

NCE Research and Program Evaluation 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

- 1. What do test results reported as a percentile standing indicate?**
 - A. The number of questions answered correctly**
 - B. The score comparison to others**
 - C. The level of difficulty of the test**
 - D. The average score in the distribution**
- 2. What type of study involves measuring characteristics of several groups at the same time?**
 - A. Longitudinal study**
 - B. Cross-sectional study**
 - C. Experimental study**
 - D. Case study**
- 3. Which research method relies on interviews and questionnaires for data collection?**
 - A. True Experiment**
 - B. Survey**
 - C. Descriptive**
 - D. Comparative**
- 4. Which error refers to the failure to reject the null hypothesis when there is a difference?**
 - A. Type I Error**
 - B. Type II Error**
 - C. False Positive**
 - D. Sampling Error**
- 5. What kind of evaluation is typically conducted at the end of a program cycle?**
 - A. Preliminary Evaluation**
 - B. Formative Evaluation**
 - C. Summative Evaluation**
 - D. Diagnostic Evaluation**

- 6. Which sampling approach is likely to yield results that better reflect the overall population?**
- A. Simple Random Sampling**
 - B. Convenience Sampling**
 - C. Stratified Sampling**
 - D. Systematic Sampling**
- 7. What type of research designs combine both quantitative and qualitative methods?**
- A. Action Research**
 - B. Quasi-Experimental Designs**
 - C. Experimental Designs**
 - D. Mixed-method research designs**
- 8. What feature distinguishes true experimental research?**
- A. The use of qualitative data**
 - B. Random assignment to experimental and control groups**
 - C. Focus on historical context**
 - D. Analysis of subjective experiences**
- 9. Which of the following describes a distribution with a long tail on one side, influencing the mean?**
- A. Normal Distribution**
 - B. Bimodal Distribution**
 - C. Skewed Distribution**
 - D. Uniform Distribution**
- 10. What is the term for the average that is most sensitive to extreme values in a data set?**
- A. Mean**
 - B. Median**
 - C. Mode**
 - D. Inclusive Range**

Answers

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

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Explanations

1. What do test results reported as a percentile standing indicate?

- A. The number of questions answered correctly
- B. The score comparison to others**
- C. The level of difficulty of the test
- D. The average score in the distribution

Percentile standing provides a score that indicates how an individual's performance compares to the performances of others in a defined group. For instance, if a student scores in the 75th percentile, it means they performed better than 75% of the individuals in the norm group. This type of reporting is useful for contextualizing an individual's score relative to the wider population, highlighting where they stand compared to their peers. The other options, while related to different aspects of test results, do not encapsulate the function of percentile standings. For instance, the number of questions answered correctly measures raw performance rather than comparative standing, while the level of difficulty of a test is more about the challenge it presents than how a score is interpreted in relation to others. Additionally, the average score in the distribution gives a sense of the group's overall performance but does not provide the specific comparative insight that percentile rankings do. Thus, percentile standings are primarily about understanding relative performance rather than absolute measures.

2. What type of study involves measuring characteristics of several groups at the same time?

- A. Longitudinal study
- B. Cross-sectional study**
- C. Experimental study
- D. Case study

A cross-sectional study is utilized to measure characteristics of multiple groups simultaneously. In this type of study, researchers gather data at a single point in time, allowing for comparison across different demographics, such as age, socioeconomic status, or geographical location. This is particularly useful for identifying patterns, relationships, or variations among groups, without following them over a period. Longitudinal studies, by contrast, involve repeated observations of the same variables over an extended period, which allows researchers to assess changes or developments over time rather than obtaining a snapshot as in cross-sectional research. Experimental studies focus on manipulating one variable to determine its effect on another within an experimental group compared to a control group, which does not inherently compare multiple groups at a single time point. Case studies, on the other hand, provide an in-depth examination of a single individual, group, or event, rather than measuring differences across several groups simultaneously. This makes cross-sectional studies particularly valuable in generating hypotheses or assessing the current state of different populations or characteristics.

