Earning the Certified Business Analysis Professional Certification

In this chapter you will
- Meet the International Institute of Business Analysis
- Learn how to earn the Certified Business Analysis Professional Certification
- Qualify for the Certified Business Analysis Professional Certification examination
- Complete the exam application and audit
- Review the certification examination details

Welcome to the book that'll help you earn the Certified Business Analysis Professional (CBAP) certification. I know your time is precious and you don't want a book that drones on like a manual for a coffeemaker. This book is direct, to the point, and covers all of the exam objectives you must know to pass the CBAP examination. Here you'll find a concise explanation of the exam details, loads of practice questions and explanations, a detailed glossary, and a nifty CD with two practice exams and some training videos.

Let's get something straight from the start. I want you to pass your exam on the first attempt. You're studying to pass the exam, not just take it. The International Institute of Business Analysis (IIBA) is the governing body for the CBAP examination, so you'll have to play by their rules. This means that you'll have to use their nomenclature, terms, and processes when you study for and talk about the CBAP examination. Sure, sure, out there in your world you might have totally different terminology for how you do your business analysis work, but on the exam you'll have to use the terms IIBA provides. Sorry.

In this first chapter, I'm laying the groundwork for the examination. You'll learn all about the IIBA and how you can join (get out your checkbook). I'll cover the qualifiers for the examination, how you can verify your business analysis experience, and how to apply for the exam. In this first chapter, I'm also going to define how to pass an exam and how you'll abide by the IIBA rules. Ready to get to work? Good—let's go!

Introducing the International Institute of Business Analysis

The IIBA is a nonprofit entity headquartered in Toronto, Canada. IIBA aims to develop and propel the business analysis role and career. Its mission: "to develop and maintain standards for the practice of business analysis and for the certification of its practitioners." The IIBA is the governing body for the CBAP examination. They also approve and brand learning centers as Endorsed Education Providers, which are training companies that offer business analysis courses and seminars.

Relatively speaking, the IIBA is a young organization; they were created in October 2003 by 28 founding members. In 2006 they became an official not-for-profit entity. Each quarter since their inception their membership has grown, and their certification is growing in popularity and demand. As of this writing, the IIBA has over 100 chapters around the world; you can check their web site to find a chapter near you: www.theiiba .org.

The book that the CBAP examination is largely based on is *A Guide to the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge* (BABOK). The BABOK supports and defines the business analyst role, processes, and generally accepted practices of the community. In no way does this business analysis book capture every action, every nuance, of a business analysis, but rather it defines a framework that most business analysts would work within. The exam you're going to pass is based on the BABOK.

Exploring the IIBA

In earlier years the IIBA certification process didn't run as smoothly as it does now. In September 2008 the IIBA moved from a paper-based, proctored examination to a computer-based examination. Prior to this move, CBAP candidates would all convene in a central locale, usually at a related tradeshow, and take the examination on paper in unison. It was like taking the SATs in high school. You'd then have to wait a few weeks to get the results of your exam mailed to you. Oh the agony!

The computer-based examination is much more convenient. The exam allows CBAP candidates to register and pay for the examination online. The exam is offered through Castle Worldwide. I'll talk about the complete application process in a moment, but the computer-based exam is big news for the folks at the IIBA. It's a huge jump not only in convenience, but also in validity, to offer electronic testing and grading.

While the IIBA does not provide training as part of their services, they do endorse training providers who provide business analysis seminars. Their program, called the Endorsed Education Provider (EEP) program, requires the training provider to submit their course details for review by the IIBA. Each business analysis course that is to be certified by IIBA goes through a review process that determines the course's accuracy, how the course meshes with the BABOK, and that the course is taught by someone who's an expert in the course's topic.

The review process is completed by three business analysis professionals who are not affiliated in any way with the training center that's seeking approval by the IIBA. Of

course the education providers have some other rules—you can see these online if you're really interested—but they mainly state that the EEPs will be good and will use quality instructors. EEPs do pay an annual fee and a per-course fee to the IIBA for the honor of being included in their EEP program.

Member chapters are another thing the IIBA organizes and approves. The IIBA chapters provide great avenues for networking, education, and chicken dinners on a regular basis. Typically chapter meetings meet monthly and have a guest speaker (often by guys who have written great books on business analysis—maybe I'll see you at your chapter event). In addition to monthly meetings, most IIBA chapters provide ongoing education, seminars, and group discounts for area workshops. You can find and join a local business analysis chapter through the IIBA web site.

As of right now, and according to IIBA, you first have to be a member of the IIBA to join a local chapter. Local chapters may also charge membership dues and a small fee for monthly meeting expenses. Check with your local chapter on what their costs and benefits are if you're curious. For point of reference, my chapter charges me $20 annually and $10 for every monthly chapter meeting I attend. Your chapter may be more or less costly, so plan accordingly.

Like any nonprofit, the IIBA is looking for volunteers to help support the organization. If you're looking to immerse yourself in the business analysis community, volunteering is a great way to meet new people, help establish direction for the IIBA, and get the inside scoop on how the IIBA works. Volunteer positions are posted, once again, through the IIBA web site and on many of the chapter web sites. You can expect to do work like field phone calls, review newsletters, help with chapter meetings and programs, and serve on different member committees.

Joining the IIBA

Now that you know the major details on the IIBA, I bet you'd like to join the organization, right? You can join the IIBA, as of this writing, for $95 per year. Once your payment has been received and processed, you're in the club. Your membership will expire one year from the last day of the month you joined. So I suppose if you want to stretch your dollars, join at the top of the month, and get a few extra days until you renew your membership. Yes, of course there's a renewal fee. Like the initial membership fee, this one is $95 for an additional year.

You can save a few dollars if your organization is a sponsor of the IIBA. IIBA Sponsors are organizations that provide services and products to the business analysis community, provide business analysis for other entities, or are just very generous with their checkbooks. As an IIBA Sponsor your company can use the IIBA logo, gain discounts on IIBA services, post your logo and company info on the IIBA web site, and post job openings on the IIBA career web site. As always, check with the IIBA, but here's a quick listing of the sponsor types your company may subscribe to:

- Premier Sponsor: $11,000 per year
- Industry Sponsor: $7,000 per year

- Corporate Sponsor: $5,000 per year
- Associate Sponsor: $3,000 per year

NOTE To be an Associate Sponsor, the least expensive choice, your organization must employ 25 or fewer people.

If you'd like your company to become an IIBA Sponsor, you can complete an application on the IIBA web site. You can also check the IIBA Sponsors page to determine if your organization is currently a sponsor so you can take advantage of the membership fee discounts. You'll need to use your company sponsor identification number when you complete the membership form to receive the discount.

You can get some good benefits by joining the IIBA. Of course you'll receive networking opportunities at IIBA events, gain access to secure areas of the IIBA web site, and belong to a community of business analysts from around the world. You'll also get some additional benefits:

- Save $125 on your CBAP examination fee. (Remember, it only costs $95 to join the IIBA, so heck, join and actually save $30. That's a movie and four packs of licorice.)
- Surf all of the job postings on the IIBA career web site.
- Access the BABOK online.
- Access the IIBA forums, social and business networking groups, and other web-based services from our pals at the IIBA.

Once your application has been approved (read, your credit card is approved), you're in the club. IIBA will automatically e-mail you your receipt, your next renewal date, and most importantly, your membership identification number. You'll use this number to get your exam fee discount. You'll also periodically receive e-mails and newsletters from the IIBA—unless you opt out of their mailings.

Defining the Business Analyst Role

If you're prepping for this certification, you probably have a good idea of what a business analyst role is. You know what your responsibilities are in your organization and what's expected of you when you work with customers, project managers, subject matter experts, and other stakeholders. The IIBA, in their free Certified Business Analysis Professional Handbook, which you can download from their web site (www.theiiba. org), clearly defines the business analyst role. Their definition characterizes a business analyst role, the duties of a business analyst, and the confines in which business analysts are to operate. A business analyst role is responsible for several things within an organization:

- Identifies the business needs of the organization's clients and stakeholders
- Helps determine solutions to business problems
- Completes requirements development
- Completes requirements management
- Serves as a communications hub among business clients, project stakeholders, and the defined solutions team

As a business analyst your work is all about requirements. According to the IIBA, you work with customers, stakeholders, and clients to elicit, analyze, validate, and document business, organizational, and operational standards. The CBAP examination focuses on these activities, processes, and the outcomes of business analysis processes. In this book I'll cover all of the business analysis processes in detail, and you'll complete practice exams, create flashcards, and learn the IIBA approach to business analysis.

NOTE It's important, I believe, to fully understand the IIBA definition of the role you serve, as this is what you'll be tested on through their exam. Knowing their interpretation of what you do will increase your odds of passing their exam.

Your goal is to pass the CBAP examination—my goal is to help get you there. To get there, and this should be evident by now, you need to learn the IIBA terms, definitions, and approaches. Your organization may have a slightly different approach than what's defined by the IIBA—and that's fine—just not for your CBAP exam. For example, some things you currently and typically do in your project as a business analyst may not synch with what's expected on the CBAP exam. On the exam, when you perform business analysis duties:

- You don't predetermine solutions; solutions are driven by the requirements of the business.
- You are not performing financial analysis.
- You are not managing projects.
- You are performing quality assurance.
- You are completing organizational development.
- You are testing software and solutions.
- You are training, coaching, and mentoring your colleagues.
- You are documenting the development of business solutions.

