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Chapter 1

Introducing the SIE (Securities Industry Essentials) Exam

Congratulations on your interest in becoming a financial professional! But before you can lose yourself in the energy of the office, the eager voices of your clients, and the warm glow of success, you have to face the SIE as well as one of the top-off (qualification) exams such as the Series 7 or Series 6. In this chapter, I give you an overview of the SIE exam, including its purpose, structure, format, scoring, and some helpful tips to guide you through the registration procedure.

This book's first four chapters go over things like what the exam is, how to study for it, how to take the test, and so on. If you feel that you have a handle on those things, feel free to jump to Chapter 5 to get right into the meat and potatoes of what you need to learn.

What Is the SIE Exam, Anyway?

Initially, the information in the SIE (Securities Industry Essentials) exam was included in books that covered the Series 6, Series 7, Series 22, and so on. The Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) had the idea to strip similar information from these exams and create the SIE exam. What I've found is that besides stripping the information from these other exams, unfortunately for you and other exam-takers, FINRA added a lot more information. What this means is that you'll have to study a lot of information to answer 75 randomized questions.

The SIE is an introductory-level exam designed to test your basic knowledge of the securities industry and is open to anyone age 18 or older. Fortunately, association with a securities firm

isn't required; individuals may take the SIE exam before or after being hired by a firm. You need to know certain terminology used in the securities industry, different securities products, how the market is structured, how the market functions, different regulatory agencies and their purposes, as well as regulated and prohibited practices.

Because *unsponsored* individuals (people not sponsored by a financial firm) are allowed to take the exam, you can take a step toward becoming a securities professional prior to being hired. (Although you can take the SIE exam and one of the corequisite exams in any order, for most people it certainly makes sense to take the SIE first.)

The purpose of the SIE and corequisite exams is to protect the investing public by ensuring that the individuals who sell or give information about securities have mastered the skills and general knowledge that competent practicing representatives need to have.

The SIE exam itself is a computer-based exam given by Prometric (www.prometric.com/finra), the testing company chosen by FINRA to provide and oversee their exams. You can take your exam at a Prometric test center throughout the United States or online at your desired location. (See the "So you want to take the test online" sidebar later in this chapter.) The 75-question exam, administered by FINRA, is 105 minutes in duration. A score of 70 percent or better will get you a passing grade and put a big smile on your face. After you pass the SIE, the results remain valid for four years from the date you pass. The passing rate for those taking the SIE exam for the first time is around 74 percent. If you include those who have taken the exam more than once, it's closer to 82 percent.

The sections later in this chapter explain the setup of the SIE exam and give a rundown of how to register for the exam. If you have other questions, visit www.finra.org/registration-exams-qualification-exams/securities-industry-essentials-exam. If you have any questions, you can chat or schedule a call through their website.

Profiling the SIE Exam-Taker

The SIE exam is for people who want to become investment company reps, general securities reps, direct participation program (DPP) reps, securities traders, investment banking reps, private securities offerings reps, research analysts, or operations professionals.

When the SIE exam was first proposed, the idea was to strip the information that was similar in all the exams that had come before (Series 6, Series 7, Series 22, and so) and put it in one place, thus making it easier for people to add licenses to their résumés. So, to become a securities professional, you need to pass the SIE exam, one of the exams listed in the next section, and typically the North American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA) Series 63 or 66 exam. The Series 63 and Series 66 exams can also be taken without sponsorship, but individuals typically wait until they've passed one of the corequisite exams, such as the Series 7, before tackling one of these.



REMEMBER

People who have a long and sordid history of embezzlement, forgery, and fraud are generally disqualified and precluded from taking the exam. Candidates must disclose any criminal records, and the FINRA reviews applications on a case-by-case basis.

One's Not Enough: Tackling the Corequisite (Top-Off) Exams

The SIE exam is just your starting point. To become an industry professional, you have to take one of the top-off exams and, in most cases, the Series 63 or Series 66 state exam as well. As far as which top-off exam(s) you'll have to take, the answer depends on the job you want and/or are hired to do. After you pass the SIE exam, the financial institution that hires you will tell you which exams you need to take and will help you schedule them.



