

ICRM Exam Consolidation

Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

What is changing with the ICRM certification exams?

ICRM is transitioning to a consolidated exam structure designed to modernize the certification program while preserving its rigor, credibility, and professional value. The new structure:

- Simplifies the candidate journey
- Reduces duplicative testing
- Continues to assess the same core competencies required of records and information management professionals

This change affects how exams are structured and delivered, not the standards or expectations of the profession.

New Exam Structure

What will the new exam structure look like?

Under the revised structure, ICRM will offer two required core assessments that together comprise the CRM credential pathway:

Foundations Exam

A comprehensive exam that consolidates content previously assessed in Parts 2, 3, and 4 and evaluates the core records and information management body of knowledge. Successful completion of the Foundations Exam results in the Certified Records Analyst (CRA) designation.

Capstone Assessment

A case study-based assessment, formerly Part 6, designed to evaluate applied professional judgment and decision-making in realistic business scenarios.

Candidates who successfully complete both the Foundations Exam and the Capstone Assessment earn the Certified Records Manager (CRM) designation.

Foundations Exam

What is the Foundations Exam?

The Foundations Exam is a comprehensive knowledge-based assessment that evaluates a candidate's understanding of core records and information management principles, standards, and practices. It is designed to assess the foundational and analytical competencies expected of records and information management professionals.

What content does the Foundations Exam cover?

The Foundations Exam consolidates content previously assessed in Parts 2, 3, and 4 and is organized into five domains that collectively represent the foundational records and information management body of knowledge. The exam includes content related to:

- Records and information management governance fundamentals
- Information architecture and framework
- Risk, compliance, and legal readiness

- Information security and privacy
- Records operations and lifecycle management

Most exam content is based on the existing Parts 2, 3, and 4 body of knowledge. A small percentage of content has been added to reflect evolving professional practices and emerging topics within the profession.

Are the Foundations Exam questions being rewritten?

No. The Foundations Exam is primarily based on content currently assessed through Parts 2, 3, and 4. While the content has been reorganized under a new exam structure, candidates should expect the majority of the material to remain familiar.

Most questions are drawn from existing item banks, supplemented by a small percentage of new content reflecting current professional practice.

What credential does the Foundations Exam support?

Successful completion of the Foundations Exam results in the Certified Records Analyst (CRA) designation. The CRA recognizes a candidate's demonstrated ability to:

- Analyze records and information requirements
- Apply records and information management standards and best practices
- Support compliant and effective information management programs

How does the Foundations Exam fit into the CRM credential?

The Foundations Exam represents the knowledge and analytical component of the CRM credential pathway. Candidates who complete the Foundations Exam and subsequently pass the Capstone Assessment earn the CRM designation.

Will there be a crosswalk showing how Parts 2, 3, and 4 map to the Foundations Exam?

Yes. ICRM will publish a crosswalk showing how content previously assessed in Parts 2, 3, and 4 aligns to the Foundations Exam domains. The crosswalk is intended to help candidates, mentors, academic partners, and other stakeholders understand how existing content maps to the revised structure.

Capstone Assessment

What is the Capstone Assessment?

The Capstone Assessment is a case study-based exam designed to evaluate how candidates apply records and information management principles, professional judgment, management concepts, and best practices in realistic business situations at the CRM level.

What is new about the Capstone Assessment?

The Capstone Assessment expands upon the former Part 6 by incorporating two independently scored case studies:

Management Case Study

Focused on leadership, governance, oversight, risk awareness, and program accountability.

Comprehensive RIM Case Study

Focused on the application of records and information management principles across the information lifecycle. This structure provides a broader assessment of professional capability by evaluating both strategic decision-making and comprehensive records and information management knowledge application.

Exam Administration

How much time will I have to complete the Foundations Exam?

Candidates will have four hours to complete the Foundations Exam. This consolidated format replaces the previous testing experience across Parts 2, 3, and 4 while providing comparable overall testing time in a single assessment.

Is the time allowed for the Capstone Assessment changing?

No. The Capstone Assessment will continue to be administered with a four-hour time limit, consistent with the previous Part 6 examination.

Changes to Existing Exam Parts

Is Part 1 being eliminated?