This is not to say that you don't perform these roles as part of your employment. It is to say, however, that the role of business analyst is distinctly different from these duties.

Qualifying for the CBAP Certification

Not everyone can take the CBAP examination—you have to qualify for the exam and certification. There's been some discontent over this approach to certification, but I think overall it's good for you and me, the qualified business analysts. If it were easy to become a CBAP, then everyone would do it. If everyone did it, then the value of the certification would decline as the market became saturated with certified business analysts. We've seen that happen already with certain information technology certifications, and the IIBA has learned from others' mistakes. Figure 1-1 is the complete chart to earning your CBAP. I'll walk through the entire process in detail now.

The process to become a CBAP isn't really that difficult. You'll need to evaluate if you think you qualify for the examination, complete an application, and cough up some bucks for the application and for the examination. I'll walk you through the whole process in one moment, but first know this: the IIBA can do whatever they want with their certification. While all of the information I'm about to share with you is accurate as of this writing, you should always cruise over to the IIBA web site and confirm the requirements, fees, and exam process. I'd hate for you to rely solely on my information here, as accurate as I am today, only to learn the fine people at the IIBA have changed some of their rules for the exam.
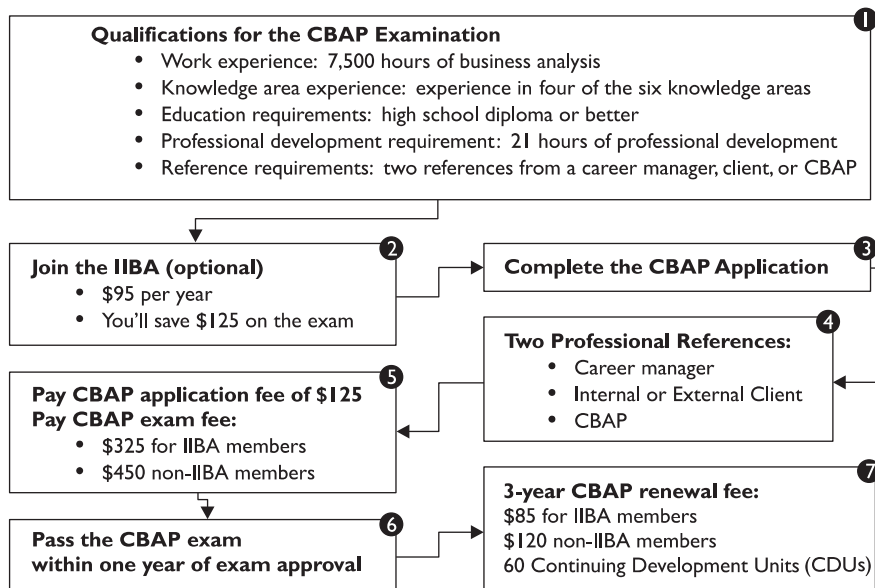

Qualifications for the CBAP Examination ❶
- Work experience: 7,500 hours of business analysis
- Knowledge area experience: experience in four of the six knowledge areas
- Education requirements: high school diploma or better
- Professional development requirement: 21 hours of professional development
- Reference requirements: two references from a career manager, client, or CBAP

Join the IIBA (optional) ❷
- $95 per year
- You'll save $125 on the exam

Complete the CBAP Application ❸

Two Professional References: ❹
- Career manager
- Internal or External Client
- CBAP

Pay CBAP application fee of $125 ❺
Pay CBAP exam fee:
- $325 for IIBA members
- $450 non-IIBA members

3-year CBAP renewal fee: ❼
$85 for IIBA members
$120 non-IIBA members
60 Continuing Development Units (CDUs)

Pass the CBAP exam ❻
within one year of exam approval

Figure 1-1   The many steps to earning your CBAP

Identifying the Typical CBAP Candidate

To qualify for the CBAP exam and certification, you'll need to have five years of business analysis experience within the last ten years. That's right—five years as a business analyst. The IIBA requires each CBAP candidate to prove and document their five years of experience as a business analyst in the context of the BABOK. When you complete your CBAP exam application, you're strongly encouraged to use the terminology and approaches discussed in the BABOK. You'll need to map your business analysis experience to the BABOK and to define how the work you've completed meshes with the expected duties of a business analyst from the IIBA point of view.

To give you an idea, here's a quick listing of what you'll find in the BABOK and where your five years of business analysis experience need to map to:

- Managing enterprise analysis and strategic planning
- Planning and managing requirements
- Eliciting requirements
- Completing requirements analysis and documentation
- Communicating requirements
- Performing solution assessment and validation

You'll also need to show how you've served as a business analyst within your organization. You can demonstrate this through your approaches to communication, leadership, and problem solving. In addition, you'll need to show how your organizational business knowledge allowed you to operate and improve as a business analyst within each entity you've served in.

If you believe that you do indeed qualify for the CBAP exam and are ready to move forward, you can begin your application at the International Institute of Business Analysis web site: www.theiiba.org. From here you can download the application form and begin documenting your experience, knowledge area skills, education, professional development, and professional references. The exam application, as of this writing, is paper based; you'll have to complete the application, print it, and then mail the application to:

Certification Manager
250 Consumers Road, #301
Toronto, Ontario
M2J 4V6
Canada

Again, I'll stress that this information is correct as of this writing, but you should always check with the IIBA web site. I have a hunch that the application process will move to a web-based form like other professional certification vendors use. I sure hope

it does. I'll assume, for now, that you do have to mail your application to the IIBA, so you should send it registered mail or through an international delivery service so you have receipt of your application delivery. I'll now walk you through IIBA's current CBAP application process.

Starting the CBAP Application

Once you've downloaded the CBAP application from the IIBA, your first step is to enter all of your personal information. You'll need the following bits of information for the application:

- **Name**   I encourage you to apply under your name as it appears on your driver's license or passport, so your ID and applicant names match. Testing centers are sticklers for this.

- **E-mail address**   Use an e-mail address that you check frequently; this is how the IIBA will contact you.

- **Primary and secondary mailing address**   This is where your certificate and other IIBA correspondence will be sent.

- **Phone numbers**   So the IIBA can contact you if they need to.

- **Job title**   While most CBAPs have the title of business analyst, the CBAP application also acknowledges that CBAPs may also be project managers, business systems analysts, or mysterious "others." If you choose "other," you'll have to elaborate on your business analyst activities and title.

- **IIBA membership number**   If you've recently joined, you have an option on the application to indicate you've recently applied for membership.

- **Current employer**   The IIBA assumes you're currently employed and doesn't provide an option if your situation is otherwise. You can, however, indicate that you're self-employed if that's the case.

- Number of employees in your current organization.

- Type of business your organization does.

The next section of the CBAP application is your education history. The requirement for the CBAP is that the applicant has a high school diploma, its equivalent, or higher education. CBAP does not reduce the required number of hours of work experience in exchange for higher education. All applicants, college grad or not, will need five years of business analysis experience to qualify for the exam. You will need to provide the highest level of education achieved and what you studied, as well as when and where you graduated.

Documenting Your Work Experience

This is the bread and butter of the CBAP application. The next section of the CBAP application is where you'll find a page titled "Work Experience." It's on this page that you'll need to document your 7,500 hours of work experience to equate to the mini-

mum five years of business analysis experience. This can get tedious, as every project and organization you completed the work for needs to be identified and documented. This means if you've worked on 20 different projects to equate to 7,500 hours of business analysis experience, you'll have 20 different work experience sheets in your application. (And no, you can't use your resume instead of completing the forms.) The one caveat to that rule is that if you've worked on several small projects within one year, you should combine all of the smaller projects as one project toward your CBAP application.

When you begin completing each form, you should document your experience from the most recent projects first and the older projects last. While you don't need to document more than 7,500 hours of business analysis experience, I encourage you to document slightly more than that if possible. The reason is that IIBA can filter out business analysis experience or activities that they determine don't count toward the certification. If they remove projects from your application, you'll likely fall below the 7,500-hour requirement. Just remember, though, if you document more than the 7,500 hours of experience, the oldest project hours counted cannot be more than ten years from when you submit your CBAP application.

When I teach my CBAP boot camps, someone always asks immediately what does and what does not count toward experience as a business analyst. I bet you're wondering the same thing. The kind folks at the IIBA provide some examples of accepted and unaccepted types of activities. In addition, you can pretty much rely on the business analysis activities documented in the BABOK as a guideline for your application.

