

# Certification Examination for Financial Research Administrators



## Candidate Handbook

### 2021

Application Deadline*	Testing Window
February 3, 2021	March 6 – March 20, 2021
August 11, 2021	September 11 – September 25, 2021

**\*Applications will not be accepted after 11:59pm Eastern on this date**

Administered by:



1350 Broadway, Suite 800 | New York, NY 10018

[www.ptcny.com/contact](http://www.ptcny.com/contact)



## COVID-19 Precautions

Candidates are reminded that face masks are REQUIRED at Prometric testing centers. Candidates must bring and wear face masks for the duration of their time inside the testing center.

Masks with exhale/one-way valves are prohibited to use at the testing center, due to the lack of viral particle filtration provided by these masks. Masks with wearable technology are also prohibited. **Any test taker that comes to the test center without an acceptable mask will not be allowed to test, marked as a “no show,” and will not be eligible for a free reschedule.**

Candidates must comply with any other local or federal mandates and guidelines.

Note: if you fall into any of the following categories, you will not be permitted to test until you no longer fit the criteria:

- Have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14-days;
- Have been exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14-days;
- Are experiencing flu or cold-like symptoms; OR
- Have returned from travel to a highly infected area in the past 14-days.

Please contact PTC ([www.ptcny.com/contact](http://www.ptcny.com/contact)) if you fall into any of the above categories.

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*This Handbook contains necessary information about the Certification Examination for Financial Research Administrators. Please retain it for future reference. Candidates are responsible for reading these instructions carefully. This Handbook is subject to change.*

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

<p><b>Professional Testing Corporation (PTC)</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.ptcny.com">www.ptcny.com</a></p> <p>(212) 356-0660</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply for examination</li><li>• Obtain general application policy and procedure information</li><li>• Obtain information about testing policies and procedures</li><li>• Transfer to a new testing period</li><li>• Request Special Accommodations</li><li>• Request Hand Score/Score Transfer</li><li>• Question about score reports</li><li>• Miscellaneous inquiries</li></ul>
<p><b>Prometric</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.prometric.com/RACC">www.prometric.com/RACC</a></p> <p>(800) 741-0934</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Schedule test appointment</li><li>• Reschedule test appointment (within a testing period)</li><li>• Cancel test appointment</li><li>• Find directions to test site</li><li>• Questions regarding testing sites and appointments</li></ul>
<p><b>Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC)</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.racc-cert.org">www.racc-cert.org</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review sessions</li><li>• Eligibility Petition Form</li><li>• Recertification Information</li></ul>

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## ATTENTION CANDIDATES

This handbook contains necessary information about the RACC Certification Examination for Financial Research Administrators. It is required reading for those applying and taking the examination. All individuals applying for the examination must comply with the policies, procedures, and deadlines in this Handbook and attest to this by signing the Candidate Attestation found on the application. Please retain this handbook for future reference. This handbook is subject to change. See [www.ptcny.com](http://www.ptcny.com) for handbook updates.

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## **CERTIFICATION**

The Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC) promotes the concept of voluntary certification by examination for all Financial research and sponsored programs administrators. After passing this examination, an individual earns the Certified Financial Research Administrator (CFRA) designation. Certification is just one part of a process called “credentialing”. It focuses specifically on the individual and is one indication of current competence in this specialized field. Certification in Financial research and sponsored programs administration is highly valued and provides formal recognition of basic knowledge in this field.

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## **REASONS FOR CERTIFICATION**

1. To provide documented evidence to a current or potential employer that an individual has been examined by an independent professional certifying organization and found to possess a certain level of basic knowledge of Financial research and sponsored programs administration.
2. To provide personal and professional satisfaction of achievement of meeting established criteria indicating the attainment of a level of basic knowledge that is customary to be a professional in the field of Financial research and sponsored programs administration.
3. To demonstrate commitment to the profession and to one's peers that an individual has taken the time and effort, beyond job experience, to learn the Financial Body of Knowledge, thus exhibiting a significant responsibility to working in the profession of Financial research or sponsored programs administration.

