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What is Non-Independent Test Taking (NITT)

NITT occurs when a test taker receives assistance, either from a person or materials, that is not a standard and acceptable type of assistance available to all test takers. This assistance leads to answer responses provided by the test taker during the exam that are not necessarily their own.

Why is it important to understand NITT as a SAS® Certification testing candidate?

Prior to testing, all SAS certification candidates agree to the SAS Global Certification Candidate Agreement. It explicitly states:

The answers you provide on this examination are the result of your own legitimately acquired skills and knowledge.

NITT is a violation of the SAS Global Certification Candidate Agreement and is considered serious.

In NITT, the responses are not the original work of the test taker, thus rendering the test results meaningless. The purpose of certification testing is to assess the individual's knowledge, skills and abilities, and the validity of the results relies on the test being taken independently.

What types of activities are considered NITT?

(The below are examples, but the list is not intended to be exhaustive of all types of NITT.)

- Taking written or digital notes into a testing center or having them present and accessible during an online exam.
- Looking at another tester's exam.
- Communicating with another person by any means during your exam.
- Allowing another person to take your exam for you, in person, remotely or by any other means (commonly referred to as proxy testing).
- Gaining pre-knowledge of exam questions.

What is pre-knowledge of exam questions and why is it considered NITT?

The SAS Certification Candidate Agreement (§6.1) cites the following behavior as considered to be NITT:

Gaining pre-knowledge of exam questions or answers by any method.

Pre-knowledge refers to the use of study materials containing questions from the actual certification exam. Anyone who uses actual certification test questions (obtained by any means, intentional or not) to prepare for an exam, compromises their ability to test independently.

By reviewing actual test questions in advance of an exam, it prevents the test taker from responding naturally, based on independent thought.

Furthermore, the assistance obtained by the test taker in NITT situations is based on their unauthorized access to SAS' proprietary intellectual property. All SAS Professional Certification test questions are confidential and owned by SAS, making the violation not only a breach of policy but also a legal issue.

Despite the gravity of this intellectual property theft, there are websites that offer study guides and exam preparatory materials obtained through illegal means, including actual certification test questions. These materials are unauthorized, illegal and unreliable, yet they are widely shared on the internet through websites and blogs, as well as through personal interactions in discussion groups, etc.

How can I avoid using unauthorized materials to study for an exam?

First, you should carefully consider test questions provided as study material. Look for indicators that suggest the material may contain actual exam test questions.

Any one of the following may be an indicator that you should consider:

- Are many other IT (information technology) companies' certification exams included on the site?
- Are there various SAS tests, covering distinctly different product areas, being offered on the site?
- Are there claims the questions are exact test questions or the same as the certification exam?
- Does the website make any guarantees about passing the exam?
- Are the materials advertised with terms like *brain dumps* or *dumps*?
- Are actual educational study materials provided as a study guide?
- Have your peers indicated that the materials are exact test questions?
- What comments do others make about the test (in person or on the web)?

The only study materials (which contain questions) that can be considered authorized by SAS are those linked to at sas.com/certification. If you are unsure about the legitimacy of study materials, you can email the SAS Global Certification Program at certification@sas.com.

How does SAS detect NITT?

Per the SAS Candidate Agreement (§6.2):

SAS may conduct a statistical analysis of exam results at any time to monitor for abnormal scores, indications of inappropriate activity, or that a score does not represent a valid measurement of a candidate's actual skills and knowledge.

SAS (and many other certification programs) has developed methods to detect NITT. The forensic data analysis considers a variety of factors of the testing result and is based on extensive academic and professional research.

All flagged exam results are meticulously reviewed prior to a revocation decision being made. Based on this thorough review, SAS can make the NITT decision with certainty.

What happens when NITT is detected?

Per the SAS Candidate Agreement (§6.3)

If SAS determines in its sole discretion that exam results are abnormal, inappropriate actions or activities have occurred, or that you have undertaken or participated in any action that compromises the integrity and/or confidentiality of an exam or the SAS Global Certification Program whether intentional or unintentional, remedial action may be taken including, but not limited to, invalidation of exam scores, revocation of credentials, a temporary or permanent ban from participating in the program, or prosecution under applicable civil and criminal law.

If SAS conducts a review and determines that the test taker has violated the candidate agreement, a notification will be sent to the candidate.

If you have taken a SAS certification exam, and it is determined you did NOT test independently:

- Your exam result (regardless of pass or fail) will be invalidated.
- Your certification (if issued) will be revoked, resulting in the loss of your certified status.
- You will not be provided a refund.
- You will be suspended from the program for a period or banned indefinitely from testing and will not be allowed to take any SAS test.
- During a suspension or ban period, all certificates, logos, marks or badges will be restricted from access or use (even certifications unrelated to the specific NITT event).

Can I appeal an NITT violation?

Per the Candidate Agreement (§6.5)

If a candidate receives written notice of a violation and any actions taken, the candidate will have thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the notice to submit a written request for appeal to the SAS Global Certification Program at certification@sas.com. The appeal should include a statement describing the grounds for the appeal and any evidence the candidate wishes to be taken into consideration. SAS may use third party(ies), including its testing delivery provider or proctor, to manage its activities, including the appeals process, on SAS' behalf.

If an appeal is made, it will be reviewed. Per the SAS Global Certification Candidate Agreement, candidates are required to “fully and truthfully cooperate with any investigation into testing irregularities.”

When an appeal is made, to prevent candidates from bypassing our statistical indicators, SAS does not provide specific details about the methods used to determine an anomalous result.

