

**NEW JERSEY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

**2012 COUNTY CORRECTION CAPTAIN  
ORIENTATION GUIDE**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Civil Service Commission (CSC) has prepared this supplemental orientation guide for promotional candidates who will participate in the 2012 County Correction Captain examination. The information in this guide and the General Multiple-Choice Exam Orientation Guide (available via CSC's website at <http://www.state.nj.us/csc/seekers/jobs/orientation/>) is designed to help candidates better understand the testing process and the types of questions they will encounter on the County Correction Captain exam. We encourage candidates to carefully review this guide along with the General Multiple-Choice Exam Orientation Guide and to take advantage of any and all opportunities to prepare for the examination.

Please note that no "study group" has been involved in the development or review of CSC examinations, and at no time has any examination material been provided to such groups. Additionally, the CSC is not responsible for any claims made by "study groups" or the manner in which they represent themselves for advertisement purposes.

## II. PRE-EXAM INFORMATION

### A. Date and Location

The tentative timeframe to administer the County Correction Captain examination is May 2012. However, in the event there are difficulties scheduling the examination for any unforeseen reason, the examination date may change. The test date, location, and report time will be confirmed when candidate examination notices are mailed two to three weeks prior to the test date.

Candidates should plan their route to the test center in advance of the test date as soon as the test location is made available. Candidates are encouraged to arrive early, since candidates arriving late will **NOT** be admitted to the exam.

### B. What Candidates **SHOULD** Bring to the Exam

Candidates arriving at the test center should have their notification card and a valid photo I.D. Candidates arriving at the test center without their notification card should report directly to Room A with their photo I.D., so that the center supervisor can issue them a new card. Candidates arriving at the test center without a valid photo I.D. **WILL NOT** be admitted to the exam. Answer sheets for CSC multiple-choice exams are scored electronically, so candidates should bring No. 2 pencils to the exam. In addition, candidates are permitted to bring highlighters to use during the exam.

### C. What Candidates Should **NOT** Bring to the Exam

With the threat of high-tech cheating on the rise, **possession** of personal communication devices, such as cell phones, BlackBerrys, pagers/beepers, photographic equipment, MP3 players, or other similar electronic communication devices, is prohibited at test centers. Candidates who are seen with these devices in the test center, even in a power-off mode, will be disqualified and dismissed immediately. The device may also be confiscated to ensure that an attempt was not made to compromise the testing process. In addition, briefcases and other personal items should not be brought inside the test center. The Civil Service Commission is not responsible for any personal items.

#### D. ADA Policy

Candidates with a request for ADA accommodations must check Box 8 on the front of their application. They will be contacted at a later date for information regarding their special need(s).

Candidates with special situations/ADA concerns, who have already been approved for ADA accommodations with CSC, must contact Marty Berrien at 609-292-4144, ext. 1991001 upon receipt of their examination notification, in order to request/discuss accommodations for their special needs.

#### E. Make-Up Policy

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.9, make-up examinations for public safety promotional examinations may be authorized only in cases of:

- I. Error by the Civil Service Commission or appointing authority;
- II. Death in the candidate's immediate family as evidenced by a copy of the death certificate; or
- III. Catastrophic injury or illness requiring an extended convalescent period provided the candidate submits a doctor's certification containing a diagnosis and a statement clearly showing that the candidate's physical condition precluded his or her participation in the examination, as well as documentation from the candidate's employer noting the candidate's related leave from work.
- IV. Military leave, which will be handled as stated in N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.9(c).
- V. Exoneration from pending disciplinary or criminal charges will be handled as stated in N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.9(d).

Make-up requests must be submitted, in writing, with supporting documentation, to: NJCSC Make-Up Exam Unit, P.O. Box 310, Trenton, NJ 08625-0310 within 5 days upon receipt of your Notification Card.

**NOTE:** All requests for **medical** make-up examinations must be accompanied by the Civil Service Commission's Medical Authorization for Make-up Examination form (DPF-728), completed by the treating physician. The Medical Authorization for Make-up Examination form can be obtained through the Make-up Unit or from our website at <http://www.state.nj.us/csc/about/publications/forms/>.

