

AHNCC's FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT HOLISTIC NURSING

- Q1: What is Holistic Nursing practice?
- Q2: Where can I get a copy of the Scope and Standards of Holistic Nursing Practice?
- Q3: I'm new at this; what are my options for certification in Holistic Nursing?
- Q4: What will be the credential of the Non-Baccalaureate Holistic Nurse Certified?
- Q5: Why do people obtain the HN-BC, HNB-BC, AHN-BC, APHN-BC, NC-BC, or HWNC-BC Certification?
- Q6: How long does my certification last?
- Q7: Are AHNCC and AHNA the same organization?
- Q8: Does AHNCC offer Certification in Advanced Holistic Nursing or Advanced Practice Holistic Nursing?
- Q9: Can a person be certified as a Holistic Nurse (HN-BC), Holistic Nurse Baccalaureate (HNB-BC) and Advanced Holistic Nurse (AHN-BC), Advanced Practice Holistic Nurse (APHN-BC) at the same time?
- Q10: How does a nursing program seek AHNCC endorsement?
- Q11: Can a nurse from another country who does not possess a US license sit for the AHNCC certification examinations?

ELIGIBILITY

- Q12: When it comes to certification, why does the American Nurse's Credentialing Center (ANCC) not distinguish between baccalaureate and non-baccalaureate nurses?
- Q13: Do I have to be a nurse to apply for Holistic Nursing or Nurse Coach Certification?
- Q14: Does the baccalaureate degree have to be in nursing?
- Q15: What continuing education courses can I use to count towards the continuing education requirement to apply for Holistic Nursing or Nurse Coach Certification or Recertification?
- Q16: Does AHNCC endorse continuing education programs?
- Q17: Do continuing education programs have to be endorsed or approved of by AHNA to count toward the Certification or Recertification continuing education requirement?

ABOUT BECOMING CERTIFIED

- Q18: How long is the application process?
- Q19: How can I get certified in Holistic Nursing or as a Nurse Coach or Health and Wellness Nurse Coach?
- Q20: If I want to sit for the Holistic Nursing examination, what is a good timeline for me to have in mind?
- Q21: If I want to sit for the Nurse Coach examination, what is a good timeline for me to have in mind?
- Q22: Can I apply for Certification before I graduate from nursing school?
- Q23: Where can I find the Application to apply for Certification?
- Q24: Is it necessary for me to purchase the Handbook or can I simply download it from online?
- Q25: How long does the Certification process take?
- Q26: Do I have to change my address at both AHNA and AHNCC?
- Q27: How often are the HN-BC, HNB-BC and AHN-BC, APHN-BC, NC-BC examinations offered?
- Q28: How do I get an extension on my initial three-month (90-day) testing window?
- Q29: If I have questions concerning the test administration, whom should I contact?
- Q30: I am ready to test! When and where are the exams held?
- Q31: Can I mail my application or my recertification application to the American Holistic Nurses Association?
- Q32: After being confirmed as eligible to test, what happens if I miss my 14-day window to test? Can I receive an extension to pay?
- Q33: If I am unable to make my previously scheduled test date, what are my options?
- Q34: How do I know if my school is AHNCC endorsed?
- Q35: Do I have to take the highest level of the exam I qualify for?
- Q36: How do I schedule my exam?

Q37: How much time is allotted to complete the exam?

ABOUT PREPARATION

Q38: What can I use to prepare for Holistic Nursing Certification?

Q39: Does AHNCC offer courses on Holistic Nursing or related topics?
the Certification or Recertification continuing education requirement?

Q40: How do I prepare for Nurse Coaching Certification?

NOTIFICATION AND RETESTING

Q41 When do I get my results?

Q42 Do I get a certificate when I successfully pass the test?

Q43 What happens if I am not successful?

Q44 How can I retest?

Q45 How often can I retest?

RECOGNITION OF AHNCC CREDENTIALS

Q46 Are AHNCC credentials nationally accredited?

Q47 What does accreditation mean?

Q48 Are AHNCC credentials ANCC Magnet recognized?

Q49 What is the difference between certificate programs and national certification?

ABOUT HOLISTIC NURSING

Q1: What is Holistic Nursing practice?

A: Holistic nursing practice is based on the nurses' ability to practice within the context of AHNA's Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics and Nursing Theories consistent with Holistic Nursing Philosophy. A holistic nurse and her/his client mutually plan goals that facilitate wellness, health, healing, and client well-being and well-becoming. Holistic Nurses practice in any place or space where they have co-created a nurse-client relationship. That is, they practice in community health, hospice, ICU, ER, hospitals, schools, independently, educational institutions, etc. Although many Holistic Nurses use modalities or alternative therapies in their practice, Holistic Nursing is not dependent on one's ability to use modalities or alternative therapies. Rather, holistic nursing is a way of being, not what we do. It is how we show up in our practice and work with our clients; it is client driven, and relationship -based. If your philosophy is holistic, then you practice holistically. The best source of information about Holistic Nursing is provided in AHNA's book (3rd edition), Holistic Nursing: The Scope and Standards for Practice.

