



Certification of Disability  
Management Specialist

# The CDMS Guide for Candidate Certification



*Developed and Administered by*

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## Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of the CDMS Guide for Candidate Certification is to provide information about the CDMS certification program to potential candidates. Prior to beginning the application process you should read this guide, along with the detailed CDMS application instructions which may be found on the last page.

Complimentary copies of this guide are available at [www.CDMS.org](http://www.CDMS.org) in the [CDMS Certification](#) section. Since information in this guide is updated periodically, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the most current edition is used.

## A Note from the CDMS Commission

Thank you for your interest in the Certified Disability Management Specialist (CDMS®) certification.

CDMS®<sup>1</sup> certification is the gold standard in workplace solutions. Individuals working in the field of absence and disability management find that the CDMS credential distinguishes them in this dynamic and evolving field.

In addition to attesting to an individual's specific knowledge, level of competency and experience, CDMS certification promotes high professional standards and ethical practice. CDMS certification also provides disability management professionals with the business acumen necessary to practice in the field.

The CDMS® credential recognizes that the field of absence and disability management has a distinct focus on workplace issues, emphasizing the role of the disability manager in helping injured or ill employees stay at or return to work, restore their earning power and contribute to the company's productivity.

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<sup>1</sup>CDMS® is a registered certification mark of the Certification of Disability Management Specialists Commission. All rights reserved.

## History of the CDMS

With a rich history spanning more than 30 years, the CDMS offers the only independent, nationally accredited program that certifies disability management specialists. The CDMS was originally established in 1984 as the Certification of Insurance Rehabilitation Specialists Commission (CIRSC) to implement recognized professional standards for rehabilitation services provided under public and private sector disability compensation systems, and changed its name in 1996 to reflect the growth and development of the field and its practitioners.

Our **purpose** is to provide certification and recertification to ensure the competence of those who provide disability management services.

Our **vision** is to serve those who contribute to the health and well-being of organizations through integrated ability management.

The **overall goal** of the CDMS is to ensure that prospective employers will be able to recruit and hire individuals who have demonstrated an acceptable level of knowledge in the field of disability management.



The CDMS does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, race, national origin, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, marital status/partnership, language preference, socioeconomic status, or any basis prescribed by law.

## **Release of Information Policy**

Information submitted as part of the application, certification, and recertification processes becomes the property of the CDMS and will not be released to outside parties unless authorized by the applicant/certificant or required by law. Individual exam results are released to the candidate, but are not released to any institution or employer. For research and statistical purposes only, data resulting from the certification process may be used in an anonymous and unidentifiable manner.

## **Certification Verification**

The Commission receives and responds to requests for information about the certification status of those holding its credential.

## **Scope of Practice: Certified Disability Management Specialist**

The Certified Disability Management Specialist analyzes, prevents, and mitigates the human and economic impact of injury, illness, and disability for employees and employers to optimize quality of care, productivity, organizational health, and regulatory compliance.

Specific techniques and practice behaviors within disability management may include, but are not limited to:

- Disability and Work Interruption Case Management
- Workplace Intervention for Disability Prevention
- Program Development, Management, and Evaluation
- Employment Leaves and Benefit Administration

### **Practice Characteristics**

The delivery of disability management services involves a complex interplay among workers with disabilities, employers, insurance carriers, labor unions, medical service providers, government agencies, and others. A major goal of disability management is to facilitate the worker's physical recovery, rehabilitation, and return-to-work process in a safe and timely manner while, concurrently, controlling the escalating costs of injury and disability for employers, insurance carriers and government. Within this context of competing interests, the disability management specialist must function in an objective and ethical fashion. The disability management specialist must maintain a balance between providing services and interventions that protect jobs for workers with disabilities while controlling the financial, safety, and other risks that confront employers.

## **The CDMS Code of Professional Conduct**

Those involved in the practice of disability management may face ethical dilemmas surrounding client rights, payor interpretation of state regulations, and individual state laws.



Each certified professional participating in the practice of disability management must abide by the [CDMS Code of Professional Conduct](#). In addition, the certified professional must also adhere to any other professional code of conduct to which the certificant is bound for guidance and support in evaluating and determining how to approach ethical conflicts.

Certificants shall practice only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, appropriate professional experience, and other professional credentials. They shall not misrepresent their role or competence to clients.

## **Section 1: The Certification Program**

### **Overview of Disability Management**

Disability management is a workplace program that seeks to reduce the impact of injury and disability and to accommodate employees who experience functional work limitations. In recent years, there has been significant growth in disability management programs as an increasing number of employers recognize the value of these services. As a direct result of their disability management practices and programs, employers have realized substantial financial savings and better vocational outcomes for employees with disabilities due to illness and injuries.

Disability management has undergone tremendous change over the past several decades. In the late 1970s and 1980s, rising disability costs became a major concern of employers, leading most states to enact workers' compensation reforms. Disability insurers also experienced significant and unexpected claim losses and were forced to re-examine their underwriting and contract provisions. This prompted employers to implement changes in the way they responded to workers with disabilities in order to reduce workers' compensation losses. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, a growing number of employers were implementing disability management programs.

