How to prepare for the PHR/SPHR exam with the SHRM Learning System Online Chat Transcript – February 28, 2013.

Q. How successful has the flashcard study been to others preparing the exam?
A. We do recommend you use the flashcards as part of your comprehensive study initiative. They can help you understand the foundational terms you will need to understand to master the content.

Q. I understand that the test is scheduled for 4 hours. Do most test takers utilize the full 4 hours?
A. The test is now 175 questions and you have 3 hours to complete it. We recommend you use the entire time by first getting through all of the questions, marking any you'd like to review and going back. You may not need all of the 3 hours.

Q. Is anyone aware of a study group near Alexandria, or downtown DC? The NOVA SHRM group is in Reston. Thanks.
A. Check out our LinkedIn Group to find a study group near you... SHRM Learning System LinkedIn group - http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=1939043&trk=hb_side_g

Q. Do you need your MBA degree before registering for the exam or can you register a couple months before completing your degree?
A. Here are the eligibility requirements for the PHR/SPHR exam.

PHR Eligibility
• 1 year of demonstrated exempt-level HR experience with a Master’s degree or higher
• 2 years of demonstrated exempt-level HR experience with a Bachelor’s degree
• 4 years of demonstrated exempt-level HR experience with less than a Bachelor’s degree

SPHR Eligibility
• 4 years of demonstrated exempt-level HR experience with a Master’s degree or higher
• 5 years of demonstrated exempt-level HR experience with a Bachelor’s degree
• 7 years of demonstrated exempt-level HR experience with less than a Bachelor’s degree

HR Certification Institute’s Eligibility Requirements - http://www.hrci.org/Exam_Eligibility/

Q. Hello! I would like to have some advice on the best strategy for studying for the PHR. There is so much information out there, I want to focus on the right information. Thanks
A. One of the best approaches to studying for the exam PHR or SPHR is the unique tools within the Learning System is a smartstudy tool that provides you with a detailed plan to study based on your current experience and knowledge since your time will vary based on those factors.

Q. Has the PHR exam changed much over the past few years? If I purchased used prep material that’s 1-3 years old, would that be a better investment than buying the 2013 material?
A. The body of knowledge changed in 2012 so you will want the most current materials. Also, the SHRM Learning System is licensed to only 1 user. Do not miss out on all of the most recent valuable tools.
Q. Hello, my director and I will be taking the SPHR. Is there any suggestion for how much time would be required to study for this test?
A. While your study efforts will be dependent on your knowledge of the content, we generally recommend that you study a minimum of 60 hours to adequately prepare for the PHR or PHR exam. Your time could be reduced if you feel comfortable with a particular area. One of the unique tools within the Learning System is a smartstudy tool that provides you with a detailed plan to study based on your current experience and knowledge since your time will vary based on those factors.

Q. What is the difference between using the SHRM system as opposed to enrolling with a university program?
A. You will receive the SHRM Learning System in either learning option. However by attending a CU course, you'll benefit from: An experienced, certified instructor, The SHRM Learning System, ranked the #1 certification prep tool, A structured learning experience that keeps you on track, Opportunities to network and learn from your peers, Tuition reimbursement and 3.5 CEUs.

Q. Is there a deadline between the time the pre-certification course is completed and when the test may be taken?
A. We recommend that you take the exam in the same calendar year as you purchase the SHRM Learning System.

Q. Wanted to know how successful the self-study option was.
A. You should consider how you best learn and use that as a guide to determine how best to use the SHRM Learning System - if you are focused and can dedicate the time needed to use the materials independently, self-study may be the right option for you. If you prefer to learn from an instructor, you may want to consider an instructor-led option.

Q. Hello! I own a payroll service bureau and want to become HR certified...need direction on where to start.
A. One of the best ways to start is the HR Certification Institute offers online assessment exams for both the PHR and SPHR certifications. There are two versions for each of the exams. The PHR Online Assessment Exam, like the actual PHR certification exam, is focused on the technical and operational aspects of HR. There are two versions of the PHR online assessment exam. You can take one at the beginning of your study program and one near the end to assess your preparedness. Each PHR assessment exam consists of 75 questions, compared with the actual PHR exam's 175 questions. The exams have the same percentage of questions from each content area. Eighty (80) minutes is allotted to complete the PHR Online Assessment Exam. This time limit is proportional to the time allotted for the actual PHR certification exam.

