



Certification of Disability  
Management Specialist

*Competency. Collaboration. Assurance.*

# The CDMS Guide for Certification Renewal and Continuing Education

Developed and Administered by the  
CDMS COMMISSION



The CDMS Commission is the only independent and nationally accredited organization that certifies disability management specialists. Through sound testing backed by scientific research, continuing education, and a strict code of ethics, the Commission validates the core knowledge and competency of these experts.

*Competency. Collaboration. Assurance.*

These three words signify the purpose, promise, and value of CDMS certification. This is the essence of what we offer. As certificants, we aspire to the highest standards in the practice. To the individuals who receive disability management services, we stand for quality and expertise. To the employers who look to us for proactive workforce programs, we offer in-depth knowledge, best practices, and cost-effective solutions. And to the other professionals with whom we work, we extend collaboration to achieve excellence.



*Competency. Collaboration. Assurance.*

Certification of Disability  
Management Specialists  
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## A Note from the CDMS Commission

Thank you for your interest in the Certified Disability Management Specialist (CDMS<sup>®</sup>) certification. The CDMS<sup>®1</sup> certification is a widely acknowledged designation of professional excellence in the field of disability management and is the standard for measuring the level of knowledge, competence and professional experience of the holder (also known as the certificant).

The CDMS<sup>®</sup> credential recognizes that the field of disability management has a distinct focus on workplace issues, emphasizing the role of the disability manager in returning ill and injured employees to the workplace as quickly as possible to promote healing, restore the individual's earning power, and contribute to the company's productivity.

The Certification of Disability Management Specialists Commission (CDMS Commission<sup>2</sup>) administers the CDMS<sup>®</sup> credential. The CDMS Commission was originally established in 1984 as the Certification of Insurance Rehabilitation Specialists Commission (CIRSC) to implement recognized professional standards for the 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. The overall goal of the CDMS Commission 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.

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 designations, demonstrating expertise in more than one area.

Importantly, the CDMS<sup>®</sup> credential attests to an individual's specific knowledge and experience regarding workplace issues. Those who work in disability management find that the CDMS<sup>®</sup> credential is a powerful way to distinguish themselves in this dynamic and evolving field.

Recommended citation: Certification of Disability Management Specialists Commission, (2010). *CDMS Guide for Candidate Certification*. Schaumburg, IL: Author.

## Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of the CDMS Guide for Candidate Certification is to provide information about the certification, including eligibility criteria, documentation and verification criteria and exam content. Potential applicants should read this guide, along with the document titled "CDMS<sup>®</sup> Application Instructions" prior to beginning the application process.

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

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

<sup>2</sup>CDMS Commission is a registered service mark of the Certification of Disability Management Specialists Commission. All rights reserved.



## Change of Address

In the event of a change in your name or address, please notify the CDMS Commission immediately by sending a letter or by using the designated form on our website.

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.

## 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.

The 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 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.

### Ethical Issues

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

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 two and a half 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 prevention, early intervention and return to work. A disability case manager who provides services to an injured worker must be proactive and must consider the needs of the worker and the employer. Disability management needs to focus not only on a specific case, but also on its duration and impact. Other issues addressed in disability management are prevention, safety, disease management, and employee wellness.

In an effort to protect the public, the CDMS Commission developed a credentialing process. Persons who earn the designation of Certified Disability Management Specialist (CDMS®) must demonstrate that they are of good moral character, 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 Commission ensures that its certification exam remains valid and relevant with current practices in the field through an in-depth "Role and Function Study." This scientifically conducted research is undertaken every five 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 five (5) years. The designation can be renewed at five-year intervals if certificants can demonstrate their ongoing professional development through re-examination or a documented program of continuing education. This type of certification renewal 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.

It is not the intent of the CDMS Commission 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.

Information submitted as part of the application, certification and certification-renewal processes becomes the property of the Commission 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/unidentifiable manner.

On its website, the Commission provides a database listing of certificants, which is updated periodically. The Commission also receives and responds to requests for information about the certification status of those holding its credential.

