

## **HOW TO PREPARE GUIDE**

# **DISEASE INTERVENTION SPECIALIST – 40641**

## **WRITTEN EXAMINATION**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

A written examination is being given in order to establish a register for the classification of Disease Intervention Specialist. The purpose of this booklet is to help you prepare for the written exam. Since all the material you will need to take the exam will be provided at the test administration, you will not be allowed to bring this booklet to the exam with you.

## **II. JOB PREVIEW**

The Disease Intervention Specialist positions are with the Department of Public Health. The Disease Intervention Specialist performs field investigative work in an epidemiological program of prevention and control of communicable diseases, chronic diseases, or a closely related field. Employees in this class acquire and investigate information of a confidential nature in the prevention and control of communicable diseases. Employees may interview infected cases and investigate reported and/or suspected cases of communicable diseases and refer these clients for professional consultation. Work also involves survey activities and extensive contact with the general public, professional, medical, and laboratory personnel and private, governmental, and related agencies. Employees may have responsibility for investigation of a major metropolitan area, a multi-county jurisdiction, or similar statewide program.

## **III. THE EXAMINATION**

The examination for this classification is a multiple-choice exam. The exam is designed to measure specific knowledges and abilities. The test is divided into seven sections with each section measuring a different knowledge or ability. Applicants are presented with a test question and four possible responses to that question. Applicants then select the BEST possible response to the question. You will have 3 hours to respond to the items.

## **IV. HOW THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION WAS DEVELOPED**

A study of the Disease Intervention Specialist classification was conducted prior to developing the examination. A number of employees who work in this job and their supervisors participated in this study.

The study showed that the following knowledges and abilities are associated with the job duties of the position. These knowledges and abilities are needed on the first day of work before training:

- Ability to communicate technical terms in common understandable language as needed to provide health education to a variety of individuals.
- Ability to handle irate individuals (patients and contacts) as needed to defuse a volatile situation.
- Ability to communicate with individuals with varying educational backgrounds as needed to provide health education and information.
- **Ability to analyze information as needed to conduct investigation and/or identify health trends.**

- **Ability to read a map and/or follow driving directions as needed to locate patient's home and/or patient contacts.**
- Ability to operate a motor vehicle as needed to locate and/or transport patients and/or patient contacts.
- Ability to work in stressful situations as needed to perform job responsibilities.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships to include co-workers, superiors, and the general public as needed to improve performance and communication and achieve departmental goals.
- **Ability to communicate in writing to include reports, correspondence, patient instructions and/or educational materials as needed to prepare reports and/or gather and provide information.**
- Ability to communicate orally as needed to make presentations, gather patient contact information and/or provide information.
- **Ability to read and comprehend information as needed to gather information, provide training, and/or stay up to date on disease information.**
- Ability to establish rapport with individuals concerning sensitive and personal topics such as sexual practices, partners and contacts as needed to determine the source of a communicable/infectious disease.
- Ability to instruct patient on procedures such as collecting specimens, administering medications and testing procedures as needed to educate patient and encourage compliance with treatment regimen.
- **Ability to plan/organize to include time management/prioritizing tasks and strategic planning as needed to meet deadlines, schedule patients and allocate resources.**
- Ability to operate standard office equipment such as copier, telephone, calculator, and FAX as needed to document, transmit, access, store and analyze information.
- Ability to operate a personal computer to include word processing, the internet, spreadsheet applications and databases as needed to document, access, store, gather and analyze information and process reports.
- **Ability to complete documentation to include reports and forms as needed to document work, record information, and efficiently manage caseload.**
- **Knowledge of basic English and grammar as needed to coherently converse and communicate thoughts orally and in writing.**

The examination for Disease Intervention Specialist will measure the six abilities and one knowledge that appear in **bold print**. The remaining abilities and knowledges cannot be measured by a written test and must be demonstrated during the probationary period if you are hired as a Disease Intervention Specialist.

