



# Certified Association Executive (CAE®) Program Candidate Handbook

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*Note: This handbook reflects the policies and procedures as of October 1, 2020. All policies and procedures are subject to change. If you need further information, please visit [asaecenter.org/cae](http://asaecenter.org/cae) or contact CAE Program staff.*

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# WELCOME

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Welcome and congratulations on taking the first step toward earning the Certified Association Executive credential. The American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) established the Certified Association Executive (CAE®) Program in 1960 to promote the highest standards of association management through the credentialing of association professionals. The CAE exam is designed to identify association professionals who have the knowledge to serve in the executive director role of a U.S.-based organization of any type or size. By choosing to review this candidate handbook, you have taken the first step toward joining those who have distinguished themselves by earning the CAE.

## How To Use This Handbook

This handbook summarizes key aspects of the CAE® Program, and is intended to help you understand why the program was developed, how it is governed, its policies and procedures, and the steps to earning and maintaining the CAE credential. The handbook is a useful reference to you as you:

- make your decision whether to pursue the CAE
- develop your course of study to meet the eligibility requirements of the CAE
- complete the CAE application
- study and prepare for the CAE examination
- seek to maintain (or provide yourself another opportunity to earn) the CAE

The CAE is a vibrant program that continues to grow and be refined in accord with the evolution of association management and certification professional practices. No printed document can address every potential question, policy detail, or future program change. You are encouraged to use this handbook as a supplement to the program information provided on the CAE Program webpages ([asaecenter.org/cae](http://asaecenter.org/cae)) as well as the information provided by ASAE's credentialing staff, who may be contacted at 202-626-2759 or [caedep@asaecenter.org](mailto:caedep@asaecenter.org).

Again, welcome and best wishes on earning your CAE!

## The CAE Commission

The CAE Commission, an independent certifying body of the American Society of Association Executives, is responsible for the governance of the CAE Program, and all policy and standards related to the CAE credential. The program is administered by ASAE staff, who implement the policies. This structure allows the CAE Commission to maintain integrity concerning policy matters related to credentialing.

The CAE Commission issues certificates to individuals who successfully meet its standards. These individuals may present themselves to the public as certified association executives.

## CAE Commission 2020-2021

### **Chair**

DJ Johnson, IOM, CAE  
VP, Membership and Volunteer Engagement  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric & Neonatal Nurses  
Washington, DC

### **Chair-Elect**

Elizabeth Ward Santana, CAE  
Director, Conceptual Research & Design  
Inteleos  
Rockville, MD

### **Immediate Past Chair**

Donté Shannon, CAE  
CEO  
Association of Equipment Management Professionals  
Middleton, WI

Juan Amador, CAE  
Director, Constituent Engagement  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
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Mary Jane Cobb, CAE  
Executive Director  
Iowa State Education Association  
Des Moines, IA

Thomas J. Coté, MBA, CAE  
Executive Director  
Capitol Hill Management Services, Inc.  
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Michelle Lui, CAE  
Executive Director  
Financial Management Association International  
Tampa, FL

Joyce L. Paschall, CMP, CAE  
Director of Education & Engagement  
American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine  
Rosemont, IL

Jacqueline Price Osafo, CAE  
Vice President of Membership  
American Health Info Management Association  
Chicago, IL

Rhea M. Steele, CAE  
Chief of Staff  
School Nutrition Association  
Arlington, VA

Diana M.L. Tucker, CAE  
Vice President for Membership and Chapter Relations  
NAIOP  
Herndon, VA

Liana Watson, DM, PMP, CAE  
Coordinator of American Board of Imaging Informatics  
and Senior Program Manager, Government Affairs  
American Registry of Radiologic Technologists  
Saint Paul, MN

### **ASAE Representative**

Cameron U. Curtis, CMM, CAE  
President & CEO  
Association of Air Medical Services

### **Public Member**

Anthony Breitbach, PhD, ATC, FASAHP  
Professor/Director, Athletic Training Program  
Saint Louis University  
St. Louis, MO

# HISTORY

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## HOW WAS THE CAE® PROGRAM DEVELOPED?

The Certified Association Executive Program is designed to elevate professional standards, enhance individual performance, and designate individuals who demonstrate the knowledge essential to the practice of association management. Founded in 1960, the CAE Program has stood as a mark of excellence for over 50 years and has evolved to reflect the growth and changes in the practice of association management.

The eligibility requirements and materials for the CAE certification program were developed based on a thorough study of the scope of practice and current state of knowledge in association management. A national job analysis survey of association professionals was conducted in 2018-2019 to define the scope of practice for association professionals and determine the content areas appropriate for the test. The survey was designed to identify the knowledge used by association professionals in the day-to-day performance of their jobs. A representative panel of association management experts reviewed the results of the survey and identified the scope of practice for association professionals based on these data, thus ensuring that the content of the test reflects the day-to-day practice of association professionals nationwide. The results were organized into the Exam Content Outline, nine knowledge domains and respective competencies that can be found on pages 10-15 of this handbook.

The CAE exam questions are written by Certified Association Executives and reviewed by a panel of association management experts. Every question is also reviewed by a psychometrician, a trained expert in development and use of examinations, prior to being selected for the test.

After the test, the questions are analyzed statistically to identify if there are any hidden flaws. Questions that appear to be flawed are discussed by the CAE Examination Committee to determine if credit should be given for more than one answer. After these issues are resolved, the test is scored.

The exam question pool for the CAE certification program is updated on a regular basis to reflect current practices in association management. Individual questions are discarded if they are out of date or not useful for other reasons.

The CAE certification test has been designed to meet testing industry standards for validity and reliability.

**Validity** is the degree to which the content of the test reflects the knowledge and skills required to perform the duties of an association chief staff executive in a competent manner.

**Reliability** is the accuracy of the test results. That is, the degree to which the test results are free from statistical error.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CAE CREDENTIAL?

The purposes of the CAE certification program are to:

- establish the body of knowledge for association professionals;
- assess the level of knowledge demonstrated by association professionals in a valid and reliable manner;
- encourage professional growth in the field of association management;
- formally recognize individuals who meet the requirements set by CAE Commission; and
- serve the public by encouraging quality association management services.

The CAE Commission, with the assistance and advice of professionals in relevant fields, has attempted to develop a credential that will recognize accepted levels of expertise in the profession with the goal of improving professional standards in association management. However, no certification program can guarantee professional competence. In addition, given the frequent changes in recommended practice and nonprofit law, the CAE Commission cannot warrant that the test materials will at all times reflect the most current state of the art. The CAE Commission welcomes constructive comments and suggestions from the public and the profession.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATION?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>The benefits of certification for association professionals include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Verification of your knowledge by an independent organization – a way to prove that you have the knowledge needed for the job</li><li>• Professional growth and development</li><li>• Enhanced job opportunities</li></ul> | <p>The benefits of certification for employers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased productivity</li><li>• Less training time needed to bring employees “up to speed”</li><li>• Competitive advantage in promoting services to members and other stakeholders</li></ul> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## GETTING READY FOR THE TEST

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### WHO CAN TAKE THE TEST?

You are eligible to apply for the test if you meet the following requirements. You:

- have one year of experience at the CEO or C-suite level at a qualifying organization\* or you have five years of experience working at the staff level at a qualifying organization. *\*\*Also, see in lieu of options.*
- are currently employed by a qualifying organization or have been employed by such within the last five years. *\*\*\*Also, see in lieu of options.*
- have a bachelor's degree or higher, or in lieu of a degree, you have eight additional years of professional work experience.
- are committed to upholding the ASAE [Standards of Conduct](#), CAE Code of Professional Conduct and have no felony convictions related to the practice of association management.
- have completed 100 hours of broad-based [qualifying professional development](#) within the last five years.

