



TICO Travel Counsellor Exam

Multiple Choice Exam Strategies

Success on the **TICO Travel Counsellor Exam** may be achieved through knowledge of the test material and an understanding of the multiple choice exam evaluation process.

The information below will provide you with some information and tools to be successful in this exam process. You will review:

1. Preparing for an Evaluation
2. Factors that Effect Your Preparation
3. The Multiple Choice Exam
4. Tips For Correctly Answering Multiple Choice Exam Questions
5. Unanswered Questions
6. Most Common Exam Errors
7. On Exam Day
8. The Day Before An Evaluation
9. Sample Test Questions



What do you mean ... I have to write an exam?

What happens if I fail?

Fear of failure is one of the greatest challenges to overcome in any test situation.

To ensure your success you need to make sure you prepare properly, organize your time, control your anxiety and review the material to be evaluated. Successful candidates employ strategies to take into account all of these things when they begin to review for an evaluation.

Preparing for an Evaluation

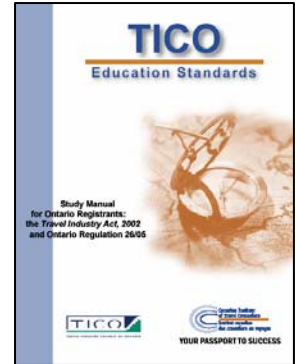
There are three stages of evaluation preparation:

- (1) **Long-term**: from the beginning of the learning to the evaluation
- (2) **Short-term**: the time leading up to the evaluation when the study and review become critical
- (3) **Immediate preparation**: the day or night before

Long-term Preparation

Now that you have decided to take the evaluation, ask yourself “what do you need to know?”

- Review the content of any study material
- Take notes as you go along, as this will help you to learn the material.
- Some people find that **highlighting key phrases with a marker**, allows them to review key ideas later on.
- Identify areas that are unclear or confusing
- Spend extra time on your weakest areas or material that has been previously unfamiliar to you. This is the time to ask for help from a co-worker or supervisor
- Try any practice test available or sample questions
- Try to understand and apply the material as opposed to memorizing it. To do this you might think of an example of where the information would apply or a scenario where you would use the information.



Short-term Preparation



- Re-read the key points in any study material provided, as well as your own study notes
- Organize any notes you may have taken; use them as a summary of the material; use them as a quick reference to clarify material you found difficult to learn or understand
- Study actively – paraphrase your notes by rewriting or reciting them in your own words
- Schedule your study breaks
- Use memory aids such as acronyms to aid hard-to-remember lists etc. An acronym is a word, made up of the first letters of a longer sentence or idea (eg CITC is an acronym for the Canadian Institute of Travel Counsellors/ TICO—for the Travel Industry Council of Ontario). It does not matter how silly the word is that you make up—actually the sillier the word, the more likely you are to remember it—and this will, in turn, help you to remember ideas or lists or concepts.

Immediate Preparation

By the time you get to the day/night immediately before your test, your study should be review (as opposed to re-learning). Use your notes or highlights from the study material. Also make sure you know the meaning of any acronyms you made up.

Keep the following guidelines in mind as you refresh your knowledge:

- Get enough sleep
- Eat properly
- Take breaks, relax, exercise
- Focus your attention
- Keep a positive attitude



Factors that Effect Your Preparation

1. Time Management

The biggest challenge that adult learners often face is finding time to meet all their commitments.

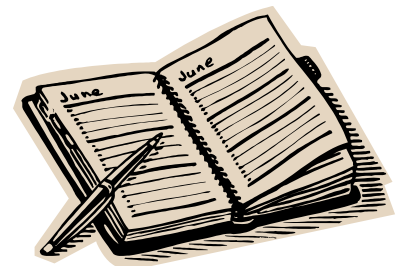
→ Analyze how you're spending your time now. Keep track of how you use time for a week. Mark your time-wasters in the following list:

- absentmindedness, forgetting things
- putting things off
- disorganization, lack of planning
- trouble getting started
- daydreaming
- checking email
- checking Facebook or other social websites
- watching TV
- just too much to do
- talking on the phone
- lack of written goals
- worry, lack of confidence
- preoccupied with problems
- no daily plan
- paying too much attention to detail
- perfectionism, trying to do everything perfectly
- indecision
- not using waiting/travel time.



