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The American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board (AANPCB)

NP Certification is time-limited. Certification is valid for a period of five (5) years. Individuals certified by AANPCB will continue to be certified, credentialed, and recognized as a certified Nurse Practitioner by AANPCB as long as minimum requirements for renewal of certification are met within the 5-year period of certification and the certification does not expire. Individuals who allow their AANPCB NP certification to expire are not authorized to use the NP-C credential and may not represent themselves as being certified by AANPCB.

Vision, Mission, and Core Values

Vision - To be the leading organization upholding the highest certification standards for nurse practitioners in promoting high quality healthcare.

Mission - To provide excellence in professional nurse practitioner certification.

Core Values - Accountability, Quality, and Transparency are the core values that support the mission and vision of the AANPCB.

Purpose - The purpose of the AANPCB is to assess the knowledge and practice competencies of nurse practitioners required to provide safe and quality healthcare.

As a national nursing certification board, AANPCB:

- Is responsible for facilitating the application processes for Nurse Practitioner (NP) certification.
- Is responsible for providing a reliable, valid, competency-based examination for NPs to assess knowledge, skills and abilities for entry-into-practice.
- Provides initial certification of the Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (A-GNP) and Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) meeting eligibility requirements for certification by exam.
- Provides processes for renewal of certification for certified A-GNPs, FNPs, Adult Nurse Practitioners (ANPs), and Gerontologic Nurse Practitioners (GNPs) meeting requirements for recertification.
- Retired the GNP exam in December 2012 and the ANP exam in December 2016 to comply with the national Consensus Model for APRN Regulation: Licensure, Accreditation, Certification and Education.
- Launched its first specialty certification examination, the Emergency Nurse Practitioner Certification Examination, for certified Family Nurse Practitioners (ENP) working in emergency care settings in January 2017. The ENP...
examination meets the requirements of the Consensus Model for both specialty certification and APRN role/population-focused competencies. ENPs must maintain current FNP certification to remain certified as an ENP.

About AANPCB

AANPCB was established by Dr. Jan Towers PhD, NP-C, CRNP, FAAN, FAANP in 1993 as the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Program (AANPCP) for the purpose of providing a valid and reliable program for the evaluation of individuals wishing to enter, continue, and/or advance in the Nurse Practitioner profession through the certification process.

Effective January 2017, AANPCP changed its business name and acronym from the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Program (AANPCP) to the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board (AANPCB). Because AANPCB offers more than one certification program, Certification “Board” more accurately represents and describes the full scope of the AANPCB certifying organization. While the name and logo changed slightly, the website domain and contact information remained the same. AANPCB is separately incorporated under the name American Academy of Nurse Practitioners National Certification Board, Inc. AANPCB is a nonprofit organization.

Board of Commissioners (BOC)

AANPCB is an independent, nonprofit organization governed by a Board of Commissioners (BOC) composed of dedicated, knowledgeable, and experienced NPs representative of the certificant population. Commissioner names are published on the certification website. The BOC governs all of the major decisions affecting the certification programs and processes, and offers input and guidance into organizational decisions. Elections for the Commissioners are held annually in October; all active AANPCB Certificants are eligible to vote. One public member (who is not a healthcare professional) is appointed to represent and protect the public.

Accreditation, Recognition, and Affiliation

Accreditation

The A-GNP and FNP certification programs offered by AANPCB are accredited by both the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification, Inc. (ABSNC) and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). Changes to certification programs align with certification accreditation standards promulgated by ABSNC and NCCA.

The Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification, Inc. (ABSNC), formerly known as the ABNS Accreditation Council, is the only accrediting body specifically for nursing certification. ABSNC accreditation provides a peer review mechanism that allows nursing certification organizations to obtain accreditation of their certification programs by demonstrating compliance with the highest quality standards available in the industry.

The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), the accrediting body of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE), serves to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the public through the accreditation of certification programs and organizations that assess professional competence. Accreditation by NCCA indicates AANPCB compliance with the NCCA Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs.

Recognition

AANPCB certifications are recognized by all U.S. Boards of Nursing, Canadian provincial nurse regulators, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Veterans Administration, private managed care organizations, institutions, and health care agencies for credentialing purposes.

Membership Organization Affiliation

AANPCB is affiliated with two national nurse practitioner membership organizations. Affiliation with a membership organization is neither a requirement for, nor an indication of, certification. Certification and Membership organizations
are independent organizations, therefore, certification and membership account information is held separately by each organization.

**Certification numbers and membership numbers are uniquely different.** Please contact the membership organization if assistance is needed with membership, continuing education, or professional opportunities.

- **American Association of Nurse Practitioners** – AANP is the largest full-service national professional membership organization for NPs of all specialties. For more information, visit [www.aanp.org](http://www.aanp.org).

- **American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners** – AAENP is the professional membership organization for NPs who practice in emergency care settings and provide emergency care for patients of all ages and acuities. For more information, visit [www.aaenp-natl.org](http://www.aaenp-natl.org).

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**NP-C Credential**

**NP-C means “Nurse Practitioner-Certified”**

NP-C is the credential authorized for use by individuals who have met the standards, qualifications, and testing requirements established by AANPCB to indicate certification status.

- NP-C is the registered trademark owned by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners National Certification Board, Inc. First use was in 1999.
- The first letter of the population specialty (i.e.; Adult, Adult-Gerontology, Emergency, Family, or Gerontologic) precedes the certification number printed on both the official embossed certificate and the wallet card. The initial A, E, F, G, or A-G indicating population specialty is optional and precedes the NP-C credential.
- **Certification granted is time-limited.** Only certificants meeting requirements for renewal of their certification are authorized to continue to use the credential.
- The AANPCB Board of Commissioners has determined that a 5-year cycle of certification meets requirements to ensure continued competence based on review of literature and consultation with credentialing experts. This decision is reviewed periodically in conjunction with subsequent practice analyses.

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AANPCBs Nurse Practitioner Certifications — 1993 to present

Adult Nurse Practitioner (ANP)
The Adult Nurse Practitioner examination was one of the first NP certification programs developed by AANPCB and launched January 1994. The ANP examination was retired in December 2016 to meet the regulatory requirements of the Consensus Model for role and population foci. *Individuals certified by AANPCB as an ANP will continue to be certified and recognized as an Adult Nurse Practitioner as long as current requirements for renewal of certification are met and the certification does not expire.* ANPs should check with their individual State Boards of Nursing for further requirements or stipulations regarding practice as an ANP practitioner.

Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)
The Family Nurse Practitioner certification program also launched in 1994. The examination tests clinical knowledge in family/individual across the life span (prenatal, pediatric, adolescent, adult, elderly, and frail elderly primary care).

Gerontological Nurse Practitioner (GNP)
The Gerontological Nurse Practitioner certification program initial exam administration was in 2007. The GNP certification examination was retired in December 2012 to meet the regulatory requirements of the Consensus Model for role and population foci. *Individuals certified by AANPCB as a Gerontological Nurse Practitioner will continue to be certified and recognized as a NP-C as long as current requirements for renewal of certification are met and the certification does not expire.* GNPs should check with their individual State Boards of Nursing for further requirements or stipulations regarding practice as a Gerontological Nurse Practitioner.

Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner (A-GNP)
The Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner certification program’s initial exam administration was January 2013. The AGNP examination tests clinical knowledge of young adults (including adolescents and emancipated minors), adults, elderly, and frail elderly in the population-focus of adult-gerontology primary care. *Certificants who are dual-certified by AANPCB as both an ANP and a GNP are eligible to apply for conversion of the certifications to the A-GNP.*

Emergency Nurse Practitioner Specialty Certification for FNPs (ENP)
AANPCB collaborated with the American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners (AAENP) in 2016 to develop the Emergency Nurse Practitioner Specialty Certification Examination for certified Family Nurse Practitioners who work in emergency care areas. The first examinations were administered on January 2nd, 2017. NPs certified by AANPCB as an ENP must maintain active certification as a Family Nurse Practitioner in order to renew ENP certification.
General Information

What is a “Certificant”? An individual who is board-certified by AANPCB is referred to as a Certificant, indicating the following requirements for certification have been and continue to be met:
• Specific educational requirements that assess national competencies of the APRN core, NP role, and population focus area of practice.
• Demonstration of professional knowledge in the NP role and population focus by successful passing the national certification examination.
• Current registered nurse licensure.
• Maintenance of Continuing Competence in the NP profession by acquiring new knowledge in the professional role on an ongoing basis and renewal of certification via an established certification renewal process.

General Principles/ Standards of Conduct
Applicants, Candidates, and Certificants must:
• Be truthful, forthcoming, prompt, and cooperative in their dealings with AANPCB;
• Be in continuous compliance with AANPCB policies;
• Respect AANPCB intellectual property rights;
• Abide by AANPCB and the testing vendor test administration rules;
• Abide by laws related to advanced nursing practice and to general public health and safety; and
• Conduct their professional work in a competent manner.