Here are some immediate examples of activities that do count toward your work experience. They're based on the examples in the CBAP Handbook, so don't use these verbatim. In fact, you should provide even more detailed examples of the work you did, because using this verbiage may raise eyebrows and red flags, and may cause your application to be scrutinized even more than usual. While these are provided as samples of things that do qualify, keep in mind this is in no way a comprehensive listing of all the different business analysis activities you could reference. Some approved business analysis activities:

- Requirements gathering
- Writing requirements documentation
- Determining project scope and objectives
- Identifying and documenting requirements risks
- Reporting on requirements progress
- Leading requirements gathering workshops
- Analyzing and documenting functional, nonfunctional, and user requirements
- Performing walkthrough activities and sign-offs of the requirements package
- Ensuring that requirements are met for the client, project stakeholder, or customer
- Reviewing testing strategy, plans, and cases

- Supporting QA and testing teams
- Determining corrective actions for defects, the priority of required fixes, and establishing workarounds for the defects

In contrast, here are some project activities that do not count toward your business analysis experience hours. Notice how many of these activities are similar to the business analysis activities that are approved. The determining factor is that the approved items focus on requirements, while these unapproved activities often focus on the project and project management duties. Basically any activity that is not clearly defined in the BABOK is not an approved business analysis activity. Use caution on your exam application; these activities do *not* count toward your business analysis experience:

- Selling requirements tools and software
- Managing projects
- Creating the project plan
- Creating the project charter
- Leading presentations on the progress of the project
- Creating and executing test scripts, reporting on testing status, and creating testing plans and strategies
- Programming
- Identifying project risks
- Providing status reports
- Tracking and managing defects
- Teaching business analysis training courses

Now that you know what you can and can't include on your exam application, you're ready to document the project details. Here's what you'll have to include for each project that you worked on as part of your 7,500 hours of business analysis experience:

- Start and end date of the project
- Project description or objective
- Your role(s) on the project
- Number of people, if any, that reported to you on the project
- Project name
- Project contact's name, e-mail, and your relationship to the project contact
- Organization name, contact information, and web site
- Total hours you worked on the project, minus the number of hours you completed non–business analysis activities, will equate to the number of hours you may count toward the 7,500 business analysis work experience

hours. The application makes you calculate the total number of hours you've completed on each project and the number of hours of business analysis work you've done on each project.

Don't let that last bullet point throw you for a loop. You could, for example, have worked for 2,500 hours as part of a project team but have spent 1,200 hours doing project work that didn't qualify as business analysis work. If that were the case, you'd only get to count 1,300 hours as business analysis experience.

NOTE The IIBA is a stickler when it comes to what does and does not count as work experience. Project management work is not the same as business analysis work.

Finally, for each project that you complete a work experience form for, you'll need to define the business analysis tasks you completed in each knowledge area and what deliverables those business analysis tasks created. Resist the urge to copy your activities and the deliverables you created as a business analyst. The IIBA warns that repetitive text will be rejected; they want you to clearly and accurately define what you did and what your activities created. Table 1-1 shows a mockup of the table that you'll have to complete for each referenced project on the CBAP application. The IIBA provides the experience area; you provide the business analysis tasks and deliverables.

Obviously, completing this CBAP application work experience section is going to be a tedious and time-consuming activity. Don't rush through the work. If you don't complete the work experience pages accurately, IIBA can reject your application, dock your experience hours, or both. If you accidentally include a business analysis task in the wrong knowledge area, the IIBA can even strike that experience from your application. Take your time and confirm the accuracy of your application before you send it off to Toronto.

For a more detailed explanation, watch the How to Earn the CBAP video now.

Experience Area	BA Tasks	BA Deliverables
Enterprise Analysis		
Requirements Planning and Management		
Requirements Elicitation		
Requirements Analysis and Documentation		
Requirements Communication		
Solution Assessment and Validation		

Table 1-1   Detailing Business Analysis Activities and Deliverables for Each Project

Documenting Your BA Knowledge Areas

CBAPs are smart people; you know this. To be a CBAP, however, you have to be a little bit more than just smart—you also have to prove your experience in the knowledge areas of a business analysis. You'll already do some of this when you document your thousands of hours of work experience, but you'll need to do just a bit more in this section of the CBAP exam application.

You'll be asked to rate your area of expertise in four of these six business analysis areas:

- Enterprise Analysis
- Requirements Planning and Management
- Requirements Elicitation
- Requirements Analysis and Documentation
- Requirements Communication
- Solution Assessment and Validation

You get to choose which four of the six business analysis areas you're experienced in—and the IIBA asks that you complete only four of the six. You'll use the following ranking for each of the four knowledge areas you want to demonstrate your strengths in:

- **Never** You never do that task in your business analysis role.
- **Seldom** You rarely perform the task.
- **Sometimes** You have performed the task five to ten times in the last ten years.
- **Frequently** You have completed the task 11 or more times in the last ten years.

For each of the knowledge areas, you'll be quizzed on the application on a given business analysis task, and you'll use the preceding scale to grade yourself on your experience in the given knowledge area activity. Next I'll walk you through the questions you'll have to answer in each knowledge area on your exam application.

Completing the Enterprise Analysis Knowledge Area Review

Enterprise analysis, according to the BABOK, comprises the activities that a business analyst uses to define and identify business opportunities for your organization. Think like an entrepreneur when you answer these questions. As a business analyst completing enterprise analysis, you'll also be helping an organization define its business architecture framework. The third part of enterprise analysis you do as a business analyst is to determine the best investment of an organization's funds when it comes to new business and technical systems. If one of the four knowledge areas you choose is enterprise analysis, you'll have to grade your strengths and weaknesses on the following questions:

- How often do you create or maintain the business architecture?
- How often do you conduct feasibility studies?

- How often do you determine project scope?
- How often do you prepare the business case?
- How often do you prepare the initial risk assessment?
- How often do you prepare the decision package?
- How often do you select and prioritize projects?
- How often do you launch a new project?
- How often do you manage projects for value?
- How often do you track project benefits?
- What other task(s) in this knowledge area do you perform that are not listed?

While you do have to answer every question, you don't have to have frequent experiences in all of these business analysis tasks to qualify for the exam. Just be honest in your personal assessment of how often you complete the work.

Completing the Requirements Planning and Management Application Area

When you complete requirements planning and management tasks, you are working with project and organizational stakeholders to determine what resources are needed for requirements gathering within your organization enterprise environmental factors, policies, and internal procedures. A business analyst completing these tasks is determining the key roles, managing the requirements scope, and serving as a communicator of the requirements gathering process. If you choose this knowledge area to be one of the four knowledge areas for your CBAP application, you'll have to answer the following questions:

- How often do you identify and document team roles and responsibilities?
- How often do you identify and consult stakeholders?
- How often do you define the BA work division strategy and allocate work?
- How often do you identify requirements risk and develop the risk management approach?
- How often do you identify key planning impact areas (for example, SDLC, life cycle methodology, risk, expectations, stakeholder needs and location, project type, and standards)?
- How often do you adjust the requirements management plan as required?
- How often do you select requirements activities (for example, elicitation, analysis and documentation, communication, and implementation)?
- How often do you estimate requirements activities (for example, identify milestones, work units, level of effort, duration, assumptions, and risks)?

- How often do you manage requirements scope (for example, baseline, structure, impacts, change management, and approval process)?
- How often do you measure and report on requirements activity (for example, determining, collecting, and reporting project and product metrics)?
- How often do you manage requirements change?
- What other task(s) in this knowledge area do you perform that are not listed?

Rely on your experience and interaction with project managers, business analysts, risk specialists, and subject matter experts as you define the requirements for the project deliverables. You are not required to have advanced experiences with every task, but you should show an accurate reflection of the work you've completed as a business analyst.

Completing the Requirements Elicitation Application Area

To define the requirements for an organization or project, you need to gather the requirements from the people who are doing the requiring. You need to talk with the clients, customers, and stakeholders to determine what opportunity, problem, or condition they want to act upon. You're eliciting, drawing out, their requirements through your communications, reviews, studies, and follow-up interviews with stakeholders. You'll also complete activities such as resolving conflicts, documenting the requirements, observing problems and studies, and facilitating workshops. If you consider requirements elicitation to be one of your four required knowledge areas to exhibit your business analysis expertise, you'll be faced with just two questions:

- How often do you elicit requirements?
- What other task(s) in this knowledge area do you perform that are not listed?

This is deceptively simple. Business analysts spend loads of time eliciting requirements, communicating with stakeholders and customers, and elaborating on the requirements to drill down to causal factors, true opportunities, constraints, and assumptions.

Completing the Requirements Analysis and Documentation Application Area

Once the requirements have been initially defined, the business analyst will analyze, frame, and document the requirements in order to find an appropriate solution to create the deliverables and benefits of the project or opportunity. The goal is not necessarily to define a project solution, but rather to frame the requirements so that the project team may complete the work to satisfy the identified requirements. If you consider requirements analysis and documentation to be one of your four required knowledge areas, you'll rank your experience according to the following questions:

- How often do you structure requirements packages?
- How often do you create business domain models?

- How often do you analyze user requirements?
- How often do you analyze functional requirements?
- How often do you analyze the quality of service requirements?
- How often do you determine assumptions and constraints?
- How often do you determine requirements attributes?
- How often do you document requirements?
- How often do you validate requirements?
- How often do you verify requirements?
- What other task(s) in this knowledge area do you perform that are not listed?

