

CDMP-E EXAMINATION PREPARATION GUIDE



cdmp-e[®]

Certified Disability Management
Professional Executive

CDMP-E EXAMINATION PREPARATION GUIDE



TM National Institute of Disability
Management and ResearchTM

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This manual is designed to support candidates preparing to write the Certified Disability Management Professional-Executive (CDMP-E) certification examination. Specifically, it is designed to enhance preparation for the examination and is not intended to serve as a substitute for formal education, professional training, or practical experience in disability management. Individuals using this manual are expected to have a foundational understanding of disability management concepts, workplace processes, relevant legislation and benefit programs, and collaborative return-to-work practices developed through their academic studies and professional experience.

The purpose of this manual is to introduce the CDMP-E exam and provide sample examination questions - so the candidate has a better understanding and appreciation for the types of questions to be expected.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CDMP-E EXAMINATION

The CDMP-E examination was designed using a detailed and psychometrically rigorous process, to ensure that the examination meets the highest levels of both exam reliability and validity. Specifically, over the course of approximately 2 years, a series of Subject Matter Experts with significant long-standing expertise as CDMPs in leadership roles worked towards the development of the examination questions and scoring rubrics for assessors to evaluate the candidate responses.

The decision was made to base the exam primarily on a series of situational interview questions, along with a single written question. Situational interviews are particularly valued because they:

1. Increase standardization and fairness

Every candidate responds to the same scenarios under the same conditions, improving comparability and reducing bias.

2. Assess job-relevant judgement

They directly evaluate decision-making, prioritization, ethics, and interpersonal conduct—especially important for complex leadership roles.

3. Reduce impression-based bias

Compared to unstructured interviews, they limit reliance on applicant charisma, similarity biases, or unrelated personal impressions.

4. Improve defensibility

Because scoring is anchored to predefined criteria, the results are easier to justify in audit, legal, or governance contexts.

5. Simulate real job demands

Well-designed scenarios reflect actual workplace challenges, increasing ecological validity.

6. Standardized scoring rubrics

Assessors are not left to decide upon the quality of candidate responses based upon their own potentially idiosyncratic notions concerning what is required for an effective/ineffective response. Rather, assessors are provided with a scoring rubric detailing what the assessor should be looking for when evaluating a specific response. Overall, this standardized and structured interview approach has been shown to lead to a highly desirable level of reliability and validity.

For the CDMP interview process, candidates are asked to respond to 6 situational interview questions, with a maximum of 10 minutes allotted for each answer. Each question presents a hypothetical scenario potentially confronting a CDMP in a leadership or executive role. The candidate is asked how they would respond to the situation as presented. Moreover, the situation is grounded in one of the 9 CDMP Occupational Standards Domain areas reviewed below. No domain area is represented more than once across the 6 interview questions.

After completing the interview portion of the exam, candidates are provided with a written question. They have up to one hour to complete their written response. Like the situational interview questions, the written question is framed around one of the 9 domain areas.

The six interview questions are delivered live through the Zoom platform. The questions remain visible on the screen as they are posed, and during the response, so the candidate may refer to the question as required.

Once the 6 interview questions are completed, the candidate is given a secure link to obtain the written question. The candidate response is written on a dedicated webpage accessible through this link. During the written exam portion, the Zoom session remains open - so the candidate can ask any questions arising to the Examiner as needed.

The interview questions are assessed by two Assessors. One Assessor poses the questions and independently scores each response, while a second Assessor observes the interview and scores all responses as well. In sum, both Assessors rate the six interview responses as well as the written submission on their own. Afterwards, they compare their scores, justify their individual assessments, and discuss any potential scoring differences with the objective of reaching a shared final rating for each question.

Prior to undertaking their roles as Assessors, both Assessors undertake a comprehensive training program provided by NIDMAR and developed by an internationally recognized leading expert in assessor training. The provision of rater training combined with the use of multiple assessors is designed to maximize the psychometric quality of the overall examination process.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Below, we first provide an overview of the CDMP Domains and Occupational Standards that serve as the foundation for the CDMP-E examination questions. For a detailed exposition of the Domain areas, please refer to the following clickable link: [Occupational Standard Domains](#). Additionally, we provide a sample interview question for each of the 9 domain areas, and a single written question from 1 of the domains. In addition, for each question we provide some of the expected/desired response elements that would likely be included in the grading rubric for the question.

Note that regardless of the expected/desired response elements contained in the grading rubric, Assessors have discretion to add or subtract points conditional upon specific aspects of the applicant response that does not easily map into the rubric. Because there are 2 assessors, both assessors must agree if scores are modulated based upon non-rubric related response elements.

