

CERTIFICATION EXAM FOR THE
**CERTIFIED SPECIALIST IN
TRAUMA REGISTRIES (CSTR)**



**EXAM INFORMATION
CANDIDATE APPLICATION
AND HANDBOOK**

A publication of the American Trauma Society's
Trauma Registry and Data Council



About the Exam

Learn about the only national certification for trauma registry and trauma data professionals

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Maintaining Your Certification

The CSTR Credential is a 4-year certification. Learn how to maintain your certification.

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For More Information

Contact the American Trauma Society to learn more or for questions concerning the CSTR Examination.

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About the ATS

The American Trauma Society is dedicated to the elimination of needless death and disability from injury. For over 5 years, ATS has served as an advocate for the trauma care system, trauma prevention programs, and the victims of trauma and their families throughout the United States. Our goals are to prevent injury whenever possible, and to ensure optimal treatment of trauma when it does occur.

Our goal is a greater focus on the Trauma Patient – ensuring these individuals and their caregivers have the resources they need throughout the entire continuum of care.

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This handbook contains necessary information about the Certified Specialist in Trauma Registries Examination. Please retain it for future reference. Candidates are responsible for reading these instructions carefully. Requirements, policies and fees associated with this exam are subject to change without notice.

The American Trauma Society (ATS) does not discriminate among applicants as to age, sex, race, religion, or national origin. Membership in the ATS is not required.

About the Certification & Examination

Certification

Congratulations on your commitment to certification in Trauma Registry. The American Trauma Society's Trauma Registry and Data Council (TRDC) endorses the concept of voluntary certification by examination for all trauma registry professionals. The Certified Specialist in Trauma Registries (CSTR) represents a trauma registry and data expert who has demonstrated current competence in a specialized area of practice and been credentialed through the American Trauma Society. Certification in trauma registry is highly valued and provides national and formal recognition of advanced trauma registry knowledge.

The Certification program was designed to promote the delivery of safe and effective care and the highest quality of data analysis. It establishes and measures a requisite of knowledge required for expertise in building, managing and enhancing trauma registry practice. The Certification encourages continued personal and professional growth in the practice of trauma registry.

The certification is awarded to candidates who pass the exam. Recertification is required every 4 years by continuing

education or re-examination to give evidence of continuing competency and knowledge. The CSTR must have current status in order to use the credential.

Examination Eligibility

The following guidelines are for those interested in taking the exam. While these are *not requirements*, the ATS **highly recommends** those applying to take the exam have a minimum of the following:

1. Have at least two to three (2-3) years of full-time or the equivalent (4,000 hours) experience in trauma registry practice.
2. A bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., or equivalent)

Fees

Fees for each application submitted for the CSTR Examination:

\$275 ATS Members
\$350 Non-Members

These fees include a non-refundable administrative fee of \$50.00. ATS membership must be current to be eligible for the reduced fee.

Application Procedure

Please read through this handbook to understand all the requirements for initial and recertification of the CSTR. Once complete, please visit the [ATS website](#) to submit your application. **NOTE: The application will be considered incomplete and not processed if any requested information or the appropriate fees are not provided.**

The form on the ATS website collects information specific to you, the candidate. Questions cover personal and demographic information, professional background and other optional information. All questions (with the exception of ones marked "Optional") must be answered. Mark only one response unless otherwise indicated.

OPTIONAL INFORMATION: Questions marked optional are included to assist in complying with equal opportunity guidelines and will be used only in statistical summaries. Such information will in no way affect your test results.

PLEASE NOTE: The name you enter on your Application must match exactly the name shown on your current government-issued photo ID (driver's license or passport). Do not use nicknames or abbreviations.

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE: When you have completed all required information, sign and date the Application in the space provided.

Once the application and payment have been submitted, the ATS will review the information and, if approved, will send a confirmation email to the applicant within 5 business days. All emails will be sent to the email address provided on the application.

Examination Administration

The CSTR examination is administered by [TesTrac](#). TesTrac collaborates with PSI Exams Online to offer computer-based testing centers located throughout the United States.

Scheduling Your Examination Appointment

Upon approval by the ATS and receipt of initial email from the ATS, PSI Exams Online (TesTrac) will send an email to the CSTR Exam Candidate within 5 additional business days with scheduling instructions. All exams must be scheduled through PSI Exams Online (TesTrac). All emails will be sent to the email address provided on the application.

