

Apprenticeship Certification Exam Manual

Counselling and Accessible Learning Services

Review Each Section

All of the pieces in this manual will fit together to help with your success.

Look for the orange 'toolboxes' throughout this document for strategies to help you study and take your exam.

Giving You the Tools to Succeed

Congratulations on completing your apprenticeship training. Your determination, knowledge, and hard work played key roles in your success and will continue to help you as you prepare for and write your certification exam.

This manual is intended to help support your success in your exam. Information is provided on:

- Study skills for writing certification exams
- Certification exam test taking including multiple choice strategies and educated guessing
- Test anxiety
- Exam accommodations

Getting Started with Studying

Time Management Tips

Set up a study schedule and determine how much information you will need to review and how much time this will take.

- Realistically, it's best to double the amount of time you initially think it will take.

Study for short periods of time.

- It's generally recommended that you study for 20 - 40 minutes and then take a 10 minute break before you return to studying.

Study when you have the most energy.

Study Environment Tips

Try to create a study area so that you automatically associate it with studying. Keeping all of your study materials in one spot will also save you time.

Good Study Habits

Study the difficult material first.

Try to identify the main topics and sub topics of what you need to study.

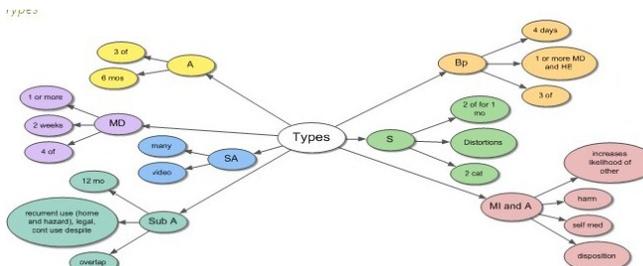
Go over information repeatedly. We remember information through frequent reviews.

Write down any problems or questions you may have as you are studying and develop a plan to get help.

Toolbox

Studying Mind Maps

In order to understand main ideas you can create mind maps with key concepts, formulas, theorems and definitions.



Getting Started with Studying Continued

Trade Specific Studying

Study main ideas, concepts, processes and formulas first. Once you understand the main ideas it will be easier to memorize details and see how they fit together.

- Memorize information after you have understood it.

Vary your studying and review by reading and then doing practice questions.

Try reciting information out loud as this helps to transfer information to your long- term memory.

Make sure you understand the specific vocabulary for your trade because your exam will be using these formal terms.

- Develop a list of these as you are studying.

Toolbox

Studying for a Multiple Choice Exam

1. Using cue cards or small pieces of paper, write key terms and/or chapter review questions.
2. Write the definitions and/or question answers on separate cards or pieces of paper.
3. Using a flat surface, spread out all of your terms/questions and definitions/answers. Now, try to match them up. Check your course materials to see if you are right.

Be Trade

Smart

Repeatedly review the fundamentals of your trade. This is the key information you must know to be successful.

Remember to learn preferred or industry practices of your trade rather than on relying on any short cuts you have learned on the job.

Do practice questions using realistic time pressures to replicate the testing situation.

General Suggestions for Taking the Certification Exam

Be Prepared

Bring all of the materials you will need for the exam (pencils, calculators etc.).

If you are easily distracted find out in advance whether you can wear ear plugs to block out the noise in the exam room.

Start Right

Budget your time.

- How much time will you have for each question?

Do a “brain dump”. This means writing down any key formulas or definitions etc. that you have memorized on your test.

- By doing this your mind is freed up to focus on the questions.

Stress Management in the Exam

Arrive early and know where you are going. This will help you to feel focused and calm.

Relax and take a few deep breaths prior to the exam.

Remember the certification exam results are feedback and not an indication of your self-worth, intelligence or ability to be a good tradesperson.

Toolbox

Interrupt Nervous Thinking

Our brains find it hard to be nervous and do a mental puzzle at the same time. Once you notice that you are more relaxed return to your test. Interrupt your nervous thoughts in the exam by:

- Doing a mental puzzle such as naming all of the provinces or prime ministers of Canada.
- Describe 5 things you can see, hear, feel, smell, and taste. This will bring you back to the present situation to help you better focus.

General Suggestions for Taking the Certification Exam Continued

Tips for Taking the Exam

Go back to the key words or the stem of the question to make sure you are answering that specific question.

- Do not add interpretations or assumptions that are not intended in the question.

Use information from other test questions to help you on the questions you do not know.

Toolbox

Multiple Choice Test Taking

1. Cover the answers and read the question. Think of the answer in your head.
2. Uncover the answers. If the answer you thought of is there, choose it and move to the next question. If it is not, move to step 3.
3. Mark your first instinct with a small dash at the side of the question. Then, narrow down your answers – draw a line through those answers that you know are incorrect.
4. If you cannot decide which is the correct answer leave the question and move on to the next. Continue steps 1 to 4 for each question.
5. At the end of the test, go back to the beginning and fill in all of your blank answers. If you come to a question that you still do not know the answer to, pick your first instinct and move on.

Keep in Mind

Remember that you are answering the question based on industry or practice standards not the short cuts that are often used when working.

Educated Guessing

Here are strategies to help you make an educated guess if you do not know the answer.

Elimination

Use the process of elimination.

- Example: $334 \times 412 = ?$

(a) 53,211

(b) 267,940

(c) 21,488

(d) 137,608

By multiplying the last 2 digits of each number (4×2) the last number must be 8. So you can eliminate answers (a) and (b). Of the 2 remaining numbers, one has 5 digits and one has 6. If we multiply 334×100 we get 33,400. Therefore (c) can't be correct because it is less than 33,400. Therefore (d) becomes the right answer by the process of elimination.