Scope and Standards of Practice
• Scope of Practice for Nurse Practitioners and Standards of Practice for Nurse Practitioners established by the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP).
• Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice (American Nurses Association).
• Holding the NP-C credential does not confer any permission to manage patients beyond the scope of the individual’s professional practice. Boundaries of professional practice are determined by each state or territory’s Nurse Practice Act that guide and govern nursing practice. Job functions are determined by the employing agency, not the credential.
• Specific age parameters are not defined for any population on AANPCB examinations. The Consensus Model for APRN Regulation does not define age parameters for any of the population foci, therefore, growth and development are used as the basis of age-related changes for constructing the certification exams and for NP practice. (See Certificant Handbook: Examination Blueprint Domains, pgs. 23 and 26). Legal scope of practice is defined by state boards of nursing in their nurse practice acts.

Certificant Responsibility
• It is the Certificant’s professional responsibility to renew their certification before their certification expires.
• NP certification expires automatically at the end of the 5-year certification period.
• Individuals who allow their certification to expire may not represent themselves as being certified by AANPCB as a nurse practitioner. Renewal is required for continued use of the credential.
• It is the Certificant’s professional responsibility to stay abreast of changes in NP certification and renewal requirements, and to recertify in a timely manner. Valid dates of the credential should be monitored.
• Certificants are responsible for updating their online account and profile, or notifying AANPCB of changes to their contact information. Failure to keep AANPCB informed of current contact information and email address may result in non-receipt of important information (e.g., program changes, or renewal notices).
• NPs dual-certified as a Family Nurse Practitioner and an AANPCB-certified Emergency Nurse Practitioner who allow their FNP certification to expire, may not represent themselves as being certified by AANPCB as an ENP.
• Subscribe to the Scope of Practice for Nurse Practitioners and Standards of Practice for Nurse Practitioners established by the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP), and the Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice (American Nurses Association).

Online Profile
• Applicants are responsible for creating their Online Profile account at www.aanpcert.org.
• Documents can be uploaded, application status viewed, and printable wallet card accessed online.
• It is important that Certificants update their Online Profile or notify AANPCB of changes to their contact information during their period of certification. Contact information, such as a change of name or address, may be updated online by the Certificant.
• Certificants are responsible for updating their Online Profile or notifying the certification program of changes to their legal name or contact information.

Name and Address Changes
• Changes may be made to name and contact information by the Certificant at any time by logging into their Online Profile with their username and password.
• If a Certificant is recertifying by examination, it is recommended that a name change request be made after they have sat for their examination and received notification of test status to avoid problems with identification documents at the testing center.
• A Request for Change of Name, Address, or Certification Status Form may be found online. The form may be submitted via email, fax, or mail to the AANPCB office. Please allow five business days from time of receipt for processing of mailed, emailed, or faxed requests for changes to name or contact information.
• In the event of a legal name change, a copy of supporting documentation (e.g., court record, marriage license) providing proof of the name change must accompany the Request for Change of Name, Address, or Certification Status Form.
• Certificants are responsible for updating their Online Profile or notifying the certification program of changes to their legal name or contact information.

Correspondence sent from AANPCB
• As a courtesy, postcard reminders are mailed and an email reminder is sent to the certificant’s last known mailing and email address on file 12-months and 6-months prior to expiration of the NP certification.
• Reminders are emailed weekly from the database if an application is missing information.
• If recertifying by examination, the Eligibility-to-sit notification will be sent via email from support@psionline.com when approved to test.
• AANPCB notifies certificants by email of important certification information (e.g.; commissioner elections, changes to a certification program). General announcements are posted on the website.
• AANPCB is not responsible for email sent from the AANP or any other membership organizations.

Certification Fees
• Fees may be found on the Certification website www.aanpcert.org.
• Fees are shown in and must be paid in U.S. dollars, and are subject to change without notification.
• A paper processing fee is charged for paper applications received via mail, email, or fax.
• There is no charge for processing of supporting documents received by AANPCB for the purposes of certification and recertification (e.g., RN licenses, CEs, unofficial transcripts).
• Applications are processed in a timely manner, therefore, AANPCB does not expedite or charge an expediting fee for processing of applications.
Contact Us

Email is the preferred method for general correspondence. Copies of RN licenses, completed paper applications, and correspondence may be mailed, faxed, or emailed.

Email: certification@aanpcert.org
Fax: (512) 637-0540
Certification Administration: (512) 637-0500
Toll-free Number: (855) 822-6727
Mailing Address: AANPCB
P.O. Box 12926
Austin, TX  78711-2926

Overnight Delivery: If an applicant wishes to ensure that materials are received by AANPCB, it is recommended that a guaranteed courier delivery service be used and sent to:
AANPCB
2600 Via Fortuna, Suite 240
Austin, TX  78746-7006

Transcripts:
• May be sent to transcripts@aanpcert.org via secure electronic transmission from a University Registrar.
• May be mailed directly to AANPCB by a University Registrar in a sealed envelope.
• May be obtained from a University Registrar in a sealed envelope and mailed to AANPCB without opening the sealed envelope.
• Any transcript sent by an applicant electronically or by mail that arrives in an unsealed envelope is considered an unofficial transcript.

AANP CE Center and the Membership Organization

Certificants who are current members of a membership organization may have access to accredited CE activities.

American Association of Nurse Practitioners® – AANP is the largest full-service national professional membership organization for NPs of all specialties. The AANP CE Center, an online CE portal, has over 100 current accredited online CE activities in a variety of formats. All standard CE activities in the CE Center are free to current AANP members. AANP CE credit is universally accepted by all state boards of nursing and NP certifying bodies to meet NP CE requirements. For more information, visit www.aanp.org.

Affiliation with a membership organization is neither a requirement for, nor an indication of, certification. Certification and Membership organizations are independent organizations, therefore, certification and membership account information is held separately by each organization. Please contact the membership organization if assistance is needed with membership, continuing education (CE), or professional opportunities.

AANPCB is an organization independent from AANP (or any other membership organization) and does not have the ability to share information or access the AANP CE Centers or their certificates. Certificants are responsible for accessing and obtaining copies of their CE certificates and/or trackers for submission to AANPCB for their recertification application.
Eligibility Requirements and Renewal Options for NPs

1. Recertify by Clinical Practice Hours and Continuing Education
   - Meet minimum clinical practice hours and continuing education requirements in the certification role and population at the advanced level within the current 5-year period of certification.
   - Minimum 1,000 hours of clinical practice as a NP appropriate for the population of certification.
   - Minimum 100 hours of continuing education (CE) applicable to the population focus.
   - Minimum 25 of the 100 CE hours advanced practice pharmacology credits.
   - Precepting a NP or interdisciplinary student at the advanced health care professional level is an option that may be used at a conversion rate of max 120 preceptor hours, not-to-exceed 25 non-pharmacology credits.
   - Graduate level courses are accepted if the course content directly relates to advanced nursing practice for the population of certification. Courses are subject to approval.
   - Current, active registered nurse licensure in the US, U.S. territories, or Canadian province or territory.

2. Recertification by Examination
   - Take and pass the appropriate and available certification examination congruent with educational preparation. (Renewal of certification by examination is not an option for Adult or Gerontological NPs due to retirement of these examinations.)
   - Current, active registered nurse licensure in the U.S., U.S. territory, or Canadian province or territory.

Certificants whose Certification Program is Retired

Certificants who are dual-certified by AANPCB as both an ANP and a GNP are eligible to apply for conversion of the certifications to the A-GNP.

Adult Nurse Practitioner (ANP)
- The Adult Nurse Practitioner (ANP) certification examination was retired in December 2016, therefore, renewal of ANP certification by examination is not an option.
- ANPs currently certified through AANPCB will continue to be certified and recognized by AANPCB as long as recertification requirements are met and the certification does not expire.
- ANPs who allow their certification to expire are unable to recertify as an Adult Nurse Practitioner and will need to obtain further post-graduate course work to meet eligibility requirements to sit for NP certification.
- ANPs should check with their individual State Boards of Nursing for additional requirements or stipulations.
- It is required that the certification specialty align with the population area of an applicant’s education program. Certificants who completed an Adult NP program may or may not qualify to take the Adult-Gerontology NP (AGNP) certification examination and should contact their academic program to clarify if their ANP program met AGNP program requirements. Documentation from the academic program administrator may be required to confirm eligibility.

Gerontological Nurse Practitioner (GNP)
- The Gerontological Nurse Practitioner (GNP) certification examination was retired in December 2012, therefore, renewal of GNP certification by examination is not an option.
- Individuals currently certified by AANPCB as a Gerontological Nurse Practitioner (GNP) will continue to be certified and recognized by AANPCB as a GNP as long as recertification requirements are met and the certification does not expire.
- GNP s who allow their certification to expire will be unable to recertify as a GNP and will need to obtain further post-graduate course work to meet eligibility requirements to sit for NP certification.
- GNP s should check with their individual State Boards of Nursing for additional requirements or stipulations.
Renewal and Maintenance of Certification

Why Recertify?

