



Questionmark Case Study

Secure Delivery of Certification Exams

Background

The Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) is a not-for-profit organization for CFOs, comptrollers, accountants and other financial management professionals at hospitals, clinics, managed care organizations, and other healthcare-related organizations. The Association, which has offices in Washington, D.C. and Westchester, Ill., provides data, reports, networking opportunities and other resources for its 35,000 members.

The Association offers a certification program in which HFMA members can earn the Certified Healthcare Financial Professional (CHFP) designation. About 7 percent of members (about 2,500) have earned the CHFP designation by completing several requirements, including professional experience, education, and passing two certification exams.

Questionmark Hosting

Since 2001, HFMA has been using Questionmark Perception to manage the online administration of certification exams. Between managing the biannual development of exam question pools, the corresponding self-study courses and the newly developed instructor-led exam prep courses, HFMA's certification department doesn't have the people or technology to manage testing too. By using the Questionmark Hosting Service, HFMA can focus on the exams themselves and not be concerned about technical details.

Certification Requirements

As part of the certification requirements, members must pass a general exam in healthcare finance practices and an exam in one of four specialties: accounting and finance, patient and financial services, financial management of physician practices, or managed care. Each of the three versions of the general exam has 150 questions, and each specialty exam has 75 questions.

If a candidate doesn't successfully complete an exam, after at least 90 days he or she can take the second version of the exam, and the third

version if the second attempt is unsuccessful. Meta-tags are used to designate whether a question is on the first, second or third version of the exam, and also to designate questions as retired when the certification program and question pools are updated every two years.

Security

When certification candidates take an exam, they do so via Questionmark Secure. They must enter a password, which is only good for 24 hours and allows only one attempt, and the proctor must also enter a password. Proctors have to be certified members of HFMA and sign an affidavit attesting they agree to abide by the stated policies for proctoring an exam.

Automated Emails

Perception version 4 allows the certification department to e-mail passwords through the system to people who have registered for an exam. It's possible to send a batch of e-mails with passwords by clicking on the scheduled exams. Perception pulls the data from the registrations to produce the emails. Perception's automated score confirmation function gives candidates their scores via e-mail immediately after completing the exam.

Exams Anytime, Anywhere

Before HFMA started using Perception, they used a paper-based process with a national testing company. But now the Association can administer its 600 tests per year in a much more efficient and cost-effective manner. Exams are available around the clock, and members are taking them all over the country.

More information

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