Certified Director of Assisted Living
Examination

Candidate Handbook

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Senior Living Certification Commission (SLCC) was created to develop voluntary credentialing programs for senior living professionals. The SLCC currently offers a certification program for assisted living community executive directors. The Argentum Board of Directors voted to create the Senior Living Certification Commission (SLCC). SLCC is a nonprofit corporation, autonomous from Argentum with its own governing Board of Commissioners.

Castle Worldwide, Inc. (Castle) provides technical assistance to the SLCC in the development and delivery of the Internet-based Assisted Living Community Executive Director Certification Examination through a network of more than 500 test centers throughout the United States and Canada.

Please use this Candidate Handbook to understand the policies and procedures of the Assisted Living Community Executive Director Certification Examination program as well as the exam application and registration processes. If you have additional questions after reviewing this information, please contact the SLCC at 703-562-1183 or Castle at (919) 572-6880 or testing@castleworldwide.com.

EXAMINATION INFORMATION

The Certified Director of Assisted Living (CDAL) Examination

The Certified Director of Assisted Living (CDAL) Examination is an Internet-based exam, administered at conveniently located testing centers around the world. The exam includes 150 multiple-choice questions and is developed and built according to the Certified Director of Assisted Living Test Specifications listed below. The exam development is based on psychometrically validated procedures and testing industry standards. Castle and the SLCC ensure the Certified Director of Assisted Living Certification Examination is valid, reliable, statistically sound, and legally defensible.

Certified Director of Assisted Living (CDAL) Examination Test Specifications

Area	Percent of Exam
Domain 1: Principles and Philosophy of Assisted Living	13
Domain 2: Resident Care and Services	14
Domain 3: Customer Experience	13
Domain 4: Leadership	12
Domain 5: Operations Management	13
Domain 6: Regulatory Compliance	12
Domain 7: Financial Management	12
Domain 8: Sales and Marketing	11
	100%

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to sit for the examination, candidates must demonstrate the following qualifications:

Route 1 (Education + Experience)

Education	Bachelor's degree granted by a college or university that is accredited by an entity approved by the United States Department of Education, or the equivalent		
Experience	At least three years (6,000 hours) work experience as an assisted living community executive director	OR	At least five years (10,000 hours) work experience in a management capacity in one or more assisted living communities

OR

Route 2 (Experience)

Experience	At least five years (10,000 hours) work experience as an assisted living community executive director	OR	At least seven years (14,000 hours) work experience in a management capacity in one or more assisted living communities

Note that Assisted Living Management does not include long term care management, nursing home management or independent living management.

All requirements must be completed prior to submitting your application for the examination. Applicants who submit their application before they have fully satisfied the experience/education requirement will be determined ineligible.

Exam Locations and Dates

Test Center Locations
The Internet-based examination is administered by Castle through a network of more than 500 testing centers in cities throughout the world. Test centers, which are subject to change, are listed here: www.castleworldwide.com/castleweb/clients/testing-services/ibt-testing-sites.aspx.

Testing Windows and Deadlines
The exam is offered during two 90-day testing windows each year. All forms and applicable fees must be submitted by the specified deadlines. Forms submitted without appropriate fees will not be processed.

Testing Windows	Application Deadline	Late Application Deadline ($50 Late Fee)	Cancellation/Rescheduling Request Deadline ($50 Fee)
March 12 – June 1	April 17	May 2	No later than 4 business days **prior** to your testing appointment
September 17 – December 14	October 31	November 14	

If a candidate misses the registration deadline, the application will be credited toward the next testing window.

Application and Examination Fees

Fees include application processing and all testing fees

Employees of Argentum member companies
- Maximum Bulk Discount Rate (purchase of 50+ certification tests): $420
- Bulk Discount Rate (purchase of 10-49 certification tests): $450
- Member Rate (purchase of 1-9 certification tests): $500

Employees of non-member companies: $650

The fee must be paid in U.S. funds to Castle Worldwide by Visa or MasterCard.

Other Fees

Reexamination Fee* - $125
> * If retaking the exam within the 366-day eligibility period. Candidates will be allowed no more than two (2) testing attempts within a 12-month period. If the candidate has not successfully passed the exam within 366 days, he/she must reapply and pay the full application and examination fees again.

