



# IAAPA Examination Syllabus

## February 2021



▶ IAAPA CERTIFIED ATTRACTIONS EXECUTIVE (ICAE)

**IAAPA**  **CERTIFIED**  
ATTRACTIONS EXECUTIVE

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                            |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| IAAPA CERTIFIED ATTRACTIONS EXECUTIVE (ICAE) EXAM SYLLABUS | 3  |
| EXAMINATION SYLLABUS STRUCTURE:                            | 3  |
| ICAE EXAMINATION DOMAINS, SUB-DOMAINS, AND EXAM TOPICS:    | 3  |
| ICAE EXAMINATION FORMAT:                                   | 10 |
| EXAM NON-DISCLOSURE                                        | 10 |



## IAAPA Certified Attractions Executive (ICAE) Exam Syllabus

Developed by global attraction industry subject matter experts, with oversight by the IAAPA Global Education Committee, and support through a third-party psychometric firm that specializes in certification program development, IAAPA presents the following examination syllabus for the IAAPA Certified Attractions Executive (ICAE) certification program. The syllabus is the outcome of the work undertaken and completed in 2020.

The content of the exam (domains, and topics covered) have been determined through a global research and analysis study that included feedback from global attractions industry practitioners, subject matter experts and experts in the development of the certification programs.

The exam is only one step in the process that allows someone to become certified. Other requirements are outlined in the IAAPA Certification Handbook.

### Examination Syllabus Structure:

The examination syllabus is structured in a hierarchy that resembles the following:

- Domain
  - Sub-Domain
    - a. Examination Topics

### ICAE Examination Domains, Sub-Domains, and Exam Topics:

The ICAE examination is divided into six sections (domains).

| ICAE Examination Domains                                | Number of Questions | Time to Complete |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Facility Operations, Entertainment, and Guest Relations | 18                  | 180 Minutes      |
| Revenue Operations and Financial Management             | 18                  |                  |
| Safety and Security                                     | 9                   |                  |
| Marketing and Public Relations                          | 7                   |                  |
| Human Resources and Management                          | 7                   |                  |
| Organizational Leadership and Corporate Culture         | 11                  |                  |
| Total                                                   | 70                  |                  |

## ICAE Examination Topic Areas:

Each sub-domain contains the topics that are tested on the examination.



### Domain 1: Facility Operations, Entertainment, and Guest Relations (18 Questions)

#### Sub-Domain: Operations Metrics

- a. Understand benefits and concerns regarding turnkey entertainment, use of outside vendor(s), and facility-based show production
- b. Know and utilize research tools to identify target audience groups and appropriate entertainment variations
- c. Understand how to leverage entertainment with other aspects of the facility (e.g., how to drive guests to other areas of the facility)
- d. Utilize guest and employee feedback to determine areas of success and areas of needed improvement

#### Sub-Domain: Facility and Show Experience

- a. Understand venue maintenance requirements and trades needed for facility maintenance
- b. Understand key considerations when deciding on renting or owning entertainment-specific equipment
- c. Understand the application of themes and purchased entertainment
- d. Plan storyline / characters that both entertain and are tied to the facility brand
- e. Develop ongoing and routine maintenance plans
- f. Leverage technology for immersion, information gathering, and refreshment of storylines
- g. Understand technology available for guests with disabilities, including cost, implementation, and knowledge of state-of-the-art resources

#### Sub-Domain: Entertainment and Special Events

- a. Understand planning processes for entertainment, educational exhibits, and special events that include connection with facility brand (e.g., festivals)
- b. Knowledge of trends and technological innovations in entertainment and educational exhibit design, including future expansion and cornerstone exhibits that define the organization
- c. Understand process of researching and designing entertainment and educational exhibits based on user needs in order to maintain engagement with guests and the community
- d. Coordinate all vendors, employees, and venue adaptations for event success
- e. Understand project planning for outdoor spaces (e.g., consideration of needed permits, parking space, emergency personnel access, safe walking spaces, etc.)
- f. Ensure equal access for all guests and consideration of special facilities (e.g., restrooms, first aid, quiet spaces, etc.)
- g. Plan for severe weather and contingency needs of entertainment and special events

#### Sub-Domain: Entertainment Sustainability

- a. Understand cost-effective strategies to continually provide fresh quality entertainment (e.g., maintain current props, costumes, characters, and sets while introducing 25% change each season, changing scenery but keeping content, etc.)
- b. Understand elements that create a “must see” attraction yielding high attendance year after year
- c. Develop a facility brand that fully engages guests’ demand of entertainment year after year
- d. Identify strategies to partner with Facility Sponsors to enhance shows beyond the stage
- e. Develop retail that continues the show beyond the stage



