

My Experience of Tableau Desktop Specialist Examination

I am working on Tableau Desktop for a few years now. But when I started studying for certification, I quickly realized that with only the working knowledge, I cannot clear the certification. Because there are more theoretical questions in the exam, and even for hands-on questions there are many concepts that I never used in real world projects like Sets, Trend Lines, etc.

It took me almost a month to prepare for the examination, and I refer multiple resources like random blogs, Tableau official tutorials (paid), and a few others to prepare for it. Once I got the confidence that now I can clear the certification, only then I booked the exam on Tableau lcsexams website. There are usually many slots available even for the next day, so I booked on Friday evening for Sunday at 4 PM.

On the exam day, I have not practiced any hands-on questions. I just revised the theoretical concepts from my notes which I made while reading the blogs and that helped a lot.

I logged in to Tableau lcsexams website at 3:55 PM, and there was a timer on my dashboard which shows after how many minutes my exam link will be activated. The link got activated at 3:59 PM and at the same time I clicked on that. Then I did wait for the proctor to join, in my case, he joined after 5 mins. He asked for my govt ID and asked me to show him my desk along with a 360-degree view of the room. We are only allowed to use a computer in-built microphone and webcam. No external headphones or webcam is allowed. There should not have any other stuff on your desk, and also asked me if I would be alone in the room for the entire duration of the exam. He did run some checks on my PC like a connection speed test which checks the bandwidth of my internet connection between my physical location and the servers that host the testing environment, also he asked me to open Task Manager to see what are the programs running. We need to use google chrome browser, I tried on Microsoft edge but the connection speed test site was not working on that. Finally, after all this, he logged on to the VM where I was supposed to take the exam. For this entire process, you need 15–20 mins but for the exam, you will get complete 60 mins. I believe proctor continuously monitor our movement during the exam, and if you have any issue you can let proctor know, obviously not related to the exam question 😊

We get 5 mins extra to read the instructions and that is automatically added to your 60 mins timer. I spent 2–3 mins in that, and also I opened the Tableau Desktop software during this time and checked from where I need to refer the datasets. I mistakenly went to windows search and type tableau and it shows me many versions so I confirmed with the proctor about the version. But you can find the right software which you need to use in the exam at your VM's desktop along with a folder that contains all the data sets which will be used during the exam.

I got almost 10 hands-on and 20 theoretical questions. As I was prepared well, so I have not found the exam difficult. But I have seen a few of my colleagues were not able to clear it in the past, so the difficulty level depends on your preparation.

Few tips for those 60 mins or what I followed:

- Read the question twice.
- You can access the internet to find the answers, I bookmarked the questions where I was not sure to check it on google in the end. But don't rely on google for every answer, as you end up wasting so much time searching the answers. For a multi-select question, I was confused in a couple of options, so I searched on google, I directly typed those options in the search bar and got what I needed. You cannot copy from your exam window, so you need to type the options on google. Another thing is don't type the question in the search bar, it is very unlikely that you will find the direct answers.
- I used Text Tables (CrossTabs) to answer most of the hands-on questions, as I find it easy and fast. Sometimes questions say that create a map or stacked bar chart, but we just need to find the right answer so I used crosstabs.
- I bookmarked all the questions where even I had 1% of doubt so that I can traverse those quickly in the end, but I selected some answer at the very first time itself, in case if I don't get time in the end.
- I used Table Calculations a lot for answering the hands-on questions, so please practice Table Calculations as much as possible during your preparation phase.
- I took the help of Tableau Desktop software even for theoretical questions, for example from where you can do the formatting of a tooltip,

select all that apply. So, for these types of questions just check every option at Tableau software, because these types of questions you cannot cover completely during the preparation phase, so don't forget to take the help of the software.

- Also, see all the options for Hands-on questions as well before marking the answer, for example for one of the questions I had the options like \$98.1 and \$98.14, so my answer was \$98.1 but then I changed the currency to two decimal places, then I got the answer as \$98.14. So please keep this in mind.
- I answered all the questions in 40 mins, and then I traversed to my bookmark questions, I spent the remaining 20 mins to search the options in google wherever I had confusion and also in rechecking the answers. Finally, I submitted it before 1 min and instantly I got the result on the screen. I scored a whooping 90%, proctor congratulated me. And in 2 hours after the exam, I got the Overall examination results in my registered email ID along with badge.

I consolidated all my learning in this course.

Hope it helps, and all the best for your Tableau Desktop Specialist examination.

Happy Learning !!!