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INTRODUCTION

This **RECERTIFICATION HANDBOOK** is written for nurse practitioners who are certified by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners National Certification Board, Inc. It provides important information on the requirements for certification renewal, application processing, and AANPCB policies. Material contained in this handbook supersedes information in previous handbooks and is subject to change without notice. Information in the AANPCB handbooks and on the certification website is updated on a regular basis.

Applications may be submitted online. AANPCB does not expedite the processing of applications. Typical application processing time is 3-6 weeks depending upon receipt of a complete application, required documents, and applicable fees.

Email is the preferred method for general correspondence.

Paper applications and other documents may be emailed, faxed, or mailed. If an applicant wishes to ensure that materials are received by AANPCB, it is recommended that a guaranteed courier service be used, and documents be sent by overnight delivery to the street address.

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**Contact Us**

American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board (AANPCB)

- **Website:** [https://www.aanpcert.org](https://www.aanpcert.org)
- **Email:** Certification@aanpcert.org
- **Email Official Transcripts to:** Transcripts@aanpcert.org
- **Certification Administration:** (512) 637-0500
- **Toll-free Number:** (855) 822-6727
- **Fax:** (512) 637-0540 or (512) 637-0334

**Mailing Address:**
P.O. Box 12926  
Austin, TX  78711-2926

**Street Address:**
2600 Via Fortuna, Suite 240  
Austin, TX  78746-7006


**ABOUT AANPCB**

**Mission and Purpose**

The American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Program (AANPCP) was established in 1993 for the purpose of providing a valid and reliable program for evaluation of individuals wishing to enter, continue, and/or advance in the nurse practitioner profession through the certification process. The business name was changed to the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board (AANPCB) on January 1st, 2017. AANPCB is a nonprofit organization incorporated under the name American Academy of Nurse Practitioners National Certification Board, Inc. Currently, there are more than 150,000 nurse practitioners certified to use AANPCBs registered NP-C credential.

**Our Mission:** To provide excellence in professional nurse practitioner certification.

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

**Our Core Values:** Accountability, quality, and transparency.

**Our Purpose:** To assess the knowledge and practice competencies of nurse practitioners required to provide safe and quality health care. As a national nursing certification board, AANPCB:

- Facilitates the application processes for NP certification.
- Provides a reliable, valid, competency-based examination for NPs to assess knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Provides entry into practice certification for the Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner and Family Nurse Practitioner meeting eligibility requirements for certification by exam and specialty certification for the Emergency Nurse Practitioner.
- Provides the processes for recertification for the Adult, Adult-Gerontology Primary Care, Family, Emergency, and Gerontologic Nurse Practitioner meeting current minimum requirements for renewal.

**Non-Discrimination Policy**

The American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board does not discriminate against candidates and certificants 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.

**Accreditation**

AANPCB certification programs are accredited by the American Board of Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC) and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

- The ABSNC, formerly the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) Accreditation Council, is the only accrediting body specifically for nursing certification. ABSNC accreditation is a peer-review mechanism that allows nursing certification organizations to obtain accreditation by demonstrating compliance with the highest quality standards available in the industry.
The NCCA is the private not-for-profit accrediting branch of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE), which is the national standard-setting organization for credentialing groups including certification boards, licensing boards, and associations. The NCCA uses a peer review process to establish accreditation standards, evaluate compliance with the standards, recognize programs that demonstrate compliance, monitor, and enforce continued compliance, and serve as a resource on quality certification.

Changes to AANPCBs certification programs will align with the certification accreditation standards promulgated by ABSNC and NCCA. Program accreditation dates may be found on the certification website.

Membership Affiliation

AANPCB is a national nursing certification board affiliated with two membership organizations.

- **American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)** - As a membership organization, AANP provides valuable member benefits for NP students and NPs of all specialties. Benefits include NP advocacy, access to free CE activities, and reduced conference registration fees for NP students, candidates, and members attending the AANP's National, Health Policy, and Fall Conferences.

- **American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners (AAENP)** - Is the membership organization responsible for the standards, qualifications, knowledge, and practice of emergency nurse practitioners. AAENP collaborates with AANPCB to develop exam content for the Emergency Nurse Practitioner certification examination.

Members of the AANP and AAENP qualify for a $75 USD discount on all certification applications. Include member number when completing the application to receive the discount.

Name and Address Change

Applicants and certificants are responsible for keeping their AANPCB account and Online Profile information current or notifying AANPCB by email of changes to contact information to receive important information from AANPCB such as application status inquiries, certification program changes, renewal notices, Board of Commissioner election information, and practice analysis invitations.

Changes to name and contact information may be made at any time by logging into the **Online Profile** with username and password.

In the event of a legal name change, complete the **Name Change Form** and submit it, with a copy of supporting documentation (e.g., court record, marriage license) providing proof of the name change, via email, fax, or mail to the AANPCB office. Please allow five business days from time of receipt for processing.

The **Name, Address, or Certification Status Change Form** is available under the **Forms** tab on the navigation bar of the AANPCB website.

For candidates who has been approved to test, it is recommended that a name change be made after the examination is taken and preliminary examination score notification has been received to avoid problems with identification documents at the testing center.

For name change questions, contact the **Verification Department** at 512-637-0500.

Frequently Asked Questions

- Access the **FAQs** on the certification website for useful and important information.
AANPCB BOARD CERTIFICATION

Individuals who become board-certified by AANPCB are referred to as a Certificant indicating they have completed specific educational requirements that assess national competencies of the APRN core, NP role, and population focus area of practice and successfully passed the national certification examination demonstrating professional knowledge in the NP role and the population focus for entry into practice.

Certification is time-limited

- Certification is time-limited and granted for 5-year periods only. NP certification expires at the end of the 5-year certification period. Individuals who allow their AANPCB certification to expire are not authorized to use the NP-C credential and may not represent themselves as being certified by AANPCB.

- 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.

- Nurse Practitioners certified by AANPCB must the meet minimum current requirements for renewal within the 5-year period of certification granted to continue to (1) be certified, (2) maintain the same certification number, and (3) use the NP-C credential.

- It is the NPs professional responsibility to renew their certification before their certification expires.

Purpose of Recertification

- Recertification requirements serve to measure and reassure the public of NP continued professional competence. Recertification provides a mechanism to assure the public that nurse practitioners have undergone periodic evaluation and met current professional standards of qualifications and knowledge for practice required to maintain and validate certification. Individuals who are board-certified by AANPCB shall renew certification via an established certification renewal process.

- Without a process for renewal of certification, a credential’s value may diminish over time.

- AANPCB certification programs meet the Standards for Accreditation of Certification Programs requirements for recertification and continuing competence established by the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification, Inc. (ABSNC) and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

Continuing Competency

- Knowledge and skills required for professional and competent NP practice evolve over time. NPs must maintain professional competency based on current information and knowledge affecting clinical practice. Maintaining clinical practice and participating in advanced practice nurse practitioner-related continuing education activities on an ongoing basis or passing the certification examination allows certificants to demonstrate maintenance of knowledge and skills in their specialty area of certification as a certified NP.