Q2: Where can I get a copy of the Scope and Standards of Holistic Nursing Practice?

A: To obtain a copy of the Standards please contact the American Holistic Nurses Association at (785) 234-1712 or <https://www.ahna.org/Shop/Publications>. This document also describes how the Holistic Nurse interfaces with the ANA Standards of Nursing.

Q3: I'm new at this; what are my options for certification in Holistic Nursing?

A: Currently there are four levels of certification for Holistic Nurses: the Non-Baccalaureate, Baccalaureate, Advanced, and Advanced Practice levels. The four credentials that are currently awarded are the Holistic Nurse, Board Certified (i.e. HN-BC); the Holistic Nurse Baccalaureate, Board Certified (i.e. HNB-BC); the Advanced Holistic Nurse, Board Certified (i.e. AHN-BC), and the Advanced Practice Holistic Nurse, Board Certified (APHN-BC). You can go to our website at <https://www.ahncc.org/certification/holistic-nurse/> to access the interactive application. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at info@ahncc.org. We also offer a Nurse Coach certification examination that is based within the tenets of Holistic Nursing.

Q4: What will be the credential of the Non-Baccalaureate Holistic Nurse Certified?

A: The HN-BC credential is for all registered nurses who do not have a Baccalaureate degree in nursing, and who take the examination for Non-Baccalaureate Holistic Nurses.

Q5: Why do people obtain the HN-BC, HNB-BC, AHN-BC, APHN-BC, NC-BC, or HWNC-BC Certification?

A: People obtain Certification for personal and professional reasons. Some people work for organizations that require Certification or offer increased career opportunities, a pay raise, or other recognition for obtaining national certification. Most agencies increase the salaries of nurses once they are certified. Other nurses believe that credentials validate and legitimize their practice. Specifically, the nurse who is HN-BC, HNB-BC, AHN-BC, or APHN-BC certified has demonstrated expertise in knowledge and practice that provides the context for Holistic Nursing and relationship client-centered care. Nurses who obtain certification as an NC-BC have demonstrated expertise in knowledge and practice that provides the context for practicing as a Nurse Coach. Individuals who are certified in both holistic nursing and nurse coaching want to demonstrate their expertise as both a holistic nurse, and a nurse coach (within the context of health, wellness, and well-being). These individuals can use the credentials for both holistic nursing and HWNC-BC (health and Wellness Nurse Coach-Board certified). Other nurses become certified because they want to be a part of a unique network of nurses—those who boldly say to the public that they are holistic nurses or nurse coaches by becoming certified.

Q6: How long does my certification last?

A: Individuals are HN-BC, HNB-BC, AHN-BC, APHN-BC, or NC-BC Certified for a five-year period. Individuals who want to use the HWNC-BC credential must have current certification as both a Holistic Nurse and Nurse Coach.

Q7: Are AHNCC and AHNA the same organization?

A: No. AHNCC and AHNA are two different organizations. AHNCC is the only national certifying corporation for Holistic Nursing or Nurse Coaching. AHNCC does not offer courses, continuing education endorsement, or membership opportunities. AHNCC helps people apply for HN-BC, HNB-BC, AHN-BC, APHN-BC, NC-BC, or HWNC-BC Certification, recertify their credentials and assist schools in getting their nursing programs endorsed.

AHNA is an education and membership organization. They offer educational opportunities, membership, annual conferences, and endorse continuing educational programs. Although the two organizations are both focused on facilitating the growth of Holistic Nursing, the purpose of both organizations is very different. Since AHNA is the professional organization linked to AHNCC, AHNA members are offered a fee discount. For more information regarding Fees, please go to the AHNCC Handbook. A link to it can be found on our website <https://www.ahncc.org> on the CERTIFICATION page.

Q8: Does AHNCC offer Certification in Advanced Holistic Nursing or Advanced Practice Holistic Nursing?

A: Yes, AHNCC does offer Certification in Advanced Holistic Nursing and Advanced Practice Holistic Nursing. Both certifications require a graduate degree **in nursing**. The APHN-BC examination application also requires that the applicant have an active unrestricted APRN license.

