

CAAMA Exam Changes Format To Ensure Rigor and Fairness

The essay portion of AAMA's credentialing exam has been eliminated, effective January 1, 2012, CAAMA Committee Chair Charles Benninger, CFAAMA, has announced. In lieu of the essay questions, additional multiple choice questions will be added.

AAMA's committee that is charged with oversight of the CAAMA examination process, the CAAMA Committee, approved the change "to minimize AAMA's legal exposure while maximizing benefits to our examinees, Benninger explained. "Our goal is to contribute to a rigorous and fair examination process that is objective in its procedure and fair in its results."

A side benefit of the new process is that examinees will be able to receive faster reporting of their results, as the exams will be graded technologically; essays will not have to be circulated to multiple evaluators to ensure absence of bias, AAMA Education Director Guy L. Snyder, CFAAMA, explained. There will be no change to the recertification process.

In recent years, the CAAMA examination process was amended to strengthen the value of the credential and accommodate members' individual needs, providing for:

- A triennial recertification component.
- Completion of the examination online.
- The ability to take the examination in foreign countries, onboard ship, etc.

Throughout the history of professional credentials in the United States, they have been impacted by changing technology and an evolving legal climate. Recent trends have focused on more objective ways to measure knowledge, with leading credentials throughout the professions eliminating essay exams to assure that results are uniform, objective and fair. Though originally essay exams were utilized to evaluate communications skills, in recent years essay evaluation has come to be perceived as inconsistent and subjective, with some graders evaluating writing ability, others evaluating content, and others both.

The purposes of AAMA's credentialing process continue to be the same as those when the program was initiated in 1995: to provide a rigorous, fair process to evaluate the professional readiness of healthcare administrators by testing their awareness of the accepted body of knowledge of their profession. Stated goals are to:

- Visibly demonstrate an advanced level of knowledge in the healthcare administration profession.
- Show commitment to professional development and continuing education.
- Gain personal satisfaction from individual achievement - certification is a voluntary program, which allows dedicated professionals to validate their knowledge, skill, and abilities.
- Identify with a distinguished group who has demonstrated the experience, knowledge and determination to raise the standards throughout the industry and increase respect and prestige of the healthcare administrator.
- Earn recognition from colleagues and peers in the private, public and federal sectors - certification is considered a plus on a resume.

Questions about the new process should be directed to Benninger at cobenninger@aol.com or Snyder, at guy@aameda.org.