



Certified Special Events Professional Exam Blueprint – 2024

Certified Special Events Professional (CSEP) Exam Blueprint

Effective December 1, 2021 – this blueprint gives you an indication of the breadth of information you need to know to be successful in completion of the Certified Special Events Professional (CSEP) examination. Included in the blueprint are the six (6) competency domains that have been identified through a Job Analysis Study conducted by the International Live Events Association (ILEA), the ILEA CSEP Exam Task Force and the ILEA CSEP Committee. Within each domain, the core areas of knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to demonstrate competence in practice are identified. Meeting professionals will be assessed in these areas on the examination.

Exam Format: Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ)

~115 MCQs – total number of MCQs to be determined based on test development of content and alignment to Competency Framework and Weightings by Domain (as outlined below), so the exam accurately assesses the performance indicators in each competency area identified.

Exam Length: 2.5 hours

Final length of exam may change with each iteration; determination to be made based on the total number of questions, and quantity and complexity of case-based questions. Candidates that request time accommodations will be considered for a 50% time extension (3.75 hours), if approved by the ILEA CSEP Committee.

Competency Domains, Framework, and Weightings

Domain 1: Strategic Outlook and Alignment (14%-18%)

CSEPs set the direction for future decisions about the production process of live events by ensuring proper alignment with client goals and objectives. They collect relevant information through various methods to properly scope the proposed project. They outline key considerations in the development of a strategic plan and determine important processes in evaluating the event’s success.

1.1 Evaluates project scope
a. Analyses relevant data and documentation to establish comprehensive understanding of event goals and objectives
• Client brand
• Target audience
• Type of event
• Key stakeholders
b. Evaluates scope of live event to determine:
• Event parameters
• Resource requirements
• Financial parameters
c. Identifies event element requirements in alignment with goals and objectives of event
d. Assesses feasibility of the event

1.2 Develops strategic plan to set direction for event decisions
a. Applies insight of key variables that influence event outcome in creating the strategic plan:
• Emerging trends, ideas, and tactics in live event design
• Current economic, financial, cultural, and political climates
• Sustainability (e.g., environmental, social, economic)
b. Demonstrates mutual understanding of event purpose and objectives and ensures agreement of desired event outcomes



Certified Special Events Professional Exam Blueprint – 2024

1.3 Applies data analysis to guide event design and assess impact
a. Designs evaluation plan based on event goals and objectives to align with strategic intent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands data relevancy based upon goals and objectives • Determines data collection needs
b. Designs data collection system in compliance with data protection requirements/regulations
c. Applies relevant event data to measure critical success factors against the goals and objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors and measures event benchmarks to align with the strategic plan • Utilizes data to assess the fulfilment of the event goals
d. Applies event data to inform business decisions, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event design • Event execution • Marketing
e. Collects and analyses event data using the evaluation plan to measure return on investment (ROI).

Domain 2: Project Management (26%-38%)

When planning an event, CSEPs undertake the management of the project from beginning to end including logistics, budgets, resource deployment and schedule management. They draw from best practices in project management to apply and adapt them to event management. They execute project management plans to meet goals and objectives of live events.

2.1 Time Management (8%-12%)
a. Identifies key priorities, deliverables, and deadlines, including adjusting and reprioritizing
b. Establishes project timeline including development of production calendar and critical path
c. Manages critical path and work assignments to ensure smooth execution and delivery of approved initiatives (e.g., follow up meetings, delegation of tasks)
d. Implements proper follow-up and reporting procedures to ensure adherence to project timelines

2.2 Financial Management (8%-12%)
a. Identifies revenue sources/streams (e.g., ticket sales, sponsorships, in-kind donations, exhibit, advertising, and merchandising sales)
b. Establishes and manages financial standard operating procedures (SOP) to ensure compliance with event or organization financial guidelines (e.g., monetary transaction processes)
c. Develops and manages budget using accepted accounting principles and audit procedures to align with the goals, objectives, and financial parameters of event (e.g., financial reports, final invoices/billing, profit, and loss)
d. Establishes pricing (e.g., registration, sponsorships, exhibits) based on market analysis to meet financial targets and goals.
e. Manages cash flow

