

FOCUS ON CRA



Stand Out in a Crowd: Credentialing Helps Employers and Employees

With overall unemployment rates at a 25 year high¹, a new phrase is making its way into our collective vocabulary: "resume overload." According to *The Wall Street Journal*, employers are changing the ways in which they post job openings and review applications in an effort to manage the overabundance.²

Now more than ever, potential employees are looking for ways to quickly relay their skills and knowledge to employers and employers are looking for solid methods to evaluate the qualifications and experience of potential employees. That's where certification can help.

What does it mean to be certified?

Professional certification is an impartial validation or confirmation that an individual possesses the skills or knowledge necessary to perform a job or task.

In the case of CRA certification, the Radiology Administration Certification Commission (RACC) is certifying that the CRA possesses the knowledge and skills that studies have determined are critical for the role of imaging administrator.

How does the RACC know what it takes to be a good imaging administrator?

The initial list of domains was created by a 10-person panel of administrators from a variety of backgrounds, regions, and facility types, working with outside test creation experts. This initial list was then confirmed and validated by over 1000 imaging administrators across the country. You can read more about the process here: http://www.crainfo.org/AM/Downloads/CRA/November_2008_CRAUpdate.pdf.

Each exam question is based on topics from that list and is backed by published references. No question is used on the exam until it goes through a rigorous review process involving key subject reviewers, CRA candidates (through the experimental questions tested on the exams), and the input of psychometricians and statisticians.

Is the CRA meaningful or does everyone pass?

That may sound like a cynical question, but with the great variety of degrees, licenses, and credentials out there, it's worth addressing.

The validity of the cut score is established and maintained by experts in the field of test creation and maintenance who stand by their work.

Before taking the exam, CRA candidates must first meet pre-

requisites based on education, experience, and potentially credentialing. Of those who meet the prerequisites, approximately 70% of CRA candidates pass on their first attempt and a total of 72% of candidates eventually pass after 1 or more attempts.

Our internal audits further back up the credential's validity in that more experienced and educated candidates are more likely to pass than those who take the exam with the minimum requirements (see <http://www.crainfo.org/AM/Downloads/CRA/WhatIsCRA.pdf>).

Will being a CRA get me the job? If I hire a CRA, will I get the best person for the job?

Obviously, no one can make that kind of guarantee. What we can tell you, however, is that every CRA has taken and passed an examination carefully designed to establish that the CRA has met a level of skill and knowledge in the areas critical to imaging management. Additionally, any CRA who has held the credential for more than 3 years has recertified with continuing education in the areas certified on the CRA examination.

The CRA designation is not the only piece of the hiring puzzle, but it can be a useful tool to help identify qualified candidates in an efficient, unbiased way.

Bottom Line

The bottom line is that CRA certification, like all certification, is not the only factor involved in finding or being the right candidate for a position.

However, CRA certification is valuable as an impartial confirmation that a candidate possesses the knowledge and skills required in the field of imaging management.

At a time when "resume overload" is an issue for job seekers and hiring personnel alike, certification is a tool that can help both sides. CRA certification can help potential employees quickly and effectively relay their skills and knowledge to employers, and it can help employers evaluate the qualifications and experience of potential employees, cutting through the bulk of applications to make the right matches for imaging management leadership.

References

1. Reddy, Sudeep. Jobless Rate Hits 8.5%. *The Wall Street Journal*. April 4, 2009. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123876121625986405.html>. Accessed April 6, 2009.
2. Needleman, Sarah E. Coping With Resume Overload. *The Wall Street Journal*. April 3, 2009. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123870480053783829.html>. Accessed April 6, 2009.