

Fundamentals of Surveying (FS) Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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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.

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!

Questions

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1. What is an easement?

- A. Title to surface rights only**
- B. A lease or "estate for years"**
- C. A fee simple title**
- D. The right that the public or an individual has in the lands of another**

2. What is the limiting factor when obtaining elevations with GNSS?

- A. A clear line of sight**
- B. A precise ellipsoid model**
- C. A precise geoid model**
- D. A precise gravimetric model**

3. By the arc definition, the degree of curve is the central angle that subtends a 100 ft ____.

- A. chord**
- B. line**
- C. arc**
- D. radius**

4. By the chord definition, the degree of curve is the central angle that subtends a 100 ft ____.

- A. arc**
- B. angle**
- C. chord**
- D. line**

5. When researching a property, what is necessary to determine the order of conveyance?

- A. Reviewing property taxes**
- B. Examining historical recording dates of all deeds**
- C. Consulting local zoning laws**
- D. Interviewing previous owners**

6. What is meant by "geodetic datum" in surveying?

- A. A reference point for measuring land elevation
- B. A mathematical model describing the Earth's shape and size
- C. A protocol for surveying measurements
- D. An approximation for mapping urban areas

7. To minimize leveling error due to refraction, which of the following strategies should surveyors employ?

- A. balance backsight and foresight
- B. keep the line of sight about the ground
- C. take backsights and foresights in quick succession
- D. All of the above

8. How does surveyor certification benefit the surveying industry?

- A. It lowers the overall cost of surveying services
- B. It ensures adherence to industry standards and builds trust
- C. It allows surveyors to work without supervision
- D. It provides automatic licensing across states

9. Construction staking is essential in what phase of a building project?

- A. Design phase
- B. Foundation laying phase
- C. Final inspection phase
- D. Planning phase

10. What is the term "right of way" related to in surveying?

- A. A right to construct buildings on land
- B. A legal right to pass over someone else's land
- C. A government claim over unregistered land
- D. A method for measuring utility lines

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What is an easement?

- A. Title to surface rights only
- B. A lease or "estate for years"
- C. A fee simple title
- D. The right that the public or an individual has in the lands of another**

An easement is defined as the right that the public or an individual has to use the lands of another for a specific purpose. This means that an easement grants someone the legal right to use a portion of another person's property without owning it, while the property owner retains ownership and certain rights over their land. Common examples include utility easements allowing companies to install power lines or pipelines across private property or access easements that allow individuals to cross someone else's land to reach their own property. This option accurately reflects the nature of an easement, which fundamentally serves as a limited right that can benefit either specific individuals or the general public, rather than transferring ownership or title to the property itself.

2. What is the limiting factor when obtaining elevations with GNSS?

- A. A clear line of sight
- B. A precise ellipsoid model
- C. A precise geoid model**
- D. A precise gravimetric model

When obtaining elevations using GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System), the limiting factor is a precise geoid model. This is because GNSS measures heights relative to an ellipsoid, which is a mathematical surface that approximates the shape of the Earth. However, for practical applications like surveying, what is often required is the height above the geoid, which represents mean sea level. To convert GNSS-derived ellipsoidal heights into orthometric heights (the height above the geoid), a precise geoid model is necessary. The geoid model provides the relationship between the ellipsoid and the geoid, allowing surveyors to make accurate height measurements. Without an accurate geoid model, the conversion from ellipsoidal heights to orthometric heights can lead to significant errors in elevation data. In contrast, while a clear line of sight might be important for satellite connectivity, it is not the primary limiting factor when it comes to elevation accuracy. Similarly, precise ellipsoid and gravimetric models contribute to understanding the Earth's shape and gravity field, but they do not directly address the critical need for an accurate geoid model in the context of surveying elevations.

