

# **2020 POLICE LIEUTENANT PROMOTIONAL EXAMINATION**

## **CANDIDATE TEST GUIDE**

July 2020

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## Section 1: Introduction

### **Overview**

This test guide is designed to assist you as you prepare for the 2020 Police Lieutenant Promotional Examination. The examination consists of four phases:

Phase I	Open-Book Multiple-Choice Exam	September 1, 2020
Phase II	Closed-Book Multiple-Choice Exam	September 1, 2020
Phase III	Written Work Sample Exam	September 3, 2020
Phase IV	Oral Board Exam	October 20, 2020

**Exam dates.** Unforeseen events may cause the exam dates and/or locations to change. Changes will be announced in the Division's Daily Bulletin, in email notices sent to candidates, or on the Commission website at [www.columbus.gov/civilservice/](http://www.columbus.gov/civilservice/).

**Exam arrival.** Please arrive to the specified test site (as indicated in each phase admission notice) at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to the beginning of each phase of the examination.

**Exam design.** These exams are designed on the basis of information obtained from a job analysis of the Police Lieutenant job classification. The job analysis provides a description of the tasks performed by Columbus Police Lieutenants, and identifies the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to effectively perform those tasks.

**Filing period.** The filing period occurs July 1 - July 31, 2020. Applications must be submitted on-line through the Commission website at [www.columbus.gov/civilservice/](http://www.columbus.gov/civilservice/).

**Scoring.** Each exam phase will be converted to z-scores and weighted twenty-five (25%) percent of the total exam score using the straightforward mathematical approach used in past years for all such exams. Per the FOP Contract, seniority points will be added to passing scores.

**Results.** Tentative test results are scheduled to be sent to candidates on October 30, 2020. Final test results with rankings are scheduled to be sent on November 13, 2020.

### **New Location!**

Our location changed in early 2019. We are now located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Jerry Hammond building at 1111 East Broad Street.

Unforeseen events may cause the dates or locations to change. Changes will be announced in email notices sent to candidates, or on the Commission website at [www.columbus.gov/civilservice/](http://www.columbus.gov/civilservice/).

## Section 2: Resources for Candidates

### **Information Sessions**

The 2020 Information Session will not be delivered in person. Instead the presentation will be recorded and then made available as a video. The video will be posted online. A link to the video will be posted to the Commission's Police Lieutenant web page the week of August 3rd, 2020. Candidates will be notified via email notice once the video is posted.

The Commission's Police Lieutenant Exam web page:

<https://www.columbus.gov/civilservice/uniformed-police-series/Police-Lieutenant/>

### **2020 Police Lieutenant Exam Reading List**

Each internal source listed below is subject to being tested on the 2020 Police Lieutenant exam. The revisions cutoff date for all internal division sources is January 31, 2020, with the exception of the FOP Contract. The December 9, 2017 - December 8, 2020 FOP contract will be used for this examination process.

Internal Division of Police Sources:

- Directives Manual
- Supervisor's Manual
- Arrest Search & Seizure Manual
- 2019 Legal Updates
- Emergency Operations Manual
- FOP Contract (December 9, 2017 - December 8, 2020)
- Patrol SOP Manual

Outside Sources:

Supplemental sources including but not limited to texts, articles and documents may be announced as needed for the Written Work Sample and Oral Board Exam at the time of the application filing period.

### **On Exam Days:**

Any of the listed source materials may be referenced by candidates during the Open-Book Multiple-Choice phase and the Written Work Sample phase, and during the preparation period of the Oral Board phase.

While the Commission will **not** provide printed copies of the source materials on exam days, each candidate may bring their own **printed** copies of the source materials. While candidates may make notes on their own printed copies of the source materials before the exam, they may **not** do so during the exam. Additionally, while candidates may seek out additional materials that are not on the reading list before the exam, to use while studying, they may not add those or any other pages to the source materials for use during the exam. Pages added to the sources are not permitted in the exam room. **In any event, personal electronic sources will not be permitted for use during the exam.**

## Section 3: Multiple-Choice Exams

### Overview

Phases I and II of the examination are the Multiple-Choice exams. Both are designed to assess the knowledge that is needed to be an effective Police Lieutenant.

The questions on Phases I and II will be in multiple-choice format. The questions will be derived from the sources shown on the reading list (see Section 2). There will be approximately sixty (60) questions on each of these phases.

Phases I and II will be administered on the **same** day. The Open-Book Multiple-Choice Exam will be administered first; the Closed-Book Multiple-Choice exam will be administered second.

