Getting Certified:  
An Insider’s Guide to the CRA Exam  
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A Little About RACC  
• Research Administrators Certification Council  
• Established in 1993  
• Board members are research administrators  
• Technical support provided by Professional Testing Corporation

A Little About Me  
• Former Chair of NCURA Region IV  
• CRA / CFRA since 2004  
• RACC Board of Directors, 2009 - 2019  
• RACC Board of Directors, Emeritus (2020)
A Little About The Exam

• Based on the Body of Knowledge
• 250 Questions; 4 Hours to Complete
• Multiple Choice (A,B,C,D)
• Passing Score of About 175
• Passing Rate between 55% - 65%

This Is A Challenging Examination!

A More Little About The Exam

Based on the Body of Knowledge
And weighted as follows:

30% - Project Development & Administration
30% - Legal Requirements & Sponsor Interface
25% - Financial Management
15% - General Management

You Must Pass All Four Parts!

Should I Take the Exam?

• Three Years Experience
  • More may be necessary
  • Lots more is not always beneficial

• Quality of Experience
  • Pre- & Post Award
  • Departmental Experience

• What Do I Hope To Gain?
Exam Questions

- Written by CRAs and Reviewed (twice) before going into the Question Bank
- Questions reflect the weighting of the exam and balanced based on difficulty
- No “All of the Above” or “None of the Above”
- No “Which is not” questions

Before The Exam

- Study
- Study
- Study
- Study

And if time permits.... **STUDY!!!**

Before The Exam

- Meet the Eligibility Requirements
  - Bachelors + Three Years Experience
  - Associates + Five Years Experience
  - No Degree + Six Years Experience
- Register at [www.racc-cert.org](http://www.racc-cert.org)
- Receive e-mail with your testing location(s)
- Select a day and location for your exam
- Study some more (seriously)
Before The Exam
• Scout your Testing Center
• Get a good night’s sleep
• Eat a good (but not huge) breakfast
• Hydrate, but don’t go nuts
• Wear comfortable clothing
• Arrive early

During The Exam
• No personal items in the examination room
• The clock doesn’t stop!
• Read the question and all four answers
• Flag questions when you’re not sure
• Don’t forget to breathe...

During The Exam
How to Answer a Multiple Choice Question
• Eliminate any clearly wrong answers
• Eliminate answers that are totally unfamiliar to you
• Use hints from questions you know
• Seriously. Don’t forget to breathe...
The **BEST Right Answer**

- All questions have the following:
  - A Stem
  - A Right Answer
  - Three Distracters
- The Distractors may be right – but only *some* of the time
- The Best Right Answer is right all the time

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**Sample Question #1**

Which of the following is a characteristic of a Cooperative Agreement?

A. Involves two or more institutions  
B. Is more restrictive than a contract  
C. Is used when sponsor involvement is required  
D. Permits comingling of federal and non-federal funds

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**Sample Answers #1**

A. Sometimes true, but not necessarily a characteristic  
B. Typically *not* true  
C. True in nearly every instance  
D. Never true (but you know that, right?)
Sample Question #2
Despite expanded authorities, prior approval from a granting agency is required for which of the following?
A. A one-year no-cost extension
B. Change of personnel paid from the grant
C. Change of the principal investigator
D. Transfer of funds from one budget category to another

Sample Answers #2
A. Not true
B. Sometimes true, but it depends on the person and their role on the project
C. Always true
D. Sometimes true, but it depends on the amounts (percent of total budget)

CAUTION!!
Read the stem carefully
Read all four answers
After The Exam

• PTC scores each test after exam window closes
• Questions with anomalously high failure rates receive further review from PTC and RACC
• Confirm the final results
• Notify participants by mail
  • Takes six weeks from the close of the testing window

Questions?
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