REMEMBER

In addition to taking the SIE exam and one of the top-off or corequisite exams listed in the following sections, you'll likely have to take either the NASAA Series 63 exam or the NASAA Series 66 exam. These exams go into *state* securities laws as opposed to federal securities laws, which are the focus of exams like the SIE. The difference between the Series 63 and Series 66 is that the Series 66 allows holders to become investment advisers as well. Your employer will let you know which exam to take. More and more broker-dealers want their agents to take the Series 66. Don't worry too much; neither of these exams are the beasts that some of the other listed exams are.

Series 6: Investment Company and Variable Products Representative Exam (IR)

Series 6 is the license required by most banks and insurance companies. This license allows the holder to sell products such as mutual funds, variable annuities, and variable life insurance (along with having an insurance license). To see the complete outline of what's covered, go to www.finra.org/sites/default/files/Series_6_Content_Outline.pdf.

Series 7: General Securities Representative Exam (GS)

Series 7 is the license exam that most people take. This license is required by most broker-dealers. The Series 7 allows you to sell equity securities, mutual funds, bonds, direct participation programs, options, and so on. To see the complete outline of what's covered, go to www.finra.org/sites/default/files/Series_7_Content_Outline.pdf.



TIP

As a side note, if you're taking the Series 7 exam after taking the SIE, I've also written *Series 7 Exam 2026-2027 For Dummies*, (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.), which is laid out in the same logical way as this book for ease of studying.

Series 22: DPP Representative (DR)

If you're planning to focus your career on selling direct participation programs (DPPs), the Series 22 exam is the one for you. This license allows you to solicit and sell limited partnership interest in DPPs such as real estate, oil and gas, and equipment leasing. To see the complete outline of what's covered, go to www.finra.org/sites/default/files/Series_22_Content_Outline.pdf.

Series 57: Securities Trader (TD)

The Series 57 license allows holders to execute trades in securities. Typically, a Series 57–licensed person works in the trading department, executing trades for individuals or firms. To see the complete outline of what’s covered, go to www.finra.org/sites/default/files/Series_57_Content_Outline.pdf.

Series 79: Investment Banking Representative (IB)

The Series 79 Investment Banking Representative exam allows holders to work in the investment banking realm. As such, the holders’ functions may include advising or facilitating equity or debt securities offerings through public offerings, private placements, and mergers and acquisitions. To see the complete outline of what’s covered, go to www.finra.org/sites/default/files/Series_79_Content_Outline.pdf.

Series 82: Private Securities Offerings Representative (PR)

If you’re planning to sell securities privately as opposed to publicly, Series 82 is the exam you’ll need to pass. This exam tests you on the knowledge needed to perform functions of a private securities offerings rep, including the solicitation and sale of Regulation D private placement securities as part of a primary offering. To see the complete outline of what’s covered, go to www.finra.org/sites/default/files/Series_82_Content_Outline.pdf.

Series 7 + Series 86 + Series 87: Research Analyst (RS)

If you love taking exams, this is the one for you. You have to pass not only the SIE exam, but also the Series 7, Series 86, Series 87, and either the Series 63 or Series 66. Yikes! If you want to be a research analyst, however, this route is the one you’ll need to follow. A research analyst is required to prepare written and/or electronic communications that show an analysis of company securities and industry sectors. To see the complete outline of what’s covered, go to www.finra.org/sites/default/files/Series_7_Content_Outline.pdf and www.finra.org/sites/default/files/Series_86-87_Content_Outline.pdf.

Series 99: Operations Professional (OS)

People who have a Series 99 license have proved that they have the knowledge needed to perform the critical functions of an operations professional. As such, their functions include client onboarding (welcoming new clients, addressing client concerns, making sure clients understand the services available to them, and so on), receipt and delivery of securities and funds, account transfers, reinvestment and disbursement of funds, and so on. To see the complete outline of what’s covered, go to www.finra.org/sites/default/files/Series_99_Content_Outline.pdf.

Signing Up

One of the things I really like about the SIE exam is that you don't need to be sponsored to take it (most of the other securities exams require sponsorship by a brokerage firm, bank, insurance company, and so on), which means that you can take the exam on your own prior to being hired. This strategy allows you to get a leg up on the competition and shows your future employer that you're not fooling around.

