

2020

Certification Policies and Procedures Handbook

Foundational

aPHR™

aPHRi™

Professional

PHR®

PHR
ca®

PHRi™

Strategic

SPHR®

SPHRi™

GPHR®

Effective: February 1, 2019

All policies and procedures in this Handbook are effective as of the Effective Date indicated above and supersede previous policies and procedures. The Handbook outlines the application process and testing and scoring methodology. To take an HR Certification Institute® (HRCI®) exam, candidates must follow all applicable procedures and meet all eligibility requirements.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO	4
HR CERTIFICATION INSTITUTE® (HRCI®).....	5
Accreditation	5
Certification Exams	5
EXAM DELIVERY	6
Impartiality Statement	6
Nondiscrimination Statement.....	6
Terms and Conditions.....	6
SUMMARY OF THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS	7
EXAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.....	8
“Professional-Level” Experience	8
Documenting Work Experience.....	8
For SPHRi Candidates Only: Documenting Knowledge of Local Employment Laws.....	9
APPLY FOR AN HRCI EXAM	10
Application Process.....	10
Additional Forms	10
Legal Name	10
Email Address.....	11
Methods of Payment.....	11
Incomplete Payment	11
Vouchers.....	11
Application Confirmation	12
After Applying for the Exam.....	12
! Name Changes	12
Address and Phone Changes	13
Application Review.....	13
! Exam Application Audit.....	13
! Request for Reconsideration (Appeal).....	14
EXAM TEST CENTERS AND APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING	15
Test Center Locations	15
Exam Appointment Scheduling	15
Exam Appointment Rescheduling.....	16
Rescheduling Process.....	16
! Refunds.....	17
! No Show Status	17
! Medical or Personal Emergency	17
Exam and Administrative Fees	17
Continuous Testing	18
Special Testing Accommodation Requests	18

EXAM OVERVIEW.....	19
About the Exams.....	19
Employment Law Changes.....	20
How the Exams Are Developed	20
Pre-Test Questions	20
How the Passing Score Is Set.....	20
Why Are “Scaled Scores” Used?.....	21
Preparing for the Exam.....	21
Build Your Own Bundle	21
Optional Services: Second Chance Insurance (SCI).....	22
! Exam Type Change	22
! Exam Eligibility Extension.....	22
Summary of Exam Application Options:	23
ON EXAM DAY	24
Identification (ID) Requirements.....	24
Signature and Photo	25
Hyphenated Names	25
Test Center Rules	26
Registration Processes	26
Comfort Aids	27
Exam Processes for All Test Centers	27
Exam Security and Cheating	27
AFTER THE EXAM	28
Exam Scoring and Official Results Reports.....	28
Digital Badge.....	28
Optional Paper Certificate.....	28
Testing Experience.....	28
Certification Program Feedback	29
Understanding the Exam Results Report	29
Retaking the Exam	29
After Certification: Use of the Designation	30
Verification Policy.....	31
Confidentiality	31
Exam Results.....	31
Application Status.....	31
Aggregate Data	31
APPENDIX	32
Pearson VUE Regional Contact Centers.....	32
Code of Ethical and Professional Responsibility.....	32
HRCI Complaints and Disciplinary Policy	34

! Denotes possible and important scenarios a candidate might encounter that fall out of the “normal” candidate application process.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



Welcome!

Congratulations on taking your first steps toward earning a world-class credential from HR Certification Institute® (HRCI®). The HRCI community is made up of dedicated HR professionals – just like you – who are the best and brightest in our profession. Earning a certification means you are serious about your HR or management career and making a difference in your organization.

Founded on a more than 40-year commitment to credentialing excellence, HRCI has a suite of certifications for HR and non-HR professionals who understand the value of minimizing workplace risk, maximizing employee performance and driving business results. HRCI is constantly introducing innovative ways to better serve the global HR practitioner.

In this Handbook, you will find an overview of the HRCI certification portfolio, eligibility requirements, and guidance on the certification process to help you select the HRCI certification type that is perfect for you.

Thank you for being a champion of people and organizations and for making HRCI certification an important part of your HR career journey.



Amy S. Dufrane, Ed.D., SPHR, CAE

HR CERTIFICATION INSTITUTE® (HRCI®)

HRCI was established in 1976 as an internationally recognized certifying organization for the HR profession. More than 500,000 professionals from over 120 countries have earned certifications from HRCI. Our certifications represent a high level of professional achievement and are valued by employers and organizations across the globe.

Accreditation

The aPHR™, PHR®, PHRca®, PHRi™, SPHR®, SPHRI™, and GPHR® are all accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). NCCA is an independent, third-party organization that accredits more than 300 programs from 120 organizations in a variety of professions and industries. The recently introduced aPHRi™ is designed to meet the high-quality standards established by NCCA. Certification programs must demonstrate compliance with rigorous standards that represent the best practices in the professional certification industry to earn and maintain accreditation status.

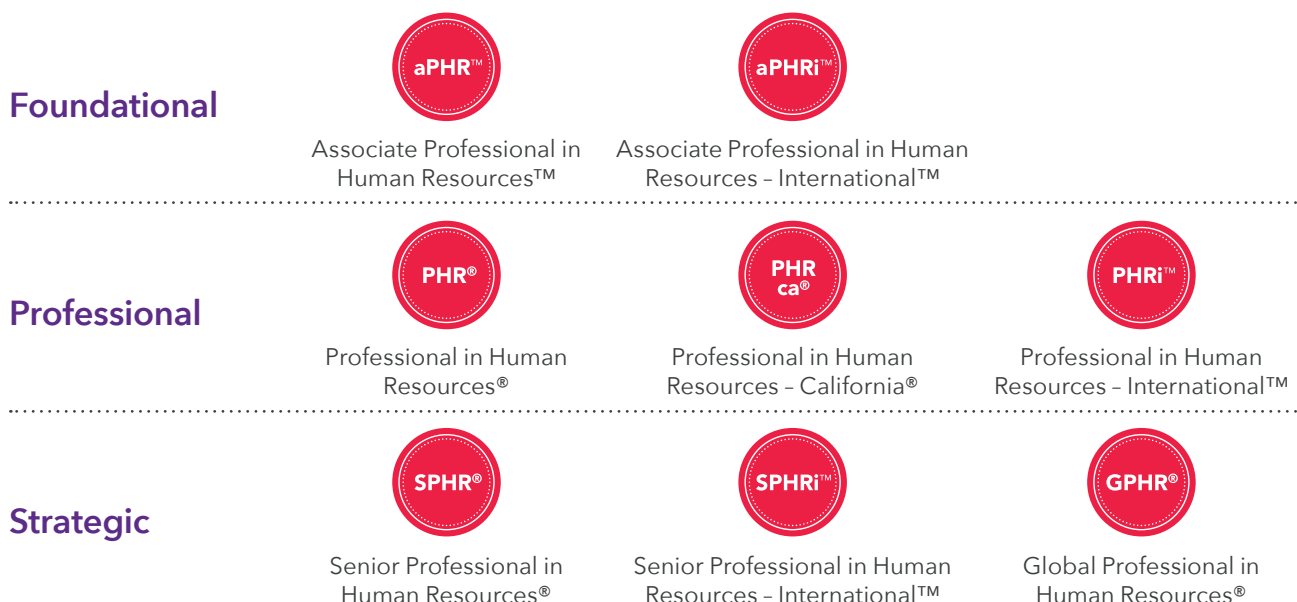
For more information on NCCA accreditation, visit www.credentialingexcellence.org.

Additionally, the PHRi and SPHRI are both accredited by the International Accreditation Service (IAS). IAS is an independent, third-party organization that accredits certification programs that have demonstrated compliance with the internationally recognized ISO/IEC 17024 standard.

For more information on IAS accreditation, visit www.iasonline.org/services/personnel-certification-bodies

Certification Exams

We offer certification exams for every stage of the HR profession:



For detailed information about our Certification Programs and Exam Types, please visit www.hrci.org.

EXAM DELIVERY

HRCI partners with Pearson VUE for exam delivery. Pearson VUE provides flexible delivery models and customized programs and continues to be one of the largest and most secure test delivery systems in the world. Exam dates for all HRCI certifications are available on a first-come, first-served basis at approved testing centers. HRCI monitors test center usage closely and periodically evaluates test center locations based on customer volume.

Impartiality Statement

HRCI and its management adhere to principles of impartiality to ensure that its certification and other activities are undertaken fairly and objectively. HRCI is intentionally structured to segregate responsibilities within the organization in order to facilitate this commitment and to continually monitor processes to that end. Any complaint or indication of concern over impartiality is taken seriously and acted on for immediate resolution.

Nondiscrimination Statement

We do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, gender, gender identity, age, religion, marital status, sexual orientation or any other status that is protected by applicable U.S. laws.

