

FOCUS ON CRA



Are You Ready to Become a CRA?



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The time has finally arrived. It's your turn. You are surrounded by strangers in a cloak of silence. A lump develops in your throat. Your heart races, your palms are sweaty; you close your eyes, take a deep breath, and wait for instructions. As your anxiety grows more intense and you think you are about to break, the proctor says those magic words: "You may break the seal on your booklet and begin your exam."

According to the Utah State Office of Education, when people take a test that is meant to show how knowledgeable or skilled an individual is in their field, people get anxious and don't perform as well as they could. In their document, *Preparing to Take a Multiple-Choice Test*, the Utah State of Education provides several test taking tips and strategies to help prepare for an exam and alleviate that infamous test taking anxiety. You can review this information at <http://www.iechs.org>.

Preparing for and taking the Certified Radiology Administrator (CRA) exam can be a source of anxiety for many imaging professionals. The first 2 questions every imaging professional aspiring to take the CRA exam must ask themselves are, "Am I eligible to take the exam?" and "Am I ready to take the exam?"

How do you know if you are eligible and ready to take the CRA exam? The first step in answering that question is to go to www.CRAinfo.org. This Web site provides information about: 1) exam eligibility requirements, 2) the CRA exam content, 3) the 5 management domains covered on the CRA exam, 4) the CRA exam question development process, and 5) a link to study/reference materials that can be used to help imaging management professionals review and prepare for the exam.

After reviewing the eligibility requirements for the CRA exam, if you are eligible to take the exam, the next step is to do a self evaluation. Based on your education, years of experience in the imaging management realm, and your overall life experiences, are you ready? Throughout your career, have you had the opportunity to gain experience in the areas of 1) human resource management, 2) asset resource management, 3) fiscal management, 4) operations management, and 5) communication and information management?

Is it reasonable to expect that you will be 100% prepared to take the CRA exam? No. Is it reasonable to think that you will be able to cover all of the variables of questions and topics that will be covered on the CRA exam? No. However, it is reasonable to think that you can be well prepared for the CRA exam if you draw upon your education, years of experience in the imaging management arena, your overall life experiences, and if you utilize the tools and information available on the CRA Web site. Another good way to help prepare yourself for the CRA exam is to find a mentor or at least another peer to study with, bounce ideas off of, and to share personal strengths and weaknesses related to the 5 domains of the CRA exam.

The worst thing you can do is pressure yourself to take the CRA exam when you do not feel confident about your own personal knowledge base. As I stated earlier, no one will ever be 100% ready to take the CRA exam. However, the only person who will really know if you are not ready to take the CRA exam is you.

Take your time, review, be prepared, then become a CRA. Define yourself as an imaging administrator with the highest quality skills and knowledge that organizations want and need from the imaging leaders of today and tomorrow. ■



Immediate Scoring Now Offered on Computer Based CRA Exams

Hate to wait? CRA candidates who take the exam in the May or November computer-based format now receive their results on the testing computer immediately following the completion of the exam. No more waiting or wondering required! ■