The CDMS Commission 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.

## Section 2: The Certification Calendar

Half-day examination appointments will be taken over the course of 8 designated days in the months of February, June and September.

Application Packet Deadline (Applicant must submit application packet postmarked* no later than this date)	Exam Window
February 1, 2011	June 3 - 11, 2011
May 1, 2011	September 9 ó 17, 2011
October 1, 2011	February 3 ó 11, 2012
February 1, 2012	June 1- 9, 2012

\* The Commission considers a postmark to be either: (1) the date stamp placed on an item by the U.S. Postal Service signifying it has been picked up for delivery; or (2) the date stamp placed on an item by a private carrier signifying it has been picked up for delivery by that carrier.

## Section 3: Criteria for Eligibility

To be eligible for the CDMS® examination, an applicant must be of good moral character, reputation, and must meet all requirements that follow. Please read the criteria carefully and note that all education and employment experience requirements must be fully satisfied prior to applying for the exam.

**Education:** A Bachelor's Degree in any discipline or a current state license as a Registered Nurse.

**Employment:** A minimum of twelve (12) months of acceptable full-time employment (or its equivalent) providing direct disability management services to individuals with disabilities receiving benefits from a disability compensation system.



## Earned Degree Requirements

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 Commission 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, [www.aacrao.org/international](http://www.aacrao.org/international), (202) 296-3359.

World Education Services (WES)/International Academic Credential Evaluation, [www.wes.org](http://www.wes.org), (212) 966-6311.

*Note: The CDMS Commission will not accept evaluations completed by other sources. The evaluation report must be sent from the source directly to the CDMS Commission 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 Commission will evaluate the courses, units, and/or degrees on a course-by-course basis.*

## Section 4: Acceptable Employment Experience

The CDMS Commission will accept only full-time paid employment (or its equivalent in part-time work) as a valid fulfillment of the employment criteria. All part-time employment will be calculated on a pro-rated basis of 37 hours per week (full-time employment as defined by the Commission). Internships and volunteer activities are **NOT** acceptable as employment experience.

In order for your employment experience at any position (past or current) to qualify as "acceptable" for certification purposes, at least 60% of your time must be/must have been spent in at least two of the three job-function areas below, performing disability management services to individuals with disabilities receiving benefits from a disability compensation system. Your supervisor, employer, or purchaser of services will be asked to attest to this on the Employment Verification Forms.



