

SHRM-CP Cheat Sheet 2026

The night-before summary, built like the exam.

134 Scored questions	3h 40m Time limit	— Passing score
\$399 Exam fee	Society for Human Reso... Governing body	— Pass rate

The Numbers to Remember

- 134 total multiple-choice questions
- 80 stand-alone knowledge questions + 54 situational judgment items
- 3 hours 40 minutes total testing time, split into two 110-minute sections
- SHRM member standard price: \$399 / non-member standard price: \$499
- \$50 nonrefundable application fee + \$49 nonrefundable standard deadline fee (separate from the exam price)
- No degree, HR title, or prior HR experience required to apply
- SHRM-SCP, the advanced credential, requires 3 years of strategic-level HR work at roughly 1,000 hours per year — the SHRM-CP has no such requirement
- Recertification: 60 PDCs within a 3-year cycle

Subtests and Scores

- Content splits three ways: 10% foundational knowledge (nine behavioral competencies), 50% knowledge items (14 HR functional areas), 40% situational judgment
- SHRM does not publish a specific numeric passing/cut score for the SHRM-CP — results are reported pass/fail from a scaled model, not a stated raw percentage
- Because there's no published cut score, treat every question as equally worth your attention rather than chasing a target number
- With 134 questions spread across the full 3 hours 40 minutes, pace yourself evenly — don't burn the majority of your time on the first section and rush the second

High-Yield Review Areas

- The 14 HR functional areas carry the single largest share of points (50%) — prioritize breadth here over any one deep-dive topic
- Situational judgment (40%) rewards practiced reasoning, not memorization — drill scenario questions specifically, not just fact recall
- The nine behavioral competencies (foundational knowledge, 10%) reward knowing what each competency looks like in action, not textbook definitions
- Review pacing: with 134 questions across the full 3 hours 40 minutes, know roughly how many minutes per question you can afford in each section before test day
- Since eligibility never required an HR title or degree, don't assume gaps in formal HR education are a weakness — focus your remaining review time purely on the tested content areas

Top Traps

- Don't assume situational judgment questions have one "correct" and several "wrong" answers — SHRM scenarios usually ask for the most effective response among several plausible ones

- Don't skip the application fee and standard deadline fee when budgeting — both are nonrefundable and separate from the \$399/\$499 exam price
- Don't assume you need an HR degree or title to register — eligibility explicitly does not require either
- Don't under-practice the knowledge half (50% of the exam) while over-preparing for situational judgment — both halves need real study time
- Don't wait until exam week to test your pacing across the full 3 hours 40 minute sitting — stamina is part of what's being tested
- Don't confuse SHRM-CP eligibility with SHRM-SCP eligibility — the SCP's 3-year, 1,000-hour strategic-work requirement does not apply to the CP

Official sources

- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) — Exam Options and Fees - SHRM Certification:
<https://www.shrm.org/credentials/certification/exam-options-fees>
- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) — SHRM Certification Best Practices, Part 2: How to Use the SHRM BASK:
<https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/organizational-employee-development/shrm-certification-best-practices--part-2--how-to-use-the-shrm-b>
- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) — Eligibility Criteria - SHRM Certification:
<https://www.shrm.org/credentials/certification/eligibility-criteria>

Free practice questions for this exam: www.everyexamprep.com/practice/exams/finance/shrm-cp