

AMERICAN *of* ACADEMY  
NURSE PRACTITIONERS  
CERTIFICATION BOARD

**AANPCB**

NP Recertification  
Certification Handbook

ANP-C  
AGNP-C  
ENP-C  
FNP-C  
GNP-C  
PMHNP-C



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## INTRODUCTION

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This **RECERTIFICATION HANDBOOK** is written for nurse practitioners who are certified by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners 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 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 below.

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## Contact Us

### American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board (AANPCB)

**Website:** <https://www.aanpcert.org>

**Email:** [certification@aanpcert.org](mailto:certification@aanpcert.org)

**Email Official Transcripts to:** [transcripts@aanpcert.org](mailto:transcripts@aanpcert.org)

**Certification Administration:** (512) 637-0500

**Toll-free Number:** (855) 822-6727

**Mailing Address:**

AANPCB  
Capital Station, LBJ Building  
P.O. Box 12926  
Austin, TX 78711-2926

**Overnight Mailing Address:**

AANPCB  
2600 Via Fortuna, Suite 240  
Austin, TX 78746

## ABOUT AANPCB

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### 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 1, 2017. AANPCB is a nonprofit organization incorporated under the name **American Academy of Nurse Practitioners National Certification Board, Inc.**

**Vision:** Nurse Practitioners meet the highest standards of excellence and competence to support quality care and optimal health outcomes.

**Mission:** Provide excellence in testing and certification for nurse practitioners.

**Values:** *AANPCB operates as an ethical and professional organization, embodying the organizational values and principles of Quality, Integrity, Respect and Responsiveness.*

**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, Family Nurse Practitioner and Psychiatric Mental Health 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, Gerontologic Nurse Practitioner and Psychiatric Mental Health 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 **Accreditation Board for 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.

### *Recertification Handbook*

- The NCCA is the private not-for-profit accrediting branch of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (I.C.E.), 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 the AANPCB 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)** [www.aanp.org](http://www.aanp.org). 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 and members attending the AANP National, Health Policy, and Fall Conferences.
- **American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners (AAENP)** [www.aaenp-natl.org](http://www.aaenp-natl.org). AAENP promotes high quality, evidence-based practice for nurse practitioners providing emergency care for patients of all ages and acuties in collaboration with an interdisciplinary team.
- 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.
- For candidates who have 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 AANPCB at 512-637-0500.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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

## AANPCB BOARD CERTIFICATION

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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 meet the 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 NP's 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 competence. Recertification provides a mechanism to assure the public that nurse practitioners have undergone periodic evaluation and met current professional standards, 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 (ABSNC)** and the **National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA)**.

### **Continuing Competency and Recertification Requirements Rationale**

- Knowledge and skills required for professional and competent NP practice evolve over time. NPs must maintain competency based on current information and knowledge affecting clinical practice. Maintaining clinical competence 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 population/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. If a certification becomes expired, the ability to apply for renewal online is not available. Contact AANPCB by email to submit an [expired certification application](#).
- Requirements for an expired certification include submitting a paper application, which includes an additional processing fee, and completion of all CE and practice requirements. The certification will be reactivated after all requirements are met and review by AANPCB staff is complete.
- 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 APRN practice, therefore, an individual whose NP certification has expired is responsible for contacting their SBON regarding their ability to work with an 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, PMHNP 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 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 Gerontologic 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.
- Certificants who are ready to retire from NP professional practice are asked to complete the [CERTIFICATION STATUS CHANGE REQUEST](#) form located under the **FORMS** tab on the home page of AANPCB’s website. Email, fax, or mail form to AANPCB. 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 themselves 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 initial certification, nor does it address practice settings. 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)
- 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](http://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 abide by AANPCB **Examination Security Policy and** federal copyright law protecting AANPCB 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<sup>®</sup> Credential

**NP-C** is the registered mark 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, PMH) precedes the certification number and is printed on both the official embossed certificate and wallet card.
- In general, there is a standard way 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.*

➤ <b>Adult Nurse Practitioner</b>	<b>ANP-C</b>
➤ <b>Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner</b>	<b>AGNP-C</b>
➤ <b>Emergency Nurse Practitioner</b>	<b>ENP-C</b>
➤ <b>Family Nurse Practitioner</b>	<b>FNP-C</b>
➤ <b>Gerontologic Nurse Practitioner</b>	<b>GNP-C</b>
➤ <b>Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner</b>	<b>PMHNP-C</b>

## 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 Wallet Cards"**. A printable certificate may be accessed on the individual's Online Profile under **"My Certifications"**.
- For information on ordering a duplicate wall certificate, see **FAQs – Duplicate Wall Certificate Requests**.

## RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS

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### **FNP, AGNP and PMHNP Recertification**

#### **Option One: Recertify by 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.
- **Practice Hours:** Minimum of 1,000 practice hours as an NP in the population focus of certification performing one or more roles of: direct patient care provider, administrator, educator, and/or researcher. Practice must be during the 5-year certification period.
- **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):** Preceptor hours may be converted to CE credits. Up to 120 practice hours precepting an advanced practice student may be converted to up to 25 non-pharmacology CE credits.

#### **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.
- 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. 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 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.
- **Practice Hours:** Minimum of 1,000 practice hours as an NP in the population focus of certification performing one or more roles of: direct patient care provider, administrator, educator, and/or researcher. Practice must be during the 5-year certification period.
- **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):** Preceptor hours may be converted to CE credits. Up to 120 practice hours precepting an advanced practice student may be converted to up to 25 non-pharmacology CE credits.

## 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; AGNP population of specialization courses; and all didactic and clinical AGNP program coursework (including all faculty-supervised clinical clock hours required) are 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 AGNP certification.
- The **Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Conversion** application may be found under the

Forms- Recertification Documents tab.

## **ENP Recertification**

### **Option One: Recertify by 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.
- **Practice Hours:** Minimum of 1,000 practice hours as an ENP performing one or more roles of: direct patient care provider, administrator, educator, and/or researcher. Practice must be during the 5-year certification period.
- **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):** Preceptor hours may be converted to CE credits. Up to 120 practice hours precepting an advanced practice student may be converted to up to 25 non-pharmacology CE credits.

### **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.

## PRACTICE HOURS

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**Rationale:** Knowledge and skills required for professional and competent NP practice evolve over time. NPs must maintain competency based on current information and knowledge affecting clinical practice. Practice hours include NP role and population/specialty-related administrative, direct patient care, education, and research activities, or a combination of these.

- NP 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 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.

### Practice Hour Requirements

- Minimum of 1,000 practice hours as an NP performing one or more roles of: direct patient care provider, administrator, educator, and/or researcher. Practice must be during the 5-year certification period.
  - **Direct patient care** duties can include direct patient care and faculty clinical supervision of NP students. Telehealth and volunteer practice are included. Student clinical practicum hours in an advanced practice program (i.e., DNP) do not qualify as NP practice hours for recertification purposes.
  - **Administrative** duties involve overseeing and interacting with advanced practice providers and/or faculty.
  - **Education** includes clinical supervision and/or didactic teaching in an NP program or providing education to advanced practice providers in other settings.
  - **Research** must be outcomes related and patient driven. Activities include QI, evidence-based science, and practice innovation.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

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**Rationale:** Completing advanced practice nurse practitioner-related CE on an ongoing basis enhances 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 evidence-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 are to be completed within the 5-year period of certification.
- 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

Rationale: 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 includes 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

CEs may be awarded for presentations such as Advanced Practice Provider/Medical Conferences, Clinical Skills and Procedure Workshops, and 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 can be used up to two times 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)

Elected office, serving on Boards and/or Committees, other certification/credentials awarded

**CE Accreditation**

CE certificates and trackers are audited for relevancy of program topics, number of 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.

## ACADEMIC COURSEWORK

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Rationale: CE credit may be received for graduate or post-graduate courses directly related to advance practice nursing knowledge and skills.

- Courses must be U.S. or Canadian accredited and subject to AANPCB approval.
- Coursework must be completed within the current 5-year period of certification.
- Course descriptions may be requested.
- An official or unofficial transcript from an accredited university is required. Transcript must include the certificant name, university name, and date of successful course completion.
- 1 academic semester credit equals 15 CE contact hours.



## PRECEPTORSHIP HOURS

**Rationale:** Precepting advanced practice students during the provision of direct clinical supervision of patient care as an NP is consistent with the demonstration of continuing competence and ongoing professional development. Therefore, AANPCB accepts preceptorship hours as an option to replace up to 25 non-pharmacology CE credits.

### 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.

### Requirement

- Complete and submit a **Preceptorship Form**. The form may be found online under the **Forms** tab at [www.aanpcert.org](http://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).

**CONVERSION TABLE**

<u>CLINICAL HOURS</u>	<u>CE CREDIT</u>
1 – 5 hours	= 1 CE
6 – 10 hours	= 2 CE
11 – 15 hours	= 3 CE
16 – 20 hours	= 4 CE
21 – 25 hours	= 5 CE
26 – 30 hours	= 6 CE
31 – 35 hours	= 7 CE
36 – 40 hours	= 8 CE
41 – 45 hours	= 9 CE
46 – 50 hours	= 10 CE
51 – 55 hours	= 11 CE
56 – 60 hours	= 12 CE
61 – 65 hours	= 13 CE
66 – 70 hours	= 14 CE
71 – 75 hours	= 15 CE
76 – 80 hours	= 16 CE
81 – 85 hours	= 17 CE
86 – 90 hours	= 18 CE
91 – 95 hours	= 19 CE
96 – 100 hours	= 20 CE
101 – 105 hours	= 21 CE
106 – 110 hours	= 22 CE
111 – 115 hours	= 23 CE
116 – 119 hours	= 24 CE
120+ hours	= 25 CE

## RECERTIFY BY EXAM

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Rationale: AANPCB certification examinations are based on national role delineation studies, which assess core knowledge and skills of certified NPs currently in practice, therefore, the entry-into-practice level exam is appropriate for renewal of certification regardless of a certificant's practice settings over time.