2.3 People Management (5%-7%)
a. Assesses staffing needs by reviewing project activities to determine requirements and selection criteria (e.g., recruitment plan)
b. Establishes project management team based on resource requirements
c. Creates structure of responsibility pertaining to event management and its staffing (e.g., roles and responsibility)
d. Develops communication policies, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting structure • Status reports
e. Ensures proper training of staff and volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site training and orientation (e.g., acclimation, security, emergency responses, inclusivity, and harassment awareness training)



Certified Special Events Professional Exam Blueprint – 2024

2.4 Stakeholder (e.g., client, sponsors, donors) Management (5%-7%)

- a. Identifies and categorizes stakeholder groups
- b. Establishes communication and working relationship parameters for each stakeholder group
- c. Develops tailored scope of services / scope of work
- d. Negotiates and executes necessary agreements, contracts, leases, and other legal documents
- e. Ensures contracts are in accordance with relevant requirements, such as:
 - Client/organization culture and protocols
 - Sustainability requirements
 - Conduct requirements
 - Diversity requirements (e.g., supply diversity)
- f. Communicates expectations to ensure alignment with event goals and objectives (e.g., project briefings, vendor/supplier meetings)

Domain 3: Risk Management (10%-12%)

CSEPs apply principles of emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation to live events planning. They assess risks and develop plans to ensure overall safety, security and well-being of all people and things surrounding the event. They also assess other risks that pose a threat to the success of the event (e.g., financial, legal, contractual) and to reputations.

3.1 Identifies, evaluates, and assesses risks that may threaten attendees, the event itself, or stakeholders, such as:

- Health and Safety
- Security
- Physical/Environmental
- Cultural
- Reputational
- Financial
- Legal/Contractual
- Organizational

3.2 Manages ongoing process of assessing the risks and applies appropriate measures to manage the probability and consequences of such risks.

- a. Identifies and engages essential resources to support risk assessment plans (e.g., emergency services, legal counsel, public relations)
- b. Develops mitigation/response plans to ensure the overall safety, security and well-being of all people and things surrounding the event
- c. Implements emergency response plan to manage resources in emergency situations.
- d. Arranges security according to emergency response plan to reduce impact.
- e. Implements proper steps to demonstrate duty of care

3.3 Determines permit requirements and ensures compliance

3.4 Ensures proper insurance coverage (e.g., liability, event insurance, additional insurances)

3.5 Demonstrates duty of care in development and execution of events



Certified Special Events Professional Exam Blueprint – 2024

Domain 4: Event Management / Event Design & Execution (28%-38%)

CSEPs apply a range of skills and knowledge to create memorable live events. They are experienced in crafting attendee experiences, designing environments, and creating programs that align with event strategy. They assess and evaluate event element requirements and identify strategies that lead to successful events. CSEPs are responsible for the execution of events or elements within an event. They implement creative and logistic plans, manage, and coordinate teams and continuously monitor the event site to ensure successful execution of event elements.

4.1 Event Design (10%-16%)
a. Translates strategy into a live experience concept
1. Crafts attendee experience by applying concepts of intentional design, such as:
• Behavior science techniques
• Health and well being
• Impact and technology
• Sustainable design
• User experience (UX) design
2. Determines event design requirements based on stated objectives that meet attendee and organizational expectations (e.g. branding guidelines, budget, sponsorship opportunities, organizational goals and objectives)
b. Identifies and determines (or identifies, selects, designs, sources, and plans event element requirements to align with strategy including selection of:
• Event site (e.g., site maps, floorplans, event flow)
• Technical production (e.g., staging, audiovisual)
• Food and beverage (e.g., menu style, vendor)
• Ancillary programs (e.g., performers, scripting, content, companion programs, exhibits, side trips, recreational activities)
• Entertainment/Branding
• Décor concept (e.g. furnishings, theme, branding plan)
• Media Plan (e.g. branding, message, method of delivery)

