

# CERTIFICATION

## GENERAL TESTING AND RENEWAL HANDBOOK

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## ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This booklet provides a general overview of ANCC testing processes and procedures for those interested in taking an ANCC certification 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](http://www.nursecredentialing.org) or by calling 1.800.284.2378.

## ABOUT ANCC EXAMS

Most ANCC certifications are accredited by the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC) 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 certifications. ANCC APRN certification examinations are accepted by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) and state boards of nursing.

ANCC certification examinations are in a multiple-choice format, and some examinations include alternate test item types such as drop and drag, hot spot, and multiple responses. Examinations are offered at domestic and international test centers. They are designed to objectively assess entry-level competency in advanced practice registered nursing (APRN) and validate nursing practice specialties, as well as interprofessional practice in specialty fields.

All ANCC programs are administered without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, color, creed, disability, gender identity, health status, lifestyle, nationality, race, religion, marital status, national origin, citizenship, status as an Vietnam Era or special disabled veteran or other statutory or otherwise legally protected category.

## 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 voluntary. Certification validates an individual’s knowledge and skills in a defined role and clinical area of practice, based on predetermined standards.

## HOW ARE EXAMS DEVELOPED?

The ANCC certification examinations are developed consistent with the technical guidelines recommended by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education (AERA, APA, NCME; 1999). Additionally, the ANCC certification examinations meet accreditation standards of the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC) and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

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

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Test questions or “items” are written by certified nurses and interprofessional content experts in their discipline who have received training by ANCC staff in writing items. The items 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. ANCC adheres to a variety of guidelines during the development of items to ensure that the items are appropriate for the specialty and certification level (e.g., APRN vs. RN). This includes editing and coding items, referencing items to the approved test content outlines and reference books, and screening items for bias and stereotypes.

Items for the examinations are selected that reflect the test content outline and item distributions. The validity and reliability of the exams are monitored by ANCC staff. Certification examinations are updated approximately every three to five years.

## HOW ARE EXAMS SCORED?

ANCC reports its examinees’ test score results as pass or fail. If an examinee fails, the score report includes diagnostic feedback for each of the major content areas covered on the examination.

ANCC examinations are criterion-referenced tests, which means that an examinee’s performance on the examination is not compared to that of other examinees in determining the examinee’s pass/fail status. In a criterion-referenced test, an examinee must achieve a score equal to or greater than the minimum passing score for the examination. The minimum passing score represents the absolute minimum standards that the examinee must achieve to demonstrate the ability to practice the profession safely and competently. With the guidance of a measurement expert (e.g., a psychometrician), a panel of subject matter experts in the nursing specialty sets the minimum passing score for each ANCC examination. In setting the minimum passing score, ANCC uses the Modified Angoff Method, which is well-recognized within the measurement field.

Each exam contains between 150 to 175 scored test items plus 25 pilot test items that do not count towards the final score. For specific information on the number of items each exam contains, please refer to the test content outline associated with that exam.

Scores on ANCC examinations are reported on a scale with a maximum possible score of 500. To pass the ANCC examination, an examinee must achieve a scale score of 350 or higher. Prior to conversion of an examinee’s score to this scale, the examinee’s raw score on the examination is determined, which is simply the number of test items that the examinee answered correctly (e.g., 105 out of 150). The raw score is then converted to a scale score, using a conversion formula.

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, prior to retaking the examination.
- 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.

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## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIAL CERTIFICATION

You must meet all the eligibility requirements for the certification exam you are seeking to take. If you do not meet all the eligibility requirements when you apply, you will not be permitted to take a certification examination. The specific eligibility requirements for your certification are available at [www.nursecredentialing.org/certification.aspx#specialty](http://www.nursecredentialing.org/certification.aspx#specialty).

**For exams that require academic transcripts for eligibility:** transcripts must be original documents, in sealed envelopes directly from the university registrar's office, and must include the degree-awarded date (degree-conferral date)\*. Official transcripts may be sent electronically directly from the university registrar's office to [aprnvalidation@ana.org](mailto:aprnvalidation@ana.org).

