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Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations
Conseil canadien des associations en ressources humaines

TIPS FOR SUCCESS - FROM THE TOP SCORERS ON THE FIRST NATIONAL KNOWLEDGE EXAM

Top exam scorers across Canada were asked how they prepared for the Knowledge Exam. Here are some answers.

Denise Buchanan, highest score in BC and across Canada

“I attended the BC Human Resources Management Association’s presentations at conferences regarding the scope, and expectations, and reviewed materials from their exam prep workshops. Of course, I used the PARC website which I found very helpful. I reworked as many sample questions as were available, and also consulted a general HR text book which helped me in areas that I needed more information about, or an update on current topics and issues.”

Nikolene Day, highest score in Manitoba

“Start early. I reviewed the sample exam on the PARC website about six months prior to writing the Knowledge exam. From there I identified areas that I needed to really focus my attention on, and which areas I could give a brief overview. I was lucky to have recently completed my HR Certificate Program, so I had a number of the recommended texts, and my employer also had a few. Studying in a number of shorter sessions has always worked well for me. Again, my employer was very supportive and permitted me one afternoon per week to spend preparing for the exam.”

Jessica Storchan, highest score in Ontario

“I had just taken the certificate in HR, so the course material was relatively fresh in my mind. I reviewed lecture notes and study notes from each of the courses. For the specific courses, I looked at the previous exams and quizzes. The other source I used was the web sites for Human Resources Management and Training and Development textbooks (ITP Nelson Series in HR www.hrm.nelson.com) which had multiple choice questions which captured the key points and were very helpful.

I also used the exam preparation guide from HRPAO- although I did not take the course. The study guide for the CPE exam was also a source of practice. These guides helped because they had practice multiple choice questions. I also used the practice questions on the PARC website. Out of all of the materials I used I found the national knowledge preparation guide and the PARC website, which gave me the breakdown of the exam, the most useful. I used the breakdown of the exam to help me focus my time on studying each of the courses. I focused on the areas with the greatest proportion of questions and I knew those really well. The three most important are compensation, training and development, and health and safety, which altogether made up 61% of the exam. The other areas I knew, but not as well as they represented a smaller proportion of the exam.

My strongest recommendation is “*Definitely do an exam prep workshop or course*”. (Note that CCHRA now offers an on-line exam prep course Campus HR at <http://www.captus.com/information/cchra.htm> which offers a diagnostic test and three timed practice exams, as well as multi-media lectures).

Go through the material – you cannot prepare for this exam the week before. You need to memorize and understand all of the key points, theories and concepts. After taking the HR certificate, I studied for about two months, every weekend, and two to three nights per week. I probably spent more time than others need to, because I studied for two extra courses that I had not taken in the certificate but which were on the national knowledge exam. Practice with all of the questions that are available to assess your performance and monitor how much studying is necessary in order to know the material well.”