

MaRC Certification – Frequently Asked Questions

MaRC is a professional certification program that distinguishes individuals who have demonstrated their job knowledge of developing and executing in-store marketing materials and the retail environment.



For whom is the certification designed?

The MaRC certification is designed for individuals in the retail industry—and students who plan to pursue a career in retail—who want to demonstrate their job-related knowledge through an independent, third party.

What is required to achieve certification?

There are no eligibility requirements for MaRC certification. Candidates must pass a written exam on the activities that drive shopper purchases at retail; the exam is based on the 2017 MaRC Exam Prep book.

What is the MaRC Exam Prep book?

The MaRC Exam Prep textbook details the standard of knowledge for the MaRC certification. Authored by more than 20 retail industry experts, the book describes the "best practices" for researching, designing, building, executing, and evaluating the retail environment and in-store marketing materials.

How is the exam structured?

The exam content is distributed among the five knowledge domains outlined in the MaRC Exam Prep book: Research, Design, Build, Market, Evaluate. Each domain represents 20% of the exam.

What is the exam like?

The closed-book exam has 100 questions and is two hours long. All of the questions are multiple-choice or true/false. Candidates must pass the exam with an overall score of 80% or better to achieve the certification. At present, the test is offered only in American English.

How do I get started?

Visit www.shopassociation.org/marc/ and follow the instructions under “The Certification Process” to register for the MaRC program and purchase the MaRC Exam Prep book. Once you have registered for the MaRC program, you must wait six weeks before you can take the exam. During this time, read and study the MaRC Exam Prep book. Then, when you’re ready to take the exam, submit your initial exam registration.

For more information about MaRC certification, visit www.shopassociation.org/marc/ and download the MaRC Candidate Handbook. For questions, please contact Melissa Campbell at mcampbell@shopassociation.org or 312-863-2908.

When and where can I take the exam?

The exam is delivered during four month-long exam windows throughout the year: February, May, August, and November. The exam is delivered and proctored online. Candidates can take the exam from anywhere in the world, at whatever time is the most convenient for them.

Does an applicant need to be a member of Shop! to pursue the certification?

No. While Shop! offers substantial discounts to its members, one does not have to belong to the association in order to seek certification.

What are the costs of pursuing the MaRC certification?

The following fees apply: (Shop! member/non-member)

1. One-time MaRC Program Application Fee \$150/\$250
2. Exam Prep book (Digital Format/PDF) \$150/\$250
3. Initial Exam Registration Fee \$300/\$400

What if I don’t pass the exam?

There is a 90-day waiting period between exam retakes. After paying the re-exam fee (\$150 for members; \$250 for non-members), candidates may once again take the exam. Candidates have three attempts to pass the test within a one-year period.

How long is MaRC certification valid?

MaRC certification is good for three years. To renew the certification for another three years, a MaRC holder must document at least 30 hours of continuing education and submit payment of the triennial Recertification Fee (\$300 Shop! members/\$400 non-members).