



# **CSSD Examination**

## *Handbook for Candidates*



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## INTRODUCTION

Specialist board certification for registered dietitians is offered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR), the credentialing agency for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in the areas of gerontological nutrition, obesity and weight management, oncology nutrition, pediatric nutrition, pediatric critical care nutrition, renal nutrition and sports dietetics. CDR specialty board certification is granted in recognition of the applicant's documented practice experience and successful completion of a computerized examination in the specialty area. The Board Certification Specialist in Sports Dietetics is offered year round. The examination consists of 150 multiple-choice questions. It is essential that you keep this Candidate Handbook readily available for reference until you have successfully completed the examination. You are responsible for knowing its contents.

## CSSD PRACTITIONER DEFINITION

The Sports Dietitian provides individual and group/team nutrition counseling and education to enhance the performance of competitive and recreational athletes.

Primary responsibilities include counseling individuals and groups on daily nutrition for performance and health; translating the latest scientific evidence into practical sports nutrition recommendations; tracking and documenting outcomes of nutrition services, serving as a food and nutrition resource for coaches, sports performance support staff, and families.

This is accomplished by providing sports nutrition education for health/wellness programs, athletic teams, and community groups; and maintaining professional competency and skills required for professional practice.

## TESTING AGENCY

PSI Services is currently the professional testing agency retained by CDR to assist in the development, administration, scoring, and analysis of this specialty examination. PSI is a research and development firm that conducts professional competency assessment research and provides examination services for a number of health practitioner credentialing programs.

## STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

CDR and PSI do not discriminate among candidates on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, religion, national origin, disability or marital status.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Information about candidates for testing and their examination results are considered confidential. Test question drafts and other materials used to create examination questions (except for test content outlines or reference lists) are secure and confidential. All such materials shall be kept in secure, locked storage, accessible only by authorized personnel, and not disclosed to or shared with others. All questions written and materials developed for questions are considered a "work for hire," and remain the property of CDR. Question writers are not allowed to conduct "review courses" or other programs designed to prepare candidates to take a CDR Specialty examination. Studies and reports concerning candidates will contain no information identifiable with any candidate, unless authorized by the candidate.

CDR asks that each practitioner work to maintain the integrity of the CSSD examination so that we may continue to provide a quality certification—one that highlights the CSSD as the board certified expert in sports dietetics. Thus, it is important to not discuss the examination content, questions and study resources. Each

time examination content is discussed the exam is compromised and there is significant loss, not only in fiscal terms (cost of test development), but also in the many hours spent creating, reviewing, editing and compiling statistics for examination questions. Discussing the examination content is unethical and provides exam candidates an unfair advantage when taking the examination.

## **EXAMINATION ELIGIBILITY**

The examination eligibility period is one year. Candidates must schedule and complete their examination before their eligibility period expires. If an appointment is not scheduled within the one-year period, candidates will have to complete the eligibility application and pay the examination fee again.

## **EXAMINATION APPOINTMENTS**

After you have received notification of your eligibility, you may schedule an examination appointment by one of the following methods. Be prepared to confirm a date and location for testing and to provide your unique identification number (that starts with a Y).

### **1. Schedule Online:**

Follow these steps:

- Go to <http://online.goamp.com>
- Select "Category"- "Healthcare"
- Select "Program"- "Commission on Dietetic Registration"
- Select "Examination" – "Specialist in Sports Dietetics Examination"
- Click On "Register for this Exam"
- If you have never used PSI's online system before you will have to register as a new user by clicking on "New user?"
- After scheduling your examination appointment online you will receive an email confirmation.

### **2. Telephone Scheduling:**

Call PSI at 888-519-9901 to schedule an examination appointment. This toll-free

number is answered from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. (Central Time) Monday through Thursday, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Friday and 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday.

If special accommodations are requested, please submit the Request for Special Examination Accommodations form included at the end of the Handbook prior to contacting PSI.

The examinations are administered by appointment only Monday through Saturday at various times based on location. Individuals are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.

When the appointment is made, the candidate will be sent an e-mail providing the time to reports to the Test Center. The candidate will only be allowed to take the examination for which the appointment has been made. No changes in examination type will be made at the Test Center. **UNSCHEDULED CANDIDATES (WALK-INS) WILL NOT BE ADMITTED** to the Test Center.

## **HOLIDAYS**

The examinations are not offered on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day (and the following Friday)
- Christmas Eve Day
- Christmas Day

## **TEST CENTER LOCATIONS**

Examinations are administered by computer at approximately 300 Test Centers geographically distributed throughout the United States. Test Center locations, detailed maps and directions are available on PSI's website: <http://online.goamp.com>. Specific address information will be provided once an appointment has been scheduled.

**SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES**

PSI complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and strives to ensure that no individual with a disability is deprived of the opportunity to take the examination solely by reason of that disability. PSI will provide reasonable accommodations for candidates with disabilities. Candidates requesting special accommodations must call PSI at 1-888-519-9901 to schedule their examination.

Wheelchair access is available at all established Assessment Centers. Candidates must advise PSI at the time of scheduling that wheelchair access is necessary.

Candidates with visual, sensory or physical disabilities that would prevent them from taking the examination under standard conditions may request special accommodations and arrangements.

Verification of the disability and a statement of the specific type of assistance needed must be made in writing to CDR using the form at the end of the Candidate Handbook at least 45 calendar days prior to your desired examination date. Please inform PSI of your need for special accommodations when scheduling your examination time.

**RESCHEDULING OR CANCELING AN EXAMINATION APPOINTMENT, REFUND REQUESTS**

A candidate may reschedule an appointment for examination at no charge once by calling PSI at 1-888-519-9901 at least two business days prior to the scheduled testing session. (See table below.)

If your examination is scheduled on...	Your must call PSI by 3:00 p.m. Central Time to change your appointment by the previous...
Monday	Wednesday
Tuesday	Thursday
Wednesday	Friday

Thursday	Monday
Friday	Tuesday

A candidate who does not schedule his/her examination appointment after confirmation of eligibility may request a full refund if they do not wish to test during their eligibility window. Requests for refunds must be made before their eligibility expires. Requests for refunds should be made in writing to [specialists@eatright.org](mailto:specialists@eatright.org). A new application and examination fee would need to be submitted if a candidate would like to take the examination at a future date.

A candidate who wishes to reschedule his/her examination appointment within their eligibility window but fails to contact PSI at least two business days prior to the scheduled testing session will be required to pay a \$85 fee to reschedule the examination. In this case to reschedule your appointment, you will need to contact CDR first at 800-877-1600, ext. 5500 or [specialists@eatright.org](mailto:specialists@eatright.org).

**INCLEMENT WEATHER, POWER FAILURE OR EMERGENCY**

In the event of inclement weather or unforeseen emergencies on the day of an examination, PSI will determine whether circumstances warrant the cancellation, and subsequent rescheduling, of an examination. The examination will usually not be rescheduled if the Assessment Center personnel are able to open the Assessment Center.

Candidates may visit PSI’s website at <http://online.goamp.com> prior to the examination to determine if PSI has been advised that any Test Centers are closed. Every attempt is made to administer the examination as scheduled; however, should an examination be canceled at a Test Center, all scheduled candidates will receive notification following the examination regarding rescheduling procedures.

If power to a Test Center is temporarily interrupted during an administration, your examination will be restarted. The responses provided up to the point of interruption will be intact.

## **EXAMINATION CONTENT**

The examination consists of 150 multiple-choice questions (125 questions scored questions and 25 pretest questions), and is constructed using approximately the number of items indicated in the Content Outline. Pretesting is done to see how well items perform before they are used in the scored portion of the examination. The pretest questions cannot be distinguished from those that will be scored, so it is important that all questions are answered to the best of your ability. Candidates will have to choose the best answer from the four options provided. Candidates will have 3 hours to complete the examination.

## **COPYRIGHTED EXAMINATION QUESTIONS**

All examination questions are the copyrighted property of CDR. It is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute or display these examination questions by any means, in whole or in part. Doing so may subject you to severe civil and criminal penalties.

## **ON THE DAY OF YOUR EXAMINATION**

On the day of your examination appointment, report to the Assessment Center no later than your scheduled testing time. Once you enter the building, look for the signs indicating PSI Assessment Center check-in. **A CANDIDATE WHO ARRIVES MORE THAN 15 MINUTES AFTER THE SCHEDULED TESTING TIME WILL NOT BE ADMITTED.**

To gain admission to the Assessment Center, a candidate needs to present two forms of identification, one with a current photograph. Both forms of identification must be current and include the candidate's current name and

signature. The candidate will also be required to sign a roster for verification of identity.

