

## CBAP Certification Preparation FAQs

### 1. What is the CBAP® Certification Examination?

- A. The International Institute of Business Analysis (IIBA®), has created the Certified Business Analysis Professional™ (CBAP®), a designation awarded to candidates who have successfully demonstrated their expertise in this field. The Certified Business Analysis Professional™ (CBAP®) designation is awarded to business analysis practitioners with at least five years of experience, and who have pass a comprehensive examination, based on the IIBA® *Business Analysis Body of Knowledge*® (BABOK®) that is designed to objectively assess and measure business analysis knowledge and experience.

### 2. What are the education or work experience requirements needed?

- A. To be eligible for CBAP Certification, you must meet the following 5 requirements:
- **Sufficient Work Experience** - 7,500 hours (i.e., five (5) years) of BA work experience in the last ten (10) years engaged in tasks specifically aligned with the BABOK®.
  - **Expertise in the BABOK® Guide Knowledge Areas** - Demonstrated experience and expertise (i.e., a minimum of 900 hours (i.e., 6 months) in at least 4 of the 6 BABOK® knowledge areas.
  - **Minimum Education** - You must meet the minimum education requirement of high school or equivalent.
  - **Adequate Professional Development Hours** - 21 hours of BA-related professional development within the last 4 years.
  - **Evidence of Certification Suitability** - Two references to indicate that you are a suitable candidate for the CBAP® certification, whether a career manager, an internal or external client or a CBAP® recipient.

### 3. How many questions are on the version 2.0 exam?

- A. The CBAP® exam has 150 questions.

### 4. What is the 2.0 exam based on?

- A. The exam is based mostly on the tasks and techniques identified in the BABOK®, version 2.0, which was released March 31, 2009. The exam switched over to the 2.0 version on August 1, 2009. While most information for the exam is contained in the BABOK, it is not the sole source of questions on the exam. The BABOK references other sources the candidate may find helpful.

### 5. How do I sign up for the exam and what does it cost?

- A. The exam is the final requirement for CBAP® Certification and anyone desiring to take the exam must first apply for certification and pass the initial screening process. Once the IIBA® determines your qualifications to sit for the exam, you must apply with the official testing agency to schedule a date for a CBT (computer-based testing) exam. You will receive an email with instructions once your application is approved. Visit [www.TheIIBA.org](http://www.TheIIBA.org) for the complete process.

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Total cost (application plus exam) for IIBA members is \$450 USD.

Total cost (application plus exam) for non-members is \$575 USD.

Candidates can save money on the cost of the exam by applying for IIBA membership. The cost of membership is \$95/year.

### **6. Is it enough to read and study only the BABOK, or should I be studying other sources of knowledge about the topics in the BABOK?**

- A. The [BABOK®](#) should be your main resource and it will provide much of the reference materials you need. Watermark Learning's [CBAP® Certification Study Guide \(2nd Edition\)](#) is another resource we recommend, and is highly focused on the exam. [Mastering the Requirements Process \(2nd Edition\) by Suzanne and James Robertson](#), and [Software Requirements, Second Edition, by Karl Wiegers](#) may also be helpful.

### **7. Where can we access a formal class to prepare for the exam? Are they offered by the IIBA?**

- A. Watermark Learning has formal [CBAP® Prep classes](#) scheduled throughout the year. We plan to have an online version available in the future. The IIBA® does not provide any formal training.

### **8. Are there practice exams readily available – how can I get them? Does the IIBA provide sample tests through the website?**

- A. The IIBA® does not provide sample tests. There are some online exams available, and you can search the web for them. We have heard varying reports on their quality, so make sure you find exams developed by people or companies such as Watermark Learning who are CBAP®-certified. That way you will be more likely to have realistic CBAP® exam simulations. Our [CBAP Online Study Exam](#) is a great way to prepare, with three study modes including a realistic exam simulator. We have almost 800 questions available that will give you experience with the types of questions you will see on the 2.0 exam.

