AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES AND MANAGEMENT

Certified in Healthcare Quality Management

(CHQM)

Certification Handbook

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Please read this handbook carefully before applying for the certification examination.

About This Handbook

This handbook contains current information about the **Certified in Healthcare Quality Management (CHQM)** certification awarded by the American Institute for Medical Sciences and Management (AIMSM). It describes the credential, the eligibility and examination process, examination rules, scoring and results, certificate issuance and verification, and recertification. It is the candidate's responsibility to read and understand this handbook before applying for the examination. Keep it for reference until you receive your certificate. All previous versions are superseded.

About AIMSM

AIMSM awards specialized professional certifications across healthcare quality, patient safety, infection prevention, leadership, analytics, and management. Each credential is earned by passing an objective examination that measures the knowledge, skills, and abilities expected of competent professionals in the field.

Accreditation & Recognition

AIMSM certifications are developed and maintained under recognized certification practices. Examinations are built on a defined body of knowledge and reviewed periodically to remain current, practice-related, and representative of professional responsibilities in the field.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

AIMSM affords equal access to the certification process for all candidates without regard to age, gender, race, religion, national origin, disability, or any other protected status.

Certification Overview

Introduction to the CHQM Certification

The purpose of certification is to promote excellence and professionalism in the field. The CHQM program certifies individuals who demonstrate their knowledge and expertise by passing a written examination. The CHQM designation provides employers and the public with assurance that the certified individual possesses the necessary knowledge, skills, and competence to perform effectively.

The Certified in Healthcare Quality Management (CHQM) program is a comprehensive, practice-oriented certification designed to develop advanced capabilities in quality management, patient safety, and performance improvement (PI) across healthcare organizations.

Grounded in international standards and real-world applications, the program equips participants to lead quality initiatives, analyze complex healthcare data, and design resilient systems that consistently deliver safe, effective, patient-centered care.

Participants move beyond compliance into high-reliability performance, using structured frameworks, data-driven decision-making, and continuous improvement methodologies.

Objectives of Certification

1. Promote professional standards and improve the practice of the field.
2. Give special recognition to professionals who demonstrate an acquired body of knowledge and expertise through successful completion of the examination.
3. Identify an acceptable level of knowledge of the principles and practice of the field for employers, the public, and allied professionals.
4. Foster continuing competence and maintain professional standards through recertification.

Definition of the Professional

A holder of the Certified in Healthcare Quality Management (CHQM) credential is an individual who has passed the accredited AIMSM examination, demonstrating competent knowledge, skill, and understanding needed to interpret and apply the iom steeep quality dimensions in practice; design, monitor, and improve kpis and performance dashboards; conduct root cause analysis (rca) and fmea to prevent recurrence; apply lean, six sigma, pdca, and focus-pdca in healthcare settings.

Value of the Credential

- Outcome-driven: focus on measurable impact across safety, quality, efficiency, and experience.
- Practice-based: real cases, tools, and simulations rather than theory alone.
- Standards-aligned: integrates JCI concepts, IOM dimensions, and global benchmarks.
- Leadership-focused: prepares participants to lead PI projects and influence culture.
- Career-advancing: builds a strong pathway toward senior quality roles.

Who Should Pursue This Certification

- Quality & Patient Safety Specialists
- Healthcare Administrators & Department Heads
- Risk Management & Compliance Professionals
- Clinical Leaders (physicians, nurses, supervisors)
- Performance Improvement (PI) Teams

- Professionals preparing for roles in Healthcare Quality Management

Competencies Validated by the Credential

The examination confirms that the certified professional can:

- Interpret and apply the IOM STEEEP quality dimensions in practice.
- Design, monitor, and improve KPIs and performance dashboards.
- Conduct Root Cause Analysis (RCA) and FMEA to prevent recurrence.
- Apply Lean, Six Sigma, PDCA, and FOCUS-PDCA in healthcare settings.
- Use statistical methods to analyze variation and evaluate processes.
- Build and sustain quality governance frameworks.
- Lead cross-functional PI teams and manage change effectively.
- Maintain continuous readiness for accreditation (e.g., JCI).
- Measure and improve patient experience and satisfaction.

