

# Preparing for the Certification Exam

Jonathan Hill

Deciding to take a certification exam is one of the most pivotal decisions in your career. This article covers those certification exams being offered through the International Certification Commission (ICC) and overseen by the U.S. BMET Board of Examiners.

Although a certification exam is not a requirement for most positions, more employers are preferring to hire those with certifications. Most job announcements in trade magazines and periodicals say “certification preferred.” They may want to ensure that a candidate has the necessary knowledge base, to demonstrate a candidate’s advancement potential, or to qualify a candidate for a position. The choice is yours as to whether you are willing to sit for an exam that will confirm to you and others the knowledge that you possess.

Once you have decided to take the certification exam, which one will you take?

- Certified Biomedical Equipment Technician (CBET)
- Certified Laboratory Equipment Specialist (CLES)
- Certified Radiology Equipment Specialist (CRES)

Your choice should be based on your current position and your career goals. Some may choose to sit for the exam that is geared to their current position. Others will choose to take an exam with the hope of redirecting their career to another field. As long as you meet the minimum eligibility requirements to take an exam, you can sit for that exam.

Whichever exam you choose, you have dedicated yourself to being one of the best in your field. The next step is to decide how to study for the exam.

Jonathan Hill, CBET, CLES, and CRES, works for ARAMARK and is currently the director of clinical engineering for Bayhealth Medical Center in Delaware. Hill earned his BS degree at Wayland Baptist University and an MBA at the University of Phoenix. He also serves in the Air National Guard as a BMET.



## Check Points

Once you commit to taking a certification exam, you should:

- ✓ Choose a study method.
- ✓ Gather study materials.
- ✓ Prepare to improve yourself and impress your employer.

Several articles written over the years tell how various people or groups study for the exam. Some study independently, as they are better at reviewing information alone. Others have given the credit for their success to studying in groups with others who are working toward the same goal. Study groups offer a great way to gain support for your endeavors. Still others seek to be in a more formalized group setting, taking an exam review course prior to taking the test. The exam review course offered at the AAMI Annual Conference is an example of this type of formalized review. Review courses provide an environment where everyone is trying to attain a similar goal, which only enhances the learning experience.

The method you choose should work best for your learning style. After all, you are the one sitting for the exam and you need to be prepared by a method that works for you.

Once you figure out how you will study, the next step is to gather the information you need to study. What you need to study will help dictate your study schedule. As expected, the laboratory and radiology tests will focus on those specialty areas, while the biomedical exam will cover a broader range of knowledge.

Each test is divided into five areas. The ICC application handbook (ICC Application Handbook, Professional Testing Corporation, NY) details each category and outlines specific subcategory areas of study. These

subcategories are your template for what study materials you should reference and gather.

Listed below are the five knowledge areas that each test will encompass:

- 1) Anatomy & Physiology (i.e. medical terminology, organ functions, etc...)
- 2) Public Safety in the Healthcare Facility (employee, patient, visitor)
- 3) Fundamentals of Electricity, Electronics and Solid-State Devices
- 4) Medical Equipment Function and Operation
- 5) Medical Equipment Problem Solving

The three tests assign different percentages to each area, so pay special attention to the test you wish to take. Larger percentage areas will require more study, but no one area should be left out of your study routine.

What resources you study is where the three certification exams will differ most. The ICC and the U.S. BMET Board of Examiners do not offer a study guide. AAMI does offer a study guide, but this guide should not be considered sufficient for studying for the exam. It does, however, provide an opportunity for you to gauge yourself as to where you would stand if you sat for a test. It will also give you an idea of those areas you will need to work on.

Additional study resources to consider include the Internet, your course books from college, regulatory guidelines, operation and service manuals, and reference books such as Thomas Floyd's *Electrical Devices* or Joseph Corr's *Introduction to Biomedical Equipment Technology*.

At this point you might be asking yourself, where do I begin?

I recommend that you check out the Professional Testing Corporation website ([www.ptcny.com](http://www.ptcny.com)) to get your hands on a free certification applicant handbook. This handbook is also available at the AAMI website, [www.aami.org](http://www.aami.org). Look over the material, which includes registration deadlines, the testing schedule and locations, and most important, what you need to study.

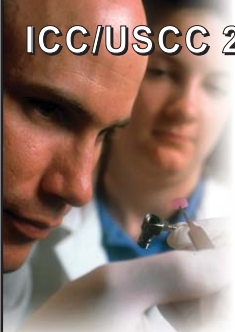
Just looking at the sub-categories of the exams explains why employers are looking for individuals who have taken and passed the exam. With the baseline of knowledge you acquire by studying for this exam, you have already improved yourself and the profession. Certification is a symbol of your dedication to the field and your personal commitment to providing the best for your customers. ■

## Preparing for the Exam

- 1). Where can you get an application handbook:
  - a) Library
  - b) Professional Testing Corporation website
  - c) AAMI website
  - d) Both B & C
  
- 2). Where do you find some source materials to study:
  - a) Internet
  - b) Reference books
  - c) Service manuals
  - d) All of the above
  
- 3) Why take a certification exam:
  - a) Improve self
  - b) Impress employer
  - c) Both A & B
  - d) To waste a Saturday morning

Answer Key:                      c) 3) d) 2) d) 1)

### ICC/USCC 2007 Exam Schedule



## CBET, CRES, CLES Certification

<b>APPLICATION DEADLINE:</b>	<b>EXAM DATE:</b>
March 24, 2007	May 5, 2007
April 30, 2007	June 19, 2007
September 22, 2007	(Boston, MA only) November 3, 2007

*If you have any questions regarding any aspect of the ICC/USCC Certification, contact Iman Hannon, certification coordinator for the ICC, at [ihannon@aami.org](mailto:ihannon@aami.org).*