→ With the above information in mind, make a monthly schedule.

- Create deadlines.
- Mark them on your schedule.
- Fill in any other important dates (including major personal commitments) for the month.



→ Create a weekly schedule.

- Put in necessary activities first (e.g., work, meals, 7–8 hours of sleep time).
- Plan study times: schedule the most difficult things for the times when you are most alert.

→ Make a daily “to do” list.

→ Other suggestions

- List tasks to be done according to their priority. Use a system such as: MUST do, SHOULD do, and COULD do.
- Reward yourself for sticking to your schedule.



2. Concentration

Concentration is a person's ability to work without letting people, feelings or activities interfere. Use the following three steps to develop your concentration ability.

→ Establish concentration



- **External distractions** are things around you (e.g., people, noises, smells) that tend to attract your attention. Be aware of what they are and separate yourself from them.
- **Internal distractions** are things inside you (e.g., thoughts, emotions, physical feelings, hunger, tiredness) that tend to attract your attention. Be aware of what they are and learn to control them.

→ Increase concentration

Plan to concentrate. In other words, be prepared to attend to the task at hand. How interested are you in what you are doing? If not much, then try to come up with reasons for developing an interest. Try to identify what it means to you or how you could use it in your life. The following techniques are useful to increase concentration:

- **Divide tasks into manageable parts.** Achievement will come sooner and more often.
- **Keep track of your thoughts** (e.g., mark an “X” in your study guide each time you catch yourself daydreaming).
- **Use a pencil, highlighter,** or anything else that will increase your active involvement in what you're doing.
- **Vary your activities.** A change is as good as a rest.
- **Plan breaks** according to your concentration span.

→ Develop the concentration habit

Establish a regular place to do your work and decide on a regular starting time for doing work. Just as certain times and places are associated with eating, so it can be with concentration. Try to be consistent. Let yourself get into a pattern of concentrating.



3. Memory

We remember almost everything for a very short time. But what we remember over the long term depends largely on how meaningful the information to be remembered is.

This, for instance, is why we often forget a phone number so easily. The numbers mean nothing to us. For this reason, clever marketers come up with schemes to help make phone numbers more meaningful (e.g., “call 123-FISH”). You can make use of such gimmicks in your own studies.

Here are some ways to make information more meaningful.

Strategy 1: Association

One way to give more meaning to what you are trying to learn is to associate the new information with what you already know. For example, you may develop a silly rhyme to memorize a definition or tricky acronym.

For example, in the TICO Study Manual on Page 13, there is a list of 6 mechanisms that the Province of Ontario uses to protect consumers. If you decided that this was important for you to learn, you might come up with something silly like:

Reggie Posity won a **Complimentary Truck** by telling the **Truth** to his **Supervisor**

1. **Registration**,
2. **Posting a Security**,
3. **Compensation Fund**,
4. **Trust Accounting**,
5. **Truth** in Advertising,
6. **Supervision/Educational requirements**

Some hints to increase your use of association include:

- **Paraphrase** the information in your own words.
- Try to **apply what you learn** to your own life.
- **Think** about what you learn.



Strategy 2: Organization

The other useful way to make what you learn more meaningful is to **organize it into groupings that are manageable in size** and make sense to you. If, for example, you have one large mass of information to learn, it will probably make more sense if you break it up into small groups, perhaps giving each group a descriptive heading.

It is a good idea to at least make your notes on loose-leaf paper, if not in a more organized, accessible electronic word or spreadsheet document. Just because information is presented to you in a given order does not mean that is a logical order for you. However you choose to do it, organizing what you learn is essential and will facilitate the learning process.

Other strategies:

- **Select.** Try to reduce information down to its main points and work from there.
- **Review.** It is one of the hardest things to get yourself to do, but if you review regularly, you will benefit. Reviewing involves reading over and processing the information for it to be of use.
- **Visualize.** Form an image in your mind of whatever it is that you want to remember. One way to do this is by trying to remember a picture of the page on which maps, charts, or diagrams appear, and then later trying to remember that picture of the page.



The Multiple Choice Exam Evaluation

In this type of evaluation, each question has 4 possible answers of which only one is correct. The other three answers are incorrect responses. These are usually referred to as '**distracters**'. The purpose of the distracters is to offer *reasonable but incorrect responses* to the question. This helps the "test company" to determine whether the candidate understands the material or not.