Special Needs

The purpose of accommodations is to provide candidates with full access to the CSTR exam. However, accommodations are not a guarantee of improved performance or test completion. ATS and TesTrac provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to individuals with documented disabilities who demonstrate a need for accommodations. Test accommodations may include things such as: (1) a separate testing room, (2) extra testing time, or (3) extra breaks.

Test accommodations are individualized and considered on a case-by-case basis. Consequently, no single type of accommodation (e.g. extra time) would necessarily be appropriate for all individuals with disabilities. Simply demonstrating that an individual meets diagnostic criteria for a particular disorder does not mean that the person is automatically entitled to accommodations.

Disabled persons and/or who require special provisions on exam day must submit a Request for Special Accommodations [form](#) (available at www.amtrauma.org) with the application, candidate fee, and written documentation of the following:

1. A formal diagnosis by a skilled evaluator (e.g., a psychologist)
2. The credentials and documentation of the expertise of the evaluator providing documentation referenced immediately above
3. Specific findings in support of the diagnosis
4. Current functional limitations
5. Explanation of the specific requests for special accommodations

While the ATS will make every effort to fulfill special accommodation requests, it reserves the right to deny or

postpone requests which are not submitted as specified above or which, in the judgment of the ATS, would jeopardize the security of the exam material or the integrity of scores derived from the exam.

Written notification will be provided to the candidate by email detailing the accommodations and any procedures that must be followed to ensure the test center can accommodate the stated needs on the test date.

Rules for the Examination

1. No electronic devices (*including cellular phones, pagers, Bluetooth devices, smart watches, cameras, voice recording devices, MP3 players, laptop computers, and tablets*) may be brought into the testing area or used during the examination.
2. No books, papers or reference materials may be taken into the examination room or removed from the examination room.
3. No questions concerning content of the examination may be asked during the examination session. The candidate should read the directions that are provided on screen at the beginning of the examination session carefully.
4. Candidates are prohibited from leaving the testing room while their examination is in session, with the sole exception of going to the restroom.

Report of Results

Candidates will be notified immediately of the score of the exam. Successful candidates will receive certification credentials from the American Trauma Society by mail within 4 weeks of the testing date.

Re-Examination

The Certification Examination may be taken up to 3 times per year. A new application and fee must be completed for each attempt. It is recommended that candidates wait at least 1 month between testing attempts, to allow for studying, application process and test scheduling.

Examination Content

The Certification Specialist in Trauma Registries Examination is a computer-based examination composed of a maximum of 250 multiple-choice, objective questions with a total testing time of four hours.

The content for the examination is described in the Content Outline below. Unless otherwise specified, definitions are based on National Trauma Data Standard.

The questions for the examination are obtained from individuals with expertise in trauma registry and are reviewed for construction, accuracy, and appropriateness.

The ATS, with the advice and assistance of TesTrac, prepared the examination.

The Certified Specialist in Trauma Registries examination covers four domains including:

