

**National Recreation and Park Association
Certified Park and Recreation
Executive (CPRE)
Examination**

Candidate Handbook



**National Recreation and Park Association
National Certification Board
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INTRODUCTION

The Certified Park and Recreation Executive (CPRE) examination is one of the principal requirements for achieving certification. It is designed to assess the base knowledge of job-related tasks common to manager and executive level professionals. The examination is administered under the auspices of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the National Certification Board (NCB).

About the National Certification Board (NCB)

The NCB consists of professionals representing all areas of the profession and various geographical regions of the country who have volunteered their time and expertise to provide overall guidance to the Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Service Certification Program.

Definition of a Certified Park and Recreation Executive

A Certified Park and Recreation Executive is a manager with administrative oversight experience in Parks and Recreation serving in the leadership role in an organization; promoting the mission and vision of the organization; formulating policies, goals, and directives; having responsibility for the fiscal, property and personnel resources of the organization ; developing strategic priorities and advocating for the organization and profession to advance parks, recreation, and environmental conservation efforts that enhance quality of life.

Examination Development

A national job analysis was conducted in 2010 to identify the important core components of the parks, recreation and leisure services profession. The analysis conducted by the Certification Development Committee culminated the exam specifications that are included in this handbook. The exam content outline serves as the blueprint for constructing the examination.

The examination is designed to be a comprehensive, job-related, and objective measure of an individual park and recreation professional's knowledge in areas identified by the exam content outline. All examination items (questions) have been written and reviewed by content experts, the CPRE Examination Committee, representing all areas of the profession and all geographical regions. These individuals provide the job-related perspective and expertise that underlies valid examinations.

About the Testing Agency

Pearson VUE is the professional testing agency contracted by the NRPA to assist in the development of the examination based on the test specifications developed by the NCB in consultation with the testing agency. The testing agency is responsible for the establishment of test centers, security, administration, scoring and analysis of the examinations and reporting scores to candidates who take the examination under the direction of the NCB.

SECTION I: ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND RULES FOR EXAMINATION

Individuals seeking certification as a CPRE must apply for the examination, submit the appropriate fee, and meet the prescribed education and experience requirements through the National Recreation and Park Association.

After applying, candidates will receive an e-mail from the NRPA Certification division confirming eligibility or ineligibility. The e-mail will include directions for scheduling the exam with the professional testing company. Candidates will schedule their exam with Pearson VUE by calling, 1-866-362-2965 or by accessing the Pearson VUE website at www.pearsonvue.com/nrpa to find a location or set up time and day for testing. When candidates schedule an appointment for the examination, they will be notified of the time to report to the center. **UNSCHEDULED CANDIDATES (WALK-INS) WILL NOT BE ADMITTED to the testing center.**

Ineligibility - Candidates who are determined to be ineligible for an examination will receive a refund for the examination fee, but will not receive a refund for the application fee. If ineligibility is determined, an applicant has the right to appeal the decision through a written request to the NCB. This appeal must be submitted within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of notice of ineligibility.

Reschedule/Cancellation

A candidate may reschedule ONE appointment for examination at no charge by calling or visiting the Pearson VUE website at least **two** business days prior to the scheduled testing session. If you wish to reschedule/cancel your examination you **must** do so by contacting Pearson VUE directly at 1-866-362-2965. A candidate who cancels his/her examination after the two business day cancellation requirement forfeits the application and all fees paid to take the examination. The Candidate will need to fill out a new application and reapply to sit for the exam.

***You must schedule a test date by the date on the e-mail and/or letter or you will forfeit your payment.**

No-shows/ Failing the examination - Candidates who fail to appear for an examination or fail the examination are not entitled to a refund, nor will the fees be applied to the next exam administration. The Candidate will need to fill out a new application and reapply to sit for the exam.

Inclement Weather or Emergency

In the event of inclement weather, other acts of God or unforeseen emergencies on the day of an examination, Pearson VUE will determine whether circumstances warrant the cancellation, and subsequent rescheduling of an examination. The examination will usually not be rescheduled if the assessment center personnel are able to open the assessment center. Candidates may call the testing site directly (please refer to your confirmation letter for the phone number) to determine the center's availability during inclement weather or emergency. Every attempt is made to administer examinations as scheduled; however, should an examination be canceled at an assessment center, all scheduled candidates will be contacted regarding a rescheduled examination date or reapplication procedures.

