



NAHAM CERTIFICATION PROGRAM STUDY GROUPS HANDBOOK



National Association of Healthcare Access Management (NAHAM)
2025 M Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036
Telephone: (202) 367-1125 | Fax: (202) 367-2125

E-mail: info@naham.org | Web: www.naham.org

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HEALTHCARE ACCESS MANAGEMENT

STUDY GROUPS MANUAL

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HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE?

This manual has been provided to assist individuals and/or affiliates in creating successful study groups for CHAA/CHAM examination preparation. Consider this manual a “toolkit” that will facilitate a successful learning experience for all individuals involved in a study group. This toolkit contains two sections: Study Group Basics and Test Preparation. The first part of this manual provides a brief introduction to study groups and provides suggestions for forming such groups including how to handle difficult situations and guidelines for effective facilitation and note taking. The second part of this manual contains information on test preparation, resources available to CHAA/CHAM candidates, and tips for examination day.

We are confident that this toolkit will be a valuable resource for individuals, as well as a resource for local and regional affiliates.

WHAT IS A STUDY GROUP?

One of the most productive ways to study is in a group with other reliable individuals. A study group is a committed and cooperative group of people who share the same goal: to learn the material in the most effective and efficient way. Working with other people who have different strengths, perspectives and learning approaches can bring new clarity to understanding and help each participant retain information. Fruitful discussion is often the difference between memorizing and truly understanding important information.

There are basically two methods for working in a study group. One way is for each participant to prepare for the assignment and then go over the material together and quiz each other, making sure that the correct information and answers are shared with the group. This is a simple and direct way to get the most out of a group effort.

Another way to work in a study group is called the Jigsaw method. One of the best ways to learn is to teach. In other words, the individual responsible for presenting a portion of the material to others in the group is a much more apt to learn the material on a deeper level. In this method, the material to be learned is divided up for each member of the group. Each member reviews all material but is responsible for mastering one particular piece of the material. In turn, when the group reconvenes, each member presents the assigned portion to the rest of the group, answering questions and leading dialogue. This process allows for each member to be engaged in the learning process by presenting and sharing knowledge on the topic at hand. This method requires a strong trust and positive interdependence within the group.

WHY FORM A STUDY GROUP?

Group study offers many advantages, in addition to gaining a deeper understanding of the subjects contained in the Examination Content Outlines. These include the following:

Sharing talents

Each person brings different strengths to a study group, such as organizational skills, the ability to stick to a task, a talent for memorization, and so on.

Covering more ground

Three study group members may be able to explain the correct answer to something that none would have solved alone.

Support system

Members of a study group often have common goals. The work each person in a group does affects the other members, which results in making the group members supportive of one another.

Socializing:

It's more fun to study with others. And because it's more fun, you spend more time studying!

PRACTICAL STEPS IN FORMING A SUCCESSFUL STUDY GROUP

Study Group Success Factors

- An effective study group ideally has **3 - 4 members**, but no more than five.
- Your group should meet *at least* once a week and you should decide how long you want your sessions to be.
- All members should make a serious **commitment** to show up and to do the required preparation prior to any group meeting. If you show up unprepared it *will* impact how effective that session is for the whole group, not to mention what *you* could get out of those sessions.
- You should choose a group '**leader/facilitator**' (this could be one person or members could take turns). This person would be responsible for keeping the group on track and on task within each session so that no one gets frustrated with pace or with time being wasted on other things not relevant to mastering the course material. This person should also send out a reminder email on weekly time/location info, plus any session info that's relevant.
- Set the **group charter** to outline group rules and regulations.

Preparing for Sessions

- You need to decide as a group what you would like to **cover** in a session. This could be handled via email (initiated by the group facilitator) a few days before your next meeting or it could be discussed at the end of each meeting. If you are meeting weekly, you will probably be discussing and working on the preceding week's material and homework (where relevant) in your next session.
- It's easy to want to focus on homework problems, in other words, *application* type sessions, but you'll be ignoring a key component involved in truly understanding your material - identifying and understanding the **concepts** underlying homework and/or exam questions. This is a great opportunity to tackle as a group! Here are some suggestions:
 - Divide the two or three lectures that you have per week among the group members.
 - Each 'subgroup' then summarizes the key concepts covered in their chosen lecture and creates a one page summary for each group member.
 - You can choose to review these concepts at the start of each group session as a whole, or each 'subgroups' can teach/present the concepts covered in their lecture to the group for subsequent review and discussion.

- You probably won't have time to cover all the assigned homework problems, so it would be helpful to decide as a group how many and which of the homework problems you want address. Each group member should then attempt to work through the problems on their own prior to your next group session (or at least have a familiarity with these problems).

ESTABLISHING A GROUP CHARTER

As stated earlier, when a study group is formed, it is important to establish some rules or guidelines to keep the group from losing enthusiasm. One way to clearly define ground rules is to create a team charter. The following page provides a sample team charter which addresses issues such as:

- Study group ground rules and guidelines
- Expectations (Time Management & Involvement)
- Fair and even contribution and collaboration
- Conflict resolution
- Other special considerations
- Establish a regular meeting place and time and encourage each other.
- Give the group a name. This will give the group a stronger identity and encourage participation.

SAMPLE STUDY GROUP CHARTER - GROUP NAME

Team Members/Contact Information

Name	Phone	Time Zone and Availability During the Week	Email
	xxx-xxx-xxxx	(e.g., AZ "Mtn Time", Mon-Sat 9-11pm)	

Study Group Ground Rules and Guidelines

What are the general expectations for all members of the team?

Expectations for Time Management and Involvement

What are the expectations for participation and communication for members of the team?

Ensuring Fair and Even Contribution and Collaboration

What strategy will you use to ensure that all team members are contributing and collaborating appropriately? Describe the communication strategy you will use if a team member is not contributing and collaborating effectively. How will the team manage conflicts between team members?