Q9: Can a person be certified as a Holistic Nurse (HN-BC), Holistic Nurse Baccalaureate (HNB-BC), Advanced Holistic Nurse (AHN-BC), and Advanced Practice Holistic Nurse (APHN-BC) at the same time?

A: No, you are either certified at the HN-BC, HNB-BC, AHN-BC, or the APHN-BC level.

Q10: How does a nursing program seek AHNCC endorsement?

A: Faculty can submit an Application for Endorsement whenever they perceive that their curricula meet endorsement criteria. For further information please see our website on the AHNCC Endorsement page which can found at <https://www.ahncc.org/school-endorsement-program/what-is-an-endorsed-school/>.

Q11: Can a nurse from another country who does not possess a US license, sit for an AHNCC certification examination?

A: Nurses who have *an RN license from their native country*, and plan to continue to work in their country can sit for the HN-BC or NC-BC examination. Anyone choosing to sit for higher than the HN-BC examination must submit their RN license which must be accompanied by a report from TruMerit, World Education Services (WES), or Educational Records Evaluation Services (ERES) confirming the educational level acquired is equivalent to the educational level in the US required for the AHNCC examination being sought.

ABOUT ELIGIBILITY

Q12: When it comes to certification, why does the American Nurse's Credentialing Center (ANCC) not distinguish between baccalaureate and non-baccalaureate nurses?

A: ANCC made the decision to certify the ADN and Baccalaureate at the same level because their Practice Analysis (PA) focused on the tasks performed by nurses; they concluded that there were no significant differences in the tasks performed by the two groups. A focus on the tasks performed emphasizes the technical aspect of caring but does not consider the interpersonal relationship between nurse and client, nor the holistic nurses' focus on the client's well-being. In all nursing activities, there are two considerations: what the nurse does and how the nurse thinks about what he/she is doing. The AHNCC Board believes that certification should be based on how nurses think about their professional responsibilities. As one colleague has repeatedly said, "Almost anyone can learn to do IV sticks, just look at those people living down there under the bridge". All nurses learn how to do the "tasks" of nursing, but not all learn how to think about why they are doing them. Nor do all learn to think about the unique person that is the recipient of their care. All holistic nurses share the common goal of improving health care; all focus their care on the well-being of the individual, group, or system. However,

their educational preparation and ability to plan and implement strategies vary. The key factor that effects such variance is the knowledge derived through the educational process. The PA demonstrated differences in knowledge and skills based on the level of educational preparation. AHNCC Board also believes that the knowledge and skills acquired through formal education enriches nurses as human beings. It alters their world-views, enhancing their ability to make clinical judgments, use and critique theory and research, and to provide leadership in nursing.

Q13: Do I have to be a nurse to apply for Holistic Nursing or Nurse Coach Certification?

A: Yes, a U.S., unrestricted registered nurse (R N) license is required for AHNCC Certification (unless you are a Registered Nurse who plans to practice only in your own country –outside the United States. If so, please see Q#11). Applicants for the Baccalaureate Holistic Nurse Certified (HNB-BC) must also have a baccalaureate degree in nursing, applicants for the Advanced Holistic Nurse Certification must have a graduate degree in nursing. Applicants for the Advanced Practice Holistic Nurse certification must have an APRN license as well. Applicants applying for the Nurse coach certification must also have an RN license.

Q14: Does the baccalaureate degree have to be in nursing?

A: If you are applying for either the Non-Baccalaureate Holistic Nurse (HN-BC) or Nurse Coach (NC-BC) examination you must have a US license to practice nursing and the degree must be from an accredited school of nursing but your baccalaureate degree can be in a different field. If you are applying for the Baccalaureate (HNB-BC) level you must have a baccalaureate degree in nursing. If you are applying for the Advanced or Advanced Practice Holistic Nursing examinations, you must have either a master's or doctoral degree in Nursing.

Q15: What continuing education courses can I use to count towards the continuing education requirement to apply for Holistic Nursing or Nurse Coach Certification or Recertification?

