

CERTIFIED ACCESS SPECIALIST PROGRAM CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been designed to guide you through the Certified Access Specialist (CASp) Program application and examination process. In this handbook you will find information on how to apply to become a Certified Access Specialist; the format, administration, and content of the certification examination; and sample examination questions and answers. As a candidate, it is your responsibility to read this handbook carefully and become familiar with the certification procedures and policies contained within.

CONTACTING DSA

Should you have any questions, please contact:

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THE CASp PROGRAM

Background

In 2003, Senate Bill 262 was passed and incorporated into Government Code 4459.5. Senate Bill 262 placed the following requirements on the Division of the State Architect (DSA): “The State Architect shall establish and publicize a program for voluntary certification by the State of any person who meets the specified criteria as a certified access specialist.” Furthermore, the State Architect is to make available to the public a list of certified access specialists who meet the specified criteria.

Purpose

The purpose of the CASp program is to further professionalize the field of disabled access rights so that those who engage the services of design professionals, building officials, contractors, and architects may do so with the confidence that they understand accessibility issues. Participation in this program is voluntary, and is designed to ensure that individuals participating in this certification program are knowledgeable of State and Federal accessibility laws and regulations, and possess the expertise to promote access to buildings and facilities for persons with disabilities.

CASp Scope of Work

Services rendered by a CASp may include the following:

- Reviewing facility plans and specifications for compliance with State and Federal accessibility laws, codes, and regulations.
- Investigating facilities for compliance with State and Federal accessibility codes and regulations.
- Conducting accessibility research, preparing accessibility reports, and/or conducting accessibility inspections.

Application Process

Candidates must submit a non-refundable fee and a completed Candidate Eligibility Application form DSA-600, to establish eligibility for the Certification Examination.

Eligibility

Minimum education and experience eligibility for examination acceptance may be satisfied by:

EITHER:

(A)1 Education: Thirty semester units of college coursework with major work in Architecture, Architectural Technology, Building Science, City and Regional Planning, Civil Engineering, Construction Management, Environmental Design, Industrial Design, Interior Architecture/Design, Landscape Architecture, Urban and Regional Design; and

(A)2 Experience: Two years of employment

- by a code enforcement agency (state, city, and/or county building department); as a plan reviewer, building inspector, or consulting entity; or
- by a licensed architect, licensed landscape architect, interior designer, registered civil engineer and/or registered structural engineer and with responsibility for planning, design, and/or field inspection; or
- as a licensed general contractor (Class A or B); or
- by a licensed general contractor as a superintendent with project management oversight.

OR:

(B)1 Education: High school diploma or GED; and

(B)2 Experience: Four years of employment

- by a code enforcement agency (state, city, and/or county building department); as a plan reviewer, building inspector, or consulting entity; or
- by a licensed architect, licensed landscape architect, interior designer, registered civil engineer and/or registered structural engineer and with responsibility for planning, design, and/or field inspection; or
- as a licensed general contractor (Class A or B); or
- by a licensed general contractor as a superintendent with project management oversight.

OR:

(C) Three years of employment in a specialized area of disability access rights, conducting assessments of facilities to determine adequacy related to the specific needs of the disability community.

OR:

(D) Professional license, or registration, issued by the State of California as an architect, landscape architect, civil engineer, and/or structural engineer.

Fees

The fees authorized by Government Code Section 4459.8(b) include:

- \$500.00 Application Fee, for processing the Candidate Eligibility Application; non-refundable.
- \$800.00 Candidate Examination Fee, for administration of the Certification Examination; non-refundable.
- \$300.00 Certification Fee, for continuing program administration over the initial three-year term of certification; non-refundable.
- \$200.00 Verification of Continuing Education Units (CEU's) prior to Certification Renewal; non-refundable.
- \$300.00 Recertification Renewal Fee, for program administration over an additional three-year term of certification; non-refundable.

Available Training

Training is not mandated by this program. The following list of available training sources is provided as a resource for further understanding the many aspects of accessibility.

- International Code Council: <http://www.iccsafe.org/>
- DSA Academy: <http://www.dsaacademy.dgs.ca.gov/default.asp>

Non-Discrimination Policy

The DSA does not discriminate against any applicant on the basis of race, color, creed, age, national origin, religion, disability, marital status, parental status, ancestry, sexual orientation, discharge status, or source of income. All candidates will be evaluated solely by the published criteria as established by this handbook.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of all candidates will be protected. Staff will not discuss pending applications and scores with anyone but the applicant.