When you're answering these questions, reflect on your communications and elicitations with users, management, clients, lines of business within your organization, and any other stakeholders who were affected by the requirements you've gathered. You'll also need to think about the requirements verification processes and how you worked with the project managers, project team members, and clients to validate the requirements as they've been defined.

Completing the Requirements Communication Application Area

Communication is one of the most valuable skills a business analyst must have. Requirements communication happens through the business analysis activities, is done in tandem with requirements gathering and analysis, and is at the heart of requirements documentation. If you consider requirements communication to be one of your required four knowledge areas, you'll have to answer the following questions based on your experience:

- How often do you create a requirements communication plan?
- How often do you manage requirements conflicts?
- How often do you determine an appropriate requirements format?
- How often do you create a requirements package?
- How often do you conduct a requirements presentation?
- How often do you conduct a formal requirements review?
- How often do you obtain requirements sign-off?
- What other task(s) in this knowledge area do you perform that are not listed?

When you answer these questions on your CBAP exam application, you'll need to reflect on your experience with stakeholders to bring them to a common understanding of the project requirements. You'll also rely on your experience to get the stakeholders to approve the requirements of the project deliverable regardless of their technical, business, or cultural background.

Completing the Solution Assessment and Validation Application Area

The overall mission of requirements gathering is to define the requirements and then to find an appropriate solution. This knowledge area works with the project manager, technology team, project team, and stakeholders to analyze the detailed design documents. You'll define the logical phases of the project, the technical design, and the quality assurance activities. If you consider the requirements solution assessment and validation as one of your four required knowledge areas, you'll have to rank your experience by answering the following questions:

- How often do you develop alternative solutions?
- How often do you evaluate technology options?
- How often do you facilitate the selection of a solution?
- How often do you ensure the usability of the solution?
- How often do you support the quality assurance process?
- How often do you support the implementation of the solution?
- How often do you communicate the solution impacts?
- How often do you complete a post-implementation review and assessment?
- What other task(s) in this knowledge area do you perform that are not listed?

When you complete this section of the CBAP exam application, you'll want to think about the technical solutions you've identified requirements for, and how you and the technical team actually created the most appropriate solution. This knowledge area also includes change management activities, quality assurance, test plans, and mitigation of risk by implanting tests on the identified solution.

Confirming Your Professional Development

Part of the qualification for the CBAP is that you've completed professional development activities. Specifically, this means you've attended business analysis training courses. You must complete 21 hours of education that's directly related to business analysis within the last four years. The seminars you attend must be completed by the date you sign and submit your application. What this means is that you can't promise to complete a business analysis seminar later and submit your application anyway. All 21 hours of the training must be done before the application submission.

Some policies are attached to the type of training you may use to complete this CBAP requirement:

- All courses that you complete through an IIBA Endorsed Education Provider (EEP) are guaranteed to qualify. On your exam application, you'll have an opportunity to indicate that you completed the training through an EEP.

- You are not required only to complete the professional development through an EEP. You can complete the business analysis training through any training entity, but the IIBA will need to review the course outline.

- In-house business analysis seminars that you attend may qualify if the IIBA approves the seminar outline, which you'll submit at the time of your application. The IIBA asks that you provide a web address where the outline can be found.

- Underlying business analysis fundamentals courses may qualify. Chapter 8 in the BABOK lists all of the underlying CBAP skills. Here are some popular examples of underlying business analysis fundamentals training that could qualify:
  - Business analysis skills such as analysis techniques, issue management, communication, and usability.
  - Business knowledge on products, processes, markets, and internal systems.
  - Meeting management, presentation skills, and decision making skills.
  - Leadership seminars on coaching, goal setting, motivation, and interviewing may also qualify.

- Project management training does not qualify. The IIBA will openly (and it seems proudly) reject any project management training that you may reference as business analysis training. Save your ink and yourself a headache and don't try it.

- Programming and programming languages seminars do not count as business analysis training. These are really about project execution rather than requirements gathering.

- Testing courses do not qualify as business analysis courses unless they have been approved by the IIBA. Proceed with caution.

The required 21 hours of professional development can be achieved through one course or through multiple courses. The application is a bit vague on whether you're allowed to count a portion of a seminar toward business analysis professional development or if the whole course must focus on business analysis. My understanding, as of this writing, is that the IIBA wants the entire course to qualify for the business analysis professional development; you aren't allowed to cherry-pick outlines and build an aggregate of training solutions. It's all or nothing for each course you reference.

Providing Professional References for the CBAP Application

One requirement that has stumped a few CBAP candidates is the requirement to provide two professional references. This requirement has posed some problems for CBAP candidates who have moved from job to job, lost touch with older contacts, and may be in new positions as they apply for the CBAP. The IIBA stance is that you don't have to provide all of your professional references—only two references.

You must have known the references for at least six months. Your references cannot be project managers unless the project manager is your career manager. Your career manager is the person who completes your annual performance review. You may be tempted to add additional references to your application, but only two references will be reviewed by the IIBA. The references you select can be

- Career manager
- Client (internal or external)
- Certified Business Analysis Professional (IIBA-certified business analysis)

You get to choose which folks will be talking about you, so this really shouldn't be too difficult unless no one likes you much. In which case you should probably end your quest as a business analyst and become a lawyer. (I'm kidding, of course.) The people you choose as your professional references should have an idea of your role as a business analyst, the work you've completed in this role, and your strengths and weaknesses.

The two professional references must complete the official CBAP Candidate Reference Form, which you can download from the IIBA web site. Once your references have the document and have supplied their usual contact information, they'll have to answer the following questions about you:

- What is your relationship to the candidate? Career manager, client, or CBAP?
- For how long have you known the candidate?
- Candidate title?
- The candidate duties?
- What has been your professional relationship with the candidate?
- Please describe how effectively the candidate performs his/her business analysis duties.
- How would you describe the candidate's business analysis skills?
- How would you rate the candidate's skills from 1 to 5, where 1 is very low and 5 is very high?
  - Communications
  - Leadership
  - Problem solving
  - Business knowledge
  - IT knowledge
  - Enterprise analysis
  - Requirements planning and management
  - Requirements elicitation
  - Requirements documentation and analysis

- Requirements communication
- Solution assessment and validation
- What are the candidate's strengths?
- What are the candidate's weaknesses?
- Does the candidate display a high degree of personal integrity (that is, act honorably, honestly, justly, responsibly, and legally)? If no, please explain.
- Do you endorse this candidate as a business analysis professional?

Once your professional reference has answered all of these questions, she is to sign the document, seal the document in an envelope, and then sign her name across the seal of the envelope. No peeking! It's your responsibility to ensure that your professional reference completes the form and submits it to the IIBA.

Completing the CBAP Exam Application

The last chunk of the CBAP application is pretty easy and straightforward compared with the rest of the application. You must submit your $125 exam application fee with your exam. If you don't include your payment, your exam application won't be reviewed. You've got to pay the fee before IIBA will review your exam and report your status. Take note, the $125 application fee is nonrefundable. If your application for the CBAP exam is declined, you won't be receiving a refund.

Here's another quirky thing about the current exam application and the IIBA web site: where and how you'll take the exam. Traditionally, the CBAP exam was a paper-based exam; approved applicants would all rendezvous at a given time and locale and would complete the proctored exam in unison. You'd hear from the IIBA when your exam was graded a few weeks after you completed the test. Now, the exam is computer based and is hosted through Castle Worldwide.

The quirky thing I mentioned is that while the computer-based test is the preferred method, the CBAP exam application still asks where you'd like to complete the exam and on what date. The IIBA advises that applicants should reference their list of compuer-based testing sites from their web site and should reference the city and computer-based test on the location section of the exam application. In other words, if you want to take the exam in Phoenix, you'd answer as Phoenix, Arizona—CBT. (Wow. What could possibly be easier?) You can also enter a time range of when you anticipate taking the exam, for example, June–July 2010. Once your exam application is approved, the IIBA will send you a confirmation letter with instructions on how to schedule your computer-based test through a web site.

The exam fee is $325 for IIBA memebers ($450 for nonmemebers)—this is in addition to the $125 application fee. You can, if you'd like to, submit your payment of $325 with your exam application. If you'd rather hang onto your dollars and stretch out the application process even longer, you can elect to pay for the exam once your application has been approved. Once your application is approved, you must pay the $325 exam fee at least 60 days prior to the exam date you indicated.

The final portion of the CBAP exam application is your signature and consent to the IIBA. You're consenting to allow the IIBA to collect and store your exam application information, your application reference forms, and your professional development information, and you're giving consent to the IIBA contacting your references. You're also allowed to choose if the IIBA can display your CBAP status on their web site once you've successfully completed the examination.

The final portion of the application also confirms your agreement to not divulge any information about the CBAP exam questions. You're not allowed to share any part of the exam with anyone orally, in writing, electronically, or by extrasensory perception. Everything that happens on the exam stays on the exam.