- Renewal of certification provides both the process to validate a certification and a mechanism to assure the public that nurse practitioners certified by AANPCB have met current professional standards of qualifications and knowledge for practice required to maintain certification.
- Recertification assures the public and the profession that the certified NP undergoes periodic evaluation for an essential level of competence.
- Participating in advanced practice CE opportunities on an ongoing basis or preparing for the certification exam offers the opportunity for certificants to maintain or acquire new knowledge in their specialty area and to stay current with developments in the healthcare field as an ANP, AGNP, ENP, FNP, or GNP.
- Certification is granted and valid for 5-year periods only.
- **There are 2 options for renewal.** No Certificant is exempt from the requirement of recertifying. (See Grandfathering Policy).

As a certifying body, AANPCB meets the Standards for Accreditation of Certification Programs by both the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification, Inc. (ABSNC) and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). As the accrediting bodies, both have definitions for recertification and competence.

Continuing competence: “demonstrating specified levels of knowledge, skills, or ability not only at the time of initial certification but throughout an individual’s professional career.” (NCCA Standard 22, Nov. 2014)

The “requirements and procedures established as part of a certification program that Certificants must meet to maintain competence and renew certification.” (NCCA Standard 22, Nov. 2014)

“APRN certification measures entry level competence at a graduate degree level in role and population as described in the Consensus Model and associated national standards and competencies.” (ABSNC Standard 6, Oct. 2016)

“Continuing competence can be defined as the ongoing ability to integrate and apply knowledge, skills, judgement, and values to practice safely, effectively, and ethically in a designated role.” (ABSNC Standard 13, 10-6-16)

Rationale for Renewal Requirements

Minimum of 1000 hours of clinical practice through employment or as a volunteer in Certificant’s role (NP) and population-foci (Adult, Adult-Gerontology, Family, or Gerontological)

- Requiring advanced level practice hours demonstrates currency of practice.
- Faculty and directors of NP programs must maintain certification to be in compliance with the National Task Force Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs (2016).
- 1000 hours of clinical practice in 5-years allows individuals employed in administrative and faculty roles the ability to maintain NP certification with at least one-half day per week of direct clinical practice and approximates the number of hours of service and training required annually of military reservists.

Minimum of 100 contact hours of advanced practice continuing education (CE) in the role and specialty

- CE should build upon evidenced-based guidelines, national clinical standards, and specialty best practices; enhance ongoing professional development; and maintain knowledge and skills. This is consistent with NCSBN Model Nursing Practice Act and Model Nursing Administrative Rules.
- 100 hours of CE in 5-years meets CE requirements of most State Boards of Nursing for renewal of RN/APRN licensure during the most recent licensure period (which in most cases is a 2-year period).
Minimum of 25 of the 100 contact hours in advanced practice Pharmacotherapeutics

- The scope of a NP includes, but is not limited to, advanced assessment and diagnosis; and the prescription, selection, and administration of therapeutic measures including over-the-counter drugs, legend drugs, and controlled substances within the NP’s role and specialty-appropriate education and certification.
- The intent of requiring APRN-level pharmacotherapeutic content CE hours is to maintain the level and currency of knowledge for continued practice in the NP profession.
- Pharmacology CE must include topics such as current clinical application of pharmacology and pharmacokinetics, techniques of safe drug prescribing information, and drug specific information/therapy for treatment of common acute and chronic diseases across the lifespan.
- Is consistent with some State Boards of Nursing prescriptive authority requirements for APRN licensure renewal.
- CE certificates must show clear accreditation by an appropriate authorizing entity.

Option: Serve as a clinical preceptor.

- Clinical mentoring of students conducted at the advanced practice level, in the certificant role and population focus with graduate-level students is a valuable contribution to the profession. (See Precepting).

Option: Complete graduate level clinical coursework

- Graduate and post-graduate courses that promote and expand knowledge and skills are accepted if directly related to NP advance practice.
- Graduate and post-graduate courses must directly related to NP advance practice. Courses are subject to approval.
- CONVERSION: 1 academic semester credit = 15 contact hours
- A transcript is required and a course description may be requested.

Recertify by Examination

The rigor of AANPCB’s examination development process guarantees quality, competency-based, certification examinations. The ability to pass the current exam is, therefore, considered evidence of continued competence, thereby assuring current competence at the time of recertification by exam. The entry-into-practice level certification examinations:

- Are psychometrically sound and legally defensible;
- Are based on national role delineation studies which examine knowledge and skills required of certified nurse practitioners currently in practice;
- Are appropriate for renewal of certification despite changes in a Certificant’s practice settings over time;
- Provide evidence of attainment of knowledge, skills, and abilities required for NP entry-level clinical practice.
- Renewal of certification by examination is not an option for AANPCB-certified ANPs or GNPs due to retirement of the Adult NP exam (December 2016) and the Gerontological NP exam (December 2012).

5-year period of certification

- Certification is granted and valid for a 5-year period based on review of literature and consultation with test consultant and credentialing experts.
- 5-years is based on the outcome of practice analyses conducted.

Current RN license

- An active current RN license, another component of continuing competence, is required for certification.
Renew by Clinical Practice and CE

While every effort is made to process applications in a timely manner, applications received less than 8 weeks prior to the expiration date of the current 5-year certification period may not be processed in time due to volume.

- AANPCB does not expedite processing of applications or charge an expediting fee.
- To avoid automatic loss of information in the certification management system, an application must be completed within 30 days of starting it.
- Certificants are expected to provide evidence of advanced continuing education activity relevant to the NPs Role and Population.
- It is the Certificant’s are responsible for determining if the:
  - CE is relevant to the NPs specialty and role.
  - CE provider is accredited.
  - CE is acceptable for his/her national recertification and their individual SBON re-licensure requirements.

Application Process

- **On-Line Profile:** Applicants must establish an online account at www.aanpcert.org. Please allow 2 business days for linking of previous certification information with a new application if creating an online account for the first time.
- **Apply Online:** The preferable application process is an online process with electronic submission of supporting documents via fax, email, or mail for processing. Normal processing time for applications is 4 weeks depending upon receipt of a complete application, required documents, and applicable fees.
- **Apply By Paper Application:** A fillable PDF (paper) application is available for download under the tab Forms on the website. An additional fee is assessed for processing of a paper application. Download, save, complete, save, and submit it along with supporting documents via fax, email, or mail for processing. Processing time will be longer when using a paper application than using the online renewal method.
- **Required Documents** includes a record of NP clinical practice hours and work practice sites, CE certificates, RN/APRN license with current expiration date, and appropriate fee payment for processing an application.
- Applicants are notified by email once weekly if additional information is needed to complete an application.
- **Certificant Signature** (electronic or written) is required on the application for processing and confirms the Certificant’s attestation to meeting all of the renewal requirements and reading the current NP Recertification Certificant Handbook.
- All applications are reviewed for minimum renewal requirements and completeness, undergo professional review by qualified Nurse Practitioners, and are subject to Audit (See Audit Policy).

Clinical Practice Site Required Information

Clinical practice site information is required. An official detailed description from the employer of the clinical practice sites, duties, or activities performed may be requested.

- **NP Volunteer Work:** Clinical practice as a nurse practitioner in a volunteer capacity is recognized and accepted for recertification purposes.
- Faculty supervised, direct patient care clinical hours obtained as a student in a DNP or other post-graduate program may not be used.

Continuing Education Required Information

ADVANCED PRACTICE CE ACTIVITIES must be in the advanced practice role and must be approved by an accredited provider or approver of nursing or medical continuing education. CE credit varies with the activity.
• **Documents** submitted must include:
  - Certificant name
  - CE topic name
  - Program sponsor name
  - CE accreditor name
  - Date of attendance or completion (within the 5-year period of certification)
  - Number of non-pharmacology contact hours awarded
  - Number of pharmacology contact hours awarded

• **Required Pharmacology CE**
  - Minimum of 25 of the 100 contact hours in advanced practice Pharmacotherapeutics
  - Topics include current clinical application of pharmacology and pharmacokinetics, techniques of safe drug prescribing information, and drug specific information/therapy for treatment of common acute and chronic diseases across the lifespan
  - Must be documented separately by the agency offering the CE activity
  - Usually designated by: **Rx** (e.g.; Rx Contact Hours: 28.0)

• Documents submitted are audited for relevancy, hours, and accreditation by appropriate authorizing entities.
• CE activities completed outside of the 5-year period of certification will not be counted.
• Check with the **State Board of Nursing** in which licensed as an RN/APRN for additional licensure requirements.

**Continuing Education Unit**
The Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is a generic reference to all kinds all continuing education activities primarily used in academic settings where 1 hour of course time and instruction is equal to 0.10 CEUs, and 10 hours of equals 1 CEU.

• Continuing professional education activities must be reported in contact hours awarded by the recognized provider.
• Credit awarded is given for course overview, introductions, the educational presentation, and questions and answers included in a presentation.
• Time spent on general announcements, breaks, lunch, exhibits, or poster sessions may not be counted.