3. Which research method relies on interviews and questionnaires for data collection?

- A. True Experiment
- B. Survey**
- C. Descriptive
- D. Comparative

The correct choice is the survey method because it specifically involves the use of interviews and questionnaires to gather data. Surveys are designed to collect information from a group of individuals, often referred to as a sample, to learn about their opinions, behaviors, experiences, or knowledge regarding specific topics. The data can be quantitative, derived from structured questions with predetermined responses, or qualitative, arising from open-ended questions that allow for more detailed insights. This method is particularly valuable in research because it enables researchers to capture a wide range of perspectives and experiences efficiently. In contrast, true experiments focus on manipulating independent variables to observe effects on dependent variables, usually in a controlled setting. Descriptive research aims to provide an accurate portrayal of characteristics or trends within a population or phenomenon, often relying on observational data rather than direct feedback methods like interviews or questionnaires. Lastly, comparative research involves analyzing the differences and similarities between two or more groups or conditions, often using data that may not involve direct information gathering through interviews or questionnaires. Thus, the survey method is uniquely characterized by its reliance on direct engagement with participants through structured forms of inquiry.

4. Which error refers to the failure to reject the null hypothesis when there is a difference?

- A. Type I Error
- B. Type II Error**
- C. False Positive
- D. Sampling Error

The error that refers to the failure to reject the null hypothesis when there is indeed a significant difference present in the population is known as a Type II Error. This occurs when a researcher concludes that there is no effect or difference when, in truth, there is one, thus missing an opportunity to detect an important result. In hypothesis testing, the null hypothesis is typically that there is no effect or no difference. If the null hypothesis is false but is not rejected, a Type II Error has occurred. This often relates to issues around the power of a test—the probability of correctly rejecting a false null hypothesis. Factors such as a small sample size, low effect size, or insufficient statistical power can contribute to an increased chance of committing this type of error. Understanding Type II Error is crucial in research because it has important implications for decision making. It can lead to a failure to implement changes or interventions that could have been beneficial, as researchers mistakenly conclude that their findings do not support action when they do. The other terms presented in the choices refer to different aspects of hypothesis testing or data interpretation: Type I Error pertains to rejecting a true null hypothesis (a “false positive”), false positives are synonymous with Type I Error, and sampling error relates to variability in sample statistics.

5. What kind of evaluation is typically conducted at the end of a program cycle?

- A. Preliminary Evaluation**
- B. Formative Evaluation**
- C. Summative Evaluation**
- D. Diagnostic Evaluation**

The evaluation typically conducted at the end of a program cycle is known as summative evaluation. This type of evaluation focuses on assessing the outcomes and impacts of a program after its implementation. Summative evaluations are designed to determine the effectiveness of the program, whether it met its objectives, and provide insights into the overall success of the initiative. At this stage, data is collected and analyzed to understand the results, which can include participant outcomes, achievement of program goals, and overall program efficacy. The findings from a summative evaluation are crucial for stakeholders, as they inform decision-making for future programming, budgeting, and policy development. In contrast, other types of evaluations serve different purposes throughout the program cycle. Preliminary evaluations are used before implementation to provide insights into planning. Formative evaluations occur during the program's implementation to improve ongoing processes and adapt strategies as needed. Diagnostic evaluations aim to identify specific issues or problems within a program, typically at the beginning stages. Each type supports different phases of program development, but summative evaluation specifically addresses the final assessment stage of program performance.

6. Which sampling approach is likely to yield results that better reflect the overall population?

- A. Simple Random Sampling**
- B. Convenience Sampling**
- C. Stratified Sampling**
- D. Systematic Sampling**

Stratified sampling is an effective approach for obtaining results that better reflect the overall population because it involves dividing the population into distinct subgroups, or strata, that share similar characteristics. This method ensures that each subgroup is adequately represented in the sample, which enhances the generalizability of the findings. By using stratified sampling, researchers can control for the variations within different segments of the population, allowing for more accurate comparisons and insights. For example, if a population is composed of different age groups, socioeconomic statuses, or ethnic backgrounds, stratified sampling guarantees that each of these groups is included in the research based on their proportion in the total population. This contrasts with methods such as convenience sampling, which may lead to biased results due to its reliance on readily accessible individuals, often overlooking other important sections of the population. Simple random sampling and systematic sampling can also yield unbiased results if implemented correctly, but they do not specifically ensure representation of subgroups within the total population as effectively as stratified sampling does. Thus, stratified sampling stands out as the most reliable approach for achieving a sample that accurately reflects the overall population.