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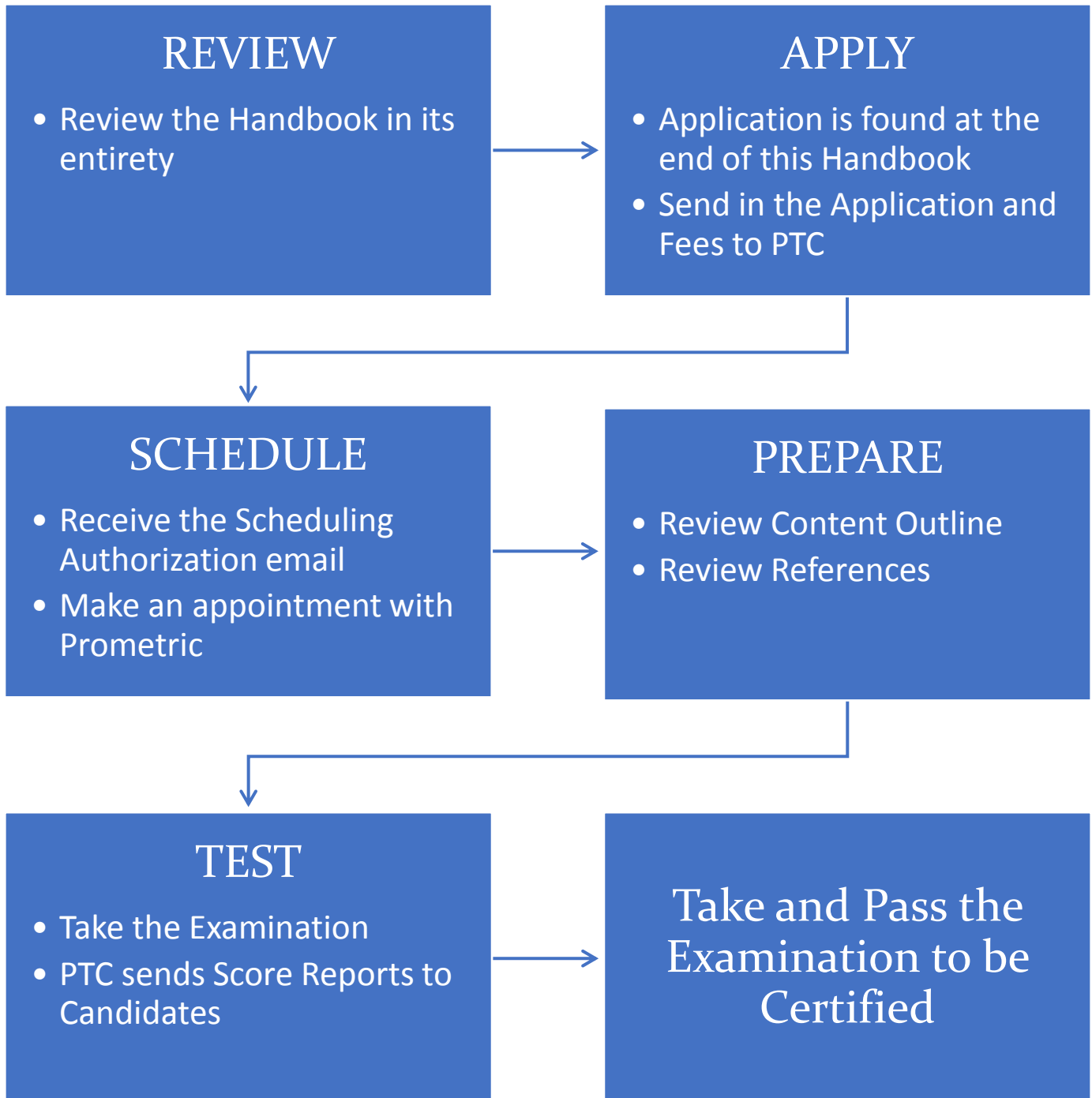
## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

1. Bachelor's or advanced degree and three (3) years of professional experience in financial research administration or sponsored programs administration either in a sponsoring or recipient organization or the equivalent in a self-funded organization;  
OR
2. An Associate's degree and five (5) years of professional experience in financial research administration or sponsored programs administration either in a sponsoring or recipient organization or the equivalent in a self-funded organization;  
OR
3. No degree and six (6) years of professional experience in financial research administration or sponsored programs administration either in a sponsoring or recipient organization or the equivalent in a self-funded organization. \*

\*Petitions for approval of this option are available on the RACC website at: <http://www.racc-cert.org/CFRA-petition-form/>.