The cost to take each single assessment exam is $45 for the PHR/SPHR. Or $70 to purchase both exams. More information can be found by visiting [http://www.hrci.org](http://www.hrci.org)

Q. If you do not pass the exam, when can you take the exam again?
A. You can take the exam in the next test window.

Q. Hi, I currently have the SHRM Learning System to prep for the PHR exam in May. My question is: I have been told that practicing questions is the best prep because you need to learn how to answer these questions. So, are the module quizzes the only practice questions outside of the pre and post test and end of section reviews?
A. There are 1,500 practice questions included in the SHRM Learning System.

Q. I haven't started any preparation. Wondering where to start... I am in a rural area and don't have access to study groups, etc.
A. You can study on your own using the SHRM Learning System but there are also online courses available at [www.shrm.org/learning/colleges](http://www.shrm.org/learning/colleges).

Q. I have been studying using a study guide from 2012. Are there many changes for 2013? If so, where can I find that information?
A. Check the resource center of your online Learning System HR Updates to ensure you have the latest information.
Q. I recently took the PHR and missed passing by a hair! Is there any trick to picking the "more right" question when you have it narrowed down to two?
   A. Test-Taking Tip #1: Trust your first impressions. There is a correct answer to each question. It is widely believed that your first impression of the correct answer will be a better choice.

Q. I just ordered the books this week and didn’t receive them yet. My % is 46% in pre assessment test. What % should I get to be approved as PHR?
   A. The assessment is gauging your current knowledge. I encourage you to apply that information to the smart study plan and set up your study plan. By the time you complete all of your studies, you should be in a high percentage range 80+. You need to learn and be able to apply the information to the test.

Q. What if your job code is not listed on the hrci website for approved job codes for the PHR, should you just pick the position that is most similar?
   A. If your title is not on the approved position title list, you must demonstrate that: Your activities are at the professional (exempt level), and At least 51% of your daily activities are within the HR function, OR you have direct supervision of those who deliver HR services. More information can be found by visit www.hrci.org.

Q. Do the flash cards come with the online study?
   A. Yes, the flashcards come with the SHRM Learning System.

Q. I have the 2010 version of the learning system, how much has been changed?
   A. SHRM released a new body of knowledge in 2012. The content in the SHRM Learning System was update to reflect that new Body of Knowledge and has since been updated to reflect new legislation.

Q. What is the best format of study for the PHR? Should you take weekly tests? Study the PHR by sections and take tests or do monthly tests? Also, what are your thoughts on prep courses?
   A. The best format of study depends on the individual and in the SHRM Learning System you can use smartstudy tools to prepare your own study plan based on pre-test assessments.

Q. I am waiting to register for the in class at a local university. I assume it will be the fall semester and then sit for the exam during the winter test session. Do you know when the universities normally offer the classes and how long the program is?
   A. SHRM has partnerships with over 300 colleges and universities across the country. You can find the course nearest you by visiting http://www.shrm.org/learning/colleges then clicking on the state you are interested in.

Q. Can you tell me what the minimum passing score is? Is it a percentage correct of the total questions asked? I know that some sections are weighted heavier. Does that mean there are simply more questions in those areas, or are the questions asked actually weighted heavier?
   A. The minimum passing score is a scaled score of 500. Consult the HRCI Handbook for more information on that. You can also find the body of knowledge there which will outline the weightings of each domain by PHR/SPHR.

Q. Are you limited to the number of times you take the practice test once you purchase it?
   A. You are not limited to a number of times. Do not cross over from learning to memorization however.

Q. What is the cost for the self-study program?
   A. Non-member self-study program is $860
      SHRM member self-study program is $695
      If you are able to bring a few people together to purchase there are significant discounts for purchases of 2 or more. You may order at www.shrm.org/learning
Q. Can you purchase the online learning piece only?
A. The online portion of the SHRM Learning System is included with your purchase. You may choose not to use the printed modules and access the materials online, through e-reader or mobile device. You may order at www.shrm.org/learning.

Q. Someone mentioned flash cards; are these available for purchase?
A. Sorry the flashcards are a part of the entire SHRM Learning System and are not available for individual purchase.

