

**Information Bulletin**  
**for**  
**Pre-Professional Assessment and Certification**  
**in**  
**Family and Community Services**



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## Overview

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The American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS), a well-respected leader in the FCS field, proudly offers the Pre-Professional Assessment and Certification (Pre-PAC) Program, creating the *premier* family and consumer sciences pre-professional assessment and certification system in the nation. AAFCS added a portfolio of standards-based assessments and industry-recognized certifications to support pre-professional level family and consumer sciences career areas and programs of study for the following reasons:

- To help satisfy the growing emphasis on assessment and accountability in secondary and postsecondary education, including requirements for Perkins funding for Career and Technical Education, and
- To help satisfy the growing emphasis on credentials as a human resource and quality control tool in employment settings throughout the career ladder.

Through these assessments, AAFCS assures that pre-professionals are effectively prepared with the knowledge and skills necessary for demanding career opportunities, therefore providing a workforce to meet the needs of business and industry in the demanding U.S. economy.

With the demand for a variety of services for children and families and the growing elderly population, career opportunities in family and community services are projected to be excellent; thus, AAFCS developed a national standards-based competency assessment measuring knowledge and skills in family and community services.

### Description of the Assessment and Certification

Assessments in the Pre-PAC portfolio are high quality, rigorous, valid, and reliable as documented through formal psychometric analysis of pilot test data. The assessments are delivered through a premier online testing platform and are used to validate competency at the pre-professional level.

The Family and Community Services Assessment and Certification are:

- driven by business and industry standards;
- based on relevant content standards and consistent with the National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education and the National Career Clusters Initiative;
- appropriate to validate achievement of competencies related to family and community services;
- useful in a broad range of education and employment settings, such as secondary and post-secondary education, community-based education programs, and employer-based human resource and staff development programs; and
- advantaged to utilize a gold-standard, computer-based testing platform format that provides for valid and reliable competency measurement and a reporting mechanism for data-driven program improvement, accountability, and individual remediation and acceleration.

## Uses of the Assessment and Certification

The assessments have application in a broad range of education, community development, staff development, and human resource settings where there is a need to document or validate competency achievement. Pre-PAC assessments are designed for use with secondary and post-secondary students and programs, pre-professionals working in early employment positions, and employers conducting staff development and training for pre-professionals. Further, the assessment and certification can be used to:

- document exit-level achievement in rigorous secondary programs and lower division post-secondary courses;
- satisfy accountability reporting mandates required by federal Perkins IV legislation as well as state and local policies;
- facilitate seamless articulation, placement, and credit-by exam within post-secondary institutions;
- validate competencies required for employment at the pre-professional and/or paraprofessional level; and
- provide an industry-recognized, pre-professional level certification.

## Careers

It is anticipated that the Family and Community Services assessment and certification will facilitate employment in early career ladder positions and promote continuing education at the post-secondary level preparing for careers associated with

- child, youth, and family services;
- community services;
- personal and home care services;
- elder care services;
- social services;
- volunteer services; and
- religious ministries and services.

In accordance with those career areas, the assessment is aligned with the following National Career Clusters:



The Career Clusters icons are being used with permission of the:



States' Career Clusters Initiative, 2010, [www.careerclusters.org](http://www.careerclusters.org)

# Assessment Specifications

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The assessment specifications provided in this section of the bulletin are intended to provide test candidates with a comprehensive overview of the domains and competencies that are covered on the assessment.

## Format

A large bank of high quality, valid test items have been developed for each Pre-PAC assessment. Each test administered is a unique combination of 80, four-option multiple choice items randomly selected from the item bank. Each of the items has only one (1) correct response. Of the 80 items presented on the assessment, 70 are scored and 10 are non-scored (used for piloting and research purposes).

The online testing software presents the items in five to seven groups or “blocks” corresponding to the domain areas identified on the assessment competency list. Testing is conducted under the supervision of proctors using PC or MAC computers in approved local schools and employment sites. During the assessment administration, it is possible to navigate forward and backward between items within a block of items. As items are viewed, they can be answered, skipped, or flagged for later review prior to submitting the item block. The testing software restricts access to other computer functions while the test is open. Local test administrators and proctors are authorized to make testing accommodations formally specified in Individual Education Plans for those with special needs.