Terms and Conditions

As part of the certification program application process, you must acknowledge that you have both read and understood the following key items:

1. Global Privacy Policy
2. Use of Information Policy
3. Code of Ethical and Professional Responsibility
4. Certification Policies and Procedures Handbook

In addition, you must agree to the following statements:

- I agree to inform HR Certification Institute, without delay, of matters that can affect my capability to continue to fulfill the certification requirements.
- In the event of suspension of my certification, due to not recertifying within the 3-year cycle, I will refrain from any use and/or further promotion of myself as certified once the credential is suspended.
- In the event of withdrawal or revocation of my certification, I will refrain from using or referencing such certified status in professional and social media venues.
- I will comply with the relevant provisions of the certification. I will only make claims regarding certification that are within the scope for which the certification has been granted.
- I will not use the certification in such a manner as to bring the certification body into disrepute, and will not make any statement regarding the certification which HRCI considers misleading or unauthorized.
- I will discontinue the use of all claims to certification that contain any reference to HRCI or the certification upon being in suspension or the withdrawal of such certification issued by HRCI.
- I will not use my certification status or the certificate credentials in a misleading manner.
- I certify that I will not provide, receive, or release any confidential examination information and/or materials (including, but not limited to: recording, copying, disclosing, sharing, publishing, or otherwise transmitting exam information by any means and for any purpose) or participate in fraudulent test-taking practices.

SUMMARY OF THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The following steps are required to earn a credential from HRCI. Each section or step is outlined in detail in this Handbook:



① EXAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS



② APPLY FOR AN HRCI EXAM



③ EXAM TEST CENTERS AND APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING



④ EXAM OVERVIEW



⑤ ON EXAM DAY



⑥ AFTER THE EXAM

HRCI offers year-round testing. Once a candidate meets the eligibility requirement(s), the candidate can submit an exam application at the candidate's convenience and then must select a test date and test center location within the exam eligibility period of 120 days.

EXAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS



HRCI exams are rigorous and primarily experience-based. In order to take an exam, candidates must meet certain criteria. These eligibility requirements can be found by visiting <https://www.hrci.org/our-programs/which-certification-is-right-for-you>.

“Professional-Level” Experience

HRCI defines “professional-level” HR experience as:

- The ability to use independent judgment and discretion in performing work duties;
- Some authority for decision-making;
- In-depth work requirements, such as data gathering, analysis and interpretation;
- Interaction with people at multiple levels including decision-makers; and
- Individual accountability for results.

Eligible candidates have acquired the minimum years of HR experience based on their education level for the specific certification they select. An HR-themed college degree is not a requirement. Professional-level HR experience is required for PHR, PHRca, SPHR, GPHR, PHRi, and SPHRi as these exams measure HR experience and knowledge gained on the job and through formal education.

Individuals who fall into one of the below categories may want to consider the aPHR or aPHRi exams:

- Managers whose main job is in a function other than HR.
- Entry-level HR practitioners (i.e. HR clerks or HR assistants).
- Those interested in transitioning into the HR profession.

Documenting Work Experience

You must complete the Work Experience section of the application to document that the amount of professional-level work experience you have meets the eligibility requirement. The required years of HR work experience do not need to be current or sequential. However, recent experience will be more helpful for the exam.

For SPHRi Candidates Only: Documenting Knowledge of Local Employment Laws

You are required to select from one of these four (4) options during the application process and may be asked for documentation confirming that you:

- Hold a local or national HR certification (such as PHR, SPHR, GPHR, CHRP, CIPM, CAHRI-CP, etc.) that includes knowledge of local employment laws in your country of residence.
- Hold a bachelor's degree (or global equivalent) or higher in Human Resources.
- Have successfully completed a college or university-level course in Employment Law.
- Have successfully completed an education or training program in Employment Law.

* Likely sources for Employment Law courses and training are associations (local HR associations and American Chambers of Commerce, for example) law firms, colleges and universities, or training firms that specialize in HR topics.

Criteria for a course that meets the Employment Law requirement:

- May be delivered in a classroom setting or virtually.
- Must provide a comprehensive review of employment laws that includes the major functional areas of Human Resources (hiring, pay/ benefits, employee/labor relations, termination, health and safety).
- Must cover foundational knowledge ("legal updates" do not qualify).
- Must be conducted by a qualified expert in the field of employment law (such as an attorney or professor with appropriate credentials).
- Must contain a minimum of five (5) hours of instructional time (not including breaks, registration or evaluation periods).
- Must provide a certificate of successful completion.

HRCI performs random audits of all applications. If your application is selected for a random audit, you must provide official documentation to indicate that you have gained knowledge of local employment law in one or more of the four ways mentioned above.



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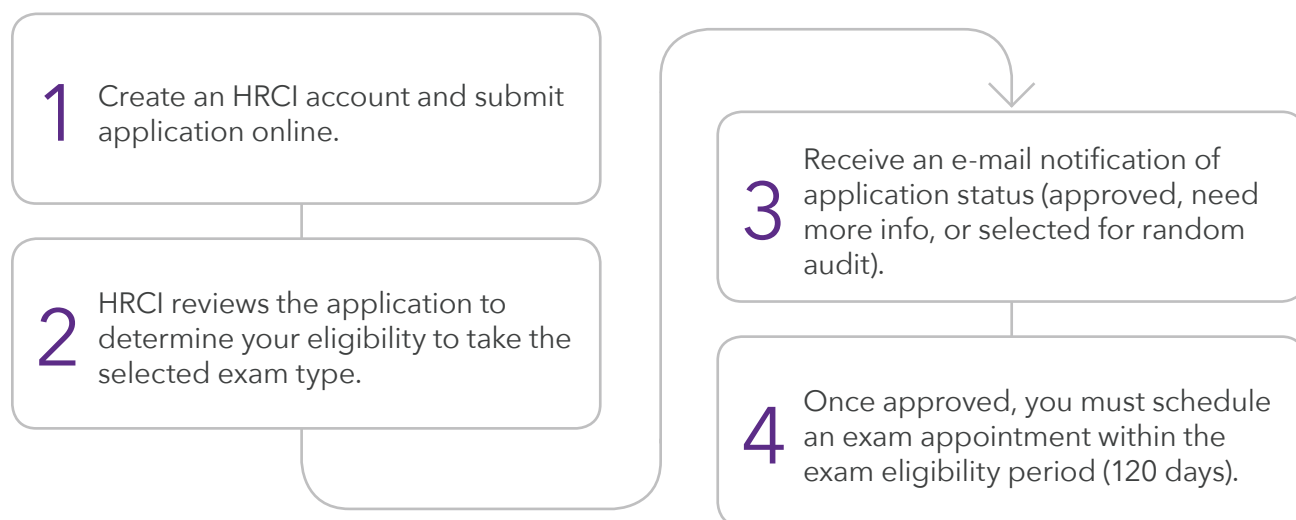


APPLY FOR AN HRCI EXAM



Application Process

The application process is as follows:



Note: Certain countries where candidates reside might be under a "USA Trade Sanction" (embargo). Please visit www.hrci.org/embargo for the most current list of impacted countries. If you live in one of these countries, please contact HRCI immediately at info@HRCI.org for additional assistance.

Additional Forms

To find any application-related forms you might need, please visit:

<https://www.hrci.org/resources/forms>.

Legal Name

When creating your HRCI profile and submitting your application, you must use your full legal name including middle name (written in Latin characters) as it appears on your official, unexpired, valid, government-issued ID. This is the official name that will allow you to be eligible to take the exam and that will appear in the HRCI Directory of Certified Professionals as well as on your digital badge once you successfully pass the exam(s).

Email Address

HRCI will use your email address as the primary identifier in your online profile and for communications. Because your email address will be attached to all online records, it is best to choose a permanent email address for this purpose. If you use a work email address, please remember to update it if you change jobs. HRCI also accepts your mobile number as a means of verification and communication with you. Please complete and update the mobile telephone section accordingly.

Methods of Payment



Fees are subject to change at any time and without prior notice. Please refer to www.hrci.org for the most current information about fees. All payments and fees must be in U.S. Dollars (USD). HRCI accepts VISA, MasterCard, American Express, money order, certified check, cashier's check and company/organization checks. Certified and cashier's checks must be made payable to HR Certification Institute, in U.S. Dollars (USD) and drawn on a U.S. bank. Cash or personal checks are not accepted. Note: HRCI cannot begin reviewing an application until all payments have been received and processed.

For payments by certified check or money order, candidates must complete the online application, send payment via mail and include a photocopy of the application summary page and the email address for each candidate with payment. Note: A single check in U.S. Dollars (USD) with the exact and total amount may be used to pay for multiple applications or a group of candidates.

Incomplete Payment

HRCI will return certified checks, cashier's checks and money orders to the sender if sent without proper candidate identification. Please mail payments to: HR Certification Institute, Accounting Department, 1725 Duke Street, Suite 700, Alexandria, VA 22314 USA.

Vouchers

HRCI offers a pre-paid voucher option which provides a unique code to be used in exchange for exam products. Vouchers do not have a monetary value and must be used for the purpose or program issued.

A voucher is valid for 365 calendar days from the date of purchase. During the 365 days, vouchers are nonrefundable in whole or in part and must be redeemed in a single transaction (no remaining credit if not used in whole). Vouchers cannot be combined with any other discount offer or promotions.