\*A qualifying organization is a nonprofit organization (trade association, professional society,

individual membership organization, philanthropic organization, tribal organization) or an association management company (AMC).

**\*\***In lieu of employment at a qualifying organization, an applicant may have ten years paid service as an employee, independent contractor, or consultant with demonstrated professional involvement within the association community by providing services as defined by the CAE exam content outline or five years of such service if substantially all of your work is devoted solely to qualifying organizations.

**\*\*\***If qualifying under in lieu of employment requirements, must be currently (or within the last five years) employed in paid service as an employee, independent contractor, or consultant with demonstrated professional involvement within the association community by providing services as defined by the CAE exam content outline.

All experience and coursework must be complete at the time the application is submitted.

Actual clock time of qualifying education counts for CAE credit including partial hours, up to a maximum of 8 CAE credits per day. (Ex. 1½ hours of qualifying education equals 1.5 CAE credits.)

**The eligibility requirements together provide a reasonable assurance that applicants for the certification have the experience and knowledge need to take and be successful at the exam.**

Professional Experience and Employment: The years of experience and employment at a qualifying organization provide a base and background to understand the management, governance, leadership, and other aspects of leading an association. More time is required at levels other than the CEO and C-suite positions, as individuals at other levels may deal directly with their specialty area and would need more time to be exposed to multiple areas and levels. Education: The bachelor's degree requirement or equivalent would typically be required for senior-level positions at qualifying organizations.

Professional Conduct: ASAE members and CAE applicants commit to work in accordance with ethical standards and to encourage the development and implementation of the ethical standards within the industries and professions represented by its members. The Standards of Conduct describe the conduct that individuals strive to uphold as ASAE members and as CAEs. Professional Development: The number of credits of professional development are required as a base of knowledge in the competency areas listed in the exam content outline. The five-year timeframe was established to allow applicants enough time to complete the requirements while keeping abreast of current best practices.

Examination: The examination is a standardized assessment that is used to ensure that certificants possess professional knowledge and skill at the level that is required for certification. The content of the CAE examination is determined by means of a practice analysis study.

## **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?**

A fee (\$500 ASAE members/\$750 nonmembers) must accompany the application. The CAE exam application documents your qualifying professional experience, professional development activities and attestation to uphold ASAE's Standards of Conduct. All experience and coursework must be complete at the time the application is submitted, which is approximately three months prior to the exam date. See [www.asaecenter.org/cae](http://www.asaecenter.org/cae) for specific fee information and application deadlines.

A nonrefundable fee of \$150 is included in the application fee. This \$150 charge is incurred upon receipt of

your application by the CAE Program. If for some reason, you fail to meet the eligibility requirements at the time of application, your application and documentation will be returned to you. Your fee will be refunded, less the \$150 nonrefundable portion.

## **HOW DO I APPLY?**

You must complete the current Certified Association Executive application to apply for the CAE exam. Please be sure to read all the information included in this handbook and follow all instructions on the application carefully.

All applications must be submitted through the online platform by the deadline for the applicable exam date.

When your application has been reviewed and accepted, you will receive an acknowledgment and your record will be marked as a valid candidate. Valid candidates may take the exam once at either of the two next test windows as part of their application fee. A second examination at the next test administration on the same application is subject to a retesting fee of \$250.

## **IS MY INFORMATION KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

Certification applications and candidates' performance on the CAE examination shall remain confidential unless otherwise stipulated by the examinee or as required by law. The CAE Program will release application and pass/fail information only to the applicant and only in writing.

The exception to this is the published list of CAEs that the Commission makes available to the public. This statement does not preclude the publishing of any certificant's name against whom disciplinary action has been taken.

For the complete policy on confidentiality, please see CAE Standing Rules and Policies, Policy #1.

## **WHEN AND WHERE IS THE TEST GIVEN?**

The CAE exam is given in a two-week window in May and December. The test is administered at Scantron examination sites throughout the U.S. and internationally. During the COVID-19 pandemic, candidates will also have the option to take the exam from their home or office via live online proctoring (LOP). The LOP option can be chosen when selecting a site through Scantron. For more information on exam sites or test center policies, visit [www.asaecenter.org/cae](http://www.asaecenter.org/cae) or contact ASAE credentialing staff at [caedep@asaecenter.org](mailto:caedep@asaecenter.org).

## **HOW ARE REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS MADE?**

The CAE Commission will make reasonable efforts to accommodate eligible candidates, who provide detailed documented evidence of their disability or need for reasonable accommodations for a professional certification exam, with auxiliary aids and services that do not present an undue burden to the CAE Commission and do not fundamentally alter the measurement of the knowledge the assessment is intended to test. If you require reasonable accommodations, you must inform the CAE Program staff of your needs in writing with supporting medical documentation at the time of your application.



## WHAT IS THE FORMAT FOR THE TEST?

The test has 200 multiple-choice questions. Each question contains four options or choices, only one of which is the correct or best answer. You will be asked to select the correct or best answer from these options.

The exam is offered as a computer-based exam in a single four-hour session. The exam is divided into two parts with a scheduled break between parts 1 and 2. Candidates will review and complete all questions in part 1 and then submit part 1 of the exam before moving on to part 2. Once part 1 is submitted, the candidate cannot go back to any of the items on part 1. Candidates can then take a break of no more than 15 minutes before beginning part 2.

Please note that for live online proctoring (LOP) candidates, the scheduled 15-minute break is the only break for the exam. Candidates may use this break to use the restroom, grab a snack, stretch, etc. Candidates testing at a test center may take other breaks if needed, but the clock will not stop for any additional breaks.

All candidates can use any portion of the four hours for part 1 of the exam, and the time remaining is available to complete part 2. For example, if a candidate uses 2.5 hours to complete part 1 of the exam, the candidate will have 1.5 hours to complete part 2 of the exam. Or if a candidate uses 1.5 hours to complete part 1, they will have 2.5 hours to finish part 2, etc. All candidates will see a countdown of the time remaining on the computer screen during the exam.

Test center candidates and LOP candidates will be able to use the onscreen open notes section during the exam for “scratch paper”. Please contact [caedep@asaecenter.org](mailto:caedep@asaecenter.org) for LOP equipment requirements and other information.

For LOP candidates, any items used/could be used to prepare for the exam should not be in the room during the exam. The desk/work area should be cleared of all items except for a clear bottle/glass of water if desired (no label). The room does not need to be completely bare, but the candidate should not access any additional items during the exam.

The CAE exam will be given on Scantron’s PASS system. A PASS demo is accessible here: <https://www.scantron.com/preparing-for-your-test/>

## WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW FOR THE TEST?

The job analysis conducted in 2018-2019 resulted in the current Exam Content Outline, which organizes competencies deemed essential to association management into eight knowledge domains. This exam content outline will be used through the May 2025 exam.

### The CAE Exam Content Outline

The composition of the exam is guided by extensive research on the job competencies performed and knowledge needed by association executives. The research and the exam content outline are updated approximately every five years. Please note that the questions from each content area will be mixed throughout the test. The questions will not be presented in content area order on the

test.

