



Renewal by SYNERGY CERPs At-a-Glance



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR YOUR NEXT RENEWAL

Read and save for reference!

- The AACN Synergy Model for Patient Care™ has been the framework for AACN Certification Corporation exams since 1997 and is now the framework for certification renewal. The integration provides continuity and aligns a more equitable emphasis on Clinical Judgment between programs. The purpose of certification renewal is to enhance continued competence. The intention is for the Synergy Model to offer more meaningful renewal requirements, better prepare nurses for the future and provide consistency between programs.
- Certification begins on the first day of the month in which the exam is passed and ends three years later. For example, if you passed the exam on December 10, 2009, your certification period is December 1, 2009 through November 30, 2012; all eligible CERPs and clinical hours would need to be completed in this date range.
- Your next renewal will be via Renewal by Synergy CERPs, which is different from the prior renewal program in that it changes how CERPs are categorized. CERPs that you used for renewal in the past will still count. They may, however, fall into a different category. During your certification period you will need to complete a minimum number of CERPs in 3 categories: A, B and C. You'll need a total of 100 CERPs, with at least 60 in Category A, 10 each in Categories B and C, plus 20 in the category of your choice.
- It's simpler than you think. CERPs for ongoing learning topics may be obtained through seminars, conferences and in-services offered through your employer (e.g. HIPAA, safety, infection control, etc). CERP activities include such things as auditing, quality improvement activities, writing or editing articles, preceptorship, participation on committees or advisory teams, membership in a professional nursing organization (e.g., ANA, AACN, etc.) as well as many others.
- You can search the AACN Online CE Center (at www.aacn.org) by Synergy CERP categories and generate a list of online CE programs available for each category. The online CE programs are free for AACN members and at a nominal fee for nonmembers.
- In addition to this document, additional resources are available online to explain the Renewal by Synergy CERPs program. Visit www.certcorp.org > CCRN or PCCN > Certification Renewal. Take a few minutes to review the Renewal by Synergy CERPs information. You will likely find that you're already engaged in activities and have completed continuing education courses that count towards your renewal. We're here to help. Please contact AACN Customer Care at 800-899-2666 if you have questions.
- Online Renewal is available to all active CCRNs and PCCNs as early as four months prior to their scheduled renewal date, when renewal materials are sent to certificants. To renew online, visit www.certcorp.org and click Renew Your Certification. Please keep AACN informed of your current address and e-mail address, by updating your profile online at www.aacn.org > My Account or by emailing info@aacn.org.

CERTIFICATION RENEWAL ELIGIBILITY

- Current unencumbered licensure as an RN or APRN in the U.S.
- 432 hours of direct bedside care of acutely and/or critically ill patients within the three-year certification period, with 144 of those hours accrued in the year preceding your scheduled renewal date. Hours spent supervising or precepting nurses or nursing students at the bedside are eligible.
- Hours must be completed in a U.S.-based or Canada-based facility, or in a facility determined to be comparable to the U.S. standard of acute or critical care nursing practice as evidenced by ANCC Magnet Status or Joint Commission International accreditation.
- Retake and pass the exam **or** complete the Renewal by Synergy CERPs program.

RENEWAL BY SYNERGY CERPS

A total of 100 CERPs must be completed in the three-year certification period, with at least 60 CERPs in Category A and 10 each in Categories B and C—plus 20 CERPs in the category of your choice.

The list of examples below is not all-inclusive. For additional examples please refer to the following pages or to the *CCRN/PCCN Renewal Handbook* online at www.certcorp.org.

Category	Minimum	Maximum
A	60	80
B	10	30
C	10	30
Total	100	

CATEGORY A - Clinical Judgment, Clinical Inquiry

60 CERPs Minimum / 80 CERPs Maximum

Examples: Lab values, BLS, ACLS, PALS, NRP, ECG, IV therapy, heart failure, pharmacology, assessment, pathophysiology, technical skills/new equipment, statistics, clinical research, evidence-based practice, auditing, publishing, practice protocols, QI/QA, clinical aspects of bioterrorism, exam reviews, CCRN or PCCN Self-Assessment Exams.

