

Congratulations on Applying for National Certification!

Eligibility Requirements

You must meet the following requirements in order to apply for the NCC:

- Be enrolled in a degree-granting counseling track in a master's, specialist or doctoral program that has been preapproved to participate. **If you are enrolled in a certificate program or taking additional courses for licensure, you are not eligible to apply.**
- Prior to graduating, you must complete a minimum of 48 semester hours/72 quarter hours of graduate-level coursework in counseling and must fulfill all [coursework requirements](#) for the NCC. If you do not complete the appropriate degree and coursework, your examination scores may be invalidated.
- Before submitting an NCC application, you must be well advanced in your program of study. At a minimum, you must have completed coursework in six of the eight required subject areas and be enrolled in the final two during the semester of the exam. Most student applicants are in the practicum/internship stage in their degree.
- You will complete an ethics attestation as part of the registration process. Ethics disclosures must be resolved before your application can be processed, including the exam registration.
- If you are dismissed or withdraw from your current program, you need to notify NBCC immediately.
- If you do not meet these requirements or complete your certification in the allotted time, your exam scores may be invalidated.

Exam Facts

Applicants for the NCC may take either the National Counselor Examination for Licensure and Certification (NCE) or the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE) to fulfill the examination requirement for certification. These exams are either administered on campus or through NBCC's computer-based exam provider, Pearson VUE.

- The NCE is made up of 200 multiple-choice questions and is scheduled for 3 hours and 45 minutes. Most examinees complete the exam in 2½ to three hours.
- The NCMHCE consists of 10 clinical simulations designed to sample a broad area of competencies, not just the recall of isolated facts. The simulations assess clinical problem-solving ability, including identifying, analyzing, diagnosing and treating clinical issues.

With the NCC application you submitted through your university, you have applied for certification through the largest counselor credentialing organization in the world—NBCC. Passing the NCE or NCMHCE is just one step in the NCC certification process.

If you intend to use this exam score for the purposes of state licensure, check with your state licensure board regarding its specific requirements at www.nbcc.org/directory.

Exam Administration

After your NCC application is approved, you will receive specific instructions about your examination arrangements. If your name does not match the name on the legal identification you will use when you report to the exam, contact us immediately. Changes to your information must be made at least 30 days prior to the exam. Once you have chosen which exam you want to take, you cannot make any changes until the current exam cycle has been completed.

- On-campus paper-and-pencil exams: If you are taking the exam on campus, you will receive an examination admission e-mail approximately 10 days prior to the exam. Please read this information carefully and report to your examination site as instructed. Take the document with you when you report to the site. This will be a one-day administration on the date assigned for the national exam.
- On-campus Internet-based exam: If you are taking the exam on campus but on a computer, Pearson VUE will contact you with information on how to set up an account so you will have access to the exam on campus. You will also receive an examination admission e-mail approximately 10 days prior to the exam. Please read this information carefully and report to your examination site as instructed. Take the document with you when you report to the site along with your Pearson VUE login information. This will be a one-day administration on the date assigned for the national exam.
- Off-campus computer-based exam through Pearson VUE: You will have a month-long window during which the exam will be available. You will receive an e-mail from Pearson VUE approximately two weeks before the first available exam date with instructions for scheduling your exam appointment. When you register for your exam date, time and location, you will receive an e-mail confirmation from Pearson VUE that serves as your exam admission letter. If you do not receive communication regarding your exam, please contact the Certification Department at certification@nbcc.org.
- NCMHCE examinees will also be given a month-long window for testing to schedule your exam date, time and location through Pearson VUE. NCMHCE examinees will receive an e-mail from Pearson VUE approximately two weeks before the first available exam date with instructions for scheduling the exam appointment. When you register for your exam date, time and location, you will receive an e-mail confirmation from Pearson VUE that serves as your exam admission letter. If you do not receive communication regarding your exam, please contact the Certification Department at certification@nbcc.org.

WHY BECOME CERTIFIED?

Former student and current NCC, MV, had this to say about why she values NCC certification.

“Having an NCC certification is not just hanging a certificate on my wall or having additional letters next to my name. It has been for me a community that has fostered my growth as a professional and continues to support me throughout my life professionally and personally. Through my connections with other NCC professionals, trainings offered through NBCC, and opportunities for professional growth offered through NBCC, NBCC continues to foster my growth. I am profoundly grateful.”

