

Certification Handbook

for

Board Certified Chaplains (BCC)

Board Certified Chaplains in Veteran Affairs (BCC-VA)

Certified Associate Chaplains (CAC)



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Section 12.0 Acknowledging Subcommittee Approval for the Certification Handbook

After the Subcommittee has granted initial approval of the organization's certification standards and procedures, appropriate office publications, including the certification handbook, shall state the statement of approval in the appropriate place. The statement of approval and logo can be found on the Institutional/Parish Group Community site after approval has been granted.

Introduction

Section 1.0: Certification by the NACC

1.1 Purpose of the Certification Handbook

This handbook provides the rationale, standards and procedures, process, and documents needed for those applying for certification and renewal of certification for board certification as a Board Certified Chaplain (BCC), a Board Certified Chaplain in Veterans Affairs (BCC-VA), and a Certified Associate Chaplain (CAC) for the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC).

1.2 NACC Directives Regarding Certification

In the application for a charter membership (1965), NACC's statement of purpose included: *The general objective of this association shall be to assist the chaplain toward the realization of progressively higher ideals, with attendant spiritual, intellectual, and personal characteristics, in the pastoral care of patients and staff of the institution.* (Published in 1975 in *A History of the National Association of Catholic Chaplains*, researched and written by Catherine Elliott, and used again in NACC's 2005 40th Anniversary Reflections)

1.3 Mission and History of the NACC

In 2007 the NACC refined its mission, vision and values, and reaffirmed those statements in 2012.

NACC MISSION STATEMENT

The National Association of Catholic Chaplains advocates for the profession of spiritual care and educates, certifies and supports chaplains, clinical pastoral educators and all members who continue the healing ministry of Jesus in the name of the Church.

NACC VALUE STATEMENTS

DISCIPLESHIP

Reflecting on and following the mission of Jesus in head, heart and action.

INTEGRITY

Living out the Gospel in all we do.

STEWARDSHIP

Developing and utilizing wisely the gifts and resources entrusted to us.

COMPASSION

Responding to the call of Jesus by sharing the suffering, hope and joy of others.

INCLUSIVITY

Welcoming, honoring and fostering diversity that deepens our unity.

PROFESSIONALISM

Providing competent and effective ministry within the field of spiritual care.

LEADERSHIP

Collaborating to develop and nurture the necessary gifts for the direction of our ministry.

EMPOWERMENT

Encouraging others to use their gifts within and beyond professional spiritual care.

NACC VISION Statement

The National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) is cultivating the ministry of chaplaincy and transforming spiritual care locally, nationally and globally to faithfully reflect the healing presence of Jesus Christ by:

- forming life-giving relationships with individuals, families, colleagues and organizations;
- advancing compassionate care through creative educational and spiritual growth opportunities;
- promoting the dignity of persons of every age, culture and state in life.

NACC is a light of hope, whose members are persistently advocating for those dedicated to the spiritual care of people experiencing pain, vulnerability, joy and hope.

Founding and Early History 1965-1975

(Note: This information was published in 1975 as *A History of the National Association of Catholic Chaplains*, researched and written by Catherine Elliott then repeated in the 2005 NACC publication *Wellsprings Of Our Journey: 40th Anniversary Reflections*.)

For many years, the Catholic Chaplaincy had no formal organization. Some chaplains were members of the Conference of Catholic Hospital Chaplains of the Catholic Hospital Association, which met on the occasion of the annual convention of the CHA. In addition, there were small, regional, unrelated groups throughout the country, but for all practical purposes, there was no real national chaplains' organization.

In 1964, the Bureau of Health and Hospitals of the former National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) considered the formation of a chaplains' association. This action was largely the result of the planning and encouragement of Monsignor Harrold A. Murray, then Director of the Bureau, and other interested bishops and priests. Monsignor Murray had served for 10 years as a part-time hospital chaplain in a community hospital and recognized the chaplains' very special ministry. He also recognized the need for upgrading standards, providing training and certification and helping the chaplains gain greater prestige.

The Administrative Board of the NCWC considered the formalization of a national chaplains' organization along with the development of training programs. In April, 1965, the Board approved the establishment of the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC). It was to operate under the auspices of the Bureau of Health and Hospitals with Monsignor Murray as its Executive

Director. It was given financial support by the NCWC for its operating budget and was to concern itself primarily with establishing a training course for hospital chaplains. An application for charter membership was designed and a statement of purpose was written. That statement reads as follows:

1. The general objective of this Association shall be to assist the chaplain toward the realization of progressively higher ideals, with attendant spiritual, intellectual, and personal characteristics, in the pastoral care of patients and staff of the institution.
2. To encourage the development of all phases of Catholic life as they relate to institutional practice.
3. To afford members an opportunity to communicate with each other and become familiar with resources of all health organizations.
4. To develop themselves as genuine Christ-like chaplains, after the example of the divine Healer of Souls.
5. To encourage and promote the education and training of priests as chaplains through national, regional, and local meetings, and through training programs.

Bishop Joseph Brunini, as moderator of the Bureau, became the first Episcopal Advisor to the infant association.

During 1966, all Ordinaries were contacted and requested to supply information on the chaplains in their dioceses. With that information, individual chaplains were contacted and the membership began to grow. A 12-member Advisory Board was formed with Monsignor Murray acting as its Chairman. Its function was to direct the activities of the Association and plan its future. The Board composed a Statement of Understanding, Criteria for Certification and relationships with other chaplains' groups and a curriculum for the orientation training program. By the end of 1966 there were 784 members of the Association of whom 461 were certified under its "grandfather clause."

During this year preparation was begun on a manual offering guidelines to the chaplains and describing the status and duties of the hospital chaplain.

A significant event for the NACC during its first year was its first Annual Convention. This was held June 14–15 in Cleveland, Ohio, and attracted 140 priests. Increased formalization of the organization took place in this year and the minutes of the Advisory Board reflect this. There was a concentration on establishing curriculum for training courses, designing proper application forms and a general emphasis on establishing the NACC as a permanent, on-going organization. By the end of 1967, the Association was beginning to have a significant impact on chaplaincy in this country. The Advisory Board had met four times and had prepared documents recommending qualifications necessary for Diocesan Directors of the Hospital Apostolate and requirements for the position of "Chaplain Supervisor." The manual Apostolate to the Sick was published in this year and the Association's first Executive Secretary was appointed, Father Michael J. McManus of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.

During 1968, the Association began to develop into a recognized, professional organization. It had set standards for certification of chaplains in both general and mental health care institutions. It was actively distributing its manual and had begun the publication of a quarterly journal, the *Camillian*. Its mailing list had grown and the minutes of meetings of this year reflect a growing enthusiasm on the part of all its members. With confidence in the importance and future of the

NACC, the Advisory Board actively publicized its existence to state and military hospitals and published information on the Association in hospital and medical journals.

In 1968 the NCWC was reorganized and renamed, becoming the United States Catholic Conference (USCC). The NACC ultimately became the division of Chaplain Services, Department of Health Affairs with Monsignor Murray as the Department's Director. 1968 was an important, eventful year for the Association and by the end of that year, the NACC had begun to fully develop into the organization as it is recognized today.

In 1969, the Advisory Board was dissolved as the Executive Committee assumed greater responsibility in the decision making process of the Association. Father McManus was instructed to hire a staff and assume all other responsibilities necessary in the formation of a permanent, centralized office. The annual membership dues were raised in an effort to provide greater financial support. The Board of Examiners had been established by 1968 and assumed the responsibility for certification and accreditation of training institutions.

By 1970, the NACC had established itself as a recognized certifying and training organization. It had designed a training institute, which was being held twice a year, and it published educational material not only for its members but for anyone interested in the health care field. Certification by the Board of Examiners became an important criterion for many health care facilities in the hiring of chaplains.

The next two years saw a gradual refinement of standards and procedures of the Association. Standards for certification were raised and improved as was the curriculum for training programs. The office had begun publishing a bi-monthly Newsletter and its annual conventions were an important event attracting more participants each year. The American College of Chaplains, the Catholic Hospital Association and the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) were just three of the health-related organizations that recognized and communicated with the NACC.

In 1972, a reorganization of the USCC placed the Association under the newly formed Department of Social Development & World Peace It was to become, under the reorganization of the USCC, the division of Chaplain Services, Department of Health Affairs. In September 1972, Cardinal O'Boyle of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., announced that Father McManus was to be the new pastor of St. Michael's Parish, Laurel, Maryland. Applications were submitted for his replacement and in January of 1973, Father David R. Baeten of the Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin, was chosen as the new Executive Secretary.

A major change took place in the Association in 1973 when the membership voted to admit sisters, brothers, and lay persons as certified members of the NACC. Discussion in this area had begun in 1972 and the resolution was given to the general membership to be voted upon. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of the proposal and in March, 1974, the Board of Examiners began accepting applications for certification from the newly formed category, Pastoral Associates. By the end of this year there were 32 certified Pastoral Associates, 177 non-certified and one Acting Pastoral Associate Supervisor. The Pastoral Associates have shown themselves to be concerned, active participants in the NACC and in their short time within the Association they have a representative on the Continuing Education Committee, a representative position on the Board of Examiners and in the last Executive Committee elections, one of their members, Sister Bonnie Woods of Detroit, was chosen as the new Secretary.

The growth and development of the NACC into the respected organization that it has become has far greater significance than might at first be apparent.

For many years, the role of the chaplain was looked upon by many as almost an “out-post” assignment, not one which was actively sought after by priests of any age. But through the dedication of a few enlightened individuals . . . the chaplaincy has finally begun to be seen for the very special ministry that it is.

The NACC in its efforts to organize, educate and certify chaplains has made even the chaplains themselves see their roll in a new perspective. The Association's very existence offers many of these dedicated people an opportunity for learning and fellowship, and stands for many as simply a symbol of support and encouragement in their sometimes very difficult assignments.

When one considers the point at which it started, the NACC has made remarkable progress in its [first] 10 years of existence. But with the increasing enrollment and participation

Since those early years

As noted above, by 1968, the NACC had already set these “higher ideals” in standards for certification of chaplains working in general and mental health care institutions, and begun the predecessor of *Vision*, the *Camillian*. By 1970, it was in professional relationship with the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), the Catholic Hospital Association (later Catholic Health Association), and the American College of Chaplains (that was renamed such in 1968 from being the Chaplains' Division of the American Protestant Hospital Association – APHA – and merged in 1998 with the Association of Mental Hospital Chaplains - AMHC – to form the Association of Professional Chaplains). These relationships stay strong today, 40 years later, in order to ensure the professionalism of chaplaincy across denominational and faith traditions. In 1973, the NACC members voted to include sisters, lay people, deacons, and brothers in becoming certified. NACC has a long, rich history!

In 1978 the Congress on Ministry in Specialized Settings (COMISS) began and NACC participated in the collaborative working relationship among the diverse cognate groups and denominations representing specialized ministries.

In 1979, the NCCB Administrative Board informed the NACC that the NACC, as well as other organizations subsidized under the departments of the NCCB, that they would no longer be subsidized under the offices of the NCCB. Staff persons for the organizations of specialized ministers were asked to leave the NCCB headquarters and form separate corporations. As with the NACC, the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) and the National Conference of Catechetical Leadership (NCCL) emerged from this decision and continue to exist today with financial support from their members.

