

ANCC Certification Examinations - Revised September 22, 2009

2009 General Testing and Renewal Handbook



1.800.284.2378
www.nursecredentialing.org

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ANCC'S MISSION

The mission of the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) is to promote excellence in nursing and health care globally through credentialing programs and related services.

To accomplish its mission, ANCC:

Certifies healthcare providers

Accredits educational providers, approvers, and programs

Recognizes excellence in nursing and healthcare services

Educates the public, and collaborates with organizations to advance the understanding of credentialing services

Supports credentialing through research, education, and consultative services.

ANCC, incorporated in 1991 as a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association, is the largest nursing credentialing organization in the world. ANCC's professional certification services provide national and international recognition for nurses who have proven themselves through education, experience, knowledge, testing, and professional conduct.

ANCC offers approximately 30 examinations including advanced practice specialties for nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists.

USING THIS BOOKLET

This booklet provides a general overview of ANCC testing processes and procedures for those interested in taking an ANCC examination and an overview of information on maintaining certification.

More detailed ANCC testing and renewal information, including information related to specific exams—such as test content outline, references, and sample practice questions—can be obtained at ANCC’s website at www.nursecredentialing.org or by calling 1.800.284.2378.

Effective 2009, all ANCC certification exams are available in a computer-based format.

ABOUT ANCC EXAMS

Most ANCC exams are accredited by the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) and/or the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).



The U.S. Department of Veteran’s Affairs, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) and health insurance companies recognize ANCC exams.

ANCC certification examinations are in a multiple-choice format and cover knowledge, understanding, and application of professional nursing practice and theory. Examinations are offered at nation-wide and international test centers. They are designed to objectively assess entry-level competency in nursing advanced practice and non-advanced practice specialties.

All ANCC programs are administered without discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender, health status, lifestyle, nationality, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

WHAT IS CERTIFICATION?

Certification is the process by which a nongovernmental agency or an association grants recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications. Certification can be used for entry into practice, validation of competence, recognition of excellence, and/or for regulation. It can be mandatory or voluntary¹. Certification validates an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities in a defined role and clinical area of practice, based on predetermined standards.

WHY CERTIFY?

FAR-REACHING BENEFITS

ANCC board certification offers extensive advantages throughout the healthcare system—benefiting patients and their families, nurses and their colleagues, and the medical practices and facilities that employ these certified professionals. It is, quite simply, an asset to the entire nursing field.

ANCC board certified nurses must meet strong professional development requirements. By keeping abreast of the latest developments in healthcare and making continuing education a priority, ANCC board certified nurses not only maintain their competence to practice, but also boost their professional self-confidence.

Nurses that have made continuing professional development a priority assure the public and employers that they have the knowledge, skills, and experience to effectively and safely deliver top-notch care. In a survey by the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS)², nurse managers noted that certification validates specialized knowledge, indicates a level of clinical competence, and enhances professional credibility.

Even more noteworthy, nurse certification has been linked to better patient outcomes, according to the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN)³, which found that certification is tied to a reduction in medical errors, among other benefits.

ANCC board certified nurses are in the greatest demand and command the highest salaries. Nurse managers surveyed by ABNS overwhelmingly prefer to hire certified nurses because certification attests to an individual's proven knowledge base and documented experience in a given specialty. In fact, 90% said they clearly prefer to hire certified nurses⁴.

Further, certification opens doors to higher-paying positions. Nurses certified in a specialty area earn an average of more than \$9,000 annually than their counterparts who aren't certified⁵. What's more, nurses report that certification increases their job satisfaction and confidence⁶.

ANCC certification exams are a fair and accurate measure of real-world competency. Thanks to an extensive test-development process, ANCC's certification exams are considered the truest gauge of a nurse's ability to provide excellent care.

It all starts with highly qualified, certified nurses who serve on Content Expert Panels (CEP) representing their specialty area. Individuals are chosen by ANCC to serve on these panels based on their education, experience, and comprehensive knowledge of their specialty. Using this expert knowledge—along with standards from the American Nurses Association Congress of Nursing Practice and Economics and those for educational and psychological testing, plus the

guidance of trained test development specialists — ANCC, in collaboration with the CEP, conducts role delineation studies to analyze the professional skills and abilities required within a specific certification type. The CEPs then develop test content outlines for the exams.

Next, a separate group of expert nurses write certification exam questions (items), combining their real-world experience with special ANCC training. These test items are then reviewed by ANCC staff and the CEP and then pilot-tested to ensure validity and quality.

Finally, ANCC staff, in cooperation with the appropriate CEP, assembles the actual exams. An ANCC measurement professional guides the entire process to be certain that all exams are psychometrically sound and legally defensible.

To further ensure the relevance of ANCC certification exams, they are all continually refined and updated to follow the latest scope and standards of practice and role delineation studies (job analyses). ANCC also subjects these exams to outside scrutiny, obtaining accreditation by two different national organizations: the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) of the National Organization for Competency Assurance.

ANCC certification is accepted by governing boards. ANCC certification is valued throughout the world by national and local agencies, including recognition by all state boards of nursing and the U.S. military. In addition, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) as well as all major third-party reimbursers accept ANCC certification for billing purposes.

SETTING THE PASSING SCORE ON ANCC EXAMINATIONS

To set the passing score for a new test form that is based upon an updated test blueprint – also known as a test content outline (TCO) – ANCC uses the Modified Angoff standard setting method. The Angoff Method is the method most widely used for determining the minimal passing scores of certification examinations.

The Angoff standard setting method is based upon a determination by a panel of experienced practitioners and educators of the level of difficulty of each test item. Judgments of item difficulty are made within the context of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are delineated in the TCO. These judgments of difficulty, also called Angoff ratings, are the panelists' estimates of the percent of minimally competent practitioners who will respond correctly to each test item.