It is important to mention that reviewing these questions is neither necessary nor sufficient for ensuring a successful examination performance. Rather, they are only included to give the candidate a sense of what to expect during the examination. Please note the questions below were specifically authored for this manual and will not be used during any actual CDMP-E examination.

Domain 1: Foundations of Disability Management

Overview

This domain examines the principles that underpin disability management as a structured organizational function. It emphasizes understanding how effective programs operate through coordinated practices, shared accountability, and outcome-focused planning. Examination questions may assess the ability to identify essential program components, distinguish

stakeholder responsibilities, and apply core concepts such as timely intervention, respectful engagement, prevention, equitable decision-making, and function-focused planning. High-performing responses demonstrate organized coordination, clearly defined responsibilities, and practical strategies that promote safe and lasting participation in work.

Sample Question: Domain 1

You have recently been hired as the Director of Disability Management for a national organization with approximately 3,500 employees across multiple provinces. Over the past three years, disability duration has steadily increased, employee satisfaction with disability management has declined, and managers report that every case is handled differently. There is no formal disability management framework, communication between Human Resources, Occupational Health, supervisors, unions, and insurers is inconsistent, and employees often feel unsupported during their absence.

The Chief Executive Officer has asked you to develop a comprehensive disability management strategy that will improve outcomes over the next 18 months.

As the new CDMP Leader, describe how you would approach this situation during your first six months. What would your priorities be, how would you engage stakeholders, and how would you determine whether the disability management program is successful?

Grading Rubric: Sample Elements

For this question some of the desired response elements may include the following:

1. The candidate explains the need to understand the current state before introducing solutions.
2. The candidate recognizes that effective disability management requires organizational leadership.
3. Rather than waiting until cases become complex, the candidate emphasizes strategies consistent with an early-intervention focus.
4. In the response, it is clear the candidate understands that disability management is primarily a collaborative organizational process.
5. The candidate recognizes that successful programs require evaluation and possible modifications over time.

Domain 2: Employment Legislation and Income Support Systems

Overview

This domain addresses the legal and benefit frameworks that influence disability management activities. Candidates are expected to understand how legislative obligations and workplace policies guide accommodation, privacy, consent, and information management. Questions may also assess general knowledge of income replacement and benefit programs and their relationship to return-to-work planning. Strong responses remain within the disability management scope by emphasizing fair processes, informed coordination, and functional decision-making rather than legal interpretation or claims adjudication.

Sample Question: Domain 2

You have recently been appointed Vice-President of Health, Safety, and Disability Management for a large multi-jurisdictional employer operating in several jurisdictions. An employee with permanent functional limitations has exhausted short-term disability benefits and is now receiving long-term disability benefits. The employee's treating physician has indicated that they can perform modified work with restrictions. The insurer supports a gradual return to work; however, the employee's manager believes accommodating the restrictions would create operational hardship. At the same time, the union alleges the organization has failed to meet its duty to accommodate, while senior leadership is concerned about legal exposure, increasing disability costs, and inconsistent accommodation decisions across the organization.

You have been asked by the CEO to lead the organization's response and establish a legally defensible, fair, and consistent approach.

As the executive responsible for disability management, describe how you would manage this situation. What principles would guide your decision-making, how would you balance the interests of the various stakeholders, and what organizational changes would you implement to reduce similar conflicts in the future?

Grading Rubric: Sample Elements

For this question some of the desired response elements may include the following:

1. The candidate acknowledges that regulatory accommodation requirements may be in place.
2. Shows an understanding that accommodation continues unless undue hardship is demonstrated.
3. There is an appreciation for the need to seek functional information rather than unnecessary medical details.

4. The candidate recognizes that multiple legal frameworks often operate simultaneously (e.g., Employment Standards, Accessibility legislation, etc.).
5. Rather than resolving only the immediate situation, the candidate should demonstrate strategic thinking.

Domain 3: Labour-Management Collaboration

Overview

This domain focuses on managing disability cases within unionized and non-unionized workplaces where multiple organizational interests must be balanced. Candidates should understand the influence of collective agreements, labour relations, and formal dispute resolution mechanisms on disability management. Assessment items may require recognition of collaborative approaches, appropriate stakeholder engagement, and strategies for resolving workplace barriers while maintaining fairness and procedural consistency. Effective responses demonstrate cooperation, transparency, and shared problem-solving.