The following is a detailed outline of the eight major content areas of the test which will be used to guide the composition of the CAE exam effective December 2020 through May 2025, with an indication in parentheses of the percentage range of the test devoted to each area:

## ASAE CAE EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

*For use beginning with the December 2020 exam*

|                                                                                                                                                       | <i>Percent Range<br/>on Exam</i> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Domain 1: Governance</b>                                                                                                                           | <b>9% to 11%</b>                 |
| <b>A. Governance Structure</b>                                                                                                                        |                                  |
| 1. Sustain an effective governance system that values diversity of thought to guide the organization in accomplishing its mission.                    |                                  |
| 2. Implement the board's policies and strategic priorities.                                                                                           |                                  |
| 3. Partner with the board and board committees to achieve the organization's mission and vision.                                                      |                                  |
| 4. Ensure there are clear lines defined for members and staff in the governance of the organization.                                                  |                                  |
| 5. Comply with laws and regulations that relate to board activities, meetings, and governance.                                                        |                                  |
| <b>B. Chapters and Affiliate Relations</b>                                                                                                            |                                  |
| 1. Evaluate the structure and function of affiliates and chapters to advance the organization's mission.                                              |                                  |
| 2. Delineate the lines of authority and responsibility for affiliates and chapters using appropriate agreements                                       |                                  |
| 3. Align policies, procedures, and resources to support affiliate and chapter relationships.                                                          |                                  |
| <b>C. Volunteer Leadership Development</b>                                                                                                            |                                  |
| 1. Develop a leadership identification program that addresses diversity and inclusiveness and aligns the organization's needs with individual talent. |                                  |
| 2. Ensure the leadership development program addresses orientation, ongoing training, collaboration, fiduciary responsibility, and accountability.    |                                  |
| 3. Develop a volunteer leadership succession plan.                                                                                                    |                                  |
| <b>Domain 2: Executive Leadership</b>                                                                                                                 | <b>19% to 21%</b>                |
| <b>A. Decision Making</b>                                                                                                                             |                                  |
| 1. Manage roles between the chief staff executive and leadership to facilitate effective decision making.                                             |                                  |
| 2. Ensure the creation of organizational performance metrics.                                                                                         |                                  |
| 3. Establish a culture of accountability.                                                                                                             |                                  |
| <b>B. Ethical Leadership</b>                                                                                                                          |                                  |

*Applicable as of 11/1/2020. All policies, procedures, and fees subject to change.*

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|                                                                                                                                                                                 |                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Adhere to the ASAE Standards of Conduct to demonstrate transparency, professionalism, and integrity.                                                                         |                  |
| 2. Embody the highest ethical principles in behavior and decision making.                                                                                                       |                  |
| 3. Communicate the importance of ethical behavior and decision making throughout the organization.                                                                              |                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                 |                  |
| <b>C. Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity</b>                                                                                                                                      |                  |
| 1. Model an understanding and respect for a culture of inclusivity to enhance the daily work and sustainability of the organization.                                            |                  |
| 2. Proactively address the impact of changing demographic and cultural trends.                                                                                                  |                  |
| 3. Identify ways that conscious and unconscious biases may impact the organization.                                                                                             |                  |
| 4. Align communications, programs, products, and services to reflect the organization's diversity.                                                                              |                  |
| 5. Create policies in support of diversity and inclusiveness.                                                                                                                   |                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                 |                  |
| <b>D. Adaptive Leadership</b>                                                                                                                                                   |                  |
| 1. Seek new perspectives and growth opportunities to increase effectiveness and build team capacity.                                                                            |                  |
| 2. Develop a diverse array of facilitation techniques and communication skills to stimulate creative thinking, ensure all voices are understood, and accomplish intended goals. |                  |
| 3. Exercise effective and ethical negotiation skills to resolve conflicts and achieve consensus.                                                                                |                  |
| 4. Formulate a process to effectively navigate change and promote innovation.                                                                                                   |                  |
| 5. Cultivate relationships to advance the organization's strategic objectives.                                                                                                  |                  |
| 6. Model self-care and wellness behaviors to encourage workforce satisfaction and productivity.                                                                                 |                  |
| 7. Facilitate a culture of inquiry that assesses the impact of trends, future scenarios, challenges, and opportunities.                                                         |                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                 |                  |
| <b>Domain 3: Organizational Strategy</b>                                                                                                                                        | <b>8% to 10%</b> |
| <b>A. General Management</b>                                                                                                                                                    |                  |
| 1. Analyze economic and other external factors to guide long term financial planning and performance.                                                                           |                  |
| 2. Prepare business plans to align resources, activities, and operations with the organization's core purpose.                                                                  |                  |
| 3. Utilize performance metrics to guide progression towards organization's goals.                                                                                               |                  |
| 4. Develop a policy of independent periodic review and audit of the organization's finances.                                                                                    |                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                 |                  |
| <b>B. Critical Analysis and Planning</b>                                                                                                                                        |                  |
| 1. Analyze the impact of key trends, including the competitive environment, on the organization and its stakeholders.                                                           |                  |
| 2. Implement a strategic planning process to advance the organization's vision and mission.                                                                                     |                  |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 3. Develop strategies for capturing business intelligence data to inform decision making.                                                                                                            |                   |
| <b>C. Knowledge Management</b>                                                                                                                                                                       |                   |
| 1. Design a knowledge management system to address stakeholder needs and preferences.                                                                                                                |                   |
| 2. Analyze data from the knowledge management system to advance the organization's mission.                                                                                                          |                   |
| 3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the knowledge management system.                                                                                                                                    |                   |
| <b>Domain 4: Operations</b>                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>17% to 19%</b> |
| <b>A. Financial Management</b>                                                                                                                                                                       |                   |
| 1. Oversee financial and business planning to achieve the organization's strategic objectives and mission.                                                                                           |                   |
| 2. Implement systems, metrics, and tools to monitor, manage, and report financial performance and ensure compliance with laws and regulations.                                                       |                   |
| 3. Communicate clear and accurate financial information to leadership and relevant stakeholders to support decision making and ensure transparency.                                                  |                   |
| 4. Manage revenue, investment, and reserve policies to protect and enhance the financial security of the organization.                                                                               |                   |
| 5. Apply generally accepted accounting principles for independent review or audit of the organization's finances.                                                                                    |                   |
| 6. Anticipate the impact of internal and external factors to guide financial planning and policies.                                                                                                  |                   |
| 7. Develop financial modeling to inform decision making and evaluate performance.                                                                                                                    |                   |
| <b>B. Human Resources</b>                                                                                                                                                                            |                   |
| 1. Foster a safe and accessible workplace through compliance with rules and regulations and development of policies and procedures.                                                                  |                   |
| 2. Delineate job roles and responsibilities with clear position descriptions, policies, and procedures.                                                                                              |                   |
| 3. Ensure fair and equitable treatment of staff and mitigate exposure to risk through compliance with applicable law and regulations in recruiting, hiring, disciplinary, and termination practices. |                   |
| 4. Evaluate employees using a documented process to support teamwork, performance, growth, and professional development.                                                                             |                   |
| 5. Maintain an up-to-date employee handbook to articulate the organization's policies, values, and expectations and comply with applicable employment laws and regulations.                          |                   |
| 6. Ensure diversity, inclusion, and equity are integrated into policies, practices, and culture.                                                                                                     |                   |
| <b>C. Legal Oversight and Risk Mitigation</b>                                                                                                                                                        |                   |
| 1. Manage the organization in compliance with relevant laws and regulations.                                                                                                                         |                   |
| 2. Obtain appropriate insurance to protect the organization's reputation and assets.                                                                                                                 |                   |