Due to the occupancy constraints in the testing facility, the Multiple-Choice Exams will be administered **twice** on test day. The first session will be administered in the morning; a second session will be administered in the afternoon. Please check your admission notice for your arrival time.

On test day, you will be given an official scan-enabled answer sheet for each Multiple-Choice exam. You will record your responses on the official answer sheets, and only the responses on those answer sheets will be scored. Credit will not be given for incorrect answers.

### Exam Day – Phase I

Phase I is an open-book multiple-choice exam. It is designed to test your knowledge of information that is in the source materials that **does not** need to be memorized.

Candidates will be permitted to bring the following to the Phase I exam:

- **Reading list sources.** You may bring your own **printed** copies of the reading list sources to the Phase I exam, and then use those during the Phase I exam. While you may mark (e.g. tabs, highlighting, underlining, notes in the margins) your own printed copies of the sources **before** the exam, you may **NOT** do so **during** the exam. All sources will be subject to inspection at the test site to ensure that no additional summary pages have been added. You may NOT share your copies of the reading list sources with other candidates during the exam. Additional details about how the reading list sources are permitted to be used during specific phases of the exam are in section 2 of this test guide.
- **Hard copy dictionary.** While you may bring and use your own hard copy dictionary, NO electronic dictionaries will be permitted, and you may NOT share your dictionary with other candidates during the exam.

- **Highlighter.** You may bring a highlighter for use during the exam; however you may NOT use a highlighter to mark on the computer answer sheet or reading sources during the exam.

## **Exam Day – Phase II**

Phase II is a closed-book multiple-choice exam. It is designed to test your knowledge of information that is in the source materials that **does** need to be memorized.

You will **NOT** be allowed to use the reading list sources during the closed-book multiple-choice exam.

Candidates will be permitted to bring the following to the Phase II exam:

- **Highlighter.** You may bring a highlighter for use during the exam; however you may NOT use a highlighter to mark on the computer answer sheet.

## **Multiple-Choice Appeals**

The Multiple-Choice exams will be subject to a one-round appeal process. The appeal process provides you the opportunity to review the scoring key for each Multiple-Choice exam, and submit an appeal of a keyed item if you think it is warranted.

**Test day.** During the administration of the Multiple-Choice exams you *must* mark your answers on the official **answer sheet** to receive points; you *may also* mark your answers in your **test booklet**. During the appeals process you will be permitted to see your test booklet and review any answers that you marked there, but you may **not** review your official answer sheets during the appeals process. Therefore it is a good idea *during* the exam to also mark your answers in your test booklet. Any marks you make in your test booklet are solely for your own use. The official answer sheets are the **ONLY** documents that will be used for scoring.

**Appeal days.** During appeals you will be provided with the answer keys and your own test booklets. You must bring your own source materials to reference for appeals, and you will be strictly prohibited from writing in those source materials or from removing any test materials (original, machine-copied, or hand-copied notes) from the appeals site. Cell phones, computers, and other electronic devices will NOT be allowed in the appeals room and only exam candidates will be permitted—NO adult family or friends.

**Basis of appeals.** You must indicate the basis on which the appeal is being filed. Appeals which are ambiguous, or do not refer to one of the four reasons listed below, or are unsubstantiated, may be summarily dismissed. For each appeal submitted, you must clearly indicate the reason that the appeal is being filed and explain the rationale.

An item may be appealed for one of the following reasons **ONLY**:

1. No correct alternative: The appellant must specify the reason the keyed alternative is incorrect.
2. Multiple correct alternatives: The appellant must demonstrate that an un-keyed alternative is at least as proper as the keyed alternative.
3. Item is not contained in a source on the reading list: The appellant must demonstrate that the item was based on reference material not contained in a source on the reading list.
4. Incorrectly keyed alternative: The appellant must demonstrate that the keyed alternative is incorrect and a different alternative is correct.

**Resolution of appeals.** The appeals will be kept anonymous and grouped by question number, and then reviewed by a panel of subject matter experts. The subject matter experts will determine the merit of each appeal.

In the event that an appeal for one of the reasons outlined in 1-3 above is granted, the item will be deleted. If an appeal is granted because the alternative was incorrectly keyed (4), the key will be corrected. If an appeal is upheld it will result in that item being either deleted or re-keyed for all candidates taking the exam. All decisions will be final.

### **How to Use the Scan-Enabled Answer Sheets**

On test day you are to mark your one answer (A, B, C, etc.) for each question on the scan-enabled answer sheets that you will be given on test day. The answer sheets will be scored by machine so it is important that you follow marking instructions carefully.