#### F. Examination Information for Make-Up Candidates

Because of concerns regarding loss of examination security relating to the illicit discussion and/or dissemination of test content, the make-up examination for this announcement may not be identical to the original examination. That is, it may be very similar to the original examination, matching the content specifications of the original examination as closely as possible. This means that the make-up examination would measure, in equal proportion, the same knowledge and/or abilities that were measured by the original examination. It will also be administered and scored in the same manner as the original examination. If a different examination is used for make-up purposes, make-up candidates may be required to obtain or use resource material for test preparation/study purposes that is particular to the make-up examination.

### III. EXAM INFORMATION

#### A. Exam Development

A job analysis was conducted to identify the knowledge and abilities that are necessary to perform the duties of a County Correction Captain. A job analysis is the process of critically examining job components in order to provide a functional description of a job. Based on this job analysis, several work components were identified, and it is from these work components that a distinct examination has been developed. During the job analysis, senior county corrections personnel rated each County Correction Captain work component in terms of its importance. Examination questions will relate to those work components that were determined to be most critical. These work components, which have been translated into test content areas, are shown below along with their relative test weights (rounded %). The test weights depict the percentage of the test devoted to each content area.

<u>Weight</u>	<u>Test Content</u>
26.8%	Standard Operating Procedures for County Correctional Facilities
13.3%	Scheduling
13.3%	Report Writing
13.3%	Effective Written Expression
13.3%	Interpersonal Relations
<u>20.0%</u>	Supervision
100%	

#### B. Multiple-Choice Exam

The exam for County Correction Captain will be in a multiple-choice format. Candidates will be provided with a question preceded by a statement, situation, or other stimulus, such as a brief scenario. Each multiple-choice question will have four choices from which candidates will select one answer that **BEST** addresses the problem or situation. Answer choices will be labeled as (a), (b), (c), and (d). Candidates must mark the answer they've selected on their standardized answer sheet. This is done by completely filling in the appropriate space on their answer sheet that designates the letter that corresponds to their answer choice. **No credit** will be awarded for any answer that is not properly marked on the answer sheet. Candidates should mark only one answer for each question, while making sure to erase cleanly any answer changes. Stray marks should be avoided. In answering all questions, candidates are to assume the role of a County Correction Captain and should choose the **BEST** answer from the options provided.

### C. Potential Source Material

The following source will be used by the Civil Service Commission to develop questions for this exam pertaining to Standard Operating Procedures for County Correctional Facilities:

New Jersey Administrative Code Title 10A: Chapter 31

The following two sources will also be used by the Civil Service Commission to develop questions for this exam:

Staff Supervision Made Easy

Scott D. Hutton

Published by the American Correctional Association, 1998

ISBN-10: 1569910936

It is available through the American Correctional Association and may be purchased either online at <https://www.aca.org/store/bookstore/search.asp> or ordered by phone by calling 1-800-222-5646, extension 0129. Prior to the posting of this guide, the publisher indicated it has a large inventory of this title in stock and that it will reprint the text as needed, if all of the copies in stock are sold. The Civil Service Commission will not be responsible for the quantity of books available.

Written and Interpersonal Communication: Methods for Law Enforcement, 4<sup>th</sup> edition

Harvey Wallace & Cliff Roberson

Published by Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009

ISBN-10: 0131597191

ISBN 13: 9780131597198

Candidates should be able to buy this text at their local bookstore, through an online bookstore, or directly from the publisher. Prior to the posting of this guide, the publisher indicated sufficient quantities of this title are available. If there are any problems regarding the availability of this text, please contact the publisher. The Civil Service Commission will not be responsible for the quantity of books available.

\*\*Please note that the development of test items is **NOT** limited to the sources provided in this orientation guide. Candidates are encouraged to consult any additional source material they feel will aid them in their preparation for the County Correction Captain exam.

## IV. POST-EXAM INFORMATION

### A. Explanation of Scoring Process

The examination will be scored electronically based on the number of correct responses. There will be no penalties for wrong answers, meaning points will not be deducted for wrong answers. Therefore, it is in the candidate's best interest to answer every question. If unsure of a correct answer, choose the **BEST** choice. Prior to starting the exam, candidates will be informed of the total number of items to answer and the total time allotted to complete the test. Candidates should budget their time so that they can respond to all questions within the allotted time. No warnings will be given as to how much time is left.

