

Information Bulletin
for
Pre-Professional Assessment and Certification
in
Interior Design Fundamentals



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Overview

The American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS), a well-respected leader in the FCS field, proudly offers the Pre-Professional Assessment and Certification (Pre-PAC) Program, creating the *premier* family and consumer sciences pre-professional assessment and certification system in the nation. AAFCS added a portfolio of standards-based assessments and industry-recognized certifications to support pre-professional level family and consumer sciences career areas and programs of study for the following reasons:

- To help satisfy the growing emphasis on assessment and accountability in secondary and postsecondary education, including requirements for Perkins funding for Career and Technical Education, and
- To help satisfy the growing emphasis on credentials as a human resource and quality control tool in employment settings throughout the career ladder.

Through these assessments, AAFCS assures that pre-professionals are effectively prepared with the knowledge and skills necessary for demanding career opportunities, therefore providing a workforce to meet the needs of business and industry in the demanding U.S. economy.

Based on the importance of living and working in residential and commercial spaces that are functional, healthy, safe, and aesthetically pleasing and the renewed emphasis on sustainable design principles, there is an increased demand for interior designers and their services. In fact, job growth in interior design is expected to occur faster than average over the next few years. Thus, the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) specifically developed a national standards-based competency assessment measuring knowledge and skills associated with interior design.

Description of the Assessment and Certification

Assessments in the Pre-PAC portfolio are high quality, rigorous, valid, and reliable as documented through formal psychometric analysis of pilot test data. The assessments are delivered through a premier online testing platform and are used to validate competency at the pre-professional level.

The Interior Design Fundamentals Assessment and Certification are:

- driven by business and industry standards;
- based on relevant content standards and consistent with the National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education and the National Career Clusters Initiative;
- appropriate to validate achievement of competences related to the fundamental principles of interior design;
- useful in a broad range of education and employment settings, such as secondary and post-secondary education, community-based education programs, and employer-based human resource and staff development programs; and
- advantaged to utilize a gold-standard, computer-based testing platform format that provides for valid and reliable competency measurement and a reporting mechanism for data-driven program improvement, accountability, and individual remediation and acceleration.

Uses of the Assessment and Certification

The assessments have application in a broad range of education, community development, staff development, and human resource settings where there is a need to document or validate competency achievement. Pre-PAC assessments are designed for use with secondary and post-secondary students and programs, pre-professionals working in early employment positions, and employers conducting staff development and training for pre-professionals.

Further, the assessment and certification can be used to:

- document exit-level achievement in rigorous secondary programs and lower division post-secondary courses;
- satisfy accountability reporting mandates required by federal Perkins IV legislation as well as state and local policies;
- facilitate seamless articulation, placement, and credit-by exam within post-secondary institutions;
- validate competencies required for employment at the pre-professional and/or paraprofessional level; and
- provide an industry-recognized, pre-professional level certification.

Careers

The Interior Design Fundamentals assessment and certification will address competencies and a skill set necessary to document a pre-professional's basic knowledge of interior design. It is anticipated that this assessment and certification will promote further education at the post-secondary level and continued training and professional development for those who want to pursue interior design careers associated with residential and commercial interiors, furnishings, and design.

In accordance with those career areas, the assessment is aligned with the following National Career Clusters:



The Career Clusters icons are being used with permission of the:



States' Career Clusters Initiative, 2010, www.careerclusters.org

Assessment Specifications

The assessment specifications provided in this section of the bulletin are intended to provide test candidates with a comprehensive overview of the domains and competencies that are covered on the assessment.

Format

A large bank of high quality, valid test items have been developed for each Pre-PAC assessment. Each test administered is a unique combination of 80, four-option multiple choice items randomly selected from the item bank. Each of the items has only one (1) correct response. Of the 80 items presented on the assessment, 70 are scored and 10 are non-scored (used for piloting and research purposes).

The online testing software presents the items in five to seven groups or “blocks” corresponding to the domain areas identified on the assessment competency list. Testing is conducted under the supervision of proctors using PC or MAC computers in approved local schools and employment sites. During the assessment administration, it is possible to navigate forward and backward between items within a block of items. As items are viewed, they can be answered, skipped, or flagged for later review prior to submitting the item block. The testing software restricts access to other computer functions while the test is open. Local test administrators and proctors are authorized to make testing accommodations formally specified in Individual Education Plans for those with special needs.