**Joint Accreditation Activities**
Joint Accreditation is the leading model of inter-professional collaboration that helps improve healthcare through continuing education for the inter-professional health care team. Formal Inter-Professional Education (IPE) Programs are organized in collaboration with the dentistry, nursing, medicine, pharmacy, or physician assistant student’s course faculty, academic advisory, and partners of a clinical site or organization and recognized. (See **Precepting**).

**CE Accreditation**
CE certificates must show clear accreditation by an appropriate authorizing entity. Continuing nursing and medical education activities must be accredited by, or be an approved provider such as, but not limited to:
  - Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)
  - Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME)
  - American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)
  - American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)
  - American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)
Acceptable CE activities for Renewal of Certification

Live Activities
A category of educational activity presented in a live format with time-limited availability.

- Conferences
- Webcasts
- Workshops
- Regularly Scheduled Series (Grand Rounds, M&M Conferences)

Enduring Materials
An educational activity presented in a format that can be retrieved on demand (i.e.; printed, recorded, computer-presented). CE is awarded for completing one entire occurrence.

- E-learning
- Journal-based articles
- Newsletters
- Non-live online activities
- Podcasts
- Printed materials

Continuing Education Providers
The following is a list of various acceptable, accredited, and independent organizations that may provide advanced nursing CE content for NPs seeking renewal through continuing education credit. This list does not imply endorsement by AANPCB, nor does it reflect in entirety all possible CE provider organizations. This list is provided as a resource and a courtesy for Certificants.

- American Academy of Dermatology (ADA)
- American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners (AAENP)
- American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA)
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)
- American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN)
- American Association of Diabetic Educators (AADE)
- American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)
- American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP)
- American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM)
- American College of Physicians (ACOP)
- American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM)
- American College of Surgeons (ACS)
- American Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)
- American Diabetes Association (ADA)
- American Medical Association (AMA)
- American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)
- American Osteopathic Association (AOA)
- Center for Emergency Medical Education (CEME)
- Institute for Nurse Practitioner Excellence (INPE)
- National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women’s Health (NPWH)
- National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP)
- National Certification Board for Diabetes Educators (NCBDE)
- Nurse Practitioner Associates for Continuing Education (NPACE)
State and Government Departments of Health

State Boards of Nursing
State Boards of Pharmacy
State Medical Associations

Various Online Providers of Evidence-Based Clinical Information

Audio Digest
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Training and Continuing Education Online (TCEO)
Clinical Advisor
Contemporary Forums
DynaMed
Journal publications (e.g., Clinical Advisor, Journal for Nurse Practitioners)
Medscape
The Medical Letter on Drugs and Therapeutics
Therapeutic Research Center/Prescriber’s Letter
Pri-Med
UpToDate (Provide a list of titles for educational programs claiming pharmacology credit for)

Available and acceptable NP Certification Review Courses

Advanced Practice Education Associates (APEA)
Barkley & Associates
Fitzgerald Health Education Associates, Inc. (FHEA)
Maria Leik Intensive Nurse Practitioner Reviews
Marye Dorsey Kellermann Educational Entitees, Inc.

Activities NOT ACCEPTED for Renewal of Certification by CE

Basic Life Support (BLS) course
Non-NP advanced practice academic courses
Other certification/credentials awarded
Elected office or serving on Boards and/or Committees
Articles or books written by the certificant
Journal clubs or professional reading
Presentations or lectures by the certificant
Posters and exhibits
Research

Advanced Life Support Courses ACCEPTED

Advanced Burn Life Support (ABLS)
Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)
Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO)
Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS)
Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP)
Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)
Precepting

Preceptor hours accrued during the 5-year period of certification may be used for renewal. Credit for Precepting is consistent with demonstration of continuing competence and professional involvement. Clinical practice hours providing direct patient care while serving as a preceptor can be claimed for a maximum of 25 non-pharmacology continuing education credits.

Preceptorship Hours

Hours must be conducted at the advanced practice level, in the certificant role and population focus with graduate-level students. Hours must be documented, verifiable, and conducted within the 5-year certification period. AANPCB reserves the right to request additional supporting documentation for validation of preceptorship.

Federal healthcare reform and national organizations (e.g., Institute of Medicine) have identified team-based care as a critical component of healthcare improvement.

Formal Inter-professional Education (IPE) programs are organized in collaboration with medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, or physician assistant student/resident course faculty, academic advisory, and partners of a clinical site or organization. Precepting as a member of a coordinated inter-professional health care team is accepted.

Precepting may be used to replace up to 25 non-pharmacology CE credits.

How to document preceptor hours

- Record preceptor hours on the Preceptorship Form located under the tab Forms at www.aanpcert.org and submitted with the application for renewal.
- Preceptor Site information must include the complete name, address, and zip code for each practice site.
- The Faculty Coordinator’s contact information for each student precepted must be complete.
- Complete as many forms as necessary to account for preceptorship sites and students.
- Incomplete Preceptorship Forms will result in delays in processing or not be used for CE credit.
- Forms must be signed and dated indicating that the Attestation Statement has been read and acknowledged.

Conversion of preceptor hours into CE credits

- Calculation of 120 clinical hours is based on being a preceptor 8 hours per week for one semester (i.e., 15 weeks x 8 hours/week = 120 hours).
- Use the Conversion Table to convert the number of clinical preceptor hours into CE credits.
Recertification by Examination

Examination Content Outline
Domains and Tasks (Examination Blueprint) for the Adult-Gerontology and Family NP certification examinations may be found in the A-GNP FNP Candidate Handbook located on the website.

Application Process for taking the Exam
- Certificants may begin their application process 12 months before the expiration date of their current certification. Applications must be submitted 120 days prior to the certification expiration date to allow sufficient time for testing and receipt of scores.
- Establish an online account at www.aanpcert.org. Online applications and electronic submissions are preferred. An additional fee is assessed for processing of paper applications.
- To avoid loss of information submitted, an application must be completed within 30 days once started.
- Normal processing time for applications is 2-4 weeks, depending upon method and receipt of a complete application, required documents, and applicable fees. Because applications are processed in a timely manner, AANPCB does not expedite processing of applications or charge an expediting fee.
- Certificants are notified by email once weekly if additional information is needed to complete an application.
- Applications are reviewed to determine qualification to take the examination and for completeness and undergo professional review by qualified Nurse Practitioners.

Eligibility-to-Test Notification from PSI: support@psionline.com
Applications are reviewed to determine qualification to take the examination and for completeness.
- When a Certificants becomes Eligible-To-Test (ETT), PSI will send the Certificants an eligibility confirmation email from support@psionline.com by end of business day. If NP program ends May 15, ETT letter sent by May 16. This ETT email will provide important instructions for scheduling a testing appointment at PSI Testing Centers.

Scheduling an Examination
- The certification examinations are administered at PSI’s Testing Centers via computer-based testing format.
- Testing centers are located throughout the United States and Canada and maintained by PSI Services, LLC (PSI).
- Certificants must create an account at PSI Exams online at www.psiexams.com before registering for an exam.
- Certificants receive a 120-day window to test. This window allows candidates the flexibility of scheduling their test around their personal schedule, employment schedule, religious needs, or any other issues without requiring the need for additional accommodations or forms.
- Download the AANPCB Candidate Information Bulletin at www.psiexams.com for scheduling procedures.
- The fastest and most convenient way to schedule a test is to schedule online on PSI’s scheduling website at www.psiexams.com. Certificants may also contact a PSI Customer Service Representative at (800) 211-2754 during PSI’s hours of operation.

Contact PSI regarding questions concerning examination administration and testing site regulations.
Important Testing Site Information

Visit [www.psiexams.com](http://www.psiexams.com) for the following information:
- Schedule an exam
- Required Identification for Exam Site
- Special Accommodations
- Testing Center Regulations
- Reschedule an exam
- Cancel a Scheduled exam
- Practice Examination
- Find Testing Center Sites near You

Examination Security Conditions

The certification examinations and all items on the examinations are the exclusive property of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners National Certification Board, Inc. Certificants who apply for the certification examination must acknowledge that they understand the following prior to taking the examination:

- Federal copyright law protects AANPCB’s examinations and the items contained therein.
- Retention, possession, copying, distribution, disclosure, discussion or receipt of any AANPCB certification examination question, in whole or in part, by written, electronic, oral, or other form of communication, including but not limited to emailing, copying or printing of electronic files, and reconstruction through memorization and/or dictation, before, during or after the certification examination is strictly prohibited.
- Theft or attempted theft of examination content is punishable by law.
- Certificants participation in any irregularity occurring during or after the examination, such as giving or obtaining unauthorized information or aid, as evidenced by observation or subsequent statistical analysis, may be sufficient cause to terminate participation, invalidate results of the examination, or necessitate other appropriate action per AANPCB Disciplinary Policy.
- Incidents regarding examination administration security will be reported to the AANPCB Board of Commissioners. Grounds for sanction may be warranted.
- PSI Testing Center Regulations may be viewed at [www.psiexams.com](http://www.psiexams.com).

