

Computer-Based Testing: A New Experience in 4 Easy Steps

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The Commission on Dietetic Registration implemented computer-based testing in September 1999 for the entry-level registration examinations for dietitians and dietetic technicians. The following steps describe the examination administration steps ranging from eligibility to testing.

Step 1: Registration Eligibility

Examination applicants establish eligibility by either:

- following directions and completing the "CDR copy" form from their program director who submits the required information on a specially designed software program to the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR); or
- foreign reciprocity candidates complete and submit the traditional paper-pencil registration eligibility application with required documentation directly to CDR.

Once registration eligibility is established, applicants are notified by CDR, who simultaneously will notify its testing agency, Pearson VUE of Bloomington, Minnesota, of applicant eligibility.

Step 2: Examination Application and Fee

Pearson VUE, CDR's testing agency, will email payment and scheduling instructions and a link to the Candidate Handbook. The email will contain an online user ID and password, which allows access to the Pearson VUE website. The examination application fee (\$200 for dietitians, \$120 for dietetic technicians) must be submitted online.

Step 3: Scheduling the Examination

After Pearson VUE processes the application and fee, examination candidates may schedule the examination appointment online. Test center appointment availability and scheduling policies may vary by test center. The 3-hour testing appointment includes time to complete a tutorial designed to orient examinees to the computer based testing process, the 2.5 hour examination, and a short post-examination survey.

Step 4: The Test Center

Upon arrival at the test center, examinees will be required to check in with the receptionist, provide government issued photo identification (e.g., drivers license, state photo ID, or passport); the name on the authorization to test letter must match the photo ID for access to the center for testing. Candidates must also secure personal belongings in a designated storage area.

Each examinee will be escorted to a computer station in the testing area. Each workstation includes a computer monitor, processing unit, and keyboard. Examinees will not be allowed to bring personal belongings, reference materials, calculator/handheld computer, or scratch paper to the testing area. Once examinees are seated at the terminal, the proctor will provide instructions and issue a white board, which will be collected at the end of the examination, and demonstrate how to use the on-line calculator.

Many test centers include a testing area to serve examinees who require special testing accommodations in a private room according to the guidelines of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

After completion of the examination and brief exit survey regarding the testing experience, score reports will be displayed on the computer screen and a hard copy will be distributed to all examinees as they leave the test center. Unsuccessful examinees must contact CDR to be

reauthorized to test. The retesting appointment must be scheduled a minimum of forty-five days after the last test date.

What's Next?

After successful completion of the examination, examinees are awarded their desired credentials. CDR electronically sends all newly credentialed practitioners orientation materials describing the requirements for certification maintenance, highlights of new and ongoing CDR initiatives, and an invoice for the annual registration maintenance fee. Once the fee is paid, CDR will send a registration identification card.

CDR values input about its entry-level certification programs. Any comments may be sent to: Commission on Dietetic Registration, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000, Chicago, Illinois 60606-6995; 312/899-0040, ext 5500; fax, 312/899-4772; E-mail: cdr@eatright.org