Information Bulletin
for
Pre-Professional Assessment and Certification
in
Leadership Essentials

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Table of Contents

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, 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.

Consistent with the increasingly complex challenges faced by individuals and families living and working in a diverse global society, AAFCS specifically developed a national standards-based competency assessment measuring knowledge and skills around the area of leadership. This assessment is designed to validate the leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities of youth and young adults as they demonstrate these skills essential in today's workplace and society.

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 Family and Consumer Sciences Assessment and Certification in Leadership Essentials are:

- driven by business and industry standards;
- based on relevant content standards and consistent with the National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education, the Essential Knowledge and Skills for the Career Clusters, the Career Ready Practices for the Career Technical Common Core, and the Employability Skills Framework;
- appropriate to validate achievement of competencies related to essential leadership knowledge and skills;
- 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 leadership development 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 legislation (such as Perkins) 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 Leadership Essentials assessment/certification will be at a knowledge and skill level associated with early career employment opportunities and rigorous leadership development programs that prepare individuals for life and career success. These leadership development programs are built upon the approach of helping young people acquire competencies necessary for success and to meet the increasing challenges in today's world.

The *National Association of Colleges and Employers Job Outlook 2018* survey overwhelmingly identified that employers are looking for candidate who are team players and problem solvers and who can plan, organize, and prioritize work. *Jobs for the Future* (2017) listed leadership as the top attribute sought by employers. The knowledge and skills validate leadership skills and abilities of youth in preparation for leadership in their family, community, and careers. The content is central to ALL career areas but may be specifically tied to career pathways involving:

- human services;
- non-profit organizations;
- education and training (public and community-based); or
- social and community 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, https://careertech.org/career-clusters

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%
  Level 3 – 30%.

Original Bloom's Taxonomy	Revised Bloom's Taxonomy	Pre-PAC Cognitive Complexity Level
Knowledge Defines, describes, identifies, labels, lists, matches, names, reads, records, selects, states, views	**Remember** Recognize, retrieve, identify, recall	1
Comprehension Classifies, describes, discusses, lists, matches, names, reads, records, selects, states, views	**Understand** Interpret, clarify, translate, illustrate, categorize, classify, conclude, predict, summarize, infer, compare, explain	
Application Assesses, determines, develops, discovers, establishes, informs, predicts, projects, provides, relates, shows, uses	**Apply** Execute, carry out, use, implement	2
Analysis Breaks down, correlates, differentiates, illustrates, infers, points out, recognizes	**Analyze** Differentiate, select, focus, organize, outline, attribute, determine point of view	
Synthesis Communicates, compares, contrasts, creates, designs, expresses, formulates, plans, reorganizes, reinforces, substitutes	**Evaluate** Check, coordinate, detect, monitor, test, critique, judge	3
Evaluation Appraises, compares & contrasts, concludes, criticizes, decides, defends, interprets, judges, justifies, supports	**Create** 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. Leadership Fundamentals	30%	21
2. Leadership Skills and Practices	30%	21
3. Teamwork Skills/Group Dynamics	30%	21
4. Conflict Management/Resolution	10%	7

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: Leadership Fundamentals

Competency 1A: Define leadership.

1.A.1	Definition of a leader
1.A.2	Identifying leadership roles
1.A.3	Identifying leadership opportunities
1.A.4	Understanding key components of professionalism
1.A.5	Making decisions, solving problems, managing resources, organizing meetings or events

Competency 1B: Critique personal qualities needed for leadership roles and responsibilities.

1.B.1	Identifying qualities valued by employees (i.e., decorum, etiquette, attitude, dependability, self-confidence, flexibility, initiative, creativity)
1.B.2	Defining one's character (i.e., confidentiality, loyalty, work ethic)
1.B.3	Understanding ethical behavior
1.B.4	Identifying values ((i.e., personal, family, conscience)
1.B.5	Understanding relationship between values and goals
1.B.6	Effects of peer pressure/influence

Competency 1C: Examine leadership styles, philosophies, and theories.

    1.C.1   Understanding authoritarian leaders
    1.C.2   Understanding democratic leaders
    1.C.3   Understanding laissez-faire or delegative leaders
    1.C.4   Understanding autocratic leaders
    1.C.5   Explain leadership principles, theories, and models, such as Servant Leadership and Key Leadership Practices

Competency 1D: Analyze the importance of ethical leadership and an employee-centered approach to leadership.

