Certification Exam Policy Handbook

AACN

CERTIFICATION CORPORATION

Certification Organization for the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses

MISSION

AACN Certification Corporation drives patient health and safety through comprehensive credentialing of acute and critical care nurses, advancing practice consistent with standards of excellence.

VISION

All nurses caring for acutely and critically ill patients and their families are certified.

VALUES

As the Corporation advances its mission and vision to fulfill its purpose and inherent obligation of driving the health and safety of patients experiencing acute and critical illness, we are guided by a set of deeply rooted values. These values are the foundation upon which we build our relentless pursuit of excellence.

- **Integrity –** *We demonstrate sound judgment, ethical behavior and accountability in all we do.*
- **Inclusion –** *We build an equitable culture, inviting the full contribution of all people.*
- **Transformation –** *We drive change and innovation to positively impact the healthcare system and improve the lives of patients, families and nurses.*
- **Leadership –** *We advocate and influence to achieve optimal outcomes and healthy work environments.*
- **Relationships –** *We collaborate and advance partnerships, honoring each individual to strengthen the collective.*

ETHICS

AACN and AACN Certification Corporation consider the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics for Nurses foundational for nursing practice, providing a framework for making ethical decisions and fulfilling responsibilities to the public, colleagues and the profession. AACN Certification Corporation's mission of public protection supports a standard of excellence where certified nurses have a responsibility to read about, understand and act in a manner congruent with the ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses.

The following AACN Certification Corporation programs have been accredited by the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC).

| CCRN® (Adult) | CCRN® (Pediatric) | CCRN® (Neonatal) |
| CMC® | CSC® | ACNPC-AG® |

The following AACN Certification Corporation programs have been accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

| PCCN® | ACNPC-AG® | |
| ACCNS-AG® | ACCNS-P® | ACCNS-N® |

Our advanced practice certification programs, ACCNS-AG, ACCNS-P, ACCNS-N and ACNPC-AG, are in alignment with the Consensus Model for APRN Regulation and other foundational national standards for APRN education, accreditation and regulation.

AACN
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CERTIFICATION
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Certification Organization for the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses

CERTIFICATION EXAM POLICY HANDBOOK

As healthcare becomes increasingly complex and challenging, certification has emerged as a mark of excellence showing patients, employers and the public that a nurse possesses a defined body of knowledge and has met the rigorous requirements to achieve specialty and/or subspecialty certification.

AACN Certification Corporation programs were created to protect healthcare consumers by validating the knowledge of nurses who care for and/or influence the care delivered to the acutely and critically ill adults, children and neonates. Today, more than 136,000 practicing nurses hold one or more certifications from AACN Certification Corporation.

This handbook outlines rules and policies for all AACN certification exam programs and includes such information as testing site and scheduling details, day of exam rules, recognition and use of credentials, obtaining a duplicate score report and name or address changes.

A brief description of the various AACN certification programs can be found on :

CCRN • PCCN • CMC • CSC

ACNPC-AG • ACCNS-AG • ACCNS-P • ACCNS-N • ACNPC • CCNS

Details about the individual certification programs, along with application forms, honor statements, test plans and sample questions, can be found in the corresponding handbook, available at www.aacn.org/certhandbooks.

We continually seek to provide quality certification programs that meet the changing needs of nurses and patients. Please visit www.aacn.org/certification, email certification@aacn.org or call 800-899-2226 for more information.

Thank you for your commitment to patients and their families and to becoming certified.

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Please direct inquiries to:

AACN Certification Corporation, 27071 Aliso Creek Road, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656

800-899-2226 • Fax: 949-362-2020 • certification@aacn.org

Please include your AACN customer number with all correspondence to AACN Certification Corporation.

Certifications Available Through AACN

Handbooks referred to below are available at www.aacn.org/certhandbooks.

Specialty Certification

CCRN®

The CCRN certification program, introduced in 1976, is for nurses providing care to or influencing the care of acutely/critically ill adult, pediatric or neonatal patients. Three eligibility pathways are available:

- **Direct Care** - for RNs or APRNs who provide direct care to acutely/critically ill adult, pediatric or neonatal patients. These patients may be found in such units as intensive care, cardiac care, combined ICU/CCUs, medical/surgical ICUs, trauma units or critical care transport/flight. Details can be found in the *CCRN Exam Handbook - Direct Care Eligibility Pathway*.

- **Knowledge Professional** - for RNs or APRNs who influence the care delivered to acutely/critically ill adult, pediatric or neonatal patients, but do not primarily or exclusively provide direct care. These nurses may work in roles such as Clinical or Patient Educator, Academic Faculty, Manager/Supervisor, Clinical Director. Details can be found in the *CCRN Exam Handbook - Knowledge Professional Eligibility Pathway*.

- **Tele-critical Care** - for RNs or APRNs working in a tele-critical care setting monitoring/caring for acutely/critically ill adult patients from a remote location. Details can be found in the *CCRN Exam Handbook - Tele-critical Care Eligibility Pathway*.

PCCN®

The PCCN certification program, introduced in 2004, is for progressive care nurses providing care to or influencing the care of acutely ill adult patients. Two eligibility pathway are available:

- **Direct Care** - for RNs or APRNs who provide direct care to acutely ill adult patients. These patients may be found in areas such as intermediate care, direct observations, stepdown telemetry or transitional care units. Details can be found in the *PCCN Exam Handbook - Direct Care Eligibility Pathway*.

- **Knowledge Professional** - for RNs or APRNs who influence the care delivered to acutely ill adult patients, but do not primarily or exclusively provide direct care. These nurses may work in roles such as Clinical or Patient Educator, Academic Faculty, Manager/Supervisor, Clinical Director. Details can be found in the *PCCN Exam Handbook - Knowledge Professional Eligibility Pathway*.

Subspecialty Certifications

CMC®

The CMC (cardiac medicine) certification program, launched in 2005, is for nurses who hold a nationally-accredited clinical nursing specialty certification (such as CCRN via the Direct Care or Tele-critical Care Pathway, PCCN via the Direct Care Pathway, ACNPC, ACNPC-AG, CCNS, ACCNS-AG, CMSRN, CEN, etc.) and specialize in the direct care of adult cardiac patients. Clinical settings may include, but are not limited to, CCUs, medical ICUs, telemetry, progressive care, heart failure clinics/home care, interventional cardiology, cardiac catheterization labs and/or electrophysiology units. Details can be found in the *CMC Exam Handbook*.

CSC®

The CSC (cardiac surgery) certification program, launched in 2005, is for nurses who hold a nationally-accredited clinical nursing specialty certification (such as CCRN via the Direct Care or Tele-critical Care Pathway, PCCN via the Direct Care Pathway, ACNPC, ACNPC-AG, CCNS, ACCNS-AG, CNOR, CRNFA, CPAN, etc.) and specialize in the direct care of adult cardiac surgery patients within the first 48 hours postoperatively. Clinical settings may include, but are not limited to, cardiothoracic surgery, cardiovascular surgery and post-anesthesia care units. Details can be found in the *CSC Exam Handbook*.

Listed on the following page are AACN's **advanced practice** certifications.

