

**BOARD CERTIFICATION**  
**AS A**  
**SPECIALIST IN GERONTOLOGICAL**  
**NUTRITION**

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**EXAM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

**Commission on Dietetic Registration**  
*the Credentialing Agency for*  
*the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*

**CDR**

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## **BACKGROUND: EXAMINATION FORMAT**

The examination for Board Certification as a Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition is developed and administered by CDR. Subject matter experts (SMEs) contribute to the development and review of each specialty examination prior to its use. This examination is administered on computer at designated testing locations. The examination consists of 150 multiple-choice questions and key feature questions (130 questions scored questions and 20 pretest questions), and is constructed using approximately the number of items indicated in the Content Outline. Pretesting is done to see how well items perform before they are used in the scored portion of the examination. The pretest questions cannot be distinguished from those that will be scored, so it is important that all questions are answered to the best of your ability. A key feature question is a multiple choice question that requires more than one answer. Candidates will have three hours to complete the examination.

## **STEPS IN TEST DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

Examination development and test administration consist of several steps, including: practice analysis, development of test specifications, item writing and review, test assembly, examination administration, scoring and reporting of results.

CDR currently contracts with PSI Services, LLC, Inc. for certification examination consulting, test development of the gerontological specialty examination. CDR currently contracts

with Comira for the administration of gerontological specialty examination.

### **Role Delineation or and Practice Analysis**

A role delineation or practice analysis study describes the tasks performed at an identified level of practice and the knowledge and skills necessary to perform those tasks. It serves as the basis for test specification development. Using a role delineation study is among the most desirable methods for test specification development, because it documents that the certification test is job-related, representative of practice, and geared to the appropriate responsibility level. Every five years, a Gerontological Practice Audit is conducted for the purpose of identifying changes in practice and for ensuring that the test specifications for the Board Certification as a Specialist in Gerontological nutrition examinations remain current and relevant.

### **Item Writing**

New items are prepared by board certified specialists in gerontological nutrition who are selected from diverse practice areas and population subgroups, and who are trained in the specifics of multiple choice and key feature question writing.

Criteria applied to writing test questions or items are:

(1) relevance and criticality to specialty level practice; (2) accuracy, currency and clarity; (3) a lack of regional and institutional differences; and (4) conformity with test specifications.

### **Item Review**

Experienced item reviewers (specialty examination workgroup (SEW) members) review test items to verify appropriate classification and conformance with item writing and minimum passing level criteria and test specifications. All test items are reviewed by professional test editors to eliminate technical flaws, ambiguities, and potential bias.

### **Test Assembly**

A draft test is assembled by the testing agency staff according to the test specifications. SEW members, review items for content accuracy, currency, and relevance to specialty practice. The assembled test undergoes final review by the SEW members. Only test items that have survived content, measurement and editorial review are suitable for inclusion on the certification test.

### **Test Administration**

Eligibility requirements were established by the Specialty Certification Panel. The testing agency administers the examinations at over 100 test sites around the country. Specialty testing needs, such as those for religious observance and physical handicaps, are accommodated under the Americans with Disabilities Act under standardized secure conditions.

### **Test Item Analysis**

After each exam has been administered and items have been scored, psychometricians review performance statistics on each item in order to identify any with questionable performance. Exam items that appear problematic, exam data and candidate comments are reviewed by experienced item writers prior to final scoring and score reporting in order to revise scoring if needed for any flawed questions.

in medical libraries, online or through Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

### **Content Outline**

The gerontological nutrition content outline describes the areas to be assessed on each examination. Content outlines are listed in the *Candidate Handbook* and on CDR's web site ([www.cdrnet.org](http://www.cdrnet.org)).

## **CANDIDATE RESOURCES**

Several resources are available to candidates to assist them in preparing for the specialty examinations.

### **References**

Gerontological references are listed in the *Candidate Handbook* and on CDR's web site at [www.cdrnet.org](http://www.cdrnet.org). The references are updated annually. Most of the publications are available

