

Q: Why is the exam changing?

A: The ATD Certification Institute grounds its credentialing programs in ATD's Competency Model framework. This has been the case since certification was introduced in 2006. ATD recently developed its new Talent Development Capability Model, which sets a new standard for talent development. The scope of the ATD CI exams has been updated to reflect updates to the Capability Model and this new standard.

Q: Why was the name changed?

A: Starting April 1, 2020, the Certified Professional in Learning and Performance (CPLP) will be the **Certified Professional in Talent Development (CPTD)**. This change is to reflect the broader scope and impact of the role of talent development and the expertise holders of the certification have, and to align the name of the certification with the name of the professional association which bestows it.

Q. When will exams change?

A: Exams reflecting the updated content will be administered beginning in July 2020 for the APTD and in August 2020 for the CPTD. Until June 30, 2020, candidates will continue to receive the exams that have been administered previously. To see the full schedule, please [click here](#).

Q: What languages will the new exams and prep be in?

A: The APTD exam will be available in Chinese in September 2020 and Arabic in November 2020. This will be an option when registering to take your exam once the exams are available.

Q: What will be different about the exams?

A: The scope of what is covered on each exam has been updated to reflect the appropriate subset of knowledge and skill from the new Talent Development Capability Model. For the APTD, this means the addition of eight new concepts. For details about what is covered on the APTD exam, [click here](#).

For the CPTD, this also means an expansion of the content covered to reflect the appropriate subset of the new Capability Model. It also means a more streamlined process that consists of only one exam that is largely skills based. Candidates will receive instant scoring of their exam at the testing center following the August 2020 administration of the pilot CPTD exam. For details on the CPTD exam content, [click here](#).

Q: Will the exams be harder?

A: The difficulty level of the exam is subjective given that candidates' levels of experience and study methods are different. The content covered is broader but will still be tested at the same level. The plan

for revising the exams was about creating exams that were a fair test of the knowledge and skill needed on the job and used up-to-date assessment techniques. There was no intention of making the exams harder.

Q: Why did you move to one exam for CPTD?

A: One of our goals in updating the program was to create a clear and streamlined process that candidates felt was fair and a good test of their knowledge and skills. In reviewing our current exam structure and exam performance, we felt that using an updated item type would better reflect the process talent development professionals go through on daily. The new case management item type relies on candidates making professional judgement and requires decision-making, based on their talent development knowledge. It also ensures that all candidates are tested on the same content.

Q: Why don't I have to pick a concentration or AOE for the CPTD?

A: Because all candidates who pass the exam receive the same credential, it is a best practice in credentialing to make sure candidates are all tested on the same scope of content. Additionally, the new detailed content outline for the topics to be tested on the exam did not lend itself to creating different exams with different concentrations. All candidates must demonstrate the same level of competence across the same content to achieve the CPTD.

Q: When can I take the new exam?

A: Applications for the new exams, using the new eligibility criteria, will open on April 1, 2020. The new APTD exams will be first administered in July 2020. The pilot exam for the new CPTD credential will begin in August 2020.

Q: Will I get instant scores?

A: The APTD will begin providing immediate scoring at the testing center in July 2020, as it always has. Those who participate in the pilot exam for the CPTD in August 2020 will not receive instant scores. Expect scoring to take 4–6 weeks. Those testing after the August 2020 pilot for the CPTD will receive instant scores at the testing center.

Q: How do I study?

A: Each candidate's preparation plan should meet their own knowledge and skill gaps. Candidates should begin with the gap assessment for the credential they are pursuing to determine where to focus their study.

Because the APTD and CPTD exams are covering common talent development topics, there are several ways for candidates to prepare. ATD CI has provide a resource reference list of texts that may be helpful in filling knowledge gaps. ATD is also releasing its new Talent Development Body of Knowledge (available digitally on February 14, 2020), which is a definitive resource for all talent development professionals. It serves as a comprehensive resource for definitions, terms, and concepts.

ATD CI has included in its new candidate handbooks a list of reading resources to help you fill knowledge gaps. [Click here](#) for more on preparation suggestions.

ATD's Education team is also updating the preparation courses for the APTD and CPTD to reflect the new content, as well as many new features. To learn more about ATD prep courses, which are not required for certification, see these pages: [Prepare for the new APTD](#), [Prepare for the CPTD](#).

Specific Program Changes

Q: Why are there additional eligibility requirements?

A: ATD CI reviewed every aspect of its certification programs. As the scope of the content covered on the exams has shifted, ATD CI wanted to be certain all applicants had a solid foundation of knowledge in talent development on which to be assessed. The addition of a professional development requirement strengthens a candidate's likelihood of success and provides a stronger foundation for the program's credibility externally.

Q: What are the additional eligibility requirements?

A: For APTD and CPTD, candidates are required to document a certain amount of continuing education in talent development prior to applying for the exams. The content of this continuing education must come from topics found in the Building Professional Capability and the Impacting Organizational Capability domains of the new Capability Model. Content in the Developing Personal Capability domain will not be accepted for initial eligibility but will be appropriate for recertification. For the APTD, candidates must document 28 hours of professional development during the most recent three years. For the CPTD, candidates must document 60 hours of professional development during the most recent five years.