#### Sub-Domain: Green Initiatives

- a. Understand “green” best practices in management, culture, operations, and sourcing
- b. Understand organizational responsibilities related to environmental sustainability
- c. Develop and oversee the implementation of sustainable policies and solutions

#### Sub-Domain: Guest Services and Hospitality

- a. Manage resources and technology available to track guest relationships and provide consistent customer service
- b. Utilize strategic problem-solving to contain aggressive guest behavior and conflict, including methods of communication specific to these issues
- c. Develop and conduct training and quality assurance measures for effective guest communication
- d. Utilize analytics to determine service recovery success
- e. Utilize guest feedback from multiple sources (social, email, in-person, etc.) to explore future business needs, staffing opportunities, and training opportunities
- f. Recognize and adjust any standard operating procedures (SOPs) which may hinder provision of exceptional customer service

#### Sub-Domain: Special Populations

- a. Supervise the updating and management of resources available for guests with disabilities (e.g., brochures, scripts, maps, sign language interpreters, technology for front line staff, etc.)
- b. Develop and oversee programs associated with membership programs in order to increase participation of special populations
- c. Continually evaluate all programs offered to guests of special populations to stay current with industry trends

### Domain 2: Revenue Operations and Financial Management (18 Questions)

#### Sub-Domain: In-House Research and Development

- a. Research and approach revenue opportunities with product and / or events and attractions
- b. Create and review return on investment (ROI) opportunities
- c. Project labor costs and needs for the location
- d. Organize event timelines and products based on reporting and feedback
- e. Comprehend efficient restaurant design
- f. Knowledge of advanced purchasing strategies

#### Sub-Domain: Seasonal Offerings

- a. Adjust pricing based on review of attraction product marketing and reporting
- b. Tie product acquisition to seasonal theming
- c. Plan dates and event areas for seasonal event(s), including menu

#### Sub-Domain: Food and Beverage

- a. Create and / or guide reports on Cost of Goods Sold (COGS) within the location(s)
- b. Develop training plans, documentation, and guidelines for food and beverage staff
- c. Develop and adjust menus, product presentations, and layouts for location(s) based on reviews and reporting
- d. Process rentals within the location for services and products offered

#### Sub-Domain: Merchandise and Retail Management

- a. Acquire product for location(s) from outside manufacturers
- b. Set Costs of Goods (COG) standards for purchasing and locations to follow
- c. Create combo, promo, and upsell opportunities based off sales
- d. Knowledge of game product standards and how to order for events and daily business
- e. Define processes and procedures for game and prize handling



#### Sub-Domain: Ticketing and Admissions

- a. Report on and adjust admission pricing and upsell opportunities
- b. Create, review, and implement combos and promos for higher revenue generation
- c. Analyze admission systems and processes for adjustments and needs

#### Sub-Domain: Catering and Group Sales

- a. Draft and execute agreements with clients and departments
- b. Select and order product based on client / guest requests
- c. Promote group and catering sales
- d. Facilitate catering and banquet events throughout the location(s) and seasons

#### Sub-Domain: Financial Metrics

- a. Understand organizational financial performance as it relates to operating profitability
- b. Calculate profitability by subtracting expenses from revenues over a given accounting period (profit and loss)
- c. Understand an organization's financial position as it relates to what the organization owns and what it owes
- d. Understand an organization's cash position in order to help with planning and decision-making
- e. Understand key financial metrics used to monitor attractions (COGS/Revenue, Revenue/Number of Visitors, Discounted Price/Full Price, Labor Costs/Revenue (sales), EBITDA/Total Revenue, Number of meals facility can produce, Revenue/Square Meters)

#### Sub-Domain: Operating Budget and Business Plans

- a. Understand and calculate the amount and cost of units expected to sell and how that translates to an average per guest
- b. Estimate and project the number of people needed to perform certain tasks and the costs associated with those estimates
- c. Understand and predict attendance patterns
- d. Understand the importance of continual review of product cost and vendor value
- e. Understand the philosophy of price increases and decreases and the possible effect on revenues
- f. Knowledge of contract negotiations strategy
- g. General knowledge of fundraising practices and various revenue sources (grants, major donors, corporate, community involvement, etc.)

