

# **AICI First Level Certification (AICI FLC) Examination Handbook**



**The Source for Image Professionals®**  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Association of Image Consultants International (AICI) is the leading and largest professional association of personal and corporate image consultants worldwide. A non-profit organization, AICI is dedicated to advancing the level of professionalism and enhancing the recognition of image consultants. Our members counsel both individual and corporate clients on appearance, behavior, communication skills, etiquette and international protocol. As experts in image consulting, our members guide clients to achieve their specific goals with authenticity, credibility and confidence.

Please use this Candidate Handbook to understand our processes of application and registration. If you have questions about the processes described here, please contact AICI at +1 (651) 290-7468 or [info@aici.org](mailto:info@aici.org).

## **EXAMINATION QUALIFICATIONS**

This examination is structured to test on the skills and knowledge needed to be a competent image professional. It tests on the basic skills needed to be successful in the image industry. You must first pass all requirements as outlined in the AICI First Level Certification Application. The AICI First Level Certification Application is online at <http://www.aici.org/?page=FirstLevelCertificat>

Additionally, AICI does encourage exam takers to review the AICI Core Competencies (page 6) before registering for the Examination.

## **EXAMINATION REGISTRATION**

### **FEES**

The examination fee is \$545 for AICI members. For non-members, the examination fee is \$1,090. The examination fee includes the processing of the examination registration and one testing appointment.

The fee must be paid in U.S. funds to AICI by check, Visa, MasterCard, or American Express. The application fee is not refundable.

### **PROCESS**

Examination registration must be submitted prior to examination. Note that the examination is computer-based and offered only through Castle's approved proctored testing centers.

Registrations are accepted on a continual basis. The testing appointment must be made at least seven (7) days prior to the test date during the scheduled testing window.

### **DEADLINES**

Candidates are strongly encouraged to complete their registrations at least 60 days prior to their desired testing date.

## **EXAMINATION REGISTRATION AND TESTING PROCESS**

1. **Review this Candidate Handbook prior to scheduling your examination.** Passing the AICI FLC Exam is the second step in completing the AICI FLC designation processes. Failure to follow the instructions can cause a delay of your examination registration. For questions regarding examination registration, contact AICI at +1 (651) 290-7468 or [info@aici.org](mailto:info@aici.org).

2. **Complete the online exam registration** ([http://www.aici.org/?page=cert\\_reg](http://www.aici.org/?page=cert_reg)) and **pay your testing fee**. You must register with your full name as it appears on your government-issued photo identification. If your full name appears differently in the AICI database, you must first update your name as it appears on your government-issued photo identification under **My Profile**. If your name in the AICI database and on your government-issued photo identification do not match, you will have challenges the day of the exam and may not be allowed to take the exam. Additionally, you will have challenges keeping your AICI member records accurate.
3. In order to **receive important electronic correspondence about scheduling your testing session**, please ensure that your e-mail program will accept e-mails from [ibt@castleworldwide.com](mailto:ibt@castleworldwide.com). All exam scheduling correspondence will be sent electronically.
4. **Schedule a testing session**. Once your examination registration has been received, Castle will send notification of eligibility to sit for the examination and will provide a unique username and password with directions on how to schedule a testing session. Please allow two to three (2–3) weeks to receive a unique username and password from Castle.

Most test sites will have morning and afternoon testing sessions available. Castle will do its best to accommodate the requested test site and date. Seats are filled on a first-come, first-served basis based on test center availability. The testing appointment must be made at least seven (7) days prior to your anticipated test date.

5. **Sit for the examination**. The examination consists of 100 multiple-choice questions. You will be given three (3) hours to complete the examination if you take it in English, French, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese, or Spanish. You will be given five (5) hours to complete the examination if you take it as an English as a Second Language (ESL) candidate.

You will be notified of the exact test location, date, and time via e-mail. You must bring your printed confirmation with you to the test site.

You must also bring photo identification with signature to the test site. Acceptable forms of identification include drivers' licenses, passports, and government-issued identification cards. Unacceptable forms of identification include gym memberships, warehouse memberships, school identification cards, credit cards, and identification with signature only (no photo).

