

HRCI's Independence

For 40 years, HRCI has been an independent organization dedicated to the certification of HR professionals. In the past, SHRM provided preparation solutions for the HRCI certification exams, while HRCI focused on the development and administration of those exams. They were always separate organizations. Because HRCI maintained its independence and focus throughout the period of its partnership with SHRM, HRCI's separation from SHRM has not affected the quality of the exam nor the credentials' recognition among employers around the world. This independence is critical: It ensures HRCI's good standing as the country's only **accredited** provider of HR credentials to HR generalists.

HRCI Credentials and Competency-Based Models

The most sought after HR competencies are too numerous to be encapsulated in a single model. HRCI's certification exams have always considered multiple competency models that are validated and widely recognized by the HR industry the world over. They are not based on a single proprietary model or products or member organization. Rather, they are the result of inputs and regular updates from thousands of practicing HR professionals from around the world.

Organizations like SHRM, who tout the importance of competency-based HR certification, use HRCI credentials as a pathway to their certification because they recognize the validity of HRCI's approach to competency-based HR certification.

HRCI Certification Exams

Passing the rigorous HRCI certification exam is the only way to earn HRCI credentials. There are no easy pathways through other certifications because passing an HRCI exam is the only way to ensure that a candidate meets HRCI's gold standard. This helps to ensure that only qualified individuals achieve HRCI certification. HRCI certification exams test candidates for competencies in exceptional HR practices and HR policies that are sought after by employers around the world who want their organizations to succeed. They require knowledge of employment law and risk management because employers want to reduce their exposure to litigation. For these reasons, SHRM uses HRCI credentials as their eligibility criteria for the SHRM Pathway to Certification for the SHRM-CP and SHRM-SCP.

HRCI – The Only Accredited Provider of HR Certification for Generalists

HRCI credentials are the only HR credentials for generalists that have been accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) an *independent* standards organization. HRCI's NCCA accreditation validates the credibility of HRCI certifications. It makes the HR profession and the public aware of the standards and requirements that HRCI has met. It also shows that, like our certified professionals, we are committed to high standards. This is an important distinction from other certifications with only their own claims to back them up.

Other organizations focus on specific HR functions, HR events, or HR association membership. For 40 years, HRCI always has and will focus on certifying HR generalists across the most essential HR functions. HRCI credentials are not built around proprietary models or preparation solutions. The exams are based on multiple data sources that are validated and recognized by practicing HR professionals around the world. Moreover, third parties provide solutions to prepare candidates for the certification exams, so there is no conflict of interest or undue influence on the certification exams.

Recognition of HRCI Credentials Around the World

A survey¹ of more than 20,000 HR professionals and their supervisors shows that when hiring, 2 out of 3 supervisors prefer HRCI certifications for HR positions. One out of five organizations require HRCI certifications for at least some of their HR positions. No other HR credentials enjoy this international recognition and demand among employers. The same study shows that employers are even willing to pay more for HRCI certified professionals. When compared to their non-certified peers, PHRs earned an average of \$4,547 more per year. SPHRs earned an average of \$19,712 more per year.

New SHRM Certifications

Membership in a professional association is no longer enough to show commitment to one's career and profession. In an increasingly competitive job market, keeping one's competencies up to date is a clear indication of such commitment. Certifications are a great way to show employers and recruiters that an HR professional's competencies—ie, knowledge, skills and abilities—are not only current but sought after. More and more employers are holding out for the HR professional who has the right skillset, making entering the credentialing market very attractive due to industry demand. To date, the new SHRM certifications are neither accredited nor as widely recognized or valued in the marketplace as HRCI's. In fact, the vast majority of people who have the SHRM letters gained them through a pathway which required holding HRCI's generalist certifications in order to qualify.

¹ An Evaluation of the Value HR Certification for Individuals and Organizations, 2014

At a Glance: HRCI vs. SHRM

Major Factors	SHRM	HRCI
Years of Service and Total Number of Certifications Awarded	Second year in certification business; majority of certifications awarded based on HRCI's designations.	Forty years of certification experience; more than 500,000 certifications awarded.
Individual Certifications Available	Only two: the SHRM Certified Professional (SHRM-CP) and the SHRM Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP)	Seven: A complete family of seven international and domestic certifications (PHR, SPHR, GPHR, PHRi, SPHRi), including a California credential (PHRca) and certifications for various levels of HR mastery, even early-career (aPHR).
Organization-Wide HR Certification	None.	Yes. In partnership with Top Employers Institute, organizations can benchmark how HR and workplace practices stack up against global organization for creating excellence in people development.
Accredited Certifications	None.	Four: The PHR, SPHR and GPHR and PHRca are all accredited by the NCCA. HRCI's newer exams (aPHR, PHRi and SPHRi) have been developed according to the same standards in anticipation of accreditation.
Link between Exams and Certification Preparation	Strong. SHRM earns money from the both exam and preparation offerings. SHRM also controls the content of its exams and its own certification preparation materials and seminars.	Weak. HRCI only produces online practice exams. This is a major line HRCI does not want to cross to maintain accreditation and to avoid improprieties, testing bias, etc.
Certification Model	Single, one-size-fits-all model and only two certifications to cover practitioners and senior practitioners.	Based on continuously evolving "HR Bodies of Knowledge" for professionals at different career stages, geographic locations and specializations.