Advanced Practice Consensus Model-Based Certifications

ACNPC-AG®

The ACNPC-AG certification program, launched in 2013, is an entry-level advanced practice certification for nurses educated at the graduate level as acute care nurse practitioners (ACNPs) to provide continuous and comprehensive advanced nursing care to acutely ill adult-gerontology patients (young adults, older adults and frail elderly) experiencing episodic illness, exacerbation of chronic illness or terminal illness. Details can be found in the *ACNPC-AG Exam Handbook*.

The ACCNS credentials are entry-level advanced practice certifications for nurses educated at the graduate level as clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) to provide advanced nursing care across the continuum of healthcare services, from **wellness through acute care**:

ACCNS-AG®

The ACCNS-AG certification program, launched in 2013, meets the specialized needs of the adult-gerontology patient population (young adults, older adults and frail elderly). Details can be found in the *ACCNS-AG Exam Handbook*.

ACCNS-P®

The ACCNS-P certification program, launched in 2013, meets the specialized needs of the pediatric patient population. Details can be found in the *ACCNS-P Exam Handbook*.

ACCNS-N®

The ACCNS-N certification program, launched in 2014, meets the specialized needs of the neonatal patient population. Details can be found the *ACCNS-N Exam Handbook*.

Advanced Practice Certifications

ACNPC®

The ACNPC certification program, launched in 2007, is an advanced practice credential for nurses who were educated at the graduate level as adult acute care nurse practitioners to provide advanced nursing care across the continuum of healthcare services to meet the specialized physiologic and psychologic needs of patients with complex acute, critical and/or chronic health conditions.

The ACNPC is no longer available for initial exam but remains as a renewal option for current ACNPCs. The Consensus Model-based ACNPC-AG exam is available for those educated as Adult-Gerontology Acute Care NPs.

CCNS®

The CCNS certification program, launched in 1999, is an advanced practice credential for nurses who were educated at the graduate level as clinical nurse specialists to provide advanced nursing care to acutely and/or critically ill adult, pediatric or neonatal patients.

The CCNS is no longer available for initial exam but remains as a renewal option for current CCNSs. The Consensus Model-based ACCNS-AG, ACCNS-P and ACCNS-N exams are available for those educated as clinical nurse specialists across the spectrum of wellness through acute care.

Handbooks are available at www.aacn.org/certhandbooks.

AACN Certification Corporation is the certifying organization for the
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN).

AACN Certification Program

Definition

Certification is a process by which a nongovernmental agency validates, based upon predetermined standards, an individual nurse's knowledge for safe and effective practice in a defined functional or clinical area of nursing. Certification validates your knowledge of nursing in your specialty area to hospitals, peers, patients and, most importantly, to yourself. Certification promotes continuing excellence in the nursing profession.

Code of Ethics

AACN and AACN Certification Corporation consider the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics for Nurses foundational for nursing practice, providing a framework for making ethical decisions and fulfilling responsibilities to the public, colleagues and the profession.

AACN Certification Corporation's mission of public protection supports a standard of excellence that certified nurses have a responsibility to read, understand and act in a manner congruent with the ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses.

To access the ANA Code of Ethics visit www.aacn.org/certification > Overview > Learn More.

AACN Values Related to Upholding the Value of Certification

Exam security is paramount to protecting patients, families and certified nurses. When we compromise the value of certification, we compromise the credentials that validate our knowledge in our specialty.

AACN's values of accountability, integrity and stewardship translate directly into upholding the value of certification. Thus, we will:

- **Be accountable** by upholding and consistently acting in concert with ethical values and principles.
- **Act with integrity** by communicating openly and honestly, keeping promises, honoring commitments and promoting loyalty in all relationships.
- **Demonstrate stewardship** through fair and responsible management of resources.

For more information, please refer to www.aacn.org/certification > Overview > Value of Certification.

Nondiscrimination Policy

It is the policy of AACN Certification Corporation, its Board of Directors, committee members and staff to comply with all applicable laws that prohibit discrimination in employment or service provision because of a person's race, color, religion, gender, age, disability, national origin or any other protected characteristic.

AACN strives to ensure equal opportunity for all exam candidates by reviewing exam content for bias and sensitivity.

Certification Exam Discount Programs

▸ **Certification Group Discount Program:** Computer-based testing discounts are available for groups of 10 or more exam candidates who apply together.

▸ **Organization Discount Program:** Employers may pre-purchase certification exam vouchers at a further discounted rate.

For details about the discount programs, visit www.aacn.org/certdiscounts, email certification@aacn.org or call 800-899-2226.

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Exam Preparation

AACN Certification Corporation does not approve, endorse, or require for eligibility use of any specific exam preparation products.

Test plans are included in each of the individual program handbooks, available at www.aacn.org/certhandbooks.

To order AACN exam review products, visit www.aacn.org/store or call 800-899-2226. For information about locating a local AACN Chapter to inquire about review courses in your area, visit www.aacn.org/chapters.

Certification and Exam Administration

The certification programs are developed and administered by AACN Certification Corporation in partnership with PSI Services.

Computer-based exams are administered by PSI throughout the year at more than 300 testing centers across the U.S. and via live remote proctoring with a personal computer in a quiet, private location.

Computer experience is not necessary, as candidates will use minimal keystrokes or a mouse and be able to take a tutorial and practice test before the exam begins. During the exam, candidates will be able to move back and forth between items and mark items for later review.

Cognitive Levels of Questions

The cognitive level of the exam items is based on a condensed version of Bloom's Taxonomy. The majority of the items are written at the application and analysis levels. Testing at higher cognitive levels provides a better indication of the candidate's critical thinking abilities when caring for acutely and critically ill patients and their families.

Confidentiality of Exam Application Status

Information regarding the status of an exam application submitted to AACN Certification Corporation will not be released to anyone without the exam candidate's written authorization.

AACN Membership Not Required

Being a member of the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses is not an eligibility requirement for AACN Certification programs.

Name and Address Changes

You are responsible for notifying AACN Certification Corporation should your name, address and/or email change at any time before or after you become certified. Failure to do so may result in not receiving information necessary for certification renewal. **You are responsible for renewing your certification even if you do not receive a renewal notice.**

▶ To notify us of any address or email changes, you may update your profile as follows:
  • Online at www.aacn.org > Sign In
  • Email info@aacn.org, or
  • Call AACN Customer Care at 800-899-2226

▶ The following changes must be made by calling AACN Customer Care at 800-899-2226:
  • Name changes
  • Address changes for exam candidates during the testing eligibility period

Exam Eligibility Outside the U.S.

Eligible candidates for AACN Certification Corporation exams or certification renewal must hold a current, unencumbered U.S.[1] RN or APRN license.

Practice hours for exam and renewal must be completed in U.S.-based[1] facilities or in facilities 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. Practice hours completed in Canada-based facilities are acceptable for CCRN, PCCN, CMC and CSC exam and renewal eligibility.

Eligible practice hours for ACNP and CNS certification exam and renewal eligibility are those completed within the U.S. APRNs practicing outside the U.S. should contact AACN at APRNcert@aacn.org regarding eligible practice hours.

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[1] *Includes District of Columbia and U.S. territories of Guam, Virgin Islands, American Samoa and Northern Mariana Islands*

Application Process

*AACN Certification Corporation recommends that you be ready to take the exam **before** submitting your application.*

Online registration is an option for all AACN exams.