The initial judgments are followed by the panelists' systematic choices about whether to modify each judgment, after reviewing candidate performance data and discrepancy indicators. The final Angoff score is calculated by averaging the judgments across test items and panel members to obtain the recommended passing score for each examination form. The passing score reflects the point of minimal competency for entry level as a certified practitioner.

CERTIFICATION CREDENTIALS

SPECIALTY (NON-ADVANCED PRACTICE) NURSING

After meeting the eligibility requirements to take the appropriate specialty (non-advanced practice) certification examination and successfully passing the exam, you are awarded the Registered Nurse – Board Certified (RN-BC) credential. An exception is the Nurse Executive Certification for which the credential Nurse Executive-Board Certified (NE-BC) is given.

ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSING

Advanced practice nursing certifications at ANCC include clinical nurse specialist (CNS) and nurse practitioner (NP) specialties. Once an advanced practice nurse (NP or CNS) meets the requirements to take the appropriate certification examination and successfully passes the exam, the nurse is awarded a credential from the chart on page 9.

OTHER ADVANCED CERTIFICATIONS

Other advanced level certifications include Nurse Executive, Advanced, in which the NEA-BC is awarded and Advanced Diabetes Management for Registered Dietitians and Registered Pharmacists in which the BC-ADM is awarded.

ANCC CERTIFICATION AND CREDENTIALS AWARDED

Certification Exam	Certification Credential Awarded
Nurse Practitioners:	
Acute Care Nurse Practitioner	ACNP-BC
Adult Nurse Practitioner	ANP-BC
Adult Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner	PMHNP-BC
Advanced Diabetes Management Nurse Practitioner	BC-ADM
Family Nurse Practitioner	FNP-BC
Family Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner	PMHNP-BC
Gerontological Nurse Practitioner	GNP-BC
Pediatric Nurse Practitioner	PNP-BC
Clinical Nurse Specialists:	
Adult Health CNS (formerly Medical-Surgical Nursing)	ACNS-BC
Adult Psychiatric and Mental Health CNS	PMHCNS-BC
Advanced Diabetes Management CNS	BC-ADM
Child/Adolescent Psychiatric and Mental Health CNS	PMHCNS-BC
Gerontology CNS	GCNS-BC
Pediatric CNS	PCNS-BC
Public/Community Health CNS (alternate credential for Advanced Public Health Nursing)	PHCNS-BC

Other Advanced Specialties:	
Advanced Diabetes Management Registered Dietitian	BC-ADM
Advanced Diabetes Management Registered Pharmacist	BC-ADM
Advanced Public Health Nursing	APHN-BC
Nurse Executive, Advanced (formerly Nursing Administration, Advanced)	NEA-BC
Specialty Nurses:	
Ambulatory Care	RN-BC
Cardiac Vascular	RN-BC
Gerontology	RN-BC
Informatics	RN-BC
Medical-Surgical	RN-BC
Nurse Executive (formerly Nursing Administration)	NE-BC
Nursing Case Management	RN-BC
Nursing Professional Development	RN-BC
Pain Management	RN-BC
Pediatric	RN-BC
Psychiatric and Mental Health	RN-BC

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIAL CERTIFICATION

1. You must meet all of the eligibility requirements for the certification exam you are seeking to take. If you do not meet the eligibility requirements when you apply, you will be considered not eligible to take a certification examination.
2. Academic degrees for advanced practice nursing exams must be awarded from an institution of higher learning accredited by either Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC). Graduate transcript(s), in a sealed envelope, can be included with your application or mailed separately and must show the date and degree conferred. Transcripts received without a date and degree conferred are not accepted. If your master's or graduate program was not US-based, please contact ANCC for additional information before you submit your application.
3. The baccalaureate or higher degree in nursing is required for these certification exams: Nurse Executive; Nurse Executive, Advanced; and Nursing Professional Development. For the Informatics Nursing certification examination, your baccalaureate can be in nursing or in a field related to informatics. Transcripts, in a sealed envelope from your school, must be either included with your application or mailed separately by the school. Transcripts must show the date of graduation and degree conferred. Transcripts received without a graduation date and degree conferred are not accepted. If the bachelor's degree was awarded from a college or university outside of the United States, a course-by-course evaluation must be completed by a foreign credential evaluation service and the report included with the application.
4. All practice requirements must have been met while holding an active registered nurse license in a US state or territory, or the professional, legally recognized equivalent in another country. Any hours of practice as a licensed practical nurse or a licensed vocational nurse do not qualify as part of the practice hours requirement.

SPECIAL TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) and its testing vendor make every effort to reasonably accommodate candidates with documented disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you have a disability as defined under the ADA, you must notify ANCC by submitting the following information with your application:

A report regarding your request from your physician or a qualified healthcare professional is required. The information must be on the physician's or other qualified healthcare professional's letterhead, typed, dated, and signed by the healthcare professional. The report must document the following information in order to be considered:

1. A specific diagnosis and date of your diagnosis
2. Specific and current findings that support your diagnosis (relevant medical history, tests administered, date of the most current evaluation, within the last 3 years)
3. A description of your substantial day-to-day functional limitations resulting from your stated disabilities
4. Specific recommendations for your testing accommodation(s) including a detailed explanation of why the accommodation is needed. If the accommodation includes extra time, please indicate the amount of time requested.

Important Note: Additional information may be requested after a review of your information.

INTERNATIONAL TESTING

All ANCC computer-based exams are available globally at Prometric™ centers. You can find a specific location by going to www.prometric.com/ANCC and selecting “Locate a Test Center.”

If you are planning to take the exam at any of the international locations, some important information is provided below:

There is no change in either the eligibility requirements or registration and review process for exams administered internationally.

There is an additional fee of \$125.00.

Due to time differences, it is important that you have a viable email address or other means of communication in case ANCC needs to contact you.

Each international location has its own specific instructions on scheduling an exam. You can review the instructions at www.prometric.com/ANCC

Candidates will receive their test results on-site before leaving the center. If you do not receive your results, contact ANCC immediately.