## **V. WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU COME TO TAKE THE EXAMINATION**

Here are some suggestions for what to do before the exam and for getting to the testing place on time and with the proper things that you will need to test.

1. **Be well rested.** Get a good night's sleep for several nights in a row before the written exam.
2. **Get there early.** Allow plenty of time to get to the examination site. If you are rushed and late, you will be upset when you get there. Plan to get there before the scheduled exam time to begin.
3. **Do not bring this booklet or any study materials with you to the exam location.** This includes notes and any manuals and source documents that you may have used to prepare for the examination. All test materials needed for the examination will be provided.
4. **Do not bring cell phones to the testing site.** Cell phones are not permitted in the testing room.
5. **Dress comfortably.** The total time provided for completion of this exam will be 3 hours.
6. **You should read and study this booklet.** You should practice the kinds of things that this booklet suggests that you practice.
7. **You must bring the test-scheduling card/letter that you received from the State of Alabama Personnel Department.** This card lists the examination title, location of exam, and day and time of examination.
8. **You must also bring picture identification to the exam location.** This may be your driver's license, a military identification card, or a passport. You only need one valid form of identification.
9. **You must bring two sharpened #2 lead pencils.** You may also want to bring a highlighter and a calculator. Small solar powered or battery operated calculators that perform basic functions such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, square roots, or percentages are allowed. Calculators that plug-in, utilize tape, have word processing, spelling, thesauruses, or other storage and retrieval capabilities (except basic memory functions) are not allowed. **Calculators that are a feature on a cell phone are not permitted.** Calculators are subject to inspection by exam monitors. Applicants may not borrow or share calculators at the exam site.

## TEST TAKING TIPS

- ✓ **Listen** to the test monitors and follow their instructions carefully.
- ✓ If you are not sure of an answer, **go with your first choice**.
- ✓ Work through the test **without spending too much time on any one item**.
- ✓ If you cannot decide on the best answer to a question, **skip it and go back to it later**.
- ✓ Use your watch or the clock in the room to **keep track of your time** during the test.
- ✓ It's to your advantage to **answer as many questions as possible**, even if you must guess.
- ✓ **Mark your answers on the answer sheet and NOT in the test booklet**. Only answers clearly marked on the answer sheet can be given credit.
- ✓ If you have a question at any time before or during the exam, **ask the monitor for assistance**. Please note that test monitors can answer questions concerning exam administration issues only. They **will not** be able to interpret exam questions for you.

### **VI. HOW TO PREPARE USING THIS GUIDE**

The questions contained in the booklet are a representation of some questions that will be on the actual examination. Familiarize yourself with the sample questions that begin on page 10. You would be well-advised to read the instructions and answer each question carefully. Like the examination questions (all of which are multiple choice), the sample items are presented in the following categories:

- Section I. Ability to analyze information
- Section II. Ability to read a map and/or follow driving directions
- Section III. Ability to communicate in writing
- Section IV. Ability to read and comprehend information
- Section V. Ability to plan/organize
- Section VI. Ability to complete documentation
- Section VII. Knowledge of basic English and grammar

The sample items which follow are representative of the type of items that will appear on the exam. They are not necessarily based on the same information, diagrams, etc., as the actual exam. All questions will be multiple choice.

In addition, please review the General Instructions to Candidates Taking Written Examinations provided at the exam site on the day of the test.

## VII. BANDED SCORING

When the written exam for Disease Intervention Specialist is graded, the scores will be grouped into bands. When you receive notification of how you performed on the exam, you will not be given a numerical score (i.e., 67 out of 80, 93 out of 100). Rather, you will be informed into which band (i.e., 1, 3, 6, 10) your score fell. The following information is provided to help you understand the banding procedure.

### **What is banding?**

Banding is one way to reduce the impact of fluctuations in test scores that do not provide meaningful information about differences in the ability to perform the job. One important purpose of testing is to identify the differences in test scores that reflect real differences among candidates. Banded scoring is a statistical procedure for grouping raw test scores that statistically are not meaningfully different from one another. In banded scoring, bands are set objectively and statistically. They are not manipulated arbitrarily.

