

Online Certification Application Streamlines Process

CONTENTS

Letter from the Chair2
 Board Member Highlight2
 Certification News3
 Examination Schedule3
 Diplomate Highlight.....4
 Accreditation News5
 Newly-Accredited Programs....5
 Program Director Highlight6
 Staff.....7

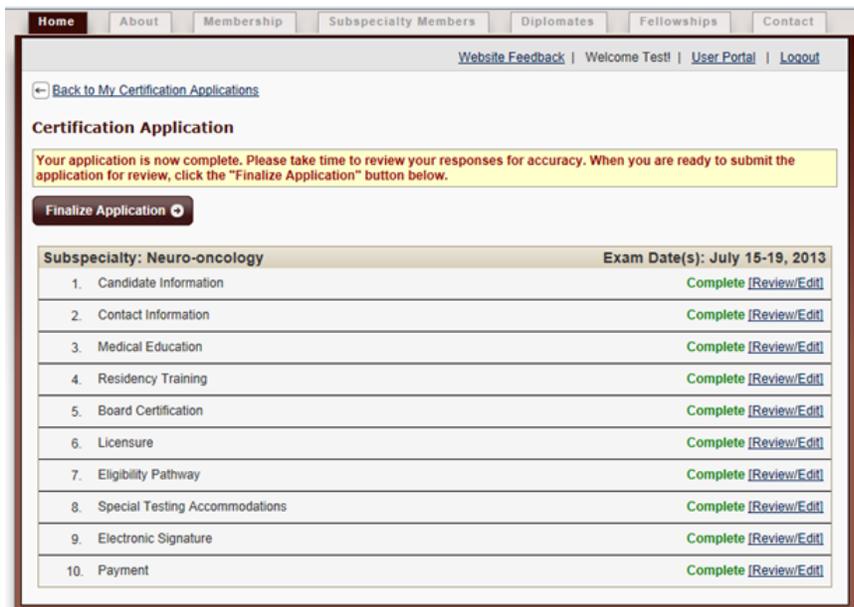


Gregory Gruener, MD, MBA

The UCNS has launched its online certification examination application. According to Gregory Gruener, MD, MBA, Certification Council Chair, "Implementation of this interface greatly enhances the user-experience. This is an exciting step forward for UCNS and makes the application review process more efficient."

The online application includes several features that applicants will appreciate. UCNS Executive Assistant Becky Swanson says, "Uncertainty regarding whether an application is complete is eliminated because applicants must upload all supporting documentation for the application. Instructions and definitions are provided on the screen while the applicant is completing the application." Certification Manager Todd Bulson says, "Paper-based applications are a thing of the past for our examination. We look forward to entering a new phase in our development, which started with the launch of our web application."

Screenshot of the online certification application



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For more information about the UCNS, visit the UCNS website at www.ucns.org.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the United Council for Neurologic Subspecialties is to provide for accreditation and certification with the goal of enhancing the quality of training for physicians in neurologic subspecialties and the quality of patient care.

Important Dates

December 1, 2012
Accreditation application deadline for spring 2013 review

January 15, 2013
Neuro-oncology certification application deadline

March 18, 2013
UCNS Board of Directors Meeting

April 1, 2013
Neurocritical Care certification examination applications available

June 1, 2013
Accreditation application deadline for fall 2013 review

July 15, 2013
Neurocritical Care certification examination application deadline

Letter from the Chair



Paul M. Vespa, MD,
FCCM, FAAN

I would like to welcome to the Board two new members. José Biller, MD, FAAN, FACP, FAHA, has been elected for a three-year term as representative of the American Neurological Association and Laszlo Mechtler, MD, has been elected for a two-year term as representative of the Neuroimaging subspecialty. These men need no introduction for most of you. Dr. Biller, Chairman of the Department at Loyola, served for several years as Chair of the Certification Council. Dr. Mechtler, holder of three UCNS certifications, was a member of the Neuroimaging examination committee.