Today, disability management encompasses illness and injury prevention -- early intervention to facilitate a safe and timely return to work. A disability case manager who provides services to an injured employee must be proactive and must consider the needs of the employee and the employer. Disability management needs to focus not only on a specific case, but also on its duration and impact to productivity. Other issues addressed in disability management are prevention, safety, disease management, employee wellness and health and productivity.

Many professionals in disability management hold more than one credential, and some may have licenses related to specific occupations. Those who hold additional credentials do not see them as competing but rather as complementary credentials, demonstrating expertise in more than one area.

### **Certification**



It is not the intent of the CDMS to guarantee that a specific individual is suitable for employment or to impose restrictive staffing requirements on any agency. Rather, the objective is to establish a national certification process that can be used with confidence by any interested party as a measure of an individual’s basic knowledge of disability compensation systems.

In an effort to protect the public, the CDMS developed a credentialing process. Persons who earn the credential of Certified Disability Management Specialist (CDMS®) must demonstrate that they abide by the CDMS Professional Code of Conduct, meet acceptable standards of quality in their practice, and have the requisite education and professional background. In addition, to become certified, disability management specialists must achieve a passing score on the CDMS® examination.

The CDMS ensures that its certification exam remains valid and relevant with current practices in the field through an in-depth “Role and Function Study.” This study is undertaken every 5 years to determine the roles, functions, knowledge, and skills of disability managers. Additionally, new examination items are continuously created and added to the certification examination.

The initial certification is valid for 5 years. The certification can be renewed at 5 year intervals if certificants can demonstrate their ongoing professional development through re-examination or a documented program of continuing education. This type of recertification is considered an essential part of an effective credentialing process. It is intended to help practitioners keep abreast of current trends and new technologies and to enhance critical skills. For complete details regarding recertification, please review the [Candidate Guide for Recertification](#).

## Section 2: The Certification Calendar

Half-day examination appointments will be taken over the course of designated days in the months of March and September. The following table lists the upcoming exam windows and application packet deadlines.

<b>UPCOMING EXAM WINDOWS AND APPLICATION WINDOW</b>	
<b><u>Application window</u></b> <b>(Applicant must submit application online no later than this date)</b>	<b><u>Exam window</u></b>
<b>April 1, 2018 - June 30, 2018</b>	<b>September 8-15, 2018</b>

## Section 3: Eligibility & Requirements

### Applicant Eligibility Criteria

To meet the eligibility criteria for the CDMS certification exam, applicants must possess both the educational and the employment requirements as outlined below. Additionally, those applying must abide by the principles and ethical requirements of



the CDMS Professional Code of Conduct. The following pages in this section will define the requirements for the CDMS certification exam. Please read the eligibility criteria carefully and review Section 4 which highlights “Acceptable Employment Experience” to ensure that you meet all the requirements prior to applying for the exam. If you have questions, please direct them to: [info@cdms.org](mailto:info@cdms.org).

### **Education:**

A Bachelor’s Degree in any discipline or current state licensure as a Registered Nurse

### **Employment:**

1. At the time of application, the applicant must be currently employed in the field of absence and disability management **AND**
2. At the time of application, applicants must be able to attest that within the past 36 months a minimum of 2080 hours of their documented work experience aligns with at least 2 of the 4 Domains/practice areas
3. Experience must focus on the provision of direct administrative, preventative or case management services to individuals experiencing short or long-term health events. This includes working with individuals who have been impacted by their ability to maintain their economic standard of living and/or are receiving wage replacement benefits from a private, local, state or federal disability wage replacement system.
4. The CDMS Commission will accept only paid employment as a valid fulfillment of the employment criteria.
5. Internships and volunteer activities are NOT acceptable as employment experience.

### **Application & Fees:**

1. Applicants must complete the online CDMS certification application and submit it with the appropriate fees, all of which must be received by the CDMS Office no later than 5pm (EST) on the date of the application window deadline. Instructions for completing the online application may be found on the last page of this Guide. A detailed outline of all applicable fees may be found on page 20.

### **Audit:**

1. All applicants for the CDMS certification exam are subject to an audit to validate education and/or licensure and work experience. For more information about application audits, please see Section 5 of the handbook.

## **Self-Employment Verification**

Self Employed applicants must complete the [CDMS Self Employment Verification Form](#), providing information for 3 different purchasers of their service and upload the form to their online application.

## **Earned Degree Requirements**

In the event that you are audited, to verify your educational background, the Commission requires an official transcript that shows the granting of your degree. A transcript will be considered official only if it bears the seal of the college or university and the signature of the school’s registrar. If your degree was granted under a name other than the one that appears on your application, the institution should be asked to include your present name with the transcript.