## Job Function Areas

Disability and Work Interruption Case Management	Workplace Intervention for Disability Prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering and interpreting personal, medical, functional, psychological and vocational information</li> <li>• Administering, scoring and interpreting assessment tools</li> <li>• Synthesizing information</li> <li>• Interpreting case-specific local, state and federal regulations</li> <li>• Synthesizing data in order to compile a comprehensive overview of case information</li> <li>• Interpreting benefits systems and plan designs</li> <li>• Developing an action plan for case management</li> <li>• Adhering to standards of quality care</li> <li>• Maximizing internal and external resources</li> <li>• Documenting pertinent case activities and results</li> <li>• Sharing pertinent case information with appropriate stakeholders</li> <li>• Analyzing data</li> <li>• Using medical terminology, treatments and protocols</li> <li>• Adhering to standards of quality care</li> <li>• Identifying key stakeholders</li> <li>• Developing partnership with stakeholders</li> <li>• Identifying and addressing the conflicting interests of stakeholders</li> <li>• Collecting worksite/job analysis data through observations, assessments and interviews</li> <li>• Identifying job functions and quantifying their exertional and non-exertional demands</li> <li>• Interpreting worksite/job analysis information</li> <li>• Negotiating and implementing job accommodations</li> <li>• Using worksite/job modification and accommodation strategies and techniques</li> <li>• Synthesizing functional capacity and job demand information</li> <li>• Assessing business management and labor issues</li> <li>• Developing transitional work plans</li> <li>• Performing initial and ongoing case assessments</li> <li>• Making referrals to internal and external resources</li> <li>• Applying the principles of disability and health-related work interruption case management</li> <li>• Identifying assets and barriers to recovery</li> <li>• Adhering to ethical requirements in data management</li> <li>• Documenting pertinent case activities and results</li> <li>• Facilitating behavior changes</li> <li>• Developing problem solving strategies</li> <li>• Projecting potential impact of decision options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluating organizational culture</li> <li>• Evaluating applicable policy, programs and procedures</li> <li>• Facilitating sponsorship by leveraging the expertise of stakeholders</li> <li>• Advancing team development</li> <li>• Promoting behavior change</li> <li>• Managing financial resources</li> <li>• Implementing a continuous improvement approach to productivity and prevention</li> <li>• Identifying content experts</li> <li>• Implementing effective training with the use of technology</li> <li>• Implementing job accommodations and recommendations</li> <li>• Conducting an organizational assessment of essential job functions</li> <li>• Partnering with human resources</li> <li>• Communicating a business case effectively</li> <li>• Developing sponsorship from management</li> <li>• Complying with employment law and labor contracts</li> <li>• Partnering with vendors and stakeholders</li> <li>• Facilitating a team approach</li> <li>• Budgeting and managing financial resources</li> <li>• Implementing data collection strategies</li> <li>• Interpreting disability, health and absence data</li> <li>• Applying occupational and functional information to transitional work</li> <li>• Implementing a continuous improvement approach to transitional work programs</li> <li>• Adapting to the ongoing needs of the workforce</li> <li>• Applying labor relations law and contracts</li> <li>• Identifying resources for technical assistance</li> <li>• Applying work hardening and conditioning methodologies</li> <li>• Using assistive technologies</li> <li>• Applying regulatory standards</li> <li>• Identifying indicators of satisfaction and productivity</li> <li>• Applying tools to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness</li> <li>• Analyzing employee health risk data</li> <li>• Interpreting disability, health and absence data</li> <li>• Estimating financial impact</li> <li>• Applying interventions to address mental health, substance abuse and workplace stressors</li> <li>• Partnering with public health, medical communities, vendors and stakeholders</li> <li>• Evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of health and wellness interventions</li> </ul>

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Program Development, Management, and Evaluation	Employment Leaves and Benefits Administration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying qualitative and quantitative measurements</li> <li>• Integrating the principles of business and finance</li> <li>• Gathering, synthesizing and interpreting disability management program findings</li> <li>• Developing financial plans</li> <li>• Interpreting finance and risk data</li> <li>• Analyzing the cost and benefits of potential actions</li> <li>• Presenting data pertaining to variations across settings</li> <li>• Designing programs aligned with organizational rewards and incentives</li> <li>• Identifying sources of data and program evaluation metrics</li> <li>• Producing effective reports based on chosen metrics</li> <li>• Comparing program data to best practice and research</li> <li>• Analyzing complex data sets</li> <li>• Applying leadership principles and techniques</li> <li>• Advocating for staff development needs</li> <li>• Incorporating change management strategies</li> <li>• Teaching others about program philosophy, objectives, practices and procedures</li> <li>• Designing training programs consistent with adult learning theory</li> <li>• Applying principles of organizational development in training approach</li> <li>• Developing and integrating business plans and models with stakeholder interests</li> <li>• Constructing business cases for programs based on their financial performance</li> <li>• Researching community and business resources</li> <li>• Developing and managing vendor relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time management for self and others</li> <li>• Applying new information to current and future problem-solving and decision making</li> <li>• Using logic and reasoning to identify strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions</li> <li>• Maintaining focus on stakeholders</li> <li>• Influencing and negotiating with others</li> <li>• Analyzing the costs and benefits of potential actions</li> <li>• Identifying measures or indicators of system performance</li> <li>• Working effectively across and within diverse populations</li> </ul>

In order for employment to be considered for an eligibility review, each place of employment must complete an Employment Verification Form and return it, with an official signed job description, to you for inclusion in 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 submitted.