Review the following instructions to help you prepare for test day.

1. Follow the test monitor's instructions carefully when you fill in your Person Identification Number (PID) on the answer sheet.
2. Although you **are** permitted and encouraged to mark in the test booklet, your score will be based **only** on the answers marked on the answer sheets.
3. Use **#2 pencils** only on the answer sheet. You will be given several pencils during the exam. Do **not** use felt-tip pens or any other pens.
4. Make one and only one mark for each test question.
5. Frequently check that the answer number you are marking on the **answer sheet** matches the question number shown in the **test booklet**.
6. Make good **dark** marks that completely fill the circle for the answer you choose.
7. To change an answer, fully erase the answer that you intend to change, then mark your new answer.

8. **Completely erase** any changed answers.

### **How to Optimize Your Multiple-Choice Performance**

The following strategies can help you while you are taking each multiple-choice exam:

1. Read the directions carefully.
2. Be familiar with the answer sheet strategies listed above.
3. Note how much time has been given to complete each exam, and regularly check how much time is remaining.
4. You **MUST** mark your answers on the **answer sheet** to receive credit. You may **ALSO** mark your answers in the **test booklet** so you can quickly double-check your answers if there is time remaining after you answer every question, and so you can review your answers and compare them to the answer key during the appeals.

Below are some suggestions for writing in the test booklet:

- a. Use slash marks (/) to break up sentences into smaller segments, so you can focus on each piece of information.
  - b. Circle key words that indicate what each sentence is about, so you can quickly and easily skim passages if you have to hunt for an answer.
  - c. Underline or circle words that harden or soften the meaning of a sentence.
  - d. Label each answer alternative, for example mark a “g” next to a clearly good answer, and mark an “x” next to a clearly bad answer, so you can save time if you have to re-read the question or answer alternatives.
5. Try to produce the correct answer in your mind before you look at the **answer alternatives**. If you know the answer, compare your answer to the alternatives that are provided and select the closest alternative.
  6. Look for clue words. Words such as **all**, **only**, **none**, **every**, **must**, and **never** harden the meaning of a statement by indicating that there are no exceptions. Generally, alternatives with these words have a lesser chance of being correct. Words such as **some**, **sometimes**, **may**, **generally**, and **possibly** soften the meaning of a statement and leave more room for an alternative to be correct.
  7. Be open to selecting the first answer that comes to mind. First instincts are often correct.
  8. Answer the easy questions first and then go back to the harder questions so you do not spend too much time on any one item.
  9. If you don't know the answer to a question before looking at the answer alternatives, first eliminate any answer alternatives that are obviously wrong. Doing so may increase



your chances of choosing the correct answer. After eliminating any obviously wrong answers, pick the best alternative from those that are left. You can even mark the question in the **test booklet**, then come back to it and change the answer on the **answer sheet** later.

10. Don't be misled by answer alternatives that are only partially true. Don't be misled by answer alternatives that are true only if certain conditions apply, and those conditions are not presented in that test question.
11. Answer every question, even if you must guess. There are no penalties for guessing.
12. If you have time, go back and look at every question and answer. Make any changes that are necessary.
13. Test monitors are there to assist with the procedures. If you have any questions, ask for assistance before the exam begins or whenever a question arises. Monitors can clarify instructions and answer questions about exam procedures, but they may not answer questions about exam content.
14. Pace yourself and leave time to go back and check your work.
15. The test questions and keyed responses are developed using the source materials on the reading list. Civil Service Commission staff and subject matter experts make great efforts to develop test material that represents the job; in the event that there are discrepancies between practices performed on the job and practices as described in the source, the keyed response will reflect the source.

### **How to Avoid Common Multiple-Choice Errors**

Analyzing your current multiple-choice exam test-taking habits and identifying problem areas *before* test day can help you be more successful *on* test day. Common errors, and strategies for avoiding them, are outlined below. Review the list; identify any errors you might be prone to making, and review and practice any strategies that follow.

Practice tests are available online and at local libraries and bookstores. Taking practice tests—even if they are unrelated to the job of Police Lieutenant—can help you identify and improve any aspects of test-taking that you may need to improve.

