Certification Procedures Manual

Part Five – Chaplain Renewal of Certification Procedures

CP51 Chaplain 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, and the Common Competencies for Certification for Professional Spiritual Care. 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.

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: CP522, CP532.3 CP532.4, CP532.9, CP532.12d).

CP52 Prerequisites

521 Chaplaincy Ministry or Retired Certified membership in the NACC (Competency 306.MNT4).

522 Completion of fifty (50) hours of educational activities per year for the five (5) year renewal period (Competency 306.MNT2). Note: Competencies Commission approved an exception to decrease the required number of educational hours per year for 2020, 2021, 2022 from fifty (50) hours to thirty-five (35) hours.

523 If the Chaplain is a lay person, the Chaplain requests that 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 306.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 as a lay ecclesial health care minister initiated by the NACC National Office.

524 The NACC National Office requests a current letter of ecclesiastical endorsement (Competency 306.MNT3). Current is defined as within one year of application for renewal of certification. The NACC will complete the endorsement request on the Chaplain’s behalf. Ecclesiastical endorsement is formal approval for ministry by:

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524.1 The Bishop of the diocese of the Chaplain’s ministry if the Chaplain is a lay person, or
524.2 The major superior if the Chaplain is a member of a religious order, or
524.3 The Ordinary (understood as the Bishop of the diocese where the priest or deacon is incardinated) if the Chaplain is a diocesan priest or deacon.

Ecclesiastical endorsement also assures NACC that any Safe Environment Training requirements (of the endorsing body) have been met by the Chaplain.

525 Participation in a peer review with an active or retired certified Chaplain or Educator who is a current member of the NACC (Competency 306.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.

526 Adherence to the Code of Ethics for Spiritual Care Professionals and knowledge of the requirements of that Code (Competency 306.MNT5).

527 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.

CP53 Procedures

531 Application Process

531.1 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. If the Chaplain holds advanced certification, he/she must adhere to the applicable NACC Chaplain Renewal of Certification Procedure as specified.

531.2 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.

531.3 If the Chaplain is a lay person, the Chaplain requests that 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 306.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.

531.4 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.

531.5 The Chaplain completes the renewal of certification process within the calendar year in which renewal is required.
531.6 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.

532 Continuing Education Documentation Process

532.1 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.

532.2 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.

532.3 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. *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).

532.4 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 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. *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.

532.5 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.
532.6 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.

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. *Note: Certification Commission approved waiving the “attended” hour requirement for education years 2020, 2021, 2022.

532.10 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.”

532.11 For attended activities (workshops, live webinars, 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.

532.12 The following limits of continuing education activities are:

532.12a Spiritual Direction – Up to ten (10) hours per year.

532.12b 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.

532.12c Therapy/Professional Supervision – Up to ten (10) hours per year.

532.12d 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.
532.12e 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.

532.12f Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Units *(additional CPE Units or Supervisory CPE Units):*

532.12f1 Didactic activity – Number of hours of participation or presentation; activity should be listed by session and include the topic and date.

532.12f2 Supervisory sessions (as part of the Unit) – Up to ten (10) hours per year.

532.12f3 Ministerial activities (patient visitation, conducting worship services, etc.) may not be submitted as continuing education activities.

533 Peer Review Process

533.1 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.

533.2 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. If the Chaplain holds advanced certification, the peer reviewer must meet the aforementioned guidelines as well as hold current certification in the same advanced specialty or demonstrate experience in the advanced specialty area.

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

533.3a A copy of recommendations from the last interview or peer review.

533.3b A completed copy of the Renewal of Certification Education Report Forms.

533.3c Renewal of Certification Peer Review Form.

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

533.4a Process – In this section, the peer reviewer summarizes the process of the peer review: beginning, middle, and end.

533.4b Content – In this section, the peer reviewer notes the content of the peer review, identifying:
533.4b1 The meaning and effectiveness of the continuing education activities for the Chaplain.

533.4b2 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.

533.4b3 Progress on recommendations made to the Chaplain during the previous interview or peer review.

533.4b4 Discussion of the Chaplain’s plans for future development.

533.4c 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 and include future plans for maintaining and enhancing competencies. Certification Competency number(s) must be listed after each recommendation.

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

534 The Chaplain sends the following materials (CP534.1-534.5) to the NACC National Office and also retains copies of these documents for future purposes:

534.1 The Renewal of Certification Application.

534.2 The Renewal of Certification Fee. If the Chaplain renewing is a NACC Retired Certified member, the Renewal of Certification fee is waived.

534.3 The Renewal of Certification Education Report Form(s).

534.4 A signed copy of the Renewal of Certification Peer Review Form.

534.5 Completed NACC Ethics Accountability Statement.

535 Certification Commission Action

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

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

535.2a When renewal of certification is granted and the ecclesiastical endorsement has been received, the Chaplain is issued a new certificate.

535.2b 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.

535.2c 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.

535.3 When a Chaplain is granted renewal of certification, the NACC National
Office retains the following in the NACC’s long-term certification files:

535.3a The Renewal of Certification Application.
535.3b The Renewal of Certification Peer Review Form.
535.3c The Ecclesiastical Endorsement letter.
535.3d A copy of the certificate.
535.3e A copy of the NACC letter confirming renewal of certification.
535.3f A copy of the NACC letter stating exceptions, if applicable.
535.3g The completed NACC Ethics Accountability Statement.
All other written and electronic documents are destroyed.

535.4 When a Chaplain is denied renewal of certification, the NACC National
Office retains the following in the NACC’s electronic certification file:

535.4a The Renewal of Certification Application.
535.4b The Renewal of Certification Peer Review Form.
535.4c A copy of the NACC letter denying renewal of certification.
All other written and electronic documents are destroyed.