

APSO Entrance Exam

Frequently Asked Questions Guide

Overview

As far back as 1983 leaders in the recruitment industry recognized the need to professionalize its members i.e. change the role of labour recruitment practitioner from that of an occupation to a profession.

The Institute of Personnel Service Consultants (IPSC) was launched on 23 July 1983 at APSO's Seventh Annual General Meeting.

The IPSC exam became the recognised accreditation entrance exam, which led to affiliate membership after registration with IPSC. The second course of study offered by the institute was a diploma, completion of which allowed a consultant to register both nationally, as a CPC - Certified Personnel Consultant, and internationally through the Confederation of Personnel Services Associations (IPSA) as a Certified International Personnel Consultant (CIPC).

Over the years the diplomas fell away as did the official membership of IPSC, for which an annual membership fee was levied, with recruiters simply completing the initial IPSC exam as a means of accrediting themselves, most especially if they worked for an APSO member.

For many years the IPSC exam has been under review, with changes being made to the material as necessitated by changing legislation and Code of Ethics etc. However the complete revamp, which has been on the cards for some years, has been delayed by the ongoing push for formal regulation within the industry.

With regulation finally within reach and the industry's drive towards professionalism, the standard was revisited by APSO during 2009 and the IPSC content and exam updated to reflect current recruitment practices.

A new era

Going forward technology has been harnessed and the course and the exam will now be available online in e-learning format. To add value to the learning experience participants will have access to supplementary reading, websites and our resources including subject matter experts via discussion forums to contextualise the learning and share experiences with others.

The new exam will be known as the APSO Entrance Exam and upon completion APSO members will be able to join the certification institute for the industry and use a professional designation behind their names to signify that they are practising "legally".

The new professional standard determines the minimum knowledge and skills required by an individual wishing to enter or operate in the labour recruitment industry and the evaluation criteria were determined through consultation with the broader labour recruitment industry and industry associations to ensure that it is comprehensive and holistic.

Following the continued negative onslaughts on the industry, labour recruitment practitioners need to build credibility as professionals through the continuous enhancing of their skills as well as highlighting their accomplishments. The APSO Entrance Exam offers a concrete measure of embedded knowledge when performing labour recruitment activities.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

In order to provide information and guidance to those wishing to learn more about the APSO Entrance Exam, the following Frequently Asked Questions have been provided. Any further queries should be address to:

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What learning material is covered in the APSO Entrance Exam?

The APSO Entrance Exam will form a solid induction course, particularly for those labour recruitment consultants working in an SME environment where they are expected to be revenue-generating almost from day one. The main aim of the exam is to ensure sufficient knowledge to promote ethical, compliant and professional recruitment services from all consultants working for an APSO member company.

Each learner is provided with comprehensive course material that is available online on the Professional Recruiters Education Portal (PREP) e-learning portal. The course covers the following:

- Module 1: The Recruitment Landscape**
 - Overview of the History of labour recruitment industry
 - Changes in labour recruitment industry in South Africa over the years
 - Roles of the stakeholders including ILO, CAPES, APSO etc
 - Role of ISP and importance of professionalisation in the industry
 - Global recruitment practices
- Module 2: The Recruitment Puzzle**
 - Different aspects of recruitment
 - Role and responsibility of a recruitment consultant
 - Benefits of using a recruitment consultancy
- Module 3: Ethics**
 - Importance of ethics in the business environment
 - APSO Code of Ethical & Professional Practice
 - Application of ethical practice within labour recruitment industry
 - Managing ethical dilemmas
- Module 4: Labour Legislation**
 - Constitution & Bill of Rights
 - Labour Relations Act
 - Basic Conditions of Employment Act
 - Unemployment Insurance Act
 - Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act
 - Employment Equity Act
 - Skills Development act
 - Immigration Act
 - National Credit Act

- Module 5: Applying the Law**
- Effective advertisement within scope of current legislation
 - Interview (legally) for success
 - Fair assessment of applicant skills, aptitudes and personalities
 - Reference and verification checks within the law
 - Database management within scope of current legislation
 - Candidate management
- Module 6: The Perm Recruitment Process**
- What is permanent recruitment?
 - Benefits of utilizing a permanent recruitment agency
 - Competencies of a permanent recruitment consultant
 - Permanent recruitment process
 - Managing terms and conditions of business with clients
- Module 7: The Temp Recruitment Process**
- What is temporary employment service (TES)?
 - Benefits of utilizing a temporary employment services (TES) agency
 - Competencies of a temporary employment services consultant
 - Temporary employment services process
- Module 8: Executive Search**
- What is executive search?
 - Benefits of utilizing an executive search consultancy
 - Executive search process
 - Executive search within the scope of the APSO Code
- Module 9: Project Management**
- Fundamentals of project management
 - Project initiation, planning and control
 - Project management tools and techniques
 - Process of project scheduling
- Module 10: Marketing & Sales**
- Sales and marketing principles
 - Role of sales and marketing in labour recruitment industry
 - Sales and marketing planning
 - Sales forecasting
 - Basic principles of territory planning and marketing
 - Sales and performance analysis

For those APSO members who operate within the Healthcare Sector, an additional module is available covering Healthcare and the TES.