Reschedule/Cancellation Fee - $50
> If a candidate schedules a testing appointment and wishes to reschedule the testing appointment within the same testing window, he/she can pay a rescheduling fee to cancel the current testing appointment and schedule a new appointment as long as the request is made at least four (4) business days prior to the original appointment date.
>
> If a candidate schedules a testing appointment and wishes to cancel the testing appointment, he/she may do so as long as the request is made at least four (4) business days prior to the appointment date. Candidates whose applications remain eligible (366 days from the application submission) will receive a Notice to Schedule [NTS] email for the next testing window. The $50 rescheduling fee must be paid before scheduling a new testing appointment in the new testing window.

Late Registration Fee - $50
> Candidates who wish to register between 15 and 30 days prior to their preferred testing appointment must pay a $50 late registration fee.

International Test Site Fee - $100
> Candidates who wish to test at an international test site (outside of the U.S. or Canada) must pay an additional scheduling fee of $100. Payment is due at the time of scheduling.

TAKING THE EXAM
Submitting Your Application

Applications to take the Certified Director of Assisted Living Examination must be submitted online. Full payment must accompany all applications. Applications will not be processed without the required fees.

An online application is available through the candidate registration system at **www.castleworldwide.com/Connect/SLCC**. You will be prompted to create an online profile that will serve as the basis for all interaction with Castle. You should record your username, password, and email address as used on the application for future reference and/or access to the system at a later time. You must register with the name that appears on the government-issued photo identification that you will use to enter the testing center to sit for your examination.

Completed applications will be evaluated and candidate eligibility determined within seven (7) business days of receipt. If the application is incomplete, a notice will be issued to the candidate by email. If the application is not completed within 180 days of opening, the application will be closed.

Eligibility Audits

A percentage of candidate applications will be selected for random audit to ensure compliance with the eligibility criteria. If your application is selected for audit, you will be provided with instructions on how to supply satisfactory documentation to support your compliance with the eligibility criteria.

Notice to Schedule (NTS)

As early as 45 days prior to the opening of the testing window, Castle will send you a Notice to Schedule (NTS) via email, which will give you a username, password, and any additional information you need to schedule your testing appointment.

Candidates will select a testing session from a list of available testing centers by geographic location, test date, and available seating. You must submit your test scheduling request at least seven (7) days prior to your preferred test date during the scheduled testing window.

Most testing centers will have morning and afternoon testing sessions available. Castle will do its best to accommodate the requested test site and date. Seats are filled on a first-come, first-served basis, based on test center availability, so it is to your advantage to schedule your test appointment as soon as you receive your NTS.

Note that candidates who wish to test at an international test site must pay an additional scheduling fee of $100. Payment is due at the time of scheduling.

You will be notified of the exact test location, date, and time via email. **You must bring your printed email confirmation with you to the test site.**

You must also bring a current photo identification with signature to the test site. Acceptable forms of identification include driver's licenses, passports, and government-issued identification cards. Unacceptable forms of identification include gym memberships, warehouse memberships, school identification cards, credit cards, and identification with signature only (no photo).

An email reminder will be issued to eligible candidates who have not yet completed test scheduling at the start of the testing window for which they are eligible. Candidate eligibility will be valid for two consecutive testing windows. Candidates will be permitted only one testing attempt per window. If a candidate does not take the examination for which he/she applied or does not successfully complete the examination within two consecutive testing windows, the application will be closed and all fees already submitted will be forfeited. In order to test on a future date, the candidate must submit a new application with all supporting documentation and full fees.

For questions regarding examination registration, contact Castle at testing@castleworldwide.com.

Cancellations, Rescheduling, and No-shows

You may cancel or reschedule a testing session up to four (4) business days prior to your testing appointment through the online scheduling system. A $50 non-refundable fee will apply when you reschedule your exam appointment.

Day of Testing Appointment:	Must Reschedule/Cancel By:
Monday	Tuesday of the previous week
Tuesday	Wednesday of the previous week
Wednesday	Thursday of the previous week
Thursday	Friday of the previous week
Friday	Monday of the current week
Saturday	Tuesday of the current week

Not appearing for your testing appointment or rescheduling your exam fewer than four (4) business days before your testing appointment will count as your original testing appointment. You will be marked as a no-show candidate and your entire testing fee will be forfeited.