- Candidates may register for their certification exam online at www.aacn.org/certification > [Get Certified](#).
- To apply with a group or to test outside the U.S., a paper application is required. Refer to for details.

Submit Application

▸ **Complete exam application/honor statement and pay application fee**

- **Use your full legal name on the application.** This name must match the photo identification (ID) presented for exam check-in and will be the name printed on your certificate.
- Advanced Practice exam applications require official, final transcripts for all graduate-level nursing coursework and an *Educational Eligibility Form* completed and signed by the program director.
- AACN will send an email to confirm that you have successfully applied and provide information about next steps.
- For verification of receipt of your application, mail your application "return receipt requested" via certified mail or include a self-addressed stamped postcard, which will be mailed when your application is received.

Application Review

▸ **Waiting period for application processing**

- Allow **2 to 4 weeks** from the date received at AACN for processing a paper application. Applying online shortens this process.
- AACN will notify you in writing if your application is incomplete, requires clarification or if you are ineligible.

▸ **Receive Confirmation email**

- After successfully applying for the exam, you will receive an email from AACN with instructions about how to schedule your exam appointment. The email will also include the eligibility period during which you must schedule and take the exam.
- If you are an ACNP or CNS exam applicant, you will schedule your exam appointment after all required documentation is received and your application has been approved.
- If you do not receive your confirmation email after applying for an exam, please contact AACN Customer Care at 800-899-2226 or certcorp@aacn.org.

The Exam

▸ **Schedule and take your exam**

- Upon receipt of your confirmation email from AACN, you will be able to promptly schedule your exam appointment by clicking the "Schedule Exam" button in your AACN customer dashboard, which will take you to the AACN Scheduling page. Before choosing an exam date, you will be required to select one of two options by which to take your computer-based exam, at a PSI testing center or via Live Remote Proctoring. For details, refer to .
- If you are taking a paper-and-pencil exam or testing outside the U.S., AACN and PSI will coordinate with you to schedule your exam appointment.
- Exam results will show on-screen, and a score report will be emailed to you within 24 hours after completion of computer-based exams. Results of paper-and-pencil exams are received by mail **6 to 8 weeks** following testing.
- Successful candidates will be mailed their wall certificate approximately **3 to 4 weeks** after testing.
- Unsuccessful candidates are eligible for a discounted retest fee. Please refer to for details.

> **Please ensure that AACN has your current contact information.**
> Updates may be made online at **www.aacn.org/myaccount** or emailed to **info@aacn.org**.
> For name changes, please call AACN Customer Care at **800-899-2226**.

Exam Application Fees

Computer-Based Testing

CCRN		PCCN		CMC CSC		ACNPC-AG ACCNS-AG · ACCNS-P · ACCNS-N	
AACN Member	Nonmember	AACN Member	Nonmember	AACN Member	Nonmember	AACN Member	Nonmember
$250	$365	$200	$305	$140	$230	$265	$375

Payable in U.S. funds. Fees are subject to change without notice. A $15 fee will be charged for a returned check.

Computer-based testing discounts are available for groups submitting **10 or more** certification exam applications together. Employers may pre-purchase exam vouchers at a further discounted rate.

For details about the Group Discount and Organization Discount programs, visit www.aacn.org/certdiscounts or call 800-899-2226.

For details on paper-and-pencil exams or for testing outside the U.S., refer to page 10 or email certification@aacn.org.

Exam Day Information

Verifying Your Identity

A government-issued identification (ID) is required to gain admission to the exam. The ID must be current and include your **photograph and signature**. Acceptable forms of ID include:

- Driver's license
- State/Province ID card
- International Travel Passport
- U.S. Visa

The name on the ID you present must match the name in your AACN record. No forms of military or temporary identification will be accepted.

Inclement Weather or Emergency

24-Hour PSI Weather Hotline 800-380-5416

In the event of inclement weather or unforeseen emergencies on the day of an exam, PSI will determine whether circumstances warrant the cancellation and subsequent rescheduling of an exam. PSI will make every attempt to contact each scheduled candidate as soon as a closure has been issued. For the latest closure information, visit schedule.psiexams.com. You may also contact the PSI Candidate Services at 833-256-1418.

An exam will usually not be rescheduled if testing center personnel can reach and operate the site. Every attempt is made to administer exams as scheduled. Should an exam be canceled at a testing site, all scheduled candidates will receive follow-up notification regarding a rescheduled exam date or reapplication procedures.

Exam Accommodations

AACN Certification Corporation is committed to ensuring that no individual is deprived of the opportunity to take an exam solely by reason of a disability or impairment.

Exam accommodations will be considered for those with a disability or impairment who submit a Request for Exam Accommodations form in advance. Only candidates approved by AACN Certification Corporation will receive testing accommodations. A Request for Exam Accommodations form is also located on pages 26 and 27.

Documentation and verification of the disability or impairment from a licensed professional must be submitted to AACN Certification Corporation with the exam application and indicated by checking the appropriate box on the paper exam application.

Testing accommodations, such as additional testing time, scribe/recorder, reader, sign language interpreter or reduced distraction environment, require advance approval. Every testing site is fully accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

If testing via live remote proctoring (LRP), the following accommodations are not available: paper-and-pencil, reader, sign language interpreter, any software like ZoomText/JAWS.

Comfort Aids such as specific medicine and medical devices including those attached to a person's body, communication aids, mobility devices and service animals do not require pre-approval. For more details, refer to Pre-approved Comfort Aids. Test Center Administrators and online proctors will perform a visual inspection of the aids prior to testing.

Confidentiality of Exam Scores

The exam application that you submit to AACN Certification Corporation constitutes written authorization for PSI to release your exam scores to AACN Certification Corporation.

Scores for exams taken within the U.S. are reported upon completion of the exam or by U.S. mail. Scores for exams completed outside the U.S. are reported via email. Exam scores are not reported by phone or facsimile.

Neither PSI nor AACN Certification Corporation will release scores to any institution or employer without your written consent.

Security Standards

AACN Certification Corporation and PSI maintain exam administration and exam security standards designed to ensure that all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. The testing site is continuously monitored by audio and video surveillance equipment for security purposes.

Candidate Feedback

Exam candidates may provide feedback about individual exam items and/or the testing experience during and after the exam.

- You may provide comments for any exam item by clicking on the COMMENT button to the left of the TIME button.
- For paper-and-pencil testing, comments may be written in the designated area of the Scantron form.
- Because of exam security considerations, you will not receive individual replies about the content of exam items or be permitted to review exam items after completing the exam.
- At the conclusion of the exam, you may complete a brief survey about your exam experience.
- You may also email feedback to certification@aacn.org.

Provide your name in all correspondence. When questions or comments concern an exam already taken, the date and time of the exam along with the location of the testing center must also be noted. Each complaint will be investigated and replied to.

Dismissal From the Exam

The proctor may dismiss you from the exam for any of these reasons:

- Unauthorized admission to the exam
- Creating a disturbance or being abusive or otherwise uncooperative
- Use of unauthorized electronic devices including cellular/smart phones, other handheld computers, calculators, pagers, alarms and other signaling devices
- Use of notes or other resources in the testing area
- Attempting to record exam questions or make notes
- Attempting to take the exam for someone else
- Giving or receiving help or being suspected of doing so
- Leaving the testing area or center during the exam administration

If you are dismissed for any of these violations, your exam score will be voided and your fees will not be refunded. Evidence of misconduct will be reviewed by AACN Certification Corporation to determine whether you will be allowed to reapply for the exam. If a re-exam is granted, a complete application and fee are required to reapply.

