

AMERICAN HOLISTIC NURSES' CERTIFICATION CORPORATION

HOLISTIC NURSING CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION (HN-BC)

APPLICATION DEADLINE

February 29, 2012

September 30, 2012

TESTING PERIOD

April 14-28, 2012

November 3-17, 2012

HOLISTIC BACCALAUREATE NURSING CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION (HNB-BC)

APPLICATION DEADLINE

January 15, 2012

September 1, 2012

TESTING PERIOD

March 3-17, 2012

October 13-27, 2012

ADVANCED HOLISTIC NURSING CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION (AHN-BC)

APPLICATION DEADLINE

December 30, 2011

July 31, 2012

TESTING PERIOD

February 11-25, 2012

September 15-29, 2012



PROFESSIONAL TESTING CORPORATION®

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Professional Testing Corporation (PTC), 1350 Broadway, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10018, (212) 356-0660, ahncc@ptcny.com

This handbook contains necessary information about the American Holistic Nurses' Certification Corporation (AHNCC). Please retain it for future reference. Candidates and certified Holistic Nurses are responsible for reading these instructions carefully and should keep it available for reference. This handbook is subject to change.

SPONSORSHIP

About AHNCC

The American Holistic Nurses' Certification Corporation (AHNCC), incorporated in 1997 and governed by a Board of Directors, is responsible for the administration of Certification Examinations based in the precepts of Holistic Nursing. The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring the validity, reliability, security, and integrity of the certification process. The AHNCC Professional Code can be found at http://www.ahncc.org/images/AHNCC_code_of_ethics.pdf.

Mission

The mission of AHNCC is to:

1. Standardize holistic nursing certification requirements,
2. Promote recognition of holistic nursing as a specialty area that is based on a core of knowledge and competencies, and
3. Advance the legitimate role of Holistic nursing in the health care system.

Values

AHNCC is committed to values that enhance professional practice and contribute to competency in holistic nursing practice. Values such as integrity, fairness, excellence, innovation, holism, mutuality, empowerment, caring, healing, and transformation provide the basis for holistic nursing practice. These values provide a foundation for the Holistic Nursing Certification Examination.

Purpose

The purpose of AHNCC is to ensure that nurses engaged in the philosophy and principles of Holistic Nursing:

1. Integrate foundational concepts of holistic, person-centered care into their life and practice, and
2. Demonstrate proficiency in the body of knowledge specific to Holistic Nursing including research and theory.

Policies

Universality: It is the policy of the AHNCC that no applicant shall be excluded from the opportunity to become certified as a holistic nurse on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

Withdrawals: Applicants wishing to withdraw their documents must submit a written letter by certified mail. No other means of communication will be accepted. All remitted fees will be forfeited.

Returned Checks: A \$15.00 fee will be assessed to any applicant whose personal check is returned for insufficient funds. Remittance of all fees thereafter must be in the form of a money order or certified check.

Correspondence: AHNCC cannot be responsible for the timely performance of the post office in delivering documents. Documents may become lost in the mail. Applicants are encouraged to make copies of all materials submitted. Those desiring verification of receipt by AHNCC should use certified or registered mail.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The AHNCC, sensitive to the special needs of persons with disabilities or impairments, complies with all ADA requirements for accommodation. To arrange for special considerations, complete the Accommodation Request (found at http://ptcny.com/PDF/PTC_SpecialAccommodationRequestForm.pdf) and submit with proper documentation and verification of the disability or impairment from a suitable licensed professional.

ABOUT HOLISTIC NURSING

The Definition of Holistic Nursing

Holistic nursing can be defined as all nursing practice that cares for the person as an integrated, holistic human being, inseparable and integral with the environment. Holistic practice draws on holistic nursing knowledge, and theories, expertise, and intuition, to guide nurses in becoming therapeutic partners with clients in a mutually evolving process toward healing and holism. Holistic nursing is universal in nature and may be practiced in any clinical setting, community, private practice, hospital, educational institution, or research foundation.