In 1980, the NACC was relocated to an office in St. Francis Seminary, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and then to a room in the Archbishop Cousins Center, the former archdiocesan minor seminary. Rev. Timothy Toohey was the first NACC Executive Director followed by Sr. Helen Hayes, OSF, and Rev. Joseph Driscoll. As the members of the NACC attempted to work with the BOE, chaplains became more and more invested in their ministerial identity.

In 1988 a major gathering in Minneapolis entitled Dialogue 88 occurred. This COMISS-led gathering included dialogue among diverse pastoral care and education groups and, at this meeting; foundation documents of COMISS were signed. Six years later a similar event, Dialogue 94, took place in Milwaukee.

Over the next several years dialogue among several cognate groups continued, including joint work by APC, NACC, Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), The National Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC), and The Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education (now called The Canadian Association for Spiritual Care – CASC) to write “The White Paper,” which was officially titled “Professional Chaplaincy: Its Role and Importance in Health Care” (©2001).

In 2003, these five cognate groups along with American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) committed to formulating Common Standards. A year later in fall 2004 at the ACPE national conference in Portland, ME, these six cognate groups unanimously agreed to the four documents that comprised the Common Standards and created an organization called The Council on Collaboration that in 2007 formally became an LLC as The Spiritual Care Collaborative (SCC). The SCC planned to initiate a regular review of each of these four documents beginning with the Common Standards for Professional Chaplaincy.

These many professional relationships helped NACC gradually raise its requirements for certifying chaplains so they were on par with those of the other associations, culminating with the SCC Common Standards for Professional Chaplaincy. Chaplaincy ministry moved from being viewed as a predominantly sacramental ministry to one that meets the spiritual and emotional needs of the person being ministered to.

The NACC adopted and added to these SCC common standards specific standards that reflected core elements of our Catholic tradition. These NACC standards were approved in 2007 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Commission on Certification and Accreditation (USCCB/CCA).

As you have read here of this history, in the early years, certification was considered to be held for life, but by the early 1980s a peer- reviewed formal renewal of certification process began as a requirement (as it is for all spiritual care associations), superseding informal continuing education. Later, getting an up-to-date endorsement from the bishop/major religious superior was also added as a requirement. Over the years, the requirements of additional units of CPE and a higher level of formal education gradually raised the level of professional preparation for initial certification. Even the requirements for renewal have been gradually upgraded. In recent years the Ethics Procedures and the Ethics Accountability Statement also improved the professional stature of chaplaincy. These are all signs of “progressively higher ideals.”

In 2011 the USCCB ended the Commission on Certification and Accreditation (CCA) and created the Subcommittee on Certification of Ecclesial Ministry and Service (SCEMS). Therefore, in 2014 the NACC again had its Standards and Procedures reviewed and approved by the SCEMS.

The following two years (2015-2016) the NACC collaborated again with its Strategic Partners in Spiritual Care, the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), Association of Professional Chaplains (APC), Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC), and Neshama: Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC) to review and revise the Common Standards which were now renamed the

Common Qualifications and Competencies. These were important revisions to make the competencies more current to the needs of professional chaplaincy.

In 2020, the NACC reviewed again its qualifications and competencies in light of the recently revised USCCB National Certification Standards (2018) and newly approved standards of the Alliance for Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministry (ACLEM) <https://lemcertification.org/>. NACC has made some further revisions and additions to its Competencies in light of these reviews.

This rich history paints the picture of growing professionalism of professional chaplaincy and extraordinary efforts to present a united voice on behalf of chaplaincy and a common front of the highest quality of ministry. “Progressively higher ideals” is captured in the standards, explored and assessed in the certification process, and lived out in every member of the NACC. It is amazing and humbling when you think about the hours and hours of time committed by our members over the decades, and so many of you today to formulate, define, and refine these standards, and to participate in and improve the certification process to make it and related documents of highest quality and integrity.

1.4 Relationship of the NACC to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service

In 1982, due to the rising cost of bringing members of the Board of Examiners (BOE) to Washington for meetings, the NCCB Administrative Board decided to transfer costs of staffing the BOE to an agency outside of the NCCB. The NCCB considered the option of withdrawing its endorsement from the certification and accreditation process, in favor of placing this agency within the NACC, but rejected the idea. The NCCB was clear in its decision to continue the endorsement of the bishops for accrediting CPE programs and certifying specialized ministers. The bishops were equally insistent that an accrediting commission be incorporated separately from the NCCB and recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDOE). The NCCB Associate General Secretary called a transition committee of BOE and NACC members to devise a plan for the eventual formation and function of what would become the USCCB Commission on Certification and Accreditation (USCC/CCA). The USCC/CCA was to be the “official agent of the NCCB for the certification of persons in specialized ministries and accreditation of training programs.” This organization would come into being following ratification by the NCCB-USCC. The requirements for recognition by the USDOE played a significant role in determining the function and policies of this newly formed accrediting commission. (Information above taken from *A History of the USCCB/CCA*, 2006, Dr. Kay Sheskaitis, IHM, former Executive Director, USCCB/CCA)

Since those years, the NACC has continued to submit for USCCB/CCA approval its standards and procedures for the certification and renewal of certification of chaplains.

Now, since 2012, the NACC submits its annual report to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service, and every seven years submits for review and re-approval its standards and procedures, along with appropriate documentation. The NACC did so in 2014, and does so again in 2021.

1.5 Periodic Review of the Certification Handbook

Contents of this Certification Handbook are reviewed on a regular basis, and updates to some procedures are recommended as needed. A full review of the Handbook will be done every three years.

Section 2: Benefits of Certification

2.1 Benefits to the Church in the United States

For over 55 years, since 1965, the NACC has continued the healing ministry in the name of the Church. In Bishop Dale Melczek's March 1, 2005, letter to our NACC membership to recognize the 40th anniversary of NACC, he offered a clear perspective on what this means. "The NACC offers an enormous advantage to the church in assisting the bishops in the oversight of this vital ministry. It also assures the people whom we serve that those who minister to them in behalf of Jesus and his church are grounded in Catholic theology, adhere to the 'Ethical and Religious Directives,' and extend the ministry of the church with the formal approval of the bishop."

All of NACC board certified members (priests, deacons, religion men and women, and lay men and women) contribute to the continued growth and benefit of certification. NACC lay men and women, who the local ordinaries endorse as lay ecclesial health care ministers, contribute to the continued growth and definition of the rightful position of Lay Ecclesial Ministry in the Church. This responds to a need identified in *Parishes and Parish Ministers: A Study of Lay Ministry*, National Pastoral Life Center 1999, reiterated in *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions*, NCCB/USCC 1999, and reemphasized in *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, USCCB, 2005 (hereafter *Co-Workers*). Certified Lay Ecclesial Ministers also help Catholic Church entities to be in compliance with norms and guidelines for formation:

"Lay persons who devote themselves permanently or temporarily to some special service of the Church are obliged to acquire appropriate formation which is required to fulfill their function properly and to carry it out conscientiously, zealously, an diligently."

—The Code of Canon Law, 231 #1;
Co-Workers, p. 33

2.2 Benefits to Provinces, Regions and State Catholic Conferences

When provinces, regions and state Catholic conferences work together toward certification, all can benefit from, and promote the following values:

"Whenever possible, provinces or regions can develop consistent certification standards and procedures so that lay ecclesial ministers might transfer from one diocese to another in the region with the approval of the sending and receiving bishops."

—Co-Workers, p. 57

The NACC appreciates the collaboration and cooperation between arch/diocese within provinces and regions and statewide Catholic conferences to utilize the common certification standards and specialized competencies published by the Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers (The Alliance), which can be found at www.lemcertification.org. The Alliance received approval for its revised standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers for the new national certification process from the USCCB Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service in fall 2018. The standards were written collaboratively by the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC), the National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM), the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL), and the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM). The intended value of these common certification standards and specialized competencies include giving directions to the future of Lay Ecclesial Ministry in the church; recognizing and affirming those already in ministry; and promoting faithful and competent Lay Ecclesial Ministers who are accountable to standards and to the arch/diocese or organization that certify them.

USCCB Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service standards require arch/diocesan offices and national organizations to provide verification that the assessment of specialized ministers seeking certification is based on the competencies outlined by Certification Handbook of the Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service.

2.3 Benefits to the Arch/Dioceses - Local Church

The NACC annually communicates on the World Day of the Sick (February 11th) to the local ordinary who are the NACC members who work and reside in his diocese, encourages the strengthening of the relationship to the local ordinary, and emphasizes the special ministry NACC board certified chaplains provide to those in need of healing, especially the aging, ill, and dying. <https://www.nacc.org/about-nacc/leadership/episcopal-advisory-council/>

As certification is a process that enables arch/diocesan officials to formally identify and authorize lay women and men for key positions and major leadership roles for specialized ecclesial ministries, the NACC encourages the local church also to view and embrace NACC members, priests, deacons, brothers, as well as lay men and women, as part of the local church's ministry. As arch/diocesan directors offer vital support to parishes by assisting them in the identification of the need for and availability of certified Lay Ecclesial Ministers with specialized competencies, some dioceses are now beginning to understand how NACC board certified members can be exceptionally helpful to the diocese and parishes in providing support and training in pastoral care. The following quotation points to the important task of identifying these roles:

"A diocese must first identify those roles that, in the judgment of the diocesan bishop, are so essential to collaborating in the pastoral care of people that diocesan policies are needed to ensure that those who are given these roles have the appropriate education, formation, experience, and ecclesial recognition to meet the needs of the community"

—Co-Workers, p.56

Certification testifies that Lay Ecclesial Ministers have received the appropriate formation required to enable them to be competent ministers in the area of specialization for which they are prepared. The certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers may also provide legal safeguards for both new and

existing individual Lay Ecclesial Ministers and arch/diocesan parish communities. *Co-Workers* points out the importance of formation in this manner:

"Ensuring the quality of pastoral care provided by lay ecclesial ministers requires a process for deciding that a given candidate has the education, formation, and professional skills necessary to serve in a particular role. This involves establishing the requirements for education, formation, and experience for specific ministerial roles and evaluating the extent to which individuals meet these requirements. This may vary from diocese to diocese, but the competence of those who serve needs to be verified in some way.

The diocesan bishop has several options for setting certification requirements. Some examples for specific ministry roles can be found in the certification standards established by national associations serving lay ministers in general or role-specific sub-groups and approved by the USCCB Commission on Certification and Accreditation."
(Update note: This is now done by the USCCB Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service)

—Co-Workers, p. 56

In the case of the NACC, it has been providing such certification for priests, religious men and women, deacons, and lay men and women such certification for specialized ministry since 1965.

2.4 Benefits to Academic Institutions

The NACC communicates and collaborates with the members of the Association of Graduate Programs in Ministry (AGPIM) regarding NACC's process for certifying its members. NACC views its collaborative efforts between academic institutions such as colleges, universities, and programs for lay formation within seminaries as very important. Academic institutions benefit from knowing the NACC certification competencies and procedures, as these standards provide a framework to demonstrate how their programs of study assist candidates in the process of certification for chaplaincy. Certification also provides a common language for dialogue and collaboration between the NACC, arch/diocesan office personnel, and the academic faculty members, who are responsible for providing programs for the formation of those preparing the NACC certification.

