

VALIDATION REPORT FOR
Confidential Intermediary



PRESENTED TO
Arizona Supreme Court
Administrative Office of the Courts
Certification and Licensing Division
1501 West Washington, Suite 104
Phoenix, Arizona 85007-3231
September 25, 2007



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the procedures used by Comira to develop a reliable and valid examination program for certified confidential intermediaries.

The content specifications include five subject matter areas:

- Statutes and code (20%)
- Program procedures (15%)
- Ethics (25%)
- Case procedures (30%)
- Search process (10%)

The entire validation process incorporates the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1999). Each aspect of the examination program is linked to the content specifications. The specifications establish the content-related validity of the examination program by identifying the important subject matter areas involved in practice. The content specifications are the foundation for all aspects of the examination development process including item writing, item review, and test publication. Finally, the content specifications are linked to minimum competence criteria that are the basis of the cut score.

All documentation necessary to verify that the validation process has been implemented in accordance with professional standards is included in the report.

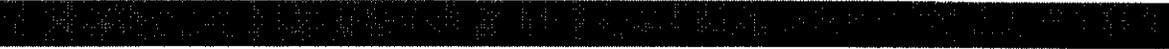
TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW	4
SECTION 2: INTRODUCTION	5
BACKGROUND	5
AUTHORITY	5
DEFINITION	5
QUALIFICATIONS	5
CONTENT VALIDATION STRATEGY	6
PSYCHOMETRIC STANDARDS	6
SECTION 3: CONTENT SPECIFICATIONS	7
APPLICABLE STANDARDS	7
PROCESS	7
CONTENT AREA WEIGHTS	7
SUBJECT MATTER AREAS	8
SECTION 4: EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT	9
APPLICABLE STANDARDS	9
EXAMINATION SECURITY	9
STRATEGY	9
PROCEDURES	10
SECTION 5: ESTABLISHMENT OF CUT SCORE	11
MEANING OF A CUT SCORE	11
UNDERLYING PREMISE	11
APPLICABLE STANDARDS	11
PROCEDURES	11
EXAMPLES OF MINIMUM COMPETENCE CRITERIA	12
CALCULATION OF CUT SCORE	13
SECTION 6: CANDIDATE STUDY GUIDE	14
PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL	14
APPLICABLE STANDARDS	14
ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT	15
RELEVANT CODE SECTIONS	15
SECTION 7: ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL	18
PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL	18
APPLICABLE STANDARDS	18
ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT	18
SECTION 8: REFERENCES	20



SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

This validation report is structured into sections that address background of the examination program for confidential intermediaries and the processes involved in content specifications, examination development, and cut score. Whenever possible, the appropriate standards are cited from the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1999).



SECTION 2: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Confidential Intermediary Board oversees a program that provides a service to help facilitate contact between adoptive parents, individuals placed for adoption, birth parents and siblings, while protecting court and agency records and the anonymity of those who desire it. The program applies only to adoptions that have been finalized in the State of Arizona.

The Court provides training to ensure that confidential intermediaries are educated about the search process and the law, and that they are sensitive to the needs of adoptive parents, adoptees, birth parents and other parties using their services. The Court certifies confidential intermediaries and provides monitoring and ongoing education to encourage a high quality of services.

AUTHORITY

Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS), Title 8, § 8-134 and Arizona Code of Judicial Administration (ACJA) § 7-201 and § 7-203 establish the authority for administration of the Confidential Intermediary Board by the Arizona Supreme Court. The Court administers the Confidential Intermediary Program through the Certification and Licensing Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

DEFINITION

ACJA § 7-203 defines a confidential intermediary as a person who completes the requirements for certification as established by ACJA § 7-201, ACJA § 7-203, and ARS § 8-134 and who possess a valid confidential intermediary certification issued by the Arizona Supreme Court.

QUALIFICATIONS

All candidates for certification must successfully complete the examination, possess the education or experience as outlined in ACJA § 7-203, and submit a completed application for standard certification, including the application fee and fingerprint card.