The Domain of Holistic Nursing

The body of knowledge of Holistic Nursing is related to the five major Core Values of Holistic Nursing and the related Holistic Nursing Standards.

The Core Values:

- Holistic Philosophy, Theories and Ethics;
- Holistic Caring Processes;
- Holistic Communication, Therapeutic Environment, and Cultural Diversity;
- Holistic Education and Research; and
- Holistic Nurse Self-Care.

The related Standards are discussed in AHNA's Holistic Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice (2007) on pages 23-33, and explicated on pages 81-93 for the HN-BC and HNB-BC nurse, and pages 93-114 for the AHN-BC nurse.

General information about the knowledge and skills of Holistic Nursing can be found in AHNA's Holistic Nurses' Scope and Standards (2007), p. 2 and 122-23.

AHNA Ethics can be found on the website at <http://www.ahncc.org/images/AHNACodeofethics.pdf>

ABOUT CERTIFICATION

Definition of Certification

Certification is the process that a non-governmental authority uses to grant recognition to an individual who has met specified qualifications and competencies in a defined area of practice. Based on predetermined standards of professional practice, a registered nurse validates her/his qualifications and specialized clinical knowledge for practice by seeking the credential conferred by such an authority. Certification is a voluntary process and should not be confused with a legal, professional license.

Purposes of Certification

National certification:

- Establishes minimum competency standards for Holistic Nursing practice,
- Assures the public that the certified nurse has completed all eligibility requirements to earn a credential verifying he/she has achieved the level of knowledge and competency required for practice of holistic nursing,
- Recognizes nurses who have met those standards, and
- Provides the certified nurse with a network of colleagues.

Membership Requirements

Membership in an association or organization is not required to become Board Certified as a Holistic Nurse (HN-BC), Baccalaureate Holistic Nurse (HNB-BC), or Advanced Holistic Nurse (AHN-BC).

Eligibility Criteria

1. Unrestricted and current United States RN licensure from an accredited institution;
2. A minimum of a Diploma or ADN Degree for the HN-BC, a Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing for the HNB-BC, and a Master's Degree in Nursing for the AHN-BC.
3. Active practice as a Holistic Nurse for a minimum of one (1) year full-time or 2,000 hours within the last five (5) years part-time, and
4. Completion of a minimum of 48 contact hours of continuing education in Holistic Nursing within a two (2) year period preceding application.

Average Minimum Time

Practice:

Post-graduation: One (1) year practice in holistic nursing (waived for eligible graduates of endorsed schools)

Certification Process:

Application	3 weeks
Examination	8 weeks (includes two weeks prior to examination)
Notification or Results	6 weeks (includes time post-examination required to validate examination)
Recertification:	8 weeks

Active candidates who submitted applications prior to April 1, 2011 (identified as Cohort 1 in the Certification Process below) should add a minimum of two weeks for the Self-Reflection Assessment (previously known as Qualitative Assessment).

Benefits of Certification

National certification:

1. Validates knowledge and skills necessary for holistic nursing practice,
2. Establishes identity with consumers, employers, colleagues, and surveyors as someone with credibility in the field of Holistic Nursing,
3. Encourages continued personal and professional growth consistent with holistic nursing, and
4. Provides documentation of knowledge and competence in holistic nursing in the form of an official certificate.

Certification Credential

Nurses certified by AHNCC may use the designated credential HN-BC, HNB-BC, or AHN-BC. This credential verifies that the individual has met all eligibility and testing requirements and is currently certified. HN-BC, HNB-BC or AHN-BC cannot be used when the nurse has:

1. Not completed AHNCC certification requirements,
2. Failed to follow required steps for recertification,
3. Requested inactive status, or,
4. Had certification withdrawn by AHNCC.

THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Effective April 1, 2011

All candidates applying for certification April 1, 2011 or after must complete the two-step Certification Process described below.