- Current, active, professional nurse licensure in the United States, U.S. territory, or Canadian province or territory, another component of continuing competence, is required for certification. An individual whose nursing license expires or is revoked is not authorized to use the NP-C credential and may not represent themselves as being certified by AANPCB.
Expired Certification

- Renewal of certification is required every 5 years. Extensions beyond the 5-year period are not granted. Because a certification is not active past the expiration date, the ability to apply online is not available after a certification expires. Contact AANPCB by email if renewal of an expired certification is needed.

- Nurse Practitioners whose AANPCB certification expires may not present themselves as an AANPCB-certified nurse practitioner or use the NP-C credential.

- State Boards of Nursing regulate APRNs’ ability to practice, therefore, an individual whose NP certification has expired is responsible for contacting their SBON regarding their ability to work with expired certification.

- Individuals whose certification expires risk potential loss of employment, wages, insurance reimbursement, or credentialing privileges depending upon the state in which they are licensed as an APRN, the employer, and the provider credentialing organization. AANPCB will not be held responsible for financial damages occurring with respect to expiration of certification or loss of employment if a certificant fails to renew prior to expiration of current certification.

- The AGNP, FNP, and ENP will need to apply for and meet current eligibility requirements for certification by examination as an Initial Applicant if unable to meet the minimum requirements of clinical practice and continuing education. A new certification number will be issued after the examination has been taken and passed and certification issued.

- The option to recertify by examination is not an option for the Adult or Gerontological NP due to retirement of the ANP and GNP certification examinations.

- Requests received from a state board of nursing or third-party vendor for verification of a certification will reflect the status of “certified” or “not certified”.

Retirement

- The NP’s certification number will automatically expire at the end of the 5-year period of certification as indicated on the certificate and will no longer be valid.

- Certificants who are ready to retire from NP professional practice are asked to notify AANPCB in writing. A Change of Name, Address, or Certification Status Form (found online under the Forms tab) may be completed and sent via email, fax, or mail to the AANPCB office. Appropriate measures will be taken to stop future AANPCB recertification reminders, election, practice analysis survey information, or other correspondence from being sent.

- AANPCB does not have a retired credential.

Dual-Certified NPs

- **Dual-certified Adult and Gerontologic Nurse Practitioner:** Certificants currently dual-certified by AANPCB as both an ANP and a GNP are eligible to apply for conversion of these certifications to the Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (AGNP) certification. The Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Conversion application may be found under the Forms tab on the navigation bar of the AANPCB website.

- **Dual-certified Emergency and Family Nurse Practitioner:** Current Family Nurse Practitioner certification is required of AANPCB-certified Emergency Nurse Practitioners. An AANPCB-certified ENP who allows their FNP certification to expire may not use the ENP-C credential and may not represent themself as...
an ENP certified by AANPCB. The ENP certification will become inactive until the FNP certification is renewed. Individuals certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) as an FNP must provide a copy of a current ANCC FNP certification when applying for and renewing ENP certification.

NP Scope and Standards of Practice

NP certification is a component of meeting entry into advanced practice requirements and does not limit ongoing professional development after one becomes initially certified and licensed nor does it address practice settings. Clinical practice should be based on educational training in providing safe and appropriate patient care as an NP.

- NPs shall maintain continuing competence in the NP profession by acquiring new knowledge in the professional role on an ongoing basis.

- Holding the NP-C credential does not confer permission to manage patients beyond the scope of the individual's professional practice. Boundaries of legal professional scope of practice are determined by each state or territory. Nurse Practice Acts guide and govern nursing practice. Job functions are determined by the employer, not the credential.

- Certificants shall reference and subscribe to the:
  - Scope of Practice for Nurse Practitioners (American Association of Nurse Practitioners)
  - Standards of Practice for Nurse Practitioners (American Association of Nurse Practitioners)
  - Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice (American Nurses Association)

- NPs providing emergency care shall refer to the American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners (AAENP) for established guidelines, Scope and Standards for ENP Practice, news, and information on the AAENP website at www.aaenp-natl.org

General Principles and Standards of Conduct

Applicants, candidates, and certificants shall:

- Be truthful, forthcoming, prompt, and cooperative in their dealings with AANPCB.
- Be in continuous compliance with AANPCB policies.
- Comply with their state board of nursing licensing Rules and Regulations.
- Respect AANPCB intellectual property rights and will abide by AANPCBs Examination Security Policy and federal copyright law protecting AANPCBs examination item content.
- Abide by AANPCB and the testing vendor test administration rules.
- Abide by laws related to advanced nursing practice and public health and safety.
- Conduct professional work as an NP in a competent manner.

NP-C® Credential

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

- The certification mark is owned by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners National Certification Board, Inc. and registered with the United States Patent and Trademark Office. First use of the NP-C credential was in 1999. NP-C stands for “Nurse Practitioner-Certified”.

- AANPCB awards the NP-C credential. As the owner of the “Nurse Practitioner-Certified” certification mark, AANPCB controls its use.
How do I sign my name?

- The first letter of the patient population-foci (A, AG, E, F, G) precedes the certification number and is printed on both the official embossed certificate and wallet card. Use of the initial to indicate population specialty is optional for AANPCB-certified NPs.

- In general, there is a standard way to for a nurse to list professional post-nominal credentials. This is important because consumers, insurance companies, credentialing and government entities may require or expect it. The highest earned academic degree is usually listed first, followed by nurse licensure or APRN designation, then nursing certifications (which are required or voluntary), and then nursing fellowships. Nurses are legally obligated to comply with the licensing requirements in the state where he or she is practicing and should check with state regulatory agencies regarding legal titling. Example: Jane Doe, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, FAANP.

- Adult Nurse Practitioner NP-C or ANP-C
- Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner NP-C or AGNP-C
- Emergency Nurse Practitioner NP-C or ENP-C
- Family Nurse Practitioner NP-C or FNP-C
- Gerontologic Nurse Practitioner NP-C or GNP-C

Wall Certificate and Wallet Card

- The certificate and wallet card will have the certification beginning and expiration date. A printable wallet card may be accessed on the individual’s Online Profile under “My Documents”.

- For information on ordering a duplicate wall certificate, see FAQs – Duplicate Wall Certificate Requests.
RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS

FNP and AGNP Recertification

Option One: Recertify by Clinical Practice Hours and Continuing Education

- Requirements must be completed within the current 5-year period of certification.
- Current U.S. or Canadian professional nursing licensure.
- Clinical Practice Hours: Minimum of 1,000 clinical practice hours in the FNP or AGNP role and population-focus.
- Continuing Education Requirements: 100 advanced practice continuing education contact hours.
- Pharmacotherapeutic CE Requirement: A minimum of 25 CEs of the 100 CEs completed must be advanced pharmacology CE.
- The following Advanced Life Support Courses are accepted, but not required:
  - 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)
- Basic Life Support (BLS) is not accepted.
- Preceptorship Hours (Optional): Up to 25 non-pharmacology CE credits may be converted to and replaced with hours conducted precepting an advanced practice student after January 1, 2017.
- Faculty Clinical Supervision Hours (Optional): Of the required 1,000 clinical practice hours, a maximum of 500 hours may be claimed by NP faculty for on-site student clinical evaluation time.

