

HRCI Professional in Human Resources - California (PHRca) Certification Practice Test (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. Which term describes a documented discussion about an employee's development and performance that involves managers, HR, and the employee?**
 - A. Performance Review**
 - B. Performance Management System**
 - C. Performance Standards**
 - D. Phantom Stock Arrangement**

- 2. Laws from one country that apply to that country's citizens when they travel or live in other countries are called what?**
 - A. Extraterritoriality**
 - B. Expatriate**
 - C. External Forces**
 - D. Extraterritorial Laws**

- 3. Under FEHA, what approach should an employer take regarding religious observances?**
 - A. Require employees to disclose religious beliefs**
 - B. Avoid inquiring whether a religious observance is required and accommodate observances the employee prefers**
 - C. Ban religious observances during work hours**
 - D. Ignore religious accommodations**

- 4. Which organizational practice encourages employees to speak directly with management rather than going through bureaucracy?**
 - A. Open comment policy**
 - B. Open door policy**
 - C. Bottom-up policy**
 - D. Hierarchical policy**

- 5. Which term is used for the graphic representation of authority and responsibility within an organization, including work processes, commonly called an organization chart?**
 - A. Org chart**
 - B. Flowchart**
 - C. Organization chart**
 - D. Process map**

- 6. Which interview is traditionally conducted when an employee leaves the company to gather feedback about their experience?**
- A. Ethnocentric staffing orientation**
 - B. ERP**
 - C. ESOP**
 - D. Exit interview**
- 7. What term refers to standards used for comparison?**
- A. Benchmarks**
 - B. Background check**
 - C. Balanced scorecard**
 - D. Balance-sheet approach**
- 8. What is the process of changing a message from one language to another while preserving meaning called?**
- A. Interpretation**
 - B. Translation**
 - C. Transcription**
 - D. Localization**
- 9. The overall set of actions and attitudes appropriate to a particular job function is called what?**
- A. Role behavior**
 - B. Role play**
 - C. Salary range**
 - D. Scaled score**
- 10. Which term denotes owning part of a company or business?**
- A. Organizational development**
 - B. Pareto chart**
 - C. Ownership interest**
 - D. Outplacement**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which term describes a documented discussion about an employee's development and performance that involves managers, HR, and the employee?

- A. Performance Review**
- B. Performance Management System**
- C. Performance Standards**
- D. Phantom Stock Arrangement**

A performance review is the documented conversation about an employee's development and performance that involves managers, HR, and the employee. It's a formal, written discussion that typically occurs on a set schedule and results in feedback, a recorded assessment, and agreed-upon development goals or action steps. This focused dialogue sits within the broader performance management process but specifically captures what was discussed and decided, making it the most precise term for the described scenario. Performance management system refers to the overall framework, tools, and processes used to manage and improve performance over time. Performance standards are the criteria or benchmarks used to judge performance. Phantom stock arrangement is a pay-for-performance plan related to stock compensation, not a performance appraisal.

2. Laws from one country that apply to that country's citizens when they travel or live in other countries are called what?

- A. Extraterritoriality**
- B. Expatriate**
- C. External Forces**
- D. Extraterritorial Laws**

Laws that reach beyond a country's borders to govern its own citizens abroad are described by the term extraterritorial laws. This phrase names the actual rules themselves that apply overseas, not just the idea of extending jurisdiction. It fits because the question asks for what those laws are called, and extraterritoriality describes the reach or principle, whereas extraterritorial laws specifies the statutes that have that reach. Think of it this way: the doctrine is the idea of extending authority; the laws themselves are the extraterritorial laws that enact that reach. For example, certain countries' anti-bribery or tax laws apply to their citizens no matter where they are. Expatriate refers to a person living outside their home country, external forces isn't a legal term here, and extraterritoriality points to the principle rather than the actual laws.

3. Under FEHA, what approach should an employer take regarding religious observances?

- A. Require employees to disclose religious beliefs**
- B. Avoid inquiring whether a religious observance is required and accommodate observances the employee prefers**
- C. Ban religious observances during work hours**
- D. Ignore religious accommodations**

Under FEHA, employers must reasonably accommodate an employee's religious observances unless doing so would create an undue hardship for the business. The best approach is to avoid requiring employees to disclose their religious beliefs and to engage in an interactive process to determine a workable accommodation based on what the employee needs. This could include flexible scheduling, swapping shifts, taking time off for religious holidays, or allowing dress or practice adjustments, as long as the accommodation is reasonable and does not disrupt essential operations. If the requested accommodation isn't feasible, the employer should offer alternatives that still meet the goal of accommodating religion without causing undue hardship. This protects the employee's right to religious practice while balancing the employer's reasonable operational needs.

4. Which organizational practice encourages employees to speak directly with management rather than going through bureaucracy?

