

# Certification Guidelines and Requirements: **A Candidate Guide**

## Examination Process & Credential Award



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# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

## About Us

All FCB requirements, policies and procedures are maintained on our website at [www.flcertificationboard.org](http://www.flcertificationboard.org). Applicants and certified professionals are individually responsible for ensuring they are following current FCB policy and procedures.

### Target Audience

The policies and procedures herein apply to all certification applicants who are in “approved to test” status, regardless of credential, EXCEPT CHILD WELFARE candidates. Please see the *Child Welfare Candidate Guide* for child welfare specific application and examination policies and procedures.

### Key Terms for the Examination Process

**APPROVED TO TEST:** When an applicant has met the minimum education, training and experience standards, and the Certification Specialist has approved their *Application for Certification* and supporting documents.

**CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL:** Any person who holds any credential issued by the FCB.

**EXAM REGISTERED:** The status of the applicant’s *Application for Certification* when approved to test.

**REGISTRATION:** The steps required to schedule the test to complete certification.

## Purpose of Exam Candidate Guide

The Candidate Guide: Examination Process and Credential Award is designed to provide applicants who are in “approved to test” status with policies and procedures related to exam requirements, registration, exam administration, score reporting, and credential award. Additionally, the FCB provides you with the background information on how FCB exams are developed and administered.

## Testing Vendors

The FCB offers two groups of exams: FCB Exams and IC&RC Exams.

FCB exams are developed by the FCB and administered at approved testing sites across Florida. The FCB has contracted with RegisterBlast to perform test site registration activities and ExamSoft for exam administration and scoring services. Applicants taking an FCB exam pay the exam fee directly to the FCB and will pay a test site

proctoring fee directly to the test site. **Proctoring fees are established by the testing site and do not exceed \$30 for a 2-hour exam.**

IC&RC exams are developed and administered by the IC&RC's contracted professional testing company, Schroder Measurement Technologies (SMT). IC&RC's exams are administered by a division of SMT called ISO-Quality Testing. FCB pre-registers approved applicants with SMT and SMT completes all registration and test administration activities directly with the applicant. Applicants taking an IC&RC exam pay all fees directly to the FCB – no fees are paid to SMT or their testing sites. You can find out more information about SMT and ISO-Quality Testing on their websites: [www.smttest.com](http://www.smttest.com) and [www.isoqualitytesting.com](http://www.isoqualitytesting.com).

## Exam Development

The development of a credentialing program designed to measure an individual's competence in a particular area is a long and complex process. A formal, psychometrically sound Role Delineation Study (RDS) is the first step of the credential development process and is the most commonly applied and accepted validation strategy used in designing credentialing programs. The purpose of the RDS is to formally identify the domains of knowledge and specific tasks needed to be a competent professional in the specified field. At the end of the RDS, an examination blueprint is established, which identifies the number of questions per performance domain and job task necessary to measure an applicant's content knowledge base. Exam items are then written by and validated by subject matter experts, ensuring that each item on the exam meets the following standards.

- The question is correct.
- The correct answer is the best answer agreed upon by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs).
- The incorrect answers are plausible, but wrong answers.
- The question measures the core competency it is intended to measure.
- The information is important for a certified professional to know.
- The question belongs on the exam.

Two widely accepted standards for the development of credentialing programs and certifying agencies are the Standards for Accreditation of Certifying Agencies (National Commission for Certifying Agencies, 2002) and the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education, 1999).

The FCB uses the above standards to guide all aspects of the exam development process which establishes content validity for all certification programs, including exam instruments.

IC&RC exams follow the same exam development process as the FCB. The IC&RC has published candidate guides for their tests, which are posted online at <http://flcertificationboard.org/certification/international-certification-reciprocity-consortium/>.

## Special Accommodations

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the FCB will provide reasonable and appropriate special testing accommodations for individuals with physical or learning disabilities to the extent permitted by cost, examination administration constraints, examination security considerations and availability of resources. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide adequate documentation of his or her disability from an approved

medical provider. Please see the *Special Accommodations Policy* for detailed policies and procedures on the FCB website at <http://flcertificationboard.org/resources/policy-and-procedure/>.

All requests for special testing accommodations must be received by the FCB for approval a minimum of 30 days before the requested test date. If you are eligible for special testing accommodations, please review the *Special Accommodations Policy* and submit an application as soon as possible.

Approved testing accommodations are valid while the applicant has an open, active *Application for Certification*. Applicants who have previously received an approval for special testing accommodations who are seeking another credential MUST submit an updated application.