*APRN certification candidates may be authorized to sit for the examination after all coursework and faculty-supervised clinical practice hours for the degree is complete, prior to degree conferral and graduation, provided that all other eligibility requirements are met. Please note, the Validation of Education Form and official/unofficial transcripts showing that coursework (and faculty-supervised clinical practice hours) is completed are required **before** authorization to test will be issued. ANCC will retain the candidate's exam result and will issue certification on the date the requested documents are \*received, all eligibility requirements are met, and a passing result is on. Unofficial transcripts are defined as a copy of a transcript, comprehensive record of your academic progress or a print out of all work completed - to date; including coursework, grades and degree(s) earned or in progress - which will allow ANCC to process and review your application.*

*For exams that require academic transcripts for eligibility: transcripts must be original documents, and must include the degree-awarded date (degree-conferral date)\*. Official transcripts may be sent, as follows:*

- *by mail, in original sealed envelopes, directly from the university registrar's office*
- or**
- *electronically, emailed directly from the university registrar's office or sent electronically via an online transcript delivery service to [aprnvalidation@ana.org](mailto:aprnvalidation@ana.org).*

For Authorization to sit for the exam, **prior to degree conferral and graduation**, ANCC will accept unofficial transcripts via email; to [APRNValidation@ana.org](mailto:APRNValidation@ana.org) or mail, to ANCC, PO Box 8785, Silver Spring, MD 20907-8785. However, ANCC will retain the candidate's exam result and will issue certification on the date the final, degree-conferred and official transcript are received, all other eligibility requirements are met, and a passing result is on file. All practice requirements must have been met while holding an active professional license (RN licensure for nursing certifications or applicable license, certification, registration or organizational documentation for interprofessional specialties) license in a U.S. 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 OR working outside of the nursing or interprofessional specialty field do not qualify as part of the practice hour requirement. Practice hours may be either part of your employment or voluntary. An UNOFFICIAL transcript, as defined by ANCC, is a comprehensive record of your academic progress or a print out of all work completed - to date; including coursework, grades and degree(s) earned or in progress - which will allow ANCC to process and review your application. It can be either a copy of a transcript issued to you directly by your school or an electronic copy downloaded from your school's website. ANCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT THAT APPEARS TO BE ALTERED\*.

\*The altering, creating, otherwise falsifying or tampering with university records, or otherwise misrepresenting one's academic accomplishments, awards or credentials could result in the denial, suspension or revocation for cause of your ANCC certification. This includes, but is not limited to, altering or creating an academic transcript and unauthorized use of university documents including letterhead and/or school seal.

All fees must be paid at the time your application is submitted to ANCC. Applications received with insufficient funds delay the review of your application for eligibility and delay your ability to schedule and take a certification examination.

Applications received with missing documentation (including signatures) delay the review of your application for eligibility and delay your ability to schedule and take a certification examination.

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## SPECIAL TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

The 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 a report regarding your request from your physician or a qualified healthcare professional. 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:

- ▶ A specific diagnosis and date of your diagnosis
- ▶ Specific and current findings that support your diagnosis (relevant medical history, tests administered, date of the most current evaluation, within the last 3 years)
- ▶ A description of your substantial day-to-day functional limitations resulting from your stated disabilities
- ▶ 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.*

Please wait for confirmation of special accommodations **BEFORE** scheduling a testing appointment as special accommodations cannot be added to an existing testing appointment.

## INTERNATIONAL TESTING

ANCC exams are available internationally. For test center locations, please visit [www.prometric.com/ANCC](http://www.prometric.com/ANCC).

- ▶ **If you are licensed outside the US:** Please have the RN or interprofessional license verified for equivalency by a credentials evaluation organization, such as CGFNS prior to application.
- ▶ **If you were educated outside the US and the exam requires a degree (NON-APRN only)\*:** Please have degrees verified for equivalency by a credentials evaluation organization, such as CGFNS prior to application. This applies to nurses licensed inside and outside of the US.
- ▶ **If you are an APRN (Clinical Nurse Specialist and Nurse Practitioner) applicant:** Candidates must meet all current eligibility requirements. This includes: hold a master's, postgraduate, or doctoral degree\* from a program accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) (formerly NLNAC: National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission). ANCC does not accept individual course-by-course evaluations of programs.