Q. How many questions do I need to get right out of the 175 questions to be PHR certified?
A. The score for the HRCI exam is a scaled score based on the weighting of each question. For more information, consult the HRCI Exam Handbook.

Q. How long do the university programs last?
A. Typically they are 12 weeks. Please go to http://www.shrm.org/learning/colleges to review each offering.

Q. I have tried to order the self-study kit but the price in my cart was coming up more than the $695
A. Are you a SHRM Member? If so, your discount should be applied when you finalize your check-out. If you are experiencing problems please contact Customer Service at 800-444-5006, option #2 or +1-651-905-2663

Q. Can you access your online learning system from any computer/ipad?
A. Yes, once you purchase the SHRM Learning System you can access from any PC or mobile device.

Q. Can you explain a bit about the 7 week accelerated online synchronous program?
A. We have details available on the 7-week virtual seminar at http://www.shrm.org/Education/seminar/Pages/virtualcert.aspx.

Q. If I purchase the SHRM learning system can I also access the material from my kindle?
A. You can also access the Learning System via Kindle or other ereader device.

Q. Is there any way the cost can be minimized aside from being a SHRM member?
A. Being a SHRM member is actually the best way to save not only on the various Learning System study options, but all the other educational opportunities such as SHRM conferences and seminars! Join today at www.shrm.org/join.

Q. Is a student-member still entitled to the member price?
A. Yes, a student member is entitled to the member price.

Q. When you say the price for SHRM member is less, I am a member of the state organization, but not SHRM. Do I still get the discounted price?
A. By joining SHRM national you will be able to receive the SHRM Member Discount! Join today at www.shrm.org/join.

Q. If I have the 2012 learning set and didn't print off the cards and now want to; can I?
A. You have access to your online learning system for 18 months so you should be able to print out the flashcards as long as you still have your license valid

Q. Where can I find the HRCI Exam Handbook you have mentioned?
For the HRCI Handbook

Q. Is the tool MacBook friendly?
A. Yes, using Chrome or Safari it is accessible from a MacBook.
Q. What are the requirements to keep your certification once you have it? I know there are guidelines to maintain the PHR Certification.
A. 60 recertification hours over 3 years

Tip - The SHRM Learning System learning modules come in print and e-reader

Q. Does the self-study include printed material as well as the online options?
A. Yes, the self-study includes printed materials and online access. Order today at www.shrm.org/learning/self

Q. Do you know how many questions from each section will be asked on the exam?

Q. Will there be a transcript of this chat available to participants?
A. You can find the transcript at http://blog.shrm.org/.

Q. Does the Essentials of HR Management Virtual seminar also help in PHR exam preparation?
A. The Essentials is not the appropriate material to use to prepare for the exam. It is geared to entry level HR.

Q. What’s the difference between self-study and the modules that I have bought?
A. The Self-Study program includes the entire SHRM Learning System which is comprised of printed learning modules and online access.

Q. Does OJT count towards recertification hours?
A. Please contact HRCI for any recertification questions at www.hrci.org or info@hrci.org.

Q. Does the 2013 Learning System have similar features as previous versions (i.e. 2009 system), where you can take a knowledge assessment to see what areas you have need to study the most?
A. Since 2012, the Learning System has been equipped with many new tools including the Quickstarts, e-reader devices, audio flashcards, strikethrough feature and so much more.

Q. I have not noticed where to download/print the Flashcards from the only learning system. Can you suggest where I should go to get this?
A. You can find the flashcards in the resource center which you will find at the top right hand side of the main menu

Q. Does the learning package have the ability to listen to the material verses read it? Something like a webcast?
A. If you have an e-reader device, some of them are equipped with a feature to read the modules to you. The modules have not been produced in an audio format.

Q. What is the best self-study guide book to buy. Are their study guides that have video programs like they have with the CPA programs?
A. The SHRM Learning System self-study program! You can find more information and try the free demo at www.shrm.org/learning/self.

Test-Taking Tip #2: Avoid over-analyzing. Be careful that you do not read too much into an answer.