Services for Candidates with Disabilities

The NRPA, NCB, and Pearson VUE are committed to ensuring that no individual with a disability is deprived of the opportunity to take the examination solely by reason of that disability. A candidate who has a disability may request special accommodations; the request must be submitted in writing at the time of application. The special accommodations form is available online at www.nrpa.org/cpre. A written description of the disability and verification from a licensed physician should be included with the application.

Services for Candidates with English as a Second Language

Time extension - If a candidate's primary language is not English and he or she wants to request a time extension to take the Certified Park and Recreation Executive (CPRE) exam he/she must submit the *ESL Request Form* (available online at www.nrpa.org/cpre) which includes additional fee information.

Translation Dictionary – If a candidate's primary language is not English and he or she wants to provide and use a strict translation dictionary (word to word and in book form only, no electronic dictionaries allowed), he or she must submit an *ESL Request Form* (available online at www.nrpa.org/cpre) to request the use of the strict translation dictionary. Unless a time extension is also requested, the candidate will be required to complete the exam within the standard 3 hours.

The ESL Request Form must include the signature of a supervisor, professor, or the employee's human resources representative, as well as the appropriate fee if requesting a time extension. If the request is approved, the applicant will receive a confirmation email from NRPA and the testing company will recognize the request when scheduling the exam. The dictionary will be inspected prior to use to ensure exam security. The ESL Form must be submitted to NRPA at least 30 days prior to the exam date.

Examination Administration

Please read the following information carefully so that you are fully prepared on the Examination Day

- Report to the assessment center no later than your scheduled testing time. A CANDIDATE WHO ARRIVES MORE THAN 15 MINUTES AFTER THE SCHEDULED TESTING TIME MAY NOT BE ADMITTED
- To gain admission to the assessment center, a candidate needs to present two forms of identification, one with a current photograph. Information provided to NRPA on the certification application must match the candidate's name on the identification. Both forms of identification must be current and include the candidate's current name and signature. The candidate will also be required to sign a roster for verification of identity. Acceptable forms of photo identification include: a current driver's license with photograph, a current state identification card with photograph, a current passport, or a current military identification card with photograph. Employment ID cards, student ID cards, and any type of temporary identification are not acceptable. **YOU MUST HAVE PROPER IDENTIFICATION (THAT MATCHES THE INFORMATION PROVIDED TO NRPA) TO GAIN ADMISSION TO THE ASSESSMENT CENTER.**
- Prior to starting the examination, you will be given the opportunity to practice taking a test on the computer.
- Following the practice test, you will begin the actual examination. Instructions for taking the examination are provided on-screen. Three (3) hours are allotted to complete the examination, practice exam and survey.
- The computer monitors the time you spend on the examination. The examination will terminate if you exceed three hours. You may click on the "Time" box in the lower right-hand corner of the screen or select the TIME key to monitor your time. A digital clock indicates the time remaining for you to complete the examination. The time feature may also be turned off during the examination.
- Candidates will not be allowed to take the following types of personal items into the testing room: cellular phones, hand-held computers/personal digital assistants (PDAs) or other electronic devices, pagers, watches, wallets, purses, hats, bags, coats, books and notes. Studying is not allowed in the testing center.

Candidates will store these items in a secure area indicated by the administrator. Cellular phones, pagers, and other electronic devices must be turned off prior to placing them in the designated secure area. The testing center is not responsible for lost, stolen or misplaced personal items.

- The administrator will log the candidate in to the assigned workstation, verify that he/she is taking the intended exam and start the exam. Candidates will sit in assigned seats until escorted out by a Test Administrator. Eating, drinking, smoking, chewing gum and making noise that creates a disturbance for other candidates are prohibited during the exam.
- The administrator will monitor candidates continuously while they take the exam. The session may be videotaped or otherwise recorded for security or other purposes.
- If the candidate experiences problems that affect his/her ability to take the exam, he/she must notify the administrator **immediately by raising your hand**.
- The administrator cannot answer questions related to exam content. If the candidates have questions of this nature, they will need to contact the NRPA after leaving the testing center.
- If the candidate takes a **break**, the exam timer will **not** be stopped. The administrator will set the workstation to break mode and the candidate will take his/her ID with him/her when he/she leaves the room. The administrator will check the candidate's ID before he/she can return to his/her seat and will then restart the exam.
- While taking a **break**, the candidate will not be allowed access to personal items other than medication required at a specific time and with the approval of the test administrator. Items not permitted include, but are not limited to: cellular phones, exam notes, and study guides, unless specifically permitted by the NRPA.
- Candidates must not try to remove copies of exam questions and answers from the testing center and will not share or discuss the questions or answers seen in the exam with other candidates.
- After the exam ends, the administrator will come to the candidate's workstation and ensure his/her exam has ended properly. The exam score will display on the screen after the exam.
- **Candidate Privacy** – Exam results will be encrypted and transmitted to Pearson VUE and to the NRPA. The testing center does not keep any information other than when and where the exam was taken. The Pearson VUE Privacy Policy Statement provides additional information regarding this; you can obtain this by visiting the Pearson VUE Web site (www.pearsonvue.com) or by contacting a Pearson VUE Call Center.