|                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                           |                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 3.                                                           | Maintain data privacy and security consistent with current law and best practices.                                                                                        |                   |
| 4.                                                           | Protect the organization's intellectual property.                                                                                                                         |                   |
| 5.                                                           | Protect human, technological, and physical assets with an emergency and business continuity plan.                                                                         |                   |
| <b>D. Infrastructure and Technology</b>                      |                                                                                                                                                                           |                   |
| 1.                                                           | Align facilities, equipment, and technology with organizational objectives and the requirements of a changing workplace environment.                                      |                   |
| 2.                                                           | Determine the organization's ongoing technology strategy.                                                                                                                 |                   |
| 3.                                                           | Ensure technology solutions are appropriate, used effectively, and aligned with organizational goals.                                                                     |                   |
| 4.                                                           | Establish policies and procedures to ensure appropriate use of the organization's technology assets.                                                                      |                   |
| <b>E. Vendor Relations</b>                                   |                                                                                                                                                                           |                   |
| 1.                                                           | Assess the organization's needs for products and services.                                                                                                                |                   |
| 2.                                                           | Develop selection and evaluation criteria for potential vendors.                                                                                                          |                   |
| 3.                                                           | Implement objective processes for Requests for Proposals.                                                                                                                 |                   |
| 4.                                                           | Implement contracting procedures that ensure the organization's expectations, interests, and assets are protected.                                                        |                   |
| 5.                                                           | Enforce contractual compliance.                                                                                                                                           |                   |
| <b>Domain 5: Business Development</b>                        |                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>12% to 14%</b> |
| <b>A. Programs, Products, Services, and Non-dues Revenue</b> |                                                                                                                                                                           |                   |
| 1.                                                           | Analyze stakeholder feedback to ensure that programs, products, and services are consistent with evolving member needs and the organization's strategic goals and values. |                   |
| 2.                                                           | Evaluate the feasibility of introducing, modifying, or discontinuing programs, products, and services.                                                                    |                   |
| 3.                                                           | Develop comprehensive implementation plans to ensure that programs, products, and services are mission-driven.                                                            |                   |
| <b>B. Meetings and events</b>                                |                                                                                                                                                                           |                   |
| 1.                                                           | Define objectives for meetings and events in alignment with organizational goals and stakeholder needs.                                                                   |                   |
| 2.                                                           | Prioritize the use of organizational resources to achieve successful meetings and events.                                                                                 |                   |
| 3.                                                           | Evaluate outcomes relative to objectives to improve future meetings and events.                                                                                           |                   |
| <b>C. Certification, Licensure, and Accreditation</b>        |                                                                                                                                                                           |                   |
| 1.                                                           | Maintain a current understanding of the distinguishing characteristics of certification, certificate programs, licensure, and accreditation.                              |                   |
| 2.                                                           | Assess the need for and relevance of credentialing programs.                                                                                                              |                   |
| 3.                                                           | Comply with relevant standards and legal obligations associated with credentialing programs to ensure validity and reliability and minimize risk.                         |                   |

|                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>D. Industry Standards</b>                                                                                                                                    |  |
| 1. Identify the need for standards in keeping with the organizational vision and mission.                                                                       |  |
| 2. Implement transparent and objective standards development and promulgation processes.                                                                        |  |
| 3. Ensure that standards are maintained to protect the organization and minimize risk.                                                                          |  |
| <b>E. Strategic Partnerships</b>                                                                                                                                |  |
| 1. Determine the organization's strategic needs and objectives for partnership.                                                                                 |  |
| 2. Develop strategic partnerships to advance the organization's mission.                                                                                        |  |
| 3. Conduct due diligence and ongoing review to ensure partnerships are viable and aligned with the organization's mission.                                      |  |
| 4. Negotiate agreements that define the terms of partnership and comply with legal requirements.                                                                |  |
| <b>Domain 6: Member and Stakeholder Engagement and Management</b>                                                                                               |  |
| <b>10% to 12%</b>                                                                                                                                               |  |
| <b>A. Recruitment and Retention</b>                                                                                                                             |  |
| 1. Determine the membership business model and value proposition to ensure alignment with the mission and strategic goals.                                      |  |
| 2. Define goals and key performance indicators for membership recruitment and retention.                                                                        |  |
| <b>B. Stakeholder Identification and Cultivation</b>                                                                                                            |  |
| 1. Establish criteria for the identification of individuals and organizations as stakeholders to align them with the organization and its strategic objectives. |  |
| 2. Engage stakeholders by identifying their current and future needs in order to maximize organizational impact.                                                |  |
| 3. Review the alignment of stakeholders using organizational metrics on a regular basis.                                                                        |  |
| <b>C. Volunteer Management</b>                                                                                                                                  |  |
| 1. Establish a system that attracts and engages volunteers through training, recognition, and accountability.                                                   |  |
| 2. Clearly delineate roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers.                                                                                        |  |
| 3. Establish a volunteer succession plan that supports organizational continuity.                                                                               |  |
| <b>D. Ethics</b>                                                                                                                                                |  |
| 1. Define the ethical standards for professional conduct that align with the vision and mission of the organization and stakeholder interests.                  |  |
| 2. Raise awareness of the ethical standards to encourage adherence.                                                                                             |  |
| 3. Manage a discipline program to address violations of the ethical standards.                                                                                  |  |
| 4. Review stakeholder interests and professional practice periodically to maintain the relevance of the ethical standards.                                      |  |
| <b>Domain 7: Advocacy</b>                                                                                                                                       |  |
| <b>5% to 7%</b>                                                                                                                                                 |  |
| <b>A. Government Relations</b>                                                                                                                                  |  |
| 1. Assess the appropriateness of and need for government relations programs.                                                                                    |  |

|                                               |                                                                                                                                         |                   |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 2.                                            | Maintain an understanding of laws and regulations related to federal and state Political Action Committees.                             |                   |
| 3.                                            | Define the government relations agenda consistent with accomplishing advocacy goals.                                                    |                   |
| 4.                                            | Implement strategies that adhere to applicable laws and regulations for lobbying and political activity.                                |                   |
| 5.                                            | Establish an evaluation process for government relations programs.                                                                      |                   |
| <b>B. Coalition Building</b>                  |                                                                                                                                         |                   |
| 1.                                            | Establish a vision of coalition building that is flexible and inclusive to advance mutual goals.                                        |                   |
| 2.                                            | Identify opportunities for new coalitions to address emerging issues.                                                                   |                   |
| 3.                                            | Organize coalitions to address issues of common interest.                                                                               |                   |
| 4.                                            | Assess the efficacy of each coalition relative to the organization's advocacy goals.                                                    |                   |
| <b>C. Public Policy</b>                       |                                                                                                                                         |                   |
| 1.                                            | Establish prioritized public policy positions that support the organization's goals.                                                    |                   |
| 2.                                            | Determine strategies to achieve public policy goals.                                                                                    |                   |
| <b>Domain 8: Marketing and Communications</b> |                                                                                                                                         | <b>12% to 14%</b> |
| <b>A. Marketing</b>                           |                                                                                                                                         |                   |
| 1.                                            | Define the scope of current and potential markets.                                                                                      |                   |
| 2.                                            | Identify market segments and their unique interests and needs.                                                                          |                   |
| 3.                                            | Develop a data-driven marketing strategy to achieve organizational goals.                                                               |                   |
| 4.                                            | Utilize effective methods of marketing to diverse groups and cultures.                                                                  |                   |
| <b>B. Brand Management</b>                    |                                                                                                                                         |                   |
| 1.                                            | Establish brand standards to convey the features, benefits, and value of the organization to stakeholders and other audiences.          |                   |
| 2.                                            | Direct the integration of the organization's brand in all programs, services, and activities.                                           |                   |
| 3.                                            | Evaluate the organization's brand effectiveness.                                                                                        |                   |
| <b>C. Communication</b>                       |                                                                                                                                         |                   |
| 1.                                            | Define the communication goals.                                                                                                         |                   |
| 2.                                            | Identify the most appropriate communication channels and preferences for meeting the diverse needs and interests of targeted audiences. |                   |
| 3.                                            | Customize content and messaging that leverage current and emerging communication channels.                                              |                   |
| 4.                                            | Establish an evaluation process to gauge the effectiveness of messaging and communication methods.                                      |                   |
| <b>D. Public Relations</b>                    |                                                                                                                                         |                   |
| 1.                                            | Identify the target audiences that should be influenced to ensure that PR efforts meet strategic goals.                                 |                   |