1. **Error:** You filled in the wrong circles on the answer sheet. Since there are a limited number of questions on the exam, this can be a very costly error. **Strategy:** Make it a habit to double check each answer choice on the answer sheet and ensure you marked the answer you chose. Pace yourself throughout the test so you have time to review your answer sheet once more at the end.
2. **Error:** You misread a question or answer. This may be caused by overlooking a key word or phrase. **Strategy:** Make it a habit to underline key words and phrases so those stand out as you review back and forth between each test question and its answer options. If the underlined terms do not closely match an answer, consider the answer

suspect and try another. **Remember, you are looking for the best answer among the answers listed.**

3. **Problem:** You did not know the meaning of one or more key terms. This could be a preparation issue or a vocabulary issue. **Strategy:** As you study, underline or highlight words and phrases that are unfamiliar. If an unfamiliar term is technical, it will likely be defined in the source materials. If an unfamiliar term is non-technical, look it up in a dictionary. It is also a good idea to build your own glossary of terms as you study.
4. **Problem:** You did not distinguish between the important and unimportant parts of a question, perhaps because the question was complicated or difficult to understand. **Strategy:** Use slash marks to break material into smaller segments; then focus on one segment at a time. If a question is especially difficult to understand, save it for last. When you return to it, review the answer options *first, before* you review the question, so you already have the possible answers in mind.
5. **Error:** You misunderstood the question, perhaps because it combined several pieces of information. **Strategy:** Re-arrange the information so that it makes sense. Underline or highlight critical pieces of information and then compare those with the possible answers. Also consider eliminating obviously wrong answers first.
6. **Error:** You chose a **wrong** answer because it “looked good,” perhaps because:
  - a. The wrong answer contained the same word or phrase that was in the question. **Strategy:** Try to produce the correct answer in your mind before you look at the answer alternatives.
  - b. The wrong answer presented a sentence or phrase out of context and thus gave a different meaning to something that was presented in the question. **Strategy:** Underline key words and phrases as you read; add brief notes about the underlined terms in your test booklet.
  - c. The wrong answer overstated what the question stated. For example, suppose the test question stated “Some officers...” and the answer you fell for stated “All officers...” **Strategy:** Make it a habit to notice words such as “some” which soften the meaning of a statement, and words such as “all” which harden the meaning. If you encounter words like these, underline them so they stick out as you review between a test question and the possible answers. Do not fall for answers that stretch or exaggerate facts described in the test question.
  - d. The wrong answer contained a passage from an irrelevant section of one of the sources. **Strategy:** If a test question introduces a situation and asks you to identify the source section that contains the most appropriate information for dealing with the situation, have the answer in mind, and try to imagine what the source might specifically state, before you review the possible answers.

## Section 4: Written Work Sample Exam

### Overview

Phase III of the Police Lieutenant Exam is the Written Work Sample exam. This phase is designed to assess knowledge, skills, and abilities that are needed to be an effective Police Lieutenant.

The Written Work Sample exam will consist of one or more problems and may consist of a series of situations or problems typical of issues a Columbus Police Lieutenant might face on the job. Candidates may be asked to describe how they would handle each problem, issue, or situation. Candidates may be required to complete or review a letter, a memo, an outline, and/or other written work product. The situation may require a brief description of actions to be taken or call for a detailed plan of action. Candidates will be given a limited amount of time to complete this phase of the exam.

### Exam Day – Phase III

In an effort to help minimize the spread of COVID-19, several changes have been made in terms of *how* and *where* the WWS will be administered:

1. The WWS will be administered **via pencil and paper**, not on computer.
2. The WWS location is being changed to **1111 E. Broad Street**.
3. The WWS may be administered **twice**: first in the morning, then in the afternoon.

Please see your Written Work Sample Exam admission notice for additional details.

Candidates will be permitted to bring the following to the Phase III exam:

- **Reading list sources.** You may bring your own **printed** copies of the reading list sources to the exam, and then use those during the exam. While you may mark (tabs, highlighting, underlining, notes in the margins) your own printed copies of the sources **before** the exam, you may **NOT** do so **during** the exam. All sources will be subject to inspection at the test site to ensure that no additional summary pages have been added. You may NOT share your copies of the reading list sources with other candidates during the exam.
- **Hard copy dictionary.** While you may bring and use your own hard copy dictionary, NO electronic dictionaries will be permitted, and you may NOT share your dictionary with other candidates during the exam.
- **Highlighter.** You may bring a highlighter for use during the exam; however you may **NOT** use a highlighter to mark on the reading sources during the exam.

## **Scoring**

Scoring of the Phase III exam will utilize a check-off type answer key. Civil Service analysts will work closely with subject matter experts (SMES) in the Division of Police to create the check-off key. Where possible, SMEs and analysts will identify the knowledge source from which each keyed response was derived. Note, some of the keyed responses may be based on SME expertise that aligns with best and/or common practices in response to any problems or situations at stake in the written work sample. The answer key may have built-in safeguards such that candidates who give contradictory responses or fail to make necessary decisions will not receive full credit or may receive negative credit.