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## THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS



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## COMPLETION OF APPLICATION

### ***Step 1 – Complete Application***

Go to <http://www.ptcny.com/test-sponsors/RACC> to view examination testing periods, application deadlines, and link to the online application. You must complete the examination application in full, using your name exactly as it appears on your current government issued photo ID such as a driver's license or a passport. Applications are not considered complete until all information and payment has been provided. The completed application can be submitted and paid for online. Retain the link to the application and your login information.

**Please note**, for new applications you will be asked to create a PIN number. This PIN will be used when going into your existing application.

### ***Step 2 – Submit Examination Fee and Application for Review***

Receive email from PTC stating that your payment and application has been received and under review.

### ***Step 3 – Receive Approval of Application***

Receive email from PTC stating that your application has been approved.

### ***Step 4 – Receive Scheduling Authorization and Schedule Testing Appointment***

Within eleven (11) weeks prior to the start of the testing period, candidates will receive a Scheduling Authorization from PTC via email from [notices@ptcny.com](mailto:notices@ptcny.com). The Scheduling Authorization includes an eligibility number and information on how to set up your examination location, date, and time through Prometric. Retain this document.

You must present your current driver's license, passport, or U.S. Military ID at the testing center at the time of your examination appointment or you will be refused admission. The name on the ID must exactly match the name on the Scheduling Authorization.

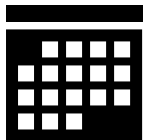
**Applicants who are not approved to sit for the examination or whose applications are incomplete 21 days prior to the first day of the testing window will receive a refund of their application fee minus the \$75 administrative fee. Refunds will be processed approximately 30 days after the end of the testing period.**

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## EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION AND SCHEDULING

The RACC Certification Examination for Financial Research Administrators is administered during an established two-week testing window on a daily basis, excluding holidays, at computer-based testing facilities managed by Prometric.

### **Scheduling Examination Appointments**



Approximately eleven (11) weeks prior to the start of the testing window, approved candidates will be emailed a Scheduling Authorization from **[notices@ptcny.com](mailto:notices@ptcny.com)**. Please ensure you enter your correct email address on the application and add the 'ptcny.com' domain to your email safe list. If you do not receive a Scheduling Authorization eight (8)

weeks prior to the start of your chosen testing window contact the Professional Testing Corporation at (212) 356-0660 or online at [www.ptcny.com/contact](http://www.ptcny.com/contact).

The Scheduling Authorization will indicate how to schedule your examination appointment with Prometric as well as the dates during which testing is available. Appointment times are first-come, first-serve, so schedule your appointment as soon as you receive your Scheduling Authorization in order to maximize your chance of testing at your preferred location and on your preferred date. **Candidates who wait until the last minute run the risk of missing out on their preferred date, time, and testing center. Candidates unable to schedule an appointment will forfeit their fees.**

Candidates unable to take the examination during their chosen testing window will need to reapply for the examination and pay a new application fee. See page 8 for more information on transferring to a new testing window.

After you make your test appointment, Prometric will send you a confirmation email with the date, time, and location of your exam. Please check this confirmation carefully for the correct date, time, and location. Contact Prometric at (800) 741-0934 if you do not receive this email confirmation or if there is a mistake with your appointment.

**Note: International candidates may also schedule, reschedule, or cancel an appointment online at [www.prometric.com/RACC](http://www.prometric.com/RACC).**

**IMPORTANT!**

You **MUST** present your current driver's license, passport, or U.S. military ID at the test center. Expired, temporary, or paper driver's licenses will **NOT** be accepted.

The first and last name on your Scheduling Authorization **MUST** exactly match the first and last name on your photo ID.

**Fees will not be refunded for exams missed because of invalid ID.**



## Rescheduling Examination Appointments within a Testing Period

Candidates are able to reschedule their examination appointments within the same testing period as long as the request is submitted within the timeframe described below. Reschedule within the permitted time frame by calling or going to the Prometric website: [www.prometric.com/RACC](http://www.prometric.com/RACC).

Time Frame	Reschedule Permitted?	Stipulations
Requests submitted 30 days or more before the original appointment	Yes	None
Requests submitted 29 to 5 days before the original appointment	Yes	Candidate must pay Prometric a rescheduling fee of \$50.
Requests submitted less than 5 days before the original appointment	No	Candidates who do not arrive to test for their appointment will be considered a no-show and all their examinations fees will be forfeited. Candidates will need to reapply and pay full examination fees for a future testing period.