2.5 Benefits to Mentors of Candidates for Certification

Certification includes the opportunity for mentors to guide candidates as apprentices through the process of certification. Mentors nurture and foster discipleship with those who are candidates for certification. Mentors benefit from the process of guiding certification candidates. Both mentors and candidates benefit from the experiences of reciprocity and mutual support:

"Mentoring, formal or informal, can be especially helpful. An experienced Church minister introduces the prospective lay minister into the ministerial workplace. A mentor passes on more than skills. He or she presents an understanding of the particular culture in which the ministry will take place, including the challenges and the opportunities. The mentor helps the prospective minister to develop realistic expectations about ministry, including the limits of what can be accomplished. This can prevent the burnout that results when actual experience fails to meet

expectations. By sharing their own stories of progress and accomplishments, sacrifices and frustrations, mentors prepare new ministers to make an informed commitment to ministry."

—Co-Workers, pp. 29-30

You can learn more about NACC's mentoring program at <https://www.nacc.org/certification/board-certified-chaplain/mentors/>.

2.6 Benefits to the Professional Community

The National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) is one of many Catholic ministry associations that provide certification for lay ecclesial ministries. Over its history, the NACC has certified as chaplains and clinical pastoral educators, priests, deacons, religious men and women, and lay men and women to continue the healing ministry in the name of the Church.

To the professional worlds within which NACC board certified chaplains serve, the NACC has collaborated with many other professional chaplaincy associations to strengthen the benefits of chaplaincy. Efforts included the "The White Paper," which was officially titled "Professional Chaplaincy: Its Role and Importance in Health Care" (©2001), as well as the Common Standard for Professional Chaplains (2004). Over the years, the majority of employers in the health care world require that a chaplain either be a board certified chaplain (BCC) or be board-certifiable within a designated period of time after employment.

The NACC continues to collaborate with cognate partners to strengthen the messages and advance the research on the benefits of professional chaplaincy.

2.7 Benefits to the NACC Member Becoming Board Certified

Certification recognizes and validates the specific vocation of priests, deacons, religious men and women, and lay men and women becoming board certified with NACC. Certification affirms these ministers who are called by their baptism, and that they are uniquely commissioned to serve the church through this specialized ecclesial ministry for which they have been certified. The response to this call is often graced with a lifetime commitment and a sincere desire to be faithful witnesses of the Gospel for the purpose of establishing the reign of God and transformation of the world.

Certification recognizes the board certified chaplain as professional and competent in her or his respective areas of specialization, here the ministry of chaplaincy and pastoral care. The process of becoming certified at the initial or renewal levels challenges those board certified to greater authenticity and integrity. Certification documents credibility and becomes part of the resume of the board certified chaplain.

The process of certification also provides candidates with the opportunity to reflect on this specialized ministry of chaplaincy, engage in self-analysis, and benefit from assessment by their peers whether they are just beginning or are experienced in their ministry:

This process also provides candidates with a backdrop for ongoing assessment and formation. It emphasizes the need for life-long intellectual learning and spiritual formation as an essential component during the process both for initial and renewal of certification.

2.8 Benefits to Agencies, Institutions and Church Communities

Those being board certified chaplains benefit agencies, institutions, and church communities by assuring a higher quality of ministry for the people they serve. Both board certified chaplains and those to whom they minister benefit from ongoing effective ministry, and thereby value those certified as a vital part of their communities and places of employment. Certification reinforces higher expectations on the part of all. Board certified chaplains are challenged to deliver quality service and sustained excellence as they fulfill their responsibilities. Agencies, institutions, and church communities have confidence that board certified chaplains are responsible agents of the church and are qualified to serve in the specialized ministry for which they have been certified.

Section 3.0 Eligibility Requirements for Certification

The NACC collaborated with its strategic partner spiritual care associations, the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), Association of Professional Chaplains (APC), Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC), and Neshama: Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC) to develop the qualifications and competencies required to become a board certified chaplain, as well as ones specific to NACC that the NACC determined essential for being one who ministers in the name of the Church.

3.1 Being in good standing with the Catholic Church and one's participation in the life of the parish or life of the community

As an applicant for certification, priests and deacons are expected through their letters of endorsement to evidence their life in the Church. (Qualification 301.QUAL1). Religious men and women receive their endorsement from the head of their religious communities. Lay men and women are required to provide to NACC a letter of recommendation from the parish priest or a priest who knows them well to verify active membership in a Catholic community or one which is in Union with Rome. Once the NACC National Office receives that letter of recommendation they request a current letter of ecclesiastical endorsement. Current is defined as within one year of application for certification. The NACC will complete the endorsement request on the Applicant's behalf after materials have been deemed sufficient to move forward with an interview.

Ecclesiastical endorsement is formal approval for ministry by (CP124):

- The Bishop of the diocese of the Applicant's ministry if the Applicant is a lay person or;
- The major superior if the Applicant is a member of a religious order or;
- The Ordinary if the Applicant is a diocesan priest or deacon (understood as the Bishop of the diocese where the priest or deacon is incardinated).
- For BCC-VA: The NACC will complete the endorsement request on the Applicant's behalf. Ecclesiastical endorsement is formal approval for ministry by the Archdiocese of the Military.

3.2 Verification of NACC's Academic/Formation Requirements

An applicant for certification needs to evidence the required academic qualifications in the application process.

Academic

For BCC, BCC-VA and CAC:

An official transcript of the Bachelor's degree. Transcripts are requested by the Applicant to be delivered directly from the institution to the NACC National Office. The Certification Commission requires transcript analysis, at the Applicant's expense, for all degrees acquired outside the United States.

For BCC and BCC-VA: An official transcript of the graduate-level theological degree. Transcripts are requested by the Applicant to be delivered directly from the institution to the NACC National Office. The Certification Commission requires transcript analysis, at the Applicant's expense, for all degrees acquired outside the United States. If applicable, a letter from the NACC Certification Commission granting a Graduate Degree Equivalency is submitted.

Formation

Applicants for BCC and BCC-VA are required to complete 4 units of CPE from an accredited ACPE site.

CAC applicants must have 2 units of CPE from an accredited site and provide verified documentation of at least 1,000 hours post CPE, either in employment, volunteer service or additional CPE.

3.3 Adherence to the NACC Professional Code of Ethics

The NACC collaborated in 2004 in the development of and the shares The Code of Ethics for Spiritual Care Professionals with its strategic partner spiritual care associations, the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), Association of Professional Chaplains (APC), Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC), and Neshama: Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC). <https://www.nacc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Code-of-Ethics-for-Spiritual-Care-Professionals-2015-2012.pdf>

The chaplain must include in application for initial certification and renewal current completion of the NACC Ethics Accountability Statement (Code of Ethics 206.11.1). In this accountability statement the chaplain confirms that he or she has read the Code of Ethics, commits to adhering to the Code, and agrees to report any circumstances where he or she has violated the code. The document can be found in the Appendices of this handbook and on our website at: [Ethics Accountability Statement for Initial Certification \(nacc.org\)](#) Current is defined as within one year of application for certification.

3.4 Membership in the NACC

The applicant might have been a Student, Volunteer or Profession Ministry member of the NACC prior to deciding to apply for certification. However, prior to applying for Certification, the applicant will need to become a Chaplaincy Ministry member of NACC (Qualification 301.QUA2). Membership dues are required on an annual basis.

3.5 Ongoing Participation in NACC Meetings/Workshops

The certified member of NACC of NACC is encouraged to participate in the life and activities of NACC. As a Chaplaincy Ministry member, the certified member has a significant investment in the mission and future of NACC with voting rights in the Association. Those who achieve and maintain Board Certification have the opportunity to serve on the NACC Board of Directors,

Committees, Commissions, Panels, as Certification Interviewers, and Interview Team Educators (ITE).

Once one is certified, one must maintain certification with a required fifty (50) hours of educational activities. You will find in the Renewal of Certification Continuing Education Units required in the Certification Procedures Handbook.

These procedures include the following:

- All Chaplains applying for renewal of Certification must submit documentation of the Completion of fifty (50) hours of educational activities per year is required for the five (5) year renewal of certification cycle (Competency 306.MNT2).
- If the Chaplain holds advanced certification, the following guidelines apply: Beginning with the year in which the advanced certification was granted, the Chaplain must complete a minimum of twenty (20) hours of educational activities per year (of the fifty (50) hours total required per year) related to education in the advanced certification. For ease of identification, the twenty(20) hours per year related to the specialty area should be coded with the credentials of the specialty.
- When educational activities are recorded, an “hour” equals sixty (60) minutes. A minimum of ten (10) hours is required in each of the four categories of Competency: Integration of Theory and Practice(TTP), Professional Identity and Conduct(PIC), Professional Practice Skills(PPS), and Organizational Leadership(OL) (see Certification Competencies 302, 303, 304, and 305). Based on the recommendations of his/her previous peer review, certification interview, or the areas where the Chaplain determines a need for growth, the other ten (10) hours may be divided to meet his/her needs
- When a continuing education activity includes time both as a presenter and as an attendee, the Chaplain may record the number of hours spent in presenting/preparing and the number of hours spent in attendance.
- 532.7 When a continuing education activity provides updating in more than one of the four Categories of Competency (see CP532.4), the Chaplain may elect to record the education hours in multiple categories. The total number of hours recorded should not exceed the total education hours for the activity.
- 532.8 Routine activities which occur as part of the Chaplain’s professional ministry responsibilities (e.g. liturgical rites, patient visitation, mentoring CPE students) may not be submitted as continuing education activities. Training mandated as part of a Chaplain’s professional ministry requirements may not be submitted as continued education activities.
- 532.9 At least twenty (20) hours of continuing education documented annually are to reflect the Chaplain’s attendance at, seminars, workshops, conferences, or live audio conferences/webinars.

Section 4.0 Certification Competencies

The NACC collaborated with its strategic partner spiritual care associations, the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), Association of Professional Chaplains (APC), Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC), and Neshama: Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC) to develop the competencies required to become a board certified chaplain, as well as ones specific to NACC that the NACC determined essential for being one who ministers in the name of the Church. NACC Chaplains are Catholics who manifest proficiency in Catholic theology and spiritual care praxis, and develop competence in the areas of Theory and Practice, Professional Identity and Conduct, Professional Practice Skills and Organizational Leadership. These Common Competencies, while reflecting the organizational grouping pertinent to spiritual care practice, they align with the USCCB National Certification Standards (NCS) which one can view and review at [\[redacted\]](#). More information on the Competencies can be found on our website at:

BCC: [Microsoft Word - Qualifications and Competencies - Chaplain Certification and Renewal of Certification \(2015-2021\).docx \(nacc.org\)](#)

4.1 The Competencies for Certification – Introduction

The following Competencies represent the Common Competencies (approved by the Strategic Partners in Spiritual Care) and the NACC-Specific Competencies. **Please note that the NACC-Specific Competencies are those that are indented in red in 302-305.** Applicants should refer to the Narrative Guides made available on the NACC website for writing to the various competencies. (BCC, BCC-VA, CAC and PCHAC).