Sample Question: Domain 3

You have recently been appointed Executive Director of Disability Management for a large unionized organization. Relationships between management and the union have become strained following several disputed return-to-work and accommodation decisions. Grievances are increasing, trust between the parties is low, and disability durations continue to rise. Senior leadership has asked you to restore confidence in the disability management program while improving collaboration and return-to-work outcomes.

As the executive responsible for disability management, how would you rebuild trust between labour and management, improve collaboration among stakeholders, and establish a fair, consistent, and effective disability management process?

Grading Rubric: Sample Elements

For this question some of the desired response elements may include the following:

1. There is a focus on building collaborative relationships.
2. Notes the need to clarify the responsibilities of managers, union representatives, Human Resources, disability management professionals, and employees.
3. There is an appreciation for using a collaborative, interest-based approach.
4. Demonstrates the need to balance organizational objectives with employee rights and collective agreement obligations.
5. Emphasizes the need for procedural fairness, transparency, and consistency.

Domain 4: Communication and Decision-Making

Overview

This domain evaluates the communication and interpersonal skills required to support disability management activities. Candidates should be able to facilitate productive discussions, build stakeholder confidence, manage difficult conversations, and resolve workplace issues using a structured approach. Questions may assess conflict management, negotiation, issue clarification, and collaborative planning. Strong responses emphasize professionalism, respectful dialogue, and practical solutions that keep return-to-work planning moving forward.

Sample Question: Domain 4

A manager refuses to support a medically appropriate return-to-work plan, believing it will negatively affect operations. How would you handle the situation if a CDMP approaches you for assistance with this?

Grading Rubric: Sample Elements

1. Ensure the CDMP clarifies the concerns of all parties through active listening and fact-finding before proposing solutions.
2. Encourage the CDMP to facilitate a collaborative discussion that balances operational needs, medical restrictions, employee well-being, and organizational obligations.
3. Confirms the CDMP is using influence and negotiation skills to build consensus.
4. Helps the CDMP to develop a practical, documented action plan with clear roles, timelines, and follow-up measures to support implementation.
5. Escalates appropriately if needed, while preserving relationships and keeping the focus on safe, sustainable return-to-work outcomes.

Domain 5: Disability Case Coordination

Overview

This domain addresses the coordination of individual disability cases from initial involvement through ongoing follow-up. Candidates should understand how to identify obstacles to recovery, determine appropriate workplace supports, coordinate services, monitor progress, and document case activities effectively. Assessment items focus on timely intervention, evidence-informed planning, stakeholder collaboration, and continuous case monitoring. Successful responses remain focused on functional outcomes while avoiding responsibilities that belong to healthcare providers or benefit adjudicators.

Sample Question: Domain 5

An employee's recovery has stalled, and their return-to-work plan is no longer progressing. How would you respond to assist a CDMP assigned to the case if they solicit assistance from you?

Grading Rubric: Sample Elements

1. Ensure the CDMP has assessed barriers to recovery and return to work by gathering updated information from appropriate interested parties.
2. Encourage the CDMP to coordinate appropriate workplace supports and services within the disability management role, while respecting the responsibilities of healthcare providers and benefit adjudicators.
3. Instruct the CDMP to review and adjust the return-to-work plan using current functional information and evidence-informed practices.
4. Ensure the CDMP monitors progress through regular follow-up, documenting case activities, outcomes, and any changes to the plan.
5. Encourage the CDMP to maintain collaborative communication with the employee, supervisor, and other interested parties to support timely, safe, and sustainable return-to-work outcomes.

Domain 6: Return-to-Work Planning and Coordination

Overview

This domain examines the planning and implementation of safe and sustainable return-to-work strategies. Candidates are expected to understand how to match functional abilities with workplace demands, develop modified or transitional work arrangements, coordinate accommodations, and monitor progress over time. Questions may involve collaboration with workers, supervisors, union representatives, healthcare professionals, and insurers while maintaining a coordinated and function-based approach. Strong responses demonstrate flexibility, ongoing evaluation, and ethical workplace decision-making.

Sample Question: Domain 6

Several managers are using inconsistent approaches to return-to-work planning across the organization. As the disability management leader, how would you address this?

Grading Rubric: Sample Elements

1. Evaluates current return-to-work practices to identify inconsistencies, risks, and opportunities for improvement.

2. Develops and implements a standardized, function-based return-to-work approach that supports safe, sustainable outcomes while allowing appropriate flexibility.
3. Engages key interested parties (e.g., managers, employees, union representatives, healthcare professionals, and insurers, as appropriate) to build understanding, consistency, and commitment.
4. Provides leadership through education, coaching, and clear expectations to strengthen organizational capacity and confidence in return-to-work practices.
5. Monitors outcomes and continuously improves the program using data, feedback, and regular review to ensure effective accommodations and successful return-to-work results.