Q. When is the deadline to sign up for the Spring SPHR test?
A. Application deadline: March 22, Late Application deadline: April 19

Q. If you miss the tests for this year. Can you take it later?
A. The test is offered every May/June and Dec/Jan. Check with HRCI for all the application deadline information.
Q. I am a recruitment manager with limited knowledge on areas of HR... which certification is best for me? PHR, SPHR or something else?
A. You can view the eligibility requirements here: http://www.hrci.org/Exam_Eligibility/

Q. Is there a link that shows what testing windows are coming in 2013?
A. Testing window dates for 2013 are at http://www.hrci.org/hrcertification.aspx?id=159

Q. What are the maximum points you can receive if answering all the answers on the exam correctly.
A. I assume you are asking about the actual exam. The maximum is 700

Test-Taking Tip #3: Answer the questions in order.
The exam is structured so that the questions are inserted randomly by degree of difficulty. Therefore, the most difficult question on the test could be the first or middle or last question. Answer all questions in order with the understanding that the test will be balanced in terms of the degree of difficulty.

Q. Is it better to take the class or the self-study?
A. It is important to consider how you learn best and if you have the discipline for self-study or prefer more facilitated learning in a classroom. Visit www.shrm.org/learning to review our different learning options.

Q. I have signed up for the 3 day pre certification seminar. Do I need to prepare anything first from the module before attending?
A. We highly recommend reviewing the SHRM Learning System prior to your seminar. This seminar is a supplemental to your preparation. Good Luck!

Q. I have the 2009 SHRM Learning System, and it came with a CD ROM with all the topics and study tools. The 'Smartstudy' tools that come with 2013 system: Is there a pretest like on the 2009 learning system that assesses your current knowledge to give you direction on what modules you need to improve on?
A. The smartstudy tools include a pre-test to assess your current knowledge and you can apply the results to creating a customized study plan based on your answers and areas you need to focus on.

Q. Will there be a CU course held in the Dallas, TX area?
A. SHRM has partnerships with over 300 colleges and universities across the country. You can find the course nearest you by visiting http://www.shrm.org/learning/colleges then clicking on the state you are interested in.

Q. How many sections and questions in those sections on the test are there? How long after taking the test do you find out your results?
A. There are 6 functional areas. The weightings vary by PHR/SPHR. You find out if you pass right away after completing the test (and a brief survey).

Q. Can we skip answers and then go back to the ones that we missed during the exam?
A. Yes there is a mark and review as part of the exam so you can go back to any difficult questions.

Q. My office has purchased the SHRM Learning System as a group resource for the office. Is it possible to obtain individual access to the online content?
A. The product license agreement is issued for 1 learner. To adhere to the license agreement, you must purchase a copy for each learner. That will allow them to see their own reports, success, etc.

Q. What does (professional) meant after exempt-level?
A. (Directly from HR Certification Institute’s website)
A Professional-level work means experience that includes: Activities in which you work independently in planning and decision-making. In-depth work requirements, including data gathering, analysis and interpretation. Interactions with a broad spectrum of contacts, including decision makers. Ultimate responsibility and accountability for your work.
Q. Can you find out if you pass the exam the same day you take it??
A. You receive preliminary results the day of but should not start using your certification until you receive your results from HRCI.

Q. Why should you answer the questions on the exam in order? If the difficult question could be first question?
A. You can go through the entire exam and mark those questions you find difficult and return to them. Feel free to answer them as you feel comfortable but remember, you want to use your time efficiently and effectively.

Q. What does the Virtual PHR/SPHR Certification Preparation offer that the self-study module doesn't? It's a huge price difference
A. The virtual cert prep is delivered by a live instructor and will allow for maximum interaction and real time Q&A chats between participants, providing a dynamic virtual classroom experience. Please visit http://www.shrm.org/learning/virtual for additional details.

Test-Taking Tip #4: Don't stop. If you are stumped by a question, continue on to the next item. Otherwise, you may lose valuable time and have to rush through the remaining questions. Mark the question to return to it later if time permits.

Q. Is there a penalty for answering a question incorrectly vs. not answering it at all?
A. If you do not answer the question, it is scored as wrong. It is to your advantage to answer all of the questions.

Q. Where are the exams locations?
A. Testing location information is available at http://www.hrci.org/HRCertification.aspx?id=2147483936

Q. Can you get a copy of the test you took after your test date? I have taken it 3 times and studied a lot each time. I have a missing link someplace and would like to better identify where my weak link is in my mind.
A. You cannot get a copy of the test you took for confidentiality reasons.

