

Certified Healthcare Internal Audit Professional[®]

Achieve the credential of excellence

By Deborah A. Radke, CHIAP[®], CPA, and Renee Jaenicke, CHIAP[®], CIA[®], CPA

Certification is considered an essential attribute of practitioners in certain professions. Once a practitioner has completed the required education and experience, he or she is ready to become certified. The Certified Healthcare Internal Audit Professional[®] (CHIAP[®]) is the only internal audit designation specific to the healthcare industry. The certification merits your consideration because it promotes and validates the specialized knowledge and proficiency of a healthcare internal audit professional.

The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little extra. – Jimmy Johnson

Certifications are important validations for individual professionals and their employers and industries. You can advance your career through a professional certification that develops and demonstrates your relevant knowledge

and skills, supports your continuing personal development and career goals, and influences how your employer perceives you.

The CHIAP[®] advantage

Internal auditors have their choice of many professional certifications of varying relevance. Some positions in the internal audit field require job candidates to hold one or more certifications, while other jobs list certifications as preferences rather than requirements. But the right certification can differentiate you.

Two common certifications in the internal audit profession are the Certified Internal Auditor[®] and Certified Public Accountant designations. However, the CHIAP[®] is the one that will set you apart in the world of healthcare internal auditing. Internal auditors in healthcare with the CHIAP[®] credential distinguish themselves from their peers, enhance their credibility and respect, assert their skills and proficiencies, appear ready for further advancement and earning potential, and demonstrate an understanding and commitment to healthcare.

Your future is created by what you do today. Have you or your staff considered earning the CHIAP[®] designation? Learn more about how the CHIAP[®] has become the premier credential for a healthcare internal auditor and

Resources

1. [Certification Program Candidate Handbook 2022](#)
2. [Exam Preparation](#)
3. [Body of Knowledge, page 22](#)
4. [Sample Examination Questions](#)
5. [Application Process](#)
6. [Recertification Process](#)
7. [CPE Requirements, page 19](#)
8. AHIA members also have access to the [Audit Resource Center](#) (login required)

what it takes to achieve and maintain this credential. Attain this designation to give your career an extra boost.

CHIAP[®] examination

In 2016, the AHIA Board of Directors (BOD) made a strategic commitment to develop a certification program unique to healthcare internal audit. The BOD established a [Certification Committee](#) to administer the certification program.

Experienced practitioners completed a job analysis study to identify the essential knowledge and skills required for healthcare internal auditors. The results were shared with AHIA membership to obtain feedback and ensure the knowledge and skills reflected current practices. The output was used to develop a job task list and an



The right certification—the CHIAP®—can differentiate you.

inventory of topics for a body of knowledge (BOK) that were used to support the creation of the CHIAP® examination questions. Exhibit 1 summarizes the major topics in the BOK.

Subject matter experts developed examination questions. To ensure the questions aligned with the BOK, each question was vetted by peer internal audit professionals and reviewed to ensure their psychometric soundness. Before being placed on the exam, all questions were pretested and approved by the Certification Committee to ensure clarity, fairness and statistical validity for use in determining a candidate’s score. Additionally, strict measures were put in place to ensure examination security, including proctoring protocols for the conduct of the exam.

The development of questions resulted in a bank of over 275 questions that are drawn upon to establish a unique 175-question multiple-choice examination. The bank is regularly refreshed with new questions.

Exams are currently administered twice a year during the

months of March/April and October/November. You are allotted four hours to complete the proctored exam.

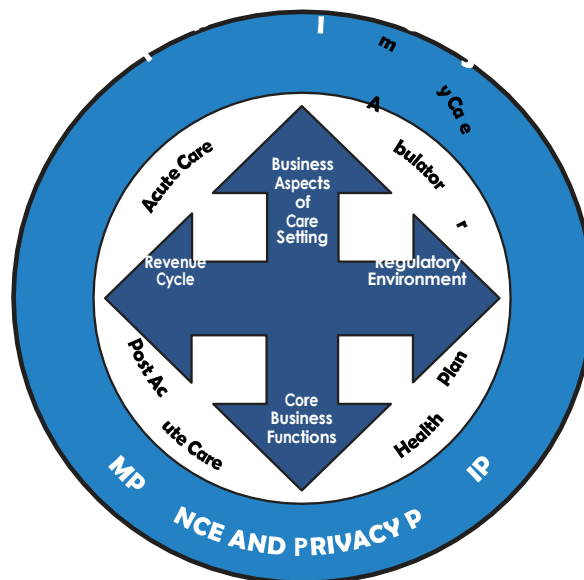
Education and experience requirements

The prerequisites to apply to sit for the CHIAP® exam include education and professional experience in the healthcare industry.

Your education must either be a bachelor’s degree and two years of qualifying work experience, an associate degree and five years of qualifying work experience, or if no degree is held, demonstration of at least 10 years of cumulative qualifying work experience. Qualifying work experience can be in the areas of operational internal auditing, external consulting for healthcare entities, and compliance.

If you meet the education and experience requirement, you must then pass the certification examination to receive the credential. The process of accumulating healthcare internal auditing experience and preparing to pass the CHIAP®

Exhibit 1 - Body of knowledge



examination likely will increase your understanding of the healthcare industry and further develop your competence in healthcare internal auditing activities.

Examination preparation resources

While challenging, the CHIAP® certification examination is designed for professionals with at least two years of experience in healthcare internal auditing. With only two years of experience, candidates may not have covered all the areas outlined in the BOK. Successful CHIAP® candidates report that they started with the BOK and identified their areas of strength and weakness.