CATEGORY B - Advocacy & Moral Agency, Caring Practices, Response to Diversity, Facilitation of Learning

10 CERPs Minimum / 30 CERPs Maximum

Examples: safety, legal or ethical issues, charting/documentation, reducing medication errors, public policy, HIPAA, Joint Commission, end-of-life care, advanced directives, comfort/pain control, stress management, patient support groups, geriatric care, diversity, cultural aspects of care, medical Spanish, therapeutic communication, psychosocial aspects of care, spiritual considerations, precepting/mentoring, teaching in-services/programs, developing patient education tools, value of certification.

CATEGORY C - Collaboration, Systems Thinking

10 CERPs Minimum / 30 CERPs Maximum

Examples: communication skills, teamwork, healthy work environments, Synergy Model for Patient Care, redesigning hospital care, disaster/emergency planning, developing policies or procedures, committees, leadership, management, risk management, community resources, case management, AACN membership.

HOW TO CALCULATE CERPS

Continuing Education Recognition Points (CERPs) are calculated according to the educational contact hour for seminars or lectures. For purposes of certification renewal, **1 CERP is equal to 1 contact hour**. CERPs are not awarded for registration, introductions, breaks, lunch or clinical time. CERPs are not awarded for completion of certification exams. For example, if you attended an educational program and earned 6 contact hours or 6 CMEs, then 6 CERPs would be awarded for this program.

For Academic Credit Courses, CERPs are assigned as follows:

- In a semester system, one semester unit credit, one semester hour or one credit is worth **15 CERPs**.
- In a quarter system, one quarter unit credit, one quarter hour or one credit is worth **10 CERPs**.
- In a trimester system, one trimester unit credit is worth **12 CERPs**.

RENEWAL BY SYNERGY CERPS - TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

Topics & Activities

All categories have both ongoing learning topics and activities that may be counted for CERPs.

A total of 100 CERPs is required every three years in the following categories, grouped as they relate to the nurse characteristics of the AACN Synergy Model for Patient Care™. The Synergy Model also includes Patient Characteristics. Synergy results when patient needs and characteristics are matched with nurse competencies. Refer to www.certcorp.org for more about the Synergy Model.

Following are examples of how CERPs are categorized in the Renewal by Synergy CERPs program. These include, but are not limited to, the examples provided.

CATEGORY A

60 CERPs Minimum / 80 CERPs Maximum

Clinical Judgment	Clinical reasoning, which includes clinical decision making, critical thinking and a global grasp of the situation, coupled with nursing skills acquired through a process of integrating education, experiential knowledge, and evidence-based guidelines.
Clinical Inquiry (or Innovator/ Evaluator)	The ongoing process of questioning and evaluating practice and providing informed practice. Creating changes through evidence-based practice, research utilization and experiential knowledge.

CLINICAL JUDGMENT

Ongoing Learning Topics

Includes all CE, academic, e-learning, CME courses and/or in-services related to body systems, monitoring, physical assessment, anatomy and physiology, nursing interventions, lab values, pharmacology, ABG interpretation, diagnostic tests, therapies, fluid dynamics, BLS, ACLS, PALS, NRP, ECG interpretation, nutritional support, bariatric surgery, IV therapy, clinical implications of bioterrorism, technical skills, new equipment, core review and exam review programs.

Activities

CCRN Self-Assessment Exam (SAE) with 70% passing score	15 CERPs once per renewal period
PCCN Self-Assessment Exam (SAE) with 70% passing score	12 CERPs once per renewal period

continued

Participation on an AACN Certification Corporation Committee or Task Force (Practice Analysis, Item Writer, Exam Development, SAE or Practice Exam Reviewer)	30 CERPs
Appeals Panel	5 CERPs

CLINICAL INQUIRY

Ongoing Learning Topics

Includes all CE, academic, e-learning, CME courses and/or in-services related to research and research process, quality improvement, evidence-based practice, how to do an audit or prevalence study; how to evaluate nursing care; and how to publish an article.

