

The Certification Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc. (CBIC) is a voluntary autonomous multidisciplinary board that provides direction for and administers the certification (CIC[®]) process for professionals who are responsible for the infection prevention and control activities/program in their work setting. The mission of CBIC is to “protect the public through the development, administration, and promotion of an accredited certification” process that focuses on current infection prevention and control practice.

Approximately every five years, CBIC performs a broad assessment of existing practice among infection preventionists (IPs)/infection control professionals (ICPs). The last practice analysis (PA) was conducted in 2009. Through the PA, IPs/ICPs in all settings articulate current job responsibilities and the knowledge that is required for their performance. The PA is an integral part of the certification examination development process and determines the backbone of the test content outline. In 2013 CBIC determined that a PA was required and contracted with Prometric to facilitate the process. The PA survey was developed in 2014 by two diverse groups of subject matter experts (SMEs) from Canada and the United States, with oversight by the CBIC Board. Both SME groups were strategically created to represent a range of experience, practice settings, facility sizes, and geographic locations throughout Canada and the United States, where the majority of certificants practice. In addition to the CBIC (worldwide) database of all certified IPs/ICPs, the membership of Infection Prevention and Control Canada (IPAC-Canada) and the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) were invited by email to participate. A link for the survey was also posted on the International Federation of Infection Control (IFIC) website.

The survey link was distributed to a total of 17,946 medical professionals; 2,819 (15.7%) were returned. Responses were received from every Canadian province and territory, and every US state. The final list of 120 task and knowledge statements identified as important through the survey vastly differed from those in the 2009 CBIC PA, with only 15 items unchanged. The survey identified a significant change in the number of tasks and associated knowledge required for the competent practice of infection prevention. Data analysis by subgroups (e.g. practice setting) was possible when responses from at least 30 respondents were included in the mean analysis, and was performed based on several demographic and background characteristics. There was no evidence in this analysis to support the creation of tiered certification examinations based on years of experience, or separate certification examinations based on practice setting.

As authorized by the CBIC Board, the CBIC Test Committee is currently re-classifying the bank of examination questions as required and is writing and reviewing questions based on the updated test specifications and content outline. The new content outline (Table) will be reflected in examinations that are administered beginning in July 2015. This iterative process of assessing and updating the certification exam ensures not only a valid competency tool, but a true reflection of current practices.

The full report of the PA methods and results can be found in the July 2015 issue of the American Journal of Infection Control, posted on the CBIC website at the following address:

www.cbic.org/UserFiles/file/AJICPAArticleJuly2015.pdf

Table. Content outline and test specifications for the CIC® examination

Certification in Infection Control (CIC®) Test Specifications, 2015	
135 questions	
Cognitive levels: 20% recall, 60% application, 20% analysis	
Category	Number of items (Questions)
Identification of Infectious Disease Processes	22 items
Surveillance and Epidemiologic Investigation	24 items
Preventing/Controlling the Transmission of Infectious Agents	25 items
Employee/Occupational Health	11 items
Management and Communication	13 items
Education and Research	11 items
Environment of Care	14 items
Cleaning, Sterilization, Disinfection, Asepsis	15 items