Creating a CRA Exam Prep Program

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Presentation Outline

• Introduction to the CRA and Exam
• Why we created a CRA preparation program
• How we created a CRA preparation program
• CRA Mentoring
• Benefits of the CRA designation
• Questions and Answers
What is a CRA?

- Certified Research Administrator

What is Certification?

- The designation of Certified Research Administrator (CRA) means that an individual has met the requirements of the Research Administrators Certification Council's eligibility requirements and has demonstrated a level of knowledge necessary for a person to be a professional research or sponsored programs administrator.
Why Should I Become Certified?

• Professional recognition.
• Personnel satisfaction.
• Indicator of subject matter expertise.
• Increased opportunities for employment.
• Professional development.
• Increased credibility with faculty and peers.
• Serve as a role model to others in the field.
How do I become a CRA?

Qualifications/Credentials

• Bachelor’s degree and 3 years professional experience in Research Administration
• An Associate’s degree and 5 year of experience
• No degree and 6 years of professional related experience (requires completion of Petition Application)

Study and sit for the CRA Exam!
Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC)

- **Certified Research Administrator** (CRA) and
- **Certified Pre-Award Research Administrator** (CPRA) certification offered

✅ Eligibility requirements: vary based on highest degree obtained and length of professional experience
✅ For fee study sessions offered throughout year; Exams offered semi-annually


**Testing period:**
- May 3-17, 2014.

**Application deadline:**
- Five to six weeks before the testing period begins.

**Exam Fee:** $375

**Practice Exam Fee:** $50 (75 questions)
Structure of Exam:

- 250 multiple choice questions
- 70% passing score (175 correct)
- Areas:
  - Project Development and Administration-30%
  - Legal Requirements and Sponsor Interface-30%
  - Financial Management-25%
  - General Management-15%
Test Center Locations:

- Connecticut – Three Testing Locations,
- Maine – One Testing Location,
- Massachusetts – Eight Testing Locations,
- New Hampshire – Four Testing Locations,
- Rhode Island – Zero Testing Locations, (Southeastern, MA)
- Vermont – One Testing Locations.

Recertification:

- Every 5 years - $200 fee,
- Must describe continued participation in research administration,
- List of educational activities (presentations given, participated in, or attended 80 hours of continuing education),
- Excel tracking spreadsheet on the CRA website,
- 3 questions for future use on the CRA exam.
How do I prepare for the CRA exam?

• The RACC provides the CRA Body of Knowledge (BOK) on its website, which details the subject matter covered on the CRA exam.
• RACC offers structured review sessions that cover the BOK. These sessions are frequently held in conjunction with SRA and NCURA meetings.
• Take the RACC CRA Practice Exam – 75 questions.
  • Excellent way to identify subject matter areas to focus on.
• Start a CRA exam study group or prep program at your institution!
BWH DOM professional development survey

Lack of local, free research administration training.

Lack of a defined career path in the field.

Interest in the Certified Research Administrator Examination.
Creating a CRA Exam Prep Program in DOM

1) The body of knowledge cast a broad net over the field of research administration, as a result our GA’s felt unprepared for the exam.

   • The RACC was not planning to offer a BOK review course in New England for the foreseeable future.

   • The onsite RACC CRA exam prep course was cost prohibitive.

2) The CRA exam registration fee and practice test fee were cost prohibitive for most research administrators.
How we created a CRA Preparation Program

CRA interviews
  • Three BWH research administrators were CRA’s.

Research Administrator interviews
  • Reviewed the RACC BOK and asked our research administrators what areas of the exam they did not feel comfortable with.

Online research and outreach
  • Discovered that several colleges and universities had robust CRA prep programs.

Created a Sharepoint Site
  • Compiled internal and external training materials relevant to the CRA exam.

Solicited local subject matter experts to conduct trainings
CRA Exam Prep Program Specifics

• BWH Research Administrators self-select to prepare and sit for the exam.

• The BWH CRA preparation program beings approximately three months before the CRA exam testing window.

• The sessions are held on Friday’s afternoons in a centrally located, low pressure environment.

• Subject matter experts from across the Longwood Medical Area present on topics that are commonly tested on the exam, and our staff have identified as areas of weakness.