Filling out an application to enroll

The easiest way to enroll to take the SIE is to go to www.finra.org/registration-exams-ce/qualification-exams/securities-industry-essentials-exam. Scroll down to the Enrollment Options section; and follow the instructions for individuals, which include creating an account, enrolling for the SIE, and paying for the exam (by credit card or Automated Clearing House [ACH] transfer).

It's a date! Scheduling your exam

After you've completed the online application and received your enrollment notification, you can schedule an appointment to take the exam by contacting the Prometric testing center. Locate the test center nearest you by calling (800) 578-6273 during business hours or by visiting www.prometric.com/exams/1finra, where you can make an appointment to take the exam at a Prometric test center or online (remotely).

At the present time, online testing is several years old. See the sidebar "So you want to take the test online" at the end of this chapter for information on taking the exam online.

Like enrollment in other securities exams, your SIE exam enrollment is valid for 120 days; you have to take the exam within this time frame. When scheduling your exam appointment, be ready to provide the following information:

- » Your name and Social Security number and/or FINRA number
- » The name of the securities exam you're registering to take
- » Your desired test date, which must be chosen from available test dates

You may not be able to schedule an appointment immediately; it depends on how busy Prometric is. Even if you're taking the exam online, you still need to have someone available to monitor the test while you're taking it. Prometric will confirm your appointment on the phone or via email.



TIP

I highly suggest putting pressure on yourself and scheduling the exam a little sooner than you think you'll be ready to take it; you can always move the test date back. (You'll be charged if you cancel within ten business days of your test date.) You know yourself best, but I think that most students study better when they have a target test date.

You have a choice of where to take the exam. If you travel often, you may want to schedule your exam at a location far away (maybe even in a different state) to get the test date you want. If you're having trouble scheduling the date and/or location of your choice, remember that you can take it online (at home or work, at a family member's house, and so on). See the sidebar "So you want to take the test online" later in this chapter.

TEST-CENTER AMENITIES

The test centers are required to comply with FINRA site guidelines, but some of the older centers may not have the amenities that the newer ones do (such as lockers and earplugs). To protect yourself from a variety of unpleasant, unexpected site surprises on exam day, the FINRA website (www.finra.org) offers general information, including test-center security guidelines (including candidate ID requirements, personal items allowed, and provided aids), test-center rules of conduct, and so on. For more specific questions, such as whether a cafeteria, vending machines, or lockers are on site, ask the center's administrator when you schedule your test date.

After you have your test date set, you may find that you're ready sooner or later than your scheduled appointment. The exam-center administrators are usually pretty accommodating about changing appointments and/or locations as long as you call before noon at least two business days before your test date, but a fee may be involved.



TIP

You can get an extension from the 120-day enrollment only if you call within ten days of your enrollment expiration and if no earlier test dates are available.

Planning for special accommodations

If you require special accommodations when taking your securities exam, you can't schedule your exam online. You have to contact the FINRA Special Conditions Team at (800) 999-6647 or fill out the special-accommodations form at www.finra.org/sites/default/files/SA-Eligibility-Questionnaire.pdf. Read on for info on how the test administrators can accommodate you if you have a disability or if English isn't your first language.



WARNING

Depending on your testing center, you may have to receive authorization to bring medical devices and supplies — such as insulin pumps, eyedrops, and inhalers — into the testing room. If you need authorization, call your local Prometric testing center, and a staff member will be able to guide you on the approval process.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) candidates

If you're disabled or learning-impaired, FINRA provides testing modifications and aids in compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To qualify for ADA provisions, your disabilities have to permanently limit a major life activity, such as learning, speech, hearing, or vision.

To apply for special accommodations, you need to submit documentation from your physician or licensed healthcare professional to the FINRA, requesting the special arrangements. Additionally, you have to submit the FINRA Special Accommodations Eligibility Questionnaire and Special Accommodations Verification Request Form for all special arrangement requests. You can find links to these forms at www.finra.org/industry/special-accommodations.

You may request the accommodations you want. Possible aids include:

- » Extra time
- » A written exam (pencil and paper)
- » A reader, writer, or recorder
- » A sign-language interpreter

- » A large-print exam booklet
- » Wheelchair-accessible locations

FINRA reserves the right to make final decisions about accommodations on a case-by-case basis.

English as a Second Language (ESL) candidates

If English is your second language, you can request additional time to take the exam when you schedule your SIE test date. If FINRA approves, you receive a little extra time to complete the exam. In general, FINRA gives an extra 30 minutes for exams shorter than 2 hours and an extra hour for exams longer than 2 hours.

