



**IC&RC  
Prevention Specialist Credential  
Overview  
NPN Conference  
September 12, 2017  
Anaheim, CA**

# First Things First

- Thank you to the NPN and CASAT/NPN Conference Management.
- To everyone else, thank you for attending and for your interest in prevention certification.

# Who is IC&RC?

- For more than 35 years, IC&RC has developed standards and examinations for credentialing of prevention, substance use treatment, and recovery professionals that adhere to the highest standards of quality and integrity.
- Today, IC&RC represents 78 member boards, including 26 countries, 48 states and territories, four Native American regions, and all branches of the U.S. military.
- **56 boards offer the Prevention Specialist credential. Top 5 include: Ohio; Texas; NY; Michigan; Oregon.**

# Who is IC&RC?

- IC&RC's credentials include
  - Alcohol and Drug Counselor (ADC)
  - Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor (AADC)
  - Clinical Supervisor (CS)
  - **Prevention Specialist (PS) – since 1994**
  - Certified Criminal Justice Addictions Professional (CCJP)
  - Certified Co-Occurring Disorders Professional (CCDP), and Certified Co-Occurring Disorders Professional Diplomate (CCDPD)
  - Peer Recovery (PR)

# Who is IC&RC?

- IC&RC represents over 50,000 reciprocal-level credentialed professionals. Up to half of all substance abuse professionals in the U.S. hold IC&RC credentials.
- Some of IC&RC's prevention partners include CSAP (fellowship program); ONDCP; CADCA; NPN; CAPT.

# Reciprocity

- Bermuda
- Canada
- Greece
- Iceland
- IHS boards (3)
- US Army and Navy
- Alabama
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- DC
- Delaware
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Mexico
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Pacific
- Pennsylvania
- Puerto Rico
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- Virginia
- Washington
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming - NEW
- Nevada - NEW

# Benefits of Certification

- Identifies professionals who are specialists in the field, setting them apart from others not certified. It is a quantifiable milestone of achievement.
- Based on industry standards and evidence-based practices. It establishes credibility and verifies competency in the field.
- Becomes a marketing tool and career mobility for the professional when seeking employment or advancement. It enhances your reputation in your profession.
- Becomes a marketing tool for the agency when promoting their services to the public, the client, potential clients, and payers.
- Certified professionals enjoy the benefit of reciprocity when moving to another state, country, or nation.
- Provides public protection and a grievance process for those harmed.
- It establishes a cadre of advocates for prevention.
- DOL states “Weekly earnings of full time wage and salary workers with a certification or license were 34% higher than earnings for those who do not hold such credentials.”

# Barriers of Certification

- Cost.
- Standards which may be difficult for some to meet.
- Competing credentials being offered by different organizations can be confusing.
- Test anxiety!

# Prevention as a Profession

- A profession becomes a full-time occupation.
- Competencies are identified for a profession.
- Education/training institutions are established.
- Local/national associations are established.
- State licensing laws/certification regulations are established.

**PREVENTION IS A PROFESSION!**

# Prevention as a Regulated Profession

- There are two basic tenets for regulation:
  1. There is a level of risk to the public.
  2. There is a specific body of knowledge which requires competency by the professional.
- Prevention meets both of these identifiers.

# Prevention Competency

- Competency must be measured and monitored – we cannot assume that someone is competent.
- Other professions measure and monitor: medicine, psychology, social work, law, etc.

# Credential Creation

- Job Analysis (JA) - large job description.
- JA completed every five years.
- Domains/core competencies are identified from the JA.
- Tasks delineate what a prevention professional does as part of providing competent prevention services.
- Exam is developed from the JA.
- Standards are developed.
- Boards adopt standards & exams for use in their own jurisdiction.
- Entire process is driven by prevention specialists (SMEs) who work directly with IC&RCs testing company.

# Prevention Specialist Domains

- Planning & Evaluation – 30%
- Prevention Education & Service Delivery – 15%
- Community Organization – 15%
- Professional Growth & Responsibility - 15%
- Communication – 13%
- Public Policy & Environmental Change – 12%

Updated 2013

# Crosswalk of IC&RC Prevention Domains and SAMHSA SPF Domains

## SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework Domains

Assessment

Capacity Building

Planning

Implementation

Evaluation

## IC&RC Prevention Domains

Planning & Evaluation  
Communication

Planning & Evaluation  
Prevention Education & Service Delivery  
Communication  
Public Policy & Environmental Change  
Professional Growth & Responsibility

Planning & Evaluation  
Community Organization  
Public Policy & Environmental Change  
Communication  
Professional Growth & Responsibility

Planning & Evaluation  
Prevention Education & Service Delivery  
Communication  
Professional Growth & Responsibility

Planning & Evaluation

# Standards/Requirements

- Experience: 2,000 hours of prevention work experience.
- Education: 120 hours of training/education across domains of which 24 hours must be ATOD specific and 6 hours must be specific to prevention ethics.
- Supervision: 120 hours specific to the domains with a minimum of 10 hours in each domain.
- Examination: All candidates must pass the IC&RC Prevention Specialist Examination.
- Code of Ethics: All candidates must sign a prevention specific code of ethics statement of affirmation that the applicant has read and will abide by this code of ethics.
- Recertification: 40 hours of training earned every 2 years.