4.2 Event Execution/Implementation (18%-22%)
a. Implements creative and logistic plans to ensure strategic alignment
1. Creates and implements logistic plans for site setup, operation, and tear down using event plan (e.g., delivery and setup of rentals, shipping and receiving)
2. Determines logistical sequence of show or event flow
3. Creates and implements production schedules to ensure successful execution of event elements
b. Coordinates event element requirements
1. Manages and ensures proper coordination of event element plans and designs, such as:
• Site and site services (e.g., parking, waste management, capacity, power, telecommunications, floor plan)
• Entertainment/Presentation (e.g., performers, scripting, rehearsal)
• Transportation (e.g., manifests, shuttle service, airport service, valet)
• Food and beverage (e.g., alcohol management, catering, guarantees and dietary needs)
• Technical production (e.g., audio/visual, lighting, sound, special effects, technical rehearsal)
• Décor and branding (e.g., furnishings, signage, props, branding, flowers)
• Guest services (e.g., hospitality, VIP)
• Ancillary programs (e.g., schedule, logistics, risk management, exhibits, side trips, recreational activities)
• Media production (e.g., photography, videography, show content)
2. Continuously monitors attendee experience (e.g., expectations, trust) and manages expectations, communications, and variations
3. Recognizes the need to adapt plans in real time and manage change (e.g., carrying out contingency plans, responding to issues and emergencies), in doing so:
• Assesses the impact



Certified Special Events Professional Exam Blueprint – 2024

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates to relevant stakeholders/parties • Gains approval for response/course of action • Documents incidents and changes (e.g., incident reports, change orders, signed authorizations)
c. Manages and coordinates internal and external teams
1. Specifies communication procedures and protocols to ensure accuracy and efficiency in event execution
2. Informs others of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event goals and objectives • Rules of conduct • Creative vision • Safety and security plan
3. Defines on-site communications plan aligned to meet event strategy and design
4. Determines and secures required technology and communication equipment and resources to meet event requirements
5. Analyses and evaluates event management processes and procedures, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assesses performance/service • Conducts debrief to capture lessons learned
d. Oversees compliance
1. Ensures compliance with legal and insurance requirements (e.g. permits)
2. Ensures conceptual and contractual compliance to align with event design and execution of event elements
3. Ensures compliance with licensing regulations and other intellectual property rights (e.g., ASCAP, BMI)
4. Secures all necessary insurance coverage, licenses, permits, waivers and other compliance instruments and documentation
5. Evaluates accessibility, inclusivity, and language requirements (e.g., physical space and access, gender neutral washrooms, translation)

Domain 5: External Communication (4%-7%)

CSEPs recognize that the critical path to an event includes elements outside of the live experience and that the communication strategies and resources deployed before, during and after the event impact the client’s return on investment.

5.1 Marketing
a. Identifies marketing requirements (e.g., strategy and resources), such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Social media plan • Mobile application • Recruitment resources • Advertising strategy • Public relations strategy
b. Informs marketing requirements by identifying proper target market segments/personas
c. Evaluates marketing activities to ensure alignment with client brand and event strategy (e.g., distribution channels)
d. Supports the production of marketing materials, collaterals, and merchandising
e. Oversees the development and/or delivery of content to support the overall event strategy (e.g., identifying key messaging, tone)
f. Ensures compliance with relevant data collection and privacy laws



Certified Special Events Professional Exam Blueprint – 2024

Professional Conduct (2%-4%)

CSEPs uphold the standards of professional conduct of their organizations, their clients, and the live events industry.

6.1 Holds self and others to the highest ethical and professional standards
--

- | |
|---|
| a. Identifies and addresses conflicts of interest |
| b. Identifies situations involving existing or potential ethical issues |
| c. Protects the integrity of the industry |
| d. Exhibits honesty and integrity |
| e. Remains accountable for their decisions and the decisions of their team to the client throughout the execution of the event plan |

6.2 Adopts an attitude of life-long learning

- | |
|--|
| a. Stays abreast of current trends and emerging issues |
| b. Remains engaged with the event industry |

6.3 Complies with governmental and regulatory requirements

- | |
|--|
| a. Ensure event complies with all governmental legislation and local ordinances |
| b. Ensure event complies with labor union jurisdictions and regulations |
| c. Monitor event activities to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and law |