All active candidates prior to April 1, 2011 must check www.ahncc.org for instructions on completion of the certification process (an active candidate is one whose application has been approved and has not exceeded the required time line completion of the certification process).

HN-BC, HNB-BC, or AHN-BC certification includes two required, sequential steps:

Step 1. An Application to Qualify for Certification, and

Step 2. A Certification Examination.

The candidate must receive AHNCC approval before progressing. An interactive Application to Qualify for Certification can be found on the website at http://www.ahncc.org/images/AHNCC_APPLICATION_PROTECTED__SEPT_27_2011.doc. Mandatory eligibility requirements are listed above and included in the Application Packet found at http://www.ahncc.org/images/AHNCC_APPLICATION_PROTECTED__SEPT_27_2011.doc.

Step 1: The Application to Qualify

The Application to Qualify for Certification must be completed in full and submitted with:

1. The appropriate fee, and
2. The signed and witnessed Letter of Agreement with AHNCC found in the Application Packet.

The application will be reviewed and approved by AHNCC. PTC will notify candidates of the status of their application within 4-6 weeks from the original date of arrival.

The application contains a new section designed to facilitate the candidate's self-reflection. This replaces the Self-Reflection Assessment used prior to April 1, 2011. The self-reflection process is a required criterion for application acceptance.

To complete an Application, go to http://www.ahncc.org/images/AHNCC_APPLICATION_PROTECTED__SEPT_27_2011.doc and download the Application. It is interactive so you can type in your information.

The Certification Examination

AHNCC and the Professional Testing Corporation collaborated to develop a reliable and valid Certification Examination based on current practice of Holistic Nursing. A multiple step process including item writing, item reviewing, testing, and item analysis was used. Nationally recognized psychometric procedures were used to select appropriate items for the examination. New items will be developed routinely to assure continued reliability and validity of the Certification Examination.

The Certification Examination consists of single answer multiple-choice questions that assess the applicant's mastery of the body of knowledge considered to be essential to the practice of Holistic Nursing. The body of knowledge involves the five major Core Values of Holistic Nursing and related Holistic Nursing Standards.

The Certification Examinations will be administered at national testing sites under strict testing regulations to ensure security of the examination.

Examination items are framed within the nursing process and include assessment, client needs, outcomes, plan of care, and implementation and evaluation of care. The cognitive level of difficulty of the questions varies to test for knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation modes of understanding.

Candidates will be notified of their score and status by the Professional Testing Corporation approximately six (6) weeks after test administration. A follow-up letter with information regarding length of certification, and recertification processes will be sent by AHNCC. Certification status will be released to others according to the Letter of Agreement with AHNCC, signed by the applicant during Application of the Certification Process.

Candidates must pass the Certification Examination to become Certified in Holistic Nursing. If a candidate fails this exam, he/she will be eligible to retake it no sooner than three (3) months and no later than one (1) year from the date of the first Certification Examination.

Candidates can retake this examination one (1) time without reapplying for certification; all such candidates must pay the retake fee. If a candidate fails the Certification Examination a second time, she/he will need to resubmit a completed Application form prior to retaking the Certification Examination. Such candidates are eligible to retake the examination no sooner than three (3) months after the date of the second examination. Timelines, fees, and documentation in effect at the time of reapplication will apply.

Graduates of Endorsed Schools

Nurses who have graduated from an AHNCC Endorsed School may be eligible for an expedited certification process. Information regarding eligibility is available by contacting AHNCC Headquarters via e-mail at ahncc@flash.net.

ABOUT THE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

The Certification Examination for HN-BC candidates consists of a maximum of 160 items. The Examination for HNB-BC candidates consists of a maximum of 180 items and the examination for AHN-BC candidates consists of a maximum of 200 items. Each item consists of a single stem followed by four possible answers. Only one answer is correct. All others are distracters; no question has two correct answers.