|    |                                                                                                                           |  |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 2. | Implement a public relations program to include public education, information, media relations, and influence strategies. |  |
| 3. | Evaluate the changing effects of external factors on public relations strategies.                                         |  |

## HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE TEST?

The CAE Commission offers the following suggestions for preparing for the test:

Review the exam content outline and ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I have a good understanding of the content area?
- Do I use this knowledge area regularly at work?

Plan your studying based on your answers to these questions. For example, for content areas you have a good understanding of and use every day, you may only need to do a quick review to prepare for the test, whereas for areas with which you are less familiar, you may decide that you need more in-depth study or training before taking the test.

When planning your studying, you should also think about what percentage of the test questions will cover each major content area (this information is included on the exam content outline which begins on page 8). If you are not very familiar with a content area that will include a significant proportion of the test questions, you probably should spend some additional time studying this area.

Decide which resources will best help you to prepare for the test. The references listed in the Core Resources below may be helpful when you are reviewing the content areas included on the test. (Note: The listing of these references is intended for use as a study aid only. The CAE Commission does not intend the list to imply endorsement of specific texts, nor are the questions on the test taken directly from these texts.)

You may choose to study on your own or you may decide to take a seminar/workshop to gain a better understanding of one or more content areas. If you know other individuals in your area who are taking the test, you may want to form a study group. Many association executive societies provide formal preparation courses or other candidate support. For more details, visit <http://www.asaecenter.org/cae> or contact the association executives' society in your area.

## The CAE Core Resources

The following core resources list has been compiled by the CAE Commission to reflect a body of resources that is aligned with the CAE exam content outline and would be useful in preparing to be a chief staff executive and for preparing to earn the CAE. The core resources list is thoroughly reviewed and revised every five years in conjunction with the job analysis and exam content outline development. This list was developed in conjunction with the CAE exam content outline. The list is reviewed and recent references may be added to the list periodically.

While the resources should not be interpreted as constituting the sole source of all CAE examination questions, it provides clarification of the positions that may be tested and direction to resources that candidates may find useful when preparing for the examination. The core resources list should not be



construed as required reading. Each candidate should develop their own personal reading list and study plan based on their individual needs and knowledge.

1. *Association Law Handbook*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition
2. *ASAE Handbook of Professional Practices in Association Management*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition
3. *The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition
4. *How to Read Nonprofit Financial Statements*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition
5. *Membership Essentials: Recruitment, Retention, Roles*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition
6. *ASAE ForesightWorks User's Guide*

In addition to the core resources, CAE exam items can be referenced to any ASAE-curated knowledge. ASAE-curated knowledge is defined as information published or disseminated by ASAE such as books sold in the bookstore, articles published in Associations Now, or published in newsletters.

## **TAKING THE TEST**

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### **WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS DURING THE TEST?**

The test will be given under strict security. You will be required to show photo identification in order to enter the testing room. Trained proctors will supervise the test. Irregularities observed during the test, such as creating a disturbance, giving or receiving unauthorized information or aid to or from other examinees, or attempting to remove test materials or notes from the testing room, may be sufficient cause to end your participation in the test, or to invalidate your scores. Irregularities may be identified by observation or suspicion by the test proctors or may be evidenced by subsequent statistical analysis of responses. The CAE Commission reserves the right to investigate each incident of misconduct or irregularity.

### **Test Scheduling**

Thirty to forty-five days prior to the testing window dates, Scantron will email a “notice to schedule” to eligible candidates. The “notice to schedule” will provide candidates with a unique username/password and the URL address to access Scantron’s online test scheduling system to select a testing session, based on seating availability within Scantron’s network of US and international test sites. Candidates will select from a listing of available testing centers by geographical location and test date.

Candidates must submit their test scheduling request at least two (2) days prior to their preferred test date.

Candidates requesting reasonable testing accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act must submit their test scheduling request at least 30 days prior to their preferred test date.

Scantron will provide telephone and email support to candidates during test scheduling. Scantron staff will be available on Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern, Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Eastern, and Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern (excluding Scantron holidays). Voice mail will accept candidate inquiries outside of these business hours.

## Confirmation Notice

Once the candidate has scheduled the examination using the online scheduling system, Scantron will email the candidate a confirmation notice, which must be printed by the candidate and taken to the test site on the scheduled test date.

The confirmation notice will provide the following information:

- The date, time, and location of the testing appointment.
- The candidate password.
- A list of items that candidates should bring to the testing center.
- Information regarding an online tutorial for candidates, so that candidates may familiarize themselves with Scantron's internet-based test delivery system prior to the scheduled test date. Candidates may access the online demonstration free of charge through Scantron's website.

## Candidate Accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

In accordance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Scantron will make arrangements for individuals with special needs upon written request from candidates and approval from ASAE. ADA requests must be submitted in writing to Scantron no later than 30 days prior to the preferred test administration date and candidates must submit their scheduling request at least 30 days prior to their preferred test date.

## International Test Scheduling

For CAE exam purposes, international sites are defined as those outside of the United States and Canada.

Within two (2) business days of receipt of the final eligibility list, Scantron will issue to eligible candidates a notice to schedule testing via email.

The notice to schedule will permit candidates to test at available international locations according to the following procedure:

- View the list of international sites/dates that are available during the designated testing period through a URL link to the online scheduling system provided in the notice to schedule. If an acceptable site/date is available, candidates will select and submit the preferred test site and date and a confirmation notice for the testing session will be issued.
- If sites/dates are not available at the preferred international location during the designated testing period, candidates may submit a request for the preferred location(s). Through the online scheduling system, candidates may submit three preferred international sites/dates for test scheduling during the designated testing period. Scantron cannot guarantee availability of the preferred sites/dates during the designated testing period.
- Within five (5) business days, Scantron will issue a confirmation notice for one of the preferred sites/dates, if it is available.

- If none of the preferred sites/dates are available, Scantron will offer an alternate site/date for the candidate's approval. Upon approval, Scantron will issue a confirmation notice to the candidate.

### **Testing Appointment Cancellations, Rescheduling, and No-Show Policies**

A candidate may cancel his or her testing session up to two (2) days in advance of his or her testing appointment.

The candidate must cancel his or her testing session through Scantron's online test scheduling system.

Provided the cancellation request is made two (2) or more days in advance of the testing appointment, Scantron will charge the candidate a \$50 cancellation or rescheduling fee by secure e-commerce at the time of the request.

A candidate may reschedule his or her testing session up to two (2) days in advance of his or her testing appointment. The candidate must reschedule his or her testing session by accessing Scantron's online test scheduling system.

