



ESTATE AGENCY AFFAIRS BOARD
OF SOUTH AFRICA

TIPS FOR ESTATE AGENTS UNDERTAKING THE PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION EXAMINATION

As the Professional Designation Examination (PDE) is an open book examination, candidates are evaluated on their practical understanding of the study (and any other relevant) material rather than on mere recall and memorisation.

Examination candidates are, therefore, expected to:

- apply the study material to actual practical workplace, as well as novel and more innovative, situations;
- analyse elements and relationships; and
- synthesise, structure, compare and evaluate.

Candidates should provide **valid evidence** for any statements made and must avoid merely duplicating the study material, providing trite or clichéd answers or making deductions that are not fully substantiated. Candidates should, therefore, **NOT underestimate the extensive preparation** that is **required to succeed in an open book examination**. As time during the examination is limited, the key to success generally lies in adequate preparation and organisation so that candidates are able quickly to locate any data, quotes, examples and/or arguments for use in answering the questions.

- **Preparation tips**

- Carefully study the relevant material ahead of time and don't expect to simply find quick answers during the examination.
- Know where to find everything by, for example, creating your own index. Observe headings and sub-headings and then also make your own outlines. Doing so will reinforce the structure of the study material in your mind. Mark all important terms with, for instance, sticky notes and flags. Mark your texts wherever you notice important concepts and terms. Making use of underlining is always helpful.
- Keep current on your readings and assignments.
- Prepare brief notes on relevant ideas and concepts. Make your own notes and write down important equations, formulas or concepts.



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- Carefully select what you intend to bring with you to the examination and make sure that you bring everything that you will need for the examination.
 - Including your own commentary on the information frequently provides fuel for your arguments and also shows that you have carefully thought your answers through.
 - Anticipate the examination by using model questions **but not model answers**.
 - Ensure that you have read, understood and can answer any practical activities or case studies that might be contained in the study material.
 - Challenge yourself with how you would answer questions and what options and resources you may need to do so.
- **Organise your reference materials - your "open book"**
 - Make your reference materials as user-friendly as possible so that you don't lose time locating what you need during the examination.
 - Familiarise yourself with the format, layout and structure of your study guide, text books and source materials.
 - Organise these with your own notes for speedy retrieval and index ideas and concepts with pointers and/or page numbers in the source material. (Develop a system of tabs/sticky notes, colour coding, draft diagrams, etc., to mark important summaries, headings and sections)
 - Write short and manageable summaries of content for each grouping.
 - List equations, data and formulas separately for easy access.



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IMPORTANT TO NOTE

Format of examination and required pass mark

The examination comprises:

- a knowledge component;
- a general application, or case study, component; and
- a component dealing with estate agency ethics, which may also be based on a case study.

All components are open book. The overall examination pass mark is 65%. Candidates will, however, be required to obtain a subminimum of 40% for each separate component (or section of the examination) to pass the examination.

Examination Questions

The knowledge component of the examination comprises short questions. In answering these questions candidates must demonstrate what they should already know.

As noted above the examination will also contain case studies. Examination candidates must carefully read, familiarise themselves with and understand the content of, and circumstances surrounding, the different case studies and then answer specific questions directly associated with the case studies. The mark allocation in respect of the case study questions differs from case study to case study and from question to question.

The marks allocated for the correct answers to each examination question will be indicated on the examination paper.



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Important tools to use for examination preparation

The Study Guides for Estate Agents

- Thorough knowledge of the prescribed study material for the Professional Designation Examinations (Levels 4 and 5 for non-principal and principal estate agents respectively), namely, the NQF Level 4 Study Guide and the NQF Level 5 Study Guide, especially including the practical activities contained in the study material, is a prerequisite for examination success.
- These study guides can be obtained from the EAAB.
- Candidates are expected comprehensively to study, and review, the relevant study guide for the respective PDE level in its entirety.
- Candidates should know, understand and be able to apply the Code of Conduct for Estate Agents and should fully acquaint themselves with the relevant study material dealing with the Code of Conduct for Estate Agents.

During the open book examination

- The first thing candidates should do is to evaluate each question to ascertain whether the question is asking for facts or for an interpretation.
- Candidates should ensure that they read all questions carefully and clearly understand what is expected of them when answering the questions.
- Candidates must make good use of available time. It is always useful to quickly review the number of questions and to note how much time each question will probably take to answer. It is also sensible to first answer the questions that candidates feel more confident of and/or which need less time to research.
- More complex and/or difficult questions should be left for later.
- Questions seeking facts are often easier and faster to answer. These questions will generally start with expressions such as:

"List five reasons ... ?"

