

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 eligibility window for taking the exam will slip away as other priorities take its place.
2. Review the detailed content outline from the candidate handbook and the website. All questions are based on the content outline.
3. If there are areas from the content outline that you may be weak in, attend workshops for overall planning/programming knowledge (these sessions are NOT ACHA exam preparation seminars) but may be offered at the Healthcare Design (HCD) conference and the spring ASHE PDC conference.
4. Find a mentor - contact ACHA to find someone in your city or state that has recently taken and passed the exam. If you need help identifying a mentor, you can contact the Executive Office.
5. Review the suggested reading list in the candidate handbook.

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
 - Life Safety Code
 - Suggested reading list in the candidate handbook
 - Review all areas listed in the detailed content outline
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 time frame for the test prior to submission.