THE CASp CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

Examination Preparation

Reference List

The Certification Examination assesses a candidate's knowledge of the access requirements in the CASp Program's Accessibility Knowledge Base, which includes, but is not limited to, the following laws, codes and standards:

- Title II (Public Services), Title III (Public Accommodations and Services Operated by Private Entities) with Appendix A (ADA Standards for Accessible Design), and Title V (Miscellaneous Provisions) of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC Chapter 126), and revised regulations of the ADA effective September 15, 2011(2010 Standards for Accessible Design) as published in the Federal register on September 15, 2010.
- Regulations for accessibility throughout all parts of the current edition of the California Code of Regulations (C.C.R.), Title 24, California Building Standards Code.
- California laws for accessibility in the Government Code, Health and Safety Code, and the Civil Code.
- Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (42 USC Sections 3601 – 3620) and the Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines.
- Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, as amended (42 USC Section 4151 et seq) and the Uniform Federal Access Standards (UFAS).
- American National Standard for Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities (ANSI A117.1), the most recent edition.
- California Department of Housing and Community Development - Voluntary Universal Design Local Ordinance (Section 17959 of the Health & Safety Code), the most recent edition.
- CA Department of Housing and Community Development - New Home Universal Design Checklist (Section 17959.6 of the Health and Safety Code), the most recent edition.
- American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), American Society of Mechanical Engineers A18.1-2005

The examination covers the following areas of competency:

- General Knowledge and Skills
- Accessibility Codes and Standards
- Review of Accessible Features in Design and Construction Documents

- Field Investigations
- Project Scoping and Accessibility Design Awareness

Content Specification

A detailed description of each CASp test area follows. The specific content areas should be interpreted broadly. When examples are provided in the following statements, they are not necessarily inclusive of all things that may be tested. All of the knowledge and skill statements are not assessed on a particular examination.

I - General Knowledge and Skills (to be embodied as necessary across test sections)

Knowledge of:

- CASp Scope of Work.
- Architectural and construction concepts and terminology related to the design and construction of various building types.

Skill to:

- Interpret design and construction documents and to inspect subsequent construction.

II – Accessibility Codes and Standards

Knowledge of:

- Provisions of Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Provisions of the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (DOJ 1994).
- Provisions of the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS).
- Provisions of Sections 504 and 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Provisions of current CA Code of Regulations, Title 24, related to accessibility requirements.
- Provisions of CA Government Code Sections 11135–11139, related to accessibility requirements.
- Provisions of CA Government Code Sections 4450–4459, related to accessibility requirements.
- Provisions of CA Health and Safety Code Sections 19952–19959, related to accessibility requirements.
- Provisions of CA Civil Code Sections 51–55.1, related to accessibility requirements.
- Current interpretative manuals, bulletins, and directives published by the CA Division of the State Architect, related to accessibility requirements.

- Basic knowledge of the underlying concepts of Titles I, IV, and V of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Regulatory jurisdictions responsible for the application, review, and approval of design and construction documents.
- Differing obligations, roles, and responsibilities of the parties involved in corrective action to achieve conformance with accessibility requirements.

III – Review of Accessibility Features in Design and Construction Documents

Knowledge of:

- Organization of design and construction documents in order to locate all relevant contents.
- Methods to delineate accessible features in design and construction documents.
- Drafting symbols, terms, and formatting conventions.

Skill to:

- Depict accessible elements in design and construction documents.
- Identify discrepancies between project/permit application and design and construction documents.
- Detect nonconformance and/or omissions related to accessibility requirements in design and construction documents.
- Check and verify coordination of accessible elements throughout all relevant design and construction documents.
- Analyze site horizontal and vertical elevation data to evaluate conformance with applicable accessibility requirements.
- Analyze and evaluate interdependent, and often contradictory, accessibility requirements.

IV – Field Investigations

Skill to:

- Conduct field investigations and/or evaluate other sources of data depicting actual site conditions.
- Identify accessible elements and determine conformance with applicable accessibility requirements.
- Assess the operational characteristics of facilities, buildings, and the site to identify viable patterns of use.
- Analyze site horizontal and vertical elevation data to evaluate conformance with applicable accessibility requirements.

- Analyze and evaluate interdependent, and often contradictory, accessibility requirements.
- Identify potential unreasonable hardship situations or technical infeasibility related to accessibility requirements through field investigation or other sources depicting actual site conditions.

V – Project Scoping and Accessibility Design Awareness

Knowledge of:

- Factors affecting the scope and applicability of accessibility requirements, including permit application date(s), construction date(s), project type and scope, occupancy, funding source(s), and programmed use of space.
- Principles and application of Universal Design to promote facility, building, and space design without accessibility barriers and meeting the needs of the greatest number of users.
- Potential liability and exposure to the client when designing and/or recommending alternative solutions to mitigate accessibility deficiencies.
- Disability-related functional limitations and related accessibility needs to provide appropriate design solutions and/or determine mitigation efforts that conform to accessibility requirements.
- Design and product resources for specific disability-related functional limitations to provide informed consultation and effective methods to meet client needs.
- Methods for substantiating equivalent facilitation, and related evaluation methods to analyze, describe, and document code conformance, technical infeasibility, and unreasonable hardship.