- Module 11: TES in Healthcare**
- Why TES assist with recruitment of healthcare professionals
 - Legal framework for practitioners
 - Nursing regulations
 - Regulations for healthcare profession
 - Principles of professional conduct
 - Scope of practice within healthcare profession
 - Batho Pele principles and the rights of the patient

How is the exam structured?

At present the learning material includes a series of self-assessment questions that are completed at the end of each module. These are designed to test your knowledge and provide guidance on areas that might require additional learning before attempting the exam.

In addition a short project is required to complete the sections relating to Perm, Temp and Executive Search Recruitment modules and the portfolio is required to be uploaded for this to be deemed complete.

At the completion of the entire learning programme, you will undertake an online exam that tests your level of embedded knowledge. You are given 2 hours to complete this exam that is made up of 100 randomly selected questions (from a pool of 143 questions) including True/False and Multiple Choice.

Once you're allocated a username & password you will have 3-months access to the e-learning platform. You will be able to take the exam at any time of your choice during this period, although all of the modules and their associated self-assessments must first be completed.

You only have one opportunity to write the exam and so delegates are advised to be sure that they're ready to attempt it.

In order to pass the exam you need to achieve a minimum of 75%.

Once you've passed you will be issued with a Certificate. You will also be entitled to join the Professional Body, and begin your journey to professionalization including attaining a professional designation and embarking on continuous professional development (CPD).

What is the pass mark?

In order to pass the exam you need to achieve a minimum of 75%. This is higher than the pass mark associated with the previous IPSC exam which was 60%. The increase relates to the improvement of the learning material and the fact that you will be required to have displayed sufficient levels of competence in embedded knowledge to be allowed to practice in the industry.

What happens if I don't pass on my first attempt?

The e-learning platform only allows a single attempt at the exam. Should you not achieve the required pass rate, you will be required to apply for a re-write.

At present the re-write costs R180 incl VAT per person.

Once you have paid, you will be advised when your login has been re-set to allow for a second attempt at the exam. You will then proceed directly to the exam section, if you feel confident enough to do this, or you can take some time to review the learning material before attempting the exam.

How much does it cost?

Currently the APSO entrance exam costs R450 excl VAT per delegate and includes 3 months access to the e-learning platform for course material and the exam fee.

Do I receive a certificate on completion?

Anyone who successfully writes and passes the APSO Entrance Exam will receive a certificate. You will also be entitled to join the Professional Body, and begin your journey to professionalization including attaining a professional designation and embarking on continuous professional development (CPD).

Is this a qualification?

This is an Embedded Knowledge exam and is not a full qualification. APSO is working towards the development of occupational qualifications specific to the labour recruitment industry. The APSO Entrance Exam should provide sound grounding for recruiters who wish to undertake the industry-specific qualification.

Is the exam accredited?

The exam is not accredited because, as an Embedded Knowledge theoretical exam, it doesn't meet the unit standard outcomes set for the NQF4 Labour Recruitment learnership.

However, learners who successfully pass this Entrance Exam will receive accreditation by APSO as well as have the opportunity to register with the Professional Body, to begin their career development pathway to designation and future qualifications.

Many corporate clients place great store in membership of APSO for their recruitment agency suppliers and see value in dealing with an individual recruiter who has successfully passed the APSO Entrance Exam and so, whilst it might not have any formal accreditation from SAQA, having the APSO Entrance Exam under your belt will definitely enhance your standing in the marketplace.

What designation can I put behind my name after successful completion?

Unlike the IPSC, that allowed individuals who'd successfully passed the exam to include the designation "AIPSC" behind their name, the APSO Entrance Exam does not do this. This is merely an embedded knowledge component that is required as per the APSO Constitution.

Going forward however, the industry will have formal designations including:

Level 1:	Labour Recruitment Consultant
Level 2:	Labour Recruitment Practitioner
Level 3:	Labour Recruitment Professional

Each designation will have criteria assigned to it and will need to be maintained via Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on an annual basis. CPD ensures that you are "fit to practice" by ensuring that you have currency of knowledge.

Industry designations will be managed by the Professional Body in future. More info will follow in due course.

Who has to write the APSO Entrance Exam?

All APSO members' staff, who are client- or candidate-facing, are required to write the APSO Entrance Exam within 6 months of joining the company, the industry or APSO.

It is a Constitutional condition of membership and all APSO members are required to ensure that their staff members write and pass the Entrance Exam within the allocated time period. All receptionist, consultants, recruiters or sales executives must write the exam and whilst it is encouraged that you get your whole team, including administrative and financial staff members, to write, it is not compulsory.

What happens if I've already written the IPSC exam?