**Please note that facsimiles or copies are not acceptable.** Any application packet that is missing required documentation may be delayed in processing.



## Section 5: Standards Committee

The Standards Committee has two basic responsibilities:

- To review or cause to be reviewed in a fair, consistent manner every application to determine whether applicants are of good moral character, reputation, and fitness for the practice of disability management and whether they satisfy the Commission's currently published eligibility criteria with respect to their education and work experience; and
- 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 demands being placed upon disability management practitioners.

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

Applicants who have been denied will receive an explanation of the committee's decision and a notice of their right to appeal. A denial by the Committee will absolutely preclude a candidate from taking the next scheduled exam. However, appeals will be considered by the Appeals Committee during the next exam cycle in time to render a decision prior to the next offering. The Appeals Committee will consider the materials reviewed by the Standards Committee, as well as any materials that the Standards Committee specifically requests the Appeals Committee to take into consideration.

### 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 will be provided to other appropriate agencies.



## Section 6: Appeals Committee

The Commission's appeals process is available to any denied candidate who feels that the eligibility criteria for certification have been inaccurately, inconsistently or unfairly applied by the Standards Committee. As previously stated, only those facts presented to the Standards Committee will be reviewed by the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will not consider additional information that may be submitted by the CDMS® applicant subsequent to the disputed eligibility review, unless specifically requested by the Standards Committee. The appeals process is designed to provide:

- Complete review of the facts as they were presented to the Standards Committee
- A second, independent evaluation of the material presented to the Standards Committee
- Due process
- 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

Applicants will receive information, procedures, instructions and timelines on their right to appeal at the time that they are informed of their denial by the Standards Committee. Applicants who choose to exercise this right will have their complete file presented to the Appeals Committee during the next examination cycle. None of the members of the Appeals Committee will take part in the decision-making process of the Standards Committee, thus ensuring an independent, objective review of each applicant's case. However, the reports of the Standards Committee are available to members of the Appeals Committee in making their decisions.

The Appeals Committee also serves another function. If a candidate who has taken the examination feels that there was an error or omission in the process, or if that person questions any aspect of the examination procedure, an inquiry may be directed to CDMS Commission's Examination and Research Committee. Should the candidate disagree with the findings of this committee, a second determination may be requested from the Appeals Committee. Again, only individuals who did not serve on the Examination and Research Committee participate in this appeals process, although the committee's reports will be available to members of the Appeals Committee.

If the applicant remains unsatisfied with the Appeals Committee's decision, the case may be directed to the full Commission for deliberation. Requests for such appeals must be sent to the Commission in writing within 30 days of the decision by the Appeals Committee. Applicants who subsequently remedy the issue that caused the denial of their candidacy must submit a new application, pay another non-refundable processing fee and satisfy the standards and criteria in effect at the time of their re-application.



## Section 7: 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 Commission has developed a pool of questions that contains a comprehensive selection of statistically validated examination items. A task force of disability managers is charged with continually adding to and upgrading this item pool.

The CDMS® certification exam is a computer-based exam. The certification exam consists of 175 multiple-choice questions drawn from the Commission's item pool. 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 Schedule

The certification examination is a half-day exam that is scheduled within a designated 8-day window in the months of February, June 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 Commission. Candidates may take a brief practice session in order to become familiar with the computer test. Upon completion, candidates will be given an opportunity to record comments on particular examination items and will be requested to complete a brief survey.

### Examination Accommodations

The CDMS Commission is committed to the fair administration of its certification examination. 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 Commission, 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 CDMS Commission is committed to providing smoke-free, fully accessible examination sites. This commitment includes making provisions for candidates who need assistance because of functional limitations. Notification of accommodation needs 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. This documentation information must be less than two years old.

Furthermore, a detailed statement must be sent to the CDMS Commission regarding past exam accommodations and, if none were provided, explaining why the requested accommodations are currently needed. Finally, if additional time is being requested, the precise amount needed must be specified and the letter from the physician or other health care professional must also indicate the time needed as well as the diagnostic basis for the request.

