Course Syllabus
Retirement Benefits Management Specialist®

Contact Information

Name: Maricor Bonjoc, CPBS
Office: 10845 Griffith Peak Drive, Suite 200, Las Vegas, NV 89135
Telephone: 702-389-1159
Email: info@acobs.org

Office Hours: Maricor is available to help and is normally online and available at short notice. Please send an email with any questions or to arrange a meeting. If Maricor doesn't respond to an email within 24 hours (M-F) ring her office phone at 702-389-1159.

Prerequisites: Minimum two years working experience in employee benefits, health insurance, pharmacy related business or undergraduate degree in business is recommended.

Course Description: This educational offering includes knowledge that is critical to effective management of the voluntary benefit. Each unit concludes with a knowledge assessment test to help gauge student comprehension. Students are required to pass with a score of 85% or better to qualify for the Retirement Benefits Management Specialist (RBMS®) designation.

Book information: The eBook will be available 24 hours before the class begins. Please note that access to the eBook is restricted to the training period, and it can only be downloaded for a fee of $100.

1. *Retirement Benefits Management Specialist (RBMS) Comprehensive Training Guide* equips brokers, consultants, and HR leaders with the knowledge to evaluate, design, and oversee retirement plans under a fiduciary standard of care. It focuses on cost transparency, vendor accountability, plan governance, and practical strategies to improve participant outcomes while reducing unnecessary fees and risk. [146 pages, updated 2026]

Methods of instruction: On-demand training is a flexible, learner-controlled approach that lets individuals access educational content whenever and wherever it suits them. It is structured to deliver knowledge in bite-sized, self-paced modules, typically delivered online, so learners can engage with material based on their schedule, skill gaps, and goals.

Learning Objectives

This is an intermediate to expert level course designed to cover relatively complex topics of pharmacy benefit management to provide the student with adequate foundational knowledge required for higher-level evaluation of RFPs, contracts, and overall PBM performance with emphasis on cost effectiveness. To that end, the following specific learning objectives will be achieved.

1. **Introduction to Retirement Benefits and Fiduciary Standards**
   Foundations of defined contribution and defined benefit plans, ERISA, fiduciary duty, and plan sponsor roles.

2. **Plan Types and Tax-Advantaged Accounts**
   Deep dive into 401(k), 403(b), 457(b), SEP, SIMPLE, IRAs, and Roth variants—including plan design and compliance.

3. **Plan Governance, Compliance, and Risk Management**
   Oversight responsibilities, Form 5500, DOL/IRS audits, nondiscrimination testing, and risk mitigation strategies.

4. **Investment Structure and Oversight**
   Plan menu construction, QDIAs, fund selection/monitoring, and benchmarking performance.

5. **Participant Engagement and Financial Wellness**
   Best practices for education, communication, and tools that drive employee participation and outcomes.

6. **Service Providers and Recordkeeper Oversight**
   Roles of recordkeepers, TPAs, advisors, custodians, and how to evaluate their fees, services, and performance.

7. **Plan Fees and Hidden Revenue Sharing**
   Unpacking revenue sharing, fee transparency, benchmarking, and aligning plan costs with fiduciary best practices.

8. **Plan Optimization and Retirement Readiness Strategies**
   Plan design levers (auto-enrollment, re-enrollment, match formulas), decumulation strategies, and outcome-based metrics.

GoToTraining: will be used as the main information repositories for this course. Almost all (if not all) course materials will be distributed through and/or completed with these tools during the semester. Session supporting materials will be made available on our GoToTraining site. Study resources and quizzes will be completed using the GoToTraining tool, launched through your dedicated registration link or email. Students are advised to plan ahead to submit their work by the posted due date and time; the instructor is not responsible for technology failures causing lost or incomplete work.

Grading:

1. A course calendar and a full schedule of deliverables, including point values, is provided at enrollment. Your total score comes from three components: quizzes, a capstone project, and the final exam.

2. Late assignments will not be accepted. Feedback and solution guidance will be generated during assignment work sessions. Supplemental feedback may be provided via email by the instructor.

Feedback and guidance will be available for assignments worked and submitted late, but the score earned will be a zero.

3. Students failing to adhere to testing policies documented herein will earn a zero for the missed examination.

4. The Grading System is pass or fail. A cumulative point total of 437 and a minimum score of 85% on the final exam is required to achieve certification.

Points	**Letter Grade**
437-515	Pass
436 or less	Fail

Course Schedule:

1. The capstone project is due before you can take the final exam. Requirements for the capstone project are provided at time of enrollment.

2. Readings should be completed before the class meeting on the date indicated in the schedule below. Unless otherwise noted, each reading is from the training guide. From time to time, additional supplementary readings may be assigned. Supplementary reading assignments will be clearly posted on our GoToTraining course site.

3. You have twelve months to complete the course, yet you should follow the following outline:

Module	Date	Topic	Chapter
Unit 1: Conceptual Foundations			
1	Week 1	Foundations of Retirement Benefits and Fiduciary Standards	1
2	Week 2	Plan Types and Tax-Advantaged Accounts	2
Unit 2: Governance and Oversight			
3	Week 3	Plan Governance, Compliance, and Risk Management	3
4	Week 4	Investment Structure and Oversight	4
Unit 3: Special Topics in Retirement Benefits Management			
5	Week 5	Participant Engagement and Financial Wellness	5
6	Week 6	Service Providers and Recordkeeper Oversight	6
7	Week 7	Plan Fees and Revenue Sharing	7
8	Week 8	Plan Optimization and Retirement Readiness	8
9	TBD	Final Examination	

<u>Testing Policies:</u>

1. Exams are CLOSED BOOK, CLOSED NOTE. Be advised if you are seeking continuing education credit, some states require that you pass the exam to be granted continuing education credit.

