CCRN RENEWAL - KNOWLEDGE PROFESSIONAL PATHWAY
Acute/Critical Care Knowledge Professional (Adult, Pediatric & Neonatal)

Staff Review: August 2023
Board Approved: June 2020
Last Revised: September 2023

1.0   POLICY

Renewal Eligibility

Current, unencumbered U.S.[1] RN or APRN license that was not subjected to formal discipline by the Board of Nursing in the state(s) in which you practiced and had no provisions or conditions that limited your nursing practice during the 3-year certification renewal period.

- Provisions or conditions may include, but are not limited to, direct supervision of practice, drug administration limitations and/or practice area exclusions.
- Documentation of all provisions and conditions from the Board or its designee must be reviewed prior to approval for renewal.
- Certificants must notify AACN Certification Corporation (Cert Corp) within 30 days if any provisions or conditions are placed on their RN or APRN license(s).

Have passed the CCRN certification exam for the applicable patient population (adult, pediatric or neonatal) of practice.

Practice as an RN or APRN for 432 hours during the most recent 3-year certification renewal period, with 144 of those hours accrued in the 12-month period prior to the scheduled renewal date is required. **Eligible practice hours are those in which the nurse applied knowledge in a way that influenced patients, nurses and/or organizations to have a positive impact on the care delivered to acutely/critically ill patients and families.**

Eligible practice hours may be a combination of role practice/non-direct care and direct care. Nurses who primarily or exclusively provide direct care may be eligible for the Direct Care Pathway. Refer to the *CCRN Renewal Handbook - Direct Care Pathway*.

Eligible practice hours are those spent focused on the patient population (adult, pediatric or neonatal) in which certification is held. A majority of the total practice hours and those within the year prior to application for CCRN renewal eligibility must focus on *critically* ill patients.

Practice hours must be completed in a U.S.-based[1] or Canada-based facility or in a facility determined to be comparable to the U.S. standard of acute/critical care nursing practice, as evidenced by Magnet® designation or Joint Commission International accreditation.

Nurses with practice hours in roles such as those listed below **may** qualify for the CCRN - Knowledge Professional Renewal Pathway. This is not an all-inclusive list, nor does it mean all nurses working in these roles are eligible.

- Clinical or Patient Educator
- Academic Faculty
- Manager/Supervisor

- Clinical Director
- Nursing Administrator
- Case Manager
- Transitional Care Coordinator

The certificant must provide the name and contact information of a supervisor or colleague (RN or physician) for verification of eligibility related to practice hours.

The name and contact information of your clinical supervisor or professional colleague (RN or physician) must be given for verification of eligibility related to practice hours. If a certificant is selected for audit, this associate will need to verify that the certificant has met the practice hour requirement.

AACN Cert Corp may adopt additional eligibility requirements at its sole discretion. Any such requirements will be designed to establish, for purposes of CCRN certification, the adequacy of a candidate's knowledge in care of the acutely/critically ill.

Renewal Options

CCRN certification is granted for a period of three (3) years. Eligible candidates may seek renewal by Synergy CERPs or Renewal by Exam. CCRN renewal options include the Direct Care Renewal Pathway, Knowledge Professional Renewal Pathway, Tele-critical Care Renewal Pathway or Inactive status. Certificants may not apply for more than one renewal option.

Option 1 - Renewal by Synergy CERPs
The Continuing Education Recognition Point (CERP) program encompasses a wide spectrum of continuing education activities performed by acute and critical care nurses. They also address the need for formal and informal educational experiences. CERPs may be awarded for activities such as acute and critical care publications, presentations, leadership responsibilities and quality assurance activities. In addition, CERPs may be awarded for membership in professional healthcare organizations as well as volunteer activities.

CCRN Renewal by Synergy CERPs via the Knowledge Professional Pathway is obtained by completing a total of 100 CERPs with a minimum of 80 CERPs in Category A and 10 CERPs each in Categories B and C during the 3-year certification period. Acceptable topics and activities can be found under Renewal by Synergy CERPs - Topics & Activities (Categories A, B & C) of the *CCRN Renewal Handbook - Knowledge Professional Pathway*.

Complete the CCRN Renewal Application for the Knowledge Professional Pathway and the Renewal by CERPs Honor Statement.