During scoring, each candidates' exam will be compared to the answers shown on the scoring key. Development SMEs will be consulted for clarification in the event that it is not clear what a candidate meant by part of a response (e.g. they used unfamiliar terminology).

The WWS exam will be scored by CSC analysts. Each candidate's exam will be initially scored by two graders. Then the score sheets will be compared item by item. If there are any items where one grader gave credit and the other grader did not give credit, then each of those items will be scored by a third grader. Credit for those items will be determined on a two-out-of-three basis.

## **Clerical Review and Limited Appeals**

You will be given an opportunity to participate in a **clerical review** process. The clerical review is scheduled for September 29, September 30, and October 1, 2020.

At the clerical review, you will be provided the opportunity to review your written work sample scores. You may petition for additional points, in the event you believe a response provided is consistent with the key, but was not awarded a point(s). You may petition for a review of your response. Internal SMEs, at the rank of lieutenant or above, will conduct the petition reviews and determine whether points will be awarded based upon the petitions filed.

During the clerical review, a **limited appeal** process will be implemented. If during the clerical review you believe that you identified that an answer on the key is critically flawed, you may submit an appeal to the Commission Executive Director. Appeals shall be submitted in writing. Written appeals submitted will not contain candidates' names, rather, they will be identified by candidate identification number only. If the appeal is upheld, the keyed response will be deleted for all candidates.

## Section 5: Oral Board Exam

### Overview

Phase IV is the Oral Board exam. Phase IV will consist of two oral board exercises, which will be independent from one another. During each oral board exercise you will be given a problem situation for which you must develop a solution.

### Exam Day – Phase IV

Test day will consist of three main activities, in the following order:

1. A preparation period,
2. Oral Board exercise #1, and
3. Oral Board exercise #2.

Each activity will occur in a separate room. Candidates may be sequestered either before or after the exam.

**The preparation period.** You will be given a set amount of time, typically sixty minutes, to plan your responses to the oral board exercises. The preparation room will be separate from the oral board exercise rooms. The panel members who will role-play and/or score Phase IV will not be observing candidates in the preparation room.

Candidates will be permitted to bring the following to the Phase IV preparation period:

- **Reading list sources.** You may bring your own **printed** copies of the reading list sources. While you may mark (tabs, highlighting, underlining, notes in the margins) your own printed copies of the sources **before** you arrive to the test site, you may **NOT** do so **during** the preparation period or during the exam. All sources will be subject to inspection at the test site to ensure that no additional summary pages have been added. You may NOT share your copies of the reading list sources with other candidates during the preparation period or during the exam.
- **Highlighter.** You may bring a highlighter for use during the preparation period; however you may **NOT** use a highlighter to mark on the reading sources during the preparation period.

The CSC will provide the following items during the preparation period:

- One or more **handouts** related to each Oral Board exercise;
- Blank **paper** and pencils for making notes;
- A non-electronic **dictionary**.

You will be permitted to bring any notes that you generate during the preparation period to each Oral Board exercise room, to use during each performance.

**The Oral Board exercises.** The allotted response time for each exercise will be approximately 10 minutes. The exact time allotments have yet to be determined.

Each exercise will consist of a role-play scenario, structured interview, presentation, or some combination of these. During each exercise you will interact with up to three panel members/role-players. In **role-play** exercises, the role-players may play civilians, subordinates, peers, superiors, or others with whom the candidate would be expected to interact in the given situation. In **structured interview** exercises, an interviewer will ask the candidate a series of questions, to which the candidate is expected to respond. In **presentation** exercises, candidates will be given a topic or problem and asked to present their ideas or solutions.

For each exercise, you will be expected to respond as if you currently hold the rank of Police Lieutenant with the Columbus Division of Police. Your performance should be complete, concise, demonstrate a thorough awareness of the issues at stake, and deliver sound resolutions to the problem(s) at hand.

You WILL be **permitted** to use any notes that you generate during the preparation period when participating in the actual Oral Board exercises. Additionally, you WILL be **permitted** to take notes while participating in each oral exercise if you so desire. You should be aware however that the panel members, when conducting evaluations, will not consider any written notes that a candidate may prepare or use during the oral exercises. The panel members/role-players may take notes during the actual Oral Board exercises.

All candidate performances will be recorded via digital video. The videos will be viewed for scoring. The performances will not be scored on exam day and assessors/role-players will not score any exercise for which they served as a panel member.

