

AACN Certification Corporation – Program Comparison Grid

Specialty Certification	Description	Initial Exam Eligibility	Exam Length (Hours)	# of Items	% Testing Clinical Judgment	Renewal Cycle (Years)	Renewal Requirements
CCRN	For RNs working at the bedside of acutely and/or critically ill patients. Three separate exams for nurses who care for adult, neonatal and pediatric patients.	1,750 hours direct bedside care in past 2 years - 875 in most recent year; acutely/critically ill; Adult, Pediatric or Neonatal	3.0	150	80	3.0	100 CERPs or successful re-examination; plus 432 hours in direct bedside care, with 144 accrued in most recent year
PCCN	For RNs working at the bedside of acutely ill adult patients in areas such as Progressive Care, Intermediate Care, Direct Observation, Step down, Telemetry, Transitional Care, Cardiac Catheterization Labs and Emergency Departments.	1,750 hours direct bedside care in past 2 years - 875 in most recent year; acutely ill; Adult focus	2.5	125	80	3.0	100 CERPs or successful re-examination; plus 432 hours in direct bedside care, with 144 accrued in most recent year
ACNPC	Entry-level advanced practice certification for nurses educated as acute care nurse practitioners to provide nursing care across the continuum of health services to meet the specialized physiologic and psychologic needs of adult patients with complex acute, critical and/or chronic health conditions. Adult ACNPs currently certified through another nationally accredited organization may apply for the ACNPC through Certification by Endorsement.	Master's or higher as an acute care nurse practitioner; Adult focus	3.5	175	49	5.0	150 CEs, 100 in acute care; or successful re-examination; plus 2,000 hours in ACNP role, with 400 in most recent year
CCNS	Entry-level advanced practice certification for nurses educated as clinical nurse specialists working with acutely and/or critically ill patients. There are three separate exams for nurses who care for adult, neonatal and pediatric patients.	Master's or higher with 500 clinical hours within CNS program; acute and/or critical care focus; Adult, Pediatric or Neonatal	3.5	175	22	4.0	60 CEs, 15 in acute or critical care education programs; or successful re-examination; plus 2,000 hours in CNS role, with 400 in most recent year
CNML	For RN nurse leaders in the nurse manager role. Offered in partnership with the AONE Credentialing Center - a division of the American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE).	BSN or higher plus 2 years of experience (minimum of 1,040 hours per year) in a nurse manager role; or a non-nursing bachelor's plus 3 years of experience; or a diploma or associate degree plus 5 years of experience	2.0	115	NA	3.0	45 contact hours of continuing professional education; or successful re-examination. Visit www.aone.org for details.
Subspecialty Certification	Description	Initial Exam Eligibility	Exam Length (Hours)	# of Items	% Testing Clinical Judgment	Renewal Cycle (Years)	Renewal Requirements
CMC	For nurses who already have a nationally accredited clinical nursing specialty certification (such as CCRN, PCCN, CCNS or ACNPC) and who care for acutely/critically ill cardiac medicine patients.	1,750 hours direct bedside care in past 2 years—875 in most recent year, 875 with cardiac patients; Adult focus	2.0	90	100	3.0	25 CERPs in clinical judgment related to cardiac care; 432 hours direct bedside care of cardiac patients, with 144 in most recent year
CSC	For nurses who already have a nationally accredited clinical nursing specialty certification (such as CCRN, PCCN, CCNS or ACNPC) and who care for cardiac surgery patients (within the first 48 hours post-operatively).	1,750 hours direct bedside care in past 2 years—875 in most recent year, 875 with cardiac surgery patients first 48 hours post-op; Adult focus	2.0	90	100	3.0	25 CERPs in clinical judgment related to cardiac surgery; 432 hours direct bedside care of cardiac surgery patients first 48 hours post-op, with 144 in most recent year