General Comprehensive Examination FAQs

Effective December 1, 2013
# Table of Contents

Am I eligible to take the Comprehensive Exam? ............................................................... 3

How much does it cost? ................................................................................................. 3

When / where do I take the Exam? ............................................................................... 3

How do I register for the Comp Exam? ......................................................................... 4

Do you accept late applications? ................................................................................... 4

Can I get a transfer or a refund? .................................................................................... 5

How does the 30-day testing format work? .................................................................... 5

Can I choose which modules I want to take? For example, if I have 3 modules left, can I take 2 modules in this offering and 1 module in another offering? ................. 5

Can I take a module more than once during the same exam window, if I can find another seat at PearsonVUE? ................................................................................... 6

What happens if I miss one of my exam appointments? Can I take it again? ............. 6

I can’t make one of the exam appointments I scheduled. What do I do? .................... 7

What material is tested on the Comprehensive Exam? .............................................. 7

How should I study? Is there a review course or study book available? ................. 7

What can I bring to the exam? Can I bring my [phone, bag, iPod, etc.] into the testing room? ................................................................. 8

Which calculators are allowed? ....................................................................................... 8

Are formulas provided for Module III (Income Approach)? ....................................... 9

How many whiteboards can I use during the exam? ................................................. 9

What if I experience a problem at the PearsonVUE testing center? ......................... 9

Do I qualify for special accommodations under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)? ................................................................. 10

When will I receive my Comp Exam results? ............................................................... 10
Am I eligible to take the Comprehensive Exam?

In accordance with Regulation No. 1: Admission to General Candidacy and MAI Membership, eligibility to write the Comprehensive Exam shall be limited to Candidates who have attended the required courses, received a passing grade on all required exams, and received credit for the college degree requirement.

Any required course and/or exam should be taken at least 6 weeks prior to the start of the Comp Exam testing window, to allow adequate time for grading and the Candidate to be notified of the results.

If you have taken all required courses and/or exams but are waiting for the results, you may apply for the Comp Exam, but we cannot process the application nor register you for the Exam until you meet the eligibility requirements – no exceptions.

Please keep in mind that PearsonVUE scheduling is on a first-come, first-served basis. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you complete your eligibility requirements before the application deadline.

How much does it cost?

The 2014 Comprehensive Examination fees are as follows:

- All four (4) modules – first-time OR re-exam ................... $ 475
- Three (3) modules – re-exam .................................... $ 375
- Two (2) modules – re-exam ...................................... $ 250
- One (1) module – re-exam ....................................... $ 125

Note: These fees are determined based on the cost of seating fees at PearsonVUE. Fees are subject to change annually.

Comprehensive Exam fees are non-refundable and non-transferable once remitted. Payment information is taken at the time of application, but the payment will not be processed until the application is manually approved by the Admissions Staff.

When / where do I take the Exam?

The Exam is administered through PearsonVUE, similar to other AI exams. You may choose any location offering the Comp Exam – it does not need to be the one closest to you. You may search PearsonVUE locations at: http://pearsonvue.com/ai.

The Comp Exam is offered 3 times per year, each over a 30-day examination window. Candidates can schedule their modules however they wish within the window, subject to availability at PearsonVUE (see question: How does the 30-day testing format work?).

As a general rule, PearsonVUE locations can start filling up 4-6 weeks before the exam window begins. Comp Exam application deadlines are set 6 weeks before each exam window for this very reason.
We strongly recommend scheduling your exam seats as soon as you receive your authorization emails. PearsonVUE availability is first-come, first-served, and AI cannot guarantee availability or reserve seats for Candidates. **You** are responsible for scheduling your exam appointments. **Do not wait until the last minute!**

**How do I register for the Comp Exam?**

You may apply using the online Comp Exam Application. Please allow 2-3 business days for your application to be reviewed and processed.

You’ll receive a confirmation email after your application has been processed, which also serves as your receipt. Payment information is taken at the time of application, but your payment will not be processed until your application is approved by the Admissions Staff.