Misuse/Disclosure of Exam Content

Any individual who removes or attempts to remove materials from the testing center, or who receives, discusses, discloses, reproduces, distributes, displays or otherwise misuses an exam question or any part of an exam question from a certification exam by written, electronic, oral or other form of communication, including but not limited to emailing, copying or printing of electronic files and reconstruction through memorization and/or dictation, will be subject to legal action and monetary damages.

Any nurse who engages in such improper behavior may also face denial or revocation of eligibility for certification or denial or revocation of certification.

Testing Outside the U.S.

Individuals residing outside the U.S. may apply to take an exam at a military testing site or at select non-military sites. An additional exam fee may apply. For international testing inquiries or to request a special application, please email certification@aacn.org.

Paper-and-Pencil Testing

Paper-and-pencil testing sessions are available to groups of nurses testing at the same time. For information, please email AACN at certification@aacn.org.

- Requests for paper-and-pencil testing must be submitted in writing **at least 4 months** before the exam date.
- All completed applications and appropriate fees must be submitted 8 weeks prior to the confirmed exam date.
- Additional site fees may apply. Group discount pricing does not apply to paper-and-pencil sessions.
- Exam results are mailed to candidates 6 to 8 weeks following paper-and-pencil testing.

AACN Certification Corporation may deny paper-and-pencil applications or cancel a paper-and-pencil exam session at its sole discretion. The use of a PSI testing center and/or PSI proctor for a paper-and-pencil exam session may also be required.

For additional information about what to expect on your exam day, refer to .

Testing Options

Two computer-based options by which to take your exam are offered — at a testing center or via live remote proctoring. At the time of your exam scheduling, you will be asked to choose one of these options. Please review the following to assess which option will best meet your needs.

▶ Testing Center

Exams are administered by AACN's testing service partner, PSI, at more than 300 locations across the U.S. To locate the testing center nearest you, please explore PSI's Testing Center Map. For details, check out this PSI Testing Center Experience video.

Discounted pricing for computer-based testing is available to groups of 10 or more who submit their applications together; for information, visit www.aacn.org/certdiscounts.

For additional information about what to expect on your exam day, refer to pages 13 and 14.

▶ Live Remote Proctoring (LRP)

Secure live remote proctoring (LRP) allows you to take your exam from your own computer/desk in a quiet and private location, such as your home office. The location must be free from distractions, and your computer must meet specific compatibility requirements. Please carefully review the following information to determine if a remote proctored exam is right for you. For details, check out PSI's Remote Proctored Exam Experience video.

Technology Requirements:
- If you select live remote proctoring (LRP) as your testing option when scheduling your exam, you must confirm that your computer operating system is compatible with the LRP platform. A Chrome-based browser is recommended.
- You will be rquired to download a secure lock-down browser, from which you will take your exam. This browser prohibits certain actions, including accessing other browsers, screen sharing or recording, copying/pasting, using dual or extended monitors, etc.
- Please use the System Compatability Check tool* to ensure that your system is compatible with PSI's LRP platform.
- PSI also offers a Tutorial Test to support you ahead of your LRP exam. The Tutorial Test, which may be launched up to 2.5 hours before your scheduled exam, includes a full system check to confirm that you can successfully launch the exam and a mini-test with five generic questions to answer.
    - You will receive a link to the Tutorial Test in the confirmation email sent to you after scheduling your LRP exam.
    - The Tutorial Test must be completed on the same Wi-Fi network and computer/laptop that will be used on test day and may be launched up to three times.
    - If you have difficulty launching the Tutorial Test, please contact PSI technical support at 844-267-1017.

*LRP is compatible with any modern Windows or Mac OS computer with a working webcam, microphone and Internet connection. PSI's System Compatibility Check tool will ensure your system meets the following technical requirements (hardware and software) for a remote proctored exam:

- **Operating system supported:** Windows 10 and later, and Mac 11 and later; 32bit (x86) and 64bit (x64)
- **Browsers supported:** PSI Secure Lock-down Browser
- **Browser settings:** The browser must accept third-party cookies for the duration of the exam only
- **Webcam/microphone:** Minimum VGA 640 x 480 resolution, enabled built-in or external microphone
- **Google Chrome Extension:** To be installed. The PSI Bridge is currently not supported on tablets, mobile devices or Chromebooks.
- **Bandwidth:** Minimum 400 kb/s download and upload
- **Hardware requirements:** 2GB RAM Memory; 1 GB Free Disk Space, minimum 1368x768 screen resolution

For additional information about what to expect on your exam day, refer to pages 15 and 17.

Scheduling Your Exam

You will receive a confirmation email after you have successfully applied for the exam. You may then schedule an exam appointment using the link in your confirmation email or via your AACN customer dashboard.

You may also schedule your exam by phone by calling 833-256-1418. You will need to provide your exam ID number, which is the same as your AACN customer number.

If you do not receive your confirmation email after applying for an exam, please contact AACN Customer Care at 800-899-2226 or certcorp@aacn.org.

Review your confirmation email to be sure that you are registered for the correct exam. Promptly notify AACN Customer Care of any error. The exam type cannot be changed at the time of testing.

Exams are administered by AACN's testing service partner, PSI, by appointment only. You must make your appointment at least 24 hours before your desired exam date.

Schedule Online

In your confirmation email, you will find a link to schedule your exam appointment. Look for "Manage Application and Exam Appointment" listed below the exam name. You may also schedule your exam appointment by logging into your AACN customer dashboard and clicking Certification. Under "My Certifications," locate "Schedule Exam" below the exam name. Your AACN customer dashboard will display the date by which you must test and the date of your scheduled exam appointment.

You will be directed to the AACN Scheduling page where you will be required to select your preferred testing option. You may choose between taking the exam at a testing center or via live remote proctoring using your own computer/desk in a quiet, private location, such as a home office. After selecting a testing option, you will be able to schedule your exam appointment.

You must schedule your exam at least 24 hours prior to your desire exam date. You will receive an email from PSI confirming the date and time of your exam, along with a reminder email 72 hours prior to your exam appointment.

Rescheduling, Cancellations and Extensions

You may reschedule or cancel your appointment, as needed, up to **48 hours prior** to your scheduled exam date. To change your exam appointment, log into your AACN customer dashboard and click Certification. Under "My Certifications," select "Manage Appointment" below the exam name.

Each time you reschedule, you will receive an email from PSI confirming your exam date and time.

There are no refunds or extensions for missed appointments. If you are unable to sit for the exam within your eligibility period, you may call AACN Customer Care at 800-899-2226 before your eligibility period expires to request an extension. A $100 extension fee is required.

If you contact AACN Customer Care to cancel your exam application after it has been processed, you will receive a refund minus a $100 processing fee.

Holiday Schedule

All PSI testing centers are **closed** on the following days:

- New Year's Holiday
- Martin Luther King Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day Holiday
- Thanksgiving Holiday
- Christmas Holiday

The above is not necessarily a complete list of days PSI testing centers may be closed.

