



Certification of Disability  
Management Specialists  
COMMISSION

*Competency. Collaboration. Assurance.*

# The CDMS Manual for Continuing Education Pre-Approval

Developed and Administered by the  
CDMS COMMISSION

For Organizations Providing  
Continuing Education to  
CDMS Certificants



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.



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## Introduction

The CDMS Commission is committed to developing and maintaining exemplary standards of practice for professionals who practice disability management. The CDMS Commission strives to elevate the quality of services provided to consumers so each and every professional takes pride in his or her chosen field, and so each and every consumer receives services that enhance his or her vocational opportunities.

Hence, the CDMS Commission believes that individuals certified as disability management specialists (CDMS<sup>®</sup>s) should continue to expand their skills in order to enhance the quality of the services they provide. Therefore, the CDMS Commission's certification renewal requirements are designed to encourage disability management specialists to continue their professional education through the attainment of continuing education in order to help them serve their clients more effectively.

While certified individuals have the option to achieve certification renewal through passing the examination, continuing education is much more frequently used as a method of certification renewal. Those who choose to renew through continuing education are required to achieve eighty (80) clock hours within the five-year period of certification, four (4) of which must be in ethics.

In order to maintain a high-level quality of continuing education opportunities, the CDMS Commission has a pre-approval process for continuing education programs/activities. Organizations that sponsor continuing education and training are encouraged to seek pre-approval of their programs/activities, which signifies to all certified individuals that the programs/activities are appropriate to use toward meeting the requirements of their certification renewal program.

This CDMS Manual for Continuing Education Pre-Approval is designed to describe the requirements and procedures for those organizations that wish to seek pre-approval of their programs/activities.

## Approval Categories

### Standard Approval Category

Any organization that does not otherwise qualify or that does qualify, but does not wish to take part in any employer in-service approval process is subject to a \$65.00 fee per program/activity. Individual applications and payments of the fee must be made for each program/activity.

### Employers Providing In-Service Training

Organizations are limited to employers that provide in-service training solely to their employees and at no charge to their employees. Organizations are subject to a quarterly fee of \$65.00 and must submit applications for each training session directly to the CDMS Commission in order that the CDMS Commission may issue approval numbers. Quarterly applications must be made and must include all programs for that quarter.



## Approval Requirements

Regardless of the category under which an organization applies for pre-approval, and regardless of whether the CDMS Commission grants the approval, the following requirements must be met prior to the granting of approval and issuing of an approval number.

1. The program must be no less than one clock hour in duration. A clock hour is defined as sixty (60) minutes of instruction time and excludes opening/closing remarks, coffee breaks, social hours, meals, etc.
2. The focus of the program must be to increase the participant's knowledge of or skill in the practice of disability management. To be approved, a program must clearly meet one of the domain focus areas for continuing education (see page 5).
3. The purpose of the program must be clearly defined in terms of expected outcomes/learning objectives.
4. The program must include an evaluation component completed by the participants. This is an evaluation of the program's value – not an assessment of the participant's learning skills.
5. It is the CDMS Commission's philosophical belief that all programs must be held in accessible, barrier-free locations so that no one with a disability is excluded from participation. The CDMS Commission strongly encourages all programs to comply with relevant federal, state/provincial, and local laws related to serving individuals with disabilities.

## Approval Process

The CDMS Commission reserves the right to monitor the programs and activities for which it has granted approval and to withdraw its approval from any program or activity that is offered or presented in a manner that is inconsistent with approval requirements. The approval process is as follows:

1. The application consistent with the approval category under which an organization is seeking approval must be completed in full and the requested documentation must be attached along with the appropriate fee. Applications can be downloaded at [www.CDMS.org](http://www.CDMS.org). **Any application submitted that is not accompanied by the appropriate fee and/or required documentation will be returned without review.**
2. Approval must be obtained/granted for each program/activity. For example, an in-service training program that is two hours in length and given on one day is considered one program/activity. Likewise, a conference consisting of a variety of sessions given over a period of three days is also considered one program/activity. Any sessions meeting the ethics domain focus area must be highlighted separately and a separate approval number sought/granted.
3. Applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-serve basis. The CDMS Commission recommends submission of an application at least 60 days prior to the program/activity start date to ensure processing of the application. Applications submitted under the recommended 60-day submission cannot be guaranteed approval prior to the program/activity start date.



4. Applications will be reviewed only for a program/activity that is within 6 months of the program/activity start date. Applications submitted beyond the 6-month maximum will be ineligible for consideration.
5. Applications requesting retroactive approval (the program/activity has already occurred), will be reviewed up to a maximum of 6 months after the completion of the program/activity. Applications submitted beyond the 6-month maximum will be ineligible for consideration.
6. Approval for any continuing education program/activity is valid through the approved calendar year (December 31), provided that no substantive changes are made to the content or format of the program/activity. A sponsor must re-apply each year for any program/activity that requires approval for subsequent years.