The Exam questions are based on

- Straight-forward Knowledge
- Application of Knowledge

Knowledge Questions are fairly simple and straight-forward. They ask a question and the candidate is expected to know the answer. For example:

What do the initials TICO stand for?
a) Transportation Industry Corporation Office b) Travel Institute Company of Ontario c) Travel Industry Council of Ontario d) Travel Industry Compensation of Ontario
The answer is (c)

Application Questions are based on general information. The candidate is expected to apply this information to a specific situation. For example: *A consumer is covered under the Compensation Fund only if he/she booked their travel services through an Ontario registered retail travel agency.* The application of this information into an exam question might look like:

With which company is a consumer required to make their travel booking in order to be covered by the Ontario Travel Compensation Fund?
a) Air Canada b) Gray Line Sightseeing Tours, Toronto c) Cruise Holidays of Toronto d) Seneca College School of Tourism, Toronto
The answer is (c)

Analysis:

This question demonstrates your application of knowing who is required to register with TICO and then asks you to select the correct response from a list of possible answers. Air Canada is an end supplier and is not required to register with TICO. Therefore a consumer who books directly with Air Canada would not be covered by the Fund. Gray Line Sightseeing Tours, which conducts one day tours, is exempt from registration with TICO. Seneca College does not sell travel, and therefore they would not be required to register with TICO. The correct answer is (c) Cruise Holidays of Toronto, as they would have a retail travel license—and someone purchasing travel services from Cruise Holidays would be covered by the Compensation Fund.

Case Study Questions

Application questions may also be presented as a **case study**. In a case study, a situation that a travel counsellor might experience will be presented. The counsellor needs to read the scenario presented, determine what question is being asked and then choose the correct response. For example:

Joe Smith decided to book his flight from Toronto to Havana, Cuba directly with Jetsgo. When Jetsgo declared bankruptcy while Joe was in Cuba, Joe paid for a one way ticket back home with another airline and then made a claim on the Compensation Fund. Joe's claim will be:

- a) accepted because Joe is an Ontario consumer and Jetsgo was a Canadian airline
- b) accepted because the Compensation Fund is responsible for bringing home Ontario consumers, no matter how they booked their travel services
- c) denied because Joe did not book through an Ontario registered retail travel agency
- d) denied because consumers are not allowed to make direct claims on the Fund. Only travel agents may claim

The answer is (c)

Analysis:

This question deals with the circumstances under which a consumer may claim on the Compensation Fund. The correct answer is (c) because Joe did not book through an Ontario registered travel agency. Therefore he is not covered by the Compensation Fund.

Question Composition

In general, questions are composed at three levels of difficulty.

Level One

- Straight recall
- No reference material (usually)
 - o Definitions
 - o Recall facts

Level Two

- Read and Interpret
- Usually with reference material

Level Three

- Higher level thinking
- Problem solve

Exam Test Questions will reflect a mix of these three levels of difficulty.



Tips for Correctly Answering Multiple Choice Exam Questions

In General:

- Answer what you know first and then return to what you were unsure about.
- Look for hints in the question to give you clues to the right answer.
- Budget your time, but don't fret. You will be given ample time to write the exam.
- Read the question carefully. Don't bother trying to figure out hidden meanings and tricks. They're usually not there.

Improve your odds, think critically:

Read the question and try to answer it *BEFORE* looking at the answers. Select the option that most closely matches your answer

New Registrants are required to post a security deposit with TICO in what amount?
a) b) c) d)
The answer is

Read the question. You know the answer is "\$10,000". Start by looking for "\$10,000" among the answers. By thinking of the answer *first*, you are less likely to be fooled by a wrong answer.