If you need to cancel and reschedule your examination once you've scheduled it, you must follow some rules. First, if you're still taking the paper-based test rather than the computer-based test, you need to notify the IIBA through their e-mail (certification@theiiba.org) as soon as possible. If your need to reschedule happens within 30 days of the exam's date, you'll be charged an administrative fee of $55. You'll have to pay the fee to the IIBA before you're allowed to reschedule your exam. So try to plan your emergencies well in advance of the exam date.

If you don't live in a cave, then you're probably taking the computer-based test. If you need to cancel and reschedule a computer-based test, you'll be charged $50 by Castle Worldwide regardless of when you cancel, reschedule, or move your exam date. It's Castle Worldwide's deal, not the IIBA's. If that steams you, then this will make your day: if you cancel within five business days of your scheduled exam start time, you lose all the examination fees that you paid. (That's right; it's like your favorite blackjack dealer pulling a 21 when you're sitting with a 19. If you don't play blackjack, just trust me that it's no fun when this happens.)

And just to be clear, if you cancel the computer-based test outside of five days of your test date but refuse to pay the $50 cancellation fee, Castle Worldwide considers your test cancelled. Their logic, I'm guessing, is that if you want to cancel the test but don't want to pay the $50 cancellation fee, then you've not really cancelled anything at all. Your test time will expire, and you'll forfeit your exam fee. Lesson to be learned? If you must cancel, do it outside of five days, and cough up the cancellation fee.

Reviewing the Exam Details

Once you've submitted your application, it's a waiting game as your pals at the IIBA review and approve your application. I'm a proponent of taking action and preparing to pass an exam rather than just taking it. If you believe that you qualify for the CBAP examination, I encourage you to take action by completing the CBAP exam application and beginning to prepare to pass the exam. By completing your application now, at the assumed onset of your studying, you'll let the IIBA review your application while you're studying to pass the exam. I think it's a mistake to study, then complete the application, and then take the exam at some distant, foggy point in the future. Work smart, not hard. Submit your application, and then begin studying for the exam.

The CBAP exam is a 150-question, multiple-choice exam. Each question will present four possible choices, and you'll have to choose the best answer for each question even if you don't like any of the choices presented. Do not leave a question unanswered; blank answers are wrong answers. You'll see a mixture of comprehension questions, where you'll need to recall the definition of terms, and situational analysis questions. The situational questions are scenario questions where you'll be placed in a scenario and have to choose the best course of action.

The CBAP exam is based on the business analysis knowledge areas where you have experience as a business analyst. Table 1-2 shows what you'll be tested on and the percentage of questions for each knowledge area.

NOTE The IIBA doesn't report exactly how many questions you'll have in each category on each exam, so the number of questions reported here is still approximate.

Tailor your study sessions and efforts to the knowledge areas with the largest percentage of questions. Loads of resources besides this book can help you pass the CBAP examination. Of course I believe that this book is your best resource for the exam, but I'm biased. The IIBA recommends some other CBAP-related materials to help you study; I've sprinkled in a few of my own recommendations at the end of the list.

- **Business Analysis Body of Knowledge**   Download and review the BABOK. No offense to the IIBA, but the BABOK is like the printed version of sleeping pills. It's a good effort, but I've made good efforts to slam dunk a basketball, and that still hasn't happened. Still, your exam is based on the BABOK, and it won't hurt you to read it (well, not too much).

Knowledge Area	Percentage of Questions	Approximate Number of Questions
Enterprise Analysis	22%	33 questions
Requirements Planning and Management	22.7%	34–35 questions
Requirements Elicitation	18.7%	27–28 questions
Requirements Analysis and Documentation	20.7%	30–31 questions
Requirements Communication	10.7%	15–16 questions
Solution Assessment and Validation	5.2%	7–8 questions

Table 1-2   Estimated CBAP Exam Questions by Knowledge Area

- **IIBA web site**   I like the IIBA web site. It's organized, easy to navigate, and loaded with good information. In particular you should visit their frequently asked questions section for more information about the exam.

- **Training**   You must have 21 hours of professional development for your exam, so you might as well take a class or two to help you earn the CBAP. And now a blatant ad: I teach CBAP seminars to organizations around the world. If you'd like more information, come by my web site, www.projectseminars.com. Of course other wonderful training centers offer business analysis courses.

- **Business analysis mentor**   This is one of the best methods to learn business analysis skills. Emulating a business analysis professional that you admire can help you develop your own business analysis skills.

- **Join a study group**   This is a suggestion from the IIBA, not me. For some people it works, for others like me, it's a waste of time. All of the study groups I've ever joined were chitchat and commiseration times that didn't help me much to learn the material. If you're going to launch a study group, create some rules and boundaries, and establish a goal for the group—like passing the exam.

- **IIBA chapters**   Absolutely! You will meet some wonderful people in your local IIBA chapters who are happy to help you learn, advance your career, and be your friend. I can't praise the IIBA chapters and their leaders enough. I strongly encourage you to contact your local chapter and get involved. Many IIBA chapters offer training, mentoring, and guidance for the exam. Once you pass your exam, return the favor and help others do the same.

- **Flashcards**   Oh, boy. If you've ever taken one of my Boot Camp Seminars, you know how much I love flashcards. Repetition is the mother of learning, and flashcards are an instant way to learn the activities, processes, and business analysis tasks you'll have to know to understand the exam questions. Buy a big stack of index cards, and write the term on one side and the definition on the other. Don't buy preprinted flashcards; creating your own flashcards is part of the learning process.

- **Practice exams**   Every chapter of this book has 20 questions focusing on the content of the chapter. Answer these questions immediately after reading the chapter content, and continue to answer them until you can answer every question correctly. The CD in the back of this book has two 150-question simulation exams. I recommend you take the first exam once you've read this whole book. Continue taking the first exam until you can answer every question correctly. Then repeat the process with the second exam. Forget the movies for Friday night—you've practice exams to complete.

- **Create an incentive**   We all like rewards for a job well done. Create an incentive for you to pass the CBAP exam. Make it something that'll excite you and that's worth your time, attention, and energy. Promise yourself that you'll take a vacation day, buy some new music, or have a fancy dinner. Give yourself something to work toward that's special to you and that will keep you moving toward passing that exam.

Creating a Study Strategy

Here at the onset of your CBAP study efforts you should create a strategy of how and when you'll study. Use your business analysis skills to determine what the requirements are to pass the exam (I've done that in this chapter), but also use your skills to determine what the requirements are for *you* to pass the exam. You'll want to do some honest assessment of the knowledge areas, activities, and deliverables the IIBA expects you to know in order to pass the exam.

In each chapter I'll provide *key terms.* These key terms are excellent topics for your flashcards. As you move through the material and you see a term or concept that you're not familiar with, add it to your flashcards. Research the terms to fully understand their meaning and purpose. It's vital for you to understand the IIBA business analysis terms, as you'll need to apply them on the exam when you're answering situational questions.

As part of your study strategy, I also encourage you to study every day between now and when you're scheduled to pass your CBAP exam. You don't need hours and hours of daily time committed to the effort, but an hour a day would be ideal. In this hour create an approach that works best for you to retain the information. That approach might be reading this book, answering chapter exam questions, and then reviewing your flashcards. For others it might be answering the chapter exam questions first to pay attention to the information in each chapter. Mix up your approach, keep things fresh, and repeat until you've learned the material. Commitment to a daily—including weekends—study session will increase your exam success odds immensely.

Finally, complete your application as soon as possible and schedule your exam. Procrastination is one of your worst enemies when it comes to earning any certification. By scheduling your exam now, you're creating a deadline to pass the exam and get back to your life. Do it. I know you don't want to drag this process out any longer than necessary, and the only way to get through this studying and testing is to do the studying and testing.

All of your studying efforts lead to your goal: to pass the CBAP examination on your first attempt. You're studying to pass the CBAP exam, not just to take the test. When your big day arrives, and it'll be here sooner than you think, get to the testing center at least 30 minutes before your exam is scheduled to start. Make certain you're well rested, that you know where the testing center is, and have a positive mind-set about passing your exam. In addition, you'll need the following for your exam:

- Your exam scheduling confirmation notice.
- Current identification with signature (valid driver's license, passport, or ID card).
- While the testing center should provide you with two pencils and some scrap paper, take some with you just in case.

Once you're seated in the testing center and your exam begins, you'll have 3.5 hours to complete the examination. No talking, noise, or tomfoolery is allowed in the testing center. You are allowed to take breaks, but you cannot pause the computer-based test once you've started it. Use your time wisely; you should be able to answer approximately 50 questions per hour, and you receive no extra credit for finishing the exam early.

Once you've completed the exam, your work will be graded immediately, and you'll know if you passed or not. Once you've passed the exam, you are a CBAP and can start bragging to everyone as such. You'll receive the CBAP logo via e-mail for your personal letterhead, and you'll receive some guidelines from the IIBA on how you're allowed to use the logo. The IIBA will also mail you a certificate suitable for framing, and a wallet card that is good for, um, keeping in your wallet.

Should a friend of yours—not you—fail the CBAP exam and want to retake it, they'll need to pay a $250 retake fee. Your friend will have to complete the official CBAP Exam Re-write Form available on the IIBA web site. The person taking the exam again can do so once within a year of when they originally submitted their CBAP exam application. The retake exam, however, must be at least three months after the failed attempt at the CBAP. If the individual, or anyone for that matter, doesn't pass the exam within the designated one-year period, he'll have to reapply and pay the full application and exam fees.

