

Healthcare Financial Management Association

**Certified Healthcare Financial Professional (CHFP)
Certification Exam**

CHFP Exam Candidate Handbook

Updated March 2009

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Information in this Handbook represents current policies and procedures for the HFMA certification exams. Information in this Handbook supercedes information contained in any previously published information.

All candidates are accountable for information included in the handbook and abiding by the designated policies. HFMA and the HFMA Board of Examiners (the BoE), will review any reported or suspected breach of policy. Activities that compromise the HFMA Certification exam and/or testing process may result in actions against the candidate and/or proctor including but not limited to being barred from taking any HFMA certification exam and/or applying for certification, removal of designation if already certified, removal of membership in HFMA, and legal action.

The HFMA Board of Examiners (BoE) and HFMA reserve the right to change these policies.

Certification Program Contact Information:

The Healthcare Financial Management Association
Attn: Career Services
Two Westbrook Corporate Center, Suite 700
Westchester, IL 60154

Web site: www.hfma.org/certification

e-mail: certification@hfma.org

Phone: (800) 252-4362, ask for certification

Fax: (708) 531-0665 (to submit credit card payment for exam applications)

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1. Exam Application Process

- The candidate must submit a completed exam application (Available on line at: http://www.hfma.org/login/index.cfm?script_name=/site/certification/exam_application.cfm .) with appropriate non-refundable fees to National HFMA as indicated on the exam application. Phone applications are not accepted and applications received without payment will not be processed.
 - On the exam application, the candidate must identify the HFMA-approved proctor's name and the mutually agreed upon date on which the candidate plans to complete the exam and the approved proctor is available to proctor it. (HFMA is *not* responsible for assigning proctors, although it can provide assistance to candidates in identifying proctors located closest to the candidate's desired testing location.)
 - Board of Examiners policy prohibits relatives of a candidate and individuals with direct reporting to or supervisory responsibilities for the candidate from serving as proctor. Candidates should not request such individuals to serve as their proctor.
- For charge payment, the test date must be scheduled no sooner than 10 business days after HFMA National's receipt of the exam application to allow appropriate processing time. For payment made by check, allow an additional 10 business days for processing of payment and scheduling the exam date. Expedite processing (i.e., exam date requested is sooner than the 10 business day processing period for charge card payment and 20 days for payment by check) will be subjected to an administrative fee of \$25.
- While the exams are available 24 hours of the day, technical support from HFMA National Career Services is available *only* during normal business hours of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm (CST) Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. *Due to limited space, the HFMA National office (Westchester, IL) is not available for testing.*
 - HFMA National posts on the HFMA web site the exam date, location and proctors *only as provided by the chapters.* Exam candidates do not have to take the exams in their local chapter. A candidate may request permission from any HFMA chapter to sit for an exam. Candidates may also independently locate an approved proctor and set a mutually agreeable test date and location with that proctor. The candidate is responsible for submitting the information in writing to HFMA National by completing the exam application and submitting it with the appropriate payment.
- After the application has been processed and approximately three (3) business days prior to the scheduled exam, the candidate and the designated proctor each will receive a unique, time-sensitive password (good for only the designated exam date) in an e-mail notification.
 - HFMA National is not responsible for any errors in the date provided on the application or other information supplied by the exam candidate.
- The password notification will be sent to the candidate and proctor's e-mail address as listed in their HFMA member profile. HFMA National is not responsible for undelivered passwords or related messages due to an invalid e-mail address in a

member's record. *It is the responsibility of the proctor and the candidate to ensure information in their HFMA member profile is current and accurate.*