You are not required to take formalized training in advance of the CHIAP® examination. However, you can support your journey to sit for CHIAP® certification examination with currently available resources and tools.

To assist applicants to pass the CHIAP® exam, AHIA has the Audit Resource Center that is available to AHIA members and contains many webinars, Tech Talks, *New Perspectives* articles, and white papers on topics relevant to the BOK. Ten hours of [webinars](#) have been recorded of subject matter experts presenting on BOK topics.

The BOK is a roadmap to aid you in assessing your knowledge on examination topics. Sample questions are included in the Candidate Handbook that can help you test your knowledge.

Discussion group webinars are offered during the application window cycle. Professionals who passed the CHIAP® examination share their most effective preparation activities, the available resources and various test-taking strategies. Candidates are encouraged to interact with the presenters and ask questions.

Sessions from each AHIA Annual Conference are evaluated to determine the sessions that pertain to the BOK topics, allowing attendees the opportunity to focus on presentations that meet their preparation needs. In 2022, 44 of the conference sessions related to a BOK category.

Study strategies

You may have been working in healthcare internal audit for years, but that does not mean that you are ready to take the examination and pass it. Just as with other certifications, the CHIAP® examination is a professional

test that requires a certain breadth of knowledge.

Successful examination candidates have provided many insights into how they studied and prepared for the exam. Consistently, they indicate that the BOK is a good place to start. Look at the BOK to find areas where you have less familiarity and expertise as an important first step.

Many successful applicants created and executed a systematic study plan based on the BOK categories, and most of them attended or reviewed the recordings of the BOK webinars. Furthermore, candidates did not just rely on the accompanying slide content. They also reviewed the webinar series at least twice and made notes on areas for additional focus.

Similar to other professional examinations, many questions will relate to more than your recall of discrete information—they will also relate to the application of what you know. While one third of the CHIAP® examination questions relate to recall, the other two thirds require that you interpret and evaluate situations based on your knowledge. Application is something we do every day in our jobs. With 175 questions on the examination, previous candidates say you should expect to use the entire allotted four hours to complete the exam.

Maintain your CHIAP® credential

Since 2019, the CHIAP® examination has been offered six times. To date, 311 people have earned the CHIAP® certification, with 66 percent of the candidates passing on the first sitting. The passing rate is consistent with other professional certification exams, such as the CIA®.

Individuals who meet the eligibility requirement and successfully pass the examination attain a two-year designation as a CHIAP®. To continue to actively hold the credential, you must complete 40 hours of continuing professional education every two years that includes two hours of ethics education. At least 10 hours of education must be earned in any single year. After the first renewal cycle on December 31, 2021, the retention rate for active CHIAP®s was over 90 percent.

Enhancements

The Certification Committee is responsible for continuing to provide relevant examination content, program guidance and recommendations, compliance, strategic oversight and reporting for the CHIAP® program. Also, the Committee

Start your examination preparation with the Body of Knowledge.

Examination questions will require you to recall information and demonstrate how to apply it.

has continued to enhance the program.

Online proctored testing – You can now take your examination online on your own computer and receive your score immediately.

Qualifying CPE credits – The types and nature of CPE credits that qualify for the renewal of the CHIAP® were expanded to include other related professional association educational events. Examples include taking and/or teaching relevant college courses, authoring of professional articles, and presenting relevant topics in a webinar or at professional association conferences.

Discussion work groups – Webinars are offered during examination application windows to support you in the development of your plan to prepare and take the exam.

Ongoing improvement goals

The Certification Committee has established strategic goals to grow the program and enhance the candidate experience.

Increase sample examination questions – New sample examination questions are constantly being developed to aid candidates in assessing their knowledge of healthcare internal auditing.

Re-evaluate examination passing score – To ensure that the results of the examination continue to be fair and valid, the Committee will periodically collaborate with our new testing vendor to re-evaluate the examination cut score. The cut score is the passing score or number of scored questions that must be answered correctly on the examination to achieve certification.

Raise awareness of the CHIAP® – AHIA will regularly communicate directly with healthcare industry internal audit leaders and conduct outreach to AHIA membership to promote the CHIAP® credential and its value.

Expand examination preparation materials – The Committee will continue to provide support to candidates in their preparation for their examination by enhancing and developing additional study materials with a goal of creating a comprehensive candidate study guide.

Transition to on-demand testing – We're working toward systems and procedures that will allow candidates to schedule their examination at any time at their convenience.

Conclusion

The CHIAP® sets the standard for excellence in the healthcare internal auditing profession. Earning the CHIAP® designation is an important step toward demonstrating your in-depth knowledge and advanced skill sets in healthcare internal auditing. No matter where you are in your career, demonstrate a commitment to your profession and become a CHIAP®.

You can contact the Certification Committee by email at info@AHIA.org or through the [Connected Community](#) on AHIA's website if you have any questions or need additional information.

Make obtaining the CHIAP® your goal and encourage your colleagues to join you! **NP**



Deborah A. Radke, CHIAP®, CPA, is the Senior Director of Internal Audits with the Johns Hopkins Institutions. She is the Chair of the AHIA Certification Committee, which is responsible for maintaining the program, developing examination content and providing oversight. Debbie can be reached at DRadke1@jhmi.edu and 667-208-8628.



Renee Jaenicke, CHIAP®, CIA®, CPA, is the Director of Audit and Compliance with the Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System. She is a member of the AHIA Board of Directors and the Board Liaison for the AHIA Certification Committee. Renee can be reached at RJaenicke@svmh.com and 805-444-4198.

There are no shortcuts to any place worth going. - Beverly Sills