PUBLIC SECTOR HR ASSOCIATION (PSHRA) CERTIFICATION PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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Table of Contents

Copyright 1

Table of Contents 2

Introduction 3

How to Use This Guide 4

Questions 5

Answers 8

Explanations 10

Next Steps 15

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

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How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

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Questions

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1. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) primarily establishes which standards?

A. Health insurance requirements

B. Minimum wage, overtime, recordkeeping, and child labor standards

C. Employee safety standards

D. Retirement benefits

2. What type of performance evaluation system was established by the TEAM Act?

A. A new performance evaluation system based on performance outcomes established for each position.

B. Annual generic performance reviews for all employees.

C. Employee self-assessment only.

D. No formal evaluation system.

3. What does criterion-referenced assessment rely on to determine competence?

A. It relies on determining a minimum acceptable level of competence based on past experience with the exam related to observed job performance.

B. It compares candidates against each other to rank performance.

C. It uses only formal education and degrees as a measure of ability.

D. It relies on standardized test scores alone.

4. What is the Rule of Three in civil service systems?

A. Allows organizations to consider 3, 5, 7, or even 9 applicants in the coequal group.

B. Requires exactly three applicants in all cases.

C. Allows only three bands of scores.

D. Bars consideration to only equal rank applicants.

5. Which action best aligns with compliance and fairness in recruitment?

A. Maintaining a structured, merit-based process with documentation.

B. Skipping interviews for internal favorites.

C. Hiring based solely on personal networks.

D. Ending the recruitment process early to avoid delays.

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6. How are the salaries for most public officials set?

A. They are generally set by statute or ordinance.

B. They are set by collective bargaining.

C. They are determined by the governor's executive order.

D. They are determined by random allocation.

7. A company received 200 applications and wants to send a short list of candidates. Which approach best ensures a fair and defensible shortlist?

A. Apply objective minimum qualifications first, then use job-related validated screening criteria.

B. Select candidates based on manager preference.

C. Interview all applicants before choosing five.

D. Use random selection after screening.

8. Which types of organizations are covered by the ADEA?

A. Individuals, partnerships, labor organizations, employment agencies, and corporations that engage in an industry affecting interstate commerce and employ at least 20 individuals

B. Only private corporations

C. Only government agencies

D. Only nonprofit clubs

9. SB 142 relates to HR by requiring what accommodations?

A. Lactation accommodations in the workplace.

B. Paid vacation time.

C. Overtime rules for public sector employees.

D. Annual performance reviews.

10. What are the specific time frames for 5 point preference eligibility?

A. Service must be between September 11, 2001, and August 31, 2010; August 2, 1990, and January 2, 1992; or after January 31, 1955 and before October 15, 1976.

B. Service must be between 1990 and 2000 only.

C. Any service after 1950.

D. Service must be within the last 5 years.

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Answers

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1. B
2. A
3. A
4. A
5. A
6. A
7. A
8. A
9. A
10. A

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Explanations

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1. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) primarily establishes which standards?

A. Health insurance requirements

B. Minimum wage, overtime, recordkeeping, and child labor standards

C. Employee safety standards

D. Retirement benefits

The FLSA sets the basic rules for wages and hours in the United States. It establishes the federal minimum wage, how overtime is paid (typically time-and-a-half for hours over 40 in a workweek), and the required recordkeeping employers must maintain for wages and hours. It also imposes child labor standards, outlining what work minors may do and the hours they can work. Other areas like health insurance, safety, or retirement benefits are covered by different laws (OSHA for safety, ERISA for retirement, health coverage laws), with states sometimes enforcing higher standards. So, the standard the FLSA primarily establishes is minimum wage, overtime, recordkeeping, and child labor standards.