Option Two: Recertify by Examination

- Take and pass the appropriate certification examination before expiration of the current certification.
- Current U.S. or Canadian professional nursing licensure required.
- FNPs who choose to recertify by examination should allow sufficient time (~120 days) for application processing, exam scheduling, and the potential for exam retake.
- Candidates are allowed only two opportunities to test per calendar year.
**ANP and GNP Recertification**

NPs currently certified as an ANP or GNP will continue to be certified and recognized if minimum recertification requirements are met and the certification does not expire. ANPs and GNPs should check with their individual State Boards of Nursing for additional requirements or stipulations. NPs who allow their ANP or GNP certification to expire may need to obtain further post-graduate course work to meet current eligibility requirements to sit for the Adult-Gerontology Primary Care or Family Nurse Practitioner certification exam.

**Only Option: Recertify by Clinical Practice Hours and Continuing Education**

- Requirements must be completed within the current 5-year period of certification.
- Current U.S. or Canadian professional nursing licensure.
- **Clinical Practice Hours:** Minimum of 1,000 clinical practice hours in the ANP or GNP role and population-focus.
- **Continuing Education Requirements:** 100 advanced practice continuing education contact hours.
- **Pharmacotherapeutic CE Requirement:** A minimum of 25 CEs of the 100 CEs completed must be advanced pharmacology CE.
- **Advanced Life Support Courses:** See p. 12.
- **Preceptorship Hours (Optional):** Up to 25 non-pharmacology CE credits may be converted to and replaced with hours conducted precepting an advanced practice student after January 1, 2017.
- **Faculty Clinical Supervision Hours (Optional):** Of the required 1,000 clinical practice hours, a maximum of 500 hours may be claimed by NP faculty for on-site student clinical evaluation time.

**Eligibility Requirements for the AGNP Certification Exam**

- Graduate education must align with the certification population area to be eligible to sit for the AGNP certification exam. Graduates of an ANP program in many cases do not qualify for AGNP certification. Contact the academic program to verify if the Adult NP program met Adult-Gerontology Primary Care NP program requirements. Documentation from the program administrator may be required to confirm eligibility.
- Completion of three separate graduate level courses in advanced pharmacology, advanced pathophysiology, and advanced physical assessment; the AGNP population of specialization courses; and all didactic and clinical AGNP program coursework (including all faculty-supervised clinical clock hours required) is required.

**Conversion of current ANP and GNP Dual-Certification to AGNP**

- Certificants currently dual-certified by AANPCB as both an Adult Nurse Practitioner and a Gerontologic Nurse Practitioner are eligible to apply for conversion of these certifications to the A-GNP certification.
- The Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Conversion application may be found under the Forms tab on the AANPCB website home page.
ENP Recertification

Option One: Recertify by Clinical Practice Hours and Continuing Education

- Requirements must be completed within the current 5-year period of certification.
- Current Family Nurse Practitioner certification is required. Individuals certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) as an FNP must provide a copy of the ANCC certificate or wallet card showing current FNP certification with number and expiration date.
- Current U.S. or Canadian professional nursing licensure required.
- Clinical Practice Hours: Minimum of 1,000 clinical practice hours in the ENP role and population-focus.
- Continuing Education Requirements: 100 advanced practice continuing education contact hours.
- Pharmacotherapeutic CE Requirement: A minimum of 25 CEs of the 100 CEs completed must be advanced pharmacology CE.
- Procedural Skills (Optional): The Emergency Care Skills and Procedures list may be found on the certification website under the Resources tab. Procedural skill CEs may be used but are not required for renewal.
- The following Advanced Life Support Courses are accepted:
  - Advanced Burn Life Support (ABLS)
  - Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO)
  - Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS)
  - Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP)
- Basic Life Support (BLS), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) are not accepted.
- Preceptorship Hours (Optional): Up to 25 non-pharmacology CE credits may be converted to and replaced with hours conducted precepting an advanced practice student after January 1, 2017.
- Faculty Clinical Supervision Hours (Optional): Of the required 1,000 clinical practice hours, a maximum of 500 hours may be claimed by NP faculty for on-site student clinical evaluation time.

Option Two: Recertify by Examination

- Take and pass the Emergency Nurse Practitioner certification examination before expiration of the current certification.
- Current Family Nurse Practitioner certification is required. Individuals certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) as an FNP must provide a copy of the ANCC certificate or wallet card showing current FNP certification with number and expiration date.
- Current U.S. or Canadian professional nursing licensure required.
- ENPs who choose to recertify by examination should allow sufficient time (~120 days) for application processing, exam scheduling, and the potential for exam retake. Candidates are allowed only two opportunities to test per calendar year.
**Clinical Practice**

Provision of direct patient care in the NP role in the certification specialty demonstrates currency of practice. NP practice may focus on a specific patient population.

- NP clinical practice is based on educational training in providing safe and appropriate patient care.
- Further education (CEs, workshops, etc.) and work experience in specialty fields contributes to your on-going professional development.
- According to the Consensus Model for APRN Regulation, preparation in a specialty is optional and builds upon the APRN role and population focus competencies.

**Clinical Practice Hour Requirements**

- A minimum of 1,000 hours of clinical practice through employment, faculty clinical supervision, or as a volunteer must be at the advanced practice level in the NP role and relate to the population of NP certification to be recognized and accepted for recertification.
- Providing advanced practice care of patient health conditions involving assessments, diagnosis, and treatment either as in-person encounters or remotely via telehealth are considered direct patient care.
- Clinical practice hours worked as an NP in a volunteer capacity for a national or international service organization is accepted for recertification. An official detailed description of the duties may be requested.
- Student clinical practicum hours in an advanced practice program (i.e., DNP) do not qualify as NP clinical practice hours for recertification purposes.

**Faculty Clinical Supervision Hours**

**Criteria for Claiming Faculty Clinical Supervision Hours**

- A minimum of 1,000 hours of clinical practice as a nurse practitioner is required for renewal of certification. Both direct patient care hours and Faculty Clinical Supervision hours are to be with the appropriate population of certification (e.g., Adult, Family).
- Faculty may claim up to 500 hours of on-site student clinical evaluation time. Credit is for actual time in the clinical agency and telehealth sites. The remaining 500 hours are to be direct patient care hours as an employee or volunteer.
- Only clinical hours within the current 5-year period of certification will count towards renewal.
- Provide the dates, clinical agency name and address, and number of hours at the site on the site visit log.
- Hours will not be accepted for simulation, standardized patient evaluations, conference time, clinical agency site evaluations, or travel time to and from the site.
CONTINUING EDUCATION

Completing advanced practice nurse practitioner-related CE on an ongoing basis enhances ongoing professional development; and maintains and promotes currency of knowledge and skills for continued NP practice.

- CE completed must be relevant to the NP role and area of certification specialty and build upon evidenced-based guidelines, national clinical standards, and specialty best practices.