New Registrants are required to post a security deposit with TICO in what amount?
a) \$5,000 b) \$10,000 c) \$25,000 d) \$15,000
The answer is (b)

But make sure you look at all the answers before choosing:

Which province has legislation in place to protect consumers who purchase travel services?
a) Ontario b) Quebec c) British Columbia d) All of the above
The answer is (d)

Analysis:

Even though (a) and (b) and (c) are true, (d) is the most correct answer. It is important to read all the answers, and not just take the first correct answer you see. (Please note that on the TICO Exam, there are no "all of the above/none of the above"-type questions)

Use the tips below to help you select the correct answer

- **Read the entire question (“stem”) with each possible answer as a full sentence**
 - *This allows you to recognize the sound and flow of the question that a correct answer usually produces*
 - *This eliminates answers that do not agree grammatically with the question*
 - *This eliminates options – narrows your choices*
 - *Treat each option as a true-false question and choose the “most true”*
- **Eliminate options you know to be incorrect**

If the question asks you something you do not know, see if you can cross out any of the wrong answers before you guess:

TICO is an acronym for:
a) Traditional Institute of Counselling in Ontario
b) Travel Institute for Complete Order
c) Travel Industry Council of Ontario
d) Travel industry Council of Ottawa
The answer is (c)

You may not know anything about TICO. But you do know that a) and b) are incorrect. By crossing out (a) and (b) you only have to guess between (c) or (d). That means you have a 50/50 chance of getting it right, just by guessing.

- **If two options look similar, except for 1 or 2 words, usually one of these is the correct answer.** Compare them for differences, then refer to the stem to find your best answer
- **If two options have the same meaning, usually both are wrong.**
- **If the options cover a wide range of numerical values, a value at or near the middle is often a good guess.**
- **An option that is longer or more detailed than the other options is often the correct answer.**
- **The option "all of the above" is frequently correct.**

If you know two of three options seem correct, "all of the above" is a strong possibility
- **Read each option as if it were a true-false question.** Cross out all the options that are false.
- **If you cannot select the correct answer after several seconds of thought, cross out any options that you are sure are wrong, put a mark next to the question, and move on to the next question.**
- **Question options that are totally unfamiliar to you**

- **Question options that contain negative or absolute words.**
Try substituting a qualified term for the absolute one, like *frequently* for *always*; or *typical* for *every* to see if you can eliminate it
- **Echo options:**
If two options are opposite each other, chances are one of them is correct
- **Remember that you are looking for the best answer**, not only a correct one, and not one which must be true all of the time, in all cases, and without exception.

Do not keep changing your answer.



Sometimes the question will seem to have two right answers:

Choose the answer that seems best to you and move on to the next question. Do not keep changing your mind. Research shows that your first choice was probably the right one. Most people who change their answers will change from a correct one to a wrong one. Only change your answer if you are absolutely sure you made a mistake. (For example, if another question on the test reminds you of the correct answer.)

Unanswered Questions

- **There is no penalty for an incorrect answer.**
 - Do not leave a question blank.
 - Attempt an educated guess by using the process of elimination.
- **As you read the question consider key words and phrases.**
Note the following: including/excluding; per person / per couple; per day / per week

At the end of the exam, candidates will be prompted to return to any unanswered questions, so that they may attempt to answer them before submitting their test for marking.

Take as much time as you have. Never leave an exam early, unless you are sure you have answered every question correctly.

If you still cannot answer the question, then guess. You have a 25% chance of getting it right anyway; more if you can eliminate one or more of the wrong answers. Never leave a blank on a multiple-choice test.

By carefully eliminating answers you know must be wrong, you can increase your chances of guessing correctly.

Imagine that you only know the answers to half the questions on a multiple-choice exam. Normally, your score would be 50%. But if you can eliminate *one* wrong answer for each question you are unsure about, you could bring your score up to 67%. If you can eliminate *two* wrong answers for each question you are unsure about, you could raise your score to 75%.

Most Common Exam Errors



- Not reading the question properly
- Not understanding what is being asked
- Panicking over the very idea of writing an exam
- Looking for tricks, nuances and hidden meanings, when there are none on the exam
- Agonizing over a question, instead of moving on
- Studying things you don't need to study.

Most common error on the exam: MISREADING THE QUESTION

On Exam Day

- The exam will be proctored by an approved supervisor
- Please bring a piece of government-issued photo id
- The exam will start on time – if you are more than 15 minutes late – you will not be admitted and your fee is forfeit,
- You will not be given extra time for being late
- For the TICO exam, no outside materials may be brought into the exam (no dictionaries, electronic devices, Study Manual, scrap paper etc)

Pacing and Timing

- Completion time per question will vary greatly due to the complexity of some questions, the amount of reference material to be read and the candidate's expertise
- Don't worry that some questions take longer
- On the 90 minute TICO Travel Counsellor Exam, you should have answered roughly 25 of the 50 questions at the 45 minute mark (Note: For the TICO exam, a timer on your screen will indicate how much remaining time you have to complete the exam)

DON'T WATCH YOUR NEIGHBOUR



You have no idea what your neighbour knows or doesn't know. Maybe he/she has left a lot of questions blank or guessed. Only worry about yourself.

