

Information Bulletin
for
Pre-Professional Assessment and Certification
in
Nutrition, Food, and Wellness



American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences
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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, 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 overwhelming national emphasis on nutrition and wellness, the startling statistics regarding obesity in America, and the important link between nutrition and disease prevention, the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) specifically developed a national standards-based competency assessment measuring knowledge and skills in nutrition, food, and wellness.

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 Nutrition, Food, and Wellness 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 Framework;
- appropriate to validate achievement of competencies related to nutrition, food, and wellness;
- 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 V 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 Nutrition, Food, and Wellness assessment and certification address competencies and a skill set necessary for success as a pre-professional in careers with a substantial focus on nutrition. There are usage applications in a broad range of education, community-based, staff development, and human resource settings. This 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:

- nutrition and dietetics,
- nutrition education,
- food handling and safety,
- food service, and
- health and wellness.

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

- [Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources](#)
- [Health Science](#)
- [Human Services](#)
- [Hospitality and Tourism](#)

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 cut 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. Wellness	18%	13
2. Food Handling	18%	12
3. Food Safety	18%	13
4. Science and Technology	18%	12
5. Nutrition Principles	18%	13
6. Careers	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: Wellness

Competency 1A: Assess emotional, psychological, spiritual, cultural, and intellectual influences on individual/family food choices and nutrition and wellness across the lifespan.

- 1.A.1 Emotional influences on food choices
- 1.A.2 Psychological influences on food choices
- 1.A.3 Dietary patterns associated with religious beliefs (i.e., vegetarianism, kosher foods)
- 1.A.4 Cultural influences on food choices
- 1.A.5 Intellectual influences on food choices
- 1.A.6 Components of wellness across the life span
- 1.A.7 Fundamentals of good nutrition across the life span

Competency 1B: Analyze economic and environmental influences on food choices and nutritional practices.

- 1.B.1 Economic influences on food choices
- 1.B.2 Environmental influences on food choices
- 1.B.3 Globalization of food
- 1.B.4 Effects of industrialization
- 1.B.5 Role of resources
- 1.B.6 Strategies to reduce food waste
- 1.B.7 Family customs
- 1.B.8 Sustainable living practices

Competency 1C: Analyze governmental influences to include legislation and regulation related to nutrition and wellness.

- 1.C.1 Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)
- 1.C.2 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- 1.C.3 Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- 1.C.4 Food and Agriculture Organization
- 1.C.5 Legal and legislative issues associated with wellness (i.e., health claims on food labels, consumer rights, allowable amounts of fats in foods, Delaney Clause, etc.)
- 1.C.6 Use of additives and controlled-substances (i.e., GRAS list)
- 1.C.7 Regulation of herbal supplementations

Competency 1D: Analyze the effects of food and diet fads on wellness.

- 1.D.1 Healthy eating habits and practices
- 1.D.2 Healthy strategies to lose weight
- 1.D.3 Healthy strategies for weight management (i.e., maintaining or gaining)
- 1.D.4 Traits, examples, and health risks of fad diets
- 1.D.5 Types and symptoms of eating disorders

Domain 2: Food Handling

Competency 2A: Apply science-based dietary guidelines in planning to meet nutrition and wellness needs of individuals and families.

- 2.A.1 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- 2.A.2 Recommended Dietary Allowances
- 2.A.3 MyPlate
- 2.A.4 Food sources of food groups
- 2.A.5 Nutritive value of foods
- 2.A.6 Portion sizes
- 2.A.7 Meal planning
- 2.A.8 Strategies to gain, lose, and maintain weight

Competency 2B: Recognize health and nutrition requirements of individuals and families with special needs.

- 2.B.1 Dietary needs of athletes
- 2.B.2 Dietary needs of young children
- 2.B.3 Dietary needs of older adults
- 2.B.4 Dietary needs of vegetarians
- 2.B.5 Strategies to lower intake of fat
- 2.B.6 Strategies to lower sodium intake
- 2.B.7 Strategies to minimize caffeine intake
- 2.B.8 Strategies to avoid/prevent cancer, heart disease, obesity, iron-deficiency anemia

Competency 2C: Demonstrate ability to select, store, prepare, and serve nutritious, safe and appealing foods.