#### Sub-Domain: Capital Budget Management

- a. Understand operations debts within a normal operating cycle
- b. Determine profitability by tracking expenses against revenue earned
- c. Understand and calculate what the return on investment (ROI) may be for a given project
- d. Understand the process of investment in fixed assets that typically have a lifespan of more than one accounting period



### Domain 3: Safety and Security (9 Questions)

#### Sub-Domain: Risk Management

- a. Identify risks within an attraction environment
- b. Assess and evaluate risks within an attraction environment
- c. Mitigate risks within an attraction environment
- d. Monitor and control risks within an attraction environment

#### Sub-Domain: Emergency Preparedness

- a. Solve problems under emergency conditions
- b. Facilitate collaboration with internal and external emergency response partners
- c. Manage staff capacity to maintain situational awareness
- d. Plan for improving organizational capacity to prepare for an emergency

#### Sub-Domain: Incident Management

- a. Understand operational initiatives to prevent spread of disease (e.g, COVID-19)
- b. Coordinate team activities during an incident
- c. Design Incident Response Plans and oversee monitoring of implementation
- d. Design and oversee operational procedures for managing hazardous substances in the workplace

#### Sub-Domain: Food Safety

- a. Manage preparation for and host audits
- b. Engage with regulatory authorities
- c. Knowledge of relevant local food safety laws and regulations
- d. Develop food quality and safety plans and systems

#### Sub-Domain: Employee Safety

- a. Oversee employee safety requirements and monitor regulatory changes
- b. Develop plans for safety, including goals and targets
- c. Recognize and reward team members based on their demonstration of effective safety behavior
- d. Demonstrate safety compliant behaviors that set the benchmark for what is expected from the team

#### Sub-Domain: Ride, Attraction, Show, and Facility Safety

- a. Develop concert and special event safety guidelines, above and beyond general facility safety plans
- b. Guide team members to think about safety issues and scenarios
- c. Demonstrate an understanding of basic ride and show safety principles
- d. Demonstrate an understanding of standard operating procedures, training and auditing plans, and emergency procedures for rides, attractions, shows, and facilities

#### Sub-Domain: Security

- a. Oversee response to security risk situations
- b. Oversee coordination of logistical necessities to security measures as needed, including personnel



## Domain 4: Marketing, and Public Relations, and Sales (7 Questions)

### Sub-Domain: Consumer Research and Competition Analysis

- a. Define, develop, and manage strategic research activities and report insights to leadership
- b. Create reporting mechanisms and presentations of research results to leadership

### Sub-Domain: Positioning and Branding

- a. Develop brand key performance indicators (KPIs)
- b. Define and align brand strategically to address issues determined by research
- c. Communicate brand and strategy to all departments and areas of facility

### Sub-Domain: Marketing Planning

- a. Understand seasonal food and product marketing strategies
- b. Understand budget requirements for marketing initiatives
- c. Develop KPIs defining promotional success
- d. Develop strategic marketing pillars and strategic marketing plan

### Sub-Domain: Products and Promotions

- a. Develop promotional strategies for specific attractions, exhibits, special events, group sales
- b. Develop promotional strategies for loyalty / membership programs
- c. Develop and manage structure of loyalty / membership programs
- d. Ensure marketing calendar alignment

### Sub-Domain: Communications

- a. Understand selection criteria for selecting external PR partners and agencies
- b. Incorporate brand into executive communication platform
- c. Lead crisis communications
- d. Select tools and platforms for marketing communications
- e. Manage communication with related government bodies

### Sub-Domain: Sales

- a. Understand strategic planning for sales across all areas
- b. Assist with account management (e.g., corporate sales, special events)
- c. Coordinate with sales leadership for promotional success

## Domain 5: Human Resources and Management (7 Questions)

### Sub-Domain: Recruiting and Staffing

- a. Conduct job interviews for leadership positions
- b. Conduct onboarding for leadership positions
- c. Develop and manage long-term staffing plans

### Sub-Domain: Training and Development

- a. Conduct a Training Needs Analysis
- b. Develop and implement strategies to cultivate workplace diversity
- c. Participate in ongoing training and development opportunities
- d. Plan and budget for the training and development of team members
- e. Guide staff and third-party vendors on company guidelines and procedures

### Sub-Domain: Compensation and Benefits

- a. Knowledge of compensation negotiation strategies
- b. Understand complex benefits and compensation structures
- c. Set key performance indicators (KPIs) of benefits for team members