- Rescheduling from one US/Canadian test site to another US/Canadian test site: Candidates must pay a \$50 rescheduling fee by credit card in US dollars.
- Rescheduling from one international test site to another international test site: Candidates must pay a \$50 rescheduling fee by credit card in US dollars.
- Rescheduling from an international site to a US/Canadian test site: Candidates must pay a \$50 rescheduling fee by credit card in US dollars.
- Rescheduling from a US/Canadian site to an international site: Candidates must pay a \$50 rescheduling fee by credit card in US dollars.

If the cancellation or rescheduling request is made fewer than two (2) days in advance of the testing appointment, the candidate will be considered a no-show, and ASAE will bill the candidate for the testing session at which the candidate did not appear.

A candidate who does not appear for his or her testing appointment and has not contacted Scantron to cancel or to reschedule, will be considered a no-show. ASAE will bill the candidate for the testing session at which the candidate did not appear.

In the following situations and with appropriate documentation, candidates may cancel their testing appointment with fewer than two (2) days' notice (a cancellation fee will apply, as defined in Section IV). Candidates requesting an emergency cancellation must notify Scantron and provide appropriate documentation no later than 10 business days after the scheduled testing appointment.

- i. Serious illness (either the candidate or an immediate family member)
- ii. Death in the immediate family
- iii. Disabling accident
- iv. Court appearance
- v. Jury duty
- vi. Unexpected military call-up

## **Secure, Computer-based Test Administration**

Scantron's test site administrators will verify the identity of each candidate prior to allowing access to the testing center. The candidate must provide government-issued photo identification and a valid confirmation notice in order to be admitted to the testing center. The candidate's name on the legal ID should match the name on the notice to schedule.

The proctor will provide a dry erase board or scratch paper and a pencil for making notes. No items or papers may be removed from the testing center. Candidates may NOT bring their own scratch paper, etc.

Candidates may bring earplugs if they are sensitive to ambient noise. Earplugs will be subject to examination by the testing center staff.

In general, food is not allowed at the testing centers. Candidates that require a snack for medical reasons should follow the process to request accommodations.

Prior to testing, candidates may review Scantron's tutorial which walks the candidates through all system features. Scantron will provide consistent and comfortable internet-based testing facilities throughout the United States, Canada, and internationally based on seating availability during the designated testing windows. Scantron will provide trained test proctors to administer the internet-based examination. The examination will be timed, with a timer displayed on each candidate's computer screen. Candidates will be permitted a total timed testing period of four (4) hours to complete the CAE certification examination.

Upon completion of the examination (or time expiration) and submission of answers, candidates will receive a simple completion message and notification that scores will be sent approximately six weeks following the close of the testing window.

## **SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS**

The CAE examination is a knowledge-based, paper-and-pencil examination consisting of 200 multiple-choice questions administered in a single four-hour time frame. The following questions have been selected for inclusion in candidate materials as sample questions. These questions have a proven record of psychometric performance on past CAE exams and are indicative of the quality of questions asked on the CAE exam. While these sample questions are intended to give candidates a better sense of CAE questions, the actual examination may include these types and other similar types of questions in varying proportions. The answers to these sample questions are given at the end of this handbook.

- 1. An annual fund campaign is the most effective approach for**
  - A. raising funds to meet current financial needs
  - B. developing funds to meet future financial needs
  - C. meeting financial goals for a specified purpose
  - D. helping donors meet annual requirements for asset distribution
- 2. A volunteer-driven association is most often found in what stage of association development?**
  - A. Embryonic
  - B. Early growth
  - C. Mature
  - D. Aging
- 3. Which of the following factors is the most important in developing product standards programs?**
  - A. Structuring the program so that members' products meet the standards
  - B. Using members to develop the standards
  - C. Developing an impartial process for complaints and appeals
  - D. Developing a communications plan to inform the industry of the new standards
- 4. An association member declares candidacy for a congressional seat and asks for the association's support. Which of the following association activities is most likely to endanger its tax exemption under Internal Revenue Service Code 501(c)(3)?**
  - A. Publishing an article discussing the pros and cons of the issues
  - B. Distributing pamphlets in support of the candidate
  - C. Circulating nominating petitions on behalf of all candidates
  - D. Hosting a forum in which the candidate and opponent debate issues
- 5. As a series of meeting on product liability progresses, there is agreement on three out of five critical points. At this stage, it is appropriate for CSE to**
  - A. review the decisions to date and secure direction on the remaining issues
  - B. publicize progress to date to members
  - C. request guidance from the regulatory agency on the remaining issues
  - D. seek favorable trade media coverage of the purpose of the negotiations
- 6. The provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act must be incorporated as policy in associations with a minimum of how many employees?**
  - A. 15
  - B. 30
  - C. 50
  - D. 150

**7. An association is budgeting for a workshop. If fixed costs are \$10,000, variable costs per registrant are \$100, and the tuition is \$300 per registrant, how many registrants are needed for the workshop to break even?**

- A. 50
- B. 150
- C. 300
- D. 500

**8. The diversity committee of an association asks the chief staff executive to report on the diversity of the professional staff. It is found that 30% of the staff are female, 10% are African American, and 20% are Hispanic. Exempt positions are held solely by Caucasian males. What is the most appropriate approach to achieving diversity at senior levels?**

- A. Evaluate employees solely on their capacity to understand and meet members' needs.
- B. Conduct a cultural audit and recommend that supervisory staff attend diversity awareness training.
- C. Recommend that association leadership incorporate valuing diversity as a primary goal of the strategic plan.
- D. Identify diverse candidates and eliminate barriers to successful performance and advancement for all staff.

**9. An association is preparing to launch a fund-raising campaign focusing on corporate contributions. What is the best first step in developing an effective solicitation program?**

- A. Secure mailing lists of potential contributors.
- B. Research the contribution policy and budget of each corporation.
- C. Create a case for supporting the campaign.
- D. Meet with key leaders face-to-face and ask for contributions.

**10. The main purpose of the statement of financial position is to provide a summary of which of the following?**

- A. Revenues and expenses for a given period
- B. Assets and liabilities
- C. Realized and unrealized gains on securities
- D. Direct and indirect operating costs

**11. Association staff have discovered that committee members tend to represent the association's old guard and are not representative of the newer members. Which of the following actions is most likely to remedy this problem?**

- A. Altering the committee and chair appointment process
- B. Strengthening the staff liaison role
- C. Strengthening the board liaison role
- D. Implementing a committee member/chair orientation training program

**12. When arguing in favor of industry self-regulation over government regulation, it is most effective to propose that industry self-regulation**

- A. is more consumer-driven
- B. can be more effectively enforced
- C. ensures a higher level of competency
- D. costs less and involves more expertise

**13. A 501(c)(6) organization can establish a 501(c)(3) organization to**

- A. create a tax shelter
- B. conduct educational research
- C. lobby the federal government
- D. operate association affinity programs

**14. At a general membership meeting of an association, a member recommends to all attendees that their companies discontinue doing business with a particular supplier until the supplier changes its pricing practices. The member also urges the association to get the word out to the entire membership. What is the most appropriate way for the chief staff executive to respond to the member's statements?**

- A. Stop the discussion, explain why the attendees should disregard the comments, and move on to the next agenda item.
- B. Suggest that the presiding officer disregard the member's request.
- C. Ask the presiding officer to take a vote on the member's request.
- D. After the meeting, contact the association's attorney to see if there is any action the association should take.