### **Exam Medium**

The CDMS Commission's 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 Commission 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 Sites**

Candidates will be able to choose from approximately three hundred (300) test administration centers in the U.S. Because the location of test sites can change, the CDMS Commission 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 location. It is recommended that candidates 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, however, respond to questions relating 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.

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

It is recommended that candidates arrive fifteen minutes prior to their scheduled appointment time. While every effort will be made to seat candidates who arrive after their scheduled time, late seating will be subject to the overall availability of seating at the test center. Those who arrive late and cannot be seated will be subject to a re-examination fee in order to reschedule. Candidates who do not show for a scheduled appointment are also subject to a re-examination fee.

### **Rescheduling and Deferrals**

Candidates who are unable to take a scheduled examination for any reason are permitted only one deferral to the next scheduled testing dates. Candidates who schedule an appointment but who are not seated due to invalid identification, late arrival, or who do not appear for their appointment may reschedule but are subject to a re-examination fee. Candidates who cancel their scheduled appointment thirty or more days prior to their scheduled appointment are not subject to a re-examination fee when rescheduling for the next scheduled testing dates. 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 CRC designation. Such reapplications will be subject to all criteria in effect at the time of reapplication.

### **Candidates Who Do Not Achieve a Passing Score**

Candidates who do not achieve a passing score on the certification exam are allowed to re-take the exam once during one of the two subsequent testing dates. Candidates will be required to notify the Commission of their intention to take the test again and will also be required to remit a re-examination fee. Candidates who do not achieve a passing score on their second attempt or who are unable to take the exam again during one of the two subsequent testing dates for any reason and who wish to continue to pursue certification will be required to submit a new application packet and forms and certification fee in order to continue their pursuit of the CDMS® designation. Such reapplications will be subject to all criteria in effect at the time of reapplication.



## Section 8: Examination Content – Knowledge Domains and Subdomains

The examination content is determined by research conducted on behalf of the CDMS Commission on a regular basis. Candidates for certification must demonstrate knowledge of the following four domains: Disability Case Management; Disability Prevention and Workplace Interruption Case Management, Workplace Intervention for Disability Prevention, Program Development, Management, and Evaluation, and Employment Leaves and Benefits Administration.

### **I. Disability and Work Interruption Case Management** (38 Questions)

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.

#### **Mean Importance Rating**

- Perform individual case analyses and benefits assessments 3.47
- Review disability case management interventions 2.89
- Promote collaboration among stakeholders 3.17
- Perform worksite/job analyses 3.07
- Develop return-to-work and work retention plans 3.24
- Implement interventions 2.92
- Coordinate benefits, services and community resources 3.03
- Monitor case progress 3.06
- Communicate in compliance with practice standards and regulations 2.95
- Develop solutions that optimize health and employment 2.62
- Communicate benefits and employment policies 2.70

### **II. Workplace Intervention for Disability Prevention** (39 Questions)

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.

#### **Mean Importance Rating**

- Implement disability prevention practices 2.90
- Develop a transitional work program 3.01
- Develop a process for worksite modification, job accommodations or task reassignment 2.93
- Recommend strategies to address ergonomic, safety and risk factors 2.67
- Recommend strategies that integrate benefits plan designs and related services 2.29
- Promote health and wellness interventions 2.26



### **III. Program Development, Management and Evaluation (27 Questions)**

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

	<b><u>Mean Importance Rating</u></b>
• Establish program goals	2.35
• Design the program	2.47
• Design a financial plan	2.29
• Develop staff	2.36
• Select metrics for evaluating the program	2.29
• Implement cross-functional processes	2.08
• Offer education and training	2.50
• Manage program's operational and financial performance	2.31
• Integrate data from all relevant sources	2.33
• Procure internal and external services	2.17
• Manage service providers	2.46