We are on our way to completing another successful year. Once again, we have exceeded our projections for the number of applications to sit for our certification examinations. In addition, we are running ahead of our expectations for fellowship accreditation applications. This means that we likely will show a surplus at year-end. I extend my sincere appreciation to all the committed physician volunteers who are helping UCNS continue to grow.



Paul M. Vespa, MD, FCCM, FAAN

Board Member Highlight – Deborah I. Friedman, MD, MPH, FAAN



Deborah I. Friedman, MD,
MPH, FAAN

Deborah I. Friedman, MD, MPH, FAAN, is Professor of Neurology and Neurotherapeutics and Ophthalmology and Director of the Headache and Facial Pain Program at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. Dr. Friedman is currently serving on the UCNS Board of Directors, representing the Headache Medicine subspecialty.

Why did you choose to practice medicine and go into the field of neurology?

In retrospect, I probably have wanted to be a physician since I was a child but never really admitted it to myself. I majored in engineering at Georgia Tech and became interested in biomedical engineering. Although I loved engineering, I realized that my real interest was in medicine about halfway through engineering school. I applied to both biomedical engineering graduate programs and medical school and was fortunate to be accepted to Tulane (for both programs). I enjoyed all of my clinical rotations in medical school, but the one that really spoke to me was neurology, perhaps because it is so similar to engineering. It is a logical, systems based, problem-solving specialty...and neurologists are incredibly nice people. I became interested in neuro-ophthalmology after spending a few days seeing patients with a neuro-ophthalmologist during an elective rotation when I was in medical school—it was the most fascinating area I had ever encountered. My specialization in Headache Medicine came later, after being in practice in neuro-ophthalmology and seeing migraine patients who were referred because of their "visual disturbances," which turned out to be migraine aura. It gave me immense personal satisfaction to treat headache patients and make such a powerful impact in their lives, and it remains a thrilling experience to this day.

Where did you train and where do you practice?

I completed my neurology residency at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, then a neuro-ophthalmology fellowship at the University of Southern California, Doheny Eye Institute. I am now a professor of neurology and neurotherapeutics and ophthalmology at the University of Texas Southwestern in Dallas, TX, where I direct the Headache and Facial Pain Program.

Why did you become involved with the UCNS?

I am currently the Chair of the Headache and Facial Pain Section of the AAN, and on the board of the American Headache Society. Under the pioneering leadership of Alan Finkel, the UCNS certification and accreditation process has been one of the most important initiatives in the practice of Headache Medicine. When the opportunity arose to become more active in UCNS, I was excited to participate.

[Continued on page 4](#)

Certification News

Letter from the Certification Council Chair



UCNS achieved a lot of “firsts” in 2012. We launched the online certification examination application. We also accepted applications for our first Neural Repair and Rehabilitation certification exam, which will be administered in December. Finally, two practice track pathways ended with administration of our Headache Medicine and Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry examinations. This is an exciting time to be part of the Certification Council and of UCNS as we move into the next phase of UCNS’s development.

Gregory Gruener, MD, MBA

Gregory Gruener, MD,
MBA

Practice Track Pathways Closing in 2013 for Two Subspecialties

Important notice to all physicians interested in certification in either Neuro-oncology (NO) or Neurocritical Care (NCC): The practice track pathways will close following the 2013 examinations in these subspecialties. After 2013, only those who have completed a UCNS- accredited NO or NCC fellowship program will be able to sit for certification examinations in NO and NCC.

The NO application became available on October 1, 2012, and the application deadline for this subspecialty is January 15, 2013. The NCC application will be available on April 1, 2013, and the application deadline is July 15, 2013. Access to the online application can be requested at www.ucns.org/certification. Applications must be finalized and payment must be received by the application deadline.