### **Scoring Dimensions**

For the Oral Board exam, you will be evaluated on four managerial dimensions: Communication, Interpersonal Relations, Analysis/Evaluation, and Decision-Making.

The basic scope of each Oral Board scoring dimension is as follows:

<b>Scoring Dimension</b>	<b>What will be evaluated</b>
Communication	How you convey and receive <b>information</b>
Interpersonal Relations	How you engage and interact with <b>people</b>
Analysis/Evaluation	How you analyze and evaluate <b>information</b>
Decision-Making	How you select and implement a <b>course of action</b>

An expanded description of each scoring dimension, and examples of effective and ineffective behaviors in each area, are next.

### **Dimension: Communication**

This dimension evaluates how you convey and receive information. In the context of the Oral Board exam this involves how you **verbally** (e.g., words, volume, tone) convey and

receive information and how you **visually** (e.g., facial expressions and body language) convey and receive information.

Examples of effective behaviors:

- Uses correct terminology and grammar
- Speaks at an appropriate pace
- Organizes ideas in ways that others can understand (e.g., chronologically)
- Answers questions completely and precisely

Examples of ineffective behaviors:

- Speaks so quickly that others miss what was said
- Rambles, speaks in monologues, or fails to get to the point
- Habitually repeats themselves (e.g., “Like I said...”)
- Responds to only part of a question

## **Dimension: Interpersonal Relations**

This dimension evaluates how you engage and treat other people. Good Interpersonal Relations involves establishing and maintaining cooperative and constructive working relationships with other individuals and groups, and taking others’ feelings, needs, and viewpoints into consideration.

Good interpersonal relations does *not* require being non-assertive or indecisive; it requires balancing sensitivity and assertiveness in ways that help everyone—including oneself—function well in their positions.

Examples of effective behaviors:

- Solicits input, especially from individuals who may hesitate to speak up
- Gives credit to others for good ideas and performance
- Welcomes contrasting viewpoints
- Offers support and assistance to individuals experiencing problems

Examples of ineffective behaviors:

- Interrupts or dismisses the input of others
- Takes credit for others’ ideas
- Gets defensive when others challenge or disagree
- Belittles individuals who make mistakes

## **Dimension: Analysis/Evaluation**

This dimension evaluates how you analyze and evaluate information. In the context of the Oral Board exam, **Analysis** involves identifying the specific issues or problems at stake in each exercise, identifying the nature and/or cause of each main issue/problem, identifying information that is relevant to a particular issue/problem, investigating how the information relates to the issue/problem, etc. In the context of the Oral Board exam, **Evaluation** involves distinguishing between information that is relevant and important to a specific topic/issue/problem, and information that is not, etc.

Examples of effective behaviors:

- Identifies the actual issues/problems at hand in each exercise
- Identifies key information relevant to the issue/problem at hand
- Investigates how a key piece of information relates to the issue or problem
- Distinguishes between important and unimportant information

Examples of ineffective behaviors:

- Misstates or overlooks the actual issue or problem at hand
- Overlooks key information relevant to the issue/problem at hand
- Misstates how a key piece of information relates to the issue or problem
- Prioritizes unimportant information

## **Dimension: Decision-Making**

This dimension evaluates how you select and implement a specific course of action in an effort to resolve a specific issue or problem. **Depending on the specifics of the situation at hand**, this could involve establishing goals, offering ideas, proposing solutions, making decisions, describing plans, outlining specific steps, resolving an issue or problem on the spot, providing justification for a specific idea/decision/plan, etc.

Examples of effective behaviors:

- Identifies possible courses of action for resolving a problem
- Makes a decision
- Implements a plan of action to achieve a goal

Examples of ineffective behaviors:

- Struggles to make a decision
- Fails to propose action that is clearly warranted
- Fails to explain how a decision will be applied

## **Oral Board Paper Inspection and Video Review**

The Paper Inspection of the Oral Board and Video Review is by appointment only; it is scheduled to occur November 4 – 6, 2020. The paper inspection is your opportunity to review a copy of your scores by dimension and by rater, and to review the video of your oral board performance.

You will have the option to invite a CPD mentor who is in the rank being tested or higher to the review of your oral exam. The CPD mentor cannot have served as a development SME for this phase. Instructions for scheduling will be included in the Tentative Results notice that is scheduled to be sent October 30, 2020.



## Section 6: Studying Techniques

This section describes some general techniques that may help you study for each phase of the exam. Perhaps you already use some of them. In any case, the techniques presented below are alternatives you can try in order to determine which work best for you.