Failure to Appear (No Show)

If a candidate fails to appear for his/her testing appointment, the following policies will be enacted:
    1) A refund is not issued.
    2) If a candidate attempts the examination again at a later date:
        a. The candidate will be a reexamination candidate if the candidate still has eligibility on his/her initial certification application. Payment of the reexamination fee ($125) will be required.
        b. The candidate will be an "initial certification candidate" if the candidate has no eligibility remaining on his/her initial certification application. Payment of the full application/testing fee ($420 to $650) will be required.
    3) Castle reserves the right to request additional evidence to support a candidate's reason for failure to appear.

Appeal of No-Show Status

An appeal of the no-show status will be considered in cases of emergencies and/or extenuating circumstances. Castle may recognize the following as acceptable reasons with documentation for failing to appear without prior cancellation:
    1) Serious illness – either you or an immediate family member

2) Death in the immediate family. The list of immediate family normally includes spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, uncle or aunt, mother- or father-in-law or stepchild.
3) Disabling accident
4) Court appearance
5) Jury duty
6) Unexpected military call up

If the candidate is unable to make the original scheduled testing appointment due to one of these reasons, the candidate should contact Castle as soon as possible with appropriate documentation. The request and documentation must be received 10 business days from the original scheduled testing appointment. If Castle does accept the appeal, then the candidate may be able to reschedule in the same testing window depending on the timing of the appeal. If the same testing window is not available, a candidate may be able test in the next testing window, depending on eligibility status. Candidates will be subject to the rescheduling/cancellation fee of $50.

Testing Time

Your scheduled test appointment time is three (3) hours. During the examination, you will have the opportunity to review questions, change answers, mark questions to come back to, or skip questions. Should your time expire while taking the exam, all answers, regardless of how they are marked, will be calculated into your score. Once your allotted time has expired, or you exit the examination, you cannot see or review the questions again.

Requesting Special Testing Accommodations

Candidates with documented visual, physical, hearing or learning disabilities that would prevent them from taking an examination under standard conditions, may request special testing accommodations and arrangements.

The Senior Living Certification Commission and Castle Worldwide require written documentation of the disability from the candidate's doctor or from another qualified medical professional on the professional's letterhead. This written documentation must accompany the registration form when being submitted to Castle. There is no extra fee for making these arrangements.

Reasonable accommodations provide candidates with disabilities a fair and equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skill in the essential functions being measured by the examination. Reasonable accommodations are decided based on the individual's specific request, disability, documentation submitted, and appropriateness of the request. Reasonable accommodations do not include steps that fundamentally alter the purpose or nature of the examination.

Requests for accommodation must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to opening of the candidate's preferred testing window, and candidates must submit their scheduling request at least 30 days prior to their preferred test date within the testing window. It is recommended that this documentation be submitted at least 45 days prior to the preferred testing date.

For more information regarding reasonable accommodations, please contact the SLCC or Castle.

Examination Results

Examination results will be available within 60 days after the <u>close</u> of the testing window.
Examination scores will be available through the online candidate system and will not be released by telephone or fax. When results are available, the candidate will receive an email with instructions on logging into the online system and accessing his/her score report. Results will be released to the candidate only. Results will not be released to a third party. In the case of an eligibility audit, examination scores will be held until the audit is complete.

Examination Scoring

The exam is based on a scaled score. Your raw score is converted through a statistical formula, revealing a scaled score. As such, we cannot indicate an exact number or percentage of questions that need to be answered correctly to pass the exam. Because there is no penalty for incorrect answers, it is recommended that you try to answer each question to the best of your ability.

If you pass the exam, your score report will indicate that you have passed the exam and earned the credential.

If you fail the exam, your score report will provide information about your performance in major topic areas relative to the performance of the average passing candidates in those areas.

Certificates

After passing the examination, candidates will receive a personalized certificate, suitable for framing, and a wallet card. The Certified Director of Assisted Living certification is valid for three (3) years.

Re-examination

Individuals who do not pass the examination may retest during the next testing window. Candidates may not take the examination more than two times in any 12-month period. All candidates who wish to retest must pay the appropriate fee.

Examination Rules

The SLCC and Castle follow standard testing industry rules and policies as outlined below.