2. Quizzes are OPEN BOOK, OPEN NOTE. The answer keys for quizzes and practice exams are provided immediately upon submission of all quizzes for study purposes.

3. The final exam is administered remotely at 6 PM ET. Students arriving late forfeit that portion of exam/quiz time. No extra time will be provided for a student's late arrival. Each student will have 60 minutes to complete the final examination.

4. Candidates must achieve a minimum score of 85% to earn certification. Two examination attempts are included with initial enrollment and the highest score earned is recorded. Candidates who do not achieve a passing score after the two included attempts may enroll in any subsequent cohort for a $200 examination fee. Enrollment provides access to the full program, including all course materials and instruction, through the cohort's final examination. The examination fee includes up to two exam attempts for that cohort. Candidates may continue to enroll in future cohorts until they achieve a passing score.

Extra credit: Students should not expect extra credit to be available. There is a course buffer (10 points) already applied for each student to use when "life happens" and for whatever reason.

Assignments/Projects: Assignments, projects and homework are documented in detail on the schedule of assignments. Any late assignment including quizzes will receive a score of zero.

Group Tasks: Where group work is assigned, assignment requirements and grading rubrics will be provided in detail on the course RingCentral site. Students should expect that a portion of their individual grade on a group project will be based upon their individual contribution as assessed by their teammates.

Attendance:

1. In order to facilitate compliance with reporting rules surrounding continuing education, attendance is taken during each monthly discussion session. Students are responsible for signing the attendance roster to signify their presence in class. Poll questions are used to take attendance for eLearning; by not answering a poll question a student is considered absent. As requested by various departments of insurance, the student's last date of attendance will be reported.

2. Students are expected to attend the monthly discussion sessions regularly. Each session will last approximately 1.5 to 2 hours. This policy recognizes that course content includes lecture and discussion, certain aspects of which may not be covered on examinations and other written assignments. Monthly discussion session attendance helps you acquire knowledge, clarification, and CE.

Classroom behavior:

1. We are all responsible for the environment of our classroom. As such, it is imperative that we respect each other and strive to provide a climate that supports academic engagement and learning. That doesn't mean we won't have fun. It does mean we will be kind and supportive of each other.

System requirements for online success: Since this course is offered in an online format, students should expect some volume of work assigned to require connectivity to online resources. As such, students should ensure that their computer system meets these minimum technology requirements.

Minimum System Requirements

- Required Operating System: Minimum Windows 10 or latest Mac OS with 32 MB RAM
- Supported Internet browsers: Chrome and Mozilla Firefox
- Browser preferences: Java/JavaScript and Cookies
- Screen Resolution requirements: 800x600 minimum
- Additional requirements may be specified by the instructor based on the technology used

Additionally, we suggest these measures for our students especially before taking quizzes or exams:

1. Make sure there is no Windows update pending on the computer.
2. Make sure that Chrome or Mozilla Firefox browsers are updated as well.
3. Make sure that Java is updated on your computer.

Test your connection (link is in the reminder emails you receive from GoToTraining) prior to joining the class. If you have any issues with connecting to a training, contact GoToTraining at 877-548-3003 (option 1). If you are taking a quiz and are unable to successfully submit it and you've addressed all points above, try clearing your cache.

Skills for online success: Because this course is offered in an online format, students should expect some volume of work assigned to require skills with online resources. As such, students should have developed these fundamental skills to be successful.

Fundamental Required Skills:

- Download and send files.
- Navigate the Internet.
- Download software updates.
- Operating system basic troubleshooting
- Participate in chats and threaded discussions.
- Familiarity with messaging platforms (Skype, Hangout, LinkedIn etc.)
- Working knowledge of (word processing, spreadsheets, course specific software)

General Policies

Policy on Withdrawal: A refund of the course fee (less $100 for the eBook training guide) is available to all registered students up to 24 hours upon a paid registration. If it's not right for you, up to 24 hours, email us and receive a refund (less $100 for the eBook training guide) of your course fee.

Academic dishonesty: All acts of academic dishonesty including cheating and plagiarism will be viewed as violations of appropriate student conduct and they will be dealt with following student due process policies in effect. Disciplinary actions will be taken as warranted. An act of academic dishonesty in this course will automatically result in a grade of Fail on the test or assignment at issue, and possibly for the course itself. Please, give credit where credit is due, specifically and consistently. The appropriate use of technology is expected.

Accreditation Information:

HRCI

The use of this seal confirms that this activity has met HR Certification Institute's® (HRCI®) criteria for recertification credit pre-approval.

SHRM RECERTIFICATION PROVIDER SHRM-CP | SHRM-SCP

PBIA is recognized by SHRM to offer Professional Development Credits (PDCs) for SHRM-CP® or SHRM-SCP® recertification activities. This program is valid for 12 PDCs. For more information about certification or recertification, please visit www.shrmcertification.org.

Life & Health Insurance License

Life and Health (L&H) licensees may earn continuing education credits check with the department of insurance or email info@pharmacybenefitinstitute.com to determine if we're an approved provider (and reporting requirements) of L&H continuing education in your state.