Don't panic when others start handing in their papers. There's no reward for being the first done

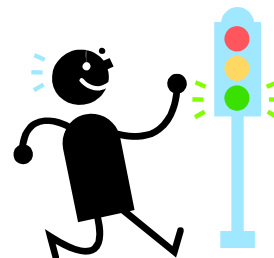
If you find yourself tensing and getting anxious during the test

- Relax; you are in control. Take slow, deep breaths
- Don't think about the fear
Pause: think about the next step and keep on task, step by step
- Use positive reinforcement for yourself: Acknowledge that you have done, and are doing, your best
- Expect *some* anxiety. It's a reminder that you want to do your best. Just keep it manageable.
- Realize that anxiety can be a "habit" and that it takes practice to use it as a tool to succeed

The Day Before the Exam

It's normal to be anxious – prepare your body as well as your mind

- Don't stay out late partying
- Fit, fed and rested
- Wear comfortable clothes / layer
- Bring **your POSITIVE ATTITUDE**



Test Anxiety

Most of us feel some anxiety when being tested. Up to a certain point, such anxiety can improve your performance, but too much anxiety can cause your performance to suffer.

Test Preparation to Reduce Anxiety:

- **Approach the exam with confidence.**
Use whatever strategies you can to personalize your success: visualization, logic, talking to your self, practice, team work, journaling, etc. View the exam as an opportunity to show how much you've studied and to receive a reward for the studying you've done
- **Be prepared!**
Learn your material thoroughly and organize what materials you will need for the test.
- **Use a checklist**
- **Allow yourself plenty of time**, especially to do things you need to do before the test and still get there a little early. Avoid thinking you just need to cram before the exam
- **Strive for a relaxed state of concentration.** Avoid speaking with any fellow candidates who have not prepared, who express negativity, or who will distract your preparation
- **Stressful foods** can include processed foods, artificial sweeteners, carbonated soft drinks, chocolate, eggs, fried foods, junk foods, pork, red meat, sugar, white flour products, chips and similar snack foods, foods containing preservatives or heavy spices. Avoid these where possible.
- **Take a small snack**, or some other nourishment to help take your mind off of your anxiety. Avoid high sugar content (candy) which may aggravate your condition. Although food items are not allowed in the test area – you may grab a quick snack or drink before entering the test room.



If you are anxious about your test, you may have reactions in any or all of the three areas listed below. Strategies to overcome or cope with these reactions are listed.

Physical

- e.g., “butterflies” in the stomach, sweating, shortness of breath, quickened pulse rate
- Take some deep breaths.
- Make sure your body is in good form (well fed, rested, etc.).

Feelings

- e.g., worry and fear
- Take some deep breaths.
- Make sure your body is in good form (well fed, rested, etc.).
- Keep your perspective. One test won't make or break you.
- Prepare well! Why make it hard on yourself?

Thoughts

- e.g., thoughts that have nothing to do with the test creeping into your mind
- Don't panic if you go blank. Allow yourself a few minutes to gather your thoughts.
- Don't look around at your colleagues. Focus on yourself and your own test.
- Don't get upset. Bring your attention back to the test

Sample Test Questions

- At the end of each Module there are 3 sample questions.
- At the back of the Study Manual there is a sample exam.
- Attempt to answer the questions provided and check your answers. If you selected quite a few incorrect answers then go back and review the module again. Wait a few days and then try the sample exam again. Your results should be better.
- If you are unsure of how an online, multiple choice exam looks, check out the 10 question sample online test of a general exam (meaning not related to TICO or any other topic – just random questions) on the Assessment Strategies Inc. (ASI), the professional testing organization website at: http://asitest.ca/Exam_Frame.asp