Your Exam Day Experience — PSI Testing Center

PSI Testing Center

- Report to the designated testing center no later than your scheduled time. The address is available when you schedule your exam. Some PSI testing centers are located in H&R Block offices. Look for signs indicating PSI Testing Center Check-In.

- You will be greeted by a proctor to guide you through the check-in process. You will not be permitted to start the exam prior to your scheduled time and will not be admitted if you arrive more than 15 minutes late.

- You will be asked to present a government-issued ID that includes your photograph and signature. Acceptable forms of ID include a Driver's License, State/Province ID Card, U.S. Visa or International Travel Passport. The ID you present must match the name in your AACN record. No forms of military or temporary ID will be accepted.

- No books, papers, dictionaries, other reference materials or personal items, including purses, briefcases, headwear, hooded apparel (with the exception of religious apparel), coats, etc., may be taken into the testing center and must be left in a vehicle or at home. If you require an exemption from this policy, refer to the Exam Accommodations section on page 8.

- Neither PSI, AACN, nor H&R Block will be responsible for loss or damage to personal items. We recommend layering your clothing so that you can adjust to the room's temperature during the exam.

Taking the Exam

Each exam consists of multiple choice questions. The number of questions answered correctly determines your score.

▸ **Logging In:** After your identity has been confirmed, you will be directed to a testing carrel where the computer screen will instruct you to enter your social security number. Instead, you will enter your AACN customer number. If you do not remember this number, you may ask the proctor. Your photograph, taken before beginning the exam, will remain on-screen throughout your testing session. The photograph will also appear on your score report.

▸ **Practice Exam:** The time used for a practice exam is not counted as part of the timed exam. Once you are comfortable with the computer-based testing process, you may end the practice session and start the timed exam.

▸ **Timed Exam:** After your practice session, you will begin the actual exam. Instructions for taking the exam are available on-screen once you begin the exam.

  The time limit is intended to allow you to complete the entire exam by working quickly and efficiently. The computer monitors the time you spend on the exam, and the exam ends automatically if you exceed the time limit.

  You can display a digital clock showing the time remaining by clicking the TIME button in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. If you find it distracting, you may turn off the digital clock anytime during the exam.

▸ **Answering Exam Items:** Only one question is presented at a time. The item number appears in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. The entire exam item will appear on the screen (i.e., a stem and 4 answer options labeled A, B, C and D). Use the mouse to click on your answer, or use the keyboard to enter the letter for your answer. Your answer will appear in the lower left section of the screen.

▸ **Changing Your Answer:** Click on a different answer or use the keyboard to change your answer as many times as you wish during the exam.

▸ **Moving to the Next Item:** Click on the forward arrow (>) in the lower right corner of the screen. This action will move you forward through the exam item by item. Click the backward arrow (<) or use the left arrow on the keyboard to return to previous items.

▸ **Unanswered Items:** You may leave an item unanswered and return to it later. You should not spend too much time on difficult questions. Instead, proceed to other questions and return to the difficult ones if time permits.

  You may bookmark an item for later review by clicking the blank square to the right of the TIME button. Clicking on the double arrows (>>) advances to the next unanswered or bookmarked item on the exam. To identify all unanswered and bookmarked items, repeatedly click on the double arrows (>>).

continued

During the Exam

▸ **Questions About Content:** You may not ask questions about the content of the exam at any time.

▸ **Notes:** Use of scratch paper is not allowed unless part of a formal exam accommodation request. A digital notepad within the testing platform is available for your use. All computer screens, questions and printed materials are the property of AACN Certification Corporation and PSI and may not be copied in any form.

▸ **Commenting on Items:** You may comment about any item by clicking on the COMMENT button to the left of the TIME button. This opens a dialog box where you may enter your comments.

▸ **Breaks, Food/Drink, Smoking:** Breaks are considered part of your exam time. You may request a break whenever you wish, but you will not be allowed additional make-up time. Leaving the testing area without authorization automatically voids the exam. You may *not* eat, drink, chew gum or smoke in the testing center.

▸ **Ending the Exam:** When you finish your exam, you will be notified if there are any unanswered questions. If you have time remaining, return to the exam and answer them. ***There is no penalty for guessing.*** Once finished, you will be asked to confirm you are ready to end the exam session.

After the Exam

After completing your exam, your results will appear on-screen. A detailed score report will be emailed to you within 24 hours of exam completion.

The day *after* you take your exam, your certification will appear in our online Certification Verification system, where you can request to have a letter verifying your certification emailed directly from AACN to anyone, including yourself, your employer and your state board(s) of nursing.

Failure to Report for an Exam

You may reapply to take the exam in the future if you did not appear for your scheduled exam session. If your original application is less than one year old, it may be reactivated by paying a fee equivalent to the retest fee. If the application is more than one year old, you must submit a new application and a fee equivalent to the retest fee.

Live Remote Proctoring (LRP)

Check-In Process: You will log into your exam session through your AACN customer dashboard by clicking "Take Exam" (or "Launch Exam" from the AACN scheduling page). You will be greeted by a live proctor who will guide you through the check-in process, which could take up to 60+ minutes.

You are asked to check-in between 15 and 30 minutes prior to your scheduled exam appointment. If you log-in more than 30 minutes after your scheduled exam time, you will not be admitted.

Headphones, electronics, cell phones, tablets, notes and reference materials are *not* permitted in the testing area. Chewing gum, smoking, food and drinks are not allowed, except for water in a clear container.

Talking, whispering and mouthing are not permitted during the exam. The proctor will advise you to avoid covering your mouth and to be sure your entire face is visible to the camera. Your computer set-up must be at a desk or table. Throughout the exam, both hands must remain on or above the workspace area. Should any concerns arise, the proctor may send a chat message to ensure exam rules are followed. Refer to for a complete list of exam rules/violations.

If you require an exemption from these policies, refer to the Exam Accommodations section on .

Be prepared to present a government-issued ID that includes your photograph and signature. Acceptable forms of ID include a Driver's License, State/Province ID Card, U.S. Visa or International Travel Passport. No forms of military or temporary ID will be accepted. The name on the ID you present must match the name in your AACN record. If you fail to provide appropriate identification, admission will be denied and a retest fee will be required.

Using your webcam, you will be asked to capture a digital photograph of your ID and a digital photograph of yourself. You will also be asked to perform a thorough scan of the room in which you will be testing.

Taking the Exam

After successful check-in, the exam will be released to you in a secure lock-down browser. The security features will block access to such things as other browsers, screen sharing/recording, copying/pasting and use of dual/extended monitors.

Each exam consists of multiple choice questions. The number of questions answered correctly determines your score.

▸ **Practice Exam:** The time used for a practice exam is not counted as part of the timed exam. Once you are comfortable with the computer-based testing process, you may end the practice session and start the timed exam.

▸ **Timed Exam:** After your practice session, you will begin the actual exam. Instructions for taking the exam are available on-screen once you begin the exam.

   The time limit is intended to allow you to complete the entire exam by working quickly and efficiently. The computer monitors the time you spend on the exam, and the exam ends automatically if you exceed the time limit.

   You can display a digital clock showing the time remaining by clicking the TIME button in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. If you find it distracting, you may turn off the digital clock anytime during the exam.

▸ **Answering Exam Items:** Only one question is presented at a time. The item number appears in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. The entire exam item will appear on the screen (i.e., a stem and 4 answer options labeled A, B, C and D). Use the mouse to click on your answer, or use the keyboard to enter the letter for your answer. Your answer will appear in the lower left section of the screen.