DATA MANAGEMENT

CONDITIONS OF INJURY

CODING AND SCORING CONCEPTS

REGISTRY ISSUES

Examination Outline

1. Data Management
 - a. Inclusion Criteria
 - i. American College of Surgeons Guidelines
 - ii. Local/State Requirements
 - iii. Department Report Logs
 - b. Data
 - i. Identification of Required Data Elements/Points
 - ii. Data Entry and Verification
 - c. Reporting
 - i. Essential Components
 - ii. Presentation Types
 1. Tables (Dashboard and others)
 2. Graphics (Graphs, Charts, Plots)
 - iii. Interpretation a. Volume b. Trends
 - d. Performance Improvement, and Patient Safety
 - i. Filter Standards
 1. American College of Surgeons
 - a. National Trauma Data Bank
 - b. Trauma Quality Improvement Program
 2. The Joint Commission
 - ii. Filter Determination and Calculation
 - iii. Loop Closure
 1. Identification of Issues
 2. Review of Issues
 3. Corrective Action
 4. Result Evaluation
 - e. Maintenance of Registry
 - i. Installation of Updates
 - ii. Password Protection
 - iii. Data Validation
 - iv. Backup Procedures
 - v. Downloads
 - f. Statistics
 - i. Population Demographics
 - ii. Sampling
 - iii. Calculations
 1. Frequencies, Averages, Percentages, Ranges, Ratios
 2. Chemistry
 3. Hematology
 4. Other
2. Conditions of Injury
 - a. Anatomy and Physiology
 - i. Head/Neck, Face, Chest, Abdomen, Spine, Extremities, Skin, Whole Area
 - b. Testing
 - i. Radiology Identification
 1. Plain Films, Ultrasound, CT Scan, MRI, Other
 - ii. Laboratory
 1. Toxicology
3. Coding and Scoring Concepts
 - a. Basic Guidelines
 - i. Documentation of Injury
 - ii. Ethical Considerations
 - b. Abbreviated Injury Scale
 - i. Concepts and Principles
 - ii. Derivations of Injury Severity Score
 - c. ICD-10
 - i. Clinical Modification (ICD-10-CM)
 1. Diagnoses Codes
 2. External Cause Codes
 - ii. Procedure Coding System (ICD-10-PCS)
 - d. Injury Scoring
 - i. Injury Severity Scoring (ISS)
 - ii. Revised Trauma Score (RTS)
 - iii. Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS)
 - iv. Probability of Survival (TRISS)
 - e. Other Scoring Tools
4. Registry Issues
 - a. Confidentiality
 - b. Trauma Prevention
 - c. Studies of Trauma Populations
 - d. Registry Operations
3. Interventions
 - i. Airway Management
 - ii. Fluid Administration
 - iii. Surgical Procedures Related to Injury
 - iv. Other
4. Post-trauma Conditions
 - i. Sequelae
 - ii. Complications

Preparing for the Examination

Responsive Practice Questions

The American Trauma Society offers prospective CSTR candidates the option of taking the Responsive Practice Questions (RPQs) prior to taking the certification exam.

The RPQs provide an experience to review examples of the types of questions and content areas included in the CSTR Examination. The RPQs provide an opportunity to learn more about the question format, style, and level of difficulty.

The RPQs consists of over 140 questions which include but are not limited to multiple choice, fill in the blank, true or false, and matching. The RPQs have a 30 day start to completion timeframe. Content includes questions within the following areas:

1. Data Management
2. Conditions of injury
3. Coding and Scoring Concepts
4. Registry Issues

After completing the RPQs, you will receive an instant score report showing performance in each of the content areas. In addition, if any question is answered incorrectly, an automatic response will be provided which will include the correct answer and an explanation for the answer.

NOTE: Performance on the CSTR RPQs may differ from actual performance on the Certification Examination. Thus, there is no guarantee that taking RPQs will help you pass the Certification Examination. Participants may find it helpful to review content in any areas of weakness indicated on the score report prior to taking the Certification Examination.

Fee: \$65 ATS Members
 \$85 Non-Members

ATS Trauma Registry Course (Live or Online)

The TRC provides a more standardized understanding of the specialty and approach to the task of maintaining a trauma registry for trauma registry professionals. Lectures are designed to build upon experience, program maturity, and institutional needs. In this manner the TRC is designed and appropriate for trauma registry and data professionals of all levels of experience. The TRC provides the student with national standard definitions and methodologies essential to a comprehensive trauma registry. The TRC has been recognized by the American College of Surgeons in the Resources for Optimal Care of the Injured Patient since 1999 as an avenue for comprehensive trauma registry training.

The comprehensive course agenda includes the following:

1. Trauma Registry Basics
2. Anatomy and Terminology
3. General Coding Principles
4. E-Coding
5. Scoring Principles
6. ICD-10-CM Coding Guidelines
7. Chart Abstraction and Data Procurement
8. Reports
9. Performance Improvement / Patient Safety
10. Computer and Electronic Technology
11. Confidentiality and Security
12. Data Validation
13. DRG, Financial Implications and the Trauma Registrar
14. American College of Surgeons – National Trauma Data Bank
15. Marketing Strategies and the Trauma Registry

Fee: \$585 ATS Members
 \$690 Non-Members

Register For These Opportunities Online At: www.AMTrauma.org

Maintaining Your Certification

Attainment of Certification

Eligible candidates who pass the Certification Examination for Trauma Registrars are eligible to use the registered designation CSTR after their names and will receive certificates from the ATS. A registry of Certified Specialists in Trauma Registry will be maintained by the ATS and may be reported in its publications.