Domain 7: Health, Function, Psychosocial Factors, and Prevention

Overview

This domain explores the relationship between health conditions, workplace factors, psychosocial influences, and disability outcomes. Candidates should recognize how physical, psychological, social, and organizational factors affect work participation and recovery. Assessment items may require interpretation of functional limitations, identification of barriers to successful work participation, and application of preventive strategies that reduce future disability risk. Candidates should understand the responsibility to coordinate workplace planning based on functional information rather than diagnose or direct clinical treatment.

Sample Question: Domain 7

Your organization has experienced a significant increase in disability-related absences, with trends suggesting that workplace factors such as workload, leadership practices, and psychosocial risks are contributing to prolonged work disability. As the executive responsible for disability management, how would you lead the organization in addressing these issues while ensuring the disability management program remains focused on functional outcomes and appropriate workplace responsibilities?

Rubric: Sample Elements

1. Analyzes organizational data and trends to identify workplace, psychosocial, and organizational factors that may be contributing to disability and delayed return to work.
2. Leads a cross-functional prevention strategy that addresses workplace risks through collaboration with leaders, HR, health and safety, and other key stakeholders, while remaining within the scope of disability management.
3. Promotes function-based disability management practices by ensuring workplace decisions are guided by functional abilities rather than medical diagnoses or treatment recommendations.

4. Influences organizational culture and leadership by building awareness of the relationship between health, work, and disability outcomes and fostering psychologically and physically supportive workplaces.
5. Establishes measures to evaluate effectiveness by monitoring disability trends, return-to-work outcomes, and continuous improvement initiatives to reduce future disability risk.

Domain 8: Disability Management Program Development and Evaluation

Overview

This domain focuses on the organizational aspects of disability management programs. Candidates should understand how programs are developed, implemented, monitored, and improved using clearly defined objectives, policies, and performance measures. Questions may examine role definition, program governance, outcome measurement, and quality improvement practices. Effective responses demonstrate the ability to use performance indicators—including duration, recurrence, costs, and work outcomes—to support ongoing program effectiveness while maintaining ethical and stakeholder-centered decision-making.

Sample Question: Domain 8

As the executive responsible for disability management, you have been asked to evaluate the organization's disability management program after senior leadership raised concerns about increasing disability durations, rising costs, and inconsistent return-to-work outcomes across departments. How would you assess the program and lead improvements to strengthen its effectiveness?

Grading Rubric: Sample Elements

1. Conducts a comprehensive program evaluation by reviewing policies, governance, roles, processes, and performance indicators (e.g., disability duration, recurrence, costs, return-to-work outcomes, and stakeholder experience).
2. Uses data to identify priorities and drive decision-making, distinguishing systemic issues from isolated cases and recommending evidence-informed improvements.
3. Leads the development and implementation of program enhancements by establishing clear objectives, standardized processes, accountability measures, and governance structures.
4. Engages and influences senior leaders and key interested parties to build commitment, clarify roles and responsibilities, and ensure consistent application of disability management practices across the organization.
5. Establishes a continuous quality improvement framework with ongoing monitoring, reporting, and evaluation to measure program effectiveness.

Domain 9: Professional Responsibility, Ethics, and Privacy

Overview

This domain evaluates the professional standards that guide disability management practice. Candidates should understand ethical decision-making, confidentiality requirements, privacy obligations, informed consent, and appropriate professional boundaries. Questions frequently assess judgement regarding information sharing, workplace relationships, and maintaining the distinction between coordination responsibilities and legal, clinical, or adjudicative functions. Strong responses demonstrate integrity, sound professional judgement, respect for worker dignity, and consistent adherence to ethical workplace practices.

Sample Question: Domain 9

As the executive responsible for disability management, a senior leader asks you to share confidential medical information about an employee to help determine whether the employee is “truly fit” to return to work. The request conflicts with your organization’s privacy obligations and established disability management practices. How would you handle the situation?

Grading Rubric: Sample Elements

1. Demonstrates ethical decision-making by protecting confidentiality, respecting privacy legislation, and ensuring information sharing is limited to what is necessary for workplace decision-making.
2. Explains and reinforces appropriate professional boundaries, distinguishing the disability management role from clinical, legal, and benefit adjudication responsibilities.
3. Provides leadership through respectful communication, educating senior leaders on function-based decision-making and appropriate use of medical information.
4. Applies organizational policies and governance processes consistently while balancing employee rights, organizational needs, and legal obligations.
5. Maintains trust and organizational integrity by documenting decisions, seeking appropriate guidance when necessary, and modeling ethical leadership that supports a fair, respectful, and compliant disability management program.