IF YOU:
- Arrive late for your scheduled examination time;
- Do not cancel at least 24 hours before the scheduled examination date;
- Miss your scheduled examination appointment; or
- Arrive without required identification …

... YOU WILL:
- Not be able to take the examination as scheduled;
- Be responsible for paying any applicable testing center fees;
- Forfeit your fee and require a new registration number.
Exam Scores
AANPCB imports exam scores from PSI once weekly

- The certification examinations are criterion-referenced tests designed to assess knowledge required for entry-level practice as a nurse practitioner. In a criterion-referenced examination, a candidate must obtain a score equal to or higher than the “passing score” to pass the test. The passing score represents absolute standards and is determined using psychometrically accepted standard-setting methodology (modified-Angoff). It is a complex scoring system that assesses standards that define what minimally competent candidates would know and answer correctly.

- Exam results are reported as a “scaled score”. The total number of correct responses is called the total raw score. Total raw scores are converted to a scaled score ranging from 200 to 800 points using statistical procedures equivalent for all administrations of the examination. A minimum passing scaled score of 500 must be obtained to pass the examination. A candidate’s performance on the examination is not compared to the performance of others taking the examination. (The scaled score is neither a “number correct” nor a “percent correct” score.)

- Certificants may obtain a preliminary Pass or Fail status at the testing center upon completion of the examination. A preliminary report of Pass from the testing site is not official notification, does not indicate active certification status, and may NOT be used for employment or licensure as an NP.

- Examination scores are considered confidential information and will not be disclosed to anyone other than the Certificant without specific written instructions from the Certificant indicating to whom and why the information is to be disclosed. Results will not be given out by telephone, email, or fax. Neither AANPCB nor PSI staff have access to, or are able to discuss, individual questions with Certificants.

Certificants who pass the Examination

- Certificants who pass the certification examination will receive an official score letter with final exam score and relative performance from strongest to weakest in the four Testing Domains (Assess, Diagnose, Plan, Evaluate) when all requirements for certification have been met. (Refer to the Domains and Tasks for the NP Examination Blueprint in the Practice Analysis section, pgs. 23-8 for content that describes each testing domain).

- The official score letter authorizes the use the NP-C credential and will have the certification beginning and end date of expiration on it.

- A packet with score letter, certification number, personalized certificate, wallet card, and lapel pin will be prepared and mailed to the Certificant within 2 weeks of score release. A printable wallet card may be accessed on the individual’s Online Account.

- Requested State Board of Nursing Verification and Primary Source Verification requests will be processed and sent one business day following score release (See Verification Requests).

Procedure for Certificants Who Attempt to Recertify by Examination and Fail

- A Certificant who does not pass the certification examination will receive an official score letter with final exam score and the relative performance from strongest to weakest in the four Testing Domains (Assess, Diagnose, Plan, Evaluate) by mail. The Certificant should review the Domains and Tasks for the NP Examination Blueprint in the Practice Analysis section for content that describes each testing domain in detail (See pgs. 23-28).

- Requested State Board of Nursing (SBON) Verification Requests and primary source verification will be sent one business day following score release (See Verification Requests).

- Certificants who meet requirements for clinical practice and continuing education may still apply for recertification by CE and clinical practice hours as long as they meet the minimum requirements and the certification has not expired. Individuals who recertify by examination and fail, whose certification expires, will need to certify as an initial applicant. The expired certification number will no longer be valid. A new certification number is issued upon successfully passing the certification exam. (See Retaking the Examination).

- Certificants may apply to retake the examination provided they do not test more than twice in a calendar year, the examination is not retired, and the certification is not expired.

- ANPs and GNPs who allow their certification to expire are unable to recertify by examination.

- Examinations are computer-based and electronically scored. Errors in scoring are virtually non-existent. Candidates who wish to appeal their exam score will be charged a fee. (See Appeals Policy).
Retaking the Examination

- In order to retake the examination, candidates are required to complete a minimum of 15 hours of advanced practice continuing education from an accredited CE provider in the areas of weakness as indicated on their score report. A general NP certification examination review course is recommended, but is not required. **CE must be completed after the examination date which the candidate did not pass.**
- The certification examination may only be taken **TWICE** in a calendar year (January 1st to December 31st).
- Candidates apply online using the **Retake Application** option.

Rescheduling and Canceling an Examination

- Refer to the AANPCB Candidate Information Bulletin at [www.psiexams.com](http://www.psiexams.com) for procedures for rescheduling or canceling an exam.
- Changes to a scheduled examination appointment may be done either online by accessing PSI's scheduling website at [www.psiexams.com](http://www.psiexams.com) or by contacting a PSI Customer Service Representative at (800) 211-2754 during PSI's hours of operation.
- In order for a Certificant to cancel and reschedule a test appointment, the request must be within the **120-day window-to-test** AND notice must be received by PSI at least 2 business days before the scheduled test date.
- Certificants who do not cancel appropriately or fail to report for their scheduled examination appointment will not be entitled to a refund and will be responsible for fees charged by the testing center.

Withdrawal from Examination

Certificants wishing to withdraw from taking the examination must email a request for withdrawal to certification@aanpcert.org. **If the request is received before expiration of the 120-day testing window AND the candidate has not scheduled a test appointment with PSI, the registration fee, less a processing fee, will be refunded within 30 days.**

Exam Extension Requests

Extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis for reasons of hardship with sufficient justification. Candidates unable to sit for the examination within their 120-day window to test may request an extension. There must not be an examination appointment scheduled. If the extension is approved, a **one-time 60-day window to test** is granted. Candidates who do not test during the 60-day extension window forfeit applicable fees, will need to reapply to take the examination, and pay the applicable fees. Extension requests must be emailed to certification@aanpcert.org.

Special Accommodations/Arrangements

Applicants receive a 120-day window to test. This window allows applicants the flexibility of scheduling their test around their personal schedule, employment schedule, religious needs, or any other issues without requiring the need for additional accommodations or forms. AANPCB and PSI comply with the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990, updated 2010)** to provide reasonable and appropriate arrangements for applicants with a disability who submit appropriate documentation.

Applicants must follow PSI guidelines regarding **Special Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities**. Applicants requiring special arrangements must complete the [PSI Special Accommodation Request Form](#) and fax it, along with documentation from the medical authority or learning institution that rendered a diagnosis, to PSI at (702) 932-2666. Verification must be submitted to PSI (not AANPCB) on letterhead stationary of the authority or specialist and include the following:

- Description of the disability and limitations related to testing
- Recommended accommodation/modification
- Name, title, and telephone number of the medical authority or specialist
- Original signature of the medical authority or specialist
Applicants must allow four (4) business days after faxing the form and supporting documentation to PSI. After 4 days, call PSI at (800) 367-1565, ext. 6750 and leave a voice message. A PSI Special Accommodations representative will call back within 48 hours to schedule the exam. The Special Accommodations Form may be found online at: www.psiexams.com AANPCB Candidate Information Bulletin or at www.aanpcert.org/certs/policy_nondisc.

Documents
- Documents sent to AANPCB become the property of AANPCB.
- Individuals should retain copies of their records for personal use and for their professional portfolio.
- AANPCB is under no obligation to return or issue copies of these documents for future use by a Certificant.
- Failure to submit the required documentation or fees, or the submission of duplicate or expired CE, will delay the review and approval of an application.

Certificate and Wallet Card
- A printable wallet card is available on a certificant’s online account.
- To order a duplicate certificate, complete the Certificate Packet Request Form found online under the tab Forms and submit it with the appropriate fee to AANPCB.
Primary Source Verification of Certification

**Primary Source Verification** provides confirmation of specific information from the original source to determine the qualifications of an individual. AANPCB conducts and provides primary source verification of nurse practitioner certification to state boards of nursing, employers, third-party vendors, and the public upon formal written request. AANPCB also provides verification of a candidate’s eligibility-to-test to state boards of nursing per written request from the candidate. Information accessed through this process is a reflection of AANPCB records.

- To protect the confidentiality of applicants, written authorization is required before information is released regarding an individual’s scores or status in the certification program. Disclosure will not take place if it violates an applicant, candidate, or certificant right of privacy. Sensitive and confidential information received by AANPCB is used solely for the purposes of certification and verification and cannot be shared without written permission or required by law.
- Requests for Verification information will not be accepted or provided by telephone.
- Electronic online requests made by a vendor must be authorized by the candidate or certificant granting permission to disclose verification of eligibility to test or to verify the NP’s certification.
- While every effort is made to ensure that the information provided is accurate and reliable, delays in posting data, updating data, or human/mechanical error remains a possibility. AANPCB will not be liable for any damages resulting from use of the information obtained through the verification process.
- Active duty military personnel will not be charged a fee for a verification request.
- Nurse Practitioners renewing their certification should allow up to 2 weeks after their certification has been renewed to submit a verification request to allow for processing time.
- Verification request forms, fees, and additional information is found online at [www.aanpcert.org](http://www.aanpcert.org).