## SECTION 2: EXAMINATIONS

### Overview of the Testing Process

This [Candidate Guide: Examination Process and Credential Award](#) will provide candidates with detailed policy and procedure for the following general exam processes:

- Unless otherwise specified, all FCB credentials require applicants to earn a passing score on a multiple-choice exam of core competency.
- Applicants are only allowed to register for an exam after they have an approved Application Portfolio and the exam fee has been paid.
- Unless otherwise specified, all exams are administered online, at approved testing centers across Florida. There are NO paper and pencil exam administrations available.
- Each test site sets up its own calendar of the days and times that they are open and available to administer the test. When you are approved to register for the test, you may select the location, date and time on the FCB website at [www.flcertificationboard.org/exams](http://www.flcertificationboard.org/exams). (Test dates and times for the MHA NCPS exam outside of Florida are not available online at this time).
- Each exam begins with a brief tutorial. Extra time is allotted to complete the tutorial.
- Applicants receive unofficial test scores immediately. Official test scores are provided to the applicant by the FCB approximately 2 to 4 weeks after the test date. The current certification exam passing scores are provided on the *Attachment: List of FCB Exams/Content Outline* at the end of this guide.
- Applicants who do not pass the exam will receive a score report from their Certification Specialist within 2 to 4 weeks indicating strengths and weaknesses by performance domain to help guide study efforts.
- Applicants may retest as many times as they choose, however, there is a 10-calendar day timeframe between test attempts for all non-IC&RC exams.
- As of 7/1/2017, applicants must wait a minimum of 90-calendar days before rescheduling the IC&RC examinations.
- The full exam fee and, if required, proctor site fee, must be paid for each exam attempt.

# Overview of the Exams

## FCB Exams

All FCB exams are computer-based, online exams administered at testing centers throughout the State of Florida and nationally.

Unless otherwise specified, FCB exams are two-hour, multiple-choice exams that contain between 100 to 150 questions. Each question lists three or four possible answers, only one of which is the correct or best answer. The exam time does not include the time allotted for the pre-testing software tutorial and any post-exam surveys.

The *Attachment: Exam Information* provides the following information for each FCB exam:

- Exam Name
- Performance Domain
- Number of Items (total and by performance domain)
- Passing Score
- Exam Fee

## IC&RC Exams

IC&RC exams are three-hour, multiple-choice exams that contain 150 questions. Each question lists three or four possible answers, only one of which is the correct or best answer. The exam time does not include the time allotted for the pre-testing software tutorial and any post-exam surveys.

Please see the IC&RC Candidate Guides posted online at <http://flertificationboard.org/certification/international-certification-reciprocity-consortium/> for details on the two IC&RC exams administered by the FCB:

- IC&RC Alcohol and Drug Counselor (ADC) Exam
- IC&RC Prevention Specialist (PS) Exam

## Passing Score

A group of subject matter experts (SMEs) established the passing score for each of the FCB exams using industry best practices, as directed by a psychometrician. The SMEs evaluated individual test questions and estimated the percentage of qualified professionals that would be able to answer each question correctly. These estimates were analyzed for consistency and calculated to produce the passing score.

Please see the *Attachment: Exam Information* for the passing score for each of the FCB exams.

Please see the IC&RC Candidate Guides for the passing score for each IC&RC exam. For additional information, the IC&RC Candidate Guides are posted online at <http://flertificationboard.org/certification/international-certification-reciprocity-consortium/>.

# SECTION 3: EXAM REGISTRATION

## Scheduling an Exam

The exam registration process varies depending on whether the exam is a FCB, IC&RC or MHA Exam.

### FCB Exams

When your Application Portfolio has been approved, your Certification Specialist will update your application status from “in process” to “exam registered”, will generate an exam fee and will send you an email notifying you to pay the fee. When your exam fee is paid, you will receive an email from the Testing Manager with directions and access code to register online at [www.flcertificationboard.org/exam](http://www.flcertificationboard.org/exam). (This step will not happen for the MHA NCPS candidates. You will receive testing information from your Certification Specialist).

The access code will allow you to select the test vendor site of your choice and the test date and time that best fits your needs. When you have been successfully registered for an exam, you will receive an email with specific directions on the test administration process, including time, date, location and specific testing site rules. **Proctoring fees are established by the testing site and do not exceed \$30 for a 2-hour exam.**

### IC&RC Exams

When your Application Portfolio has been approved, your Certification Specialist will email you the *Exam Pre-Registration Form* and will generate an exam fee. Upon receipt of the *Exam Pre-Registration Form* and fee payment, the FCB will pre-register you with the IC&RC’s testing vendor. Within 24-hours of pre-registration, you will receive an email from the IC&RC’s testing vendor with information on completing registration and test administration activities.

