

Revised CAM a Hit With Industry Professionals



New format better fits today's adult learning environment.

In an effort to boost completion rates for the Certified Apartment Manager (CAM) designation, the National Education Institute (NAAEI) has updated CAM requirements and has replaced the community analysis component with an enhanced exam and a new learning module that teaches critical problem-solving skills.

The updated CAM program took effect Jan. 1 with full implementation completed in April. The changes were made based on feedback received from students, course facilitators and graders who found the community analysis component to be an outdated and ineffective method for teaching today's adult learners.

Former NAAEI President Jeff Lowry, CAPS, led the task force charged with revising and updating both the CAM and Certified Apartment Portfolio Supervisor (CAPS) programs. The task force examined how well the CAM program has fared during the past five years and found that many people who start the course do not complete it.

"We found many candidates were taking the classroom portion of the course, took and passed the exam but stopped their studies when the time came for them to complete the community analysis module," says Lowry, President of Operations for Madera Residential, based in Lubbock, Texas. "They found it very cumbersome and not tailored for today's adult learning environment."



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— Misti Alvarez, CAM
Business Manager, Woodland Springs Manor Apartments, Carmel, Ind.

Lowry says the program needed to shift to meet the needs of today's adult learners. As a result, a new "Research, Analysis and Evaluation" module has been added. It uses case studies and in-class activities to ensure students can draw meaningful conclusions and recommendations from facts and conditions presented to them.

What Has Changed?

The course's exam now includes two parts instead of just one. The first consists of 115 multiple-choice questions and the second includes 75 scenario-based, multiple-choice items, including drag and drop features.

NAAEI has created new skill checks to help students prepare for the new exam, and it has developed a new webinar to also assist them.

Another CAM program revision affects exam delivery. The CAM exam is still offered online, but now it must be administered by a NAAEI-trained proctor. Exams may be taken through NAAEI affiliates or participating companies. Students taking the CAM Online program will sit for the exam at a local testing center operated by Castle Worldwide, which has locations around the nation.

Lowry says the task force hopes all changes will lead to higher completion rates, as well as a program that is better embraced by students. Even with all of the changes, he says, the CAM program is just as rigorous and thorough as it was before.

"We did not 'dumb down' anything," he says. "We are just taking a different approach using a learning platform that is styled for today's adult learner."

Misti Alvarez, CAM, found the new exam extremely comprehensive. She participated in the Indiana Apartment Association's Beta Test Program for the new CAM exam. At first she thought she had failed the exam, she says, but later discovered she performed well and is now looking forward to pursuing her next NAAEI professional designation.

Received Well By CAM Students

"The basis (for the exam) was to essentially apply all of the CAM information that I learned to 'real-life scenarios' in which one must analyze and diagnose the problem and then use the recommendation procedures to resolve the issue," says Alvarez, who is Business Manager for Woodland Springs Manor Apartments in

Carmel, Ind. "It was interesting, and definitely a challenge."

Lowry says the changes more greatly enhance the value of the CAM professional designation. As an industry professional, Lowry says he knows first-hand the benefits provided to employees—or even prospective employees—who hold the CAM designation. This type of education provides people with an essential foundation of industry knowledge that companies can then build on.

"It is important for employees in the apartment industry to have regular, ongoing training," he says. "NAAEI professional designations, such as the CAM, offer that. They also provide employees with a tremendous sense of accomplishment, which is an essential component for learning."

For information about CAM program changes, please contact education@naahq.org.