Once your application is processed, PearsonVUE will upload your registration overnight, and your authorization emails will be sent to you the next morning. You will receive 1 email per module. You may contact PearsonVUE to schedule your modules once you receive the authorization emails.

For better seating availability and flexible scheduling options, we strongly recommend that you schedule your exam seats as soon as you receive authorization. **Do not wait until the last minute!**

**Do you accept late applications?**

Yes. We can accept late applications until the last business day before the 30-day exam window begins. However, once the window begins we cannot accept applications nor register examinees for that offering – no exceptions.

We generally advise against submitting late applications if at all possible. The application deadlines are set six (6) weeks before the start of each 30-day exam window to give examinees more scheduling flexibility and the best chance of securing preferred exam dates. If you apply late, you may have difficulty scheduling your exam appointments.

Late applicants typically do not get their ideal exam dates and/or testing location. PearsonVUE seating is first-come, first-served, and AI cannot guarantee availability or reserve seats. You may have to travel to another PearsonVUE location if the local testing center is full – even out of state, in some past cases.

Examination fees are non-refundable and no transfers will be permitted into another offering. The Admissions Department reserves the right to deny late applications at its discretion. Candidates who submit late applications must agree to these provisions.
Can I get a transfer or a refund?

NO. Due to the nature and logistics of the exam delivery format, transfers and/or refunds are NOT permitted.

When you apply for the Comprehensive Exam, you agree to prepare for the Exam as necessary, and sit for ALL of your required modules during the designated 30-day examination window.

It is YOUR responsibility to reserve exam appointments that will fit into your personal schedule, attend your scheduled exam appointments, and study for the Exam as necessary.

How does the 30-day testing format work?

As of January 1, 2013, the Comp Exam is now offered over a 30-day examination window. Under this new format, examinees can schedule their modules in any order, on any available days at PearsonVUE, within the specified 30-day examination window.

For example, if the exam window is from April 1–May 3, a Candidate needing credit for all 4 modules could take them all in the first week; or space them out over the whole 30 days; or take 1 module each Friday over 4 Fridays; or even take 2 modules a day over 2 consecutive days, etc. Any scheduling combination is acceptable, as long as the Candidate completes ALL required modules during the designated 30-day exam window.

The 30-day format was designed to provide more scheduling flexibility for examinees, greater seating availability at PearsonVUE, and the ability to take modules strategically, according to personal need.

Candidates are responsible for choosing exam dates that will fit into their personal schedules, attending their scheduled exam appointments, and studying for the Exam as necessary.

We welcome any comments about the new delivery format; please send comments to the Admissions Staff at comp@appraisalinstitute.org.

Can I choose which modules I want to take? For example, if I have 3 modules left, can I take 2 modules in this offering and 1 module in another offering?

No. Comp Exam modules cannot be taken “piecemeal.” Each time you take the Exam, you must sit for ALL modules for which you still need passing credit. However, you can choose the order of taking each module during the exam window (e.g., some Candidates like to take their “most difficult” module last, so they have more time to study).
For example, if you passed Module II the first time you took the Comp Exam, the next time you take the Exam you must sit for Modules I, III, and IV.

If you do not take **ALL** modules still needing credit during the 30-day exam window, you will receive an “Incomplete” for **ALL** modules in that offering – **no exceptions**.

An “Incomplete” has no effect whatsoever on your Candidate status or Comp Exam eligibility. It is simply a way for us to document that your modules did not receive grades in that offering. (This is similar to the 90% attendance policy for AI Education courses.)

**Can I take a module more than once during the same exam window, if I can find another seat at PearsonVUE?**

No. Your PearsonVUE authorization is valid for one attempt at that module only, just like other AI exams administered through PearsonVUE. Grade results are not distributed until after the end of the examination window (see question: *When will I receive my exam results?*).

**What happens if I miss one of my exam appointments? Can I take it again?**

If you anticipate a schedule conflict with one of your scheduled exam appointments, you must call PearsonVUE **at least 1 business day in advance** to reschedule. PearsonVUE does allow rescheduling with the aforementioned advance notice, subject to seating availability.