Preparing for the Exam

The following resources may be helpful in preparing for either exam:

- Study guides (www.nbcc.org/exam/studyguides)
- Current professional books, journals and newsletters that are published by professional counseling organizations
- NBCC Certification Examination Handbooks (<http://www.nbcc.org/Certification/StudentInformation>)
- Course notes
- The NBCC *Code of Ethics*.

Benefits of NCC Certification

- Access to low-cost professional liability insurance
- Ability to market yourself as an NCC and use NBCC certification marks
- Access to the National Certified Counselor Newsletter
- A free six-month listing in [The Therapy Directory](#)
- Opportunities to participate in free webinars offered by the NBCC Foundation
- Continuing education credit opportunities with *Psychology Today*, *The Professional Counselor* and the NBCC Foundation
- Listing on NBCC's Counselor Find Directory
- Access to [ProCounselor](#) for tracking continuing education
- Priority enrollment on international opportunities through NBCC International
- Ability to apply for specialty certifications to show your areas of expertise

Note to Eligible Graduate Students

You are beginning the application process for national certification and will have a head start on meeting requirements for NCC certification. Applicants who have met all NCC requirements except for postgraduate experience and supervision may have their exam results sent to third parties such as state licensure boards once NBCC has received and verified a copy of your final, official transcript.

REMEMBER

After submission of the application, applicants and certificants are required to provide written disclosure to NBCC in the event that they become the subject of a legal, criminal or disciplinary matter. The written disclosure must be submitted to NBCC within 60 days of becoming aware of the change or complaint.

IMPORTANT TERMS

The National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc. and Affiliates (NBCC) is a nonprofit, independent certification organization established in 1982. NBCC's original and primary purposes are to establish and monitor a national certification system, to identify those counselors who have voluntarily sought and obtained certification, and to maintain a register of those counselors. As NBCC has grown, it and its divisions and affiliates have taken on additional responsibilities to advance the counseling profession and enhance mental health worldwide.

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) is an independent agency that develops and implements educational standards for the counseling profession and accredits professional counselor preparation programs. Coursework requirements for the NCC certification are consistent with CACREP's standards for counselor preparation programs. Starting in 2022, NBCC will require a master's degree or higher from a CACREP-accredited counseling program for certification.

URGENT

It is important that you follow all the steps to complete certification and obtain your NCC credential. This ensures that your examination scores remain available to you in the future.

Postponing or Retaking the Exam

Your NCC application will remain open for two years or three unsuccessful attempts to pass the NCE or NCMHCE, whichever comes first.

If you do not pass the exam or if circumstances prevent you from taking the exam when scheduled, you will receive information by e-mail about rescheduling procedures, exam reregistration fees and testing dates. Examinees can defer their testing date at no extra charge by informing NBCC in writing at least 30 days prior to the exam date; however, a reregistration fee will be charged if notification is not received beforehand.

Requesting a Score Verification Report

Score verification is only available after your official, final transcript has been received and verified. After that time, you can order a score verification report to be sent to a third party. These reports are available from the online store in your ProCounselor account. Score verification requests are completed approximately four weeks from the date your payment clears. Express delivery options are also available.

Completing the NCC Application Process

Once you graduate, remember to send NBCC an official, sealed transcript documenting your degree conferral date. To ensure that your NCE or NCMHCE scores remain active, you will need to complete all the steps of the certification process and satisfy current NBCC policies. If you graduated from a non-CACREP program, you will need to submit verification of 3,000 hours of counseling work experience and 100 hours of counseling supervision (both over a 24-month post-master's time period) or verification of state licensure. Electronic forms to submit these requirements are located within your ProCounselor account. If your application closes, your scores will be permanently inactivated. You may be eligible to reactivate a closed application as long as your scores are not older than six years. There is a reactivation fee.

Looking for an internship or job?

Visit NBCC's new job board at <http://jobboard.nbcc.org> to post your résumé and browse current vacancies.

StudentWorks

A FREE WEB
RESOURCE FOR
STUDENTS

[www.nbcc.org/
studentworks](http://www.nbcc.org/studentworks)

We want to stay in touch with you!

Anytime your contact information changes, be sure to keep NBCC informed. Visit ProCounselor at your convenience to update your information.

Add nbcc@nbcc.org to your address book so you don't miss important communications.



The Official NBCC Study Guide for the NCE

Developed with your questions in mind, this guide will help you prepare for the NCE. To order, visit Procounselor.nbcc.org.