In addition to each item being associated with a domain and competency, the items are also designed to assess appropriate cognitive levels necessary for competent practice. Specifically, some items assess at the lower level, some at the middle levels, and some at higher order levels. The items included on each test proportionally represent three cognitive difficulty levels:

- Level 1- 40%;
- Level 2 – 30%; and
- Level 3 – 30%.

Original Bloom’s Taxonomy	Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy	Pre-PAC Cognitive Complexity Level
<u>Knowledge</u> Defines, describes, identifies, labels, lists, matches, names, reads, records, selects, states, views	<u>Remember</u> Recognize, retrieve, identify, recall	1
<u>Comprehension</u> Classifies, describes, discusses, lists, matches, names, reads, records, selects, states, views	<u>Understand</u> Interpret, clarify, translate, illustrate, categorize, classify, conclude, predict, summarize, infer, compare, explain	

<u><b>Application</b></u> Assesses, determines, develops, discovers, establishes, informs, predicts, projects, provides, relates, shows, uses	<u><b>Apply</b></u> Execute, carry out, use, implement	2
<u><b>Analysis</b></u> Breaks down, correlates, differentiates, illustrates, infers, points out, recognizes	<u><b>Analyze</b></u> Differentiate, select, focus, organize, outline, attribute, determine point of view	
<u><b>Synthesis</b></u> Communicates, compares, contrasts, creates, designs, expresses, formulates, plans, reorganizes, reinforces, substitutes	<u><b>Evaluate</b></u> Check, coordinate, detect, monitor, test, critique, judge	3
<u><b>Evaluation</b></u> Appraises, compares & contrasts, concludes, criticizes, decides, defends, interprets, judges, justifies, supports	<u><b>Create</b></u> Generating, hypothesizing, planning, designing, producing, constructing	

## Scoring

Once the assessment is submitted, results will be available immediately to the test candidate. The results provide an overall percentage score, a breakdown of scores corresponding to the domain levels on the competency list, and the indication whether pre-professional certification has been achieved. Based on the rigor and difficulty level of the assessment, the national cut score for pre-professional certification eligibility is established annually by AAFCS. Individuals who complete the assessment and earn the cut-score for certification are granted a time-limited pre-professional certification (3 years).

Scores can be used to demonstrate an individual's learning and competency, pinpoint weaknesses or gaps in performance, improve programs and curriculum, and demonstrate accountability to various stakeholders. Through articulation agreements, scores may be used as the basis for advanced placement and/or credit-by-exam by post secondary institutions. Thus, state and local entities have latitude for independently establishing passing or qualifying scores for other purposes.

## Assessment At A Glance

The specific content being assessed by the items on the assessment follows the test specifications outlined in this section of the bulletin. Please note the number of items on the assessment in each domain.

Domain	Weighting	Number of Items
1. Careers and Volunteer Opportunities	20%	14
2. Factors Related to Family and Community Services	25%	17
3. Professional and Ethical Behaviors	15%	10
4. Conditions Affecting Individuals and Families	20%	14
5. Services for Individuals and Families	20%	14

## Content Outline for Domains and Competencies

The following outline provides an overview of the content addressed within the domains and competencies. The outline is provided as a tool to be used for guidance in preparations for the assessment and is not intended to be totally inclusive. The numbered concepts listed under each competency are meant to be representative rather than prescriptive.

### Domain 1: Careers and Volunteer Opportunities

Competency 1A: Analyze opportunities, needs and rewards for employment and entrepreneurial endeavors.

- 1.A.1 Careers vs. jobs
- 1.A.2 Professional organizations (i.e., names and examples, value of membership)
- 1.A.3 Influences on career choices
- 1.A.4 Factors to consider when volunteering
- 1.A.5 Career resources
- 1.A.6 Examples of positions and agencies for employment
- 1.A.7 Employment trends and outlook
- 1.A.8 Entrepreneurial opportunities

Competency 1B: Summarize education and training requirements and the process of obtaining employment in family and community services arena.

