

Helpful Hints for the ACHA Exam

Long Term – Preparation (3-6 months)

1. Pick an exam date and make that date happen. You must approach passing the exam as you would respond to a client's RFP. Take it seriously -- if you do not, the one year eligibility window for taking the exam will slip away as other priorities take its place.
2. Attend the ACHA Masters Class and/or the ACHA Planning & Programming Workshop at the fall Healthcare Design (HCD) conference and the spring ASHE PDC conference for overall planning/programming knowledge (these sessions are NOT ACHA exam preparation seminars).
3. Find a mentor - contact ACHA to find someone in your city or state that has taken and passed the exam.
4. Review the suggested reading list in the candidate handbook.
5. Read the detailed content outline from the candidate handbook and the website. All questions are based on the content outline.

Short Term – Preparation (1-2 months)

1. Plan a minimum study time of 16-24 hours prior to taking the exam.
2. Take the Practice Exam. Review which questions you answered incorrectly and focus on those content areas (design, planning, contract documents...).
3. Focus your attention and study time on the Planning and Programming sections of the content outline. These areas seem to have the most trouble for candidates.
4. Re-review the detailed content outline from the candidate handbook and the website. All questions are based on the content outline.
5. Understand:
 - Adjacency of departments -- surgery to ED to ICU to Imaging....
 - Workflow and process of patients, materials, staff, and public
 - Industry standards for healthcare design and planning modules/formulas
6. Review:
 - FGI (AIA) Guidelines 2010
 - Life Safety Code 2003
 - Suggested reading list in the candidate handbook
 - Review all areas listed in the DCO.
7. Review other healthcare project floor plans for:
 - Adjacencies of departments
 - Layouts of patient units
 - Circulation patterns

Exam

1. Do not rush your answer – read the question slowly.
2. -Do not try to 'solve' the problem with your Healthcare Architecture expertise, but only 'answer' what the question is asking.
3. Make sure you truly understand what the question is asking.
4. Do not read more into the question than the words that are on the screen.
5. If you're having trouble with a question, skip it and return it once you complete the rest of the questions.
6. Compare the four (4) different answers to determine the answer that is the most probable.
7. Use the entire two-hour time frame for the test prior to submission.