Exam candidates who redeem vouchers for payment must follow all applicable eligibility and exam rules. If a candidate does not take the exam within the application eligibility period (120 days), the candidate must reapply to take an exam and pay all applicable fees using a new voucher or another payment method.

The voucher's expiration date ends its validity and cannot be redeemed or be of any value to a candidate or organization that purchased the voucher(s).



Application Confirmation

HRCI and most of its partners and vendors communicate using e-mail. Therefore, you must provide an active email address in your application to ensure you receive all communications including notifications, confirmations and reminders.

Within one (1) business day of processing payment, HRCI will send you an auto-generated email to confirm receipt of your application. You will receive a separate e-mail notification with the status of the application (approved, need more info, or selected for random audit). Once eligibility is approved, you may schedule an exam appointment within the application approval's eligibility period.

After Applying for the Exam

Processing Time for Application-Related Items and Forms:

Type of Application	Processing Time
Application that does not require additional documents or is not selected for random auditing	One (1) business day
Application with a Special Testing Accommodation Request Form	Ten (10) business days (excluding weekends and holidays)
Application that is selected for Random audit	Ten (10) business days (excluding weekends and holidays)

! Name Changes

Once you create your HRCI profile and submit your application, you must contact HRCI if there is a mistake or your name legally changes. To change a legal name, follow this process:

- Complete the [Name Change Request Form](#).
- Provide a scanned copy of a certified or notarized document, marriage certificate, or government-issued ID.
- All the above items must be submitted via email to info@hrci.org. Once the change is made, HRCI will notify you via e-mail.

If you have an exam already scheduled, you must submit the change request at least five (5) business days before your scheduled exam appointment.

Note: HRCI does not return documents. Please do not send original, certified or notarized documents.



Address and Phone Changes

If your mailing address and/or telephone number changes, please log into your HRCI account and update your profile accordingly.

If you need to update your email address, please send a request to info@hrci.org for your e-mail to be changed.

Application Review

HRCI may deny an application and set its status to “ineligible,” if any of the following is determined:

- Documented experience fails to meet the eligibility requirements.
- Information on the exam application has been falsified or misrepresented.
- Documentation necessary to determine eligibility is not submitted.

Exam Application Audit

HRCI performs random audits of all applications to verify the accuracy of the information submitted. A candidate’s application may be selected for audit at any point in the initial or subsequent application process. A candidate is notified by e-mail no later than one (1) business day if selected for random audit.

If selected, the candidate must submit one e-mail that includes all of the following items in order to verify that the application meets the eligibility requirements for the selected exam type. The e-mail with attachments must be sent to examaudit@hrci.org.

- [The Exam Application Audit Form](#)
- Official job description(s)
- Educational transcript/diploma
- Local Employment Law document (SPHRi only)

Once all required items are e-mailed to HRCI, we will review them within ten (10) business days. If you are unable to provide the required information, your application will be set to “ineligible” status. Your exam fee will be refunded less the application fee and any special fee(s), as applicable.

Refunds may be considered if an application is made ineligible; however, a processing fee will be applied. For a detailed list of all fees, please visit www.hrci.org.



Request for Reconsideration (Appeal)

A request for reconsideration allows an individual to appeal an adverse non-disciplinary decision made as part of the exam eligibility, exam testing and recertification processes.

The types of items that fall into this policy are:

- Deemed ineligible to take an exam.
- Concerns about an unsuccessful exam result.
- Test site issue resulting in an unsuccessful result.
- Rescheduling of exam by testing vendor.
- Medical or personal emergency.
- Denial of recertification application.

A request must be made using the Request for Reconsideration (Appeal) Form and submitted to the Sr. Director, Client Relations & Services within ten (10) business days of receiving the adverse determination. The written request must include date of determination, details of the circumstances, the reason for the appeal (including relevant supporting materials not previously submitted), and individual's email address, postal address, and a phone number at which the individual can be reached.

The request will be reviewed by the Sr. Director, Client Relations & Services who will obtain and review any additional information relevant to the appeal within ten (10) business days of receipt of request. If there is any reason for which impartiality might be reasonably be questioned, the director will recuse themselves.

The Sr. Director, Client Relations & Services will notify the individual of the decision within five (5) business days of the determination. The determination will be final. There shall be no subsequent discriminatory action against the appellant.



EXAM TEST CENTERS AND APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING



Test Center Locations

HRCI partners with Pearson VUE to deliver certification exams. Pearson VUE will notify you of any changes to test site availability due to bad weather, technical issues or other unscheduled events.

If there is severe weather, a local emergency or a national emergency near the testing center, go to www.pearsonvue.com/hrci/ for updates on closures and delays, or contact your Regional Contact Center for international test site information.

You will not be assessed a rescheduling fee if Pearson VUE cancels an exam due to severe weather or a local or national emergency.

Exam Appointment Scheduling

We encourage you to schedule your exam appointment date as soon as your exam application is approved. Scheduling early increases the chance you will receive your preferred testing date, time and location.

Exam appointments may be scheduled online. Online scheduling is the preferred method, because it is faster and more efficient. Please note, if you choose to schedule your exam appointment by phone, Pearson VUE will charge an additional administration fee.

To schedule an appointment, visit www.pearsonvue.com/hrci/ and have the following information ready:

- Your official name exactly as it appears on your valid, unexpired government-issued ID (written in Latin characters). This must match the name used on your application/exam approval.
- Your HRCI 9-digit Eligibility ID located in your online application summary.
- Your daytime phone number.
- The name of the exam sponsor (HRCI).
- The exam type for which you are approved (aPHR, aPHRi, PHR, PHRca, PHRi, SPHR, SPHRi, GPHR).
- Your preferred appointment date, time and location.

Note: You must have an email address to schedule your exam appointment online. Also, select one to two alternate dates, times and locations, in the event your preferred choice is not available.

Save the Pearson VUE confirmation e-mail as proof of your appointment in case there is an issue on your exam day.

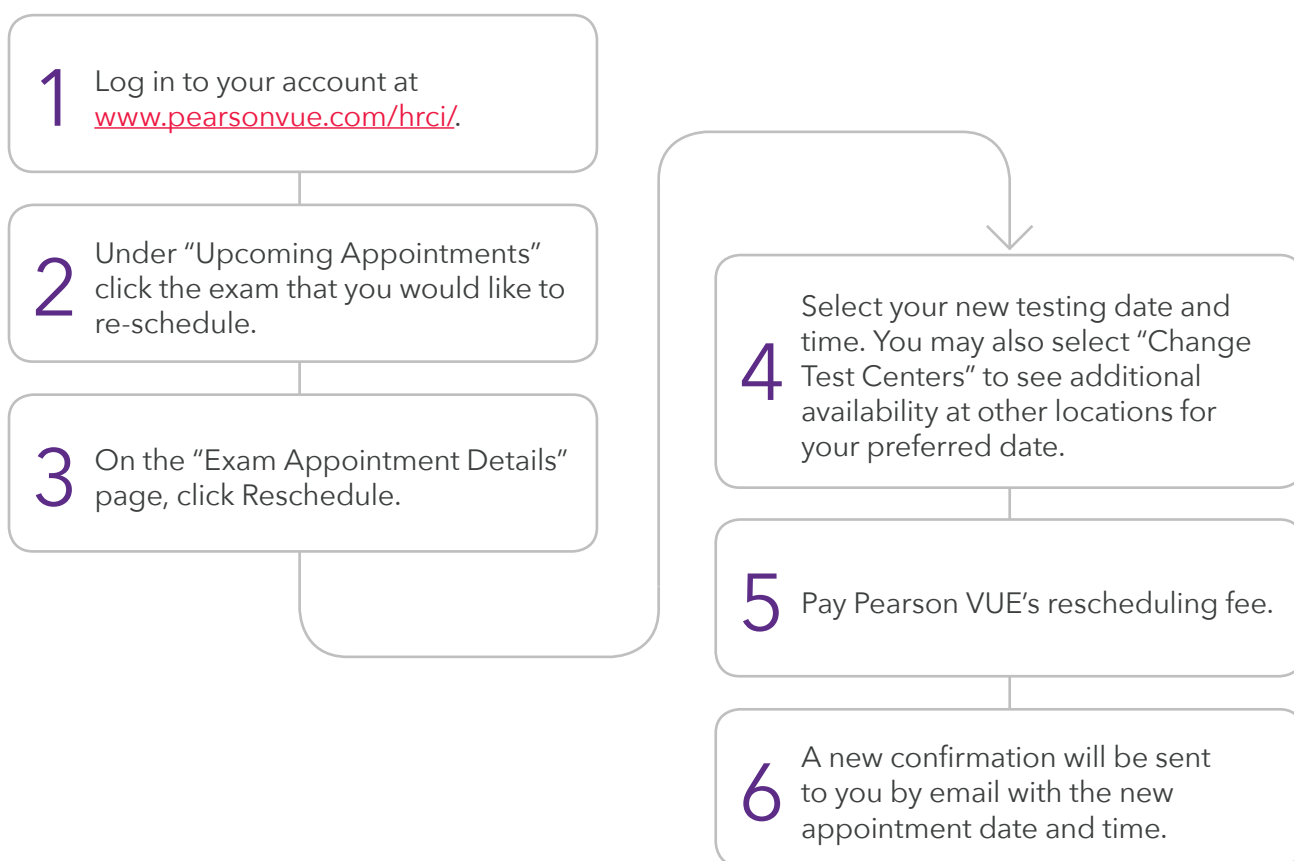
Exam Appointment Rescheduling

Rescheduling Process

If you reschedule your exam appointment, you must pay Pearson VUE's nonrefundable fee each time you change/cancel your appointment. You are not guaranteed a new appointment if you try to reschedule.