*All CCRN renewal pathways (Direct Care, Knowledge Professional and Tele-critical Care) require a total of 100 CERPs with a minimum number of CERPs in Categories A, B and C. If the certificant is renewing CCRN via a different pathway, they may complete the Synergy CERP requirements for the pathway from which they are moving or the pathway they are moving to.

Option 2 - Renewal by Exam
Certificant must meet eligibility requirements for renewal and successfully apply for, take and pass the exam before the scheduled renewal date. It is not permissible to take the exam and

then attempt to renew by Synergy CERPs if certificant fails the exam. Certificants who fail renewal by exam will need to meet the initial exam eligibility requirements and successfully pass the exam to reobtain certification.

Refer to the *CCRN Exam Handbook - Knowledge Professional Eligibility Pathway* for the current test plan and exam references and to the *Certification Exam Policy Handbook* for exam scheduling and testing information.

To renew by another pathway, the certificant must meet those requirements and pass the CCRN exam for the applicable patient population.

CCRN renewal via the Direct Care Pathway: Refer to the CCRN Exam Handbook - Direct Care Eligibility Pathway for the current test plan and exam references.

CCRN renewal via the Tele-critical Care Pathway: Refer to the CCRN Exam Handbook - Tele-critical Care Eligibility Pathway.

Option 3 - Inactive Status
Inactive status is available to renewing certificants who do not currently meet renewal eligibility requirements but do not wish to lose their certification. Inactive status provides additional time, up to 3 years from the scheduled renewal date, to meet the renewal eligibility requirements.

While Inactive, the nurse may not use the CCRN credential. Once Inactive, the candidate may reactivate their certification anytime during the 3-year Inactive period, as soon as all of the established renewal eligibility requirements are met. Inactive status does not allow the certified nurse 6 years to meet the requirements (the original certification renewal period plus Inactive status period).

The eligibility requirements must be accrued within a 3-year period, with 144 practice hours accrued in the most recent year preceding reactivation. Certification will be reinstated upon submission of a completed renewal application and renewal fee.

The individual may choose to reactivate as soon as they meet the renewal criteria. When moving from Inactive status to active status, the new 3-year certification period begins on the first day of the month following when the renewal application is signed.

Inactive status may be held more than once, but not for two consecutive renewal periods. If the certificant does not reactivate 4 months prior to the end of the 3-year inactive period, reminders will be sent to them by email referring them to the most recent version of the renewal handbook.

2.0   PURPOSE AND LIMITATIONS OF RENEWAL OPTIONS

The purpose of certification renewal is to promote continued competence. The renewal process helps to maintain an up-to-date knowledge base through continuing education and practice hours, or practice hours and passing the certification exam.

 Following are the limitations to the components of the renewal options:

- CE/CERP limitations include content quality and relevance to practice as well as an individual's ability to self-select CE/CERPs most pertinent to the individual's practice and educational needs.
- Limitations of practice hours include the quality of the practice environment and limitations on learning opportunities.
- One limitation of the exam is not assessing new competencies, as exam competencies were validated through initial certification.

Requiring two components for renewal, rather than one, decreases the limitations and furthers the goal of continued competence.

In addition to providing a sense of professional pride and achievement, CCRN certification reinforces the special knowledge and experience required for acute/critical care nursing.

Because the field of acute/critical care nursing is so dynamic, and new, often experimental technologies are introduced rapidly, yet the patient population is highly vulnerable, it is of highest importance to validate that the certificant is remaining current with practice changes and advances in therapeutic modalities. The most recent comprehensive study of nursing practice validated that the majority of CCRN practice occurs with acutely/critically ill patients, often with numerous comorbidities.

A three year renewal period allows for public protection in that it provides the AACN Certification Board of Directors with a mechanism to verify every three years that a certificant has had no disciplinary action taken on their RN or APRN license through renewal honor statement and random audit process.

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[1] *Includes District of Columbia and U.S. territories of Guam, Virgin Islands, American Samoa and Northern Mariana Islands. Puerto Rico is not an NCSBN member and, therefore, not included. The exception would be if a PR facility is a VA, carries Magnet® designation or is Joint Commission International accredited.*

[2] *The Internal Review Panel has determined that Australia practice aligns with U.S. practice.*