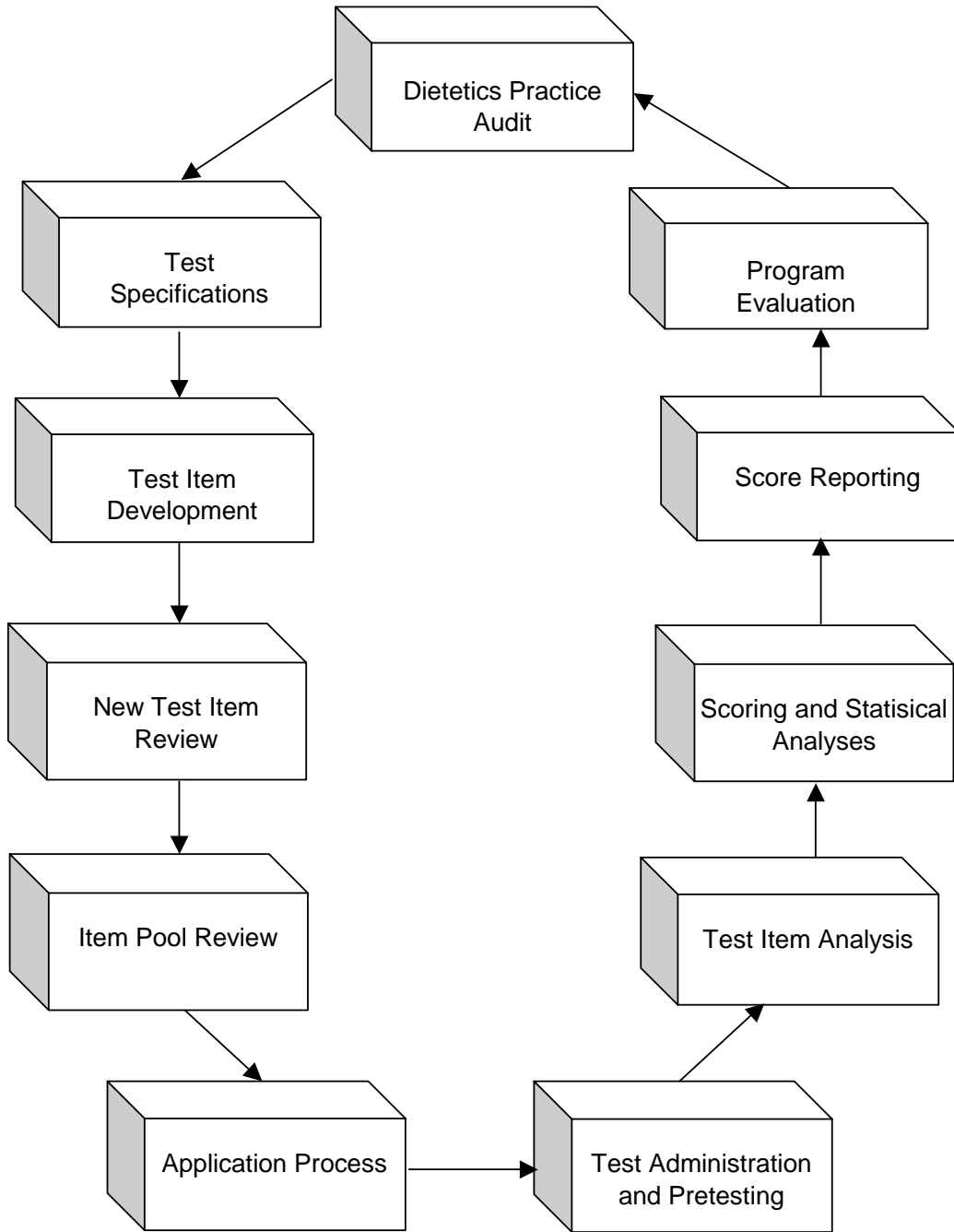


CERTIFICATION TESTING PROGRAM



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Dietetics Practice Audit

A Dietetics Practice Audit describes the knowledge and skills necessary to perform competently at an identified level of practice. It serves as the basis for test specification development. Using a role delineation study is among the most desirable methods for specification development, because it assists in ensuring that the certification test is job-related, representative of practice, and geared to the appropriate responsibility level. CDR conducts a Dietetics Practice Audit every five years.

Test Specifications

Test specifications are a detailed blueprint for constructing a test. They include a description of the content to be tested, the proportion of the test to be devoted to the different areas of content within domains, and the characteristics of acceptable test items. Test specifications derived from the practice audit verified by actual practice provide evidence in support of test content validity and establish its defensibility and credibility.

Test Item Development

New items (questions) are prepared by individuals selected from diverse practice areas and population subgroups who are trained in the specifics of good test construction principles.

Criteria applied to writing test items are:

(1) relevance and criticality to entry-level practice; (2) accuracy, currency and clarity; (3) regional and institutional differences; and (4) conformity with test specifications.

Test items are reviewed by professional test editors to eliminate technical flaws, ambiguities, and potential bias. All test items are reviewed by experienced item writers to verify appropriate classification and conformance with item writing criteria.

Editorially and technically sound items are pretested as unscored items on a test. This ensures that the scoreable portion of the test includes good performing items.

Test Assembly and Review

Experienced test reviewers appointed by the Commission on Dietetic Registration review items for content accuracy, currency, relevance to entry-level practice and one best answer. Only test items that have survived content, measurement, and editorial review are suitable for inclusion in the computer-based testing item pool.

ADMINISTRATION AND SCORING

Test Administration

Registration eligibility requirements are established by the Commission on Dietetic Registration. The Commission contracts with ACT, Inc. to administer the tests on computer at over 200 test sites. Special testing needs, such as those for religious observance and physical handicaps, are accommodated under standardized secure conditions.

Test Item Analysis

After each test has been administered and items have been scored, psychometricians review performance statistics on each item in order to identify any with questionable performance. Test items that appear problematic are reviewed by experienced item writers prior to scoring and score reporting to eliminate items with evidenced ambiguities and potential item response errors.

Passing Score Determination

A passing score study is periodically conducted by experienced dietetics professionals representing diverse practice areas and population subgroups. The use of systematic judgment of content experts in these studies establishes the minimum level of acceptable professional performance expected on a certification test. CDR uses a criterion-referenced approach for determining the passing score. This criterion-referenced passing score becomes the basis for equating future examinations, thus ensuring that all test versions are of equal difficulty level.

REPORTS AND EVALUATION

Score Reporting

A score report announces the examinee's performance on the certification test. The report includes a total scaled score as well as raw scores in the various domains for general information purposes.

Following each test administration, the Commission provides dietetic education programs with both institutional test summary reports of examinee group performance and individual scores by name when authorized by the examinee.

A comprehensive technical report, which includes statistical data, is provided by the test contractor to the Commission on Dietetic Registration. This report, feedback from dietetic programs, examinee, and exam committee surveys are used by the Examination Panel in evaluating the certification testing program. The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* and established Examination Panel procedures are used as the basis for the evaluation process.