Following the Examination and Scoring of Results

After finishing the examination, you are asked to complete a demographic survey. Upon completion of the survey, you will receive a score report. The report will include your results based on content area and your overall raw score; that is the number of questions correctly answered. This is for your records. The sum of your content area scores equals the number of items you answered correctly on the entire examination. The reason for reporting content area scores is to enable you to evaluate your performance on each part of the test.

NRPA will also be informed of the examination results (pass/fail only) for its applicants by the professional testing company. The passing score for the examination reflects the amount of knowledge a committee of experts has determined to be appropriate for certification. A criterion-referenced standard setting procedure and expert judgment was used to evaluate each item on the examination in order to identify the passing point. Your ability to pass the examination depends on the amount of knowledge you display, not the other individuals taking the test. Although different forms of the examination can vary somewhat in difficulty, passing the examination has historically required candidates to answer approximately 77 percent of the questions correctly. Therefore, you can expect the raw score required to pass to be within a few points of 97.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The NRPA does not discriminate among applicants on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, disability, or marital status.

Your Status as a NCB Certified Park and Recreation Executive

If you pass the CPRE Examination you will be awarded the CPRE designation as a Certified Park and Recreation Executive. NRPA will issue a Certified Park and Recreation Executive certificate to each individual who passes the examination approximately six (6) to eight (8) weeks after the results are released.

Your certification is valid for three (3) years. Professionals are required to obtain 3.0 CEUs from the date they passed the exam to the expiration date of their certification. CEUs taken must be classified within the Executive Level Core Competencies (Communication, Finance, HR, Planning and Policy-notice these are different from examination levels) at the time of renewal.

Certified Park and Recreation Executives are **required** to advise NRPA of any email or address changes.

Release of Information

The NRPA and its testing agency are committed to protecting the confidentiality of candidates' results and have adopted policies to ensure privacy. Information about candidates' examination results are not routinely released to any third party absent special, compelling circumstances. Successful candidates are added to the NRPA CPRE registry available at www.nrpa.org within 6-8 weeks of examination.

Registry

The online certification registry lists the name, city/state, contact information (email/phone), certification number and expiration date of all certified professionals in current standing. The registry provides verification of certification status to certified professionals, employers, state associations and others.

Certified professionals may choose to have their contact information (email/phone) removed from the registry by either logging into the online certification center at www.nrpa.org/certification/ or by sending an e-mail message to certification@nrpa.org

Scores Cancelled by NCB and NRPA

The NRPA's testing agency is obligated to report scores that accurately reflect the performance of each candidate. For this reason, the testing agency maintains exam administration and security standards that are designed to assure that all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and to prevent some candidates from gaining an unfair advantage over others due to irregularities or misconduct. The testing agency will routinely review irregularities and test scores suspected of unusual or non-standard circumstances and report such to the NCB through the NRPA.

The NRPA reserves the right to withhold or cancel exam scores if, in its sole opinion, there is reason to question their validity. Scores considered for cancellation by the NRPA may be grouped into two categories:

1. Suspected candidate misconduct. In such cases, the NRPA may initially withhold exam scores and notify the candidates that they have the opportunity to provide additional information as requested by the NRPA. The NRPA may also undertake a confidential review if the circumstances giving rise to the questionable score validity. If it is determined that there is sufficient cause to question score validity, the NRPA may cancel the score(s) and inform the involved parties.
2. Irregularities. Scores may be withheld and/or cancelled because of circumstances beyond candidate's control, such as defective exam materials or mistiming. In such cases, candidates will be informed and offered an opportunity to retake the examination if the NRPA determines that scores must be cancelled.