For a degree to meet the educational requirements for certification eligibility, the granting college or university must have been accredited at the time the degree was conferred by one of the national or regional accrediting associations accredited by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

If your degree is from a foreign country, the CDMS will allow individuals to submit their transcripts in addition to an evaluation report from either of the following two sources:

**American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (AACRAO)/Office of International Education Services**

<http://ies.aacrao.org>

(202) 296-3359

**World Education Services (WES)/International Academic Credential Evaluation** [www.wes.org](http://www.wes.org)

(212) 966-6311

*Note: The CDMS will not accept evaluations completed by other sources. The evaluation report must be sent from the source directly to the CDMS postmarked by the application deadline date and must include recognition status of foreign institution, level of education completed by student, U.S. degree comparability, field of study, courses, credits or units, individual grades or overall grade average, and course content. The CDMS will evaluate the courses, units, and/or degrees on a course-by-course basis.*

## Section 4: Acceptable Employment Experience

In order for your employment experience at any position to qualify as “acceptable” for CDMS certification, at least 2080 hours within the last 36 months must be directly associated to work in at least two of the four Domains as outlined on the following pages:

### Knowledge Domain

### Content Area Weighting

#### Domain 1: Disability and Work Interruption Case Management 35%

- Gathering and interpreting personal, medical, functional, psychological, and vocational information
- Administering, scoring, and interpreting assessment tools
- Synthesizing information
- Interpreting case-specific local, state, and federal regulations
- Synthesizing data in order to compile a comprehensive overview of case information
- Interpreting benefits systems and plan designs
- Developing an action plan for case management
- Adhering to standards of quality care
- Maximizing internal and external resources
- Documenting pertinent case activities and results
- Sharing pertinent case information with appropriate stakeholders

- Analyzing data
- Using medical terminology, treatments, and protocols
- Adhering to standards of quality care
- Identifying key stakeholders
- Developing partnership with stakeholders
- Identifying and addressing the conflicting interests of stakeholders
- Collecting worksite/job analysis data through observations, assessments, and interviews
- Identifying job functions and quantifying their exertional and non-exertional demands
- Interpreting worksite/job analysis information
- Negotiating and implementing job accommodations
- Using worksite/job modification and accommodation strategies and techniques
- Synthesizing functional capacity and job demand information
- Assessing business management and labor issues
- Developing transitional work plans
- Performing initial and ongoing case assessments
- Making referrals to internal and external resources
- Applying the principles of disability and health-related work interruption case management
- Identifying assets and barriers to recovery
- Adhering to ethical requirements in data management
- Documenting pertinent case activities and results
- Facilitating behavior changes
- Developing problem solving strategies
- Projecting potential impact of decision options

### **Domain II: Workplace Intervention for Disability Prevention 30%**

- Evaluating organizational culture
- Evaluating applicable policy, programs, and procedures
- Facilitating sponsorship by leveraging the expertise of stakeholders
- Advancing team development
- Promoting behavior change
- Managing financial resources
- Implementing a continuous improvement approach to productivity and prevention
- Identifying content experts
- Implementing effective training with the use of technology
- Implementing job accommodations and recommendations
- Conducting an organizational assessment of essential job functions
- Partnering with human resources
- Communicating a business case effectively
- Developing sponsorship from management
- Complying with employment law and labor contracts
- Partnering with vendors and stakeholders

- Facilitating a team approach
- Budgeting and managing financial resources
- Implementing data collection strategies
- Interpreting disability, health, and absence data
- Applying occupational and functional information to transitional work
- Implementing a continuous improvement approach to transitional work programs
- Adapting to the ongoing needs of the workforce
- Applying labor relations law and contracts
- Identifying resources for technical assistance
- Applying work hardening and conditioning methodologies
- Using assistive technologies
- Applying regulatory standards
- Identifying indicators of satisfaction and productivity
- Applying tools to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness
- Analyzing employee health risk data
- Interpreting disability, health, and absence data
- Estimating financial impact
- Applying interventions to address mental health, substance abuse, and workplace stressors
- Partnering with public health, medical communities, vendors, and stakeholders
- Evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of health and wellness interventions

### **Domain III: Program Development, Management, and Evaluation 20%**

- Applying qualitative and quantitative measurements
- Integrating the principles of business and finance
- Gathering, synthesizing, and interpreting disability management program findings
- Developing financial plans
- Interpreting finance and risk data
- Analyzing the costs and benefits of potential actions
- Presenting data pertaining to variations across settings
- Designing programs aligned with organizational rewards and incentives
- Identifying sources of data and program evaluation metrics
- Producing effective reports based on chosen metrics
- Comparing program data to best practice and research
- Analyzing complex data sets
- Applying leadership principles and techniques
- Advocating for staff development needs
- Incorporating change management strategies
- Teaching others about program philosophies, objectives, practices, and procedures
- Designing training programs consistent with adult learning theory
- Applying principles of organizational development in training approach



- Developing and integrating business plans and models with stakeholder interests
- Constructing business cases for programs based on their financial performance
- Researching community and business resources
- Developing and managing vendor relationships

#### **Domain IV: Employment Leaves and Benefits Administration 15%**

- Time management for self and others
- Applying new information to current and future problem-solving and decision making
- Using logic and reasoning to identify strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions
- Maintaining focus on stakeholders
- Influencing and negotiating with others
- Analyzing the costs and benefits of potential actions
- Identifying measures or indicators of system performance
- Working effectively across and within diverse populations

### **Section 5: Application Audits**

CDMS randomly audits 5% of certification applications. Applications may be audited to verify employment/work hour information, and the state board of nursing may be asked to verify current licensure.

In the event that your employment experience is audited for an eligibility review, each place of employment must complete an Employment Verification Form and an official signed job description which you must include with your application packet. If an official job description is not available, or it does not accurately reflect all of your job duties, a detailed letter describing your specific job activities must be completed by your employer for submission.