In addition to each item being associated with a domain and competency, the items are also designed to assess appropriate cognitive levels necessary for competent practice. Specifically, some items assess at the lower level, some at the middle levels, and some at higher order levels. The items included on each test proportionally represent three cognitive difficulty levels:

- Level 1- 40%;
- Level 2 – 30%; and
- Level 3 – 30%.

| Original Bloom’s Taxonomy | Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy | Pre-PAC Cognitive Complexity Level |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| <u>Knowledge</u> Defines, describes, identifies, labels, lists, matches, names, reads, records, selects, states, views | <u>Remember</u> Recognize, retrieve, identify, recall | 1 |
| <u>Comprehension</u> Classifies, describes, discusses, lists, matches, names, reads, records, selects, states, views | <u>Understand</u> Interpret, clarify, translate, illustrate, categorize, classify, conclude, predict, summarize, infer, compare, explain | |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <u>Application</u> Assesses, determines, develops, discovers, establishes, informs, predicts, projects, provides, relates, shows, uses | <u>Apply</u> Execute, carry out, use, implement | 2 |
| <u>Analysis</u> Breaks down, correlates, differentiates, illustrates, infers, points out, recognizes | <u>Analyze</u> Differentiate, select, focus, organize, outline, attribute, determine point of view | |
| <u>Synthesis</u> Communicates, compares, contrasts, creates, designs, expresses, formulates, plans, reorganizes, reinforces, substitutes | <u>Evaluate</u> Check, coordinate, detect, monitor, test, critique, judge | 3 |
| <u>Evaluation</u> Appraises, compares & contrasts, concludes, criticizes, decides, defends, interprets, judges, justifies, supports | <u>Create</u> Generating, hypothesizing, planning, designing, producing, constructing | |

Scoring

Once the assessment is submitted, results will be available immediately to the test candidate. The results provide an overall percentage score, a breakdown of scores corresponding to the domain levels on the competency list, and the indication whether pre-professional certification has been achieved. Based on the rigor and difficulty level of the assessment, the national cut score for pre-professional certification eligibility is established annually by AAFCS. Individuals who complete the assessment and earn the cut-score for certification are granted a time-limited pre-professional certification (3 years).

Scores can be used to demonstrate an individual's learning and competency, pinpoint weaknesses or gaps in performance, improve programs and curriculum, and demonstrate accountability to various stakeholders. Through articulation agreements, scores may be used as the basis for advanced placement and/or credit-by-exam by post secondary institutions. Thus, state and local entities have latitude for independently establishing passing or cut scores for other purposes.

Assessment At A Glance

The specific content being assessed by the items on the assessment follows the test specifications outlined in this section of the bulletin. Please note the number of items on the assessment in each domain.

| Domain | Weighting | Number of Items |
|---|-----------|-----------------|
| 1. Career Paths | 10% | 7 |
| 2. Design Fundamentals | 25% | 18 |
| 3. Factors Influencing Design | 10% | 7 |
| 4. Design Communications and Skills Development | 25% | 17 |
| 5. Interior Design Applications/Analysis | 20% | 14 |
| 6. Professional Practice | 10% | 7 |

Content Outline for Domains and Competencies

The following outline provides an overview of the content addressed within the domains and competencies. The outline is provided as a tool to be used for guidance in preparations for the assessment and is not intended to be totally inclusive. The numbered concepts listed under each competency are meant to be representative rather than prescriptive.

Domain 1: Career Paths

Competency 1A: Identify education, training and credentialing requirements

- 1.A.1 Education required for positions in the interior design career ladder
- 1.A.2 National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) examination
- 1.A.3 Licensing
- 1.A.4 American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) requirements
- 1.A.5 National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA) credentialing

Competency 1B: Summarize the roles, functions and occupations related to interior design

- 1.B.1 Roles of interior designers
- 1.B.2 Functions of interior designers
- 1.B.3 Responsibilities of interior designers
- 1.B.4 Primary areas of interior design
- 1.B.5 Residential interior design
- 1.B.6 Commercial interior design

Competency 1C: Describe interior design professional organizations and career development

- 1.C.1 Components of a portfolio
- 1.C.2 Career and professional development
- 1.C.3 Benefits of professional organization membership
- 1.C.4 Résumé development
- 1.C.5 Interviewing skills
- 1.C.6 Internships and job shadowing
- 1.C.7 Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC)
- 1.C.8 American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)
- 1.C.9 National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ)
- 1.C.10 International Interior Design Association (IIDA)
- 1.C.11 National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA)

Competency 1D: Understand the attitudes and values of interior design professionals

- 1.D.1 Conflicts of interest
- 1.D.2 Personality characteristics best suited to interior designers
- 1.D.3 Stress management
- 1.D.4 Title Act and Practice Act