## Transferring to a New Testing Period

Candidates unable to take the examination during their scheduled testing period may request a **ONE-TIME** transfer to a future testing period. **There is a transfer fee of \$235.00.** After you have transferred once by paying the \$235.00 fee, you will need to pay the full examination fee in order to transfer a second time; so, ***please plan carefully.***

**Please note:** requests to transfer to a new testing period must be received within 30 days of your originally scheduled testing period.

Candidates wishing to transfer to a new testing period need to follow the steps below.

1. Go to <http://secure.ptcny.com/apply>.
2. Click "Start New Application."
3. Choose RACC-CFRA in the first drop-down menu; then choose the new examination period in the second drop down menu and fill out the rest of the information on the page.
4. Fill out the application making sure you answer yes to the question asking if you are transferring.
5. When you have finished the application, click "Submit Transfer Request."

6. PTC Support will send you an email letting you know your transfer application was approved and that you can log back into your application and pay the one-time \$235.00 transfer fee.

Call 212-356-0660 if you have any questions regarding the transfer process.

If candidates are unable to attend the examination on the date for which they registered and elect not to transfer to another testing period the application will be closed and all fees will be forfeited. There will be no refund of fees.

The transfer fee is based on costs and is not punitive in nature. The transfer fee must be paid at the time the request is approved. The candidate is responsible for contacting Prometric and canceling the original examination appointment, if one was made.

**Exams may only be transferred to a new testing period once; please plan carefully.**

Please note: Transferring your Examination only refers to instances when a candidate is unable to take their exam during a testing period for which they have already applied. Candidates who did not pass their examination and are retaking the examination need to pay the full Examination Fee.

### Failing to Report for an Examination



If you fail to report for an examination, you will forfeit all fees paid to take the examination. A completed application form and examination fee are required to reapply for the examination.

## EXAMINATION FEES

Fee Type	Amount	Details
Application Fee	US \$395.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-refundable<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Non-transferable</li> <li>• Includes testing center fees</li> <li>• Includes non-refundable \$75 administrative fee</li> </ul>
Transfer Fee (Moving to a new testing window; see page 7)	US \$235.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Applies to candidates who need to move to a new testing period</b></li> <li>• Must submit new application &amp; fee to PTC</li> </ul>
Rescheduling Fee (29-5 days prior to scheduled appointment; see page 6)	US \$50.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Applies to candidates who need to move their appointment within their current testing period</b></li> <li>• Payable directly to Prometric</li> <li>• Reschedule with Prometric online or over the phone</li> </ul>



There will be no refund of fees unless applicants are ineligible for the examination. Ineligible candidates will be refunded their fees minus an administrative fee. **Please be advised: Prometric does not have the authority to grant transfers to another testing period or refunds.**

## SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

RACC and PTC support the intent of and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). PTC will take steps reasonably necessary to make certification accessible to persons with disabilities covered under the ADA. According to the ADA, an individual with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity (such as seeing, hearing, learning, reading, concentrating, walking) or a major bodily function (such as neurological, endocrine, or digestive system). The information you provide and any documentation regarding your disability and special test accommodations will be held in strict confidence.

All approved testing accommodations must maintain the psychometric nature and security of the examination. Accommodations that fundamentally alter the nature or security of the exam will not be granted.

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<sup>1</sup> Applicants who are ineligible to take the examination or whose applications are incomplete by the application deadline will have their examination fees returned minus an administrative fee.

Special testing arrangements may be made upon receipt of the Application, examination fee, and a completed and signed Request for Special Needs Accommodations Form, available from [www.ptcnyc.com/PDF/PTC\\_SpecialAccommodationRequestForm.pdf](http://www.ptcnyc.com/PDF/PTC_SpecialAccommodationRequestForm.pdf) or by calling PTC at (212) 356-0660.

This Form must be uploaded with the online application no later than 8 weeks prior to the start of your chosen testing window. Candidates who do not submit their Special Accommodations Form with their application may not be able to test during their chosen testing period and therefore be subject to rescheduling or transfer fees.