Please plan to arrive at the testing center at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the testing session. Those who arrive late for testing sessions may not be permitted to test.

6. Upon completion of the examination, you will receive your final score. You must receive a score of 500 or above to pass the exam. AICI has moved away from using raw scores for examinations to the more standard practice of using scaled scores, similar to standardized programs such as the ACT and SAT. Scaled scores allow us to make more meaningful comparisons across forms. The standard scale of 300-600 with a passing score of 500 is the standard for AICI examination.

## INTERNATIONAL TESTING

A number of international testing sites (outside of the U.S. and Canada) are available for the AICI FLC Examination. Castle cannot guarantee the availability of testing sessions at specific international locations, and the international testing locations are subject to change. See <https://www.castleworldwide.com/castleweb/clients/testing-services/ibt-testing-sites.aspx> for a list of international testing sites. Please note that these sites are based on seating availability and that not every site will be available for every testing window. Once you are approved to take an exam, you will receive a web link with your notice to schedule that lists specifically which sites, dates, and times are available during the testing window for which you are scheduling.

Candidates must indicate on their examination registration that they wish to test at an international site outside of the U.S. and Canada.

### **LANGUAGE TRANSLATIONS**

The AICI FLC examination is translated into French, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese, and Spanish.

Candidates must indicate on their examination registration which language they want to take the exam in.

### **EXAMINATION RETAKES**

Candidates who fail the examination will receive information on scheduling a second testing appointment. The examination retake fee is \$545 for members and \$1,090 for non-members and must be paid before scheduling a new testing appointment. You may retake the examination at any time.

### **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**

Reasonable accommodations provide candidates with disabilities a fair and equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skill in the essential functions being measured by the examination. Reasonable accommodations are decided upon the individual's specific request, disability, documentation submitted, and appropriateness of the request. Reasonable accommodations do not include steps that fundamentally alter the purpose or nature of the examination.

Reasonable accommodations generally are provided for candidates who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits that person in one or more major life activities (e.g., walking, talking, hearing, and performing manual tasks); have a record of such physical or mental impairment; or are regarded as having a physical or mental impairment.

To apply for reasonable accommodations, the candidate must submit a request by paper along with documentation that supports reasonable accommodations provided by an appropriate licensed professional on the professional's letterhead. The documentation must include a diagnosis of the disability and specific recommendations for accommodations. It is recommended that this documentation be submitted at least 45 days prior to the preferred testing date. For more information regarding reasonable accommodations, please contact AICI at +1 (651) 290-7468 or [info@ aici.org](mailto:info@ aici.org).

## **EXAMINATION INFORMATION**

### **DOMAINS AND COMPETENCIES**

The certification examination consists of 100 multiple-choice questions. Five (5) major domains account for the examination's content.

AICI Classification Code/Outline	Current Exam Count
<b>Domain/Outline Area</b>	
Business Management- The AICI Code of Ethics	5
Physical Aspects of Image	10
Artistic Aspects of Image/Visual Design in Apparel	50
Psychological Aspects of Image	15
Social Aspects of Image	20
	<b>100</b>

### **Core Competencies**

#### *I. Technical Image Consulting*

- A. Psychological Aspects of Image
- B. Social Aspects of Image
- C. Physical Aspects of Image
- D. Artistic Aspects of Image/Visual Design in Apparel

#### *II. Professional Preparation & Development — Application of Technical Knowledge*

- A. Clientele/Target Market
- B. Programs (Working with Groups)
- C. Services (Working with Individuals)
- D. Products
- E. Marketing/Marketing Techniques

#### *III. Business Management*

- A. Organizational Aspects
- B. Management Aspects

For more detailed information about the core competencies, visit [www.aici.org/?page=CoreCompetencies](http://www.aici.org/?page=CoreCompetencies)

## SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

The following questions were taken from the examination question repository and serve as samples of the question type and question content found on the certification examination. Please see the answer key on page 8 of this handbook.