- A. Open comment policy**
- B. Open door policy**
- C. Bottom-up policy**
- D. Hierarchical policy**

An open door policy is about keeping management accessible so employees can speak directly to leaders without navigating red tape. It signals that concerns, questions, and suggestions are welcome and will be heard promptly, which helps build trust and quick problem-solving. This approach reduces unnecessary bureaucracy by removing or lowering barriers to conversation, making it easier to address issues while they're small. Why this fits: it explicitly encourages direct communication with management rather than routing all matters through multiple layers or formal channels. It supports a culture of transparency and responsiveness, which can improve morale and retention. Why other options don't fit: an open comment policy might provide a channel for feedback but doesn't guarantee direct access to management or reduce bureaucracy; a bottom-up policy emphasizes decisions driven by employees rather than direct talk with management; a hierarchical policy reinforces the formal chain of command and can create more barriers to open dialogue.

5. Which term is used for the graphic representation of authority and responsibility within an organization, including work processes, commonly called an organization chart?

A. Org chart

B. Flowchart

C. Organization chart

D. Process map

Understanding how authority and responsibility are arranged across an organization is shown through a diagram that maps the structure, reporting lines, and who is responsible for different roles or units. This kind of diagram is called an organization chart. It presents the formal hierarchy and the distribution of authority, making it clear who reports to whom and how different parts of the organization connect. The term used in HR and formal documentation is organization chart, which is the full, standard name for this diagram. Using the shorter form org chart is common in everyday language, and it refers to the same concept, but the formal label is organization chart. A flowchart, on the other hand, focuses on the sequential steps within a process, showing how tasks flow from one step to the next, not who holds authority or how responsibilities are distributed. A process map is similar in that it centers on the activities and flow of a process rather than the organizational structure and reporting relationships.

6. Which interview is traditionally conducted when an employee leaves the company to gather feedback about their experience?

A. Ethnocentric staffing orientation

B. ERP

C. ESOP

D. Exit interview

Collecting feedback from departing employees is done through an exit interview, a practice used to understand why someone is leaving and what could be improved in the organization. This interview is typically conducted near the end of employment and focuses on the employee's experience, including management, culture, processes, and overall job satisfaction. The insights gained help the company identify trends that may indicate retention issues, reveal areas for policy or process changes, and inform improvements to onboarding and work environment. It also supports a smooth transition by addressing any knowledge transfer needs and preserving goodwill with the departing employee. The other options don't fit this purpose: ethnocentric staffing orientation relates to international staffing strategies, not gathering feedback from leaving employees; ERP is a system for integrating core business processes; ESOP is a program for employee ownership.

7. What term refers to standards used for comparison?

- A. Benchmarks**
- B. Background check**
- C. Balanced scorecard**
- D. Balance-sheet approach**

Benchmarks are standards used for comparison. They serve as reference points—either industry norms, best practices, or internal targets—so you can measure current performance against a known standard. This helps identify gaps, set realistic goals, and track progress over time. In HR, benchmarks might be used to compare metrics like time-to-hire, turnover, or training ROI against industry averages or past internal performance. The other terms describe different ideas. A background check is about verifying a person's history rather than a standard for measuring performance. A balanced scorecard is a broad performance-management framework that looks at multiple perspectives (financial, customer, internal processes, learning and growth) rather than a single standard of comparison. A balance-sheet approach refers to a financial or compensation method used for evaluating assets, liabilities, or cross-border pay, not to standards used for comparison.

8. What is the process of changing a message from one language to another while preserving meaning called?

- A. Interpretation**
- B. Translation**
- C. Transcription**
- D. Localization**

Translation is the process of changing a message from one language to another while preserving its meaning. It focuses on converting written text in one language into another language, keeping the intent, tone, and information intact so the reader understands it as if written originally in that language. This is distinct from interpretation, which is spoken real-time conversion; transcription, which turns spoken language into written form within the same language; and localization, which adapts content for a specific culture and region, including idiomatic and regional adjustments. In HR contexts, translation ensures policies, communications, and benefits information are accurately understood across language groups.

9. The overall set of actions and attitudes appropriate to a particular job function is called what?

- A. Role behavior**
- B. Role play**
- C. Salary range**
- D. Scaled score**

Role behavior refers to the overall set of actions and attitudes expected of someone in a specific job function. It defines how the person should think, act, and interact to perform the job effectively, including professionalism, communication style, decision-making, ethics, and adherence to policies. This expectation guides job descriptions, performance evaluations, and training needs, helping to align daily conduct with what the organization values for that role. It differs from role play, which is a training exercise to practice those behaviors; it also differs from salary range, the pay band for the position, and a scaled score, which is just how test results are reported.

10. Which term denotes owning part of a company or business?

- A. Organizational development**
- B. Pareto chart**
- C. Ownership interest**
- D. Outplacement**

Owning part of a company is described by the term ownership interest. An ownership interest means you hold a claim to a portion of the company's equity, profits, and, depending on the type of ownership, possibly a say in decisions. It represents partial ownership, such as owning stock in a corporation or a membership/partnership stake in another business. In HR contexts, this concept matters for discussions about equity compensation, stock options, and employee ownership plans. The other terms refer to different HR areas: organizational development focuses on improving how an organization functions and adapts to change; a Pareto chart is a quality-management tool used to prioritize issues by frequency or impact; outplacement involves services to help departing employees transition to new work opportunities.

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://hrciphrca.examzify.com>

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

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