

## AHNCC RECERTIFICATION HANDBOOK



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## Introduction

Certification is a professional pathway to validate your nursing specialty knowledge, competence, attitudes, skills, and expertise. With today's healthcare focus on health promotion, wellness, and well-being your certification provides evidence and assures consumers, employers, and other key stakeholders that you are a leader in healthcare transformation. Continuing competency and meeting renewal requirements are required to maintain your valued credential as a Certified Holistic Nurse (HN-BC<sup>®</sup>, HNB-BC<sup>®</sup>, AHN-BC<sup>®</sup>, APHN-BC<sup>®</sup>) or Certified Nurse Coach (NC-BC<sup>®</sup> or HWNC-BC<sup>®</sup>).

Completing the recertification process demonstrates your continued commitment to providing excellent holistic nursing or nurse coaching based care. It validates your on-going expertise as a holistic nurse or nurse coach and your commitment to personal and professional growth and development. Certain requirements must be met for an individual to demonstrate continuing competency in their specialty area, in this case Holistic Nursing or Nurse Coaching. This handbook outlines the process and requirements for re-certification and renewal of your national credentials.

### Certificant Responsibilities

1. Keep your contact information current with AHNCC;
  - a. Log into your record at [www.ahncc.org](http://www.ahncc.org) (Login at the top of the page), or
  - b. Send changes to [info@ahncc.org](mailto:info@ahncc.org) ;
2. Notify AHNCC of Last Name changes (send copy of official documentation to [info@ahncc.org](mailto:info@ahncc.org) );
3. Continue to be in good standing in nursing with an active, unrestricted RN license;
4. Be actively involved in Holistic Nursing or Nurse Coaching;
5. Completion of 100 contact hours of continuing education or professional development hours that build your knowledge, skills, and expertise in your area of certification;
6. Apply for Recertification in a timely manner.

## **Timeline for Recertification**

Renewal of the Holistic Nurse and Nurse Coach Certifications is required every 5 years. Recertification is due on the fifth year, the last day of the month of the expiration date appearing on the certificate. AHNCC will notify certificants approximately a year prior to their expiration date. Recertification documents should be sent 2 months or 60 days before the certification expiration date on the certificate to ensure time for processing, but no more than 6 months before the expiration date. Certification is *no longer active* after the date stated on the certificate if the recertification process has not been completed. If the recertification application has not been received prior to the expiration date, your status will be changed to “Inactive.”

Credentials are not backdated. Inactive certificants cannot use certification credentials. You have three years while “Inactive” to send in your Recertification Application. You may renew at any time during the three years. After the three years, your Status will be changed to “Expired,” and you must re-take the exam to renew the credentials. Continuing competency (CC) hours must be earned within the 5 years prior to renewal of your certification. CC hours that build your knowledge, skills, and expertise in health, wellness, wellbeing, communications, spirituality, nutrition, etc. can be used for Holistic Nursing and/or Nurse Coaching renewal requirements.

HWNC-BC Nurse Coaching credentials require that both Holistic Nursing and Nurse Coaching certifications are Active. If the Holistic Nursing credentials are not Active, the Nurse Coaching credentials become NC-BC.

## **Recertification Options**

There are three options for recertification. Choose the option that best fits your current life circumstances.

*Recertification of Credentials* - You meet the eligibility requirements to re-certify and do not want to have a lapse in your certification, or, your certification has lapsed and you are within the 3-year Inactive Status timeframe.

*Retired Status* – You are a certified nurse considering retirement or have recently retired and wish to use the designation of retired certified but do not choose to or are unable to complete the active re-certification process. This application must be completed within one year of expiration of certification. When you complete this process, you will receive the Retired Certified Holistic Nurse designation.

Successfully passing the AHNCC certification examination.

Applications for both categories are available for download on the website [www.ahncc.org](http://www.ahncc.org) listed under recertification. (We are adding more in-depth demographic questions in hope of better serving our certificants and those we serve.)