- Each proctor is assigned a specific password that is time sensitive and valid only on the scheduled exam date. If the wrong name of a proctor is provided on the application and another password is entered, the testing system will not work. HFMA is not responsible for errors in the candidate's application, e.g., incorrect exam date, wrong proctor, etc., and processes applications based on information provided on that exam application.
- It is the responsibility of the candidate and proctor to ensure passwords are received in advance of the exam, and contacting HFMA National as appropriate.
- Candidates have a maximum of one year after registering for an exam in which to complete that exam. After one year, the candidate forfeits the paid exam fee and must submit a new application with appropriate payment.
- Candidates wishing to reschedule an exam must submit a written request (e-mail to certification@hfma.org) at least two days prior to the exam. (Phone requests for change of exam date will *not* be accepted.) The candidate wishing to reschedule and exam is responsible for the following:
 - Inform the proctor as soon as possible of the need to re-schedule.
 - Contact the chapter, if the chapter is administering the exam, to determine when the chapter will next offer that exam. If the date conflicts with a candidate's schedule, the candidate may complete the exam on a day offered by another chapter.
 - Inform HFMA Career Services in writing (certification@hfma.org) of the proctor with whom the candidate was going to be taking the exam and on what date, as well as the name of the proctor with whom the candidate will now be taking the exam and that rescheduled date
 - * Candidates submitting the request for a new exam date on shorter notice will forfeit the exam fee for the cancelled date and be required to submit a new application and appropriate fees.
 - * Candidates rescheduling more than twice will be assessed a \$25 processing fee.
- Only approved proctors are allowed to install the browser software needed for administration of the exam. (All HFMA certified members are eligible to serve as proctors when they go through the requisite approval process.) Candidates are not allowed to install the Browser software on any computer. This would potentially compromise the integrity of the testing process and is considered a breach of policy.
- Proctors are responsible for coordinating any efforts required to ensure full functionality of the computers and the exam administration software. HFMA National staff support is available only during normal business hours.

2. Exam Administration Policies

Examination Confidentiality

All candidates are required to accept the terms of the HFMA confidentiality policy that they will not divulge the nature or content of HFMA examinations test items, engage in unauthorized communication during the examination, refer to unauthorized materials or use unauthorized equipment during the exams. A confidentiality statement is included in the exam application process and in the instructions that precede the on-line certification examinations. Acceptance of the confidentiality statement is required to launch the examination. Candidates refusing to accept the confidentiality statement will not be allowed to schedule certification examinations.

HFMA (the Professional Development department, the Board of Examiners, and/or the HFMA Board of Directors) reserves the right to audit test sites and ensure adherence to exam procedures. Any noted or suspected irregularities or compromise of the exam or testing process will be investigated. Candidates reported to be or who are suspected of compromising the exam or testing process may be prohibited from taking any exam, applying for certification, and/or retaining HFMA membership and/or certified status, among other potential consequences.

- The candidate's identity will be verified by the proctor by checking a driver's license or other form of picture identification to ensure the proper candidate is taking the exam. A candidate attempting to have someone else complete the exam is a violation of the HFMA Code of Ethics and the candidate and/or the attempted substituted exam taker will be subjected to consequences for the action based on a review of the situation.
- The candidate is allowed to take the exam with only the proctor they identified on their exam application. Any deviation from this is considered breach of policy. If someone other than the designated proctor to whom the password was sent is administering the exam, that proctor must contact HFMA immediately. The exam cannot continue until HFMA approves the substitution of the proctor. The unapproved proctor is expected to terminate the exam immediately until HFMA approves the substitution and provides the substituted proctor with a different password. The candidate will also be assigned a new password because the assigned password is good for only one attempt at an exam.
- The proctor should assist the candidate with signing on to the Internet testing site and ensuring the candidate is connected properly.
- The proctor is expected to remain in the room during the entire time of the exam and ensure that the exam or testing process is not compromised. The proctor leaving the room is considered a breach of policy, and may result in HFMA revoking the candidate's exam score for that exam during which the proctor's absence occurred, among other potential consequences.

- The proctor should ensure the candidate has access to the proper exam (s) for which they paid for on the exam application (Core, Accounting and Finance, Patient Financial Services, Management of Physician Practices, or Managed Care).
- The proctor is also responsible for ensuring the candidate understands how to interact with the computer, use the mouse, and enter responses.
- The proctor is not allowed to explain or provide information regarding the interpretation of question content that the candidate may find unclear.
- Copying of questions in part or whole by the candidate, proctor or anyone else is fully restricted. Like the self-study course materials, the exams are copyright protected. The exams may not be duplicated in part or whole for any reason. Doing so would be a breach of confidentiality and the situation subjected to review by the Board of Examiners for determination of the appropriate consequences. The ruling of the BoE is considered final.
- Cell phones or other photographic/image capturing devices are not allowed in the testing room/area as it can be disruptive and potentially compromise the integrity of the exam/testing process. Candidates are not allowed to have access to a phone during the exam or any breaks from the exam. A candidate receiving or making a phone call during the exam compromises the exam and/or testing process and may result in HFMA revoking the candidate's test score for that exam during which the phone call occurred, among other potential consequences. To avoid disruption to the exam candidate, proctors should not make or receive phone calls during an exam. Candidates are not allowed to use cell phones as a calculator.
- The candidate is not allowed to bring the study guide or any other materials into the testing room/area and these materials should not be readily available to the candidate, including during any break times. Attempts to use reference materials can be a basis for termination of the examination and the candidate being prohibited from taking any exam in the future.
- The candidate is not allowed to have scratch paper. Any needed scratch paper will be provided by the proctor and destroyed at the completion of the exam.
- Candidates are not allowed to spend time on activities not related to completing the exam that would compromise the exams. Such activities include, but are not limited to, working in other applications.
- Candidates should not spend excessive lengths of time away from the testing station. Restroom breaks are allowed, but they should be reasonable in length. The exams are timed and the clock does not stop running if the candidate walks away from the on-line exam. Candidates taking excessive or extended breaks are considered to be potentially compromising the testing process and such incidents may result in HFMA revoking the candidate's test score for that exam during which the incident occurred, among other potential consequences.