Skill to:

- Develop priorities of corrective action based on cited accessibility requirements.
- Analyze and evaluate interdependent, and often contradictory, accessibility requirements.

Sample Questions

1) What is the maximum allowable floor slope within an accessible shower with two floor drains?

- a. 0.5%
- b. 1%
- c. 2%
- d. 3%

2) Sixteen employees working in a privately funded, city-operated museum are protected under which Federal law?

- a. Title I of the ADA
- b. Title II of the ADA
- c. Title IV of the ADA
- d. UFAS

3) What do the required geometric symbols on restroom doors represent?

- a. universal accessible use
- b. men, women or unisex use
- c. child assistance use
- d. universal family use

4) A ramp is defined as any walking surface in the accessible route with a slope that exceeds what ratio?

- a. 1:10
- b. 1:12
- c. 1:15
- d. 1:20

5) The top gripping surface of a ramp handrail must be within what height range vertically above the ramp surface?

- a. 30" to 34"
- b. 34" to 38"
- c. 36" to 42"
- d. 38" to 42"

Answer Key: c, a, b, d, b

EXAMINATION DAY

What to Bring

Standard testing practices are employed to ensure the security and fairness of this examination. Candidates will be required to bring their DSA examination site admission form and to present at least one government issued identification, bearing a photograph and signature, at the check-in desk. Candidates are asked to leave personal items* in their cars or at home. Pencils and calculators will be provided at the test site.

*Personal items, including, but not limited to, cameras, purses, briefcases, backpacks, fanny packs, study materials, beepers, pagers, cellular telephones, PDAs, etc., are not permitted in the testing room. Proctors will not monitor any personal items left outside the testing room. The CASp Program will not be responsible for any items not permitted into the testing room.

Forms of Identification

Only the following forms of government issued identification will be accepted:

- 1) Current state issued driver's license or state issued identification card
- 2) Current U.S. or foreign issued passport
- 3) Military identification card issued within the last five years

Check-in

Rosters of registered candidates are provided to the Chief Proctor at the test site. Candidates will present their DSA examination site admission form and a government issued identification bearing a signature and photograph. Proctors check the resemblance to the photograph and compare that person's signature when they sign the roster to prevent impersonation, and ensure each examination is administered in a fair and secure manner. Only registered examinees with proper identification will be allowed to enter the test site.

Late Arrival

Proctors shall admit each eligible examinee into the test site, provided the individual arrives prior to the official time of the test administration. Based on the pace of admissions processing, the Chief Proctor shall decide when the doors of the examination room will close. Late arriving examinees will be considered ineligible and will not be admitted after the doors are closed. Visitors will not be allowed to enter the testing

room at any time, unless specific arrangements were previously made for a special accommodation.

Examination Length

Watch the time carefully during the test, as this is a timed examination lasting 2.5 hours. The proctor will periodically announce the remaining time.

General Instructions

The examination may be offered twice on the scheduled day at each location. Morning and/or afternoon sessions may be available.

The test proctor will read instructions prior to each examination. Helpful information is given during the proctor's instructions so listen carefully. Ask questions if there is something you do not understand about the procedure, but be aware that the proctor cannot answer questions about test content or interpret words. You may not bring an interpreter to the test without prior permission.

Once the doors are closed, an examinee count will be conducted to assure the proper number of test booklets is distributed. Test booklets will be distributed by hand to each examinee. Unused test booklets will be kept available in a secure place, to be distributed as needed in case of defect. A defective test booklet will be replaced with another test booklet of exactly the same type. Any replacements will be noted on the Proctor's Report.

At the end of each test session, the proctors will collect all test booklets, and any other test materials. Examinees finishing early must turn in all materials before leaving the testing room.

EXAMINATION TAKING TIPS

The basic format for this test is the multiple-choice format with four distinct choices. Here are some general tips for taking this type of test:

- The examination is a closed-book test.
- Read all directions and questions carefully.
- The test is designed to have only one answer that is best from among the four choices given.
- Make sure you are careful to make clean erasures on your answer sheet and to only mark one correct answer per test item.
- Your score on this test will be based only on the number of correct choices you make. This test does not penalize you for incorrect answers or guessing.

- Interpret words according to their generally accepted meanings. No question is intended to be a “trick” or “catch” question.
- Answer the easy questions first; postpone more difficult questions until later, making an initial guess in case you do not have enough time to go back to it.
- Check your answers if you have time; however, remember that often your first response is correct.
- If you find a question you believe may be incorrect, you can comment on the comment sheet provided with your examination materials. Include why you believe the question may be incorrect. This must be done during the allotted time for each examination.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Examination facilities are accessible to the disabled. Please direct requests for special accommodations to DSA CASp Program at (916) 323-2737 or (916) 445-8100 at least two weeks before the examination date.

