

Information Bulletin
for
Pre-Professional Assessment and Certification
in
Housing and Furnishings



American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences
400 N. Columbus Street, Suite 202
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 706-4600
www.aafcs.org

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Overview

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, as 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.

Given that housing is considered a basic human need, that the housing industry is linked to 20-25% of the U.S. economy, that home sales and home building are improving, and that there is a renewed emphasis on living in a functional, safe, energy-efficient, and aesthetically pleasing space, there is a demand for those employed in the residential housing and furnishings industry. To help ensure a quality workforce, AAFCS specifically developed a national standards-based competency assessment to measure knowledge and skills related to residential housing and furnishings, with special attention given to the application of the concepts and content.

Description of the Pre-Professional 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 Housing and Furnishings 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 residential housing and furnishings;
- 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 Pre-Professional 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

The Housing and Furnishings assessment/certification address competencies and a skill set necessary for success as a pre-professional in a career with focusing on residential housing and furnishings. It will facilitate employment in early career ladder positions and promote continuing education at the post-secondary level in career areas involving:

- public and private sector housing programs,
- residential property and facility management,
- real estate,
- retail home furnishings, or
- home decorating and staging.

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

Assessment Specifications

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>Application</u> Assesses, determines, develops, discovers, establishes, informs, predicts, projects, provides, relates, shows, uses	<u>Apply</u> Execute, carry out, use, implement	2
<u>Analysis</u> Breaks down, correlates, differentiates, illustrates, infers, points out, recognizes	<u>Analyze</u> Differentiate, select, focus, organize, outline, attribute, determine point of view	
<u>Synthesis</u> Communicates, compares, contrasts, creates, designs, expresses, formulates, plans, reorganizes, reinforces, substitutes	<u>Evaluate</u> Check, coordinate, detect, monitor, test, critique, judge	3
<u>Evaluation</u> Appraises, compares & contrasts, concludes, criticizes, decides, defends, interprets, judges, justifies, supports	<u>Create</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 in Housing and Furnishings	10%	7
2. Knowledge of Housing and Furnishings Processes	25%	17
3. Residential Housing, Furnishings, and Design Concepts	25%	17
4. Professional Communications and Marketing	25%	17
5. Professional Practices	15%	12

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 in Housing and Furnishings

Competency 1A: Identify fundamentals to career success.

- 1.A.1 Resumé development
- 1.A.2 Portfolio development
- 1.A.3 Basics of job interviewing (i.e., appropriate behaviors before, during, and after an interview; appropriate interview questions)
- 1.A.4 Evaluating job offers
- 1.A.5 Value of volunteer work
- 1.A.6 Process of acquiring a professional identity

Competency 1B: Examine potential career paths and opportunities.

- 1.B.1 Jobs/careers in the sustainable housing industry
- 1.B.2 Jobs/careers in the home staging industry
- 1.B.3 Job trends in the housing and furnishings industry
- 1.B.4 Career ladders within the housing and furnishings industry

Competency 1C: Understand the roles of professional organizations

- 1.C.1 Importance and value of membership in professional organizations
- 1.C.2 Types of housing and furnishings-related professional organizations

Competency 1D: Evaluate educational preparation necessary for career success

- 1.D.1 Importance of internships and job shadowing
- 1.D.2 Job skills required of housing industry professionals
- 1.D.3 Education and training requirements in the housing profession
- 1.D.4 Certifications and credentials available in the housing profession

Domain 2: Knowledge of Housing and Furnishings Processes

Competency 2A: Analyze historical architectural styling.

- 2.A.1 Housing styles
- 2.A.2 Famous residential housing architects
- 2.A.3 Roof styles

Competency 2B: Describe the history of furnishings.

- 2.B.1 Furniture styles
- 2.B.2 Furniture periods
- 2.B.3 Construction of furnishings (i.e., types of furniture joints, textiles)

Competency 2C: Understand the information shown on construction documents.

- 2.C.1 Architectural drawings
- 2.C.2 Commonly used architectural symbols
- 2.C.3 Types of construction documents
- 2.C.4 Isometric drawings

Competency 2D: Understand interior and exterior floor plan design.