Activities

Develop best practices, standards of practice, or standard nursing care plans for specific patient populations; original authorship	3 CERPs (revised 1 CERP)
Develop evaluation tools based on outcome criteria in behavioral terms; original authorship	3 CERPs (revised 1 CERP)
Develop or revise practice protocol; original authorship	3 CERPs (revised 1 CERP)
Auditing activities	3 CERPs per year (minimum 8 hours)
Quality Improvement activities	3 CERPs per year (minimum 8 hours)
Research activities	3 CERPs per year (minimum 8 hours)

Professional Publications

Responsibility in the publication may be authorship, co-authorship, or editorial. The item to be published may be a book, chapter in a book, paper, article, abstract, book review, etc. Professionally authored multimedia aids are acceptable. Note: CERPs for joint authorships are determined by dividing the number of CERPs to be awarded by the number of authors. **A maximum of 30 CERPs per renewal period is allowed in this area.**

Editorial in a journal	2 CERPs
Write a column for a journal	5 CERPs
Article in a local newsletter, AACN chapter newsletter, or AACN's Bold Voices	2 CERPs
Original research article (peer reviewed)	15 CERPs

continued

RENEWAL BY SYNERGY CERPS - TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

Textbook or chapter author or editor	2 CERPs per 10 pages (max 30)
Professionally authored multimedia aids	15 CERPs
Research abstract	5 CERPs
Journal article (peer reviewed)	10 CERPs
Journal reviewer (review of articles or book chapters)	5 CERPs
Book reviews	2 CERPs
Unpublished master's thesis	10 CERPs
Doctoral dissertation	30 CERPs
Service on editorial boards	5 CERPs per board/per year

Activities regularly completed as the focus of your primary nursing role may not be counted for CERPs.

If an activity is counted in one category, it may not be counted in another category (e.g., poster, speaking, publishing on one study may be counted only once).

Acceptable Proof for Category A CERPs

If selected for audit, submit all of the following that apply:

- Photocopy of CE certificate for any ongoing learning CE. The CE certificate must contain your name, date(s) of attendance, title of course and contact hours. If the program was not formally granted contact hours, submit all the following: written verification of attendance, including name of participant, date(s) of attendance, title of course and hours of course (minus breaks and lunch), signed by educator or course director.
- SAE score report showing passing score of at least 70%.
- Written verification of project, activity or committee/board involvement, including date(s).
- A copy of the title page and table of contents is required. Publisher's notice of acceptance for publication should be submitted if CERPs are to be granted before printing.
- Copies of ACLS, BLS, and PALS cards are not sufficient for audit as they do not include actual class time, which varies. Please provide documentation of hours, with course date and title, your name, and signature of a supervisor, educator or professional associate so total number of CERPs may be calculated.

CATEGORY B

10 CERPs Minimum / 30 CERPs Maximum

Advocacy & Moral Agency

Working on another's behalf and representing the concerns of the patient/family and nursing staff; serving as a moral agent in identifying and helping to resolve ethical and clinical concerns within and outside the clinical setting.

Caring Practices

Nursing activities that create a compassionate, supportive, and therapeutic environment for patients and staff, with the aim of promoting comfort and healing and preventing unnecessary suffering. These caring behaviors include, but are not limited to, vigilance, engagement, and responsiveness of caregivers. Caregivers include family and healthcare personnel.

Response to Diversity

The sensitivity to recognize, appreciate and incorporate differences into the provision of care. Differences may include, but are not limited to, individual, cultural, spiritual, gender, race, ethnicity, lifestyle, socioeconomic, age and values.

Facilitation of Learning

(or Patient/
Family Educator)

The ability to facilitate learning for patients/families, nursing staff, other members of the healthcare team and community. Includes both formal and informal facilitation of learning.