VALIDITY OF EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

All candidates will receive a comment form with their examination package. The comment form(s) will provide the candidates with an opportunity to list examination questions that they thought were confusing or inadequately worded. This is the only time that candidates may comment on examination questions and must be completed during the allotted time to take the examination. Proctoring staff will collect all comment forms from candidates for further analysis.

AFTER THE EXAMINATION

Passing Score Information

The pass point for the CASp examination is not arbitrary. A criterion-referenced approach is used for setting the pass point for this examination. The modified Angoff method is the most commonly used method for licensure and certification examinations, and involves setting the pass point on the basis of minimum standards for proficient practice (e.g., job requirements) rather than relative candidate performance (e.g., grading on the curve). Subject matter experts in the field were consulted throughout the process to ensure a fair and accurate pass point.

Notification of Results

Candidates will receive their results by mail within four to six weeks of taking the examination.

Challenging Your Results

Appeals concerning examination results must be submitted in writing within 30 days after receiving the results by mail. Written appeals must be submitted to:

Division of the State Architect

Attn: CASp Exam Challenges

1102 Q Street, Suite 5100

Sacramento, CA 95811

Receiving Certification

Candidates who successfully pass the examination may request a certificate by mail following receipt of examination results. Candidates who passed the examination and paid the certification fee can expect to have their names placed on the Certified Access Specialist List within one month of notification.

Retaking the Examination

Candidates who do not pass the examination will have the opportunity to retake the examination an unlimited number of times until they pass. However, candidates must pay the fee for each examination and register within scheduled examination deadlines.

RECERTIFICATION

A CASp becomes eligible for renewal of certification upon completing and submitting form DSA-600, payment of a recertification fee, together with verification of having completed, during each three year period of certification, a minimum of 15 Continuing Education Units (CEU's) of classes in Federal and State regulatory updates, and Universal Design. Classes should address changes to the laws and regulations identified in Section 134 of the program regulations. Each CEU is equivalent to one hour of instructional time. When a certificate holder meets all the requirements for recertification, the certificate holder will be certified for an additional three-year period.

All continuing education offerings attended must be completed within the three-year period immediately preceding the effective date of certification renewal. Courses completed as part of a prior renewal requirement cannot be applied to a current renewal application. Applicants who are unsure if a provider's course offerings are approved for CEUs should contact the provider directly for the appropriate information. It is the CASps responsibility to determine if a CE course meets the requirements set for in Title 21 regulations and the Government Code, and that all CE requirements have been met. The DSA does not pre-approve or register providers of CE courses.

Submit any request for CE Equivalent Activity on form DSA-605 Continuing Education Equivalency Petition. You may request an extension of time to complete your CE requirements on form DSA-606 Continuing Education Extension Request if you qualify for an extension. These requests must be submitted with your Continuing Education Course Verification form DSA-604, form DSA-600 Candidate Eligibility and Certification Renewal Application, and the appropriate renewal fees. Please follow the directions provided on each of the respective forms before completing the respective forms and submit any questions directly to the CASp Unit.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

- The DSA is not able to process the renewal of CASp certification online. The renewal process must be complete by mail.
- Carefully read all instructions before completing the required forms.
- CE courses must include classes in federal and state regulatory updates and Universal Design.
- A maximum of 10 CEUs is allowed for all equivalent activity. CEUs for instructing a course shall not exceed the credits given for the course and cannot exceed five CEUs. Instructors may take the CEU credit once during the three-year renewal period.
- A minimum of five CEUs must be in structured training.
- Distant learning must include a formal exam which is graded at the end of the course.
- All Continuing Education Course Verifications must include the certificate number and/or course sponsor, date completed, course hours and course title.
- Continuing Education extension requests may be granted for a period not to exceed 90 days from the date of certification expiration.
- A CASp certification which has expired and has not been renewed will become inactive. If an extension is denied and all conditions of certification renewal have not been met, an applicant will be required to re-qualify through the examination process before he/she can again become a CASp Inspector.

You can download and print the CASp Certification renewal forms here:

Candidate Eligibility and Certification Renewal Application with Instructions:
Form DSA-600

Continuing Education Course Verification with Instructions: [Form DSA-604](#)

Continuing Education Equivalency Petition with Instructions: [Form DSA-605](#)

Continuing Education Extension Request with Instructions: [Form DSA-606](#)

THE CASp REGULATIONS

The complete text of the CASp regulations can be found on-line at
http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/dsa/casp/Voluntary_CASp_Regs.pdf.

These regulations include additional information regarding the Recertification process and cause for Disciplinary Action.