Contact the ANCC Customer Care Center at 1.800.284.2378 or 301.628.5000 or certification@ana.org for details or additional questions.

INTERNATIONAL TESTING FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL

Military nurses wishing to take an exam outside of the United States may sit for exams at Prometric™ global testing centers.

PRIOR TO THE EXAM

The following information applies to all ANCC exams.

Any changes to the information submitted on your application form must be made within the time frames stipulated in this handbook and may entail additional fees.

ELIGIBILITY

All eligibility requirements must be met and all fees paid at the time you submit your application. Applications received with insufficient funds, missing eligibility documentation, or missing required signatures incur delays which can impact your ability to take a certification exam. See website for most recent eligibility requirements and fees. (Fees are subject to change without notice.)

SPECIAL TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

See page 12.

TEST SITES

You can locate exam test sites, addresses, and phone numbers at www.prometric.com/ancc

PREPARING FOR THE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

Study Plan: Approximately six months before you plan to take your exam, develop a study plan. This could include self study, finding a study buddy or group, taking a review course, taking an on-line narrated review course, reviewing current textbooks and articles, or other methods. The key is to have a study plan and follow through with it.

ANCC OFFERS THE FOLLOWING REVIEW MATERIALS

Test Content Outlines

You can find a complete test content outline on the ANCC website. This outline includes the number of questions for each domain of practice and identifies the areas that are included on the examination. www.nursecredentialing.org/cert/TCOs.html

Sample Questions

To practice actually taking the test, you can go over some sample questions. The questions are similar to those on the actual examination, but do not represent the full range of content or levels of difficulty. There is no time limit associated with reviewing these questions, and you can take it as many times as you wish, for free. www.nursecredentialing.org/cert/sampleQs.html

References

If you would like to do some additional reading, you might want to look over the list of authoritative texts. While the list is not all-inclusive, it may act as a guide to help you prepare. www.nursecredentialing.org/cert/refs.html

Review Seminars

Review Seminars for certification exams are available for many different nursing specialties at various hospitals and schools of nursing across the country. Participants receive contact hours. Seminar schedule and registration at: www.nursecredentialing.org/cert/revseminars.html

Study Groups

Using the content from the seminars, the faculty lecture on the material during several telephone conference calls scheduled during a specific time period. Look for the “Study Group” courses in the seminar schedule. Participants receive contact hours. Study Group schedule and registration at: www.nursecredentialing.org/cert/revseminars.html

On-Line Narrated Review Courses

ANCC’s On-Line Narrated Review Courses contain the same content as our popular Review Seminars, with the voice over of an instructor talking the student through the material. After you register for the course, you will have three months in which to complete the materials. Participants receive contact hours.

To help develop your test-taking skills, ANCC offers a web-based Test-Taking Techniques course for a nominal fee. This generic course offers no contact hours.

For more information and to register: www.nursecredentialing.org/cert/webcourses.html

Review and Resource Manuals

Written by nursing experts in each specialty, these manuals help candidates prepare for a variety of certification exams by enhancing your critical thinking skills and identifying strengths and weaknesses. Contact hours available on-line for an additional fee. Order manuals at: www.nursecredentialing.org/cert/revmanuals.html

AFTER YOU HAVE MAILED YOUR APPLICATION

Allow at least five business days after you mail your application for staff at ANCC to receive your application from the bank. This allows for bank processing of credit cards and checks, which occurs prior to your application being sent to the ANCC headquarters.

Within four to six weeks from the date you mailed your application, you will receive a Receipt of Application Notice in the mail. If you do not, call 1.800.284.2378.

Within ten weeks from the date you mailed your application, you will receive either an Eligibility Notice OR a letter requesting additional information OR a letter stating you are not eligible to take the exam. If you are not eligible, the letter will explain why, and you will later receive a refund minus the \$140 administrative fee.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If you have a change in your address, please call us at 1.800.284.2378 to inform us of the change, so we can assure you receive an authorization to test or admission ticket and test scores.

CHANGE OF LEGAL NAME

You must provide ANCC with a copy of the legal documents authorizing the change in your name. Mail to: ANCC Certification, ATTN: Name Change, 8515 Georgia Avenue, Suite 400, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3492. No faxes, please.

COMPUTER-BASED EXAMS

All ANCC examinations are computer-based and are offered through the Prometric™ testing system. The testing system is an international network of testing centers. Additional information about the location of test centers, including addresses and telephone numbers of each center, is available at www.prometric.com/ancc

Within eight weeks from the date you mailed your application, you will receive an Eligibility Notice or a letter requesting additional information. If you received an Eligibility Notice, it will give you 90 days during which to schedule and take your exam. Read it carefully and follow the directions.

Once you receive your Eligibility Notice, you can make an appointment with Prometric. You cannot schedule an appointment prior to receiving your Eligibility Notice or after the expiration date on your Eligibility Notice. Schedule as soon as possible for your preferred date and time. If you wait until near the end of the eligibility period, you may have to accept any appointment available.

You can schedule an appointment on-line at the Prometric Registration website www.prometric.com/ancc or by calling the Prometric Registration Center at 1.800.350.7076.

EXTENDING THE 90 DAY TESTING WINDOW

In the event that you are unable to test during the 90 day testing window, you may, one time only, request a new 90 day testing window. The non-refundable fee is \$100. This new testing window must begin less than 6 months from the last day of the initial testing window; requests should be received after the end of the initial 90 day testing period. If you do not test during your new testing period, you will need to re-apply as a new applicant, meet any new eligibility requirements, and pay all applicable fees. To make this request, please complete the Testing Window Re-Assignment Request Form (see page 36).