**Only those requests made and received on the official Request for Special Needs Accommodations Form will be reviewed. Letters from doctors and other healthcare professionals must be accompanied by the official Form and will not be accepted without the Form. All requests must be made at the time of application. Accommodations cannot be added to an existing exam appointment.**

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## PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION

- Check your government issued photo ID (driver's license, passport or U.S. Military ID) when you make your examination appointment. Is it expired? Does the first and last name on your ID match the first and last name on your Scheduling Authorization email? Proctors at the Prometric testing center will refuse admission to candidates with expired IDs, IDs with names that do not match their records, and temporary paper IDs. Candidates will be marked as no-shows and will forfeit their exam fees.
- Check your PTC Scheduling Authorization email and Appointment Confirmation email from Prometric to make sure everything is accurate (i.e. your name, exam name, appointment date, time and location).
- Make yourself familiar with the location of your chosen testing site and any requirements they may have for parking and check the weather and traffic conditions before you leave for the testing center. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to arrive as late arrival may prevent you from testing.
- In the event of inclement weather, check the Prometric website for site closures: <https://www.prometric.com/closures>.
- Prometric's website provides information on what you can expect on your test day, including a walkthrough of check in and security procedures: <https://www.prometric.com/test-center-security>.
- This Handbook provides the Content Outline for the Examination (see appendix). Use these to help you start studying for the examination.
- Review the Rules for the Examination on the next page before your appointment.

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## WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE TESTING CENTER

PTC has partnered with Prometric Testing Centers to deliver examinations to candidates. Here is what you can expect when you arrive at your Prometric Testing Center.

- Candidate Check-In
  - Candidates will be asked to present their IDs
  - Candidates will be asked to empty and turn out their pockets
  - Candidates will be “wanded” or asked to walk through a metal detector
  - Inspection of eyeglasses, jewelry, and other accessories will be conducted. Jewelry other than wedding and engagement rings is prohibited.
  - Religious headwear may be worn into the testing room; however, it may be subject to inspection by a testing center administrator before entry into the testing room is permitted.
  - Prometric provides lockers for candidates to store their purses, mobile phones, jackets, food, drinks and medical supplies.
- During the Exam
  - No breaks are scheduled during the exam. Candidates who must leave the testing room to take a break will not be given extra time on the exam
  - Accessing mobile phones or study materials during the examination is prohibited
  - Smoking is prohibited at the testing center
  - All examinations are monitored and may be recorded in both audio and video format

Please keep in mind: other exams will be administered at the same time as your examination. Therefore, examinees may hear ambient noises such as typing, coughing, or people entering and exiting the testing room that cannot be avoided. Prometric is unable to provide a completely noise-free environment. However, headphones may be requested to minimize impact.

Please see [Prometric's website](#) for more information about what to expect on testing day.

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## RULES FOR THE EXAMINATION

Please read the information below carefully. You are responsible for adhering to the examination rules while at the testing center.

- ⇒ You must present your current driver's license, passport, or US Military ID at the testing center. Candidates without valid ID will NOT be permitted to test. Temporary or paper copies of your ID will not be accepted.
- ⇒ No Electronic devices that can be used to record, transmit, receive, or play back audio, photographic, text, or video content, including but not limited to, cell phones, laptop computers, tablets, Bluetooth devices; wearable technology (such as smart watches), MP3 players (such as iPods), pagers, cameras, and voice recorders are permitted to be used and cannot be taken in the examination room. Prometric provides lockers for your personal items.
- ⇒ No papers, books, or reference materials may be taken into or removed from the testing room.
- ⇒ No questions concerning content of the examination may be asked during the examination session. The candidate should read carefully the directions that are provided on screen at the beginning of the examination session.
- ⇒ Candidates are prohibited from leaving the testing room while their examination is in session, with the sole exception of going to the restroom.
- ⇒ Bulky clothing, such as sweatshirts (hoodies), jackets, coats, and hats (except hats worn for religious reasons), and most types of jewelry may not be worn while taking the examination. Proctors will ask you to remove such items and place them in your locker. Please see [Prometric's statement on Test Center Security](#) for more information.
- ⇒ All watches and "Fitbit" type devices cannot be worn during the examination.
- ⇒ No food/beverages are permitted inside the testing room. Leave these items in your assigned locker.



Contact PTC at (212) 356-0660 or [www.ptcny.com/contact](http://www.ptcny.com/contact) with any questions about the Examination Rules.

**Violation of any of the rules listed above may lead to forfeiture of fees, dismissal from the testing room, and cancellation of your test scores.**

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## TESTING CONDITIONS OR EXAMINATION FEEDBACK

Any candidate who feels that the examination effort was negatively impacted by the test center conditions should notify the proctor immediately. The situation should also be reported to PTC at [www.ptcny.com/contact](http://www.ptcny.com/contact) within 3 business days of the test appointment. Any comments about the test itself should also be reported to PTC at [www.ptcny.com/contact](http://www.ptcny.com/contact) within 3 business days of the test appointment.

