Certified Professional Contract Manager® (CPCM®) Handbook

Effective November 16, 2023

Table of Contents

Welcome to the CPCM® Certification Program

The National Contract Management Association (NCMA) is pleased to welcome you to our certification process. Obtaining and maintaining the CPCM® is a significant milestone in your professional development. The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with essential information about the policies and procedures on how you can:

- *Apply* for the CPCM® certification,
- *Obtain* the CPCM® certification, and
- *Maintain* the CPCM® certification.

NCMA requires that all CPCM® certification applicants read this entire handbook.

NCMA Contact Information

For general information on the certification program:

Visit www.ncmahq.org/certifications

Call 800.344.8096 or 571.382.0082

Email Certification@ncmahq.org

CPCM® Handbook was originally created August 7, 2020

About NCMA's Certification Program

Program Scope

NCMA was founded in 1959 and has become the prevailing professional resource for those in the contract management profession. NCMA is dedicated to the professional growth and educational advancement of all contract managers. In addition, NCMA strives to serve and inform the profession it represents and to offer opportunities for the open exchange of ideas in neutral forums.

In this role, NCMA is the foremost certification body for contract management. NCMA certifications are based on an *American National Standard* (ANS), the *Federal Acquisition Regulation* (FAR), and the *Uniform Commercial Code* (UCC).

NCMA's certification program is maintained by the Certification Oversight Body, which operates as an impartial body with membership drawn from a variety of backgrounds—to include government and commercial buyers, sellers, academicians, regulatory authorities, and consultants. Collectively, this interdisciplinary group maintains the certification program with the intent to advance contract management practices and competencies. Essentially, NCMA certifications are developed and maintained by Contract Management practitioners for Contract Management practitioners.

NCMA's certification program includes:

- Certified Professional Contract Manager® (CPCM®),

- Certified Federal Contract Manager® (CFCM®),

- Certified Commercial Contract Manager® (CCCM®), and

- Certified Contract Management Associate™ (CCMA™).

NCMA certifications are distinguished by their development and universal application, which makes them transferable across industries. A significant strength of NCMA certifications is that they are portable and not tied to any single role, contract methodology, or organization.

Program Vision

The NCMA certification program advances contract management practices and competence. It serves as the profession's standard for the practice of contract management. NCMA certifications attest to the combined knowledge, skills, and abilities of government and commercial buyers and sellers, as well as academics, regulatory authorities, and consultants. NCMA certifications are intended to be earned by those who manage contracts and who meet the knowledge requirements expected to be acquired through relevant education, training, and experience. Following is an image of the NCMA Certification Pyramid.
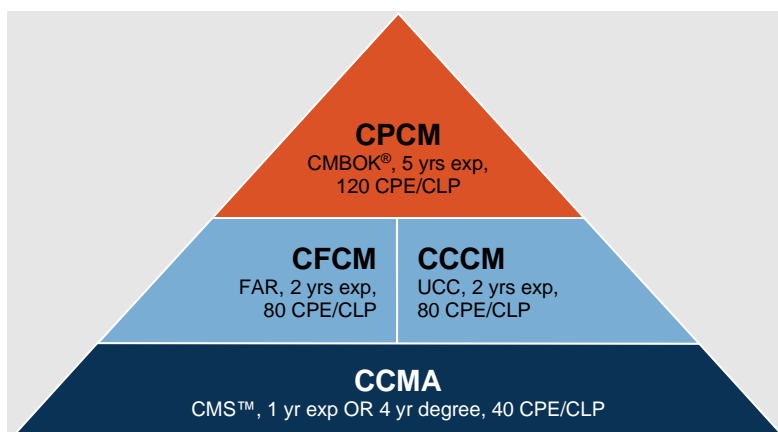
Definitions

"Contract management" means the actions of a contract manager to develop solicitations, develop offers, form contracts, perform contracts, and close contracts. (Source: ANSI/NCMA ASD 1-2019.)

"Contract manager" means the authorized representative or agent for a contracting party. (Source: ANS/NCMA ASD 1-2019.)

"Applicant" means a person who has submitted a certification application, but the application has not yet been approved.

"Candidate" means a person who has an approved certification application but is not yet certified.

"Certificant" means a person holding a certification in good standing.

"Retired certification status" means a recognition bestowed on eligible certificants who no longer practice in contract management or related fields. It is not an active certification status.

Basic Tenets

NCMA will ensure that:

a) Only those individuals who demonstrate the knowledge/skills to be competent are certified.

b) Any exams used to measure the candidates are fair, objective, valid, and reliable.

c) Certification functions are separated from all other functions NCMA performs (e.g., membership, education, etc.).

d) All certificants agree to abide by the NCMA Code of Ethics.

e) The confidentiality of all candidate data is maintained.

f) Fairness is demonstrated through impartiality to all certification applicants and candidates.

g) All certifications will expire unless the recertification requirements are met.

Overview of the CPCM® Certification

The CPCM® is awarded to those who meet education, training, and experience requirements and who demonstrate knowledge of the *Contract Management Body of Knowledge®* (CMBOK®).

The CMBOK® provides a common understanding of the terminology, practices, policies, and processes used in contract management. The CMBOK provides broader and deeper explanations of the competencies found in the *Contract Management Standard*™ (CMS™), which is an accredited ANS by the *American National Standards Institute* (ANSI) [ANS number: ANSI/NCMA ASD 1-2019 (R2022)].