BCC: [Initial Certification Materials and Application - The National Association of Catholic Chaplains \(nacc.org\)](#)

BCC-VA: [VA Initial Board Certification - The National Association of Catholic Chaplains \(nacc.org\)](#)

CAC: [Applying to be a Certified Associate Chaplain - The National Association of Catholic Chaplains \(nacc.org\)](#)

PCHAC: [PCHAC Information - The National Association of Catholic Chaplains \(nacc.org\)](#)

4.2 Competencies for Board Certified Chaplain (BCC)

These competencies that need to met include both the Common Competencies shared with the other profession spiritual care associations, as well as the NACC specific Catholic Competencies determined essential for ministering in the name of Church. The NACC specific competencies are highlighted in red. The numeration is a shared numeration with the other professional spiritual care associations so that as you prepare for chaplaincy through your CPE, your CPE Educator can also reference these competencies for all in your CPE group whether the participant is preparing for certification with NACC or one of the other professional certifying bodies.

302 Integration of Theory and Practice Competencies (ITP)

The candidate for certification will demonstrate the ability to:

IIP1: Articulate an approach to spiritual care, rooted in one's faith/spiritual tradition that is integrated with a theory of professional practice.

IIP2: Incorporate a working knowledge of psychological and sociological disciplines and religious beliefs and practices in the provision of spiritual care.

IIP2.1 Demonstrate an understanding of Vatican II and Post Vatican II documents of the Church, Systematic/Foundational Theology, Scripture, Theology of the Trinity, Christology, Ecclesiology, Sacramental Theology, Catholic Social Teaching, Canon Law, Ecumenical and Interreligious Practice.

IIP2.2 Articulate an understanding of one's baptismal call and chaplaincy as a ministry of the church.

IIP2.3 Recognize both the reality of personal and social sin and demonstrate the power of justice, mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation to heal persons and relationships.

IIP3: Incorporate the spiritual and emotional dimensions of human development into one's practice of care.

IIP4: Incorporate a working knowledge of different ethical theories appropriate to one's professional context.

IIP 4.1 Demonstrate an understanding of *The Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*.

IIP5: Articulate a conceptual understanding of group dynamics and organizational behavior.

IIP6: Articulate how primary research and research literature inform the profession of chaplaincy and one's spiritual care practice.

303 Professional Identity and Conduct Competencies (PIC)

The candidate for certification will demonstrate the ability to:

PIC1: Be self-reflective, including identifying one's professional strengths and limitations in the provision of care.

PIC2: Articulate ways in which one's feelings, attitudes, values, and assumptions affect professional practice.

PIC3: Attend to one's own physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

PIC 3.1 Articulate a spirituality grounded in a relationship with God, self, and others.

PIC 3.2 Demonstrate one's commitment to on-going faith development and spiritual growth.

PIC 3.3 Demonstrate life-work balance skills, including time management.

PIC4: Function in a manner that respects the physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual boundaries of others.

PIC5: Use one's professional authority as a spiritual care provider appropriately.

PIC5.1 Articulate an understanding of the responsibility of the public nature of a chaplain's role.

PIC6 Advocate for the persons in one's care.

PIC7: Function within the Common Code of Ethics for Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Clinical Pastoral Educators, and Students.

PIC8: Communicate effectively orally and in writing.

PIC9: Present oneself in a manner that reflects professional behavior, including appropriate attire, and grooming.

304 Professional Practice Skills Competencies (PPS)

The candidate for certification will demonstrate the ability to:

PPS1: Establish, deepen and conclude professional spiritual care relationships with sensitivity, openness, and respect.

PPS2: Provide effective spiritual support that contributes to well-being of the care recipients, their families, and staff.

PPS3: Provide spiritual care that respects diversity and differences including, but not limited to culture, gender, sexual orientation, and spiritual/religious practices.

PPS4: Triage and manage crises in the practice of spiritual care.

PPS5: Provide spiritual care to persons experiencing loss and grief.

PPS6: Provide religious/spiritual resources appropriate to the care recipients, families, and staff.

PPS7: Develop, coordinate, and facilitate public worship/spiritual practices appropriate to diverse settings and needs.

PPS8: Facilitate theological/spiritual reflection for those in one's care practice.

PPS9: Facilitate group processes, such as family meetings, post trauma, staff debriefing, and support groups.

PPS10: Formulate and utilize spiritual assessments, interventions, outcomes, and care plans in order to contribute effectively to the well-being of the person receiving care.

PPS11: Document one's spiritual care effectively in the appropriate records.

305 Organizational Leadership Competencies (OL)

The candidate for certification will demonstrate the ability to:

OL1: Promote the integration of spiritual care into the life and service of the institution in which one functions.

OL2: Establish and maintain professional and interdisciplinary relationships.

OL2.1 Demonstrate the ability to build peer relationships for the purpose of collaboration and active participation in the creation and maintenance of a healthy work environment.

OL2.2 Demonstrate skills in organization, conflict management, leadership, or supervision of others.

OL3: Understand and function within the institutional culture and systems, including utilizing business principles and practices appropriate to one's role in the organization.

OL4: Promote, facilitate, and support ethical decision-making in one's workplace.

OL4.1 Demonstrate skill in facilitating decision-making based on an understanding of culture/ethnicity, gender, race, age, educational background and theological values, religious heritage, behavioral sciences, networking, and systems thinking.

OL5: Foster a collaborative relationship with community clergy and faith group leaders.

4.3 Competencies for Board Certified Chaplain in Veteran Affairs (BCC-VA)

Along with the Common and Catholic Competencies provided above, a candidate for Board Certified Chaplain in Veteran Affairs (BCC-VA) also needs to meet the following competencies.

302 Integration of Theory and Practice Competencies

IIP4.3 Demonstrate theoretical understanding of Just War Theory and Roman Catholic social teaching as it relates to war and conflict in our world.

304 Professional Practice Skills Competencies

- PPS3.1 Provide spiritual care to Veterans with respect to their specific needs as they relate to military service, combat, and the different Eras in which they served.
- PPS3.2 Provide spiritual care to Veterans who suffer from PTSD, TBI, mental illness, substance
- PPS3.3 Provide spiritual care to Veterans in special care settings such as palliative care and long-term care facilities.
- PPS3.4 Provide competent spiritual care to Veterans who experience a variety of emotions and deal with moral conflict/moral injury related to war and combat.

AC applicants should see specific Narrative Writing Templates and List of Competencies on our website at: [Applying to be a Certified Associate Chaplain - The National Association of Catholic Chaplains \(nacc.org\)](http://nacc.org)

4.4 Competencies for Certified Associate Chaplain (CAC)

If you are considering the new NACC Certified Associate Chaplain certification, your qualifications will not require a graduate degree in theology, however you will still need to have completed at least thirty-two (32) graduate-level hours of theological study from an accredited institution, pastoral formation program, diocesan ministerial training program, or professional ministry program. You will be able to evidence this academic preparation through Certified Associate Education Form completed and sent with relevant documentation no later than nine (9) weeks before the application deadline. The form can be found [here](#).

Also, you will need to complete a minimum of two (2) units of CPE from an accredited ACPE, USCCB/CCA, or CASC/ACSS CPE Center. And have completed a minimum of one thousand (1,000) ministry hours post-CPE experience through employment and/or volunteer ministry hours.

The competencies you will need to evidence are those of BCC Common Competencies, except for the Common Organizational Leadership (OL) Competencies. You will need to meet the NACC Specific OL Competencies. You can see the Narrative Writing Guide for further detail. [\(Appendices ___\)](#)

The following Qualifications and Competencies represent the Common Qualifications and Competencies (*approved by the Strategic Partners in Spiritual Care*) and the NACC-Specific Qualifications and Competencies. Please note that the NACC-Specific Competencies are those that are indented in 702-705.

701 Qualifications of Professional Chaplaincy (QUA)

The candidate for certification must:

- QUA1: Provide documentation of current endorsement or of good standing in accordance with the requirements of his/her own faith/spiritual tradition.
- QUA2: Be current in the payment of the annual fees as designated by one's professional association.

QUA3: Have completed a Bachelor's degree from a college, university, or theological school accredited by a member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (www.chea.org) and a minimum of thirty-two (32) graduate-level hours of theological study from an accredited institution, pastoral formation program, diocesan ministry training program, or professional ministry program. Equivalencies for the Bachelor's and/or graduate-level hours will be granted by the individual professional organizations according to their own established guidelines.

QUA4: Provide documentation of a **minimum of two (2) units** (Levels I & II) of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) accredited or approved by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), by programs that were accredited by the former United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Commission on Certification and Accreditation (USCCB/CCA), or the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC/ACSS).

QUA5: Have completed a minimum of **one thousand (1,000) ministry hours post second unit of accredited CPE (see QUA4)**. Ministry hours may be achieved through employment, volunteer ministry, additional accredited CPE unit (see QUA4) or a combination of the three.

702 Integration of Theory and Practice Competencies (ITP)

The candidate for certification will demonstrate the ability to:

ITP1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of Vatican II and Post Vatican II documents of the Church, Systematic/Foundational Theology, Scripture, Theology of the Trinity, Christology, Ecclesiology, Sacramental Theology, Catholic Social Teaching, Canon Law, Ecumenical and Interreligious Practice.

ITP1.2 Articulate an understanding of one's baptismal call and chaplaincy as a ministry of the church.

ITP1.3 Recognize both the reality of personal and social sin and demonstrate the power of justice, mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation to heal persons and relationships.

ITP 4.1 Demonstrate an understanding of *The Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*.

703 Professional Identity and Conduct Competencies (PIC)

The candidate for certification will demonstrate the ability to:

PIC1: Be self-reflective, including identifying one's professional strengths and limitations in the provision of care.

PIC2: Articulate ways in which one's feelings, attitudes, values, and assumptions affect professional practice.

PIC3: Attend to one's own physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

PIC 3.1 Articulate a spirituality grounded in a relationship with God, self, and others.

PIC 3.2 Demonstrate one's commitment to on-going faith development and spiritual growth.

- PIC 3.3 Demonstrate life-work balance skills, including time management.
- PIC4: Function in a manner that respects the physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual boundaries of others.
- PIC5: Use one's professional authority as a spiritual care provider appropriately.
- PIC5.1 Articulate an understanding of the responsibility of the public nature of a chaplain's role.
- PIC6 Advocate for the persons in one's care.
- PIC7: Function within the Common Code of Ethics for Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Clinical Pastoral Educators, and Students.
- PIC8: Communicate effectively orally and in writing.
- PIC9: Present oneself in a manner that reflects professional behavior, including appropriate attire, and grooming.

704 Professional Practice Skills Competencies (PPS)

The candidate for certification will demonstrate the ability to:

- PPS1: Establish, deepen and conclude professional spiritual care relationships with sensitivity, openness, and respect.
- PPS2: Provide effective spiritual support that contributes to well-being of the care recipients, their families, and staff.
- PPS2.1 Possess an appropriate level of comfort and proficiency with contemporary communication technology and be able to employ it in spiritual care.
- PPS3: Provide spiritual care that respects diversity and differences including, but not limited to culture, gender, sexual orientation, and spiritual/religious practices.
- PPS4: Triage and manage crises in the practice of spiritual care.
- PPS5: Provide spiritual care to persons experiencing loss and grief.
- PPS6: Provide religious/spiritual resources appropriate to the care recipients, families, and staff.
- PPS7: Develop, coordinate, and facilitate public worship/spiritual practices appropriate to diverse settings and needs.
- PPS7.1 Demonstrate the ability to integrate sacred art, music, and space for liturgical celebrations and communal prayer.
- PPS8: Facilitate theological/spiritual reflection for those in one's care practice.
- PPS9: Facilitate group processes, such as family meetings, post trauma, staff debriefing, and support groups.
- PPS10: Formulate and utilize spiritual assessments, interventions, outcomes, and care plans in order to contribute effectively to the well-being of the person receiving care.
- PPS11: Document one's spiritual care effectively in the appropriate records.