7. What type of research designs combine both quantitative and qualitative methods?

- A. Action Research
- B. Quasi-Experimental Designs
- C. Experimental Designs
- D. Mixed-method research designs**

Mixed-method research designs are characterized by their integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods within a single study. This approach allows researchers to capitalize on the strengths of both types of data, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. By using quantitative methods—often involving statistical analysis—researchers can quantify variables and determine patterns. Meanwhile, qualitative methods enable them to explore deeper insights, experiences, and contextual factors that numbers alone may not illustrate. This dual approach works harmoniously, where qualitative data can help explain the "why" behind quantitative results, and quantitative findings can inform the development of qualitative inquiries. Utilizing mixed methods can thus enrich the interpretation of findings and foster a more nuanced perspective on the research topic. In contrast, action research focuses primarily on solving specific problems through a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting but does not inherently combine both quantitative and qualitative methods in the same structured way. Quasi-experimental and experimental designs are primarily quantitative in nature, emphasizing controlled conditions and statistical methodologies to assess cause and effect, without integrating qualitative insights. Therefore, the strength of mixed-method research designs lies in their ability to draw from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives, making them particularly valuable in complex research environments.

8. What feature distinguishes true experimental research?

- A. The use of qualitative data
- B. Random assignment to experimental and control groups**
- C. Focus on historical context
- D. Analysis of subjective experiences

True experimental research is distinguished by the use of random assignment to experimental and control groups. This methodological feature is crucial because it helps to ensure that the groups are equivalent at the outset of the study, which minimizes bias and allows for causal inferences to be drawn about the effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Random assignment helps to control for confounding variables that might otherwise influence the outcomes of the research. This means that any observed differences in outcomes can more confidently be attributed to the manipulation of the independent variable rather than other factors. The strength of true experimental research lies in its ability to support causal conclusions due to this randomization. Other options do not capture the distinctive characteristic of true experimental research. The use of qualitative data is not specific to experimental designs and can be found in various research methodologies. Focusing on historical context pertains more to qualitative or interpretive research rather than experimental rigor. Analyzing subjective experiences, while valuable, is characteristic of qualitative research and does not align with the objective measurement typically associated with true experimental studies. Thus, the hallmark of true experimental research is indeed the random assignment to experimental and control groups, making this feature critical for maintaining the integrity of the study's findings.

9. Which of the following describes a distribution with a long tail on one side, influencing the mean?

- A. Normal Distribution**
- B. Bimodal Distribution**
- C. Skewed Distribution**
- D. Uniform Distribution**

A distribution with a long tail on one side is known as a skewed distribution. This type of distribution is characterized by the presence of outliers or extreme values that significantly pull the mean toward the tail, resulting in a distortion of the typical central tendency. In a skewed distribution, if the tail extends towards the right, it's referred to as positively skewed, and if it extends to the left, it's called negatively skewed. The key aspect is that these tails lead to a situation where the mean, median, and mode are not all equal, contrasting with a normal distribution where they coincide. The mean is particularly sensitive to extreme values, making it a less reliable measure of central tendency in skewed distributions. Recognizing the implications of this is crucial for proper data analysis and interpretation. Specifically, in skewed distributions, reliance on the mean can obscure the reality of the data's central tendency and variability, aiding in making more informed decisions in research and program evaluation efforts.

10. What is the term for the average that is most sensitive to extreme values in a data set?

- A. Mean**
- B. Median**
- C. Mode**
- D. Inclusive Range**

The mean, often referred to as the average, is calculated by summing all the values in a dataset and then dividing by the number of values. This calculation makes it particularly sensitive to extreme values, also known as outliers. When a dataset contains extremely high or low values, the mean can be significantly affected, resulting in a value that may not accurately represent the central tendency of the majority of the data points. For example, if you have the data set {1, 2, 3, 4, 100}, the mean would be $(1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 100) / 5 = 22$. However, the majority of the data points are much lower, and the mean does not reflect the typical values in the dataset. In contrast, the median is the middle value when the data is ordered, and is not influenced by extremes, making it a better measure of central tendency in skewed distributions. The mode, being the most frequently occurring value, is also unaffected by extreme values. The inclusive range simply gives an idea of how spread out the data is but does not provide a measure of central tendency. Therefore, the mean is the term that identifies the average highly sensitive to extreme

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://nceresearchprogrameval.examzify.com>

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