1. In North America, in order to project a high-impact presence through non-verbal communication, which of the following should the Image Consultant consider?
  - A. Announcing him/herself when entering a room
  - B. Offering his/her hand immediately, regardless of the cultural setting
  - C. Making eye contact when greeting people
  - D. Lowering the chin slightly to project respect
  
2. Which of the following is the definition of a color's *complement*?
  - A. One step over on the color wheel
  - B. Opposites on the color wheel
  - C. Two steps over on the color wheel
  - D. Equidistant on the color wheel
  
3. Which of the following is **CORRECT** for a man wearing a suit?
  - A. Wear black shoes and a black belt.
  - B. Wear braces (suspenders) with a belt.
  - C. Tuck in the narrow end of a tie into the shirt near the collar.
  - D. Wear a wide knot tie with a narrow spread collar.
  
4. An AICI colleague confides in an Image Consultant that he/she is involved in a conflict with another member. Which of the following actions should the Image Consultant take?
  - A. Talk to other AICI members whose opinions are valued and discuss the problem with them.
  - B. Offer advice or coach him/her how to resolve the issue with that consultant face-to-face.
  - C. Urge him/her to contact the Ethics Chair and ask for assistance in resolving the problem.
  - D. Offer to assist and talk to both sides in an attempt to get the conflict resolved.
  
5. Which of the following statements is **TRUE** about communication?
  - A. Men and women communicate verbally in the same ways.
  - B. Verbal communication styles are the same everywhere.
  - C. It is sometimes best to alter your verbal communication style to match the client's pattern.
  - D. To be authentic, always maintain your own communication style.

## FOR MORE PREPARATION: DEMO TEST

Castle offers a free online tutorial and demo test to familiarize candidates with the computer-based testing environment. The online demonstration and tutorial are accessible at any time, anywhere, through any computer with Internet access. Candidates may access the tutorial and demo on Castle's website <https://www.castleworldwide.com/castleweb/candidates/sample-tests/index.aspx>. The demo **is not** intended to be a review of AICI examination content.

### SAMPLE QUESTION ANSWER KEY

QUESTION NUMBER	CORRECT ANSWER	QUESTION REFERENCE
1	C	Casperson, Dana May. <i>Power Etiquette: What You Don't Know Can Kill Your Career</i> . New York: AMA Publication, 1999. Page 11.
2	B	Mathis, Carla and Helen Villa Connor. <i>The Triumph of Individual Style: A Guide to Dressing Your Body, Your Beauty, Your Self</i> . Fairchild Books & Visuals, 2002. Page 148.
3	A	Bassil, James. <i>AskMen.com Presents The Style Bible: The 11 Rules for Building a Complete and Timeless Wardrobe</i> . Collins, 2007. Page 113.
4	C	<i>AICI Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct</i> as published on the AICI Website. <a href="http://www.aici.org">www.aici.org</a>
5	C	Casperson, Dana May. <i>Power Etiquette: What You Don't Know Can Kill Your Career</i> . New York: AMA Publication, 1999. Page 114.



## **TESTING APPOINTMENT INFORMATION**

### **EXAMINATION RULES**

AICI and Castle follow industry standard testing rules as outlined below.

### **PROHIBITED ITEMS**

Candidates are expressly prohibited from bringing the following items to the test site:

- cameras, cell phones, optical readers, or other electronic devices that include the ability to photograph, photocopy, or otherwise copy test materials
- notes, books, dictionaries, or language dictionaries
- book bags or luggage
- iPods, MP3 players, headphones, or pagers
- calculators, computers, PDAs, or other electronic devices with one or more memories
- personal writing utensils (i.e., pencils, pens, and highlighters)
- watches
- food and beverage
- hats, hoods, or other headgear

If Castle testing personnel determine that you have brought any such items to the test site, they may be demanded and held for an indefinite period of time by Castle testing personnel. We reserve the right to review the memory of any electronic device that may be in your possession at the testing center to determine whether any test materials have been photographed or otherwise copied.

If our review determines that any test materials are in the memory of any such device, we reserve the right to delete such materials and/or retain them for subsequent disciplinary action. Upon completion of our review and any applicable deletions, we will return your device to you, but will not be responsible for the deletion of any materials that may result from our review, whether or not such materials are test materials.

By bringing any such device into the test site in contravention of our policies, you expressly waive any confidentiality or other similar rights with respect to your device, our review of the memory of your device and/or the deletion of any materials. Castle, the examination site, and the test administration staff are not liable for lost or damaged items brought to the examination site.