NCMA Certificant Expectations

NCMA expects its certificants to behave in a professional manner while continuously striving to improve the individual competence of themselves and those around them, and to improve organizational capability. To reinforce this expectation, all applicants, candidates, certificants, and those who are in the Retired certification status must agree to and abide by the NCMA Code of Ethics and the NCMA Certification Policies & Procedures Agreement.
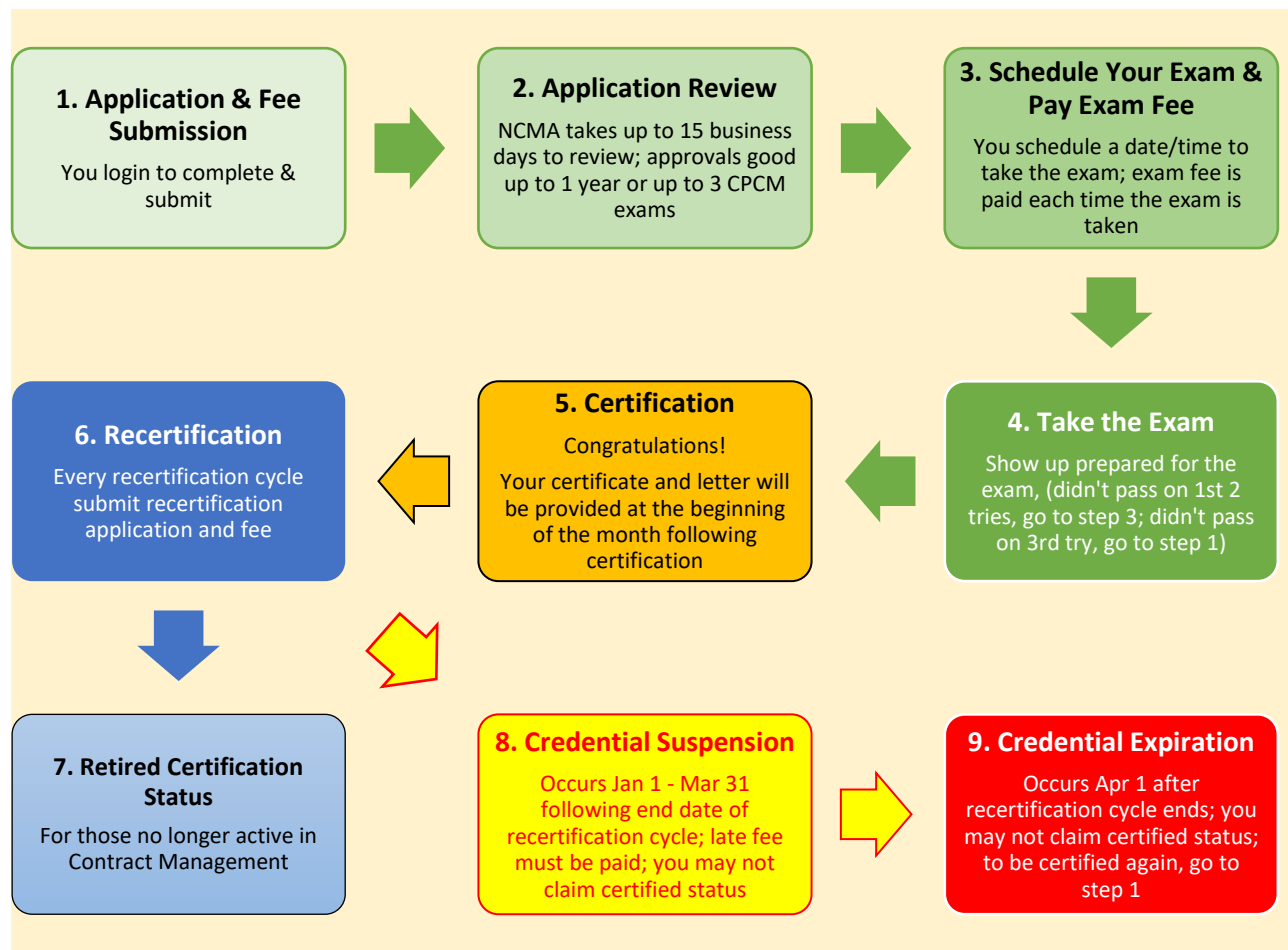
- **NCMA Code of Ethics.** The Code establishes principles for members of the contract management profession. The Code requires members of the contract management profession to conduct themselves in a way that brings credit to the profession.
  - o Please visit the online Code of Ethics to read the Code.

- **NCMA Certification Policies & Procedures Agreement**. The Agreement establishes policies and procedures for those seeking and achieving NCMA certifications. The Agreement requires all applicants, candidates, certificants, and those who are in the Retired certification status to conduct themselves in a way that bolsters the integrity of the NCMA certification program.

  o Please visit the online Certification Policies & Procedures Agreement to read the Agreement.

The Code and the Agreement may be updated or revised from time to time. It is your responsibility to obtain, understand, and agree to the current online versions.

Steps in the CPCM® Certification Process

The following figure presents the step-by-step process to apply for, obtain, and maintain the CPCM® certification. Each of the steps are discussed in detail on the following pages.

| **1. Application & Fee Submission**
You login to complete & submit | → | **2. Application Review**
NCMA takes up to 15 business days to review; approvals good up to 1 year or up to 3 CPCM exams | → | **3. Schedule Your Exam & Pay Exam Fee**
You schedule a date/time to take the exam; exam fee is paid each time the exam is taken |

| **6. Recertification**
Every recertification cycle submit recertification application and fee | ← | **5. Certification**
Congratulations!
Your certificate and letter will be provided at the beginning of the month following certification | ← | **4. Take the Exam**
Show up prepared for the exam, (didn't pass on 1st 2 tries, go to step 3; didn't pass on 3rd try, go to step 1) |

| **7. Retired Certification Status**
For those no longer active in Contract Management | | **8. Credential Suspension**
Occurs Jan 1 - Mar 31 following end date of recertification cycle; late fee must be paid; you may not claim certified status | → | **9. Credential Expiration**
Occurs Apr 1 after recertification cycle ends; you may not claim certified status; to be certified again, go to step 1 |

Step 1. Application & Fee Submission

To be eligible for the CPCM® certification, you must meet certain education, training, and work experience requirements. For the CPCM®, there are no waivers for these requirements.

Education	Training	Work Experience
Bachelor's degree* (must be from a regionally accredited institution)	120 CPE (must conform with CPE Guide™)	5 years (must conform with Contract Management Standard competencies)

 * For degrees outside the United States, evidence of equivalency must be provided by an independent third-party evaluator. U.S. accreditation standards apply to U.S. colleges and universities. To determine the equivalency of your degree, you must obtain a determination of equivalency from an independent source. World Education Services, Scholaro, Credit Eval, Info Check USA, and SpanTran are some of the organizations that provide credential evaluations for international students. NCMA is not affiliated with these organizations in any way.

CPCM® Certification Fees

Though you are not required to be an NCMA member to obtain an NCMA certification, the fees you pay are determined by your NCMA membership status. The membership rates apply only when you are a member in good standing. The following figure presents the applicable fees.

Action	Member Fee	Nonmember Fee
Certification Application (good for 1 year but no more than 3 exams)	$225	$425
Certification Exam (must pay for each exam individually)	$135 (US & Canada) $160 (all others)	$135 (US & Canada) $160 (all others)
Recertification Application (submitted every 5 years)	April-July: $47.50 August-October: $76.00 November-March*: $95.00	April-July: $72.50 August-October: $116.00 November-March*: $145.00

*Recertification applications submitted after 12/31 of their recertification cycle end date may be subject to a late fee in accordance with Step 8 Credential Suspension.