2. What type of performance evaluation system was established by the TEAM Act?

A. A new performance evaluation system based on performance outcomes established for each position.

B. Annual generic performance reviews for all employees.

C. Employee self-assessment only.

D. No formal evaluation system.

The TEAM Act establishes a new performance evaluation framework that ties ratings to outcomes defined for each position. This means the criteria are tailored to the actual duties and expected results of each role, making assessments objective and directly linked to job success. It's not a blanket annual review for all employees, nor is it limited to self-assessment or a loosely informal process; it creates a formal system built around position-specific outcomes. For example, a role focused on delivering programs would be evaluated on concrete results like on-time delivery, quality standards, and measurable impact.

3. What does criterion-referenced assessment rely on to determine competence?

A. It relies on determining a minimum acceptable level of competence based on past experience with the exam related to observed job performance.

B. It compares candidates against each other to rank performance.

C. It uses only formal education and degrees as a measure of ability.

D. It relies on standardized test scores alone.

Criterion-referenced assessment determines competence by checking whether a person can meet a defined standard of performance. The standard is anchored to job-related criteria—the specific tasks, behaviors, and outcomes that competent performance requires—so evaluators judge each candidate against that benchmark rather than against how other candidates perform. This creates a clear minimum level of competence that must be reached, which is useful for making pass/fail determinations and for identifying exactly where a performer meets or falls short of the required standards. This approach differs from norm-referenced methods, which rank people relative to one another, and from measures that rely only on formal education or on standardized test scores without tying results to job-specific performance criteria.

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4. What is the Rule of Three in civil service systems?

A. Allows organizations to consider 3, 5, 7, or even 9 applicants in the coequal group.

B. Requires exactly three applicants in all cases.

C. Allows only three bands of scores.

D. Bars consideration to only equal rank applicants.

The main idea here is that the Rule of Three governs how many qualified candidates are put forward to the selecting official when candidates are closely tied in merit. It provides flexibility so the hiring decision isn't forced to a single fixed number if several applicants are essentially equal in qualifications. In practice, when a coequal group exists—candidates who are tied on a score—the rule allows the agency to refer a subset of that group for consideration, and that subset can vary. This could mean three, or more like five, seven, or even nine candidates, depending on the vacancy and policy. The goal is to ensure the selecting official has enough good options to choose from while maintaining fairness and competitive integrity. This isn't about fixing the exact number every time, about imposing bands of scores, or about restricting consideration only to those who are at the same rank. The essence is the flexible pool size from the coequal group to support a fair, well-informed choice.

5. Which action best aligns with compliance and fairness in recruitment?

A. Maintaining a structured, merit-based process with documentation.

B. Skipping interviews for internal favorites.

C. Hiring based solely on personal networks.

D. Ending the recruitment process early to avoid delays.

Ensuring recruitment is fair and compliant means using a structured, merit-based process with thorough documentation. This approach standardizes how candidates are evaluated, applying the same job-related criteria to everyone, and keeping detailed records of postings, screening decisions, interview notes, scoring rubrics, and the rationale for selecting or not selecting each candidate. Such documentation creates transparency, supports equal opportunity, and provides an audit trail that aligns with legal requirements and organizational policies. This is the best approach because it ties the hiring decision to demonstrated qualifications rather than personal influence or convenience. Skipping interviews for internal favorites bypasses objective assessment and opens the door to bias. Hiring solely based on personal networks privileges a few and ignores merit. Ending the recruitment process early to avoid delays risks excluding qualified applicants and can violate policies or legal timelines.

6. How are the salaries for most public officials set?

A. They are generally set by statute or ordinance.

B. They are set by collective bargaining.

C. They are determined by the governor's executive order.

D. They are determined by random allocation.

Salaries for most public officials are set by formal laws or local rules enacted by the governing body. In state and local governments, pay for elected officials and many top administrators is determined through statutes or ordinances, often incorporated into the annual budget or a dedicated compensation schedule. This approach provides transparency, public accountability, and a consistent framework that lasts across terms and administrations. An executive order would bypass the legislative process and typically applies only to agency operations, not to the broad, long-term compensation of officials. Collective bargaining covers wages for many public employees, but salaries for elected officials and top executives are usually established by law or policy rather than through bargaining. Random allocation has no legal or ethical basis and would undermine fairness and accountability.