Reporting to the Examination Location

Candidates are to report to the exam location on the scheduled date about 15 minutes before the scheduled start time for the exam and should bring the following items:

- The assigned password
- A current picture identification card such as a valid driver's license
- Silent, battery operated, non-printing calculator. Cell phones are not an acceptable calculation device.

The following are *not* allowed in the testing room/area:

- Blank "scratch" paper for use during the examination
- Reference or other materials or paper of any type including books, newspapers, magazines, the self-studies or study aids, and personal notes
- Electronic capture, recording or transmission devices of any kind
- Cell phones or other photographic/image capturing devices
- Communication with other candidates during the examination
- Eating, drinking or use of tobacco

Americans with Disabilities Act

In accordance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, the Board of Examiners will allow reasonable modification of exam administration processes in circumstances where a determination has been made that a candidate's disabilities require departure from established testing protocol and where the accommodation will not affect exam validity and reliability. A written request, including appropriate written medical verification of the disability and stipulated accommodations for the disability, must be submitted to HFMA National at least 30 days prior to scheduling an examination date with a chapter or proctor. Requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

3. Completing the Exam

- Both the candidate and proctor must enter their assigned passwords.
- Neither the candidate nor the proctor should share his or her password with anyone else.
- With the assigned password, the candidate is allowed only one attempt at each assigned exam on a given exam date.

3.1 Entering the Passwords to Begin an Exam

The sign on screen has a “Perception Server” logo in the upper left, and a “Questionmark Perception” logo in the lower right corner. Beneath the logos are a **Name** field and a **Password** field.

Please enter your name and password below

Name	<input type="text" value="Candidate's Password"/>
Password	<input type="text" value="Proctor's password"/>
<input type="button" value="Enter"/>	

Each the Candidate and Proctor's *passwords are case sensitive*. If the password is typed in upper case in your e-mail notification letter, they must be entered in upper case. Enter these passwords exactly as provided to you by HFMA National. Be sure to bring a copy of the e-mail with you.

1. The **candidate** enters their password in the **Name** field exactly as provided to the candidate in the e-mail notification from HFMA National.
2. The **proctor** enters their password in the **Password** field exactly as provided to the proctor in the e-mail notification from HFMA National.
3. The candidate clicks on **Enter**.

The following information appears at the beginning of every exam to inform and guide the candidate through the examination process.

You are about to begin the HFMA certification examination. If this is not the exam for which you have registered, notify your proctor immediately and do not proceed any further.

The multiple-choice questions on this exam are based on content covered in the self-study course material. The specialty exams each have 83 questions and the Core exam has 166 questions. The exam questions are grouped into sections representing chapters in the self-study course.

There is only one correct answer for each question and there is no penalty for guessing. Select the best response by clicking on the circle next to your selected answer. The circle will be highlighted. Unanswered questions are scored as incorrect.

After you complete the questions in each section, you are requested to “submit” your answers. Until you “submit” your answers to a section, you may continue to answer questions and change answers within that section. Once you “submit” an exam section, you may not return to that section and will no longer be able to change any of your responses.

You are allowed two (2) hours to complete the specialty exam and four (4) hours to complete the Core exam. If you have not submitted your last exam section by that time, the computer will terminate your exam and your score will be based on the number of questions you have answered correctly. The clock will not start running until you have accessed the first question on the exam and will stop after you have submitted the last section of the exam or after the maximum allowed time has been reached, whichever comes first.