**15. When developing a needs assessment survey, the chief staff executive should first**

- A. set objectives
- B. hire a survey specialist
- C. determine the sample size
- D. determine the research instrument

**16. Ideally, professional development opportunities for employees should be identified by which of the following individuals or entities?**

- A. The employee alone
- B. The employee in consultation with the supervisor
- C. The human resource department
- D. The chief staff executive

**17. The new chief staff executive of a 50-employee association has asked the human resources manager to create a number of options to improve teamwork. Which of the following options would be most effective?**

- A. Create cross-functional staff committees to address association issues.
- B. Conduct a seminar on teamwork for the entire staff.
- C. Speak to staff directors individually and ask them to work together to resolve the problem.
- D. Create social opportunities for staff interaction.

**18. The primary types of budgets used by associations are**

- A. revenue and expense
- B. revenue and capital
- C. personnel, revenue, and capital
- D. annual operating, cash flow, and capital

**19. Although associations are tax exempt under Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations, the IRS may require them to pay income tax on**

- A. conference registrations

- B. investment income
- C. membership dues
- D. group purchasing services

**20. Which of the following is a system for organizing ongoing financial data?**

- A. Statement of financial position
- B. Statement of cash flows
- C. Chart of accounts
- D. Annual audit

**21. Which of the following adverse consequences will most likely arise when an association concentrates primarily on generating income?**

- A. Loss of member focus
- B. Loss of tax-exempt status
- C. Decreased volunteer participation
- D. Increased taxation from non-related business income

**22. Following a major change in customer demands, a national 501(c)(6) association is reviewing its mission. What should be the first step in the review process?**

- A. Conduct a membership survey to get member input.
- B. Begin an environmental scan to establish the current state of the industry.
- C. Establish a committee to determine the long-term vision of the organization.
- D. Retain an outside consultant to facilitate the process.

**23. The board chair-elect proposes that an association undertake a \$100,000 direct mail campaign to generate sales leads for distributor members during the next year. No funds are available for the project at this time. The most appropriate next step is to**

- A. delay review of the proposal until the next budget cycle
- B. determine how the proposal fits into the context of the association's strategic plan
- C. initiate a special dues assessment for distributor members to generate funds for the campaign
- D. reduce other direct mail campaigns and allocate the savings to the new campaign

**24. Effective consensus building requires that**

- A. decisions be based on majority opinion
- B. participants willingly accept the group's general agreement
- C. everyone in the group must agree
- D. everyone must meet face-to-face

**25. Six weeks prior to an association's annual convention, the association's CEO requests that the CSE replace the contracted keynote with a speaker specified by the CEO. The CSE's most**

- A. consult with the education staff to determine what is necessary to comply
- B. explain that the association is contractually obligated to the original speaker
- C. determine what the officer is trying to accomplish by changing the speaker
- D. state that this issue should be taken to the board of directors

**26. What is the primary motivator in retaining quality staff?**

- A. Above average salary



- B. Comprehensive benefit plan
- C. State of the art working conditions
- D. Relationship with direct supervisor

**27. An applicant for a national professional association's certification program submits medical documentation of a vision problem and requests a reader for the three-hour certification examination. The cost for a reader is \$25 per hour. What is the most appropriate way to handle the additional costs?**

- A. Ask the candidate to provide a reader.
- B. Provide a reader at the candidate's cost.
- C. Provide a reader at the association's cost.
- D. Split the cost of a reader between the association and the candidate.

**28. An employee of a member organization of a 501(c)(6) trade association is holding a fundraiser for a member of Congress and is requesting assistance from the association. The association can legally participate in the fundraiser by**

- A. announcing the event to the membership
- B. making a donation to the campaign
- C. mailing invitations to members' business addresses
- D. mailing invitations to members' home addresses

**29. The most important advantage associated with incorporation is**

- A. protection of tax-exempt status
- B. enhanced credibility with the membership
- C. provision of a formal organizational and governance structure
- D. reduction of the personal liability of volunteer leaders

**30. The lobbying costs of a 501(c)(6) organization are approximately 16% of expenses. The percentage of dues paid by members that may be deductible as a regular business expense is approximately**

- A. 0%
- B. 16%
- C. 84%
- D. 100%

**31. The board of directors is considering the development of an Internet-based continuing education program. One member of the board is affiliated with an educational institution that can design and deliver the training. What action should the board take first with respect to this member?**

- A. Ask the board member to abstain from voting on this issue.
- B. Ask the board member to leave the room while the issue is discussed.
- C. Allow the board member to be involved in the discussion and voting and put the project out to bid.
- D. Review established board policy regarding conflicts of interest.

**32. How would a 501(c)(6) organization disclose an estimated nondeductible lobbying percentage?**

- A. The percentage does not need to be disclosed.
- B. The percentage must be included on the dues invoices.

- C. The percentage can be included on either the dues invoices or in the annual report.
- D. The percentage can be announced at the annual business meeting.

**33. Following an extensive formal rule-making process, a federal agency develops standards that are contrary to positions taken by a professional association. In the following six-month period, the association's programming activities should focus on**

- A. scheduling membership meetings to further discuss the new standards
- B. developing educational materials to assist members in complying with the new standards
- C. intensifying efforts to change the new standards
- D. establishing a governmental relations/grassroots campaign to change the new standards

**34. A professional association is formally recognizing organizations that provide training and education in the profession that it represents. Which of the following options best describes the activity?**

- A. Licensure
- B. Accreditation
- C. Certification
- D. Credentialing

**35. An association is working with a supplier to offer an affinity program to its members. To ensure that the affinity program's income remains tax nonexempt, the association should**

- A. refrain from promoting the affinity program
- B. take full responsibility for promoting the program
- C. split the promotion responsibility equally with the supplier
- D. spend less than \$1,000 in program promotion

**Questions 36-37 refer to the following information:**

**A member of a 501(c)(6) trade association in the chemical industry has been cited by the Environmental Protection Agency for pollution of ground water. The media are calling for comment.**

**36. The chief staff executive's most appropriate first step is to**

- A. convene an emergency meeting of the ethics committee
- B. issue a comment explaining the infraction
- C. express support for a full-scale clean-up
- D. recommend the immediate expulsion of the cited company from the membership

**37. As a result of this event, environmental activist groups are beginning to look at the industry. The board agrees that the association needs to improve the image of the industry and, in addition to hiring a public relations firm, endorse the creation of a community service project. The key criterion for assessing the alternatives for long-term projects is the**

- A. budget allocations for projects
- B. membership involvement in the project
- C. improved relationships between the members' plant and the media
- D. amount of positive national media attention that will be attracted

## **HOW IS THE TEST SCORED?**

Your exam score is based on your total number of correct answers. You should answer all items, as there is no penalty for guessing. You can choose only one response per item.

Your performance on the test will be measured against a standard of knowledge that was predetermined using a criterion-referenced method. This standard is the basic level knowledge that can reasonably be expected of individuals with basic competence in association management. You will NOT be measured against the performance of the other individuals taking the test. This means that if everyone who takes the test meets the knowledge standard, everyone will pass.

The passing score for the CAE exam was set by the CAE Commission based on a recommendation from a national panel of experts representative of the profession. These experts reviewed each test question, evaluated the difficulty of the question, and made a judgment as to how a professional with basic competence would perform on the question. These judgments were analyzed statistically to determine the passing score. They used a mathematical formula derived from a modified Angoff method to perform this analysis.