## B. Review and Appeal Information

Candidates will be given the opportunity to schedule an appointment to review the exam. During the review, candidates will have up to 30 minutes to look through a clean copy of the exam booklet and a copy of the key sheet. Before the exam begins, candidates will be given a review form that explains the specific dates and times that will be made available for reviewing the exam. Appointments are made on a first come, first served basis, until all appointments are booked. Candidates will be permitted to leave the test center with the review form so they can reference the information contained on it, in order to schedule an appointment if they choose to do so.

Any objection to the manner in which the examination was administered must be made in writing immediately following the completion of the exam, by completing a Test Administration Comment/Appeal Form prior to leaving the examination center. This form can be obtained from the Center Supervisor. No appeal relating to the manner in which the exam was administered shall be permitted after the test date.

Candidates should be aware that as of July 1, 2010, all appeals pertaining to exam administration and/or exam content are subject to a \$20 processing fee, paid by check or money order to NJ CSC. Persons receiving public assistance or who have veteran status are exempt from this fee.

## C. Explanation of Seniority

A candidate's final score (and rank) on the promotional list consists of two weighted parts: the test score and the seniority score. The seniority score is comprised of the time from the regular appointment date (of the eligible title) to the closing date of the announcement, minus the time spent on suspensions, layoffs, and regular leaves of absence without pay (other than military), such as educational, gubernatorial appointments, personal, sick, disability, family, voluntary furlough, furlough extensions, and to fill elective office (day for day deduction from length of service).

For the County Correction Captain promotional examination, seniority is weighted at 20% and test score is weighted at 80%. The seniority score is combined with the test score to produce the final average score.

## D. Calculation of Seniority Score

To a base score of 70.000, one point is added for each year of eligible service up to a maximum of 15. The maximum possible seniority score is 85.000.

## E. Explanation of Exam Results and Promotions

The results from this examination will be available after the receipt and review of all examination appeals. This process generally takes a minimum of 12 weeks following the last test review date. Candidates should **NOT** call the CSC for their scores. Candidates will receive their examination results in the mail.

If you pass your exam, your name will go on a promotional list ranked by your final score (a composite of test score and seniority score). This promotional list will last for 3 years from its promulgation date or until it is exhausted, whichever occurs first. However, for good cause, the promotional list may be

extended by the CSC for up to 1 additional year.

When your appointing authority (hiring agency) notifies CSC that it wants to fill vacancies, CSC sends it the names that are ranked highest on the promotional list. This is called a certification list. When your name appears on a certification list, it means that you may be interviewed and considered for promotion.

Also, when your name appears on a certification list, CSC will send you a Notification of Certification. You must contact the appointing authority in writing within 5 business days to express your interest. If you do not respond, your name may be removed from the promotional list.

If a disabled veteran or veteran is the first name on the certification, the appointing authority must hire that candidate unless there is a very good reason not to. If there are no disabled veterans or veterans on a certification, the appointing authority can normally choose from among the top 3 candidates for each position.

**Please Note: Promotional appointees are considered to be serving conditionally, pending resolution of all scoring appeals related to the examination.**

## V. SAMLPE QUESTIONS

The following three questions are examples of the types of questions that will appear on the upcoming examination. Please note that these are only sample items. The examination will contain different questions, although similar in structure and content. Answering these sample items correctly does not guarantee you the same success on your examination. Answers to these questions can be found on the next page.

Question 1 is an example of a test question designed to measure candidates' knowledge of Standard Operating Procedures for County Correctional Facilities.

1. You need to make sure that security checks are taking place as often as required by *N.J.A.C. 10A:31-17.4*. Security and visual observation checks must be conducted in Disciplinary Detention every
  - (a) 15 minutes.
  - (b) 30 minutes.
  - (c) hour.
  - (d) two hours.

Question 2 is an example of a test question designed to measure candidates' knowledge of Standard Operating Procedures for County Correctional Facilities.