### Sub-Domain: Human Resources Legal Issues

- a. Oversee Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) compliance
- b. Understand adherence to legal employment and severance regulations
- c. Manage for and support implementation of Human Resources policies and compliance



#### Sub-Domain: Performance Management and Supervision

- a. Apply and demonstrate active listening skills
- b. Conduct performance reviews
- c. Set key performance indicators (KPIs) and review individual performance based on KPIs
- d. Mentor and coach team members
- e. Oversee and model the management of daily briefings and staff meetings

#### Sub-Domain: Staff Engagement

- a. Develop and implement plans to recognize team members for outstanding and role model behavior and achievement
- b. Plan for, develop, support, and implement staff engagement initiatives
- c. Understand the benefits of high employee engagement

### Domain 6: Organizational Leadership and Corporate Culture (11 Questions)

#### Sub-Domain: Mission-centered Growth

- a. Work with executive leadership to organize the structure and support growth / reduction of staff
- b. Mentor upper-level managers / supervisors
- c. Emphasize safety culture
- d. Oversee training and professional development that centers on organizational mission
- e. Ensure success of a common goal and enhancement of brand
- f. Manage inter-organizational teams and committees
- g. Create and support sub-committees with specific purposes related to organizational mission
- h. Guide adaptations and guest experiences to changing needs and populations
- i. Provide ongoing support for professional development and continuing education

#### Sub-Domain: Data-driven Decision-making

- a. Use of metrics and data, including regular performance review metrics
- b. Recognize and apply lessons learned from past budgetary years
- c. Synthesize and utilize guest feedback
- d. Oversee ongoing quality improvement (QI) of training about guest experiences and entertainment
- e. Recognize and implement new and innovative feedback engagement

#### Sub-Domain: Effective Communication

- a. Support effective communication to and within the organization via all avenues (e.g., speaking, email, chat, text, etc.)
- b. Inspire and motivate peers, executives, and subordinate team members via communication
- c. Develop targeted organizational goals that share vision and actionable items with staff and stakeholders
- d. Develop and oversee development of guest-facing communication that also share vision and mission of the organization
- e. Develop training programs that ensure employees understand effective communication, including conflict management
- f. Develop guidance on how to provide effective feedback to direct reports and peers
- g. Develop trust and rapport among leadership and staff
- h. Communicate the organizational mission and brand to prospective employees and clients



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#### Sub-Domain: Ethics

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- a. Knowledge of copyrighting laws and mechanical and technical licensing
- b. Knowledge of music licensing requirements and reporting (e.g., ASCAP, BMI, SESAC, GMR)
- c. Develop guidelines to establish behavior expectations and accountability to these expectations for staff and vendors
- d. Ensure compliance in all areas with established local, state, country, regional, and industry laws, rules, and standards
- e. Adopt, promote, and ensure ethics standards to industry best practices related to sales and marketing efforts
- f. Demonstrate ethically-sound decision-making leadership routed in local cultural norms
- g. Participate in the development and maintenance of a uniform code of ethics

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#### Sub-Domain: Creativity and Innovation

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- a. Knowledge of available resources to foster innovation (e.g., seminars, production companies, trade shows, organizations, etc.)
- b. Create the expectation and opportunity for people and teams within the organization to explore new concepts
- c. Encourage sampling of new concepts with trials of new products and concepts

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#### Sub-Domain: Incorporation of Organizational Culture and History

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- a. Oversee development of onboarding materials that support the organizational culture
  - b. Develop and highlight connections between the organizational culture and the guest experience
  - c. Participate in the development of cross-functional opportunities for collaboration
  - d. Support, recognize, and advocate for employee involvement in external volunteer activities
  - e. Initiate and guide standards that proactively advance giving back (e.g., volunteer time off (VTO), annual requirements / commitments, regular internal staff recognition communications, etc.)
  - f. Create and support partnerships with non-competing organizations that support organizational culture and mission
  - g. Develop and support employee engagement and recognition in achieving the goals of the organization
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### ICAE Examination Format:

The ICAE examination presents a fictional case study. Candidates will be required to fully read the case study, and using the supplied information answer the 70 multiple-choice questions within 180 minutes.

### Exam Non-disclosure

The ICAP exam is a non-disclosed examination, which means that current exam questions and answers will not be published or divulged. Candidates are required to accept the IAAPA Terms and Conditions to begin the exam.

### NOTE:

Exam topics and/or format are subject to change as approved by IAAPA's Global Education Committee.