*\*This applies to nurses licensed both inside and outside the US.*

Contact the ANCC Customer Care Center at 1.800.284.2378 or 301.628.5000 or [certification@ana.org](mailto:certification@ana.org) or by sending an email inquiry to [certification@ana.org](mailto:certification@ana.org) for details or if you have additional questions.

## TEST SITES

You can locate exam test sites, addresses, and phone numbers at [www.prometric.com/ANCC](http://www.prometric.com/ANCC).

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## PREPARING FOR THE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

Each certification exam has a test content outline, reference list, and sample questions available for free to prepare you for the examination.

### Study Plan

Approximately 6 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 online narrated review course, reviewing current textbooks and articles, or other methods. The key is to have a study plan and follow through with it.

### Test Content Outlines

You can find a complete test content outline on the ANCC Web site. The test content outline includes the number of questions for each domain of practice and identifies the areas that are included on the examination.

### Sample Questions

To practice, you can answer sample questions that 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 the sample questions, and you can review them as many times as you wish, for free.

### References

For 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.

## RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION

ANCC Record Retention Policy is to collect and maintain all records necessary to fulfill the legal requirements for record retention and disposition. This includes all information submitted in support of initial certification and certification renewal. The names of candidates for a test or names of individuals failing a test or individual test scores are not released.

Certificant and Candidate information and certification test results are maintained indefinitely in the ANCC Certification database, Personify. The records are password protected and accessible only to staff involved with the certification process. Information from hard copy applications or supporting documents is manually entered into Personify and the document imaged for storage on a password protected secure site. Supporting documents include but are not limited to transcripts, licenses, membership cards, or written communications.

ANCC maintains records of submitted hard copy documentation for a minimum of five years. In addition, ANCC maintains electronic records of all customer activity and online applications within its database system.

## MAINTAINING YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

### Change of Address

If you have a change to any of your contact information, please call us at 1.800.284.2378 or update in your account through your ANCC Login on **[www.nursecredentialing.org](http://www.nursecredentialing.org)** or email us at **[certification@ana.org](mailto:certification@ana.org)** to inform us of the change, so you can ensure you receive all correspondence.

**Failure to maintain current contact information with ANCC will result in your missing critical updates.**

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## Change of Legal Name

Requests for legal name change due to marriage, divorce, or a court-approved legal name change must be sent in writing with a copy of the marriage certificate, divorce decree, court-approved legal name change document or updated (and most recent) copy of your driver's license or state-issued identification card, reflecting the name change. For clinicians who have applied in the past under one name and are currently applying under a different name, please note that ANCC requires copies of legal name change documents before proceeding with the application review process.

Send a request for legal name change, by mail or email, with accompanying documentation to:

ANCC Certification  
ATTN: Name Change  
8515 Georgia Avenue, Suite 400  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Email: [certification@ana.org](mailto:certification@ana.org)

If you are currently certified and have already been issued a wall certificate but wish to order a duplicate wall certificate with your new legal name, please send a completed Duplicate Wall Certificate Order Form: [www.nursecredentialing.org/Certification/CertificationPolicies/WallOrderCertificationForm.aspx](http://www.nursecredentialing.org/Certification/CertificationPolicies/WallOrderCertificationForm.aspx) with payment, to:

ANCC Certification  
ATTN: Duplicate Wall Certificate  
P.O. Box 8785  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

## SCHEDULING A TEST DATE

All ANCC examinations are computer-based and 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 the address and telephone number of each center, is available at [www.prometric.com/ANCC](http://www.prometric.com/ANCC). ANCC delivers its certification examinations via computer-based testing, year round.

After you receive an Authorization to Test Notice, you will have 90 days to make an appointment with Prometric to take the test. You cannot schedule an appointment prior to receiving your Authorization to Test Notice or after the expiration date on your Authorization to Test Notice. Schedule as soon as possible for your preferred date and time, and provides you with the flexibility to schedule your examination based on your religious, personal or other needs. If you wait until near the end of the eligibility period, you may have to accept any appointment available.