Failure to provide requested documentation for an audit will result in the denial of the candidate's application.

Please note:

- Facsimiles or copies are not acceptable
- In addition to the standard 5% audit, other applications may be audited at the discretion of the CDMS Commission

### **Section 6: The Certification Examination**

#### **Examination Structure**

The exam is constructed to ensure that it is consistent with minimal competency requirements and criteria-referenced testing concepts. Standards for item selection include: item difficulty (between .39 and .95 with a median in the .60-.70 range); a positive point biserial; and appropriate content distribution. Using an intensive written



field testing process, the CDMS has developed a pool of questions that contain a comprehensive selection of statistically validated examination items. The Test Development Committee comprised of subject matter experts in the field of absence and disability management are charged with continually adding to and upgrading this “item bank.”

The CDMS<sup>®</sup> certification exam is a computer-based exam. The certification exam consists of 175 multiple-choice questions drawn from the Commission’s item bank. All candidates seeking certification must take this exam, which is based on a body of knowledge encompassing the laws, public regulations, and existing delivery systems for disability services in the U.S. Each examination includes 50 field test questions that will not be used in the scoring of the examination. The examination is comprised of 4 major domains and 32 sub-domains. Each domain is represented by a specific number of questions. Each question/response is referenced to the literature of disability management/laws and credit is given for each correct response based on that literature. Sample questions are included in this Guide.

### **Examination Day Schedule**

The certification examination is a half-day exam that is scheduled within a designated window in the months of March and September. Examination appointments will vary according to the examinee’s individual schedule. Three and a half hours are allowed to complete the exam unless accommodations are requested and approved by the CDMS. Candidates may take a brief practice session in order to become familiar with the computer test.

### **Examination Sites**

Candidates will be able to choose from approximately 300 test administration centers in the U.S. Because the location of test sites can change, the CDMS does not maintain information regarding test sites. At the time candidates are notified of their eligibility to take the exam, they will be provided with complete instructions regarding exam scheduling and locations.

Candidates should schedule their testing appointment as soon as possible in order to obtain a preferred location, date, and time. Extensions will not be granted due to delays in scheduling.

- Test administration centers are designed to provide standardized test administration.
- Test center personnel will guide candidates through the check-in process and will be available throughout the test administration in the event that a candidate has a question related to the administration of the exam.
- Test center personnel cannot respond to questions related to the content of the examination.
- Two forms of valid identification with signatures will be required for admission to the test center.
- One of the IDs must include a photo.
- Candidates with invalid or insufficient identification will also be subject to a re-test fee.



- Upon admission, the testing center will take a photo of each candidate.
- All personal belongings will need to be placed in a locker available at the test center.
- Books, paper, and other resources are not allowed.
- Test center personnel will provide a white board that must be turned in at the end of the exam. No food or drink, including water, may be taken into the testing room.
- You may leave the testing room to use the restroom or get a drink of water, but you will need to sign out according to the instructions that will be explained at the test center. Testing time will not be increased to accommodate such a break. **A candidate who cannot comply with this rule for medical reasons must apply for testing accommodations.**
- Candidates who attempt to violate exam security in any way will be dismissed from the test center and may forfeit their right to seek certification.

### **Examination Medium**

The CDMS certification examination has been validated in a multiple choice format; therefore, alternative versions of the exam can be provided only in that format. However, various accommodations may be provided by the CDMS Commission to afford access to the exam for individuals with disabilities who qualify for accommodations. These accommodations may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Glare Screen
- Screen Magnifier
- Enlarged Font (to 125%)
- Track Ball Mouse
- Touch Pad
- Separate Room
- Adjustable Height Table
- Braille
- Reader
- Scribe
- Extra Time (time and one-half or double time)
- Sign Language Interpreters (to facilitate communication with test center personnel) \*

*\*The CDMS does not allow translation of the examination by sign language interpreters. However, individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and who require assistance in communicating with test center personnel via sign language, must request a sign language interpreter to facilitate communication at the test center.*

### **Examination Accommodations**



The CDMS is committed to the fair administration of its certification examination. In addition to providing smoke-free, fully accessible examination sites, the Commission's commitment includes provisions for candidates who need assistance due to functional limitations.

Special consideration may be given to applicants who can document a bona-fide disability as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) and who have had a relevant history of accommodations, where such accommodations were possible. Reasonable accommodations, as provided by the CDMS, have to be consistent with established practices and research regarding fairness and equity in testing in order to protect the integrity of the examination process.

The ADAAA retains the American with Disabilities Act's (ADA) basic definition of "disability" with respect to an individual as:

- A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual
- A record of having such an impairment
- Being regarded as having such an impairment (ADA, 1990, Section 12102)

**The following guidelines are for candidates requiring examination accommodations:**

- Notification of a candidate's need for exam accommodations must be made at the time of application.
- All requests for exam accommodations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- The candidate must provide a letter that describes the type of disability and gives a detailed description of the accommodations being requested. In addition, the candidate must provide a letter on official letterhead from a physician or other licensed specialist that documents the diagnosis, treatment provided, and last date of treatment. The letter must also explain the need for the requested accommodations.
- A detailed statement must be sent to the CDMS regarding past exam accommodations and, if none were provided, explaining why the requested accommodations are currently needed.
- If additional time is being requested, the precise amount needed must be specified and the letter from the physician or other healthcare professional must also indicate the time needed as well as the diagnostic basis for the request.
- All documentation/information provided must be current and at the time of application not more than 90 days (3 months) old.