2. Officer Berkley submits a written report of the minor violation that Inmate Gonzalez committed. You are the shift supervisor and have just finished reviewing this report. You agree with the minor violation report. According to *N.J.A.C. 10A:31-16.5*, within how many hours of your review should the On-the-Spot Correction sanction be imposed on Inmate Gonzalez?
  - (a) 12
  - (b) 24
  - (c) 36
  - (d) 48

Question 3 is an example of a test question designed to measure candidates' knowledge of effective supervision techniques.

3. Your subordinate, Lieutenant Saunders, is due for his annual performance evaluation. Lieutenant Saunders has performed well over the last year, but there are a few areas in which you would like to see him improve. For your feedback to be effective, it is **BEST** for it to be
  - (a) general.
  - (b) personal.
  - (c) descriptive.
  - (d) universal.

## **ANSWERS**

The correct answer to sample Question #1 is (b).

According to *N.J.A.C. 10A:31-17.4*, “Security and visual observation checks shall take place every 30 minutes in Disciplinary Detention.” Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

The correct answer to sample Question #2 is (b).

According to *N.J.A.C. 10A:31-16.5(f)*, “If the shift supervisor concurs with the written minor violation report, the On-The-Spot Correction sanction shall be imposed within 24 hours of the shift supervisor’s review.” Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

The correct answer to sample Question #3 is (c).

As a supervisor, you should be descriptive in your evaluative feedback. Employees should not just be told that they did something effective or ineffective, but instead should also be told the reasons why their actions were or were not effective. Feedback should be impersonal (focused on the action and not the person), therefore option (b) is incorrect. Options (a) and (d) are incorrect because this type of feedback will not provide employees with enough information as to why the actions they took were incorrect or inform them of how they should perform in the future. Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.

## VI. STUDY TIPS

### A. Descriptions and Study Tips for Different Learning Styles

Research suggests that not all people learn the same way. With so much information available in the source material, it may help you to consider which learning style best matches your abilities, so you can determine the most effective way for you to study the material. While this is not an exhaustive description of the different learning styles, consider the following information, and the links that follow, as one possible way to determine which study method is best for you.

#### i. *The Visual Learning Style*

##### Description

You learn best when information is presented visually and in a written language format. In a classroom setting, you benefit from instructors who use the blackboard (or overhead projector) to list the essential points of a lecture, or who provide you with an outline to follow along with during lecture. You benefit from information obtained from textbooks and class notes. You tend to like to study by yourself in a quiet room. You often see information "in your mind's eye" when you are trying to remember something.

##### Study Tips

- Find a quiet place to study, away from noise and visual distractions.
- Preview the study material by looking at the table of contents, headings, and pictures before starting to read.
- Write symbols or key words in the margins of your textbook or manual.
- Use highlighters in different colors to emphasize and organize important concepts.
- Write down key points and details that you want to remember.
- When given information in charts, write out explanations in your own words.
- Organize your notes in outline format, including main headings or categories and notes below each. As an alternative, you can organize your notes by using charts, graphs, pictures, or diagrams.
- Make flashcards of important points and key terms. Limit the amount of information placed on each card.
- Visualize key concepts in your head.

#### ii. *The Auditory Learning Style*

##### Description

You learn best when information is auditory (presented in an oral language format). In a classroom setting, you benefit from listening to lecture and participating in group discussions. You also benefit from obtaining information from audio tape. When trying to remember something, you can often "hear" the way someone told you the information, or the way you previously repeated it out loud. You learn best when interacting with others in a listening/speaking exchange.

##### Study Tips

- Before reading, look through headings and pictures and say out loud what you think each section may cover.
- While reading your notes or textbook, read out loud whenever possible.
- Take pauses while reading to summarize aloud what you have read.

- Tape record yourself reading your notes or textbook, then play it back and listen to it repeatedly, or listen to books on CD.
- Study in a group or with a friend. Discuss the material.
- Make up flashcards and read the material out loud as you memorize it.
- Ask a friend to help quiz you on test material.

### iii. *The Tactile-Kinesthetic Learning Style*

#### Description

You learn best when physically engaged in a "hands on" activity. In the classroom, you benefit from a lab setting where you can manipulate materials to learn new information. You learn best when you can be physically active in the learning environment. You benefit from instructors who encourage in-class demonstrations, "hands on" student learning experiences, and field work outside the classroom.

