CDME FINAL EXAM – 2021

This final exam is released for use between January 1, 2021 – January 15, 2022.

Please read this entire document carefully and fully before starting on your assignment. Papers that do not meet the guidelines outlined in this document will be sent back for revision or a complete redo.

**Deadlines**
- Final exams are accepted year-round.
- Once the submission is “accepted” by the review team the candidate has completed the program and is deemed certified.
- April 30, 2020: Deadline to submit final exam in order to be recognized during the 2021 Annual Convention.

**Contact**
Return all three assignments at one time to cdme@destinationsinternational.org.
If you have any questions, please email cdme@destinationsinternational.org.

**Exam Sections**
The final exam provides the opportunity for the CDME candidate to demonstrate his/her ability to apply what was learned throughout their CDME experience, rather than the recall of specific items presented throughout the program.

1. **Two essay questions (Assignments 1 and 2)**
   - Questions are designed to assess your grasp of essential elements of the broad CDME body of knowledge including destination organization leadership and critical issues.
   - Responses are expected to reflect insights learned during coursework and how they relate to your current role.
   - Responses are judged primarily on the application of critical thinking as it relates to coursework and real-world work experience.

   **Guidance:**
   - Before answering the questions, carefully read and think through the question being asked.
   - Use examples from specific courses and explain how they relate to you as a leader, or to your organization.
   - Be thoughtful and bring original thinking to your writing.
• Specific Requirements:
  o Minimum of 750 words; do not exceed 1,000 words.
  o File Name: First Last CDME Final Exam Assignment #1 (or #2)
    ▪ Ex: Jane Smith CDME Final Exam Assignment #1

2. Research Paper (Assignment 3)
Consider this assignment a capstone to the program; it is the most extensive piece of the final exam process.
You are strongly encouraged to plan out your paper, perhaps several months before you write it, so you can digest the material and bring your unique perspective and insight to the project, as well as gather sources for material.

Don’t be afraid to discuss your topic selection and the paper with colleagues in the office; they can be a powerful sounding board and may be helpful in providing insights and references. Your contacts can also test your assumptions.

• Topic Selection:
  o You are encouraged to think carefully about your topic selection before you begin the process.
  o Select a topic of significant interest, that excites you and about which you feel passionate. It will make writing the paper more enjoyable and you will bring greater insights to the project.
  o You can examine any issue that is relevant and meaningful to the destination organization profession.
  o A sample list of topics is provided; if you select one of these you do not need to seek approval of your topic.
  o If you would like to focus on a topic which is not included in the list, send an email with a brief description of your idea and the purpose for selecting it, to cdme@destinationsinternational.org.

• Writing the paper:
  o It is recommended to begin developing and writing your paper at least six weeks prior to submission, to allow yourself time to be thoughtful in the approach taken and to think critically.
  o Write the paper when you have plenty of time to think through the material, perhaps on a day off or during the weekend when you are uninterrupted.
  o It can be extremely beneficial to write a draft and set it aside for a few days before continuing the work. It will look different to you than the day you wrote it.
  o Review and organize your notes and references ahead of time so you can build the paper. If more research is required to validate your assumptions, you will have the time to do that without facing a deadline crunch.
  o Plan on writing at least two or three drafts before you finalize your submission.
Guidance:
- The submission will be judged on the fresh thinking you bring to the subject, as well as critical thinking skills.
- Stating the obvious and simply repeating what was said in class is not enough to qualify for successful completion of the final exam.
- Use the body of knowledge presented over the course of the program, as well as personal perspective and relevant readings or research on the subject.
- It is expected that the paper will demonstrate the academic rigor that would be appropriate in a higher learning environment.

Specific Requirements:
- Maximum of 3000 words, double spaced
- Includes:
  - an introduction (background and purpose – 500 words)
  - main findings/viewpoint (analysis – 1,500 words)
  - conclusion (applications – 850 words)
  - an executive summary (abstract – 150 words)
- American Psychological Association (APA) academic style
  - Resource: Purdue University Online Writing Lab

Request additional consult:
If you would like to be paired with a CDME graduate who can act as a resource throughout the process, please reach out to CDME@destinationsinternational.org.