ACJA § 7-201 and § 7-203 do not provide for any waiver of the examination. All applicants for certification must take and pass the examination in order to be eligible for certification.

ACJA § 7-201(E)(2)(c) states that the Confidential Intermediary Board *may* refuse to issue a certificate if the candidate:

- Does not meet the requirements for certification,
- Has not submitted the applicable documents and fees,
- Has committed fraud, dishonesty, corruption or material misrepresentation in applying for the certificate or on a certification examination in this state or any other,
- Has a record of a felony conviction or any other offense involving moral turpitude,
- Has been ordered for treatment pursuant to ARS, Title 36 or found to be incapacitated pursuant to ARS Title 14,
- Is subject to revocation or suspension of certification or has had any occupational or professional license denied, revoked or suspended,
- Has been found civilly liable in an action involving fraud, intentional misrepresentation, misappropriation, theft or conversion.

CONTENT VALIDATION STRATEGY

To ensure that the examination reflected the actual tasks performed by certified confidential intermediaries, a content validation strategy was employed to establish the link between the job competencies and the content of the examination. Therefore, persons who were employed in the reporting profession were consulted to identify the major subject matter areas in the reporting profession.

PSYCHOMETRIC STANDARDS

The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1999) set forth by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education, hereafter called the Standards, serve as the standards for development of all aspects of a test, including test development, passing score, administration of tests, and reporting of results. The Standards are used by the measurement profession as the psychometric standards for validating all examinations, including licensing and certification examinations.

SECTION 3: CONTENT SPECIFICATIONS

APPLICABLE STANDARDS

The most relevant standards that apply to specifications for credentialing examinations are:

Standard 3.3 *"The test specifications should be documented, along with their rationale and the process by which they were developed. The test specifications should define the content of the test, the proposed number of items, the item formats, the desired psychometric properties of the items and the item and section arrangement." (p 43)*

Standard 3.5 *"When appropriate, relevant experts external to the testing program should review the test specifications. The purpose of the review, the process by which the review is conducted, and the results of the review should be documented. (p 43-44)*

PROCESS

A focus group of certified confidential intermediaries was convened to identify the major subject matter areas that should be included in the content specifications. The group considered topics from the following statutes in developing the content specifications.

- ARS Title 8 pertaining to certified confidential intermediaries
- ACJA § 7-201 pertaining to general requirements for certification
- ACJA § 7-203 pertaining to certified confidential intermediaries

CONTENT AREA WEIGHTS

The focus group evaluated the importance of major subject matter areas of practice, and determined their relative importance to practice, and assigned a weight (percentage) to each area. For example, if the weight is 20%, there would be 20 questions on a 100-item examination.

SUBJECT MATTER AREAS

The final content specifications contain five major subject matter areas.

- I. Statutes and code (20%)
 - a. ARS Section 8-134
 - b. ACJA Section 7-201
 - c. ACJA Section 7-203
 - d. Indian Child Welfare Act
- II. Program procedures (15%)
 - a. Certification
 - b. Complaints
 - c. Renewal
 - d. Compliance
- III. Ethics (25%)
 - a. Standards of conduct
 - b. Confidentiality
 - c. Sensitivity and professionalism
 - d. Conflicts of interest
- IV. Case procedures (30%)
 - a. Search parties
 - b. Request for appointment
 - c. Consultation and mentoring
 - d. Fees and expenses
 - e. Record access, affidavits, and orders for release
 - f. File review statement
 - g. Information consents
 - h. Request for withdrawal and case reassignment
 - i. Finalization report
- V. Search process (10%)
 - a. Record searches
 - b. Public information
 - c. Communication and telephone call guidelines

SECTION 4: EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT

APPLICABLE STANDARDS

Several standards apply to the validation of examinations:

- Standard 3.7 *"The procedures used to develop, review, and try out items, and to select items from the item pool should be documented." (p. 44)*
- Standard 3.11 *"Test developers should document the extent to which the content domain of a test represents the defined domain and test specifications." (p. 45)*
- Standard 14.14 *"The content domain to be covered...should be defined clearly and justified in terms of the importance of the content for credential-worthy performance in an occupation or profession. A rationale should be provided to support a claim that the knowledge or skills being assessed are required for credential-worthy performance in an occupation and are consistent with the purpose for which the licensing or certification program was instituted.... In tests used for licensure, skills that may be important to success but are not directly related to the purpose of licensure, e.g., protecting the public, should not be included." (p. 161)*

EXAMINATION SECURITY

Participants agreed to sign an examination security agreement which specified that they would keep all examination materials secure, discuss the examination only during department-sponsored meetings, and avoid involvement in any examination-oriented review program for prospective confidential intermediary candidates.

STRATEGY

Two focus groups of certified confidential intermediaries were convened to create and select questions (items) for the examination. By doing so, the content of the items was created and reviewed in a controlled setting, where participants could exchange feedback from other participants regarding the technical content of items.

PROCEDURES

Item development

Participants were provided a formal orientation in the principles of good item construction, opportunities to familiarize themselves with the content specifications, and opportunities to work with fellow participants to create the items. For each item, considerable emphasis was placed on specifying the linkage of item content to the content specifications and providing a citation from an authoritative reference source. Therefore, each item was linked to a specific topic in the specifications and to a page or section of an authoritative reference source. There were numerous opportunities for individual assistance with item development as well as opportunities for review by other participants.

Item review

Formal orientation was provided to benefit persons who were previously involved in item development and persons who were new to the process. Participants worked individually or in pairs to provide initial review of the items and then reviewed the items as a group. Items were evaluated for clarity, technical accuracy, readability, and applicability to actual job situations.

Test publication

Participants were given a formal orientation to the publication process. In the orientation, they were given an overview of the process. Then, they were asked to consider several factors in selecting items for two forms of the written knowledge test: the percentage of items designated for each area in the content specifications, depth and breadth of content coverage in each area, and similarity/dissimilarity of item content. Of the items selected, they were asked to designate a small number of items as anchor items, or items common to the two forms of the examination.

The process for selecting items was as follows. The participants considered the content of items, content area by content area and then made their selections, e.g., all items for statutes and code, program procedures, ethics, case procedures, and search process. After each set of items was selected, participants mutually agreed upon the selection of the items that met the percentages of items prescribed by the content specifications.

Great care was taken to create parallel and equivalent forms such that participants were instructed to alternate their selections for each form as they proceeded through each content area. The results of the selection process were two parallel and equivalent forms of the examination.

SECTION 5: ESTABLISHMENT OF CUT SCORE

MEANING OF A CUT SCORE

A criterion-referenced passing score, or cut score, is the score that reflects minimum standards of competent practice for new practitioners. The cut score is based upon the difficulty of the items in the examination, not the scores of candidates who sat for the examination.

UNDERLYING PREMISE

The underlying premise of cut score ratings is minimum competence criteria required for safe, competent practice. The criteria defines minimum competence in terms of critical, job-related work behaviors and take into account the training and experience that candidates would bring to the examination.

APPLICABLE STANDARDS

The most relevant standards applicable to passing scores are:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Standard 3.4 | <i>"The procedures used to interpret test score, and, when appropriate the normative or standardization samples or the criterion used should be documented." (p. 43)</i> |
| Standard 14.17 | <i>"The level of performance required for passing a credentialing test should depend on the knowledge and skills necessary for acceptable performance in the occupation or profession and should not be adjusted to regulate the number or proportion of persons passing the test." (p. 162)</i> |

PROCEDURES

A modified Angoff procedure (Angoff, 1971), was used to establish the cut score ratings. In this procedure, a focus group of subject matter experts familiar with the confidential intermediaries served as judges to rate the difficulty of individual items on an examination.