Domain 2: Design Fundamentals

Competency 2A: Apply elements and principles of design

- 2.A.1 Scale drawings
- 2.A.2 Elements of design
- 2.A.3 Principles of design

Competency 2B: Apply knowledge of history of art, interiors, and architecture

- 2.B.1 Furniture styles by designer (Adams Brothers, Duncan Phyfe, Frank Lloyd Wright, George Hepplewhite, Thomas Sheraton, and Thomas Chippendale)
- 2.B.2 Historical furniture periods (French Provincial, American Georgian, Georgian, Art Deco, 18th Century, 20th Century, French Baroque, Empire, Art Nouveau)
- 2.B.3 Common furniture types (i.e., side chair, wing chair, slat back chair, etc.)
- 2.B.4 Architectural housing styles (i.e., Ranch, Prairie, Bungalow, Contemporary, Southern Colonial, French Manor, Pennsylvania Dutch Colonial, Split levels, etc.)

Competency 2C: Illustrate color basics and color theory

- 2.C.1 Color wheel
- 2.C.2 Color types (i.e., primary, intermediate, tertiary)
- 2.C.3 Color schemes (i.e., analogous, split-complementary, triadic, etc.)
- 2.C.4 Shades vs. tints
- 2.C.5 Intensity
- 2.C.6 Value
- 2.C.7 Color harmony
- 2.C.8 Effect of texture, line, and pattern on color
- 2.C.9 Neutral colors, warm colors, cool colors

Competency 2D: Utilize creativity in interior design projects

- 2.D.1 Problem solving ability
- 2.D.2 Characteristics of creative individuals
- 2.D.3 Aspects of creativity
- 2.D.4 Sources of inspiration
- 2.D.5 Enhancing creativity

Domain 3: Factors Influencing Design

Competency 3A: Incorporate client needs, goals, and resources into interior design projects

- 3.A.1 Protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public
- 3.A.2 Need for space
- 3.A.3 Social and psychological factors influencing design projects
- 3.A.4 Identifying client needs and goals
- 3.A.5 Programming phase of design
- 3.A.6 Financial resources influencing design projects

Competency 3B: Identify trends and new technology in interior design and construction components

- 3.B.1 Current trends in housing and space
- 3.B.2 Types of computer aided design software
- 3.B.3 Virtual reality models
- 3.B.4 Sustainable or “green” design
- 3.B.5 Aging-in-place

Competency 3C: Describe ergonomics, anthropometrics, and human comfort theories

- 3.C.1 Anthropometric design
- 3.C.2 Sustainable design
- 3.C.3 Universal design
- 3.C.4 Ergonomic design
- 3.C.5 Types of kitchen layouts
- 3.C.6 Role of kitchen triangle

Competency 3D: Summarize environmental sustainability and ecological issues

- 3.D.1 Common conservation methods
- 3.D.2 Aspects of “green” design
- 3.D.3 Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)
- 3.D.4 Environmental issues associated with design

Domain 4: Design Communications and Skills Development

Competency 4A: Utilize appropriate interior design terminology and communication skills

- 4.A.1 Factors for effective communication
- 4.A.2 Visual communications
- 4.A.3 Types of communications used by interior designers
- 4.A.4 Punch lists
- 4.A.5 Spec books
- 4.A.6 Bubble diagrams
- 4.A.7 Presentation techniques
- 4.A.8 Rendering techniques
- 4.A.9 Memo sample
- 4.A.10 Cut for Approval (CFA)

Competency 4B: Evaluate the appropriate selection and use of media and studio tools

- 4.B.1 Advantages of technology and computer-generated tools
- 4.B.2 Use of computer aided design (CAD) software
- 4.B.3 Tools for furniture plans
- 4.B.4 Room elevation
- 4.B.5 Building sections
- 4.B.6 Models
- 4.B.7 Architectural scale
- 4.B.8 Three-dimensional drawing techniques

Competency 4C: Interpret construction documents such as renderings, floor plans, isometric perspectives, and specifications

- 4.C.1 Frequently used architectural symbols (i.e., windows, doors, walls, etc.)
- 4.C.2 Architectural drawings
- 4.C.3 Floor plans
- 4.C.4 Layout
- 4.C.5 Scaled drawings
- 4.C.6 Specifications
- 4.C.7 Area measurements
- 4.C.8 Elevations
- 4.C.9 Common systems show on construction documents (i.e., HVAC, electrical, etc.)
- 4.C.10 Isometric drawings