705 Organizational Leadership Competencies (OL)

The candidate for certification will demonstrate the ability to:

OL2.1 Demonstrate the ability to build peer relationships for the purpose of collaboration and active participation in the creation and maintenance of a healthy work environment.

OL2.2 Demonstrate skills in organization, conflict management, leadership, or supervision of others.

OL4.1 Demonstrate skill in facilitating decision-making based on an understanding of culture/ethnicity, gender, race, age, educational background and theological values, religious heritage, behavioral sciences, networking, and systems thinking.

706 Requirements for the Maintenance of Certification (MNT)

In order to maintain status as a Certified Associate Chaplain, the chaplain must:

MNT1: Participate in a peer review process every fifth year.

MNT2: Document thirty (30) hours of annual continuing education as designated by one's professional association.

MNT3: Provide every fifth year documentation of current endorsement or of good standing in accordance with the requirements of his/her own faith tradition.

MNT4: Be current in the payment of the annual fees as designated by one's professional association.

MNT5: Adhere to the Common Code of Ethics for Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Clinical Pastoral Educators, and Students.

707 Appeals of Certification Decisions (ACD)

The individual seeking an appeal of a certification decision:

CD1 Has a right to a timely and complete review of a negative recommendation.

ACD2 Has access to a certification appeals panel free from conflict of interest, and panel members shall not have participated in the original recommendation.

ACD3 Submits a written request for an appeal based on the grounds that such recommendation was an alleged violation of the Competencies and/or Procedures.

ACD4 Accepts the decision of the Certification Appeals Panel as final and binding for the association.

Section 5.0 Process for Initial Certification

5.1 Requesting and Completing an Application Form

The Applicant contacts the NACC National Office for links to certification materials on the NACC website. Deadline is February 15 and September 15 for CAC, BCC and BCC-VA applications. Deadline of July 15 and December 15 for PCHAC or Advanced Certification.

CAC Applicants must complete the Certified Associate Chaplaincy Education form with relevant documentation no later than nine (9) weeks before the application deadline. The form can be found [here](#): [Microsoft Word - Application Form- Education Equivalency for CAC.doc \(nacc.org\)](#)

5.2 Meeting Eligibility Requirements

For **Board Certified Chaplain (BCC)** Applicants your requirements include:

1. Be Roman Catholic or a member of one of the churches in union with Rome. This will be evidenced by an Ecclesiastical Endorsement for certification and the NACC requests the Ecclesiastical Endorsement on your behalf after your application receives approval to move forward with an interview.
2. Have a completed graduate-level Theological Degree in theology, divinity, religious studies, pastoral ministry, pastoral studies, or spirituality from an accredited academic institution.
3. Have completed a Bachelor's degree from a college, university, or theological school accredited by a member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (www.chea.org).
4. Have completed a **minimum of four units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)** accredited by the [Association for Clinical Pastoral Education \(ACPE\)](#), the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Commission on Certification and Accreditation (USCCB/CCA), or the [Canadian Association for Spiritual Care \(CASC/ACSS\)](#).
5. Be a Full Member of the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC).

For **Board Certified Chaplains in Veterans Affairs (BCC-VA)** your requirements include all of the above, plus provide evidence of employment by a Veterans Affairs facility.

For **Certified Associate Chaplain (CAC)** includes all of the above except:

- **The academic requirement** does not include a graduate-level Theological Degree but evidence of having completed at least thirty-two (32) graduate-level hours of theological study from an accredited institution, pastoral formation program, diocesan ministerial training program, or professional ministry program. Applicants will need to complete the Certified Associate Chaplaincy Education form with relevant documentation no later than nine (9) weeks before the application deadline. The form can be found [here](#).
- **The CPE requirement is two units of CPE.**

5.3 Participating in the Mentoring Process

Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to seek a mentor for the certification process. All mentors are NACC board certified chaplains who have renewed certification at least one time. Mentors serve on a voluntary basis. If requested, the NACC office will help in finding a mentor for an applicant in need of one and struggling to find one. Learn more of the mentoring value and how to go about finding a mentor by going to: <https://www.nacc.org/certification/board-certified-chaplain/mentors/>.

5.4 Submitting a Portfolio

All applicants should submit a portfolio of these completed items to the NACC by the date of the deadline:

1. Completed application form.

2. Autobiography, not to exceed seven (7) numbered pages, addressing personal, professional, and faith development.
3. One current example of the Applicant's provision of Spiritual Care utilizing the Spiritual Care Encounter Cover Sheet. It will address, at minimum, the following Competencies ITP2, PPS10 and PPS11.
4. Final evaluations by Applicant of the final CPE Unit and one other CPE Unit of the Applicant's choice which demonstrate the Applicant's ability and willingness to grow as a professional chaplain. Each evaluation is to be clearly dated.
5. Final evaluations by the Certified Educator of the final CPE Unit and the corresponding CPE Unit evaluation of the Applicant's choice as referenced in CP131.3d. Each evaluation is to be clearly dated, and signed.
6. Narrative Statement I: documenting how the Applicant meets each of the NACC-Specific Competencies required for certification (excluding ITP2.1 which will be assessed through the Integrative Theological Narrative and ITP4.1 which will be assessed through an eLearning module.
7. Integrative Theological Essay (Competency ITP2.1): addressing the Applicant's familiarity with the documents and theologies of the Competency, including ministerial examples demonstrating how the theologies have enhanced the Applicant's provision of spiritual care.
Please note: If this is not the Applicant's first interview for certification, an additional page must be included addressing how the Applicant has grown in the Competencies that were not met as outlined in the Presenter's Report Part II from each previous interview. Narrative Statement II: documenting how the Applicant meets each of the Common Competencies required for certification, excluding PIC8 & PIC9 which will be assessed through materials and within the interview.
8. If applicable, letter from the NACC Certification Commission granting equivalency of one (1) CPE Unit.
9. If applicable, Presenter's Reports Part I and II from each previous interview.
10. The certification application fee, two-thirds of which is non-refundable if the process is discontinued for any reason.
11. Current letter of recommendation from the person to whom the Applicant reports in his/her place of ministry. If the Applicant is not currently ministering, a letter from anyone in a reporting position that can attest to the ministerial experience of the Applicant is required.
Please note: If the Applicant is a lay person, the Applicant requests that a current letter of recommendation from his/her pastor or from a priest in active ministry (in the applicant's Diocese of Ministry) be submitted by the pastor/priest directly to the NACC National Office. Letter is to be a signed original on letterhead. Current is defined as within one year of application for certification. This letter accompanies the request for ecclesiastical endorsement that will be initiated by the NACC National Office.
12. Certificate of completion of E-Learning module and Post-Test on NACC-Specific Competency ITP4.1.
13. An official transcript of the Bachelor's degree. The Certification Commission requires transcript analysis, at the Applicant's expense, for all degrees acquired outside the United States.

14. An official transcript of the graduate-level theological degree. The Certification Commission requires transcript analysis, at the Applicant's expense, for all degrees acquired outside the United States. If applicable, a letter from the NACC Certification Commission granting a Graduate Degree Equivalency is submitted.
15. Current completion of the NACC Ethics Accountability Statement (Code of Ethics 206.11.1). Current is defined as within one year of application for certification.

The NACC office will alert the Applicant that the materials have been received and will be reviewed within 3 weeks of the application deadline.

5.5 Assessing the Documents and Competencies of Candidates

Upon receipt of Applicant materials, the NACC National Office starts a file for the Applicant. The NACC office reviews the Applicant's materials to assess the completion of Certification Procedures. To be completed within three weeks post- certification application deadline. The office staff checks for completeness only, not the quality of the content.

If any materials are missing, an interview will not be scheduled. If the interview is not scheduled: The Applicant will have the opportunity to reapply for certification.

All documents will be destroyed except those documents cited below in CP133.5.

If an interview is scheduled, the NACC National Office initiates the request for endorsement on behalf of the Applicant (Qualification 301.QUA1).

The NACC National Office sends the Applicant: The names and addresses of the interview team, identified by role within the interview team: Chair, Presenter, Reader. The date, time and location of the interview.

Applicants are notified no later than (60) days before the date of the interview of the interview date, place and interviewers.

5.6 Participating in an Interview Process

Interviews are done two times each year either in-person or virtually. Dates on the interview weekends are determined in the previous year but generally take place the last two weekends in April and the first two weekends in October. Interviewers are board certified members of NACC and are expected to sign Covenants of Professionalism and Confidentiality and are required to attend training sessions conducted by Interview Team Educators.

5.7 Meeting with Interviewers

Applicants are encouraged to meet with a mentor in preparation for their interview. Also, applicants are provided opportunities to attend webinars specifically tailored to discuss the certification process. NACC conducts webinars on "Preparing for Initial Certification" and another webinar that entitled "Virtual Interviewing with NACC." These are free webinars and are recorded for the benefit of all Applicants.

The applicant will be notified of the day and time of the virtual interview and how to prepare for the virtual interview. The interviewer will also be coached on the virtual interview etiquette as needed. The NACC office staff is very helpful in this area.

5.8 Consideration by the NACC Certification Commission

Upon receipt of Applicant materials, the NACC National Office starts a file for the Applicant. The NACC office reviews the Applicant's materials to assess the completion of the materials. If any materials are missing, an interview will not be scheduled. If the interview is not scheduled: The Applicant will have the opportunity to reapply for certification.

If an interview is scheduled, the NACC National Office initiates the request for endorsement on behalf of the Applicant (Qualification 301.QUA1). The NACC National Office sends the Applicant: The names and addresses of the interview team, identified by role within the interview team: Chair, Presenter, Reader. The Applicant reviews interview team names for potential conflict of interest and alerts the NACC National Office if any conflict exists.

After the interview, the interview team prepares its report and recommendations (PRP II) for the Commission and shares the recommendation with the interviewee. The Certification Commission will receive all the interview reports, along with the recommendations, and make the final decisions regarding the candidate for certification. The Commission meets regularly to review these recommendations.

5.9 Celebrating the Conferral of Initial Certification

The **Celebration of the Eucharist and Missioning Ceremony** takes place at the annual conference. During this ceremony, all those who were certified with the NACC in the previous year will be missioned. In the packet of information sent to each Certified Applicant, within 30 days after the Commission Meeting ratifying the decision of the Interview Team, a document inviting them to the Missioning Ceremony is included. They are asked to respond if they will attend or not.

Section 6.0 Process for Renewal of Certification

6.1 Notifying Candidates

The renewal process occurs every five (5) years, beginning with the year of initial certification. During the month of December of the calendar year prior to the year in which renewal of certification is required, the Certified Chaplain receives a letter directing him/her to the NACC website for materials for renewal.