- 2.C.1 Developing a healthy approach to food and nutrition
- 2.C.2 Locally grown foods
- 2.C.3 Safe food practices for cooking outdoors
- 2.C.4 Equivalents and measuring techniques
- 2.C.5 Selection, storage, and cooking techniques for meats and meat products
- 2.C.6 Selection, storage, and cooking techniques for dairy products
- 2.C.7 Selection, storage, and cooking techniques of grain and starches
- 2.C.8 Selection, storage, and preparation techniques for fruits
- 2.C.9 Selection, storage, and preparation techniques for vegetables
- 2.C.10 Buffet service
- 2.C.11 Food service styles

Competency 2D: Evaluate food and nutrition information, including food labels, in relation to the nutrition content of the food.

- 2.D.1 Portion sizes
- 2.D.2 Nutrition Facts Panel (i.e., information located on label, order of ingredients, etc.)
- 2.D.3 Food product identification
- 2.D.4 Reliable sources of nutrition information

Domain 3: Food Safety

Competency 3A: Assess conditions and practices that promote safe food handling and methods for preventing a food borne illness outbreak for commercial and home practice.

- 3.A.1 Safe food storage practices
- 3.A.2 Safe food handling practices
- 3.A.3 Challenges to preventing foodborne illness

Competency 3B: Analyze safety and sanitation practices in retail, institutions and home (including the use of equipment).

- 3.B.1 Sanitation practices (i.e., handwashing, Fight BAC guidelines, etc.)
- 3.B.2 Food safety temperatures (i.e., danger zone, sterilization temperature, correct doneness temperatures for meat, etc.)
- 3.B.3 HACCP (i.e., purpose, implementation, and identification of critical points)
- 3.B.4 Safe use of equipment
- 3.B.5 Cross-contamination

Competency 3C: Analyze the causes and foods at risk for food borne illnesses.

- 3.C.1 Viruses
- 3.C.2 Food contaminants (chemical and microbial)
- 3.C.3 Potentially hazardous foods
- 3.C.4 Foodborne illnesses (i.e., *Clostridium botulinum*, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Escherichia coli*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Salmonella*, Botulism, Hepatitis, and Trichinosis)
- 3.C.5 Pathogens and toxins

Domain 4: Science and Technology

Competency 4A: Analyze influence of scientific and technical advances on the nutrient content, availability, and safety of foods.

- 4.A.1 Strategies to increase food supply
- 4.A.2 Sustaining the food supply
- 4.A.3 Protecting the food supply
- 4.A.4 Food preservation methods
- 4.A.5 Role of technology in expanding the food supply
- 4.A.6 Genetically engineered foods
- 4.A.7 Gluten and flour types
- 4.A.8 Effect of ethylene on plants
- 4.A.9 Irradiation
- 4.A.10 Functions of food packaging
- 4.A.11 Recipe changes at higher altitudes

Competency 4B: Relate scientific and technical advances in food processing, storage, product development, and distribution for nutrition and wellness.

- 4.B.1 Scientific method and hypothesis testing
- 4.B.2 Freezing techniques (i.e., blanching before freezing, ideal foods for home freezing, preventing freezer burn)
- 4.B.3 Solute, solvent, and saturated substances
- 4.B.4 Food science principles (i.e., osmosis, caramelizing sugars, Maillard reaction, kneading dough, use of egg whites, etc.)
- 4.B.5 Microwave cookery
- 4.B.6 Home canning
- 4.B.7 Cryogenic freezing and liquids
- 4.B.8 Moist-heat and dry-heat methods of cookery
- 4.B.9 Effect of ingredients on microbes, processing time, and/or temperature
- 4.B.10 Effects of canning, drying, freezing, and heating on vegetables
- 4.B.11 Reconstituting dehydrated foods

Competency 4C: Determine the effects of food science and technology on meeting nutritional needs.

