CCC®

Critical Communication Capability® Foundation exam specification

March 2023

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About this course

The number and complexity of the critical situations that organizations confront are increasing. As a result, organizations must handle critical communications around such crises as part of an ongoing programme rather than as a one-off 'project'. A changing media and social landscape amplifies this need. Mishandling crises can significantly and adversely impact an organization's brand and reputation, ecosystem health, legal and compliance standing, and financial performance. Organizations must have good preparation for, proper responses to, and effective follow-up after, critical situations.

Critical communication situations in today's digital enterprises span both IT and the business. Organizations, therefore, require a single orchestrated capability that is ingrained in all people and teams, using a common framework and shared visibility of goals, tools and practices. They must grasp the factors involved in managing crises and develop the capability to respond effectively. A structure for practice and training is essential, as the mere intellectual acceptance of the need for capability is insufficient. Organizations need to build capability into their 'muscle memory' to respond effectively to critical situations.

The Critical Communication Capability (CCC®) Framework provides business and IT professionals with a shared approach, a common language and best-practice guidance for understanding and improving their capability to prepare for, respond to, and follow up on critical situations.

The CCC qualification introduces business and IT professionals to intelligent, practical and orchestrated crisis communications. It supplies a unified model for what is needed, including a terminology, indicators of capability, and best practices for improving skills and, ultimately, performance in critical situations.

Passing the CCC Foundation certification exam certifies that the candidate can describe the CCC principles, concepts and models, using the terminology set out in this syllabus as a basis for applying them in practice.

Audience

The CCC Foundation course and exam are for business and IT leadership professionals who support and contribute to an organization's preparation for, response to, and follow-up in, the aftermath of an incident.

Learning objectives

At the end of your studies, you should be able to:

- Explain what critical communication capability is and why organizations need it
- List and describe the principles of effective communication
- List and illustrate the elements of the CCC Model and its key principles, concepts and terminology
- List typical critical communication capability gaps and describe the actions that can close them
- List and describe the four result areas that critical communication capabilities contribute to, including the key indicators that show when these result areas are in their desired state. You should know the best practices for achieving and maintaining those desired states within the context of critical communications
- List and describe the three critical communication phases, including the roles, activities, key moments of truth, and entry and exit criteria associated with each phase. You should know the desired states for the capability indicators of each phase, and the best practices for achieving and maintaining those desired states
- List and describe the four resource areas drawn on in critical communications, and cite the best practices associated with each. You should know the desired states of the capability indicators in each phase, and how to achieve and maintain those desired states.

Contact hours

Candidates preparing to sit the CCC Foundation certification exam should plan for 14 contact hours of study, including:

- Participating in a self-directed or instructor-led course
- Completing and reviewing a sample exam (2 contact hours)

The 14 contact hours do not include the time required for sitting the certification exam or reviewing the official publication that is the basis for the course.

Prerequisites

The CCC Foundation course has no prerequisites. Experience with major incident handling or public relations for critical business situations is helpful.

Candidates for the CCC Foundation certification exam must complete all units of an accredited course from an authorized training organization and obtain a letter of attendance or badge to purchase an exam.

Certification exam overview

The following table outlines how the exam is administered, including the materials allowed and the exam duration. It covers exam scoring, including the total number of marks and the number required to pass. It describes the Bloom's levels associated with the exam questions and the question types that candidates can expect to be asked during the exam.

Number of questions/marks	There are 40 questions, each of which is worth 1 mark. There is no negative marking for incorrect answers
Question types	All questions are multiple choice. One type has a question and four possible answers. Some of these question types ask what the correct answer is, and others ask you to show which answers are incorrect. Another type of question is a fill-in-the-blank question, which asks you to complete the statement with the missing word or words, drawing from four possible answers. The exam includes Bloom's level 1 questions, which ask you to recall concepts from the CCC Model and Framework. It also includes Bloom's level 2 questions, which ask you to demonstrate that you can apply concepts to given scenarios.
Exam duration	You have 60 minutes to complete the exam unless you are taking it in a language that is not your native tongue or working language, in which case you can request 25% extra time (75 minutes total).
Prerequisites	Certificate of completion from a CCC Foundation registered training organization (RTO).
Open or closed book	The exam is closed book. While taking the exam, you may not use any reference materials, including the CCC Framework official publication and course book.
Passing score	You must answer correctly a minimum of 26 (65%) questions to pass the exam.
Delivery	This exam is available online or in paper format from APMG International https://apmg-international.com

CCC Foundation syllabus

Information in the table is organized as follows:

- **Column 1** Lists the units and topics to be covered, the number of marks and weighting for each unit, and the suggested number of contact minutes for study
- **Column 2** Details the assessment criteria for each learning outcome
- **Column 3** Cites the sections (and all subsections unless otherwise indicated) in the official publication in which the assessed concepts are described
- **Column 4** Cites the Bloom's level of the exam questions
- **Column 5** Lists the number of marks associated with each question.