6.2 Applying for Renewal

The Certified Chaplain completes the renewal of certification application, the NACC Ethics Accountability Statement, the peer review form, and the continuing education reporting form(s). All forms are available on the NACC website.

If the Certified Chaplain is a lay person, the Certified Chaplain requests a current letter of recommendation from his/her pastor or from a priest in active ministry within the applicant's

Diocese of Ministry, be submitted by the pastor/priest directly to the NACC National Office (Competency 706.MNT3). Letter is to be a signed original on letterhead. Current is defined as within one year of application for renewal of certification. This letter accompanies the request for ecclesiastical endorsement initiated by the NACC National Office.

After all materials are received, the NACC National Office requests a current letter of ecclesiastical endorsement on behalf of the Certified Chaplain. Current is defined as within one year of application for renewal of certification.

The Certified Chaplain completes the renewal of certification process within the calendar year in which renewal is required.

If unable to complete the renewal process within the calendar year in which renewal is required, the Certified Chaplain may request, in writing, an extension from the Chair of the Certification Commission. Extensions are granted in one (1) year increments for a maximum of two (2) years and do not alter the original renewal of certification schedule. If requesting an extension, the Certified Chaplain must submit the appropriate extension fee. Extension request and payment must be received at the NACC National Office by December 31 of the year in which renewal of certification is required.

6.3 Fulfilling Ongoing Requirements for Renewing Certification

The Certified Chaplain maintains an annual record of his/her continuing education hours over the five (5) year period to reflect consistent and intentional educational updating. This annual record must be logged on the current NACC Continuing Education Hours form and must be electronically produced by computer or typewriter. Handwritten forms will not be accepted.

Categories for continuing education parallel the current Competencies for Certified Chaplains. Refer to the NACC website for a current version of the Competencies for Certification and Renewal of Certification of Chaplains.

Completion of fifty (50) hours of educational activities per year for Board-Certified Chaplains and thirty (30) hours of educational activities per year for Certified Associate Chaplain is required for the five (5) year renewal of certification cycle (Competency 706.MNT2).

When educational activities are recorded, an “hour” equals sixty (60) minutes. Certified Chaplains may have continuing education hours in all four categories of Competency. Based on the recommendations of his/her previous peer review, certification interview, or the areas where one determines a need for growth, the continuing education hours can be divided between the four sections.

A continuing education activity is only counted once regardless of the Certified Associate Chaplain’s role as an attendee or presenter. If presenting, one can also include preparation time. If one is presenting the program multiple times, the presentation and preparation time may be counted only once.

When a continuing education activity includes time both as a presenter and as an attendee, one may record the number of hours spent in presenting/preparing and the number of hours spent in attendance.

When a continuing education activity provides updating in more than one of the four Categories of Competency, one may elect to record the education hours in multiple categories. The total number of hours recorded should not exceed the total education hours for the activity.

Routine activities which occur as part of the Certified Chaplain's professional ministry responsibilities (e.g. liturgical rites, patient visitation, mentoring CPE students, etc.) may not be submitted as continuing education activities. Training mandated as part of a Certified Chaplain's professional ministry requirements may not be submitted as continued education activities.

At least twelve (12) hours of continuing education documented annually are to reflect the Certified Chaplain's attendance at seminars, workshops, conferences or live audio conferences/webinars.

Designate each activity as "A" for attended, "P" for presented, "M" for review of education materials, or "V" for volunteer service to the NACC of an educational value. Live presentations and/or attendance at live webinars/audio conferences are considered attending educational events and should be designated "A" for attended. Reading of books/articles and listening/viewing of recorded events (videos/audio conference/webinars) are considered reviewing of educational materials and should be designated as "M."

For attended activities (workshops, live webinars, retreats, etc.) include title of program, presenter name, and location or sponsor of program. For reading books or articles include title and author of books/articles. For listening/viewing of recorded events (videos/audio conferences/webinars) include title of program and presenter name. If using an acronym or abbreviation, define it at least once in the written record.

The following limits of continuing education activities are:

For Board Certified Chaplains and BCC-VA:

- Spiritual Direction – Up to ten (10) hours per year.
- Retreat – Up to twenty (20) hours total per year. Report each retreat utilizing the following parameters: Four (4) hours per day for directed, guided, preached, individual retreat; Conference type retreats report total hours of participation.
- Therapy/Professional Supervision – Up to ten (10) hours per year.
- Educational Materials (M) including books, articles, and recorded events (videos/audio conferences/webinars) – Up to twenty-five (25) hours per year.
- Volunteer Service to the National Association of Catholic Chaplains that is of an educational value – Up to fifteen (15) hours per year. If the Volunteer Service to the NACC includes serving as a volunteer for an initial certification interview weekend (interviewer, interview team educator, etc.), the Chaplain may report up to twenty (20) hours total per year.
- Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Units (additional CPE Units or Supervisory CPE Units):
 - Didactic activity – Number of hours of participation or presentation; activity should be listed by session and include the topic and date.
 - Supervisory sessions (as part of the Unit) – Up to ten (10) hours per year.
 - Ministerial activities (patient visitation, conducting worship services, etc.) may not be submitted as continuing education activities.

For Certified Associate Chaplains.

- Spiritual Direction – Up to five (5) hours per year.
- Retreat –Up to nine (9) hours total per year. Report each retreat utilizing the following parameters: Three (3) hours per day for directed, guided, preached, individual retreats. Conference type retreats report total hours of participation.
- Therapy/Professional Supervision – Up to five (5) hours per year.
- Educational Materials (M) including books, articles, and recorded events (videos/audio conferences/webinars) – Up to fifteen (15) hours per year.
- Volunteer Service to the NACC that is of an educational value – Up to eight (8) hours per year. If the Volunteer Service to the NACC includes serving as a volunteer for a Certified Associate interview weekend (interviewer, interview team educator, etc.), the Associate Chaplain may report up to ten (10) hours per year.
- Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Units (additional accredited CPE Units or Supervisory CPE Units):
 - Didactic activity – Number of hours of participation or presentation; activity should be listed by session and include the topic and date.
 - Supervisory sessions (as part of the Unit) – Up to ten (10) hours per year.
 - Ministerial activities (patient visitation, conducting worship services, etc.) may not be submitted as continuing education activities.

6.4 Assessing Requirements and Competencies

The Renewing Chaplain sends the following materials to the NACC National Office and also retains copies of these documents for future purposes:

- The Renewal of Certification Application.
- The Renewal of Certification Fee. If the Chaplain renewing is a NACC Retired Certified member, the Renewal of Certification fee is waived.
- The Renewal of Certification Education Report Form(s).
- A signed copy of the Renewal of Certification Peer Review Form.
- Completed NACC Ethics Accountability Statement.

The Certification Commission reviews the materials and determines if the Chaplain meets the Competencies for Renewal of Certification.

6.5 Meeting with Peers Who Have Been Certified

The Certified Chaplain arranges for and completes an hour-long peer review session. The peer review session does not need to be an in-person session. The peer review session may be completed by telephone or Voice Over Internet Protocols (VoIP) technologies (e.g. Skype or Zoom). The peer review report must be recorded on the current NACC Peer Review form and must be electronically produced (computer or typewriter). Handwritten forms will not be accepted.

The peer reviewer is a certified Chaplain or Educator, active or retired, who is a current member of the NACC with whom the renewing Chaplain does not share a reporting relationship (the renewing Chaplain reports to the Peer Reviewer or vice versa) and who is not an Inactive

or Emeritus member of the NACC. If the Renewing Chaplain holds a specialized certification (BCC-VA, or PCHAC) the peer reviewer must meet the aforementioned guidelines as well as hold current certification in the same specialty.

Prior to the peer review, the Certified Chaplain sends the following materials to the reviewer allowing ample time for review:

1. A copy of recommendations from the last interview or peer review.
2. A completed copy of the Renewal of Certification Education Report Forms
3. Renewal of Certification Peer Review Form

The electronically produced (computer or typewriter) Peer Review Form contains three (3) sections:

Process – In this section, the peer reviewer summarizes the process of the peer review: beginning, middle, and end.

Content – In this section, the peer reviewer notes the content of the peer review, identifying:

- The meaning and effectiveness of the continuing education activities for the Chaplain.
- An update regarding the Chaplain's development of Integration of Theory and Practice, Professional Identity and Conduct, Professional Practice, and Organizational Leadership Skills with significant changes in the five (5) year period.
- Progress on recommendations made to the Chaplain during the previous interview or peer review.
- Discussion of the Chaplain's plans for future development.

Recommendations – In this section, the peer reviewer writes recommendations that flow from the process and content. Recommendations are related to the Competencies for Certification and Renewal of Certification of Chaplains and include future plans for maintaining and enhancing competencies. Certification Competency number(s) must be listed after each recommendation.

The peer reviewer signs the Peer Review Form and sends it back to the Renewing Chaplain for review and signature.

6.6 Consideration by the NACC Certification Commission

Materials for renewals are reviewed at least twice a year by Commissioners to determine if the materials are appropriately documented. When materials are confirmed by the NACC staff and select Commissioners to be ready for vote, then the materials are presented at the upcoming Commission meeting where the Commission votes on the applications at the next upcoming meeting. If not complete, the Chaplain is notified to provide further clarification.

6.7 Recommending Candidates for Renewal of Certification

The Certification Commission reviews the materials look for the requirements of educational pieces on categories and determines if the Chaplain's materials meets the Requirements for Renewal of Certification.

The NACC National Office notifies the Chaplain of the Certification Commission's decision within thirty (30) days of the decision.

- When renewal of certification is granted and the ecclesiastical endorsement has been received, the Chaplain is issued a new certificate.
- When additional information and/or clarifications are required by the Certification Commission before a decision can be made, the Chaplain will receive a letter requesting clarifications and/or additional information. The Certification Commission sets the deadline by which the revised/additional materials must be received. The Certification Commission will review the submitted material(s) at the next scheduled Commission meeting and determine if the Chaplain meets the Requirements for Renewal of Certification.
- When renewal of certification is denied, the Chaplain is issued a letter outlining the reason(s) for denial. The Certification Commission's decision is final.

6.8 Celebrating the Renewal of Certification

The **Celebration of the Eucharist and Missioning Ceremony** takes place at the annual conference. During this ceremony, all those who were recertified with the NACC in the previous year will be missioned. We acknowledge renewals on the NACC website and in various NACC publications.

Section 7.0 Roles in Relationship to the Certification Process

7.1 Certification Commission

The Certification Commission is involved in overseeing the certification process and the renewal of certification process for chaplains and supervisors. The Commission is responsible for the following.

1. Implements and monitors the process of certification of NACC members.
2. Reviews and issues decisions on all applications for renewal of certification.
3. Reviews recommendations of interview teams and approves or overturns recommendations.
4. Provides a report to the Board of Directors after each commission meeting.
5. Provides an annual report to the Board of Directors.

The appointment term lasts for 3 years and can be renewed for an additional 3 years.