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## REPORT OF RESULTS

Test results are not released at the testing center but will be sent to candidates approximately one month following the close of the testing period. This is necessary to allow for the psychometric review and administrative time required to ensure accurate and reliable scores. Scores on the major areas of the examination and on the total examination will be provided. Successful candidates will also receive certificates from the RACC.

### Scoring Process

The passing score for the CFRA Examination has been reviewed and approved by RACC and has been determined using a criterion-referenced methodology.

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## REQUESTING A HANDSCORE

Candidates who fail the examination may request a hand scoring of their data file. Hand scoring is a manual check of the data file by the testing service to determine if there have been any errors in scoring. Although the probability of such an error is extremely remote, this service is available. Requests for hand scoring must be received by PTC no later than 90 days after the date of the examination by completing and returning the Request of Handscore form on [www.ptcny.com](http://www.ptcny.com) with payment of \$25. Candidates who fail the examination will not be permitted to see the examination questions. For reasons of test security, no candidate is allowed to review the examination or any of its items.

To ensure correct reporting of results, PTC automatically performs handscores of examinations of candidates who score within 3 points of passing as a quality control measure. Thus, it is extremely doubtful that any examination results will change from “fail” to “pass” through handscoreing.

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## CONFIDENTIALITY OF EXAMINATION SCORES

RACC/PTC will release the individual test scores ONLY to the individual candidate. Any questions concerning test results should be referred to RACC or PTC.

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## REEXAMINATION

The Certified Financial Research Administrator Examination may be taken as often as desired upon filing of a new application and payment of the applicable fee. There is no limit to the number of times the examination may be repeated.

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## ATTAINMENT OF CERTIFICATION & RECERTIFICATION

Eligible candidates who pass the examination will be certified for a period of five years, are eligible to use the designation CFRA after their names, and will receive a certificate from the RACC. A registry of Certified Financial Research Administrators is maintained by the RACC and may be reported in its publications. Further information concerning the CFRA credentialing program and information regarding preparation for the examination may be found at the RACC home page, <http://www.racc-cert.org>. An annotated list of the CFRA Body of Knowledge may be found in the CFRA *Body of Knowledge* section of the website.

The CFRA designation is awarded for a period of five (5) years. At which time a CFRA must recertify for an additional five (5) years by one of two methods:

1. Earning 80 contact hours of education credits during the preceding 5 years, 80% of which (64 credits) must be taken in topics related specifically to Financial activities
2. Re-taking and passing the CFRA examination

Reminders about recertification will be sent by way of email, beginning approximately three (3) months before the dates of recertification.

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## CODE OF ETHICS

Certificants are expected to practice and uphold the following principles in the discharge of their professional responsibilities. A candidate is required to sign the following statement as part of his/her application process:

I agree that I shall:

- perform my duties with honesty, diligence, and responsibility
- conduct myself free of personal and professional conflicts or the appearance of impropriety
- remain mindful as a steward of the funds I assist in requesting and managing have been provided fundamentally for the public good
- be prudent in the use and protection of sensitive information/data
- act in good faith promoting ethical integrity in all of our actions
- in public forums, maintain respectful communication about others in the profession

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## REVOCATION OF REGISTRATION

Certification may be revoked by the RACC for any of the following reasons:

1. Falsification of an application.
2. Misrepresentation of certification status.
3. Breach of existing ethical standards of professional practice.

An appeals mechanism for challenging revocation of certification is available.



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## CONTENT OF THE EXAMINATION

The RACC Certification Examination for Financial Research Administrators is a computer-based examination composed of a maximum of 250 multiple-choice with total testing time of four (4) hours. The content of the examination is described in the Body of Knowledge beginning below.

The questions for the examination are obtained from Certified Financial Research Administrators, individuals with expertise in financial research administration, and are reviewed for construction, accuracy, and appropriateness by the RACC and PTC's psychometricians RACC, with the advice and assistance of the Professional Testing Corporation, prepares the examination.

The RACC Certification Examination for Financial Research Administrators will be weighted in approximately the following manner:

I.	Governing Framework	25%
II.	Project Costs	35%
III.	Reporting	25%
IV.	Fiscal Compliance	15%

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## CFRA BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

For an annotation giving sample resources, see <http://www.racc-cert.org>.

