Once a Job/Task Analysis has been validated or modified for any ACAC certification program, the certification board will follow the procedures outlined below to develop, administer and maintain the corresponding certification examination.

I.   Item Development

1. **Item writing**. The certification board may solicit item writers from among its own membership, from ACAC staff or from outside professionals with interest and/or expertise in the field in which the certification is offered. Item writers must review the ACAC item writing manual each time they participate in an item writing activity and draft proposed items according to the rules and procedures described there. Draft items must be earmarked for a specific item bank, and must be submitted to ACAC staff for editorial review before going to the board for validation.

2. **Item format**. The certification board shall decide on the format(s) of examination items by unanimous vote. The board shall take care to consider the background and experience of the target candidate population in its deliberations. The board shall ensure that the format(s) of exam items is (are) appropriate to the industry in which the certificationis offered and shall issue a statement to this effect. The item format(s) chosen by the board shall be explained and included in the ACAC item writing manual.

3. **Item validation**. Before being placed into the item banks for the certification examination, draft items must be validated by the certification board at its executive meeting. The certification board shall specify a sound psychometric method by which to establish the content validity of the items it authorizes for inclusion in the item banks.

4. **Item banking**. The certification board may delegate to ACAC staff the task of placing validated items into the appropriate item banks. The certification board shall create a separate item bank for each domain of the exam blueprint. Item banks shall contain a sufficient number of items to allow for rotation and replacement, and for the use of pilot items on the certification examination.

II.   Assessment Development

1. **Test form specifications**. The certification board shall consult current research and psychometric practice as necessary to specify the length and administration time limit of the certification examination. If necessary, the board shall develop an examination blueprint that corresponds exactly to the results of the Job/Task Analysis – that is, domains of the exam will reflect domains of the Job/Task Analysis in content and in weight.

2. **Delivery format**. The certification board shall determine the administration mode (as computer based testing, pencil-and-paper, etc.) and scoring method by unanimous vote.

III.   Test Form Assembly

1. **Content sampling plan**. At the direction of the certification board, ACAC staff shall assemble the examination by selecting items from the item banks in the numbers specified

by the examination blueprint. Items shall be selected at random from within each item bank and shall be ordered at random on the examination form across all content domains to form a draft examination form. This draft shall be reviewed by the certification board for adequacy of content coverage and item redundancy and approved by unanimous vote.

2. **Use of pilot items**. In assembling the examination, ACAC staff shall include three pilot items from each item bank. A pilot item is an item that has been validated by the certification board but has never been used on an exam. Pilot items shall be scored along with the rest of the exam, but their results shall not count toward the final score. Psychometric data on pilot items shall be preserved and analyzed by the certification board at each executive meeting. At the discretion of the certification board, pilot items may be included in the exam according to the procedures in Section IV.2 below.

3. **Setting the cut score**. The certification board shall authorize a cut score study whose purpose is to set the passing score for the certification examination according to a psychometrically defensible procedure. The board shall issue a report of this study that provides the final cut score as well as estimates of reliability and error of measurement. The certification board shall periodically review the cut score study and authorize a new study when necessary.

IV.   Assessment Review and Evaluation

1. **Psychometric analysis**. The certification board shall authorize ACAC staff to collect statistics relating to the examination and prepare a psychometric review of its performance in preparation for each executive meeting of the board. Item-level and test form-level data shall be used to assess both the validity and reliability of the exam and its items. This review shall include, at a minimum, estimates of the internal consistency reliability of the test form, estimates of standard error at the cut score, and point-biserial correlation and difficulty indices for each item on the test. Weaknesses revealed as the result of this review shall be addressed by modifying or replacing items according to the procedures below.

2. **Item replacement procedures**. The certification board may remove any item from the examination by unanimous vote, either to remove a poorly performing item or simply make room for a pilot item.   In either case, ACAC staff shall replace the outgoing item with a validated item chosen at random from the same item bank.

The certification and its Job/Task Analysis. At each executive meeting, the certification board shall verify that the current form of the examination exactly reflects the content domains and weights of the exam blueprint. As the blueprint is itself a reflection of the Job/Task Analysis which is the heart of the certification program, this procedure ensures that the JTA and the certification exam are always firmly linked.

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