the blank questions. Questions are never developed to try to trick or confuse a candidate. For security reasons, questions on the examination are not released to anyone.

Developing good test taking skills help decrease stress and anxiety. They can also optimize your performance on an examination. Knowing the content is most important, but a skilled test taker can utilize techniques to help them answer questions correctly when they are unsure of the answer.

- Study the material over time, in a distraction-free environment.
- Use notes and materials to make flash cards. Provide an example for each definition or key term.
- Study in groups.
- Study in smaller blocks of time over several days instead of one long session.
- Get rest the night before, drink lots of water and dress in layers on the day of the exam.
- Review the test in its entirety – just look it over.
- Make sure you understand the questions. Ask yourself, what is the question asking?
- Look for grammatical clues in the answers. The question should be grammatically consistent with the correct answer.
- Multiple-choice will include options that are plausible so read every answer carefully before selecting a final answer.
- Once a final answer is determined, avoid changing it.
- Always choose a response, even if it's your best educated guess or you "go with your gut" - avoid skipping questions. If you used your best effort and are still unsure about which answer is correct, then take a guess. If there are four responses, you have a 25% chance of selecting the correct answer.

In some cases, a candidate can be fully qualified and know the content, yet still perform poorly or fail an examination. Often, going over some basic reading comprehension skills and seeking assistance in this area is very helpful to candidates. There is nothing wrong with brushing up on these skills from time-to-time as it can dramatically increase test scores and competence.

- Identify the main idea of the question.
- Use context clues to help you understand the question.
- Make connection to what you know about the topic and your work and training experiences.
- Take your time.

There are also resources available to assist candidates who may want extra help in this area, including: local library, community colleges, community centers and online tools.