



Certification Procedures Manual

**Approved by
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service (CEMS)**



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NACC Certification Commission**

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Part Fourteen – Chaplain in Veterans Affairs Renewal of Certification Procedures

CP14.1 Chaplain in Veterans Affairs Renewal of Certification is the process by which Catholic Chaplains certified by the NACC demonstrate their ongoing proficiency as spiritual care providers within the current NACC Competencies for Catholic spiritual care theology and praxis, the Common Competencies for Certification for Professional Spiritual Care, and the NACC-Veterans Affairs Specific Competencies. Renewal of Certification is the continuation of the certification process, building on recommendations from the previous renewal of certification or the original certification. This renewal is achieved primarily through continuing education in the following areas: Integration of Theory and Practice, Professional Identity and Conduct, Professional Practice Skills, and Organizational Leadership. The Chaplain incorporates the recommendations from the previous renewal of certification or the original certification in formulating plans for education and/or development through a peer review process.

At the time renewal is due, if the Chaplain in Veterans Affairs is no longer ministering in a Veterans Affairs location (as required by CP14.24) but is still in active ministry, the Chaplain may renew certification as a Chaplain as outlined in the Certification Procedures Manual, Part Five: Chaplain Renewal of Certification.

A Retired Certified member of the NACC who has been certified for at least five (5) years and has successfully engaged in at least one (1) five (5) year renewal process may maintain certification without the expectation of fulfilling Certification Competencies 306.MNT1 – 306.MNT3 (Certification Procedures 522-525). See the Certification Procedures Manual, Part Eight: Retired Chaplain or Retired Educator Renewal of Certification Utilizing Reduced Certification Requirements Procedures.

The renewal of certification process takes place every five (5) years.

Note: Given the COVID-19 pandemic, the Certification Commission and Competencies Commission approved special exceptions for the 2020, 2021, 2022 education years. See specific details in the following Procedures: CP14.22, CP14.32.33 CP14.32.4, CP14.32.9, CP14.32.12d).

CP14.2 Prerequisites

- 14.21 Chaplaincy Ministry membership in the NACC (Competency 806.MNT4).
- 14.22 Completion of fifty* (50) hours of educational activities per year for the five (5) year renewal period (Competency 806.MNT2). *Note: Competencies Commission approved an exception to decrease the required number of educational hours for 2020, 2021, 2022 from fifty (50) hours to thirty-five (35) hours (per year).
- 14.23 The NACC National Office requests a current letter of ecclesiastical endorsement (Qualification 801.QUA1). Current is defined as within one year of application for certification. 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.

- 14.24 Be employed by a Veterans Affairs facility (full time, part time, fee basis or contract basis) as a chaplain.
- 14.25 Successful completion of VIRTUS or similar training.
- 14.26 Participation in a peer review with an active or retired certified Chaplain or Educator who is a current member of the NACC (Competency 806.MNT1) with whom you do not share a reporting relationship (renewing Chaplain reports to the Peer Reviewer or vice versa) and who is not an Inactive or Emeritus member of the NACC. The reviewer must hold current certification in the same specialty (veterans affairs) or demonstrate experience in the specialty area.
- 14.27 Adherence to the Code of Ethics for Spiritual Care Professionals and knowledge of the requirements of that Code (Competency 806.MNT5).
- 14.28 Current completion of the NACC Ethics Accountability Statement (Code of Ethics 206.11.1). Current is defined as within one year of application for renewal of certification.

CP14.3 Procedures

14.31 Application Process

- 14.31.1 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 Chaplain receives a letter directing him/her to the NACC website for materials for renewal.
- 14.31.2 The 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.
- 14.31.3 The Chaplain provides evidence of employment by a Veterans Affairs facility (full time, part time, fee basis, contract basis) as a chaplain. A copy of the renewing chaplain's listing in the National Chaplain Center Chaplain Directory will suffice.
- 14.31.4 After all materials are received, the NACC National Office requests a current letter of ecclesiastical endorsement on behalf of the Chaplain. Current is defined as within one year of application for renewal of certification. The ecclesiastical endorsement will provide evidence of successful completion of VIRTUS or similar approved training.
- 14.31.5 The Chaplain completes the renewal of certification process within the calendar year in which renewal is required.
- 14.31.6 If unable to complete the renewal process within the calendar year in which renewal is required, the 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 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.

14.32 Continuing Education Documentation Process

- 14.32.1 The 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 (computer or typewriter). Handwritten forms will not be accepted.
- 14.32.2 Categories for continuing education parallel the current Competencies for Certification. Refer to the NACC website for a current version of the Competencies for Certification and Renewal of Certification of Chaplains in Veterans Affairs.
- 14.32.3 Completion of fifty* (50) hours of educational activities per year is required for the five (5) year renewal of certification cycle (Competency 806.MNT2).: The Chaplain must complete a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of educational activities per year (of the fifty (50) hours total required per year) related to education in the specialty certification (Veterans Affairs). For ease of identification, the fifteen (15) hours per year related to the specialty area should be coded with the credentials of the specialty (BCC-VA). *Note: Competencies Commission approved an exception to decrease the required number of educational hours for 2020, 2021, 2022 from fifty (50) hours to thirty-five (35) hours (per year).
- 14.32.4 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 (ITP), Professional Identity and Conduct (PIC), Professional Practice Skills (PPS), and Organizational Leadership (OL) (see Certification Competencies 802, 803, 804, and 805). 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. *Note: Certification Commission approved an exception to decrease the minimum number of hours required in each category from ten (10) hours to seven (7) hours. This exception is in effect for education years 2020, 2021, 2022.
- 14.32.5 A continuing education activity is only counted once regardless of the Chaplain’s role as an attendee or presenter. If presenting, the Chaplain can also include preparation time. If one is presenting the program multiple times, the presentation and preparation time may be counted only once.