To qualify for extra time because English is your second language, fill out the form at www.finra.org/sites/default/files/LEP-request-form.pdf.

Just in case: Canceling as an option

If something comes up or if you feel that you're just not ready, you can cancel your appointment to take the SIE exam without penalty if you do so at least ten business days before the exam date. If a holiday falls within the cancellation period, you have to cancel an additional business day earlier. If you're scheduled to take the exam on a Wednesday, for example, you have to cancel on Tuesday two weeks before your exam date. If a holiday falls between those dates, you have to cancel on Monday two weeks before your exam date. For more information, visit www.finra.org/industry/reschedule-or-cancel-your-appointment.



WARNING

If you cancel after the prescribed deadline, don't show up to take the exam, or show up too late to take the exam, you'll be charged a cancellation fee equal to the cost of the exam fee you paid. I'm sure that the old "I forgot" excuse has been tried, but I've never heard of it being effective.

Taking a Peek at the Tested Topics

As a practical exam, the SIE requires you to master vocabulary, handle customer accounts, understand the rules and regulations that govern the securities industry, and, yes, work with some math formulas (although very few). For ease of use, this book focuses on the information you need to pass the SIE exam. Here's an overview of what to expect:

- » The underwriting process — how new securities come to market (Chapter 5)
- » Common and preferred stock (Chapter 6)
- » Corporate bonds and U.S. government securities (Chapter 7)
- » Securities issued by local governments (municipal bonds) (Chapter 8)
- » Investment companies, including mutual and closed-end funds (Chapter 9)
- » DPPs (limited partnerships) (Chapter 10)
- » Options (Chapter 11)
- » Customer accounts (Chapter 12)
- » Analyzing the benefits and risks associated with investments; making appropriate recommendations to customers (Chapter 13)

- » Following how new securities are brought to the market and how existing securities are traded in the market (Chapter 14)
- » Risk considerations and income tax implications that stock market investors face (Chapter 15)
- » Rules and regulations governing the purchase and sale of securities and the registered representative's responsibility for maintaining accurate records (Chapter 16)

FINRA has released a list of the distribution of questions on the SIE exam. See Table 1-1 for the number of questions devoted to each topic as applied to a registered rep's performance.

TABLE 1-1 **Distribution of SIE Exam Questions**

Topic	Number of Questions	Percentage of Exam
Knowledge of capital markets	12	16
Understanding products and their risks	33	44
Understanding trading, customer accounts, and prohibited activities	23	31
Overview of regulatory framework	7	9
<i>Total</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>100</i>

Pretty much each of these topics falls under multiple areas of study. To correctly answer questions that address the topic of handling customer accounts, for example, you have to know enough about different types of stocks, bonds, and so on to guide your customers, including which investments are most beneficial to retirees and which work best for investors who are just entering the workforce.

Although Table 1-1 shows the outline of the exam, this book (and most other study materials) breaks the chapters down by similar content to make your life easier and keep you from having to jump back and forth.

Understanding the Exam Format and Other Exam Details

To make sure that you don't walk into the testing center, take one look at the computer screen, go into shock, and start drooling on the keyboard, I use the next few sections to cover some of the testing details for the SIE exam.

Reviewing the exam basics

The SIE exam is a computerized, closed-book (in other words, no book) exam that lasts 1 hour and 45 minutes. The exam consists of 80 multiple-choice questions, although only 75 of them count toward your score (see the next section).



TIP

Certainly, you can take bathroom breaks at any time, but the clock continues to tick away, so you may want to reconsider drinking a mega-jumbo iced latte the morning of your test.

For information on the types of questions to expect, see Chapter 3. Flip to Chapter 4 for an overview of how your exam day may progress.

Practicing on five additional trial questions

To ensure that new questions to be introduced in future exams meet acceptable standards before inclusion, you answer five additional, unidentified questions that don't count toward your score. In other words, you get 80 questions to answer, but only 75 are scored.

Note: Don't waste your time trying to figure out which questions are experimental; you likely won't know for sure. FINRA may use these as regular questions on future exams in order to move the passing rate up or down.