## **Late Arrival or Failure to Show**

It is recommended that candidates arrive fifteen minutes prior to their scheduled appointment time. Candidates who arrive late and cannot be seated, or do not show for a scheduled appointment are subject to payment of the full examination fee, should they apply for the next window.

## **Rescheduling and Deferrals**

Candidates who are unable to take a scheduled examination for **any reason** are permitted only one reschedule/deferral to the next examination window. Please note acceptable timeframes, conditions and additional fees that apply to rescheduling and deferring.

- a. Candidates who wish to defer your exam appointment to the next available exam window will be subject to pay a \$75 deferment fee in addition to the cancellation fee.
- b. Candidates who cancel and reschedule their scheduled appointment five (5) or more calendar days prior to and excluding the examination date are subject to a \$25 rescheduling fee from testing center (SMT).
- c. Candidates who cancel their appointment within five (5) calendar days or less, arrive late to their appointment, are not seated due to invalid identification, or who do not appear for their appointment may reschedule but are subject to payment of the full examination fee of \$385.
- d. Regardless of reason, candidates who are unable to sit for the second scheduled exam will not be issued a refund. Candidates who wish to continue to pursue certification will be required to submit a new application packet, together with the certification fee, to continue their pursuit of the CDMS credential. Such reapplications will be subject to all criteria in effect at the time of reapplication.

## **Reschedule/Cancellation Policy**

If it is less than (5) calendar days, you will not be allowed to cancel or reschedule your exam unless any of the following four situations have occurred:

1. Jury Duty
2. Death in immediate family
3. Military Deployment
4. Sickness

If you experience any of the above, you **MUST** provide IQT with proper documentation before being rescheduled to a new date. **Documentation must be submitted to IQT within 10 calendar days of your missed examination or it will not be considered for a reschedule.**





**\*\*If none of the above are the reason for needing to reschedule or cancel your exam less than 5 days prior to your scheduled exam date, then you will not be allowed to reschedule or cancel your exam and if you do not show up, you will be considered a "no show", your examination fees will be forfeited, and you will be required to re-register and pay all fees prior to sitting for the exam\*\***

**Retake Exam**

Candidates who do not achieve a passing score on the certification exam are allowed to re-take the exam once during the next subsequent testing window. Candidates will be required to notify the Commission of their intention to take the test again and will also be required to remit a \$200 re-take fee. Candidates who do not achieve a passing score on their second attempt and who wish to continue to pursue certification will be required to submit a new application and full certification exam fee of \$385 in order to continue their pursuit of the CDMS® credential. Such reapplications will be subject to all criteria in effect at the time of reapplication.

**Section 7: Examination Content:  
Knowledge Domains and Subdomains**

**DOMAIN I: Disability and Work Interruption Case Management (35%)**

*Disability and Work Interruption Case Management involves ethical performance of necessary activities pertaining to an individual’s illness or injury to ensure quality of care, recovery, and cost effectiveness. This entails planning, managing and advocating for that individual’s return to meaningful work, a process that includes coordination of benefits and services and implementation of return-to-work plans.*

	<b>Mean Importance</b>
A - Perform comprehensive individual case analyses and benefits assessments using best practices to develop appropriate interventions.	4.23
B - Review and assess disability case management interventions to ensure quality care, recovery, and cost effectiveness.	4.03
C - Facilitate collaboration among stakeholders using effective communication strategies to optimize functional recovery.	4.26
D - Perform worksite/job analyses using observation, assessment, interview, and records review to determine the requirements of jobs and appropriate accommodations.	4.07



E - Develop individualized return-to-work/stay-at-work and worker retention plans consistent with practice standards and program policy by collaborating with relevant stakeholders to facilitate successful employment outcomes.	4.15
F - Implement interventions using appropriate counseling and behavior change techniques to optimize functioning and productivity.	3.83
G -Coordinate benefits, services, and community resources to facilitate optimal functioning in a cost effective and medically appropriate way.	3.7
H - Monitor case progress by assessing medical conditions, health status, and functional capacity on an on-going basis to optimize recovery and facilitate successful employment outcomes.	4.25
I - Disseminate appropriate information, keep stakeholders informed, document case activities, and prepare reports in compliance with standard practice and regulations.	4.37
J - Develop and implement solutions that optimize the overall health and productivity of workers by addressing their health and work/life issues impacting employment outcomes.	3.8
K - Coordinate service providers to maximize the quality of services and return on investment.	3.93

**DOMAIN 2: Workplace Intervention for Disability Prevention (30%)**

*Workplace Intervention for Disability Prevention involves joint labor/management collaboration in the identification of workplace safety and risk factors. It also covers the recommendation and implementation of prevention, health, and wellness intervention practices and strategies, such as ergonomics, job analyses, and return-to-work programs.*