Acceptable forms of identification include a current:

1. State issued driver's license with photograph
2. State issued identification card with photograph
3. US Government issued passport
4. US Government issued Military identification card with photograph
5. US Governments issued alien registration card
6. Social security card (secondary form)
7. CDR registration identification card (secondary form)
8. Credit card (secondary form)

Employment ID cards, student ID cards and any type of temporary identification are NOT acceptable as primary identification. Candidates are prohibited from misrepresenting their identities or falsifying information to obtain admission to the Test Center.

## **SECURITY**

CDR and PSI maintain examination administration and security standards that are designed to ensure all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. The Test Center is continuously monitored by audio and video surveillance equipment for security purposes.

The following security procedures apply during the examination:

- Examinations are proprietary. No cameras, notes, tape recorders, computers, pagers or cellular phones are allowed in the testing room. Possession of a cellular phone or other electronic devices is strictly prohibited and will result in dismissal from the examination.
- Only silent, non-programmable calculators without alphabetic keypads or printing capabilities are allowed in the testing room.



- No guests, visitors or family members are allowed in the testing room or reception areas.

### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

No personal items, valuables, or weapons should be brought to the Test Center. Coats must be left outside the testing room. You will be provided a locker or secure folders to store your belongings during testing. You will not have access to these items until after the examination is completed.

You will be asked to pull out your pockets to ensure they are empty. If any personal items are observed in the testing room after the examination is started, you will be dismissed and the examination forfeited.

### **EXAMINATION RESTRICTIONS**

- Pencils will be provided during check-in.
- You will be provided with one piece of scratch paper at a time to use during the examination. You must return the scratch paper to the supervisor at the completion of testing, or you will not receive your score report.
- No documents or notes of any kind may be removed from the Test Center.
- No questions concerning the content of the examination may be asked during the examination.
- Eating, drinking or smoking will not be permitted in the Test Center.
- You may take a break whenever you wish, but you will not be allowed additional time to make up for time lost during breaks. You may not leave the testing building during your break.

### **MISCONDUCT**

If you engage in any of the following conduct during the examination you may be dismissed, your scores will not be reported and examination

fees will not be refunded. Examples of misconduct are when you:

- create a disturbance, are abusive, or otherwise uncooperative;
- display and/or use electronic communications equipment such as pagers, cellular phones;
- talk or participate in conversation with other examination candidates;
- give or receive help or are suspected of doing so;
- leave the Test Center during the administration;
- attempt to record examination questions or make notes;
- attempt to take the examination for someone else;
- are observed with personal belongings, or
- are observed with notes, books or other aids.

### **COMPUTER LOGIN**

After your identification has been confirmed, your photograph will be taken. This photograph will also print on your score reports. You will be directed to a work station where you will be instructed on-screen to enter your unique identification number (that starts with a Y).

### **PRACTICE TUTORIAL**

Prior to attempting the examination, you will be given the opportunity to take a practice tutorial.

The time you use for this practice tutorial is NOT counted as part of your examination time or score. When you are comfortable with the computer testing process, you may quit the practice session and begin the timed examination. Please note that this practice tutorial is to help you become familiar with the computerized examination format; it is possible that the problems will not be nutrition related.

## **TIMED EXAMINATION**

Following the practice tutorial, you will begin the 3-hour timed examination. Before beginning, instructions for taking the examination are provided on-screen.

The computer monitors the time you spend on the examination. The examination will terminate if you exceed the time allowed. A digital clock located at the top of the screen updates as you record your answers and indicates the time remaining for you to complete the examination.

Only one examination question is presented at a time. Choices of answer to the examination questions are identified as A, B, C, or D. You must indicate your choice by either typing in the letter in the response box in the lower left hand of the computer screen or clicking the option using the mouse. The question number appears in the lower right hand corner of the screen.

To change your answer, enter a different option by typing A, B, C, or D or by clicking on the option using the mouse. You may change your answer as many times as you wish during the examination time limit.

To move to the next question, click on the forward arrow (>) in the lower right portion of the screen. This action will move you forward through the examination question by question. If you wish to review any question or questions, click the backward arrow (<) or use the left arrow key to move backward through the examination.

An examination question may be left unanswered for return later in the examination session. Questions may also be bookmarked for later review by clicking in the blank square to the right of the Time button. Click on the double arrows (>>) to advance to the next unanswered or bookmarked question on the examination. To identify all unanswered and bookmarked questions, repeatedly click on the double arrows (>>). When the examination is completed, the number of examination questions answered is reported. If not all questions have been answered and there is time remaining, return to the examination and answer those questions. Be sure to provide an answer for each examination

question before ending the examination. There is no penalty for guessing.