THE DAY OF THE EXAM

WHAT TO BRING ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM

When you arrive at the test center, you must present **one** form of acceptable identification from the list below:

- **Driver's license** issued by the Department of Motor Vehicle in one of the 50 states in the U.S., District of Columbia, or one of the U.S. territories;
- **State identification** issued by the Department of Motor Vehicle in one of the 50 states in the U.S., District of Columbia, or one of the U.S. territories;
- **Passport**
- **U.S. military identification**

Your identification must be valid (unexpired) and contain **both** your signature and recent (no more than 10 years old) photograph. All identification must be in English and signed in English. If you are currently serving in the U.S. military and are testing outside of the United States, District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories then you are required to provide valid U.S. military identification. If your valid military identification does not have **both** your signature and recent photograph you will need to provide additional identification that meets the aforementioned requirements. The only identification acceptable in test centers outside of the United States, District of Columbia and the U.S. territories is a valid passport for candidates who cannot provide valid U.S. military identification.

If you do not bring **one** form of acceptable identification (possibly **two** forms of acceptable identification, if testing outside of the U.S.) listed above, you will not be admitted to the test and you will be required to re-register and re-pay the examination fee. Your rescheduled test date must fall within your eligibility period.

It is not necessary for you to bring the ANCC eligibility letter to the test center and it will not be counted as an acceptable form of identification.

If you do not bring one form of acceptable identification listed above, you will not be admitted to the test and you will be required to schedule a new testing window for a fee of \$100. (See form on page 36.)

Do NOT bring any of these items to the testing center: books, paper, calculators, Kleenex, food*, drink*, water*, notes, cell phone, PDA, personal electronics* of any kind.

TIME OF ARRIVAL

You must arrive at the test center at least 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment time. If you arrive so late that your session cannot begin without interfering with the test center schedule, then you are considered a "no show" and your testing window automatically expires. You can request a one time only, new 90 day testing window. The non-refundable fee is \$100. This new testing window must begin less than 6 months from the last day of the initial testing window. If you do not test during your new testing period, you will need to re-apply as a new applicant and pay all applicable fees. To make this request, please complete the Testing Window Re-Assignment Request Form (see page 36).

* If you require an exception for medical reasons, please submit a special testing accommodation request as detailed on page 11.

LENGTH OF EXAM TIME

Total time is four hours, which includes time set aside for check-in, instructions, and a practice session on the computer. The actual time allotted for the test is 3.5 hours. Before starting the actual test, you may take a practice session that allows you to become familiar with the computer system.

After finishing the test, you will be asked to complete a brief survey before leaving the testing center. Completing this survey provides feedback to ANCC for quality improvement initiatives.

Any issues that occur at the test site that affect test performance must be reported before leaving the test center. These issues must be reported on the survey and to the proctor before leaving the test center. Please also call the Prometric Customer Care hotline at 1.800.350.7076 and ANCC at 1.800.284.2378 before receiving your test scores (i.e. do NOT accept your test scores on site after the exam).

RULES AND ADVICE FOR TAKING ANCC EXAMS

Biometrics are now in place for enhanced security. Your fingerprint will be scanned before testing and each time you re-enter the testing area. It is stored for 24 hours, then erased to ensure privacy.

Sufficient time has been provided for you to respond to all questions. You are advised not to spend an inordinate amount of time on individual questions until you have had an opportunity to respond to every question. Time is not intended to be a factor in the examination.

There is no penalty for guessing; you are encouraged to respond to every examination question. Computer-based exams DO allow you to mark questions you are unsure about and go back to them later.

All candidates will be checked in at the test site prior to being admitted to the examination room. You will be asked to place all personal possessions in a designated area. All ANCC exams are "closed-book." Books, paper, calculators, and other resources are not allowed. Test center administrators will issue scratch paper and pencils which must be turned in at the end of the test session.

No food or drink, including water, may be taken into the testing room. You may leave the testing room to use the restroom or get a drink of water, but you will need to sign out according to the instructions that will be explained at the test site. Your testing time will not be increased to accommodate a break. If you have a medical condition and cannot comply with this rule, then you must apply for special testing accommodations as described in this handbook on page 12.

Please verify that you have been given the correct examination that you are eligible to take. Check the title and examination code on the cover/screen of the examination to make sure they match with the information the testing agency sent you. If you fail to take the correct examination, your score is invalid.

The ANCC certification examinations contain 25 pilot or un-scored questions, which are scattered throughout the exam. Since these questions cannot be distinguished from the scored questions, it is important that you answer all the questions. However, your test results are based solely on the scored questions.

No test materials, documents, or memoranda of any sort may be removed from the examination room or retained. You may not copy any test questions or make any notes regarding the content of the examination. If you attempt to do so, your results may be invalidated and you may be prohibited from retesting.

All instructions given by the proctor must be followed in order to ensure proper processing of your examinations results.

You may not ask questions concerning content of the examination during the examination period.

During the examination, examinees must not give help to or receive help from other examinees. Proctors are required to report any incident in which there is evidence of irregular behavior. Any such reports could result in the invalidation of your test scores.

Confidentiality: You will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement; by signing it you agree not to release any details regarding the exam questions, including giving written or verbal information to colleagues, faculty, etc. Violation of that agreement can result in loss of certification and liability for civil penalties and damages.

Concerns about site or the process: If you have any concerns about the test site or the testing process, you **MUST** file a report with the proctor **before you leave the test site and before you receive your test scores.**

COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL FROM AN EXAM

Requests for permanent withdrawal must be received by ANCC before the expiration of the assigned 90-day eligibility period. You must cancel any previously scheduled appointments with Prometric in order not to be charged the full test fee. An administrative fee of \$140 and any special fees are nonrefundable. If you decide to apply for certification again, you must complete a new application, pay fees, and meet all eligibility requirements in effect for the year in which you reapply.

Send a written request for withdrawal to:

ANCC
ATTN: Exam Withdrawal
8515 Georgia Ave, Suite 400
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3492

AFTER THE EXAM

TEST RESULTS

All computer-based exams offer on-site testing results. This means you will receive a copy of your exam results before you leave the test center. If you do not receive a copy of your results at the center, please call ANCC at 1.800.284.2378.

To protect candidates' privacy and ensure no misinterpretations occur, scores are not released by telephone, fax, or email for any reason.