- 1.B.1 Interviewing skills
- 1.B.2 Résumé development
- 1.B.3 Work ethic and competencies
- 1.B.4 Requirements for employment
- 1.B.5 Professional identity



Competency 1C: Explain the roles and functions of individuals engaged in family and community services careers.

- 1.C.1 Characteristics of productive employees
- 1.C.2 Expectations of employees
- 1.C.3 Confidentiality
- 1.C.4 Services offered by family and community service agencies
- 1.C.5 Programs offered by family and community service agencies

Domain 2: Factors Related to Family and Community Services

Competency 2A: Identify ethical and legal issues that confront human service employees.

- 2.A.1 Code of ethics
- 2.A.2 Ethical behaviors and practices in the workplace
- 2.A.3 Harassment
- 2.A.4 Client relationships and interaction

Competency 2B: Determine personal values, biases, and stereotypes.

- 2.B.1 Value systems
- 2.B.2 Value clarification
- 2.B.3 Work ethic
- 2.B.4 Prejudices, stereotypes, and biases
- 2.B.5 Working with culturally diverse groups
- 2.B.6 Developing cultural competence
- 2.B.7 Ethnocentrism

Competency 2C: Analyze harmful, fraudulent, and deceptive human service practices.

- 2.C.1 Better Business Bureau (BBB)
- 2.C.2 Elder abuse and crimes against the elderly
- 2.C.3 Consumer rights
- 2.C.4 Consumer responsibilities
- 2.C.5 Writing a consumer letter of complaint
- 2.C.6 Right of refusal

Competency 2D: Evaluate uses of technology in human services.

- 2.D.1 Software applications (i.e., spreadsheets, desktop publishing, word processing)
- 2.D.2 Appropriate use of computers in the workplace
- 2.D.3 Advantages of technology
- 2.D.4 Privacy policies

Competency 2E: Select effective self-advocacy strategies to overcome diverse challenges facing human services professionals.

- 2.E.1 Caregiver roles and responsibilities
- 2.E.2 Stress management
- 2.E.3 Role and importance of advocacy
- 2.E.4 Being an effective advocate
- 2.E.5 Self-care

Domain 3: Professional and Ethical Behaviors

Competency 3A: Identify professional and ethical collaborative relationships with colleagues, participants, and families.

- 3.A.1 Professional code of ethics
- 3.A.2 Personal boundaries of employees
- 3.A.3 Dual relationships
- 3.A.4 Organizational charts and chain of command

Competency 3B: Analyze participants' strengths, needs, and interests across the life span through formal and informal assessment practices.

- 3.B.1 Formal needs assessment
- 3.B.2 Development through the lifespan
- 3.B.3 Specific developmental needs of older adults
- 3.B.4 Activities of Daily Living (ADL)
- 3.B.5 Assessment of client's ability to live independently
- 3.B.6 Coping with grief

Competency 3C: Identify culturally appropriate methods of providing services for individuals and families.

- 3.C.1 Language barriers and preferences
- 3.C.2 Working with culturally diverse individuals and families
- 3.C.3 Role of empathy
- 3.C.4 Role of tolerance
- 3.C.5 Stereotypes, bias, and prejudice
- 3.C.6 Developing cultural competence
- 3.C.7 Scapegoating

Competency 3D: Identify interpersonal skills needed to interact effectively with individuals and families.

- 3.D.1 Verbal communication
- 3.D.2 Nonverbal communication
- 3.D.3 I-messages and You-messages
- 3.D.4 Mixed messages
- 3.D.5 Active listening skills
- 3.D.6 Assertiveness
- 3.D.7 Conflict resolution skills
- 3.D.8 Mediation and negotiation skills

Domain 4: Conditions Affecting Individuals and Families

Competency 4A: Analyze health, wellness, and safety issues of individuals and families with a variety of challenges.

