

STUDY GUIDE for Candidates Pursuing a Practitioner Based Certification through the NCDA Credentialing Commission - CCC

Suggestions on how to Prepare for the Written Assessment Portion of the CCC Credential



How might I prepare for the written assessment portion of the CCC credential?

The Certified Career Counselor is a practitioner level credential. The most important aspect of the CCC credential is that it recognizes the intersection of counseling and career development. This credential is intended for career counselors with an advanced degree in counselor education, counseling psychology, rehabilitation counseling or closely related counseling degree with significant exposure to career counseling practice. To prepare for the written assessment portion the best advice is to familiarize yourself with the competencies listed below and show how you apply these competencies in your sessions with clients. As soon as you click on the icon to accept/start a scenario, you must complete that scenario within the 60 minutes allowed. If you wish, you may log out of your application, in the *FluidReview*, web platform, and then log back in later to complete the next scenarios. Be sure to log out completely or the clock continues to run.

How is competency measured as it applies to the CCC credential?

The CCC credential is based on career counseling competencies of theory, ethics, multicultural influences, assessments, and labor market/employment trends. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate a comprehensive level of understanding surrounding these competencies in the four scenarios. Your application will then be assessed blind, via this rubric, by a qualified reviewer.

What are the career counseling competencies in each scenario within the CCC credential?

Scenario 1: This is the assessment question. Expertise in evaluating and selecting valid and reliable instruments appropriate to the client's gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and physical and mental capacities. Show how you appropriately administer, score, and report findings from instruments in client sessions.

Scenario 2: This is the standards and ethics question and will give you a description of a client. In this answer show the ability to identify and understand familial and cultural influences as they relate to the client. Analyze how you can support and challenge the client to examine life-work roles within the larger context including

culture, and balance of work, leisure, family, and community in their careers. You must also show an understanding and application of ethical counseling practice.

Scenario 3: This is the labor market information question. You must demonstrate a knowledge of education, training and employment trends. Your answer must include national and regional labor market information resources that provide information about job tasks, functions, salaries, and future outlook related to occupations.

Scenario 4: This is the theory question. Applicants must show a core understanding and application of theory. Analyze how you use career theory(ies) as you work with clients.

Listed below are several trusted resources you may find valuable as preparation for the scenarios you will be expected to complete within the CCC application. You are encouraged to seek out additional resources, from academic and professional sources, focusing on these same (and similar) topics.

- A Case Study Approach to Ethics in Career Development (2nd Ed), NCDCA Publication.
 - A Comprehensive Guide to Career Assessment (7th Ed), NCDCA Publication.
 - Career Development Theory and Its Application, NCDCA Publication.
 - Gaining Cultural Competence in Career Counseling (2nd Ed), NCDCA Publication.
 - NCDCA Ethics Code: https://ncda.org/aws/NCDA/asset_manager/get_file/3395
 - NCDCA Career Counseling Competencies:
https://ncda.org/aws/NCDA/pt/sd/news_article/37798/_self/layout_ccmsearch/true
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* Writing a Response to a Scenario or Case Study *

Throughout this guide, the terms **scenario**, **question** and **case study** *are interchangeable* and used to describe what you will read and then respond to in the assessment portion of the credentialing process. For most of our credentials, you will read the scenario and then respond to a focused question.

In this brief study guide, you will find some suggestions for preparing and succeeding when you are taking the assessment portion of your credential. Explore these topics:

- Preparing yourself physiologically
- Review the competencies and “freshen” your knowledge
- When you are ready to begin
- Tightening and editing your writing.

Preparing yourself physiologically.

- Just think—we expect athletes to practice constantly and use everything in their abilities and situations in order to achieve success. Yet, somehow many of us are convinced that they can quickly write a coherent focused essay response – even though it may have been a while since you wrote one in a time limited situation. Essay exams are like any other testing situation in life: you’ll do best if you are prepared for what is expected of you, have practiced doing it before, and have arrived in the best shape to do it.
- You may not want to believe this, but it’s true: a good night’s sleep and a relaxed mind and body can do as much or more for you as any last-minute cram session. If you are rested, breathing normally, and feeling prepared, you are in a much better position to do a good job
- If for some reason you find yourself feeling a sense of panic, take a minute every once in a while during the test to breathe deeply, stretch, and clear your brain. You need to be especially aware of the likelihood of errors, so check your essays thoroughly before you hand them in to make sure they answer the right questions and don’t have big oversights or mistakes (like saying Holland when you mean Super).