### **RESCHEDULING AN EXAMINATION**

You may reschedule a testing session up to four (4) business days before your testing appointment through the online scheduling system. A \$50 nonrefundable fee will apply.

Not appearing for your testing appointment or rescheduling your exam less than five (5) business days before your testing appointment will count as your testing appointment. You will be marked as a no-show candidate and your testing fees will be forfeited.

### **CANCELING A TESTING APPOINTMENT**

Testing appointments can be cancelled; however, candidates will not receive a refund for the canceled testing appointment. Candidates who are unable to test during their scheduled testing appointment should follow the rescheduling rules.

## ***NEXT STEPS***

### **AFTER PASSING THE AICI FLC EXAM**

After you pass the AICI FLC exam, you will have completed your second step toward AICI certification. After you pass the AICI FLC exam, you will have completed your second step toward AICI FLC certification. Keep a copy of your letter with your passing information in your files. Your formal letter and certificate inferring upon you the designation of AICI FLC will be mailed to you six to eight weeks after passing the AICI FLC Exam.

### **RECERTIFICATION**

#### **Maintaining Certification**

The AICI Certification Program is committed to promoting the highest levels of professionalism in the image industry. Certification validates you as a professional and enhances your credibility in the marketplace. AICI is committed to maintaining a high level of professional excellence, demonstrated by earning CEUs for ongoing education and advancement. After earning your AICI certification, you will be required to do the following to maintain your certification.

#### ***Certification Renewal Requirements***

All AICI Certifications will be required to earn 2.4 CEUs every three (3) years in order to maintain certification. This renewal period is determined by the date that you earn your first level of certification with AICI. The three-year period ends on June 30 of the third year you are certified.

#### ***Earning Required CEUs***

It is your responsibility to monitor and maintain records of all CEUs earned. AICI maintains records of CEUs earned through AICI CEU'd courses.

The CEU formula is:

- 1 hour of approved training = 0.1 CEUs
- 10 hours of approved training = 1.0 CEU

Therefore, you will need an average of eight (8) hours of approved training per year to earn the required 2.4 CEUs in the three-year renewal period.

You may review your AICI profile, which includes CEUs earned from AICI CEU'd courses, by logging into the AICI website and clicking **MyProfile**.

#### ***Certification Renewal Fee***

The Certification Renewal Fee is due August 31 of your certification renewal year. This fee is in addition to your AICI Annual Membership Dues for your renewal year. Please see the schedule below:

<b>Renewal Fees</b>	<b>AICI Members</b>	<b>Non-Members</b>
CIM	US \$300.00	US \$750.00
CIP	US \$300.00	US \$750.00
FLC	US \$300.00	US \$750.00

You will receive a certification renewal notice from Headquarters six (6) months prior to your renewal date. You may renew your certification online.

## ***PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS/CODE OF CONDUCT***

### **AICI CODE OF ETHICS**

AICI Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct - As amended and restated October 10, 2006.

#### **The Code of Ethics**

##### **Members of AICI shall:**

- Act with integrity, competence, dignity, and in an ethical manner when dealing with the public, clients, prospects, employees and fellow members.
- Practice and encourage others to practice in a professional and ethical manner that will reflect credit on members and their profession.
- Strive to maintain and improve their competence and the competence of others in the profession.
- Use reasonable care and exercise independent professional judgment.

#### **Standards of Professional Conduct**

##### **STANDARD I: FUNDAMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

###### **Members shall:**

1. Maintain knowledge of and comply with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations of any government, governmental agency, regulatory organization, licensing agency, or professional association governing the members' professional activities.
2. Not knowingly participate or assist in any violation of such laws, rules, or regulations.
3. Not undertake any professional responsibilities unless, by training and experience, the member is competent to adequately perform the work required.
4. Accurately represent qualifications, education, experience and affiliations in all forms of personal and professional communication as prescribed in AICI's Bylaws.