The FCB is responsible for the pre-registration process and you are responsible for the registration process. The registration process and test administration process is conducted directly between the test applicant and the IC&RC’s testing vendor, Schroder Measurement Technologies testing division, called ISO-Quality Testing, Inc. Please see the appropriate *IC&RC Candidate Guide* for additional details on IC&RC exam registration and administration at <http://www.internationalcredentialing.org/examprep>.

### For All Exams

- All special accommodations must be pre-approved by the FCB at least 30-days before your requested test date and are communicated to the test site by the FCB. Do not request unapproved testing accommodations when you arrive at the testing center.
- FCB testing sites establish a proctoring fee that must be paid directly to the test site. The proctoring fee will not exceed \$30 for a 2-hour exam.

- IC&RC testing sites do not have a separate proctoring fee. DO NOT pay fees directly to SMT or their testing sites.

## Test Center Locations

The FCB exams are currently available at testing centers throughout the State of Florida. To find the closest testing site, please visit our website at [www.flcertificationboard.org/exam](http://www.flcertificationboard.org/exam).

The FCB is partnering with Mental Health America for the MHA NCPS credential. Testing locations are being added daily for non-Florida locations. For MHA NCPS test locations within the State of Florida, please see our website at [www.flcertificationboard.org/exam](http://www.flcertificationboard.org/exam). For additional MHA only test locations, please visit our website at <https://flcertificationboard.org/certification/nationally-credentialed-peer-specialist/>.

IC&RC exams are administered at SMT testing sites throughout the State of Florida. For information on IC&RC testing sites in Florida, please see [www.isoqualitytesting.com](http://www.isoqualitytesting.com).

Most testing centers are open Monday through Saturday, during normal business hours.

## Rescheduling or Cancelling an Exam

You may reschedule or cancel an exam within an authorized period. **Registrations must be rescheduled at least 5 business days before the scheduled appointment.** If an issue arises that prohibits you from making it to your scheduled exam, you may reschedule according to the test center's regulations before your scheduled exam date. A rescheduling fee may be assessed by your test center.

For assistance in rescheduling, please contact your Certification Specialist.

## Missed Exam/No Show

**If you fail to arrive for your exam at the scheduled time, do not have the proper ID, or do not have the email confirmation, you will not be allowed to sit for the exam. You will be considered a "no show", your exam fees will be forfeited, and you will be required to re-register and pay all fees prior to sitting for the exam.**

For more information on what FCB considers an emergency, please see the Emergency Withdrawals section below.

## Emergency Withdrawals

You may submit an emergency withdrawal request if an emergency occurs on the day your exam is scheduled.

Examples of what FCB considers an emergency include a serious illness, injury or unexpected hospitalization, a death in the immediate family, a serious accident, or a court appearance. All emergencies must be supported by written documentation and must be reported to the FCB within 24-hours of the missed test date or as soon as possible if the emergency prevents timely reporting.



# SECTION 4: EXAM ADMINISTRATION

The following information is for FCB and IC&RC exams.

## Exam Day

### Identification Requirements

When you complete the online registration process, you will be provided with a confirmation email that includes the date, time, location and other information about your exam.

In order to take your exam, you must provide proof of identity by presenting a valid, unexpired, government-issued ID with a photograph and signature. The name on the ID must match your name that appears on the confirmation email, your FCB certification account, and the testing center administration fee payment (unless you paid the test center fee online). **Candidates who arrive at the test center without acceptable ID will not be allowed to test and will forfeit all fees.** The following are approved forms of ID:

- Passport/Passport Card
- Government-Issued Driver's License
- Government-Issued Driving Learner's Permit
- Official ID issued by a government agency (state or federal) to non-drivers (must include photo)
- Military ID
- Permanent Resident Card (Green Card)
- US Department of Homeland Security-Issued Employment Authorization Card

We strongly recommend that you read the entire confirmation email as you will be held to the testing center policies and procedures.

When you arrive at the test center to take your exam, test center staff will assist you in taking the exam by providing you with your user ID and password, and the exam password.

## Test Center Rules

No personal items are allowed in the testing room, including but not limited to the following:

- Mobile phones
- Hand-held computers/personal digital assistants (PDAs) or other electronic devices
- Pagers
- Watches
- Wallets
- Purses

- Firearms or other weapons
- Hats (and other non-religious head coverings)
- Bags
- Coats
- Books and/or notes, pens or pencils (including scratch paper)
- Food or drinks

You must store all personal items in a secure area as indicated by the testing center or return them to your vehicle. All electronic devices must be turned off before storing them in a locker. You will be asked to empty your pockets and ensure nothing is in them. The testing center is not responsible for lost, stolen or misplaced personal items.