▸ **Changing Your Answer:** Click on a different answer or use the keyboard to change your answer as many times as you wish during the exam.

▶ **Moving to the Next Item:** Click on the forward arrow (>) in the lower right corner of the screen. This action will move you forward through the exam item by item. Click the backward arrow (<) or use the left arrow on the keyboard to return to previous items.

▶ **Unanswered Items:** You may leave an item unanswered and return to it later. You should not spend too much time on difficult questions. Instead, proceed to other questions and return to the difficult ones if time permits.

You may bookmark an item for later review by clicking the blank square to the right of the TIME button. Clicking on the double arrows (>>) advances to the next unanswered or bookmarked item on the exam. To identify all unanswered and bookmarked items, repeatedly click on the double arrows (>>).

During the Exam

Your entire exam session will be recorded and monitored by a live proctor. During the exam, communication between you and the proctor will be limited to typed messages via the chat tool. The proctor will be able to see and hear you, but you will not be able to see or hear the proctor.

▶ **Questions About Content:** You may not ask questions about the content of the exam at any time.

▶ **Notes:** Use of scratch paper is not allowed unless part of a formal exam accommodation request. A digital notepad within the testing platform is available for your use. All computer screens, questions and printed materials are the property of AACN Certification Corporation and PSI and may not be copied in any form.

▶ **Commenting on Items:** You may comment about any item by clicking on the COMMENT button to the left of the TIME button. This opens a dialog box where you may enter your comments.

▶ **Breaks, Food/Drink, Smoking:** Breaks are considered part of your exam time. You may request a break whenever you wish, but you will not be allowed additional make-up time. Leaving the testing area without authorization automatically voids the exam. You may *not* chew gum, eat, drink or smoke in the testing area.

▶ **Technical Issues:** If you lose your Internet connection during the exam, please call PSI's technical support line at 844-267-1017.

▶ **Ending the Exam:** When you finish your exam, you will be notified if there are any unanswered questions. If you have time remaining, return to the exam and answer them. ***There is no penalty for guessing.*** Once finished, you will be asked to confirm you are ready to end the exam session.

After the Exam

After completing your exam, your results will appear on-screen. A detailed score report will be emailed to you within 24 hours of exam completion.

The day *after* you take your exam, your certification will appear in our online Certification Verification system, where you can request to have a letter verifying your certification emailed directly from AACN to anyone, including yourself, your employer and your state board(s) of nursing.

Dismissal from the Exam

You will need to ensure that your testing environment is free of noise and distractions. Taking the exam from a work environment (other than a home office) is not recommended. If the testing environment has noise or distractions, your exam session could be terminated.

Proctors will be continuously monitoring for exam policy violations such as use of unapproved resources (e.g., electronic devices, written/printed materials, etc.). The proctor may terminate the exam at any time if a violation occurs. The proctor may provide warnings or terminate the exam, depending on the violation(s).

If you are dismissed for any violations, your exam score will be voided and your fees will not be refunded. Evidence of misconduct will be reviewed by AACN Certification Corporation to determine whether you will be allowed to reapply for the exam. If a re-exam is granted, a complete application and fee are required to reapply.

Exam Violations

Please review the following list of LRP exam violations. These rules exist to ensure exam security and protect the integrity of AACN's certification programs. **The number in parentheses indicates the maximum number of warnings allowed before the exam is terminated.**

- Tapping fingers or feet (3)
- Looking around/taking eyes off screen (3)
- Closing eyes (longer than blinking) (2)
- Touching face/covering mouth (2)
- Moving lips/mouthing words/whispering (2)
- Talking to self/reading exam questions aloud (2)
- Using explicit/abusive language – aloud or via chat (2)
- Having improper lighting – too dark or bright (2)
- Having improper webcam placement (2)
- Having headset or earbuds (2)
- Eating, drinking or chewing gum (2)
- Losing internet connection/system errors (2)
- Moving out of camera view (2)
- Talking to others/making noise (1)
- Having phone/device/references/papers (1)
- Using phone/device/references/papers (0)
- Copying exam content/screen recording (0)
- Browsing the web (0)
- Seeking exam help/having others in room (0)
- Displaying explicit/abusive behavior (0)
- Covering camera or leaving test area (0)

Failure to Report for an Exam

You may reapply to take the exam in the future if you did not appear for your scheduled exam session. If your original application is less than one year old, it may be reactivated by paying a fee equivalent to the retest fee. If the application is more than one year old, you must submit a new application and a fee equivalent to the retest fee.

Paper-and-Pencil Exams

▶ **Check-In**: You will be asked to present a government-issued ID that includes your photograph and signature. Acceptable forms of ID include a Driver's License, State/Province ID Card, U.S. Visa or International Travel Passport. No forms of military or temporary ID will be accepted. The name on the ID you present must match the name in your AACN record. If you fail to provide appropriate identification, admission will be denied and a retest fee will be required. Once your identity is confirmed, you will be directed to a testing seat and given an exam booklet and Scantron form.

Taking the Exam

Each exam consists of multiple choice questions. The number of questions answered correctly determines your score.

▶ **Answering Exam Items**: Using the Scantron form, notate your answers to the questions presented in the exam booklet. Because your answer sheet will be optically scanned by computer, it is important that you use the pencil provided to mark your answers. Do not make any stray marks on your answer sheet. If you erase, be sure the previous mark is completely erased.

▶ **Unanswered Items**: You may leave an item unanswered and return to it later. You should not spend too much time on difficult questions. Instead, proceed to other questions and return to the difficult ones if time permits.

▶ **Answer Every Item**: If you have not answered every item and have time remaining, return and answer them. *There is no penalty for guessing.*

▶ **Timed Exam**: The time limit is intended to allow you to complete the entire exam by working quickly and efficiently.

During the Exam

▶ **Questions About Content**: You may not ask questions about the content of the exam at any time.

▶ **Making Notes**: You may make any notes or calculations you wish in the exam booklet. However, you will not receive credit for any answers unless they are marked on your answer sheet. You may not remove any documents or notes from the exam room, and their return to the proctor is required.

All questions, paper and written materials are the property of AACN Certification Corporation and PSI and may not be reproduced in any form.

▶ **Commenting on Items**: You may comment about any item using the designated area of the Scantron sheet. Write the item number in the blank box and your comments about the item.

▶ **Breaks, Food/Drink, Smoking**: Breaks are considered part of your exam time. You may request a break whenever you wish, but you will not be allowed additional make-up time. Leaving the testing area without authorization automatically voids the exam. You may *not* chew gum, eat, drink or smoke in the testing area.

After the Exam

After you finish the exam, you will be asked to complete a short evaluation of your testing experience.

For paper-and-pencil testing, your score report will be received 6 to 8 weeks following completion of the exam. Your official score report will provide the number of correct answers for each major content category.

Approximately 1 to 2 weeks after exam results are received, successful candidates will be mailed their congratulations letter and wall certificate.

Failure to Report for an Exam

You may reapply to take the exam in the future if you did not appear for your scheduled exam session. If your original application is less than one year old, it may be reactivated by paying a fee equivalent to the retest fee. If the application is more than one year old, you must submit a new application and a fee equivalent to the retest fee.