### **Misconceptions about banding.**

There are many misconceptions about banding and the use of banded scores. Some of the most common misconceptions are listed below. Each misconception is followed by a clarification.

**Misconception:** *Each band should have the same number of people.*

We do not force bands to be a certain size. The people in a band are similar to each other in that statistically there is no meaningful difference in their scores. Sometimes Band 1 may be very large, and at other times it may be small. Scores on the exam determine the size of the bands.

**Misconception:** *Band numbers have no meaning. I don't have a score.*

Band numbers do have meaning. Think of a band as a group of tied scores. Consider that in school two students with average grades of 94.5 and 94.3 would both be grouped into the same band. Just because one student made a 94.5 and one student made a 94.3, the teacher cannot be sure that 0.2 of a point means that the student who scored 94.5 is smarter or is a better student. The scores are so close to each other that they are basically the same.

For example, think of the achievement tests that children take in school. The fine print on these tests always informs you not to focus on the numerical score but rather on the comparative score, which uses some type of grouping technique such as percentiles, standard deviations, grade levels, etc. These grouping techniques are considered forms of banding. Banding compares your performance on the test to the other test takers' performance and groups your score with others that are statistically the same.

**Misconception:** *Band numbers are the same as letter grades.*

Band numbers are not the same as letter grades. Band 1 does not equate to an "A," Band 2 to a "B," and so on. In school, a predetermined numerical range of scores (i.e., 90-100, 80-90, 70-80) equals an alphabetical value (i.e., A, B, C). This grading system is a form of banding. In this case, unlike grade school, the width of bands is not set in advance. Scores are banded only in relation to one another, so you compete against other test takers. The scores of all test takers determine the width of the bands, and your score is set in relation to the scores of your peers.

***Misconception: A banded score on one test has the same value as a banded score on another test.***

Banded scores are test specific and cannot be compared from test to test. Consider that a test taker scored 88 on one test, and the highest score of all test takers was 89. It is likely for this exam that the test taker who scored 88 would be in Band 1. However, if the same person scored the same grade on another test, and the highest score of all test takers was 100, he/she may be in Band 2 or Band 3. Candidates' scores vary on each test, and since candidate scores determine the width of bands and into which band test takers fall, the value of a banded score varies from test to test.

***Misconception: People with the most seniority who have been on the job longest should be in the top bands.***

People with the most experience do not always fall into the top bands. Time spent in a job may not be the same as possessing a knowledge, skill, or ability needed to perform the job. The people with the strongest knowledges, skills, and abilities (or who did best on the exam) will be in the top bands. Some of the people in the top bands will have been in similar jobs for a long period of time, and others will have been in similar jobs for a short period of time. Years of service do not always equal proficiency. Candidates with seniority or experience do not automatically perform best on the test. Regardless of seniority, candidates who display the appropriate knowledges, skills, and abilities perform best on the test.

***Misconception: A standing in Band 4 or below automatically indicates failure or ineligibility for jobs.***

A band number of 4 or lower is not automatically equated with failure. For one test, there may only be 4 bands, and for another test, there may be 14 bands. So, your success on the test based on your position in a band varies from test to test. Your standing in a band does not indicate whether or not you pass or fail the test. The true test of success in your employment opportunities is whether or not you can be certified and considered for a job vacancy.

***Misconception: Banding replaced the "Rule of 10."***

Banding did not replace the "Rule of 10." The "Rule of 10" determines the number of bands to be certified. In the past, tied scores referred to an actual numerical score (e.g., two candidates with a score of 98.98 were considered tied) while now all of the scores within a band are considered tied.

***Misconception: People in a band do not differ.***

When several people are placed in the same band, it does not mean that those people do not differ at all. Instead, it means that their scores on the exam do not differ enough to be separate scores.

