

A Primer on Effective ETCP and InfoComm Study Groups

The 12 Steps below provide tips for better test taking and dealing with test anxiety. These are suggestions that you may have seen before, which are proven to help you succeed in getting a passing grade. Look them over and try to incorporate the points that make sense to you when preparing for the exam.

Above all remain confident. Your years of experience and studying that have qualified you to take the test have certainly already provided you with a strong underpinning of knowledge.

Step 1

Find a few like-minded people with an interest in taking the same certification exam as you. Make sure that your study partners are people who are willing to commit to working as a group to help each other prepare for the test. Many members feel that a 10 person study group, which meets once a week, face-to-face, works best. The priority of the study topics can be determined by the group at its first meeting, based on the strengths and weaknesses of the participants.

Please utilize the bibliography for book resources on the ESTA Foundation website:

<http://www.estafoundation.org/seminars/resources/rigbiblio.htm>

There is also an ETCP Facebook study group that you may find helpful:

<https://www.facebook.com/etcp.esta.org>

Please utilize the InfoComm Certification Prep links on the InfoComm website:

<http://www.infocomm.org/cps/rde/xchg/infocomm/hs.xsl/21952.htm>

Step 2

Regardless of whether your study group is just for a brush up, or if you are studying for mid level training (this may take several months of preparation) to be qualified to test, draw up a study schedule that creates blocks of time and material, and set a date at the most appropriate time for you to take the certification exam.

More information on the ETCP test and how to fill out and send in the application can be found at:

<http://etcp.plasa.org/>.

More information on the InfoComm test and how to fill out and send in the application can be found at:

<http://www.infocomm.org>

Step 3

Break down the Body of Knowledge on your own into three separate categories: things you know, things you think you know, and things you don't know. This checklist will enable you to break your studying into organized, manageable chunks, which should allow for a comprehensive review plan with minimal anxiety.

Create study checklists

Identify all of the material that you will be tested on-- list notes, formulas, ideas, and text assignments for which you are accountable.

Broad categories for **ETCP Arena Rigging** are: Planning and Engineering, Installation, and Materials and Equipment. More information on the ETCP Arena Rigging Content Outline can be found at:

<http://etcp.plasa.org/candidateinfo/riggingexams/ArenaContentOutline.html>

Broad categories for **ETCP Theatre Rigging** are: Planning and Layout, Implementation and Management, and Rigging Systems. More information on the ETCP Theatre Rigging Content Outline can be found at:

<http://etcp.plasa.org/candidateinfo/riggingexams/TheatreContentOutline.html>

Broad categories for **ETCP Entertainment Electrician** are: Electrical Skills, Regulations, Codes, and Life Safety, and Entertainment Electrical Systems Planning. More information on the ETCP Entertainment Electrician Content Outline can be found at:

<http://etcp.plasa.org/candidateinfo/electrical exams/ElectricalContentOutline.htm>

Types of **InfoComm Certifications** and links to its broad categories can be found at:

<http://www.infocomm.org/cps/rde/xchg/infocomm/hs.xsl/certification.htm>

Step 4

Compare your breakdown from Step 3 with your study group. Each category in the outline needs to be addressed, so those who are more knowledgeable in one area can help those who are less knowledgeable in that area. Hopefully, the members in the group will have different strengths and weaknesses.

Step 5

Study. Participating in the study group is not a substitution for working on your own. Individually study the items in “things you know” and “things you think you know.” As a group, the individuals who researched the topics in “things you don’t know” can teach that topic to the other people in the group.

a. Record your notes

and significant portions of text on your phone so you can review material while walking or relaxing in a nonacademic environment.

b. Create flashcards

for definitions, formulas, or lists that you need to have memorized--put topics on one side of the card, answers on the other.

Flashcards will enable you to test your ability to not only recognize important information, but also your ability to retrieve information from scratch

Step 6

Amass questions on topics you may not quite fully understand. Contact experts and set up meetings so that they can answer your questions. These could be ETCP certified brothers and sisters in your own local union, or in neighboring locals. You may also contact the IATSE Training Trust Fund with any questions, or a request for an expert, at info@iatsetrainingtrust.org

Step 7

Quiz each other in the group. Keep studying and do not give up.

Step 8

Prepared to be tested. There are useful test taking tips on the ETCP website:

<http://etcp.plasa.org/candidateinfo/riggingexams/TestTakingTips.html>

Step 9

Take the sanctioned sample tests.

Rigging Examination: <http://etcp.plasa.org/candidateinfo/riggingexams.html>

Electrical Examination: <http://etcp.plasa.org/candidateinfo/electricalexam.html>

InfoComm: <http://www.infocomm.org/cps/rde/xchg/infocomm/hs.xsl/22138.htm?type=Self-Assessment%20or%20Practice%20Exam>

Step 10

Find the answers to any questions from the sample tests that you didn't know. You may repeat the sample tests if you wish. Set up another meeting with your local union experts to discuss any questions or remaining areas that you are still unsure of. This could be a phone call to the person you previously met who helped you study.

Step 11

Don't cram. Try to remember and understand the material a little at a time.

Step 12

Take the exam.

- ✓ **Get a good night's sleep** the night before the exam.
- ✓ **Allow yourself plenty of time on the day of the test**, to do things you need to do before the test and still get there a little early.
- ✓ **Don't go to the exam with an empty stomach**
Fresh fruits and vegetables are often recommended to reduce stress.
- ✓ **Take a small snack, so that hunger will not distract you.**
- ✓ **Bring at least two pens/pencils with good erasers, a calculator** with enough batteries and any other resources that your proctor allows you to bring.
- ✓ **Bring a watch to the test** so that you can better pace yourself.
- ✓ **Choose a comfortable spot in the room for taking the test** with good lighting and minimal distractions.

✓ **Strive for a relaxed state of concentration**

Avoid speaking with any fellow students who have not prepared, who express negativity, who will distract your preparation.

✓ **Approach the exam with confidence:**

View the exam as an opportunity to show how much you've studied and to receive a reward for the studying you've done.

✓ **When you first receive your test, do a quick survey of the entire test** so that you know how to efficiently budget your time.

✓ **Do the easiest problems first.**

Don't stay on a problem that you are stuck on, especially when time is a factor.

✓ **Keep a positive attitude throughout the whole test and try to stay relaxed.**

If you start to feel nervous take a few deep breaths to relax.

✓ **If you don't know an answer, skip it.**

Go on with the rest of the test and come back to it later. Other parts of the test may have some information that will help you out with that question.

✓ **Pace yourself, don't rush.** Read the entire question and the whole question carefully.

Pay attention to the details, and don't make assumptions about what the question might be.

✓ **Don't worry if others finish before you.**

Focus on the test in front of you.

✓ **If you have time left when you are finished, look over your test.** Make sure that you have answered all the questions. Only change an answer if you misread or misinterpreted the question because the first answer that you put is usually the correct one. Watch out for careless mistakes and proofread your essay and/or short answer questions.

✓ **Double check to make sure that you put your first and last name on the test.**

With hard work, preparation, and study, you will hopefully succeed. And if you do not, persevere by returning to Step One, concentrating on the areas where you did not do well.

GOOD LUCK!