

NCARB Live Follow-Up: Exam Software and the Demo Exam

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Michelle Cohn [00:00]: Hi, everyone. Thanks for checking out this video. We're going to be answering some questions about the online proctoring, and the exam software, and the demo exam. We were able to cover some of this information during our recent NCARB Live, but not all of it, so hopefully you'll find this added video helpful. Our first question here:

How is NCARB addressing existing exam technical issues, crashes, and the lag time?

So we are in constant communication with the software developer behind our exam delivery, notifying them of issues that we hear about to make sure that we can continually update as needed to minimize and eliminate potential issues for our candidates.

One issue in particular that we know we have heard from candidates about resources taking a while to load. And actually there's a new PDF reader that we haven't talked too much about, but will be available in the test in the new exam when it launches on December 14th. And will also be part of that new demonstration exam when it launches in mid-November.

The new PDF reader's functionality is very similar to the existing PDF reader, that you'll be able to keyword search, see bookmarks, zoom in and out of documents, but notably there's just some different software behind it, and so it actually does move quite a bit faster. So we're hoping that will be noticed positively by our candidates and will help alleviate some of your concerns.

Joan Paros [01:36]: **If a software glitch result in a fail, can candidates retest before the 60-day retake period is up?**

The 60-day retake policy is a security feature. We have that in place because once candidates are exposed to exam content, they need to wait the 60 days in order to test so they don't see the same content twice in a row.

If you have a technical issue during your exam before the actual exam is launched—so say, for example, that you're seated at your monitor and the exam attempt to be launched fails, you don't actually see any exam content—then you would contact NCARB's customer service, and they would be able to provide you with a seat credit to reschedule that exam at no charge to you. If you've seen any exam content, obviously that would go directly to the security issue and you would have to wait 60 days to test again.

Michelle Cohn [02:34]: All right, next question:

Candidates have experienced a lot of issues with reading case study reference material or having questions that seem unrelated to the reference material, among other issues.

Well, so there I mentioned earlier, the PDF reader, which should help out with some of the loading time for case study reference material.

But this question is really asking:

What about questions that just seem unrelated to the reference material?

Well, I can assure you that, as part of the content development process, we do make sure that the materials provided to you in the exam, whether it's a standalone exhibit that's in a question or whether it's a variety of resources provided within the case study, that they are relevant to the questions and that you do need to refer to some aspects of those resources in order to answer a case study question.

Now, just like being in an office when someone hands you the IBC, you usually don't have to read it cover to cover to find the information that you're looking for, right? You usually just know that you need to go to the specific chapter, or maybe you remember the specific table on the lower right-hand corner of a certain page and that's where you find the information you're looking for. So similarly, when you're taking the ARE, it's important to know that there might be more pages or more documents than you need for any one question that you're being given. But it's important to know how to find the information, where to find the information, so particularly on the case studies that might have a lot of resources, you might not need every resource to answer every question, but when you look at the question, you'll certainly want to know, well, "Where do I need to find the information in order to answer the question?" Without spending time loading a whole lot of pages or going through a whole bunch of different reference materials, you'll want to be able to quickly identify what piece of reference material is relevant for this specific question and be able to go right to that. Again, that PDF reader has a keyword search, it has bookmarks, and so hopefully will help you quickly find the information that you need so that you're able to apply that information to the question that you're on.

Joan Paros [04:52]: Next question.

When will the demo exam be ready?

We expect to have the demo exam available within your NCARB Record by early- to mid-November. And we'll let you know when that's available for you to begin practicing with the white board and see the new exam layout and everything else that the exam has to offer.

Michelle Cohn [05:13]: Will the new demonstration exam allow us to practice the break strategy?

Yes, absolutely. All of the features that you can expect to see in the test center or in your online proctored exam starting December 14th will definitely be part of the new demonstration exam. You'll be able to understand how that break feature works. You can play with it, understand how items lock when you come back from a break, how that new exam summary screen is

going to work in terms of seeing items that are completed or incomplete. And so we encourage everyone to really take a look at that before they get to their actual test.

Joan Paros [05:49]: Is there a limit to how many times you can take the demonstration exam?

There is no limit, so you'll have plenty of opportunities. Make sure you give yourself enough time to be able to go in and practice the demonstration exam until you actually feel comfortable with it.

Michelle Cohn [06:05]: Does the demonstration exam come with answers, so candidates can fully understand the new format?

So the demonstration exam does not contain answers and it is not scored. So I suppose from that aspect, it's not 100 percent the same as in a test center; you're not going to be seeing a provisional score at the end of the demo exam.

However, all of the questions that are included in the demonstration exam are also included in the *ARE Handbook*, so we encourage you to take that demo exam without those reference materials nearby. But at the end of the demo exam, if you don't end your exam session, but instead you can really open up that *Handbook* and then go through your various questions and sort of score yourself. You'll certainly have all the information you need to be able to do that.

Joan Paros [06:56]: Will sample questions reflect knowledge per each test section? That is, ARE 4.0 had sample questions regarding the knowledge required to take those tests.

Yes. While the demo exam doesn't have questions taken from the actual exams that you'll see in the test center or during your online proctored exam, they are actual test questions and they're directly applicable to the material that you'll be tested on during a real-life exam.

Michelle Cohn [07:27]: All right, well, that ends our list of questions here about the exam software and about the demonstration exam. We hope that you found this helpful. Please stay tuned for other videos regarding online proctoring questions. Thank you.