Prohibited Items

Candidates are expressly prohibited from bringing the following items to the test site:

- Cameras, cell phones, optical readers, or other electronic devices that include the ability to photograph, photocopy, or otherwise copy test materials
- Notes, books, dictionaries, or language dictionaries
- Book bags or luggage
- iPods, MP3 players, headphones, or pagers
- Calculators, computers, PDAs, or other electronic devices with one or more memories
- Personal writing utensils (i.e., pencils, pens, and highlighters)
- Watches
- Food and beverage
- Hats, hoods, or other headgear

If Castle testing personnel determine that you have brought any such items to the testing center, they may be demanded and held for an indefinite period of time by Castle testing personnel. We reserve the right to review the memory of any electronic device that may be in your possession at the testing center to determine whether any test materials have been photographed or otherwise copied.

If our review determines that any test materials are in the memory of any such device, we reserve the right to delete such materials and/or retain them for subsequent disciplinary action. Upon completion of our review and any applicable deletions, we will return your device to you, but will not be responsible for the deletion of any materials that may result from our review, whether or not such materials are test materials.

By bringing any such device into the test site in contravention of our policies, you expressly waive any confidentiality or other similar rights with respect to your device, our review of the memory of your device and/or the deletion of any materials. Castle, the testing center, and the test administration staff are not liable for lost or damaged items brought to the examination site.

Exam Security

Exam security is a serious matter. In addition to leaving all personal items outside of the exam room, candidates may be asked to turn pockets inside out, as well as show that nothing is hidden under shirt sleeves and the hems of pants legs. Also note that most sites record testing sessions. Candidates caught with prohibited items in the exam room risk exam invalidation, disciplinary action, assessment of monetary damages, and/or legal liability.

PREPARING FOR THE CERTIFIED DIRECTOR OF ASSISTED LIVING EXAMINATION

Sample Exam Questions

The following questions were taken from the examination question repository and serve as samples ONLY of the question type and content found on the examination. Please see the answer key on page 11 of this handbook.

1. A community has a budgeted occupancy of 110 residents, but has a current occupancy of 95. On a budget of 0.60 hours per resident day in the dining services department, how many hours per day should be scheduled?

    A. 57
    B. 60
    C. 66
    D. 95

2. Which is the **BEST** way to analyze sales staff performance?

    A. Routinely evaluate the number of sales per lead by individual sales staff against established goals and standards.
    B. Perform post move-in resident satisfaction surveys to compare the sales process against established goals and standards.
    C. Collect statistics for individual sales staff and review them against established goals and standards.
    D. Review follow-up appointments for a single prospect and the appointment-to-conversion rate against established goals and standards.

3. Which law prohibits employment discrimination against recovering drug addicts?

    A. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
    B. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
    C. Civil Rights Act (Title VII)
    D. Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

4. A resident bumped her head during a fall but has no apparent injury. The community's policy states that all residents who are known to have hit their head must be evaluated medically in a hospital. The resident does not want to go to the hospital, and her responsible party insists on not sending her to the hospital.

   What should the team do?

   A. Call the physician and ask for advice.

   B. Follow the community's policies and procedures.

   C. Have the responsible party stay with the resident or hire a private duty aide to observe her for changes over the next 48 hours.

   D. Negotiate with the responsible party that the team will watch the resident closely for changes and send her for evaluation only if the resident agrees.

5. Which is a **BEST** practice for determining whether a community is appropriate for a prospective resident?

   A. Complete an admission checklist with the resident and family.

   B. Conduct a face-to-face interview with the family.

   C. Obtain a physician order that the resident is appropriate.

   D. Complete a comprehensive assessment of the potential resident.

Demo Test

Castle offers a free online tutorial and unscored demo test to familiarize candidates with the computer-based testing environment. The online demonstration and tutorial are accessible at any time, anywhere, through any computer with Internet access. Candidates may access the tutorial and demo on Castle's website at https://www.castleworldwide.com/castleweb/candidates/sample-tests/index.aspx. The demo is **not** intended to be a review of examination content.

Sample Question Answer Key

Question Number	Correct Answer	Domain
1	A	7
2	C	8
3	B	4
4	B	2
5	D	2

APPENDIX A: EXAM PREPARATION TIPS

How to Study
The SLCC encourages candidates to prepare for the examination by using available resources.