## **CANDIDATE COMMENTS**

During the examination, comments may be provided for any question by clicking on the Comment button to the left of the Time button. This opens a dialogue box where comments may be entered. Comments will be reviewed, but individual responses will not be provided. Once you leave the Test Center, if you still have comments, you may forward written comments to CDR at [specialists@eatright.org](mailto:specialists@eatright.org). All comments sent to CDR should be to the attention of Specialist Certification no later than 7 business days after the examination appointment. Please note that the appeal process is different.

## **FOLLOWING THE EXAMINATION**

After completing the examination, candidates are asked to complete a short evaluation of their examination experience. Candidates are then instructed to report to the Test Center Supervisor to receive score report. Scores are reported in written form only. Scores are not reported over the telephone, by electronic mail, or by facsimile.

## **PASS/FAIL SCORE DETERMINATION**

The methodology used to set the minimum passing score is the Angoff method, based upon data gathered during the performance of a Passing Point Study by a panel of experts in the field. The experts evaluated each question on the examination to determine how many correct answers are necessary to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to pass this examination portion. Your ability to pass the examination depends on the knowledge and skill you display, not on the performance of other candidates.

Passing scores may vary slightly for each version of the examination to accommodate for variances in examination difficulty. To ensure fairness to all candidates, a process of statistical

equating is used. Slight variations in difficulty level are addressed by adjusting the passing score up or down, depending on the overall difficulty level statistics for the group of scored questions that appear on a particular version of the examination.

### **INTERPRETING YOUR SCORE REPORT**

The content area scores on the score reports are not used to determine pass-fail decision outcomes. They are only provided to offer a general indication regarding candidate performance in each content area. The examination is designed to provide a consistent and precise determination of a candidate's overall performance and is not designed to provide complete information regarding a candidate's performance in each content area. Candidates should remember that areas with a larger number of items will affect the overall score more than areas with a fewer number of items. The precision and consistency of scores diminishes with fewer items and therefore, sub-scores should be interpreted with caution, especially those that correspond to content areas with very few items.

### **QUALITY CONTROL/SCORING**

Before the examination is administered, each form undergoes quality control checks. A thorough item analysis is completed and is used as part of the statistical review of the performance of the examination.

### **SCORES CANCELLED BY THE CLIENT OR PSI**

CDR and PSI are responsible for the validity and integrity of the scores they report. On occasion, occurrences, such as computer malfunction or misconduct by a candidate, may cause a score to be suspect. CDR and PSI reserve the right to void or withhold examination results if, upon investigation, violation of its regulations is discovered.

### **IF YOU PASS THE EXAMINATION**

All candidates who pass the examination will receive an orientation e-mail and wall certificate, specialty identification card and orientation materials in about four weeks.

### **RE-ESTABLISHING ELIGIBILITY**

To take the examination again following a failed attempt, a candidate contact CDR at [specialists@eatright.org](mailto:specialists@eatright.org). CDR requires a 60- day waiting period between examination attempts. An examination fee will need to be submitted, however, completing a new eligibility application is not necessary if the candidate is within the one year eligibility period. If the one year candidate eligibility period has ended then the fee and new application would have to be submitted.

### **FAILING TO ARRIVE FOR AN EXAMINATION**

A candidate who fails to report for an examination forfeits the registration and all fees paid to take the examination. A new examination fee will need to be submitted, however, completing a new eligibility application is not necessary if the candidate is within the one year eligibility period. If the one year candidate eligibility period has ended then the fee and new application would have to be submitted.

### **DUPLICATE SCORE REPORT**

Candidates may purchase additional copies of their results at a cost of \$25 per copy. Requests must be submitted to CDR, in writing. The request must include the candidate's name, registration number, mailing address, telephone number, date of examination and examination taken. Submit this information with the required fee payable to CDR in the form of a check, money order or cashier's check. Duplicate score reports will be mailed within approximately two weeks after receipt of the request and fee.

### **APPEALS PROCESS**

An individual may appeal decisions regarding Commission policy/procedures (certification,

eligibility, certification maintenance, and recertification) by filing a written appeal. Appeals must be sent to CDR within 30 calendar days after notification of an adverse decision and will be considered by the CDR Appeals Panel at its next scheduled meeting. A \$20.00 Appeals Review Fee will be required with every appeal submitted. Appeals submitted without the \$20.00 fee will not be heard by the CDR Appeals Panel. A comprehensive copy of the procedures can be found on the CDR website [here](#).