Your certification start date is the date you successfully completed the exam.

Your certificate and ANCC pin are mailed to you approximately eight weeks after you have successfully completed the exam. You will also receive an official letter from ANCC with your specific 5-year certification period.

A specialty certification pin (e.g. Adult CNS, Medical-Surgical Nurse, Adult NP), custom certificate frame, and additional certification recognition products can be ordered from the ANCC Certification E-Store www.nursecredentialing.org/cert/estore

EXAM SCORING

Exam scores are reported in a scale score format. Providing scale scores allows for standardization and comparison of examinee performance from year to year. Your scale score will be reported with either a pass or fail designation. If you fail, your score report will include diagnostic information for each content area of the test. For more information on raw scores versus scaled scores and information on diagnostic feedback, see Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

RE-SCORED TEST RESULTS

If you fail the exam, you may request to have your results re-scored. A \$30.00 non-refundable fee is charged for re-scoring. Submit your request in writing no later than three months after the exam date to: American Nurses Credentialing Center, attn: Re-Score, 8515 Georgia Avenue, Suite 400, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Requests received after the deadline are not accepted.

RETESTING

If you do not pass the examination the first time, you can obtain a copy of the Retest Application and policies at www.nursecredentialing.org/cert/retest.html or call Customer Care at 1.800.284.2378 for a copy. There is a one-time reduced fee for the first retest. Any additional retests require submission of a new application and full application fees. There is a minimum 60 day waiting period from the date you last tested. Retesting must be completed within two years of the initial test date. You are required to retake the entire examination. Go to the ANCC website for the most current retest policies.

RENEWING YOUR CERTIFICATION

As an ANCC board certified professional, you must meet specified requirements in order to maintain and renew your certification within five years. The purpose of certification renewal is to provide evidence that you have continued to expand your professional knowledge to demonstrate evidence of continual competence in your certification specialty. It also allows you to continue to use your ANCC credentials.

ANCC conducts role delineation studies (RDS) every five years to determine changes in practice. The results of the RDS may demonstrate sufficient changes in practice that may require the development of a new test content outline and a new examination. Based on the anticipated results from these studies, the Commission on Certification established the five-year period for renewing certification.

Helpful Hints:

Develop your five year plan to show evidence of continual competence requirements for certification renewal.

Visit the ANCC website on a regular basis to download the most current renewal application, because certification renewal criteria can change to reflect the current health care environment.

Provide ANCC with any changes to your contact information including a preferred email.

Maintain an active registered nurse license.

Warning: There is no grace period and no backdating. Certification renewal applications received after the certification expiration date will have a renewal period beginning with the date of approval and will therefore incur a gap in the certification dates. When there is a gap in certification dates, ANCC can not backdate a certification renewal to meet regulatory, reimbursement, or other requirements for practice. You will need to check with your state licensing board, employer, and/or the agency that is reimbursing your services to determine if you can continue to practice and/or receive reimbursement for services while you are in the process of reactivating your certification. If your employer or state board of nursing (SBON) requires certification in order for you to practice and your certification lapses, then the employer or SBON may no longer allow you to practice. Please submit the complete application when you renew - submitting a partial or incomplete renewal package will only delay approval of your certification renewal, resulting in a longer gap in the certification dates.

CERTIFICATION REACTIVATION

A lapsed or expired ANCC certification may be reactivated. There is no "grace period." The procedure to reactive your ANCC certification depends on the amount of time that has lapsed since the certification expiration date.

If it has been two years or less since your certification expired, you can reactivate your ANCC certification using a combination of professional development plus a minimum of 1000 practice hours for your certification specialty within the past five years from the date you submit your application. If you do not have the practice hours, then you can renew by professional development and retaking the exam. You will need to pay the certification renewal fee plus the additional reactivation fee. The 2009 reactivation fee is \$125.00. Applications received without the

correct fees and supporting documentation are considered incomplete and will delay the reactivation process.

If it has been more than two years since your certification expired and the exam is still offered, you can reactivate your ANCC certification by a combination of professional development plus retesting for your certification specialty. You will need to pay certification renewal fee plus the additional reactivation fee. The 2009 reactivation fee is \$125.00. Applications received without the correct fees and supporting documentation are considered incomplete and will delay the reactivation process. If your certification exam has been retired, this option is not available.

You will need to check with your state licensing board, employer, and the agency that is reimbursing your services to determine if you can continue to practice and/or receive reimbursement for services while you are in the process of reactivating your certification.

If you have multiple certifications that have expired, you will need to meet all certification renewal requirements for each expired certification and submit an application with the renewal fee and reactivation fee for each certification you are choosing to reactivate.

BACKDATING OF CERTIFICATION

When there is a gap in a certification dates, ANCC cannot backdate a certification renewal to meet any regulatory or other requirements for practice. Certification renewal applications received after the certification expiration date will have a certification renewal period beginning with the date of approval and incur a gap in the certification dates. Submitting an incomplete certification renewal application (e.g. missing pages of the application, insufficient professional development documentation, expired license, missing signatures, etc.) will delay the evaluation of your application. All missing information will need to be received and evaluated before a final decision is made.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How do I notify ANCC of changes in my address, email, etc.?

By calling our customer care center 1.800.284.2378

2. How do I notify ANCC of a name change?

You must provide ANCC with a copy of the legal documents authorizing the change in your name. Mail to: ANCC Certification, ATTN: Name Change, 8515 Georgia Avenue, Suite 400, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3492.

3. My hospital or organization wants all the nurses to take the exam at the same time in the same location. Can we do this?

Your hospital organization can request to become a special test site for a flat fee of \$480. This allows any eligible nurse in your hospital to take any of these exams in a paper and pencil format at a date, time, and place set by your organization: Ambulatory Care Nursing, Cardiac Vascular Nursing, Gerontological Nursing, Medical-Surgical Nursing, Pain Management, Pediatric Nursing, Psychiatric & Mental Health Nursing, Nurse Executive, Nursing Case Management, or Nursing Professional Development.