You must reschedule your exam appointment at least two (2) business days before your original appointment or all fees will be forfeited.

Reschedule Your Exam Appointment Online



Pearson VUE will immediately send a confirmation email with your new appointment information. If you do not receive the confirmation email, contact Pearson VUE immediately. If you have an approved special testing accommodation and want to reschedule your appointment, it is your responsibility to verify with Pearson VUE that the rescheduled exam appointment with this accommodation has been processed.



! Refunds

Once an exam application is approved, no refunds will be made if you no longer wish to take the exam.

Refunds may be considered if an application is made ineligible. However, a processing fee will be applied. Fees are subject to change at any time and without prior notice. For a detailed list of all fees, please visit www.hrci.org.

Note: In cases of an approved refund, the processing of such is reverted to the original method of payment. It may take up to two (2) billing cycles for a refund to be reflected on a credit card statement.

! No Show Status

You are considered a “No Show” if you:

- Are an inactive candidate (no response, no scheduling, expired eligibility).
- Arrive more than 15 minutes late for the exam appointment.
- Do not appear for the exam appointment.
- Do not have proper and valid identification (ID).
- Do not cancel the exam appointment at least two (2) business days before the scheduled exam.

! Medical or Personal Emergency

A medical or personal emergency is an unplanned event within two (2) days (48 hours) of the exam appointment that prevents you from taking the exam. A medical or personal emergency may apply on a case-by-case basis to you or to one of your immediate family members (spouse, child or parent as defined by the Family Medical Leave Act). Minor medical events or personal obligations that may happen on or near the exam date are not considered medical or personal emergencies.

If you encounter a medical or personal emergency, please contact our Client Advocacy Team by email at info@hrci.org or by phone +1.571.551.6700 or +1.866.898.4724. You must do so within 30 calendar days of the missed event. HRCI will work with each candidate on a case-by-case basis to decide best course of action. No refunds will be provided.

Note: If you miss your exam appointment because you are too busy or are unprepared, you will not receive a refund or any other exception. Work emergencies or projects are not considered personal emergencies.

Exam and Administrative Fees

Fees are subject to change at any time and without prior notice. Please refer to www.hrci.org, for the most current information available about fees.



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Continuous Testing

Candidates must meet all eligibility requirements to take HRCI exams. An exam appointment may be scheduled as soon as the application is approved.

An application is approved when the status in the online application is “Eligible-Pending Appointment.”

The exam eligibility is valid for 120 calendar days from the application approval date. This means that the exam must be scheduled and taken within those 120 calendar days.

If a candidate applies for an exam and is deemed eligible but does not schedule a date to take the exam within the 120 calendar days, the exam application eligibility expires and the candidate will need to reapply and pay all applicable fees.

Once an exam application is approved, neither exam-type changes or refunds will be made if a candidate no longer wishes to take the exam.

Special Testing Accommodation Requests

HRCI accommodates candidates with disabilities who need special arrangements to take their exam and will coordinate with its testing partner to provide reasonable auxiliary aids and services. A candidate must request special accommodations at the same time when completing the application by marking the appropriate box on the application form and submitting the [Special Testing Accommodation Request Form](#).

The candidate completes the applicant’s portion of the form. A professionally licensed or credentialed individual must complete the Documentation of Disability-Related Needs section of the Special Testing Accommodation Request Form. The description provided must include the type of disability, an explanation of past accommodations made for the disability and the specific testing accommodations requested.

If a Special Testing Accommodation Request Form is submitted after having scheduled an appointment, the candidate must apply for a special accommodation within the exam eligibility period. The candidate must also cancel that appointment at least two (2) business days before they are scheduled to test. A late accommodation request is handled on a case-by-case basis.

Once HRCI receives the completed Special Accommodation Form, HRCI will coordinate with its testing partner to set up the accommodation. You will be sent an email notification from HRCI advising you to proceed and schedule a new appointment.

Note: HRCI partners with Pearson VUE to deliver certification exams. Pearson VUE may not be able to fulfill all special accommodation requests. Additionally, Pearson VUE will not be able to comply with the request if the operating conditions, local laws or customs make the request unlawful, impossible or economically unfeasible.



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EXAM OVERVIEW



About the Exams

HRCI exams contain a variety of questions or item types that require you to use your HR experience to select the best answer. Each exam includes scored questions and pre-test questions randomly distributed throughout the exam. Pre-test questions are not counted in the final results. The length of time given to complete an exam depends on the exam type selected. Please visit www.hrci.org for additional information.

Traditional multiple choice	These items contain a stem (or premise) and four (4) answer choices including only one (1) correct answer.
Multiple choice, multiple response	These are like multiple choice items except there are two (2) or more correct answers. The item will tell you how many correct options there are.
Fill in the blank	You will be asked to provide a numeral, word, or phrase to complete the sentence.
Drag and drop	You will be asked to click on certain pieces of information and drag them with your cursor to place them in the correct position.
Scenarios	Scenario questions present typical HR situations, followed by a series of exam items based on the scenario. These scenarios require you to integrate facts from different subject areas.

All questions are classified based on one of the following cognitive levels:

- **knowledge/comprehension:** recalling factual material, such as definitions
- **application/problem solving:** applying familiar principles or generalizations to solve real-life problems
- **synthesis/evaluation:** combining different elements and using critical thinking skills to solve a complex problem

For more details and examples, go to:

<https://www.hrci.org/how-to-get-certified/preparation-overview/how-the-exams-are-structured>

Note: The Appointment Length noted in your Pearson VUE confirmation email is longer than the actual exam time. The Appointment Length includes time for all components of the testing appointment, including time to read and agree to the exam confidentiality statement, take the tutorial, and complete the optional end-of-exam survey.

Learn more about all HRCI exams including a breakdown of exam topics and eligibility requirements by visiting <https://www.hrci.org/our-programs/our-certifications/overview>.

Employment Law Changes

Employment laws change constantly. Candidates are responsible for knowing the HR laws and regulations that are in effect at the time of their exam.

How the Exams Are Developed

HRCI follows certification industry best practices to create and update all exams. HR subject matter experts (SMEs) are involved in every step of the exam development process which is overseen by a professional testing organization. To learn more about the exam development process, visit <https://www.hrci.org/how-to-get-certified/preparation-overview/how-the-exams-are-structured>.

Pre-Test Questions

HRCI is committed to offering exams that contain current and relevant content. We achieve this goal by reviewing current questions and developing new ones to reflect changes in the profession. All exams include new questions that have not been used on previous versions of the exam type. These items are known as “pre-test” questions.

HRCI includes pre-test questions in its exams to gather valuable data about the new questions before they are included in future tests. These pre-test questions are:

- Not distinguished from others.
- Scattered throughout the exam so you will answer them with the same care in which you would when answering scored questions.
- Not counted or included in determining the final exam score.

How the Passing Score Is Set

HRCI uses the modified Angoff method to set the cut score on every exam, which is a common, industry standard method of setting cut scores on credentialing exams. The Angoff method essentially uses field experts to determine the difficulty of each question. It defines the cutoff score as the lowest score a minimally acceptable candidate is likely to achieve. At the beginning of the standard setting meeting, SMEs discuss requirements to take the exam type, attributes of candidates who take the exam, and the characteristics of minimally qualified or minimally competent candidates (MCC) with respect to the credential type. After discussing the MCC, SMEs individually rate each item with respect to the MCC, where each rating is the expected percent of MCCs who correctly answered an item. After the SMEs individually rate items, they discuss their ratings as a group with the goal of reflecting on the reasons for their ratings and being able to adjust their ratings based on the rationale from other SMEs with different career/life experiences. After 1-2 rounds of discussion and rating adjustment, the final recommended cut score is presented to HRCI as the average final-round sum of the ratings for an individual SME across all SMEs in the panel.



Why Are “Scaled Scores” Used?

The purpose of scaled scores is to ensure both fairness and consistency in reporting scores to all candidates. By using the Modified Angoff model, scores are converted to a common scale to account for the difference in difficulty on multiple forms (or versions) of an exam. HRCI also creates and maintains multiple forms of the exams for security reasons. As we develop newer versions, some questions in each content area are replaced. These changes may cause one version to be slightly more difficult than another. To account for any such differences, HRCI uses a process known as equating where we ensure all exams are scored fairly. The passing score for each exam type is set at 500, regardless of the version of an exam a candidate takes. For more information about scoring, please see “Exam Scoring and Official Results Reports” and “How the Passing Score Is Set” in this handbook.