"What events led up to ... ?"

- Candidates should avoid over-answering questions. They should, rather, aim for concise, accurate, thoughtful and meaningful answers that are grounded on available evidence.
- Candidates should never waffle and in the hope that, by so doing, they may provide the required answer. Waffling will not qualify candidates for marks regardless of the length of the answer provided.



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- Candidates should avoid word-for-word repetition of the content of the study guide, or any other material. The PDE is a professional designation examination and, as such, candidates are required to apply themselves using current knowledge, practical experience and material that has been thoroughly learned and studied. Although the study guide generally provides valuable information to candidates, if the question requires application based on personal knowledge/experience, candidates who simply repeat the content of the study guide are unlikely to earn any marks.
- It is important to remember that application unavoidably means that some answers to certain questions may not always be found directly in the study guides. In such instances candidates must indicate, from their practical knowledge and experience, how they would tackle the situation at the workplace.
- Candidates must ensure that they clearly understand the nature of the question and what it requires of them before attempting to answer it. This can only be done by reading the question thoroughly and repeatedly and making sure that it is correctly understood.

LEARN FROM THE UNFORTUNATE EXPERIENCES OF PREVIOUS PDE CANDIDATES

The unfortunate experience of candidates in previous Professional Designation Examinations who failed to provide any of the required answers and, instead, waffled, made unsupported and unfounded guesses not based on the facts and adopted a “shotgun approach”, rather than a targeted approach, to the answering of questions, was that they did not, of course, earn any marks for their efforts.



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- **Rules and Regulations at the examination venue**

- Examinations are conducted in the morning to enable candidates to arrive and depart on the day of the examination without having to stay overnight.
- Examinations commence promptly at 09:00. Candidates must, however, be seated by no later than 08:30.
- Candidates who arrive more than 30 minutes after the commencement of the examination will be refused admission to the examination.
- Candidates must bring the EAAB registration letter with them to the examination venue and must provide positive proof of identity. An identity document, passport or valid driver's licence will suffice for this purpose.
- While there will probably be a wall clock at each examination, candidates should have their own watch to help them pace themselves during the examination.
- Smoking and/or eating is not permitted during the examination.
- Candidates writing open book examination are permitted to take books or papers of any kind into the examination room.
- No electronic devices of any nature, including cellular telephones, are permitted at the examination venues

AN EXAMPLE OF A CASE STUDY USED IN A PREVIOUS PDE MIGHT BE HELPFUL FOR PDE CANDIDATES WHEN PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION

After Mrs. Brown's estate agency firm, Ace Estates, had received a written sole mandate from Mr. Monetti to sell his home in Eden Springs, she requested Mr. Maseko, an intern estate agent in the service of Ace Estates, to conduct an inspection of the property in accordance with the requirements of a checklist, contained on the property data sheet, that had been compiled by Ace Estates.

Mr. Maseko, while conducting the inspection, noted that the flooring in the lounge, which was not carpeted, was constructed of a resilient hardwood and simply assumed that the flooring of the remainder of the house, which was wall-to-wall carpeted, was also made of hardwood. Without questioning Mr. Monetti in this regard, or making any additional inquiries, Mr. Maseko specified 'hardwood floors' on the Ace Estates property data form.



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Mr. Monetti's home was subsequently sold through Ace Estates to Mr. Kunene.

Mrs. Brown was rather surprised in due course to receive a telephone call from an angry Mr. Kunene. Mr. Kunene informed her that, despite assurances by Ace Estates that the house had hardwood floors, this had proved not to be the case.

Mr. Kunene pointed out that when he had removed the wall-to-wall carpeting in the remainder of the home to sand and polish the floors he had discovered that all the flooring, save only for that in the lounge, was constructed of a cheap plywood sub-flooring. Mr. Kunene argued that he had estimated the purchase price he was prepared to pay for the house on the basis that the home had hardwood floors. He believed that, in the light of the misrepresentation, he had substantially overpaid for the property. Mr. Kunene indicated, furthermore, that if the matter was not suitably resolved he would sue Ace Estates for the damages that he had suffered by reason of the misrepresentation regarding the flooring.

Candidates are required to comment on the case study and, also, to apply the actual case study situation to the relevant provisions of the Code of Conduct for Estate Agents.

Finally, GOOD LUCK to PDE candidates from all members of the EAAB Education and Training Department.