A: For Holistic Nursing certification any courses that address the Holistic Nursing Standards of Practice and related Core Values are accepted for this requirement. Courses that are medically oriented such as ACLS, pharmacology, symptoms management, disease-oriented courses will not be accepted unless the applicant can explain how they directly relate to the practice of Holistic Nursing. For example: a course that focuses on the pathophysiology, medical management of a disease or symptoms and the pharmacology would not be acceptable. For Recertification: One hundred Continuing Education or Continuing Competency Units are required. These continuing competency hours must directly relate to Holistic Nursing practice, theories (e.g., Erickson, Tomlin, & Swain; Newman; Nightingale; Leininger; Parse; Paterson & Zderd; Rogers; Dossey, and Watson), concepts (such as spirituality, connectedness, holism, presence, intuition, mind-body-spirit integration, self-care, healing, etc.), or Holistic Nursing research. Courses that are modality based can be used if they focus on the person and relationship between the nurse and client and are not just technique-oriented. There are many different pathways/activities that can be used to demonstrate continuing competency and help holistic nurses and nurses coaches show self-development and growth in their knowledge, skills and expertise related to their specialty practice. For Nurse Coach Certification, courses that address the Nurse Coach Competencies, skills, knowledge etc. related to the role of Nurse Coaching or the tenets of Holistic Nursing Standards of Practice related to health, wellness, health promotion, wellbeing and well-becoming will be accepted. Continuing competency options or activities include offering presentations, publishing, being on holistic nursing/nurse coaching committees, doing research and many more possibilities. To learn more go to the recertification application and scroll to the bottom of the application at <https://www.ahncc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/RECERT-APPL-062725.pdf> pages 11-14. AHNCC staff will be happy to review any courses you might be considering taking or answer questions you have regarding Continuing Education courses or continuing competency activities.

Q16: Does AHNCC endorse continuing education programs?

A: No, AHNCC does not endorse continuing educational programs. For information regarding continuing education program endorsement, you can contact the American Holistic Nurses' Association at 1-800-278-AHNA or www.ahna.org.

Q17: Do continuing education programs have to be endorsed or approved by AHNA to count toward the Certification or Recertification continuing education requirement?

A: No, continuing education hours in Holistic Nursing or Nurse Coaching that are obtained from any licensed individual, organization, or institution are acceptable. A program does not need to be endorsed or approved by AHNA. However, some of the best continuing education courses are available through AHNA and any CNE programs endorsed by AHNA are automatically accepted

ABOUT BECOMING CERTIFIED

Q18: How long is the application process?

A: For AHNCC Holistic Nursing test applications, the application process is completed in **TWO STEPS**. “**STEP 1**” is the eligibility step. Applications are uploaded by the candidate and processed by C-NET in the order they are received. Applications uploaded to C-NET after 4:00 PM EST will be date-stamped for the following business day. Once you have submitted your application, *please allow four to six weeks for processing*. “**STEP 2**” involves registration. **Eligible candidates will be notified by email and given 14 days to pay for their examination. Candidates who pay within the allotted 14-day period will be registered to test and will be granted a three-month (90-day) testing window.**

Q19: How can I get certified in Holistic Nursing or as a Nurse Coach or Health and Wellness Nurse Coach?

A: Individuals applying for the Holistic Nursing (HN) or Nurse Coaching (NC) examination must complete the Certification Process. For the HN examinations, this includes an application, with a Self-Reflective Assessment which is *optional but strongly encouraged* as it helps prepare candidates for the examination; and a Quantitative Examination. During the Application phase, the nurse’s license, holistic practice, continuing education, and education will be verified. The only exception is for the graduates of Endorsed Programs. They are not required to complete one year of practice nor the continuing education requirement; these are incorporated in their academic program. For more information, go to <https://www.ahncc.org/certification/holistic-nurse/>, click on the Certification link for details. After the application is processed and accepted **eligible candidates will be notified by email and given 14 days to pay for their examination. Candidates who pay within the allotted 14-day period will be registered to test and will be granted a three-month (90-day) testing window.**

The Nurse Coaching examination application is one step. It requires that the applicant submit the application along with a copy of their RN license, their educational transcript, and Self-Reflective assessment if it is elected to be done, and a validation of the supervised NC hours completed. Required documents will be verified and **eligible candidates will be notified by email and given 14 days to pay for their examination. Candidates who pay within the allotted 14-day period will be registered to test and will be granted a three-month (90-day) testing window.**

Q20: If I want to sit for the Holistic Nursing Certification exam what is a good timeline for me to have in mind?

A: A reasonable timeline is as follows:

1. Begin preparing for the examination by reading, evaluating self, and networking with other Holistic Nurses preparing for the examination. Practice examinations can also be taken and have been found to be very useful by applicants as they prepare for the examination. Practice examinations can be found at www.cnetnurse.com.
2. Download the application handbook from the website.
3. Part of the application process involves the Self-Reflective Assessment (SRA) if you choose to do so. With the SRA there are no right or wrong answers. Instead, this is an opportunity for you to explore your own growth and to describe how you have incorporated the Core Values and Holistic Nursing Standards into your life, both personally and professionally. You are not required to submit this with your application however it is strongly encouraged as we have found that it helps candidates prepare for the examination.

4. Compile documents needed for the two-step application process. First, complete Step 1 - the online application and upload it, along with the required documents, and fee to C-NET. **BE ADVISED: Submitting an incomplete application will result in an additional Incomplete Application Fee.** To avoid this fee, follow all the instructions carefully and take care and the time to upload all the required documents properly during your initial submission.