Preparing for the Exam

No two candidates have the same knowledge base because HR experience and educational backgrounds vary.

Many candidates spend time studying and preparing for the exams to determine how well a candidate might apply their HR knowledge and experiences. Therefore, it is not possible to train for or teach to the exam by reading certain books or memorizing specific information. The best way to prepare is to review and study the HR content in each functional area of the Exam Content Outline for the selected exam type. Visit <https://www.hrci.org/how-to-get-certified/preparation-overview/exam-preparation-resources> to learn more about the various and available preparation resources available.

Build Your Own Bundle

For candidates who seek additional studying materials, HRCI has created a convenient Build Your Own Bundle Program (BYOB). BYOB offers options for discounted exam preparation tools available for purchase when applying for an exam. For a detailed list of the most recent preparation resources in this program, visit www.hrci.org/how-to-get-certified/build-your-own-bundle/overview.

HRCI does not endorse any specific preparation program or offering. We encourage prospective candidates to use a variety of resources that reflect their learning styles and needs. Purchasing an optional certification preparation product is NOT required. Likewise, HRCI does not guarantee an individual will pass based on the purchase of any optional certification preparation product that might correspond with the exam-type selected.

If you purchase a preparation resource as part of a BYOB or Prepackaged Bundle, and are then deemed ineligible to test, you will receive a 100% refund for the resource in addition to the exam fee. The application fee is nonrefundable.

Refunds for a preparation resource that are part of a BYOB will only be available within ten (10) business days of the application approval date, provided the packaging and material have not been accessed or damaged and pending approval from the vendor who provided such materials. Refunds of exam fees follow the refund policies in this Handbook. **Fees are subject to change at any time and without prior notice.** Please refer to www.hrci.org/exam-preparation for more information.



Optional Services: Second Chance Insurance (SCI)

Second Chance Insurance (SCI) is an OPTIONAL program that allows a candidate to pre-purchase the opportunity to retake a **different version of the same exam type** a second time if the candidate is unsuccessful on the first attempt. The retake exam may not be changed to a different exam type. SCI must be purchased when the exam application is submitted online and cannot be added as a separate purchase once the exam application has been submitted. As an optional pre-paid program, the fee is nonrefundable, meaning that if a candidate purchases SCI and does not take the actual exam (no show) or does not utilize it in the allotted time to reschedule and take that same exam type, the candidate forfeits all fees and eligibility of the SCI. **Fees are subject to change at any time and without prior notice.** Please refer to our website, www.hrci.org, for the most current information about fees.

A candidate with SCI does not have to pay any additional fees or resubmit the exam application if unsuccessful. It is automatically done by HRCI. An email notification will be sent once the application is set up, and the candidate must then contact Pearson VUE and schedule an exam appointment within the allotted eligibility period. Candidates who purchased the insurance who are unsuccessful may *schedule* their retake exam appointment beginning 90 calendar days from their previous exam date.

Candidates with SCI will have 120 calendar days to schedule and retake the same exam once the SCI exam application has been automatically set up.

If a candidate purchases SCI with their exam application and does not take the exam, the SCI is void since the insurance is only applied if the candidate takes the exam and is unsuccessful.

If an application is deemed ineligible, the SCI fee will be automatically refunded to the original method of payment or applied to a different exam-type for which the candidate applies and is deemed eligible.

! Exam Type Change

Candidates may request an exam type change as long as an exam appointment has not been scheduled.

! Exam Eligibility Extension

If a candidate is unable to test within the original exam eligibility period (120 calendar days) provided when the exam application was approved, the candidate may choose to apply for the optional [Exam Eligibility Extension Form](#), by completing and paying the applicable fee. **Fees are subject to change at any time and without prior notice.** Please refer to www.hrci.org, for the most current information about fees.

This request must be submitted prior to the end of the eligibility period provided when the original application was approved. Any exam appointment must be canceled prior to the form being submitted. The form must be completed at least ten (10) days prior to the end of the original eligibility period and submitted with the appropriate fee. This extension cannot be used or combined with Second Chance Insurance.

Once HRCI processes the application and payment, it will **add 60 calendar days to the end of the original 120 calendar day eligibility.** The exam must be taken during this extension. No refunds or additional extensions will be made. The extension is limited to one request per exam application.



Summary of Exam Application Options:

Item	Cash/Credit Card Payment OR Voucher Redemption
Application approved by HRCI	Schedule and take the exam within 120 calendar days from the application approval date.
Application is made ineligible by HRCI	The candidate must apply for the new exam-type for which the candidate is eligible. No refunds. NOTE: If payment was with cash/credit card, HRCI will issue a full refund minus a processing fee.
Rescheduling an Exam Appointment: If you want to change the exam date within the original 120 calendar days, go to Pearson VUE	An individual may reschedule their exam appointment provided it is done at least two (2) business days prior to the appointment. There is a rescheduling fee each time that it is done. No refunds will be issued if you are unable to test on your new exam date.
Exam Eligibility Extension (60 calendar days): If you are unable to test within the original 120 calendar days of eligibility, you may request an extension by completing the Exam Eligibility Extension Form	The request must be submitted before the last ten (10) days within the 120 calendar days of eligibility. A candidate must cancel any exam appointment prior to the request. There is an extension fee and such extension is limited to one request per exam application. No refunds will be issued if unable to test during the extension.
Never scheduled an exam appointment or missed the exam appointment (during the 120 calendar days eligibility period)	No refund, exception or extension will be provided. You will need to reapply and pay all applicable fees.



ON EXAM DAY



HRCI exams are administered in highly secured testing centers worldwide. Only approved candidates are admitted to the test centers to take the exams. Upon arrival, a candidate must present proof of identity. Without a valid, unexpired, government-issued photo ID, showing the exact eligibility full name (written in Latin characters), the candidate must cancel the appointment with Pearson VUE at least two (2) business days before the actual exam date to avoid forfeiting exam eligibility and all associated fees. A candidate arriving to a test center late or without the required identification matching the name under which the eligibility was approved will not be permitted to take the exam and forfeit all associated fees. Find additional Exam Day Tips at: <http://www.hrci.org/examdaytips>.

Identification (ID) Requirements

- The first and last name on the ID must exactly match the first and last name on the exam application for which the candidate was deemed eligible.
- All IDs required must be issued by the country in which the candidate is testing. If the candidate does not have the qualifying ID issued from the country they are testing in, an international travel passport in Latin characters from their country of citizenship is required.
- Candidate is required to present one (1) form of original (no photo copies), valid (unexpired) government issued ID that includes their name, recent recognizable photograph, and signature.

The following are acceptable forms of primary identification:

- ✓ International Travel Passport
- ✓ Driver's license
- ✓ Military ID (including spouse & dependents)
- ✓ Identification card (national/state/province identity card)
- ✓ Alien registration card (green card, permanent resident, visa)
- ✓ Local language ID (not in Latin characters) - *accepted only if issued from the country in which the candidate is testing.*

Additional Allowances

- Expired forms of ID are not acceptable; unless accompanied by valid renewal papers.
- European Union candidates testing within the EU zone may also provide a valid, unexpired EU card as their primary ID.
- For candidates testing in Japan, an employee or student ID (with at least a name and recent recognizable photo) is acceptable if accompanied with a valid Blue Japanese Health Card.

A government issued ID missing a visible signature or that has an embedded signature **must** be supplemented with an original (no photo copies), valid (unexpired) ID that has at least a matching name and recent recognizable photo, or a matching name and signature (or a valid Blue Japanese Health Card, if testing in Japan). If you have any questions about the ID you are required to bring with you to the testing center for admittance for your exam, please contact Pearson VUE customer service at <http://www.pearsonvue.com/hrci/contact/>.

Signature and Photo

The Test Center Administrator (TCA) will capture your digital signature upon checking in. Your digital signature must match the signature on your valid, unexpired, photo identification (ID). The picture on the ID must match you, the person presenting it.

Hyphenated Names

If your last name is hyphenated, your ID must match at least one of the last names. Additionally, your signature must match the signature on the ID, and the picture on the ID must match the person presenting it.

Name on Application	Name on ID	Acceptable
Chi Xing-Lu	Sandy X. Lu	No
Chi Xing-Lu	Chi X Lu	Yes
Cynthia Chi Xing-Lu	Chi Xing Lu	Yes
Cynthia Lu	Cynthia X Lu	Yes
Jeffery Johnson	Jeffery Charles Johnson	Yes
Jeffery C. Johnson	Jeffery Charles Johnson	Yes
J.P. Smith	John P. Smith	Yes
Jennifer Lincoln Murphy	Jennifer Lincoln	Yes
Jennifer Lincoln	Jennifer Murphy	No

Test Center Rules

The following rules are enforced at all test centers to ensure a secure, fair and consistent test experience for all test-takers.