## Approval Number

Organizations seeking approval will be provided with an approval number and a verification of completion form. **The verification of completion form distributed to each participant must contain the correct issued approval number(s) as well as all other descriptors located in the sample verification of completion form. Incorrect information distributed to participants will delay the processing of their continuing education.** The verification of completion form is to be distributed only at the close of the program/activity. The assigned approval number(s) is/are not to be printed on any general distribution handouts or mailing information.

***NOTE:** Authorized providers are required to maintain participant records for those programs approved by the CDMS Commission for a period of five years. Participant records are defined as a list of participant names and continuing education hours awarded for each program.*

## Ethics Definition

In order to earn CEs in the ethics focus area, the content of the program must show evidence that the CDMS Code of Professional Conduct is referenced and properly cited within the presentation. Examples of such evidence include, 1) reference to the CDMS Code within the promotional or marketing materials or 2) written explanation from the presenter that states the way and extent to which the CDMS Code will be addressed within the presentation.

Appropriate subject matter must relate to disability management and must include one of the following:

- the disability manager/client relationship
- confidentiality
- professional responsibility
- relationships with other professionals
- evaluation, assessment and interpretation
- teaching, training and supervision
- research and publication
- electronic communications/emerging applications
- business practices
- resolving ethical issues



## Criteria for CE Offered Solely Through Written Means

Continuing education offered solely through written means (e.g., self-study course) is subject to application of the following criteria where the course/article must meet the minimum number of words/questions in order to obtain the stated number of hours:

Number of Words	Number of Multiple-Choice Questions	Number of Hours Approved
Up to 10,000	10	2
10,001 – 20,000	15	4
20,001 – 30,000	20	6
Every 10,000 thereafter	5 additional questions	2 additional hours

If the organization requesting approval is dissatisfied with the number of hours awarded, provided that the number of hours awarded is a minimum of 15 hours, the organization may request a review by the Standards Committee. The burden to prove why additional hours should be awarded remains with the organization requesting approval.

## Type of Instruction

### Conference

A series of seminars or workshops spanning the course of one or more consecutive days.

### Seminar/Workshop

A lecture or presentation delivered to an audience on a particular topic or set of topics.

### Self-Study Course

An educational course that is provided in written format where at the conclusion participants complete an examination based on the course content.

### Webinar

A live presentation, lecture, seminar or workshop that is transmitted over the Internet and allows interaction between the presenter and the audience.

### Webcast

A recorded presentation, lecture, seminar or workshop that is transmitted over the Internet and does **not** allow interaction between the presenter and the audience.

***NOTE:** The CDMS Commission acknowledges it is the responsibility of the certificant to actively participate in a program for the benefit of furthering their professional education. However, the CDMS Commission encourages all providers of continuing education to actively monitor participation in a program prior to awarding credit to certificants.*



## Program Review Fee

Review fees are determined according to the approval category under which an organization applies and under which they are qualified. See the following chart to identify the applicable fee:

Category*	Fee**
Standard Approval Category	\$65.00 per program/activity
Employers Providing In-Service Training	\$65.00 per quarter

\*See approval categories on Page 1.

\*\*All fees are non-refundable.

## Domain Focus Areas for Continuing Education

The following areas constitute the domain focus areas that are appropriate for continuing education for disability management specialists. Headings in bold denote the domain focus areas, while the bulleted items offer specifics related to that domain focus area.

### I. **Disability and Work Interruption Case Management**

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.

*Possible coursework topics under this area may cover how to:*

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

### II. **Workplace Intervention for Disability Prevention**

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.

*Possible coursework topics under this area may cover how to:*

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



### **III. Program Development, Management and Evaluation**

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

*Possible coursework topics under this area may cover how to:*

- Establish program goals
- Design the program
- Design a financial plan
- Develop staff
- Select metrics for evaluating the program
- Implement cross-functional processes
- Offering education and training
- Manage program's operational and financial performance
- Integrate data from all relevant sources
- Procure internal and external services
- Manage service providers

### **IV. Employment Leaves and Benefits Administration**

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.

*Possible coursework topics under this area may cover how to:*

- Manage employment leaves
- Administer health and welfare plans
- Manage payroll and system data
- Identify risks associated with interruptions and leaves

### **V. Ethics**

*Possible coursework topics under this area may include:*

- Ethical Practice in Disability Case Management
- Ethical Practice in Disability Prevention and Workplace Intervention
- Ethical Practice in Program Development, Management and Evaluation