

PUBLIC SECTOR HR ASSOCIATION (PSHRA) CERTIFICATION PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE) STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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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 of the following best describes the purpose of the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA)?**
 - A. Laws prohibiting workplace discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on protected categories.
 - B. A framework for public sector pension reform.
 - C. Rules for state employee wage payments.
 - D. Standards for private sector recruitment advertising.
- 2. AB 51 prohibits employers from requiring employees to sign mandatory arbitration agreements as a condition of employment for disputes related to which areas?**
 - A. Tax law
 - B. Labor laws and discrimination
 - C. Intellectual property
 - D. Immigration status
- 3. What are the specific time frames for 5 point preference eligibility?**
 - A. Service must be between September 11, 2001, and August 31, 2010; August 2, 1990, and January 2, 1992; or after January 31, 1955 and before October 15, 1976.
 - B. Service must be between 1990 and 2000 only.
 - C. Any service after 1950.
 - D. Service must be within the last 5 years.
- 4. Which statement about the California WARN Act is true?**
 - A. It requires 60 days' notice before a mass layoff, relocation, or termination.
 - B. It requires 30 days' notice before a mass layoff, relocation, or termination.
 - C. It has no notice requirement.
 - D. It only applies to the private sector.
- 5. To increase salaries, what is the correct process?**
 - A. Amendment to the statute or ordinance.
 - B. Administrative directive.
 - C. Budget reallocation only.
 - D. Public referendum only.

- 6. What is the "meet and confer" process under the MMBA?**
- A. A court mediation requirement.
 - B. A requirement for employers and employee organizations to discuss proposed employment terms and work toward an agreement before decisions are made.
 - C. Annual general meeting for employee groups.
 - D. Arbitration of labor disputes after a strike.
- 7. Which of the following periods is NOT a valid 5-point eligibility window?**
- A. September 11, 2001 to August 31, 2010
 - B. August 2, 1990 to January 2, 1992
 - C. February 1, 1955 to September 15, 1975
 - D. February 1, 1980 to December 31, 1990
- 8. How should a job analysis treat work behaviors with respect to their relation to performance outcomes?**
- A. It should examine the work behaviors and the corresponding tasks, and, if applicable, the resulting work products.
 - B. It should ignore work behaviors.
 - C. It should only consider pay and benefits.
 - D. It should focus solely on company culture.
- 9. A long-time employee who has consistently performed well suddenly begins missing deadlines. What should HR do first?**
- A. Discipline the employee immediately.
 - B. Explore possible causes such as workload, health, or personal issues.
 - C. Terminate the employee for performance issues.
 - D. Ignore the change in performance.
- 10. What are the limitations of at-will employment in the public sector?**
- A. Public employees often have due process rights that protect them from termination without just cause.
 - B. Employees can be terminated at any time for any reason without due process.
 - C. All terminations require a formal hearing in every case.
 - D. Employees have no protection against dismissal during budget cuts.

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which of the following best describes the purpose of the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA)?

- A. Laws prohibiting workplace discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on protected categories.**
- B. A framework for public sector pension reform.
- C. Rules for state employee wage payments.
- D. Standards for private sector recruitment advertising.

FEHA is about preventing unfair treatment in employment and housing by prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on protected characteristics such as race, sex, religion, disability, age, and more. This means employers and housing providers must treat people equitably and cannot impose different terms or conditions because of those protected traits. The law also covers harassment and retaliation, ensuring that employees can raise concerns without fearing retaliation and that harmful conduct is addressed. Enforcement mechanisms and remedies exist to address violations and promote a fair workplace and housing market across the state. The option describing laws that prohibit workplace discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on protected categories best captures this core purpose. The other choices refer to pension reform, wage payments, or advertising standards, which are not the aim of FEHA.

2. AB 51 prohibits employers from requiring employees to sign mandatory arbitration agreements as a condition of employment for disputes related to which areas?