    1.D.1   Sharing power with employees/team members
    1.D.2   Placing needs of employees/team members first
    1.D.3   Encouraging and coaching employees/team members
    1.D.4   Empowering employees/team members
    1.D.5   Applying ethical principles to leadership situations

Domain 2: Leadership Skills and Practices

Competency 2A: Utilize effective skills and practices to solve problems, make decisions, set goals, and promote productivity.

    2.A.1   Understanding importance of planning (i.e., setting priorities, organizing, effective planning)
    2.A.2   Identifying key elements of goal setting (i.e., short-term goals, intermediate goals, long-range goals)
    2.A.3   Identifying effective personal skills (interpersonal skills, management skills, technical skills, thinking skills)
    2.A.4   Importance of time management skills
    2.A.5   Procrastination as a barrier to reaching one's full potential
    2.A.6   Delegation as a leadership skill
    2.A.7   Steps in the decision-making process
    2.A.8   Creating SMART goals

Competency 2B: Analyze effective communication strategies, skills, and practices.

    2.B.1   Effective verbal communication
    2.B.2   Importance of listening skills (i.e., active listening)
    2.B.3   Barriers to communication (i.e., cultural, emotional, nonverbal, physical, body language)
    2.B.4   "I" feedback messages

Competency 2C: Examine the role of health and wellness for leaders managing multiple roles and responsibilities.

    2.C.1   Stress management
    2.C.2   Managing multiple roles
    2.C.3   Identifying main aspects of health (i.e., social health, physical health, mental, and emotional health)
    2.C.4   Importance of sleep and exercise
    2.C.5   Achieving balance

Domain 3: Teamwork Skills and Group Dynamics

Competency 3A: Determine mission of a group and strategies to build alignment within the group.

 3.A.1 Purpose of a mission statement
 3.A.2 Importance of a mission statement
 3.A.3 Elements of a mission statement
 3.A.4 Creating a mission statement

Competency 3B: Create a team among various individuals and for varying purposes.

 3.B.1 Identifying types of teams (i.e., functional, virtual, informal, multi-functional, formal, cross-functional)
 3.B.2 Understanding the importance/role of team leader
 3.B.3 Assigning team responsibilities

Competency 3C: Encourage delegation of responsibilities and motivation for quality within the team.

 3.C.1 Motivating team members (i.e., intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation)
 3.C.2 Analyzing self-oriented role
 3.C.3 Clarifying mission and roles of team members
 3.C.4 Creating positive relationships among team members
 3.C.5 Understanding strengths of team members
 3.C.6 Understanding groupthink
 3.C.7 Effectiveness of leaders as role models
 3.C.8 Leading volunteers
 3.C.9 Delegating of team members
 3.C.10 Handling bullying

Competency 3D: Analyze team and group dynamics.

 3.D.1 Stages of team functions (i.e., forming, storming, performing)
 3.D.2 Understanding groupthink
 3.D.3 Benefits of teamwork
 3.D.4 Reasons teams fail to meet objectives
 3.D.5 Qualities of effective team members
 3.D.6 Characteristics of a team player

Competency 3E: Identify the importance of collaboration with key individuals/stakeholders.

 3.E.1 Hallmarks of an effective team member
 3.E.2 Encouraging team members
 3.E.3 Meeting or beating all deadlines
 3.E.4 Putting needs of team first
 3.E.5 Understanding the importance of coaching and guidance
 3.E.6 Reinforcing value and accountability
 3.E.7 Increasing group cohesiveness
 3.E.8 Creating effective meeting agendas
 3.E.9 Holding team members accountable
 3.E.10 Importance of collaboration
 3.E.11 Danger of hidden agendas
 3.E.12 Supervisory strategies to help set up individuals for success
 3.E.13 Coaching underperforming team members

Competency 3F: Foster positive relationships with peers, subordinates, and superiors.

    3.F.1   Improving relationships with superiors
    3.F.2   Developing effective team relationships
    3.F.3   Role of diversity in teams
    3.F.4   Maintaining peer relationships (i.e., respect, understanding, affirming value of others)

Competency 3G: Develop consensus among the team.

    3.G.1   Understanding the role of gaining consensus within a team
    3.G.2   Role of effective teamwork
    3.G.3   Avoiding groupthink
    3.G.4   Understanding the importance of collaboration
    3.G.5   Importance of effective performance reviews

Domain 4: Conflict Management/ Resolution

Competency 4A: Identify conflict prevention strategies

    4.A.1   Methods of resolving conflict
    4.A.2   Importance of negotiation
    4.A.3   Role of communication in preventing conflict
    4.A.4   Ways to avoid conflict

Competency 4B: Analyze situations which involve conflict.

