AICP Certification Exam Outline

Changes Starting with the May 2008 Exam

The AICP Comprehensive Planning Examination consists of 170 multiple choice questions (20 of which are pre-test and do not count toward the final score). The items listed below under each of the major areas are intended to be representative and not inclusive of all subject matter known to the planning profession.

Candidates should note that exam questions do not precisely follow the order listed below. Questions are randomly distributed in the examination to provide an even distribution of questions with respect to degrees of difficulty relative to an individual candidate’s education and experience.

The specifications are:

I. History, Theory and Law [15%]
   A. History of Planning
   B. Planning law
   C. Theory of planning
   D. Patterns of human settlement

II. Plan Making and Implementation [30%]
   A. Visioning and goal setting
   B. Quantitative and qualitative research methods
   C. Collecting, organizing, analyzing, and reporting data and information
   D. Demographics and economics
   E. Natural and built environment
   F. Land use and development regulations
   G. Application of legal principles
   H. Environmental analysis
   I. Growth management techniques
   J. Budgets and financing options
   K. GIS/spatial analysis and information systems
   L. Policy analysis and decision making
   M. Development plan and project review
   N. Program evaluation
   O. Communications techniques
   P. Intergovernmental relationships
   Q. Parks, open space and recreation
   R. Planning law
   S. Policy planning
   T. Public services
   U. Social and health services
   V. Transportation
   W. Urban design

III. Functional Areas of Practice [25%]
   A. Community development
   B. Comprehensive or long range planning
   C. Development regulation or administration
   D. Economic development and revitalization
   E. Economic analysis and forecasting
   F. Educational, institutional, or military facilities planning
   G. Energy policy
   H. Food system planning
   I. Growth management
   J. Hazard mitigation and disaster planning
   K. Historic preservation
   L. Housing
   M. Infrastructure
   N. Labor force or employment
   O. Land use
   P. Natural resources and the environment
   Q. Parks, open space and recreation
   R. Planning law
   S. Policy planning
   T. Public services
   U. Social and health services
   V. Transportation
   W. Urban design

IV. Spatial Areas of Practice [15%]
   A. Planning at national level
   B. Planning for multi-state or bi-state regions
   C. Planning for state
   D. Planning for sub-state region
   E. Planning at county level
   F. Planning for urban areas
   G. Planning for suburban areas
   H. Planning for small town
   I. Corridors
   J. Neighborhoods
   K. Waterfronts
   L. Historic districts or areas
   M. Downtowns

V. Public Participation and Social Justice [10%]
   A. Public involvement planning
   B. Public participation techniques
   C. Identifying, engaging, and serving underserved groups
   D. Social justice issues, literature, and practice
   E. Working with diverse communities
   F. Coalition building

VI. AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct [5%]