You can find more information on special test sites on our web site or by calling our customer care center 1.800.284.2378 or email ANCCspecialtestsite@ana.org.

4. What happens if my application is deemed ineligible to take an exam?

You will receive a letter from ANCC stating the reasons you were found not eligible and recommendations to become eligible. You will also receive a refund minus the \$140.00 administrative fee along with information about the appeal process.

5. Do I need to be computer literate to take the exam?

No. You have the option of taking a 20 minute practical tutorial to become familiar with the computer system before you start the exam. This exercise allows you to understand the procedures used to answer the questions and how to flag questions for later review, which can be done any time before the test ends. Time spent on the tutorial does not count against the exam time, nor does unused tutorial time add to exam time.

6. Can my eligibility be revoked or my exam results invalidated?

Yes. If the test center proctor determines that your actions violate exam procedures, or if it is discovered that information in your application is false.

You are reminded that, as stated on the application for certification that you signed, you agreed that "misstatement of any material fact submitted...may be sufficient cause for ANCC to bar me from the examination, to invalidate the results of my examination, to withhold certification, to revoke certification, or to take other appropriate action."

7. What if I decide to reschedule my computer-based test appointment?

If it is more than 30 days in advance, you may cancel an appointment on a timely basis without penalty before the scheduled session date by calling the test center directly or Prometric™ call center (1.800.350.7076). At the time of cancellation, be prepared to reschedule within your eligibility period.

There is a \$25.00 fee to reschedule or cancel an appointment if the change is made less than 30 days and up to 12:00 pm Eastern Time the 5th business day before your appointment.

If an appointment is canceled less than 5 business days before an appointment, you will have to schedule a new testing window for a fee of \$100 to reschedule your appointment. (See form on page 36.)

For Testing Centers outside the United States: Please consult the Prometric website.
www.prometric.com/ANCC

8. What happens if I miss my scheduled computer-based test appointment?

If you miss your scheduled appointment, then you are considered a "no show" and your testing window automatically expires. You can request a one time only, new 90 day testing window. The non-refundable fee is \$100. This new testing window may not begin more than 6 months from the last day of the initial testing window. If you do not test during your new testing period, you will need to re-apply as a new applicant and pay all applicable fees. To make this request, please complete the Computer-Based Testing Window Re-Assignment Request Form (see page 38).

9. If I find that I cannot take my computer-based exam during my initial 90-day period, can I request an extension?

Yes. You can request a one time only, new 90 day testing window. The non-refundable fee is \$100. This new testing window may not begin more than 6 months from the last day of the initial testing window; requests should be received after the initial 90 day testing period. If you do not test during your new testing period, you will need to re-apply as a new applicant and pay all applicable fees. To make this request, please complete the Computer-Based Testing Window Re-Assignment Request Form (see page 38).

10. What if I want to change my test site?

To request changes involving computer-based exams, call the test center directly or the Prometric™ call center (1.800.350.7076).

If it is more than 30 days in advance, you may cancel an appointment on a timely basis without penalty before the scheduled session date by calling the test center directly or Prometric™ call center (1.800.350.7076). At the time of cancellation, be prepared to reschedule within your eligibility period.

There is a \$25.00 fee to reschedule or cancel an appointment if the change is made less than 30 days and up to 12:00 pm Eastern Time the 5th business day before your appointment.

If an appointment is canceled less than 5 business days before an appointment, you will have to schedule a new testing window for a fee of \$100 to reschedule your appointment. (See form on page 36.)

For Testing Centers outside the United States: Please consult the Prometric website. www.prometric.com/ANCC

11. What if I want to withdraw from an exam?

To withdraw from an exam, send a written request for withdrawal to ANCC, Attn: Exam Withdrawal, 8515 Georgia Ave, Suite 400, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or call 1.800.284.2378 or visit www.nursecredentialing.org/cert/withdrawal.html for more detailed information.

Requests for withdrawal must be received by ANCC before the expiration of your 90-day eligibility period.

You must cancel any previously scheduled appointments with Prometric™ in order not to be charged the full test fee.

An administrative fee of \$140 and any special fees are nonrefundable.

If you withdraw from the examination and plan to reapply at a future date, you must complete a new application, pay fees, and meet all eligibility requirements in effect at the time you reapply.

12. What if a problem occurs related to the testing process?

On occasion, testing irregularities may occur that affect a group of test takers such as administrative errors, defective equipment, and natural disasters; these will be investigated and a decision will be reached.

If you experience a problem at the test site, you must report it on the survey onsite, to the testing proctor onsite, and by calling the Prometric™ (1.800.350.7076) and ANCC customer help lines (1.800.284.2378) immediately, before you receive your results.

Problems reported after you received your test results are not accepted.

13. How are exams developed?

Each examination is developed in cooperation with an individual Content Expert Panel (CEP) composed of carefully selected experts in the field. CEPs analyze the professional skills and abilities from role delineation studies or logical job analyses, which provide the evidence for the test content outline (also called test blueprint.)

Test questions are written by certified nurses in their discipline who have received training by ANCC staff in writing test questions. The test questions are then reviewed by the CEP with the ANCC staff and pilot tested to ensure validity and psychometric quality before being used as scored items on the actual examinations.

Examinations are assembled by ANCC staff in cooperation with the CEP. The validity and reliability of the exams are monitored by ANCC staff.

14. How are exams scored?

The number of questions on the examination is 150 scored test items plus 25 pilot test items that do not count on your score.

The raw passing score on an examination (e.g., 105 out of 150) is established using a systematic standard setting procedure that employs the judgment of a group of subject-matter experts in your nursing specialty. ANCC works in cooperation with the content expert panel to adopt the passing score which reflects the minimum level of knowledge needed in the specialty area to practice the profession safely. The raw passing score is then transformed to a scale score. See Question 15 for more information on setting a passing score.