Once your eligibility has been reviewed and approved, you will receive an email confirmation of your eligibility along with a link to register and pay for the Examination.

5. Continue preparation for the examination by reading, evaluating self, and networking with other Holistic Nurses preparing for the examination. Practice examinations can also be taken and have been found to be very useful by applicants as they prepare for the examination. They can be found at www.cnetnurse.com.

6. Once you have completed Step 2 and have paid to sit for the examination, you will be e-mailed an Eligibility Notice containing a link to schedule your exam appointment. You will have **three months from the email notification date** to sit for the test. A current government-issued photo identification, such as a driver's license or passport, must be presented in order to gain admission to the testing center. For test security purposes, the name on the government-issued photo ID will be checked against the name you registered with (supplied on your application). **Be Advised: If there is a deviation between the name on your test registration and the name on the government-issued photo ID you present at the test site, you will be turned away.** Appointment times are first-come, first-served, so schedule your appointment as soon as you receive your Eligibility Notice in order to maximize your chance of testing at your preferred location and on your preferred date. **If something happens to prevent you from sitting during that 3-month period** the applicant can pay an additional \$100.00 to extend their testing period for another 3 months. Requests for an additional three-month period must be submitted in writing before the original three-month period has closed. **IF FOR SOME REASON the candidate does not extend the testing period or does not test during the second 3-month session they will be required to reapply to sit for the examination.**

Q21: If I want to sit for the Nurse Coach Certification exam what is a good timeline for me to have in mind?

A: A reasonable timeline is as follows:

1. Begin preparing for the examination by reading, evaluating self, and networking with other nurses preparing for the Nurse Coach examination. Practice examinations can also be taken and have been found to be very useful by applicants as they prepare for the examination. Practice examinations can be found at www.cnetnurse.com.

2. Download the application handbook from the website.

3. Part of the application process involves the Self-Reflective Assessment (SRA) if desired. As a prerequisite for certification as a Nurse Coach, you are strongly encouraged to complete a self-reflective assessment of your journey as we have found that it is very helpful to candidates as they prepare for the examination. You are not required to submit this with your application.

4. First, save any documents needed for the application process to your computer; being sure to identify them by name. Next, complete the application online and upload it along with **all** required documents, and fee to C-NET. **Make sure that your application is complete and all required documents are included to AVOID an incomplete application fee.** Once you are found eligible, you will be e-mailed an Eligibility Notice containing a link to schedule your exam appointment.

5. Continue preparation for the exam by reading, evaluating self, and networking with other nurses preparing for the Nurse Coach examination. A practice examination is available and can be found at www.cnetnurse.com.

6. You will have **three months (90-days) from the email notification date** to sit for the test. A current government-issued photo identification, such as a driver's license or passport, must be presented in order to gain admission to the testing center. For test security purposes, the name on the government-issued photo ID will be checked against the name you registered with (supplied on your application). **Be Advised: If there is a deviation between the name on your test registration and the name on the government-issued photo ID you present at the test site, you will be turned away.** Appointment times are first-come, first-served, so schedule your appointment as soon as you receive your Eligibility Notice in order to maximize your chance of testing at your preferred location and on your preferred date. If something happens to

prevent you from sitting during that 3-month period the applicant can pay an additional \$100.00 to extend their testing period for another 3 months. . Requests for an additional three-month period must be submitted in writing before the original three-month period has closed. **IF FOR SOME REASON the candidate does not extend the testing period or does not test during the second 3-month session they will be required to reapply to sit for the examination.**

Q22: Can I apply for Certification before I graduate from nursing school?

A: No, you need to document that you have met all the criteria, including your academic degree, before you can submit an application.

Q23: Where can I find the Application to apply for Certification?

A. Go to <https://www.cnetnurse.com/holistic-nursing> and choose the certification you would like to apply for.

Q24: Is it necessary for me to purchase the Handbook or can I simply download it from online?

A: AHNCC has gone “Green”. We invite you to go to the C-NET website (<https://www.cnetnurse.com/holistic-nursing>), click on the appropriate exam, click on “Application and General Information”, and download the AHNCC handbook for free by clicking on the link. **As a certified Holistic Nurse or Nurse Coach, you are responsible for the information in these Handbooks, therefore it is wiser to download the entire Handbook than just sections.**

Q25: How long does the Certification process take?

A: Most people require approximately four-six months to complete the process. Please see Anticipated Timeline above for more details.

Q26: Do I have to change my address and contact information at both AHNA and AHNCC?

