

## **Part 3 - Exam Preparation Techniques**

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### **Examination Format**

The examinations are objective tests composed of four-option multiple-choice items (questions), each of which has only one (1) correct response. Your score is based upon the number of items answered correctly. There is no penalty for guessing. Each examination is comprised of 150 items. The specific content being assessed by the 150 items on each examination follows the test specifications outlined in the next section of this study guide. In addition to each item being associated with a Standard or Area of Study, the items are also designed to assess appropriate cognitive levels necessary for competent practice. Specifically, some items assess at the lower level, or “knowledge/recall;” some at the middle levels, or “comprehension and application;” and some at higher order levels, or “analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.” More information regarding cognitive levels are defined in the well-known work *Taxonomy of Educations Objectives: Handbook I: Cognitive Domain, 1956* (Benjamin S. Bloom, Max D. Englehart, Edward J. First, Walter H. Hill and David R. Krathwohl).

### **Studying for the Examination**

The test measures two things: your knowledge of the subject matter and your ability to take an examination. The first depends on your preparation and experience in your chosen field of family and consumer sciences. You can improve in this area through study. The second area depends on self-confidence and your experience with multiple-choice questions. It also depends upon your ability to recognize related information or solutions to problem situations.

Your preparation should include a self-study reading program, as well as other refresher activities including attending professional meetings and workshops, listening to tapes of presentations made at professional meetings, and taking academic or noncredit courses. The *Candidate Information Bulletin* is excellent resource providing a reference list of study materials.

If you have recently graduated or are still completing your baccalaureate degree, review your course outlines, notes and other materials that relate to the content of the examination. Read for the broad perspective, then go back and identify logical divisions into categories or units, noting both the trends and the relationships between ideas and between units, and listing major points, ideas, and conclusions.

### **Tips for Taking an Examination**

Below is a list of helpful things to keep in mind as you prepare for and then sit for one of the examinations:

- Try to 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.”
- Arrive at the examination well rested.
- Over-study to build self-confidence and to remind yourself just how much you know, but don’t study so much that you feel overwhelmed.

- Avoid stimulants. Stimulants can make you so wide-awake that you may miss the point on some test items. Avoid tranquilizers, if your health condition permits. It is better to be a bit nervous before an examination than to be drowsy.
- Follow directions! If you read them too quickly, you may miss something important.
- Read each item very carefully. Don't jump to conclusions based upon a quick skimming of the wording.
- See if you can answer the item before looking at the four (4) response options.
- Never think you have immediately spotted the correct response. "Back into" the correct response by first eliminating the incorrect choices.
- Answer each item – guess if necessary. Your score is based upon the number of items you respond to correctly. There is no penalty for guessing.
- If you are not sure of an answer, look for clues in the item and even in the choices. If you are able to eliminate some options, your chances of being correct if guessing are improved.
- Use your time wisely. Take the items in order, but don't waste time worrying about those you cannot answer with certainty. Guess intelligently, select an answer, and if you have time at the end, return for a second look. By then, you may have remembered something, or had a memory "jogger."
- Be sure you understand administrative details about examination admission; computer based testing, registration procedures, identification, score reporting, etc. Being familiar with these details will reduce your anxiety.