ADVOCACY & MORAL AGENCY

Ongoing Learning Topics

Includes all CE, academic, e-learning, CME courses and/or in-services related to patient rights, value of certification, advance directives, informed consent, ethics, ethical issues, regulatory issues (HIPAA, Joint Commission), insurance and reimbursement, legal aspects of nursing practice, public policy and sexual harassment training.

Activities

Participation on an Ethics Committee 5 CERPs per year

CARING PRACTICES

Ongoing Learning Topics

Includes all CE, academic, e-learning, CME courses and/or in-services related to comfort measures, therapeutic communications, therapeutic touch, palliative care, grief and loss, patient safety (including infection control, fall prevention, body mechanics), stress management and burn-out, and pet therapy.

continued

RENEWAL BY SYNERGY CERPS - TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities

Facilitate a patient or family support group (e.g., Mended Hearts, bariatric or transplant support groups)	6 CERPs per year (minimum of 6 hours)
Participate in a pet visitation program for hospitals or nursing homes	5 CERPs per year (minimum of 5 hours)
Facilitate a critical incident debriefing with staff involved	5 CERPs per year (minimum of 5 hours spent on incident)

RESPONSE TO DIVERSITY

Ongoing Learning Topics

Includes all CE, academic, e-learning, CME courses and/or in-services related to cultural diversity, developmental stages, medical Spanish, cultural aspects of transportation, spiritual considerations of the dying patient, psychosocial issues in diverse populations, and outcomes/health disparities related to diverse populations.

Activities

Participation on an advisory team or committee related to diversity (e.g., multigenerational work environment, cultural aspects of care, special needs)	5 CERPs per year
Volunteer community service for diverse populations (e.g., HIV hospice, migrant health clinics, free clinics). Minimum four (4) visits/service contacts per year. Activity must involve nursing clinical judgment	1 CERP per hour (max of 8 CERPs per renewal period)

FACILITATION OF LEARNING

Ongoing Learning Topics

Includes all CE, academic, e-learning, CME courses and/or in-services related to learning theory, mentoring, precepting, assessing learning needs, and health literacy projects.

Activities

Designing informational aids intended for use as references in the clinical area	3 CERPs (revised 1 CERP)
Designing patient educational aids, booklets, or audiovisual projects	5 CERPs per project (revised 1 CERP)
Designing a multimedia learning module (e.g., patient teaching program on PowerPoint)	5 CERPs per project (revised 1 CERP)
Preceptorship/mentorship (includes checking skills for staff competency). Minimum of 80 hours per year of preceptorship required	6 CERPs per year

continued

Professional Presentations

Encompasses the certificant's participation as an instructor delivering content to nurses, other healthcare professionals or the public. The presentation must be delivered within a structured framework of teaching/learning.

A presentation includes seminar, in-service, a clinical conference, patient/family education program, consumer education program, Basic Cardiac Life Support, Advanced Cardiac Life Support, AACN chapter educational activities and/or presenting an original paper or poster presentations. The participant may be a primary instructor, member of a team, guest lecturer or member of a panel. Check-in stations during a skills lab also count in the category.

3 CERPs are granted for each contact hour of lecture given. Each repeat presentation is granted 1 CERP per contact hour for a maximum of two times within a renewal period.

If the program is co-taught, the number of CERPs to be awarded is determined by dividing CERPs by the number of instructors.

A maximum of 10 CERPs per year will be granted for professional presentations.

FOR EXAMPLE

A one contact-hour presentation given three times (one original and two repeat presentations) would earn a maximum of 5 CERPs.

Activities regularly completed as the focus of your primary nursing role may not be counted for CERPs. For example, as a critical care educator you may not claim CERPs for orientation programs that you present; however, presentations given on a newly researched topic for your chapter, or at NTI, may be claimed for CERPs in Category B.