How to Submit Payment

Once you have uploaded your certification or recertification application, payment will be made by credit card through the NCMA shopping cart process.

Exam fees are submitted directly to the testing center when you schedule your exam.

Special Needs Accommodations

You may request special needs accommodations for any NCMA exam due to disability, handicap, and/or other conditions that may impair your ability to take the exam.

Please identify your special need for exam accommodations as part of the application process.

If you do not request exam accommodations at the time of application but will require them, please contact certification@ncmahq.org as soon as possible. If you have already scheduled your exam, you may need to cancel and reschedule the appointment.

How to Access Your Application

1. Log into your profile at the top of any page on the NCMA website and select Certification Applications from the left-hand menu
2. From there, do one of two things:
    a. Click on new application by selecting the blue button of the certification you are applying for
       -OR-
    b. If it is an existing certification, click on the certification within the menu
3. From there, follow the tabs and instructions along the top.

Step 2. Application Review

Once your application and fee have been successfully submitted, you will receive an email notification within fifteen (15) business days if your application is approved, if your application has been selected for Continuing Professional Education (CPE) audit, and/or if additional information or evidence is required. In accordance with Section 7.0 of the *Contract Management CPE Guide*™, (CPE Guide™) all certification and recertification applications are subject to audit of CPE documentation prior to application approval, though only a percentage of applicants will be audited.

Exam Eligibility Period

Once your application has been approved, the **one-year (1)** exam eligibility period begins. NCMA will send you an email notification with instructions on how to schedule your exam date and time.

You may take the exam up to three (3) times within this eligibility period if you do not pass the exam on the first or second attempts. Though there are no additional application fees to take the exam the second or third time, there will be an additional exam fee for each exam taken.

Step 3. Schedule Your Exam & Pay Exam Fee

All NCMA certification exams are administered through Kryterion Testing Centers and it is the responsibility of the candidate to schedule the exam. The CPCM® exam may be taken onsite or online. In both cases, the proctoring is performed by Kryterion. NCMA cannot reserve or guarantee seating at the testing centers or if they are online proctored (OLP). We recommend that you schedule your exam as soon as you determine the date on which you want to take it and at least three (3) months before the expiration of your eligibility period.

Please save all exam scheduling verifications and correspondence received for your records.

The remaining portion of this step is divided into three sections:

- Step 3.1 Testing Center Exam Instructions,
- Step 3.2 OLP Exam Instructions, and
- Step 3.3 How to Reschedule or Cancel Your Exam Appointment

Step 3.1 Testing Center Exam Instructions
Taking an exam at a testing center can be a new, exciting, yet anxious experience. We want you to feel relaxed and comfortable when visiting a Kryterion Testing Center, so we've provided the following overview on what to expect as you move through the process:

1. Registration & Payment

You will register for your exam through NCMA's Webassessor portal (access is provided in the application approval email mentioned in Step 2). During this process you will select your desired exam, choose Onsite delivery, and select a Testing Center, date, and time for your exam session. You will also be asked to pay the exam fee at this time.

2. Confirmation

You will receive an email confirming your scheduled testing date, time, Kryterion Testing Center location, and your **Test Taker Authorization Code.** This code is required to launch your exam at the Testing Center.

3. Check-In at the Testing Center

Arrive 15 minutes prior to your scheduled exam time. Two forms of identification are **required** at the Testing Center, and they will be verified and recorded. One must be a government issued photo ID. Secondary identification must include your printed name such as a credit card, bank debit card, or employee identification card. Please note in the United States, a Social Security Card is not an acceptable form of identification. The name on your two forms of identification **must match exactly** with your name as specified in your test-taker profile in Webassessor. Additionally, all identification must be current. Expired identification will not be accepted. You will also need to provide the Test Taker Authorization Code from your Confirmation email. The Kryterion Certified Proctor (KCP) will provide you with documentation about preparing for your exam session while your workstation is prepared in the testing room.

4. Personal Items

DO NOT bring personal items with you to the testing center unless specifically approved in advance for special accommodations or listed as an approved exam aid.* NCMA, Kryterion, Inc., and Kryterion Testing Center locations are not responsible for lost or stolen items. You will be asked to place any personal items in a cabinet, locker, or compartment prior to entering the exam area. Personal items include but are not limited to backpacks, scratch paper, books, bags, purses, keys, wallets, hats, briefcases, books, cell phones, calculators, electronic devices, watches, food and drink, and any weapons or firearms.

5. Taking Your Exam

Once your exam has loaded, the proctor will escort you to the workstation in the testing room and you may then begin your exam. The exam engine provides you with detailed instructions on how to take the exam and walks you through each step of the process. Scratch paper is provided by the proctor but is collected by the proctor prior to the candidate leaving the facility. Under no circumstances are candidates allowed to remove scratch paper from the facility, even if it is blank.

6. Submitting Your Exam

At the end of your exam session, you will be prompted to notify the proctor that you have completed the exam. The KCP will submit your exam and complete the check-out process.

7. Exam Results

Exam results are provided immediately on-screen after submission (results will not be printed by the Testing Center). However, any score provided at the conclusion of a candidate's exam session is considered _preliminary_ until the candidate receives notice from NCMA that the result is official.

Step 3.2 OLP Exam Instructions

1. Registration & Payment

You will register for your exam through NCMA's Webassessor portal (access is provided in the application approval email mentioned in Step 2). During this process you will select your desired exam,

choose OLP delivery, and select a date and time for your exam session. You will also be asked to pay the exam fee at this time.

2. Confirmation

You will receive an email confirming your scheduled testing date and time. This email will contain important information and requirements for the OLP exams. Ensure that at least one day prior to your scheduled exam time, you have read the instructions on how to prepare for your OLP exam, installed the secure browser, and set up your Biometric Profile.

3. Check-In

Log into your Webassessor account at least 15 minutes prior to your scheduled exam time. One form of identification is **required** and will be verified and recorded by the OLP proctor. Biometrics are used in OLP and serve as your second source of identfication. The name on your identification **must match exactly** with your name as specified in your test-taker profile in Webassessor. Additionally, the identification must be current. Expired identification will not be accepted.

4. How to Launch an Online Proctored (OLP) Exam

Click the **My Assessments** tab of your Webassessor account to view the associated screen. You will find your exam listed in the Scheduled Exams section.

The Launch button appears 10 minutes before the exam is scheduled to start and remains visible for 20 minutes, or until you click it to begin.