## **Recertification Requirements**

The following requirements must be met for recertification

1. Continue to be in good standing in nursing with an active, unrestricted license documented by a copy of a US RN license attached to application;
2. Active practice as a Holistic Nurse for a minimum of one year full-time or 2,000 hours parttime within the past five years or 1200 hrs. of active practice as a Nurse Coach within the past five years;
3. Completion of 100 contact hours of continuing education or professional development hours as described below;
4. Signed Letter of Agreement with AHNCC.

### **Continuing Competency Requirements**

Continuing competency is an ongoing, life-long process that includes self-assessment and self-reflection which facilitates self-awareness, self-development and reflective practice. AHNCC believes that our certificants are committed to integrate and apply their knowledge, skills, judgement, and expertise, using attitudes, values, and beliefs required to practice safely, effectively, and ethically in their designated role, patient population and/or setting. The Holistic Nurse or Nurse Coach certificant is also expected to understand, respect, and honor different cultural views, values, beliefs, and behaviors of those they serve. Recertification requirements are required to ensure that certificants are in compliance with AHNCC's continuing competency viewpoint.

The continuing competency criterion for renewal of your AHNCC certification is the equivalent of 100 contact hours or continuing competency hours in holistic nursing or nurse coaching and related content.

Contact hours must have been acquired from the date of your last certification to the date for renewal and submission of your recertification application. Continuing competency means that you have completed learning experiences that result in updating and expanding your knowledge, expertise, and skills in your specialty. Therefore, credit is given for appropriate continued education courses and alternative and equivalent activities such as publishing, presentations at conferences, and academic courses in your specialty. Specific information follows:

All contact hours must address holistic and/or integrative nursing, nurse coaching, holistic nursing theories, or theorists; or major concepts such as spirituality, healing, communications, relationship-based patient-centered care, self-care, nutrition, wellness, holism, sacred space, or presence that are relevant to your practice. They can also be related to holistic, integrative modalities or healing therapies, methods of practice, and studies that facilitate self-care, growth, and transformation within a holistic context. For individuals certified in nurse coaching, content focused on the skills, attitudes, and knowledge related to the role of nurse coaching or that can be used by Nurse Coaches can also be submitted. If you have a question about whether or not a course will be accepted you can contact us at [info@ahncc.org](mailto:info@ahncc.org).

Medical focused courses will not be accepted for AHNCC Recertification unless you can explain how they relate to your practice. Courses that are considered basic nursing preparation are not accepted.

Specific written documentation demonstrating completion must be provided if audited. See <https://www.ahncc.org/resources/professional-development-activities/> for continuing competency opportunities.

## Options for Meeting Professional Growth and Development

### Continuing Competency Requirements

| Activity                                                                                     | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Documentation                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Accredited Contact Hours                                                                     | Contact hours are earned through participation in accredited educational programs. These may be lectures, seminars, presentations, online education, and journal activities that award CEs. For a conference with multiple sessions, each session must be identified individually.<br>60 minutes = 1 contact hour (CE)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Certificate of attendance or completion.                                                                                             |
| Academic Courses                                                                             | Academic credit is completed through an accredited higher education institution. A grade of "C" or higher or a grade of "pass" in a pass/fail system must be achieved.<br>1 quarter credit = 10 contact hours<br>1 semester credit = 15 contact hours                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Course transcript indicating successful completion                                                                                   |
| Employer in-services or other programs, courses, workshops not offering official CE credits. | Presentation must be 60 minutes or longer.<br>60 minutes = 1 equivalent contact (ECCH). Specific in-service can be used only once in the five-year period, but may be used for both Holistic Nursing and Nurse Coaching recertification.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Documentation of title, presenter, date offered, and signed by organizational designee.                                              |
| Presentations                                                                                | This includes presentations related to holistic nursing, holism, and holistic health. The presentation must be at least 30 minutes in length and include learning objectives and references. <u>Each hour</u> of presentation is equivalent to 1 ECCH. Preparation time may be included with a maximum of 2 hours preparation time per hour of presentation. The same presentation may be used <b>only once</b> during the certification period. A total of 30 ECCH may be used in the five-year period but may be used for both Holistic Nursing and Nurse Coaching recertification. | Written documentation of content and verification of presentation.                                                                   |
| Poster Presentation                                                                          | Scholarly posters may be presented at conferences, educational settings, or health care facilities. A poster presentation is equal to 1 ECCH for the presentation and 2 ECCH for preparation. A specific poster may only be used once in the five-year period but may be used for both Holistic Nursing and Nurse Coaching recertification.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Written documentation of content and verification of presentation                                                                    |
| Curriculum Development                                                                       | This includes development of academic courses related to holistic nursing.<br>1 course = 10 ECCH.<br>30 ECCH may be used in the five-year period for curriculum development. <i>You may only use the same course once during the five-year period, but a course can be used for both Holistic Nursing and Nurse Coaching recertification.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Course syllabus including course description and objectives, and references with verification from academic institution is required. |

