



STUDENT NEWS

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from the National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc.

Congratulations! You Passed!

Now that you've passed the NCE, what's next? Read below to find the answers to some of the most common questions.

I applied for the NCC credential and passed the NCE; what do I do now?

This is an excellent question. To answer it, you must remember that the National Counselor Examination (NCE) is just one part of the credentialing process. Now that you have received your score report from NBCC in the mail, there are some additional steps to accomplish before you can put the letters "NCC" after your name on your business card and stationery.

To become fully certified, you will need to supply NBCC with additional documentation about your background and preparation for professional practice. If you are a student graduating from a CACREP-accredited program, you will follow one set of directions; if you • are graduating from a non-CACREP-accredited program, you will follow another set. (To check on whether your program was CACREP-accredited, consult the CACREP website at www.cacrep.org.)

Should you fail to send these within two years of your original testing date, your file will be closed, which means that your NCE score is invalidated. So, be sure these tasks are prominently displayed on your "To Do" list! NBCC does not release exam scores to third parties, even with your permission, if you are not either fully certified or Board Eligible—another reason to take care of that "To Do" list.

Students from CACREP-accredited programs must send two documents to NBCC:

- 1) A sealed, official transcript showing degree conferral

- 2) A completed Counseling Supervisor's Endorsement form.

When you are officially certified, you will receive a boxed certificate in the mail along with a lapel pin and continuing education file folder.

After you are fully certified, you can send a written request to NBCC asking that your score report be mailed to a third party. Please submit the \$15 processing fee with each request to cover printing and handling.

For graduates of non-CACREP programs, there are several requirements for certification beyond a passing exam score.

You will need to send a sealed, official graduate transcript showing degree conferral. (Ed. S and doctoral students should refer to their correspondence with NBCC for special instructions on transcript submission.)

If you had not done so previously, you will also need to send a completed Counseling Supervisor's Endorsement form; this form was included with your exam score letter.

Both items must be submitted no later than two years from your original testing date. Once these forms have been reviewed and approved, you are officially a Board Eligible National Certified Counselor and may ethically call yourself a Board Eligible NCC but you cannot use the designation for soliciting clients for independent practice. As a Board Eligible NCC, you may request in writing

see *Congratulations* on page 2

Mynbcc

Useful Information
for Applicants and Certificants

Now that you're "in the loop," there's a convenient online resource to help you keep track of information associated with your relationship with NBCC.

A free, secure service, myNBCC, is a useful tool to access information about prerequisites needed to complete certification, to check the status of documents received by NBCC, and to inform both NBCC and others about you as a professional.

As a certificant, a National Certified Counselor has the option of allowing some of the information from the myNBCC profile to appear in *CounselorFind*. *CounselorFind* (see link on the NBCC home page www.nbcc.org) is a tool that prospective clients and other professionals can use to learn about your areas of practice, any languages you speak, your work phone number, etc.

To use myNBCC, you will need your NBCC ID number which is located above your name on your NCE score report. Please visit www.mvnbcc.org/.

Congratulations from page 1

that your score report be mailed to a third party. There is a \$15 processing fee to cover printing and handling.

At the next step, you must begin documenting your post-graduate counseling experience and supervision. Specifically you must:

- Complete two years and at least 3,000 hours of experience.
- Complete at least two years and 100 hours of counseling supervision.

When these requirements have been completed, submit the required forms for review as well as the Board Eligible upgrade fee. If all the requirements are fulfilled, you will become fully certified and can use the NCC letters after your name. Bear in mind that there is a limit of three years from the date of passing the NCE to complete the requirements for full certification.

NBCC will send detailed information and instructions along the way. Remember to save these materials for easy reference during the process. Most importantly, remember to **let us know if you move** so that we can continue to communicate with you. We are happy to answer any questions you may have. Feel free to contact the Certification Department either by phone (336-547-0607) or email (certification@nbcc.org).

What's the Big Deal?

Passing the NCE and completing the additional steps for national certification are all well and good, but why is it important? What's the value of the NCC credential?

We're glad you asked since this is one of our favorite topics. The issue can get confusing because there are two distinctly different counseling "badges" you can earn that are referred to similarly: national credential and state credential (often called state license).

There are several benefits of the national credential:

- National recognition of basic standards of practice
- Enforceable professional Code of Ethics
- Powerful career development tool
- Advocacy and public education services through NBCC

The NCC (National Certified Counselor) credential is the counseling field's only general practice credential on the national level. It is a completely voluntary credentialing process, developed within the profession itself to set necessary and sufficient basic standards for counselor preparation.

State credentialing earns you the right to call yourself state-licensed or state-

certified (licensed professional counselor is the most common term) and makes it legal for you to practice independently in your state. With the exception of California and Nevada, all states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico regulate the practice of counseling.

If my state requires licensure in order to practice there, why should I follow through and become an NCC? To start, being an NCC makes you part of a large professional group which is self-regulating. The profession itself sets and maintains its own standards and has its own adjudication system for those who violate the Code of Ethics. In essence, it prefers self-regulation over government regulation, though it supports and promotes the latter in our complex society.

From an individual perspective, you can use the NCC designation to promote your career and your practice. Some employers require the NCC credential. Unlike state credentials, national certification is not affected by individual laws in each state. This is your portable counselor credential. If you are seeking state licensure or state certification, odds are good that your state licensing board will allow you to transfer your NCE score for use in the licensure process. In fact, most states use NBCC as their "testing company" for credentialing purposes. For most counseling professionals today, it makes sense to hold both the national and state credential.