You can schedule an appointment online at the Prometric Registration Web site at [www.prometric.com/ANCC](http://www.prometric.com/ANCC) or by calling the Prometric Registration Center at 1.800.350.7076.

There is no reschedule and cancellation fee for candidates who reschedule or cancel more than 2 days prior to their appointment. If candidates cancels in less than 2 days, they forfeit their testing fee.

## 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 exam re-assignment 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 reapply 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 at [www.nursecredentialing.org/ReAssignmentRequestForm.aspx](http://www.nursecredentialing.org/ReAssignmentRequestForm.aspx).

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## THE DAY OF THE EXAM

### What to Bring

When you arrive at the test center, you must present one form of acceptable identification from the list below (no photocopies will be accepted):

- ▶ Driver's license issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles in one of the 50 states in the United States, the District of Columbia, or one of the U.S. territories
- ▶ State identification issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles in one of the 50 states in the United States, the 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 a 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 the United States, the 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 a 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, the 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 United States) listed above, you can substitute an official ID that does not contain a signature plus a secondary ID that does contain a signature.

If you do not bring acceptable ID, you will not be admitted to the test and your eligibility window will end. You will be required to submit additional documentation and fees in order to schedule a new testing date. Please, contact ANCC for details.

It is not necessary for you to bring the ANCC Authorization to Test Notice to the test center, and it will not be counted as an acceptable form of identification. ANCC partners with Prometric to deliver its certification examinations and endorses and supports the Prometric procedures in the administration (security and standardized testing) of ANCC examinations.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Once at the test center, you should expect the following, upon check-in (and upon return from breaks):

- ▶ Signing into the test center log book
- ▶ Visual inspection of eyeglasses, jewelry, hair and other accessories
- ▶ (For APRN candidates only) Electronic Biometric capture (fingerprint)
- ▶ Locker Key Tag
- ▶ Dry-erase Board, for note taking
- ▶ Scanning, with metal detector

### Restrictions

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

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Use of a cellular phone or other electronic or other devices is strictly prohibited and will result in dismissal from the examination and additional actions by ANCC.

No documents or notes of any kind may be removed from the examination room, and such removal may result in dismissal from the examination and additional actions by ANCC.

No questions concerning the test content may be asked during the examination, and asking questions may result in dismissal from the examination and additional actions by ANCC. All candidates will be required to remove their eyeglasses for visual inspection by a Prometric Test Center Associate (TCA). Other items subject to a visual inspection include (but are not limited to) jewelry, neckwear, hair and other accessories worn by candidates.

## Time of Arrival

You must arrive at the test center at least 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment time. If your arrival is so late that your session would interfere with the test center schedule, you will be considered a “no show” and your testing window will automatically expire. You will be required to submit additional documentation and fees in order to schedule a new testing date. Please contact ANCC for details.

## Length of Time for Exam

Total time for most exams is 4 hours, which includes time set aside for check-in, instructions, and a practice session on the computer. The actual time allotted for most tests is 3.5 hours. Please refer to the individual certification page at [www.nursecredentialing.org](http://www.nursecredentialing.org) for the total time allotted for your exam. 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 to the Test Center Administrator (TCA) 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 or send an email to [certification@ana.org](mailto:certification@ana.org) to discuss concerns that affected your test experience.

## Rules for Taking ANCC Exams

- ▶ 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 instructions given by the proctor must be followed in order to ensure proper processing of your examination results.
- ▶ All candidates will be checked-in at the test site prior to being admitted to the examination room. You are required to place all personal possessions in a designated area.
- ▶ All ANCC exams are “closed book.” Books, paper, calculators, PDAs, cell phones, or electronic or other devices or resources are not allowed. Test center administrators will issue and dry-erase boards that must be turned in at the end of the test session. Failure to follow these instructions can result in your scores being revoked and may prohibit you from retesting or taking other ANCC certification examinations.
- ▶ 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 will be invalidated and you may be prohibited from retesting or taking any other ANCC certification.

