

CANDIDATE PACKET

STANDARDS FOR SPECIALIZATION EXAMS

(amended August 2009; March 2010)

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Section 1 – Policy Statement

These standards for certification of specialization exams are established by the Texas Court Reporters Association Specialization Exams Committee. The standards require that individuals certified by the Texas Court Reporters Association Specialization Exams Committee possess an enhanced level of skill and expertise.

Section 2 - Definitions

As used in these Standards:

- (A) “Applicant” refers to both a certification and recertification applicant unless specifically stated otherwise.
- (B) “Application” is a generic term and refers to all forms used in the examination application process.
- (C) “Association” means the Texas Court Reporters Association.
- (D) “Board of Directors” refers to the composition of the TCRA Officers and Directors.
- (E) “Specialization Exams Committee” refers to the composition of professional TCRA members who hold various certifications, the Chair of which is appointed by the TCRA President.
- (F) “CE” refers to Continuing Education.
- (G) “CRCB” means the Texas Court Reporters Certification Board.
- (H) “CSR” refers to a Certified Shorthand Reporter certified by the Supreme Court of Texas.
- (I) “Equivalency” refers to a national, federal, or other state certification that is equal or similar in achievement as the specialization exam.
- (J) “Exam” refers to the certification examination.
- (K) “TCRA” means the Texas Court Reporters Association.

Section 3 - Authority

The authority to certify and revoke certification is vested in the Specialization Exams Committee as approved by the Texas Court Reporters Association Board of Directors.

Certification by the Specialization Exams Committee is not intended to, and shall not be interpreted to, preempt nor usurp the authority of the court reporter licensing agency for the State of Texas.

Section 4 – Requirements for Certification

In order to obtain certification, an Applicant must meet all eligibility requirements and examination requirements.

Section 5 - Requirements to Maintain Certification

In order to maintain certification status, individuals shall maintain a continuous TCRA membership and maintain a Texas CSR license in good standing, if applicable.

Section 6 - Expiration of Certification

Certification of any specialization exam shall expire upon non-payment of TCRA membership dues.

Section 7 - Revocation of Certification

Any certification may be revoked upon verification of professional misconduct or unethical conduct as set forth in the rules and statutes governing certified shorthand reporters in the State of Texas; failure to maintain specialization exam certification requirements; or by any other means as set forth in the bylaws or policies and procedures of TCRA.

Section 8 – Application for Specialization Exam

An individual seeking certification must file an Application for Specialization Exam with the required fee. A Confirmation of Registration will be sent to Applicant upon receipt of payment and eligibility status of Applicant.

All applicants seeking a waiver shall provide verification of equivalent certification(s) at the time of filing for Application for Specialization Exam. *See Section 10*

Section 9 - Re-Application for Specialization Exam:

Where applicable, Application for Specialization Exam must be made within 365 days of the failed portion of the exam in order to retain any and all grades of the exam passed. All eligibility requirements must be met upon re-application.

Section 10 – Application for Waiver

The Specialization Exams Committee may waive testing requirements upon verification of Applicant's eligibility for the specified exam, verification of equivalent certification(s), review of Applicant's credentials, if applicable, and upon payment of required fee. A copy of the equivalent certification must have the applicant's name, address and expiration date of equivalent certification.

Section 11 – Eligibility

All Applicants must meet the mandatory eligibility requirements for each specialization examination as contained in the *Specialization Certification Guidelines*.

Section 12 – Fees

Applicants shall timely pay all fees as established by the Specialization Exams Committee and approved by the TCRA Board of Directors.

Section 13 – Forms

Applications, forms, documents and examinations involved in the certification and renewal of certification process shall be approved by the Specialization Exams Committee.

Section 14 – Examination Location

All specialization exams shall be conducted in such location and on such date as set by the Specialization Exams Committee and approved by the TCRA Board of Directors.

Section 15 – Improper Conduct

If the TCRA Board of Directors determines that an Applicant engaged in improper or unethical conduct during the exam process or misrepresented any material fact requested, the Applicant will automatically be prohibited from filing any Application for Specialization Exam or any future Application for Specialization Exam.

Section 16 – Examination Results:

All examination results will be mailed to Applicant within four to six weeks following the examination.

Section 17 – Cancellations:

If cancellation of an examination is given by TCRA, a Notice of Cancellation will be given to all Applicants within 48 hours of an examination date.

Cancellations by Applicants must be made at least seven (7) days prior to the examination date. After cancellation deadline, no refunds will be given. A non-refundable processing fee of \$35 will be held by TCRA.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

(including Instructions, Grading Guidelines and Certification Guidelines)

(amended July 2009; March 2010)

The knowledge and machine exams are the exclusive property of the Texas Court Reporters Association. No part of the examination may be copied or reproduced in whole or in part by any means whatsoever, unless authorized by TCRA.

IMPORTANT NOTE TO APPLICANTS:

* Applicants are prohibited from using any electronic devices. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, audio sync, Bluetooth, wireless connections, digital recorders, and cell phones.

Exceptions:

*electronic devices used prior to testing for individual warm-up are allowed until instructed to be removed from the testing room; and
wireless connections used for transmitting steno to applicant's computer (i.e., StenoCast) is acceptable as long as all "recording" connections are disabled*

* Applicants shall disable their computer's microphone.