Mastering the computerized format and features

Although you don't need any computer experience to do well on the exam, you don't want your first encounter with a computerized exam to be on the date of the SIE exam. Being familiar with the way the questions and answer choices appear on the screen is essential. FINRA has been nice enough to provide a tutorial for taking its qualification exams, such as the SIE, at the following link: www.finra.org/sites/default/files/external_apps/proctor_tutorial.swf.html.

In addition, a friendly exam-center employee will give you an introductory lesson to familiarize you with operating the computer before the exam session begins. Although candidates receive different exam questions and some may get slightly easier tests than others, FINRA realizes that and will adjust scores (which you won't know about) to make sure that each candidate has an equal chance to pass the exam.

The following list describes some important computer exam features:

- » Scroll bars for moving the questions on the screen.
- » A time-remaining clock to help you track how much time you have left during each part. (If the clock is driving you batty, you can hide it with a click of the mouse.)
- » A confirmation box that requires you to approve your answer choice before the computer proceeds to the next question.
- » An indication of which question you're currently on.
- » A choice of answering the questions by doing one of the following:
 - Holding down the Ctrl and Alt keys and typing the letter for the correct answer on the keyboard.
 - Using the mouse to click the correct answer.
- » The capability to change your answers or mark questions that you're unsure of for later review, which allows you to go back and answer them at any time during that particular part. The Mark for Review button appears at the bottom of the screen when you select an answer. Also, a Previous button allows you to go to the previous question if you want to change an answer.
- » Both Calculator and Notepad buttons are available in the top-left corner of the screen for you to use if necessary to help you answer the questions. Whatever you type in the notepad will be available the whole time you're taking the test.

- » If, during the test, you forget how any of the test features works, you can always click the Help button in the top-left corner for instructions.
- » When you complete the exam, you can click the Exit Exam button in the top-left corner. At that point, you can review questions or continue exiting the exam.

You can review your questions at any time during the test by clicking the Review Questions button on the bottom of the screen. At that point, you see a highlighted list of all the questions that you've answered as well as their question numbers; the question numbers marked for review have a green flag next to them. Just click the number to review questions you want to see again. You can remove a Marked for Review flag by clicking the Mark for Review button again. Click the Return to Test button at the top of the screen to get out of the review section.



TIP

Although you can review and change all your answers at the end of your test, I suggest that you refrain from going through all the questions again. Your brain is going to feel like it went through a blender by the time you finish the exam. Review only your *marked* questions and — this is important — change the answers only if you're 100 percent sure that you made a mistake. As an instructor, I've graded too many practice exams to count, and I know that people change a right answer to a wrong one five times more often than they change a wrong one to a right one.

Viewing exhibits

Some of the questions may require you to look at an exhibit such as an income statement or balance sheet to answer a question. Back when I took the exam, each candidate was given an exhibit book, and the question told you which exhibit you needed to look at in the book. Now the exhibits are right on the screen next to the questions, and the questions tell you to refer to the exhibit to extract the information you need. If a question requires more than one exhibit, thumbnails of the exhibits appear on the right. Just click each one to open it.

Instant gratification: Receiving and evaluating your score

Remember having to wait weeks for a standardized test score, hovering somewhere between eagerness and dread? Those days are gone. At the end of the SIE exam, the system calculates your score and lets you know whether you passed or failed; the results are displayed for you right there on the computer screen. Although the wait for your grade to pop up may feel like an eternity, it really takes only a few seconds to determine whether you're going to dance out of the testing center or walk out with a frown on your face. When you sign out, the test-center administrator will tackle you (well, approach you) and give you a printed exam report showing whether you passed or failed.

Each question on the SIE exam is worth an average of 11/3 points (some are worth more and some are worth less, depending on FINRA's feeling about how difficult a question is), and candidates need a score of 70 or better to achieve a passing grade. This percentage translates to 53 questions out of 75 that you have to answer correctly. The scores are always rounded down, so a grade of 69.33 is scored as 69 on the SIE.

Many moons ago, back when you actually got to see your grade, the passing grade was 70 (and the exam took up to 6 hours and was 250 questions long [260 with the experimental questions]). One of the other students in my class got a 69.6, which was rounded down to a 69, and he had FINRA review his exam to try to get him the extra point. Needless to say, FINRA ruled against him, and he had to take the exam again.