Note: Pearson VUE cannot guarantee a completely noise-free and distraction-free test environment. Other exams are administered at the same time as HRCI exams. You may hear noise, including typing, coughing and people walking. You can request a noise reducing headset or disposable ear plugs from Pearson VUE where available.

Registration Processes

- Arrive at the Pearson VUE Test Center at least 15 minutes before your scheduled exam time. If you miss your appointment or do not have a valid, unexpired photo ID, you cannot take the exam and will lose all your fees. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late to your appointment, you may be refused admission and exam fees may be forfeited. You will be asked to present your ID. The Test Center Administrator (TCA) will take your photograph, and capture your digital signature. The digital signature must match the signature on your photo ID.
- You will be directed to store any personal belongings in a locker. This includes items such as a mobile device, food or drink, hat, purse/bag, coat, jacket, or additional outwear accessories, or a watch.
- HRCI exams do not include any scheduled breaks. You may take an unscheduled break if needed, such as to use the bathroom, but you will be expected to comply with security screening upon your return to the testing room. Any unscheduled breaks will count against your allotted exam time.
- You cannot leave the test center or use a mobile device during the test or during a break. Your exam will be terminated if you leave the test center or use a mobile device. Study materials may not be reviewed or referenced during the examination or during any break and will result in your examination being terminated and your score invalidated.
- You cannot look at study materials after you arrive at the test site facility or during a break.
- You cannot smoke or take a break to smoke during the examination.
- Religious headwear may be worn into the testing room. It will be inspected by a TCA before entry into the testing room is permitted.



HRCI Contact
Information:



PHONE +1.571.551.6700
U.S. TOLL-FREE +1.866.898.4724



EMAIL info@hrci.org
WEB hrci.org



Comfort Aids

Certain items defined as “minor comfort aids” are allowed in the testing room as long as they are inspected by the TCA before they are brought into the testing room. These include:

- Tissues, such as Kleenex
- Cough drops (must be unwrapped)
- Pillow for supporting neck, back or injured limb
- Sweater, sweatshirt or blazer (If the item has pockets and the candidate does not want to remove the item for inspection, the candidate will be asked to show that the pockets are empty.)
- Eyeglasses and hearing aids
- Neck braces or collars (worn by people with neck injuries)
- Insulin pump attached to a person’s body

Exam Processes for All Test Centers

Exams are monitored and may be recorded as audio or video. Candidates will have access to a tutorial on the computer testing technology for ten (10) minutes prior to the start of the exam. It is important that candidates use this time to understand the special features of the technology.

You can submit comments about specific exam items during the exam by following the on-screen instructions. HRCI will review all comments but will not respond to comments. Please note, you cannot ask questions about exam content of anyone.

Exam Security and Cheating

In order to protect and secure the integrity of its exams and the value they bring to the HR practitioners who have earned a certification, HRCI retains the right to cancel any test score obtained in a questionable manner. Before you can begin an HRCI certification exam you must agree to an Exam Confidentiality Statement. Failure to agree to the statement will prevent you from being able to take the exam. This statement says, among other things, that you understand that the exam and the questions it contains are the exclusive property of HRCI. You must also confirm your understanding that you cannot disclose, publish, reproduce or transmit any part of the exam, in any form, by any means, in oral, written, electronic or mechanical formats, for any purpose, without the express, written permission of HRCI. This includes, but is not limited to, memorizing exam questions, sharing exam questions or topics with anyone, or comparing information taught in a certification preparation course with actual exam content, whether in whole or in part. Theft or attempted theft of any exam content is publishable as a felony. Violation of exam confidentiality is a serious ethical breach that could result in disciplinary action by HRCI, including possible suspension or revocation of any HRCI certifications earned.



HRCI Contact
Information:



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WEB hrci.org



AFTER THE EXAM



Exam Scoring and Official Results Reports

Candidates will receive a copy of the exam results report at the testing center and will be notified within 1-2 business days by Pearson VUE when the official results are available online.

If a notification for exam results is not provided within a week of taking the exam, please contact HRCI by sending an email to info@hrci.org.

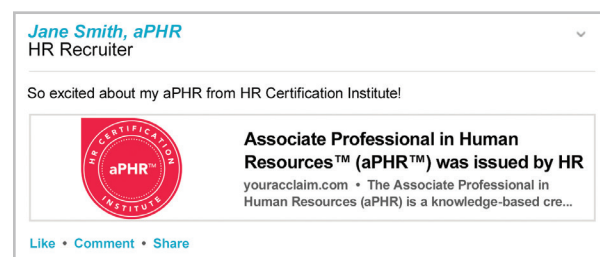
Digital Badge

HRCI uses the digital badge as its official certificate. When a candidate passes the exam and receives the official results report, HRCI will send information on how to claim the exam type's digital badge. This badge can be used to display the earned credential on social media sites, in the candidate's email signature and other digital spaces and social media venues.

A digital badge is the undisputed and newest technology for displaying achievements and capabilities on social media, emails, personal websites and resumes. It protects the integrity of a professional's credentials by providing a link to verified data from HRCI that cannot be falsified. HRCI digital badges allow the credentialed professional to provide employers with easy, valid verification of earned credentials, while positioning the professional at the forefront of this new

technology for communicating professional skills. For additional information about digital badge technology, go to "Recertification Resources" at: www.hrci.org/digitalbadges.

LinkedIn Example



Optional Paper Certificate

In addition to the free digital badge, if a certified professional still wishes to have a paper certificate, HRCI works with a fulfillment vendor to provide this option. To purchase an optional paper certificate, please visit the online store at www.hrci.org. Once ordered, the certificate will be sent using a traceable delivery service.

Fees are subject to change at any time and without prior notice. Please refer to www.hrci.org for the most current information about fees.

Testing Experience

To report any problems that occurred during the testing experience please file a report with the TCA immediately at the test site.

Certification Program Feedback

Individuals have two (2) options to submit feedback:

- Optional end-of-exam survey at the test center while waiting for the results report
- [Certification Program Feedback Form](#)

Understanding the Exam Results Report

Pearson VUE follows careful procedures to ensure that exam results reports are correct.

The results report informs the candidate of having passed or failed the exam. A scaled score of at least 500 is needed to pass. If a candidate is unsuccessful or did not pass, the candidate will receive a scaled score indicating how far from the passing score s/he was. An explanation of candidate performance levels on each of the exam topic areas is also provided. This performance level information is not an official domain score and should not be interpreted as such. The information is provided only as a guide for future study should an unsuccessful candidate wish to test again. If a candidate is successful and passes the exam, the letter with explanations can be used to guide future professional development activities.

Retaking the Exam

The following chart shows what must be done to re-take an exam:

Exam Status	Next Steps	Outcome*
Unsuccessful (Fail) with Second Chance Insurance	Must wait 90 calendar days between exam attempts.	HRCI will send an e-mail notification. Candidate has 120 days from that eligibility date to schedule and take the exam.
Unsuccessful (Fail) without Second Chance Insurance	Must wait 90 calendar days between exam attempts.	Candidate must re-apply, qualify, and pay all the related exam fees. Candidate has 120 days from the application approval date to schedule and take the exam.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancelled, • NDA Refused, • Withdrawn, • No show, • Not scheduled/ Inactivity 	Candidate can re-apply immediately, qualify, and pay all the related exam fees.	Candidate has 120 days from the application approval date to schedule and take the exam.
Unsuccessful (Fail) and wants to change the exam type (ex. From SPHR to PHR)	Candidate can apply immediately, qualify, and pay all the related exam fees.	Candidate has 120 days from the application approval date to schedule and take the exam.

After Certification: Use of the Designation

To use HRCI letters in one's title, individuals must:

1. Successfully pass the exam-type and continue to meet our certification and recertification standards;
2. Demonstrate the requisite experience requirements; and
3. Agree to abide by the Code of Ethical and Professional Responsibility.

Successful individuals are authorized to use the following certification marks or designations in communications and marketing materials, as appropriate:

- aPHR
- aPHRi
- PHR
- PHRca
- PHRi
- SPHR
- SPHRi
- GPHR

Any complaint of logo or credential misuse should be filed through the HRCI Complaints and Disciplinary Policy. HRCI will follow all policies and procedures to determine the validity of the complaint and notify the person misusing the logo or credential that they must cease and desist use. If they fail to cease and desist, HRCI will take further steps, possible including legal action, to prevent logo or credential misuse. HRCI actively monitors for incorrect use of the logo or credential.

For more information on Recertification, visit <https://www.hrci.org/recertification/what-is-recertification/recertification-resources>.

Correct*



John Smith, SPHRi

234-567-8910
johnsmith@company.com



Jane Jones, PHRca, GPHR

234-567-8910
johnsmith@company.com

Incorrect*



**John Smith, Senior Professional
in Human Resources -
International (SPHRi)**

234-567-8910
johnsmith@company.com



John Smith, S.P.H.R.i.

234-567-8910
johnsmith@company.com

***Always display the first earned designation followed by others recently earned.**



Verification Policy

The names of currently certified individuals are not considered confidential and may be published/verified by HRCI. Published information will include name, city, state, country, certification(s) held, certification status and certification number. To access this directory, refer to: <https://recert.hrci.org/public/membersearch/certificants>.