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| Publications                      | <p>Publications include journal articles, book chapters, and books.</p> <p>Journal article in peer-reviewed publication, primary author = 20 ECCH per article;<br/>other authors= 10 ECCH.</p> <p>Article in non-peer-reviewed publication, primary author = 10 ECCH; other authors = 5 ECCH.</p> <p>Book author, primary author = 20 ECCH;<br/>other authors= 10 ECCH.</p> <p>Book chapter, primary author = 15 ECCH; other authors= 10 ECCH.</p>                                              | Written documentation of published material required.                                                                                             |
| Designing Educational Materials   | <p>This includes developing professional educational handbooks or manuals used for patient or staff teaching related to holistic care = 20 ECCH.</p> <p>Institutional brochures or pamphlets = 10 ECCH.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>Cover and table of contents for Handbook/Manual, and references used.</p> <p>Copy of brochure or pamphlet, or electronic copy is Required.</p> |
| Research Projects/Studies         | <p>For research projects, Master's theses, Doctoral dissertations, and DNP Projects focused on holistic, integrative nursing practice, the primary or secondary investigator shall submit the literature review, IRB documentation etc. and evidence of dissemination of original works through presentation or publication.</p> <p>Master's thesis = 50 ECCH<br/>DNP Project = 75 ECCH<br/>Doctoral dissertations = 100 ECCH<br/>Research Study with IRB Approval = 100 ECCH</p>               | Proof of Completion and published article, or presentation outline and proof of presentation.                                                     |
| Professional Committee Membership | <p>Committee activity is directly related to holistic, integrative nursing. Committees must meet at least 3-4 times a year.</p> <p>Current membership in a national, state, or local holistic, integrative nursing organization such as AHNA = 1 ECCH per year.</p> <p>Leadership in a national holistic, integrative organization, such as board member = 5 ECCH per year.</p> <p>Active participation on a committee for a national holistic, integrative organization = 4 ECCH per year.</p> |                                                                                                                                                   |

|                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                       | <p>Leadership in a state holistic integrative organization such as AHNA state chapter = 4 ECCH.</p> <p>Active participation on a committee for a state holistic integrative organization = 3 ECCH per year.</p> <p>Participation on a holistic committee within a healthcare institution = 4 ECCH per year.</p> <p>Professional committee participation <i>not to exceed</i> 20 ECCH in the five-year period.</p> |                                                                                         |
| Item Writing                                          | <p>Submission of test items for a holistic nursing or nurse coach exam as described in the Item-Writers Handbook. 1 item = 1 ECCH</p> <p><i>A maximum of 20 ECCH</i> may be earned in the five-year period.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Items submitted to AHNCC via email or C-NET.                                            |
| Item Writing or Review Session or Score Cutting Panel | <p>Participation in a panel that writes or reviews test items or SME panel.</p> <p>One hour session = 1 ECCH.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Verification of participation.                                                          |
| Preceptor in Holistic Nursing                         | <p>Precepting other nurses in integrative holistic nursing. A minimum of 20 hours per year of preceptorship is required = 5 ECCH.</p> <p><i>Maximum hours</i> acquired per five-year term = 15 ECCH.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Documentation showing preceptor relationship and verification signature from colleague. |
| Holistic/ Integrative Nursing Projects                | Evidence-informed holistic system level change projects that enhance health of the staff or consumers = 50 ECCH.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Literature review and summary of project. Evidence of implementation required.          |