The ratings are based upon the question, "What percentage of minimally competent candidates would answer this item correctly?" There is emphasis on "would" versus "should" because minimum competence standards are based on what would actually happen rather than what a minimally competent candidate should be doing. The ratings for each item ranged from 25% (guessing) to 95% (very easy).

The major steps were:

- a) Reviewing the purpose of the examination so that participants understand that the examination was designed to identify candidates who possessed the minimum competence to practice without harming the public health, safety, or welfare.
- b) Reviewing the meaning of the cut score so that participants understand that the cut score means that, yes or no, candidates possess a certain level of competence.
- c) Reviewing minimum qualifications for taking the examination to gain an understanding of what training and experience that new practitioners bring to the examination.
- d) Reviewing the content specifications for the examination to understand the breadth and depth of the content covered in the items.
- e) Developing minimum acceptable competence criteria so that participants had a common understanding of the behaviors that could be exhibited by minimally competent candidates. Examples of critical work behaviors in the minimum competence criteria are presented in the following section.
- f) Taking and self-scoring the examinations to assist participants in understanding the difficulty of the items under test-like conditions.
- g) Providing an orientation to the rating process so that participants were basing their ratings on the minimum competence criteria. First, participants were asked to make independent ratings for a few items and provide their rationales for their ratings to the group. Then, participants were asked to consider the rationales of others in the group and make final ratings.
- h) Proceeding with the rating process for blocks of items until ratings were obtained for all items in both forms of the examination.

EXAMPLES OF MINIMUM COMPETENCE CRITERIA

- Discusses fees with client regarding costs of search
- Understands the concept of confidentiality of information
- Abides by telephone guidelines when identifying self on the phone to various parties
- Uses terminology that is not offensive to the search subject
- Knows where to research the information about the codes
- Has working knowledge of ARS § 8-134
- Has working knowledge of Standards of Conduct and Client Fee Schedule ACJA § 7-203 (J) and (M)
- Can substantiate costs with receipts and/or documentation (logs)
- Knows that there is an option for case reassignment or withdrawal
- Begins search by reviewing court records for affidavit

- Searches agency records for additional information, e. g., adoptive parents names, names of siblings, relatives, references for home studies, original birth certificate
- Is aware of the sensitivities of persons of the adoption triad
- Retains records and search information in a confidential and secure manner
- Maintains confidentiality during search process, e. g., there are some differences between identifying and non-identifying information and the parties with whom they can share the information
- Knows relationship and age criteria that determines who can initiate a search and be the subject of a search
- Builds a network of support systems of mentors and information sources
- Knows when to go to a mentor and/or consultant for assistance
- Maintains professional boundaries

CALCULATION OF CUT SCORE

Comira calculated the cut score by averaging the ratings across items in each form of the examination. The resulting cut scores are mathematically scaled to a score of 70 so that each examination has the same reported cut score.

SECTION 6: CANDIDATE STUDY GUIDE

PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

A candidate study guide was made available to the candidates prior to the examination. The purpose of the candidate study guide was to provide information including policies and procedures for the examination.

APPLICABLE STANDARDS

Several standards apply to the candidate study guide:

- Standard 3.20 *The instructions presented to test takers should contain sufficient detail so that test takers can respond to a task in the manner that the test developer intended. When appropriate, sample materials, practice or sample questions, criteria for scoring, and a representative item identified with each major area in the test's classification or domain should be provided to the test takers prior to the administration of the test...* (p. 47)
- Standard 8.2 *"Where appropriate, test takers should be provided, in advance, as much information about the test, the testing process, the intended test use, test scoring criteria, testing policy, and confidentiality protection as is consistent with obtaining valid responses."* (p. 86)
- Standard 8.13 *"In educational testing programs and in licensing and certification applications, test takers are entitled to fair consideration and reasonable process, as appropriate to the particular circumstances, in resolving disputes about testing. Test takers are entitled to be informed of any available means of recourse."* (p. 89)
- Standard 14.14 *"The content domain to be covered by a credentialing test should be defined clearly and justified in terms of the importance of the content for credential-worthy performance in an occupation or profession. A rationale should be provided to support a claim that the knowledge or skills being assessed are required for credential-worthy performance in an occupation and are consistent with the purpose for which the licensing or certification program was instituted."* (p. 181)

ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT

The study guide includes the following topics:

- Candidate eligibility
- Re-examination
- Special accommodations
- Question formats
- Passing score
- Major topics to be tested
- Sample questions
- Candidate registration
- Prohibited materials
- Check-out procedures
- Examination security
- Notification of results
- Review of examination (for applicants who did not pass)
- Re-examination policies
- Relevant code sections
- Sample questions

RELEVANT CODE SECTIONS

The following code sections were included as reference material in the study guide. These code sections served as the basis for the test questions.

1. ACJA § 7-201 (D)(2)(b)(4)(c)
2. ACJA § 7-201 (E)(1)(f)(2)(d)(iv)
3. ACJA § 7-201 (E)(2)(b)(iv)
4. ACJA § 7-201 (E)(3)(b)
5. ACJA § 7-201 (E)(6)
6. ACJA § 7-201 (E)(8)(b)
7. ACJA § 7-201 (E)(9)(e)(1)
8. ACJA § 7-201 (F)(6)
9. ACJA § 7-201 (G)(2)
10. ACJA § 7-201 (G)(4)(a)(1-3)
11. ACJA § 7-201 (H)(12)
12. ACJA § 7-201 (H)(23)
13. ACJA § 7-201 (H)(7)(b)(4)
14. ACJA § 7-201 (H)(9)(b)(5)
15. ACJA § 7-201 (H)(9)(d)(1)
16. ACJA § 7-201 (J)(2)(c)
17. ACJA § 7-201(E)(1)(d)
18. ACJA § 7-201(E)(7)
19. ACJA § 7-201(H)(11)
20. ACJA § 7-203 (E)(1)(b)
21. ACJA § 7-203 (E)(2)
22. ACJA § 7-203 (E)(2)(A)

23. ACJA § 7-203 (E)(7)
24. ACJA § 7-203 (F)(2)
25. ACJA § 7-203 (F)(4)(d)
26. ACJA § 7-203 (F)(4)(D)
27. ACJA § 7-203 (F)(5)
28. ACJA § 7-203 (F)(5)(a)
29. ACJA § 7-203 (F)(5)(b)
30. ACJA § 7-203 (F)(6)
31. ACJA § 7-203 (F)(6)(b)
32. ACJA § 7-203 (F)(7)
33. ACJA § 7-203 (G)(1)
34. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(1)
35. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(1)(a)
36. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(1)(b)
37. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(1)(c)
38. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(1)(e)
39. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(1)(f)
40. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(1)(g)
41. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(1)(h)
42. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(2)
43. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(2)(c)
44. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(2)(d)
45. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(2)(f)
46. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(2)(g)
47. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(2)(i)
48. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(3)(c)
49. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(4)
50. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(4)(a)
51. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(4)(b)
52. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(4)(f)
53. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(4)(c)
54. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(5)
55. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(5)(1)
56. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(5)(b)
57. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(5)(b)
58. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(5)(d)
59. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(5)(e)(1)
60. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(5)(e)(2)
61. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(5)(e)(3)
62. ACJA § 7-203 (J)(5)(f)
63. ACJA § 7-203 (L)(2)(a)
64. ACJA § 7-203 (L)(4)(f)
65. ACJA § 7-203 (L)(7)
66. ACJA § 7-203 (L)(8)(c)
67. ACJA § 7-203 (L)(9)(c)(1)
68. ACJA § 7-203 (L)(9)(e)
69. ACJA § 7-203 (M)
70. ACJA § 7-203 (M)(1)
71. ACJA § 7-203 (M)(3)
72. ACJA § 7-203(F)(6)(a)