- Requiring advanced pharmacology CE helps maintain currency of knowledge for continued NP practice and is consistent with some State Boards of Nursing prescriptive authority requirements for APRN licensure renewal.

- NPs should check with their State Board of Nursing for additional RN/APRN licensure continuing education requirements.

CE Log, Certificates, and Trackers

- A Continuing Education Log is available for download on the website under the tab Forms.

- CE certificates must show clear accreditation by an appropriate authorizing entity. See CE Accreditation.

- CE documents submitted for recertification must include the NP name, CE activity topic, Program Sponsor, CE Accreditor, date of attendance or completion, and the number of non-pharmacology and pharmacology contact hours awarded.

- CE activities completed outside of the 5-year period of certification will not be counted.

- Some organizations provide a list (or Tracker) of CE activities an individual has completed (e.g., AANP CE Center, Medscape, UpToDate). CE Trackers are a convenient way to enter CEs. The tracker must have the NP name, program titles, dates completed, accreditor, number of pharmacology hours, and total number of CEs awarded. Enter these activities on the online or paper log as one entry “Add Individual CE”. Write in the name of the tracker, date of most recent CE completion, total CE hours, and total pharmacology hours.

Advanced Pharmacology Requirement

- Requiring advanced pharmacology CE helps maintain currency of knowledge for continued NP practice and is consistent with some State Boards of Nursing prescriptive authority requirements for licensure renewal.

- Pharmacology CE include current clinical application of pharmacology/pharmacokinetics, techniques of safe drug prescribing information, and drug specific information/therapy for treatment of common acute and chronic diseases across the lifespan. Pharmacology content should be documented by the agency offering the CE activity, which may be designated by the abbreviation “Rx”. For example:

  - 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).

Live Activity Formats

A category of educational activity presented in a live format with time-limited availability (e.g., Advanced Practice Provider/Medical Conferences, Clinical Skills and Procedure Workshops, regularly scheduled Grand Rounds).
Enduring Materials

An educational activity presented in a format that can be retrieved on demand (e.g., Journal-based articles and online activities). CE is awarded for completing one entire occurrence.

Advanced Life Support Coursework Accepted

These courses cannot be used more than twice in a 5-year renewal cycle. A CE certificate showing your name, activity title, date, accreditor, sponsor, and CEs awarded for completion of the course is required. A wallet card will not suffice.

- Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) – Not accepted for ENP renewal
- Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) – Not accepted for ENP renewal
- Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP)
- Advanced Burn Life Support (ABLS)
- Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO)
- Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS)

Activities Not Accepted for Renewal

- Basic Life Support (BLS)
- Articles or books written, presentations, posters, lectures, Journal Clubs
- Elected office, serving on Boards and/or Committees, other certification/credentials awarded

CE Accreditation

CE certificates and trackers are audited for relevancy, hours, and accreditation by appropriate authorizing entities. CE certificates must show clear accreditation by an appropriate authorizing entity. Industry supported education standards have been developed to provide quality CE for health care professionals. Activities approved for CE 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 free from commercial bias, interest, and support.

The following independent organizations may provide acceptable, accredited Advanced Practice Provider content. The list is provided as a resource and courtesy for certificants, does not imply endorsement by AANPCB, and does not reflect in entirety all possible CE provider organizations.

Various Online Providers of Evidence-Based Clinical Information

- Audio Digest
- Contemporary Forums
- DynaMed Plus
- Journal publications (e.g., Clinical Advisor, Journal for Nurse Practitioners)
- Medscape
- Prescriber’s Letter
- Pri-Med
- UpToDate
Continuing Education Providers/ Sponsors

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 Critical-Care Nurses (AACN)
American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE)
American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)
American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP)
American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM)
American College of Physicians (ACP)
American Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)
American Medical Association (AMA) in collaboration with the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME®) of accredited CME activities certified for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™
American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP)
Nurse Practitioner Associates for Continuing Education (NPACE)
Nurse Practitioners in Women’s Health (NPWH)
State Medical Associations, State Boards of Nursing, and State Boards of Pharmacy

NP Certification Review Courses (These are a few available and acceptable review courses.)

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

ACADEMIC COURSEWORK

- Credit may be received for graduate or post-graduate courses taken within the current 5-year period of certification. The coursework must directly relate to advanced practice nursing knowledge and skills.
- Courses are subject to approval and course descriptions may be requested.
- 1 academic semester credit equals 15 CE contact hours.
- Enter academic course name and number and course completion date on the online or paper log as one entry "Add Individual CE". Convert the coursework credits to CE contact hours.
- An official or unofficial transcript with the certificant name, university name, and the academic coursework claiming credit for is required to receive credit. Transcripts must be mailed to AANPCB in a sealed envelope or sent via secure, electronic transmission directly from the school registrar to transcripts@aanpcert.org
PRECEPTORSHIP HOURS

Preceptorship hours are recognized and accepted by AANPCB. Precepting inter-professional advanced practice students during the provision of direct clinical supervision of patient care as a nurse practitioner is consistent with the demonstration of continuing competence and ongoing professional development.

Qualifications

- Qualifying preceptor hours acceptable for renewal CE credit are defined as the provision of direct patient care as an NP while serving as a clinical preceptor for advanced practice students affiliated with dentistry, nursing, medicine, pharmacy, or physician assistant programs.

- Hours completed orienting or precepting individuals who have already completed their advanced practice programs (e.g., post-program completion residencies, employee orientation programs, or other training of credentialed advanced practice providers) does not qualify and is not accepted.

- Only hours conducted after January 1st, 2017 will be accepted.

Requirement

- Complete and submit a Preceptorship Form. The form may be found online under the Forms tab at www.aanpcert.org. Complete as many forms as necessary to account for preceptorship sites and students. Incomplete forms will not be processed.

- Complete preceptor site information for each practice site and faculty coordinator contact is required.

- Hours must be documented and verifiable. AANPCB reserves the right to request additional supporting documentation for clarification or validation.

Conversion to Non-Pharmacology Hours

- A maximum of 120 preceptorship hours may be claimed for a maximum of 25 non-pharmacology CE credits*.

- Convert the number of hours precepted to CE credits using the Preceptor Hours Conversion Table. Record the total number of non-pharmacology credits on the CE Log of the renewal application.

*Calculation of 120 clinical hours is based on precepting 8 hours per week for one semester (i.e., 15 weeks x 8 hours/week = 120 hours).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLINICAL HOURS</th>
<th>CE CREDIT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5 hours</td>
<td>= 1 CE</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 – 10 hours</td>
<td>= 2 CE</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 – 15 hours</td>
<td>= 3 CE</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 – 20 hours</td>
<td>= 4 CE</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 – 25 hours</td>
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<td>26 – 30 hours</td>
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<td>31 – 35 hours</td>
<td>= 7 CE</td>
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<td>36 – 40 hours</td>
<td>= 8 CE</td>
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<td>41 – 45 hours</td>
<td>= 9 CE</td>
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<td>46 – 50 hours</td>
<td>= 10 CE</td>
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<td>51 – 55 hours</td>
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<td>111 – 115 hours</td>
<td>= 23 CE</td>
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<tr>
<td>116 – 119 hours</td>
<td>= 24 CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120+ hours</td>
<td>= 25 CE</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
RECERTIFY BY EXAM

Contact a PSI Customer Service Representative during PSI hours of operation at (800) 211-2754 for all questions concerning exam administration and testing site regulations, or to reschedule or cancel a scheduled examination appointment.