Maintaining the IIBA CBAP Certification

Once you've earned the CBAP certification, you'll have to complete some work to maintain the certification. This means you'll need to complete at least 60 Continuing Development Units (CDUs) within each three-year Continuing Certification Requirements (CCR) program. Each CBAP's three-year CCR cycle starts on the day they pass the CBAP exam and ends exactly three years later. You'll report your CDUs through the IIBA web site using the CBAP Certification Renewal Form.

In addition to completing the CDUs, you'll also have to pay a renewal fee; it's $85 for IIBA members and $120 for non-IIBA members. Your CBAP status is considered active as long as you've completed the CDUs and paid your renewal fees. If a CBAP fails to accrue the 60 CDUs, his CBAP status is changed to suspended, and his name is stripped from the online CBAP database. Once the suspended CBAP has earned the required 60 CDUs and paid the renewal fees, his status is changed back to active. If a suspended CBAP does not rectify the CDU problem and revert to active status within one year of being suspended, his CBAP designation is removed. If he wants to be a CBAP, the individual will have to start the entire certification process from scratch. No fun.

You can earn your 60 CDUs from six different categories. While no minimum amount is required from any category, there is a maximum number of CDUs you're allowed from any category. You can only count your participation in these activities if they are started after you've earned your CBAP. Here are details on the six CDU activities you can complete:

- **Formal academic education**   You can earn up to 40 CDUs per CCR cycle in formal academic education. The business analysis class must be offered for degree credit, and you must receive a passing grade in the class.

- **Professional development**   You can earn up to 30 CDUs per CCR cycle through professional development. You complete these seminars from EEPs or through training vendors who have their business analysis seminars approved by the IIBA. IIBA chapters can also grant CDUs for their meetings.

- **Professional activities**   You can earn up to 30 CDUs per CCR cycle through your professional activities. This category is reserved for activities that contribute to the business analysis knowledge area. Here are the breakdown and CDU values for this activity:

  - Author or coauthor a business analysis article that's published in a refereed journal to earn up to 30 CDUs per article.

  - Author or coauthor a business analysis article that's published in a non-refereed journal to earn up to 15 CDUs per article.

  - Serve as a speaker on business analysis at a conference, workshop, formal course, or through an IIBA chapter meeting to earn 10 CDUs per activity.

  - Moderate a discussion panel on business analysis, and you'll earn 5 CDUs.

  - Author or coauthor a business analysis textbook, and you'll earn 30 CDUs.

  - Develop content for a formal business analysis learning program, and you'll receive 15 CDUs.

- **Self-directed learning**   You can earn up to 15 CDUs per CCR cycle by spending at least 15 hours being coached, studying business analysis books, Internet resources, or other instructional sources. What a deal!

- **Volunteer**   You can earn up to 30 CDUs by volunteering through an IIBA chapter, in the community, or with charitable groups.

- **Professional experience**   You can earn up to 21 CDUs just by doing your job. It's based on the number of hours you spend completing business analysis duties over a three-year time frame. Here's the scoop:

  - Complete 1,000 to 1,999 hours of business analysis activities within a three-year time frame and you'll receive 7 CDUs.

  - Complete 2,000 to 2,999 hours of business analysis activities, and you'll receive 14 CDUs. If you've done 1,999 hours, find one more hour of work.

  - Complete 3,000 or more hours performing business analysis work within a three-year time frame, and you'll receive the maximum of 21 CDUs. You should also get a vacation.

If you complete more than 60 CDUs within your three-year certification cycle, you can apply up to 20 CDUs to your next certification cycle. The catch is that only CDUs earned in the last year of your certification cycle can be transferred to the next certification cycle.

Adhering to the CBAP Code of Ethical Conduct and Professional Standards

As part of your CBAP application and CBAP certification renewal process, you must sign and agree to abide by the CBAP Code of Ethical Conduct and Professional Standards. As with all IIBA documents, you can download your own free version from the IIBA web site. There's nothing shocking or unreasonable in this code of ethics, but if you're found guilty of violating the code, your CBAP status could be revoked.

The first section of the CBAP Code of Ethical Conduct and Professional Standards centers on your responsibility to the business analysis profession. You agree to comply with all of the IIBA rules and policies when it comes to applying to become a CBAP and maintaining your CBAP status. You'll report violations of the code to IIBA when there's clear and factual evidence of such violations, and you'll work with IIBA should there be an investigation into the breach of the code. You're also to communicate with clients and stakeholders whenever there's a circumstance that is a conflict of interest or a situation that could be construed as a conflict of interest or impropriety.

In your business analysis role, you agree that you will provide truthful advertisements and reflections of qualifications, experience, and skills. This also means that you won't accept assignments that you aren't fully competent and qualified to complete. The CBAP Code of Ethical Conduct and Professional Standards expects that you'll comply with laws, regulations, and standards that apply to your employment and services. That seems fair.

As a CBAP, you're also to advance the profession of business analysis. Specifically, according to the CBAP Code of Ethical Conduct and Professional Standards you are to

- Respect the intellectual work of others.
- Share the CBAP Code of Ethical Conduct and Professional Standards with other business analysts, clients, customers, and distant relatives.
- Advance the best qualified business analysis professionals. In particular, you are to advance certified business analysts who adhere to this code and to avoid those business analysts who don't adhere to this code or whose reputation might negatively impact the business analysis profession.
- Not tarnish other business analysts' reputations through malice or indifference.
- Maintain your education, competence, skills, and abilities through continuing education.
- Give generously of your time by training and mentoring others.

The CBAP Code of Ethical Conduct and Professional Standards also includes a section on your responsibilities to the public. As a CBAP, you're to be honest in your advertising, sales, cost and time estimates, and qualifications. You shouldn't take on assignments that you know you're unqualified to complete, but you should work to completely satisfy the scope of the services you've promised the customer to complete.

Don't deceive the customers for personal gain, but act honestly and in good faith that the public is doing the same.

Business analysts may become privy to information that is sensitive in nature. As a CBAP, and frankly as a good person, you are not to divulge that information. Keep private things private. Imagine a contract-based business analyst and how they may work for multiple entities. It'd be unethical for the business analyst to share information and insight into systems and operations of one client with other clients. This doesn't mean that the business analyst can't use what she's learned and apply it to different clients, but it does mean she shouldn't blab about specific operations, systems, and projects to all of her clients.

The CBAP is to use some common sense. No, the CBAP Code of Ethical Conduct and Professional Standards doesn't actually say that, but that's pretty much what you're expected to do as a CBAP. You can't take bribes, compromise projects, or make poor decisions for stakeholders that may just help your personal gain. Avoid conflicts of interest, impropriety, and even the appearance of both. Be honest, act in your customer's best interest, and do what's best for your client.

Chapter Summary

You've covered a lot of ground in this chapter. You've learned about the IIBA and their certification program, joining the IIBA, and finding a local business analysis chapter to join. The fee to join the IIBA is $95 per year of membership, and your local chapter may have a small annual fee to join. Your local chapter will likely also charge a small fee for each meeting—usually to offset room rental, dinner, and chapter events. I think it's a good idea to join the IIBA, not only for the networking and web resources, but you'll also save $125 on your exam fee—that alone is worth the membership.

The exam fee is $325, and the exam application fee is $125; these costs are in addition to the $95 to join the IIBA. Basically, to join the IIBA, apply for the exam, and to then take the test, you'll spend $420—which includes your $125 discount for joining the IIBA. So unless you're really opposed to joining organizations, you should join the IIBA and save some cash.

If you've decided that you're on your way to becoming a CBAP, you should complete your exam application as soon as possible. Completing the CBAP exam application is a time-consuming process, as you've got to document your education, professional development, and 7,500 hours of business analysis activity over the past ten years. You'll also need two professional references who can vouch for you as being a stellar business analyst.

As a CBAP applicant, you'll have to document how much time you've spent in at least four of the six business analysis knowledge areas, what experience you've had with a myriad of business analysis activities, and show what deliverables you've created from each activity. Once you've completed and signed the application, and submitted the form to the IIBA along with your payment and professional references, you'll be notified by the IIBA when they approve your application.

When your application is approved, you can schedule your computer-based test, the last hurdle to the CBAP. The test has 150 questions, and you'll have three and a half hours to complete the exam at a Castle Worldwide testing center. When you're done answering all of the questions or your time expires, whichever happens first, your exam is graded and your score is displayed on the computer screen. If you pass, you're certified. Congrats!

After your party, you'll then need to begin working toward maintaining your CBAP credential. You'll do this by earning the required 60 Continuing Development Units (CDUs) within your three-year certification cycle. You can earn these 60 units in a bunch of different ways including self-study and just working as a business analyst. In addition to your 60 CDUs, there's a CBAP renewal fee of $85 for IIBA members and $120 for CBAPs who aren't members of the IIBA.