- 14.32.6 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.
- 14.32.7 When a continuing education activity provides updating in more than one of the four Categories of Competency (see CP14.32.4), 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.
- 14.32.8 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.
- 14.32.9 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. *Note: Certification Commission approved waiving the “attended” hour requirement for education year 2020, 2021, 2022.
- 14.32.10 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 conferences/webinars) are considered reviewing of educational materials and should be designated as “M.”
- 14.32.11 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. For listening/viewing to 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.
- 14.32.12 The following limits of continuing education activities are:
- 14.32.12a Spiritual Direction – Up to ten (10) hours per year.
 - 14.32.12b 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.
 - 14.32.12c Therapy/Professional Supervision – Up to ten (10) hours per year.
 - 14.32.12d Educational Materials (M) including books, articles, and recorded events (videos/audio conferences/webinars) – Up to twenty-five* (25) hours per year. *Note: Certification

Commission approved waiving the limitation set for Educational Materials for education years 2020, 2021, 2022.

14.32.12e 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.

14.32.12f Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Units (*additional CPE Units or Supervisory CPE Units*):

14.32.12f1 Didactic activity – Number of hours of participation or presentation; activity should be listed by session and include the topic and date.

14.32.12f2 Supervisory sessions (as part of the Unit) – Up to ten (10) hours per year.

14.32.12f3 Ministerial activities (patient visitation, conducting worship services, etc.) may not be submitted as continuing education activities.

14.33 Peer Review Process

14.33.1 The 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). 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.

14.33.2 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. The peer reviewer must meet the aforementioned guidelines as well as hold current certification in the specialty area (Veterans Affairs) or demonstrate experience in the specialty area.

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

14.33.3a A copy of recommendations from the last interview or peer review.

14.33.3b A completed copy of the Renewal of Certification Education Report Forms.

14.33.3c Renewal of Certification Peer Review Form.

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

- 14.33.4a Process – In this section, the peer reviewer summarizes the process of the peer review: beginning, middle, and end.
- 14.33.4b Content – In this section, the peer reviewer notes the content of the peer review, identifying:
 - 14.33.4b1 The meaning and effectiveness of the continuing education activities for the Chaplain.
 - 14.33.4b2 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.
 - 14.33.4b3 Progress on recommendations made to the Chaplain during the previous interview or peer review.
 - 14.33.4b4 Discussion of the Chaplain’s plans for future development.
- 14.33.4c 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 in Veterans Affairs and include future plans for maintaining and enhancing competencies. Certification Competency number(s) must be listed after each recommendation.
- 14.33.5 The peer reviewer signs the Peer Review Form and sends it back to the Chaplain for review and signature.
- 14.34 The Chaplain sends the following materials to the NACC National Office and also retains copies of these documents for future purposes:
 - 14.34.1 The Renewal of Certification Application.
 - 14.34.2 The Renewal of Certification Fee.
 - 14.34.3 The Renewal of Certification Education Report Form(s).
 - 14.34.4 A signed copy of the Renewal of Certification Peer Review Form.
 - 14.34.5 Evidence of employment.
 - 14.34.6 Completed NACC Ethics Accountability Statement.
- 14.35 Certification Commission Action
 - 14.35.1 The Certification Commission reviews the materials and determines if the Chaplain meets the Competencies for Renewal of Certification.
 - 14.35.2 The NACC National Office notifies the Chaplain of the Certification Commission’s decision within thirty (30) days of the decision.

- 14.35.2a When renewal of certification is granted and the ecclesiastical endorsement has been received, the Chaplain is issued a new certificate.
 - 14.35.2b 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 Competencies for Renewal of Certification.
 - 14.35.2c 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.
- 14.35.3 When a Chaplain is granted renewal of certification, the NACC National Office retains the following in the NACC's long-term certification files:
- 14.35.3a The Renewal of Certification Application.
 - 14.35.3b The Renewal of Certification Peer Review Form.
 - 14.35.3c The Ecclesiastical Endorsement letter.
 - 14.35.3d A copy of the certificate.
 - 14.35.3e A copy of the NACC letter confirming renewal of certification.
 - 14.35.3f A copy of the NACC letter stating exceptions, if applicable.
 - 14.35.3g The completed NACC Ethics Accountability Statement.
- All other written and electronic documents are destroyed.
- 14.35.4 When a Chaplain is denied renewal of certification, the NACC National Office retains the following in the NACC's electronic certification file:
- 14.35.4a The Renewal of Certification Application.
 - 14.35.4b The Renewal of Certification Peer Review Form.
 - 14.35.4c A copy of the NACC letter denying renewal of certification.
- All other written and electronic documents are destroyed.