## **VIII. GENERAL QUESTIONS**

### **Are there any vacancies for the Disease Intervention Specialist?**

You may contact the personnel office of the Department of Public Health to receive information on current or future vacancies.

### **How are vacancies filled for the Disease Intervention Specialist?**

The top ten applicants on the register are sent to the Department of Public Health for consideration. Since the banded scoring process is used, all of the scores within a band are considered tied. Therefore, all names within a band are certified out to the agency, which may include more than 10 names. The names of people not selected stay on the register to be considered for future jobs. Persons are usually hired at the minimum of the pay range.

### **What is a register?**

A register is a list of all individuals who have successfully completed the selection procedure for a State Merit System job. The register is a complete list of individuals who are eligible for employment in a certain job classification.

### **Test Results**

Approximately four to six weeks after completing the exam, you will receive a Notice of Examination Results postcard in the mail. This post card will identify your score, or band placement, for the written exam. If you have not received your score within four to six weeks, you should call the State Personnel Department.

In addition to your band placement, you may also obtain your standing, or rank on the register online at [www.personnel.alabama.gov](http://www.personnel.alabama.gov). From the home page, you should click on “My Profile” and follow the instructions. For security purposes, you must now create an online profile in order to access your standing.

### **How long will I remain eligible for appointment?**

If you pass the examination, your name will remain on the employment register for two years from the date you were placed on the register. You will be notified by mail when to reapply.

### **Reasonable accommodations**

If you would like to request special testing accommodations or have any questions concerning the test site or testing conditions, please contact the State Personnel Department at (334) 242-3389.

### **Rescheduling a Written Examination**

If there is a conflict in your schedule, and you are unable to attend the written exam at the time and date for which you have been scheduled, you must resubmit your Application for Examination. The State Personnel Department will schedule you for the next available administration of this written test.

### **Administrative Questions**

If you have any administrative questions or concerns about the exam or questions about any of the information presented in this booklet, you should contact the State Personnel Department. Exam administrators are not allowed to provide specific information about the content of the exam.