If you missed one or more of your exam appointments, and did not contact PearsonVUE 1 business day in advance, you have two options:

a) Contact us at comp@appraisalinstitute.org to arrange re-authorization for your module. There is a $125 re-authorization fee per module. After we process your re-authorization, you’ll receive the new authorization email the next morning. Once you’ve received the new authorization, you should contact PearsonVUE **immediately** to reschedule your missed module for one of the remaining days of the exam window.

**Please keep in mind that if you miss a module near the end of the exam window, it may be very difficult to find another open seat, as there will be fewer remaining days to choose from.**

b) Forgo this exam entirely and register for a future Comp Exam offering. You must contact PearsonVUE to cancel any remaining exam appointments. You will need to submit another application and pay the exam fees to register for a future Comp Exam offering. **Comp Exam registrations and fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.** Our transfer/refund policies supersede PearsonVUE’s generic cancellation/refund policy.
I can’t make one of the exam appointments I scheduled. What do I do?

PearsonVUE will allow you to reschedule any exam appointment, but you must contact them at least 1 business day in advance. You can reschedule a module for any another day (subject to availability) within the same examination window only. To reschedule, please contact PearsonVUE Customer Service at 1-877-894-3483.

As long as you give PearsonVUE enough advance notice, you do not need permission from AI to reschedule a module. If you missed your exam and/or did not give at least 1 business day notice, please refer to question: What happens if I miss one of my exam appointments? Can I take it again?

What material is tested on the Comprehensive Exam?

The Comp Exam is based on the entire Appraisal Institute body of appraisal knowledge. It may cover anything in the required examinations and courses, current appraisal literature, and the AI Regulations and Bylaws. It is designed to measure a Candidate’s ability to integrate classroom knowledge with personal experience and judgment. A general overview of the concepts tested in each module can be found in the Comp Exam Guidebook, page 9.

The concept of this Exam is to blend evaluation of a Candidate’s educational background, which was tested in basic and advanced courses, with evaluation of his/her judgment, which has not been tested. The object is to determine how a Candidate functions in the real estate world beyond the formulaic problems of the course laboratory.

As a future MAI Designated Member, you have the continuing responsibility to know current methods, techniques, information, and other content presented in courses and in the literature of the Appraisal Institute. You should not think of the Comp Exam as a “review test” of the Advanced (Level II) courses – it is much more than that. We need to know that you can combine appraisal theory, methodology, judgment, and critical thinking to solve real appraisal problems. The General Comprehensive Examination is a measure of your ability to perform in real-world situations.

How should I study? Is there a review course or study book available?

The Appraisal Institute does not have a review course or study guide specifically for the Comp Exam. However, the Comp Exam Guidebook is an excellent resource which includes sample questions (taken from the last version of the Exam) with the correct and incorrect answers explained for you.

Consider the materials from the AI courses you’ve taken; not only the Advanced Education (Level II), but your Qualifying Education (QE) as well. Use the critiques from your previous course exams to find areas where you may need improvement. Go back through your QE coursework and review fundamental concepts, formulas, and definitions – this knowledge is critical to success on the Exam. The Comp Exam
will be testing the Appraisal Institute’s **entire** curriculum, so you need to have a solid foundation in the basics and must be able to apply these concepts to the various real-world situations presented to you.

Research conducted by AI has routinely proven that Candidates with the most current Level II courses do much better on the Exam overall than Candidates who took their Level II courses many years ago, or not at all. **The Comprehensive Examination Panel strongly recommends that you attend, and take the examinations for, the Level II courses if you are preparing for the Exam.**

**An Important Note:** Anything advertised as a “Comp Exam review/prep course” was created by third-party individuals outside the Admissions Department and Comprehensive Examination Panel, and are therefore unofficial. Third-party providers do not use official exam content and their materials have not been reviewed or approved by Admissions or the Comp Exam Panel. We do not endorse, nor can we confirm the accuracy and/or efficacy of any third-party materials, courses, or seminars. The Exam is designed such that it should not be necessary to attend a third-party seminar to receive passing results.