TESTING INFO FROM FINRA

The FINRA website (www.finra.org) is certainly worth checking out. It contains all the nitty-gritty details about the SIE and related exams. Use this website for the following:

- **FINRA Current Uniform Registration Forms for Electronic Filing in WEB CRD:** This page includes the registration forms and a link to the Uniform Forms Reference Guide, with contact numbers and other explanatory information for filers.
- **FINRA Test Center Rules of Conduct:** Just in case you're unable to distinguish the test center from that third-period algebra class you had back in high school, FINRA gives you the rules and regulations for taking the SIE. (Don't hide a list of equations under the brim of your baseball cap; don't roam the halls during your restroom break; and don't pass notes, no matter how bored you are.)
- **FINRA Registration and Exam Requirements:** This section gives you a comprehensive list of the categories of securities representatives and the exam requirements.
- **FINRA Appointments and Enrollment:** Here, you find FINRA tips for scheduling appointments to take securities exams, info about obtaining extensions, and the exam-cancellation policy.
- **FINRA Registration Exam Fee Schedule:** Check out this page to see the fees for registering for different securities exams.

You passed! Now what?

After you pass the SIE, FINRA will provide confirmation that you passed. At that point, if you haven't done so already, you can find a broker-dealer, bank, insurance company, or the like that wants you. After you're hired, your employer will let you know which other exams you have to take and will schedule them accordingly.

When you've passed your other exams and have become a licensed representative, you'll need to fulfill FINRA's yearly continuing-education requirements. All participants must complete their exams by December 31st of each year. You will be required to take a computer-based exam covering regulatory elements such as compliance, regulatory, ethical, and sales-practices standards at a Prometric exam center or online. In addition, a brokerage firm element requires broker-dealers to keep their registered representatives updated on job and product-related topics.

So you need a do-over: Retaking the exam

I'm sorry to end this chapter on a negative note, but the SIE is a relatively difficult exam, and some people need a do-over.

If you fail the SIE, you'll have to request a new test date and pay to retake the test. You should reapply immediately, though you have to schedule the new test date for at least 30 days after the day you failed. (That's 30 days of prime studying time!) If you fail the exam three times, you're required to wait 180 days before you can retake it.

Use the time between exams to understand what went wrong and fix it. Here are some of the reasons why people fail their securities exams and some of the steps you can take to be successful next time:

- » **Lack of preparation:** You have to follow, and stick to, a well-constructed plan of study. You have your diagnostic printout after you take the exam; use it to focus on the areas of study where you fell short!



REMEMBER

Prep courses can help you identify and focus on the most commonly tested topics and provide valuable tips for mastering difficult math problems. Also consider tutoring sessions tailored to accommodate your busy schedule and pinpoint the areas of study where you need the most help.

- » **Nerves:** Some people are very nervous test-takers, and they need to go through the process to get comfortable in unfamiliar situations. Next time around, they'll know what to expect and will pass with flying colors.

The people who are most nervous about taking the exam tend to be the ones who haven't prepared properly. Make sure that you're passing practice exams on a consistent basis with grades in at least the high 70s before you attempt to take the real exam.

- » **Insufficient practice exams:** You need to take enough practice exams before you take the real test. I think that getting used to the question formats and figuring out how to work through them is as important as learning the material to begin with.

Check out Chapter 2 for info on setting up a study schedule and making the most of your practice exams.



WARNING

SO YOU WANT TO TAKE THE TEST ONLINE

Due to COVID-19 way back in 2020, many of the Prometric test-center locations closed, which meant that candidates weren't able to take their exams. FINRA and Prometric worked on setting things up so that you can take their exams online. Although the testing-center locations have reopened, the online testing option is still available. Obviously, you need some things (and need to know some things) before making an appointment to take the test at your location. I suggest that you review the complete list at www.prometric.com/sites/default/files/2020-04/PrometricProUserGuide_3.1_1.pdf.

This site lists requirements for your computer (speakers, microphone, movable camera, and so on) and operating system. It also provides downloading instructions and explanations of ID requirements, and it explains that an either AI and/or an agent (who works for Prometrics) will be monitoring you through video chat. It is up to that agent to make sure that your testing area meets their requirements, you have the proper ID, and that you're not cheating during the test.

If an individual is caught cheating, they face severe consequences, including permanently barring the candidate from taking any FINRA qualifying exams.