## IX. SAMPLE TEST QUESTIONS

### Section I: Analyzing Information

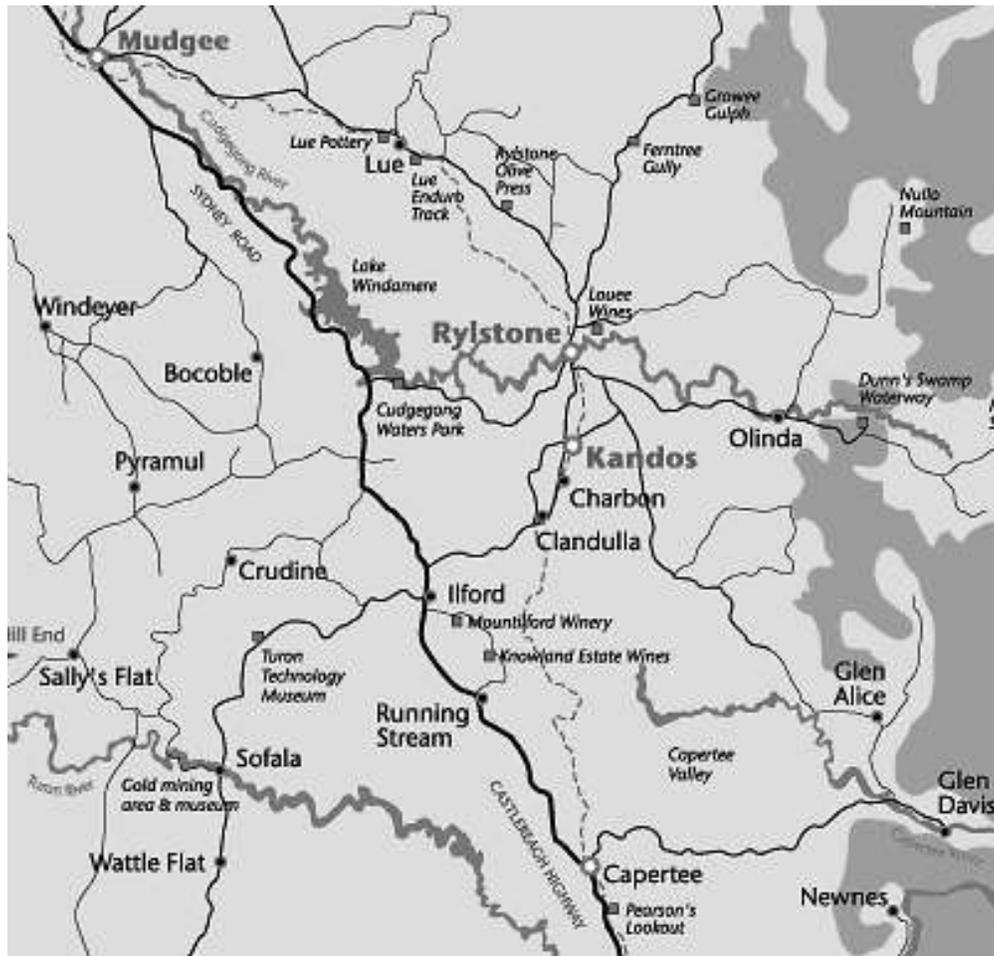
Number of Treated STD Cases by Sex and Race of Client							
	White Males	White Females	Black Males	Black Females	Other Males	Other Females	Totals
AIDS	11,100	11,250	13,200	13,100	1,150	1,200	51,000
GONORRHEA	20,500	20,400	28,000	29,400	3,050	3,000	104,350
PID	22,000	21,500	23,000	28,000	3,300	3,400	101,200
SYPHILIS	18,000	17,500	20,000	19,000	3,200	3,500	81,200
HERPES	20,000	20,000	25,000	25,000	3,100	3,300	96,400
CHLAMYDIA	19,500	21,000	24,000	25,000	3,000	3,000	95,500
HEPATITIS B	23,000	22,000	23,000	28,000	2,800	2,500	101,300
TOTAL	134,100	133,650	156,200	167,500	19,600	19,900	630,950

According to the table above, for which disease were the least number treated?

- A. AIDS
- B. Syphilis
- C. Herpes
- D. Chlamydia

Answer (A) is correct. According to the table, there were a total of 51,000 treated cases of AIDS, followed by 81,200 treated cases of syphilis, 95,500 treated cases of chlamydia, and 96,400 treated cases of herpes.

## Section II: Map Reading



Which of the following towns is located in the furthest Northwest corner of the above map?

- A. Newnes
- B. Wattle Flat
- C. Mudgee
- D. Windeyer

Answer (C) is correct. Mudgee is located in the most Northwest corner of the map.

### Section III: Written Communication

The sentences in the following paragraph may or may not be in the proper order. Choose the answer that lists the sentences in the most logical order.

- 1) I have a son named John.
- 2) He will start tomorrow.
- 3) That means he is old enough to start school.
- 4) He is five years old.

- A. 1-2-3-4
- B. 2-4-3-1
- C. 1-4-3-2
- D. 4-3-2-1

Answer (C) is correct. This represents the most logical order of the four sentences.

### Section IV: Reading Comprehension

#### What is Influenza?

It is an illness caused by influenza viruses. It generally affects people of all ages. Typically, people with influenza have fever, chills, headache, cough, and muscle soreness and may be sick for several days to a week or more. Most people recover fully. A small portion of cases are particularly severe, and patients may develop pneumonia or other complications. In some past epidemics, about one case out of every thousand was fatal. The risk of complications and death from influenza is highest for people with chronic health problems like diabetes; disease of the heart, lungs, or kidneys; severe anemia; or chronic illnesses (or medications) which lower the body's resistance to infection. It is also high for older persons generally—particularly those 65 years or older.