State Boards of Nursing (SBON)

- State Boards of Nursing are not automatically notified of an applicant’s Eligibility-to-Test or of an exam taken.
- AANPCB provides verification of certification status to SBON free of charge.
- A completed [State Board of Nursing Notification Form](http://www.aanpcert.org) is required to notify a SBON of a candidate’s Eligibility-to-Test or certification status upon release of exam score.
- A completed [State Board of Nursing Notification Form](http://www.aanpcert.org) is required to notify a SBON of a NP’s current certification status (certified or not certified) and renewal.
- Requests are usually processed within one business day of receiving a State Board of Nursing Notification Form.
- Requests for verification submitted the same week that a candidate tests may reflect that the individual is not certified.
- Verification of certification status is delivered by email or regular mail according to individual state board preference.
- A SBON may request notification of certification, failure, or expiration status.

Third-Party Vendor

- A completed [Primary Source Verification Order Form](http://www.aanpcert.org) is required to send employers an official letter of verification of NP certification. The [Primary Source Verification Order Form](http://www.aanpcert.org) is available online.
- Employers and related organizations may purchase [Prepaid Verification Vouchers](http://www.aanpcert.org) to order primary source verification of individuals holding active AANPCB certification. The verification voucher process is available online under the tab **Verify**.
- Verification requests must be accompanied by a current signed release from the NP and dated within 6 months of the request. Processing time for a third-party vendor verification request of certification may take up to 10 business days from receipt of request and is subject to fee.
- Verification letters will be sent via email. Embossed hard copies are available upon request and will be mailed.
AANPCB Policies

Audit Policy
AANPCB conducts random audits of renewal applications on a regular basis and reserves the right to verify and/or audit any application submitted for recertification. Certificants must sign the application confirming they attest to meeting the renewal requirements and reading the current Renewal Handbook. CE documents submitted are audited for relevancy, hours, and accreditation by appropriate authorizing entities. Clinical practice sites are audited for role, population-focus, dates, and site information. Individuals selected for audit during the application process are notified via email of additional documentation or clarification needed. Requested audit documentation must be received before an application is moved forward in the review process.

Grandfathering Policy
Certification-eligible Nurse Practitioners who participate in the development of an initial AANPCB certification examination may be awarded the credential in cases where knowledge of the examination content prohibits them from taking the exam. In this case, a one-time, grandfathering period is limited. Once a new certification program is accredited, grandfathering is not allowed and no additional individual will receive the credential without meeting all eligibility and examination requirements. To ensure continuing competence, NPs who receive “initial certification by grandfathering” must meet the same requirements for recertification as NPs who certified by initial examination.

Certification by Endorsement
The option for certification by endorsement was discontinued on June 1, 2012. Prior to June 2012, NPs who (1) met specific eligibility requirements, (2) sat for a certification examination offered by a comparable NP certifying body, and (3) were certified as a NP by a comparable national certifying body were allowed to apply for “certification by endorsement” by AANPCB without having to take the examination.

Retired Status
Certificants who are ready to retire from NP professional practice are asked to notify AANPCB in writing at certification@aanpcert.org. Appropriate measures will then be taken to stop future AANPCB recertification reminders, election, practice analysis survey information, and other correspondence from being emailed out by the certification management system. The NP’s certification number will expired at the end of the 5-year period of certification as indicated on the certificate and will no longer be valid. AANPCB does not have a “retired credential”.

Certification Expired
It is the certified nurse practitioner’s responsibility to renew their certification in a timely manner prior to expiration. AANPCB-certified Nurse Practitioners who allow their certification to expire may not use the NP-C credential or present themselves as an AANPCB-certified nurse practitioner.

Individuals whose certification has expired risk potential loss of employment, wages, insurance reimbursement, or credentialing privileges. AANPCB is not responsible for financial damages occurring with respect to expiration of a certification.
- Certificants found ineligible to renew their certification through clinical practice and CE will need to apply for, and meet current eligibility requirements, for certification by examination as an Initial Applicant.
- Requests for verification of a certification received from a State Board of Nursing or third-party vendor will reflect the current status of the certification. AANPCB provides Verification of Certification with the dates in which the certification was valid.
Confidentiality and Disclosure

Candidate information and scores are considered confidential information. Sensitive and confidential information received by AANPCB is used solely for the purposes of certification and verification and cannot be shared without written permission or required by law. Disclosure will not take place that violates an applicant, candidate, or a certificant right of privacy. Individual scores are not included in the verification documents sent to Boards of Nursing or other entities unless specifically requested in writing by the Certificant or required by law. Individuals who wish to have their individual scores sent to their education program must request that particular service in writing to AANPCB.

AANPCB Certificants, applicants, credentialing agencies, employers, and third-party vendors may order Primary Source Verification of Certification of individuals who hold or have held active AANPCB certification. To protect the confidentiality of applicants, written authorization is required before information is released regarding an individual’s scores or status in the certification program. Electronic online requests made by a vendor must be authorized by a candidate or certificant granting permission to disclose verification of eligibility to test or to verify the NP’s certification.

Non-Discrimination

AANPCB does not discriminate against individuals with respect to age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, or any other characteristic legally protected by law. Reasonable and consistent use of non-discrimination and impartiality policies and procedures will apply to all programs of the AANPCB, to include application processes, testing processes, and business operations. AANPCB complies with applicable federal, state, and local laws. AANPCB business operations includes, but is not limited to the selection of volunteers and vendors, volunteer or staff member conduct, hiring and firing of certification staff, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Examinations will be job-related and developed based on the program’s current role delineation studies and close adherence to the program’s test specifications. AANPCB shall make its services available to all applicants, candidates, and certificants who meet the eligibility criteria as defined in the program’s publically available procedures subject to limitations defined in policy.

Appeals

Applicants who do not meet eligibility criteria may appeal their denied application for initial certification. Appropriate and complete documentation must be submitted along with the required fee before the appeal can be reviewed. The appeal will be reviewed within 30 days of receipt of documents. Notice of determination shall be provided to the applicant within 10 business days of the decision via electronic or paper methods to include email and postal service. The appeal decision is final. There is no further appeal beyond this point. The applicant will be responsible for any expenses incurred during the Appeals process.

A review process for candidates who do not pass the examination and wish to have their exam results reevaluated is available. Examinees are discouraged from requesting this service as extensive and rigorous quality control procedures are employed to ensure the accuracy of results and in all previous score challenges there is no record of a score discrepancy being detected. Examinations are computer-based and electronically scored. An exam rescore is limited to verifying that the responses as scored were made by the examinee and were correctly transformed into a scaled score. The rescore service is not a review of the exam content, what the correct answer should be, the acceptability of testing conditions, or a reconsideration of the passing standard. Candidates will be charged a fee for hand scoring by the testing vendor ($150.00 subject to change). Results of the rescore will be sent to the candidate within six weeks of receipt of request.

Correspondence regarding an appeal should be addressed to the attention of the AANPCB Certification Manager at certification@aanpcert.org.
Disciplinary Policy

The American Academy of Nurse Practitioners National Certification Board, Inc. is a national certifying body which develops and administers nurse practitioner (NP) certification programs for individuals wishing to enter, continue and/or advance in the NP profession through established certification processes. To be eligible for certification or recertification, an individual must comply with AANPCB policies and procedures, and standards of conduct as set forth in the Disciplinary Policy. AANPCB awards the Nurse Practitioner-Certified (NP-C) credential. As the owner of the NP-C trademark, AANPCB controls its use.

The AANPCB Disciplinary Policy:
- Articulates standards of conduct for individuals seeking certification and recertification and for individuals holding certification, and
- Establishes a fair process for addressing noncompliance.

Violations and Sanctions
Actions which constitute a violation of AANPCB Disciplinary Policy include, but are not limited to:
- Cheating on an examination.
- Providing false information.
- Misrepresenting certification status.
- Misusing AANPCB property.
- Being subject to any regulatory, criminal, or civil action related to the practice as a certified NP.

Grounds for sanctions are as follows:
- Conviction of a felony or other crime of moral turpitude under federal or state law in a matter related to the practice of, or qualifications for professional activity.
- Gross negligence or willful misconduct in the performance of professional services or other unethical or unprofessional conduct based on the formal determination of a licensing body.
- Fraud or misrepresentation of the NP-C credential.

Process for Submitting Complaints
Complaints about a Nurse Practitioner certified by AANPCB may be submitted by any individual or entity, must be in writing, and include the identity of the submitter as well as the identity of the Certificant. Address correspondence to the attention of the AANPCB Certification Manager at Certification@aanpcert.org or mail to the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board at P.O. Box 12926, Austin, TX 78711.

Individuals who bring forth complaints are not entitled to relief or damages by virtue of this process. Actions taken by AANPCB do not constitute enforcement of the law, although referral to appropriate federal, state or local government agencies, including boards of nursing, law enforcement, public health agencies, or employers may be made about a Certificant’s conduct in appropriate situations. The Board of Commissioners may amend, modify, or change the Disciplinary Policy and procedures without prior notice.

Records Retention
AANPCB implements a Records Management and Retention Policy and institutes best business practices with regards to retention, security, and disposal of paper and electronic records received from applicants, candidates, and Certificants. These processes are reviewed annually and may be modified at any time for compliance with local, state, and federal laws affecting record retention.