##### **STANDARD II: RELATIONSHIP WITH AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE CLIENT**

###### **Members shall:**

1. Clearly define, verbally or in writing, the scope and nature of the project or services to be performed and all fees or costs involved in the project or services from conception to completion.
2. Inform clients and prospective clients of any special relationship or circumstances that could be considered a conflict of interest.
3. Hold client information in confidence, except as compelled by law.

### **STANDARD III: RELATIONSHIP WITH AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PROFESSION AND THE ASSOCIATION**

#### **Members shall:**

1. Not engage in professional misconduct.
2. Not engage in any professional conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation or commit any act that reflects adversely on their honesty, trustworthiness, or professional competence.
3. Not knowingly endorse an individual who is unqualified with respect to education, training, and/or expertise, as per the established Bylaws and membership requirements of the Association.
4. Not discriminate against anyone based upon economic factors, race, creed, ethnic background, gender, age, sexual preference, physical condition or country of origin.
5. Not, without permission or giving appropriate credit, use materials, client lists, titles and/or thematic creations originated by others. Members will take credit only for work created by them or by those under their paid supervision.
6. Hold inviolate any confidential information entrusted to them by a colleague, except as compelled by law.
7. Not be a party to any agreement to unfairly and/or inappropriately limit another consultant's access to the marketplace.
8. Not, by word or deed, cause unjust injury to another consultant's reputation and/or business relationship(s).

#### **VIOLATION**

As a member of AICI, or as a non-member receiving an AICI designation, I am committed to and obligated by this Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct. I understand that any violation of this Code shall be determined using the established rules and procedures set forth by the AICI Ethics Committee. I understand that any disciplinary action shall be applied by AICI in accordance with the Bylaws and Policies and Procedures of the Association.

I hereby waive any and all claims, including claims for defamation and restraint of trade, that I may have against AICI or against any member of AICI arising out of any complaint, investigation, proceeding, or enforcement related to the Code of Ethics, including with respect to findings and disciplinary actions, up to and including expulsion.

I subscribe to the AICI Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct. My signature on this document means my pledge to abide by these standards.

## **APPENDIX A: RECOMMENDED REFERENCES**

### **AICI Core Competencies**

[www.aici.org/?page=CoreCompetencies](http://www.aici.org/?page=CoreCompetencies)

### **AICI Key Terms**

<https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/aici.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/certification/aicikeyterms.pdf>

### **AICI FLC Suggested Reading**

There are many books and resources that support the identified AICI Core Competencies and that can help you prepare for this exam. We have chosen the titles included in this listing based on the following guidelines:

- Information is presented in a clear, concise manner, and is universal in its presentation
- Contents are presented at an introductory level or “First Level” of learning
- Books cover multiple Core Competencies to some degree
- Books are readily available worldwide (e.g., Amazon.com)
- Total number of books are kept to a minimum and at a reasonable price
- Books are currently in print

It is not necessary to read all of these books.

Titles have been listed in alphabetical order of author’s last name within each Core Competency.

Some titles appear in multiple categories.

#### **A. Psychological Aspects of Image**

***AICI Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct*** as published on the AICI website.  
[www.aici.org](http://www.aici.org)

***AICI Key Terms of the Image Industry*** as published on the AICI website. [www.aici.org](http://www.aici.org)

Rasband, Judith. ***Wardrobe Strategies for Women***. Fairchild Books and Visuals, 2002.

#### **B. Social Aspects of Image**

Bassil, James. ***AskMen.com Presents The Style Bible: The 11 Rules for Building a Complete and Timeless Wardrobe***. Collins, 2007.

Bell, Catherine Graham. ***Managing Your Image Potential: Creating Good Impressions in Business***. Prime Impressions, 2001. (Chapter headings and ordering information available at: [www.prime-impressions.com/myip.html](http://www.prime-impressions.com/myip.html))

Bixler, Susan, and Lisa Scherrer Dugan. ***5 Steps to Professional Presence: How to Project Confidence, Competence and Credibility at Work***. Avon, MA: Adams Media Corporation, 2001.

Brown, Bobby. ***Bobby Brown Make-up Manual***. Springboard, 2008.

Casperson, Dana May. ***Power Etiquette: What You Don't Know Can Kill Your Career***. New York: AMA Publication, 1999.

