

Note to Candidates

The PA examination for December 2021 and onwards will include significant formatting changes to reduce the number of documents candidates and graders need to handle and to clarify what is to be answered and how and where to answer it within each task. The principal changes are these:

- Similar to FSA written-answer exams, candidate responses will be written in the same Word document as the tasks, with a separate space to answer provided for each subtask.
- Exam points are provided for each subtask instead of only for each task.
- While all tasks refer to the same business problem and dataset, each will be answered independently. Similarly, the .Rmd file has starter code that reads the data file into a dataframe. This initial dataframe should not be altered. It will be used to create a copy for each task that needs it at the start of code provided for that task. This ensures a common starting point for candidates for each task and allows the tasks to be answered in any order.
- Only the Word document will be required for submission. The tasks will include specific directions to paste elements from your work in R, such as code, tables, and graphs, into the Word document. The .Rmd file will not need to be submitted.

There are no changes to the learning objectives or the content of the exam, only these formatting changes. For clarity, the revised *General Information for Candidates* that will appear on the exam (except minor edits such as the number of tasks) is shown below in its entirety.

On a separate note, the two cheat sheets will again be available on the Prometric computer. The syllabus document has been updated to include these links.

General Information for Candidates

This examination has ## tasks numbered 1 through ## with a total of 100 points. The points for each task are indicated at the beginning of the task, and the points for subtasks are shown with each subtask.

Each task pertains to the business problem (and related data file) and data dictionary described below. Additional information on the business problem may be included in specific tasks—where additional information is provided, including variations in the target variable, it applies only to that task and not to other tasks. An .Rmd file accompanies this exam and provides useful R code for importing the data and, for some tasks, additional analysis and modeling. The .Rmd file begins with starter code that reads the data file into a dataframe. This dataframe should not be altered. Where additional R code appears for a task, it will start by making a copy of this initial dataframe. This ensures a common starting point for candidates for each task and allows them to be answered in any order.

The responses to each specific subtask should be written after the subtask and the answer label, which is typically ANSWER, in this Word document. Each subtask will be graded individually, so be sure any work that addresses a given subtask is done in the space provided for that subtask. Some subtasks have multiple labels for answers where multiple items are asked for—each answer label should have an answer after it. Where code, tables, or graphs from your own work in R is required, it should be copied and pasted into this Word document.

Each task will be graded on the quality of your thought process (as documented in your submission), conclusions, and quality of the presentation. The answer should be confined to the question as set. No response to any task needs to be written as a formal report. Unless a subtask specifies otherwise, the

audience for the responses is the examination grading team and technical language can be used. When “for a general audience” is specified, write for an audience **not** familiar with analytics acronyms (e.g., RMSE, GLM, etc.) or analytics concepts (e.g., log link, binarization).

Prior to uploading your Word file, it should be saved and renamed with your five-digit candidate number in the file name. It is not required to upload your .Rmd file or other files used in determining your responses, as needed items from work in R will be copied over to the Word file as specified in the subtasks.

The Word file that contains your answers must be uploaded before the five-minute upload period time expires.