Eligibility Requirements

All aspiring professionals have complete access to the examination process. The examination is written to test the knowledge, skills, and abilities of practitioners who perform the tasks in the examination content outline. No prior AIMSM certification is required to apply. Relevant education or professional experience in the field is recommended to prepare adequately for the examination.

About the Examination

Format

The CHQM examination is an objective, multiple-choice examination delivered online through the AIMSM portal. Each question has four options (A–D) with a single best answer. The exact number of questions and the time limit are shown on the exam screen before you begin.

Question Types

Questions span three cognitive levels: **recall** (knowledge of specific facts and concepts), **application** (interpreting or applying information to a situation), and **analysis** (evaluating, problem-solving, or integrating information and judgment). Emphasis is placed on application and analysis.

Content Basis

The examination content is based on a defined body of knowledge (the examination content outline) and is reviewed periodically to ensure it remains current, practice-related, and representative of the responsibilities of professionals in the field.

Access Window

After completing payment you have **90 days** to schedule and take your examination. All fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable.

Applying for and Scheduling the Examination

1. Create an AIMSM portal account and verify your email address.
2. Open the certification page and select your delivery mode.
3. Complete payment (secure card checkout, or approved bank transfer for organizational groups) to unlock the exam.
4. Schedule and sit the proctored examination within your access window; you may reschedule within that window from your portal.

Rules for Online Testing

Taking the Examination

One question is presented at a time. Indicate your choice by selecting option A, B, C, or D. You may change your answer as many times as you wish within the time limit, and move forward or backward to review questions. Questions may be left unanswered and returned to later. A counter shows how many questions have been answered and how many remain; before final submission you confirm the number of unanswered questions. There is no penalty for guessing, so provide an answer for every question before ending the examination.

Identification & Environment

- A working webcam, microphone, and stable internet connection are required; the session is proctored and may be recorded by video and audio.
- Test in a quiet, private, well-lit room; no other person may be present.
- Be prepared to verify your identity before the examination begins.

Prohibited Items

- Mobile phones, smart watches, or any additional electronic device or monitor.
- Notes, papers, sticky notes, books, or reference material of any kind.

- Headphones or earbuds; food; and any other person in the room.

Prohibited Conduct

- Giving or receiving help, or communicating with anyone during the examination.
- Leaving the webcam view, using another device, or browsing other websites during the exam.
- Attempting to record, copy, or reproduce examination questions.
- Having someone else take the examination on your behalf.

Confidentiality & Copyright

All examination questions are the copyrighted property of AIMSM. Reproducing, recording, distributing, or displaying examination questions by any means — including posting to social media or other websites — is prohibited and may subject you to civil and criminal penalties and revocation of your credential.

Candidate Declaration

When you apply for the examination, you attest to the following:

- I have read and understand the information provided in this Candidate Handbook.
- I authorize AIMSM to make reasonable inquiries to verify my credentials and professional standing, and to use my de-identified data for statistical analysis.
- I understand the initial certification period and agree to meet current requirements to maintain active status thereafter.
- I acknowledge and abide by the code of ethics of my professional practice.
- I understand that false information, or prohibited behavior identified through proctor observation or statistical analysis, may result in denial, disqualification, or loss of the credential.
- I understand that examination questions are copyrighted and that I will not reproduce or distribute them.
- I understand that I may be recorded by video and audio during my examination.

Scoring & Results

Passing Standard

The minimum passing score is **60%**. The passing standard is criterion-referenced: it is established by a panel of subject-matter experts who judge the knowledge and skill required to pass. Your ability to pass depends on the knowledge and skill you display — not on the performance of other candidates.

Your Score Report

The examination is scored automatically. Immediately on submission your result — **Pass** or **Fail** — with a score percentage is shown on screen, and an official exam report (PDF) is available in your portal and emailed to you. AIMSM will not release individual score reports to employers or third parties without your written authorization.

Content-Area Feedback

Where provided, per-content-area percentages are offered only as general feedback on your performance and are not used to determine the pass/fail decision, which is based on your overall score. Areas with fewer questions should be interpreted with caution.