3. By the arc definition, the degree of curve is the central angle that subtends a 100 ft ____.

- A. chord**
- B. line**
- C. arc**
- D. radius**

The degree of curve is defined in surveying as the measure of the curvature of a circular arc. Specifically, it represents the central angle that subtends an arc length of 100 feet. In this context, the arc refers to the portion of the circle being measured, which directly relates to the curvature and how sharp the turn is. When considering the definition, it is important to note that the degree of curve provides a way to quantify the curvature of a roadway or a path, which is essential for design, especially in areas like highway engineering and civil construction. The specific measurement of 100 feet is a standard used in surveying to create a consistent framework for understanding curves, facilitating easier communication of road and rail design parameters. The other terms, such as chord, line, and radius, refer to different concepts in geometry related to circles but do not accurately describe what the degree of curve measures. The chord is a straight line connecting two points on the circumference, a line refers generally to a straight path, and the radius is the distance from the center of the circle to any point on its circumference. None of these directly relates to the subtended arc length used to define the degree of curve.

4. By the chord definition, the degree of curve is the central angle that subtends a 100 ft ____.

- A. arc**
- B. angle**
- C. chord**
- D. line**

The degree of curve, according to the chord definition, specifically refers to the central angle that subtends a 100-foot chord. This terminology is used in surveying and civil engineering to describe how tightly a road or railway turns. The central angle is the angle formed at the center of the curve by two radii that extend to the endpoints of the chord, which in this case is a straight line of 100 feet connecting those two points on the arc of the curve. Understanding this concept is crucial because it helps in calculating the geometry of curves, which is essential for designing safe and efficient roads and other structures. The definition emphasizes that the measurement is based on a chord rather than an arc or any other line, since a chord is specifically the straight line that connects two points on a curve, making it central to the definition and calculation of curves in surveying.

5. When researching a property, what is necessary to determine the order of conveyance?

- A. Reviewing property taxes**
- B. Examining historical recording dates of all deeds**
- C. Consulting local zoning laws**
- D. Interviewing previous owners**

Determining the order of conveyance of a property primarily involves examining historical recording dates of all deeds. The order in which property has changed hands throughout its history is crucial for establishing ownership rights and any potential claims against the property. Each deed recorded provides legal evidence of the transfer of ownership from one entity to another, and the dates on which these transactions took place establish the chronological sequence of ownership. Historical recording dates are essential because they allow you to trace back the lineage of the title, identifying previous owners and any encumbrances that might affect the current owner's rights. This process helps to identify prior claims that could impact property use or ownership, offering a clearer understanding of the property's legal standing. While property taxes, local zoning laws, and interviews with previous owners can provide useful information regarding the property, they do not specifically establish the order of conveyance as clearly and directly as reviewing historical deeds and their recording dates.

6. What is meant by "geodetic datum" in surveying?

- A. A reference point for measuring land elevation**
- B. A mathematical model describing the Earth's shape and size**
- C. A protocol for surveying measurements**
- D. An approximation for mapping urban areas**

The term "geodetic datum" refers to a mathematical model that describes the Earth's shape and size. It serves as a foundational reference for geodetic positioning, which is crucial in surveying to accurately determine locations on the Earth's surface. A geodetic datum includes the reference ellipsoid parameters, which approximate the Earth's shape, and the origin point upon which those parameters are based. This model is essential for ensuring that measurements can be reliably reproduced and compared against a common standard, which is particularly important in a field where precision is paramount. Surveys that utilize different datums may yield incompatible results; therefore, a consistent datum is necessary for all mapping and geographic information system (GIS) applications. The other choices address concepts related to surveying but do not accurately define a geodetic datum. For instance, while reference points for measuring land elevation or protocols for surveying measurements are important in the context of surveying practices, they do not encapsulate the mathematical and spatial essence of a geodetic datum.