Candidate Confidentiality Agreement

All candidates for Certification are required to agree to the following statements:

I hereby apply to the Healthcare Financial Management Association (“HFMA”) for examination and issuance to me of Certification as Certified Healthcare Financial Professional (CHFP), in accordance with and subject to the procedures and regulations of HFMA. I have read and agree to the conditions set forth in the HFMA Certification Exam Candidate Handbook covering the administration of the Certification Examinations; the Certification process; and HFMA’s policies. I agree to disqualification from examination; to denial of Certification, and to forfeiture and redelivery of any certificate granted me by HFMA in the event that any of the statements or answers made by me in this application are false or in the event that I violate any of the rules or regulations governing such examination.

I authorize HFMA to make whatever inquiries and investigations it deems necessary to verify my credentials and professional standing. I understand that this application and any

information or material received or generated by HFMA in connection with my Certification will be kept confidential and will not be released unless I have authorized such release or such release is required by law. However, the fact that I am or am not, or have or have not been Certified is a matter of public record and may be disclosed, and I authorize HFMA to make such disclosure to the HFMA Chapter of which I am a member. Finally, I authorize HFMA to use information from my application and subsequent examination for the purpose of statistical analysis, provided my personal identification with that information has been deleted.

I understand that the content of the Certification Examinations is proprietary and strictly confidential information. I hereby agree that I will not disclose, either directly or indirectly, any question or any part of any question from an Examination to any person or entity. I understand that I can be disqualified from taking or continuing to sit for an Examination, or from receiving Examination scores, if HFMA determines through either proctor observation, statistical analysis, or any other means that I was engaged in collaborative, disruptive, or other unacceptable behavior during the administration of or following the Examination.

I further understand that the unauthorized receipt, retention, possession, copying or disclosure of any Examination materials, including but not limited to the content of any Examination question, before, during, or after the Examination may subject me to legal action. Such legal action may result in monetary damages and/or disciplinary action including denial or revocation of certification or re-certification.

I hereby agree to hold HFMA, its officers, directors, examiners, employees, and agents, harmless from any complaint, claim, or damage arising out of any action or omission by any of them in connection with this application; the application process, any examination given by HFMA; any grade relating thereto; the failure to issue me any certificate; or any demand for forfeiture or redelivery of such certificate. I understand that the decision as to whether I qualify for certification rests solely and exclusively with HFMA and that the decision of HFMA is final.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THESE STATEMENTS AND I INTEND TO BE LEGALLY BOUND BY THEM.

Press "Submit" to access the first section of the exam.

3.2 Accessing the Assigned Exams

Once the candidate and the proctor have both entered their password and the candidate submits the sections attesting to abide by the testing policies and procedures, another screen should appear with an HFMA logo in the upper left corner, and a “Questionmark Perception” logo in the lower right corner. This screen lists the exams that have been assigned and are available to the candidate (the exams that he or she has advance registered for). The candidate may select any of the exams on that list. A sample listing is as follows:

The following assessments are available to you:	
Core Examination	Start
Accounting and Finance Examination	Start
Patient Financial Services Examination	Start

In this example, this person has signed up for three examinations. To choose an exam to launch, the candidate clicks on the **Start** button for the selected exam and that exam will launch.

3.3 Beginning the Exam

Once the candidate has downloaded an exam, a page will appear with the HFMA logo and a time clock in the upper left hand corner. When the candidate begins the first section of the exam, the time clock will reflect the full time allowed for the exam, i.e., two hours for specialty exams or four hours for the Core exam.

- If this is the first section of an exam, the candidate will see the introduction information.
- For all remaining sections within an exam, the candidate will see how much time remains and how many questions are in the new section.

Each section identifies the topic (i.e., chapter in the corresponding self-study course) being tested so that the candidate is aware of the content area being tested.

Each exam is set up to download only ONE TIME, i.e., when the candidate presses the START button. If the candidate pushes the START button more than once, it will halt the original download of the exam and try to download the exam again. This will terminate the testing session and the candidate will not have access to the exam. **It is important that the candidate allow the exam to download and NOT click on the START button a second time.**

3.4 Responding to Questions on the Exam

The candidate answers questions by using the mouse to click on one of four circles in front of the four answer options.

- If an option is selected, the center of the circle will be filled by a black dot. It is necessary to click on the circle to select an answer; simply clicking on the text will not make the selection.
- It is not possible to click on more than one option for any question. There is only one answer to the question.
- If another option is selected, another circle will be filled by the black dot.
- Unanswered questions are scored as incorrect. The final score is based on the total number of questions answered correctly.

Once the candidate completes a section of the exam, two buttons appear at the bottom of the page.