### General Studying Tips

- Start early; do not wait until the last minute to study.
- Schedule regular study times.
- Reciting from memory helps transfer information from short-term memory to long-term memory. Regularly attempt to recite key points from memory. More material will be retained if a greater portion of your study time is spent reciting.
- Create associations between material you are studying, and tasks and events in your own life; doing so will help you remember and contextualize what you are studying.

### Note-Taking Techniques

**Cornell Note-Taking System.** This system is an effective exam-preparation tool because it *actively* engages your thinking and memory; plus it helps you take, review, and organize notes in less time. The basic process, which can be summarized as Record > Question > Recite > Reflect > Review > Summarize, can be implemented in five main steps:

1. Create four sections on a blank page, as shown on the right.
2. In the right-hand column, as you read the material that you are studying, write down main notes and key thoughts;
3. In the left-hand column, review the notes you took in step 1, write key words and phrases that summarize the notes, and develop and write your own self-test questions from the notes.
4. In the bottom row, summarize in your own words the notes you took in step 1.
5. Test yourself. Cover the right-hand column where you took notes; use the key words and self-test questions you wrote in the left-hand column to review. Identify concepts and facts that you could not accurately recall, and study those more closely.

Course, Topic, and Date	
Study Cues	Class Notes
Summary	

**Questions-in-the-Margin System.** This system involves the following steps:

1. Survey the entire section,
2. Return to the first paragraph and read to determine what is important,
3. Write a brief question about the key points in the margin,
4. Underline or highlight key words and sentences that answer the questions.

## **Reading Comprehension Techniques**

**Page-at-a-Time Method.** This method involves stopping at the bottom of each page and summarizing the content in a few sentences. Ask yourself, “What was said on this page?” The page-at-a-time method makes you concentrate by forcing your mind to focus on the material while it is still fresh.

**Organizational Pattern Method.** This method involves identifying how the material is organized. If you first identify the organizational pattern, you may be able to better organize both your note taking and thinking. Examples of common organizational patterns include:

- **Process Pattern:** Information presented as steps in a sequence.
- **Increasing Importance Pattern:** Information presented from least to most important.
- **Decreasing Importance Pattern:** Information presented from most to least important.
- **Cause and Effect Pattern:** Content organized by problem, solution, and/or outcome.
- **Compare or Contrast Pattern:** Content organized by similarities or differences between two or more pieces of information.

**Paragraph Method.** This involves stopping at the end of each paragraph and summarizing it in one sentence. Simply ask yourself, “What was this paragraph meant to convey?” This can help ensure that you understand what you read. It can also help you identify the types of sentences and paragraphs you are reading. This approach can help you identify where the important information is in the material.

Identify types of sentences by function:

- Topic sentences point to the main idea
- Supporting sentences support, explain, and clarify the main idea
- Concluding sentences summarize the main idea or content

Identify types of paragraphs by function:

- Introductory paragraphs relay the main idea
- Expository paragraphs present new information
- Transitional paragraphs tie information together
- Summarizing paragraphs restate main ideas and draw conclusions

**SQ3R Method.** This is a five-step method that can be implemented as follows.

**Step 1: Survey.** To survey is to find the limits or borders of something. This step involves distinguishing between important information and trivial detail.

The most obvious approach is to scan pages from start to finish. By skimming over the pages, you will get an idea of what is to come and how long it will take to cover the material. This will help you to break the assignment down into reasonable time blocks. Look for section summaries, which provide an overview of the important parts or pieces of a section. If you look at the section itself, you will see that it is usually broken down into smaller parts or pieces through the use of headings or numbering. Bold headings introduce big or important elements; smaller headings introduce sub areas of these important elements. These headings can provide an important road map of the content.

**Step 2: Question.** Most people need a reason to do things; the same is true when it comes to studying. This step involves formulating questions, then looking for the answers in the source that you will be studying. You can use the source headings to inspire possible questions. Write a question for each major and minor heading. Looking for answers to questions that you yourself came up with can give more meaning to the material you are reading.

**Step 3: Read.** Reading alone is a poor study method. Reading is just one step. When you read, tackle the reading in smaller chunks—the small chunks that you identified in the survey step. One section might be all of the material under a major heading. If several pages are included under a major heading, divide it up into smaller sections separated by minor headings. Try to determine how many sections you will read in a given study session. Once you are able to answer the questions you developed in step two, you can move on to the next section. Be sure you understand the material in each section you read before you move on to the next. Take breaks between sections, not in the middle of sections.

It is important to understand the material you are reading. One way to do this is to keep a list of all unfamiliar terms and their meanings. The quicker you get to know the meaning of all the terms, the more effective studying will be. You might want to keep a notebook of these unfamiliar terms as well as important terms.

