

**HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR I - 40757**



**HOW TO PREPARE BOOKLET**

**State of Alabama Personnel Department**

## **Introduction**

A written examination is being given in order to establish a register for the classification of Health Services Administrator I. The purpose of this booklet is to help you prepare for the written exam. Since all the material you will need to take the exam will be provided at test administration, you will not be allowed to bring this booklet to the exam with you.

## **The Job**

Health Services Administrator I positions are with the Department of Public Health.

The Health Services Administrator I position is professional work in assisting a county administrator or central office administrator in providing program and support services; directing and managing a county-wide, multi-discipline health services operation for a small county; assisting administrators in larger counties; or serving as staff assistants in statewide health programs with professional duties in quality control, training, policy interpretation, technical assistance, and/or budgeting. Employees are assigned duties requiring increasing levels of responsibility and independence as they progress through the salary grade.

## **The Examination**

The examination for this classification is a multiple-choice exam. A multiple-choice exam is designed to measure specific knowledges. The test is divided into four sections with each section measuring a different area. Applicants are presented with a test question and four possible responses to that question. Applicants then select the **BEST** possible response to the question.

During the exam, you will be required to respond to approximately 100 questions regarding four topics. These topics include performing mathematical computations, grammar and English usage, planning and organization, and reading comprehension. You will have 3 hours to respond to the items.

## **Reasonable Accommodations**

If you would like to request special testing accommodation or have any questions concerning the test site or testing conditions, please contact the State Personnel Department at (334) 242-3389.

## **How The Written Examination Was Developed**

A study of the Health Services Administrator I classification was conducted before developing the examination. Employees who work in this position and their supervisors participated in this study to determine what job duties are performed by Health Services Administrator Is and what knowledges and abilities a Health Services Administrator I must possess in order to perform the job duties of the position.

The study showed that the following knowledges and abilities are associated with the job duties of the position. A Health Services Administrator I must possess the knowledges and abilities listed below their first day of work before training:

- Knowledge of the principles of office management to include office methods and procedures and general business practices and conditions as needed to work effectively within the organization.

- Ability to communicate orally in one-on-one situations such as instructional situations, briefings, and problem-solving as needed to obtain/convey information and resolve conflicts.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with individuals and groups such as co-workers, subordinates, superiors, legislators, state and federal agencies, and the general public as needed to promote team/group dynamics, enhance morale, improve performance, promote horizontal/vertical organization, communicate, and achieve departmental goals.
- ***Ability to perform mathematical computations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division as needed to calculate rates, percentages, and ratios.***
- ***Ability to plan/organize to include time management, prioritizing tasks, and strategic planning as needed to meet deadlines, allocate resources, and achieve program objectives.***
- ***Ability to write documents such as letters, memorandums, reports, brochures, pamphlets, and newsletters to include clarity, content, conciseness, and grammatical and spelling accuracy as needed to provide/obtain/exchange information and elicit support.***
- ***Ability to read and comprehend narrative information such as laws, regulations, manuals, letters, memorandums, summaries, reports, technical journals, periodicals, and legal documents as needed to make revisions, implement programs, interpret rules, gain knowledge and understanding, ensure compliance with rules and regulations, and plan for future requirements and needs.***
- Ability to operate equipment such as pager, copier, cellular phone, telephone, calculator, FAX machine, and keyboard as needed to document and access information, maximize work time, transmit information, ensure access to office and clients, and store and analyze information.
- Ability to operate a personal computer to include purpose, capabilities, limitations, and software applications as needed to document and access information, maximize work time, transmit information, store and analyze information, process reports, and evaluate program needs.
- Ability to handle irate individuals (patients and contacts) as needed to defuse a volatile situation.
- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing with individuals with varying educational backgrounds as needed to provide information.

The examination for Health Services Administrator I will measure the four areas that appear in **bold print** on the preceding pages. The remaining abilities and knowledges cannot be measured by a written test and must be demonstrated during the probationary period if you are hired as a Health Services Administrator I.

## **What To Do Before You Come To Take The Examination**

Here are some suggestions for what to do before the examination and for getting to the exam location on the correct day, on time, and with the proper materials that you will need to take the examination.