2012 Certification Examination Schedule

Subspecialty	Application Deadline	Examination Date	Location
Headache Medicine	April 16, 2012	October 1-5, 2012	Pearson VUE
Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry	May 15, 2012	November 5-9, 2012	Pearson VUE
Neural Repair and Rehabilitation	July 16, 2012	December 10-14, 2012	Pearson VUE

2013 Certification Examination Schedule

Subspecialty	Application Deadline	Examination Date	Location
Neuroimaging	August 15, 2012	January 28- February 1, 2013	Pearson VUE
Neuro-oncology	January 15, 2013	July 15-19, 2013	Pearson VUE
Neurocritical Care	July 15, 2013	December 9-13, 2013	Pearson VUE

Diplomate Highlight



Jianxin Ma, MD

Jianxin Ma, MD, is a staff neurologist at Crouse Hospital in Syracuse, NY, and a 2011 UCNS diplomate in Neuroimaging.

Why did you choose to practice medicine and go into the field of neurology?

During my childhood, my mother had frequent excruciating pain from gallstones. It was my dream to be a doctor to help my mother when I grew up. Neuroscience has always been fascinating to me. That is why I chose the field of neurology after finishing medical school.

Why did you decide to seek UCNS certification?

Neuroimaging certification is my first UCNS certification. This is a first step for a neurologist to be credited for neuroimaging involvement, including reading. Through the certification process I have gained confidence for CNS MRI reading. Now I am pursuing my second UCNS certification in Headache Medicine. I would like to improve my evaluation and treatment for headache patients. I have already seen great benefits from the preparation process, including the CME requirement. This certification will also assist me to set up a headache subspecialty clinic.

How has UCNS certification impacted you?

UCNS certification has enriched my knowledge in the field of neurology and significantly enhanced my practice. Because of the knowledge I acquired in studying for the certification examination, patients have benefitted from receiving evaluation and treatment in a more efficient fashion. I have gained trust for preliminary reading of the neuroimaging studies and the patient's hospital stay is much smoother.

What would you like individuals in neurology and the public to know about UCNS certification?

UCNS certification will help you to subspecialize your practice with national recognition. Overall, you will be a better neurologist.

Board Member Highlight

Continued from page 2

What has been the impact of the UCNS since it was established in 2003?

UCNS has changed the landscape of the field of Headache Medicine; it has given us credibility and legitimacy. Although headache is the most common neurological disorder by a factor of 10, there was still a feeling among some neurologists and department chairs that Headache Medicine wasn't "real neurology." Not only is it "real neurology," but it is a dynamic field that is underserved and has tremendous therapeutic impact.

What impact do you feel the UCNS will have on the future of neurology?

UCNS gives a voice to smaller neurologic subspecialties. It will set the standards for training and credentialing of such specialties in years to come.

How will the UCNS process be beneficial to both the generalist and the subspecialist?

There are many general neurologists who enjoy seeing and treating patients with various subspecialty disorders. Perhaps they are in a phase of their career that makes further fellowship training prohibitive. I see UCNS certification as a powerful process to add value to the generalist with subspecialty expertise via the practice tracks. Those physicians who have subspecialty training in areas that are not recognized by ACGME are afforded the opportunity to be officially credentialed by UCNS. The UCNS process adds recognition and validity to both generalists and subspecialists.

What would you like the public to know about the UCNS?

If your doctor is UCNS-certified, you may rest assured that they have met rigorous standards in their area of subspecialty.

Accreditation News



David C. Good, MD,
FAAN

I am pleased to introduce Clifton Gooch, MD as the newest member of the Accreditation Council. Dr. Gooch was appointed to represent the American Neurological Association and is the first member to hold the newly created ninth seat of the Accreditation Council, which was added in response to the heavy workload of the Council. I would also like to take this time to thank Jasper Daube, MD, FAAN for his work on the Council. Dr. Daube resigned his position earlier this year. On behalf of the Accreditation Council and UCNS, we appreciate Dr. Daube's dedication and hard work while serving on the Accreditation Council.

