**Tips to Prepare for Certification**

The first thing to know is that the Certified Web Analyst® (CWA) is a certification of what you know. [Eligibility to test](https://www.digitalanalyticsassociation.org/application_information#eligibility) is determined by minimum levels of both education and years of work experience.

If you have the relevant experience, you are more than half way there already. You may be used to studying for tests – open the books, go over the topics, do exercises and make sure you have thoroughly absorbed the knowledge. However, the CWA certification will not require you to memorize learned materials.  You can learn about the relevant concepts from books or blogs but there’s more to the analytic certification.  The reason this exam requires relevant experience in the field is that experience transforms the conceptual knowledge into an analytical mindset.  It’s less about knowing all the metric definitions and more about knowing which metric is appropriate at answering which question.  These are things you do day in and day out on the job.  You don’t really need to study these types of things.

There are still things you can do to better your odds of passing the test.

Review the test [areas of knowledge outline](http://www.digitalanalyticsassociation.org/?page=knowledge_required).  This will help you identify your areas of strength and weakness.  For example, some find out their experience is more focused on web analytics and optimization and they are weaker on search/campaign management.  Knowing the areas to polish, you may choose to do a bit of reading online on the topics and chat with your resident search pro at a high level about what kind of things he/she does on a daily basis, how he/she does them and why.  This may allow a level of comfort toward additional areas.

Answer the [sample questions](http://www.digitalanalyticsassociation.org/?page=cert_exam_res).  This will give you a sense of how ready you are.  You may wish to print the 2 documents out and cover the answer key with some post-it-notes before answering.  Learn the % you get correct on the multiple choice section and on the business case section.  If you get stuck on a lot of these questions, you may wish to talk to your peers to figure out why that happened.  This could be a good opportunity to clarify some concepts or re-tune some reasoning processes.

The above 2 steps will likely take less than 10 hours.  If you find too many topics are unfamiliar this would be a sign that more extensive preparation may be needed or that you may benefit from taking a course.

What more should you know about the CWA exam?

Since we are primarily testing for analytical capability rather than knowledge recall, experience solving many different web analytics business problems is the best predictor of success on the exam.\*

Use good test taking skills.  Most of us have been out of school for a while so although these are not new concepts, it may be helpful to review some of them here:

It may be helpful to read the questions before reading the business case so when you do read the business case you already know what kind of relevant information you are looking for.  There will be more information presented in the case than is needed to answer the question and to identify which information matters, is critical.

Be aware of the time limit.  The business case section may take longer than you expect, so you may wish to quickly scan through all of the sections first to have a mental map of all the questions.  You may estimate time blocks so you can skip past some question you are unsure about and will have enough time to come back and finalize those questions.  You also may want time to add explanations to the questions that you might want to dispute in case your score ends up missing the passing mark by only a few questions. Make a note of the question number and your concern so you can place any concerns the end of the exam.

Also, keep in mind that the passing grade is 60% so you know you are not expected to be an expert on every topic.  And even if you don’t end up passing on the first try you have a diagnostic report of your test results to review and time to prepare for a retake.  As a practitioner of web analytics you likely already have what it takes to take on this test.