Once you have selected the Launch button, Webassessor will automatically log you out of your account for security reasons. Your Webassessor browser page will display the following: "You have launched an online proctored test and have been logged out of the system for security reasons."

Note: All exam candidates are recorded during the entire exam.

5. Video Camera Preview Page and Camera Position

Webassessor will display a Video Camera Preview page.

- Use the live video display to adjust the location of your webcam.

- Verify that your microphone is working.

6. Security Check

NCMA requires you to complete a few simple exam security checks before starting your online proctored exam. This "pre-check" typically involves an ID confirmation and a 360-degree video review of your test environment.

7. Testing Environment Requirements

- Breaks during an exam are not allowed.

- Your room must be well lit, quiet, and free of distractions.

- Your immediate surroundings must be clutter-free. There is only one active computer, one active monitor, one keyboard, and one mouse.

- No exam aids are authorized. However, an online scratch space is available to the candidates during the exam. After the exam closes, no data or text from the scratch space will be stored.

- You must not wear a lanyard, badge, hat, watch, or jewelry. (Remove them before the exam starts.)

- You may not interact with anyone – aside from online support staff – during your exam.

- You may not use dual monitors.

- Do not lean out of the camera view during your exam. A proctor must be able to see you at all times.

- Cell phones or any other "smart" devices are not permitted in the testing area.

- Reading the exam aloud or talking is prohibited.

Note: If the testing environment or system set-up are not satisfactory, you will receive instructions to help you correct the issue(s). Once Kryterion approves the adjustments, your exam will resume.

Failure to satisfy the preceding requirements or follow instructions can lead to termination of your exam and forfeiture of your payment. NCMA will be notified.

8. Online Exam System Requirements

Summary: Online or remote proctored exams should be done on a personal computer, no virtual machines are allowed, and the download of required software may require an Administrative user account. To see the full list of online exam system requirements and to perform a system check, please visit the Kryterion website.

Additional Consideration: You must disable all software that can interfere with your online proctored exam. This includes, but is not limited to, pop-up blockers, antivirus software, firewalls, VMWare/Bootcamp, Skype, Photobooth, and TeamViewer. 2.   This exam is supported by Standard English keyboards only. If you are using a non-English keyboard, please go to Microsoft's Support Website for instructions on modifying your keyboard to ensure a successful exam launch.

9. Communication with the Testing Center After the Exam Session Starts

PLEASE NOTE: Once the exam session begins, chat is the only method of communication with the testing center. Also, getting the technician engaged could take 3 – 4 minutes but any lost time will be added to the exam session.

Step 3.3 How to Reschedule or Cancel Your Exam Appointment

On-Site Proctored Exam:

You may cancel or reschedule an exam through your Webassessor portal with no additional fee up to 72 hours prior to your scheduled exam time. No Shows, Cancellations and Reschedules within 72 hours of your scheduled exam time will incur an additional fee or the forfeiture of your exam fee altogether. Exam fees, vouchers or coupons used to pay for the exam will not be refunded for sessions canceled without proper notice.

Online Proctored Exam:

You may cancel or reschedule an exam through your Webassessor portal with no additional fee up to 24 hours prior to your scheduled exam time. No Shows, Cancellations and Reschedules within 24 hours of your scheduled exam time will incur an additional fee or the forfeiture of your exam fee altogether. Exam fees, vouchers or coupons used to pay for the exam will not be refunded for sessions canceled without proper notice.

How to Reschedule Your Assessment:

1. Log in to your account in Webassessor.

2. Click on the **My Assessments** tab and locate the Scheduled Assessments section and click on the Reschedule/Cancel link to the right of your scheduled assessment. From this exam details page, the Reschedule and Cancel buttons will be available.

3. **To reschedule your assessment**, select the Reschedule/Cancel link and follow the prompts.

    *   If you are within the reschedule window, you will be prompted to pay the reschedule fee. Submit your payment details in order to complete the reschedule process. An email will be sent confirming the payment and rescheduling of your assessment.

    *   Click Done on the purchase-confirmation page to return to your account home screen.

How to Cancel Your Assessment:

1. Log in to your account in Webassessor.

2. Click on the **My Assessments** tab and locate the Scheduled Assessments section and click on the Reschedule/Cancel link to the right of your scheduled assessment. From this assessment details page, the Reschedule and Cancel buttons will be available.

3. If you cancel an upcoming assessment at a testing center outside of the 72-hour window, you will receive a refund for any fees you paid for the assessment. If you cancel an upcoming assessment within the 72-hour window, you will receive a partial refund (the assessment fee less the late-cancellation fee).

4. If you cancel an upcoming OLP assessment outside of the 24-hour window, you will receive a refund for any fees you paid for the assessment. If you cancel an upcoming assessment within the 24-hour window, you will receive a partial refund (the assessment fee less the late-cancellation fee).

5. **To cancel your assessment**, select the Cancel option.

    *   If you are within the cancellation window, you will see your total eligible refund amount on the following screen.

    *   If you submit the cancellation request, your assessment will be cancelled, and you will be issued a refund to the original credit card used to complete the transaction. You will then be redirected to your account home screen. This refund may take 8-10 days to fully process.

        o   An email will be sent confirming the cancellation of your assessment and the amount refunded.

No-Show Status

Failure to notify Kryterion or NCMA within the specified time periods to reschedule or cancel your exam and failure to meet a scheduled exam appointment will result in a no-show status. With a no-show status, you will forfeit the exam fee and you must pay the full exam fee to schedule another exam appointment.

Step 4. Take the Exam

NCMA Exam Confidentiality Agreement

Prior to beginning the exam, all candidates are presented with the following Exam Confidentiality Agreement (ECA):

As a candidate for this exam, you are required to follow the terms of the NCMA Exam Confidentiality Agreement (ECA) and the NCMA Code of Ethics. Please read and agree to the following before beginning your exam:

1. I will follow all NCMA certification program policies and requirements. I understand that failure to do so may result in investigation and sanctions by NCMA, which could include canceling my exam results and forbidding me from taking future exams.
2. I understand that NCMA exams are confidential. I will not discuss or disclose the questions, content, or answers from my exam to any person or organization, including other candidates, education providers, or exam preparation services, etc. at any time.
3. Prior to this exam, I have not received information from any source regarding the confidential questions, content, or answers of this exam.
4. I will promptly report to NCMA any possible violations of the ECA, NCMA Code of Ethics, or NCMA certification program policies by myself or others.