Passing Point/Cut Score

A criterion-referenced standard setting process, known as the modified Angoff, is used to establish the passing point/cut score for the exam. Each candidate's performance on the exam is measured against a predetermined standard.

The passing point/cut score for the exam is established using a panel of subject matter experts, an exam development committee (EDC), who carefully reviews each exam question to determine the basic level of knowledge or skill that is expected. The passing point/cut score is based on the panel's established difficulty ratings for each exam question.

Under the guidance of a psychometrician, the panel develops and recommends the passing point/cut score, which is reviewed and approved by AACN Certification Corporation. The passing point/cut score for the exam is established to identify individuals with an acceptable level of knowledge and skill. All individuals with a score equal to or above the passing point/cut score have demonstrated an acceptable level of knowledge.

The passing point/cut score is not a percentage but a raw number that may change over time as an exam is updated based on results of the most recent study of practice, also known as a job analysis, or when the exam forms are periodically changed and equated for difficulty.

For each content area, the number of questions answered correctly is also reported to give candidates an idea of how well they performed in each area and to identify areas of weakness.

The questions are designed to test both your ability to remember specific facts or points of knowledge and your ability to apply that knowledge in performing specific skills and abilities required of acute or critical care nurses. Since an exam measures your knowledge in all areas, you could achieve a high number of correct responses in some areas but not pass the exam.

The passing point/cut score should not be confused with the pass rate, which is the percentage of candidates testing who are successful at passing an exam.

Canceled Scores

AACN Certification Corporation and PSI are responsible for the integrity of the scores they report. On occasion, occurrences such as a computer malfunction or misconduct by a candidate may cause a score to be suspect. AACN Certification Corporation and PSI are committed to resolving such issues as quickly as possible. AACN Certification Corporation may void exam results if the investigation shows that policies have been violated.

If You Do Not Pass the Exam

If you do not pass the exam, you may reapply to AACN Certification Corporation for a retest. A discounted retest fee is available to candidates who took the exam within their most recent eligibility period but did not pass. Candidates may apply for and take the same certification exam up to 4 times in a 12-month period. After 12 months, signing a new honor statement is required.

Candidates may apply for a retest via one of the following methods:

▸ Online at www.aacn.org/certification > Get Certified
▸ By mailing *or* faxing a paper application
  • Application can be found in the applicable handbook online at www.aacn.org/certhandbooks
  • Select the "retest" option
▸ By calling AACN Customer Care at 800-899-2226

Confidentiality of Exam Scores

The exam application that you submit to AACN Certification Corporation constitutes written authorization for PSI to release your exam scores to AACN Certification Corporation. Scores for exams taken within the U.S. are reported upon completion of the exam or by U.S. mail. Scores for exams completed outside the U.S. are reported via email. Exam scores are not reported by phone or facsimile.

Neither PSI nor AACN Certification Corporation will release scores to any institution or employer without your written consent.

Duplicate Score Reports

You may request an additional copy of your score report for a fee of $25 per copy. Submit requests and payment by check or money order within 12 months of sitting for the exam by mail to:

PSI Certification Headquarters
18000 W. 105th St.
Olathe, KS 66061-7543

The request must include:

- Your name
- AACN customer number
- Address
- Phone number
- Date and type of exam taken

Sign and date your request. Duplicate score reports are mailed within approximately 2 weeks after receipt of your request.

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.

Certification Renewal

Your certification period begins the first day of the month in which the certification exam is passed.

- **CCRN, PCCN, CMC** and **CSC** certifications are granted for a 3-year period. For example, February 1, 2023 through January 31, 2026.
- **ACNPC-AG, ACCNS-AG, ACCNS-P, ACCNS-N, ACNPC** and **CCNS** certifications are granted for a 5-year period. For example, February 1, 2023 through January 31, 2028.

Renewal notifications will be emailed to you starting 4 months before your scheduled renewal date. **You are responsible for renewing your certification even if you do not receive renewal notification.**

Renewal by exam candidates must successfully apply for and schedule their exam in enough time to complete the exam **before** their scheduled renewal date. You may not take the exam early, then attempt to renew by CE Points or CERPs if you do not pass.

To renew, you must hold a 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 most recent certification period.

Refer to the individual certification renewal handbooks for specific requirements and for alternate designations, such as Inactive status. APRN certificants may be eligible for Conditional Certification.

[1] *Includes District of Columbia and U.S. territories of Guam, Virgin Islands, American Samoa and Northern Mariana Islands*

Audits

Random audits of initial exam and renewal candidates is a routine part of AACN Certification Corporation's commitment to our mission of ensuring public safety and complying with standard regulatory practices.

Nurses are not notified in advance of being audited. Audits are conducted randomly after candidates successfully pass the initial exam or renew certification. Those selected for audit are notified via email, and have a period of 60 days to submit the required documentation.

▸ For **initial exam audit**, the following documentation is required:

- Copy of U.S. RN or APRN license
- Form to verify clinical/practice hours

▸ For **renewal audit**, the following documentation is required:

- Copy of U.S. RN or APRN license
- Form to verify clinical/practice hours
- CERP Log or CE Renewal Point Log
- Copies of CE/CERP documentation

AACN Certification Corporation will review audit documentation and respond to audit candidates within 30 days of receiving their documentation. Those who pass the audit will be informed via email. Those who do not pass the audit will be sent a letter notifying them of the revocation of their certification.

Failure to respond to an audit, pass an audit or provide the required documentation in a timely manner will result in revocation. Notification of certification revocation will be sent to the nurse's state board of nursing and may be sent to the nurse's employer. With revocation of certification, customers are prohibited from reapplying for any AACN certification exam for a period of 3 years.

No refunds will be issued in the case of failure or non-response to an audit. Revocation of certification may be appealed. Refer to .

Complete details about the audit process can be found in the renewal handbook for your certification, available at www.aacn.org/certhandbooks.

Military nurses who receive an audit notification during overseas deployment are asked to contact AACN at 800-899-2226 immediately upon their return to the U.S. for instructions on submitting audit materials without penalty.

Recognition of Certification and Use of Credentials

A listing of certified nurses is maintained by AACN Certification Corporation and may be reported in its publications and/or listed on its website. Certification status is available to the public via the Certification Verification system, at www.aacn.org/certification > Verify Certification.

AACN certifications are not punctuated with periods. The specific program of certification (e.g., CCRN) and specific patient population (i.e., neonatal, pediatric, adult or adult-gerontology) where applicable, will be noted on the certificant's wall certificate.

Specialty Certifications

Candidates who meet all eligibility requirements and pass the specialty certification exam may use the corresponding credential, "CCRN" or "PCCN" after their licensing title.

CCRN and PCCN are registered service marks.

The proper use of each credential is as follows:
- **CCRN**: Chris Smith, RN, CCRN
- **PCCN**: Chris Smith, RN, PCCN

Advanced Practice Certifications

Candidates who meet all eligibility requirements and pass the advanced practice certification exam may use the corresponding credential, "ACNPC-AG", "ACCNS-AG", "ACCNS-P", "ACCNS-N", "ACNPC" or "CCNS" after their licensing title.

ACNPC-AG, ACCNS-AG, ACCNS-P, ACCNS-N, ACNPC and CCNS are registered service marks.