    4.B.1   Identifying attitudes which invite conflict
    4.B.2   Understanding conflict
    4.B.3   Effective conflict resolution strategies
    4.B.4   Handling conflicts between managers and their subordinates

Competency 4C: Analyze methods of conflict resolution.

    4.C.1   Steps in effective mediation
    4.C.2   Unacceptable ways to settle differences
    4.C.3   Characteristics of peer mediation
    4.C.4   Role of mediation in conflict resolution
    4.C.5   Creating "win-win" solutions
    4.C.6   Understanding conflict management styles (i.e., avoiding, problem-solving, forcing, bargaining)

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. When a leader offers guidance, praise, and encouragement to team members, which leadership skill is being displayed (Domain 1, Competency 1B)
   A. Problem solving
   B. Delegating authority
   C. Setting goals
   D. Motivating others

2. Focusing on the encouraging and positive messages you receive from people you trust helps build _____. (Domain 1, Competency 1D)
   A. competence
   B. potential
   C. resilience
   D. self-esteem

3. Which of the following statements **BEST** describes the actions of an effective leader? (Domain 1, Competency 1D)
   A. Casts vision, inspires followers, and empowers employees to do their best.
   B. Sets goals, allocates work, and pressures employees to perform.
   C. Creates a fun environment and allows each employee to have an equal vote
   D. Makes all final decisions because he or she knows the most

4. Which one of the following decision-making methods should be utilized when making an important decision?   (Domain 2, Competency 2A)
   A. Evaluating all the options
   B. Keeping the status quo
   C. Getting parents to help
   D. Having friends help decide

5. In terms of goals, what does the acronym SMART stand for? (Domain 2, Competency 2A)
   A. Short, Measurable, Actionable, Results-focused, Tedious
   B. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-focused, Time-bound
   C. Specific, Meaningful, Applicable, Realistic, Trademarked
   D. Specific, Mediocre, Achievable, Readiness-level, Tedious

6. Statements of fact about how an individual feels or thinks are called _____. (Domain 2, Competency 2B)
   A. "I messages"
   B. selfish messages
   C. "you messages"
   D. empathetic messages

7. The first step in solving a problem is to _____. (Domain 2, Competency 2B)
   A. collect necessary data
   B. define the problem correctly
   C. evaluate the possible choices
   D. choose a plan of action

8. Sarah is a high school student, and she has told several people, "I want to become a teacher." This is an example of a _____. (Domain 2, Competency 2B)
   A. short-term goal
   B. standard
   C. long-term goal
   D. personal priorities

9. Which of the following will **NOT** contribute to successful conflict resolution? (Domain 4, Competency 4C)
   A. Being open to other viewpoints
   B. Assuming the conflict will resolve itself
   C. Accepting responsibility for achieving a solution
   D. Being willing to compromise

10. Tomas and Mario are working together on a very complicated school project. But, Mario wants to take charge, do a great job on the project, and make the best grade in their class. Mario's style is probably _____. (Domain 4, Competency 4C)
    A. accommodation
    B. reconciliation
    C. collaboration
    D. competition

Answer Key:

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

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
https://www.aafcs.org/credentialing-center/pre-pac/portfolio/leadership.

Acknowledgements

AAFCS has engaged the assistance of a broad range of esteemed family and consumer sciences professionals and educators, as well as youth and adult leadership professionals from across the nation to assist in identifying relevant industry standards and develop the Leadership Essentials assessment instrument. Recognizing the value of a solid assessment tool in assuring that programs are effectively preparing individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to assume leadership roles as family members, community members, as well as a workforce filled with effective leaders. The following stakeholders participated on the development panel for the Leadership Essentials assessment and certification:

- Patty Hendrickson, Hendrickson Leadership Group, LaCrosse, WI
- Christine Hollingsworth, Family, Career, & Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), Reston, VA
- Conrad Lucas, Capitol Resources, Charleston, WV
- Vicki Ferrence Ray, Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY), Westlake Village, CA
- Dennis Trittin, LifeSmarts, Gig Harbor, WA
- Doug Swanson, Division of Youth & 4-H, National Institute of Food & Agriculture (USDA-NIFA), Washington, DC
- Wendy Wagner, Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement & Public Service - George Washington University, Washington, DC
- Wade Weber, Kansas State University Research & Extension - Kansas 4-H, Manhattan, KS
- Mary Ballard, Center for Faculty Excellence, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA
- Cheryl Empey, Teacher Educator, Brigham Young University - Idaho, Rexburg, ID
- Brenda Osman, East Central High School, St. Leon, IN
- Robyn Sherman, Rockbridge County High School, Lexington, VA