# Society for Human Resource Management

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SANDRA M. REED SHRM-SCP



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#### **SHRM-CP Exam and SHRM-SCP Exam**



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Cover image: © Jeremy Woodhouse/Getty Images Cover design: Wiley This book is dedicated to the tireless HR professionals that show up every single day and try to make their workplaces —and themselves—better. I see you.

#### Acknowledgments

I would like to start by acknowledging the efforts of the incredible editorial team I had the privilege of working with on this project! It would not have happened without the guidance (and nudging) from my project manager, Gary Schwartz, who barely digitally reacted when I added four chapters halfway through the project and submitted content in such a nonlinear fashion. Similarly, thanks to my editor, Kenyon Brown, whose "flexibility-withaccountability" approach is exactly what my INTP (Introverted, Intuitive, Thinking, and Perceiving) personality requires.

Whenever I start a new book, I put in a special request for Pantelis Markou as the technical editor. Having him review my work gives me confidence that, if I make an error, he will not only catch it, but he will also provide feedback on how to make the content stronger. I was also fortunate to call upon his expertise for the special features in <u>Chapter</u> <u>11</u>, "Diversity and Inclusion," along with the professional expertise of Reut Schwartz-Hebron, Jeffrey Pietrzak, and Dawn Kelley. I am grateful that they understood my vision for that chapter and for their generosity in sharing their work.

I have had the absolute luxury of working with clients and students whom I adore. Thank you to the businesses and students who put their trust in me and allowed me to conduct my experiments in their "petri dishes." We have learned together the incredible value of heartfelt leadership over these last 18 months, and they (the leaders and employees) were my role models. Finally, I'd like to acknowledge my family, Chris, Clara, Calvin, and Jen. I tend to disappear when writing, and yet they continue to support and encourage and love and demand and enrich my life beyond any professional work I could imagine. This last year was intense beyond belief, and I wouldn't want to "do life" without them!

#### **About the Author**

Sandra M. Reed, SPHR, SHRM SCP is a leading expert in the certification of human resource professionals. She is the author of *HRCI: A Guide to the Human Resource Body* of Knowledge (HRBoK) (Wiley, 2017), PHR and SPHR Professional in Human Resources Certification Complete Deluxe Study Guide: 2018 Exams, Second Edition (Wiley, 2019), and PHR/SPHR Exam For Dummies with Online Practice, Second Edition (For Dummies Press, 2021). Reed has trained adult learners at the University of California, Davis; the University of the Pacific, and California State University, Stanislaus. She holds an undergraduate degree in industrial-organizational psychology and a graduate degree in organizational leadership. She is a master practitioner of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality assessment, and the owner of a business consulting group that specializes in strategy, organizational effectiveness and design, and leadership development for small businesses. You can find her at www.sandrareed.co.

#### **About the Technical Editor**

**Pantelis Markou**, PhD, is the chief administrative officer for Mikimoto America and an adjunct professor of business psychology at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. He has over 20 years of corporate experience managing human capital in the fashion and luxury jewelry industries, and some of his specialties are business strategy, executive selection and coaching, talent management and leadership development, change management, organizational design and restructuring, and cultural integration for mergers and acquisitions. In addition to his responsibilities in human resources, he oversees information technology, real estate, legal, and operations at t=company headquarters in New York.

Markou holds a bachelor of science in psychology from Brooklyn College, a master's degree in organizational psychology from Columbia University, and a PhD in business psychology from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

#### Introduction

Writing a book at any time is always exciting; writing a book in the middle of a pandemic is an extreme adventure. Toward the beginning of this project, I became ill with Covid-19. Six months later, my Type 1 diabetic husband also caught the virus. Five months later my oldest son got married. In between these major events, my daughter began her independent study at high school, there were a couple of job changes in the house, a cancelled vacation to New York, a strategic rebrand, an added 10 pounds, and a switch to a vegetarian diet. Oh, and one other small item: I let my SHRM SCP certification expire and had to retest not because I didn't have the credits, but because I simply did not register them. My first thought when I found out was "Am I an adult or not?" Anxiety, joy, lack of balance, a healthy dose of curiosity, and the original cast of "Hamilton: An American Musical" were the companions inside my head.

As I navigated these circumstances and thoughts that informed my perspective: I am you, and you are me. Your experiences may bedifferent, but we have weathered this time in history, and all of its uncertainties, together.