## **WHAT INFORMATION WILL I RECEIVE ABOUT MY SCORE?**

The test is designed only to distinguish those who have the basic level of knowledge from those who do not. There is no evidence that someone who receives a very high score on the test will perform significantly better on the job than someone whose score falls exactly at the passing point. Therefore, if you pass the test, you will be informed only that you have successfully completed the credentialing process. You will NOT be notified of your actual score.

If you do not achieve a passing score, you will be notified of your score and the minimum score required to pass and will receive a diagnostic report showing your performance in each content area. This information is provided to assist you in deciding whether to retake the test and how to plan your study efforts for future tests.

## **WHEN WILL I RECEIVE MY TEST RESULTS?**

CAE exam results will be mailed approximately 6-8 weeks after the last day in the testing window. To protect the confidentiality of your test score, no results will be given over the telephone, by email or by fax.

## **APPEALS PROVISIONS**

### **Request for Comparative Review**

If you do not achieve a passing score on the test, you may request a comparative review up to approximately 30 days after receipt of your results. Requests may be made to Scantron for a \$50 fee. The comparative review will verify that the candidate's answers were scored against the correct examination answer key in order to confirm that the candidate's final examination score was reported correctly. Scantron will distribute comparative review results letters to candidates via First Class US Mail. Scantron will provide ASAE with electronic copies of the final letters to the candidates.

### Retaking the Test

There is no limit on the number of times that you may apply for and take the test. If you are not successful on the exam and your application is still valid, there is a \$250 fee to retake the CAE exam. If you do not succeed in passing the test within one year after the date on which your application is processed, and your application expires, you will be required to submit a new application, fees, and meet all eligibility requirements in effect at the time of the application.

### Appeals for CAE Applicants, Candidates and Recertifying Certificants (CAE Commission Standing Rules and Policies, Policy #16)

An appeal may be made by a CAE applicant, candidate or certificant only regarding the following circumstances:

- the CAE Commission's interpretation of standards including candidate eligibility from the time of candidate inquiry or the filing of the initial application through the time of conferring of the credential;
- exam administration procedures;
- testing conditions severe enough to cause a major disruption of the examination process; and
- exam score based on exam content and/or keyed item responses;
- the CAE Commission's interpretation of standards required for renewal.

The applicant, candidate or certificant who wishes to make an appeal (the "Appellant") must submit an appeal in writing to the CAE Appeals Committee within thirty (30) days of receipt of notification of an adverse decision.

The CAE Appeals Committee shall then meet by teleconference within 30 days after the end date of the appeal period. All determinations regarding appeals must be decided by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Appeals Committee. Notice of the Appeals Committee determination shall be provided to the Appellant within 10 business days of the decision. The Appellant then has 30 days from receipt of the Appeals Committee determination to file a written appeal with the CAE Commission.

The appeal shall be considered at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the CAE Commission. All determinations regarding appeals must be decided by two-thirds vote of the Commission. Notice of the Commission determination shall be provided in writing to the Appellant within 10 business days of the Commission meeting. The CAE Commission's determination shall be final.

For information on certification revocation and other disciplinary actions including complaints against certificants, please see CAE Commission Standing Rules and Policies, Policy #15.

### **NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The CAE Commission does not discriminate against any person on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, religion or disability.

## CERTIFICATION MAINTENANCE

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Certification Maintenance is required for all Certified Association Executives (CAEs) to promote ongoing enhancement of knowledge, to encourage continued learning and professional development, and to promote continued advancement of knowledge and higher levels of excellence in association management.

Each CAE reaches their first certification renewal date on the third December 31st following the original certification date. To maintain the certification, a CAE must accumulate 40 CAE credit hours and submit a qualifying completed Certification Renewal application by December 31 of the expiration year. A discounted fee is offered for those who renew by October 31 with completed credits and full payment.

The three-year certification maintenance cycle was selected to ensure that Certified Association Executives (CAEs) will continually be exposed to a variety of continued learning and professional development activities. The requirement to earn 40 CAE credit hours during each three-year certification maintenance cycle promotes involvement in a variety of leadership, learning and service activities.

CAE credit hours for certification renewal may be accumulated in a wide variety of ways, and executives involved in the profession should have little difficulty maintaining the CAE certification. Qualifying activities for renewal credit include:

- Up to a maximum of 10 CAE credit hours from leadership, instruction, and writing activities including:
  - 2 CAE credits per year for service as an officer of an association or professional society or ASAE committee, section, or special interest group
  - 2 CAE credits for each course/workshop that is instructed
  - 2 CAE credits for each article, chapter or book written
- Continuing education programs as outlined for CAE applicants.
- Providing or receiving mentoring or coaching specifically focused on the field of association management and representative of the exam content outline for a minimum of 10 clock hours. Two hours of mentoring or coaching equals one CAE credit, up to a maximum of 10 CAE credits.
- Of the 40 credits required, one credit must be focused on ethics. The course(s) must be directly related to either association or nonprofit as defined by the CAE exam content outline. The course(s) should have ethics in the title or within the official course description. Multiple courses may be taken to complete the ethics requirement as long as the total time of the eligible ethics courses adds up to a minimum of 1 CAE credit (1 clock hour), e.g., two 30-minutes courses or two 45-minute courses.

Certification renewal fees are \$350 for ASAE members/\$500 nonmembers. Inactive and retired status options are also available.

## USE OF THE CERTIFICATION TITLE AND INITIAL DESIGNATION

Individuals who are currently certified may use the title “Certified Association Executive” and the designation “CAE”. The title and designation may not be used to imply that an association or firm is certified. Use of the title and designation by individuals who have not been awarded the certification or who have failed to maintain their certification is expressly prohibited. The designation “CAE” is a trademarked property and its use is subject to approval by the CAE Commission.

*Note: This handbook reflects the policies and procedures as of November 1, 2020.  
All policies and procedures are subject to change.*

**Answer Key for Sample Questions**

1. A. raising funds to meet current financial needs
2. A. Embryonic
3. C. Developing an impartial process for complaints and appeals
4. B. Distributing pamphlets in support of the candidate
5. A. review the decisions to date and secure direction on the remaining issues
6. C. 50
7. A. 50
8. D. Identify diverse candidates and eliminate barriers to successful performance and advancement for all staff.
9. C. Create a case for supporting the campaign.
10. B. Assets and liabilities
11. A. Altering the committee and chair appointment process
12. D. costs less and involves more expertise
13. B. conduct educational research
14. A. Stop the discussion, explain why the attendees should disregard the comments, and move on to the next agenda item.
15. A. set objectives
16. B. The employee in consultation with the supervisor
17. A. Create cross-functional staff committees to address association issues.
18. D. annual operating, cash flow, and capital
19. D. group purchasing services
20. C. Chart of accounts
21. A. Loss of member focus
22. B. Begin an environmental scan to establish the current state of the industry.
23. B. determine how the proposal fits into the context of the association's strategic plan
24. B. participants willingly accept the group's general agreement
25. C. determine what the officer is trying to accomplish by changing the speaker

- 26. D. Relationship with direct supervisor
- 27. C. Provide the reader at the association's cost
- 28. A. announcing the event to the membership
- 29. D. reduction of the personal liability of volunteer leaders
- 30. C. 84%
- 31. D. Review established board policy regarding conflicts of interest.
- 32. B. The percentage must be included on the dues invoices.
- 33. B. developing educational materials to assist members in complying with the new standards
- 34. B. Accreditation
- 35. A. refrain from promoting the affinity program
- 36. C. express support for a full-scale clean-up
- 37. D. amount of positive national media attention that will be attracted