- 2.D.1 Floor plans
- 2.D.2 Scaled drawings
- 2.D.3 Basic landscape elements
- 2.D.4 Elevations and detailed plans

Competency 2E: Demonstrate necessary mathematical applications.

- 2.E.1 Markup percentage calculations for retail items
- 2.E.2 Square footage of a room
- 2.E.3 Volume of living space in a house
- 2.E.4 Cost of building a house based on cost per square foot

Competency 2F: Understand furniture placement.

- 2.F.1 Furniture planning and placement
- 2.F.2 Circulation and traffic patterns
- 2.F.3 Prioritizing furniture needs
- 2.F.4 Allotments of space (i.e., conversation, dining, sleeping)

Competency 2G: Evaluate appropriate interior background treatments.

- 2.G.1 Flooring options
- 2.G.2 Wall treatments
- 2.G.3 Window treatments

Competency 2H: Demonstrate knowledge of technology programs.

- 2.D.1 Computer aided design (CAD)
- 2.D.2 Computer uses and applications within the housing industry
- 2.D.3 Types of project models

Domain 3: Residential Housing, Furnishings, and Design Concepts

Competency 3A: Identify the principles and elements of design

- 3.A.1 Principles of design
- 3.A.2 Elements of design
- 3.A.3 Types of lines
- 3.A.4 Types of balance (i.e., radial, gradation, asymmetrical, symmetrical)
- 3.A.5 Color theory

Competency 3B: Demonstrate how interior elements can be used to create moods and illusions.

- 3.B.1 Illusions created by lines
- 3.B.2 Combination of patterns in a room setting
- 3.B.3 Formal vs. informal room settings
- 3.B.4 Chair rails and other architectural details

Competency 3C: Understand the basics of wiring.

- 3.C.1 Basics of room lighting (i.e., types of lighting, bulbs, etc.)
- 3.C.2 Basics of electricity
- 3.C.3 National Electrical Code (NEC)

Competency 3D: Understand the basics of mechanical planning.

- 3.D.1 Basics of plumbing
- 3.D.2 Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems

Competency 3E: Evaluate kitchen and bath design.

- 3.E.1 Kitchen work triangle
- 3.E.2 Types of kitchen layouts
- 3.E.3 Bathroom elements and size

Competency 3F: Determine housing decisions based on ecological, socioeconomic, and cultural context.

- 3.F.1 Energy conservation
- 3.F.2 Energy efficient appliances
- 3.F.3 Housing discrimination issues
- 3.F.4 Universal design
- 3.F.5 Sweat equity

Competency 3G: Understand the basics of budgeting.

- 3.G.1 Housing affordability
- 3.G.2 Buying vs. renting
- 3.G.3 Types of sales for furnishing-related items (i.e., loss leader, specialty, seasonal, close-out, etc.)

Competency 3H: Identify environmental factors and emerging trends.

- 3.H.1 Master planned communities
- 3.H.2 Sustainable and “green” housing

Domain 4: Professional Communications and Marketing

Competency 4A: Discuss what is meant by scope of work.

- 4.A.1 Design phases and processes
- 4.A.2 Client needs and consultations
- 4.A.3 Terms associated with the project (i.e., punch list, etc.)
- 4.A.4 Project management skills

Competency 4B: Understand goals, roles, and responsibilities of employees.

- 4.B.1 Goal setting
- 4.B.2 Workplace teams
- 4.B.3 Traits of good employees
- 4.B.4 Employer expectations
- 4.B.5 Courtesy in the workplace

Competency 4C: Describe marketing techniques used in the industry.

- 4.C.1 Techniques and/or methods of consumer product problem resolution
- 4.C.2 Types of consumer product purchase benefits
- 4.C.3 Phases of the product life cycle
- 4.C.4 Convenience goods
- 4.C.5 Customer service and marketing

Competency 4D: Utilize effective communication styles.

- 4.D.1 Types of communication
- 4.D.2 Email and voice mail communication
- 4.D.3 Presentation techniques and presentation boards
- 4.D.4 Appropriate methods for providing feedback

Domain 5: Professional Practices

Competency 5A: Understand general staffing and personnel procedures.