**Exam Information**

- NP Certificants must apply for, take, and pass the appropriate certification examination prior to the current 5-year certification-end date to maintain the certification and certification number.

- Refer to the Candidate and Emergency Handbooks for test specifications and examination blueprints. Additional information may be found at PSI Exams Online Frequently Asked Questions and in the PSI Candidate Information Bulletin under the Resources tab on the certification website.

- AANPCB certification examinations are administered via computer-based testing format at PSI Testing Centers located throughout the United States and Canada. Candidates have 3 hours to take the exam.

- There are 150 questions on each exam. Of the 150 questions, 15 are pretest questions that cannot be distinguished from those that are scored. Pretest questions are included to determine how they perform statistically to vet them for use on future exams. A candidate's score is based solely on 135 scored questions.

- The 120-day testing 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.

- New examinations are developed annually, using current therapeutic guidelines and references, and released every January. All items are reviewed to ensure consistency with therapeutic clinical guidelines published at the time exams are developed.

- The Consensus Model for APRN Regulation does not define specific age parameters for any of the population foci, therefore, growth and development are used as the basis of age-related changes for constructing the FNP or AGNP certification exams and for NP practice.

**Practice Exam**

- AANPCB’s Practice Examinations meet the same test specifications (exam blueprint) as noted in this Handbook. NP content experts developed the practice exam questions.

- Practice exams provide the candidate with an opportunity to familiarize themself with the format of test questions on the certification exam. Practice Exams are an optional assessment tool and not a study guide for the certification exam.

- Performance on the Practice Exam is not a predictor of whether a candidate will pass the competency-based certification examination. Taking a Practice Exam is not required and does not give any advantage over the candidate who chooses not to.

- Visit the Practice Exams tab on the navigation bar of the AANPCB website for more information.
Approval and Authorization to Test

- Exam candidates are Eligible to Test when a Recertification by Examination application is reviewed to determine that current eligibility criteria to take the examination has been met and approved. An Approval and Eligibility to Test email will be sent by AANPCB from certification@aanpcert.org when the candidate’s name and information is sent to PSI.

- When a candidate becomes eligible to test (as verified during the application review process), AANPCB will export the name of candidate to PSI and send an Approval and Eligibility to Test email to the candidate from certification@aanpcert.org

- PSI will send an Authorization to Test confirmation email from no-reply@psionline.com within 24-48 hours of PSI receiving the candidate’s name and information from AANPCB. This email provides (1) important instructions for scheduling a testing appointment at PSI Testing Centers, (2) the candidate ID number, and (3) authorizes the 120-day testing window. Check all email inboxes including junk/spam folders for the PSI email.

Schedule, Reschedule, or Cancel an Exam

- To schedule an exam, candidates must first create an account at PSI Exams online at www.psiexams.com

- Changes to a scheduled examination appointment may be done online at PSI Exams online.

- A request to cancel and reschedule a test appointment must be made with PSI at least 2 business days before the scheduled test date and within the 120-day window-to-test.

- Candidates must comply with PSI’s procedures for rescheduling or canceling an exam. Candidates 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.

Extension Requests

- Extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis for reasons of hardship if a candidate is unable to sit for the examination within their 120-day window to test. Email the request to certification@aanpcert.org

- Any scheduled examination appointment must be cancelled prior to granting an extension.

- If the extension is approved, a one-time 60-day window to test is granted. An extension will not extend past the certification end-date. 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.

Exam Withdrawal

- Applicants wishing to withdraw from taking the examination must email a written request for withdrawal to certification@aanpcert.org

- The registration fee, less a processing fee, will be refunded within 30 days if the request for withdrawal is received before expiration of the 120-day testing window and the candidate has not scheduled a test appointment.
**Special Accommodations Request**

Candidates receive a 120-day window to test. This window allows applicants the flexibility of scheduling the exam around one's personal schedule, employment schedule, or religious needs without requiring the need for additional accommodations or forms.

**Special Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities**

- PSI complies with the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990, updated 2010)* and provides reasonable and appropriate arrangements for candidates with a disability who submit appropriate documentation. Applicants must follow PSI’s guidelines regarding special arrangements.

- Applicants requiring special arrangements must (1) complete the [PSI Special Accommodation Request Form](#) and (2) fax the completed form, along with documentation from the medical authority or learning institution that rendered a diagnosis, to PSI at (702) 932-2666.

- Documentation must be submitted to PSI (not AANPCB) on letterhead stationery of the medical authority or specialist and must 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 business days after faxing the form and supporting documentation to PSI for documentation to be processed and reviewed. After 4 days, call PSI at (800) 367-1565, ext. 6750 and leave a voice message. A PSI Special Accommodations representative will contact the candidate regarding the decision for accommodations.

**Test-Taking Tips**

- A resource document containing [Test-Taking Tips](#) is available under the Reference Lists tab.

**Reference Lists**

- Current reference lists are available under the Reference Lists tab on the navigation bar of the website.

**Sample Questions**

- Examination questions range from knowledge of pathophysiology, pharmacology, physical assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up to testing for synthesis of information in clinical decision making while carrying out those activities. Refer to the Sample Questions p. 32 for examples of the type of question format on the certification exams. These questions are not updated, and no correct answers are provided.
Important Testing Site Information

- **Scheduling Procedures and Testing Regulations:** Download the PSI Candidate Information Bulletin. It may be found under the Resources tab on the certification website and on the PSI website when registering for the following information:
  - Schedule an Exam
  - Required Identification for Exam Site
  - Special Accommodations
  - Testing Center Regulations
  - Reschedule an Exam or Canceling a Scheduled Exam

- **Testing Sites:** Certification examinations are administered via computer-based testing format at PSI Testing Centers located throughout the United States and Canada.

- **Identification:** Names must match on the AANPCB application, PSI Test Registration, and forms of identification presented at the testing center for an eligible candidate to sit for their scheduled examination.

- **Late or missed appointment:** If you arrive late for your scheduled examination time, do not cancel at least 48 hours before the scheduled exam date, miss your scheduled exam 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, require a new registration number, and forfeit your fee.

Release of Exam Scores

- **Preliminary Pass or Fail status:** Candidates 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 NP certification status, and may not be used for employment or licensure.

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

- **Score Report:** An official letter with the exam score and relative performance (from strongest to weakest) in the Testing Domains will be mailed to candidates when all requirements for score release have been met. Exam score results will not be given out by telephone or fax. Exam scores are considered confidential information and will not be disclosed to anyone other than the candidate without specific written instructions from the candidate indicating to whom and why the information is to be disclosed. The score letter authorizes use of the NP-C credential for a 5-year period only.