The ECA is a reminder of some, but not all, of the security related policies that the candidate previously accepted during their application. Failure to agree with any or all of the ECA will result in the immediate termination of the candidate's exam session.

CPCM® Exam

The CPCM® exam is based on the competencies found in the CMBOK®. PLEASE NOTE: Beginning January 15, 2023 through December 31, 2023 candidates will have the option to choose between the CPCM Exam based on the CMBOK® Sixth Edition or the CPCM Exam based on the CMBOK® Seventh Edition. Beginning January 1, 2024, only the CPCM Exam based on the CMBOK® Seventh Edition will be available. The exam is comprised of 180 multiple-choice questions (including scenario-based questions), with each question having four (4) options. Candidates are allowed up to four (4) hours to complete the exam.

Successful candidates receive a passing score of at least **72.2%** on the exam.

Candidates who do not receive a passing score must wait at least ten (10) days before retaking the exam. If the exam is not passed on the second attempt, candidates must wait at least ten (10) days before retaking the exam. If the exam is not passed on the third attempt candidates must submit a new certification application, to include the application fee, and receive approval prior to scheduling and retaking the exam. Please follow the process outlined in Step 1. Application and Fee Submission of this Handbook.

CPCM® Exam Information

The CPCM® exam is comprised of 180 multiple-choice questions of which ten (10) are beta questions. Beta questions do not impact the final score and are used to assess the validity of future exam questions. The beta questions are randomly placed throughout the exam. Of the 180 questions, 30 are scenario-based. All scored questions are equally weighted. The following formula is used to determine the four (4)hour length of the exam.

Category	Minutes per Question	Number of Scored Questions	Number of Beta Questions	Total Minutes
Regular	1	141 – 150	10	150
Scenario-Based	2	21 – 30		60
Exam Review				30

Total	240

CPCM® Job Task Analysis (JTA)

NCMA conducts a JTA to determine what job tasks are important and used frequently by contract managers. NCMA's JTA process includes a public survey, review by subject matter experts, and public comments. This structured approach identifies the skills, knowledge, abilities, and other characteristics needed to effectively perform contract management.

The NCMA JTA led to the identification of contract management competencies. A competency is the blend of related skills, knowledge, abilities, and other work-related characteristics that:

- Affects a major part of one's job (a role or responsibility);
- Correlates with job performance;
- Can be measured against well-accepted standards;
- Can be improved through education, training, and work experience; and
- Differentiates individuals and organizations from the competition.

Item Development

CPCM® exam questions are:

- Developed and independently validated by working groups comprised of CPCM® holders,
- Referenced to the CMBOK®, and
- Monitored through psychometric analysis.

CPCM® Exam Blueprint

The exam blueprint details the range of questions contained in each CMBOK® section. The following table presents the number of possible questions in each section.

Section	# Questions
CM Framework	5-8
CMBOK® Overview	5-8
1.0 Leadership	8-12
2.0 Management	30-35
3.0 Guiding Principles	30-35
4.0 Pre-Award	30-35
5.0 Award	30-35
6.0 Post-Award	30-35
7.0 Learn	6-10
TOTAL	**180**

CPCM® Content Matrix

The following table presents a matrix that aligns the CMBOK® Seventh Edition competencies with CPCM® knowledge content areas. The knowledge content areas describe the type of knowledge necessary to achieve contract management competence.

CMBOK® Competencies	CPCM® Knowledge Content Areas
A Leadership A.1 Competence A.2 Character A.3 Collaboration A.4 Emotional Intelligence A.5 Vision	**KA Leadership Knowledge Content Area** KA.1 Oral and Written Communication Techniques KA.2 Effective Listening Techniques KA.3 Self-Awareness Techniques KA.4 Team Leadership Techniques KA.5 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Techniques KA.6 Networking Techniques KA.7 Decision-Making Techniques KA.8 Critical-Thinking Techniques KA.9 Conflict Management Techniques KA.10 Succession Planning Techniques
B. Management B.1 Business Management B.2 Change Management B.3 Financial Management B.4 Project Management B.5 Risk Management B.6 Supply Chain Management	**KB Management Knowledge Content Area** KB.1 Management Tools and Techniques KB.2 Generally Accepted Accounting Principles KB.3 Analysis of Financial Statements KB.4 Principles of Budgeting KB.5 Principles of Economics KB.6 Principles of Marketing KB.7 Life Cycle Management KB.8 Change Management Strategies KB.9 Principles of Financial Management KB.10 Principles of Project Management KB.11 Risk Analysis and Mitigation Strategies KB.12 Principles of Supply Chain Management
1.0 Guiding Principles 1.1 Skills and Roles 1.2 Contract Principles 1.3 Standards of Conduct 1.4 Regulatory Compliance 1.5 Situational Assessment 1.6 Team Dynamics 1.7 Communication and Documentation	**K1.0 Guiding Principles Knowledge Content Area** K1.1 Defining Team Roles and Responsibilities K1.2 Problem-Solving Techniques K1.3 Strategic Planning and Execution K1.4 Forms of Legal Relationships K1.5 Organizational Regulations, Codes, Policies, and Procedures K1.6 Professional Standards of Conduct and Codes of Ethics K1.7 Classes of Agents K1.8 Basis of Authority of Agents to Act K1.9 Contract Law K1.10 Contract Funding Laws, Policies, and Procedures K1.11 Intellectual Property
2.0 Pre-Award	**K2.0 Pre-Award Knowledge Content Area**