• We encourage staff to form small study groups.
## Spring 2014 CRA Exam Prep Session Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 14, 2014</td>
<td>11:30am – 1pm</td>
<td>CRA Info Session &amp; Human Subject Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 28, 2014</td>
<td>12pm – 1pm</td>
<td>Animal Research and Lab Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 14, 2014</td>
<td>12pm – 1pm</td>
<td>A-21 vs. A-122 and Export Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 28, 2014</td>
<td>12pm – 1pm</td>
<td>Federal Contracting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 4, 2014</td>
<td>12pm – 1pm</td>
<td>Non-NIH Federal Sponsors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 11, 2014</td>
<td>12pm – 1pm</td>
<td>Intellectual Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 25, 2014</td>
<td>12pm – 1pm</td>
<td>CRA Exam Tips and Tricks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CRA Exam preparation sessions include:

• Human Subject Research
  • Nuremburg Code, Declaration of Helsinki, Belmont Report, 45 CFR 46, Informed Consent, IRB, HIPPA, and clinical trial phases.

• Animal Research and Lab Safety
  • IACUC (purpose, composition, etc.), Animal Welfare Act, OLAW, USDA.

• A-21 vs. A-122
  • CRA exam heavily college and university focused, so knowledge of A-21 nuances is critical.
CRA Exam preparation sessions include:

- Non-NIH Federal Sponsors
  - NSF, DOD, ONR, NASA.
- Federal Contracting
  - Federal Acquisition Regulations, how to read FAR citations, FAR case law, FAR contract types, contract termination.
- Intellectual Property
  - Patents, copyrights, trademarks, licensing, Bayh-Dole Act.
- CRA Exam Tips and Tricks
  - CRA specific and generic standardized test taking strategies.
CRA Exam Mentoring

- Active CRA’s leading and participating in the study sessions gives confidence to individuals preparing for the CRA exam.
- CRA mentors share exam preparation tips, test taking strategies, and their experience on the day of the exam.
- Good citizenship: if you participate in our CRA program when you prepare for the exam, we expect you to be a CRA mentor.
- Community building – staff preparing for the CRA exam and the mentors feel like they are part of something bigger.
- Networking!
CRA Benefits – getting ahead of the curve

The CRA designation remains a relative unknown in New England: 2,044 actives CRAs – 129 in New England (6%)
CRA Designation Benefits – Quotes from BWH CRA’s

Confidence

“Passing the CRA exam gave me more confidence when I engage directly with faculty members, and validated all of my hard work over the years.”

Subject Matter Expertise

“I feel that the CRA designation in my signature block validates me as a subject matter expert in this field.”

Knowledge/Skills Development

“While I do not use all of the information that I learned for the exam on a daily basis, I feel that studying for the exam really expanded my research administration knowledge base and gives me the confidence to track down answers.”

Networking

“The CRA prep study sessions and mentoring opportunities really helped me grow my professional network across BWH.”
CRA Designation Benefits – Job Postings

BWH Department of Medicine, Research Administration Program Manager

- Basic Qualifications: 3-5 years of experience in grants management or related field required.
- Additional Qualifications: CRA preferred or are willingness to sit for the exam in the first year.

Harvard Medical School, Wyss Institute, Senior Research Officer

- Basic Qualifications: 5 - 7 years of experience in grants management or related field required.
- Additional Qualifications: Prefer candidates will have passed the CRA examination or are willing to take the CRA examination.

Tufts University, Senior Research Administrator

- Minimum Qualifications: 3 years direct experience in accounting and research administration. Sound knowledge of A-21 and A-110.
- Preferred Qualifications: Master’s Degree and/or CRA.
CRA Preparation Program Benefits

• Raise the bar for research administration within your institution.

• Provide professional development opportunities for research administrators.
  – Both for individuals preparing for the CRA exam, but also for individuals that are looking to increase their subject matter knowledge base, but are not ready to take the CRA exam.
  – CRA mentors are provided an opportunity to be leaders within the institution.

• Networking opportunities across departments and institutions.
  – Our program started as BWH DOM, now includes five BWH Departments and three outside institutions.

• Improved camaraderie and relationships among CRA prep program participants.
CRA Exam Sample Questions

Payments made by an entity that licenses intellectual property from a licensor are called?

a. Commissions  
b. Dividends  
c. Royalties  
d. Usage Fees

CFDA #’s have how many digits?

a. 2 digits  
b. 6 digits  
c. 5 digits  
d. 4 digits

The International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) is administered by which agency?

a. Department of State  
b. Department of Defense  
c. Department of Treasury  
d. Department of Interior
Questions and Answers
Contact Information

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