During the pandemic, my LinkedIn message box filled daily with questions about certification, specifically: "Is now the right time to take the exam?" Other concerns included pass rates, fear of failure, finances, job security, and perhaps the most common of concerns—capacity and time. The truth is, doing anything of significance is never convenient, even in the absence of a global shutdown. Those issues have always been barriers to taking a first step toward professional certification. The pandemic simply spotlighted them in a more emotionally intensive way. If the exam concerns and my experience are familiar to you, consider the words of Lao Tzu, who asked, "Do you have the patience to wait until your mud settles, and the right course of action comes along?" (Tao Te Ching, Stephen Mitchell translation, 1995). When I read this, I visualize myself thrashing about in a stream, blocking my own vision by stirring up the mud. It was in one of these underwater moments that the theme for my writing process (and guite frankly, life), declared itself: *Be still, not idle*. I encourage you to do the same. Read this book. Take practice exams. Reach out to your network. Set the worry aside. Wander when stuck. Rest before you quit. Life will happen whether you prepare, pass, or fail. The key to success of all sorts is to plant your feet firmly on the ground and stop thrashing about. This will allow you to be on your path with a still mind and a clear vision. This is important because, as a therapist told me, "We are not human *thinkers*, we are human *beings*, meant to do, to act." Stop thinking, start doing, and enjoy the people you meet and the perspectives you gain along the way. I truly wish you the best of luck!

#### **How This Book Is Organized**

The goal of this book is to serve two outcomes: prepare for a difficult exam and be a go-to resource as you practice the craft of human resources. For these reasons, a few structural features were included.

#### **Applied Examples**

As you may be aware, these exams are experience-based, and thus it is critical that you see examples of how the content applies to the workplace. This is accomplished in three main ways:

**Exam Notables:** Each chapter opens with a section entitled "Exam Notables." The purpose of this section is to introduce SHRM's definition of the exam functional area and to provide a relevant example that demonstrates how the concepts apply in real life. You will also see a list of key terms within each chapter. Some of these terms are drawn straight from SHRM's Glossary of Terms, whereas others are drawn from the best practices of HR.

**Chapter Feature:** Titled "Note," "Case Study," or "Tip," these sidebars feature relevant examples of an exam concept as it is being practiced in the field or as it may appear on the exam.

**Review Questions:** <u>Chapters 5</u>–<u>19</u> closes with 10 Review Questions that are designed to test your knowledge. A few are written to place you into the workplace, requiring that you use critical thinking skills to apply what you just read.

#### Parts

As you begin to prepare for the exams, your main tool from SHRM will be the exam Body of Competency and Knowledge (BoCK). This document outlines the content focus of the exams, and it is divided into behavioral competencies, technical competencies, and functional areas. These are further sorted into clusters and subcompetencies. More on this will be found in the coming chapters. For our purposes here, though, I sought to organize the book into parts to reduce the confusion that the BoCK can produce. The five main "parts" of this book are briefly reviewed next.

**<u>Part I</u>: Preparing for the Exams** In <u>Part I</u>, you will find a review of the certification process and take a closer look at the BoCK.

**Part II: Understanding Human Resource Competencies** In <u>Part II</u>, we break down the various competencies that are reviewed throughout the content areas. This includes a look at the differences between the behavioral competencies and the domains of knowledge competencies (also called technical expertise), which are further broken down into HR functional areas.

**<u>Part III</u>: The People Knowledge Domain** <u>Part III</u> takes a deep dive into the functional areas related to the workers we trust to achieve organizational goals.

**Part IV: The Workplace Knowledge Domain** The technical competencies of the workplace focuses on the internal and external environments where work gets done and how workplace practices affect achieving organizational results. It is in <u>Part IV</u> that SHRM's behavioral competencies begin to be introduced at the end of each chapter.

**Part V: The Organization Knowledge Domain** This part's major focus is on the structures and relationships that drive organizational behavior and successful strategies.

#### **Other Resources**

Finally, I took care to ensure that each chapter includes additional resources to augment your studying efforts. Hearing from multiple perspectives, in multiple voices, and in multiple ways will increase the odds that you will retain information on exam day and beyond. I encourage you to build additional time each week into your study plan to access the website links, watch the recommended videos, read summaries of the cited authors, or even chase down a headline about a topic of interest. Context matters with these exams.

#### Interactive Online Learning Environment and Test Bank

The interactive online learning environment that accompanies the *SHRM®* Society for Human Resource Management Complete Study Guide: SHRM-CP Exam and SHRM-SCP Exam provides a test bank with study tools to help you prepare for the certification exams—and increase your chances of passing them the first time! The test bank includes the following:

#### Sample Tests

All the questions in this book are provided, including the chapter review questions at the end of each chapter. In addition, there are two practice exams (one each for the SHRM-CP and SHRM-SCP). Use these questions to test

your knowledge of the material. The online test bank runs on multiple devices.

#### Flashcards

Two sets of questions are provided in digital flashcard format (a question followed by a single correct answer); one set is for the SHRM-CP and the other set is for the SHRM-SCP. You can use the flashcards to reinforce your learning and provide last-minute test prep before the exam.

#### **Other Study Tools**

A glossary of key terms from this book and their definitions is available as a fully searchable PDF.