While this chapter focused on the mechanics of the CBAP application and maintenance process, the remainder of this book focuses on passing the CBAP exam. I'll do that by detailing all of the content of the BABOK, activities, and outputs. You'll learn all of the details of the exam, complete practice tests, and learn the IIBA approach to business analysis. Your new goal, and my goal for you, is to earn your CBAP with as little pain and with as much joy as possible.

Key Terms

A Guide to the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge **(BABOK)**   The BABOK book is published by the IIBA and supports and defines the business analysis role, processes, and generally accepted practices of the community. The CBAP examination is based largely on the BABOK.

Business analyst   An individual who identifies the business needs of the organization's clients and stakeholders, helps determine solutions to business problems, completes requirements development, and performs requirements management. The business analyst also facilitates communications among clients, project stakeholders, and the defined solutions team.

CBAP Code of Ethical Conduct and Professional Standards   An IIBA document that defines the expected ethical and professional standards for all CBAPs.

Certified Business Analysis Professional (CBAP)   An individual who has the required education, professional development, and work experience, and has proven so by passing a business analysis exam governed by the International Institute of Business Analysis.

Completing the Solution Assessment and Validation   This business analysis knowledge area works with the project manager, technology team, project team, and stakeholders to analyze the detailed design documents. You'll define the logical phases of the project, the technical design, and the quality assurance activities.

Continuing Development Units (CDUs)   CBAPs must earn 60 CDUs per three-year cycle to maintain their CBAP status. CDUs can be earned through education, professional activities, and professional development.

Endorsed Education Provider (EEP)   Educational providers such as training centers or colleges have paid a fee to the IIBA to have their materials reviewed and endorsed by the IIBA as being accurate business analysis courses. EEPs may provide professional development courses and seminars that offer Continuing Development Units.

Enterprise analysis   These business analysis activities help define and identify business opportunities for an organization.

International Institute of Business Analysis (IIBA)   A nonprofit entity headquartered in Toronto, Canada. IIBA aims to develop and propel the business analysis role and career through its mission "to develop and maintain standards for the practice of business analysis and for the certification of its practitioners." The IIBA is the governing body for the CBAP examination and certification.

Requirements Analysis and Documentation   This business analysis knowledge area defines the analysis, framing, and documenting of the requirements in order to find an appropriate solution to create the deliverables and benefits of the project or opportunity.

Requirements Communication   This business analysis knowledge area happens throughout the business analysis activities and is done in tandem with requirements gathering and analysis. This activity documents and shares information about the requirements, status, and business analysis processes and their progress.

Requirements Elicitation   This business analysis knowledge area defines structured approaches to systematically and accurately draw out or confirm the project or opportunity requirements from the project stakeholders and clients.

Requirements Planning and Management   A business analysis knowledge area and activity that works with the project and organizational stakeholders to determine the required resources to complete the requirements gathering process. A business analyst completing these tasks is determining the key roles, managing the requirements scope, and serving as a communicator.

Questions

On your CBAP exam, you won't encounter questions from very much of the material in this chapter. This chapter, an overview of the CBAP process, didn't cover in much depth the CBAP exam objectives. You should, however, complete the following chapter exam anyway to get your brain reacquainted with answering situational- and definition-type test questions.

1. Where is the IIBA headquartered?
    A. Toronto
    B. New York City
    C. Newton Square
    D. San Francisco

2. When was the IIBA founded?

   A. October 2003

   B. October 2006

   C. January 1984

   D. March 1999

3. Marcy is a new business analyst, and Tom is mentoring her. Marcy would like some additional literature to read about the IIBA and the practices of a business analyst. Which book should Tom refer to Marcy?

   A. *PMBOK*

   B. *Business Analysis Body of Knowledge*

   C. *The All-in-One CBAP Exam Study Guide*

   D. *A Guide to the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge*

4. Mark is applying to become a CBAP. He is considering joining the IIBA to save $125 on his examination fee. Which one of the following is not a benefit of joining the IIBA?

   A. Mark can access the BABOK online.

   B. Mark can access the IIBA online forums.

   C. Mark can access the IIBA job posting forums.

   D. Mark can access the IIBA CBAP logos to use on his web site.

5. How many years of experience as a business analyst are required to become a CBAP?

   A. Three years within the last five years

   B. Five years within the last ten years

   C. Ten years within the last decade

   D. Three years within the last ten

6. Which one of the following is not a business analysis knowledge area?

   A. Managing Enterprise Analysis and Strategic Planning

   B. Planning and Managing Requirements

   C. Managing Requirements and Program Benefits

   D. Performing Solution Assessment and Validation

7. Fred is applying for the CBAP, but he is worried that his application will be rejected because of his lack of a college degree. What can Fred do to ensure his application will be approved even though he does not have a college degree?

   A. Fred does not need a college degree to apply for the CBAP; he must have graduated from high school.

    B. Fred does not need a college degree to apply for the CBAP; he can document 1,500 additional business analysis experience hours in lieu of the college degree.

    C. Fred does not need a college degree to apply for the CBAP; he must attend 32 contact hours of training in lieu of the college degree.

    D. Fred cannot apply to become a CBAP; a college degree is required for all CBAP applicants.

8. Which one of the following activities may not be used toward your business analysis work experience on your CBAP exam application?

    A. Writing requirements documentation

    B. Project management

    C. Determining project scope and objectives

    D. Identifying and documenting requirements risks

9. How many knowledge areas must the CBAP applicant prove their business analysis experience in?

    A. Six

    B. Nine

    C. Four

    D. All of them

10. You are a business analyst in your organization and are mentoring Tracy on business analysis. Tracy is currently helping you identify new business opportunities for your organization. The process of identifying new business opportunities is known as what?

    A. Research and development

    B. Feasibility study

    C. Enterprise analysis

    D. Enterprise environmental factors

11. Jason is a CBAP for the Sunshine Organization, an IT development firm. He is currently identifying and documenting all of the requirement team roles and responsibilities for a newly identified project within the organization. Martin, the project manager, wants to know what business analysis process Jason is completing. What should Jason's answer be?

    A. Jason is doing a project management activity and should stop.

    B. Communications management

    C. Roles and responsibilities identification

    D. Requirements planning and management

12. In what business analysis knowledge area would a CBAP manage requirements conflicts?

    A. Requirements Communication

    B. Requirements Analysis and Documentation

    C. Requirements Elicitation

    D. Requirements Planning and Management

13. How many professional references will the CBAP applicant need in order to qualify for the CBAP examination?

    A. Four

    B. Two

    C. One

    D. Six

14. You are a business analyst for your organization and are working with Mary, the project manager of a new project. The project is a software development project that will connect your organization's manufacturing operations with existing customers. You are currently defining the logical phases of the project. Mary is uncertain of what phases should happen in which order, so you'll rely on historical information to help the process along. The definition of the phases is hosted by what knowledge area?

    A. Risk Management

    B. Solution Assessment and Validation

    C. Requirements Analysis and Documentation

    D. Requirements Elicitation

15. How many hours of professional development activities must you complete prior to submitting your CBAP application?

    A. 32

    B. 12

    C. 21

    D. 60

16. Hannah is completing her CBAP exam application, and she needs to list her professional references. She understands that she must have known the reference for at least six months prior to submitting the application, but she's confused as to what type of references she must identify. Which one of the following references does not qualify as a CBAP exam application professional reference?

    A. Career manager

    B. Client (internal or external)

    C. Certified Business Analysis Professional (IIBA-certified business analyst)

    D. Project manager

17. What must the professional references do with the CBAP Application Reference Form once they've completed it?

    A. Mail it immediately to the IIBA.

    B. Seal the envelope, sign the seal, and then mail it to the IIBA.

    C. Electronically sign the form and then submit it to the IIBA through their web site.

    D. Sign the form and fax it to the IIBA.

18. How much does it cost to apply for the CBAP examination?

    A. $125

    B. $325

    C. $450

    D. Nothing

19. How many questions are on the CBAP examination?

    A. 200

    B. 100

    C. 250

    D. 150

20. Your customer has requested that your organization create a new web site for his company. He'd like the web site to have blog, chat room, technical charting, and e-commerce abilities. You and your requirements gathering team are beginning to develop solutions for the customer. Your team creates four different alternative solutions. Alternative solution identification happens in which business analysis knowledge area?

    A. Risk Management

    B. Solution Assessment and Validation

    C. Requirements Analysis and Documentation

    D. Requirements Elicitation

Questions and Answers

1. Where is the IIBA headquartered?

    A. Toronto

    B. New York City

    C. Newton Square

    D. San Francisco

    A. The IIBA is headquartered in Toronto. All of the other choices are incorrect. While you certainly won't have a question on the CBAP examination on this particular content, this is an example of a comprehension-type question. You will have comprehension questions where you'll need to answer based on the definition of terms.

2. When was the IIBA founded?

   A. October 2003

   B. October 2006

   C. January 1984

   D. March 1999

   A. The IIBA was founded in October 2003 by 28 founding members. In 2006, they became an official not-for-profit entity. The other choices are incorrect.

3. Marcy is a new business analyst, and Tom is mentoring her. Marcy would like some additional literature to read about the IIBA and the practices of a business analyst. Which book should Tom refer to Marcy?