73. ACJA § 7-203(J)
74. ACJA § 7-203(J)(2)
75. ACJA § 7-203(J)(2)(b)
76. ACJA § 7-203(J)(4)(c)
77. ACJA § 7-203(L)(2)(a)
78. ACJA § 7-203(M)(i)
79. ARS § 8-134(A)(1)
80. ARS § 8-106(E)
81. ARS § 8-121
82. ARS § 8-134
83. ARS § 8-134 (1)
84. ARS § 8-134 (2)
85. ARS § 8-134 (A)
86. ARS § 8-134 (A)(6)
87. ARS § 8-134 (A)(7)
88. ARS § 8-134 (C)
89. ARS § 8-134 (D)
90. ARS § 8-134 (E)
91. ARS § 8-134 (F)
92. ARS § 8-134 (J)(5)(e)(3)
93. ARS § 8-134(A)
94. ARS § 8-134(A)(6)
95. ARS § 8-134(A)(7)
96. ARS § 8-134(C)
97. ARS § 8-134(D)
98. ARS § 8-134(G)
99. ARS § 8-134(H)
100. USC Title 25, Chapter 21, § 1901

SECTION 7: ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

An administrative manual was made available to the Board prior to the examination. The purpose of the administrative manual was to provide information regarding all aspects of test administration.

APPLICABLE STANDARDS

The most relevant standards that apply to administrative manuals are:

Standard 3.19 *"The directions for test administration should be presented with sufficient clarity and emphasis so that it is possible for others to replicate adequately the administration conditions under which the data on reliability, validity, and, where appropriate, norms were obtained." (p. 47)*

The comment following the standard states that it is essential that test administrators received detailed instructions on test administration guidelines and procedures.

Standard 3.21 *"If the test developer indicates that the conditions of administration are permitted to vary from one test taker or group to another, permissible variation in conditions for administration should be identified and the rationale for permitting the different conditions should be documented." (p. 47)*

ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT

The administrative manual addresses the following topics:

- Factors that can influence test scores
- Questions to ask when developing policies and procedures for test administration
- Concept of standardization
- Selecting the testing site
- Scheduling
- Proctor training
- Test security
- Time limits
- Instructions
- Guessing

- Documentation of irregularities or misconduct
- Printing of materials
- Shipment of materials
- Examination assistants
- Contingency plans
- Written instructions for onsite administration
- Registration of candidates at testing site
- Seating arrangements
- Candidate misconduct and documentation of misconduct
- Recommended candidate-proctor ratios
- Readers and markers

SECTION 8: REFERENCES

- American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education (1999). Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. Washington, DC: Author.
- Angoff, W. H. (1971). Scales, norms, and equivalent scores. In R. L. Thorndike (Ed.), Educational measurement (2nd ed., pp. 508-600). Washington, DC: American Council of Education.
- Chinn, R. N. (2006). Considerations in setting cut scores. Lexington, Kentucky: Council on Licensure, Enforcement, and Regulation, Resource Brief.
- Chinn, R. N., & Hertz, N. R. Practice analysis for licensing and certification programs. Presented as a pre-conference training session, National Council on Measurement in Education, San Francisco, California, April 2006.
- Chinn, R. N., & Hertz, N. R. (2002). Alternative approaches to standard setting for licensing and certification examinations. Applied Measurement in Education, 15, 1-14.
- Hertz, N. R., & Chinn, R. N. (2005). Practical guidelines for constructing examinations. Folsom, CA: HZ Assessments.
- Hertz, N. R., & Chinn, R. N. (2002, April). The role of deliberation style in standard setting for licensing and certification examinations. Paper presented at the National Council on Measurement in Education, New Orleans, LA.
- Hurtz, G., & Hertz, N. R. (1999). How many raters should be used for establishing cutoff scores with the Angoff method? A generalizability study. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 59(6), 885-897.