Certification is recognized for a period of four years at which time the candidate must meet continuing education requirements (see below) or retake and pass the current Certification Examination for Trauma Registrars.

Recertification

To apply for recertification through continuing education, 32 contact hours of continuing education (CE) related to Trauma Registry practice must be submitted for consideration. A minimum of 32 contact hours must be in the areas of (I) Data Management, (II) Conditions of Injuries, (III) Coding and Scoring Concepts, and (IV) Registry Issues. All CEs must have been completed during the four years prior to the candidate's certification renewal date with a minimum of eight CEs completed during the 12 months prior to recertification. These CEs may be accumulated in any combination of the following:

1. Continuing Education Programs: These may include workshops, seminars, professional development offerings, home-study courses, and state or national conferences. The CE provider/sponsor must be identified sufficiently to allow a reviewer to recognize the organization. Use state abbreviations, names of organization, names of hospital or college, etc. The applicant may be requested to show proof of number of hours for each CE completed.
2. Academic Courses: Each individual academic credit will be considered as ten CE hours. Courses may be undergraduate or graduate level and a transcript of successful completion may be requested.

All program information must be listed on the Application of Recertification of Certified Specialist in Trauma Registries (CSTR) through Continuing Education and must include date, program title, provider or sponsor, and number of CEs awarded. Candidates must include documentation of all CEs awarded (These include, course certificates of completion, course syllabus, transcript or other certifying document). Candidates will be notified of

application evaluation within four weeks of application submission. If criteria are deemed fulfilled, a new four-year certificate effective the renewal date will be issued to the CSTR.

Recertification Process/Policies

The ATS National Office must receive all applications for recertification at least 30 days prior to the expiration date. [Click here to apply.](#)

Fee:	\$100	ATS Members
	\$165	Non-Members

All applications are subject to CE audit. Applications will be randomly selected for audit. Copies of certificates and/or transcripts are required. Selection of applications for audit will be made upon their receipt, and the candidate will receive written notice of the audit at that time.

If certification lapsed more than six months past the certification expiration a candidate must meet current eligibility requirements and re-take the CSTR certification examination.



Renewal Notices

ATS sends CSTR renewal reminders by email. It is important to keep your current contact information in your ATS profile at all times. Because delivery of renewal notices can't be guaranteed, it is the candidate's responsibility to apply for renewal of certification before the application deadline date. If you have unsubscribed from bulk emails or use a workplace email address you may not receive email messages as intended. Please use a personal email address, or request your employer not block ATS emails. Also, be sure to check your spam or junk mail folders regularly for communications from ATS.

Revocation of Certification/Credential

The occurrence of any of the following actions will result in the denial, suspension or revocation of the Certification by the ATS:

1. Falsification of information on initial or recertification

- application(s).
2. Cheating on the certification examination.
3. Misrepresentation of certification status.
4. Failure to meet certification or recertification criteria.
5. Failure to supply requested material by deadline.
6. Failure to pay any appropriate and required fees.

No fees will be refunded if recertification is denied. If CSTR recertification is denied, depending on reason for denial, an applicant may appeal the decision. The ATS Trauma Registry and Data Council provides the appeal mechanism for challenging revocation of board certification. It is the responsibility of the individual to initiate this process.

An appeal must be submitted in writing to the ATS TRDC within 30 days of recertification denial notification. The appeal shall state specific reasons why the candidate is entitled to recertification. The ATS will review the appeal and issue a decision within 30 days of submission.

General Information

Release of Information

Certification status is a matter of public record and may be released. The following information is not of public record, and cannot be divulged without the written permission of the applicant:

1. Exam enrollment status
2. Exam Score
3. Number of exam attempts
4. Number of activities listed in continuing education registry
5. Personal information, such as contact information.

ATS Membership

Membership in the American Trauma Society is not required for certification or recertification. If you fulfill the eligibility requirements and your membership dues are paid prior to or at the time of application for the exam, then you are eligible for the ATS member rate.

To join, enroll online at www.amtrauma.org or call the ATS

Membership Department at 800-556-7890 or 703-538-3544 (Extension 1).

ATS Contact Information

For answers to questions about the certification process visit the ATS website or contact the ATS Education and Certification office:

Website: www.amtrauma.org

Email: education@amtrauma.org

Phone: 800-556-7890 or 703-538-3544.