In addition to the reasons listed above, the NRPA may withhold or cancel examination results if, upon investigation, violation of NRPA policies outlined in this publication has been committed.

Appeals

Applicants desiring to appeal their examination score may write a letter of appeal to the National Certification Board. In the letter, candidates should state why they do not agree with the examination outcome. Written appeals must be received within three months of the examination date for the appeal to be considered. Send to CPRP & CPRE Certification Committee c/o National Recreation and Park Association, 22377 Belmont Ridge Road, Ashburn, VA 20148. Appeals will be brought before the certification committee on a quarterly basis.

SECTION II: GENERAL EXAMINATION PREPARATION

The study and test-taking advice described here may be helpful as you prepare for the examination. Try to be objective about yourself and your individual learning needs when you are deciding how best to proceed with your study.

Study Advice

Determine how you study best. Some students seem to learn faster by hearing the information, while others need to see it written or illustrated, and still others prefer to discuss material with colleagues. A combination of these alternatives can often produce the most effective study pattern. If you had success in lecture courses with little outside review, it may be that you need to hear information for best retention. If you find that you prefer to read material, then you might consider jotting down important facts on a 3x5 card. You can refresh your memory by periodically reviewing these cards. This technique is especially effective if you write the material thoughtfully and concisely, allowing you to digest the material through both reading and writing. You may wish to organize a study group or find a study partner. Once you decide on the method most effective and comfortable for you, focus on that preference and use the other techniques to complement it.

Plan your study schedule well in advance. Use learning techniques, such as reading or audio-visual aids. Be sure you find a quiet place to study where you will not be interrupted. We suggest you concentrate your study efforts on a few carefully chosen textbooks. Textbooks used in an accredited parks and recreation baccalaureate program are most useful.

Test-taking Advice

The advice offered here is presented primarily to familiarize you with the directions.

1. Read all instructions carefully.
2. For best results pace yourself by periodically checking your progress. This will allow you to make any necessary adjustments. Remember, the more questions you answer, the better your chances of achieving a passing score.
3. Be sure to record an answer for each question, even those of which you are uncertain. You can leave questions blank and come back. Avoid leaving any questions unanswered; this will maximize your chances of passing. It is better to guess than to leave a question unanswered; there is no penalty for guessing.

Exam Content

To begin your preparation in an informed and organized manner, you should know what to expect from the actual examination in terms of the content. Your score will be based on one hundred and twenty-five (125) four option, multiple-choice questions distributed according to the exam content outline in the following section. In addition to the 125 scored items, 25 pretest items will be embedded in your examination. Items are not identified as scored or pretest for the candidate, allowing meaningful data to be collected on the items. Pretesting is a standard testing procedure that is necessary to ensure that items used on the scored portion of the exam are accurate.

Additional information regarding the content of the examination you will be taking is presented in the following sections. This includes a content outline, sample questions, and answers. The content outline will give you a general impression of the examination and, with closer inspection, can give you specific study direction by revealing the relative importance given to each category on the examination.

Reference Materials - reference materials can be found online, in the NRPA headquarters, and most of the larger accredited university libraries would also carry these reference materials.

Moiseichik, M. (2010) Management of Parks and Recreation Agencies (3rd Edition). Ashburn, VA: NRPA

Warren, R., Rea, P., & Payne, S. (2007). Park and Recreation Maintenance Management, (4th ed.) Champaign, IL: Sagamore Publishing Inc.

Kraus, R. & Curtis J. (2000). Creative Management in Recreation, Parks and Leisure Services (6th & 7th ed). St. Louis, MO: McGraw-Hill.

Flynn, R. (1993). Facility Planning for Physical Education, Recreation and Athletics. Reston, VA: American Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

Noe, R. (1997). Readings in Human Resource Management. Irwin.

Hurd, A., Mulvaney, M., Rossman, J.R. & McKinney, W. (2007) The Official Study Guide for the Certified Park and Recreation Professional Examination (3rd ed.) Ashburn, VA: NRPA

Peterson, J.A., Hronek, B.B., & Garges, J.R. (2008). Risk Management: Park, Recreation, and Leisure Services (5th ed). Champaign, IL: Sagamore Publishing Inc.

Goodman & McGregor (1994). Legal Liability and Risk Management. New York, Ontario: Risk Management Associates.

Rodney, L. & Toalson, R. (1985). Administration of Recreational Parks and Leisure. Macmillan.

