Criminal Justice Comprehensive Exam Summary:

Undergraduate Level

Peregrine Academic Services (PAS) provides assessment services for performing direct assessment of learning outcomes in a range of academic disciplines. The online exams are used to evaluate retained student knowledge in relation to the academic program's learning outcomes.

This document outlines the Criminal Justice assessment service for the associate and bachelor's academic degree levels.
The assessment service is designed for use by US-based schools and programs.

PAS places a high priority on ensuring the validity and reliability of the assessment services. These practices begin at the design stage and continue through beta-testing, and with ongoing regularly scheduled quality reviews. A description of the approach used to ensure ongoing validity and reliability is provided at the end of this document.

The undergraduate test bank of questions is used for both associate and bachelor's levels because:
   a) The questions are associated with foundational knowledge levels.
   b) Using the same test bank for both associate and bachelor's level testing is an accreditation/articulation requirement for undergraduate transfer students completing a degree program at the associate level and continuing forward with a bachelor's program.

When used for the associate and bachelor's degree exams, the academic program manager selects topics that align with their learning outcomes and the program curriculum (usually 4-6 topics per exam for the associate degree and 8-10 topics for the bachelor's).

The exams include 10 questions for each topic and each exam is unique as questions are selected at random from the test bank with 50-200 questions per topic.

This document provides information on:
   • Topics and subjects covered within each topic.
   • Example questions.
   • Assessment Service Validity and Reliability.

The Topics are:

   1. Administration of Justice
   2. Corrections
   3. Courts
   4. Criminological Theory
   5. Ethics and Diversity
   6. Homeland Security
   7. Juvenile Justice
   8. Law Adjudication
   9. Law Enforcement
   10. Research and Analytical Skills

Topic: Administration of Justice

Subjects
- Comparative Criminal Justice
- Contemporary Criminal Justice System
- Major Systems of Social Control
- Personnel Management

Example Questions

Contemporary criminal justice is known for several eras or periods encompassing different philosophies. Known for its connection to the Wickersham Commission the _____ era was a significant driving force in the modernization of criminal justice practices.
   A. community
   B. political
   C. reform
   D. statutory
Correct Response: C

Management in a criminal justice agency is most closely associated with_____.
   A. a police sergeant
   B. small group leadership
   C. one-on-one direction
   D. day-to-day operations of various parts of an organization
Correct Response: D

Topic: Corrections

Subjects
- Carceral Facilities (Jails/Prisons)
- Community-based Corrections
- History and Correctional Philosophies
- Practice and Legal Environment

Example Questions

The matching of offenders to institutions that have the physical security and staff resources to prevent escapes and control inmate behaviors is called_____.
- A. risk need assessment
- B. security classification
- C. program assessment
- D. risk/program classification

Correct Response: B

Jails are expected to provide a(n) _____ acceptable environment.
- A. lawsuit-free
- B. danger-free
- C. inhumanely
- D. constitutionally

Correct Response: D

Topic: Courts

Subjects
- Federal and State
- History
- Lower Courts
- US Supreme Court

Example Questions

_____ is not a legal element of a crime.
   A. Harm
   B. A guilty act
   C. Concurrence
   D. A guilty mind
   E. A guilty conscience
Correct Response: E

The party that is unsatisfied with the verdict of a lower court and files an appeal in a higher court is known as the _____.
   A. complainant
   B. affiant
   C. appellant
   D. appellee
   E. respondent
Correct Response: C

Topic: Criminological Theory

Subjects
- Nature and Causes of Crime
- Offenders
- Typologies
- Victims

Example Questions

According to the most common interpretations, which element is the least important to deterrence?
A. fortitude
B. celerity
C. obfuscation
D. severity
E. certainty

Correct Response: D

In criminology, the term macro level means _____.
A. a theory that explains crime at the individual level of analysis
B. a theory that explains crime at the community or societal level of analysis
C. a theory that circumscribes another theory
D. a theory that supplants another theory
E. a theory about the process of theorizing

