

# What Works Clearinghouse: Group Design Standards Training Tips for Becoming a Certified Reviewer

The What Works Clearinghouse's (WWC) Group Design Standards Training informs the public about key elements of the WWC's Group Design Standards, increases transparency, and promotes the use of rigorous, high-quality research.



**Becoming Certified:** Becoming certified in the WWC Group Design Standards requires that you complete the reviewer training and then successfully complete a certification exam, which can be attempted up to four times. The exam is split into sections, and you will not be required to retake any section of the exam that you have previously passed on any attempt.

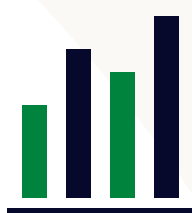
This infographic provides **tips** for becoming a WWC-certified reviewer as well as additional information about the certification process.

## Tips for Completing the Group Design Training Certification Test

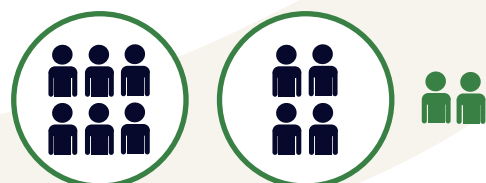


### Identifying the study design

determines which standards will guide you through the review process. Even when you know it is a group design study, the first step is identifying whether the study is an randomized control trial (RCT) or quasi-experimental design (QED).



**Baseline equivalence** demonstrates similarities between two groups at the start of the study. Depending on several factors, some studies will need to demonstrate baseline equivalence, while other studies will simply need to control for key variables. Carefully review when and how the WWC calculates their own effect sizes and *p* values depending on the results of the baseline equivalence step.



### Understanding the concept of attrition

is crucial for evaluating group designs. For RCTs, demonstrating low attrition is a step toward being eligible to receive a rating of *Meets WWC Standards Without Reservations*.



Studies can be tricky because real-life examples may not be straightforward. We used examples from studies reviewed by the WWC to inform the trainings and exams. **Read carefully** the study, the standards, and the question (both on the certification test and when reviewing real studies).



**Rely upon resources provided.** The WWC team has created multiple resources to help guide you. We recommend the following steps:

- Step 1:** Print or download the presentation slides for each module and take notes while watching the modules.
- Step 2:** Watch each module sequentially and pause and reverse the video as needed.
- Step 3:** Download the certification test.
- Step 4:** Review the test and read each question carefully.
- Step 5:** Make notes and generate a rationale for your answer using all potential resources.
- Step 6:** Enter test responses online and submit your responses to find out if you have passed.

After passing the test, you will be a WWC-certified reviewer in the group design standards and can be included in the list of certified reviewers on the WWC website. WWC contractors or the Institute of Education Sciences may contact you to consider doing reviews for the Clearinghouse.

*The new training corresponding to the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Version 5.0 will be available in early 2023. At that time, some of the specific details around the training system will change, but the general guidance around how to approach reviewing a study will still be helpful for reviewers interested in being certified under the new handbook.*

To learn more about the WWC Group Design Standards Training, see <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/OnlineTraining>.

To learn more about the WWC, visit our website: [whatworks.ed.gov](http://whatworks.ed.gov).