# The Written Exam – Oh No!

- Candidates will receive correspondence from the testing company regarding specific instructions to register for the exam.
- The PS exam is 150 multiple choice questions with both a 3-option and 4-option format. But wait. Only 125 questions are scored – more to come on this. Candidates have up to three hours to complete the exam.
- IC&RC Exams are computer based and offered on an on-demand basis year round. There are over 300 computer based testing sites worldwide. Candidates can choose the testing site that is closest for their travel.
- Preliminary scores are available after a candidate completes the exam. Official scores and notification of certification will follow from the credentialing authority after your exam date.

# So 150 questions but only 125 are scored – what's up with that!

On each IC&RC exam there will be 25 “unweighted” items that will not count toward the candidate’s final score. Unweighted items are also called pretest items.

Pretest items will not be identified on the exam, and will appear randomly on all exam forms.

It is important to include pretest items on an examination because items should be piloted to ensure quality before they contribute to a candidate’s score. Pretesting items provides verification that the items are relevant to competency and contribute toward measuring a candidate’s proficiency in the material. The statistical data received from pretesting is analyzed to determine if an item performs within an acceptable range. For example, item statistics tell us if an item is too difficult and possibly outside the candidates’ scope of knowledge or practice, if an item is too easy and does not measure competency, or if the correct answer is misidentified. If an item exhibits acceptable statistical performance, the item can be upgraded to “weighted” status and included on future examinations as a scored item.

# Is this ever going to end?

In a larger context, the need to stay current with industry standards and the existence of incentives for cheating are the most compelling reasons to include pretest questions on examinations. Pretesting items allows the examination to stay current with the profession. The field is constantly evolving, and it is important that the examination reflect current practice and the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of competent practitioners. Including pretest items also allows IC&RC to produce more test forms which increases the security of our examinations.

Overall, pretesting items is in the best interest of candidates as it will help ensure the quality of future examinations. Pretest items have absolutely no effect on a candidate's score. For example, if two candidates both answer the same number of weighted items correctly, and one answers all of the pretest items correctly and the other answers none of the pretest items correctly, they both receive the same score and pass/fail status on the exam. In fact, candidates will be protected against poorly performing items adversely affecting their scores, while at the same time taking an examination that is current with professional trends.

# More about the exam process

- No books, papers, or other reference materials may be taken into the exam room.
- No questions concerning the content of the exam may be asked during the exam period.
- You will need one form of photo identification on the day of the exam. CBT requires you to also bring an admission letter which will be given to you when you schedule an exam.
- If you arrive at the test site late and the exam has begun, you will not be permitted to enter and will forfeit your opportunity to test that day.
- Candidate Guides are available for all exams and include the domains and tasks for each domain, sample exam questions and a list of references free of charge. They can be downloaded from IC&RC's website:

[www.internationalcredentialing.org](http://www.internationalcredentialing.org)

## Still more

- Candidates may cancel or reschedule their exam prior to their scheduled date but there may be fees associated with this activity depending on the number of days prior.
- Candidates failing the exam can retest after a 90 day wait period from date of last taking the exam. Candidates will be sent retest instruction from the credentialing authority.

# Special Administration

- Individuals with disabilities and/or religious obligations that require modifications in exam administration may request specific procedure changes, in writing, to the credentialing authority no fewer than 60 days prior to the exam date. With these written requests, the candidate must provide official documentation of the disability or religious issue. Candidates should contact the credentialing authority on what constitutes official documentation. The testing site will offer appropriate modifications to its procedures when documentation supports the need for them.

# Pass or Fail

## Scoring the Exam

IC&RC exam scores are reported on a scale of 200 to 800 for all international exams. Candidates must achieve a score of 500 in order to pass the exam. The score is determined by the number of questions correctly answered. Scaled scores are very similar to converting inches to centimeters (a 10 inch ribbon is also 25.4 centimeters long). The length of the ribbon has not been changed; only the units of measurement to describe its length.

IC&RC's testing company will score all exams. Scores will be broken down by category (domain) so that candidates can see percentages of correctly answered items in each domain. The passing point is determined by a criterion-referenced approach called the Angoff Modified Technique. Criterion-referenced exams are quota-free with regard to passing percentages. The passing point is fixed to assure that all candidates must achieve the same score to be granted certification.

# Test Anxiety

- A little bit of anxiety is a good thing.
- Severe anxiety can interfere with the capacity to think clearly.
- One solution: spend 10 minutes writing about your thoughts and feelings immediately before taking the exam. This is a practice called “expressive writing.”
- Writing about worries has the effect of offloading the worries onto the page so that you have more cognitive horsepower available to apply to the questions on the exam.
- This type of intervention brings exam pressures to the forefront enhancing the likelihood of excelling under pressure.

# Exam Preparation

A study guide is available for the prevention specialist examination.

- Prevention Resource Center of RI – study guide available and it's free!!!
- Practice exam at [http://internationalcredentialing.org/Resources/Documents/PracticeExams\\_instructions.pdf](http://internationalcredentialing.org/Resources/Documents/PracticeExams_instructions.pdf)

# 1,159 Exam Candidates Since Dec. 2013

- Highest scaled score was 746 (about 8 questions incorrect)
- Lowest scaled score was 285 (about 36 questions correct)
- International pass rate = 77%
- International fail rate = 23%
- Total professionals holding CPS credential worldwide = 3100

# How are candidates performing per domain on the exam?

- Planning and Evaluation – 75%
- Prevention Education and Service Delivery – 74%
- Communication – 75%
- Community Organization – 75%
- Public Policy and Environmental Change – 76%
- Professional Growth and Responsibility – 78%
- %'s are questions answered correctly

# QUESTIONS?

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# Gifts for everyone!

A small token of my appreciation to all of you for attending and at least acting like you enjoyed this training. Many thanks!