Fujii, Donna. ***Color with Style***. Graphic-Sha Publishing, 1991.

Knudsen, Joyce M. and Desmond C.Y. Chan. ***From Head to Soul,® International (Third Edition)***. Red Publish, 2005.

Mathis, Carla and Helen Villa Connor. ***The Triumph of Individual Style: A Guide to Dressing Your Body, Your Beauty, Your Self***. Fairchild Books & Visuals, 2002.

Parsons, Alyce. ***Style Source: The Power of the Seven Universal Styles for Women and Men***. Universal Style, 2008.

Pease, Barbara and Allan Pease. ***The Definitive Book of Body Language***. Bantam, 2006.

Rasband, Judith. ***Wardrobe Strategies for Women***. Fairchild Books and Visuals, 2002.

### C. Physical Aspects of Image

***AICI Key Terms of the Image Industry*** as published on the AICI Website. [www.aici.org](http://www.aici.org)

Bassil, James. ***AskMen.com Presents The Style Bible: The 11 Rules for Building a Complete and Timeless Wardrobe***. Collins, 2007.

Bell, Catherine Graham. ***Managing Your Image Potential: Creating Good Impressions in Business***. Prime Impressions, 2001.

Mathis, Carla and Helen Villa Connor. ***The Triumph of Individual Style: A Guide to Dressing Your Body, Your Beauty, Your Self***. Fairchild Books & Visuals, 2002.

Pease, Barbara and Allan Pease. ***The Definitive Book of Body Language***. Bantam, 2006.

Rasband, Judith. ***Wardrobe Strategies for Women***. Fairchild Books and Visuals, 2002.

### D. Artistic Aspects of Image

***AICI Key Terms of the Image Industry*** as published on the AICI Website. [www.aici.org](http://www.aici.org)

Baldrige, Letitia. ***Letita Baldrige's Complete Guide to The New Manners for the 90's***. Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990.

Bassil, James. ***AskMen.com Presents The Style Bible: The 11 Rules for Building a Complete and Timeless Wardrobe***. Collins, 2007.

Bell, Catherine Graham. ***Managing Your Image Potential: Creating Good Impressions in Business***. Prime Impressions, 2001.

Mathis, Carla and Helen Villa Connor. ***The Triumph of Individual Style: A Guide to Dressing Your Body, Your Beauty, Your Self.*** Fairchild Books & Visuals, 2002.

Nix-Rice, Nancy. ***Looking Good: A Comprehensive Guide to Wardrobe Planning, Color & Personal Style Development.*** Portland, OR: Palmer/Pletsch Publishing, 1996.

Parsons, Alyce. ***Style Source: The Power of the Seven Universal Styles for Women and Men.*** Universal Style, 2008.

Rasband, Judith. ***Wardrobe Strategies for Women.*** Fairchild Books and Visuals, 2002.

## **E. Code of Ethics**

***AICI Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct*** as published on the AICI Website.  
[www.aici.org](http://www.aici.org)

Baldrige, Letitia. ***Letita Baldrige's Complete Guide to The New Manners for the 90's.*** Macmillian Publishing Company, 1990.

Bell, Catherine Graham. ***Managing Your Image Potential: Creating Good Impressions in Business.*** Prime Impressions, 2001.

Casperson, Dana May. ***Power Etiquette: What You Don't Know Can Kill Your Career.*** New York: AMA Publication, 1999.

Forni, P.M. ***Choosing Civility: The Twenty-Five Rules of Considerate Conduct.*** St. Martin's Griffin, 2003.

Post, Peggy and Peter Post. ***The Etiquette Advantage in Business: Personal Skills for Professional Success.*** HarperCollins Publisher, 1999.

## **APPENDIX B: EXAM PREPARATION TIPS**

### **How to Study**

AICI encourages candidates to prepare for the examination by using resources such as those listed in this handbook. *(A list of recommended references can be found in Appendix A.)*

Candidates may take training courses from image training leaders. A list of trainers is available on the AICI website at [http://www.aici.org/?page=Image\\_Trainers](http://www.aici.org/?page=Image_Trainers)

Plan your review methods well in advance of the examination. Think about the study method that is best for you (e.g., individual review, study group, class) and the types of materials that are most helpful (e.g., textbooks, audio or video programs, outlines, memory aids). It may also be helpful to use materials given to you during training activities related to your work as an image consultant.