- **Graduate academic ENP program:** AANPCB must receive an Official final transcript via (1) mail or delivery in the original sealed envelope or (2) email via secured website from the Registrar's office. An Official final transcript must have the university insignia, degree completed, and the date degree awarded/conferred. Transcripts faxed by a candidate and unsealed or tampered transcripts are not official.

- **Post-graduate (post-master's) certificate program:** AANPCB must receive and process an official MSN transcript in addition to a transcript with educational program coursework for the ENP certificate program and a transcript or certificate showing the post-graduate certificate awarded.

- **Emergency Fellowship:** A certificate of completion of the ENP Fellowship program must be received.
• The certification start date is not the date the exam was taken. A certification start date will be the date the score is released by AANPCB and will be viewable on the Online Profile.

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

Retake Exam

• AANPCB will mail an official Fail Letter with their final exam score and relative performance (from strongest to weakest) in the Testing Domains. A score report may be emailed to candidate if requested in writing.

• Completion of a minimum of 15 hours of advanced practice nursing continuing education from an accredited CE provider in the areas of weakness as indicated on their score report is required. A general NP certification examination review course is recommended, but not required. CE must be completed after the examination date which the candidate did not pass.

• Complete CE and then apply online. A paper application is available.

• Two opportunities to test per calendar year: Candidates are not allowed to take the certification examination more than TWICE between January 1st to December 31st to avoid exam item compromise.

AANPCB Examination Security Policy

Federal copyright law protects AANPCB’s examinations and the items contained therein. The certification examinations and all items on the examinations are the exclusive property of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners National Certification Board, Inc. Candidates who apply for the certification examination acknowledge that they understand and agree to the following prior to taking the examination:

• 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.

• Disclosure, discussion, or receipt of any AANPCB certification examination questions and/or the examination, in whole or in part, on social media networking, in study groups, or by other methods is strictly prohibited.

• Theft or attempted theft of examination content is punishable by law.

• Candidate 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.
HOW TO APPLY

Online Profile
Visit www.aanpcert.org to create an Online Profile account. Once an account is established:

✓ Apply to recertify either by clinical practice and continuing education hours or by exam.
✓ Upload a copy of current professional nursing license with expiration date.
✓ View application status updates.
✓ Make changes to name, address, or contact information.
✓ Order verifications to be sent to state boards of nursing and employers.
✓ Access a printable wallet card when certified.
✓ Apply for recertification.

How To Videos
• View the How-to Apply Video available on the AANPCB website for information on how to complete the application process.

Application Process
How Early Can I Apply?
• Certificants who meet the minimum clinical practice and continuing education (CE) requirements may apply as early as 1 year prior to the expiration date.
• NPs who choose to recertify by examination should allow sufficient time (~120 days) for application processing, exam scheduling, and the potential for exam retake.

Apply Online
• Online applications and electronic submissions are preferred. Online applications must be completed within 30 days to avoid loss of information.

Apply by Paper Application
• A fillable PDF paper application is available on the website for download under Forms on the navigation bar.
• Paper application processing is longer than the online method and a processing fee is assessed for entering paper applications.

Processing Time
• Typical processing time for applications is 3-6 weeks depending upon receipt of a complete application, required documents, and applicable fees.
• Applications are processed in a timely manner in the order received. AANPCB does not expedite processing of applications or charge an expediting fee.
• Applications are screened using eligibility criteria before forwarding to qualified advanced practice nurses for professional review.
Required Documents

- Current professional nursing license with expiration date and fee payment is required to initiate processing of an application. Access a copy from the state or government-appointed licensing board of nursing.

- Documents can be uploaded to the online application, or sent via fax, email, or mail after the application has been submitted.

- Documentation of NP clinical practice hours/practice sites, a completed CE log, copies of CE certificates and professional nursing license with current expiration date, are required to initiate the processing of an application for renewal by clinical practice hours and continuing education.

- 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 documents or issue copies of these documents for future use by a certificant.

Notification of Missing Items

- Monitor your Online Profile for application status updates and notification of missing items. Weekly emails are sent if information is needed to complete an application. (See Correspondence from AANPCB.)

Signature and Attestation

The applicant’s signature (electronic or written) on the application is required for processing. This signature confirms that the information provided by NP applying for certification renewal is accurate and true to the best of their ability. Applicants who apply for recertification attest that they:

- Have accessed the Recertification Handbook online at www.aanpcert.org
- Shall maintain current, active professional nursing licensure.
- Are obligated to notify AANPCB of nursing licensure suspension or revocation by a board of nursing or regulatory body.
- Understand that AANPCB may amend requirements, policies, and procedures.

Applicants choosing to recertify by continuing education (CE) and clinical practice hours attest that they have met the minimum requirement for advanced practice CE, have practiced a minimum of 1,000 clinical hours as an NP in the role and population focus, and can provide further validation of clinical practice hours, faculty clinical supervision hours, preceptorship hours, and CE documents as applicable.

This signature also confirms that the applicant has read, agrees to adhere to, and understands the following AANPCB Policies:

- General Principles and Standards of Conduct
- NP Scope and Standards of Practice
- Non-Discrimination Policy
- Confidentiality and Disclosure Policy
- Examination Security Policy
- Disciplinary, Appeals, and Complaints Policy
- Records Retention Policy
Frequently Asked Questions

- Access the FAQs on the certification website for useful and important information to help you complete your application process.

Certification Fees

- Fee payment is required to initiate processing of an application.
- Members of the AANP and AAENP qualify for a $75 USD discount on all certification applications. Include member number when completing the application to receive the discount.
- Current fees are posted on the AANPCB website and must be paid in U.S. dollars. Fees and refunds are subject to change without notification.
- There is no charge for processing supporting documents received by AANPCB for the purposes of certification and recertification (e.g., RN/APRN licenses, CEs, unofficial transcripts).
- AANPCB does not expedite or charge an expediting fee for processing of applications.
- A paper processing fee is charged for paper applications received via mail, email, or fax.
- Refunds are processed according to information available on the AANPCB website home page, FAQs, and Employers/Credentialing Services sections.

Correspondence from AANPCB

- Notification of missing documentation is emailed weekly from certification@aanpcert.org and is viewable on the applicant’s Online Profile. A reminder is emailed weekly to candidates who have been approved to test prior to degree completion until a final official transcript is received.
- AANPCB emails the Approval and Eligibility to Test to the exam candidate from certification@aanpcert.org
- Exam candidates receive their Authorization to Test from PSI by email from no-reply@psionline.com
- Certificants are notified by email of important information such as Commissioner elections, changes to a certification program, and invitations to participate in a Practice Analysis. General announcements are posted on the website.
- Courtesy reminder postcards and emails are sent to the NP’s last known contact addresses one year prior to certification expiration, and again at 6 months prior to expiration if a renewal application has not yet been received. A letter and email are sent ~6 weeks prior to certification expiration if a renewal application has not been received.
- AANPCB is not responsible for email sent from AANP, AAENP, or any other organization.
VERIFICATION OF CERTIFICATION

Primary Source Verification

Primary Source Verification is the process whereby confirmation of specific information from the original source is provided to determine the qualifications of an individual. Requests received from a state board of nursing or third-party vendor for verification of a certification reflect the status of “certified” or “not certified”.