The single items are designed to assess the applicant's mastery of the body of knowledge and related skills considered to be essential to the practice of holistic nursing. Each exam is designed to assess proficiency of a certified nurse at the given level of expertise. For example, HN-BC nurses are expected to use concepts drawn from the major holistic nursing theories and to apply research findings in their practice. HNB-BC nurses are expected to critique research findings and apply holistic nursing theory in practice. AHN-BC are expected to design studies, analyze research findings, and critique and study nursing theories.

Blueprint for the Examinations

The *HN-BC Examination*, organized by Core Value as follows, with approximate weightings in each area:

1. Holistic Philosophy, Theories, and Ethics (29%)
2. Holistic Education and Research (7%)
3. Holistic Nurse Self-Care (16%)
4. Holistic Communication, Therapeutic Environment, and Cultural Diversity (28%)
5. Holistic Caring Process (20%)

The *HNB-BC Examination*, organized by Core Value as follows, with approximate weightings in each area:

1. Holistic Philosophy, Theories, and Ethics (26%)
2. Holistic Education and Research (14%)
3. Holistic Nurse Self-Care (12%)
4. Holistic Communication, Therapeutic Environment, and Cultural Diversity (28%)
5. Holistic Caring Process (20%)

The *AHN-BC Examination*, organized by Core Values as follows, with approximate weightings in each area:

1. Holistic Philosophy, Theories, and Ethics (28%)
2. Holistic Caring Process (27%)
3. Holistic Communication, Therapeutic Environment, and Cultural Diversity (17%)
4. Holistic Education and Research (19%)
5. Holistic Nurse Self-Care (9%)

Sample Certification Examination Questions, HN-BC

1. The term "healing" is best described by which of the following definitions?

1. Activities that prevent illness and growth
2. A continual journey of self-changing and evolving
3. The essence that permeates all of life, manifested in one's being
4. Return to the natural state of integrity and wholeness of an individual

(4 is correct. 2 is a good distracter, but is not correct. While it may describe the process, it does not indicate that growth is occurring.)

2. Which of the following is a responsibility of a holistic nurse?

1. Ensure that the client finds meaning in the illness
2. Use true presence with a client to facilitate understanding of the client's perception of the illness
3. Establish rapport with client to get the client to understand and cooperate with the treatment regime
4. Use true presence with client and force the nurse's own problems into the background in order to focus on the tasks to accomplish

(Answer 2 is correct. While 1 is an aim of holistic nursing, holistic nurses cannot ensure that this will happen immediately. Although some might be drawn to 4, it does not describe the essence of presence or the reason for using presence.)

Sample Certification Examination Questions, HNB-BC

1. A 53-year-old woman with recurrent breast cancer confides to a holistic nurse that she plans to stop her medical treatments that no longer seem to be helping her, and to try an herbal preparation a friend told her cures cancer. She says she does not plan to tell her family right away because they might be against her plan. Which of the following is the most appropriate action?

1. Tell her it would be best to talk with her doctor first
2. Inform her family and physicians as soon as possible
3. Accept her decision without question and say nothing more
4. Explore further with her what made her come to this decision

(4 is correct. Although holistic nurses support their client's world view, without further clarification, it is impossible to understand why she made this decision.)

2. In a study of 156 women who have a history of childhood sexual abuse, a nurse found that there was a statistically significant correlation between the severity of the abuse and suicide attempts within the previous year. Based on this finding, a holistic nurse working with a group of women who have a history of childhood abuse should first

1. screen group participants for suicide risk.
2. assure group participants of confidentiality.
3. inform group participants of these research findings.
4. encourage group participants to describe their abuse.

(1 is correct. While 2 is a good distracter, given the research findings, the holistic nurse is ethically responsible to further assess group participants to determine their risk status.)

Sample Certification Examination Questions, AHN-BC

1. Which of the following is the rationale for individualized, supportive nursing interventions for clients experiencing pain?