	<b>Mean Importance</b>
A - Implement disability management practices through training, education, and collaboration to integrate prevention and change organizational behavior/culture.	3.77
B - Develop and administer a comprehensive transitional work program through collaboration with stakeholders to facilitate optimal productivity and worker retention.	3.98
C - Develop an interactive, organizational process for accommodation needs, incorporating appropriate resources for optimal functioning in the workplace and worker retention.	3.75
D - Recommend workplace strategies to address ergonomic, safety, and risk factors using available data to prevent disability and mitigate loss.	3.79
E - Recommend strategies that integrate benefit plan designs and related services to promote prevention, optimal productivity, quality care, and cost containment.	3.44
F - Promote health and wellness interventions that demonstrate measurable value by targeting the specific needs of workers and the organization.	3.42

**DOMAIN 3: Program Development, Management, and Evaluation (20%)**

*Program Development, Management, and Evaluation include identification of, need for and implementation of comprehensive disability management programs utilizing best practices & metrics.*

	<b>Mean Importance</b>
A - Establish disability management program goals by assessing organizational needs and evaluating best practices.	3.77
B - Design the disability management program in cooperation with stakeholders, using supporting policies, best practices, roles, and benchmarks to achieve established program goals.	3.82
C - Assist in the design of a financially sustainable disability management program.	3.46
D - Provide staff development consistent with disability management	3.53



program goals and the financial plan.	
E - Select disability management program performance metrics based on goals, design, best practices, and benchmarking data to assess effectiveness and make adjustments as needed.	3.58
F - Implement cross-functional/multiple stakeholder processes consistent with disability management program philosophy, objectives, and best practices to meet program goals.	3.59
G - Educate and train stakeholders to promote disability management program goals.	3.73
H - Monitor the disability management program's operational and financial performance using established metrics to identify costs, trends, and productivity loss for the purpose of program evaluation and return on investment.	3.5
I - Integrate data to support decision making for disability management program improvement, assessment of cost effectiveness, and return on investment.	3.67
J - Procure internal and external services using selection criteria to achieve disability management program goals.	3.59

**DOMAIN 4: Employment Leaves and Benefits Administration (15%)**

*Employment Leaves and Benefits Administration includes management of employment leaves, health and welfare plans, payroll and systems management and other risks associated with work interruption.*

	<b>Mean Importance</b>
A - Manage employment health-related leaves in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements to maintain legal and regulatory compliance.	3.53
B - Identify risks associated with health-related work interruptions and employment leaves to enhance organizational decision making.	3.47
C - Effectively communicate and explain essential elements of benefits and employment policies to workers to mitigate adverse impact and facilitate informed decision making.	3.65

## Section 8: Sample Examination Questions

*The following questions are provided to give you an idea of what examination questions could look like:*

1. Transferable skills analysis is most effective for a disability management specialist to identify jobs that demonstrate:
  - A. unskilled and semi-skilled tasks requiring little or no training.
  - B. the worker’s rehabilitation potential.
  - C. existing openings that include on-the-job training.
  - D. the same or lesser degree of skill required, compared to past work.
  
2. In advising employers regarding prevention of workplace violence, a key area that the disability manager should recommend for reviewing is:
  - A. employee lounge accommodations.
  - B. availability of dangerous tools.
  - C. psychological evaluation.
  - D. security procedures.



3. The most reliable predictor of the employment outcome for a worker who has sustained a closed head injury is:
  - A. financial report.
  - B. the length of time in coma.
  - C. the location of the brain lesion.
  - D. the amount of gross motor spasticity.
  
4. Federal legislation that mandates the extension of health insurance for workers who have a pre-existing medical condition is:
  - A. Health Maintenance Organization Act of 1973 (HMOA).
  - B. Employee Retirement and Income Security Act (ERISA).
  - C. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
  - D. Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA).
  
5. Costs of retraining employees due to industrial injuries are:
  - A. fixed costs.
  - B. direct costs.
  - C. indirect costs.
  - D. variable costs
  
6. Outcome-based payment systems may encourage disability management specialists to sacrifice:
  - A. quick payment.
  - B. time efficiency.
  - C. high quality job matches.
  - D. maximum medical improvement.
  
7. Long-term disability (LTD) coverage provides benefits to replace income lost due to occupational or non-occupational disabilities. During the initial coverage period, claimants are eligible for benefits provided they are:
  - A. eligible for workers' compensation partial disability benefits.
  - B. unable to perform any type of work.
  - C. eligible for Social Security partial disability benefits.
  - D. unable to work at their previous occupation.
  
8. To be eligible for Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) benefits, a disability must prevent the performance of substantial gainful activity and have lasted or be expected to last:
  - A. 6 months.
  - B. 12 months.
  - C. 18 months.
  - D. 24 months.

**Correct responses are 1-D, 2-D, 3-B, 4-C, 5-C, 6-C, 7-D, 8-B**



## **Section 9: Reading List**

Some general sources that may be of help to examination candidates can be found on the CDMS website [Exam Prep](#) page under Other Resources. The [reading list](#) does not completely delineate the parameters of the CDMS® examination. It is merely a suggested means for reviewing information related to disability and case management.