To make studying more active, mark or underline or highlight while you read. This will also help you to focus on the major ideas and keep you from getting bogged down with unimportant details. Reviewing the material will be easier since you have already given yourself some hints and associations that will aid in later recall.

Also, make notes to yourself in the margins. If you choose to use the underlining and marking method, here are a few guidelines:

- Review the entire section once before doing any underlining or marking.
- Don't mark or underline too much; the value of the technique lies in highlighting only the most important material.
- Use ink if possible so your underlining and notes do not disappear or become unclear in the course of studying.
- Use symbols. For example, use "?" to mark questions that come to mind as you read, use "\*" for a particularly important idea, etc.

**Step 4: Recite.** Recitation helps you remember what you just read. Recitation is most effective when it is done soon after you first learn new material because the greatest amount of information is lost or forgotten right after it is first learned.

Recitation does not have to be out loud, but it should be formal. Don't just look over the information and say to yourself, "Now I know it." Rather, close the book and try to repeat what you just read, then check to see if you were correct.

Reciting material with the assistance of another individual is also helpful. You can ask each other questions about portions of the material, which will make you recite the material in a more formal way. Choosing someone who is familiar with the material is

not necessary. The person only has to be able to recognize that what you have said is what is written in the book or in your notes.

Do not try to recite too much information at once. Depending on the number of pages covered, this might be all of the information in one major heading or even one subheading. A whole chapter is certainly too large a unit for recitation purposes.

**Step 5: Review.** After you finish studying a block of material such as a chapter, review what you have learned. This can be done through reciting or through answering specific questions. The point is that you should go back over the material once you think you have learned it.

The second form of review is done just before you begin a new study session. In this form of review, you are actually preparing yourself for new learning by strengthening previous learning. This helps to ensure that any old learning that is needed as a basis for new learning is correct and available.

The final form of review is done before a test and is most effective in a group with other test takers. This cuts down on some of the drudgery of pre-test studying and can increase the meaningfulness of the information. It is sometimes easier to remember the information if you think back to who said what and how the review conversation went.

## **Concentration Techniques**

You must pay close attention to reading material if you expect to remember it during an exam. Below are several things you can do to enhance your concentration.

1. **Make the material more interesting or meaningful.** One way to do that is to apply it to yourself by relating it to your own personal experiences. For example, when you study the Supervisor's Manual try to relate each main concept to something you have done or have seen a supervisor do.
2. **Eliminate distractions from your study environment.** Distractions compete for your attention, interfere with your concentration, and "turn off" your memory of the material. It can be difficult for anyone to pay attention to several things at the same time; instead we usually switch back and forth, paying attention first to one thing and then to another. Unfortunately, any material that did not receive attention will not be remembered. This means listening to the radio while you are studying, or studying in a noisy area, will leave gaps in your memory of the material you are trying to learn. Establish a regular "place to study" to help you focus your attention.
3. **Eliminate internal distractions.** Avoid trying to learn or memorize material when you are tired or hungry. Fatigue reduces the amount of material that you can remember. Both fatigue and hunger make concentration difficult. One way to avoid internal distractions is to schedule study times with regular breaks and to set realistic goals.
4. **Use the check-mark technique.** This technique involves keeping a separate sheet of paper beside you and marking a check on it each time your mind wanders. This makes you aware of how often you are not concentrating and forces you to keep focused. Too

many checks could indicate that a different study time could allow you to concentrate better and use your time more effectively.

## **Memorization Techniques**

### Distributed vs. Massed Practice

Distributed practice involves studying for short periods on many days. For example, instead of studying for 7 hours one day each week, aim instead to study for one hour each day of the week. This approach will help reduce fatigue and boredom. Also, it is easier to stay motivated when you study in shorter blocks of time.

Massed practice involves studying for many hours on relatively few days. This method is also known as “cramming.” While this method may be useful for creative processes, such as when first drafting a paper, it is a much less effective technique for memorizing information that you may need to do well on a test or on the job.

## **Visualization Techniques**

The left-brain is used for reading, note-taking and memorization, while the right brain is used for looking at graphs, shapes, and forms, and for visualizing and focusing on the whole. By visualizing while studying, you use both hemispheres of the brain and strengthen the ability to recall information at a later time.

A concept map or word diagram can help you to visualize material. This is an outline in a flow chart format that shows key points and how they are related. It can be used to reinforce important facts, clarify difficult passages, and organize and pull together ideas, and can be used as a review.