Domain A: Develop Solicitation 2.1 Plan Solicitation 2.2 Request Offers **Domain B: Develop Proposal** 2.3 Plan Sales 2.4 Prepare Offer	K2.1 Requirements Identification Techniques K2.2 Elements of Planning K2.3 Market Research Techniques and Tools K2.4 Lifecycle Management K2.5 Performance-Based Acquisition K2.6 Unique Organizational Pre-Award Practices K2.7 Electronic Contracting Tools K2.8 Organizational and Personal Conflict of Interest Identification and Mitigation Strategies K2.9 Types of Contracts K2.10 Other Contracts, Agreements, and Arrangements K2.11 Methods to Solicit Offers K2.12 Contract Incentives K2.13 Contract Financing Options K2.14 Legal Entity Structures K2.15 Elements of a Solicitation Package K2.16 Elements of a Proposal Package K2.17 Proposal Evaluation Factors K2.18 Owner-Provided Property
3.0 Award **Domain C: Form Contract** 3.1 Cost or Price Analysis 3.2 Conduct Negotiations 3.3 Select Source 3.4 Manage Disagreements	**K3.0 Award Knowledge Content Area** K3.1 Contract Negotiation Strategies and Tactics K3.2 Proposal Evaluation Techniques K3.3 Unique Organizational Award Practices K3.4 Pricing and Payments K3.5 Price and Cost Analysis K3.6 Contract Format Methods K3.7 Documentation Techniques to Mitigate Risk
4.0 Post-Award **Domain D: Perform Contract** 4.1 Administer Contract 4.2 Ensure Quality 4.3 Manage Subcontracts 4.4 Manage Changes **Domain E: Close Contract** 4.5 Close Out Contract	**K4.0 Post-Award Knowledge Content Area** K4.1 Types of Contract Changes K4.2 Contract Change Management K4.3 Elements of a Subcontract Package K4.4 Subcontract Management Techniques K4.5 Legal Dispute Resolution K4.6 Alternate Dispute Resolution Methods K4.7 Forms of Contract Termination K4.8 Unique Organizational Post-Award Practices K4.9 Inspection and Acceptance K4.10 Quality Assurance Principles K4.11 Quality Management Principles K4.12 Types of Audits K4.13 Contract Close-Out Procedures
C. Learn	**KC.0 Learn Knowledge Content Area**

C.1 Continuous Learning	KC.1 Career Planning and Development
C.2 Individual Competence	KC.2 Professional Development Techniques
C.3 Organizational Capability	KC.3 Goal Setting
	KC.4 Skills Gap Analysis
	KC.5 Developing a Learning Organization
	KC.6 SWOT Analysis
	KC.7 Knowledge Transfer Evaluation Techniques
	KC.8 Life Balance Tools and Techniques
	KC.9 Innovation Development and Implementation Techniques

Sample Exam Questions

The following are sample CPCM® exam questions. The intent is to provide an indicator as to how the questions are constructed. The correct responses are in bold font. Also, there are no responses available on the exam with "all of the above", "none of the above", or any other option where multiple options are correct or incorrect. In addition, there are no true/false, fill-in, or short answer questions.

1. Leaders should focus on tasks no one else can do rather than tasks they enjoy. Not doing so is a trait of _____.

    a. **Ineffective delegation**
    b. Unproductive habits
    c. Overreliance on personal knowledge
    d. Poor time management

2. The value added in _____ is in understanding the customer's near- and long-term requirements and determine the organization's ability to successfully respond to a solicitation.

    a. Plan Solicitation
    b. Request Offers
    c. **Plan Sales**
    d. Prepare Offer

3. The _____ competency is the oversight of contract performance pursuant to the fulfillment of the contract terms, conditions, and specifications.

    a. Monitor Contract
    b. Ensure Quality
    c. Contract Delivery
    d. **Administer Contract**

Establishing the Passing Score

The passing score for the CPCM® exam is determined by sound psychometric analysis. In addition, NCMA uses subject matter experts – contract management professionals from all aspects of the profession (e.g., buyers, sellers, academics, etc.) – to determine how many questions you must answer correctly to pass the exam. All questions are valued at equal weight, and your final score is calculated by totaling the points you have earned on the exam.

NCMA Exam Security and Confidentiality

The exam, answer sheets, worksheets, and/or any other exam or exam-related materials remain the sole and exclusive property of NCMA. These materials are confidential and, unless directed by valid and lawful subpoena or court order, are not available for review by any person or organization for any reason.

Exam (pass/fail) results are confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone without candidate consent, unless directed by valid and lawful subpoena or court order. If you would like your exam results to be released to a third party, you must provide NCMA with a written request that specifically identifies the types of details (e.g., exam date, pass/fail status, etc.) about the exam results that the third-party person or organization should receive.

When you submit any NCMA certification application, you agree to abide by the NCMA Exam Confidentiality Agreement (found in this handbook). Among other things, this document addresses post-exam questions and discussions. It states: *"…Furthermore, I agree not to discuss, debrief or disclose, in any manner, the specific content of NCMA exam questions and answers, to any individual."*

Any such discussion would be a potential violation of the Certification Policies & Procedures Agreement and thus, could affect the status of your certification, up to and including revocation of your certification or permanent suspension from any NCMA certification exams.

Preliminary Exam Scores

Any score provided at the conclusion of a candidate's testing session is considered preliminary until the candidate receives notice from NCMA that the result is official.

Exam Report

Exam results are provided immediately on-screen after submission (results will not be printed by the Testing Center). However, any score provided at the conclusion of a candidate's exam session is considered preliminary until the candidate receives notice from NCMA that the result is official.

Reexamination(s) Policies and Procedures

When your application is approved, you are granted a one (1) year eligibility period in which to pass the exam. During the eligibility period, you may take the exam up to three (3) times because candidates do not always pass the exam on their first attempt. Gauge your time carefully to leave enough time during the eligibility period to retake the exam, if needed.

Reexam fees apply to the second and third attempts to pass the exam. If you do not pass the exam there is a required waiting period before you can sit for another attempt. The intent of this waiting period is to allow for additional exam preparation.

If your eligibility period expires without you passing the exam, you must reapply for the certification. The following figure presents reexam fees, wait periods, and other comments applicable to retaking exams.

Action	Fees	Comments
Attempt 1 Exam Fee (payable when scheduling exam)	$135 (US & Canada) $160 (all others)	To retest after attempt 1, you must wait 10 days and return to Step 3
Attempt 2 Exam Fee (payable when scheduling exam)	$135 (US & Canada) $160 (all others)	To retest after attempt 2, you must wait 10 days and return to Step 3
Attempt 3 Exam Fee (payable when scheduling exam)	$135 (US & Canada) $160 (all others)	To retest after attempt 3, you must return to Step 1
Approved Application (Good up to 1 year or 3 exam attempts)	$225 Member $425 Nonmember	15 business days to process

> The CPCM® requirements and exam structure may be occasionally revised. NCMA may update this CPCM® Handbook at any time. It is your responsibility to understand the current requirements and exam structure. Please be sure to monitor this CPCM® Handbook for possible revisions. If you have any questions, please contact NCMA.

Step 5. Certification

Once you have been notified directly by NCMA that you have officially passed the exam and you have met all requirements, you are granted the CPCM® certification. You may refer to yourself as a CPCM® certification holder as long as you have an active certification status. You are authorized to use the CPCM® designation in block letters after your name on business cards, personal letterhead, resumes, websites, and in your email signature.

Please note that as part of the application process, you agreed to adhere to the NCMA Certification Policies and Procedures Agreement and the NCMA Code of Ethics. This means, among other things, that you will only use the CPCM® designation in the manner stated above and that you will not use the CPCM® designation in company names, domain names, product names, or any other unauthorized manner.