## **Section 10: Examination Scoring, Results, Certificates, Inquiries and Test Score Review**

### **Examination Scoring**

The CDMS selects a panel of subject matter experts to participate in its standard setting workshop. This panel arrives at a recommended passing score for the examination using a method called the modified Angoff approach. In this method, each expert considers examination questions individually and makes a judgment about the probability that a minimally competent candidate would answer the questions correctly. The overall passing scores were then computed as the average of the predicted probabilities for all individual questions. This panel then recommends the passing score for the examination to the CDMS Commission, who sets the passing score. The passing score represents the minimum level of knowledge that must be demonstrated to pass the examination.

Because of the need for security, multiple forms of the examination (each containing a different combination of questions) are used. The passing scores cannot be set as specific raw scores or numbers of questions answered correctly because some of the test forms may be slightly easier or more difficult than others. Requiring the same raw scores to pass all the different forms, therefore, would not be fair. A statistical procedure called equating is used to adjust for any differences in levels of difficulty among examination forms. Once the examination forms have been equated, a procedure called scaling is used to convert the actual number of correct answers, or raw scores, to a uniform scale. These converted scores are called scaled scores. Scaled scores ensure that all examinees demonstrate the same level of ability in order to pass the examination. In 2013, these procedures were implemented before administration so the passing score can now be pre-determined and candidate's score will be available at the test site.

The CDMS disapproves of using test results for any purpose other than the use for which the examination is developed and conducted. This includes using test results for internship or employment selection. In addition, test results may not be used to compare educational programs. Certification tests are mastery tests—not achievement or selection instruments.

### **Examination Results**



Immediately after testing, all candidates will receive examination scores on site. Approximately 4-6 weeks following the test administration window, all candidates will receive written notification of their examination results. Exam results are confidential and will be released **ONLY** to the candidate. Individual results are not released to any institution or employer.

### **Certificates**

A certificate will be sent to each candidate who receives a passing score within 6-8 weeks of the exam. After receiving the certificate and the profile that reports their passing status, individuals are entitled to begin using the “CDMS®” credential after their names.

Duplicate or replacement certificates can be requested from the CDMS office. There is a \$25 fee for this service. Individuals who do not receive their original certificate within 8 weeks of the certification examination should contact the CDMS Commission office at 847-375-6380.

### **Examination Inquiries**

Candidates who feel that an error or omission occurred during the examination process, or those who question any aspect of the examination procedure, should send an email outlining their concerns to the CDMS Test Development Committee at [info@cdms.org](mailto:info@cdms.org).

### **Test Score Review**

Candidates who wish to have their score reviewed must provide written notification to the attention of the Client Service Associate at the CDMS Certification Office. The request will be forwarded for review by the Test Development Chair and representatives from the testing company. A **fee of \$25** must be included with your request. The findings of this review are final and the candidate will receive written notification via electronic/certified mail. There is no appeal.

## **Section 11: Use of the CDMS® Credential**

Use of the CDMS® credential is strictly limited to those individuals who:

1. Have met all the criteria of the CDMS and have taken part in the certification examination, either during the initial mean or standard score setting period (October 1984 to October 1985) or by achieving a passing score
2. Have been officially notified by the CDMS through the receipt of an examination profile showing a passing score
3. Have subsequently maintained their certification status as required under the CDMS recertification plan.

Individuals using the CDMS® credential or otherwise represent themselves as being certified without first having fulfilled these requirements, will be deemed to be in



violation of the CDMS Code of Professional Conduct and may be denied the right of certification. Such individuals may also be subject to legal action.

## **Section 12: Denial of Eligibility**

### **Executive Committee Review**

The Executive Committee has the responsibility to clarify existing eligibility criteria and make periodic recommendations to the Commission regarding revisions or additions. The goal of such recommendations is to ensure that the standards used are appropriate when viewed in the context of the role expectations of disability management practitioners.

The applications reviewed by this committee will include investigation of any entries that raise questions regarding the acceptability of the candidate's academic degrees, employment experience, eligibility documentation, etc.

Applicants who have been denied eligibility to take the certification examination will receive an explanation of the Executive Committee's decision. Included in this notice will be instructions on the applicant's right to appeal and information related to the process, procedure, and timeline. All correspondence between the Executive Committee and the applicant regarding the decision and right to appeal must be conducted via electronic and certified mail. If applicant does not request an appeal within the specified time, the right to appeal is nullified.

### **A denial by the Executive Committee will absolutely preclude a candidate from taking the next scheduled exam.**

Applicants who choose to exercise their right to appeal will have their complete file presented to the Appeals Committee during the next examination cycle. No member of the Appeals Committee will have taken part in the Executive Committee's decision making process, thus ensuring an independent, objective review of each applicant's case.

The Appeals Committee will consider only the materials reviewed by the Executive Committee.

### **Appeals Committee**

The CDMS certification appeals process is available to any denied candidate who feels that the eligibility criteria for certification has been inaccurately, inconsistently or unfairly applied by the Executive Committee. As previously stated, only those facts presented to the Executive Committee will be reviewed by the appeals committee. The appeals committee will not consider additional information that may be submitted by the applicant subsequent to the disputed eligibility review, unless specifically requested by the Executive Committee.