### **IV. Employment Leaves and Benefits Administration (21 Questions)**

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><u>Mean Importance Rating</u></b>
• Manage employment leaves	2.46
• Administer health and welfare plans	2.48
• Manage payroll and systems data	2.17
• Identify risks associated with interruptions and leaves	2.31

## **Section 9: Sample Examination Questions**

The CDMS Commission does not endorse particular study materials or preparation courses. The Commission encourages applicants to prepare by utilizing the current reading list which is available on the CDMS website ([www.CDMS.org](http://www.CDMS.org)) and by reviewing the content outlined in the domains as listed within this guide. 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 10: Reading List

Some general sources that may be of help to examination candidates can be found on the CDMS website ([www.CDMS.org](http://www.CDMS.org)). The reading list does not completely delineate the parameters of the CDMS<sup>®</sup> examination. It is merely a suggested means for reviewing information.

## Section 11: Examination Scores, Results, Certificates and Inquiries

### Examination Score

The CDMS Commission selects a panel of twelve judges 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, which set 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.

The CDMS Commission 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 ó not achievement or selection instruments.

### Examination Results

Approximately four weeks following the test administration window, all candidates will receive notification of their examination results. Exam results are confidential and will be released **ONLY** to the candidate **IN WRITING BY FIRST CLASS MAIL**. Individual results are not released to any institution or employer.

### Certificates

A certificate will be sent to each candidate who receives a passing score. After receiving the certificate and the profile that reports their passing status, individuals are entitled to begin using the öCDMS<sup>®</sup>ö designation after their names.

Duplicate or replacement certificates can be requested from the CDMS Commission office. There is a fee for this service. Individuals who do not receive their original certificate within six weeks of the certification examination should contact the CDMS Commission office.



## 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 a letter outlining their concerns to the CDMS Commission Examination and Research Committee. If the candidate disagrees with the committee's findings, a further appeal may be made to the Appeals Committee (see Section 6).

## Section 12: Use of the "CDMS®" Designation

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

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

Individuals who use the CDMS® designation 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 13: Certification Renewal

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

Those individuals who do not renew their certifications are officially notified that they may no longer use the "CDMS®" designation nor represent themselves to the profession or the public as being certified. Likewise, they may not exercise any rights and privileges ascribed to a designation holder. A letter to the individual's last known address shall constitute sufficient notification. A certification renewal application will be mailed to the individual's last known address five to six months prior to the expiration date of the current certification.

The CDMS Commission requires all certification holders to keep the office advised in writing, either through the mail or the CDMS Commission 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 the certification renewal application to designation holders. However, it is the individual's responsibility to re-certify at the appropriate time. Failure to receive a renewal application is not considered grounds for an extension.



## Section 14: Fees

To avoid a processing delay, the application packet including payment must be sent to:

Certification of Disability Management Specialists Commission  
1699 E. Woodfield Road, Suite 300  
Schaumburg, IL 60173-4957

Make all checks payable to the **CDMS Commission**.  
*Please note that all fees are subject to change and are non-refundable.*

### **Certification Fee** **\$385**

This fee must be submitted in full with your application packet.

### **Related Fees**

Handling Fee for Returned Checks (NSF, closed account) **\$35**

Re-Examination Fee **\$200**

(Must be paid by applicants who fail the examination on their first attempt and schedule to take the exam a second time during one of the two subsequent testing dates. Must also be paid by applicants who are not seated for a scheduled appointment due to invalid identification, late arrival or who do not appear for their appointment.)

Written Certification Verification (send check with written request) **\$15**

### **Renewal through Continuing Education** **\$285**

This fee must be submitted in full with your application for certification renewal.

### **Renewal through Re-Examination** **\$485**

This fee includes both a certification renewal and an examination charge. It must be remitted with the CDMS Certification Renewal Application.

### **ALL FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE.**

Applicants are asked to pay particular attention to the deadlines that occur during the application process. If the candidates do not meet schedules for requested information, the CDMS Commission may assess a late documentation fee to cover its additional processing costs.

