

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CMC® AND CSC® CERTIFICATION

What are AACN's cardiac subspecialty certifications and how are they displayed?

CMC is the designation for Cardiac Medicine Certification; CSC is the designation for Cardiac Surgery Certification. These three-letter credentials may only be displayed with a clinical nursing specialty certification attached with a dash, such as CCRN-CMC or CCNS-CSC. If a nurse were to obtain both subspecialty credentials they could be attached to the same clinical nursing specialty certification, such as CCRN-CMC-CSC.

Who is the target audience for the Cardiac Medicine (CMC) exam?

The CMC exam is designed for **certified** nurses currently practicing in areas such as: CCU, combined ICU/CCU, medical ICU, Telemetry, Progressive Care, Heart Failure Clinics/Home Care, Interventional Cardiology, Cardiac Catheterization Labs and/or Electrophysiology units.

Who is the target audience for the Cardiac Surgery (CSC) exam?

The CSC exam is designed for **certified** nurses currently working in areas such as cardiovascular surgery, cardiothoracic surgery or post-anesthesia care units, caring for cardiac surgery patients in the first 48 hours post-operatively.

What are the eligibility requirements for the CMC and CSC exams?

The eligibility requirements for both subspecialty certification exams are:

- Current unencumbered RN or APRN license in the U.S.
- Current nationally accredited (NCCA or ABNS) clinical nursing specialty certification
- 1,750 hours in bedside care of acutely and/or critically ill adult patients within the last 2 years preceding date of application, with 875 of those hours accrued in the 12-month period preceding application; 875 of the 1,750 hours need to be in the care of:
  - acutely and/or critically ill cardiac patients, for CMC
  - cardiac surgery patients within the first 48 hours post-operatively, for CSC

If I hold PCCN® certification, will I be eligible to take one or both of the subspecialty exams?

Yes, if you meet the practice requirements for CMC and/or CSC certification. The PCCN exam is based on a national practice analysis (also known as a study of practice) and tests the holistic patient, which is required of national clinical nursing specialty certifications.

Are there Pediatric and Neonatal versions of the CMC and CSC exams?

No, the CMC and CSC exams are Adult focused.

What kind of nursing specialty certification is necessary to be eligible to take a subspecialty exam?

Candidates for the CMC and CSC exams must hold a current nationally accredited clinical nursing specialty certification, i.e., accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) and/or the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS). Examples of eligible specialty certifications include, but are not limited to: CCRN, PCCN, CCNS, CEN, RN-BC, FNP, CPAN, CRNA, CNOR, CRNFA, ACNPC, APRN-BC, ACNP-BC.

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**What content do the CMC and CSC exams cover?**

Since all eligible candidates must hold a clinical nursing specialty certification, the 90-item subspecialty exams concentrate solely on the Synergy Model component of Clinical Judgment. Although components such as patient teaching and collaboration are very important in providing patient care, eligibility for the CMC and CSC subspecialty credentials assumes that the nursing licensure exam and the clinical nursing specialty certification exam tested these elements. Refer to the CMC and CSC test plans for more specific information about exam content.

**If I do not pass the CMC or CSC exam on the first attempt, what can I do?**

Referring to your CMC or CSC exam score report and the exam test plan, identify the topic areas in which you have the most room for improvement. For additional information refer to our Web site at [www.certcorp.org](http://www.certcorp.org) under How to Prepare for Your Certification Exam. Candidates may sit for the CMC and/or CSC exam up to four times in a 12-month period. A discounted retest fee is available to candidates who do not pass the exam. The discounted rate is available until the exam is passed.

**What are the renewal requirements for CMC and CSC certification?**

Renewal requirements include:

- Current encumbered RN or APRN license in the U.S.
- Current nationally accredited (NCCA or ABNS) clinical nursing specialty certification
- 25 Category "A" Clinical Judgment CERPs in the three-year certification period:
  - For CMC, CERPs must pertain to cardiology (any item on the CMC test plan)
  - For CSC, CERPs must pertain to cardiac surgery (any item on the CSC test plan)
- 432 hours of direct bedside care during the three-year certification period with 144 of those hours accrued in the 12-month period preceding the scheduled renewal period:
  - For CMC, hours must be in care of acutely and/or critically ill cardiac patients
  - For CSC, hours must be in care of cardiac surgery patients within the first 48 hours post-operatively

**What are the rules for expiration of the specialty certification that will be tied to my CMC or CSC?**

In order to be eligible for the CMC or CSC subspecialty exam, the clinical nursing specialty certification to which it will be tied must be current for 90 days from the date of processing the candidate's registration (including online exam registration). This applies to both AACN and non-AACN certifications.

**Can my CMC or CSC certification be tied to another eligible clinical nursing specialty certification if the credential to which it was initially tied expires?**

If your specialty certification (e.g., CCRN, PCCN, CCNS, ACNPC) tied to your subspecialty certification (CMC and/or CSC) expires, your CMC and/or CSC will automatically be placed on Inactive status, unless you contact AACN to request that your CMC and/or CSC be tied to a different clinical nursing specialty certification (documentation required if non-AACN credential).