7.2 Competencies Commission

The Competencies Commission reviews the Common Competencies and the NACC Competencies and Procedures for Certification and make recommendations to the NACC Board of Directors. They are responsible for the following:

1. Develops and maintains a consultation process for proposed changes.
2. Recommends competencies to the Board of Directors.
3. Retains pertinent documentation in minutes regarding reasons for recommended changes.
4. Develops and interprets glossary
5. Provides consultation to the Certification Commission
6. Provides an annual report to the Board of Directors

7.2 Certification Appeals Panel

The role of the Certification Appeals Panel is to review appeals of certification decisions in accordance with NACC Competencies and Procedures. They present their findings to the Certification Commission who presents to the Executive Director. They are responsible for the following:

1. Conducts the certification appeals process as outlined in the NACC Competencies and Procedures with an impartial review of all the documentation in a negative certification decision.
2. Provides an annual report to the NACC Certification Commission and Board of Directors outlining the number of appeals and corresponding number of decisions upheld or reversed.
3. Communicates to the NACC Certification Commission the nature of certification appeals to assist the commissioners in focusing on areas of improvement for the ongoing training of interviewers.

7.3 Organization Executive Director and Staff

State that the executive director has delegated authority from the Board of Directors to certify in the name of the national organization competent specialized ministers. Normally, the executive director delegates components of the process to the staff and others. Explain how this delegation happens and those who assess who are part of a process with the executive director. In addition to overseeing all aspects of the certification process, the executive director approves those ongoing formation events sponsored by the organization that develop the competencies of those relating to the organization and that prepare specialized ministers for initial and renewal of certification.

Here explain what the national office staff does in relation to the process of certification. This may include but not necessarily be limited to the following:

- 7.3.1 Reviewing Records and Transcripts:
 - Administrative Specialist/Certification receives and reviews all documents and transcripts from Applicants to ensure that they have met the requirements of the certification process.
- 7.3.2 Reviewing Self-Assessment Instruments
 - Applicants are required to take an ERD learning module online and complete a test. The results of the test are sent to the Administrative Specialist/Certification. A score of 88% on the test allows the Applicant to receive a Certificate of Completion that is submitted with the Application.
- 7.3.3 Reviewing Evaluations of Interviews with Applicants:

- The Certification Commission reviews all Applicants' Presenters Reports Part I and Part II to ensure that the Interview Process was conducted accordingly and that the recommendations are valid.
- 7.3.4 Reviewing Portfolios
 - The Administrative Specialist/Certification reviews all applications for completeness but not content. The Interviewers will review the content of the materials of the Applicant for content.
- 7.3.5 Recommending Candidates for Certification to the Executive Director (Be sure to make clear the distinction between certification, receiving a certificate and endorsement.)

After reviewing the information from the Interviews, the Certification Commission ratifies the decision of the Interview Teams and the Applicants are either certified, certified pending Endorsement or not certified. This information is then presented to the Executive Director after the vote.

7.5 Role of Mentors

The National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) encourages all Applicants for certification to have a Mentor to assist them throughout the process of preparing and submitting their certification materials. The mentoring program provides support and guidance to individuals whose goal is to achieve certification through the NACC. Participation in the program is encouraged, but not mandatory. All mentors are NACC board certified chaplains who have renewed certification at least one time. Mentors serve on a voluntary basis.

7.6 Role of the Interviewer Team Educators and Interviewers

The Lead Interview Team Educator (ITE), the ITEs, and the certification interviewers function under the authority and are accountable to the NACC Certification Commission.

Lead ITE and ITEs Role-specific Duties and Responsibilities:

- Oversees certification process to assure alignment with NACC Standards and Procedures.
- Assures that Presenter's Reports Parts I and II are professionally prepared and include appropriate references to NACC Standards throughout, appropriate recommendations that facilitate the Applicant's ongoing growth, and consistency with dynamics of the interview.
- Assures that the Presenter's Report Part I is given to the Applicant at least one hour prior to the interview.
- Consults with the Lead ITE, NACC Administrative Specialist/Certification, certification interviewers, site coordinators, the Certification Commission Liaison, and the Certification Commissioner on-call as needed with quality assurance as the focus.
- Surfaces and forwards names of potential interview team members to the NACC Administrative Specialist/Certification to be given to the NACC Certification Commission.
- Responds to the questions of certification interview team members.
- Communicates with and responds to the NACC Administrative Specialist/Certification for updates and consultation.
- Communicates with and responds to the Lead ITE for updates and consultation.
- Communicates with and responds to the Site Coordinator prior to the certification interviews.

- Assists the certification interview team self-evaluation, peer review, debriefing, and ongoing individual feedback toward the continuous quality improvement of the interview process.
- Provides individual feedback to certification interviewers.
- Assures that the interview process respects time frames (50 minutes per Applicant).
- Resolves issues relating to interview process Standards onsite, if possible, utilizing the on-call Certification Commissioner as needed.
- Completes and returns all relevant reports and evaluations from the certification interview process to the NACC Administrative Specialist/Certification.
- Educates certification interviewers, through both new interviewer orientations as well as refresher training for experienced interviewers (primarily through conferences calls).
- Assures the quality of educational offerings that address the experience and concerns of interview team members.
- Assists the NACC Administrative Specialist/Certification in the composition of certification interview teams.
- Agrees to serve a three-year term.
- Actively participates in the annual ITE meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in July.

Professional Requirements of Lead ITE, and ITEs:

- Maintains NACC certification status.
- Demonstrates proficiency with all current NACC Standards and Procedures for certification and other relevant materials.
- Abides by the NACC Code of Ethics.
- Brings experience as a certification interviewer.

Key relationships with the Lead ITE, NACC Administrative Specialist/Certification, certification interviewers, site coordinators, the Certification Commission Liaison, and the Certification Commissioner on-call, are characterized as one of partnership and collaboration with shared commitment to assuring the quality of the certification interview process.

1. Agree to undertake the **mandatory per session and/or annual** training (review of materials, completion of tests, participation in training calls, etc.) and ongoing updating (keeping current with NACC Competencies, Certification Procedures Manual, and Code of Ethics) for the scope of my role as an Interviewer, **completing the required training within specified timeframes.**
2. Agree to serve as an Interviewer, **assume the different roles on the certification interview teams**, and **work collaboratively with the ITE** for a minimum of one session of certification interviews each year, along with the required preparation, timely submission, and timely communication (through email, mail, and/or telephone/Skype) with interview teams before, during, and after the certification session.
3. Agree to treat Applicant materials with openness and confidentiality, to assess materials in alignment with NACC Competencies and Procedures, and to offer the same measure of respect and competent assessment with the Applicant in the personal interview time frame.
4. Agree to be aware of and monitor any discrimination and declare any conflict of interest on the part of the Interviewer that may inhibit an optimal experience for the Applicant or other interview team members, and respectfully withdraw from serving on that team, as needed. Interviewers understand that the decision to thoughtfully withdraw from a role that may not

serve their own or the best interests of the Applicant or another member of the team will be honored and respected.

5. During certification interview sessions, Interviewer agrees to focus solely on role as an Interviewer on behalf of the certification Applicant, striving to work with interview team members in a collegial and respectful manner.
6. Agree to practice intentional and effective stewardship in travel and related expenses for my volunteer service within my interviewer role for the NACC, meeting specified timeframes for submission of expenses.
7. Role as a certification interviewer can be counted as learning for continuing education hours toward renewal of certification up to **20** hours annually **for years in which I serve on the minimum of one session of certification interviews.**

Section 8.0 Withdrawal of Certification

The NACC Ethics Procedure Manual outlines the procedure for ethical complaints, and what would be the grounds for withdrawal of certification for ethical reasons. <https://www.nacc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NACC-Ethics-Procedures-Manual-September-2019.pdf>

In the Ethics Procedure Manual you will find:

222 Possible actions as outcomes of the deliberation:

222.1 No action (no violation of the Code occurred): The adjudication of no action is based on the assessment of the Ethics Commission. No corrective action is taken, and no record of the investigation is kept.

222.2 Admonishment: The adjudication of admonishment is based on the assessment of the Ethics Commission that the Respondent has accepted responsibility for a violation of the Code of Ethics and the Respondent's reconciliatory action is adequate to ensure that such a violation will not be repeated. Specific recommendations to enhance professional or ethical practice may be proposed. This action may be recommended only in those cases in which the conduct of the Respondent is assessed by the Ethics Commission not to threaten the wellbeing of third parties and/or bring the reputation of NACC into disrepute. A record of this action is to be maintained on file at the NACC National Office.

222.3 Reprimand: This is a serious rebuke of the member. The adjudication of reprimand is based on the assessment of the Ethics Commission that the complaint brought against the Respondent merits the Respondent's acknowledgement and ownership of her/his conduct that has brought harm. The Ethics Complaint Review Team's report indicates that violation of the Code of Ethics has occurred and that the Respondent must accept responsibility and change his/her conduct. Reprimand may include specific disciplinary actions and specific instructions (including increased supervision and possible reporting documentation) to be followed for a specified period of time. A record of this action is to be maintained on file at the NACC National Office. The Respondent is required to report the Reprimand in his/her Ethics Accountability Statement Form at the time of the next submission.

222.4 Suspension of NACC certification and or membership: The adjudication of suspension is based on the assessment of the Ethics Commission that the conduct of the Respondent has brought serious harm to a third party and/or to the reputation of NACC.

Suspension is also based on the assessment that Ethics Procedures Manual, September 2019, Page 10 the Respondent's continued participation in NACC may pose a serious threat to third parties, and/or bring the reputation of NACC into serious disrepute. Suspension would be set for a specific period of time determined by the Ethics Commission with instructions to be followed before certification and/or membership is reinstated. The Respondent will demonstrate compliance to the satisfaction of the Ethics Commission and the Certification Commission if the Respondent is certified. The suspension will be monitored.

8.1 Criteria

222.5 Recommendation of withdrawal of certification and/or membership (withdrawal of certification would require final action by the NACC Certification Commission and withdrawal of membership would require final action by the NACC Board of Directors). This recommendation is required when the assessment of Ethics Complaint Review Team is any one of the following:

222.5a The conduct of the Respondent has brought serious harm to an individual(s).

222.5b The conduct of the Respondent has caused serious harm to a third party and/or brought into serious disrepute the reputation of NACC.

222.5c The Respondent has been found guilty in a court of law of a criminal offence that is not in line with the Code of Ethics.

222.5d The Respondent has been dismissed from a professional organization with which NACC has reciprocity.

8.2 Process

The following from the Ethics Procedure Manual explains the process.

223 If the action includes specific instructions or recommendations to be completed and reported back to the Ethics Commission, the Respondent sends the written response with supporting documents to the Chair of the Ethics Commission in care of the NACC National Office within the specified period of time. **Failure to comply will result in recommendation of withdrawal of certification to the Certification Commission and/or loss of membership recommendation to NACC Board.**

The response will be reviewed at the end of its specified time. If the Ethics Commission or its designee determines a reasonable need to continue monitoring the member, it may recommend further disciplinary actions for an additional specified time. Such additional actions will not be imposed lightly, will reflect concern for the well-being of the member, the public and/or the Association, and will be reviewed by the Ethics Commission within six months of additional imposition.

All inquiries regarding current and past ethics investigations must be directed to the Chair of the Ethics Commission.

8.3 Notification to the Executive Director

224 At the conclusion of the case the following written materials are sealed in a confidential file in the NACC National Office for a period of seven (7) years:

224.1 The completed NACC Ethics Complaint Form 224.2 The completed NACC Ethics Complaint Response Form

224.3 The completed Ethics Complaint Review Team Report Form

224.4 Letters to the Respondent and Complainant communicating outcome. All other written and electronic documents are destroyed.