Assignment #1:
Based on your destination organization experience and the discussions in your core courses throughout the CDME program, what does destination leadership really mean today? Define and discuss fully the principles and issues facing destination organization leaders and use examples from both your destination organization and your destination. For those working outside of destination organizations, how would you apply this to your client relationships? This should be a minimum of 750 words and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Assignment #2: - COVID Crisis Management Response: Referring back to the body of knowledge presented in the four core courses, give specific examples of how your business or destination organization has dealt with or is dealing with the pandemic. For example, what new skill sets have you acquired or honed during your time in the CDME program that apply to this current crisis?

This should be a minimum of 750 words and should not exceed 1,000 words.
Assignments 1 and 2 Review Criteria:

Technical/Objective Criteria:
☐ Did the response consist of a minimum of 750 words, and not exceed approximately 1,000 words?

Subjective Criteria:
☐ Did the response identify and discuss fully the key components of destination management and leadership, using illustrations from the destination and destination organization?
☐ Did the response introduce any new and/or original ideas, concepts or approaches to our roles as destination organizations?
☐ Were ideas, concepts or approaches (new or otherwise) noted in the paper well thought out and appropriately researched?
☐ Did the author demonstrate strategic and critical thinking?
☐ Is the submission comprehensive and practice-oriented?

Assignment #3:
For this assignment, we are looking for the application of the knowledge you gained during the course of the program to the real-world current situation in your destination. In other words, how are you going to use the knowledge you’ve gained to enhance, change, grow your destination. This is your chance to show that you have gained and enhanced your knowledge, skills and abilities to manage your destination successfully.

You may choose one of the topics below or determine an alternative topic on destination management. Prepare a 3,000 word (maximum), double-spaced investigative paper. The paper’s contents will include:
- introduction (background and purpose – 500 words)
- main findings/viewpoint (analysis – 1,500 words)
- conclusion (applications – 850 words)
- executive summary (abstract – 150 words).

The author is expected to adhere to APA (American Psychological Association) Style Guidelines and provide a minimum of 10 references. See introductory section (page 3) for additional guidance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAMPLE TOPICS FOR 2021*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destination organization careers and talent development</td>
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<td>Destination regionalism</td>
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<td>Destination organization advocacy, government and/or community relations</td>
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<td>Reinventing the Visitor Center experience</td>
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<td>The evolving role of destination organizations</td>
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<td>Destination social media and marketing</td>
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<td>Destination organization digital marketing</td>
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<td>strategies</td>
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<td>Destination performance management</td>
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<td>Destination and community branding</td>
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<td>Destination organization new funding initiatives / tourism improvement districts</td>
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<td>New technology in destination organizations</td>
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<td>The destination organization executive as the destination leader</td>
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<td>Key challenges and directions in destination marketing and/or sales</td>
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<td>The destination organization role in crisis management and preparedness – pre, during and post-event</td>
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<td>Weaponization of travel and the destination organization role/response</td>
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<td>International marketing and sales</td>
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<td>The destination organization role in community issues (i.e., homelessness, crime, etc.)</td>
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<td>Marketing and operations under severely reduced financial capacity</td>
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*These topics are suggestions only. If the subject you wish to use for your final exam investigative paper is not listed above, please send your request for topic consideration to cdme@destinationsinternational.org.

**Assignment 3 Review Criteria:**

**Technical/Objective Criteria:**

Did the participant include:

☐ An introduction (background and purpose, approximately 500 words)
☐ Main Findings/Viewpoints (an analysis, approximately 1,500 words)
☐ Conclusion (application of the findings/viewpoints, approximately 850 words)
☐ Executive Summary (an abstract of the paper, approximately 150 words)
☐ Did the paper adhere to APA style?
☐ Were a minimum of 10 references provided?
Subjective Criteria:
☐ Did the paper introduce any new and/or original ideas, concepts or approaches to the role of Destination Organizations?
☐ Were ideas, concepts or approaches (new or otherwise) noted in the paper well thought out and appropriately researched?
☐ Did the author demonstrate strategic and critical thinking?
☐ Is the submittal comprehensive and practice-oriented?

Final Exam Ratings
☐ Final Exam Accepted
☐ Final Exam Accepted – Opportunities for Improvement Noted
☐ Final Exam Accepted – Exemplary Work/Content should be considered for Destinations International programming
☐ Final Exam NOT Accepted. Reviewer will provide significant commentary, with direction given to the applicant as to what is needed for the final exam to be resubmitted and accepted.
☐ “Red-pen” review needed prior to consideration for publication.