

Interested in learning more about earning your Certified Association Executive credential?

Here's a great place to start!



Eligibility

- Professional Experience/Tenure
 - 3 years – Chief Staff Officer at a nonprofit or AMC; or
 - 5 years – Staff level at a nonprofit or AMC; or
 - 10 years – Employee, independent contractor, or consultant with professional involvement within the association community (5 years of such service if substantially all of your work is devoted to nonprofits or AMCs)
- Bachelor's degree or up to 8 years of additional years of professional experience if no bachelor's degree
- 100 hours of qualifying professional development within the last 5 years preceding the application (note, for certification renewal, 40 hours of continuing professional development is required every 3 years)

Exam Dates

- ASAE offers the CAE exam on the 1st Friday of May and December each year
- Note, the exam cannot be taken for renewals

Exam Locations

- As long as there is a minimum of 3 candidates taking the exam, ISAE offers an exam site local to Indianapolis
- If there are less than 3 candidates, you are able to arrange with ASAE to take your exam at a local testing facility (i.e. IUPUI, etc.)
- If you will be traveling on the exam date, check with ASAE for other testing sites across the country, or arrange with ASAE to take your exam at a local testing facility

Application

- Must be submitted, along with all qualifying professional development, 10 weeks prior to the exam; exact dates are published at ASAE
- The exam must be taken within 12 months of submitting your application
- Current application fees: \$500 (ASAE members); \$750 (Nonmembers)

ISAE Resources to Help Prepare and Earn Hours

- ISAE App – Download the ISAE app and click on “CAE Center” for a number of resources to help prepare for the CAE exam
- Study Groups – Each spring and fall ISAE offers a facilitated study group that meets weekly (usually Wednesdays 4:00-6:00pm) for the 6 weeks leading up to the exam; ISAE study groups are free to ISAE members, and each session provides **2 CAE hours (12 total)** toward your professional development requirement. *You may participate in the study group as many times as you would like, so you are encouraged to participate the spring or fall prior to your anticipated test date to maximize the eligible CAE hours prior to your application deadline.*
- CAE Hours – Through event options such as our Legislative Luncheon, Women's Forum, CAE Luncheon, Lunch & Learn Webinars (live and archived), CEO Dinner, ISAE Strategy Academy, Annual Convention, CEO/CSE Summit and Trend Camp, ISAE

offers opportunities to earn more than **50 CAE hours** of qualified professional development each year to be used toward earning or renewing your CAE credential.

- E-Learning Portal – Through ISAE’s partnership with [SeminarWeb](#), there are 100+ webinar programs on-demand providing more than 100 additional CAE hours of qualified professional development to be used toward earning or renewing your CAE credential.
- QAS Program – ISAE has partnered with the Florida Society of Association Executives for ISAE members to earn the [Qualified Association Specialist](#) designation. The program consists of 12 one-hour online modules that will earn you **12 CAE hours** while earning your QAS designation.
- IOM – Through our partnership with the [Institute for Organization Management](#), ISAE offers two partial scholarships to new students enrolling in the IOM program. Completion of the program, typically done over a four-year period, earns you **96 CAE hours**.

Pathway to Your CAE

1. Determine which Professional Experience eligibility applies to you
 - Do you already qualify based on your tenure (including additional years if needing to subsidize a bachelor’s degree)?
2. Track your CAE hours, keeping in mind that all hours need to have been earned within the 5-year period immediately preceding your application
 - How many more do you need?
 - Determine how long, realistically, it will take to earn the additional hours needed. There should be more than enough opportunity within ISAE alone to earn the difference. Keep in mind that webinars are a great way to earn a few hours on your own schedule!
3. Begin studying
 - ASAE recommends a number of texts to study. At minimum, consider purchasing or borrowing the most current editions of:
 - [CAE Study Guide 2015](#) – Includes access to online practice exams!
 - [ASAE Handbook of Professional Practices in Association Management](#)
 - [Association Law Handbook](#)
 - Review the 9-domain [CAE Exam Content Outline](#) to determine which areas you feel stronger or weaker in: Strategic Management; Governance and Structure; Membership Development; Programs, Products and Services; Leadership; Administration; Knowledge Management & Research; Public Policy, Government Relations, and Coalition Building; Marketing, Public Relations & Communications. To the extent possible, seek professional development opportunities that apply to those domains you feel weakest in.
 - Join a study group. In addition to [ISAE’s study group](#), the [Michigan Society of Association Executives](#) offers a couple of different options to join national study groups for a fee, and ASAE itself offers a 3-day [CAE Kickoff](#) course at their office in Washington, DC.
4. Complete your application
 - Depending on your specific timing, you may want to do this before you start your study program.
 - Keep in mind that the [application is due](#) to ASAE approximately 10 weeks prior to the exam date.
 - The link to the application can be found [here](#).
5. Take the exam!
 - The exam is a four-hour, 200 multiple choice question exam
 - Results are sent to your home four to six weeks following the exam