### I. GOVERNING FRAMEWORK

- A. Statutory Requirements
  - 1. FOIA
  - 2. Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT)
  - 3. Non-delinquency on federal debt
  - 4. IRS classification of institution
  - 5. Salary cap
  - 6. Other
- B. Regulations
  - 1. Administrative Requirements (2 CFR Part 215)
  - 2. Cost Principles (2 CFR Part 220)
  - 3. Audit Guidelines (OMB Circular A-133 and Uniform Guidance)
  - 4. Federal Acquisition Regulations (mandatory clauses for cost reimbursable contracts, clauses based on institution types)
  - 5. Other
- C. Agency Policies
  - 1. DHHS
  - 2. NSF
  - 3. DOD
  - 4. Other

D. Awards

1. Types and characteristics of sponsors
  - a. Federal, state and local government
  - b. Nonprofit
  - c. For profit business and industry
  - d. International Entity
  - e. Sponsor Responsibilities
2. Forms of Federal Assistance (discretionary, mandatory, block, formula)
3. Specific Award Terms and Conditions
4. Budget flexibility and budget restrictions (cost reimbursable, fixed price, task order, deliverable-based)
5. Period of performance and pre-award costs
6. Incremental funding and limitation of costs
7. Other

E. Institutional Policies and Procedures (policy development and implementation)

**II. PROJECT COSTS**

A. Types of funding

B. Budget Structure

1. Role of the budget and characteristics of effective budgets
2. Budget models, templates and forms (Modular, Line item, SF424 form, Grants.gov)
3. Understanding sponsors' budget guidelines
4. Types, definitions and uses of budget categories
5. Budget templates and forms
6. Calculations of budget costs
  - a. Institutional base salaries
  - b. Effort and calendar months
  - c. Fringe benefits
  - d. Indirect costs
  - e. Other
7. Budget justification
8. Major Functions of Institution A-21
9. Revised budgets and rebudget of costs
10. Other

C. Composition of Costs

1. Total Project Costs
2. Direct Costs
  - a. Salaries and wages (federal requirements for employee compensation on sponsored projects, institutional base salary, post-differential allowance for employees based abroad, percentage of effort/calendar months)
  - b. Equipment (definition)
  - c. Travel (per diem, FLY US,)
  - d. Recharge or cost centers
  - e. Other project-related costs
3. Indirect Costs
  - a. Development of indirect rate proposal (cognizant audit agency)
  - b. Methods for developing indirect rate (simplified method, direct allocation, multiple allocation, indirect cost rate proposal method)
  - c. Types of indirect costs (predetermined, provisional, fixed, final)
  - d. Components of indirect costs (formula)
  - e. Indirect cost base types (MTDC, TDC, S&W)
  - f. Waiver of indirect costs

- g. Major Project/Unlike Circumstances (criteria and application)
- 4. Fringe Benefit rates (calculation, composition)
- D. Allocation of Costs
- E. Budgets for specific funding programs
  - 1. Clinical Trial Costing (per patient budgets & billing)
  - 2. Training grant budgets (stipend levels, budget restrictions for trainee expenses)
  - 3. Other
- F. Cost sharing (cash & in-kind contributions; criteria, types, documentation)
- G. Program Income
- H. Project expenses
  - 1. Pre-award Costs
  - 2. Noncancelable costs
  - 3. Cost Overruns & Residuals
  - 4. Disallowed expenses
  - 5. Accelerated expenses
  - 6. Other
- I. Expanded authorities

### **III. REPORTING**

- A. Institutional Award Reporting (reports on awards and expenditures, NSF/national rankings, benchmarking)
- B. Cost Recovery
  - 1. Invoicing (deliverable based billing, scheduled payments, cost reimbursable, fixed price, billing practices)
  - 2. Letter of Credit and other electronic methods for drawing down funds
  - 3. Nonpayment
  - 4. Payments
- C. Financial Reports
  - 1. Reporting Periods
  - 2. Federal Financial Reports (FFR)
  - 3. Relinquishment Statement
  - 4. Authorized Signatory & Certification Statement
  - 5. Other
- D. Institutional Reports
  - 1. Income Statement
  - 2. Balance Sheet
  - 3. Other
- E. Closeout
  - 1. Process for closing awards
  - 2. Components of final financial report and required documentation
  - 3. Unliquidated obligations
  - 4. Carryover of unobligated funds
  - 5. Records retention
  - 6. Property Reports
  - 7. Other
- F. Subcontracting plan (small disadvantaged business goals)
- G. Indirect Cost recovery distribution

