



CERTIFIED ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE

the essential credential in association management



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Certified Association Executive (CAE™) program is designed to elevate professional standards, enhance individual performance, and designate association professionals who demonstrate the knowledge essential to the practice of association management. The CAE program has stood as a mark of excellence for over 40 years. Earning the CAE credential is the hallmark of a committed association professional.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE IMPACT OF THE CAE

- **Drives professional self-confidence:** 70% of CAE test takers report enhancing knowledge, improving advancement opportunities, and elevating their status in their current position as their motivation.
- **Widespread value and recognition:** particularly among your board leaders, members, and those involved in hiring nonprofit professionals including executive recruiters and association HR directors.
- **Opens doors and creates connections:** through a range of CAE-only events and increased volunteer leadership opportunities through ASAE & The Center and local, state, and regional association professional societies.

EARNING AND MAINTAINING THE CAE

Earning and maintaining the CAE is a three-part process:

- 1) **Fulfilling pre-requisites** — Candidates must meet higher education, qualifying nonprofit professional experience, association management continuing education requirements, and sign a pledge to uphold ASAE's standards of professional conduct. Once you fulfill the pre-requisites and intend to sit for the exam within the next 12 months, submit your completed CAE program application.
- 2) **Passing an examination** — The exam is administered at scheduled test centers throughout the U.S. based on anticipated candidate concentration. It is a fair but challenging exam designed to test the ability of test-takers to apply fundamental knowledge to scenarios drawn from real-world association management challenges. The content of the test is based on extensive research into the tasks and knowledge essential to successful association management. The [Exam Content Outline](#) presents these 156 competencies organized into nine knowledge domains. To provide candidates an authoritative resource for these topics, the CAE Commission has identified the [CAE Authoritative Literature](#).
- 3) **Maintaining the credential** — CAEs maintain their knowledge and credential by fulfilling certification renewal requirements every three years.

TIPS AND HINTS FOR PLANNING YOUR PATH TO EARNING THE CAE

1. **Now is the time to get started** – Savvy candidates begin early and align their association management continuing education courses to build their skills across all aspects of the Exam Content Outline.
2. **Begin with self-assessment and planning** – Each candidate should review the Exam Content Outline, rating their level of knowledge on each task. Then develop a plan of courses, reading, and mentoring to strengthen needed areas.
3. **Give yourself the best chance for success** – Spend as much time on preparation as needed so that only 4 hours is spent taking the exam (i.e., prepare to pass the first time).
4. **Look for opportunities to build your perspective** – The CAE exam is designed to identify those ready to step into the executive director role of a nonprofit of any type or size. Reading case studies, participating in list serve discussions, and networking with a variety of association professionals can help you better understand the nuances of different nonprofits.
5. **Get help** – Check with your local state society or association network to connect with other CAE candidates. Several organizations offer CAE study courses, but a study course should only be one part of preparation.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

1. **Logon to** <http://www.whatiscae.com> for complete program information, including sample questions in the [CAE Candidate Handbook](#).
2. **Call the CAE staff** at 202-626-2759.
3. **Email the CAE staff** at caedep@asaecenter.org