

Continuing Education





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Prepare to Do Well on the RCM Exam

Are you ready to write the RCM Exam? Being eligible to write the exam and going on to successfully pass the exam are two different things. The average passing rate for the RCM exam over the past two years has been 66%; that means that only 66% of the candidates writing any RCM exam have passed. You may write the exam a total of three times, but how can you prepare to ensure success the first time you write?

Preparation is the key factor for success. We hear many times that candidates are too busy working full-time to study for the exam; or they are too busy with family; or they passed the courses; or they took the Refresher Course; or they have worked in the industry for a long time -- so why do they have to prepare? These comments, while true, are not reasons to skip study-

ing for the exam. The RCM designation is a serious, meaningful designation, and the exam to earn it is not easy. If you wish to be successful in the exam, you must take your preparations for the exam seriously. If you don't you may have to write the exam more than once.

Every person learns in their own way, and the same goes for how they study. It is important that you identify what method works best for you and apply it. Here are some methods you might consider:

Repetition

Well in advance of the exam date, set aside specific time each day or week to study. Begin by answering the review questions at the back of each chapter in each student manual. You can choose to simply look up the answers and memo-

rize them; you can choose to write out the answers; you can choose to put the questions on index cards with answers on the back and have someone verbally ask you the questions; or you can choose some other method. The point of any of these suggestions is to ensure that the information becomes easily accessible to you through repetition.

Refresher Course Combined with Self-Study

You can attend the Refresher Course if you wish – but please remember that it is not the only thing you should do to prepare to write the RCM Exam. The Refresher Course is designed to provide you with a brief overview of the information found in the four ACMO courses – it is not designed to tell you what to



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study, or to give you the answers to the exam questions! Some people choose to attend the Refresher Course before they begin their studying to give them a broad outline from which to focus their studying; others choose to take the Refresher Course after they have prepared for the exam as a final review before their exam sitting. But remember, the point of the Refresher Course is not to be the only preparation you should take to write the exam. ACOMO is currently working to have the Refresher Course available online in an effort to make it easier to “attend” for everyone.

Develop a Strategy

Sometimes it has been a long time since you have written a formal exam, or writing exams may make you nervous. To help you feel more confident, we suggest having a formal strategy for writing the exam before you arrive at the exam location. This way you will be able to manage your stress and rely on your strategy if you get flustered. Here are some things to think about:

You have 3-1/2 hours to write an exam which covers the four ACOMO courses. There are four sections to the RCM Exam. You should decide before you arrive how you will divide the time available to you between the sections. You may simply divide the time by four to determine the maximum time you can spend on each section and still finish all sections. There are 210 minutes and four sections, so the maximum time for each section would be 52-1/2 minutes. You should move on to the next section when that time is up regardless of whether you have answered all the questions; if you take less time on subsequent sections, you can go back to the ones you didn't have time for. You may also decide to answer the questions for the sections you feel most confident about first to allow yourself more time for those sections you don't feel confident about. Or, alternatively you may want to tackle those sections you are worried about first, and hope you will have enough time for the sections you find easier afterwards. The point of any of these suggestions is to persuade you that you need to think about how you will attack the exam before you arrive to write it.

Each section of the RCM Exam contains true/false questions, multiple choice questions and short answer questions. For the true/false and multiple choice questions, there is only ONE answer for each ques-

tion. Even if you think there is more than one, there is only one. Try not to second-guess yourself after you've answered a question. ACOMO does not try to “trick” you with any of the questions – if you aren't sure about an answer, either leave it and come back to it, or go with your best guess. For the short answer questions, use the marks assigned to each question to guide how much or how little you write in your answer. If a question is worth 2 marks, you won't get any extra marks even if you write a long answer, and worse, you

have wasted time. Alternatively, it is hard to get a full 4 marks, for example, if you have provided a one-word answer.

We hope that you will consider some or all of these tips and techniques before you decide to write the RCM Exam. Preparation is critical for your success, and we look forward to welcoming you as an RCM once you have passed the exam and achieved your required experience! ■

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