1. Eliminate the need for medication to manage pain
2. Interrupt acting out behaviors related to pain experiences
3. Reduce the sense of helplessness and increase the sense of control
4. Avoid reactivating repressed or unresolved past emotional experiences

(Answer 3 is correct. Holistic nurses aim to empower their clients. This in turn, facilitates them in separating psychic pain from physical pain, altering their output of neurotransmitters.)

2. Which of the following explains the current research findings of psychophysiology responses?

1. A web-like pattern locked between the frontal cortex, limbic system, and hypothalamus
2. A loop starting from sensory organs to thalamus to cortex to limbic system and back to body response
3. The hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal axis controls secretion of glucocorticoids for the suppression of immune cell response
4. Neurotransmitters carry messages to receptor sites throughout the bodymind, stimulating release of hormones that influence emotional states as well as immune integrity

(Answer 4 is correct)

DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXAMINATIONS

Examinations were developed using a multistep process. First, the unique practice of the Holistic Nurse was established with a Role Delineation Study (RDS) performed by an AHNA Task Force. The RDS tested the frequency and importance of individual competencies, specific to the Standards of Holistic Nursing and related to Holistic Nursing Core Values. The results of data analysis from the RDS were used to draft the Examination Blueprints.

Item writers were recruited from among the cohort of certified Holistic Nurses. They were directed to write items to address a specific competency within their range of expertise and level of practice.

Following compilation of items, the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC) reviewed each item for structure, grammar, wording, and other editorial considerations. Next they were sent to members of the Examination Development Committee (EDC) for review, revision, clarity, and appropriateness for the Standard. The items were also evaluated for negative wording, single correct answer, and appropriateness for the level of the examination.

The items were then reviewed with a panel of expert holistic nurses to ensure content validity. The derived items were used, by PTC, to draft the examinations, based on the Blueprint. The final step in the process was performed by the Examination Development Committee (EDC) with the guidance of professional PTC staff. The EDC reviewed each item for content validity, and each set of items to ensure construct validity. Next, they reviewed the entire examination to ensure that it matched the Examination Blueprint.

PASSING SCORES

Angoff methods were used to determine cutoff scores for the examinations.

Examination Revision

An annual review of the literature is performed to determine if there is sufficient change in the practice activities and/or performance of holistic nurses. When the literature indicates a change in practice, previous RDS results are reevaluated to determine if the changes can be accommodated by changes in the Blueprint or if a new RDS is warranted. The RDS is repeated every five years at the maximum.

EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION

Administration of the examinations is overseen by the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC) in concert with PSI. They are offered twice year, in more than 400 locations, over a two-week period of time. Candidates apply to PSI for a specific time and location for the examination. Dates for the examinations are posted on the AHNCC website and on <http://www.ptcny.com/clients/AHNCC/index.html>.

Online Tutorial

A Tutorial and a Testing Software Demonstration can be viewed online. Go to www.ptcny.com/cbt/demo.htm. This online Tutorial can give you an idea about the features of the testing software.

REPORTING OF TEST SCORES

All candidates receive a report of their examination results from PTC within 3-4 weeks post-examination. This report includes a breakdown of the candidate's scores according to the subcategories of the examination and the candidate's total score. All scores are shown in relation to potential scores for the examination. A follow-up letter will be sent from AHNCC within 2-3 weeks. The names of candidates who have successfully passed the examinations will also be reported to AHNA. The names of those who pass the examination will be released for the press.

MAINTENANCE OF ITEMS AND EXAMINATIONS

All examinations and item banks are maintained in secure surroundings by PTC and PSI. No one but authorized personnel have access to either the examination or the item banks. The examinations are reviewed following each examination and if any item is deemed problematic, it may be replaced.

RECERTIFICATION

Certification is valid for a period of five (5) years from the date appearing on the certificate. The time frame for certification begins with the first day of the month following which all requirements have been successfully completed. Renewal notices will be sent by e-mail approximately four to five (4-5) months prior to certification expiration. Recertification requires that Certificants continue to be in good standing and meet recertification requirements shown below.