- 5.A.1 Decision making techniques
- 5.A.2 Management of resources (i.e., human/non-human, energy, money, skills, time, etc.)
- 5.A.3 Leadership qualities

Competency 5B: Identify fundamental accounting and pricing procedures.

- 5.B.1 Building costs and residential cost determination
- 5.B.2 Expected labor cost percentage for building new homes
- 5.B.3 Project budget (i.e., specifications, finishes, etc.) and square footage costs
- 5.B.4 Billing (i.e., direct billable costs, out of pocket expenses, etc.)
- 5.B.5 Profit (i.e., net, markup, investment, gross, etc.)

Competency 5C: Describe risk management techniques.

- 5.C.1 Health and safety issues in homes
- 5.C.2 Causes of accidents
- 5.C.3 Types of insurance (i.e., renter's insurance, homeowners, etc.)

Competency 5D: Evaluate legal issues.

- 5.D.1 Governmental wage requirements
- 5.D.2 Company policies and procedures
- 5.D.3 Workers' compensation laws
- 5.D.4 Government agencies (i.e., Housing and Urban Development)
- 5.D.5 Federal legislation (i.e., Civil Rights Act, Fair Labor Standards Act)

Competency 5E: Explain ethical behavior

- 5.E.1 Code of ethics
- 5.E.2 Work ethic

Sample Assessment Items

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 assessments. Always choose the one best answer.

1. Sarah is seeking a job and is preparing a resumé. She should consider _____. (Domain 1, Competency A)
 - A. handwriting the document or including it in the text of an email message
 - B. adding information about all the schools attended, including elementary school
 - C. enhancing it with cute graphics and printing it on brightly colored paper
 - D. drawing attention to her qualifications, experiences, and professional activities
2. Joseph has decided to observe a professional in the home staging business to learn more about the opportunities, roles, and responsibilities associated with that career field. Joseph's primary purpose for observing is to _____. (Domain 1, Competency D)
 - A. network
 - B. job shadow
 - C. negotiate a job
 - D. write a paper
3. One common feature of the ranch style home is the _____. (Domain 2, Competency A)
 - A. one-story design
 - B. tall, thin portico
 - C. gingerbread trim
 - D. broken pediment
4. The abbreviation HVAC may be found on various construction documents. This abbreviation is referring to systems associated with _____. (Domain 2, Competency C)
 - A. heating, ventilating, and air conditioning
 - B. household ventilation and acceleration coolant
 - C. home ventilation and automated cooling
 - D. heat ventilation and condensation
5. What is created when all elements of a space have a unifying theme that blends them together? (Domain 3, Competency A)
 - A. Emphasis
 - B. Scale
 - C. Intensity
 - D. Harmony
6. Universal design in housing was inspired by the demographic trend associated with an increased _____. (Domain 3, Competency F)
 - A. birth rate
 - B. death rate
 - C. elderly population
 - D. move to the inner city

7. A decorator is meeting with a family to discuss the plans for a kitchen remodel. Which of the following topics would **NOT** be included in the discussion to learn about the family's needs? (Domain 4, Competency A)
- A. Number of cooks in the family
 - B. Family's vacation habits
 - C. Physical limitations of family members
 - D. Family's eating habits or meal patterns
8. Presentation boards are often used to communicate ideas about a housing project. Which of the following would **NOT** be contained on a typical presentation board? (Domain 4, Competency D)
- A. The decorating professional's resumé
 - B. Floor plans, elevations, and other drawings
 - C. Samples of flooring and wall treatments to be used
 - D. Information to help visualize the finished product
9. Which of the following is a health hazard often found in kitchen cabinets and furniture? (Domain 5, Competency C)
- A. Asbestos
 - B. Mold
 - C. Formaldehyde
 - D. Radon
10. Under Fair Housing legislation, which of the following is **NOT** protected from discrimination? (Domain 5, Competency D)
- A. Income
 - B. Family status
 - C. Sex
 - D. Race

Answer Key:

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

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

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 will be available online at <http://www.aafcs.org/CredentialingCenter/PrePAC.asp>.

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