Certification records are considered confidential information, and includes but is not limited to RN licenses, official and unofficial transcripts, continuing education documents, education records as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, financial data, and individual identifiable information/unique identifiers as defined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).
Data from paper records received are entered into the AANPCB Certification Management System (CMS), the repository for all certification and recertification applications, files, and pertinent and associated information. Information entered into the CMS remains a permanent electronic record. In the event of a circumstance involving litigation, disposal of any documents pertaining to the litigation will be suspended.

All documents submitted for application consideration become the property of AANPCB. At such time that a paper record is no longer required for the processing of an application or valued for its information, the paper record is destroyed per the AANPCB Records Management and Retention Policy. Individuals should retain copies of their records for personal use and for their professional portfolio. AANPCB is under no obligation to return or issue copies of these documents for future use by a Certificant. Failure to submit the required documentation or fees, or the submission of duplicate or expired licensure or CE, will delay the review and approval of an application.

**Abandoned Application**

Examination scores cannot be released until the final official transcript is received. Incomplete applications will be considered abandoned if a final official transcript showing the degree awarded is not received. Submission of a new application to sit for the National Certification Examination again, along with applicable fees, will be required after an incomplete application has been deemed abandoned regardless of whether the candidate initially passed the exam or not. An exception to this, due to extenuating circumstances, must be submitted in writing and is subject to approval (e.g., delay in completing final DNP project). The period of abandonment is:

- 1 year after taking the national certification examination for graduates of a Master’s program
- 2 years after taking the national certification examination for graduates of a Doctoral program
Commonly Asked Questions

General Questions

1. I have more than 100 CE contact hours. May I use the additional CEs for my next recertification?
   No. Only CE courses completed during the 5-year period of certification period may be used. Your certification date will stay the same.

2. If I recertify early (e.g. 6 months) before my certification expires, does my certification date change to the date that my recertification is approved?
   No.

3. Do I need to send ALL of my CE documents I have earned over the 5-year period of certification?
   You may submit as many CE documents as you would like. AANPCB, however, only requires enough to meet your minimum requirements of 100 non-pharmacology CE total with 25 pharmacology CE credits for processing of an application. If there is a question about a particular CE being accepted and you have plenty, then send more in.

4. Can I use CEs I received before I became certified?
   No. Only the CE hours obtained within your current 5-year certification period will be accepted for renewal of certification.

5. I completed an Adult NP (ANP) program. Can I take the Adult-Gerontology NP (AGNP) certification examination?
   No. It is required that the certification specialty align with the population area of an applicant’s education program. Graduates of an Adult NP program in most cases will not qualify for the AGNP certification and will need to contact their academic program to clarify if their ANP program met AGNP program requirements. Documentation from the academic program administrator may be required to confirm eligibility.

6. Why did AANPCP change their name to AANPCB?
   Effective January 1, 2017, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Program (AANPCP) changed its business name to the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board (AANPCB). As a national certifying board, AANPCB offers several certification programs, therefore, “Board” more accurately represents and describes the full scope of the AANPCB certifying organization. While the name and logo changed slightly, the website domain and contact information remained the same.

7. How do I sign my name?
   In general, there is a standard way to list post-nominal credentials which is important because consumers, insurance companies, credentialing, and government officials or entities may require or expect it. Certificants should check with the state regulatory agencies regarding legal titling.
   **Example:** Jane Doe, MSN, APRN, AGNP-C.
   - Academic degrees are listed first because they are earned, considered permanent, and in most cases cannot be taken away from an individual.
   - Nursing licensure and APRN designation are regulated by individual State Boards of Nursing and may be revoked.
   - Certification may be voluntary or required.
CE Logs and CE Trackers

8. Where do I find the CE Log?
   A fillable CE Log is available as a PDF for download on the Certification website under the tab Forms.

9. I am filling out the CE log, do I need to list every CE certificate I submit?
   We need a list of the CE courses/programs and the certificate of attendance. When completing the CE log, list the activity title, date, accreditor, sponsor, and credits awarded.

10. Can I submit a CE tracker?
    An electronic CE log or tracker can simplify the entry process if required information such as participant name, activity title, date, accreditor, sponsor, and credits awarded. Submit or upload the tracker with your application. Submit that electronic tracker if you have an account with an organization that provides a CE log/tracker such as AANP, Medscape, Prescriber Letter, UpToDate.

What is the difference between a CME, contact hour, & AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™?

11. Why are there different terms and abbreviations that apply to continuing education courses?
    CE is calculated based on the number of minutes for non-promotional instruction and learning activity time. The abbreviation used depends on the organization authorized as an accrediting body to approve the activity. Each of the abbreviations have a specific meaning - although they often are used interchangeably. Some activities will offer several options depending on the topic, course content, audience, and accreditor. Activities that include advanced nursing and other healthcare professionals usually offer CEUs or CMEs.

12. What is the difference between Continuing Education Units (CEUs), Continuing Medical Education (CME), and Continuing Nursing Education (CNE)?
    - One clock hour equals 60 minutes.
    - Continuing Education Units (CEU) - A CEU is based on 60 minutes of instruction and expressed in tenths. The CEU is defined as 10 contact hours in an organized continuing education activity. One contact/CE hour is equivalent to 60 minutes of educational instruction.
    - Continuing Medical Education (CME) - CME content is developed for physicians to address medical and health care specialties. Accredited CME providers may issue documentation of participation in an activity to non-physicians specifying the number of hours of participation. Non-physician participants may not receive A contact hour is based on 60 minutes of instruction.
    - Continuing Nursing Education (CNE) - For APRN certification renewal, CE must build on “entry into practice” education. Activities specific to non-APRN nursing usually offer CNE. Continuing Nursing Education is not acceptable unless it is accredited by a State Board of Nursing or nationally recognized Nursing organization. 1 contact hour is based on 60 minutes of instruction.
    - Pharmacology CE credit - The minimum number of contact hours awarded for a pharmacy education program is 1 contact hour = 0.1 continuing education unit (CEU). Contact hours may be awarded in increments of tenths (e.g.; 3.1 CEUs.). All computations are rounded down.

13. Which ones can I use to meet AANPCBs CE requirements?
    All continuing education activities (CEU, CME, and hours of participation) submitted for recertification must be reported in contact hours awarded by a recognized provider. Credit is given for course overview, introductions, the educational presentation, and questions and answers included in a presentation. Time
spent on general announcements, breaks, lunch, exhibits, or poster sessions may not be counted. Typical information to look for is:

- **Contact Hours:** 1.00
- **Pharmacology Hours:** 1.00
- **Expires:** Oct 01, 2019
- **Topics:** Pharmacology, Infectious Disease, Internal Medicine
- **Population:** Adult, Family
- **Target audience/Role:** APRN, Nurse Practitioner, Advanced Practice Provider (APP)

14. **Does AANPCB accept AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™?**

For the purposes of recertification, AANPCB accepts AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™ issued by organizations accredited by ACCME as the number of hours of participation. The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) provides continuing medical education for physicians. The American Medical Association (AMA) defines a physician as an individual who have obtained an MD, DO, or equivalent medical degree from another country and only physicians are eligible to be awarded AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. Non-physician health professionals may not be awarded AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. However, accredited CME providers may issue documentation of the amount of time a non-physician participation in a live AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ activity listed as hours, not credits.

**For example:** The [name of accredited CME provider] certifies that [name of non-physician participant] has participated in the live activity titled [title of activity] at [location] on [date]. This activity was designated for [number of credits] AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. [Name of non-physician participant] participated for [amount of time] hours.

15. **Can I take my CE courses online?**

Online educational programs are accepted. We do not limit where you take your continuing education courses as long as they are accredited by an approved organization and are related to your work as a nurse practitioner. Although AANPCB does not endorse any specific course, we have provided a short list of organizations who offer online CE courses in the Renewal Handbook and on the website for your convenience.

16. **Do you accept UpToDate educational content?**

Yes, we do. If claiming pharmacology CE, we request a list of titles for the educational programs you are claiming pharmacology credit.

17. **Does AANPCB accept American Nurses Credential Center (ANCC) accredited contact hours to meet certification requirements?**

Yes.

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**Does AANPCB automatically have my AANP CE Center trackers and CE information?**

18. **Many of my CEs were taken through AANP. Does that mean the AANPCB has them?**

No. The American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) membership organization is a separate entity from the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board (AANPCB). As such, we do not have the ability to share information and do not have access to AANPs CE Center or certificates. Certificants will need to submit copies of their CE certificates in order to receive credit for it from AANPCB for recertification. An official CE tracker from AANP will also suffice.
What is a CE Accradiator?

19. What is a CE accradiator?
An accreditor is an organization that approves the program or continuing education (CE) course. Industry supported education standards have been developed to provide quality continuing education for health care professionals. Activities approved for accreditation by accreditation staff and/or independent reviewers must be educationally sound, relevant to practice, fair and balanced (unbiased); contribute to the quality and safety of health care; and commercial funding and faculty-industry relationships must be disclosed to learners.

