

The Endorsement Exam

Q. Who takes the Endorsement Exam?

A. Categories III and IV.

Q. When is the exam offered each year?

A. VAIMH is temporarily allowing for the virtual administration of Endorsement® exams due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual exams can only be administered one-on-one (one Proctor per one exam respondent). The Endorsement Coordinator and/or Exam Handler will work in collaboration with the candidate to arrange an examination date.

To be approved to sit for the exam, a Category III or IV candidate must submit their application and all required documents no later than 6 weeks prior to the exam date (January 31st for March exams, and July 31st for September exams).

Q. What is the format of the exam?

A. There are two parts to the test: Part 1 consists of multiple-choice questions. Part 2 consists of three vignettes or scenarios; you are asked to answer two of the three. You will have three hours to complete the examination (i.e., 90 minutes to complete Part 1, and 90 minutes to complete Part 2). The material covered requires knowledge about pregnancy, early development, and clinical practice experiences. Both parts draw on cumulative learning experiences in college/university settings and specialized in-service trainings, as well as self-study (e.g., books and journal articles about infancy, early parenthood, and infant mental health). Your supervised work experiences with infants, toddlers, and families, and experiences within reflective supervision or consultation groups related to your work with infants and families will also contribute to learning that is reflected in the examination questions.

Q. What primary topics are covered in the multiple-choice portion of the test?

A. The multiple-choice questions are related to the competencies as indicated in the [VAIMH Competency Guidelines](#) booklet, such as:

- Attachment separation and loss
- Pregnancy, infant and young child development and behavior
- Relationship-based therapeutic practice
- Infant mental health screening and assessment
- Disorders of infancy/early childhood
- Cultural competence
- Reflective practice

Q. How should I study for the exam?

A. Studying for the test will vary from person to person. If you are currently engaged in relationship-based practice with infants and their families, receive reflective supervision, and have consistently updated your knowledge and skills through specialized in-service training, or enrollment in university or college coursework specific to infancy, early parenthood, and infant mental health, you will most likely be very prepared.

If you have not engaged in clinical practice or attended in-service trainings or university-based coursework specific to the promotion of infant mental health, you will find the test challenging. There is an [Exam Suggested Resource List](#) available on the Early Childhood Mental Health VA website.

Q. What happens if I do not pass the exam?

A. A passing score on Part 1 (multiple-choice) of the exam is 80%. Candidates who receive a score of less than 80% will be invited to take the exam again in one year. In order to carefully protect exam materials, candidates will not receive specific feedback related to the questions missed on Part 1.

Candidates who do not receive a passing score on Part 2 (responses to vignettes/scenarios) will be provided specific feedback based on exam reviewers' remarks. Those candidates will be invited to take the exam again in one year. There is no charge to retake Part 1 or Part 2 of the exam.