



ICRM Foundations Exam Outline

Records and Information Management Domains, Subdomains, Topics, and Descriptions

About this outline

This outline identifies the domains, subdomains, and topics covered by the ICRM Foundations Exam. Use the descriptions to understand the knowledge areas represented in the exam and to guide study or curriculum alignment.

At a glance

Domain	Knowledge area
1	RIM Governance Fundamentals
2	Information Architecture and Framework
3	Risk, Compliance, and Legal Readiness
4	Information Security and Privacy
5	Records Operations and Lifecycle Management

Reading order: Domain → Subdomain → Topic → Description

Domain 1: RIM Governance Fundamentals

RIM professionals should understand the foundational governance principles that ensure information is managed consistently and responsibly throughout its lifecycle, aligned with organizational objectives, regulatory requirements, and ethical expectations.

1A Records and Information Management Principles

RIM professionals should understand recognized best-practice frameworks (e.g., ARMA International's The Principles® and the Information Governance Maturity Model) and how they integrate with organizational strategy, policy enforcement, and oversight to support defensible, enterprise-wide information governance.

1A1 Best Practices and Standards

RIM professionals should understand standards for effective information governance, including requirements for consistency, compliance, and lifecycle controls. They should understand how responsible oversight, including for automated or AI-assisted processes, supports integrity, privacy, confidentiality, and defensibility.

1A2 Aligning RIM with Business Strategy

RIM professionals should understand how governance structures, roles, and responsibilities align RIM programs with organizational strategy, enabling policy implementation, accountability, and measurable outcomes.

1B Records and Information Lifecycle Management

RIM professionals should understand each phase of the lifecycle and how consistent practices across systems support compliance, access, risk reduction, and value.

1B1 Lifecycle Phases

RIM professionals should understand creation/receipt, active use, maintenance/storage, and final disposition, and how decisions at any phase influence downstream management, retention, access, protection, and regulatory compliance.

1B2 Implementation Strategies

RIM professionals should understand how to implement lifecycle controls using policies, processes, training, and technology, including classification, access controls, retention, and disposition, to ensure reliable, governed execution across the organization.

1C Professional Practices and Ethics

RIM professionals should understand the ethical expectations, stewardship responsibilities, and leadership roles central to the discipline.

1C1 Role, Advocacy, and Leadership

RIM professionals should understand how to advocate for responsible information governance, influence policies, guide stakeholders, and lead organizational decision-making aligned with compliance and transparency.

1C2 Professional Development

RIM professionals should understand career development pathways, certifications, professional associations, and the need for continuous learning as technologies and regulations evolve.

1C3 Ethical Considerations (Privacy, Integrity, Transparency)

RIM professionals should understand core ethical principles and how they support trusted information practices and regulatory compliance, including ensuring that any automated or system-assisted processes uphold transparency, privacy, and integrity.

Domain 2: Information Architecture and Framework

RIM professionals should understand the structures and standards, including classification schemes, taxonomies, metadata, and data maps, that enable organized, findable, and governable information across systems.

2A Taxonomy and Classification

RIM professionals should understand how to design and maintain classification strategies that support retrieval, compliance, and organizational needs.

2A1 Strategy Development

RIM professionals should understand how to design scalable, defensible classification and taxonomy strategies aligned with business needs and governance requirements, including evaluating automated classification outputs.

2A2 Application in Records and Information Management

RIM professionals should understand how classification structures are applied in systems to ensure accurate capture, retrieval, and lifecycle control, and how structures integrate into workflows to maintain consistency.

2A3 Metadata and Classification

RIM professionals should understand how descriptive, structural, and administrative metadata support identification, context, retrieval, and compliance, and how to validate metadata generated or inferred by automated tools.

2B Records Definitions and Declaration

RIM professionals should understand record types, distinctions from nonrecords, and formal declaration processes across formats and systems.

2B1 Distinguishing Record Types

RIM professionals should understand distinctions among records, nonrecords, and transitory information, and among structured, unstructured, and semistructured formats, ensuring each is governed appropriately.

2B2 Declaration Processes

RIM professionals should understand triggers, tools, and policies for formally declaring records, ensuring consistent accountability and lifecycle control.

2C Records Capture and Media Evaluation

RIM professionals should understand how to capture complete, authentic records and evaluate media characteristics for long-term preservation and accessibility.

2C1 Documentation and Transaction Integrity

RIM professionals should understand how to ensure records accurately document business activity, remain reliable over time, and reflect authenticity and completeness at the point of capture.

2C2 Migration and Media Considerations

RIM professionals should understand strengths, limitations, stability, and preservation requirements of physical and digital media, and how to plan and execute migrations to maintain long-term accessibility.

2D Data Mapping

RIM professionals should understand how to visualize where information resides, how it moves, how it supports operations, and how it fulfills regulatory and legal obligations.

2D1 Creation and Application

RIM professionals should understand how to build data maps identifying systems, locations, ownership, duplication, and processing, including documentation of automated workflows.

2D2 Enhancing Information Accessibility

RIM professionals should understand how data maps support retrieval, legal and regulatory responses, and consistent policy enforcement across platforms.

Domain 3: Risk, Compliance, and Legal Readiness

RIM professionals should understand risk identification, mitigation, compliance requirements, and legal process readiness, ensuring defensible and accountable information practices.