- A. Tax law
- B. Labor laws and discrimination**
- C. Intellectual property
- D. Immigration status

AB 51 is about preventing employers from making arbitration a condition of employment for claims that come under California's labor laws and anti-discrimination protections. That means wage-and-hour issues, breaks, overtime, leaves, and discrimination/harassment claims under the Labor Code and the Fair Employment and Housing Act. Those areas are the ones the law aims to protect access to the courts for, rather than forcing employees into arbitration as a condition of getting or keeping a job. Other areas—like tax, intellectual property, or immigration status—aren't covered by this rule in the same way, so they don't fit the purpose of AB 51.

3. What are the specific time frames for 5 point preference eligibility?

- A. Service must be between September 11, 2001, and August 31, 2010; August 2, 1990, and January 2, 1992; or after January 31, 1955 and before October 15, 1976.**
- B. Service must be between 1990 and 2000 only.
- C. Any service after 1950.
- D. Service must be within the last 5 years.

Five-point veteran preference is awarded to service members who performed active duty during defined war-time or campaign periods. Those specific windows are set so that the eligibility aligns with recognized periods of conflict. The three time frames listed reflect the periods that qualify for the five-point preference: the Gulf War era (August 2, 1990, to January 2, 1992), the post-9/11 era (September 11, 2001, to August 31, 2010), and a span covering older conflicts (after January 31, 1955 and before October 15, 1976) that includes the Vietnam era and related eligibility. Because the five-point preference isn't granted for any service or for service simply within a broad range like the 1990s, or only for the most recent years, the listed periods are the precise qualifying windows. The other options don't match these defined timeframes, which is why they aren't correct.

4. Which statement about the California WARN Act is true?

- A. It requires 60 days' notice before a mass layoff, relocation, or termination.
- B. It requires 30 days' notice before a mass layoff, relocation, or termination.
- C. It has no notice requirement.
- D. It only applies to the private sector.

California law requires a longer heads-up than many other rules when a large group of workers will be affected. The act mandates 60 days of advance notice to the workers and to the state's labor department whenever a mass layoff, relocation, or termination is planned that affects a sizable number of employees at a single site within a 30 day period. This 60 day window gives workers time to prepare for changes, seek new opportunities, and access retraining or other support. It's also important to know the coverage isn't about a narrow private-versus-public distinction alone; it applies to employers of a certain size operating in California and can include certain public entities under specified conditions. That's why the statement about 60 days of notice is the true one, whereas 30 days, no notice, or application only to private sector employers do not fit the actual requirements.

5. To increase salaries, what is the correct process?

- A. Amendment to the statute or ordinance.
- B. Administrative directive.
- C. Budget reallocation only.
- D. Public referendum only.

Salaries for public employees are set by the legal authority that creates and governs compensation, typically a statute or local ordinance. To raise pay, you must change that authority—amending the statute or the ordinance—to authorize higher salaries. Administrative directives can't permanently alter compensation because they rely on existing legal authority and don't change the sanctioned pay levels. Reallocating the budget only moves funds within what's already authorized; it doesn't create new authorized pay amounts. Public referendums, while possible in some places, are not the standard path and can be slower and more cumbersome. The direct, proper route is to amend the statute or ordinance to authorize the higher salaries, and then fund the change through the budget.

6. What is the "meet and confer" process under the MMBA?

- A. A court mediation requirement.
- B. A requirement for employers and employee organizations to discuss proposed employment terms and work toward an agreement before decisions are made.
- C. Annual general meeting for employee groups.
- D. Arbitration of labor disputes after a strike.

Meet and confer is the required two-way discussion between an employer and the employee organization about proposed terms and conditions of employment, with both sides working in good faith to reach an agreement before decisions are made. This process is about exploring proposals, sharing information, and attempting to settle terms collaboratively on issues like wages, hours, benefits, and working conditions. It isn't court mediation, an annual general meeting, or arbitration after a strike.