## Section 15: Special Notes for Application Completion

Detailed completion instructions are included with the application packet. Please be sure to read them carefully before filling out your application. If your application is incomplete or illegible, it will be returned.

All educational and employment experience requirements must be fully satisfied before the examination date.

Any application that does not meet ALL of the educational and employment criteria will be denied with a partial refund of the certification fee. Persons who wish to re-apply must submit



a new application and pay a second, non-refundable fee. They also will have to meet all of the standards and criteria in effect at the time of their re-application.

The designated deadlines for accepting applications will not be extended for any reason. The CDMS Commission recommends that you mail your application as early as possible once you have satisfied all of the educational and employment requirements.

Below are some special notations regarding your application.

### **Exam Accommodations**

The Commission is committed to providing smoke-free, fully accessible testing sites and to helping those candidates who may require accommodations when taking the CDMS<sup>®</sup> examination. If you need assistance, please indicate the necessary accommodation in your application.

### **Professional Employment Experience**

Before completing the employment section of the application, please read the definition of "Acceptable Employment Experience" (Section 4) very carefully. You may wish to include various explanatory materials with your application to clarify your employment background. Any employment you desire to have reviewed for eligibility purposes must be listed on the application. **The Commission will not extract information from a resume.**



## Professional Development

No more than half (40) of the required 80 continuing education credits may be acquired through professional development in a five-year cycle. See the grid below for a breakdown as to how professional development endeavors may be used toward renewal credits.

Type of Training	Clock Hours Awarded	Proof of Attendance or Completion*
Authorship/Co-authorship of published articles	15	Copy of the article developed. OR The internet citation for the article.  <i>Information submitted must reflect date of publication.</i>
Authorship/Co-authorship of published book chapter	15	Copy of the book chapter developed. OR A copy of the cover, title page and table of contents from the book where the chapter appears.  <i>Information submitted must reflect your name as the author/co-author and date of publication.</i>
Authorship/Co-authorship of published book	40	Copy of the book developed. OR A copy of the cover, title page and table of contents from the book.  <i>Information submitted must reflect your name as the author/co-author and date of publication.</i>
Computer applications and technology	1 hour for each hour of training	Certificate of attendance or completion. OR A letter from the sponsor stating you have completed the program, the dates of completion and the number of clock hours attended.
Development of Legislation or Regulations	1 hour for each hour of service	Documentation of appointment to committee and information developed in relation to legislation or regulation.
Development of professional presentations  OR Development of In-service training programs	2 hours for each hour of training	Outline of the training program or presentation AND a program agenda listing you as presenter which states the length and date of the program or presentation.  OR A letter from the supervisor or training director stating you are the developer which includes the length and date of the program or presentation.  <i>Credit is given on a one-time-only basis for the learning experience, which is the research and development of the program or presentation, not for the presentation itself.</i>
Editorial review of disability management publication	15	Copy of page from publication listing you as editor. Must reflect date and title of the publication.
Research/Independent study	40	Copy of qualitative and/or quantitative research, including a list of source materials.
Service to professional disability management or health and productivity organization	1 hour for each hour of service provided to the association	Letter from the president/director of organization documenting services performed, the number of hours served and the dates of service.



## Application Packet Checklist

Please use the following checklist to verify that you have included all necessary documents in your application packet prior to mailing 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. Remember that all forms require your original signature and the original signature of your verifiers as well.

Application Forms and Supporting Documentation	Who needs to include in application packet?	Is this form or document read to submit?
CDMS Application Form	All Applicants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Payment	All Applicants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exam Accommodation Form	Applicants who checked the need for accommodation on the CDMS Application Form	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exam Accommodation Documentation	Applicants who checked the need for accommodation on the CDMS Application Form	<input type="checkbox"/>
Official School Transcript	All Applicants	<input type="checkbox"/>
License Verification Form	RN Applicants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment Verification Form(s)	All Applicants except those who are self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-Employment Verification Form(s)	Applications who are self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signed Job Description	All Applicants	<input type="checkbox"/>