- 4.A.1 Safety rules and guidelines
- 4.A.2 OSHA
- 4.A.3 Universal precautions
- 4.A.4 Adequate rest
- 4.A.5 Home fire safety plans
- 4.A.6 Falls (i.e., potential dangers, treatment)
- 4.A.7 Dealing with medical emergencies
- 4.A.8 Minor burns and cuts
- 4.A.9 Steps to prevent illness
- 4.A.10 Disease carriers

Competency 4B: Explain the role of referral services needed to address selected human services issues.

- 4.B.1 Psychiatrists
- 4.B.2 Emergency and disaster relief services
- 4.B.3 Referral policies and procedures
- 4.B.4 Hospice programs and services
- 4.B.5 Grief counseling and support services
- 4.B.6 Elder care services
- 4.B.7 Programs and services for the aging population
- 4.B.8 Suicide
- 4.B.9 Alcohol and drug use and abuse

Competency 4C: Identify the tasks of daily living and assistance required for individuals and families (including shopping, banking, recordkeeping, and other services).

- 4.C.1 Medications
- 4.C.2 Stable home environments
- 4.C.3 Banking and money management practices
- 4.C.4 Shopping strategies (i.e., pricing, sales, advertising, etc.)
- 4.C.5 Moving and relocation
- 4.C.6 Activities of daily living
- 4.C.7 Emergency preparedness
- 4.C.8 Self-feeding

Domain 5: Services for Individuals and Families

Competency 5A: Analyze needs and accommodations for people with a variety of challenges.

- 5.A.1 Power of attorney
- 5.A.2 Family strengths and resilience
- 5.A.3 Foster care and adoption
- 5.A.4 Hospice
- 5.A.5 Wills
- 5.A.6 Funeral services (i.e., cremation, memorials, burials, etc.)
- 5.A.7 Congregate housing
- 5.A.8 Disability
- 5.A.9 Americans with Disabilities Act
- 5.A.10 Fighting discrimination
- 5.A.11 Domestic violence
- 5.A.12 Wraparound care

Competency 5B: Explain the importance of friends, family, and community relationships.

- 5.B.1 Social support
- 5.B.2 Reciprocity
- 5.B.3 Problem solving and decision making
- 5.B.4 Being informed of rights
- 5.B.5 Sources of support
- 5.B.6 Reliable information for caregivers, family, and friends
- 5.B.7 Community-based programs and services
- 5.B.8 Social capital
- 5.B.9 Appropriate environments
- 5.B.10 Building community relationships
- 5.B.11 Family support

Competency 5C: Critique ways to validate the participants' capabilities and right to privacy, dignity, and personal autonomy.

- 5.C.1 Appropriate responses, behaviors, and actions with clients
- 5.C.2 Achieving autonomy
- 5.C.3 Demonstrating supportive actions and behaviors
- 5.C.4 Maintaining independence
- 5.C.5 Mainstreaming and inclusion
- 5.C.6 Adaptive clothing
- 5.C.7 Adaptive technology

## Sample Assessment Items

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A series of sample test items is provided below. These items are not intended to serve as a study mechanism, but to familiarize candidates with the format, style and structure of the items that can be expected on the tests. Always choose the one best answer.

1. To find the most satisfying career, a person should \_\_\_\_\_. (Domain 1, Competency A)
  - A. wait for a good job to come along
  - B. choose his or her parent's career
  - C. thoroughly research careers and jobs
  - D. focus on the one which pays the most
2. If, after interviewing for a job, Terri is **NOT** offered a position, she should \_\_\_\_\_. (Domain 1, Competency B)
  - A. never apply at that company again
  - B. accept that she will never get a good job
  - C. make up things about that company
  - D. position herself for future openings
3. A belief that one's own culture is the most natural or the best is called \_\_\_\_\_. (Domain 2, Competency B)
  - A. enculturation
  - B. assimilation
  - C. ethnocentrism
  - D. acculturation
4. Consumer protection and services provided by government include all **EXCEPT** \_\_\_\_\_. (Domain 2, Competency C)
  - A. consumer information on goods and services
  - B. guarantees of customer satisfaction
  - C. licensing requirements
  - D. product safety regulations