The proper use of each credential is as follows:
- **ACNPC-AG**: Chris Smith, RN, ACNPC-AG
- **ACCNS-AG**: Chris Smith, RN, ACCNS-AG
- **ACCNS-P**: Chris Smith, RN, ACCNS-P
- **ACCNS-N**: Chris Smith, RN, ACCNS-N
- **ACNPC**: Chris Smith, RN, ACNPC
- **CCNS**: Chris Smith, RN, CCNS

Subspecialty Certifications

Candidates who meet all eligibility requirements and pass the CMC or CSC subspecialty certification exam may use the corresponding credentials after their licensing title, linked to a nationally-accredited (ABSNC or NCCA) clinical nursing specialty certification. Candidates must specify to which certification they wish to attach their subspecialty certification.

CMC and CSC are registered service marks.

CMC and CSC may only be **displayed attached to a clinical nursing specialty credential**.

The proper use of each credential is as follows:
- **CMC**: Chris Smith, RN, PCCN-CMC
- **CSC**: Chris Smith, RN, CCRN-CSC

If both subspecialty credentials are obtained, they may be attached to the same clinical nursing specialty credential, e.g., CCRN-CMC-CSC.

Denial of Certification

AACN Certification Corporation will deny certification to initial exam candidates for any reason deemed appropriate including, but not limited to, the following:

- Violating any rules of the exam
- Falsification of a certification exam application
- Falsification of any information provided to AACN Certification Corporation
- Failure to meet eligibility requirements
- Failure to pay fees
- Failure to meet deadlines
- Failure to respond to or pass an audit
- Misrepresentation of certification status or misuse of credential
- Cheating (or reasonable evidence of intent to cheat) on the exam
- Sharing exam contents
- Provisions or conditions placed on RN or APRN licensure

    A current, unencumbered license is required. An unencumbered license is not currently being subjected to formal discipline by the board of nursing in the state(s) in which a nurse is practicing and has no provisions or conditions that limit the nurse's practice in any way.

In the event of denial, you may be notified that you are prohibited from reapplying for the certification exam for a period of up to 3 years. AACN Certification Corporation may take additional actions pending further investigation, including sending notification to your employer and/or state board of nursing, as appropriate.

Revocation of Certification

AACN Certification Corporation may revoke certification for any reason deemed appropriate including, but not limited to, the following:

- Falsification of a certification exam application or renewal application
- Falsification of any information provided to AACN Certification Corporation
- Failure to meet/maintain eligibility requirements
- Failure to pay fees
- Failure to meet deadlines
- Failure to respond to or pass an audit
- Misrepresentation of certification status or misuse of credential
- Conviction of a felony
- Cheating (or reasonable evidence of intent to cheat) on the exam
- Sharing exam contents
- Provisions or conditions placed on RN or APRN licensure during the certification renewal period

    Certificants must notify AACN Certification Corporation **within 30 days** of any provisions or conditions placed against their RN or APRN license(s).

In the event of revocation, notification may be sent to your employer and/or state board of nursing, where appropriate.

You will be notified that you may be prohibited from reapplying for any AACN certification exam for a period of up to 3 years.

Fees paid for certification renewal are not refunded.

> Refer to the Upholding the Value of Certification section at www.aacn.org/certification > Overview > Value of Certification.

Review and Appeal of Certification Eligibility

The review and appeal process is available to individuals whose certification status has been denied, expired or revoked.

Internal Review Panel (IRP)

The review process is conducted by the staff of AACN Certification Corporation.

Initial applicants and prospective applicants may request a review of eligibility within 45 days of notification of denial. The written request should describe their eligibility and how it conforms to the certification program.

Requests for review of expired or revoked certification status should include information and documents to support the request for reinstatement. Requests for review should be received within 30 days of notification of certification expiration or revocation.

Please email your request for review to:

certification@aacn.org

Or mail to:

Certification Specialist
AACN Certification Corporation
27071 Aliso Creek Road
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656-3399

The IRP will review the documentation provided and render a decision within 30 days. Additional information may be requested by the IRP. The IRP decision will be communicated via email to the individual requesting review.

Appeal of Eligibility, Exam and Renewal Determination

A candidate who believes he/she was unjustly denied eligibility for an exam, who challenges results of an exam or who believes he/she was unjustly denied renewal of certification may request reconsideration of the decision by emailing a written appeal to certification@aacn.org.

The candidate for certification or renewal of certification must provide convincing evidence that a severe disadvantage was afforded the candidate during processing of an application for exam or renewal of certification or prior to or during administration of an exam.

The appeal must be made within 45 days of receipt of the adverse decision (for example, a score report or any other official correspondence related to certification or renewal of certification from AACN Certification Corporation or its agents). The written appeal must also indicate the specific relief requested.

The appeal process is conducted by the AACN Certification Corporation Appeals Panel. The Appeals Panel is comprised of certified peer volunteers who have an understanding of the credential being appealed and are not members of the internal review process. Panel members sign confidentiality agreements as well as conflict of interest forms prior to participation.

The Appeals Panel will review the documentation provided and render a decision within 30 days. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final and will be communicated via email to the requesting individual.

AACN
CERTIFICATION
CORPORATION

Request for Exam Accommodations

If you have a disability covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), please complete this form and the Documentation of Disability-Related Needs form on the next page so your accommodations for testing can be processed efficiently. The information you provide and any documentation regarding your disability and need for accommodation in testing will be treated with strict confidentiality. *Please submit completed form 2 to 3 weeks prior to your anticipated exam date.*

Candidate Information

AACN Customer #: _____   **Requested Testing Center:** _____

Name: _____
Last   First   MI   Maiden

Mailing Address: _____
City   State   Zip

Daytime Phone Number: _____

Exam Accommodations

I request accommodations for the _____ certification exam.

Please provide (check all that apply):

☐ Seating or other physical accommodations
☐ Scribe/recorder
☐ Reader
☐ Sign language interpreter
☐ Reduced distraction environment
☐ Extended testing time (*check one*) ☐ time and a half ☐ double time
☐ Other special accommodations (*please specify*)

_____

_____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

Signed: _____   **Date:** _____

Submit this form with your exam application via ONE of the following methods.
- **mail**: AACN Certification Corporation, 27071 Aliso Creek Road, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656-3399
- **email**: info@aacn.org
- **fax**: 949-362-2020

For questions, call AACN Customer Care at 800-899-2226.

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Documentation of Disability-Related Needs

Please have this section completed by an appropriate qualified professional (e.g., education professional, physician, psychologist, psychiatrist) to ensure that our testing vendor, PSI Services, is able to provide the required accommodations.

Professional Documentation

I have known _____ since _____ / _____ / _____ in my capacity as a
            Exam Candidate Name   mm   dd   yy

_____
                                    Professional Title

The candidate discussed with me the nature of the exam to be administered. It is my opinion that, because of this candidate's disability described below, he/she should be accommodated by providing the arrangements listed below and/or on the attached.

Description of Disability: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ **Email:** _____

License # (if applicable)**:** _____

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CERTIFICATION CORPORATION

Certification Organization for the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses

27071 Aliso Creek Road
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656-3399
800-899-2226
www.aacn.org

AACN Certification Corporation updates the information, fees and requirements listed in this handbook on a regular basis. Certificants are responsible for utilizing the most current handbook available. Please refer to www.aacn.org/certification for the most current information.