

# SES QSTI Exam Success Guide

Over the last three years we have observed a large number of people taking the QSTI exams. We debriefed dozens of participants after the exams to determine what worked for them and what didn't. The following guidance is based upon we have learned.

**The major problem has been failure of the applicants to prepare**, that is, study for the exams. Yes, it is open book....Yes, many of the applicants have years of experience. The ones who study seem to do well, even thrive. Those who don't, seem to suffer, in spite of their experience.

**Ok, so how do you study?**

1. **Read through each of the methods the exam will cover.** Refer either to the instack or the SES website for the list of methods to be covered. Make sure you review those variations on the methods and the differences between them and the main method. Don't just scan the methods; read the methods completely. You may be surprised at what you find that you have forgotten or did not know, especially if you have not done that method for a while. Do not try to 'cram' the study in one session. Study over a period of days.

**Field experience alone is not going to get you through the exam.** You will need knowledge of the methods. This is going to help in more than one way....it is just impossible to look up 50 questions in an hour. You should know at least 60 to 70 percent of the answers right off the top of your head. That gives you time to complete the exam.

2. **Review the structure of the method** so you can look up that little detail asked for in a question. While you might not remember the detail exactly, so getting to it quickly is of critical importance.

3. **Study with others**....have someone read a line from the method leaving out something. This creates read through questions. Most of the questions are right from the methods.

5. **Make sure your CFRs are in good shape and current.**

6. Still nervous.....You may want to get some third party formal training as a refresher.

**Taking the exam....tips from the pros**

1. **Read each question carefully.** There are no "trick" questions. If you know the answer, mark the correct answer and move to the next question.

2. If you do not know the answer make a mark beside the question and move to the next question and repeat the process. This keeps you from losing valuable time by getting stuck on one question. When you get to the end of the exam, go back to the front and look up answers as you need to.

3. If you cannot find the answer, try to eliminate clearly wrong answers and pick the best looking one. Master test takers know that the first guess is more likely than not to be right.

4. **Make sure you have an answer for each question.** Be careful here, people have failed by missing a couple of pages of questions.

5. Lastly if there is time, review the questions and answers.

Here are a few example questions from general knowledge and Method 9. They are not on any of the QSTI exams but show you how exam questions are structured. Download Method 9 and give them a shot. Give yourself six minutes for this practice run.

1. As the contrast between the background and plume decreases the viewed plume opacity.

- A. Stays the same
- B. Increases
- D. Decreases

2. The defined accuracy of Method 9 is:

- A. + 7.5%
- B. + 5 %
- C. +/- 7.5%
- D. +/- 5 %
- E. A or B
- F. C or D

3. To certify a Method 9 Observer must have an absolute average error on his certification run of 50 readings of less than 7.6%

- A. True
- B. False

4. The equation of changes in volume where pressure is constant is

- A.  $P_1/P_2 = V_1/V_2$
- B.  $V_1/T_1 = V_2/T_2$
- C.  $P V = N R T$
- D.  $V_1/T_2 = V_2 / T_1$

5. In Method 9 you always observe the opacity of the plume at the densest part of the plume.

- A. True
- B. False