#### Study Tips

- Before reading, look over the table of contents, headings, etc., to get a feel for the book or manual.
- Write notes, draw pictures, or make charts as you are reading or listening to study material.
- Take short (3-5 minute) breaks during your study time.
- Walk around while reading or memorizing information.
- Move while learning (e.g., tap a pen, squeeze a "stress relief" object, swing an arm, kick a leg).
- Listen to tapes or CDs of study material while working out.
- Type notes on the computer. Incorporate tables and graphics as needed.
- Consider studying in a lounge chair rather than at a desk.
- Consider playing background music (baroque) while trying to learn new material.
- Consider reading material through colored transparencies in order to help with focus.
- While reading, point to or trace the words as you go along.
- Paraphrase the material being learned.
- When possible/appropriate, act out what is being learned. If this is not possible, visualize the concept in your mind.
- Try to find real-life examples of concepts being learned.
- Write important information several times to help with memory.

#### **Sources:**

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NJEA. Learning Style Inventory.  
<http://www.njea.org/pdfs/LearningStyleInventory.pdf>

## B. Understanding and Reducing Test Anxiety

Law enforcement officers face a level of stress on a daily basis that is unlike almost any other career. However, most officers would prefer to deal with the stress involved in responding to a call for service than to deal with the anxiety caused by sitting for an exam that impacts their chances of being promoted. This portion of the County Correction Captain orientation guide attempts to assist candidates in recognizing some of the causes of test anxiety and provides strategies on how to reduce it. Test anxiety is a condition in which a person experiences worry or distress before, during, or after a test or other assessment, to such an extent that it causes poor performance or interferes with normal learning. Because of its effect on performance, it is important that candidates recognize the potential symptoms of test anxiety and take steps to reduce it.

It is normal for any candidate taking an exam to feel a certain degree of nervousness. However, true test anxiety can be a serious threat to a candidate's preparation and performance on the exam. Test anxiety can manifest itself in psychological ways such as "blanking," having difficulty concentrating, and experiencing negative thoughts, as well as physical ways, such as nausea, headache, sweating, and muscle tension. Candidates can attempt to reduce the effects of test anxiety and increase their chances of maximizing their performance on the exam by focusing on three steps: be prepared, get organized, and practice.

### i. *Be Prepared*

Preparation begins with recognizing and confronting negative thoughts you may have about your past exam performance and your chances for scoring well on the upcoming County Correction Captain exam. Negative thoughts can influence your preparation for the exam by affecting your study habits, breaking your concentration, and causing you to second-guess your abilities. One strategy to reduce these thoughts is to take out a sheet of paper and create two columns. On the left side of the paper, you will honestly assess your attitudes and write down every negative thought you have about the prospects of taking a written exam. Next, on the right side of the paper, you will write a positive thought that counteracts the negative thought. For example:

#### Negative Thought

I always do poorly on tests.

If I don't pass this test, I'm a failure.

I can't possibly know everything that will be on the exam.

#### Positive Thought

I will be more prepared than I have been in the past.

I'm going to pass, but if I don't, I can still bounce back.

I know the areas where my knowledge is strong and I will focus on the areas in which I am unfamiliar.

Honestly assessing your feelings and concerns will help you begin to change your attitudes and create a positive mindset.

Another strategy to use for preparing for the exam is to gather as much information about the exam as possible. Consulting the County Correction Captain job specification (<http://info.csc.state.nj.us/jobspec/01397.htm>) and reading over this orientation guide thoroughly will help you familiarize yourself with all aspects of the exam. Information provided in this guide will tell you, in general, what topics will be covered and what resources you can use to learn about the topics. This is a vital step in preparing for the exam, because knowing the information covered by the exam will assist you in organizing a study plan.

## ii. *Get Organized*

Being organized in your study habits is the next step in reducing test anxiety and increasing your performance on the exam. After you have determined from the information available to you, the topics to be covered on the exam, you need to honestly assess in which areas you are strong and which areas require more attention. You may find it helpful to create a study plan or schedule that defines what you will need to study, what resources you will need to compile, and the amount of time you will spend on each topic. When creating a study plan, you must remember to make it realistic for your current lifestyle. Candidates with responsibilities, such as family obligations, cannot expect to spend all their off-duty hours studying. Candidates should also make an attempt to avoid changing their normal routine in order to focus all their energy solely on studying. Although you may find that you need to make some sacrifices in order to put in the proper amount of time studying, it should not be at the expense of eliminating your other interests and obligations. Some candidates believe that if they skip meals or stay up late, they are gaining extra hours of study time. Research suggests, however, that altering your normal sleeping and eating patterns, as a result of trying to spend all your spare time studying, does not have the benefits you would expect. Physical health is as important as emotional health in reducing anxiety.