Unit, learning outcome, total marks, weight and contact minutes	Assessment criteria	Related publication sections	Bloom's level	Number of marks
CCCFM01 The rationale for critical communication capability 1. Describe the rationale for building critical communication capability (4 marks, 10% weight, 60 minutes)	1.1.a Recall the definition of a critical situation 1.1.b Recall the definition of critical communication capability 1.1.c Recall the definition of muscle memory	1.1, 1.2	1	1
	1.2 Cite examples of critical situations and how effective the organization was in handling them	1.3, 1.4	2	2
	1.3 Describe changing media and communications dynamics and how they shape response strategy	1.6, 1.7	1	1
CCCFM02 Principles of effective communication 2. List and describe core communications principles used in critical situations (4 marks, 10% weight, 60 minutes)	2.1.1 List and describe the principles of communication 2.1.2 List and describe the six Cs of effective messaging 2.1.3 List and describe the six PESTLE factors 2.1.4 Define 'moments of truth'	2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 2.1	1	1
	2.2 Give examples of applying the principles of communication and the six Cs of effective messaging	2.2, 2.3	2	2
	2.3 Describe and apply examples of incorporating staging in managing moments of truth	2.1, 2.2, Figure 2.1	2	1

Unit, learning outcome, total marks, weight and contact minutes	Assessment criteria	Related publication sections	Bloom's level	Number of marks
CCCFM03 An introduction to the CCC Framework 3. List and describe the parts of the CCC Model (4 marks, 10% weight, 60 minutes)	3.1 List and describe the four elements of critical communication capability	3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 (Table 3.3, Table 3.4)	1	2
	3.2.a Describe the four result areas of the CCC Model			
	3.2.b Describe the four stages of the CCC Model			
	3.2.c Describe the four resource areas of the CCC Model			
	3.2.d Describe the five levers of the CCC Model			
	3.3 Describe how to apply the CCC Model to an organization and its benefits to teams and roles	3.2	2	1
	3.4 Describe how to use the CCC Model to evaluate critical situations	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, Table 3.5, Table 3.6	2	1
	3.5 Describe how the elements of the CCC Model work together to manage a crisis			

Unit, learning outcome, total marks, weight and contact minutes	Assessment criteria	Related publication sections	Bloom's level	Number of marks
CCCFM04 Result areas of the CCC Model 4. List and describe the four result areas of the CCC Model (6 marks, 15% weight, 120 minutes)	4.1 List and describe the four result areas	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6	1	2
	4.2.1 Explain how to use factors and instruments to track a situation's impact on result areas 4.2.2 Explain how to use monitoring and tracking to track a situation's impact on result areas 4.2.3 Explain how to use indicators of success to track a situation's impact on result areas	4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5; all subsections and tables	2	3
	4.3 Recall the factors that should be considered for each of the four result areas in the response and aftermath phases	4.6	1	1

Unit, learning outcome, total marks, weight and contact minutes	Assessment criteria	Related publication sections	Bloom's level	Number of marks
CCCFM05 Phases of the CCC Model 5. List and describe the three phases of critical communications (10 marks, 25% weight, 180 minutes)	5.1 List and describe the three phases of critical communications	5.1, 5.2	1	3
	5.2.a Describe key principles, models and concepts for the standing phase			
	5.2.b Describe key principles, models and concepts for the response phase			
	5.2.c Describe key principles, models and concepts for the aftermath phase			
	5.3 Cite how to apply best practices to moments of truth in the standing phase to improve success	5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.3.1 and all subsections and tables	2	2
	5.4 Cite how to apply best practices to moments of truth in the response phase to improve success	5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.4.1 and all subsections and tables	2	2
	5.5 Cite how to apply best practices to moments of truth in the aftermath phase to improve success	5.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.5.1 and all subsections and tables	2	2
	5.6 Recall and describe the responsibilities in responding to a critical situation for each of the principal roles in an organization	5.1, 5.2, 5.6 and Tables 5.15–5.20	1	1

Unit, learning outcome, total marks, weight and contact minutes	Assessment criteria	Related publication sections	Bloom's level	Number of marks
CCCFM06 Resource areas of the CCC Model 6. List and describe the four resource areas of the CCC Model, including examples of capability indicators associated with each (8 marks, 20% weight, 180 minutes, including a self-assessment)	6.1 Define the four resource areas, and cite factors that add and detract from each	6.1, 6.2	1	2
	6.2.1 Explain how to apply indicators and which levers to use to improve capabilities for people resources 6.2.2 Explain how to apply indicators and which levers to use to improve capabilities for process resources 6.2.3 Explain how to apply indicators and which levers to use to improve capabilities for information resources 6.2.4 Explain how to apply indicators and which levers to use to improve capabilities for technology resources	6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7	1, 2	4
	6.3 Outline the approach and objectives of conducting a capability self-assessment	6.1, 6.2, 6.7, 6.7.2 and Table 6.7	1	2

Unit, learning outcome, total marks, weight and contact minutes	Assessment criteria	Related publication sections	Bloom's level	Number of marks
CCCFM07 CCC Improvement and capability levers 7. Describe the five levers of the CCC Model and how to apply them (4 marks, 10% weight, 60 minutes)	7.1 Outline the cycle of monitoring and capability assessment	7.1, 7.2	1	1
	7.2 Outline the steps in conducting a force field analysis			
	7.3 List the eight stages of the Agile sprint process and explain how to use them	7.1, 7.2, 7.3	1	1
	7.4.1 Explain how to use best practices to improve capability	7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5	2	2
	7.4.2 Explain how to use force field analysis to improve capability			
	7.4.3 Explain how to use Agile continual improvement to improve capability			
	7.5.5 Explain how to use planned drills and exercises to improve capability			