Module 1: TICO's Role in the Travel Industry

- 1) **TICO is responsible for administering the *Travel Industry Act, 2002*. To which Ministry does TICO report?**
- a) The Ministry of Consumer Affairs
 - b) The Ministry of Government Services
 - c) The Ministry of Tourism
 - d) The Ministry of Finance

Module 2: Ontario's Travel Industry Act

- 2) **Jane Smith works in a call centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia. They are owned by ABC Wholesaler, a registrant, which is located in Hamilton, Ontario. Calls are forwarded to the call centre from 7:00 pm to 7:00 am, when ABC Wholesalers is closed. Does Jane have to pass the TICO Exam?**
- a) Yes because Ontario consumers will call the line and Jane is answering questions on behalf of the registrant
 - b) No, because the call centre is located in Halifax and, as TICO is an Ontario organization, the rules don't apply.
 - c) Yes, because every travel counsellor in every province must pass the TICO exam
 - d) No, because after-hours emergency call centres are exempt from complying with the TICO Education Standards

Module 3: Registrant Obligations Before the Sale

- 3) **Before counselling or advising a client, a travel agent must do which of the following:**
- a) Inform the client of any counselling fee charges
 - b) Show the client a picture of the travel service being sold
 - c) Advise the client of the need for travel documentation (passport, visa)
 - d) Ask to make an imprint of the client's credit card.
- 4) **Joe Smith works at ABC Travel. John and Joan Clark book a tour package to a country where all the banks and restaurants are closed on Saturday, and shorts and T-shirts are not allowed in any of the temples or palaces. What are Joe's obligations in these matters?**
- a) None because in this case they specifically asked to travel to this country and therefore it can be assumed they did their research.
 - b) None. Aside from explaining the travel documentation needed for travel, Joe is not obligated to tell them anything else.
 - c) Joe is responsible for telling the clients about standards of services at the destination that may be different from Canada
 - d) Joe is responsible for telling the Clark's about the banks but not about matters that deal with eating in restaurants or how to dress when sightseeing. That is what guide books are for.

Module 4: Registrant Obligations after the sale but before the client travels

- 5) **When advertising a price, Ontario Regulation 26/05 demands that the following be shown:**
- a) Retail sales tax
 - b) Federal good and services tax
 - c) All taxes, fees, levies, service charges and surcharges
 - d) All taxes except retail sales tax and federal good and services tax

- 6) **If a registrant becomes aware that a different cruise ship is substituted in place of the cruise ship the client booked, they must do which of the following:**
- a) Advise the client about the name of the new ship and his/her cabin number
 - b) Give the customer a full refund
 - c) Rebook the client on the ship they wanted when that ship is available
 - d) Offer the customer the choice of a full refund or comparable alternate services acceptable to the customer
- 7) **Whose responsibility is it to check that a client's accommodation is as it was described at the time of purchase?**
- a) The client
 - b) The registrar
 - c) The registrant who acquired the right to sell the accommodation
 - d) The hotel supplying the accommodation
- 8) **ABC Travel orders their airline tickets from XYZ Holidays. Jane Smith purchased a return flight overseas from ABC Travel Agency. The agent at the airline ticket counter noted that her passport said Jane Smith, but the name on the e-ticket was Joan Smith. The airline agent refused to issue a boarding pass. Who is responsible for this situation?**
- a) The agent at the airline ticket counter, as she should not have been so picky about the name details, as it was obviously just a typo
 - b) Jane Smith, as she had plenty of opportunity to review the details of the e-ticket before she arrived at the airport
 - c) The travel agent at ABC Travel, as he should have ensured that all the information on the e-ticket was correct before sending it on to Jane.
 - d) XYZ Holidays, as they made the spelling mistake in the first place.

Module 5: Ontario Travel Industry Compensation Fund
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- 9) **Which of the following is covered by the Compensation Fund?**
- a) Counselling fees paid to a travel agent
 - b) The cost of alternate travel services
 - c) Taxes
 - d) Insurance premiums
- 10) **What is the filing deadline for making a claim on the Compensation Fund?**
- a) Within thirty days of the date of the registrant or end supplier airline or cruise line failure
 - b) Within sixty days of the date of the registrant or end supplier airline or cruise line failure
 - c) Within six months of the date of the registrant or end supplier airline or cruise line failure
 - d) Within one year of the date of the registrant or end supplier airline or cruise line failure