3A Risk Management

RIM professionals should understand how to identify, assess, document, and mitigate risks associated with information assets.

3A1 Risk Identification and Assessment

RIM professionals should understand how to recognize risks, evaluate likelihood and impact, document vulnerabilities, and assess compliance gaps in physical and digital environments.

3A2 Mitigation Strategies

RIM professionals should understand how to implement safeguards, controls, monitoring, and corrective actions aligned with governance and audit expectations.

3A3 Audit Readiness and Responses

RIM professionals should understand how to prepare for audits, maintain documentation, respond to findings, and document automated/system actions to support regulatory or investigative defensibility.

3B Compliance

RIM professionals should understand applicable legal, regulatory, privacy, and policy requirements and how to operationalize them.

3B1 Regulatory and Legal Frameworks

RIM professionals should understand the laws and regulations governing retention, privacy, data protection, and disclosure, and how to apply them. They should also understand requirements for transparency, data minimization, purpose limitation, and accountability when automated processes are involved.

3B2 Acceptable Use Policies

RIM professionals should understand how acceptable use policies govern employee interactions with information systems, data, and records, including monitoring and restriction expectations.

3B3 Litigation Support

RIM professionals should understand how to support legal processes, including legal holds, preservation, collection, review, and production, and how automated outputs (e.g., TAR) are validated for defensibility.

Domain 4: Information Security and Privacy

RIM professionals should understand principles and controls for protecting sensitive information and enforcing privacy requirements throughout the lifecycle.

4A Security Principles

RIM professionals should understand confidentiality, integrity, and availability, and the controls that protect records from unauthorized access, alteration, loss, or destruction.

4A1 Objectives and Protective Measures

RIM professionals should understand physical, administrative, and technical controls that ensure records remain trustworthy and protected.

4A2 Management of Sensitive Information

RIM professionals should understand how to classify and safeguard sensitive data, apply Privacy by Design, and assess how emerging tools handle sensitive information.

4B Security Classifications and Access Control

RIM professionals should understand how security classification schemes and access control models protect information across systems.

4B1 Classification Systems

RIM professionals should understand how to design and apply sensitivity-based classification systems that support appropriate access and protection.

4B2 Access Control Mechanisms

RIM professionals should understand authentication, authorization, and audit controls, including role-based, attribute-based, and rule-based models, and their application to physical and digital environments.

Domain 5: Records Operations and Lifecycle Management

RIM professionals should understand operational processes for creating, capturing, storing, retrieving, maintaining, and disposing of records in a consistent, compliant, and defensible manner.

5A Information Creation and Storage

RIM professionals should understand how physical and electronic records are created, captured, and stored using appropriate metadata, formats, media, and storage environments to ensure authenticity, accessibility, and preservation.

5A1 Physical and Electronic Records

RIM professionals should understand standards for creating and managing physical and digital records, including naming conventions, formats, capture methods, and cloud storage considerations.

5A2 Digital Communication and Collaboration

RIM professionals should understand how communication tools (email, IM, voicemail, video conferencing) generate records and how system-generated artifacts (summaries, transcripts, suggested responses) must be captured and governed.

5A3 Web and Data-Driven Content

RIM professionals should understand how web, social media, and data-driven processes (OCR, RFID, EDI, speech recognition) generate records requiring structured storage and governance.

5A4 Storage Media and Data Types

RIM professionals should understand characteristics and limitations of storage media and environments (data centers, data lakes/warehouses, cloud) and how they affect records protection and lifecycle management.

5A5 Business Continuity and Protection

RIM professionals should understand strategies for vital records protection and continuity planning, including disaster recovery and impact analysis.

5B Retrieval and eDiscovery

RIM professionals should understand how indexing, metadata, and search enable retrieval and how eDiscovery processes support legal and regulatory matters.

5B1 Indexing and Search Techniques

RIM professionals should understand indexing structures, controlled vocabularies, and search capabilities, including semantic and natural-language search, and how to evaluate accuracy.

5B2 eDiscovery Processes

RIM professionals should understand identification, preservation, collection, review, and production, and how technology-assisted review and analytics support defensible eDiscovery.

5C Facility and Data Center Management

RIM professionals should understand how physical and digital storage environments are designed, secured, and operated, including vendor management.

5C1 Design, Security, and Operations

RIM professionals should understand environmental controls, physical security, operational workflows, virtualization, redundancy, and data residency awareness.

5C2 Vendor Management

RIM professionals should understand evaluation and oversight of third-party providers, including contract requirements, SLAs, risk assessments, and audit practices.

5D Record Identification, Retention, and Disposition

RIM professionals should understand inventory, valuation, schedule development, and defensible disposition practices, including holds and compliance measurement.

5D1 Inventory and Valuation

RIM professionals should understand how to identify record types, formats, systems of record, and how to assess business, legal, fiscal, operational, and historical value.

5D2 Retention Schedule Development

RIM professionals should understand how to map record types to retention periods, maintain schedules, and collaborate with stakeholders using both general/functional and program-specific approaches (e.g., bucket models).

5D3 Disposition Practices

RIM professionals should understand secure destruction, archival transfer, and documentation of disposition, including controls for holds and evaluating the compliance of system-suggested disposition actions.