### **9. What percentage is required to pass the CBAP?**

- A. The IIBA has not published percentages yet. Our best guess for that is because the sample size of examinees is small enough so that they can't yet assign an exact "cut score." The next edition of the exam, based on BABOK 2.0, will be more likely to have a published pass/fail percentage.

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### 10. What is the overall first time pass rate of those taking the CBAP?

- A. The latest numbers we have heard put the pass rate at between 80% and 90%. Note that is not an official number, just our best guess. It is high partly because the IIBA® screens applications so well and demands so many years of experience. It is also high because examinees so far have been super-prepared to pass.

### 11. What is the best way to demonstrate that I meet the requirement of 7500 hours?

- A. You need 7500 hours spent on business activities, and not just working hours. IIBA® has an application that contains a section you can use as a template with the kind of information you need to complete. The form asks for information such as project name, start/end date, your role, project organization and contact, and project hours spent doing business analysis tasks as well as describing the tasks and your deliverables. The IIBA® audits a certain number of applications, so the hours you list should be as accurate as possible. Contact us if you would like to receive a [complimentary application worksheet](#) to help you organize your hours.

### 12. The online CBAP application lists non-BA tasks for projects. Should I put down any non-BA hours on my application?

- A. Here is the situation. If you indicate any non-BA tasks, the IIBA may deduct a proportionate percentage of hours from your reported project hours. Let's say you worked 1000 hours on a project, and indicated 3 tasks, 2 of which were BA work and one was a PM task. The IIBA may then deduct 33% or 333 hours from your 1000 hours, leaving you a net of only 667 hours to count towards your 7500. Take this into account as you report hours and tasks on your application. See the IIBA's own FAQs document for more information on [www.TheIIBA.org](http://www.TheIIBA.org) for details on this.

### 13. Do I need experience in all of the Knowledge Areas to apply?

- A. No, the IIBA has established you need 900+ hours in at least 4 of the 6 core Knowledge Areas to apply.

### 14. How long does it take to get approved to take the exam once you complete the application?

- A. Within two weeks of receiving your application package IIBA will notify you that your application is being processed. The IIBA will then assess the application for completeness and fulfillment of the CBAP® certification requirements. The IIBA will notify you, via email, of the results of this assessment within 21 days of receiving the application.

### 15. Do you recommend any books to help prepare for the certification that would contain practice questions for the exam?

- A. Watermark Learning's "[CBAP® Certification Study Guide](#)", Second Edition, currently used in our [CBAP® Certification Preparation Course](#), contains over 200 sample questions. Our Guide also provides a trial subscription to our [CBAP Online Study Exam](#), which contains 750+ questions for further practice. There are other books that focus mainly on exam questions, and a few are available through [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com). Be prepared to

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spend 100+ hours to read, study, memorize, and take practice exams. [Contact us if you'd like to receive a complimentary CBAP® Preparation Roadmap.](#)

### 16. Are there any suggestions you have that a study group can follow for local chapters?

- A. We've heard it works best is to divide up the BABOK section by section, and assign a section a week for the group to read and review. Have one person lead each section and prepare an overview of the section, and lead a discussion. Some groups practice by creating and taking exam questions, and others find exam questions on the web for practice. If you participate in a book club, the process is similar, only you are reading to pass the CBAP, not for fun!

### 17. Where can I get the BABOK book to study for the exam?

- A. You can download it from the IIBA® web site. Visit [www.TheIIBA.org](http://www.TheIIBA.org) and go to the "Professional Development" section. You'll see a link for the BABOK®, and another link to download the current version 2.0. That release of the BABOK is the basis for the current CBAP® exam.

### 18. What counts towards the required 21 hour professional development hours?

- A. Any business analysis training topic, such as requirements elicitation, requirements analysis or modeling courses, requirements planning/managing, etc. Training on related fields such as project management or software testing do not count towards the 21 hours. Nearly every Watermark Learning BA course applies to the 21 hours. Contact us if you have any questions.

