

## CSC RENEWAL

### Cardiac Surgery Nursing Subspecialty

Staff Review: March 2022

Board Approved: May 2022

Last Revised: March 2022

#### 1.0 POLICY

##### Renewal Eligibility

Current, unencumbered U.S.<sup>1</sup> 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).

Current clinical nursing specialty certification, to which the CSC credential will be attached, accredited by the NCCA (National Commission for Certifying Agencies) or ABSNC (Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification) is required. One whose CSC certification is tied to a non-AACN specialty certification must provide proof of specialty certification that is valid for 90 days beyond CSC renewal date.

Examples of acceptable clinical nursing certifications include, but are not limited to, CCRN, CCRN-E, PCCN, ACNPC, ACNPC-AG, CCNS, ACCNS-AG, CNOR, CRNFA, CPAN, etc.

Practice as an RN or APRN is required for 432 hours in direct care of acutely/critically ill adult cardiac surgery patients within the first 48 hours postoperatively during the 3-year certification renewal period, with 144 of those hours accrued in the last year of the 3-year certification renewal period.

Practice hours for CSC renewal eligibility must be completed in a U.S.-based<sup>1</sup> or Canada-based facility or in a facility determined to be comparable to the U.S. standard of acute/critical care

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<sup>1</sup> 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

nursing practice, as evidenced by Magnet® designation or Joint Commission International accreditation. Practice hours outside the U.S. may qualify; determination will be made upon review by the Internal Review Panel.<sup>2</sup>

CSC-certified nurses working in the following units may qualify for CSC renewal: cardiothoracic surgery, cardiovascular surgery or post anesthesia care (or other areas as appropriate).

Nurses serving as manager, educator (in-service or academic), APRN, or preceptor may apply hours spent supervising nursing students or nurses at the bedside toward the clinical hour requirement. Nurses in these roles must be actively involved in caring for cardiac and/or cardiac surgery patients; for example, demonstrating how to measure pulmonary artery pressures or supervising a new employee or student nurse performing a procedure.

The name and contact information of a professional associate must be given for verification of eligibility. If a certificant is selected for audit, this associate may be contacted to verify that the certificant has met the practice hour requirement. A professional associate is defined as a clinical supervisor or a professional associate (RN or physician) with whom the certificant works (need not be CSC-certified).

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

### **Renewal Options**

CSC certification is conferred for a period of three (3) years. Eligible candidates for CSC renewal must meet the eligibility requirements described in the Renewal Eligibility section of this policy and then may seek renewal by one of the following options: Renewal by CERPs, Renewal by Exam or certificant may choose Inactive status. A CERP is a Continuing Education Recognition Point. Certificants may not apply for more than one renewal option.

#### **Option 1 - Renewal by CERPs**

Subspecialty Renewal by CERPs is obtained by accumulating a total of 25 Category A clinical judgment CERPs. These CERPs must be accrued during the 3-year certification renewal period. CERPs for CSC renewal must pertain to cardiac surgery and may include any topic on the CSC Test Plan. For CSC renewal, ACLS courses (initial or renewal) are acceptable for CERPs once during the 3-year renewal period.

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*exception would be if a PR facility is a VA, carries Magnet® designation or is Joint Commission International accredited.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Internal Review Panel has determined that Australia practice aligns with U.S. practice.*

### **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 *CSC Exam Handbook* for the current test plan and exam references and to the *Certification Exam Policy Handbook* for exam scheduling and testing information.

### **Option 3 - Inactive Status**

Inactive status is available to renewing candidates who do not currently meet renewal eligibility requirements but do not wish to lose their certification. Inactive status allows certified nurses up to 3 years from their original date of renewal to meet eligibility requirements. While Inactive, the individual may not use the CSC credential.

Once Inactive, the candidate may choose to reactivate their certification anytime during the 3-year Inactive status period, as soon as all of the established renewal eligibility requirements are met.

Inactive status does not allow the CSC-certified nurse 6 years to meet the requirements (the original certification renewal period plus the Inactive status period). The eligibility requirements must be accrued within a 3-year period with 144 of the 432 clinical hours caring for cardiac surgery patients accrued in the most recent year preceding reactivation.

Subspecialty 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. The eligibility requirements must be met within the 3-year period just prior to submitting the application to reactivate. To calculate, count back 3 years from the date that the active status renewal application is submitted. An individual may not hold Inactive status for two consecutive renewal periods.

## **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, CSC 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 CSC 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 Board 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.