225 The confidential file is the responsibility of the NACC Executive Director. No one is to have access to the contents of these files without a court order or without the written consent of the Chair of NACC Ethics Commission, Board Chair, and/or Executive Director (in consultation with counsel) for extraordinary circumstances.

226 If there is no ethics appeal, the Chair of the Ethics Commission, the Chair of the Certification Commission and the Executive Director collaboratively determines who is entitled to have knowledge or information regarding the outcome of the ethics complaint (may include, but not limited to: respondent's place of work, respondent's endorsing body, etc.).

Section 9.0 Appealing an Adverse Certification Decision

When an Applicant for certification receives notification of denial of certification and believes that NACC Procedures for Certification of Associate Chaplains, Chaplains, Chaplains in Veterans Affairs, or Recognition of Board Certified Strategic Partner Applicants were violated, resulting in a negative certification decision, the right to a timely appeals procedure is ensured. The Certification Appeals Panel strives to resolve all appeals according to the time line established below.

CP92 Procedures

921 With the notification of denial of certification, the Applicant will receive information about the appeals process including:

921.1 Appeals Procedure Letter.

921.2 A copy of the NACC Certification Appeals Procedures.

922 If an Applicant chooses to appeal the decision of the Certification Commission, the Applicant has twenty (20) calendar days from the postmark of the notification of denial of certification to send a formal appeal to the Chair of the Certification Appeals Panel in care of the NACC National Office via certified mail. Additionally, if an applicant submits an appeal of the decision of the Certification Commission, the Chair of the Certification Appeals Panel may request to speak with the Interview Team Educator and/or the appropriate members of the Interview Team so that additional pertinent information relevant to the applicant's interview can be provided. All members involved in the certification process understand that confidentiality must be maintained during this timeframe.

The Appellant materials will include:

922.1 Formal letter requesting an appeal and citing relevant NACC - Procedures that are alleged violations. An appeal must be based upon the grounds that the decision of the Certification Commission was in disregard or violation of NACC procedures, and that the violation had an impact on the outcome of the certification process. Examples of grounds for appeal may include:

Substantial inaccurate representation of the Applicant's application materials as presented by the Applicant's interview team.

Failure of the Interview Team, the ITE, or the Certification Commission to uphold the policies or follow the procedures of the certification process.

922.2 Presenter's Reports Part I and II from Associate Chaplain, Chaplain, or Chaplain in Veterans Affairs certification interview, or a copy of the letter from the Certification Commission denying the Certification of Recognition request.

923 Within fifteen (15) days of the postmark of the formal appeal from the Appellant, the Chair of the Certification Appeals Panel reviews copies of the Appellant's formal appeal with at least one additional member of the Certification Appeals Panel for the purpose of determining whether the formal appeal:

923.1 Demonstrates probable cause which indicates a potential violation of the NACC Procedures, or

923.2 Does not demonstrate probable cause and it is determined that there are no grounds to proceed.

924 If it is determined that there are no grounds to proceed, the Appellant is notified by the Chair of the Certification Appeals Panel via the NACC National Office. The decision is final.

If it is determined there is probable cause to proceed with the formal appeal, the Chair of the Certification Appeals Panel, in consultation with the NACC National Office, appoints a three (3) member Certification Appeals Review Team consisting of a Chair, a Presenter, and a Reader from among the Certification Appeals Panel members. The three (3) Review Team members will not have participated in the initial review of the appeal or have a conflict of interest with the Appellant.

925 The Appellant is notified of the composition of the Certification Appeals Review Team by certified mail and has ten (10) days from the postmark of the notification of the composition of the Certification Appeals Review Team to indicate a conflict of interest with a member of the team by notifying the Chair of the Certification Appeals Panel via the NACC National Office.

927 No other written or electronic documents are considered in the Certification Appeals Review Team deliberations. The Interview Team Educator that supervised the work of the original interview team and or the appropriate members of the Interview Team that supervised the work of the original interview team may be consulted by the Certification Appeals Review Team, if needed. If this consultation is deemed necessary, the Certification

Appeals Review Team will contact the NACC National Office and the Administrative Specialist/Certification will arrange the communication.

928 Within twenty (20) days of the receipt of the Appellant's materials by the Certification Appeals Review Team, the Certification Appeals Review Team deliberates and renders a decision to:

928.1 Uphold the decision of the Certification Commission to deny certification or,

928.2 Refer the matter back to the Certification Commission, if a violation of the Procedures exists, with a recommendation to either:

928.2a Grant certification or certification recognition, or

928.2b Grant a new interview.

929 The Chair of the Certification Appeals Review Team notifies the Chair of the Certification Appeals Panel of the outcome. The Chair of the Certification Appeals Panel notifies the NACC National Office.

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931 When the Certification Appeals Review Team upholds the decision of the Certification Commission to deny certification, the Appellant is notified via certified mail by the NACC National Office. The decision of the Certification Appeals Review Team regarding upheld denials is final.

932 When the matter is referred back to the Certification Commission, it has thirty (30) days to render a decision on the recommendation.

933 The Certification Commission's decision to grant or deny certification or certification recognition, or to offer the Appellant a new interview (not applicable to certification recognition), is communicated to the Appellant via certified mail through the NACC National Office within thirty (30) days of the Certification Commission's action. The decision of the Certification Commission is final.

933.1 When an Appellant is granted certification or certification recognition and the ecclesiastical endorsement has been received, the Appellant is sent a notification packet. The certificate is presented at the Missioning Ceremony of those newly certified during the Eucharist Celebration at the next annual conference. If the Appellant is unable to attend the ceremony, or upon request, the certificate is mailed.

933.2 When an Appellant is denied certification or certification recognition, the Appellant will have the opportunity to reapply for certification. If the Appellant decides to apply again, all Competencies will be considered in subsequent process(es) including but not limited to Competencies cited as not met in previous process(es).

933.3 When an Appellant is offered a new interview by the Certification Commission (not applicable to certification recognition), the interview that initiated the current appeals process will be officially expunged from the Appellant's certification record. If the Appellant engages in a subsequent interview process, all materials are

submitted according to established dates and guidelines. Normal and reasonable interview expenses incurred by the Appellant are paid by the NACC. The Appellant has the subsequent two application deadlines to submit new materials and engage in a new interview process at the expense of NACC. If the Applicant does not submit new materials and engage in a new interview process in that time frame, the right to a new interview at NACC's expense is relinquished.

935 At the conclusion of the appeal process, the NACC National Office retains the following in the NACC's long-term certification files:

935.1 A copy of the Appellant's formal appeal.

935.2 A copy of the completed Certification Appeals Report Form.

935.3 A copy of the notification letter alerting the Appellant of the decision.

All other written and electronic documents from the appeals process are destroyed.

Section 10.0 Certification Records

The following documents from the Certification Interviews are maintained in a digital file store system that is accessible only by the NACC staff. An applicant can request information from their own files at any time.

133.1 When an Applicant is granted certification, the NACC National Office retains the following in the NACC's long-term certification files:

133.3a The Certification Application.

133.3b The Ecclesiastical Endorsement letter.

133.3c A copy of the NACC letter requesting ecclesiastical endorsement.

133.3d A copy of the certificate.

133.3e Presenter's Reports Part I and II.

133.3f A copy of the NACC letter confirming certification.

133.3g The Receipt of Certification Materials Form.

133.3h Certification Waivers (if applicable).

133.3i The Chaplain Notification Form.

133.3j Copies of the notification letters.

133.3k The completed NACC Ethics Accountability Statement.

All other written and electronic documents are destroyed.

133.2 When an Applicant is denied certification, the NACC National Office retains the following in the NACC's electronic certification file:

133.4a The Certification Application.

- 133.4b Presenter's Reports Part I and II.
 - 133.4c A copy of the NACC letter denying certification.
 - 133.4d The Receipt of Certification Materials Form.
 - 133.4e Certification Waivers (if applicable).
- 133.3 When an Applicant is denied an interview or denied certification, the NACC National Office retains the following in its temporary files for the period of time indicated by each item:
- 133.5a Official transcript of the basic academic degree (NACC to keep for five (5) years from the date of origin).
 - 133.5b Official transcript of the graduate-level theological degree or letter granting Graduate Degree Equivalency (NACC to keep for five (5) years from the date of origin).
 - 133.5c Transcript analysis, if applicable, of academic and theological degree (NACC to keep for five (5) years from the date of origin).
 - 133.5d Current letter of recommendation from the person to whom the Applicant reports in his/her place of ministry or if not currently ministering, a letter from anyone in a reporting position that can attest to the ministerial experience of the Applicant (NACC to keep for one (1) year from date of origin).
 - 133.5e For lay Applicants, a current letter of recommendation from his/her pastor or from a priest in active ministry (NACC to keep for one (1) year from date of origin).
 - 133.5f Current letter of ecclesiastical endorsement (NACC to keep for one (1) year from date of origin).
 - 133.5g A copy of the NACC letter requesting ecclesiastical endorsement. (NACC to keep for one (1) year from date of origin).
- All other written and electronic documents are destroyed.

Section 11.0 Appendices

- A. Sample Application Form for Initial Approval
- B. Sample Application Form for Renewal of Certification
- C. Sample Recommendation Forms
- D. Sample Education/Formation Report Form
- E. Roster of Certification Commission Members
- F. Roster of Interview Committee Members
- G. Roster of Members of the Appeals Committee

A. Sample Recommendation Forms

Here please include an updated roster of the members of the Certification Commission/Committee. Include names, titles and contact information for each member.

Here please include an updated roster of the members of the Interview Committee. Include names, titles and contact information for each member.

Here please include an updated roster of the members of the Certification Commission/Committee. Include names, titles and contact information for each member.

B. Template for Appeal of an Adverse Decision Sample Letter and Application Form

Date

Name

Title

Address

City/State/Zip

Dear (*Name*):

I am writing to notify you of my request to review the decision of the (*Organization or Certification Committee*) on (*date*) to deny or delay my certification as a (*Name of the Role for which you Requested Certification*).

State here:

1. *A clear and adequate reason for the appeal, including substantiating evidence if necessary. Specifically clarify either that:*
 - *the decision was based on an incorrect or incomplete representation of your competence and why you believe this is so; or*
 - *the process was conducted in violation or disregard of specific procedures outlined in the arch/diocese's or organization's certification handbook.*

2. *Your desired resolution and willingness, if the committee would deem it beneficial, to appear before the commission for an interview.*

Thank you for your careful consideration of my request. I am aware that the decision of the Committee/Commission is final and binding.

Respectfully,

Note: Candidates are strongly advised to keep a copy of their original appeal letter for their own personal records and use throughout the review process.

C. Glossary

The Subcommittee Glossary can be found in the Subcommittee Certification Handbook on page 34 and may be helpful to your candidates. You can revise definitions that you feel appropriate to your national organization.

Section 12.0 Acknowledging Subcommittee Approval for the Certification Handbook

After the Subcommittee has granted initial approval of the organization's certification standards and procedures, appropriate office publications, including the certification handbook, shall state the statement of approval in the appropriate place. The statement of approval and logo can be found on the Parish or Institutional Group Community site after approval has been granted.