

CHID Exam Helpful Hints: Exam Preparation Guide

Long Term – Preparation (3-6 months)

1. Familiarize Yourself with the Exam Content Objectives/Outline

Thoroughly review the detailed content outline provided on the [AAHID website](#). Every question on the exam is based on this outline, so it is essential to understand it fully.

2. Follow AAHID on Social Media

Stay up to date with important announcements and upcoming exam info by following AAHID on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#). We regularly post updates, including when we have our Exam Info Community Connections, where you can learn more about the certification process.

3. Review the Certification Checklist

Go through the [Certification Checklist](#) to ensure all required materials and steps are completed before applying for the exam. This will help keep you on track throughout the process.

4. Complete Your CHID Application and Payment by May 15th

Ensure your application is submitted, and payment is made by May 15th. Missing this deadline may delay your exam date for a full year or prevent you from sitting for the exam. There is a late period deadline of June 15th with an extra \$100 late fee.

5. Address Potential Knowledge Gaps

Identify areas where you may need improvement and seek out educational opportunities to strengthen your knowledge. While these are not CHID-specific exam preparation seminars, workshops and sessions at events like the Healthcare Design (HCD) Conference, ASHE PDC Conference, or EFA Conference can enhance your overall understanding of healthcare interior design. Seek additional educational opportunities from your professional membership organizations (IIDA, AIA, NIHD, etc.)

- **Understand Healthcare Design Fundamentals**

Focus on understanding:

- The adjacency relationships between departments (e.g., surgery, ED, ICU, Imaging).
- The flow and processes of patients, materials, staff, and the public.
- Industry standards and guidelines for healthcare design, including planning modules and formulas.

- **Review Key Documents and Resources**

Make sure to review the following documents:

- FGI Guidelines (2022 for 2026 CHID exam)
- Life Safety Code
- Any relevant suggested reading from the Candidate Handbook
- All areas listed in the content outline, including healthcare-specific considerations.

- **Study Floor Plans**

Review healthcare project floor plans to get a sense of:

- Department adjacencies
- Patient unit layouts
- Circulation patterns within the space

6. Find a Mentor

Seek out someone who has recently passed the CHID exam. Having a mentor can offer valuable insights and guidance. Review the [CHID Directory](#) to see if there is anyone in your state who holds the CHID.

7. Review Suggested References

Go through the suggested reference list found on the [AAHID website](#).

Short Term – Preparation (1-2 months) - You were approved to sit for the examination – What's Next?

1. Set an Exam Date and Commit

Choose your September exam date early and make it a non-negotiable goal. Treat exam preparation with the same dedication as responding to a major client project. Procrastination will only push your exam date further away and put you at risk of not having an exam time available.

2. Revisit the Content Outline

Revisit the content outline on the website to ensure you haven't missed any critical areas. All questions will be derived from this outline, so a thorough understanding is essential.

3. Dedicate Time for Study

Every person has their best way to study, however, some suggestions on how to prepare are below:

- Block out 2-3 sessions per week for at least 1-2 hours each for studying.
- Choose your most alert time for study sessions (i.e. early mornings or evenings).
- If you do plan to study for longer blocks of time, consider using a timer to give yourself a brain break (i.e. 25 minutes to study/5-minute break)
- Based on a survey sent to 2025 CHID Exam takers, here is a breakdown of roughly how many hours they spent preparing:
 - 20-59 hours = 31% of respondents
 - 60-80 hours = 23% of respondents
 - 81-100 hours = 31% of respondents
 - 101+ hours = 15% of respondents

4. Focus on Key Content Areas

In the final stages of preparation, prioritize the Planning and Programming sections of the content outline. These topics often present challenges for candidates, so give them extra attention.

5. Join the LinkedIn Study Group

Connect with others preparing for the CHID exam by joining the LinkedIn Study Group. Once your application is approved, you will receive a link to join the group. This is a great opportunity to ask questions, share insights, and learn from peers who are also preparing for the exam.

6. Review the Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

Familiarize yourself with the glossary of acronyms and terms provided on the [AAHID website](#). This will help ensure you understand the terminology used in the exam and avoid confusion during test-taking.

7. Preview the Sample Study Questions

Use the [25 free sample questions](#) to get a feel for the format and identify areas of weakness. Focus your attention on the questions you missed, as they often highlight knowledge gaps in critical areas like design, planning, and contract documents. If possible, try to simulate the testing conditions - no phone, quiet space, block of time, no distractions. For additional questions, consider purchasing the new [CHID Self-Assessment](#) which includes 50 sample items, feedback on incorrect answers, and a breakdown of your scores based on each content area of the examination.

During the Exam

1. Take Your Time

Do not rush through the exam. Carefully read each question before answering.

2. Focus on What's Being Asked

Avoid overthinking or applying extra knowledge beyond what the question is asking. Focus solely on the specific details provided in the question.

3. Understand Each Question

Make sure you fully comprehend the question before answering. If something is unclear, take a moment to reconsider before proceeding.

4. Don't Read Into the Question

Only use the information provided in the question. Do not try to infer more than what is explicitly stated.

5. Skip Difficult Questions

If you encounter a challenging question, move on to the next one and return to it later if time allows.

6. Evaluate All Answer Choices

Compare all answer options and select the one that is most likely correct. Eliminate obviously incorrect answers to narrow your choices.

7. Use All Available Time

Utilize the entire time allotted for the exam. Double-check your answers before submitting to ensure you've made the most informed choices.