- 4.C.1 Organically grown foods
- 4.C.2 Advantages of concentrated foods
- 4.C.3 Role of sulfur
- 4.C.4 Effects of food density, shape and size, and amount of food

Domain 5: Nutrition Principles

Competency 5A: Evaluate the functions and the requirements of *vitamins* on nutrition and wellness across the life span, and their food sources.

- 5.A.1 Fat-soluble vs. water-soluble vitamins
- 5.A.2 Forms of Vitamins A and B and D
- 5.A.3 Vitamins (i.e., effect of light on certain vitamins, dangers of mega dosing, etc.)
- 5.A.4 Food sources
- 5.A.5 Vitamin associated with building strong bones

Competency 5B: Evaluate the functions and the requirements of *minerals* on nutrition and wellness across the life span, and their food sources.

- 5.B.1 Minerals common in most foods
- 5.B.2 Iron (i.e., Relation of hemoglobin and myoglobin to iron, heme and nonheme iron, etc.)
- 5.B.3 Relation of sodium to high blood pressure
- 5.B.4 Role of sodium and potassium in the regulation of osmotic flow of liquids
- 5.B.5 Mineral associated with building strong bones
- 5.B.6 Food sources

Competency 5C: Evaluate the functions and the requirements of *proteins* on nutrition and wellness across the life span, and their food sources.

- 5.C.1 Meeting protein needs through a vegetarian eating plan
- 5.C.2 Elements found in protein (C, H, O, N)
- 5.C.3 Essential amino acids
- 5.C.4 Proteins commonly found in food such as milk
- 5.C.5 Metabolism of excess proteins
- 5.C.6 Role of protein in the diet
- 5.C.7 Food sources
- 5.C.8 Calories per gram of protein

Competency 5D: Evaluate the structures, the functions and the requirements of *fats* on nutrition and wellness across the life span, and their food sources.

- 5.D.1 LDL-cholesterol and HDL-cholesterol
- 5.D.2 Fats (i.e., saturated, unsaturated, polyunsaturated)
- 5.D.3 Fatty acids (i.e, Omega-3,. essential fatty acids, trans fatty acids, sources of fatty acids)
- 5.D.4 Functions of fat in the body
- 5.D.5 Food sources
- 5.D.6 Calories per gram of fat

Competency 5E: Evaluate the functions and the requirements of *carbohydrates* on nutrition and wellness across the life span, and their food sources.

- 5.E.1 Monosaccharides and disaccharides
- 5.E.2 Fiber (i.e., dietary fiber, soluble fiber, insoluble fiber)
- 5.E.3 Pectin
- 5.E.4 Sugars (i.e., Glucose, Dextrose, Lactose, Sucrose, Fructose, Glycogen)
- 5.E.5 Food sources
- 5.E.6 Calories per gram of carbohydrates

Competency 5F: Evaluate the functions and the requirements of *water* on nutrition and wellness across the life span, and its food sources.

- 5.F.1 Content and function of water in the body
- 5.F.2 Water content of foods
- 5.F.3 Polar covalent bonds
- 5.F.4 Recommended consumption amounts of water
- 5.F.5 Physical activity and water needs

Domain 6: Careers

Competency 6A: Analyze jobs and preparation requirements for careers in nutrition and food occupations.

- 6.A.1 Specific career titles associated with nutrition and food occupations (i.e, Dietitian, Executive chef, Researcher, Food stylist, Food service manager, Counselor, Restaurateur)
- 6.A.2 Functions of careers associated with nutrition and food
- 6.A.3 Roles and responsibilities of careers associated with nutrition and food
- 6.A.4 Sources of information on related careers (i.e., Occupational Outlook Handbook)

Competency 6B: Analyze personal qualifications, interests, values, and educational preparation necessary for employment in a career in nutrition and food.

- 6.B.1 Personal priorities, aptitudes, and preferences associated with nutrition and wellness related careers
- 6.B.2 Résumé and portfolio development
- 6.B.3 Interview skills
- 6.B.4 Education, training, and licensure requirements for nutrition and food careers

Competency 6C: Evaluate job market opportunities locally, regionally and nationally.