If the answer to a mathematical question covers a broad range, eliminate the extremes and consider choosing a number in the middle (unless you are certain that the answer is in the extreme range).

True and False

Consider whether each option is true or false, then eliminate the false statement.

Watch for absolutes (“all”, “none”, “always”, “never”, “only”) or qualifiers (“few” “many” “some” “often” “sometimes”).

- Remember that qualifiers offer more exceptions and possibilities and can sometimes make the answer true.
- Also watch for words like “best” or “preferred practice.”

General Tips for Educated Guessing

Underline any units of measure.

Consider selecting answers that are longer and more descriptive.

Translate double negatives into positive terms. For example “not lacking”=“having” and “not none”=“some”.

Educated Guessing Continued

“Look Alikes”

Sometimes one of the “look alike” options is correct. This is where the answers are almost identical but there are one or 2 extra words. In this situation circle or underline these one or 2 extra words and see what you circled or underlined in the question.

- Remember with “look alike” options consider which one best answers that specific question.

If two quantities are very close, consider choosing one of them.

- For example, 37.5 ; 3.75

If two numbers differ by only a decimal point (and the others are not close) consider choosing one of them.

- For example 3.2, 41, 2.5, 25; a reasonable guess is either 2.5 or 25.

Test Anxiety

What is Test Anxiety?

Some anxiety is healthy because it helps you to focus and perform well. Test anxiety tends to occur in waves and can occur prior, during or even after the certification exam.

Begin by identifying your test anxiety cycle: What are your anxious thoughts, physical sensations and behaviours?

Guessing with Opposite sites

Sometimes one of the directly opposite answers will be the right answer. In the example below, if you are unsure of the answer, you may want to guess “large” or “small” because they are opposites.

For example:

When using expansion foam on a window, which of the following is correct?

- Use a large amount of expansion foam.
- Use a fire rated expansion foam.
- Use a small amount of expansion foam.
- You should not use expansion foam on a window.

Test Anxiety Continued

3 Components of Test Anxiety

Behavioral

- Difficulty studying, going blank, being easily distracted or annoyed, hard time organizing thoughts, restlessness or fidgeting, etc.

Psychological/Emotional

- Negative thoughts such as “I will never be able to do this,” “I am going to fail” “I can’t learn theory and am only good at doing things with my hands”.

Physical

- Rapid heartbeat, shaking, sweating, tenseness in shoulders or jaw, shortness of breath, dry mouth, etc.

Dealing with Test Anxiety

Address “what if” questions. What if you do fail? What are your options? Sometimes facing our fears and thinking about options actually helps to reduce our fear.

Put any past test failures behind you. If you have ever failed a test before you might be worried that it will happen again. Remember this is a different experience and at a different time in your life. You have likely studied differently and have lots of experience behind you.

Do not worry if others leave the test sooner than you do. Do not interpret this as you are doing something wrong or that you will fail.

Take Care

Take care of yourself prior to the exam. Try to eat properly, limit your intake of caffeine, exercise and get enough sleep.

Talk with others about your fears. This might include family, friends or a professional.

Do not talk with other students prior to the test especially if they want to talk about the content of the exam.

Test Anxiety Continued

Dealing with Negative Thoughts

Try to replace your negative thoughts with balanced and realistic thoughts.

- “I will never be able to do this” might become “I have passed many tests during my apprenticeship training and this means that I have been successful with tests before”.
- “I can’t learn theory and am only good at doing things with my hands” might become “I have learned lots of theory which I have been applying throughout my apprenticeship training”.

Toolbox

Reducing Test Anxiety

Try a few of these test anxiety reduction strategies to see which ones work for you.

- Try some deep breathing exercises. Breathe deeply from the belly when you inhale. Do this for 5 minutes and your body will become more relaxed.
- Try relaxing activities such as tensing and relaxing parts of your body, listening to music, prayer, yoga, imagery exercises and meditation. They are proven to work!
- If you go blank during the exam, try one of the following: spend a few minutes breathing deeply, do a mental puzzle, or circle or underline the key words in a question. These will help you to refocus.

Watch Yourself

Observe your physical sensations and try not to react or interpret them. Your negative interpretation of your shaking hands makes it worse.

Accommodation Alternatives

As an alternative to the Request for C of Q Accommodations Letter from Accessible Learning Services, you may request accommodations for the C of Q by providing disability documentation directly to the Employment Training Consultant. The Employment Training Consultant will review the documentation to determine the appropriate level of accommodation for the C of Q.

For questions regarding accommodations for the C of Q, please call Accessible Learning Services at 905-575-1212 x 5401

Exam Accommodations

If You Need Accommodations for the Certificate of Qualification Exam

If you are a Mohawk College apprentice who has previously been identified or diagnosed with a disability, you may request accommodations for your Certificate of Qualification Exam (C of Q) in your specific trade.

To arrange accommodations:

1. Meet with the Accessible Learning Services Case Manager to determine accommodation needs for the C of Q. For appointment an appointment with a Case Manager call the Accessible Learning Services Clerk at 905 575-1212 ext. 5401.
2. If required, the Accessible Learning Services Case Manager will assist you to acquire the appropriate disability documentation to support C of Q accommodation needs. The Case Manager will refer for a psychoeducational assessment, when needed, to support accommodation requirements. Apprentices with medical disabilities may also see their physician for medical documentation to support accommodations.
3. After review of disability documentation, the Accessible Learning Services Case Manager will develop a Request for C of Q Accommodations Letter and provide this letter to you. You will then given this letter to your Employment Training Consultant, and request accommodations for the C of Q.