I am also pleased to announce that two Accreditation Council initiatives have been completed. First, accreditation applications for UCNS's newest subspecialty, Neural Repair and Rehabilitation, are available on the UCNS website at <http://www.ucns.org/go/subspecialty/neuralrepair/accreditation>. Second, the common program requirements were approved by the Board of Directors at the spring meeting. The updated common program requirements are available on the website at <http://www.ucns.org/globals/axon/assets/9932.pdf>. The Accreditation Council is now working with each subspecialty to integrate the approved common program requirements into all subspecialty-specific program requirements.

David C. Good, MD, FAAN

Apply for UCNS Accreditation by December 1

UCNS is now accepting accreditation applications until December 1, 2012. Programs approved following this deadline may be accredited as of June 1, 2013. The next deadline for program applications will be June 1, 2013.

UCNS Accredits New Programs

Congratulations to the following programs that were reviewed during the spring 2012 meeting and received accreditation from the UCNS effective June 1, 2012. Programs accredited at the fall meeting will be listed in the spring newsletter. A complete list of UCNS-accredited programs is available at <http://www.ucns.org/apps/directory/>. Newly-accredited programs and their fellowship directors are:

Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry	
Cleveland Clinic, Las Vegas	Dylan Wint, MD
Massachusetts General Hospital	Zeina El-Chemali, MD
Headache Medicine	
Fletcher Allen Healthcare/University of Vermont	Robert E. Shapiro, MD, PhD
Stanford University	Robert P. Cowan, MD
University of Kentucky	Siddharth Kapoor, MD
University of Southern California	Soma Sahai-Srivastava, MD
Neurocritical Care	
Mayo Clinic, Florida	William D. Freeman, MD
Ochsner Health System	Arash Afshinnik, MD
University of Pittsburgh	Lori A. Shutter, MD
Neuro-oncology	
Cleveland Clinic	Glen H.J. Stevens, DO, PhD
Northwestern University	Jeffrey J. Raizer, MD
University of Texas Southwestern	Bruce Mickey, MD
Yale University	Joachim M. Baehring, MD

Program Director Highlight



Patrick Capone, MD, PhD

Patrick Capone, MD, PhD, is the Chairman of Neurology and Neurosciences at Winchester Medical Center in Winchester, VA, President of Winchester Neurological Consultants, Inc., and Director of the Winchester Neuroimaging Fellowship.

Why did you choose to practice medicine and go into the field of Neuroimaging?

I had obtained a PhD in molecular immunology and a medical degree at the University of Buffalo intending to pursue a career as a laboratory and clinical research scientist. During medical school I attended a series of elective lectures by Dr. William Kinkel termed, "Neurology/Neuroanatomy Correlation." Dr. Kinkel is one of the pioneers of modern imaging as one of the early developers of the clinical application of CT and MRI for neurologic disease. Dr. Kinkel's elegant lectures provided diagrams of neuroanatomy pathways with CT and MRI correlates of the neuroanatomy and pathophysiology of actual patients. These lectures and the technology were, to me, spellbinding.

When I completed medical school I continued to pursue my goal of clinical and academic research and spent a residency year at the University of Vermont. I quickly realized that I missed direct patient care. I then enrolled in the residency program at the University of Buffalo, where Dr. Kinkel was the program director. He had the vision and judgment to mandate that all residents spend a dedicated two months doing only Neuroimaging in their first year of the residency, recognizing that beyond our direct examination skills, modern Neuroimaging techniques were unarguably the most important diagnostic tool for the evaluation of our patients. I recognized that my Neuroimaging training was of immense value to my skills as a neurologist and did a one-year fellowship at the Dent Neurologic Institute under the tutelage of Dr. Verne Bates and Dr. Kinkel.

Where do you currently practice?

I have been in clinical practice as a neurologist and neuroimager in Winchester, VA, at Winchester Medical Center since 1993. Our private practice neurology group has provided 24/7 diagnostic Neuroimaging coverage at our institution for all of the inpatients and outpatients of our region since the inception of these technologies, including MRI, CT, and ultrasonography. We maintain a very active neurology service with a very active stroke, epilepsy service, neuro ICU with coverage for essentially all ages and the full range of neurologic disease.

Why did you decide to seek UCNS accreditation for your program?