If You Do Not Pass

- If you do not pass, you are entitled to **one complimentary retake** — simply schedule a new exam date from your portal.
- After the complimentary retake, further attempts require payment of the standard examination fee.
- There is no limit on preparation time; you may schedule a retake when you are ready.

The Certificate & Use of Designation

- On passing, your certificate is issued **instantly** as a downloadable PDF in your portal and emailed to you.
- Each certificate carries a unique certificate number, a QR code, and a barcode, and is valid for **3 years**.
- Certified professionals are entitled to use the designation “CHQM” after their name on letterheads, business cards, and forms of address.

- Certification is granted to individuals only and may not be used to imply that an organization or firm is certified.

Verification of Certification Status

Anyone can confirm the current status of a certificate on the AIMSM public verification page by scanning the certificate's QR code or entering the certificate number. This allows employers and third parties to validate a credential quickly and securely.

Recertification (Renewal)

Certificates are valid for 3 years. To maintain active status, log in to your portal and, next to the certificate, upload evidence of continuing professional/training hours completed during the last 3 years, then pay the $100 renewal fee. On completion, validity is extended for a new 3-year cycle. Continuing education should relate to the areas covered in the current examination content outline.

Examination Content Outline (Body of Knowledge)

The examination assesses the following content areas. These define the knowledge base measured by the CHQM examination; they are not a training schedule.

Foundations of Healthcare Quality

- Concepts of quality and safety in healthcare
- IOM STEEEP dimensions (Safe, Timely, Effective, Efficient, Equitable, Patient-Centered)
- Comparative overview of global healthcare systems

Leadership & Team Dynamics in PI

- Leadership styles in healthcare quality
- Building high-performing teams
- Stages of team development and collaboration

Quality Governance & Strategic Planning

- Quality roles and responsibilities
- Quality councils, committees, and reporting structures
- Strategic planning and alignment with organizational goals
- Utilization management fundamentals

Performance Improvement (PI) Frameworks

- Overview of PI models and methodologies
- Identifying and prioritizing improvement opportunities
- Systems thinking and process mapping

Quality Tools & Techniques

- Fishbone (cause-and-effect) diagram
- Pareto analysis
- Run charts and control charts
- Scatter diagrams and process visualization

Risk Management & Root Cause Analysis

- RCA methodology (step-by-step)
- FMEA for proactive risk assessment
- Human error versus system failure

Data Analytics & Statistics for Quality

- Descriptive statistics (mean, SD, correlation, t-test)
- Understanding variation and process capability
- Data visualization for decision-making

Financial & Economic Aspects of Quality

- Cost of quality and cost of poor quality (COPQ)
- Budgeting for PI initiatives
- Value-based healthcare concepts

Implementation of Improvement Methods

- Lean principles and waste reduction
- Six Sigma fundamentals
- PDCA and FOCUS-PDCA cycles
- Sustaining improvements

Patient Safety & Accreditation

- International Patient Safety Goals (IPSG)
- Human Factors Engineering (HFE)
- Accreditation versus certification versus licensure
- Continuous readiness and compliance systems

Patient Experience & Satisfaction

- Measuring patient satisfaction
- Voice of the Customer (VOC)
- Service excellence in healthcare

Preparing for the Examination

AIMSM offers an official study guide (PDF) for this certification, aligned to the content outline above. Candidates are encouraged to combine the official material with reputable references and practical experience in the field. AIMSM does not endorse third parties that claim to possess live examination questions; such material is prohibited and its use may result in disqualification.

General Information — Fees (USD)

Item	Fee
Certification examination	$495
Official study material (PDF)	$195
AIMSM membership (1 year) — 20% off all fees	$150
Certificate renewal (per 3-year cycle)	$100

Members receive an automatic 20% discount on certifications, study materials, and renewals, shown at checkout. All examination fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable.

Candidate Responsibilities & Contact

Your Responsibilities

- Read and understand this handbook before applying.
- Provide accurate personal and professional information.
- Maintain the confidentiality and integrity of examination content.
- Comply with proctor instructions and AIMSM policies at all times.

Contact

For questions about enrollment, the examination, your certificate, or renewal, contact **certification@aimsm.org** (copied to info@aimsm.org). Please include your full name and your certificate or booking number where relevant.