



CSOWM Examination

Handbook for Candidates



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**Commission on Dietetic Registration
CSOWM Candidate Handbook**

INTRODUCTION

The Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR), the credentialing agency for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, is responsible for the development and administration of the interdisciplinary specialist certification in obesity and weight management. In addition, CDR offers specialist board certification in the areas of gerontological nutrition, oncology nutrition, pediatric nutrition, pediatric critical care nutrition, renal nutrition, and sports dietetics for qualified individuals. CDR specialist 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 interdisciplinary Board Certified Specialist in Obesity and Weight Management (CSOWM) examination consists of 150 multiple-choice questions. Candidates will have 3 hours to complete the exam. 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.

CSOWM PRACTITIONER DEFINITION

Health professionals who educate, support, and advocate for patients and clients to understand and manage their weight and associated risks through the use of nutritional, behavioral health, medical, surgical, pharmacotherapeutic, and exercise and physical activity interventions.

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 several 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 CSOWM examination so that we may continue to provide a quality certification—one that highlights the CSOWM as the board-certified expert in obesity and weight management. 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 APPOINTMENTS

After you have received notification of your eligibility from CDR, 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 (beginning with a Y), which was sent in your eligibility email.

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 Renal Nutrition 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/AMP 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 two-page 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 applicant will be sent an email providing the time to report to the Test Center. The applicant 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 Jr. 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 and detailed maps are available on the PSI 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

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.*

If your examination is scheduled on...	You 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

* If a subsequent reschedule is necessary, there will be an \$85 fee for each instance during the eligibility window.

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. 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.

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 Test Center no later than your scheduled testing time. A CANDIDATE WHO ARRIVES MORE THAN 15 MINUTES AFTER THE SCHEDULED TESTING TIME WILL NOT BE ADMITTED.

To gain admission to the Test Center, a candidate needs to present two forms of identification; one must be a valid government issued identification with 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 Government 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 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 alpha keys 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 administration will be 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 participation 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 report. You will be directed to a workstation where you will be instructed on-screen to enter your unique identification number, which was provided to you with your eligibility information from CDR.

PRACTICE TUTORIAL

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

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 answers to the examination question 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 in the option using the mouse.

To change your answer, enter a different option by pressing the A, B, C, or D key 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 you to 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 hand icon to advance to the next unanswered or bookmarked question on the examination. To identify all unanswered and bookmarked questions, repeatedly click on the hand icon.

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. Also if more than one answer is required it will be indicated within the question.

CANDIDATE COMMENTS

During the examination, comments may be provided for any question by clicking on the button displaying an exclamation point (!) 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. All comments should be sent to CDR (Attn: Specialty Certification) no later than five business days after the close of the examination window. 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 examination proctor to receive their 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 report 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 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 a wall certificate, online specialty identification card and orientation materials approximately four weeks after they receive their score report.

RE-ESTABLISHING ELIGIBILITY

To take the examination again following a failed attempt, a candidate must contact CDR at specialists@eatright.org. CDR requires a 60-day waiting period between examination attempts. 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.

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. The following exam-specific appeals will not be accepted:

- the receipt of a failing score on a CDR examination,
- the examination or other measurement tool or individual test items, or
- test content validity.

Appeals must be sent to CDR (cdrappeals@eatright.org) 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 Appeal Review Fee will be required with every appeal submitted. Appeals submitted without the \$20.00 fee, will not be considered by the CDR Appeals Panel. A comprehensive copy of the appeals procedures can be found on the CDR website [here](#).

CERTIFICATION MAINTENANCE

At the end of the specialist five-year certification period, specialists who wish to recertify must hold a current eligible credential or certification as identified by CDR here:

<https://www.cdrnet.org/csowm-eligibility>

And,

1. Successfully complete an eligibility application – including the required minimum number of specialty practice hours
2. Submit an examination fee
3. Pass the specialty examination

The reason 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

Please click on the CDR website links 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. Which weight loss medication is a serotonin receptor agonist?
 - A. lorcaserin (Belviq)
 - B. liraglutide (Saxenda)
 - C. naltrexone HCL and bupropion HCL (Contrave)
 - D. phentermine and topiramate (Qsymia)

2. Which vitamin is most often deficient in a patient who has undergone bariatric surgery and has been vomiting for 72 hours?
 - A. niacin
 - B. riboflavin
 - C. thiamine
 - D. cyanocobalamin

3. After Roux-en-Y gastric bypass, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) should be avoided due to risk of
 - A. constipation.
 - B. strictures.
 - C. dumping syndrome.
 - D. ulcers.

Answers

1. A
2. C
3. 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

DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY-RELATED NEEDS

Please have this section completed by an appropriate professional (**education professional, physician, psychologist, psychiatrist**) to ensure that AMP 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

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