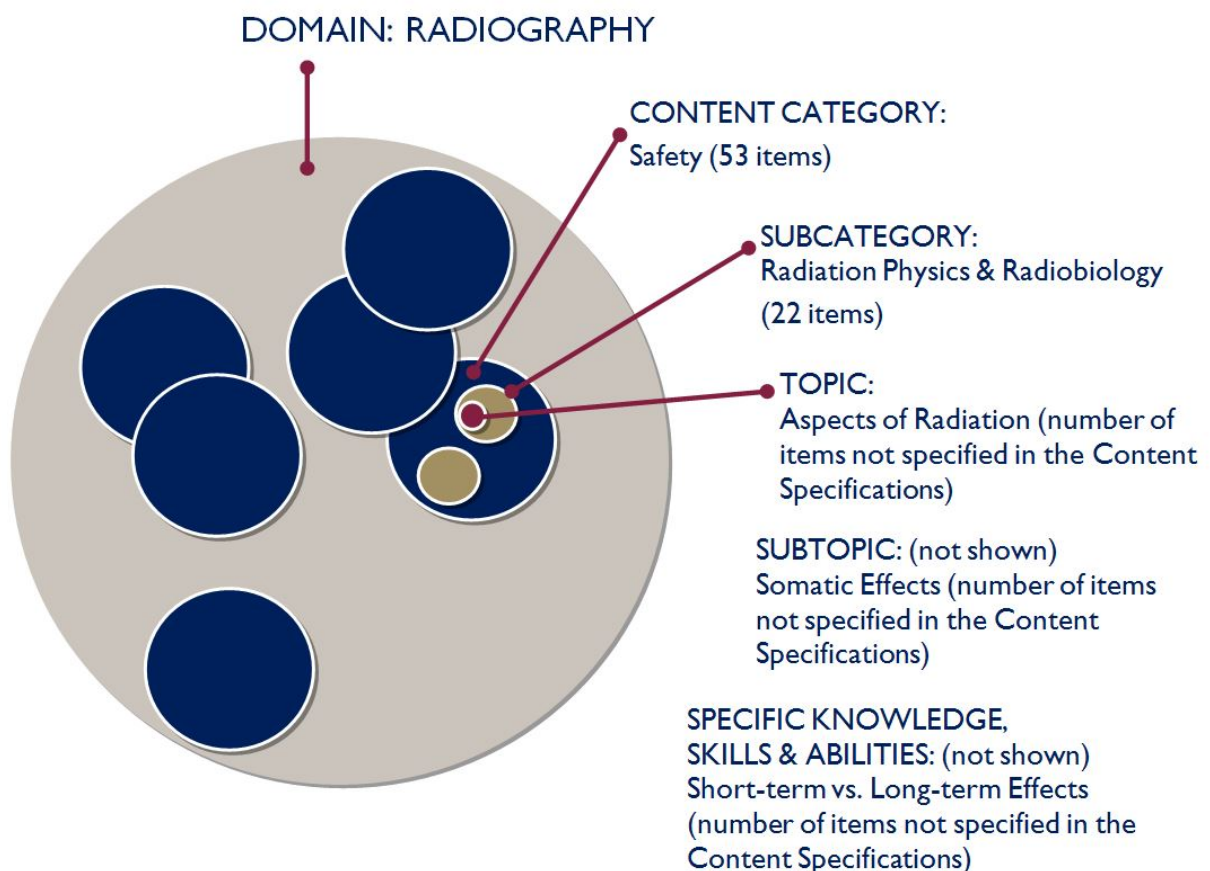**WHAT IS DOMAIN SAMPLING?**

We generally use the domain sampling model to develop our certification and registration exams. It works well because a carefully specified sample can yield much information about an entire population.

No single exam can reasonably include questions about every possible knowledge, skill, or ability in a particular set of skills ("domain"). Instead, exams include a sample of the domain skills. We typically assemble exams of 100 to 200 questions sampled from a larger domain.

Sampling in a Domain

Once we define a domain, we develop a strategy for sampling from it. The figure below illustrates the relationships among levels of a particular domain.

Size is an important feature of a sample; an exam must be long enough to reliably sample the domain. Our Practice Analysis Advisory Committees consider a range of factors, such as the breadth of the domain, the number of content categories, and other data obtained from the practice analysis. We also draw on common psychometric practices.

We then ensure that the domain is well-represented by developing content specifications. They include factors such as the number of questions for each content category and subcategory.