7. Which of the following periods is NOT a valid 5-point eligibility window?

- A. September 11, 2001 to August 31, 2010
- B. August 2, 1990 to January 2, 1992
- C. February 1, 1955 to September 15, 1975
- D. February 1, 1980 to December 31, 1990**

Five-point veteran eligibility applies to active-duty service that occurs during officially recognized periods of war or national emergency. The window must lie within one of those recognized periods. The period from February 1, 1980 to December 31, 1990 starts well before the Gulf War and includes many years that are not part of any officially recognized war period. Although it extends into the Gulf War era in 1990, the overall window is not completely contained within a single recognized wartime period, so it doesn't qualify as a valid five-point eligibility window. The other windows align with recognized wartime periods or start during those periods (such as the post-9/11 era, the Gulf War, or the Vietnam era), so they meet the criteria.

8. How should a job analysis treat work behaviors with respect to their relation to performance outcomes?

- A. It should examine the work behaviors and the corresponding tasks, and, if applicable, the resulting work products.**
- B. It should ignore work behaviors.
- C. It should only consider pay and benefits.
- D. It should focus solely on company culture.

When assessing how performance happens, you look at the actions employees actually take and how those actions lead to outcomes. In a job analysis, this means not only listing the tasks that must be done, but identifying the work behaviors people must demonstrate to perform those tasks well—and, if relevant, the work products those behaviors produce. This link between behaviors, tasks, and products lets you see which actions drive successful results and how to measure and develop them. This is why the best answer emphasizes examining the work behaviors alongside the corresponding tasks and, when applicable, the resulting work products. For example, in a data analyst role, the tasks might include data cleaning and reporting, but the behaviors—careful data validation, proper methodological approach, and clear communication—are what lead to high-quality datasets and accurate, useful reports. Without focusing on these behaviors, you'd miss the drivers of performance. Paying attention to pay, benefits, or company culture alone doesn't address how performance is actually produced, so they aren't the focus of job analysis for linking behaviors to outcomes.

9. A long-time employee who has consistently performed well suddenly begins missing deadlines. What should HR do first?

- A. Discipline the employee immediately.
- B. Explore possible causes such as workload, health, or personal issues.**
- C. Terminate the employee for performance issues.
- D. Ignore the change in performance.

When a long-time employee who has consistently performed well suddenly misses deadlines, the first move is to explore possible underlying causes such as workload, health, or personal issues. This approach recognizes that a performance hiccup can be a symptom of something outside the employee's control, rather than a sign of deliberate underperformance. By investigating root causes, HR can determine the appropriate, supportive response instead of jumping to punishment or termination. Start with a private, nonjudgmental conversation to gather facts: recent changes in workload, new or conflicting priorities, any health concerns, caregiving pressures, or personal stressors. Review workload trends, deadlines, and resources available to the employee, and consider whether accommodations or adjustments (like reallocating tasks, shifting deadlines, or providing time off) could help. If health or personal issues are involved, point the employee toward appropriate supports such as an employee assistance program, medical guidance, or a temporary leave if needed. Throughout, document what is discussed and any agreed-upon steps, and ensure actions align with policy and legal guidelines. Disciplining immediately or terminating for a sudden dip in performance is not appropriate as a first response, and ignoring the change can worsen outcomes. By identifying and addressing the root cause, HR protects both the employee and the organization and sets the stage for restored performance.

10. What are the limitations of at-will employment in the public sector?

- A. Public employees often have due process rights that protect them from termination without just cause.**
- B. Employees can be terminated at any time for any reason without due process.
- C. All terminations require a formal hearing in every case.
- D. Employees have no protection against dismissal during budget cuts.

Public sector employment is typically not truly at-will. Many public employees operate under civil service rules, merit systems, or contract provisions that require due process before dismissal. This means termination isn't allowed simply for any reason or without a process to determine the legitimacy of the action. Agencies must usually provide notice, an opportunity to respond, and a hearing or formal review, and they must show just cause or a substantial reason supported by the record. Even when performance problems exist, there are steps like coaching, documented warnings, and opportunities to appeal decisions or grieve them through established procedures. While budget cuts can lead to layoffs, those processes are governed by formal layoff rules to protect employee rights rather than allowing arbitrary dismissal. In short, due process protections limit at-will authority in the public sector by ensuring terminations follow a recognized, accountable process.

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://pshra.examzify.com>

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

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