Currently, only new entrants will be required to write the APSO Entrance Exam. However it is anticipated that, with the coming legislation, all recruitment professionals, irrespective of their length of experience or previously qualification, will be required to write an entrance exam to confirm their embedded knowledge competence.

APSO will ensure that our exam meets the requirements set by the recognised professional body and will advise members accordingly of any requirement for experienced and IPSC-certified consultants to write the new exam.

This exam is far superior to its predecessor and would be an excellent refresher course for all consultants and managers. It is especially important that consultants who wrote their IPSC more than 5 years consider re-writing because much has changed within the recruitment landscape, most especially the labour legislation.

How do I enrol?

Enrolments are done online on our website, www.apsco.co.za

Once you complete the enrolment form, you will be invoiced for the exam fee. You must pay the invoice and send proof of payment, as instructed.

On completion of this enrolment process, you will be issued with a Username and Password, and provided with instructions on how to login to the PREP system.

How often do you take enrolments?

Enrolments can be made at any time, however entrance onto PREP will be done once a month to ensure that learners are grouped with others with whom they can share experiences and form a "learning group".

As a result, all enrolments must be entirely complete – which includes completed enrolment form and full payment – by the 25th of each month. Any outstanding enrolments will be rolled over ONCE to the following month, after which time they will be discarded and the learner will have to begin the enrolment process again from scratch.

Can I postpone the course?

Once you've been successfully enrolled, and been issued with a username and password, you cannot postpone! Your 3-month access begins on the day you receive your password and so you must ensure that you complete your studies within this time frame. If you don't, you will be required to re-enrol, paying the exam fee again in full.

How will I know how to access PREP?

Once you've been successfully enrolled you will be issued with your username and password. You will also be given a User Guide to explain to you how to login online for the first time and how to navigate the PREP system.

What is PREP?

The Professional Recruiters Education Portal (PREP) is an e-learning platform that has been created to facilitate the APSO Entrance Exam.

PREP can be easily accessed via the APSO website homepage and once you've been provided with login details you can log in to PREP to manage your learning.

PREP provides a platform for the learning material as well as links to supplementary reading in the form of articles, websites and others to enhance your learning experience.

All of the module self-assessments are also available on PREP for simple completion.

The Entrance Exam now also requires learners to complete a practical exercise on either Permanent, Temporary Employment Services or Executive Search modules. The practical exercise template can be downloaded from PREP for use and the final project portfolio can be simply uploaded to your e-learning space for reference.

The actual exam is also done online in PREP.

Do I require any fancy downloads and how will this affect my bandwidth?

PREP is an Internet-based e-learning platform and so requires no downloads. Learners simply need to visit the website and to have Internet Explorer loaded onto their machine.

The e-learning platform is designed to be used in various settings and so should not unduly affect your bandwidth. Your Internet line speed may affect the time it takes to download the pages but this should not negatively affect your learning experience.

Can I do the exam manually?

Unfortunately the exam can only be completed online. However, to cater for individuals who prefer to learn from notes as opposed to on screen, APSO can provide a manual at an additional cost. These manuals have to be ordered through APSO National Office.

Individual Manual

This is a ring-bound manual in black and white that cannot be easily updated in the event of changed material. This would be a good option for an individual who wants to have their own manual on which they could make notes/highlight etc.

Costs are based on printing costs and may vary: estimated cost R100 ex VAT.

Why has APSO chosen to go the electronic route?

APSO membership is widely spread across South Africa and under the IPSC system, that involved a face-to-face training session (optional) and a manual written exam, some of our members were disadvantaged.

Technology has been embraced within the learning environment, particularly for continuous professional development. In keeping with global trends and in order to be more eco-friendly, and accessible to as many people as possible, APSO has invested in setting up the PREP system.

Do I need to be an IT guru to use PREP?

The e-learning platform is very easy to navigate and no special IT skills are required. Even someone with relatively low computer literacy will be able to work their way through the learning material and write the online exam.

In order to assist learners, a simple user guide will be provided once you've enrolled and been issued with your PREP login details.

For any more complex technical queries, APSO can refer the learner to the support desk allocated to maintaining PREP.

Is the learning material available in any other language?

Unfortunately the learning material is only available in English due to the restricted resources available. However, unlike the previous material, the updated learning material has been consciously designed to ensure simple English that will cater for learners who are not first-language English speaking.

Can the learning material be made available to a visually impaired learner?

On request, APSO can make available the learning material in Word format that can be utilized by technology designed to "read" the material for a visually impaired learner. If required, APSO can also arrange for an oral examination for candidates who are visually impaired. For more information contact APSO National Office.

Can I replace a learner with another person in the event that the original enrolled learner leaves my employ?

Due to the fact that each learner is provided with a unique login to PREP, it is not possible for APSO to substitute learners. All learners will have to be enrolled individually at the usual cost. APSO suggests that if members are concerned about costs associated with learners who resign during the process, that they cover this within their employment contracts or employee agreement.