AANPCB provides the following upon written request:

- Confirmation of nurse practitioner certification status (certified/not certified) to State Boards of Nursing, employers, third-party vendors, and the public.

- Verification of candidate eligibility-to-test to State Boards of Nursing.

Information on Primary Source Verification, verification request forms, and fees is available under the Verify tab on the navigation bar of the AANPCB website.

State Boards of Nursing Notification

- AANPCB does not automatically notify a SBON of a candidate’s authorization to test, an exam taken, or certification status change (active or expired).

- Completion of a State Board of Nursing Notification Form with fee payment is required.

- A SBON may request candidate exam pass or failure status or NP certification status (active or expired).

- State Boards of Nursing (SBON) and active duty military personnel will not be charged a fee for processing a verification of certification.

- Requests are usually processed within one business day of receiving a SBON Notification Form. Individual state boards of nursing determine their preference by email or regular mail of a verification.

Third Party Vendors

- Primary Source Verification Order Form: A completed form is required to send employers an official letter of verification of current NP certification status.

- Prepaid Verification Vouchers: Employers and related organizations may purchase Vouchers to order primary source verification of individuals holding active AANPCB certification. The voucher process is available online under the tab Verify.

- Signature Release: Verification requests must be accompanied by a current signed release from the NP and dated within 6 months of the request.

- Processing time and Fee: Processing time for a third-party vendor verification request of certification may take up to 10 business days from receipt of request for a fee as noted on the AANPCB website.

- Verification letters: Will be sent via email. Mailed embossed hard copies are available upon request.
**Important Information**

- Requests by telephone for verification information will not be accepted.

- To protect the confidentiality, a signed release authorizing disclosure of eligibility to test or NP certification is required from the candidate or certificant 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.

- Information accessed through this process reflects AANPCB records. Requests for verification submitted and processed the same week that a candidate tests may reflect that the individual “is not certified” due to examination score importing times (e.g., A Verification request is received, processed, and letter emailed at 8 a.m.; scores are imported and certification complete is released at 2 p.m. same day).

- While every effort is made to ensure that information provided is accurate and reliable, processes for updating and posting data resulting in the delay of correct information or human/mechanical error remain a possibility. AANPCB will not be liable for any damages resulting from use of information obtained through the verification process.
AANPCB POLICIES

Confidentiality and Disclosure Policy

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 as 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 service in writing to AANPCB. The Confidentiality and Disclosure Policy may be viewed online under Certification Board Policies.

Examination Security Policy

Federal copyright law protects AANPCB’s examinations and the items contained therein. The certification examinations and all items on the examinations are the exclusive property of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners National Certification Board, Inc. Candidates who apply for the certification examination must acknowledge that they understand and agree to the policy prior to taking the examination. The Exam Security Policy may be viewed on p. 22 and online under Certification Board Policies.

Aggregate Score Report Policy

Data summary reports for each specialization are compiled annually for NP educational programs for the purpose of providing information on program graduates examination performance. To protect candidate confidentiality, score data are provided only when three or more program graduates test for a given specialization during a calendar year. If a candidate wishes to have individual scores sent to their education program, they must request that service in writing to AANPCB. Information regarding the disclosure of examination scores may be viewed online in the Confidentiality and Disclosure Policy under Certification Board Policies.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board does not discriminate against an individual 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 and policies shall be administrated in a non-discriminatory way. 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, updated 2010. 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.

All requests for Special Accommodations/Arrangements are processed by our testing vendor, PSI Services LLC. All PSI examination centers are equipped to provide reasonable and appropriate arrangements for applicants with a disability in accordance with the ADA. Candidates who wish to request special arrangements because of a disability must follow PSI Special Accommodations procedures.
Appeals Policy

Applicants Who Do Not Meet Criteria for Renewal of Certification

Applicants may appeal a denial in the event an application for recertification is denied for reasons of not meeting minimum certification renewal requirements. Appropriate documentation must be submitted along with the required fee before the appeal can be reviewed. 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. This option is only available for the Family, Adult-Gerontology, and Emergency certification examinations (Adult and Gerontological NP certification examinations are no longer available).

The Appeals Policy and process for submitting an appeal may be viewed online under Certification Board Policies.

Complaints and Disciplinary Policies

The American Academy of Nurse Practitioners National Certification Board, Inc., a national certifying body, develops and administers nurse practitioner 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. As the owner of the Nurse Practitioner-Certified certification mark, AANPCB controls its use and awards the NP-C credential.

The AANPCB Disciplinary Policy articulates standards of conduct for individuals seeking certification and recertification, for individuals holding certification, and has an established fair process for addressing noncompliance. 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 the Disciplinary Policy and procedures without prior notice.

Violations and Sanctions

Actions which constitute a violation of AANPCB Policy include, but are not limited to:

- Cheating on an examination.
- Providing false information.
- Misrepresenting certification status.
- Misuse of 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 registered NP-C credential.

Complaints can range from procedural frustration to reporting behavior that may require disciplinary action. A complaint must be submitted in writing and sent via email, mail, or fax. The Complaints and Disciplinary Policy and process for submitting a complaint may be viewed online under Certification Board Policies.
Records Retention Policy

Certification records are considered confidential information, and includes but is not limited to, nursing licenses, 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).

Effective 2010, the repository for all certification and recertification applications, files, and pertinent and associated information is the AANPCB Certification Management System (CMS). Information from paper records received is entered in the CMS and becomes a permanent electronic record. Individuals should retain copies of their records for personal use. AANPCB is under no obligation to return or issue copies of these documents for future use by an applicant, candidate, or certificant.

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 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. All documents submitted for application consideration become the property of AANPCB. At such time that a paper record is no longer required for processing of an application or valued for its information, the paper record is destroyed per policy. In the event of a circumstance involving litigation, disposal of any documents pertaining to the litigation will be suspended.

Abandoned Applications

Incomplete applications will be considered abandoned if a final official transcript showing the degree awarded is not received. The period of abandonment is 1 year after taking the national certification examination for graduates of a master’s or post-graduate certificate program, and 2 years after taking the national certification examination for graduates of a doctoral program. Exception to this, due to extenuating circumstances, must be submitted in writing and is subject to approval.

Recertification applications submitted before the certification-expiration date will be considered abandoned 30 days after the certification-expiration date if missing documentation has not been received to complete the incomplete application. The application will be denied.
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board (AANPCB)
Recertification Handbook

AANP Scope of Practice for Nurse Practitioners

Scope of Practice for Nurse Practitioners

Professional Role
Nurse practitioners (NPs) practice in nearly every health care setting including clinics, hospitals, Veterans Affairs and Indian Health Care facilities, emergency rooms, urgent care sites, private physician or NP practices (both managed and owned by NPs), nursing homes, schools, colleges, retail clinics, public health departments, nurse managed clinics, homeless clinics, and home health. NP practice includes, but is not limited to, assessment; ordering, performing, supervising and interpreting diagnostic and laboratory tests; making diagnoses; initiating and managing treatment including prescribing medication and non-pharmacologic treatments; coordinating care; counseling; and educating patients and their families and communities.