- **Get there early.** Give yourself plenty of extra time to get to the test center and to park. If you are rushed and late, you will be upset when you get there. Plan to get there before the scheduled exam time.
- **Do not bring this booklet or any study materials with you to the exam location.** This includes notes and any manuals and source documents that you may have used to prepare for the examination. All test materials needed for the examination will be provided.
- **You must bring the test-scheduling card** that you received from the State of Alabama Personnel Department. This card lists the examination title, location of exam, and date, day, and time of examination.
- **You must bring two sharpened #2 lead pencils.**
- **You must also bring picture identification to the exam location.** This may be your driver's license, a military identification card, or a passport.
- **You may bring a calculator** to use for the Health Services Administrator I examination. **Small solar powered or battery operated calculators that perform basic functions such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, square roots, or percentages are allowed.** Calculators that plug-in, utilize tape, have word processing, spelling, thesauruses, or other storage and retrieval capabilities (except basic memory functions), are not allowed. **Calculators that are a feature on a cell phone are not permitted.** Calculators are subject to inspection by exam monitors. Applicants may not borrow or share calculators at the exam site.

## **Test Results**

Four to six weeks after completing the exam, you will receive a Notice of Examination Results postcard in the mail. This postcard will identify your score, or Band placement, for the written exam. If you have not received your score within four to six weeks, you should call the State Personnel Department.

In addition to your Band placement, you may also obtain your standing, or rank on the register, online at [www.personnel.alabama.gov](http://www.personnel.alabama.gov). From the home page, you should click on "Applicants" and then "Register Standings", and follow the instructions. For security purposes, you must now create an online profile in order to access your standing.

## **Rescheduling a Written Exam**

If there is a conflict in your schedule, and you are unable to attend the written exam at the time and date for which you have been scheduled, you must resubmit your Application for Examination. The State Personnel Department will schedule you for the next available administration of this written exam.

# Test Taking Tips

- **Listen** to the test monitors and follow their instructions carefully.
- If you are not sure of an answer, **go with your first choice**.
- Work through the test **without spending too much time on any one item**.
- If you cannot decide on the best answer to a question, **skip it and go back to it later**.
- Use your watch or the clock in the room to **keep track of your time** during the test.
- It's to your advantage to **answer as many questions as possible**, even if you must guess.
- **Mark your answers on the answer sheet and NOT in the test booklet**. Only answers clearly marked on the answer sheet can be given credit.
- If at **any time before or during the exam**, you have a question, **ask the monitor for assistance**.

## **VI. How To Prepare Using This Guide**

This Pretest Booklet can be used as a practice guide. The questions contained in the booklet are a representation of some questions that will be on the actual examination. Familiarize yourself with the sample questions that begin on page 8. You would be well-advised to read the instructions and answer each question carefully. Like the examination questions (all of which are multiple choice), the sample items are presented in the following categories:

Section I. Written Communication

Section II. Mathematics

Section III. Reading Comprehension

Section IV. Planning

The sample items which follow are representative of the type of items that will appear on the exam. They are not necessarily based on the same information, diagrams, etc., as the actual exam. All questions will be multiple choice.

In addition, please review the General Instructions to Candidates Taking Written Examinations provided at the exam site on the day of the test.

## **Sample Test Questions**

### **Section I**

### **Written Communication**

For question 1, you will find four alternatives. You are to choose the alternative which identifies the best punctuation mark which should replace the \* in each of the terms.

1. He says that James' work cannot be finished this week \* therefore, we have has an extension of time.  
  
A. comma  
B. hyphen  
C. semicolon  
D. no mark

For question 2, choose the answer that demonstrates the most appropriate English usage.

2.
  - A. The supervisor and the aide, together with the rest of the office force, has unanimously agreed to send a representative.
  - B. The supervisor, together with the aide and the rest of the office force, have unanimously agreed to send a representative.
  - C. The entire office force, including the supervisor and the aide, have unanimously agreed to send a representative.
  - D. The entire office force, including the supervisor and the aide, has unanimously agreed to send a representative.

For question 3, choose the phrase that best expresses the statement.

3. It is imperative that the owner \_\_\_\_\_ the changes now.  
  
A. effect  
B. affect  
C. effects  
D. affects

**Answer questions 4 & 5, by using the sentences below. If none of the sentences listed would logically follow the sentence select "0", "No Sentence," as the answer.**

**Sentence A**

The budgeting process makes planning an explicit management responsibility.

**Sentence B**

Planning takes a back seat or is actually obliterated by workday pressures.

**Sentence C**

Too often, managers operate from day to day, extinguishing one business brush fire after another.

**Sentence D**

They simply have no time for any tough-minded thinking beyond the next day's problems.

**Sentence E**

The principal advantage of budgeting is probably that it forces managers to think ahead, anticipate, and prepare for changing conditions.