### **IV. FISCAL COMPLIANCE**

- A. Financial Management systems
  - 1. Characteristics and Impacts of Financial Systems Implementation
  - 2. Cost Accounting Standards

3. Effort certification and reporting
4. Cost transfers
5. Equipment
- B. Cash Management
  1. Optimizing Revenue
  2. Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Collections
- C. Financial Risk Assessment and Management
  1. Cost and Fund Accounting
  2. Ethics, Accountability and Delegations of Authority
  3. Fraud and Bad Debt
  4. Performance Metrics
  5. Award Type
  6. Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI)
- D. Expense Monitoring (shadow systems, committed expenses, unexpended balance, electronic tools)
- E. Procurement
  1. Bid process, vendor profiles and procurement standards
  2. Procurement card management & monitoring
- F. Subrecipient Monitoring (invoice review, verification of expenses, site visits)
- G. Clinical Trial Management Systems
- H. Audits (internal and external)
  1. Audit preparation (roles, responsibilities, expectations, involved parties)
  2. Audit findings and corrective actions, including OIG (Office of Inspector General)
- I. Fiscal compliance from sponsor's perspective (how gov't monitors spending –certificate of accuracy of indirect costs (DOD), certificate of costing pricing data (contracts \$100,000), report of current expenditure and projected expenses (DOE))

**(Note: Information provided in parenthesis is descriptive and not comprehensive.)**

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## SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

In the following questions, choose the one best answer.

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1. According to 2 CFR 200 (Uniform Guidance), a nonprofit institution with federally sponsored agreements is required to file a Cost Accounting Standards (CAS) Disclosure Statement when fiscal year funds surpass a MINIMUM of
    1. \$10,000,000.
    2. \$15,000,000.
    3. \$25,000,000.
    4. \$50,000,000.
- 
2. A PI whose institutional base salary is \$250,000 has committed 30% effort to an award. If the negotiated fringe benefit for the institution is 27.5%, what is the total amount that can be charged to this grant for the PI's effort?
    1. \$68,750
    2. \$75,000
    3. \$89,375
    4. \$95,625
- 
3. Which of the following is NOT a best practice for cost transfers?
    1. Transfers have a direct benefit to the project onto which a cost is being transferred
    2. Transfers of expenditures from one sponsored project to another may be processed at any time
    3. Faculty and staff make every effort to allocate costs to appropriate project when costs are incurred
    4. Expenses must be transferred within 90 days following month in which original charge was posted

<b>CORRECT ANSWERS TO SAMPLE QUESTIONS</b>
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1. 4; 2. 4; 3. 2
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## REFERENCES

The following references may be of some help in preparing for the examination. The list does not attempt to include all acceptable references, nor is it suggested that the Certified Financial Research Administrator Examination is based entirely on these references or that RACC endorses these publications. In some cases, individual experience is the best reference.

### **BOOKS**

Kulakowski, Elliott C. and Chronister, Lynne U. Research Administration and Management. Sudbury, Massachusetts: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2006.

### **ONLINE MANUAL**

Division of Cost Allocation Practices Manual for Reviewing College and University Long-Form Indirect Cost Rate Proposals

<https://rates.psc.gov/fms/dca/c&u.html>

### **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Council on Governmental Relations (COGR)

<http://www.cogr.edu/>

National Association of College and University Business Officers

<http://nacubo.org>

National Conference on College Cost Accounting (NACCA)

<http://costaccounting.org>

National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA)

<http://www.ncura.edu/>

Society of Research Administrators International (SRA)

<http://www.srainternational.org/sra03/index.cfm>

### **FEDERAL FUNDING AGENCIES AND OTHER RESOURCES**

DHHS: <http://www.hhs.gov>

DOE: <http://www.energy.gov/>

ED: <http://www.ed.gov/>

Grants.gov: <http://grants.gov/>

NASA: <http://www.nasa.gov>

NIH: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm>

NSF: <http://nsf.gov/>

**CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS (CFR)**

2 CFR Part 215: Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and Other Non-profit Organizations

2 CFR Part 220: Cost Principles for Educational Institutions

2 CFR Part 225: Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments

2 CFR Part 230: Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations

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