Your certification status may be verified in one of three ways:

1. Individuals may be listed in our Directory of Certified HR Professionals.
2. Employers can request in writing specific information with the individual's permission/release.
3. Certification status may be verified via telephone upon request with the following information: first name, last name, and certification number.

Confidentiality

HRCI is committed to protecting confidential or proprietary information related to applicants and certification holders, as well as the examination development, maintenance and administration process. HRCI will not disclose any confidential applicant/certification holder information unless authorized in writing by the individual or as required by law. A certification status is not considered confidential information.

Personal information retained within the applicant/certification holder database and or applicant/certification holder files will be kept confidential. This includes information and any documentation regarding a disability and the need for accommodation in testing.

With the applicant's/certification holder's permission, HRCI shares non-personal information with third parties. This information is not considered confidential and may include name, city, state, country, certification(s) held and certification status.

HRCI will notify an individual seven (7) business days prior to releasing his/her information to a body having legal jurisdiction upon receipt of a court order requesting the individual's information, unless the court order prohibits such notification.

Exam Results

Individual examination results are considered confidential. Exam scores are released only to the individual candidate, unless a signed release is provided in advance. Results are not released by phone, fax or email. All personal information submitted by applicants and certification holders with their application, is considered confidential.

Application Status

An individual's application status is considered confidential. We do not disclose information regarding whether or not an individual has applied for certification or has taken the examination. Current certification status is published and verifiable as noted in the Credential Verification section.

Aggregate Data

Aggregate exam statistics, studies and reports concerning applicants/certification holders will contain no information that can allow others to identify an individual.



APPENDIX

Pearson VUE Regional Contact Centers

Pearson VUE maintains regional contact centers around the world. Please visit the link below for contact information for your region:

<http://www.pearsonvue.com/hrci/contact/>

Code of Ethical and Professional Responsibility

The HRCI Code of Ethical and Professional Responsibility has been adopted to promote and maintain the highest standards of service and conduct for all persons it has certified to use any of its certification marks, including: aPHR, aPHRi, PHR, SPHR, PHRca, GPHR, PHRi and SPHRi.

HRCI determines who is certified and thus authorized to use the marks. Implicit in the acceptance of this authorization is an obligation not only to comply with the mandates and requirements of all applicable laws and regulations but also to take responsibility to act in an ethical and professionally responsible manner. Adherence to these standards is expected from all who hold an HRCI credential and serves to ensure public confidence in the integrity of these individuals.

Those holding an HRCI credential commit to the following:

Professional Responsibility

As an HRCI certification holder, you are responsible for adding value to the organizations you serve and contributing to the ethical success of those organizations. You accept professional responsibility for your individual decisions and actions. You also are an advocate for the HR profession by engaging in activities that enhance its credibility and value. You will:

- Adhere to the highest standards of ethical and professional behavior.
- Measure the effectiveness of Human Resources in contributing to or achieving organizational goals. Comply with the law.
- Work consistently within the values of the profession. Strive to achieve the highest levels of service, performance and social responsibility.
- Advocate for the appropriate use and appreciation of human beings as employees.
- Advocate openly and within the established forums for debate in order to influence decision-making and results.

Professional Development

As an HRCI certification holder, you must strive to meet the highest standards of competence and commit to strengthen your competencies on a continuous basis. You will:

- Commit to continuous learning, skills development and application of new knowledge related to both HR management and the organizations you serve.
- Contribute to the Exam Content Outline, the evolution of the profession and the growth of individuals through teaching, research and dissemination of knowledge.

Ethical Leadership

As an HRCI certification holder, you are expected to exhibit individual leadership as a role model for maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct. You will:

- Be ethical and act ethically in every professional interaction.
- Question pending individual and group actions, when necessary, to ensure that decisions are ethical and are implemented in an ethical manner.
- Seek expert guidance if ever in doubt about the ethical propriety of a situation.
- Through teaching and mentoring, champion the development of others as ethical leaders in the profession and in organizations.

Fairness and Justice

As an HRCI certification holder, you are ethically responsible for promoting and fostering fairness and justice for all employees and their organizations. You will:

- Respect the uniqueness and intrinsic worth of every individual.
- Treat people with dignity, respect and compassion to foster a trusting work environment free of harassment, intimidation and unlawful discrimination.
- Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to develop their skills and new competencies.
- Assure an environment of inclusiveness and a commitment to diversity in the organizations you serve. Develop, administer and advocate policies and procedures that foster fair, consistent and equitable treatment for all.
- Regardless of personal interests, support decisions made by your organizations that are both ethical and legal.
- Act in a responsible manner and practice sound management in the country or countries in which the organizations you serve operate.

Conflicts of Interest

As an HRCI certification holder, you must maintain a high level of trust with your stakeholders. You must protect the interests of those stakeholders as well as your professional integrity and should not engage in activities that create actual, apparent or potential conflicts of interest. You will:

- Adhere to and advocate the use of published policies on conflicts of interest within your organization.
- Refrain from using your position for personal, material or financial gain or the appearance of such.
- Refrain from giving or seeking preferential treatment in the HR processes.
- Prioritize your obligations to identify conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof. When conflicts arise, you will disclose them to relevant stakeholders.

Use of Information

As an HRCI certification holder, you must consider and protect the rights of individuals, especially in the acquisition and dissemination of information, while ensuring truthful communications and facilitating informed decision-making. You will:

- Acquire and disseminate information through ethical and responsible means.
- Ensure only appropriate information is used in decisions affecting the employment relationship.
- Investigate the accuracy and source of information before allowing it to be used in employment-related decisions.
- Maintain current and accurate HR information.
- Safeguard restricted or confidential information Take appropriate steps to ensure the accuracy and completeness of all communicated information about HR policies and practices.
- Take appropriate steps to ensure the accuracy and completeness of all communicated information used in HR-related training.

HRCI Complaints and Disciplinary Policy

A. Introduction

1. HR Certification Institute (HRCI) is an independent certifying organization for the human resources profession. As a certifying organization, HRCI evaluates individuals who wish to enter, continue and/or advance in the profession through the certification process. HRCI is governed by the Board of Directors (Board). HR Certification Institute Certification Council (Council) was established in 2016 as a Special Purpose Council within HR Certification Institute. The Council is established

in HR Certification Institute Bylaws, which authorize the Council to have autonomy in decision making regarding the development and administration of HR Certification Institute's certification programs.

2. Those certified by HRCI (referred to as "certificants") have successfully completed the required certification process, which includes meeting certain eligibility requirements and passing a certification examination. HRCI certificants subscribe to a Code of Ethical and Professional Responsibility. By applying for certification or recertification, HR professionals agree that they have read and will comply with the Code of Ethical and Personal Responsibility, the Complaints and Disciplinary Policy and other certification program policies. These disciplinary procedures are not formal legal proceedings, thus many formal rules and practices of a court proceeding are not observed. The rules are intended to afford due process and fairness.
3. Successful candidates are granted certification by HRCI and may hold themselves to the public as such. In order to maintain and enhance the credibility of HRCI certification programs, HRCI has adopted these Administrative Procedures (the "Procedures") to allow consumers and others to bring complaints concerning a certificant's conduct to HRCI. If a violation constitutes grounds for sanctions as set forth below, the Certification Council established by the HRCI Board may reprimand, or revoke the individual's certification.

The grounds for sanctions under these Procedures are as follows:

- a. Violation of established HRCI certification program policies, rules, and requirements;
- b. Fraud or misrepresentation in the application for, or maintenance of, certification;
- c. An irregular event in connection with HRCI examination, including (but not limited to) copying examination materials, causing a disruption in the testing area, and failure to abide by reasonable test administration rules;
- d. Taking the exam for any purpose other than that of becoming credentialed in the area referenced in the title of the exam;
- e. Disclosing, publishing, reproducing, summarizing, paraphrasing, or transmitting any portion of the exam in any form or by any means, verbal, written, electronic or mechanical, without the prior express written permission of HRCI;
- f. Unauthorized possession or misuse of HRCI credentials, examinations, and other intellectual property, including but not limited to: aPHR, aPHRi, PHR, PHRca, PHRi, SPHR, SPHRi, and GPHR;
- g. Misrepresentation of credential status;
- h. Failure to provide requested information in a timely manner;
- i. Conviction of a felony under federal or state law in a matter related to the practice of, or qualifications for, professional activity.

4. HRCI will ensure that information concerning the complaint process, as developed by the Certification Council, will be available to applicants, certificants, consumers and the public at appropriate locations. These Procedures apply to all complaints or inquiries received about an HRCI certificant.
5. It should be emphasized that actions taken under these Procedures do not constitute enforcement of the law, although referral to appropriate federal, state, or local government agencies may be made by HRCI regarding the conduct of the certificant in appropriate situations.

Individuals who submit complaints are not entitled to any relief or damages by virtue of these Procedures, although they will receive notice of the actions taken if the submitter agrees in advance and in writing to maintain any such information in confidence.

