1.0 Policy

Renewal Eligibility

Current, unencumbered licensure as an RN or APRN in the U.S.¹ is required. An unencumbered license has not been subjected to formal discipline by any state board of nursing during the 3-year renewal period and has no provisions or conditions that limit the nurse’s practice in any way. Certificants must notify AACN Certification Corporation (Cert Corp) within 30 days if any restriction is placed on their RN or APRN license(s). This applies to all RN or APRN licenses currently held.

Have passed the adult CCRN or CCRN-E exam.

Practice as an RN or APRN is required for 432 hours in care of acutely/critically ill adult patients in a tele-ICU or in a combination of tele-ICU and direct care during the 3-year certification renewal period, with 144 of those hours accrued in the last year of the certification renewal period. The majority of the total hours and those within the last year for renewal eligibility must focus on critically ill patients.

Practice hours for CCRN-E renewal eligibility must be completed in a U.S.-based² facility or in a facility determined to be comparable to the U.S. standard of acute/critical care tele-ICU 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.³

Determination of eligibility is not based on unit type but on patient acuity, as patient placement varies by facility and bed availability, etc. The renewing CCRN-E certificant must work with

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

² 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 a Magnet® designation or is Joint Commission International accredited.

³ The Internal Review Panel has determined that Australia practice aligns with U.S. practice.
acutely/critically ill adult patients for the number of hours specified in the eligibility requirements.

Nurses serving as manager, educator (in-service or academic), APRN or preceptor may apply hours spent supervising nursing students or nurses who are practicing remotely in a tele-ICU. Nurses in these roles must be actively involved in caring for patients; for example, a manager or CNS for a tele-ICU service may provide clinical rounds or be consulted in the management of an individual patient.

The name and contact information of a professional associate 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. A professional associate is defined as a supervisor or a professional associate (RN or physician) with whom the certificant works (need not be CCRN-E-certified).

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

Renewal Options

CCRN-E certification is granted for a period of 3 years. Eligible candidates for CCRN-E 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: Renewal by Synergy CERPs, Renewal by Exam or Inactive Status. Certificants may not apply for more than one renewal option.

The Continuing Education Recognition Point (CERP) program encompasses a wide spectrum of continuing education activities performed by acute and critical care nurses. It also addresses the need for formal and informal educational experiences for acute and critical care nurses. CERPs may also be awarded for other 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.

Option 1 - Renewing CCRN-E certification
CCRN-E Renewal by Synergy CERPs is obtained by completing a total of 100 CERPs with 70 CERPs in Category A, 5 CERPs in Category B and 25 CERPs in Category C. These CERPs must be accrued during the 3-year renewal period. Acceptable topics and activities are listed under Renewal by Synergy CERPs - Topics & Activities (Categories A, B & C) of the CCRN-E Renewal Handbook.

Moving from CCRN-E to CCRN or CCRN-K
CCRN for CCRN-K renewal may be obtained by completing the Synergy CERP program for CCRN or CCRN-K or for the program from which the candidate is moving. All 3 programs (CCRN, CCRN-
E and CCRN-K) require a total of 100 CERPs with a minimum number of CERPs in Categories A, B and C. CERPs must be completed during the 3-year certification renewal period. Details can be found in the applicable renewal handbook.

- The CCRN-E Synergy CERP program requires completion of 70 CERPs in Category A, 5 CERPs in Category B and 25 CERPs in Category C.
- The CCRN Synergy CERP program requires 60 CERPs in Category A, 10 CERPs each in Categories B and C, plus 20 CERPs in the category of choice.
- The CCRN-K Synergy CERP program requires 80 CERPs in Category A and 10 CERPs each in Categories B and C.

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

- **Moving from CCRN-E to CCRN**
  Meet the eligibility requirements for CCRN renewal and successfully apply for and complete the CCRN exam (adult only). Current test plan and exam references can be found in the *CCRN Exam Handbook*.

- **Moving from CCRN-E to CCRN-K**
  Meet the eligibility requirements for CCRN-K renewal and successfully apply for and complete the CCRN-K exam (adult only). Current test plan and exam references can be found in the *CCRN-K Exam Handbook*.

**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 allows certified nurses up to 3 years from their original date of renewal to meet eligibility requirements. While Inactive, the nurse may not use the CCRN-E 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 CCRN-E-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 within a tele-ICU or in a combination of tele-ICU and direct care 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. 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 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, CCRN-E 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-E 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.