4. Which sentence did you put for sentence "1"?
  - (A) Sentence E
  - (B) Sentence B
  - (C) Sentence C
  - (D) Sentence D
  
5. Which sentence did you put for sentence "2"?
  - (A) Sentence A
  - (B) Sentence B
  - (C) Sentence C
  - (D) Sentence D

Calculate the following:

6. 90% of 82 is what number?
- A. 80.7
  - B. 73.8
  - C. 75.4
  - D. 88.3
7. Thirty-seven percent of \$82,600 is equal to
- (A) \$27,560
  - (B) \$28,075
  - (C) \$29,550
  - (D) \$30,562
8. An employee has an annual salary of \$26,965. After he arranges to have deducted from his salary 12% for the purchase of bonds, 17% for federal withholding tax, and 3% for a retirement fund, what is the amount of his monthly check?
- (A) \$1,528.02
  - (B) \$1,507.98
  - (C) \$1,597.88
  - (D) \$1,697.88
9. An employee's annual salary was increased from \$22,464.00 to \$24,710.40 last year. If it is increased by the same percent this year, what will be the employee's salary?
- (A) \$26,782.64
  - (B) \$27,181.44
  - (C) \$27,438.52
  - (D) \$27,982.64
10. In the fiscal year of 1991-1992, a total of 109,782 food permits were issued,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of which were for males. The monthly average for males was closest to
- (A) 3659
  - (B) 6099
  - (C) 6861
  - (D) 9149

**What is Influenza?**

It is an illness caused by influenza viruses. It generally affects people of all ages. Typically, people with influenza have fever, chills, headache, cough, and muscle soreness and may be sick for several days to a week or more. Most people recover fully. A small portion of cases are particularly severe, and patients may develop pneumonia or other complications. In some past epidemics, about one case out of every thousand was fatal. The risk of complications and death from influenza is highest for people with chronic health problems like diabetes; disease of the heart, lungs, or kidneys; severe anemia; or chronic illnesses (or medications) which lower the body's resistance to infection. It is also high for older persons generally—particularly those 65 years or older.

Influenza viruses frequently undergo changes in their chemical makeup. These changes make it possible to catch influenza even though immunity (antibodies) may have been developed against previous strains of influenza. Thus, having had influenza or influenza vaccine in past years may not prevent getting influenza again.

Although influenza epidemics are unpredictable, some influenza occurs each year. In very large epidemics as much as 1/3 of the population has become sick as thousand have died.

**The following questions are based on the information contained in the paragraph above.**

11. Influenza is caused by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. a virus
  - B. a bacterium
  - C. a type of fungus
  - D. a protozoan
  
12. Why do people get influenza over and over again?
  - A. The body develops no immunity against influenza.
  - B. The influenza virus often mutates so that natural immunity is not effective.
  - C. Both A & B
  - D. None of the above
  
13. Influenza would be most dangerous to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. a seventy-three year old nursing home patient
  - B. a five month old infant
  - C. a six year old child in first grade
  - D. a forty year old man who works outdoors in all types of weather

**Scenario**

You work in the Department of Archives and History. One of your responsibilities is to set the schedule for the department's correspondence storage vault. You have a pool of three clerks X, Y, and Z, who can work at the vault. These clerks have responsibilities other than the vault.

Vault hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (except lunch, from 12:00 to 1:00)

First shift: 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Second shift: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Third shift: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Fourth shift: 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The following restrictions apply:

One clerk must work at the vault at all times.

Vault shifts are two hours long and nobody can work two shifts in a row (even after lunch).

Clerk Y can only work first and third shifts.

**Use the information contained in the above scenario to answer the following questions.**

14. If Clerk X worked the first shift, which of the following schedules is possible?

- I. Clerk X will work second shift.
- II. Clerk Y will work second shift.
- III. Clerk Z will work second shift.

- A. I only
- B. II only
- C. III only
- D. both I & II

15. If Clerk Y is scheduled to work third shift and Clerk X is scheduled for fourth shift, which of the following schedules is possible?

- I. Clerk Y will work second shift.
- II. Clerk X will work first shift.
- III. Clerk Z will work second shift.

- A. I only
- B. II only
- C. both I & II
- D. both II & III

## Answers to Sample Questions

### Section I. Written Communication

1. C
2. D
3. A
4. A
5. A

### Section II. Mathematics

6. B
7. D
8. A
9. B
10. B

### Section III. Reading Comprehension

11. A
12. B
13. A

### Section IV. Planning

14. C
15. D

## **VIII. Banded Scoring**

When the written exam for Health Services Administrator I is graded, the scores will be grouped into bands. When you receive notification of how you performed on the exam, you will not be given a numerical score (i.e., 67 out of 80, 93 out of 100). Rather, you will be informed into which band (i.e., 1, 3, 6, 10) your score fell. The following information is provided to help you understand the banding procedure.

### **What is banding?**

Banding is one way to reduce the impact of fluctuations in test scores that do not provide meaningful information about differences in the ability to perform the job. One important purpose of testing is to identify the differences in test scores that reflect real differences among candidates. Banded scoring is a statistical procedure for grouping raw test scores that statistically are not meaningfully different from one another. In banded scoring, bands are set objectively and statistically. They are not manipulated arbitrarily.