**What can I bring to the exam? Can I bring my [phone, bag, iPod, etc.] into the testing room?**

The only item you may bring into the testing room is your financial calculator. **No other personal items are permitted**, including but not limited to: cell phones, wallets, bags, purses, iPads/tablets, music players, food & drinks, etc. The testing center will provide a private locker for you to store your personal items during the examination.

Scratch paper, notes, and books are also prohibited. PearsonVUE will provide you with **TWO (2)** six-page, dry-erasable, whiteboard booklets and two (2) dry-erase pens to use for scratch work (see question: *How many whiteboards can I use during the exam?*).

PearsonVUE can also provide sound-cancelling headphones and/or earplugs by request. Please keep in mind that PearsonVUE can allow or prohibit any items in their testing rooms at their discretion.

**Which calculators are allowed?**

The following financial calculators are allowed (other models/types are discouraged):

- **HP 10B** and **10Bii**
- **HP 12C**
- **HP 17Bii** and **17Bii+**
- **HP 19Bii**
- **TI BA II PLUS**

The PearsonVUE staff will ask you to clear your calculator’s memory before and after the exam. Calculators must be noiseless. Each examinee may bring only **one (1)** calculator into the testing room.
Are formulas provided for Module III (Income Approach)?

Yes. A list of basic formulas is incorporated in the computerized Module III exam given at PearsonVUE. These formulas are adequate for solving all questions in the Module III exam. Examinees will have access to the formulas on each question page of the exam.

How many whiteboards can I use during the exam?

In lieu of scratch paper, PearsonVUE will provide each examinee with TWO (2) laminated, multi-page, dry-erasable whiteboard booklets and two (2) dry-erase pens. Each booklet contains six (6) pages with eleven (11) writeable surfaces.

Examinees may have TWO (2) booklets checked out at a time. Examinees may receive a new, clean booklet by exchanging the used booklet with the PearsonVUE staff.

What if I experience a problem at the PearsonVUE testing center?

PearsonVUE has administered our Comprehensive Exam and other Appraisal Institute education exams for nearly 10 years. PearsonVUE has an extensive customer support network and can resolve nearly all issues on-site, directly with the examinee.

Each PearsonVUE testing site keeps a manual containing the exam policies of their client institutions, including the Appraisal Institute’s. If you experience a random, minor issue such as being given the wrong type of whiteboard, please politely ask the testing center staff to check the manual for AI’s Comp Exam policies. Minor problems of this nature are usually fixed immediately.

If you have comments/complaints about your PearsonVUE experience, we strongly encourage you to submit an Incident Report before you leave the testing center that day. This is PearsonVUE’s recommended procedure.

PearsonVUE follows up on comments/complaints with the examinee privately. They also send a list of all reported incidents to the Admissions Dept. at the conclusion of each 30-day Comp Exam testing window.

For more information about PearsonVUE’s customer support, please visit their website at:

(Next page)
Do I qualify for special accommodations under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)?

If you believe that you qualify for accommodation under the ADA, please contact the Admissions Staff at comp@appraisalinstitute.org before submitting an online Comp Exam application.

You will need to provide written documentation from your physician describing your situation and the accommodations needed. Please notify the Admissions Staff in writing at least 6 weeks in advance to arrange accommodations. We'll do our best to help make sure your exam experience will fit your needs; however, we cannot guarantee that accommodations will be available for last-minute requests.

When will I receive my Comp Exam results?

In the interest of ensuring confidentiality and fairness for all examinees, grade letters are sent after all testing is completed. We do not receive results as each examinee takes each module. PearsonVUE sends the results to us after the end of the 30-day exam window, once everyone has finished testing.

Grade letters are sent to Candidates via email within 30 business days from the end of the exam window. If you took your module(s) in the earlier part of the window, it could be 6-8 weeks from your last date of testing. Please do not call the National Office to ask about grades if it has been less than 8 weeks from your last date of testing.

If it has been more than 8 weeks from your last date of testing and you have not received your grade letter, please contact Admissions/CE at comp@appraisalinstitute.org.