- 6.C.1 Food and product design and development
- 6.C.2 Manufacturing and food distribution
- 6.C.3 Biotechnology
- 6.C.4 Foodservice
- 6.C.5 Sources for development of materials and processes used in the food industry, including NASA and armed forces

Competency 6D: Compare personal goals to career opportunities within food areas.

- 6.D.1 Short-term goals vs. long-term goals
- 6.D.2 Role of standards, resources, and opportunities in career decision-making
- 6.D.3 Work schedules for jobs in foodservice, teaching, and counseling
- 6.D.4 Career planning

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. Tamera is concerned about her health. She wants to start practicing good nutrition. Which of the following is a guideline for practicing good nutrition? (Domain 1, Competency A)
 - a. Eat foods that are easily digestible and pass through your body quickly.
 - b. Count calories and limit intakes of proteins and carbohydrates.
 - c. Combine the right amount of physical activity with healthy eating habits.
 - d. Eat foods that provide all the nutrients needed and in the right amounts.
2. Ming wants to save money on her food budget. Which of the following is the **LEAST** effective strategy for reducing food waste? (Domain 1, Competency A)
 - a. Cook extra large portions in case people are very hungry.
 - b. Store all foods properly at the correct temperature.
 - c. Use leftover foods while they are still usable.
 - d. Plan what to serve and then shop accordingly.
3. Which of the following is **NOT** a correct equivalent? (Domain 2, Competency C)
 - a. 1 tablespoon = 3 teaspoons
 - b. 1 cup = 12 tablespoons
 - c. 1 pint = 2 cups
 - d. 1 quart = 2 pints
4. Which of the following factors is the greatest contributor to the increasing obesity problem among Americans today? (Domain 2, Competency B)
 - A. Nutrition guidelines do not take into consideration the differences in body size, age, and gender.
 - B. Federal nutrition guidelines change too often for Americans to consistently follow.
 - C. Americans have become accustomed to eating larger serving sizes and portions of food.
 - D. American consumers are paying more and more attention to the Nutrition Facts panels on food.
5. Which of the following types of commercially-processed fruits generally has the lowest concentration of sugar? (Domain 2, Competency D)
 - A. Canned fruits in heavy syrup
 - B. Canned fruits in light syrup
 - C. Frozen fruits
 - D. Dried fruits

6. Jody is unsure how long some soymilk has been in the refrigerator. Which should he **NOT** use to evaluate the product? (Domain 3, Competency A)
- A. Appearance
 - B. Smell
 - C. Taste
 - D. Touch
7. Good hand washing practices decrease the spread of a source of foodborne illness that commonly lives in the colon of mammals that is known as _____. (Domain 3, Competency C)
- A. Clostridium perfringens
 - B. Escherichia coli
 - C. Lactobacillus acidophilus
 - D. Staphylococcus aureus
8. Advantages associated with genetically modified foods include all of the following **EXCEPT** _____. (Domain 4, Competency B)
- A. improved nutrition for consumers
 - B. greater resistance to spoilage
 - C. universal consumer acceptance
 - D. reduced use of pesticides
9. Patricia eats a varied diet. She wants to be sure that she is getting all of her minerals. Which of the following minerals is Patricia likely to get in her diet, because it is found in most foods? (Domain 5, Competency B)
- A. Zinc
 - B. Iron
 - C. Potassium
 - D. Phosphorous
10. Mary Beth has taken an aptitude test which revealed that she is best suited for an occupation that requires analytical skills, working with people, and following a protocol. Which of the following occupations is most ideal for Mary Beth? (Domain 6, Competency B)
- A. Executive chef
 - B. Dietitian
 - C. Accountant
 - D. Researcher

Answer Key:

- 1. D
- 2. A
- 3. B
- 4. C
- 5. C

- 6. C
- 7. B
- 8. C
- 9. D
- 10. B

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 in the “Assessment and Certification Resources” section of each assessment web page.

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