Submit

Reset

- If the candidate selects **SUBMIT**, they will be taken to the next exam section and will *not* be able to return to this exam section. The answers selected in this section are uploaded and the answers cannot be changed after the SUBMIT button is clicked. The candidate is free to revisit the questions in a section and change answers until they hit the SUBMIT button.
 - Do NOT hit the SUBMIT button more than once. Doing so may cause the system to terminate the exam and you will not have access back into that exam. Allow the system time to process the section you have just submitted
 - If the candidate selects RESET, all answers selected in this section will be deleted, and the candidate will have to re-answer all questions. Unless the candidate wishes to completely “start from scratch” on the section, selecting RESET is not recommended.
- The clock at the top of each section tracks the time the candidate has remaining. The candidate should continue to work through sections, and submit the sections as they are completed. Maximum time allowed for the candidate to complete an exam is as follows:
 - Four hours for the Core exam
 - Two hours for each specialty exam

If the allotted time runs out before the candidate completes the exam, the system will simply close down the exam, whether the candidate completes/submits or not. At that time, the system will save answers that have been entered, and the exam will be ended. Sections not submitted will not be scored. The final score is based on the total number of questions answered correctly.

If an Internet disconnection occurs, the system will allow the candidate to re-enter the exam where it left off. The clock continues to run during this down time.

3.5 After the Completing the Exam

- Candidates receive their score on the screen almost immediately after they submit the last section of an exam. The candidate receives only the final score. Scores are not provided for individual sections/chapters or correctness of individual questions.
- The secure browser allows the candidate to print this score screen. The candidate will also receive their score via e-mail transmitted through the testing system. The score will be sent to the e-mail address included in the candidate's HFMA member profile. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure accuracy of this information.

The HFMA Board of Examiners has worked with experts in testing and psychometrics to ensure that the test is valid and the scoring is accurate, fair, valid, and verifiable. The HFMA examinations are graded using scaled scores and the minimum passing score is 21 based on a scaled score range of 1 to 30.

- Scores (including Pass or Fail status) are not shared by HFMA National with anyone other than the candidate. HFMA discloses only aggregate score data that will not divulge or imply the result of an individual candidates score.
- Candidates successfully completing one exam are in a "Conditioned Status." and have 24 months from the date the first examination is passed to successfully pass the second examination. There is no exception to this policy as an eligibility requirement for becoming a Certified Healthcare Financial Professional (CHFP).
 - If both exams are not successfully completed within the required two-year period, both exams must be retaken. When retaking an exam, the candidate must complete a CHFP Examination Application (see next page) and submit it with the appropriate non-refundable fee.
 - If the candidate did not successfully complete an exam and would like to retake that exam, the candidate must repeat the exam application process as described in the "Exam Application Process" section, including payment of the appropriate exam fee. *Exams cannot be retaken prior to a minimum 90-day wait period.* Exceptions to this timeframe will not be granted.
- Candidates who do not successfully complete the exam are required to wait a minimum of 90 days before retaking the exam. There is no exception to this policy of timeframe for retaking the exam.
- Candidates who retake the exam must submit a new exam application with the appropriate fee and abide by all of the procedures required for applying for an exam. They will need to arrange for and then indicate on the application when they will retake the exam and the name of the proctor. Phone applications are not accepted.

If the proctor determines a candidate is compromising the exam/process, the proctor will end the exam immediately and report the candidate to HFMA National for potential violation of the HFMA Code of Ethics. The candidate may be prohibited from taking any exam, applying for certification, and/or retaining HFMA membership and/or certified status, among other potential consequences. The situation may be reviewed by HFMA National, the HFMA Board of Examiners and/or the HFMA National Board of Directors.

4. Applying to Become a CHFP

- To become certified, a candidate must successfully complete the Core and one specialty exam within 24 months of successfully completing the first exam. Passing the two requisite exams does NOT mean the candidate is automatically certified. Other requirements must be met. More information is available at: <http://www.hfma.org/certification/chfp/>
- Candidates meeting all requirements to become a CHFP must submit a conforming CHFP application (available on-line at: <http://www.hfma.org/certification/chfp/CHFPApplication.htm>).
- If the CHFP application is accepted, a certificate will be issued to the candidate's local chapter president for presentation to the candidate.
- To retain the designation, certified members (CHFPs and FHFMA's) must remain an active HFMA member meet the certification maintenance requirements every three years, as described on the HFMA web site: <http://www.hfma.org/certification/certmaintenance/>.
- Any HFMA member holding the CHFP designation may take additional specialty exams to add a specialty certification to his or her qualifications. Additional specialty exams can be taken by HFMA members at any time.