Studying is NOT allowed in the testing center.

Visitors, children, spouses, family or friends ARE NOT allowed in the testing center.

The Testing Center Proctors will log you into your assigned workstation. You will verify that you are taking the intended exam. Once you have entered the testing room, you may not communicate with other candidates. Any disruptive, threatening or fraudulent behavior may be grounds for termination of the exam.

Eating, drinking or chewing gum, smoking and/or making noise that creates a disturbance for other candidates is prohibited during the exam.

To ensure a high level of security throughout the testing experience, you will be monitored at all times.

If you experience any problems or distractions, or if you have other questions or concerns, you must raise your hand and the Testing Center Proctor will assist you. The Testing Center Proctor cannot answer questions related to the exam content. You should listen carefully to any directions given by the Testing Center Proctor and read the online examination directions carefully.

After you finish the exam, you will raise your hand and the Testing Center Proctor will come to your workstation and sure that your exam has ended properly. Your unofficial score will display on the computer screen after the exam.

Your exam results will be encrypted and transmitted to Examssoft and the FCB. The test center does not retain any information other than when and where your exam was taken.

You may not attend the examination only to review or audit test materials. No unauthorized persons will be admitted into the testing area. All examination content is strictly confidential.

## Misconduct and Dismissal Policy

If you do not follow the rules as indicated in the Test Center Rules section of this guide, tamper with the computer or if you are suspected of cheating, appropriate action will be taken. This may include invalidation of your exam results.

Failure to follow testing center instructions and rules of conduct will result in violation of security or disruption of the administration of an examination may result in dismissal from the examination, voided examination scores, and forfeiture of examination fees.

# SECTION 5: SCORE REPORTING

The following information is for FCB and IC&RC exams.

## Score Reporting

At the end of your exam, you will see an unofficial, preliminary score on the screen. You will NOT be able to print this score. You will receive an official letter and score documentation via email from the FCB within 2 to 4 weeks after your exam, unless otherwise specified in the credential specific standards tables.

If you do not pass the exam, you will be provided with percentages of correctly answered items in each content domain to better focus future study efforts. For security reasons, you will not be provided with a copy of the examination for review.

Test scores are valid for a three-year period. Individuals who allow their credential(s) to become inactive and have a test score older than three-years will be required to retest as part of the reinstatement process. Please see [Candidate Guide: Maintenance and Renewal Process](#) for the reinstatement procedures.

## Retakes

For a FCB exam, there is a 10-business day waiting period for retesting. To schedule a retake, contact your assigned Certification Specialist.

For an IC&RC exam, there is a 90-day waiting period for retesting. To schedule a retake, contact your assigned Certification Specialist.

The mandatory waiting period for either a FCB or IC&RC exam cannot be waived under any circumstance.

## Appeals

All examination scores are final. Examination scores cannot be appealed. You may request a second verification of your examination score within 30 calendar days of taking your exam. To initiate this process, please contact your Certification Specialist.

## Examination Grievances

If you believe an unusual event or condition related to the administration of your examination caused a significant adverse effect on your performance during the exam, you may submit a grievance regarding the exam administration to the FCB for investigation.

Grievances must be submitted to the FCB within 30-calendar days of the examination. Grievance statements must be submitted in writing, dated and signed. Grievance statements must be accompanied by the *FCB Application & Exam Administration Grievance Form*, which can be found at <https://flcertificationboard.org/resources/policy-and-procedure/>.

Information to include in the grievance statement should include, but is not limited to:

- Title of exam
- Examination date
- Name and location of testing center
- Name of proctor on duty (if known)
- Detailed explanation of the situation
- Impact the situation had on exam performance

FCB will then investigate the specifics of the testing situation. When warranted, you will be offered a free retake. An exam grievance will not challenge the design or content of the examination or overturn a failing score.

## Test Disclosure

FCB exam security and item banking procedures do not permit you to access exam questions, answer keys, or other secure materials related to the examination.

## Certification Award

Unless otherwise specified in the credential specific standards table, a certification credential is issued within 2- to 4-weeks of the FCB's receipt of official passing test score(s).

The credential issue date is the date you earned a passing score on the required exam.

When you are certified, you will receive an official letter of congratulations, a wall certificate suitable for framing and instructions on maintaining your credential. You will be able to print a PDF of your wallet card from your online individual account.

Please note the wall certificate is issued one time, at the time of original certification, and does not expire. The wallet card is available online when the credential is awarded and with each successful renewal. The wallet card can only be printed when the credential is in "certified" status.

For information on renewal processes and renewal dates, please refer to the [Candidate Guide: Maintenance and Renewal Process](#).