Certificate

Your certificate will be provided electronically and a letter will be mailed to you at the beginning of the next month following certification.

Public Information

Upon request, NCMA will verify and provide information as to whether an individual holds a current, valid certification and the scope of that certification, except where the law requires such information not to be disclosed.

Step 6. Recertification

Immediately upon certification, the five (5) year recertification cycle starts. To continue to be a CPCM® in good standing, you are required to earn sixty (60) Continuing Professional Education (CPE) and be approved for recertification by December 31 following five (5) full years of certification.* For instance, if you earn the CPCM® any time in 2020, you must have submitted a recertification application and received approval of that application by December 31, 2025. Following this same example, the next recertification cycle will end on December 31, 2030. Certificants are responsible to submit correct and

timely applications to allow for review and approval by December 31 of the fifth year after certification or recertification.

Once your recertification application and fee have been successfully submitted, you will receive an email notification within fifteen (15) business days if your application is approved, if your application has been selected for CPE audit, and/or if additional information or evidence is required. In accordance with Section 7.0 of the CPE Guide, all certification and recertification applications are subject to audit of CPE documentation prior to application approval, though only a percentage of applicants will be audited.

*Please note: Effective January 1, 2021, the number of CPE required to recertify the CPCM® will increase to one hundred (100). This means that those who recertify in 2026 and later must provide evidence of 100 CPE over the five (5) year recertification cycle. For instance, those who certify or recertify in 2021 will be required to provide evidence of 100 CPE when recertifying in 2026.

As you approach the end of your five (5) year cycle, as a courtesy, NCMA will send emails to remind you of your need to recertify. These notices will be sent to the email you have on file with NCMA. Please keep in mind that you are responsible to keep your email address up to date. If your email is not up to date, you will not receive the reminders.

Please allow 15 business days for your application to be reviewed and processed. Note that this does not mean your application will be approved within 15 business days. It is the responsibility of the certificant to track, plan, and achieve the recertification requirements by the deadline.

> The CPCM® recertification requirements may be revised from time to time. When revisions occur, NCMA will make a public announcement and contact you as a CPCM certificant in good standing at the email address in your NCMA profile. However, it is your responsibility to understand and comply with the current requirements to be recertified. If you have any questions, please contact NCMA.

Recertification Program Overview

NCMA's recertification requirements support the continuous learning expected of our certification holders so they are always prepared to meet the demands of today's complex business environment. The purpose of the program is to:

- Enhance continuous learning and development among certification holders,
- Provide direction in development areas to ensure relevancy of certified practitioners,
- Encourage and recognize individualized learning opportunities,
- Offer a mechanism for attaining and recording professional development activities, and
- Sustain the value of NCMA certifications.

Everyone who earns a CPCM® certification must actively maintain their certification(s) through continuous learning and renewal of their certification(s) every 5 years.

Being actively engaged in professional development and learning activities allows certification holders to earn CPE, fulfilling the continuing certification requirements and ultimately growing and developing as a practitioner.

NCMA recognizes that everyone has different professional needs and desires. The recertification program is designed to be flexible so it can adapt to those needs and allow you to customize your activities. The program provides a general framework and guidance—you determine your ultimate development path.

For details and instructions on how to earn and track CPE, download the *Contract Management Continuing Professional Education Guide*^{TM} (CPE Guide^{TM}).

Action	Member Fee	Nonmember Fee	CPE Requirement
Recertification Application (Submitted every 5 years)	April-July: $47.50 August-October: $76.00 November-March*: $95.00	April-July: $72.50 August-October: $116.00 November-March*: $145.00	Evidence of 60 CPE** (must conform to CPE Guide™)

*Recertification applications submitted after 12/31 of their recertification cycle end date may be subject to a late fee in accordance with Step 8 Credential Suspension.

**Evidence of 100 CPE will be required from those who are recertifying the CPCM® beginning in 2026.

Application Review

The application review will take up to 15 business days. Note that this does not mean your application will be approved within 15 business days. It is the responsibility of the certificant to track, plan, and achieve the recertification requirements by the deadline.

Please keep in mind that:

- You agree to abide by the NCMA Code of Ethics and the NCMA Certification Policies & Procedures Agreement;
- The same type of documentation used to verify CPE in recertification is the same as that used in the certification process; and
- Any requests for additional information on an incomplete recertification application does not extend the recertification deadline.

Recertification Notification

Upon recertification, NCMA will issue a letter to recognize the accomplishment along with a gold seal with the updated year of recertification to place on your certificate.

Step 7. Retired Status

The retired certification status allows individuals to continue to be recognized for achieving NCMA certification(s) after leaving the contract management profession or related fields. Retired certification status does not require the CPE requirements of the active certifications, which may no longer provide value to a retired individual. Please note that retired certification status does not qualify for and is not considered an active certification.

Eligibility

Those eligible to apply for the retired certification status must meet the following criteria:

- The individual must hold an active CPCM®, CFCM®, and/or CCCM® certification in good standing for at least 10 years;
- Provide 60 CPE hours*; and
- The individual must be, or soon to be, separated from the contract management profession or related fields.

*Please note: Beginning in 2026, evidence of 100 CPE will be required.

Applying

- Applicants must complete the retired certification application form and include a one-time, nonrefundable $95 (NCMA member)/$145 (nonmember) application fee.

- Individuals with a retired certification status designation must adhere to the same Code of Ethics as active certificants and may be subject to revocation in the event of a Code violation.

- If the individual with the retired certification status becomes re-employed within the contract management profession or a related field, he or she must discontinue use of the retired status designation and reactivate the certification.

- Applicants are not required to be NCMA members to hold the retired certification status.

Once your application and fee have been successfully submitted, you will receive an email notification within fifteen (15) business days if your application is approved, if your application has been selected for CPE audit, and/or if additional information or evidence is required. In accordance with Section 7.0 of the CPE Guide, all certification and recertification applications are subject to audit of CPE documentation prior to application approval, though only a percentage of applicants will be audited.

Rights and Privileges

Individuals who qualify for retired certification status may use the applicable NCMA certification (CPCM®, CFCM®, CCCM®, and/or CCMA™) followed by the retired designation (Retired) after their name and all forms of address to indicate their status. For example, "John Smith, CPCM (Retired)" signifies a retired CPCM® certification.