A: Yes. It is your responsibility to notify both AHNA (if you are a member) and AHNCC of any address changes. Since they are different organizations, they do not have a shared database. If you only notify AHNA that you have moved, AHNCC will be unable to contact you when they need to send you information such as information regarding the recertification of your credentials. If you do not recertify in the required time period your credentials will go to inactive status. During that 3-year period if you do not renew your certification you will need to take the examination to become certified again. To email us your change of address please contact us at adminasst@ahncc.org, info@ahncc.org, or through the CONTACT Link on the AHNCC website <https://www.ahncc.org>.

Q27: How often is the HN-BC, HNB-BC, AHN-BC, APHN-BC, or NC-BC examinations offered?

A: Examinations are offered year-round and are offered at hundreds of locations throughout the country and are available at select international sites. Examinations are computer-based and candidates are given a three-month (90-day) testing window which begins upon notification of eligibility. Once the Applicant has been approved by AHNCC for the Quantitative Exam, the candidate may send in the test application and they will then be sent the necessary information needed to schedule the examination.

Q28: How do I get an extension on my initial three-month (90-day) testing window?

A: If a candidate is unable to sit within the *initial* three-month (90-day) period, the candidate must request an extension from C-NET. The extension **request must be submitted before the close of the initial 90-day testing window and must be in writing or email**, or the request will not be considered. Once approved, the candidate will be instructed to pay an **extension fee** which will extend the testing period for an additional 3 months (90-days). **Be Advised: Only one extension will be granted per application. If for any reason a candidate is unable to test during the extended 90-day testing window, the candidate’s fees shall be forfeited and the candidate will be required to begin the application process over if they wish to continue with the certification process.**

Q29: If I have questions concerning applications or the test administration, who should I contact?

A: The Center for Nursing Education, and Testing (C-NET) handles all questions regarding applications and the administration of the examinations. Their website is www.cnetnurse.com. You can contact C-NET by phone at 800-463-0786, ext. 11 between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM EST Monday-Friday or email them at info@cnetnurse.com.

Q30: I am ready to test! When and where are the exams held?

A: All AHNCC examinations are offered year-round. To find a test location nearest you, please visit www.cnetnurse.com and click "Exam Sites".

Q31: Can I mail my application or my recertification application to the American Holistic Nurses Association?

A: No. All applications for initial certification are submitted online to C-NET. Any correspondence regarding holistic nursing or nurse coach certification must be submitted to C-NET at info@cnetnurse.com.

Recertification applications must be submitted electronically to recertification@ahncc.org or mailed to AHNCC at 811 Linden Loop, Cedar Park TX 78613.

Q 32: After being confirmed as eligible to test, what happens if I miss my 14-day window to test? Can I receive an extension to pay?

A: No. Upon approval to test, candidates **will have 14 calendar days** to submit the exam application and testing fee. If the candidate has not completed the process during the 14 calendar days, they must start over and complete Step 1 again and re-submit the application with eligibility information to C-NET.

Q 33: If I am unable to make my previously scheduled test date, what are my options?

A: You can reschedule your exam **as long as you first cancel the previously scheduled test date (no less than 48 hours prior to the appointment)**. If you miss your examination date, you will be considered "absent from the test". Candidates who miss their test date **may qualify for an extension**. To qualify, **you must make your request in writing (by email)** to C-NET at info@cnetnurse.com **BEFORE the close of your initial 90-day testing window**. C-NET will respond to your email and provide a link where you can pay the \$100 extension fee. Once done, C-NET will grant you an additional 90-day testing window. **Be advised: Only one permit extension will be granted per application. If you do not request an extension in writing before the close of your initial 90-day window, you will not qualify for an extension.** If you do not test, for any reason, during your extended 90-day testing window, your fee will be forfeit and you will need to reapply.

Q 34: How do I know if my school is AHNCC endorsed?

A: You can go to the link on our website at <https://www.ahncc.org/school-endorsement-program/current-endorsed-nursing-programs/>, and then check for your school under "Currently Endorsed Schools". If your school is identified in the list, and you graduated within the last two years, then you are eligible for the modified certification program for graduates of endorsed schools for two years following your graduation date. Specifically, this means you will not need to provide documentation that you have practiced for one year, or submit continuing education contact hours as you have met the requirements through your program. **Please remember that an official transcript from the endorsed school must accompany your application. Rather than have the transcript sent to C-NET, please scan transcript plus front and back of envelope to upload with the application.)**

If your school is not identified in the list, it is not currently AHNCC Endorsed, and you will need to go through the regular application process.

Q35: Do I have to take the highest level of the exam I qualify for?