Neurology training, from what I have seen at multiple institutions throughout the United States, has greatly suffered due to financial and cultural medical turf issues, which I believe can be harmful to the care of our patients. Neuroimaging is an essential component for neurologic care and will only continue to be more so in the future. I have been providing training for residents and medical students who rotate in our institution with a particular focus on imaging since 1993. When the UCNS accreditation process for neurologists was established, I decided that it was vital to the future of neurology as a profession that many more neuroimagers needed to be trained with documentable training. I began a one-year fellowship program for neurologists in 2007 when the UCNS announced that it would begin certifying neurologists in Neuroimaging.

How has UCNS accreditation impacted your program?

Our program accreditation has helped attract more residents interested in Neuroimaging to apply to our program. The significance of an accreditation process is becoming increasingly recognized by applicants. Since we have achieved accreditation, the majority of our own neuroimagers have obtained UCNS certification for themselves. The continuing and increasing need for documenting subspecialty training and continuing education is unlikely to change any time in the future.

UCNS Common Program Requirements Approved

The UCNS common program requirements have been approved by the Board of Directors. UCNS is working with the subspecialties to implement the common program requirements into each subspecialty's program requirements. Programs should review the common program requirements, which are available on the UCNS website at <http://www.ucns.org/globals/axon/assets/9932.pdf>.

Program Changes

All programs are reminded that certain program changes must be submitted to UCNS for approval. If you are planning changes in faculty, curriculum, or resources in your UCNS-accredited fellowship, you must notify the Accreditation Council. The program change procedure and template letter are available at <https://www.ucns.org/go/about/program>. Programs failing to notify the UCNS of any changes may be in danger of an adverse accreditation action, up to, and including, loss of accreditation. All changes in program directors, program duration, and certain resources require approval prior to any changes being made to the fellowship directory.

Questions About UCNS?



*Becky Swanson
Executive Assistant*

Becky Swanson is the UCNS Executive Assistant. Diplomates, applicants, and programs calling with general inquiries will usually start by talking with her. If you have a question you would like answered in this section, email her at bswanson@ucns.org.

Q: What do I need to know about using the online certification application?

A: Each section of the online application has instructions to assist you. Answers to most questions can be found in the instructions; however, here are some helpful things to keep in mind:

- The Medical Education section is for medical education only (MD, MBBS, etc.), and the Residency section is for residency training only (do NOT list fellowship training).
- Dates must be in the exact MM/DD/YYYY format. If the exact day is not known, please use "01," i.e., 05/01/2012.
- Some sections require that you upload documentation before proceeding to the next section.
- You must use the templates that are provided for any supporting letters.

Q: I am in a fellowship program that is going through the accreditation process. When does my program have to receive accreditation in order for me to be considered a graduate of a UCNS-accredited fellowship program?

A: Programs that are approved for accreditation in the spring receive a June 1 accreditation start date, and programs that are approved for accreditation in the fall receive a December 1 accreditation start date. As long as the accreditation start date is prior to your fellowship completion date, you will be considered a graduate of a UCNS-accredited program.

Staff

UCNS staff is available Monday-Friday to answer your questions regarding subspecialty membership, accreditation, and certification.

Subspecialty Membership Inquiries

John Kohring, Executive Director, (612) 928-6106 jkohring@ucns.org

Certification Inquiries

Todd Bulson, Certification Manager, (612) 928-6067 tbulson@ucns.org

Accreditation Inquiries

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General UCNS Inquiries

Becky Swanson, Executive Assistant, (612) 928-6050 bswanson@ucns.org

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The UCNS is sponsored by five parent organizations:

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- Association of University Professors of Neurology,
www.aupn.org
- Child Neurology Society
www.childneurologysociety.org
- Professors of Child Neurology, see also
www.childneurologysociety.org

SUBMIT STORY IDEAS

Any news or story ideas for UCNS readers?

We would like to hear from you. Submit feedback regarding this issue and/or story ideas for future issues to the UCNS Executive Office.