* Exam Monitors have the right to inspect an applicant's equipment

* By signing in on exam day, you acknowledge that you understand and agree to abide by these Rules and Regulations. Failure to follow these or any TCRA specialization exam rules and regulations, instructions, or guidelines may result in your automatic failure and being barred from taking TCRA-administered exams.

Equipment and Transcripts:

1. No instruction will be given on how to operate your equipment.
2. TCRA and the exam site assume no responsibility for an applicant's equipment.
3. Additional transcription time will not be allowed, period, if the exam requires transcription.
4. Applicants must label their steno machine disk or other removable media with their ID# given at the exam site.
5. No instruction will be given on how to produce your transcript or how to create an ASCII file for those exams that require an ASCII.
6. Applicants must perform all functions relating to transcript production or ASCII creation on his/her own.
7. Applicants must bring steno machine; security keys; software; laptop computer; printer, if producing a transcript; one 3.5" disk, CD, or other removable media, if creating an ASCII; extension cord and power strip.
8. The exam site will not provide paper for those exams that require printing.
9. Applicants are encouraged to confirm that all equipment is working properly prior to exam date.

INSTRUCTIONS

(amended July 2009; March 2010)

GENERAL:

Applicants **MUST**:

1. Arrive early and have all equipment set up and checked to ensure proper functioning prior to exam.
2. Bring a photo ID.
3. Sign in at exam site.
4. Turn OFF all cell phones prior to entering examination room.
5. Place ID# given at exam site on files and/or removable media when instructed.

INSTRUCTIONS (continued)

Texas Certified Realtime Reporter (TCRR) Exam:

Exam Format:

1. The format for this exam will be in accordance with the Texas Uniform Format Manual unless otherwise listed below.
2. **No** headers or footers are permitted except for page numbers only.
3. Transcripts must be in mixed case. **Upper case only is NOT allowed.**
4. Paragraphing is encouraged but not required.
5. An ASCII will be created by the applicant when instructed by the Examiner in charge.

Exam:

1. A warm-up exam will be given prior to the exam.
2. One file may be used as long as it is clear to the Examiner in charge where the exam actually begins after the warm-up material.
3. At the conclusion of the exam, you **MUST** move away from your steno machine and computer. Failure to do so will be an automatic disqualification and considered cheating.
4. When instructed by the Examiner in charge, you will create an ASCII disk, verify your file is on your disk, and hand it to the Examiner in charge. Be sure your ID# is on your ASCII disk.

SPECIALIZATION CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

(amended August 2009; March 2010)

Texas Certified Realtime Reporter (TCRR)

- A. **Certification:** To certify Texas reporters by an Exam Committee of his/her peers that the reporter possesses an enhanced level of skills, knowledge, and experience required to make a realtime verbatim record in this state and that the reporter possesses a professional membership in the Texas Court Reporters Association while earning continuing education to advance his/her knowledge in all aspects of reporting that go above and beyond those required by statute.
- B. **Eligibility:**
 1. **Mandatory Requirements**
 - a. Texas Certified Shorthand Reporter in good standing; and
 - b. Professional Member in good standing of TCRA with dues paid in full
 2. **Examination Waiver**

The Specialization Exams Committee may honor an applicant's equivalent certification(s) after review of applicant's credentials and determining that the applicant currently holds an equivalent certification and meets all eligibility requirements.
- C. **Machine Exam:**
 1. **Administration of Exam:** Audio or Oral
 2. **Exam Content:** Literary @ 180 wpm

3. **Duration of Exam:** Five (5) minutes
 4. **Accuracy Percentage for Certification:** 96% or higher accuracy
- D. **Requirements to Maintain Certification:**
1. Maintain continuous Professional Membership in TCRA in good standing; and
 2. Maintain Texas Certified Shorthand Reporter license in good standing

GRADING GUIDELINES

The following count as ½ point off:

- a. Each incorrect or missing punctuation
Example: Tell me what you did sir.
- b. Each incorrect or missing capitalization
Example: He worked at Ford motor company.
- c. Each untranslate or phonetic that is likely to be readable by a layperson
Example: I had an ace of /HARTS.
Example: Her name was sinder ella.
- d. Each incorrect homophone
Example: Did you eat the plumb?
Example: I herd the doorbell ring.
- e. Each incorrect spacing or word compound
Example: The vehicle did not have enough horse power.
Example: The car would breakdown often.
- f. Each misspelling that is likely to be readable by a layperson
Example: Did the rabbit eat the care ot?

The following count as 1 point off:

- a. Any steno stroke translating as a conflict
Example: Where did they say [they're/their/there] going?
- b. Each omitted word
Example: He was riding the __ and fell off.
- c. Each added word not dictated
Example: He was were was not going to the store.
- d. Each wrong number
Example: The wreck happened on June 10, 209. (1 error)
- e. Each misplaced period that would materially alter the meaning
- f. Each wrong word
- g. Each contraction read as two words
- h. Two words where read as a contraction
- i. Each misplaced word
- j. Each misspelled word

The following will NOT be counted as errors:

- a. Use of the word “dollars” instead of the \$ symbol.
- b. Use of the word “percent” instead of the % sign.