Correct Response: B

Topic: Ethics and Diversity

Subjects
- Deontological and Teleological Ethics
- Diversity Issues in Criminal Justice
- Ethical Decision-Making and Problem Solving
- Ethics in Criminal Justice (Personal, Situation, Professional)

Example Questions

A major pitfall that criminal justice professionals face in working within diverse communities is
_____.
   A. focusing too much on differences
   B. failing to focus on differences rather than the law
   C. relying too heavily on training rather than authentic cultural dialog
   D. failing to ensure that officers of the same ethnicity deal with community members
   E. failing to overlook infractions of the law when the law is culturally biased

Correct Response: A

The idea that taking insignificant gratuities such as a free cup of coffee may lead to more severe forms of corruption later on is referred to as the _____.
   A. spiral of moral decay
   B. slippery slope
   C. incivilities thesis
   D. bad apple theory
   E. the yawning gap

Correct Response: B

Topic: Homeland Security

Subjects
- History
- International Enforcement Effort
- Legislation and Case Law
- National Enforcement Efforts

Example Questions

_____ has the highest per capita imprisonment rate in the world.
A. Russian federation
B. China
C. Kazakhstan
D. United States

Correct Response: D

The motives for international terrorists are often centered around furthering ones _____.
A. religious objectives
B. laws
C. personal attitudes
D. freedom of expression

Correct Response: A

Topic: Juvenile Justice

Subjects
- Case Law
- Corrections
- Family Violence
- History

Example Questions

The formal pronouncement of judgment and punishment on the juvenile who engaged in the conduct charged is known as _____.
   A. arraignment
   B. disposition
   C. adjudication
   D. sentencing
Correct Response: B

Delinquent behavior is based on the belief that children below a certain age are incapable of _____, thus they are presumed to be unaware of the full consequences for what they do.
   A. actus reus
   B. mens reus
   C. rationalization
   D. justification
Correct Response: B

Topic: Law Adjudication

Subjects
- Criminal Law
- Criminal Procedures
- Defense
- Prosecution

Example Questions

Pretrial proceedings in the federal district courts and trials in federal misdemeanors are often handled by _____ who are appointed by federal district judges.
A. magistrate judges
B. referees
C. special controllers
D. special counsel
E. justice of the peace

Correct Response: A

Evidence that is obtained by law enforcement because of other illegally obtained evidence is prohibited in criminal court by the _____ doctrine.
A. inevitable discovery
B. plain view
C. best evidence
D. fruit of poisonous tree
E. exclusionary rule

Correct Response: D

Topic: Law Enforcement

Subjects
- Case Law
- History
- Police Organization and Subculture
- Practice (Local, State, Federal)

Example Questions

When the courts create a new interpretation of an existing law it is referred to as _____.
- A. statutory law
- B. civil law
- C. case law
- D. stare decisis

Correct Response: C

Accusations against the police that include favoritism, corruption, and laziness are often made by the community when they_____.
- A. are afraid of the police
- B. lost faith in the fairness of the criminal justice system
- C. when they feel that the criminal justice system is doing a good job
- D. when someone has been arrested

Correct Response: B

Topic: Research and Analytical Skills

Subjects
- Quantitative Methods in Conducting Criminal Justice Research
- Quantitative Methods in Analyzing Criminal Justice Research
- Qualitative Methods in Conducting Criminal Justice Research
- Qualitative Methods in Analyzing Criminal Justice Research

Example Questions

Inductive reasoning can best be defined as _____.
    A. reasoning that moves from a general theory to specific observations
    B. reasoning that is internally consistent and based on quantitative analysis
    C. reasoning that moves from specific cases to general theories
    D. reasoning that is ethically sound
    E. reasoning based on grounded theory

Correct Response: C

Researchers call a variable that theoretically has an infinite number of possible values between any two specific measurements _____.
    A. an independent variable
    B. a dependent variable
    C. a discrete variable
    D. a continuous variable
    E. a placebo

Correct Response: D

Assessment Service Validity and Reliability

Introduction

The programmatic assessment services provided by Peregrine Academic Services (PAS) are used to assess retained knowledge of students at various academic degree levels. Schools deploy these services to evaluate the effectiveness of their academic programs, identify areas for improvement, and demonstrate program outcomes to external stakeholders.