B. HRCI Certification Council

1. The Certification Council is responsible for development and administration of the HRCI certification programs and for the implementation of these Procedures.
2. The Certification Council Chair is specifically responsible for ensuring that these Procedures are implemented and followed.
3. All Certification Council members, staff, and other individuals engaged in investigations or decisions with respect to any complaint under these Procedures may be indemnified and defended by HRCI from and against liability arising from HRCI-related activities to the extent provided by law.

C. Complaints

1. Complaints must be submitted in writing by an individual or entity. Inquiries or submissions other than complaints may be reviewed and handled by HRCI at its discretion.
2. The complaint must be submitted on the HRCI Code of Ethics Violation Complaint Form and the specific grounds for sanctions as referenced above in Section A.
3. HRCI will not review or further pursue any complaints which:
 - a. Contain unreliable or insufficient information;
 - b. Are patently frivolous or inconsequential;
 - c. Allege general unethical or unprofessional behavior by a certificant;
 - d. Do not expressly reference specific grounds for sanctions;
 - e. In HRCI's sole reasonable discretion may choose not to review or further pursue a complaint based on the date of the violation; or
 - f. In HRCI's sole reasonable discretion, are more appropriately addressed by an administrative, regulatory, or law-making entity.

Upon receipt and preliminary review of a submission involving an HRCI certification program or the grounds for sanction, the Sr. Director, Client Relations & Services

(“Director”) may conclude, in his/her sole discretion that the submission does not constitute an actionable complaint as described above. If not an actionable complaint, the submission is disposed of by notice from the Director to its submitter, if the submitter is identified. All such preliminary dispositions by the Director are reported to the Certification Council in writing in an annual summary. If the Director determines that the submission is a valid and actionable complaint, the Director will contact the accused for any additional information that may be necessary. The individual will have 30 days to submit any and all applicable documentation. This documentation will be presented to the Certification Council for investigation. If no applicable documentation is submitted within the 30 days, the Director may proceed with making a determination. The Director may consult with the CEO and/or legal counsel as needed to make either determination.

4. If a submission is deemed by the Director to be a valid and actionable complaint, the Director shall see that written notice is provided to the certificant whose conduct has been called into question. The certificant whose conduct is at issue shall also be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint. The Director also shall ensure that the individual submitting the complaint receives notice that the complaint is being reviewed by HRCI. The Director will determine if the submission is worthy of an investigation, and if necessary a phone interview will be scheduled. Upon completion of the interview, the Director will decide if the submission will move forward for investigation by the Certification Council.
5. The Director shall make the decisions described above and provide the notices required here under within 60 days of receipt of the complaint.

D. Review of Complaint

1. For each submission involving an alleged violation of the grounds for sanctions that the Director concludes is a valid and actionable complaint, the Certification Council authorizes an investigation into its specific facts or circumstances to whatever extent is necessary in order to clarify, expand, or corroborate the information provided by the submitter.
2. Both the individual submitting the complaint and the certificant who is the subject of the investigation (or his or her employer) may be contacted for additional information with respect to the complaint. The Certification Council may at its discretion contact such other individuals who may have knowledge of the facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint.
3. All investigations and deliberations of the Certification Council are conducted in confidence, with all written communications sealed and marked “Personal and Confidential,” and they are conducted objectively, without any indication of prejudgment. An investigation may be directed toward any aspect of a complaint which is relevant or potentially relevant. Formal hearings are not held and the parties are not expected to be represented by counsel, although the Certification Council may consult HRCI’s counsel.
4. The Certification Council shall undertake all reasonable efforts to ensure that the review process set forth in this section shall be completed within 90 days of the

determination to investigate.

5. The Certification Council initially determines whether it is appropriate to review the complaint under these Procedures or whether the matter should be referred to another regulatory, administrative, or other entity engaged in the administration of law.
6. The Certification Council may be assisted in the conduct of its investigation by additional HRCI staff and/or legal counsel. The Certification Council Chair exercises general supervision over all investigations.

E. Determination of Violation

Upon completion of an investigation, the Certification Council may make a determination that there has been a demonstrable and serious violation based on the grounds for sanction. The determination of the disciplinary decision is prepared under the CEO's supervision and is presented to the HRCI Board along with the record of the Certification Council's investigation.

1. If the Certification Council determines that a violation has not occurred, the complaint is dismissed with notice to the certificant and the individual or entity who submitted the complaint. The complaint is included in an annual summary Certification Council report.
2. If the Certification Council determines that a violation has occurred, the council will decide on an appropriate sanction.
3. This determination and the imposition of a sanction are promulgated by written notice to the certificant and to the individual submitting the complaint, if the submitter agrees in advance and in writing to maintain in confidence whatever portion of the information is not made public by the Council.
4. In certain circumstances, the Certification Council may determine that the certificant who has committed an actionable sanction, should be offered an opportunity to submit a written assurance that the conduct in question has been terminated and will not recur. The decision of the Certification Council to make such a determination is within their discretionary power. If such an offer is extended, the certificant at issue must submit the required written assurance within 30 days of receipt of the offer, and the assurance must be submitted in terms that are acceptable to the Certification Council. If the Certification Council accepts the assurance, notice is given to the certificant and to the submitter of the complaint, if the submitter agrees in advance and in writing to maintain the information in confidence.

F. Sanctions

1. Any of the following sanctions may be imposed by the Certification Council upon a certificant whom the Certification Council has determined to have violated the grounds for sanctions, although the disciplinary decision applied must reasonably relate to the nature and severity of the violation, focusing on reformation of the conduct of the member and deterrence of similar conduct by others:
 - a. Written reprimand to the certificant;

- b. Suspension of the certificant for a designated period; or
- c. Termination of the certificant's certification from HRCI.

The HRCI database and certificant's file will be promptly updated to reflect any certification suspension or termination.

2. Reprimand in the form of a written notice from the Certification Council normally is sent to a certificant who has received his or her first substantiated complaint. Suspension normally is imposed on a certificant who has received two substantiated complaints. Termination normally is imposed on a certificant who has received two substantiated complaints within a two (2) year period, or three (3) or more substantiated complaints. The Certification Council may at its discretion, however, impose any of the sanctions, if warranted, in specific cases.
3. Certificants who have been terminated shall have their certification revoked and may not be considered for HRCI certification in the future. If certification is revoked, any and all certificates or other materials requested by HRCI must be returned promptly to HRCI.

G. Appeal

1. Within 30 days from receipt of notice of a determination by the Certification Council that an individual committed an action resulting in grounds for sanctions, the affected certificant may submit to HRCI in writing a request for an appeal. Upon receipt of a request for appeal, the Chair of the Certification Council will appoint a three (3) person Appeal Panel. Individuals appointed to serve on the Appeal Panel cannot be current members of the HRCI Board of Directors or Certification Council. Appeal Panel members will sign a confidentiality and conflict of interest statement prior to beginning their service on the committee.

This Appeal Panel may review one or more appeals, upon request of the HRCI Certification Council Chair. No HRCI staff may serve on the Appeal Panel; further, no one with any personal involvement or conflict of interest may serve on the Appeal Panel.

2. The Appeal Panel may only review whether the determination by the Certification Council was inappropriate because of:
 - a. material errors of fact, or;
 - b. failure of the Certification Council or HRCI to conform to published criteria, policies, or procedures.

Only facts and conditions up to and including the time of the Certification Council's determination as represented by facts known to HRCI are considered during an appeal. The appeal shall not include a hearing or any similar trial-type proceeding. Except as otherwise set forth herein, legal counsel is not expected to participate in the appeal process, unless requested by the appellant and approved by the HRCI Certification Council and the Appeal Panel. The Certification Council and Appeal Panel may consult HRCI legal counsel.

3. The Appeal Panel conducts and completes the appeal within 90 days after receipt of the request for an appeal. Written appellate submissions and any reply submissions may be made by authorized representatives of the appellant and of the Appeal Panel. Submissions are made according to whatever schedule is reasonably established by the Appeal Panel.

The decision of the Appeal Panel either affirms or overrules the determination of the Certification Council, but does not address a sanction imposed by the Certification Council. The decision of the Appeal Panel, including a statement of the reasons for the decision, is reported to the HRCI Certification Council in writing. The Appeal Panel decision is binding upon the Certification Council, the certificant who is subject to the sanction, and all other persons.

H. Resignations

If a certificant who is the subject of a complaint voluntarily surrenders his or her HRCI certification(s) at any time during the pendency of a complaint under these Procedures, the complaint will be dismissed without any further action by the Certification Council or an Appeal Board established after an appeal. If this occurs, the information will be retained in HRCI's permanent file for future reference. However, the Certification Council may authorize the Certification Chair to communicate the fact and date of resignation, and the fact and general nature of the complaint which was pending at the time of the resignation, to or at the request of a government entity engaged in the administration of law. Similarly, in the event of such resignation, the person or entity who submitted the complaint are notified of the fact and date of resignation and that Certification Council has dismissed the complaint as a result.



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