### **Misconceptions about banding.**

There are many misconceptions about banding and the use of banded scores. Some of the most common misconceptions are listed below. Each misconception is followed by a clarification.

#### ***Misconception: Each band should have the same number of people.***

We do not force bands to be a certain size. The people in a band are similar to each other in that statistically there is no meaningful difference in their scores. Sometimes Band 1 may be very large, and at other times it may be small. People's scores determine the size of the bands. We never know how many people will be in each band until we receive the test scores.

#### ***Misconception: Band numbers have no meaning. I don't have a score.***

Band numbers do have meaning. Think of a band as a group of tied scores. Consider that in school two students with average grades of 94.5 and 94.3 would both be grouped into the same band. Just because one student made a 94.5 and one student made a 94.3, the teacher cannot be sure that 0.2 of a point means that the student who scored 94.5 is smarter or is a better student. The scores are so close to each other that they are basically the same.

For example, think of the achievement tests that children take in school. The fine print on these tests always informs you not to focus on the numerical score but rather on the comparative score, which uses some type of grouping technique such as percentiles, stanines, standard deviations, grade levels, etc. These grouping techniques are considered forms of banding. Banding compares your performance on the test to the other test takers' performance and groups your score with others that are statistically the same.

#### ***Misconception: Band numbers are the same as letter grades.***

Band numbers are not the same as letter grades. Band 1 does not equate to an "A," Band 2 to a "B," and so on. In school, a predetermined numerical range of scores (i.e., 90-100, 80-90, 70-80) equals an alphabetical value (i.e., A, B, C). This grading system is a form of banding. In this case, unlike grade school, the width of bands is not set in advance. Scores are banded only in relation to one another, so you compete against other test takers. The scores of all test takers determine the width of the bands, and your score is set in relation to the scores of your peers.

**Misconception:** *A banded score on one test has the same value as a banded score on another test.*

Banded scores are test specific and cannot be compared from test to test. Consider that a test taker scored 88 on one test, and the highest score of all test takers was 89. It is likely for this exam that the test taker who scored 88 would be in Band 1. However, if the same person scored the same grade on another test, and the highest score of all test takers was 100, he/she may be in Band 2 or Band 3. Candidates' scores vary on each test, and since candidate scores determine the width of bands and into which band test takers fall, the value of a banded score varies from test to test.

**Misconception:** *People with the most seniority who have been on the job longest should be in the top bands.*

People with the most experience do not always fall into the top bands. Time spent in a job may not be the same as possessing a knowledge, skill, or ability needed to perform the job. The people with the strongest knowledges, skills, and abilities (or who did best on the exam) will be in the top bands. Some of the people in the top bands will have been in similar jobs for a long period of time, and others will have been in similar jobs for a short period of time. Years of service do not always equal proficiency. Candidates with seniority or experience do not automatically perform best on the test. Regardless of seniority, candidates who display the appropriate knowledges, skills, and abilities perform best on the test.

**Misconception:** *A standing in Band 4 or below automatically indicates failure or ineligibility for jobs.*

A band number of 4 or lower is not automatically equated with failure. For one test, there may only be 4 bands, and for another test, there may be 14 bands. So, your success on the test based on your position in a band varies from test to test. Your standing in a band does not indicate whether or not you pass or fail the test. The true test of success in your employment opportunities is whether or not you can be certified and considered for a job vacancy.

**Misconception:** *Banding replaced the "Rule of 10."*

Banding did not replace the "Rule of 10." The "Rule of 10" determines the number of bands to be certified. In the past, tied scores referred to an actual numerical score (e.g., two candidates with a score of 98.98 were considered tied) while now all of the scores within a band are considered tied.

**Misconception:** *People in a band do not differ.*

When several people are placed in the same band, it does not mean that those people do not differ at all. Instead, it means that their scores on the exam do not differ enough to be separate scores.

## **IX. Frequently Asked Questions About the Health Services Administrator I Job**

### ***Are there any vacancies for the Health Services Administrator I?***

You may contact the personnel office of the Department of Public Health to determine current or future vacancies.

### ***How are vacancies filled for the Health Services Administrator I?***

The top ten applicants on the register are sent to the Department of Public Health for consideration. Since the banded scoring process is used, all of the scores within a band are considered tied. Therefore, all names within a band are certified out to the agency, which may include more than 10 names. The names of people not selected stay on the register to be considered for future jobs. Persons are usually hired at the minimum of the pay range.

### ***How long will I remain eligible for appointment?***

If you pass the examination, your name will remain on the employment register for two years from the date you were placed on the register. You will be notified by mail when to reapply.