7. To minimize leveling error due to refraction, which of the following strategies should surveyors employ?

- A. balance backsight and foresight**
- B. keep the line of sight about the ground**
- C. take backsights and foresights in quick succession**
- D. All of the above**

Minimizing leveling errors due to refraction is crucial for obtaining accurate survey measurements. Each of the strategies mentioned plays a role in addressing this issue. Balancing backsight and foresight helps to equalize any potential errors that may be introduced by atmospheric conditions. When surveyors take equal distances for their backsights and foresights, they can reduce the impact of refraction, as errors may cancel out over the longer distances. Keeping the line of sight close to the ground is also a significant technique. Refraction tends to be more pronounced at lower elevations, particularly when temperature gradients and atmospheric pressure vary. By maintaining a higher elevation for the line of sight, surveyors can minimize the effects of refractive distortion, ensuring more reliable measurements. Taking backsights and foresights in quick succession minimizes the time in which atmospheric conditions can change significantly. Rapid succession reduces the exposure to changing environmental elements, such as temperature and humidity, which can cause variations in the refraction index. Therefore, employing all of these strategies can effectively help surveyors reduce leveling errors caused by refraction, making option D the best choice.

8. How does surveyor certification benefit the surveying industry?

- A. It lowers the overall cost of surveying services**
- B. It ensures adherence to industry standards and builds trust**
- C. It allows surveyors to work without supervision**
- D. It provides automatic licensing across states**

Surveyor certification plays a crucial role in enhancing the professionalism and quality of the surveying industry. By ensuring adherence to established industry standards, certification signifies that surveyors have met specific educational, training, and ethical requirements. This compliance not only fosters a high level of competency among professionals but also reassures clients and stakeholders about the reliability and accuracy of the surveying services provided. When surveyors are certified, it builds trust with the public and the industry, as it indicates that they have a recognized level of expertise and are committed to maintaining ethical practices. This increased trust can lead to better collaborative opportunities, enhanced professional reputation, and ultimately, a more reliable surveying environment. Other options do not align as closely with the primary benefits of certification. While lower costs or the ability to work without supervision might be positive aspects in different contexts, they don't directly relate to the fundamental purposes of certification. Additionally, certification does not provide automatic licensing across states, as licensing requirements can vary significantly depending on local laws and regulations. Thus, the core benefit remains the adherence to industry standards and the trust that certification fosters.

9. Construction staking is essential in what phase of a building project?

- A. Design phase**
- B. Foundation laying phase**
- C. Final inspection phase**
- D. Planning phase**

Construction staking is essential during the foundation laying phase of a building project because it provides critical guidance regarding the exact locations and elevations of structural elements. Staking involves placing physical markers on the ground to indicate where the foundations will be dug and laid. This is crucial for ensuring that the construction aligns with the design plans, maintaining proper dimensions and orientations specified by the architect or engineer. During this phase, surveyors use measurements to stake out the layout and ensure that all subsequent work – from excavation to the actual pouring of the foundation – occurs accurately. Any errors at this stage can lead to significant issues later, such as misalignment of structures, uneven foundations, or costly redesigns, making accurate staking vital for the success of the construction project. While the design, planning, and final inspection phases are all important in their own right, they serve different purposes that do not involve the physical layout needed for construction.

10. What is the term "right of way" related to in surveying?

- A. A right to construct buildings on land**
- B. A legal right to pass over someone else's land**
- C. A government claim over unregistered land**
- D. A method for measuring utility lines**

The term "right of way" in surveying is primarily associated with a legal right to pass over someone else's land. This concept is essential for various types of land development and infrastructure projects, including roads, railways, pipelines, and utility services. The right of way allows individuals or organizations to traverse private property for public or private purposes, ensuring that necessary pathways for transportation or utility installation can occur without the obstruction of land ownership issues. This understanding of right of way ties closely to easements, which grant specific use of land owned by another. For instance, if a municipality wishes to extend a road, it may need to obtain a right of way through adjacent properties, ensuring that the project can proceed while respecting property rights. Connecting this to the other options, the first option about constructing buildings on land refers to property rights that do not inherently relate to the access privileges implied by right of way. The third option involving a government claim over unregistered land does not align with the idea of passage since it pertains more to land ownership issues rather than the right to cross property. Finally, the method for measuring utility lines focuses on the technical aspects of surveying and does not encompass the legal rights associated with traversing land, which is the crux of the right of

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://fundamentalsofsurveying.examzify.com>

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

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