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- ▶ 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, you must apply for special testing accommodations.
- ▶ 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 request to switch the examination you have previously applied for, (depending on the circumstances) there may be a \$100 administrative fee required to facilitate the change.
- ▶ You may not ask questions concerning content of the examination during the examination period.
- ▶ During the examination, you must not give help to or receive help from others. 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 and/or other sanctions.
- ▶ Additional testing center regulations are published on the Prometric Web page at <https://www.prometric.com/en-us/for-test-takers/prepare-for-test-day/documents/TestCenterRegulations.pdf>.
- ▶ Confidentiality: You will be required to sign a Statement of Understanding; by signing it you agree not to release any details regarding the exam questions, including giving written or verbal information about the test questions to colleagues, faculty, etc. Violation of that agreement can result in loss of certification and liability for civil penalties and damages.

## 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 to not be charged the full test fee. An administrative fee 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 at the time at which you reapply.

Send a written request for withdrawal to:

ANCC  
 ATTN: Exam Withdrawal  
 P O Box 8785  
 Silver Spring, MD 20910-8785

You may also submit a withdrawal request, via email, to [certification@ana.org](mailto:certification@ana.org).

## AFTER THE EXAM

### Test Results

All computer-based exams offer on-site testing results. This means you will receive a copy of your test 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 or send an email to [certification@ana.org](mailto:certification@ana.org).

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

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

*\* Please note: if your application is pending evidence of graduation/degree conferral, ANCC will retain your exam result and will issue certification and provide services described below on the date the requested documents are received and all eligibility requirements are met.*

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Your certificate and ANCC pin are mailed to you approximately 4 weeks after you have successfully completed the exam. You will also receive an official letter from ANCC with your specific 5-year certification period.

### Verification of Certification

ANCC provides primary source verification. Request your one free verification of certification at [www.nursecredentialing.org/certification/verifycertification.aspx](http://www.nursecredentialing.org/certification/verifycertification.aspx). Additional verifications of certification can also be ordered from this site. ANCC does not automatically send verification to your state board of nursing or employer. Please request the verifications you need.

### Exam Scoring

Test results are pass or fail. If you fail, your score report will include diagnostic information for each content area of the test.

### Retesting

If you do not pass the examination you may retest after 60 days from the date you last tested. You may not test more than three times in any 12-month period. All candidates who retest must submit a retest application and meet eligibility requirements in effect when the retest application is submitted. ANCC may require additional supporting documentation to determine eligibility.

To apply for a retest, please follow the instructions at this link: [www.nursecredentialing.org/Retesting](http://www.nursecredentialing.org/Retesting) or call Customer Care at 1.800.284.2378 or send an email to [certification@ana.org](mailto:certification@ana.org). You are required to retake the entire examination.

## RENEWING YOUR CERTIFICATION

Health systems technology, strategies, and research can change professional practice and health care, and this can become an issue for public safety. Due to these changes, the Commission on Certification (COC) established a 5-year period for certification. Renewing certification every 5 years provides evidence to the public that the nurse is meeting requirements for continued competence by updating his or her knowledge and showing commitment to lifelong learning. Certification can be renewed through various professional development and practice activities. Certification renewal may also permit you to seek continued licensure, reimbursement, and potential employer recognition. Certification renewal is required for continued use of your ANCC certification credentials. If you choose not to renew your ANCC certification, then you must cease using your ANCC credentials after your certification expiration date.

The current renewal requirements are available at [www.nursecredentialing.org/RenewalRequirements.aspx](http://www.nursecredentialing.org/RenewalRequirements.aspx).

### Helpful Hints:

- ▶ Visit the ANCC Web site on a regular basis to download the most current renewal requirements. Certification renewal criteria can change to reflect changes in practice or regulatory requirements.
- ▶ Develop a plan to show evidence of continual competence requirements for certification renewal.
- ▶ Provide ANCC with any changes to your contact information including a preferred email address.
- ▶ Maintain an active registered nurse license.

