Graduate Credit Equivalency Guidelines for Certified Associate Chaplain Applicants

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 eighteen (18) graduate-level credits 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 credits in theology will be granted by the individual professional organizations according to their own established guidelines.

The applicant needs to evidence graduate-level familiarity with the following theological areas:

- Dogmatic/Systematic Theology (Vatican II/Post Vatican II studies in Trinity, Christology, Ecclesiology, Sacraments, Liturgy), Scriptures: Hebrew and Christian, Catholic Social Teaching, Ethics/Moral Theology (in addition to the Ethical and Religions Directives for Catholic Health Care Services), Pastoral Theology and Ministry. They can also include Canon Law, Ecumenism, Interreligious/Interfaith Practice. (ITP2.1, ITP2.2, and ITP4.1)

If you have completed 18 or more graduate credits from a CHEA accredited institution in the disciplines listed above, you meet the educational prerequisite for CAC Certification and do not need to apply for equivalency. This will be evidenced by a graduate transcript.

If you do not have a minimum of 18 graduate credits from a CHEA accredited institution in the disciplines listed above, you are eligible to apply for educational equivalency if you have:

- A Bachelor’s degree from a college, university, or theological school accredited by a member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.
- Participated in an accredited pastoral formation program, diocesan ministry training program, or professional ministry program. (Pages 2-3 explain the types of equivalencies the applicant may list and the number of hours of attendance that are required for each graduate credit).

Considerations for Permanent Deacons

- If you have earned a Master’s Degree in Theology or Pastoral Ministry as part of your formation program, you already meet the educational prerequisite for the CAC Certification. This will be evidenced by your graduate transcript.
- If you did not earn a Master’s Degree as part of your formation program, but your diocesan formation program abides by the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States, then your diaconal formation satisfies the education prerequisites for CAC Certification. This will be evidenced by a letter from your Director of Diaconate Formation stating that the program you have completed abides by the directives in this directory.
- If you did not earn a Master’s Degree as part of your formation program and your diocesan formation program does not abide by the National Directory of Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States, then you will need apply for educational equivalency.
Equivalency Rubrics

The following formation experiences will count toward evidencing the eighteen (18) graduate credit hours equivalency in core coursework pertinent to NACC Competencies for Certification. These rubrics are reflected in the CAC Education Equivalency Application which provides space to document these experiences.

1. Graduate-level theological course work (as many credits as applicable) from a CHEA-accredited school
   a. What is needed: Transcripts
   b. Each credit is considered 1 graduate credit.

2. Graduate-level theological course work from a non-CHEA-accredited school (up to 30 graduate credits).
   a. What is needed - Transcripts
   b. Each credit is considered .5 graduate credit, for a maximum of 15 graduate credits.

3. Professional ministry training programs applicable to pastoral care ministry such as Catholic Prison Ministries Coalition Foundational Program, Lay Formation Certification Programs, etc. (up to 240 hours)
   a. What is needed - Proof of completion from the institution including curriculum, hours required, and fulfillment expectations (lay formation or permanent diaconate program)
   b. Every 15 hours is 1 graduate credit, for a maximum of 16 graduate credits.

4. Professional development, such as, audited graduate courses, continuing education (up to 150 hours)
   a. What is needed - Listing of event title, date, CEUs or total hours
   b. Every 15 hours is 1 graduate credit, for a maximum of 10 graduate credits.

5. NACC-approved webinars, e-learning sessions, or webinar recordings (up to 100 hours)
   a. What is needed - Listing of event title, date, CEUs or total hours (50-60 min.)
   b. Every 15 hours is 1 graduate credit, for a maximum of 10 graduate credits.

6. Mentored/Supervised Education, such as accredited CPE units (see QUA 4), or supervised education by other qualified mentors (up to 90 hours)
   a. What is needed – from mentor/supervisor/educator, a statement of what was offered and number of hours (Accredited CPE units beyond the 2 required units are eligible)
   b. Every 15 hours is 1 graduate credit, for a maximum of 6 graduate credits.

7. Professional/Pastoral teaching/writing (presentations, published writings, etc.) that evidence knowledge and application of theological areas of study (up to 90 hours)
   a. What is needed – Description of professional theological/pastoral research published in journals, conferences or professional/pastoral formation level courses, seminars, retreats with number of hours involved or required.
   b. Every 15 hours is 1 graduate credit, for a maximum of 6 graduate credits.
8. Pastoral Ministry experience in excess of the 500 required post-CPE hours required (up to 90 hours)
   a. What is needed – 1. Signature of a BCC, an ACPE Educator, or a Pastor/Ministry Supervisor (with credentials) who has known applicant for at least two years who can attest to applicant’s work and hours committed to work.
   b. Every 15 hours is 1 graduate credit, for a maximum of 6 graduate credits.

9. Graduate Degree, CHEA accredited, with content pertinent to chaplaincy (up to 15 graduate credits)
   a. What is needed – Transcripts and description of how the education applies to chaplaincy ministry.
   b. Each credit is considered 1 graduate credit.

10. Theological coursework in upper-level (300-level and above) undergraduate studies coursework to supplement the degree (up to 12 undergraduate credits)
    a. What is needed – Transcripts description of how the education applies to chaplaincy ministry.
    b. Each undergraduate credit is considered .5 graduate credits, for a maximum of 6 graduate credits.