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7. A company received 200 applications and wants to send a short list of candidates. Which approach best ensures a fair and defensible shortlist?

A. Apply objective minimum qualifications first, then use job-related validated screening criteria.

B. Select candidates based on manager preference.

C. Interview all applicants before choosing five.

D. Use random selection after screening.

The main concept here is using a two-step, objective screening process that ties decisions to job relevance. First, applying objective minimum qualifications ensures everyone who lacks essential requirements is out, establishing a clear eligibility baseline. This baseline is important because it prevents disqualifying someone for non-essential reasons and creates a level playing field for all applicants. Next, using job-related validated screening criteria helps distinguish among those who meet the minimums. These criteria are proven predictors of job performance and are assessed with reliable tools or structured methods, such as validated interviews, skill tests, or work samples. Because these measures are standardized and tied to the role, they produce consistent, defensible decisions that can be documented and defended if questioned. This approach is fair and defensible because it relies on objective, reproducible standards that directly relate to job success, reducing subjective bias and complying with merit-based selection principles. Other options are less reliable: relying on manager preference introduces personal bias; interviewing everyone is often impractical and can still be biased without structured methods; selecting randomly after screening ignores job-related performance signals and is hard to defend as fair or merit-based.

8. Which types of organizations are covered by the ADEA?

A. Individuals, partnerships, labor organizations, employment agencies, and corporations that engage in an industry affecting interstate commerce and employ at least 20 individuals

B. Only private corporations

C. Only government agencies

D. Only nonprofit clubs

The ADEA applies to a broad range of employers that meet the threshold and operate in interstate commerce. Any organization that employs 20 or more people and is involved in interstate commerce can be subject to age-discrimination rules, not just large corporations. This includes partnerships, labor organizations, and employment agencies, as well as corporations, all of which may hire or manage employees who are protected under the act. The key idea is that the law targets age discrimination in employment for those 40 and older, across diverse types of employers, as long as they reach the 20-employee threshold and are connected to interstate commerce. The other options are narrower, focusing only on private corporations, government agencies, or nonprofit clubs, which excludes many entities that the ADEA covers when they meet the size and commerce criteria.

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9. SB 142 relates to HR by requiring what accommodations?

A. Lactation accommodations in the workplace.

B. Paid vacation time.

C. Overtime rules for public sector employees.

D. Annual performance reviews.

Lactation accommodations in the workplace are what SB 142 addresses. The bill requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations for employees who are breastfeeding, so they can express milk during work hours. This typically means access to a private space (not a bathroom) and time during the workday to pump, ensuring privacy and comfort while supporting the employee's breastfeeding needs. The goal is to help nursing employees balance work and child care without penalty or stigma, aligning with nondiscrimination and family-supportive practices. Paid vacation, overtime rules, and annual performance reviews are separate HR concerns and are not what SB 142 requires.

10. What are the specific time frames for 5 point preference eligibility?

A. Service must be between September 11, 2001, and August 31, 2010; August 2, 1990, and January 2, 1992; or after January 31, 1955 and before October 15, 1976.

B. Service must be between 1990 and 2000 only.

C. Any service after 1950.

D. Service must be within the last 5 years.

Five-point veteran preference is awarded to service members who performed active duty during defined war-time or campaign periods. Those specific windows are set so that the eligibility aligns with recognized periods of conflict. The three time frames listed reflect the periods that qualify for the five-point preference: the Gulf War era (August 2, 1990, to January 2, 1992), the post-9/11 era (September 11, 2001, to August 31, 2010), and a span covering older conflicts (after January 31, 1955 and before October 15, 1976) that includes the Vietnam era and related eligibility. Because the five-point preference isn't granted for any service or for service simply within a broad range like the 1990s, or only for the most recent years, the listed periods are the precise qualifying windows. The other options don't match these defined timeframes, which is why they aren't correct.

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Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

https://pshra.examzify.com

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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