### **Managing Test Anxiety**

A little anxiety regarding test taking can be helpful because it stimulates and motivates you to perform at your best; however, severe anxiety can hinder test performance. If you know that you frequently experience severe test anxiety, consider preparing yourself for the examination by developing coping mechanisms to make your tension work for you. In addition, an online demonstration and tutorial are available at <https://www.castleworldwide.com/castleweb/candidates/sample-tests/index.aspx>. The demonstration and tutorial will familiarize you with the testing environment. They are not intended to be a review of AICI examination content.

Before the day of the examination, visualize and rehearse the testing situation. Imagine yourself taking the examination with a positive attitude and focused, but calm, behavior.

Take measures to reduce your stress during the examination. Use deep-breathing techniques, and be sure to stretch your muscles periodically. Such exercises can reduce both physical and mental stress. If necessary, take a few minutes to imagine a calm, pleasant scene, and repeat positive phrases.

Do not let the comments or behavior of testing personnel or other examinees make you anxious. As examinees are taking different versions of the examination, examinees will finish at different times – some finishing very early, others taking the full three (3) hours. Examinees who finish more quickly than you may not perform any better than you. Everyone works at his or her own speed. Some of the best test performers routinely use the total allocated time. Remember that (a) there is no limit to the number of examinees who can receive passing scores, (b) there is no bonus for completing the examination early, and (c) you are not competing with anyone else.

Eating well, avoiding too much alcohol, and maintaining a regular sleep pattern for several days before the examination will help you to be physically prepared. Also, on the day before you take the test, collect all the supplies you will need and choose comfortable clothing. Knowing that you are prepared for the test will help to reduce your anxiety.

Finally, your best method for controlling your anxiety is to feel prepared for the test. Designing a study plan well in advance will help you get ready.



### Tips for Taking the Examination

- Budget your time well. Because you will have three (3) hours to complete 100 questions, you will want to complete more than half (50) in less than half the time. This is because you will want extra time after completing the full examination to review questions you either skipped or questions you may have marked for review. Also, allow time so that every hour you can take a minute or so to relax your eyes and stretch your neck and hand muscles.
- Read each question carefully, focusing on what is being asked. If you are uncertain about the answer but nevertheless want to give a tentative response at the time, mark the test question to indicate that you want to review the test question and your answer if time allows. Go back to questions marked in this manner after completing the entire test.
- Read all options before selecting your answer. Always select the best choice.
- Do not overanalyze or try to “read into” a question. Questions are not written to be tricky. Do not assume additional information beyond what is given in the test question. All information necessary to answer the question will be given in the text of the question or scenario.
- Remember that this is an international test. The questions will be based upon an accepted knowledge base. Choose options that you know to be correct in any setting.
- If there are questions including the words “not,” “except,” or “least,” answer with particular care because you will be looking for the exception. These questions involve a reversal of your usual thought patterns.
- Pay close attention to key words such as “best,” “most,” “primary,” or “usually.” These words indicate that other options may at times be correct, but given the wording or situation in the test question, you must judge which option is the best.
- Skip difficult questions and come back to them later. Questions on the test are not ordered by difficulty (i.e., they do not go from easiest to hardest). Also, content areas (the domains) and topics are addressed randomly in questions throughout the test.
- When guessing, use the process of elimination. Treat each option as a true or false statement, and eliminate those that you would not select. Narrow your choices and then make an educated guess.
- Answer every question, because there is no penalty for guessing. Go through the entire test, answering the questions you believe you know and skipping the ones you do not. Leave time at the end of the testing period to go back to the questions you skipped or want to review. If you are running out of time, leave a minute or so at the end to complete all of the blank questions randomly. Remember, you have a 25% probability of answering a question correctly by chance alone, so don’t miss any!
- If reading English is difficult for you because English is not your primary language, maximize your time by reading and answering all the shorter questions first. After completing all of the short questions, go back and attempt to answer the longer questions.

- Review the suggested resources listed in this handbook.