The appeals process is designed to provide:

- Due process
- A complete review of the facts as they were presented to the Executive Committee
- A second, independent evaluation of the material presented to the Executive Committee
- Fair and consistent application of eligibility criteria
- A method to appeal certain aspects of the examination process

The appeals process does not provide:

- Time to acquire additional education, employment experience, or supervision required for certification
- Additional time to submit the documentation required for certification

Requests for an appeal will only be considered once. All decisions rendered by the Appeals Committee are final. Applicant will be notified of the Appeals Committee decision via electronic and certified mail.

### **Section 13: Certification Revocation**

The following shall constitute grounds for immediate revocation of an individual's certification:

- Falsification of information or providing misleading or inaccurate information on the application
- Failure to maintain eligibility once certified
- Failure to pay required fees
- Misrepresentation of CDMS® status
- Cheating on the certification exam
- Violations of the CDMS Code of Professional Conduct

Furthermore, if an individual's CDMS® certification is revoked or suspended, notice of this action may be provided to other appropriate agencies.

### **Section 14: Recertification**

Initial certification as a CDMS® is valid for 5 years. The Commission believes that all CDMS® certificants should continue to expand their skills in order to enhance the quality of the services that they provide. Recertification may be achieved by acquiring 80 clock hours (including a minimum of 4 hours in the area of ethics) of continuing education every 5 five years or by re-taking and achieving a passing score on the certification examination every 5 years.





Those individuals who do not recertify are officially notified that they may no longer use the CDMS® credential nor represent themselves to the profession or the public as being certified. Likewise, they may not exercise any rights and privileges ascribed to a credential holder. A letter to the individual’s last known address shall constitute sufficient notification. A certification renewal reminder will be emailed and mailed to the individual’s last known address 5-6 months prior to the expiration date of the current certification.

The CDMS requires all certification holders to keep the office advised in writing, either through the mail or the CDMS website, of any changes in their name or address to ensure prompt receipt of such mailings. The Commission will make every reasonable effort to send recertification reminders to credential holders. However, it is the individual’s responsibility to re-certify at the appropriate time.

**Section 15: Change of Address/Name**

In the event of a change in your name or address including email address, please log in to your account on the website at [www.CDMS.org](http://www.CDMS.org). Click the ‘Login’ button in the upper right-hand corner and enter your username and password to access your personal account. When you have successfully logged in, the button that previously said ‘Login’ will now say ‘Logout.’ To make updates to your contact information, click on ‘Update my profile’ located on the top right of the page. You will have the option to ‘Edit’ your information. Once complete, hit ‘Save’ after you modify.

We appreciate your efforts to keep our mailing list current and allowing us to keep you up to date regarding news of the Commission and other matters of interest.

**Section 16: Fees**

**\*All fees are non-refundable and subject to change**

**Certification Exam Fee**

Application and Exam Fee **\$385**

**Related Fees**

**Retake Fee **\$200****

- Candidates who fail the examination on their first attempt and schedule to take the exam a second time during the next subsequent testing dates.

**Deferment Fee **\$75****

- Candidates who wish to defer the examination to the next testing dates.

**No Shows, Late Arrivals, Insufficient Documentation & Unexcused **\$385****

- Any applicant who was not seated for a scheduled appointment due to invalid identification, late arrival or who did not appear for their appointment will be required to complete the application process again and pay the full exam fee if they wish to reschedule

**Cancellation/Reschedule Fees**



- 5 or more days prior to exam \$25
- Less than 5 days prior to exam \$385

**Examination Score Verification** \$25

**Certificate Reprint/Replacement** \$25

**Note:** Applicants are asked to pay particular attention to the deadlines that occur during the application process. If an applicant or candidate does not meet schedules/deadlines for requested information, the CDMS may assess a late documentation fee to cover its additional processing costs.

## **Section 17: Completing Your Application**

### **Special Notes**

- Prior to completing your application, be sure that you meet the all educational and employment requirements.
- All educational and employment requirements must be fully satisfied by the application deadline date.
- Before completing the employment section of the application, please read the definition of “Acceptable Employment Experience” (Section 4) very carefully. **The Commission will not extract information from a resume.**
- If you require exam accommodations, you must indicate this on your application. Once the application has been submitted, you will receive an accommodations form with instructions on how to complete.

### **Application Instructions**

Please use the following instructions to verify that you have included all necessary documents in your application prior to submitting it to the CDMS Commission. Your application will not be processed unless it is complete. Incomplete applications may cause you to miss your targeted test cycle.

1. Visit [www.cdms.org](http://www.cdms.org)
2. Click “Apply Online” for Certification.
3. Follow the instructions to create a new log-in and password.
4. Once you are logged in, complete all of the required tabs.
5. Once all tabs are complete, please hit “Payment and Submit”.
6. If you are paying by credit card, please enter information.

You will receive an automatic notification stating that your application has been received. In the even that you are audited, you will be informed and will need to submit the appropriate information.

Please allow 7-10 business days to receive your Authorization to Test form. This will allow you to schedule your examination.

QUESTIONS?



All questions related to the certification program and application process may be directed to [info@cdms.org](mailto:info@cdms.org). You may also call the CDMS Office at 1-844-681-8156.