A: No, you can take the level of examination you qualify for or one of the lower-level examinations. For example, if you have a baccalaureate degree in nursing you would be qualified for the HNB-BC examination but you are also able to choose to take the HN-BC examination. Applicants who have a graduate degree in Nursing are able to sit for the HN-BC, HNB-BC, or

AHN-BC exam. Nurses with an APRN license are eligible to sit for any level of the holistic nursing certification examinations. You **do not** have to sit at the highest exam level you are qualified for.

Q36: How do I schedule my exam?

A: Once C-NET has approved both STEP 1 and STEP 2 of your Holistic Nursing application (and you have been registered to test), you will receive an email which contains a link for you to schedule your exam. The link will allow you to select a day, time and location for your exam; or if you wish, to cancel a previously selected exam date in favor of a new exam date. You will be granted a 90-day testing window, during which time you will be required to schedule a test date and sit for the exam. **Be Advised: If you wish to cancel a test date that you previously scheduled, you must do so no less than 48 hours before that test date or you will be locked into it.**

Q37: How much time is allotted to complete the exam?

A: The candidate is allowed 3 hours to complete all of the holistic nursing exams except the APHN exam which allows the candidates to have 4 hours.. The candidate is allowed 3 hours to complete the nurse coach exam.

ABOUT PREPARATION

Q38: What can I use to prepare for Holistic Nursing Certification?

A: There are different phases in preparing for Certification. Before the submission of your application, you should explore your beliefs, review the Core Values and Standards of Nursing, and decide how your philosophy relates to these. Once you conclude that they do, then you need to acquire sufficient knowledge to prepare you to practice as a Holistic Nurse or Nurse Coach. AHNCC has identified Primary and Secondary resources. These can both be found in the Handbook which can be found by going to the appropriate exam on the CERTIFICATION page on our website www.ahncc.org, or clicking on <https://www.ahncc.org/certification/holistic-nurse/> or <https://www.ahncc.org/certification/holistic-nurse-coach/>. and clicking on the link to the Handbook.

The Primary References are offered specifically to help candidates prepare to take the national AHNCC Holistic Nursing Certification Examinations. Primary references for those preparing for the Certification Examination include the Core Essentials for Holistic Nursing (2025). The AHNCC Core Essentials document can be found on the AHNCC website www.ahncc.org on the RESOURCES page under the Certification Applications and Supporting Documents page. This free document provides a listing of the practice competencies which were identified through an extensive literature review and validated through a Practice Analysis (PA) undertaken by practicing Holistic Nurses. The competencies provide a basis for the certification examinations. There are four sets of Competencies, depending on which level of examination you are intending to take:

- Core Essentials for HN-BC Holistic Nursing: <https://www.ahncc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2025-HN-BC.COMPETENCIES-BASEDonRDS.pdf>
- Core Essentials for HNB-BC Holistic Nursing: <https://www.ahncc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2025-HNB-BC.COMPETENCIES-BASEDonRDS.pdf>
- AHN-BC Core Essentials and Competencies (starting June 15, 2025): <https://www.ahncc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2025-AHN-Core-Essentials-and-Competencies.pdf>
- APHN-BC Core Essentials and Competencies (starting June 15, 2025): <https://www.ahncc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2025-APHN-Core-Essentials-and-Competencies.pdf>

The next primary reference recommended is Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice. (3rd ed.) Silver Spring, MD: American Nurses Association (<https://www.ahna.org/Shop/Publications>). The third primary reference suggested is the AHNCC Practice Examinations, which can be found at www.cnetnurse.com. Practice examinations offer a learning experience comparable to the testing experience. They are based on the examination blueprint, formatted exactly as our certification examinations and the items are drawn from our pool of items. There are practice examinations for HN-BC, HNB-BC, AHN-BC, APHN-BC, and NC-BC certification examinations.

The Secondary References are offered to help candidates explore holistic nursing concepts, issues, philosophy, and related matters in greater depth and expand one's knowledge base. The secondary references that are offered are not exclusive; many others may also be used to build one's expertise in holistic nursing. They can be found in the Handbook below the primary references.

In conclusion, if you want to review or add to your knowledge base as you prepare for the certification examination, we suggest that you start with the Core Essentials and Competencies (AHNCC, 2025), review the Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards (ANA/AHNA, 2019), and then select from the secondary references (examples are provided in the Handbook under Content of Examination/References) to build your expertise. Finally, the AHNCC Practice Examination will help you test your expertise and give you experience with the AHNCC testing format.

Q39: Does AHNCC offer courses on Holistic Nursing or related topics?