Credentialing Opportunities for the Future-Specialized Credentials

Once you become an NCC, you will have taken an important step toward another credentialing process available through NBCC. NBCC offers specialized certification in three areas of counseling—Clinical Mental Health, Addictions, and School Counseling. Holding the NCC credential is a prerequisite for each.

It's important to begin planning for further credentialing right away to ensure that you can meet the next level of requirements. When applying for specialized credentials, documentation of post-master's experience and supervision is required. Both the National Certified School Counselor (NCS) and the Master Addictions Counselor (MAC) credentials require three years of post-master's experience and supervision. The Certified Clinical Mental

Health Counselor (CCMH) requires a minimum of two years post-master's but it frequently takes nearly three years to obtain the required 3000 hours of direct client contact. Counseling supervisors must hold an advanced degree in a mental health field and there are additional requirements for counseling supervisors of CCMH candidates. If you plan to apply for a specialized credential, keep in touch with prior counseling supervisors whenever you relocate. An alternative is to obtain the necessary forms for the additional credential and have your counseling supervisor complete them as part of the exit interview.

In addition to supervision and experience, there are educational requirements beyond

those required for the NCC. You may have fulfilled those educational requirements already. While your course of study is fresh, you may wish to obtain a specialty application and look through the Required Coursework Form to determine whether you will need additional coursework. Specialty applications can be obtained from our website at www.nbcc.org/specialtycreds.

Finally, we advise holding onto your academic catalog and even course syllabi in case they are needed during your specialized application process or even for a state credential application in the future. If you would like to correspond with someone at NBCC about specialized credentialing, contact certification@nbcc.org.

Maintaining the NCC Credential

You may remember reading in your application that there are some important steps required to maintain the NCC credential. We will briefly outline them here:

- 100 contact hours every five years
- \$48 annual maintenance fee
- Reaffirmation of the Code of Ethics

Continuing Education: Lifelong learning is required in almost every profession; counseling is no different. NCCs must complete at least 100 contact hours of continuing education for each five years of certification. New NCCs are certified for five years and at the end of each five year cycle, they must be prepared to document completion of the required 100 contact hours of continuing education. A continuing education file folder will arrive with your certificate (after you have completed all certification requirements.) The folder is covered with detailed information about how to obtain and document continuing education and serves as a convenient place to store your certificates of attendance, certificates of completion, and other items verifying your continuing education experiences. For more information visit wwwnbcc.org/recertification2.

Annual Maintenance Fee: Once certified, you will receive a bill each year for the NCC annual maintenance fee. This fee is due during your birth month. Since you won't receive a bill until you've been certified a full year, the first bill will be a prorated amount and may be more than the \$48 you will be billed in subsequent years.

Code of Ethics: Each year, you are asked to recommit to following NBCC's Code of Ethics. The attestation statement is included on your bill form. Ethical practice is vitally important for the public's protection and for your professional security. Because of this, NBCC reviews all charges made against NCCs and adjudicates appropriately. If you have misplaced your copy of NBCC's Code of Ethics, visit wwwnbcc.org/ethics2 to obtain a copy of the Code and information regarding ethics processes and procedures.

Veterans Eligible for Reimbursement of NCE Assessment Cost

If you are a veteran, a special program through the Veterans Administration provides reimbursement for your expense for the NCE portion of your NCC application process. Veterans must submit an application and a copy of their NCE in order to qualify for the \$120 reimbursement. For more information, visit the Veterans Administration's GI Bill website at www.gibill.va.gov/Education/LCVets.htm.

Your NCE Results and State Credentialing

When you applied for NBCC's National Certified Counselor (NCC) credential, you set into motion an important credentialing process. Passing the NCE is one step in this process. Now that you've taken the NCE, refer to the letter of instruction included with your score report. If you passed the NCE and follow these instructions, the remaining steps in your NCC credentialing process will be simple. Remember that you must complete this process in order to release your scores to any third party.

Did you know that a passing NCE score is one requirement for state counselor licensure/certification in 39 states and the District of Columbia? California and Nevada are the only two states that have not yet enacted counselor credentialing laws. State counselor credentialing laws and requirements vary, but the purpose of state laws is public protection through a mandated regulatory process. If you plan to work as a private practitioner, state law actually requires that you obtain the necessary state credential. We recommend that you begin reviewing your state's credentialing process, so you will be familiar with all their requirements well in advance of applying.

If you work in a school setting or in an agency under the supervision of another mental health or medical professional, you

may not be required to obtain your state's counselor credential. We still recommend becoming acquainted with your state's laws regarding general counseling practice, as your professional plans may change, laws may change, or your employing organization's policies may change requiring licensure in the future.

State educational requirements vary, as do post-master's experience and supervision requirements. If you are planning on becoming state credentialed at some time in the future, it's a good idea to not only review the current state requirements, but to stay up-to-date on state credentialing issues. Your state's counseling association is a good source for information about state credentialing. You may link to your state counselor credentialing board through NBCC's website. Simply go to www.nbcc.org/stateboardmap, scroll down to the bottom, select your state, and click on the link to the state counselor credentialing board. Many websites provide detailed instructions for individuals planning to apply.

You should be very proud of your hard-earned counselor credential; there is no doubt that it will open professional doors throughout your career.

NBCC Insurance Center

NBCC PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM

NBCC's professional Liability Insurance Program is designed to meet the liability needs of counseling professionals. Whether you are in an individual or group practice, on a full or part-time basis, you need to protect yourself in the event of a lawsuit. The NBCC-endorsed program is underwritten by Lloyds of London, which offers affordable policies with substantial protection. For a quote or an application, go to www.nbcc.lockion-ins.com/pl.