Domain 5: Interior Design Applications/Analysis

Competency 5A: Select products for residential and commercial design projects

- 5.A.1 Lighting
- 5.A.2 Window treatments
- 5.A.3 Interior finishes
- 5.A.4 Furniture selection
- 5.A.5 Floor covering selections
- 5.A.6 Upholstery fabrics
- 5.A.7 Energy efficient products
- 5.A.8 Accessories
- 5.A.9 Textile fibers and finishes

Competency 5B: Summarize phases of the design process

- 5.B.1 Phases of the design process
- 5.B.2 Building safety codes
- 5.B.3 Concept development
- 5.B.4 Schematic development
- 5.B.5 Adjacency Matrix
- 5.B.6 Criteria Matrix
- 5.B.7 Project management
- 5.B.8 Scheduling

Competency 5C: Develop an interior design project budget and timeline

- 5.C.1 Punch lists
- 5.C.2 Creating a project budget
- 5.C.3 Figuring square footage
- 5.C.4 Billable costs
- 5.C.5 Net profit
- 5.C.6 Gross profit
- 5.C.7 Markup profit
- 5.C.8 Scope of project services

Competency 5D: Analyze space and furniture arrangement within universal design concepts and building codes

- 5.D.1 Activity zones
- 5.D.2 Traffic patterns
- 5.D.3 Bubble and block diagrams
- 5.D.4 Furniture arrangement
- 5.D.5 Building codes
- 5.D.6 Optimizing space
- 5.D.7 Public and private zones
- 5.D.8 Universal design

Domain 6: Professional Practice

Competency 6A: Identify relevant legislation, regulations, and codes

- 6.A.1 International Building Code
- 6.A.2 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- 6.A.3 Federal, state, and local codes
- 6.A.4 Title and Practice Acts
- 6.A.5 ANSI

Competency 6B: Utilize ethical and collaborative business practices

- 6.B.1 Copyright
- 6.B.2 Trademarks
- 6.B.3 Patents
- 6.B.4 Licensing
- 6.B.5 Code of ethics
- 6.B.6 Ethical issues in interior design
- 6.B.7 Collaborating with other professionals
- 6.B.8 Contracts and contract labor

Competency 6C: Identify sound interior design business practices

- 6.C.1 Business roles (i.e., Principal designer, Associate designer, Design assistant, Project manager, etc.)
- 6.C.2 Fees and billing structures
- 6.C.3 Insurance requirements
- 6.C.4 Specifications
- 6.C.5 Types of business structures (i.e., sole proprietorship, partnership, joint venture, corporation, etc.)
- 6.C.6 Outsourcing
- 6.C.7 Professional practices

Competency 6D: Summarize appropriate safety regulations related to interior design

- 6.D.1 Safety issues
- 6.D.2 OSHA
- 6.D.3 Lifting guidelines

Sample Assessment Items

A series of sample test items is provided below. These items are not intended to serve as a study mechanism, but to familiarize candidates with the format, style, and structure of the items that can be expected on the assessments. Always choose the one best answer.

1. What is the name of the certifying examination for interior design professionals? (Domain 1, Competency A)
 - A. Professional Interior Designer's Exam
 - B. National Interior Design Professional Credential
 - C. National Council for Interior Design Qualification
 - D. National Licensing Exam for Interior Design
2. What is the name of the largest professional association for interior designers in the United States? (Domain 1, Competency C)
 - A. American Society of Interior Designers
 - B. Worldwide Interior Design Association
 - C. Council for Excellence in Interior Design
 - D. Association of Professionals in Interior Design
3. The architect of the Prairie-style house is _____. (Domain 2, Competency B)
 - A. Frank Lloyd Wright
 - B. King George
 - C. Queen Victoria
 - D. Louis Sullivan
4. When creating a focal point, the color scheme would work **BEST** when _____. (Domain 2, Competency C)
 - A. colors are used in equal amounts
 - B. soft, cream colors dominate
 - C. one bright, bold color dominates
 - D. neutral colors are used equally
5. What area of interior design involves designing work spaces and furniture that emphasize good posture and minimize muscle strain on the body? (Domain 3, Competency C)
 - A. Anthropometric design
 - B. Human comfort design
 - C. Sustainable design
 - D. Ergonomic design
6. A large university is building a new football stadium and athletic complex. The goal of this university is to build a "green" facility. Which of the following is the recognized standard for measuring (quantifying) building sustainability? (Domain 3, Competency D)
 - A. Truly Green
 - B. LEED Certification
 - C. Energy Star
 - D. Life Cycle Value