### 19. Can we send the CBAP application without having the needed 21 hours, and once accepted we take the course that gives us 21 hours?

- A. You must have the 21 hours of courses before you submit your application. You do not need to submit a course certificate with your application, but be prepared to provide one if you are audited.

### 20. What is a good time frame for study prior to taking the exam?

- A. An "ideal" span is around 3-6 months, depending on your approach. Plan on spending 100-200 hours preparing, which is the average range we found in our research. If you plan on just using the BABOK or joining a study group, plan on at least 6+ months. That gives you plenty of time to study in a relaxed manner and requires the least "overtime" to study. A person could also do it in 4-6 weeks, but then be prepared to study nights and weekends, or for taking entire days off to read, study, memorize, and take practice exams.

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### **21. Do you feel a CBAP prep course will shorten the 3-6 month study time needed?**

- A. Yes, we do. It does so because it will help you focus on the critical areas to study for the exam. It also helps you develop your own best method for preparing for the exam vs. wasting time to discover your own method. Another benefit of a class is taking practice exams in a simulated test environment and discussing the rationale for the answers with your CBAP-certified instructor. There is also the added benefit of learning from the questions asked by other students.

### **22. Could you share which companies are looking for CBAPs?**

- A. Here are some recent organizations that IIBA cited as adopting the CBAP and BABOK:
- EDS will identify CBAPs as BA subject matter experts among the 2500 BAs in its Applications Delivery organization. These CBAP SMEs will be asked to mentor and coach BAs and 'kick off' BA project activities.
  - The Royal Bank of Canada selected CBAP because they feel that it is the only designation that truly focuses on the business analysis knowledge areas (as reported in the November Newsletter article).
  - The Hartford Financial Services Group added CBAP to its list of professional designations for employees, distinguishing experienced BAs as having a body of knowledge and experience recognized internationally.
  - SunTrust Banks used the BABOK to help establish a career roadmap for BAs that includes CBAP at the expert level.
  - Insurity, a ChoicePoint business, has formed a study group to prepare for the CBAP exam, encouraging its BAs to certify and reimbursing them for the costs.
  - The Chubb Group of Insurance Companies added CBAP to its list of professional designations for employees, denoting the discipline of business analysis as a key function in Chubb. Chubb now recognizes CBAP certification in the same light as the PMP® certification for Project Managers and CPCU for Underwriters.”
- Source: IIBA Newsletters, December, 2007 and February, 2008  
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### **23. Does being a PMP help in becoming a CBAP?**

A. We think having a PMP will help from the standpoint of having prepared for and passed a strenuous exam. The questions and subject matter are different, of course, but the process of exam preparation, study, memorization, and overcoming test anxiety will help you pass the CBAP exam.

### **24. After having passed the exam the first time, do you repeat the exams after intervals to remain certified or is it only the once?**

A. Individuals who have attained the CBAP credential must demonstrate an ongoing professional commitment to the business analysis profession by satisfying the IIBA Continuing Certification Requirements (CCR) program. In order to satisfy the CCR program and maintain an active credential status, CBAPs must earn and report a minimum of 60 Continuing Development Units (CDUs) during each 3 year CCR cycle. CBAPs do not need to re-take an exam unless they let their certification lapse.

### **25. Can you download the BABOK, even if not a member of IIBA? Also, will the electronic version allow the tester to go back to questions?**

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A. Yes to both.

**26. I've purchased the Watermark Learning study guide. Is it recommended to take a class in addition to the study guide?**

A. Our 3-day CBAP Certification Prep class will help you make the most of the limited study time you have. We recommend that you prepare enough to feel confident about the exam before taking it. For some people, the study guide may be enough. Others have bought multiple guides, plus exam questions, flashcards, etc. Attending the class is the most complete start to your preparation because of the insights the instructor adds as well as immediately answering your individual questions. You also benefit from the questions asked by other students.