A raw score on an examination refers to the number of test questions answered correctly. A scale score is a linear transformation of a raw score. Transforming a raw score to a scale score is similar to transforming your height from feet to centimeters. A scale score is neither the number of questions answered correctly nor the percentage of questions answered correctly.

For all ANCC examinations, a scale score of at least 350 on a maximum scale of 500 will be required to pass the examination. Raw score information will not be available to examinees.

For passing examinees, the score report will indicate the scale score achieved and "pass" status.

For examinees who do not achieve a scale score of at least 350, the score report will show the scale score achieved, "fail" status, and diagnostic feedback for each of the content areas covered by the examination. The diagnostic feedback categories are:

Low: The score you obtained for this content area is below an acceptable level. Substantial study of this content area is recommended prior to retaking the examination.

Medium: The score you obtained for this content area is marginally acceptable; however, further study of this content area is recommended.

High: The score you obtained for this content area is well above average; however, a review of this content area may be helpful to you prior to retaking the examination.

The diagnostic feedback is intended to identify content areas that contributed to a failing score. The purpose of the diagnostic feedback is to help failing candidates tailor their study for a future examination.

Please note, reporting the score in scale format does not affect the pass/fail status of a candidate. The pass/fail status is determined based on whether the candidate has correctly responded to the required number of items.

Scale Score	Interpretation
500	150 correct answers - perfect score
425	A high score
350	Candidate correctly answered the minimum number of items required to pass the exam
347	Candidate came very close to passing the exam
300	A low score

15. How does ANCC set a passing score?

To set the passing score for a new test form that is based upon an updated test blueprint – also known as a test content outline (TCO) – ANCC uses the Modified Angoff standard setting method. The Angoff Method is the method most widely used for determining the minimal passing scores of certification examinations.

The Angoff standard setting method is based upon a determination by a panel of experienced practitioners and educators of the level of difficulty of each test item. Judgments of item difficulty are made within the context of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are delineated in the TCO. These judgments of difficulty, also called Angoff ratings, are the panelists' estimates of the percent of minimally competent practitioners who will respond correctly to each test item.

The initial judgments are followed by the panelists' systematic choices about whether to modify each judgment, after reviewing candidate performance data and discrepancy indicators. The final Angoff score is calculated by averaging the judgments across test items and panel members to obtain the recommended passing score for each examination form. The passing score reflects the point of minimal competency for entry level as a certified practitioner.

16. How do I request a verification of my eligibility to test or verification of my certification?

Simply follow the instructions at www.nursecredentialing.org

17. Can I continue to use ANCC credentials when my certification is expired?

No. When your certification expires, you no longer have the authority to use ANCC credentials. Use of ANCC credentials without an active, current certification is considered fraud.

18. My colleague has an ANCC board certified nurse pin with the name of her specialty engraved on it. Where do I get one of those?

ANCC offers specialty pins, custom certificate frames, and other recognition items on www.nursecredentialing.org

19. I'm no longer working. What should I do?

If you would like to maintain an active certification and you do not have the practice hours to renew your certification, you can renew with a combination of professional development and testing. This does not apply when an exam is no longer offered.

If you are retired from the work force, ANCC has two recognition programs for nurses who have held any ANCC certification:

Pathfinder Circle: For a small fee, you will receive a new certificate and pin indicating that you are a retired board certified nurse.

Ambassador Circle: You can join this distinguished circle of colleagues to remain active in the profession. Individuals selected for this group become official representatives of ANCC certification.

More information is available at www.nursecredentialing.org or by calling Customer Care at 1.800.284.2348

20. How long until my certificate arrives?

A packet containing your certificate, wallet card, and lapel pin will arrive approximately eight weeks after passing your exam.

¹ Credentialing, Certification, and Competence: Issues for New and Seasoned Nurse Practitioners. *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*. June 2006. Volume 17, Issue 6.

² American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) Value of Certification Survey, March 2005.

³ AACN, 2002.

⁴ ABNS, 2005.

⁵ Nursing2006 salary survey. Volume 36, Number 10. Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins.

⁶ AACN, 2002.

ANCC CERTIFICATION 2009 PRICING CHART

INITIAL CERTIFICATION TESTING PRICES	2009 ALL EXAMS
Examination fee for American Nurses Association Members	\$270
American Association of Diabetes Educators Members – For Advanced Diabetes Management Exam Only	\$270
American Psychiatric Nurses Assn Members – For Psychiatric Exams Only	\$290
Discount Rate Organizations*	\$340
Examination fee for Non-Members	\$390

ADDITIONAL/SPECIAL FEES FOR INITIAL CERTIFICATION TESTING	CBT	PAPER & PENCIL
Special Testing Site	N/A	\$480 paid by site (Some CBT exams can be administered at special sites as paper & pencil tests. Call ANCC for details.)
Permanent Application Withdrawal / Deemed Ineligible to Test Fee	\$140	\$140
Change Assigned Test Date/ Testing Window	\$100	n/a
Verify Certification or Testing Eligibility	\$40	\$40
Re-Scoring	\$30	\$30
International Test Site	\$125	N/A
Replace Certificate	\$40	\$40
Returned Check Fee	\$35	\$35

RECIPROCITY PRICES	2008-2009 ALL EXAMS
American Nurses Association Members	\$270
American College of Nurse Practitioners Discount Rate – For Nurse Practitioner Reciprocity Only	\$340
Non-Members	\$390

CERTIFICATION RENEWAL PRICES (IF RENEWING BEFORE EXPIRATION DATE, USING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE HOURS OR TESTING)	2008-2009 ALL EXAMS
American Nurses Association Members	\$200
American Association of Diabetes Educators Members – For Advanced Diabetes Management Certification Only	\$200
American Psychiatric Nurses Assn Members – For Psychiatric Certifications Only	\$240
Discount Rate Organizations*	\$280
Non-Members	\$350