   A. *PMBOK*

   B. *Business Analysis Body of Knowledge*

   C. *The All-in-One CBAP Exam Study Guide*

   D. *A Guide to the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge*

   D. Marcy needs a copy of *A Guide to the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge.* A is incorrect, as "PMBOK" is an abbreviation for *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge,* not an IIBA favorite but it's a better guide for project managers than the BABOK. B is incorrect, as this is not as good a choice as D. This question is a good example of always choosing the best answer. Sure, you could argue that B and D are almost the same, but D is the correct name of the book, so it's the better choice. Always choose the best answer. If you chose C, I'm flattered but this is incorrect. You should choose your answers the way the IIBA expects you to answer the question.

4. Mark is applying to become a CBAP. He is considering joining the IIBA to save $125 on his examination fee. Which one of the following is not a benefit of joining the IIBA?

   A. Mark can access the BABOK online.

   B. Mark can access the IIBA online forums.

   C. Mark can access the IIBA job posting forums.

   D. Mark can access the IIBA CBAP logos to use on his web site.

   D. Mark won't be able to download the CBAP logos from the IIBA web site just because he's joined the IIBA. Mark will need to pass the CBAP exam and then follow the IIBA rules and policies for using the logos. A, B, and C are all valid benefits of joining the IIBA, so these choices are incorrect. This is a good example of how some of the questions want you to find the incorrect answer. Pay attention to what the question is asking, such as in "which one is not" or "all of the following except for which one" phrases.

5. How many years of experience as a business analyst are required to become a CBAP?

   A. Three years within the last five years

   B. Five years within the last ten years

   C. Ten years within the last decade

   D. Three years within the last ten

   B. You need five years of experience as a business analyst to qualify for the CBAP examination. Note that choice C is a bit of a trick, as ten years is a decade—that won't work.

6. Which one of the following is not a business analysis knowledge area?

   A. Managing Enterprise Analysis and Strategic Planning

   B. Planning and Managing Requirements

   C. Managing Requirements and Program Benefits

   D. Performing Solution Assessment and Validation

   C. Choice C is not a business analysis knowledge area. Choices A, B, and D are all valid choices, as there are six business analysis knowledge areas: Enterprise Analysis, Requirements Planning and Management, Requirements Elicitation, Requirements Analysis and Documentation, Requirements Communication, and Solution Assessment and Validation.

7. Fred is applying for the CBAP, but he is worried that his application will be rejected because of his lack of a college degree. What can Fred do to ensure his application will be approved even though he does not have a college degree?

   A. Fred does not need a college degree to apply for the CBAP; he must have graduated from high school.

   B. Fred does not need a college degree to apply for the CBAP; he can document 1,500 additional business analysis experience hours in lieu of the college degree.

   C. Fred does not need a college degree to apply for the CBAP; he must attend 32 contact hours of training in lieu of the college degree.

   D. Fred cannot apply to become a CBAP; a college degree is required for all CBAP applicants.

   A. Fred only needs to have earned a high school diploma to qualify for the CBAP certification. Choices B, C, and D are all incorrect choices.

8. Which one of the following activities may not be used toward your business analysis work experience on your CBAP exam application?

   A. Writing requirements documentation

   B. Project management

   C. Determining project scope and objectives

   D. Identifying and documenting requirements risks

   B. You'll need five years of business analysis experience to qualify for the CBAP examination. Your project management experience does not count toward the certification. The IIBA is very particular about project

management activities and business analysis activities, so use caution in your CBAP application and documentation of professional experiences.

9. How many knowledge areas must the CBAP applicant prove their business analysis experience in?

   A. Six

   B. Nine

   C. Four

   D. All of them

   C. While there are six business analysis knowledge areas, you only have to document your experience in four of the six. Choices A, B, and D are all incorrect choices.

10. You are a business analyst in your organization and are mentoring Tracy on business analysis. Tracy is currently helping you identify new business opportunities for your organization. The process of identifying new business opportunities is known as what?

    A. Research and development

    B. Feasibility study

    C. Enterprise analysis

    D. Enterprise environmental factors

    C. Enterprise analysis, according to the BABOK, is composed of the activities that a business analyst uses to define and identify business opportunities for your organization. Think like an entrepreneur when you answer these questions. Choices A, B, and D are incorrect choices.

11. Jason is a CBAP for the Sunshine Organization, an IT development firm. He is currently identifying and documenting all of the requirement team roles and responsibilities for a newly identified project within the organization. Martin, the project manager, wants to know what business analysis process Jason is completing. What should Jason's answer be?

    A. Jason is doing a project management activity and should stop.

    B. Communications management

    C. Roles and responsibilities identification

    D. Requirements planning and management

    D. When Jason does requirements planning and management tasks, he is working with project and organizational stakeholders to determine what resources are needed for requirements gathering. A business analyst completing these tasks is determining the key roles, managing the

requirements scope, and serving as a communicator of the requirements gathering process. A is incorrect, as Jason is defining the roles and responsibilities needed for requirements gathering, not the project team. B is incorrect, as Jason is not communicating requirements or status. C is incorrect, as this question is not as accurate as choice D.

12. In what business analysis knowledge area would a CBAP manage requirements conflicts?

   A. Requirements Communication

   B. Requirements Analysis and Documentation

   C. Requirements Elicitation

   D. Requirements Planning and Management

   A. Requirements Communication does include the management of requirements conflicts. Choices B, C, and D are incorrect choices because management of requirements conflicts does not happen in these knowledge areas.

13. How many professional references will the CBAP applicant need in order to qualify for the CBAP examination?

   A. Four

   B. Two

   C. One

   D. Six

   B. You'll only need two professional references to qualify for the CBAP exam. If you include more than two, only two can be used by the IIBA for their evaluation. Choices A, C, and D are incorrect.

14. You are a business analysis for your organization and are working with Mary, the project manager of a new project. The project is a software development project that will connect your organization's manufacturing operations with existing customers. You are currently defining the logical phases of the project. Mary is uncertain of what phases should happen in which order, so you'll rely on historical information to help the process along. The definition of the phases is hosted by what knowledge area?

   A. Risk Management

   B. Solution Assessment and Validation

   C. Requirements Analysis and Documentation

   D. Requirements Elicitation

   B. Phases are defined in the Solution Assessment and Validation knowledge area. Choices A, C, and D are all incorrect choices for Mary's problem.

15. How many hours of professional development activities must you complete prior to submitting your CBAP application?

    A. 32

    B. 12

    C. 21

    D. 60

    C. You'll need 21 hours of professional development prior to the date on your CBAP exam application. Choices A, B, and D are incorrect; note that choice D is the number of Continuing Development Units you'll need to maintain your certification once you've earned it.

16. Hannah is completing her CBAP exam application, and she needs to list her professional references. She understands that she must have known the reference for at least six months prior to submitting the application, but she's confused as to what type of references she must identify. Which one of the following references does not qualify as a CBAP exam application professional reference?

    A. Career manager

    B. Client (internal or external)

    C. Certified Business Analysis Professional (IIBA-certified business analyst)

    D. Project manager

    D. Hannah needs two references for her CBAP application. The references must be a career manager, client, or CBAP that she has known for more than six months. While Hannah could use a project manager who serves as her career manager, choice D does not clearly define this option. This is an example of choosing the best answer, as a project manager is not specifically defined by the IIBA as one of the three types of professional references the CBAP applicant may use.

17. What must the professional references do with the CBAP Application Reference Form once they've completed it?

    A. Mail it immediately to the IIBA.

    B. Seal the envelope, sign the seal, and then mail it to the IIBA.

    C. Electronically sign the form and then submit it to the IIBA through their web site.

    D. Sign the form and fax it to the IIBA.

    B. Once a professional reference has completed the CBAP Application Reference Form, he is to sign the form, seal it in an envelope, and sign his name across the seal. Choices A, C, and D are incorrect procedures for the form and CBAP application.

18. How much does it cost to apply for the CBAP examination?

    A. $125

    B. $325

    C. $450

    D. Nothing

    A. It will cost you $125 to apply for the CBAP examination. Choice B is the actual exam fee for members. Choice C is the total fee for the exam and the application fee, both of which you can pay at once when applying for the exam. Choice D is incorrect, as there is a fee for applying to take the CBAP examination.

19. How many questions are on the CBAP examination?

    A. 200

    B. 100

    C. 250

    D. 150

    D. There are 150 questions on the CBAP examination. You'll need to answer the 150 questions within three hours. Choices A, B, and C are all incorrect choices.

20. Your customer has requested that your organization create a new web site for his company. He'd like the web site to have blog, chat room, technical charting, and e-commerce abilities. You and your requirements gathering team are beginning to develop solutions for the customer. Your team creates four different alternative solutions. Alternative solution identification happens in which business analysis knowledge area?

    A. Risk Management

    B. Solution Assessment and Validation

    C. Requirements Analysis and Documentation

    D. Requirements Elicitation

    B. Alternative solutions are found during the Solution Assessment and Validation. This is a legitimate and encouraged business analysis activity. Choices A, C, and D are all incorrect choices.