Restrictions

Retired certification designees may not use the applicable NCMA certification (CPCM®, CFCM®, CCCM®, and/or CCMA™) without the "(Retired)" suffix, and they are not entitled to use or hold themselves out to the public as an active NCMA certificant.

Reactivating a Retired Certification

Retired NCMA certifications may be reactivated under the following options:

Option 1. If the application for reactivation is made within 5 years of the last date of being an NCMA certificant in good standing, the retired certificant must complete the reactivation application, which will include providing evidence of the applicable amount of CPE for each of the years in which the certification was retired. For example, the current requirement to recertify is 60 hours of CPE (an average of 12 CPE hours per year). If reactivation is requested after 3 years, the number of required CPE hours is prorated to 36 hours.

Option 2. If more than 5 years has passed since the last date of being an NCMA certificant in good standing, or the requirements to reactivate are not met, the individual must go through the certification process again to include completing the application process and passing the exam (starting at Step 1. Application & Fee Submission) of the certification process.

Step 8. Credential Suspension

Certificants must plan accordingly and attain new CPE throughout the five (5) year recertification cycle. Complete recertification applications must be approved for recertification by December 31. Recertification applications not approved or submitted after December 31 will result in the applications certification status being changed from active to "suspended."

During this period of suspension, you are not authorized to present yourself as holding an active CPCM®.

A recertification late period will commence on January 1 with a requirement to be approved for recertification no later than March 31 following the recertification deadline, certificants may submit the recertification application with a nonrefundable late fee. Please keep in mind that any requests for

additional information on an incomplete recertification application does not extend the suspension deadline.

Please allow 15 business days for your application to be reviewed and processed. Note that this does not mean your application will be approved within 15 business days. It is the responsibility of the certificant to track, plan, and achieve the recertification requirements by the deadline.

Step 9. Credential Expiration

Applications received after March 31 are not accepted and the certification is expired. As of April 1, you are not authorized to present yourself as holding an active CPCM®.

To achieve an active CPCM®, the current certification process must be followed from the beginning. If you achieve an active CPCM® again, the effective date will be as of the current date NCMA notifies you of the accomplishment. You will not be retroactively certified to cover the gap in which you did not hold an active CPCM®.

Certification Complaints Process

All complaints regarding the certification process are governed by the NCMA Certification Complaints Procedures. Examples of a complaint include but are not limited to:

- Dissatisfaction with a certification process,
- Dissatisfaction with exam content, or
- Dissatisfaction with the exam administration.

All certification related complaints must be reported within 30 days of the event/incident cited, made in writing, and sent to NCMA:

- Via email at certification@ncmahq.org, or
- Via postal mail at 1818 Library Street, Suite 500 Reston, VA 20190-6274

All complaints should include evidence supporting the reason for the complaint and the nature of the request, including all reasons why the action or decision should be changed. A complaint must include:

- Date;
- Stated Complaint;
- Relevant supporting materials; and
- The complainant's phone number and email address.

We will acknowledge, in writing, your complaint within 14 business days of receipt. If a complaint is missing any necessary information, you will be informed and allowed an additional 30 days to supply the missing information. If the required information is not submitted within that time, the request will be closed. The review and validation of the complaint will occur in a constructive, impartial, and timely manner. You will be notified of the outcome within three (3) business days of the decision being made. A record of the complaint, including any subsequent action(s) taken, and the decision made will be maintained by NCMA. All information pertaining to the complaint will remain confidential.

You have the right to appeal the decision on your complaint within 14 calendar days of the notification of the decision rendered. The appeal must be submitted in writing to NCMA Certifications and can be sent via email to certification@ncmahq.org or mail to one of the addresses listed above. Please see the following section for appeals procedures.

Certification Appeals Process

All challenges to NCMA's Certification Program are governed by the NCMA Certification Appeals Procedure. This appeal process is the only method to review complaint decisions made by NCMA. Examples of an appeal include but are not limited to:

- Rejection of a certification application,
- Decision of a filed complaint, or
- Failure to meet requirements resulting in a certification being suspended or terminated.

All certification related appeals must be reported within 30 calendar days of the event/incident cited, made in writing, and sent to the NCMA Certification Staff:

- Via email at certification@ncmahq.org or
- Via postal mail at 1818 Library Street, Suite 500 Reston, VA 20190-6274.

To request an appeal, you must submit a request and include evidence supporting the reason for the appeal and the nature of the request, including all reasons why the action or decision should be changed. An appeal must include:

- Name and e-mail address of the appellant,
- Nature of the objection,
- A description of why the appeal should be granted, and
- Any applicable evidence that supports the appeal.

We will acknowledge, in writing, your appeal within 14 business days of receipt. The review and validation of the appeal will occur in a constructive, impartial, and timely manner. You will be notified of the appeal decision within 30 calendar days of NCMA's receipt of the appeal, unless circumstances warrant a delay. If a delay is expected, you will be notified. A record of the appeal, including any subsequent action(s) taken, and the decision made will be maintained by NCMA. All information pertaining to the appeal will remain confidential.

Appendix: How to Approach the Examination*

For the mental side of examinations, here are some recommended exam-taking techniques:

1. Relax. The examination is based on your profession.

2. Read the questions carefully, answering those you can easily and quickly answer. It is usually a good idea to go with your first impression when answering a question; second-guessing can cause you to change a correct answer to an incorrect one.

3. Skip over or flag questions that appear too difficult and return to them later.

4. Don't stop. Keep going. Keep reading questions until you find one you can answer. The questions you've read will be in the back of your mind; when you return to them, you'll have a fresh perspective. Avoid overanalyzing and second-guessing the question. Choose the correct answer for the question as it is written. Do not make assumptions about what the question means. Don't regard questions as being "trick questions" or concentrate on the exceptions to normal practice.

5. Keep an eye on the clock. Judge the time you have so you don't spend a lot of time puzzling over one question to the detriment of being able to answer several others. Flag questions you are having trouble with and move on.

6. Don't try to "game" the system by choosing answers to ensure that an equal number of As, Bs, Cs and so on are selected.

7. Try to answer the question in your mind before you read the choices. Good exam questions are constructed to allow the knowledgeable examination candidate to do this.

8. If you can't readily identify the correct answer, make an educated guess. Eliminate the choices you know to be false and select from those remaining.

9. If time permits, look over your answers. However, avoid trying to second-guess your answers.

10. Don't worry about the examination. You may feel wrung out and exhausted at the end of it, but that is not necessarily an indication of how well or how poorly you may have performed.

- *This section and its content are meant to provide helpful tips. NCMA cannot and does not guarantee that its practices will result in a passing exam.*