### **RECERTIFICATION**

At the end of the specialist five-year certification period, specialists who wish to recertify must be a current Registered Dietitian with CDR and:

1. Successfully complete an eligibility application – including the required

minimum number of specialty practice hours

2. Submit an examination fee
3. Pass the specialist examination

The reasoning for requiring recertification testing is that the Specialist Board Certification is a practice credential, a credential that represents to the public that the certificant possesses the knowledge, skills and experience to function effectively as a specialist in that area. The nature of the knowledge and skills to practice at a specialty level is subject to change due to technological and scientific advances. Recertification testing helps to provide continuing assurance that the certified specialist has indeed maintained their knowledge in the specialty area.

## EXAM STUDY RESOURCES

Click on the CDR website link's below to view the following documents:

[CONTENT OUTLINE](#)

[REFERENCE LIST](#)

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Sample questions are provided to help familiarize the candidate with the format of the examination and are not reflective of the depth and breadth of the content covered. Please refer to the content outline for a comprehensive list of examination content areas.

1. Popular reduced-carbohydrate diets offer the MOST potential benefit to exercisers who have
  - A. Type I Diabetes
  - B. elevated triglycerides
  - C. a low waist-hip ratio
  - D. a high  $VO_{2\max}$

1B, task 7
2. Which of the following is the reason athletes consume high-glycemic index foods immediately following an endurance exercise session?
  - A. increase the rate of muscle glycogen resynthesis
  - B. produce ATP in large quantities
  - C. increase carbohydrate deposition in type IV muscle fibers
  - D. prevent the athlete from becoming fatigued

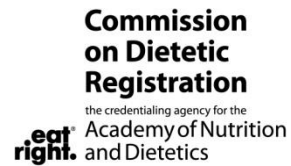
2A, task 1
3. Resting energy expenditure (REE) of an athlete
  - A. increases with age in an individual who is weight-stable
  - B. is used to determine  $VO_{2\max}$
  - C. can be calculated using an individual's fat-free mass

1B, task 1
4. A 153-lb (69-kg), 5'9", 17-year-old competitive rower is experiencing fatigue during training and is unable to complete her usual training sessions. Her hemoglobin level is 11 grams per deciliter and red blood cell count is  $3.80 \times 10^6$ /UL. Her favorite foods are salads, veggie burgers, pancakes, and stir-fried vegetables. In addition to obtaining a dietary analysis, which of the following laboratory tests should the sports dietitian obtain to evaluate total body iron stores?
  - A. Serum iron
  - B. Total iron-binding capacity

- C. Hematocrit
- D. Serum ferritin

2D, task 2

<u>Answers:</u>	
1.	B
2.	A
3.	C
4.	D



## REQUEST FOR SPECIAL EXAMINATION ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have a disability covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act, please complete this form and the Documentation of Disability-Related Needs so your accommodations for testing can be processed efficiently. The information you provide and any documentation regarding your disability and your need for accommodation in testing will be treated with strict confidentiality. Please return this form to CDR within 45 days of the desired testing date.

### CANDIDATE INFORMATION

CDR Registration Number _____		
Last Name _____	First Name _____	Middle Initial _____
Address _____		
City _____	State/Province _____	Zip Code/Postal Code and Country _____
Daytime Phone Number _____	Fax Number _____	E-mail Address _____

### SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

I request special accommodations for the \_\_\_\_\_ examination.

Please provide (check all that apply):

- Reader
- Extended examination time (time and a half)
- Reduced distraction environment
- Other special accommodations (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Description of disability: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Return this form to:

Attn: Specialty Certification, Commission on Dietetic Registration,  
120 S Riverside Plaza, Ste 2190, Chicago, IL 60606-6995  
[specialists@eatright.org](mailto:specialists@eatright.org)



## DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY-RELATED NEEDS

Please have this section completed by an appropriate professional (**education professional, physician, psychologist, psychiatrist**) to ensure that PSI is able to provide the required examination accommodations.

### PROFESSIONAL DOCUMENTATION

I have known \_\_\_\_\_ since \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ in my capacity as a  
Examination Applicant Name  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Professional Title

The applicant discussed with me the nature of the examination administered. It is my opinion that because of this applicant's disability described below, he/she should be accommodates by providing the special arrangements listed on the previous page.

Description of disability: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ License # (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form to:  
Attn: Specialty Certification  
Commission on Dietetic Registration,

120 S Riverside Plaza, Ste 2190, Chicago, IL 60606-6995  
[specialists@eatright.org](mailto:specialists@eatright.org)



**Commission on Dietetic Registration**  
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**Chicago, IL 60606-6995**  
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