As licensed, independent practitioners, NPs practice autonomously and in coordination with health care professionals and other individuals. NPs provide a wide range of health care services including the diagnosis and management of acute, chronic, and complex health problems; health promotion, disease prevention; health education, and counseling to individuals, families, groups and communities. They may also serve as health care researchers, interdisciplinary consultants, and patient advocates.

The nurse practitioner role is consistent with the APRN consensus model practicing in the population foci of family, pediatrics, women's health, adult-geriatrics, neonatal, and psychiatric mental health. The scope of practice is not setting specific but rather based on the needs of the patient (APRN Consensus Model, 2008).

Education
NPs are advanced practice registered nurses who obtain graduate education at the masters, post-master's or doctoral level and obtain national board certification. NP education programs follow established educational standards which ensure the attainment of the APRN core, role core, and population core competencies. Educational preparation provides NPs with specialized knowledge and clinical competency which enable them to practice in various health care settings. National NP education program accreditation requirements and competency-based standards ensure that NPs are equipped to provide safe, high-quality, cost effective patient centered care upon graduation. Clinical practice competency and professional development are hallmarks of NP education.

Accountability
Each NP is accountable to patients, the nursing profession, and the state board of nursing. NPs are expected to practice consistent with an ethical code of conduct, national certification, evidence-based principles, and current practice standards.


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Responsibility
The patient-centered nature of the NP role requires a commitment to meet the evolving needs of society and advances in health care science. NPs are responsible to the public and adaptable to the dynamic changes in health care. As leaders in health care, NPs combine the roles of provider, mentor, educator, researcher, advocate, 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, cost effective patient centered care.
AANP Standards of Practice for Nurse Practitioners

Standards of Practice for Nurse Practitioners

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

The nurse practitioner role is consistent with the APRN consensus model practicing in the population foci of family, pediatrics, women’s health, adult-geriatrics, neonatal, and psychiatric mental health. The scope of practice is not setting specific but rather based on the needs of the patient (APRN Consensus Model, 2008). Education, certification, and licensure of an individual must be congruent in terms of role and population foci. APRNs may specialize but they cannot be licensed solely within a specialty area. In addition, specialties can provide depth in one’s practice within the established population foci. Education and assessment strategies for specialty areas will be developed by the nursing profession, i.e., nursing organizations and special interest groups. Education for a specialty can occur concurrently with APRN education required for licensure or through postgraduate education. Competence at the specialty level will not be assessed or regulated by boards of nursing but rather by the professional organizations (APRN Consensus Model, 2008).

In addition to their clinical role, NPs may serve as health care researchers, interdisciplinary consultants, and patient advocates. NPs provide a wide range of health care services including the diagnosis and management of acute, chronic and complex health problems, health promotion, disease prevention, health education and counseling to individuals, families, groups and communities.

Process of Care

The nurse practitioner blends the scientific process, current evidence and national standards of care with a holistic approach to manage patient care and foster professional practice. This process includes the following components.

A. Assessment of health status

The nurse practitioner assesses health status by:

- Obtaining a comprehensive relevant health, social and medical history
- Performing a thorough physical examination based on age and history
- Performing or ordering preventative and diagnostic procedures based on the patient’s age and history
- Identifying health risk factors
- Evaluating social determinants of health that may influence the patient’s health and wellness.
B. Facilitation of shared decision making and participation of the patient/family in health care decisions

The nurse practitioner facilitates patient participation in health care by providing evidenced based, culturally sensitive information needed to make decisions and choices regarding:

- Promotion, maintenance, and restoration of health
- Appropriate utilization of health care resources
- Potential for consultation with other appropriate health care personnel

C. Promotion of optimal health
D. Provision of continually competent care
E. Facilitation of entry into the healthcare system
F. The promotion of a safe environment

Interprofessional and Collaborative Responsibilities

As a licensed, autonomous practitioner, the nurse practitioner contributes to patient care as a team leader and member in the provision of health care, interacting with professional colleagues to provide patient-centered comprehensive quality care.

Accurate Documentation of Patient Status and Care

The nurse practitioner maintains accurate, legible, and confidential records.

Responsibility as Patient Advocate

The nurse practitioner is a responsible advocate for patient welfare and upholds ethical and legal standards. As an advocate, the nurse practitioner influences health policy at the local, state, national, and international levels.

Quality Assurance and Continued Competence

Nurse practitioners recognize the importance of continued education through:

A. Participation in quality assurance review, including the systematic, periodic review of records and plans of care that may result in a quality improvement plan
B. Maintenance of current evidence-based knowledge by completing continuing education activities related to the nurse practitioner’s specialty and clinical practice
C. Maintenance of certification and compliance with current state and federal laws
D. Application of current evidence-based practice and utilization of best practice standards

Integral Roles of Nurse Practitioners

Nurse practitioners combine the roles of provider, mentor, preceptor, educator, researcher, advocate, and interdisciplinary consultant. The nurse practitioner interprets and emulates the role of the nurse practitioner to individuals, families, professional colleagues, and legislators.
B. Diagnosis
   The nurse practitioner makes a diagnosis by:
   • Utilizing diagnostic reasoning
   • Synthesizing and analyzing the collected data from health history and any
diagnostic information
   • Formulating a differential diagnosis(es) based on the history, physical
examination and diagnostic test results/information

C. Development of a comprehensive plan of care
   The nurse practitioner, together with the patient and family, establishes an
evidence-based, mutually acceptable, cost-conscious, effective plan of care that
maximizes health potential or end of life decisions. Formulation of the plan of care
includes:
   • Ordering and interpreting additional necessary diagnostic tests
   • Establishing priorities to meet the health care needs of the individual, family,
   and/or community
   • Prescribing or ordering appropriate necessary pharmacologic and non-
   pharmacologic interventions
   • Developing a patient education plan considering the patient’s health literacy
   competencies/learning needs.
   • Ordering consultations or referrals based on evidence and standards of
   professional care and shared decisions with patient/family

D. Implementation of the plan
   • Interventions are based upon established priorities and consistent with the nurse
   practitioner’s specialized education and clinical practice. Actions by nurse
   practitioners are:
   • Individualized, recognizing the patient’s preferences and abilities
   • Consistent with the appropriate plan for care
   • Based on scientific, evidenced based principles, theoretical knowledge, and
   clinical expertise
   • Inclusive of 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 plan of care with documentation of patient
   care outcomes
   • Reassessing and modifying the plan with the patient and family as necessary to
   achieve health outcomes and patient goals

Care Priorities
   The nurse practitioner’s practice model emphasizes patient-centered holistic health care:

A. Patient and family education
   The nurse practitioner provides health and wellness education and utilizes
community resource opportunities for the individual and/or family.
Research as Basis for Practice
Nurse practitioners support research and dissemination of evidence-based practice by developing clinical research questions, conducting or participating in studies, implementing quality improvement, and incorporating system changes into practice.