**Visit [www.prometric.com](http://www.prometric.com) or contact a Prometric customer service representative during Prometric hours of operation for all questions concerning exam administration and testing site regulations.**

**Prometric dedicated toll-free customer service number for AANPCB candidates: (800) 742-8738**

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### Exam Information

- 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 can be found on the AANPCB scheduling page at [www.prometric.com](http://www.prometric.com).
- AANPCB certification examinations are administered via computer-based testing format at Prometric testing centers located globally. 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, AGNP or PMHNP certification exams and for NP practice.

### Practice Exam

- AANPCB 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 themselves 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

When a candidate becomes eligible to test (as verified during the application review process), AANPCB will export the name of the candidate to Prometric and send an **Eligibility to Test and Schedule Exam Notification** email to the candidate from [certification@aanpcert.org](mailto:certification@aanpcert.org). This email provides important instructions for scheduling a testing appointment at Prometric Testing Centers and authorizes the 120-day testing window. Check all email inboxes including junk/spam folders for Approval and Eligibility to Test email.

## Schedule, Reschedule, or Cancel an Exam

- Log in to your AANPCB account at [www.aanpcert.org/signin](http://www.aanpcert.org/signin) and select **Schedule Exam** found under **My AANPCB**. You must use your AANPCB login information to schedule your testing appointment.
- Changes to a scheduled examination appointment may be done online by logging into your AANPCB account or by visiting [www.prometric.com](http://www.prometric.com).
- A request to cancel and reschedule a test appointment, with no additional fee, must be made at least 31 days before the scheduled test appointment and within the 120-day window-to-test. If canceling and/or rescheduling a test appointment within 30 days of the scheduled exam, a fee will apply. Exam appointments cannot be canceled or rescheduled within 24 hours of the exam appointment.
- Candidates must comply with Prometric'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.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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

- All test centers are equipped to provide access in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and every reasonable accommodation will be made in meeting a candidate's needs.
- Applicants with disabilities or those who would otherwise have difficulty taking the test will need to complete the **Special Accommodation Request** online [using this link](#). The request will be reviewed, and a Prometric Special Accommodations Team Member will contact the candidate within 3-5 business days to confirm the approved accommodations. **DO NOT** schedule your examination until your completed Prometric Special Accommodations Request Form and required documentation has been received and approved by the Prometric testing accommodations Department.

## Test-Taking Tips

- A resource document containing **Test-Taking Tips** is available under the **Resources** 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** in the FNP AGNP PMHNP Candidate Handbook 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:** Visit the AANPCB scheduling page on [www.prometric.com](http://www.prometric.com) 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 Prometric testing centers located globally.
- **Identification:** Names must match on the AANPCB application, Prometric 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 24 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, you will 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 non-existent. Candidates who wish to appeal their exam score may be charged a fee. (See **Appeals Policy**).
- **Score Report:** An official letter with the exam score and relative performance 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.
- 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 email an official Fail Letter with the final exam score and relative performance in the Testing Domains.
- 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 the score report is required. Since performance in a testing domain is based on fewer items and is therefore less reliable than performance on the whole exam, 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 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.

***Recertification Handbook***

- 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

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### Online Profile

Visit [www.aanpcert.org](http://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 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 are recommended. Online applications must be completed within 30 days to avoid loss of data, check your browser's cookie settings for additional 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 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 practice hours, 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](http://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 practice hours attest that they have met the minimum requirement for advanced practice CE, have practiced a minimum of 1,000 hours as an NP in the role and population focus, and can provide further validation of practice 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](mailto:certification@aanpcert.org) and is viewable on the applicant's **Online Profile**.
- AANPCB emails the Approval and Eligibility to Test to the exam candidate from [certification@aanpcert.org](mailto:certification@aanpcert.org)
- 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

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### 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).
- To submit a request, log in to your [My AANPCB](#) account and access the “Order A Verification” section.
- 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 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 test 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

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### 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 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. 21-22 and online 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, **Prometric LLC**. All Prometric 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 Prometric 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, if applicable, before the appeal can be reviewed. Certificants found ineligible to renew their certification through 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, Psychiatric Mental Health 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.

### **Incomplete Applications**

Incomplete recertification applications submitted before the certification expiration date will be placed on hold. If the necessary documentation is not received within 6 months after the certification expiration date, the application will be denied.

American Academy of Nurse Practitioners National Certification Board, Inc



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