Acceptable Proof for Category B CERPs

If selected for audit, submit all of the following that apply:

- Photocopy of CE certificate for any ongoing learning CE. The CE certificate must contain your name, date(s) of attendance, title of course and contact hours. If the program was not formally granted contact hours, submit all of the following: written verification of attendance, including name of participant, date(s) of attendance, title of course and hours of course (minus breaks and lunch), signed by educator or course director.
- Evidence of participation in the presentation (e.g., brochure, announcement, or written statement) and contact hours.
- Written verification of project, activity or committee/board involvement, including date(s).
- Written verification by manager of facilitation of critical incident debriefing with dates and number of staff involved.

RENEWAL BY SYNERGY CERPS - TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

CATEGORY C

10 CERPs Minimum / 30 CERPs Maximum

Collaboration	Working with others (e.g., patients, families, healthcare providers) in a way that promotes/encourages each person's contributions toward achieving optimal/realistic patient/family goals. Collaboration involves intra- and interdisciplinary work with colleagues and community.
Systems Thinking	The body of knowledge and tools that allow the nurse to manage whatever environmental and system resources that exist for the patient/family and staff within or across healthcare systems and non-healthcare systems.

COLLABORATION

Ongoing Learning Topics

Includes all CE, academic, e-learning, CME courses and/or in-services related to communication skills; dealing with conflict; dealing with difficult people; crucial conversations; and improving inter-departmental or inter- and intra-professional communication.

Activities

Current membership in a professional nursing healthcare organization (e.g., AACN, ANA, etc.)	3 CERPs per year/per organization (max 6 CERPs per year)
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The following applies for AACN or other national organizations:

Participation on a Chapter Advisory Team	15 CERPs per year
Participation as a Learning Connection Mentor	5 CERPs per year
Participation in a review panel (grant abstract, NTI Creative Scholarship)	5 CERPs per year
Participation in a think tank	10 CERPs per year
Participation in a work group	10 CERPs per year
Participation as an AACN Ambassador	5 CERPs per year
Participation on a non-AACN national committee	10 CERPs per year
Volunteering in a healthcare mission (e.g., Flying SAMS, Project Concern, health fairs, manning a first aid booth at a community event). Activity must utilize nursing clinical judgment.	1 CERP per hour (max of 8 CERPs per renewal period)

SYSTEMS THINKING

Ongoing Learning Topics

Includes all CE, academic courses and/or in-services related to care across many departments, settings, facilities, participants, regions; discharge planning; standards of excellence; management and leadership skills; healthy work environments; AACN Synergy Model for Patient Care™; risk management; natural disaster/emergency planning and coordination, exploring community resources, etc.

Activities

Participation in activities/teams/committees that solve or prevent complex problems, and improve care across many participants, multiple departments, settings, facilities or regions (e.g., spearheading a major patient care improvement)	5 CERPs per activity/per year
Participation in leadership responsibilities or committee involvement at a chapter/regional level	8 CERPs per committee/per year
Leadership responsibilities or committee involvement in professional or health-related organizations	8 CERPs per committee/per year
Participation as an AACN or AACN Certification Corporation Board Member	20 CERPs per year
Initiating or leading an interdisciplinary team to solve a patient care problem or leading a case conference	5 CERPs per team meeting/case conference (max of 5 CERPs per year)
Developing or revising nursing policy or procedure	3 CERPs for original; 1 CERP for revision

Activities regularly completed as the focus of your primary nursing role may not be counted for CERPs.

Acceptable Proof for Category C CERPs

If selected for audit, submit all of the following that apply:

- Photocopy of CE certificate for any ongoing learning CE. The CE certificate must contain your name, date(s) of attendance, title of course and contact hours. If the program was not formally granted contact hours, submit all the following: written verification of attendance, including name of participant, date(s) of attendance, title of course and hours of course (minus breaks and lunch), signed by educator or course director.
- Written verification from the organization.
- Written documentation (brochure) of the volunteer organization's (non AACN) values and mission statement.
- Photocopy of membership card.
- Written verification from the organization on initiative or leadership role on team to solve patient care problem.

Visit www.certcorp.org for more about Renewal by Synergy CERPs, including a slide program with narration.