A: AHNCC does not offer any continuing education courses. Applicants studying for the examination are provided with a suggested reference list in the Handbooks. Courses are also available through AHNA and other organizations as well as several correspondence programs. Possible sources for CNE courses can be found on our website <https://www.ahncc.org>, at <https://www.ahncc.org/resources/professional-development-activities/>.

Q40: How do I prepare for Nurse Coaching Certification?

A: The Primary References provided in the Nurse Coach Handbook are offered specifically to help candidates prepare to take the AHNCC Nurse Coach Board Certification Examination. The Secondary References are offered to help candidates explore nurse coaching concepts, issues, philosophy, and related matters in greater depth. If you want to review or add to your knowledge base as you prepare for the certification examination, we suggest that you start with the Primary References.

Primary References for those preparing for the Nurse Coach Certification Examination include the Core Essentials for Nurse Coaching (2023) which can be found on the RESOURCES page on our website at <https://www.ahncc.org/resources/document-library/>. This free document provides a listing of the competencies/practices which were identified through an extensive literature review and validated through a Practice Analysis taken by practicing Nurse Coaches. The competencies provide a basis for the certification examination. The next primary reference is the American Nurses Association (2021) Art and Science of Nurse Coaching: The Provider's Guide to Coaching and Competencies. Silver Spring, MD: American Nurses Association (<https://www.nursingworld.org/nurses-books/art-and-science-of-nurse-coaching-2nd-edition/>). Next, select from the secondary references (shown in the Handbook) to build your expertise and knowledge base.

Finally, the AHNCC Practice Examinations (a primary reference) will help you test your expertise and give you experience with the AHNCC testing format. The AHNCC Practice Examinations can be found at www.cnetnurse.com. The practice examinations offer a learning experience comparable to the testing experience. The practice examinations are based on the examination blueprint, formatted exactly as our certification examinations, and the items are drawn from our pool of items.

NOTIFICATION AND RETESTING

Q41 When do I get my results?

A: Results from your computer-based test will be issued at the test site location upon completion of your exam.

Q42 Do I get a certificate when I successfully pass the test?

A: You are considered certified from the moment you pass the examination. A digital copy of your certificate will be made available shortly after that.

Q43 What happens if I am not successful?

A: After sitting for the examination, if you are unsuccessful, you will be allowed to retake the examination at a reduced rate for up to twelve (12) months from your initial examination date.

Q44 How can I retest?

A: As long as you are retaking your examination within twelve (12) months of your initial exam date, you will not need to resubmit a new application to C-NET. Instead, your Score Report will contain a web address where you will be allowed to make a payment to retest at a reduced rate. Be advised: for test security purposes, C-NET cannot allow you to sit for your retake exam until a period of thirty (30) days has elapsed from your previous examination date.

Q45 How often can I retest?

A: You may sit for this exam as many times as you like, so long as you remain eligible.

RECOGNITION OF AHNCC CREDENTIALS

Q46 Are AHNCC credentials nationally accredited?

A: All 5 of the AHNCC certification examinations are nationally accredited by the Accreditation Board for Nursing Specialty Certification (ABSNC). *ABSNC is the only accrediting body specifically focused on nursing certification programs.*

Q47 What does accreditation mean?

A: Accreditation is a voluntary process where an independent body evaluates a program to ensure that it meets established quality standards. It provides assurance to applicants, employers, and other institutions that the accredited entity offers a quality program. National accreditation from the [Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification \(ABSNC\)](#) means that a nursing certification program has been evaluated and found to meet rigorous, nationally recognized standards for quality and rigor. This accreditation serves as a benchmark, demonstrating that the program adheres to best practices in certification, including aspects like test development, administration, and scoring.

Accreditation by ABSNC provides assurance to nurses and the public that the certified individuals have met rigorous standards in their specialty, potentially enhancing their professional standing and career opportunities and signifies that the certification program has been recognized as meeting the highest quality standards within the industry.

Q48 Are AHNCC credentials ANCC Magnet recognized?

A: Accreditation by the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC) is recognized by ANCC to achieve Magnet status. Therefore, all AHNCC credentials are recognized by hospitals seeking or renewing ANCC Magnet status.

Q49 What is the difference between certificate programs and national certification?

A: A certificate program is a narrower and usually shorter educational program that focuses on specific content and skills or knowledge needed for a particular field. Certificates of completion are provided when the program has been completed. While national certification provides a credential earned by demonstrating competence and acquisition of the knowledge and skills, against nationally recognized standards for a profession. Certification is usually achieved through a reliable and valid national examination that is created through a rigorous and standardized process. The credential is usually earned by successfully passing a rigorous standardized examination. Certificates are often a stepping stone or a way to gain entry into a field, whereas certifications demonstrate a higher level of expertise and commitment within a chosen profession.