Recertification Requirements

Successfully complete 100 contact hours of continuing education related to holistic nursing within the five (5) year period preceding the date of expiration of the certification period. At least twenty percent (20%) of the contact hours must directly address holistic nursing philosophy, theory or research. The remaining contact hours can be related to holistic modalities, methods of practice, and studies that facilitate self-care, growth and transformation within a holistic context. The contact hours must be approved by a licensing board, credentialing body, educational institution, or other qualified individual or organization.

Appropriate documentation of continued education (such as certificates of completion) must be retained by the candidate. The candidate may be requested to show proof of contact hours submitted. All applications are subject to potential audit. Copies of documentation will be requested. Applications will be randomly selected for audit and the candidate will receive written notice of the audit at that time.

Recertification Process

Recertification requires submission of the renewal application packet and recertification fee no later than 60 (sixty) days prior to certification expiration.

Failure to submit a complete packet prior to certification expiration date requires the candidate to complete the Reactivation Process as described on the website at www.ahncc.org/images/Reactivation_Policy_of_Certification.pdf. Recertification Packets can be found at http://www.ahncc.org/images/Interactive_REcertification_handbook_May_26_2011_protected-3.doc.

FEES

Note: The following fees are valid for candidates April 1, 2011 or after. To determine appropriate fees for candidates prior to April 1, 2011, please visit the website at <http://www.ahncc.org/fees.html>. Fees, payable in US funds, subject to change without notice.

Application fees

AHNA Member

Endorsed Graduates.....	\$50.00
HN-BC, HNB-BC.....	\$75.00
AHN-BC	\$100.00

Non-AHNA Member

Endorsed Graduates.....	\$75.00
HN-BC, HNB-BC.....	\$100.00
AHN-BC	\$125.00

Certification Examination

AHNA Member

HN-BC, HNB-BC.....	\$375.00
AHN-BC	\$395.00

Non-AHNA Member

HN-BC, HNB-BC.....	\$395.00
AHN-BC	\$425.00

Recertification (Fees effective January 1, 2012)

AHNA Member

HN-BC, HNB-BC.....	\$265.00
AHN-BC	\$315.00

Non-AHNA Member

HN-BC, HNB-BC.....	\$295.00
AHN-BC	\$345.00

CERTIFICANT RESPONSIBILITIES

HN-BC, HNB-BC, and AHN-BC Certificants are held responsible for:

1. AHNA's Personal and Professional Code of Ethics <http://www.ahncc.org/images/AHNACodeofethics.pdf>
2. Professional conduct as described in AHNCC's Professional Code http://www.ahncc.org/images/AHNCC_code_of_ethics.pdf
3. Notification of any information that might lead to revocation of certification
http://www.ahncc.org/images/Change_of_address_form_Feb_9_2010.doc;
http://www.ahncc.org/images/letter_of_agreement_feb_2011_protected.doc
4. Maintenance of continuing education record so that requirements can be verified at any point in time
5. Notification of an address, name, or telephone change
http://www.ahncc.org/images/Change_of_address_form_Feb_9_2010.doc
6. Submission of Renewal Application Packet within sixty days prior to certification expiration date.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Disciplinary action may be taken if any of following occur:

1. Falsification of an application or misrepresentation of eligibility to become certified;
2. Misrepresentation of certification to the public or misuse of the HN-BC, HNB-BC, or AHN-BC credential;
3. Untruth of any information submitted to AHNCC;
4. Lack of a current RN license or knowledge of legal actions against a licensee in any US jurisdiction or foreign country;
5. Failure to maintain eligibility requirements, or pay required renewal fees.

POSSIBLE SANCTIONS

1. Denial or suspension of eligibility;
2. Revocation of certification;
3. Non-renewal of certification;
4. Reprimand;
5. Suspension of certification; or
6. Other corrective active.

PTC CONTACT INFORMATION

For any questions, contact Professional Testing Corporation at:

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