Special Considerations

What do you, as a team, agree will make this team experience different from past team experiences?

INDIVIDUAL STUDY TIPS

Tips in Preparation for the Exam

The best tip regarding how to prepare for any examination is to approach your examination in the manner that will make you most comfortable. You don't want to be stressed while you're reading and answering questions.

We have provided some recommendations below. See which jump out at you and might be those which can help and not hinder your examination experience.

- Maintain a positive attitude as you study. Think about doing well, not failing. Think of the examination as an opportunity to show how much you have learned.
- Go into the examination well rested and well fed. Get enough sleep the night before the examination. Eat a light and nutritious meal before the examination. Stay away from junk foods.
- Stay relaxed during the examination. Taking slow, deep breaths can help. Focus on positive self-statements such as "I can do this."
- Avoid studying in the hours immediately before your examination.
- Keep a good attitude.
- Don't talk about the test to other students just before entering the room: their anxiety can be contagious.
- Orient yourself. Find out exactly where the examination is given (location and room), and how long it would take you to get there; do a trial run if you're unfamiliar with the location.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Have in mind a post-examination celebratory activity for you to look forward to! Whether it's a candy bar, a lunch outside, or something else.

Tips for the Day of the Exam

- Avoid foods you know will make you feel sluggish, bloated, or otherwise not like a million bucks, the day before **and** the morning of the examination.
- Go to the bathroom before walking into the exam room. You don't want to waste anytime worrying about your bodily needs during the test.
- If you're a coffee, tea, or soda drinker, keep your caffeine intake to a minimum. Have just enough to make you feel yourself but not so much that you run the risk that feeling you get when you've had too much caffeine.
- Read the question carefully before you look at the answer options.
- Come up with the answer in your head before looking at the possible answers; this way the choices given on the test won't throw you off
- Eliminate answers you know aren't right.
- Read all the choices before choosing your answer. If you simply do not know the answer, take an educated guess and select an answer.
- Don't keep on changing your answer; usually your first choice is the right one, unless you misread the question.

- Answer the “easy” questions first. Feel free to bookmark questions and come back to them later.
- Don't worry about other students finishing the examination before you do. Take the time that you need to do your best.

Additional Study Skill Resources

Below are some links to additional references on how to enhance your study skills:

<http://www.testtakingtips.com/test/multiple.htm>

<http://www.testtakingtips.com/anxiety/index.htm>

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/study-skills/teaching-methods/6390.html>

http://www.swccd.edu/~asc/lrnglinks/test_anxiety.html

<http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/dawn.psurny-68764-multiple-choice-test-taking-tips-education-ppt-powerpoint/>

<http://www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/general/testtaking.html>

<http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/bernardhome-170810-test-taking-strategies-students-standardized-tests-preparation-testing-tips-ppt-education-powerpoint/>

http://www.testprepreview.com/test_anxiety.htm

<http://www.memorizationtips.com/techniques.htm>

<http://www.how-to-study.com/study>

PREP TOOLS AND RESOURCES

There are many resources available to candidates as they prepare for their respective certification examination. These resources should not be the only sources of information that are utilized.

- Exam Content Outline
Review the applicable examination content outline and ask yourself the following questions:

Do I have a good understanding of the content areas?

Do I use this knowledge area regularly at work?

Plan your studying based on your answers to these questions. For example, for content areas you have a good understanding of and use every day, you may only need to do a quick review to prepare for the test, whereas in areas in which you are less familiar, you may decide that you need more in-depth studying or training before taking the test. Some individuals may simply not be at the point whereby they will be successful testing and may wish to consider deferring applying until they feel more prepared.

When planning your studying, you should think about what percentage of the test questions will cover each major content area (this information is included in each examination content outline). If you are not very familiar with a content area that will include a significant proportion of the test questions, you probably should spend some additional time studying this area.

Click on the links below to take the readiness assessment:

EXAM READINESS ASSESSMENT	
CHAA READINESS ASSESSMENT	CHAM READINESS ASSESSMENT

- E-learn Manager and E-learn Associate Interactive Study Guide
Interactive study aids complete with narrated instruction, activities, downloadable materials, and online quizzes all designed to help certification examination candidates and potential candidates assess their readiness to take our examinations. E-Learn Manager™ is another tool and resource among others advised for preparation of the CHAM examination and E-Learn Associate™ is a tool and resources among others advised for preparation of the CHAA examination. Click the following link for more information <http://www.naham.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4247> .
- Instructor led Courses and E-learning Opportunities
Candidates are strongly encouraged to approach studying holistically – reviewing current literature, participating in instructor led courses such as at the NAHAM Annual Conference, attending hospital in-service training, and forming study groups to name just a few methods of preparation. In addition, NAHAM offers web seminars on various topics that may be applicable to your study needs. Check out more information about the web seminar by clicking on the following link
<http://www.naham.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3303>
- References

Below are links to valuable sources of information that are related to the content covered on the exam <http://www.naham.org/i4a/links/?pageid=3315&showTitle=1> .

- [Department of Health and Human Services Links](#)
- [HIPAA Related](#)
- [Joint Commission](#)
- [NAHAM Affiliate Associations](#)
- [NAHAM Selected Links](#)
- [Red Flags Rule Related](#)

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR RETAKING THE EXAM AFTER AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT

- Focus your studying based on your score report. If you were strong in the pre-encounter section but weak in the future development section approach your preparation thoughtfully by closely reviewing the examination content outline.
- Identify those habits that worked well and replace those that don't!
- Review the practical steps for signing up for your second attempt on the examination as outlined on the NAHAM web site.

*We would love to hear about successful study group experiences.
Please send all case studies to info@naham.org!*