7. As a design assistant for a major interior designer, Chloe has noticed that there are abbreviations for many standard terms in the interior design industry. One abbreviation she has seen many times is SFR. She should know that this means a _____. (Domain 4, Competency A)
- A. standard fixture restroom
 - B. single family residence
 - C. standard family room
 - D. structured finance regulation
8. When looking at the quality and prices of similar items sold in different places, a designer is _____. (Domain 5, Competency A)
- A. buying at a discount house
 - B. comparison shopping
 - C. custom-ordering
 - D. visiting a showroom
9. Which kitchen shape is the **MOST** comfortable and efficient? (Domain 5, Competency D)
- A. U-shape
 - B. L-shape
 - C. Island shape
 - D. Parallel shape
10. Maurice has a new client and visits their home. During the visit, the client shares plans and boards that were obviously prepared by another design professional. What would be the ethical thing to do? (Domain 6, Competency B)
- A. Complete the project anyway, because the client is well-known.
 - B. Report the client to the local authorities for stealing project plans.
 - C. Contact designers in the area to tell them about this client.
 - D. Verify if there is a working relationship with the other designer.

Answer Key:

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. B |
| 2. A | 7. B |
| 3. A | 8. B |
| 4. C | 9. A |
| 5. D | 10. D |

Suggested Preparation Techniques

The assessment measures two things: knowledge of the subject matter and ability to take an assessment. The first depends on the preparation, instruction, and experience gained in the selected content area. The second depends on self-confidence and experience with multiple-choice questions. It also depends upon the ability to recognize related information or solutions to problem situations.

In preparation for the assessments, test candidates should:

- Avoid situations that would trigger emotions such as worry, anger, depression, and lack of confidence right before the test day. These emotions interfere with memory and are sometimes called “memory thieves.”
- Follow the directions! If read too quickly, something important may be missed.
- Read each item very carefully and avoid jumping to conclusions based upon a quick skimming of the wording.
- See if they can answer the item before looking at the four (4) response options.
- Never think they have immediately spotted the correct response. “Back into” the correct response by first eliminating the incorrect choices.
- Answer each item. Look for clues in the item and even in the choices. If able to eliminate some options, the chances of selecting the correct answer are improved. Use the “flag” options to denote items to come back to within the item block.
- Read the “Candidate Guide to Assessments.” It is important to understand details about online testing and navigation.

Suggested Instructional Resources

The Pre-PAC Instructional Resource Directory provides a list of suggested resources providing content addressed within Pre-PAC assessments. Development panel members and instructors have identified resources that would be relevant and useful in addressing the domains and competencies within the assessment. Use of the references and resources do not guarantee successful completion of the assessment.

AAFCS does not endorse any external products (textbooks, curriculum, etc), vendors, consultants, or documentation that may be referenced in the Directory. While every effort will be made to ensure accuracy and reliability of content, AAFCS assumes no responsibility for errors or for use of the information provided. Additionally, AAFCS disclaims any and all liability for any claims or damages that may result from providing information contained on the site, including any Web sites maintained by third parties and linked to the Pre-PAC site. The responsibility for content rests with the organizations that provide the information. The inclusion of links from the site does not imply endorsement by AAFCS.

The Pre-PAC Instructional Resource Directory is available online at <http://www.aafcs.org/CredentialingCenter/PrePAC.asp>

Acknowledgements

AAFCS has engaged the assistance of a broad range of esteemed interior designers, educators, and other professionals from across the nation to assist in identifying relevant industry standards and develop the assessment instrument. Recognizing the value of a solid assessment tool in assuring that programs are effectively preparing individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in interior design and for pre-professional careers requiring those skills, the following stakeholders participated on the development panel for the assessment and certification:

- Penny Bonda, *Interior Design Magazine* and United States Green Building Council, Washington, DC
- Rosalyn Cama, CAMA, Inc., New Haven, CT
- Sherylin Doyle, National Kitchen and Bath Association, Hackettstown, NJ
- Connie Edwards, American Woodmark Corporation, Winchester, VA
- Doug Hartsell, Duralee, Washington, DC
- Lisa Henry, Knoll, Castle Rock, CO
- Charisse Johnston, Gensler, Inc., Los Angeles, CA
- Josh Sloan, Waring and Company, Denver, CO
- Robert Wright, Principal Residential Designer, Bast-Wright, San Diego, CA
- Stephanie Clemons, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO
- Patricia Hollender, Arapahoe Community College, Littleton, CO
- Christy Somerville, University of New Haven, New Haven, CT
- Deborah Griffin, Lexington High School, Lexington, SC
- Cynthia Ziemba, HSE High School, Fishers, IN