



Preparing for the Exam

Preparing for the exam can be a lengthy process. The candidate should ensure there is plenty of time to review all of the elements that are in the exam to support a successful effort. There are many options to prepare for the exams that can be chosen. NONE are required to take either the CHSE or the CHSOS examinations. The candidate should evaluate each option carefully (SSH provided options or any other options) to include the costs of each and the time requirements for each.

The Society for Simulation in Healthcare does not state or imply that the review methods, techniques, examination review courses, and/or preparatory materials are the best or only means for preparing adequately for the certification examination. Completing any or all of the suggestions, courses, resources, and other items listed here does not guarantee that any candidate will pass the certification exam.

Examination Blueprint

This document is the key item to have available when you are preparing for the exam. Every question on the exam maps back to at least one element on the exam blueprint. It is important to remember that the exam covers all elements that are listed as well. The exam blueprint lists the domains of knowledge, the percentage of each domain that will appear on the exam, and the detailed items that exist within each domain.

Preparatory Methods

There are many different ways to prepare for the examinations. The primary document no matter which method you use is the examination blueprint. The blueprint should remain at the ready for guidance and to help understand what concepts fit in which place(s) on the blueprint.

One step that is often missed is when the candidate does not reflect on which method(s) work best to prepare for the exam—based on the candidate’s own professional and learning characteristics. Individual work compared to group work is one example of this. Similarly to learners having different styles, preparing for an exam must recognize that each candidate has unique characteristics that mean some methods for reviewing and studying are more or less effective. Thus, the first step must be to reflect on what has historically worked for the candidate in preparing for any exam.

Recommended for All: (this has no cost)

Download the examination blueprint. Turn each item into a question (e.g. “what do I understand/know about the concepts of debriefing?”). Any question that is easily answered can be deemphasized for study and review. Questions that are more difficult to answer can be

prioritized for study and review. This information will help guide the use of the following study methods:

Web Resources:

There are many web resources that can be useful. Blogs, association websites (such as SSH Sim Connect and the live learning center), social media groups, libraries, journals, and many more items are available and useful. The candidate must filter what is useful and reliable to ensure they are learning is accurate and up-to-date.

Study Group:

Many find study groups to be useful. There are many ways to have a study group such as doing a journal club, creating a closed study group on social media or other platforms, or having in-person study groups that get together. There are many different methods and styles.

Literature Review:

Journal articles and other literature exists in many forms. SSH has the Simulation in Healthcare journal. Other simulation specific journals and healthcare related journals with simulation-specific articles can be very useful for reviewing based on key words or other techniques.

Books or Similar:

Books are similar to journals. They are often comprehensive in nature and can be useful for covering many topics. The index can support key word searches, and often whole chapters can prove very useful.

Peer Inquiry:

This technique is essentially directly asking another simulationist about a topic or concept. Peers and those with many years of experience in healthcare simulation can offer tremendous insights into topics, especially those with which they have more experience.

Practice Exam:

SSH offers an optional practice exam. The questions and answers were written by the same individuals who have written the questions on the actual exams. In addition, rationales have been provided for these 30-question practice exams that help the individual understand how the questions are written. The practice exam is not intended to be an indicator of successful passing of the exam. It is delivered on the same web-based platform as the actual exam, and can be completed from any computer. It will help the candidate understand the style of questions and the platform used for the exam.

Formal Courses:

SSH and others offer formal in-person and online courses to self-evaluate, review, and/or prepare. All of these courses are optional, have different methods and styles, and cannot guarantee passing the exam. Many candidates may find these useful. Each course should be carefully evaluated for appropriateness by each candidate.

Considerations

There are many considerations that each candidate should keep in mind:

- Each item(activity) may have a cost. None are required, and the candidate should carefully consider all costs associated with any preparatory activities.
- Each preparatory method is voluntary.
- All should be evaluated, and cross referenced for accuracy and complete information. There is rarely one single resource, individual, or course that has all the information.

- Some items are SSH approved. This do not indicate anything other than have been developed and reviewed by SSH.
- When reviewing and studying, the candidate should remember that the exams do not favor any simulation setting, modality, clinical setting, methodology etc UNLESS specifically noted in the exam blueprint.
- All review work should be conducted within the framework that the exam is written for the two-year competency lens. Answers for the questions are developed and evaluated with the framework, “How would an individual with two years of experience in the role be expected to perform?”
- Questions are typically not simple recall questions. They will require the candidate to think about which answer is best given the information in the question (through the two-years’ experience lens).

Reexamination Preparation

Reexamination preparation follows much the same path as preparing for the exam initially. The domain results show the correct percentage of answers in each domain. This feedback can help direct areas to focus for restudy. Candidates are encouraged to reflect on the concepts within each domain and compare it to the results for each domain.