| How to Calculate Contact Hours                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>For the purposes of re-certification, one (1) hour of education time is equal to one contact hour equivalent. This is time spent in a lecture, seminar, or presentation. It does not include registration, introductions, and breaks.</p> <p>For academic credit courses, one (1) quarter credit is equal to 10 contact hours. One (1) semester credit is equal to 15 contact hours.</p> |

## **Rationale for Recertification Requirements**

Recertification requirements are designed to ensure that certificants are current and in good standing with nursing, to encourage them to expand their expertise, disseminate knowledge and skills, and provide leadership in holistic nursing or nurse coaching.

*Five-year requirement for recertification* – While the foundation of holistic nursing remains stable, new knowledge, skills, and strategies related to holistic person-centered and relationship-based care, evidence regarding effectiveness of holistic integrative interventions and coaching strategies, and holistic conceptual frameworks are continually evolving. Demonstration of continuing competence requires acquisition of new knowledge through self-reflection, self-development, and life-long learning.

*Active, unrestricted RN license* – An active and unrestricted license indicates that the registered nurse may practice in their state without stipulations and there are no known ethical or moral violations that require the attention of AHNCC. It ensures that only licensed registered nurses are certified

*Active involvement in holistic nursing* – In addition to continuing education, active practice in holistic nursing supports continuing competence and professional growth. A total of 1 year of fulltime practice or 2000 hours in the previous 5 years is required as a criterion, for continued competence. Nurse coaches are required to have 1200 hours of practice within the last five-year period in order to renew their certification. Practicing nurses actively apply their knowledge, skills, and values which encourages them to maintain their expertise and provide leadership in holistic nursing and nurse coaching. This may include private practice, working as an educator, researcher, at the bedside or in the community, volunteer work, i.e., as a parish nurse, or anywhere else where you use your RN license, and offer nursing knowledge, skills, beliefs, and expertise.

*Completion of one-hundred contact hours of continuing education or professional development hours*– The requirement for 100 hours of continuing education or equivalent professional development hours ensures new learning and updating one's knowledge base and skills related to holistic nursing and/or nurse coaching through a variety of professional development activities. Lifelong growth, development, and self-reflection is expected of all AHNCC certificants. In addition to completing structured education, candidates may participate in activities that support holistic nursing or nurse coaching practice. Refer to the table of Continuing Competency activities for approved professional growth and development focused activities.

*Signed letter of agreement with AHNCC* – In signing the letter of agreement, the candidate for recertification verifies that information provided is accurate, gives AHNCC permission to review the application, and agrees to remain in compliance with the rules, standards, and policies of AHNCC.

## **Audit Process**

Twenty per cent of the applications for recertification will be audited. As applications are received, every fifth application will be selected for review. The CEO or designee will request that the audited applicant provide documentation that the 100 *contact hours of continuing education or professional development hours* have been met within 30 days of receipt of notice. Written documentation will be reviewed by the CEO or designate. Written documentation may include transcripts, certificates of attendance, validation of presentation, and others. Approved required documentation is listed above in the table of Continuing Competency Activities table. If an audit is found to be incomplete, the individual being audited will be notified and asked for the missing documentation. If that documentation is not provided the certificant will be notified that they can no longer use their credential(s) and that their certification has been changed to inactive status. Individuals are eligible to renew their credentials if they meet the recertification criteria within the 3-year inactive period.

Individuals may appeal the audit decision in writing to AHNCC. Review of the audit decision will be made by the Standards Hearing Committee as described in the PROFESSIONAL CODE OF ETHICS FOR AHNCC CERTIFIED NURSES signed by all certificants when applying for AHNCC certification.