INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NEWS

TOO OLD FOR COLLEGE: NOT ANYMORE

SOFIA EMPEL, CRM

If you think you are too old to go back to school, think again.

In 2013, adult learners in the U.S. increased to approximately 6.8 million students. According to *Manifesto for College Leaders* written by Louis Soares, U.S. Department of Education data indicates that only 15% of current undergraduates enroll in college directly after high school.

The ARMA International Education Foundation (AIEF) recently released the International Directory of English Language Courses in Records and Information Management (RIM). This resource compiled by Greg Gardner identifies accredited universities and colleges that offer RIM programs and courses.

The Directory lists associate, bachelor, masters, and doctoral degree programs organized by country, as well as 22 online programs. Programs which are located in the United States and Canada are broken down into smaller state or province categories. Each listing includes links to the institution's website, location, email address, degree offered, brief description, and delivery method (in-residence or online).

Potential students at all levels can use the Directory as a starting point for finding English language higher education courses and programs geared to information professionals. AIEF describes this resource as a "living directory" that will be updated based on user feedback.

According to a recent Gallup and Lumina Foundation report, Americans overwhelmingly believe higher education helps candidates get good jobs and achieve financial security. In an interview with *The Daily Texan*, Bill Gates noted "Ninety-seven million U.S. jobs require high-level skills. Yet only 45 million Americans currently qualify for

these positions." Economist Tony Carnevale projects that by 2018, the U.S. will need at least 22 million more people with college degrees to meet the demand for educated workers.

If you are interested in furthering your RIM education, the Directory is a good place to start your search and can be found on the AIEF website at http://www.armaedfoundation.org/.

I'M A CRM CANDIDATE: WHAT NOW?

BY SOFIA EMPEL, CRM

After you've been accepted as a CRM candidate, you should plan a test-taking strategy for parts 1 to 5. This includes figuring out the order to take each part, how many parts to take at once, what to learn, and how to study.

In what order should I take the parts?

The first five parts of the CRM exam can be taken in any order. Part 6 can only be taken after the successful completion of parts 1 through 5. For example, some candidates choose the order by taking parts they feel are more difficult when they have fewer commitments and more time to study.

How many parts should I take at once?

You can take as many parts as you want in a given cycle. The number of exams in each cycle should depend on your goals, time constraints, financial considerations, and your strengths and weaknesses. You can take all five parts in one day, one or two parts per day in the same cycle, or spread the parts out over several cycles.

How do I determine what to learn?

Very few candidates are strong in all 5 areas covered by the exam. Therefore, a review of exam content and a self-assessment can help you figure out what you need to learn. The ICRM Handbook contains an annotated outline (section 2, page 9 through 65) of exam content organized by part.

Review each part and determine your strengths and weaknesses.

For example, after reviewing the outline you may feel not at all prepared for part 1, very prepared for parts 2 through 4, and somewhat prepared for part 5. Knowing this can help you allocate your time, effort, and resources accordingly.

How should I study?

Most candidates use a combination of self-guided study supplemented by other activities. Some examples of study resources are:

- *Preparing for the CRM Examination: A Handbook*

- CRM study packs, ARMA International bookstore

- ICRM workshops, chapter level

- CRM study groups, including conference call groups

- ICRM workshop, ARMA's annual conference

- *Information Management Journal* articles

- ICRM bibliography

Take the time to think through what's best for you. Regardless of your level of knowledge, developing a test-taking strategy that fits your goals, schedule, resources, and knowledge not only makes good sense, but also can help you achieve certification faster.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sofia Empel, CRM, MLIS, CDIA+ is president of InfoCentric Strategies, an information governance consultancy specializing in records and information management program development, training, technology implementation, and other analytical services.

Sofia is a past recipient of the AIEF's Mavis Eppes, FAI Excellence in Records Management Scholarship and participates in ICRM activities as a grader, mentor, and workshop instructor. Sofia can be reached at sofiaempel@infoCentricStrategies.com.