Q: What specifically is considered professional development for eligibility?

A: The professional development for eligibility requirement is designed to assist in ensuring that applicants for certification have a solid foundation of talent development knowledge on which to be assessed. Professional development for eligibility is defined as several kinds of activities when the content covered falls into the Building Professional Capability and the Impacting Organizational Capability domains of the Talent Development Capability Model. Content from concepts found in the Developing Personal Capability domain are not applicable for eligibility. Courses designed to prepare

you for certification exams may be applicable but must be pre-approved. ATD courses designed to prepare you for either the APTD or CPTD exams can be reported for 20 hours of professional development.

Examples of eligible professional development activities include:

- attending commercially available talent development educational courses or talent development workshops
- attending educational sessions related to the talent development industry at local conferences such as ATD or SHRM chapter-sponsored conferences
- attending talent development chapter events or other talent development industry meetings
 - business meetings, committee meetings, and general information meetings are not eligible
- attending undergraduate or graduate-level talent development courses from an accredited institution are eligible for 15 hours per semester credit hour
- for all professional development activities, applicants should retain proof of completion in the event they are selected for audit.

How hours are calculated:

- One hour is awarded for each physical hour of a continuing education activity unless otherwise specified.
- Hours are accrued on an hourly basis for all educational time in talent development–related continuing education events, including online training. Prorated hours (in 15-minute increments) are permissible after the first 30 minutes.
- All educational activities must be at least 30 minutes in length to qualify.
- Educational activities must directly contribute to the talent development professional’s understanding of concepts that fall within the Building Professional Capability and Impacting Organizational Capability domains of the Talent Development Capability Model. Content from concepts found in the Developing Personal Capability domain are not applicable for eligibility.

Q: What proof must I submit for professional development on the application?

A: Candidates should retain proof of completion in the event they are randomly selected for audit. Candidates do not need to provide proof of completion unless it is requested by ATD CI. Proof of completion is typically a certificate of attendance or successful completion. For events such as the ATD International Conference, proof of registration and other documentation, such as a photocopy of the conference badge, would be accepted. ATD CI staff will work with each candidate on proof of completion as necessary, but proof of completion is only needed if selected for audit. If a candidate has not been selected for audit, they do not need to contact ATD CI staff regarding acceptable proof.

For Current Candidates

Q: What if I am scheduled to test before July/August?

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A: If you have already applied to take either the APTD or the CPLP, you have been sent a personalized email with how these changes may affect you and what your options are. Candidates have the choice to remain on their current certification journey and test by June 30, 2020, or may delay taking their exam until after July 1, 2020, and be tested against the new exam content.

If you have been preparing to test before June 2020, we encourage you to remain on your current certification path. No changes to the exam will be implemented before July 1, 2020. You have all the tools in your hands currently and you have been preparing. The best path is to continue with your plan to test before June 30, 2020.

Q: What if I chose to switch to the new process, but my year's eligibility expires before the test window?

A: Each candidate with an application in process has been sent a personalized email with their options: STAY in the current content path and complete testing before June 24, 2020, or to SWITCH to the new content. Please review your personalized email (sent January 30) for your personalized options.

Q: What if I'm partially through my year for a prep on-demand course or a learning system but want to switch to the new exam? Can I access to the new prep or updated learning system?

A: Those who have a current subscription to the learning system will have the option to switch to a subscription to the new and updated Talent Development Body of Knowledge publication, which replaces the learning system. Please watch your email for a message about how to make this switch.

Those who are currently enrolled in an on-demand prep course will also have the option to switch to new and updated on-demand courses. Please watch your email for a message about how to make this switch.

Q: If I am already in progress and switch to the new exam, do I need professional development?

A: If an individual has submitted an application, had the application approved, and has paid for the exam prior to March 15, 2020, *and* the candidate wishes to delay testing to the new exam after July 1, 2020, the candidate's requirement to submit professional development shall be waived. Candidates who have not been approved to take the exam and paid for the exam by March 15, 2020 will have their application invalidated. They will need to reapply and meet all criteria for the new programs.

Q: If I have been studying to test, what do I do now?

A: If you have already applied to take the APTD or the CPLP, you have been sent a personalized email with how these changes may affect you and what your options are. Candidates have the choice to remain on their current certification journey and test by June 30, 2020, or choose to delay taking their exam until after July 1, 2020, and be tested against the new exam content.

If you have been preparing to test before June 2020, we encourage you to remain on your current certification path.

For Candidates Considering Certification

Q: I plan to test out using my Master's or APTD. Are there options to do so after June?

A: If you have already applied and been approved to test, you can continue in your chosen test-out path through June 30, 2020. After July 1, 2020, no test-out options will be available. The new test outlines, based on the Capability Model, did not provide for enough content to be included in a test-out. Additionally, ATD CI found that very few candidates chose the test-out option, and those that did, generally did not perform well on the exam.