Influenza viruses frequently undergo changes in their chemical makeup. These changes make it possible to catch influenza even though immunity (antibodies) may have been developed against previous strains of influenza. Thus, having had influenza or influenza vaccine in past years may not prevent getting influenza again.

Although influenza epidemics are unpredictable, some influenza occurs each year. In very large epidemics, as much as 1/3 of the population has become sick as thousand have died.

According to the passage above, influenza would be most dangerous to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. a seventy-three year old nursing home patient
- B. a five month old infant
- C. a six year old child in first grade
- D. a forty year old man who works outdoors in all types of weather

Answer (A) is correct. The passage indicates that there is a high risk of complications for those 65 years or older.

## Section V: Planning and Organizing

Read the situation and answer the following question based on the information provided.

Your supervisor will be out of the office today. You arrived at work at 7:55 A.M. You and your spouse have an appointment today at 11:00 A.M. with your family doctor who has advised you that the appointment should not be rescheduled. You need to leave by 10:30 A.M. and will be unable to return to the office later today. Sue Beck, a clerical aide and office receptionist, is the only other employee in the office today. However, she does not type. Your supervisor left a note listing the following tasks that must be done today.

- Type the Barron report (2 hours to complete).
- Sort and distribute the mail (30 minutes to complete).
- Call Virginia Hall about the Barron project (10 minutes to complete).
- Post new dividend rates by 12 noon, today (20 minutes to complete).
- Set up the conference room for the next day's 8:00 A.M. meeting (30 minutes to complete).
- File dividend reports (2 hours to complete).

Which of the following tasks below would you be forced to perform yourself?

- A. File dividend reports
- B. Set up the conference room
- C. Type the Barron report
- D. Sort and distribute the day's mail

The correct answer is (C). Since Ms. Beck cannot type, you must type the Barron report.

**Section VI: Completing Documentation**

**FORM 1**

<b>CLIENT SCHEDULE CHANGES</b>	
<b>DATE:</b>	_____ (a) _____
<b>CLIENT NAME:</b>	_____ (b) _____
<b>CLIENT CHART NO:</b>	_____ (c) _____
<b>ACTIVITY TO BE DROPPED:</b>	_____ (d) _____
<b>TIME/PERIOD:</b>	_____ (e) _____
<b>ACTIVITY TO BE ADDED:</b>	_____ (f) _____
<b>TIME/PERIOD:</b>	_____ (g) _____
<b>INSTRUCTOR FOR ADDED ACTIVITY:</b>	_____ (h) _____
<b>Signature of employee submitting changes:</b>	_____ (i) _____

(Send to clerical section by noon on Thursday.)

**Scenario**

Bobby White, a client of Alabama’s Mental Health Rehabilitation Center strained his ankle and could no longer participate in Mr. Pool’s 3<sup>rd</sup> period swimming class.

On May 18, 2015 Kerry Short, an Activity Program Aide, was asked to pull Bobby’s chart, # 846, to drop the swimming class from Bobby’s schedule and to include Mr. Gray’s 3<sup>rd</sup> period pottery class.

According to the form and scenario above, what should the Activity Program Aide type or write in section (f) of Form 1?

- A. His signature
- B. 3<sup>rd</sup> period
- C. Pottery
- D. Swimming

The correct answer is (C). Bobby White’s schedule was changed by dropping the swimming class and adding Mr. Gray’s 3<sup>rd</sup> period pottery class.

## Section VII: English and Grammar

Choose the answer that demonstrates the most appropriate English usage.

- A. The supervisor and the aide, together with the rest of the office force, has unanimously agreed to send a representative.
- B. The supervisor, together with the aide and the rest of the office force, have unanimously agreed to send a representative.
- C. The entire office force, including the supervisor and the aide, have unanimously agreed to send a representative.
- D. The entire office force, including the supervisor and the aide, has unanimously agreed to send a representative.

Answer (D) is correct. This represents the most appropriate English usage.