- Take all of the time you've been allotted. Reread, rework, and rethink your answers if you have extra time at the end, rather than giving up and clicking submit the minute you've written your last sentence. Use every advantage you are given.
- Remember that your reviewers do not want to see you trip up—they want to see you do well. With this in mind, try to relax and just do the best you can. The more you panic, the more mistakes you are liable to make. Put the experience in perspective: will you die from a poor performance? Will you lose all of your friends? Remember: it's just a short essay response.

Review the competencies and “freshen” your knowledge.

1. Review the topic of your essay. You will want to think carefully about what you read on the credentialing website about the competencies that will be addressed. Spend some time reviewing these competences and think about their application in the settings in which you work.
2. As you are reviewing this material, think about it with the goal of writing a short essay response.
3. Review our advice on the components of focused, brief essay writing.

When you are ready to begin,

1. Before you open your 1st scenario, free write about the topic for about 5 minutes as a warm-up.
2. Plan your time: Figure about 1/10 of your time to plan your response: write a brief outline. Plan another 1/5 of your time to read back through your response for editing and tightening it.
3. Read all the information provided for you and the instructions carefully to understand the format, the question, and the time limit. All of the credential assessments have a time limit.
4. As you read the scenario, notice key words in the questions (discuss, compare/contrast, analyze, explain, provide examples and such). Try looking closely at what the question is directing you to do, and try to understand what specific information you need to provide.
5. Before you begin writing, organize your answer. For answers that require a paragraph or two, jot down several important ideas or specific examples that help to focus your thoughts.
6. In planning your answer, **briefly** outline how you will address all the pieces of the questions or the topic. Check your outline against what the question or instructions ask. Think about a clear, concise and logical way to organize your response. Your outline will have to be selective—not everything you know, but what you know that you can state clearly, keep to the point in the time available, and address the question.
7. Perhaps the most important thing to keep in mind in writing essay exams is that you have a limited amount of time and space in which to get across the knowledge you have acquired and your ability to use it. Essay exams are not the place to be subtle or vague. It's okay to have an obvious structure, even the five-paragraph essay format you may have been taught in high school. Introduce your main idea, have several paragraphs of support—each with a single point defended by specific examples, and conclude with a restatement of your main point and its significance.
8. REMEMBER: Answer the question you are asked. Be careful not to stray off topic by exploring too many options. **Read the question carefully and address the core of what is being asked!**

As you are writing,

1. Generally, write sentences and paragraphs but switch to point form if you are running out of time.
2. Be clear for you reviewer: have a topic sentence for each paragraph and identify points you want to make. If the scenario has specific subparts (or required components), clearly identify what you are addressing in each subpart. You might use a header to introduce that point you want to make.
3. Follow your outline.
4. If you draw a blank, but know you want to add more, leave space for additional points.
5. Watch the clock carefully to ensure that you do not spend too much time on only one part of your answer. You must be realistic about the time constraints of an essay exam. If you write one dazzling answer on an exam with three parts, you earn only 33 points, but not enough to pass.
6. Keep your writing real – answer in simple, clear language.

Tightening and editing your writing.

1. Add a 1-3 sentence introduction and summary. In both, preview (or remind) about the key points. If introductions stump you, just leave some space and add the intro later.
2. Review your response to make sure you have answered the questions and your response matches your thesis or topic sentences. Make clear connections.

Listed Below are several suggested Resources to prepare for the Scenarios/Case Studies within the assessment portion of your application for certification:

- [The Critical Thinking Skills Cheatsheet \[Infographic\] – courtesy of Global Digital Citizen](#)
- [Tips for how to start the writing assignment - Invention: Starting the Writing Process – courtesy of the Purdue Owl](#)
- [How to write a good essay: Paraphrasing the question – courtesy of engVid: Learn English with Emma](#)
- [Writing a case study response – courtesy of QUT cite|write](#)

References:

Wantanabe-Crocket, L. (2016, December 12). The Critical Thinking Skills Cheatsheet [Infographic]. Retrieved from <https://globaldigitalcitizen.org/critical-thinking-skills-cheatsheet-infographic>

Weida, S. & Stolley, K. (2011, February 9). Tips for how to start the writing assignment - Invention: Starting the Writing Process. Retrieved from <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/587/01/>

Emma. (2016, September 12). *How to write a good essay: Paraphrasing the question*. [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/o9aVjBHEEbU>

Writing a case study response. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.citewrite.qut.edu.au/write/casestudy.jsp>