

## 8 Steps to a Successful ITIL® V3 Intermediate Exam

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Wouldn't it be nice if just attending a class or viewing an online training course were all you had to do to successfully pass one of the ITIL® V3 Intermediate- or Advanced-Level exams?

No matter how good any of itSM Solutions' (or any other ITIL course provider's) classes are, YOU still are responsible for preparing yourself to successfully sit for the exam.

Following are 8 tips we have distilled from discussion threads on [My ITSM Mentoring Community™](#), the discussion group for online students that itSM Solutions maintains on the [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) professional networking site.

Although a course provider can never guarantee that a student will pass the official ITIL exam, we have witnessed a marked degree of success by students who have followed these 8 steps.

### 1. Plan your Studies.

This step is especially important for online students. When you attend an instructor-led course, you adhere to the schedule of the course.

The advantage of an online course is that you can follow a schedule that is most advantageous to you. Unfortunately, for many of us procrastinators, that may equate to a compressed study schedule 2 days before the course expires.

Unless you like "living on the edge," make sure you chart out a schedule to fit the course into your daily activities. Most online courses present a suggested study plan that you can use as a guide to plan your studies.

### 2. Have Realistic Expectations of the Effort You Must Apply to the Course

The prerequisite for the ITIL V3 intermediate courses is a V3 Foundation certificate and experience in the area you are studying.

It is always good to have "stretch" goals, but please be realistic. If your only work experience is two years on the Service Desk, it may be premature to think that you have accumulated the right experience to successfully navigate the Service Design or Service Strategy Lifecycle courses.

Course providers are always happy when students report that they have learned something from our courses. However, bear in mind that the purpose of the ITIL training and certification process is to certify that the candidate possesses the skills and knowledge appropriate for the certification topic.

There are plenty of "gotchas" in the ITIL certification process. Even experienced practitioners who know the good practices cold will fail the exam if they do not take the time to ensure that they understand the proper use of ITIL's terminology. If your organization calls an Incident an "Event" and an Event a "Situation," make sure you use the right terms in your exam!

### 3. Read the Study Material

All intermediate ITIL courses highly recommend that you obtain the official OGC ITIL publications and read the appropriate sections for the course. Not only does this give you an additional perspective for answering the examination questions, but it is a useful addition to your professional library.

In addition, many courses come with their own manuals and reading material.

As good as a lecturer or a video presentation may be, you will gain additional knowledge by looking at the subject matter from the different perspectives offered by the study material.

#### **4. Focus on the Syllabus**

The OGC ITIL publications contain far more information than is required for the ITIL Intermediate courses, and the course syllabus guides you through what is required for each certification.

All course providers must develop their courses according to the syllabus requirements for each particular course.

Do not fall into the trap of "More is Better" and try to digest the entire book in your study routine! While it is always helpful to understand the context of a particular syllabus item, please be aware that the certification exam will cover ONLY the items on the syllabus.

Thus, you will find Roles and Responsibilities in the Capability courses, but only a cursory discussion of the topic in the Lifecycle courses. That is not an error on the part of the course provider; that is the requirement of the Lifecycle syllabus.

#### **5. Take the Sample Exams**

The ITIL Accreditor provides course providers with two sample exams for each intermediate-level course. These exams are gradient-scored, complex, multiple-choice exams where you receive different points for each possible answer; i.e., Best Answer = 5; Second Best = 3; Third Best = 1; Distracter = 0.

Most of us have never taken such an exam, and the sample exams are an excellent way to hone your exam-taking skills. Most students find it useful to take the sample exam, check their answers against the answer key and rationale, and make the effort to understand why they scored highly on the questions they got right and why they missed points on the other questions.

After they complete the exam, they do some additional study in the areas in which they were weak. Then, they take the exam again to see if they have improved (the questions are sufficiently complex that most students forget their details within a day or two of doing one of the practice exams).

#### **6. Develop a Strategy for Answering Complex Multiple-Choice Questions**

As mentioned above, most of us have never sat for a gradient-scored, complex, multiple-choice exam, and the first time through one of the samples may come somewhat as a shock.

It is helpful to develop a strategy for answering these questions. Such strategies could involve things such as underlining key points in the accompanying scenario, or the identification of maturity levels or lifecycle phases. Many other students and instructors have developed strategies for sorting through these questions. Some of the strategies may work for you; some may not; and you may have success by developing your own strategies. In any case, most course providers have means to pass on some of these tips (never the actual questions or answers, though!) to help you prepare for your exam.

#### **7. View from the Perspective of Bloom Levels 3 & 4**

The ITIL V3 Intermediate exams test your ability to apply and analyze the ITIL framework in the context of a one-page scenario. It does not require memorizing the bullets and text found in the OGC publications.

The ITIL Qualification Scheme employs the Bloom taxonomy in both the construction of the learning units and in the examinations. The Foundation course utilizes Bloom Levels 1 and 2, Knowing and Comprehending.

The Lifecycle and Capability courses move two levels higher to Levels 3 and 4, Applying and Analyzing. In this examination structure, the candidate is expected to be able to apply what he or she has learned to a real-life situation.

For example, even if an organization does not yet have formal Change Management processes in place, it still has to Release & Deploy changes into the live infrastructure. The correct answer for such an organization may well be the answer that recognizes this deficiency rather than the by-the-book answer that relies on the previous implementation of formal Change Management.

The top-level Managing Across the Lifecycle (MALC) course also includes questions at Bloom Level 5, Synthesizing.

## **8. Take Advantage of the Mentoring Community**

Although it is not required by the syllabus, many course providers, including itSM Solutions, maintain a Mentoring Community where individuals may post questions and answers. itSM Solutions maintains and monitors [My ITSM Mentoring Community™](#); on the [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) professional networking site.

Students and instructors alike actively post questions and answers on this site, and several recent threads have very nicely addressed some of the strategies for taking the ITIL V3 Intermediate exams. Membership is open to all registered itSM Solutions students.

### **Summary**

These 8 simple steps will help to structure your classroom or online training and give you a tried-and-true foundation for a successful course and examination experience.

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