Rossman, J.R. & Schlatter, B.E. (2011). Recreation Programming: Designing and Staging Leisure Experiences (6th ed.). Champaign, IL: Sagamore Publishing

Operational Guidelines for Grounds Maintenance.

Detailed Exam Content Outline

On any examination form, all of the tasks under each portion of the outline may not be evaluated, and any combination of tasks can be tested. For example, the items testing finance may address any of the four tasks listed in this detailed outline. It is unlikely that any task would be tested more than once.

Responsibilities in Communication - 18%

- Collaborate with external groups, committees, advisory boards, and councils
- Formalize relationships with outside organizations (e.g., leagues, associations, clubs, non-profits, school districts, faith-based organizations)
- Develop marketing strategic plan (e.g., press releases, advertising, presentations)
- Foster internal/external departmental relationships
- Provide input for reports
- Communicate organization's vision and mission to personnel and stakeholders

Responsibilities in Finance - 11%

- Research, provide input, or prepare requests for alternative support (e.g., grants, donations, sponsorships, in-kind services, matching funds)
- Conduct cost recovery analysis for a specific area in order to recommend fee schedules
- Manage area specific contracts
- Prepare and manage budget for areas of responsibility

Responsibilities in Human Resources - 23%

- Perform personnel actions(e.g., disciplinary actions, coaching, recognitions, terminating, grievances)
- Develop job descriptions
- Evaluate personnel performance (e.g., develop goals, recommendations, work plans)
- Design and conduct training for staff, board members, advocacy groups, volunteers
- Enforce HR/Union policies and procedures
- Supervise interns and field workers (e.g., coach, mentor, evaluate)
- Manage time cards, payroll and/or employee records
- Conduct hiring process for new employees (e.g., recruitment, reviewing applications, interviewing, hiring)

Responsibilities in Operations - 31%

- Enforce participant Code of Conduct
- Manage properties (e.g., parks, facilities, areas)
- Monitor capital improvements (e.g., renovations, building new facilities)
- Implement emergency management plan
- Conduct inventories of programs (internal and external) being offered
- Manage customer relationships (e.g., service recovery, recognition, retention)
- Provide input for risk management, safety, security plans, policies and procedures
- Collect input and update standard operating procedures/manuals
- Compile adequate information to defend agency in the event of accidents, risk management context
- Develop energy efficient and environmentally friendly procedures (e.g., disposal methods, purchasing of efficient supplies, Green initiatives, LEED, recycling)
- Analyze operating data (e.g., attendance, revenue, expenditures, maintenance, marketing)
- Implement plan to include participants with disabilities

Responsibilities in Planning - 18%

- Assist with development of emergency management plan
- Provide input/updates for agency strategic/master plan (e.g., area specific work plan)
- Identify needs for new facilities, services, and capital improvements
- Analyze trends and best practices
- Develop comprehensive program plan
- Collect public input (e.g., public hearings, focus groups, surveys)
- Develop a plan to include participants with disabilities

Sample Items

1. Communication

Periodic meetings among personnel from various recreational providers in a particular community promotes the

- A. staffing of each provider's programs.
- B. standardization of fee schedules and budgets among providers.
- C. development of personnel intervention procedures for each provider.
- D. coordination of activities and services offered by each provider.

2. Finance

When an individual wishes to donate securities, stocks and bonds to an agency, they are donating

- A. assets.
- B. commodities.
- C. current income.
- D. personal property.

3. Human Resource

A patron lodges a complaint alleging a golf pro made inappropriate sexual remarks to customers in a pro shop. The city has a zero tolerance policy for sexual harassment. The first thing the agency should do is

- A. dismiss the golf pro in accordance with the city's zero tolerance policy.
- B. email the person making the complaint to verify the allegations.
- C. put the golf pro on paid administrative leave and conduct an investigation.
- D. suspend the golf pro and direct staff to write a formal letter of apology.

4. Operations

Which of the following is generally considered the most effective document to limit the ability of a participant to bring litigation against an agency?

- A. agency's policy and procedures manual
- B. a waiver contract
- C. facility inspection form
- D. brokers certificate of insurance

5. Planning

A park and recreation professional is preparing a capital improvement plan. Which of the following should the professional do to develop a program for improvements?

- A. justify and prioritize by cost of projects
- B. give first priority to last year's unfunded projects
- C. recommend incremental increases to existing projects
- D. assess and prioritize needs

Answers

- 1. D
- 2. A
- 3. C
- 4. B
- 5. D

Notes