



Symantec Beta Certification Exam Frequently Asked Questions

As Symantec develops new certification exams, part of the process involves conducting a Beta exam.

Participating in a Symantec Certified Beta Exam

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Q: What is a Beta exam?

A: From time to time, Symantec offers exams during a try-out or Beta period. These Beta exams are open for a short period of time, typically 20-30 days, with a goal of having 70 or more participants complete the test. For a limited number of candidates, Beta exams are free.

Contact a Symantec Sales representative or instructor and customer_certifications@symantec.com to express your interest in participating in a Beta exam.

During the Beta period, candidates are given a list of questions to determine their individual skill levels before taking the Beta exam. All Beta participants are required to complete the survey.

Beta exams are used to collect data on the performance of the test items. The statistical results of the test items' performance, along with the candidates' comments and feedback, assist Symantec in selecting effective test items to build and release the production test, which is the final high-quality version of the exam.

The Beta test is longer than the production test. Beta participants answer all of the items in the total item pool. After Beta, the items are divided between multiple forms for security and integrity. Production tests, therefore, have less than half of the number of questions on the Beta test. After the Beta period is closed, test scores, survey results, and item data are collected from Prometric, the testing service provider. Beta test information is imported into a testing database and linked to the item IDs and descriptions. Next, Beta candidate comments and classical item statistics or item response theory parameters are generated and reported.

The reports are then viewed by psychometricians who analyze the psychometric properties of the items to ensure that the items actually measure what we want them to measure. Items may be discarded if they are identified as too difficult or too easy, show evidence of not being clearly understood, are a poor discriminator of knowledge, and so on. The items that survive this analysis are sorted into the multiple equivalent forms of the production exam. The forms are built to match each other as closely as possible for content distribution, score distribution, reliability, and test time distribution.

Using the raw data from the Beta exam, the Beta participants are scored on the new final production exam forms. These scores are combined with the participants' survey responses to set the cut-score and to help validate the pass-fail decisions made from the test. The survey is used to place participants into groups of "like" ability, and each "like" group is reflected in the test results. For example, Symantec expects candidates with very little experience or knowledge to have lower test scores than those with medium levels of experience and knowledge. Reliability between the forms is established by correlating test scores obtained on the different forms.

Finally, we determine the cut score, also known as the passing score. Ranges, based upon the numerical values assigned to the survey responses, are established for the minimally qualified candidate, less-than-qualified candidate, and over-qualified candidate. After the Beta exam, candidates are placed into one of three groups based upon their survey results. The mean and median scores for the three groups are then used, along with business needs, to determine an appropriate cut score and verify the validity of the forms.

The final step is to modify the tests with the results of the Beta and psychometric analysis. If a candidate passes a Beta exam, he or she receives credit towards the designated certification track. Upon passing a Beta exam, the candidate only needs to pass the other required exams [if applicable] for the designated certification track.

Note that results from the Beta test are not available until approximately six to eight weeks after the Beta close.

Q: Which Beta exams are available?

A: Click the following link to find an update for new Beta exams as they are available:
<http://go.symantec.com/certification>

Q: Where do candidates take the exam?

A: You can choose from several registration methods:

- Online using www.prometric.com/symantec
- By phone using the Candidate Service Contact Center
- In person by visiting a local test center

1. Online

Prometric's online registration system offers the most convenient and efficient means of scheduling examinations. This system allows candidates to access real-time scheduling 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Candidates can select their preferred testing date and location, obtain immediate on-screen confirmation, and receive a follow-up email confirming their appointment details. Prometric displays the Symantec logo and test program details on the www.prometric.com/symantec scheduling and registration Web site.

2. By Telephone

Prometric supports a global contact center organization that enables Symantec candidates to schedule their test appointments by telephone. These phone numbers are available at www.prometric.com/symantec. U.S. candidates can call 1-866-891-6397.

3. At the Test Center

Of course, candidates can also schedule their examinations in person at their local Prometric test center or by calling the local test center (phone numbers are listed at www.prometric.com/symantec.) Each test center uses a local scheduling system that is directly tied into the centralized scheduling database and offers instant appointment confirmation.

Regardless of the registration method used, the first 70 Beta candidates to register can use a promo code to get a free exam. (Promo code is specific to each exam and is made available at the opening of registration for each exam).

Q: How does a candidate prepare to take the Beta exam?

A: A candidate reviews the exam objectives to assess his or her level of knowledge on the topics covered in the exam. The candidate can also enroll in existing Symantec Education product courses to refresh or update his or her knowledge. Be sure to view the complete [exam details](#) and preparation strategies on the Web.

Q: How much time is required to take the Beta exam?

A: A candidate must allow three hours to complete the entire exam item pool. A candidate is tested on the entire item pool, which is eventually divided into multiple forms for the final release of the post-Beta exams. Symantec has multiple forms of the production exams for reasons of security and test integrity. Candidates who re-take the exam do not see the same test form consecutively.

Q: When will candidates see the results of their completed Beta exam?

A: Our post-Beta analysis is complete six to eight weeks after the close of the Beta period. After this item analysis is finished, Prometric mails a score report to each candidate.