20. How do I know which contact hours are accredited/approved?
See Accreditation on page 15 for a list of accreditors.

Pharmacology CE Questions

21. Is there a certain number of pharmacology hours I need to submit with my CEs?
A minimum of 25 pharmacology credits are required.

22. How can I tell if the CE I have earned will qualify as a Pharmacology CE?
Rx CE must include such topics as current clinical application of pharmacology and pharmacokinetics, techniques of safe drug prescribing information, and drug specific information/therapy for treatment of common acute and chronic diseases across the lifespan. Rx CE must be separately documented by the sponsor offering the pharmacology and non-pharmacology CE. Pharmacology credit awarded is usually listed under the title of each session, designated with “Rx”, and/or may look like the following examples:
- Rx Contact Hours: 28.0.
- Credit: 1.25 CE; 0.5 of which may be applied towards Pharmacology.
- The ABC Course (Program ID #) is approved for 24.75 contact hours (12.5 hours of Pharmacology).
- 22 Contact Hours (3 pharmacology credits).
- ABC Conference - 12 Contact Hours/12 Pharmacology Hours.

What about Precepting?

23. Am I able to receive continuing education credit for my preceptorship hours?
Certificants may use Precepting as an option to replace a certain number of CE credits. See Precepting on pg. 20 for information on how to claim your Preceptor hours in the past 5-year period of certification.

Can I use graduate-level coursework?

24. I am currently in school. Can I use my coursework for CE credit?
Yes, graduate level courses are accepted if the course content directly relates to advanced practice nursing role and population of certification. Courses are subject to approval. To receive credit you will need to submit a university transcript, and course descriptions if requested. Each one hour credit of a semester course equals 15 contact hours (i.e., a 3 credit class = 45 contact hours).
Can I receive credit for Advanced Life Support Courses?

25. May I use advanced life support courses for CE credit?
   We accept several advanced life support courses. See Advanced Life Support Courses Accepted on pg. 16.

26. How many times can I use ACLS, ATLS, ABLS, ALSO, and PALS in a renewal cycle?
   No more than twice in a 5-year renewal cycle.

27. How many CEs can I claim for completion of advanced life support courses?
   The number of contact hours awarded will be based on the length of the course, and the number of hours of participation awarded on the certificate of completion. A CE certificate showing participant name, activity title, date, accreditor, sponsor, and hours awarded for completion of and participation in the course is required for credit. A wallet card will not suffice.

Renew by Exam

28. My certification will soon expire and I don’t have the required number of CEs.
   No. All CEs must be dated within the period of certification. CEs taken after certification expires will not be accepted.
   If your certification expires and you do not meet the requirement for recertification by CE and clinical practice, you will need to apply to take and pass the certification examination. If certification has not yet expired, complete additional applicable pharmacology and non-pharmacology CE immediately.

29. I will need to renew my certification by taking the examination. How soon do I need to apply?
   Certificants may begin their application process 12 months before the expiration date of their current certification. Applications must be submitted at least 120 days prior to the certification expiration date to allow sufficient time for application processing, scheduling, testing and receipt of scores.

30. Can I recertify by exam if I am an Adult NP or a Gero NP?
   No. Unfortunately. Both of those examinations have been retired.
AANP Scope of Practice for Nurse Practitioners

Professional Role
Nurse practitioners (NPs) are licensed, independent practitioners who practice in ambulatory, acute, and long-term care as primary and/or specialty care providers. Nurse practitioners assess, diagnose, treat, and manage acute episodic and chronic illnesses. NPs are experts in health promotion and disease prevention. They order, conduct, supervise, and interpret diagnostic and laboratory tests, prescribe pharmacological agents and non-pharmacologic therapies, as well as teach and counsel patients, among other services.

As licensed, independent clinicians, NPs practice autonomously and in coordination with health care professionals and other individuals. They may serve as health care researchers, interdisciplinary consultants, and patient advocates. NPs provide a wide-range of health care services to individuals, families, groups, and communities.

Education
NPs are advanced practice registered nurses who obtain graduate education, post-master’s certificates, and doctoral degrees. Educational preparation provides NPs with specialized knowledge and clinical competency which enable them to practice in various health care settings, make differential diagnoses, manage and initiate treatment plans and prescribe medications and treatment. National NP education program accreditation requirements and competency-based standards ensure that NPs are equipped to provide safe, high-quality patient care from the point of graduation. Clinical competency and professional development are hallmarks of NP education.

Accountability
The autonomous nature of NP practice requires accountability to the public for delivery of high-quality health care. NP accountability is consistent with an ethical code of conduct, national certification, periodic peer review, clinical outcome evaluation, and evidence of continued professional development.

Responsibility
The patient-centered nature of the NP role requires a career-long commitment to meet the evolving needs of society and advances in health care science. NPs are responsible to the public and adaptable to changes in health care. As leaders in health care, NPs combine the roles of provider, mentor, educator, researcher, and administrator. NPs take responsibility for continued professional development, involvement in professional organizations, and participation in health policy activities at the local, state, national and international levels. Five decades of research affirms that NPs provide safe, high-quality care.

© American Association of Nurse Practitioners, 1993
Reviewed and Revised by the AANP Fellows at the Winter 2015 Meeting
AANP Standards of Practice for Nurse Practitioners

I. Qualifications
Nurse practitioners are licensed, independent practitioners who provide primary and/or specialty nursing and medical care in ambulatory, acute and long-term care settings. They are registered nurses with specialized, advanced education and clinical competency to provide health and medical care for diverse populations in a variety of primary care, acute and long-term care settings. Master’s, post-master’s or doctoral preparation is required for entry-level practice (AANP 2006).

II. Process of Care
The nurse practitioner utilizes the scientific process and national standards of care as a framework for managing patient care. This process includes the following components.

A. Assessment of health status
The nurse practitioner assesses health status by:
- Obtaining a relevant health and medical history
- Performing a physical examination based on age and history
- Performing or ordering preventative and diagnostic procedures based on the patient’s age and history
- Identifying health and medical risk factors

B. Diagnosis
The nurse practitioner makes a diagnosis by:
- Utilizing critical thinking in the diagnostic process
- Synthesizing and analyzing the collected data
- Formulating a differential diagnosis based on the history, physical examination and diagnostic test results
- Establishing priorities to meet the health and medical needs of the individual, family, or community

C. Development of a treatment plan
The nurse practitioner, together with the patient and family, establishes an evidence-based, mutually acceptable, cost-awareness plan of care that maximizes health potential. Formulation of the treatment plan includes:
- Ordering and interpreting additional diagnostic tests
- Prescribing or ordering appropriate pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions
- Developing a patient education plan
- Recommending consultations or referrals as appropriate

D. Implementation of the plan
Interventions are based upon established priorities. Actions by the nurse practitioners are:
- Individualized
- Consistent with the appropriate plan for care
- Based on scientific principles, theoretical knowledge and clinical expertise
- Consistent with teaching and learning opportunities

E. Follow-up and evaluation of the patient status
The nurse practitioner maintains a process for systematic follow-up by:
- Determining the effectiveness of the treatment plan with documentation of patient care outcomes
- Reassessing and modifying the plan with the patient and family as necessary to achieve health and medical goals
III. Care Priorities
The nurse practitioner’s practice model emphasizes:
   A. Patient and family education
      The nurse practitioner provides health education and utilizes community resource opportunities for the
      individual and/or family
   B. Facilitation of patient participation in self care.
      The nurse practitioner facilitates patient participation in health and medical care by providing information
      needed to make decisions and choices about:
      • Promotion, maintenance and restoration of health
      • Consultation with other appropriate health care personnel
      • Appropriate utilization of health care resources
   C. Promotion of optimal health
   D. Provision of continually competent care
   E. Facilitation of entry into the health care system
   F. The promotion of a safe environment

IV. Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Responsibilities
As a licensed, independent practitioner, the nurse practitioner participates as a team leader and member in the
provision of health and medical care, interacting with professional colleagues to provide comprehensive care.

V. Accurate Documentation of Patient Status and Care
The nurse practitioner maintains accurate, legible and confidential records.

VI. Responsibility as Patient Advocate
Ethical and legal standards provide the basis of patient advocacy. As an advocate, the nurse practitioner
participates in health policy activities at the local, state, national and international levels.

VII. Quality Assurance and Continued Competence
Nurse practitioners recognize the importance of continued learning through:
   A. Participation in quality assurance review, including the systematic, periodic review of records and
      treatment plans
   B. Maintenance of current knowledge by attending continuing education programs
   C. Maintenance of certification in compliance with current state law
   D. Application of standardized care guidelines in clinical practice

VIII. Adjunct Roles of Nurse Practitioners
Nurse practitioners combine the roles of provider, mentor, educator, researcher, manager and consultant. The
nurse practitioner interprets the role of the nurse practitioner to individuals, families and other professionals.

IX. Research as Basis for Practice
Nurse practitioners support research by developing clinical research questions, conducting or participating in
studies, and disseminating and incorporating findings into practice.