5. An advantage of collaborative work for a large organization or agency might be all of the following **EXCEPT** \_\_\_\_\_. (Domain 3, Competency A)
- A. learning from many different specialists
  - B. exposure to many different perspectives
  - C. experiencing a diversity of program participants
  - D. independence and working alone
6. Danielle was assigned a big project at work, but she put off starting and tried to do it all at the last minute. Her supervisor said she needed better time management skills and to stop \_\_\_\_\_. (Domain 3, Competency D)
- A. setting goals
  - B. procrastinating
  - C. prognosticating
  - D. planning
7. Mrs. Jarvis takes a prescription that was written several years ago, when she weighed 20 pounds more. She might be in danger of \_\_\_\_\_. (Domain 4, Competency A)
- A. over-medication
  - B. obesity
  - C. over-payment
  - D. over-compensating
8. Jake's family is struggling to make ends meet. Many times, he is unable to pay cash for items his family needs. Jake should consider all of the following methods to obtain the items **EXCEPT** \_\_\_\_\_. (Domain 4, Competency C)
- A. using a credit or debit card
  - B. shopping a discount store
  - C. using a layaway plan
  - D. shoplifting
9. Assuming that someone who receives help or support will eventually return the favor and provide help to another person is an example of the \_\_\_\_\_. (Domain 5, Competency B)
- A. concept of typicality
  - B. norm of fair living
  - C. natural order of things
  - D. norm of reciprocity
10. All of the following may be supportive of someone who is dying **EXCEPT** \_\_\_\_\_. (Domain 5, Competency C)
- A. giving reassurances as needed
  - B. sitting quietly in the room
  - C. listening attentively and responding
  - D. interrupting if the person mentions death

Answer Key:

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. B  |
| 2. D | 7. A  |
| 3. C | 8. D  |
| 4. B | 9. D  |
| 5. D | 10. D |

## Suggested Preparation Techniques

The assessment measures two things: knowledge of the subject matter and ability to take an assessment. The first depends on the preparation, instruction, and experience gained in the selected content area. The second depends on self-confidence and experience with multiple-choice questions. It also depends upon the ability to recognize related information or solutions to problem situations.

In preparation for the assessments, test candidates should:

- Avoid situations that would trigger emotions such as worry, anger, depression, and lack of confidence right before the test day. These emotions interfere with memory and are sometimes called “memory thieves.”
- Follow the directions! If read too quickly, something important may be missed.
- Read each item very carefully and avoid jumping to conclusions based upon a quick skimming of the wording.
- See if they can answer the item before looking at the four (4) response options.
- Never think they have immediately spotted the correct response. “Back into” the correct response by first eliminating the incorrect choices.
- Answer each item. Look for clues in the item and even in the choices. If able to eliminate some options, the chances of selecting the correct answer are improved. Use the “flag” options to denote items to come back to within the item block.
- Read the “Candidate Guide to Assessments.” It is important to understand details about online testing and navigation.

## Suggested Instructional Resources

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The Pre-PAC Instructional Resource Directory provides a list of suggested resources providing content addressed within Pre-PAC assessments. Development panel members and instructors have identified resources that would be relevant and useful in addressing the domains and competencies within the assessment. Use of the references and resources do not guarantee successful completion of the assessment.

AAFCS does not endorse any external products (textbooks, curriculum, etc), vendors, consultants, or documentation that may be referenced in the Directory. While every effort will be made to ensure accuracy and reliability of content, AAFCS assumes no responsibility for errors or for use of the information provided. Additionally, AAFCS disclaims any and all liability for any claims or damages that may result from providing information contained on the site, including any Web sites maintained by third parties and linked to the Pre-PAC site. The responsibility for content rests with the organizations that provide the information. The inclusion of links from the site does not imply endorsement by AAFCS.

The Pre-PAC Instructional Resource Directory is available online at <http://www.aafcs.org/CredentialingCenter/PrePAC.asp>.

## Acknowledgements

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