The questions provided above were designed to introduce the format and style of situational interview questions you can expect on the CDMP-E examination. Given that the candidate is asked to respond to 6 questions, only 6 of the 9 domain areas will be represented. The written question given to the candidate at the conclusion of the interview portion of the exam will be framed around one of the remaining 3 domain areas not heretofore considered through the interview questions. Below is a sample written question from Domain 9:

You have recently been appointed as the executive responsible for your organization's disability management program. During your first six months, you discover several practices that raise significant ethical and professional concerns. Managers routinely request detailed medical information rather than functional abilities, employee consent for sharing information is inconsistently documented, disability management staff report feeling pressured to disclose confidential information to operational leaders, and there is uncertainty about the boundaries between disability management, human resources, healthcare providers, legal counsel, and benefit adjudicators.

Prepare a paper outlining how you would establish and sustain a culture of ethical, professional, and legally compliant disability management across the organization. In your response, describe the principles that would guide your leadership, how you would strengthen governance, policies, and accountability, how you would address inappropriate requests for confidential information, and how you would build organizational understanding of appropriate roles and responsibilities. Discuss how you would balance employee privacy, organizational needs, and stakeholder expectations while maintaining trust and supporting effective return-to-work outcomes.

Grading Rubric: Sample Elements

1. Demonstrates ethical decision-making by protecting confidentiality, respecting privacy legislation, and ensuring information sharing is limited to what is necessary for workplace decision-making.
2. Explains and reinforces appropriate professional boundaries, distinguishing the disability management role from clinical, legal, and benefit adjudication responsibilities.
3. Provides leadership through respectful communication, educating senior leaders on function-based decision-making and appropriate use of medical information.
4. Applies organizational policies and governance processes consistently while balancing employee rights, organizational needs, and legal obligations.
5. Maintains trust and organizational integrity by documenting decisions, seeking appropriate guidance when necessary, and modeling ethical leadership that supports a fair, respectful, and compliant disability management program.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The sample questions in this guide are designed to help candidates prepare for the CDMP–Executive certification examination by reflecting on the competencies, judgement, and leadership capabilities expected of senior disability management professionals. While no preparation guide can predict the exact examination content, these questions are representative of the style, complexity, and scope of the assessment.

A key strength of the CDMP–Executive assessment is its emphasis on situational interviewing. Rather than testing memorization of facts, the examination evaluates how candidates apply their knowledge and experience to realistic executive-level challenges. This approach provides candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate critical thinking, ethical judgement, strategic leadership, communication skills, and the ability to balance organizational objectives with employee-centered disability management practices. It also better reflects the realities of executive practice, where success depends on sound decision-making in complex and often competing circumstances.

The integrity and fairness of the assessment are further strengthened through the use of two trained Assessors. Independent evaluation by experienced Assessors promotes consistency, minimizes individual bias, and ensures that responses are evaluated against established competency standards rather than personal opinion. This dual-assessor model enhances the reliability and credibility of the certification process while providing candidates with a fair and objective assessment of their capabilities.

Considerable care and attention have been devoted to the development of the examination questions. Each question has been intentionally constructed to align with the competencies identified within the CDMP–Executive examination blueprint and to assess executive-level application rather than theoretical knowledge alone. The scenarios have been designed to reflect realistic workplace challenges encountered by disability management leaders and require candidates to demonstrate strategic thinking, stakeholder engagement, ethical leadership, program oversight, and evidence-informed decision-making.

As you prepare for the examination, focus not only on what you know, but also on how you communicate your reasoning, justify your decisions, and demonstrate leadership. Strong responses are typically structured, practical, ethically grounded, and clearly linked to disability management principles. Candidates who can integrate technical knowledge with sound executive judgement will be well positioned to succeed.

We encourage you to use these sample questions as a framework for practice. Reflect on your responses, identify opportunities to strengthen your examples and leadership approach, and ensure you answer the questions clearly and confidently. With thoughtful preparation and a solid understanding of executive disability management practice, you will be well prepared to demonstrate the competencies expected of a CDMP–Executive.

ELIGIBILITY QUALIFICATIONS

To be eligible to write the CDMP-Executive examination, candidates must already hold the CDMP designation and have maintained it in good standing for at least five years. They must also have completed at least two years of senior leadership experience during the last five years. By the time someone sits the examination for this designation, they have already built a career overseeing staff, managing programs, and contributing to organizational policy and strategy.

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