



# Study Strategies for AA AE

## Certification Exams

- A. The BEST thing you can do is Read the Materials.
  - 1. The exams are written from the materials, not the workbooks, not quizlet.com or cram.com or other study aids.
  - 2. Don't spend more time looking for shortcuts than you do in actually learning the material.
  - 3. Make sure you have the current edition of the materials. You can find information on the latest materials on the [AAAE website](#) under each program page.
- B. Have a plan; start reading as soon as you get the information and schedule study times like you would schedule an important meeting that you cannot miss.
- C. Get your study materials ready (highlighters, word processor or pens).
- D. Read with context. Give yourself a context, such as reading with the intent to explain the information to someone else. How would you brief or teach this information to someone else?
- E. Make flash cards. Flash cards are used because they work. It's the best way to memorize rote knowledge, particularly in a short period of time. In military flight school, you'll see flight students walking around with stacks of index cards or using the online Flashcard apps.
- F. Avoid the shortcuts.
  - 1. Cram.com and quizlet.com are okay for creating flash cards, but don't rely on someone else's flash cards to be right.
  - 2. Past exams, or notes from others
    - a) The exam may be on outdated information. Plus, AA AE hasn't published a practice exam in nearly 20 years.
    - b) The Jeopardy questions and clicker questions used in the classes are not the test questions. I've seen people do well on Jeopardy and clicker questions because someone from a previous class wrote them down; the problem is, that's all they study believing that's everything on the exam. And, when they see themselves doing well on Jeopardy and the clicker questions they don't study as hard believing they 'have it down.'
  - 3. Some people use ChatGPT to get an overview of a topic, but don't stake your grade on what ChatGPT is telling you. It's not always right.
- G. If there are official study questions from the materials, always do those!
- H. Study groups? Some people work better in studying in groups, while others are self-study. If you're a "study grouper" then get a study group.

- I. Teach to learn: Make good use of your study group time to teach someone else a concept or section of the module. We also learn more when we need to teach it to someone else.
- J. If you can, take the class. You'll learn what's important and what is just context. And, you'll have plain language explanations of the material, analogies, stories, etc., to make the concepts easier to understand.
- K. Study daily. Even if it's just a quick Flashcard review. Keep your flash cards or Flashcard app with you, and flip through them during your downtime (waiting in line at Starbucks, waiting for a meeting to start). That said, study the various material intermittently; study one section on one day, then another section on the next day. A couple of days later, revisit the previous section.
- L. YouTube can be your friend, particularly when learning about airport signs, markings, lighting, imaginary surfaces and other related concepts.
- M. Think like your teacher (or course developer). Read with the perspective that you are the one creating the exam.
  - 1. Most questions are along the lines of who, what, when, where, why and how.
  - 2. Demonstrate how you can look at information and create an exam question.
  - 3. Exercise: use a paragraph from the module and see if they can generate a question from it.
  - 4. Look for the terms and definitions.
  - 5. Ask yourself, if you were going to ask a multiple-choice question from what you're reading, what would you ask?
- N. Write your own exam.
- O. Break the modules down into sections, subsections and sub-sub sections. Study in small amounts.
- P. Accept the modules as the truth, regardless of what you do in industry. Don't assume that the terms used at your airport and in your career are the same as they are in the modules.
- Q. Don't assume that the material in the ACE modules matches the material in the C.M. exam.
- R. Understand that each instructor writes questions differently and tests on different information. Talk to industry associates who have previously taken the exam you're about to take, to get their perspective.
- S. Review the areas where you are an expert, to check your "truth" against the module "truth." Don't assume things are the way you do it at your airport. Also, many times we come up with our own terms for things, but that may not be the term the FAA, TSA, EPA or other governing agency uses.
- T. Get Hands On
  - 1. Take a tour of the department or departments related to the topic, i.e., if you're doing ACE Operations, take an airfield tour and spend a day with Ops if possible. Or study with someone from the Operations department (or the Planning

Department if you're doing ACE Planning, or Finance, if you're doing ACE Finance, and so on). If you don't have someone at your airport, then see if someone from another airport can help.

2. Take a look at the actual documents (Airport Layout Plans, Airport Master Plans, Sponsor Assurances, NPIAS...). This turns abstract concepts into reality. They are available online.
  3. Talk to people who are "the experts" in the main topics.
- U. Talk to others that have taken the exam(s). Each ACE exam is written by a different author so questions can come in a variety of ways, levels of detail, and what is being tested on.
- V. Look for "natural" test questions, which is anything with a qualifier, "the most..." "the first..." "the best..." or anything with a qualifier, like "Large hub airports represent 70% of the total number of annual passenger enplanements in the U.S."
- W. When you take the exam:
1. Read the question carefully. Understand what the question is asking.
    - a) *For example, did the question say, "Aircraft Operator" or "Airport Operator?" These nuances can make the difference in a correct or incorrect response.*
  2. Watch the language carefully. We're not trying to trick you, it's just that the FAA and other government agencies are agencies of nuance and sometimes there's a difference between "and," and "or," or "required" versus "recommended."
  3. Don't start answering the question (in your mind) until you've read the entire question.
  4. Try not to change your initial answer. You've got a better chance to changing it to the wrong answer than the right answer.
  5. Do a quick study the day of the exam. Shuffle through your flash cards to get yourself back into "test mode."
- X. Taking the exam:
1. Set up your computer and space according to the AAAE [exam guidelines](#).
  2. Have your AAAE account number (candidate ID) and an identification card with your face on it (i.e., driver's license), available. Your AAAE number can be found in your account at [www.aaae.org](http://www.aaae.org).
  3. For the actual exam, go through and answer the questions you know the answers to right away. This helps you build momentum. If you're unsure of one, skip it. Don't get hung up on one question. If you're unsure, move to the next one, and the next one and so on, until you hit one you know.
  4. Go back through and answer the ones you're pretty sure about, or those you've narrowed down to a couple of possibilities. You can spend a little bit more time

here, but if after a few minutes you're still stumped, skip the question and come back to it later.

5. Go back through a third time and answer the ones you previously skipped. By now, your brain is back into the materials. Subsequent or previous questions may remind you of the answer to the question.
  6. If you still have questions you haven't answered, you're in the best position you can be in to make a good, educated guess.
  7. Check to be sure you have answered all the questions before you hit submit.
- Y. If you don't pass, try again. You'll get a report from AAAE on how well you did in each objective of the modules, and, you'll have seen 100 or 180 actual test questions.
1. Put the retake date on the calendar and schedule it.
- Z. Oh, did I mention, Read the Modules!

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