**Important Notice:** There is no grace period or backdating. Certification renewal applications received after the certification expiration date will have a renewal period beginning with the date of approval

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and will therefore incur a gap in the certification dates. When there is a gap in certification dates, ANCC cannot backdate a certification renewal to meet regulatory, reimbursement, or other requirements for practice or employment. You will need to check with your state licensing board, your 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. 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 reactivate your ANCC certification depends on the amount of time that has lapsed since the certification expiration date and exam availability. Please refer to the current Certification Renewal Requirements, posted on our website.

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.

## EXPEDITED PROCESSING OF CERTIFICATION APPLICATIONS

### Processing Time

To shorten this processing time to 5 business days, complete the **Certification Expedite Review Request Form** [pdf] and include the processing fee.

### Expedite Review Policy

All certification applications are subject to the same review and must meet all ANCC eligibility requirements. No eligibility criteria will be waived. Furthermore, if an application is incomplete or ANCC requires additional information to determine eligibility for certification, the review of the application may not be completed within 5 days and additional delay may result.

### Fax Your Expedite Request

Please fax (do not mail) your Certification Expedite Review Request Form [pdf] to 301.628.5233. Mailing this form with your certification application will delay processing. If you both fax and mail it, you will be double-charged.

### Certification Verification

Please be advised that ANCC does not automatically send verifications to you, state boards of nursing or employers. ANCC encourages you to complete and fax the **Verification Request Form** [pdf] with the Certification Expedite Review Request Form to ensure the fastest verification processing time after your exam.

## APPEAL

Please refer to [www.nursecredentialing.org/CertificationAppealProcedure.aspx](http://www.nursecredentialing.org/CertificationAppealProcedure.aspx) for the policy on Appeal.

## DENIAL, SUSPENSION, AND REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION

Certification can be denied, suspended, or revoked for cause, including but not limited to the following:

- ▶ Failing to complete or provide evidence of completion of the requirements for initial certification, certification renewal, or reactivation of certification
- ▶ Failure to maintain the required professional licensure
- ▶ Determination that initial certification or certification renewal was improperly granted or that certification was improperly reactivated
- ▶ Falsification or misstatement of information on any certification-related document
- ▶ Providing false or misleading information
- ▶ Misrepresentation
- ▶ Cheating or assisting others to cheat
- ▶ Causing, creating, or participating in an examination irregularity
- ▶ Assisting others to wrongfully obtain initial certification or to renew or reactivate certification
- ▶ Failure to comply with the scope and standards of practice in an area in which ANCC certification is held
- ▶ Failure to comply with the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements or other applicable standards, related to the appropriate specialty or discipline
- ▶ Conduct unbecoming of the applicable specialty's profession

### Reporting Revocation

- ▶ To Licensing Authorities: Suspension and revocation of certification is reported to licensing authorities.
- ▶ To Others: ANCC may report suspension or revocation of certification to employers, legal authorities, third-party payers, and other third parties, including but not limited to, law enforcement officers or agencies.

### Misrepresentation of the ANCC Credential

If an individual is identified or recognized as misrepresenting themselves as certified when in fact they are not, the Commission on Certification has an obligation to take appropriate steps to protect the credential.

## HOW TO DISPLAY YOUR NEW CREDENTIALS

[www.nursecredentialing.org/DisplayCredentials-Brochure.pdf](http://www.nursecredentialing.org/DisplayCredentials-Brochure.pdf)





The mission of the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association (ANA), is to promote excellence in nursing and health care globally through credentialing programs. ANCC's internationally renowned credentialing programs certify and recognize individual nurses in specialty practice areas. ANCC recognizes health care organizations that promote nursing excellence and quality patient outcomes while providing safe, positive work environments. In addition, ANCC accredits health care organizations that provide and approve continuing nursing education.

ANCC's Certification Program enables nurses to demonstrate their specialty expertise and validate their knowledge to employers and patients. Through targeted assessments that incorporate the latest nursing practice standards, ANCC certification empowers nurses with pride and professional satisfaction.



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ANCC is the only nurse credentialing organization to successfully achieve ISO 9001:2008 certification in the design, development, and delivery of global credentialing services and support products for nurses and health care organizations.

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