Finally, remember that studying involves more than highlighting words in a book and memorizing definitions. When establishing your study plan or schedule, your goal should be to have a full understanding of terms and concepts. You will know you have a full understanding of the information when you can define a given term in your own words and discuss why it is important. Similarly, concepts are fully understood when you are able to take two related concepts and discuss their similarities and differences.

## iii. *Practice*

The final step in reducing test anxiety is to practice. While it is not possible to replicate the conditions you will encounter during the exam administration, there are strategies that you can use to simulate the skills you will need during the exam. For instance, during a multiple-choice exam, you may be sitting at a desk for several hours working on your exam. To prepare for this, it may help to block out a similar amount of uninterrupted time while you are studying. This can help you experience what it will be like to have to focus your attention for that period of time. Using the chapter review in a text book or other resource is often another way to test your knowledge, while also giving you the opportunity to practice reading and analyzing multiple-choice questions. In some cases, candidates will know others who are taking the exam. Although many people prefer to study on their own, coming together to review in a group can also be helpful. During this review, each member of the group can come with prepared questions based on the source material. This strategy has the benefit of ensuring that you are reading the material critically enough to develop questions from it, while at the same time, practicing the routine of sitting down and answering questions prepared by another person.

During the days leading up to the exam, you should focus on reviewing the material you have already studied. In order to reduce test anxiety on the day of the exam, you should make every attempt to get a good night's sleep the night before, so that you can arrive at the test center well rested. Plan to arrive early, so that you are not rushing into the test center with only minutes to spare before the exam. It is important to listen to the monitor's instructions carefully and ask questions if you are unsure of anything that has been said. Be aware of how much time you have to complete the exam and the fact that you will be responsible for keeping track of your own time. Remember that, unless instructed otherwise, you are permitted to write in your test booklet. As you proceed through the test, you may wish to circle key words or concepts that may be important in answering test questions, making sure to properly mark all answers on your answer sheet. Review each question carefully and select the BEST answer from the options given. Remember that anxiety is fed by a fear of the unknown. The more you do to prepare before the exam, the better chance you will have at performing at your highest level.

Additional study tips are available in the General Multiple-Choice Exam Orientation Guide, which is available via CSC's web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/csc/seekers/jobs/orientation/>.

**Sources:**

<http://www.studygs.net/tstprp8.htm>

<http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/01361anxiety.pdf>

**C. Tips for Answering Multiple-Choice Questions**

- Try not to read too much into each question. Avoid imagining scenarios in which the answer could be true. In most cases, questions that appear to be “trick questions” are usually only tricky because they are not taken at face value. Determine the best answer using only the information supplied in the question, without making unwarranted assumptions. The correct answer is the one that works best for the situation described.
- Be sure to choose an answer that is directly related to the question being asked. Do not select an answer choice, even if it is a true or correct statement by itself, unless it specifically answers the question being asked.
- The correct answer is the choice that contains the most exact or most complete information in response to the question. Some answer choices may be correct or true in part, but less exact or less complete than the “best” choice. An answer choice that is only partially correct, partially true, or true only under certain conditions should be considered an incorrect choice.
- Don't let more difficult questions affect your attitude and steal valuable time.
- Don't linger over questions you cannot answer. If you cannot decide on an answer choice, make your best guess and move on. However, if you must guess, try to eliminate as many clearly wrong choices as you can in order to make your guess from as few options as possible.

**VII. CONCLUSION**

This orientation guide was designed to help familiarize candidates with aspects of the County Correction Captain examination, as well as provide some suggestions for preparation. The suggestions provided here are not exhaustive; we encourage candidates to engage in whatever additional preparation strategies they believe will enhance their chances of performing effectively on the examination. We hope that this orientation guide has been helpful to you. GOOD LUCK!