Create your study plan and review methods well in advance of the examination. Think about the study method that is best for you (e.g., individual review, study group, class) and the types of materials that are most helpful (e.g., textbooks, audio or video programs, outlines, memory aids). It may also be helpful to use materials given to you during training activities related to your work.

Managing Test Anxiety
A little anxiety regarding test taking can be helpful because it stimulates and motivates you to perform at your best; however, severe anxiety can hinder test performance. If you know that you frequently experience severe test anxiety, consider preparing yourself for the examination by developing coping mechanisms to make your tension work for you. In addition, an online demonstration and tutorial are available at www.castleworldwide.com/tds_v5/asp/home.asp to help familiarize you with the computer-based testing environment. They are not a review of examination content.

Before the day of the examination, visualize and rehearse the testing situation. Imagine yourself taking the examination with a positive attitude and focused, calm behavior.

Take measures to reduce your stress during the examination. Use deep-breathing techniques, and be sure to stretch your muscles periodically. Such exercises can reduce both physical and mental stress. If necessary, take a few minutes to imagine a calm, pleasant scene, and repeat positive phrases.

Do not let the comments or behavior of testing personnel or other examinees make you anxious. As examinees are taking different versions of the examination, as well as entirely different examinations, examinees will finish at different times – some finishing very early, others taking the full three (3) hours. Examinees who finish more quickly than you may not perform any better than you. Everyone works at his or her own speed. Some of the best test performers routinely use the total allocated time. Remember that (a) there is no limit to the number of examinees who can receive passing scores, (b) there is no bonus for completing the examination early, and (c) you are not competing with anyone else to pass the exam.

Eating well, avoiding too much alcohol, and maintaining a regular sleep pattern for several days before the examination will help you to be physically prepared. Also, on the day before you take the test, collect all the supplies you will need and choose comfortable clothing. Knowing that you are prepared for the test will help to reduce your anxiety.

Finally, your best method for controlling your anxiety is to feel prepared for the test. Designing a study plan well in advance will help you to be successful.

Tips for Taking the Examination
- Budget your time well. Because you will have three (3) hours to complete 150 questions, you will want to complete more than half of the exam (75 questions) in less than half the time (90 minutes). This is so you will have extra time after completing the full examination to review questions you either skipped or marked for review. Also, allow time so that every hour you can take a minute or so to relax your eyes and stretch your neck and hand muscles.

- Read each question carefully, focusing on what is being asked. If you are uncertain about the answer but nevertheless want to give a tentative response at the time, mark the test question to indicate that you want to review the question and your answer if time allows. Go back to questions marked in this manner after completing the entire test.

- Read all options before selecting your answer. Always select the best choice.

- Do not overanalyze or try to "read into" a question. Questions are not written to be tricky. Do not assume additional information beyond what is given in the test question. All information necessary to answer the question will be given in the text of the question or scenario.

- Test questions are based upon an accepted knowledge base as outlined in the test content outline. Choose options that you know to be correct in any setting, not just your place of employment.

- If there are questions including the words "not," "except," or "least," answer with particular care because you will be looking for the exception. These questions involve a reversal of your usual thought patterns.

- Pay close attention to key words such as "best," "most," "primary," or "usually." These words indicate that other options may at times be correct, but given the wording or situation in the test question, you must judge which option is the best.

- Skip difficult questions and come back to them later. Questions on the test are not ordered by difficulty (i.e., they do not go from easiest to hardest). Also, content areas (the domains) and topics are addressed randomly in questions throughout the test.

- When guessing, use the process of elimination. Treat each option as a true or false statement, and eliminate those that you would not select. Narrow your choices and then make your best educated guess.

- Answer every question even if you have to guess. There is no penalty for guessing. Go through the entire test, answering the questions you believe you know and skipping the ones you do not. Leave time at the end of the testing period to go back to the questions you skipped or want to review. If you are running out of time, leave a minute or so at the end to complete all of the blank questions randomly. Remember, you have a 25% probability of answering a question correctly by chance alone, so don't miss any!

- If reading English is difficult for you because English is not your primary language, maximize your time by reading and answering all the shorter questions first. After completing all of the short questions, go back and attempt to answer the longer questions.

- Review the suggested resources listed in this handbook.