



Quiz:
What HR Certification is
Right for You?

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HR certification is one of the best decisions I made in my HR career. From the PHR to the SPHR to the SHRM-SCP, certifications helped me demonstrate my value to the business and show off what I knew.

They also helped me to earn more money. The data show that in virtually every case, a person with a certification will earn more than a person without one, regardless of the degree.

The questions below are short, but they require you to look deep within to decide what fits you. Take your time and think seriously about what this means for your career if you go in this direction. I've been helping people get certified for over 10 years, and now it's your turn to dive in.

You got this.

- Ben Eubanks

1) What kind of company do you want to work for?

- A) A large enterprise or multinational company
- B) A small or midsize firm
- C) I'm not really sure

2) What type of HR work do you want to do?

- A) I want to be a specialist and really focus in on one thing (recruiting, learning, talent, etc.)
- B) I want to be a generalist and have my hands in a lot of things
- C) I'm not really sure

3) What is your background/experience?

- A) I have worked mainly in larger organizations or would prefer to
- B) I have worked in midsize or small organizations or would prefer to
- C) I have never worked in HR

4) What is your education?

- A) I have a degree in HR or an advanced degree in HR/business
- B) I don't have a degree related to HR
- C) I don't have a degree

5) What is your end goal?

- A) I want to be a high level individual contributor or a leader in a large HR function
- B) I want to be a key HR leader in a smaller HR team where I influence results
- C) I am not sure

A's

If you selected mostly A's, you should lean towards a SHRM certification. SHRM certifications are geared toward people working in larger organizations that may already have some knowledge of compliance and HR legal matters, since the exam doesn't include any questions on those topics.

A SHRM exam instead focuses on becoming an internal consultant to the business, growing your career development options by following the competency model, and developing capabilities that make you a stronger business professional. The SHRM-SCP is better suited to someone who has more experience and is either in a leadership role or is preparing for one.

Key SHRM exam components: leadership and navigation, business acumen, ethical practice, relationship management, consultation, critical evaluation, global effectiveness, and communication. HR related: people, organization, and workplace.

B's

If you answered mostly B's, you should lean towards an HRCI certification (PHR, SPHR, etc.) HRCI certifications are better suited to those working in smaller organizations as they are often tasked with compliance. The HRCI exams dig deep into compliance across labor relations, talent acquisition, and more.

An HRCI exam helps to demonstrate your knowledge and experience in key areas, and the SPHR version is more heavily weighted to someone carrying leadership responsibilities of setting a strategy, aligning with the business, and measuring impact. If you're not in a leadership role the SPHR could still help, but many people pursue it either directly after or just before taking on a leadership position in HR.

HRCI exam components: business management, leadership and strategy, talent acquisition, learning and development, total rewards, and employee/labor relations.

C's

If you answered mostly C's, it's time to do some more self-exploration. :-) If you are in the first 5 or 10 years of your career, you may not yet know what exactly you want to do within the HR profession. That's fine! The first job (or jobs) help you to start thinking about what you want to do. Most importantly, they help to show you what you don't want to do. You learn that you really love training and development, but you don't like small companies because they don't have a lot of growth options. Maybe you like wearing all the hats in HR, and you can't really do that in a larger organization without becoming a VP of HR.

It's possible to get your feet wet in HR with some degree combinations and pursue a SHRM exam with less experience. HRCI is a bit more stringent with experience requirements, but their exams are very much HR focused while the SHRM version can feel a bit more like a general business competency exam with HR added in. You've got a great HR career path ahead of you--seize it!

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Want to learn more about how we help?

Our certification tools are designed to be used with another full study tool or system, filling in the gaps they miss with critical thinking skills, strategic insights, and more. This isn't just a dry textbook approach. It's by HR pros, for HR pros, in language that everyone can understand.

And it's priced where everyone can afford it.

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