SPECIAL FEES/PRICES FOR CERTIFICATION RENEWAL	2008-2009 ALL EXAMS
Reactivation Fee (If less than 2 years expired, using professional development and practice hours or testing.)	Renewal price above plus \$125
Returned Check Fee	\$35
Permanent Application Withdrawal / Deemed Ineligible to Renew	\$140

*** Discount Rate Organizations List– Members of these organizations qualify for the Discount Rate for these specific certification exams.**

Certification Name	Discount Rate Organization Name
Acute Care Nurse Practitioner	American College of Nurse Practitioners
Adult Health CNS	National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
Adult Nurse Practitioner	American College of Nurse Practitioners
Adult Psych & Mental Health CNS	American Psychiatric Nurses Association International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
Adult Psych & Mental Health Nurse Practitioner	American College of Nurse Practitioners American Psychiatric Nurses Association International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
Ambulatory Care Nursing	American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
Cardiac Vascular Nursing	American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association Society for Vascular Nursing
Child/Adol Psych & Mental Health CNS	American Psychiatric Nurses Association International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
Diabetes Management, Advanced	American Association of Diabetes Educators American College of Nurse Practitioners American Diabetes Association American Dietetic Association American Pharmacists Association National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
Family Nurse Practitioner	American College of Nurse Practitioners
Family Psych & Mental Health Nurse Practitioner	American College of Nurse Practitioners American Psychiatric Nurses Association International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
Gerontological Nurse	National Gerontological Nursing Association
Gerontological Nurse Practitioner	American College of Nurse Practitioners Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association National Gerontological Nursing Association
Gerontology CNS	National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists National Gerontological Nursing Association
Pain Management	American Society for Pain Management Nursing
Pediatrics CNS	National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
Pediatric Nurse Practitioner	American College of Nurse Practitioners
Pediatric Nursing	None available
Psychiatric & Mental Health Nursing	American Psychiatric Nurses Association International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses

Public Health Nursing, Advanced	American Public Health Association-Public Health Nursing Section National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
Informatics Nursing	Alliance for Nursing Informatics
Medical-Surgical Nursing	None available
Nurse Executive	None available
Nurse Executive, Advanced	None available
Nursing Case Management	None available
Nursing Professional Development	National Nursing Staff Development Organization

These certifications exams are retired, but can be renewed if renewal requirements have been met. Collaborator discount organizations are listed below:

Certification Name	Discount Rate Organization Name
Cardiac Rehabilitation Nursing	American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation
Certified Vascular Nurse	None available
College Health Nursing	American College Health Association
General Nursing Practice	None available
High-Risk Perinatal Nurse	None available
Home Health Nursing	None available
Home Health Nursing CNS	National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
Maternal-Child Nursing	None available
Perinatal Nursing	None available
Public/Community Health Nursing	American Public Health Association-Public Health Nursing Section
School Nursing	None available
School Nurse Practitioner	American College of Nurse Practitioners



P.O. Box 791333
Baltimore, MD 21279-1333

1.800.284.2378
301.628.5000 tel
www.nursecredentialing.org

Testing Window Re-Assignment Request

If you are unable to test during the 90 day testing window you were issued, ANCC is now offering a one-time opportunity to receive a new testing window without re-applying.

Please Note:

- > **This new testing window may not begin more than 6 months from the last day of the initial testing window.**
- > **Please wait until your initial testing window has ended to send in this form.**
- > **This is a one-time-only offer. If you do not test during this new testing window, you will need to re-apply and pay all applicable fees.**

Please complete this form, include payment, and **mail** it to: **ANCC, P.O. Box 791333, Baltimore, MD 21279-1333**. When your request and fee have been received, you can expect to receive your authorization to test letter in two to three weeks.

Name (please print): _____

Address: _____

Exam: _____

Certification ID Number or Social Security Number (for identification purposes): _____

Requested 90-Day Testing Window: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Fee: \$100.00 (non-refundable)

Payment Method: Personal Check Money Order Credit Card

If you are paying by credit card, please complete the following: Visa MasterCard

Account Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Name as It Appears on the Card (please print): _____

Signature for Payment Authorization: _____

If you received special accommodations for your initial testing window and require them again, please initial here:

You may refer to our guidelines by visiting www.nursecredentialing.org or by calling 1.800.284.2378. _____

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association (ANA), provides individuals and organizations throughout the nursing profession with the resources they need to achieve practice excellence. ANCC's internationally renowned credentialing programs certify nurses in specialty practice areas; recognize healthcare organizations for promoting safe, positive work environments through the Magnet Recognition Program[®] and the Pathway to Excellence[®] Program; and accredit providers of continuing nursing education. In addition, ANCC offers an array of informational and educational services and products to support its core credentialing programs.

ANCC is the world's largest and most prestigious nurse credentialing organization. ANCC certification exams validate nurses' skills, knowledge, and abilities. More than a quarter million nurses have been certified by ANCC since 1990. More than 75,000 advanced practice nurses are currently certified by ANCC.

The ANCC Magnet Recognition Program recognizes healthcare organizations that provide the very best in nursing care and professionalism in nursing practice. The program also provides a vehicle for disseminating best practices and strategies among nursing systems. The ANCC Magnet Recognition Program is the gold standard for nursing excellence.

ANCC accreditation of a continuing nursing education program is the hallmark of quality. ANCC is the nation's leader in accreditation of continuing nursing education programs.

ANCC's Institute for Credentialing Innovation produces a variety of educational services and products to support those seeking certification, Magnet recognition, Pathway designation, or accreditation. Review and resource manuals, review seminars, and web-based learning all support individuals who are on the path to certification. National Magnet Conferences[™], workshops, and consulting services support organizations on the Journey to Magnet Excellence[™] and for those pursuing Pathway designation. Educational events and consultants are available to assist continuing nursing education accreditation programs in achieving the highest caliber education.

All programs of the ANCC are administered without discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender, health status, lifestyle, nationality, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

The American Nurses Association Center for Continuing Education and Professional Development is accredited as a provider of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

ANA is approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing, Provider Number 6178.



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