Q: If I hold the APTD, what are the advantages to go for the CPTD now?

A: If you have an APTD and five years of experience, you may wish to consider obtaining the CPTD. With a more streamlined process that requires only one exam, provides for instant scoring, and has expanded content that will highlight a broader scope of capabilities, now may be a great time to earn the credential.

Q: How many hours should I plan to study for the exam?

A: Each candidate should tailor their study plan to their own strengths and weaknesses as well as how much experience they have had. Both exams are a new mix of content, so ATD CI does not have reports from current candidates. However, for the current APTD exam, candidates reported spending an average of 40–60 hours preparing. For the current two-exam process for CPLP, candidates have reported spending an average of 80 hours for the knowledge exam and 40 hours for the skills application exam. Now that there is only one exam, we expect study time to be closer to 80 hours. ATD CI will update this once we have feedback from candidates who have taken the new exams.

Other FAQs

Q: If the CPLP is only one exam now, why is the price the same? Can I get a discount since it's just one exam?

A: ATD CI has added several enhanced features as part of the CPTD certification process. These include a one skills-based exam only requirement; a shorter certification timeline; instant scores with added feedback features; a new type of exam that better simulates real-life decision-making; new exam content that highlights an expanded scope of capabilities as a TD professional within your organization; and a single candidate dashboard for application, exam scheduling, scores, and online recertification process. To provide those enhancements, ATD CI has made those investments without any price increase or decrease for the CPTD.

About the CPTD Pilot Exam

Q: What does pilot mean?

A: Any time a new exam is given that reflects significant changes in exam content or in the type of test question used, the first time the exam is given is called a pilot. This allows the test sponsor—in this case, ATD CI—to make determinations as to the difficulty level of the exam before it affects whether a candidate passes the exam. We can set the cut score using actual performance data. Additionally, we can review item statistics to determine if there are any flaws in item construction. We can remove those items from the exam so that poor item construction does not negatively affect candidates' scores.

For candidates to receive the benefit of this additional review, we have to withhold scores from test takers in order to do that analysis. A candidate may have to wait as many as six weeks to receive their score. However, when they do receive it, they can be assured they have had the benefit of a thorough exam review. Additionally, candidates who choose to test during the pilot period are helping to set the standard for the credential going forward.

Q: Do the pilot scores count?

A: Yes. A candidate's performance on the pilot exam does determine whether or not the candidate passes the exam and is awarded the credential. However, pilot candidate's have the benefit of additional exam review so that no candidate is inadvertently penalized on their score because of a poorly constructed test question. ATD CI is offering a free retest to any candidate who participates in the CPTD pilot exam in August 2020.

For Current Certificants

Q: If I am already certified. What does this mean for me?

A: If you are already certified, you have been sent a personalized message about the changes to the certification program. There are no immediate changes for those who are currently certified. Those who currently hold the Certified Professional in Learning and Performance (CPLP) will be switched over and granted the Certified Professional in Talent Development (CPTD) on April 1. New digital badges and certificate packages with new lapel pins will be issued on a rolling basis starting in mid-April.

All individuals currently certified whose next expiration date is May 1, 2021 or after will need to report at least 20 hours of continuing education in the new capability areas on their next certification application. Those whose expiration is January 30, 2020, through April 30, 2021, will have these requirements in place for their next recertification cycle. These are the new capability areas for CPTD:

- Communication
- Emotional Intelligence & Decision Making
- Collaboration & Leadership
- Project Management

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- Compliance & Ethical Behavior
- Learning Sciences
- Technology Application
- Career & Leadership Development
- Business Insight
- Consulting & Business Partnering
- Organization Development & Culture
- Data & Analytics
- Future Readiness.

New Capability Areas for APTD are:

- Communication
- Emotional Intelligence & Decision Making
- Collaboration & Leadership
- Project Management
- Compliance & Ethical Behavior
- Learning Sciences
- Technology Application
- Knowledge Management
- Career & Leadership Development
- Coaching
- Business Insight
- Consulting & Business Partnering
- Organization Development & Culture
- Talent Strategy & Management
- Performance Improvement
- Change Management
- Data & Analytics
- Future Readiness.

Additionally, going forward, all certificants will be required to report a minimum number of continuing education hours as part of their recertification application. Once the requirement to take continuing education in the new capability areas is met, the continuing education can be on any TD-related topic.

Q: Can I keep the CPLP certification in my signature and on social media after the name is changed?

A: After April 1, the name of the credential will be changed and recognized by ATD as Certified Professional in Talent Development. You should discontinue using the CPLP after your name and update it to CPTD.

Q: Will I have to retest for the APTD since the exam has changed?

A: As a current APTD or CPLP certificant, you will not need to take any further assessments. However, you will need to report a specific number of continuing education credits on your recertification application that covered topics that are new to the Capability Model. For further details, review the [Recertification Handbook here](#).

If you have other questions, please send an email to: certification@td.org