PAS places a high priority on ensuring the validity and reliability of the assessment services. These practices begin at the design stage and continue through beta-testing, and with ongoing regularly scheduled quality reviews. The following outlines the approaches used to ensure ongoing validity and reliability.

Validity refers to the extent to which the test banks and the services measure the phenomena under consideration.

Reliability refers to the extent to which the exam results are repeatable and therefore data sets can be compared over time.

Design Features that Impact Validity and Reliability

The following features apply to all assessment services.

- Exam scoring is 100% objective using automated marking.

- Each exam viewed by a student is unique using a random selection of questions from the test bank in random topic order.

- Timed response periods for questions. When the user navigates away from the exam screen, the screen fades, a message appears informing the user that he/she has left the exam window and the questions are timed.

- Students are unable to copy/paste from the exam window.

- The exam services meet the security requirements for Management of Information Technology (MIS) Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) compliant organizations.

- Abandoned exams are excluded from summary reports.

Ensuring Ongoing Validity and Reliability

Validity

To ensure test bank validity, the following measures were adopted when the initial test banks were created. The same principles are used with subsequent changes to the test banks.

- The specific accreditation or certification requirements related to learning outcomes evaluation were used to determine the topics and subjects for the test banks.

- Current teachings for each topic were considered regarding the foundational level of each test bank.

- Exam questions were written and reviewed by academic professionals within each discipline. Similar subject matter experts are used with subsequent editing and for new questions.

- Each topic has questions designated for 4-8 subjects per topic to help ensure appropriate breadth of coverage and allow for specific learning outcomes measurement.

- Exam responses are either correct or incorrect with only one possible correct choice. Scores are determined by summarizing the percent correct: per subject, per topic, and by total score.

Reliability

PAS contracted with external experts to design a comprehensive and statistically sound approach to measuring assessment service reliability. The result is that each year, a *Reliability Report* is generated for each assessment service. The report generates data for several reliability metrics and the data for each are compared with acceptability criteria to determine which test questions should be modified or replaced. Subject matter experts in the field are then contracted to modify/replace the targeted questions. Hence, the assessment service is regularly reviewed and improved to ensure ongoing reliability.

Reliability is determined by measuring *Item Difficulty*, *Item Discrimination* and *Question Interchangeability.*

Item Difficulty refers to percentage of students who answer questions correctly. Data are generated by topic and for each individual question. The target Item Difficulty is 60 percent correct with an acceptable range of 35 – 80 percent.

Item Discrimination refers to how well a question distinguishes between those students with more knowledge (higher overall exam scores) from those with less knowledge. Two measures are used: *Discrimination Index* and *Point-Biserial Correlation*.

For a given question, the Discrimination Index compares the scores of students with high overall test scores with students with low overall test scores. The scale is -1 to +1, with higher values indicating that a given question better distinguishes between high and low performing students. A value of ≥ 0.20 is considered acceptable.

Point-Biserial Correlation is equal to the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient between the scores on the entire exam and the scores on a specific question. A score of ≥ 0.10 is considered acceptable.

When assessing the quality of questions, both the Discrimination Index and the Point-Biserial Correlation Coefficient are reviewed.

Question Interchangeability refers to the ability to substitute a question in the test bank with another without significantly affecting the total score that an individual would receive on the exam. This is determined using Cohen's Effect Size d calculated based on a two-tailed t-test comparing the total score for all students who had that question in their exam versus the total score of the students who did not have that question in their exam. The scale is 0-1.0 and a score of < 0.20 is considered acceptable.