Q. Do you have free practice test questions available?
A. Try the demo at http://www.shrm.org/learning/demo

Q. When you say, you can 'mark' a question and then go back to it later? Is there something that you have to check mark on to keep it for later?
A. The post test in the Learning System mirrors the HRCI exam so you can see how the process works for mark and review

Test-Taking Tip #5: Don't look for answer patterns. The psychometric testing process used by the Institute ensures that questions do not fall into patterns. Contrary to some myths, "c" will not necessarily be the most frequent answer, and the first answer may be correct.

Q. When you get the results, is the fee still like $50 to get background info as to what questions were missed and background rationale behind the question?
A. I believe what you are referring to is the fee to have your exam rescored manually to ensure of your results. That option is still available.

Test-Taking Tip #6: Length of an answer is a false clue. One test-taking myth is that the longer an answer, the more likely it is to be correct. However, it often is more difficult to write incorrect distractors than the correct answer, so it is just as likely that the longest answer is incorrect.

Q. Can you apply to take the PHR exam before you have a full 2 years of experience with a Bachelor's degree, but by the date of the exam you will have that amount of experience?
Q. Should someone with eight plus years of HR experience go for the PHR or SPHR?
A. You can view eligibility requirements at http://www.hrci.org/Exam_Eligibility/

Audience Poll Question:
When do you plan on taking the exam?
Spring Test Window (May 1 - June 30) = 71%
Winter Test Window (Dec. 1 - Jan 31, 2014) = 29%

Q. I understand that the SPHR is significantly more difficult than the PHR. What are the recommended study hours for the SPHR?
A. It is the level of exam that varies. More studying will not necessarily result in your passing. I suggest you review the qualifications for SPHR and then review information for the ideal candidate. To be successful, it is important to have the strategic perspective.

You can try a free demo of the SHRM Learning System at www.shrm.org/learning/demo

Test-Taking Tip #7: Eliminate obvious distractors.
For most questions, there are two distractors that usually appear to be incorrect, one that is likely to be plausible but incorrect, and then one correct answer. The following tips may also help to narrow down the correct answer:
- When you first read a question, generally you should be able to eliminate two of the answers as incorrect (consider using the strike-through feature to cross them out).
- If two or more options are identical, then both responses must be incorrect.
- If two options are opposites, then at least one of them may be eliminated.
- Select the option that is the most inclusive.
- Do not change your answers unless they are obviously wrong.

Audience Poll Question:
Which exam are you preparing for?
SPHR = 24%
PHR = 76%

Q. Are these test taking tips somewhere on the SHRM website we can reference later, or do I have to read through the dialogue later to get them?
A. You will find test taking tips in the online resource center in the SHRM Learning System. There is also an audiocast available in the same area
A. We'll provide a transcript of this chat and all of the tips will be included.

Best of luck with your studies! Create a detailed study plan and stick to it. Read the modules, use the tests, flashcards, listen and view the audiocasts and webcasts.

Test-Taking Tip #8: Use the HR Certification Institute strike-through feature.
Exam candidates are able to use a "strike-through" feature on the exam. This feature allows test takers to strike through the answer choices they believe to be incorrect. This will help applicants narrow down their answers.

Q. I am part of a study group through a local chapter. The study group included the books in preparation for the exam. Is there anything else that I would need in preparation? I hear a lot about flash cards which did not come with the books through the group.
A. Is your local chapter using the SHRM Learning System? If so, you should have the flashcards. We include them in the system as part of a comprehensive learning package as they are helpful for on the go studying.
Q. I just completed my application to test, and need to provide supporting documentation to demonstrate eligibility - I believe because my job title was not listed. I think I need to provide the Qualifying HR Work Experience form as well as a copy of my job description. Is there anything else?
A. We recommend you contact HRCI - www.hrci.org

The SHRM Learning System is a system designed to help walk you through all of your studies from creating the study plan to experiencing the exam functionality with the post-test. Get started today!

If you would like to join the SHRM Learning System LinkedIn group visit http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=1939043&trk=hb_side_g

If your specific question did not get answered or if you have other questions please e-mail shrmeducation@shrm.org.