

Probate Referee Certification Exam

CANDIDATE TEST PREPARATION INFORMATION

Purpose

The purpose of this information is to help candidates prepare for the State of California Certification Examination for Probate Referees. Adequate preparation for the examination can increase your mastery of the test objectives and the probability of passing.

Exam Content Areas

In September 2006, CPS HR staff met with 10 experienced California Probate Referee subject matter experts (SMEs) to determine and define the major responsibility areas and relevant knowledge and skills common to Probate Referees. These knowledge and skill competencies were reviewed in September 2014 and the exam content is reviewed every year to ensure applicability and relevance.

The exam covers the following three major competency areas. Many test questions cover more than one of these competency areas. Table 1 (below) provides a more detailed review of the exam content areas.

Section	Competency Area	# of Items
1	Real Property Appraisal	50
2	Personal Property and Business Appraisal	35
3	Probate Law, Procedures, and Ethics	15
Total Number of Items		100

Reference and Scoring Information

A score of at least 70 is required to pass the exam. Candidates who take the State of California Certification Examination for Probate Referees receive a score that ranges from 0 to 100. Those who pass the examination receive a score between 70 and 100. Those who fail the examination receive a score between 0 and 69.

Reference information can be found in the California State Probate codes and the California Probate Referees' Guide (available at http://www.sco.ca.gov/Files-EO/probate_guide.pdf).

Table 1

Section 1: Real Property Appraisal – 50 items
<i>VALUE AND APPRAISAL PRINCIPALS</i>
Knowledge of the concept of value and appraisal principles
Knowledge of ownership interest (e.g., fee simple, leased fee, leasehold)
Knowledge of legal descriptions including sections, township, and ranges
Knowledge of the principle of substitution
Knowledge of easements
<i>COST APPROACH</i>
Knowledge of the cost approach
Knowledge of the concept of highest and best use
Knowledge of the concepts of physical depreciation
Knowledge of the concepts of obsolescence
<i>MARKET APPROACH</i>
Knowledge of valuation using comparable sales data (calculation)
Knowledge of per unit values
Knowledge of selection and sales adjustments
<i>INCOME APPROACH</i>
Knowledge of income approach
Knowledge of direct capitalization
Knowledge of net operating income
Knowledge of lease analysis
Knowledge of rent control
Knowledge of the definition of discounting
<i>OTHER</i>
Knowledge of the Williamson Act and other special assessment districts (e.g., Mello-Roos)
Knowledge of the factors in appraising non-residential property
Knowledge of the concept of life estate
Knowledge of basic statistical analyses

Section 2: Personal Property and Business Appraisal – 35 items

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Knowledge of tangible personal property

Skill to value automobiles and other vehicles

Skill to value collectibles

Skill to value livestock, machinery/tools, personal property, and trade fixtures

BUSINESS

Skill to interpret financial statements

Knowledge of cash flow analysis

Skill to perform goodwill evaluations

Knowledge of entities (e.g., corporations, partnerships, etc.)

Knowledge of the relationship between book value and market value

Knowledge of closely held businesses

Knowledge of the concepts of depreciation

INVESTMENTS AND OTHER

Knowledge of promissory notes

Knowledge of stocks and bonds

Knowledge of passive investments (e.g., limited partnerships)

Knowledge of the valuation of shares of a holding company

Knowledge of royalties and annuities

Section 3: Probate Law, Procedures, and Ethics – 15 items

Knowledge of Probate Code sections 400 – 460, 8800 – 8970, 11302b, 13100 – 13500, 16247

Knowledge of Government Code Sections relating to Probate exemptions

Basic knowledge of the probate administration

Basic knowledge of the concept of conservatorship and guardianship

Basic knowledge of the purpose of probate and trusts

Knowledge of the state controller's rules and regulations pertaining to Probate Referees including ethics