Yes. The standalone Part 1 examination will be retired. However, the management concepts previously assessed through Part 1 are not being eliminated. Relevant content will be incorporated into the Capstone Assessment through realistic case study scenarios that emphasize applied judgment and decision-making.

What is changing with Part 5?

Part 5 will no longer be offered as a required component of the CRA or CRM certification pathway. ICRM is evaluating options for incorporating advanced technology-related competencies into a future specialty credential or designation. Planning for this offering is still underway, and additional information, including scope, requirements, and potential launch timing, will be communicated when available.

Foundational technology knowledge will continue to be integrated throughout the Foundations Exam and Capstone Assessment to reflect the important role technology plays in modern records and information management practice.

Candidates Currently in Progress

What if I am already working toward certification?

ICRM is developing a transition framework designed to recognize candidate progress and previously passed exams. Candidates who have already passed one or more examinations will receive transition guidance outlining how their progress applies within the new structure. Additional information regarding exam equivalencies, timelines, eligibility, and transition requirements will be communicated before implementation.

Will I lose credit for exams I have already passed?

No. ICRM is committed to recognizing candidate progress and previously completed exams through an appropriate transition framework. Additional information regarding exam equivalencies, transition pathways, and any applicable credits will be communicated as implementation planning progresses.

Because the Foundations Exam is based primarily on content currently assessed through Parts 2, 3, and 4, candidates who have previously passed one or more of those exams may encounter similar concepts, topics, or questions within the new exam structure.

Additional information regarding transition credits, equivalencies, and candidate-specific pathways will be communicated as implementation planning progresses.

Does the five-year completion window still apply?

Yes, but only under the new exam structure. Because the legacy and consolidated exam structures cannot be maintained in parallel indefinitely, legacy exams will be retired and candidates will transition to the revised model. Previously completed exams will be recognized through the transition framework, and candidates will receive guidance regarding how the completion timeline applies to their individual circumstances.

Existing CRAs and CRMs

Does this change affect my existing CRA or CRM credential?

No. All CRA and CRM credentials earned under the current structure remain fully valid. Current members will not be required to retest, recertify, or complete additional examinations as a result of this change. The value, recognition, and standing of existing credentials remain unchanged.

Does this change dilute the achievement of current CRMs or CRAs?

No. This initiative changes how competency is assessed, not the standards required to achieve certification. The revised structure continues to evaluate the knowledge, judgment, and professional capabilities expected of certified professionals while providing a more streamlined and integrated certification pathway.

Academic Partnerships

How does this affect approved academic programs?

Academic partnerships remain fully supported. Students who satisfy the Foundations requirement through an approved academic program will only need to complete the Capstone Assessment to achieve certification. Updated guidance and exam mappings will be provided to academic partners before implementation.

Beta Testing and Launch

Will there be an opportunity to participate in beta testing?

Yes. ICRM plans to conduct beta testing prior to the full launch of the new exam structure. Additional information regarding participation opportunities, eligibility requirements, registration, and timing will be communicated separately.

When will the new exams be available?

Current planning includes:

- Beta testing in Fall 2026
- Full launch targeted for early 2027

Additional implementation details and timelines will be communicated as they are finalized.

Study Resources

How does the new exam structure align with current study resources?

Existing recommended resources remain the primary source for exam preparation. The Foundations Exam is based primarily on content currently assessed in Parts 2, 3, and 4, and most exam questions are derived from the existing body of knowledge. Candidates should continue using current recommended resources as the foundation of their preparation.

To support the transition, ICRM will also publish:

- Updated Key Term Study Guides
- Additional preparation guidance
- A Foundations Exam crosswalk
- Supplemental study resources where appropriate

Staying Informed

How will I stay informed about future updates?

ICRM will continue providing updates through:

- The ICRM website

- Direct communications to candidates and members
- Communications with academic partners and other stakeholders

Additional guidance, transition information, timelines, and preparation resources will be published as implementation activities progress.

Looking for Additional Information?

As transition planning continues, additional FAQs may be added covering:

- Candidate transition scenarios
- Exam equivalencies
- Beta testing participation
- Updated study resources
- Registration and scheduling processes

Please check the ICRM website regularly for the latest updates.