

UNITED COUNCIL
FOR
NEUROLOGIC
SUBSPECIALTIES

**Information for Applicants for
Certification in Neuroimaging**

2017 Examination

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I. **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND PRACTICE TRACK**

The following are eligibility criteria for certification in the subspecialty of Neuroimaging (NI) and can be found at <http://www.ucns.org/go/subspecialty/neuroimaging/certification>. There are general requirements that must be fulfilled as well as requirements for specific pathways of application.

A. **GENERAL**

General eligibility criteria:

1. Applicants must be a Diplomate in neurology or child neurology in good standing of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology or have equivalent certification by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada*.
2. Applicants must hold a current, active, valid, unrestricted, and unqualified license to practice medicine in at least one jurisdiction in the United States, its territories, or Canada, and in each jurisdiction in which they practice.

A license to practice medicine is not “current, active, valid, unrestricted and unqualified” if, in any manner to any extent whatsoever, one or more of the following applies. The license is:

- a. under probation;
- b. conditioned, e.g., the physician is required to practice under supervision or with modification, or to obtain continuing education;
- c. limited, e.g., to specific practice settings;
- d. institutional, temporary, or educational;
- e. inactive as a result of an action taken by or a request made by a medical licensing board.

Policy on Medical Licensure

If any license currently held by an applicant participating in the application process is restricted or qualified in any way, full details must be provided to the UCNS. The UCNS may, at its sole discretion, determine whether to investigate the license and the information provided. The UCNS reserves the right to determine if the license fulfills this policy. Licenses that have been revoked, suspended, surrendered, or not renewed in order to terminate or settle disciplinary proceedings do not qualify as meeting the requirements for medical licensure, and all such licenses must be reported for review and consideration. The UCNS will determine if the situation is cause to deny an applicant’s certification application, deny a candidate access to an examination, or revoke a diplomate’s certificate.

Diplomates must continuously fulfill the Policy on Medical Licensure. Failure to do so will result in loss of certification.

*Candidates who have qualified for examination by ABMS or the RCPSC, but have not yet been certified by such board, may sit for the NI examination but may not receive notification of the results until the criterion in I.A.1 has been satisfied. Candidates must sit for the ABMS or RCPSC examination in the same year as the UNCS NI examination.

B. PATHWAYS

Applicants must have completed **one of two** eligibility pathways. The pathways are:

1. UCNS-Accredited Fellowship
2. Practice Track
3. Recertification

1. UCNS-Accredited Fellowship

An applicant must have successfully completed a fellowship in NI that is **accredited by the UCNS**. The fellowship must be 12 or more months in length. The applicant must satisfactorily complete the fellowship training by the date of the application. The applicant must apply within 36 months of completing the fellowship. Verification by the appropriate fellowship program director must be provided.

Applicants currently in a fellowship that will not be completed prior to the application deadline may still apply. **The applicant must have successfully completed the fellowship training a minimum of 45 days prior to the examination week. Confirmation from the fellowship program director stating applicant has successfully completed the UCNS accredited fellowship program must be received within 30 days of the fellowship program completion date.**

2. Practice Track

The practice track is a process that allows physicians who initiated the subspecialty prior to the availability of accredited training programs to qualify for the examination by meeting a defined set of criteria.

The applicant must submit the following documentation for **one of the three** following areas NI:

- a. Satisfactory completion of 12 months of formal training (non-accredited) in NI focused on MRI that has taken place after the completion of residency training in neurology or child neurology. Training or exposure to NI given to neurology or child neurology residents as part of their neurology or child neurology curriculum will not count toward the 12 months of training. The applicant must provide documentation from the appropriate program director at each institution where the training occurred.

OR

- b. At least 50 hours of Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education approved category 1 CME specifically related to NI or Neuroradiology focused on MRI over the 60 months prior to application. Specification of programs attended and relevance to the field of NI or Neuroradiology focused on MRI must be provided.

OR

- c. A letter from the applicant's current department chair that states he/she has an active, full-time academic appointment in which his/her teaching responsibilities include instructing one or more of the following in NI: medical students, residents, or fellows.

AND (in addition to one of a, b, or c above)

- d. Documentation of completion of **one of the two** following practical expertise requirements in NI:
 - i. Valid certificate in MRI/CT from the American Society of Neuroimaging.

OR

- ii. Documentation of supervised or independent written interpretation of at least 650 neuroimaging cases, at least 500 of which must be in MRI of the brain or spine. Documentation must be from all appropriate CME programs, mentors, medical directors, or program directors.

AND (in addition to d above)

- e. Documentation of a 36-month* period of time in which the applicant has spent a minimum of 25% of his/her time in the practice of NI. The practice must:
 - i. Include diagnostic MRI NI evaluations in conjunction with direct diagnosis and management of neurological cases in which MRI is employed as a key component of the diagnostic workup.
 - ii. Have occurred in the United States, its territories, or in Canada, or at hospitals accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.
 - iii. Have occurred in the 60-month interval immediately preceding application for certification but need not be continuous.

The application must contain letters from **two** physicians familiar with the applicant's practice pattern during the practice time submitted in the application. The letters must together address an entire 36-month period of time submitted.

* If the applicant has completed unaccredited training, this may count towards the 36-month period of time. For example, if the applicant completed 12 months of unaccredited training in NI, the UCNS will count these 12 months towards the 36-month period of time. Documentation of an additional 24-month period of time would then be required.

This practice track pathway of application will close on the last day of the application cycle for the 2017 NI examination. To apply via this pathway,

physicians must have fulfilled the requirements of the pathway on or before that date.

3. Recertification

Recertification applicants are required to submit evidence of 300 ACCME-approved Category 1 CME, 20% (60) of which are specific to Neuroimaging, that were earned during their certification cycle.

Diplomates certified prior to the January 1, 2011, effective date of the policy on maintaining certification have prorated CME requirements. Diplomates certified in 2008 are required to submit evidence of 240 total CME, 48 of which are subspecialty specific. The full policy on maintaining certification can be found on the UCNS website at <http://www.ucns.org/globals/axon/assets/11915.pdf>.

Recertification applicants will sit for the UCNS recertification examination offered closest to the expiration date of his or her current UCNS certification. If no recertification examination in the diplomate's subspecialty is offered in the year when his or her certificate expires, he or she shall take the examination offered in the prior year. Because no NI exam will be offered in 2018, 2008 NI diplomates will need to recertify in 2017.

II. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION IN NEUROIMAGING

A. Application

UCNS uses an online application system. All applications must be completed online, and all supporting documentation must be uploaded through the online application system where requested. Application sections must be completed sequentially, and some application sections require you to upload documentation before proceeding to the next section. Paper applications are no longer available.

UCNS provides templates that **must** be used for any supporting documentation. All letters must be on letterhead and contain an appropriate signature. Letters that do not follow the template, are confusing, are not on letterhead, or do not contain an appropriate signature will not be accepted. Any letters of support are not intended to be letters of recommendation. The letters are simply to provide information to the Certification Council in the most clear and concise way possible.

A personal logon is required to access the application. You must request your personal logon information no later than 4:00 pm Central time on the application deadline date in order to apply for the examination. You are encouraged to work on your application prior to 4:00 pm Central time on the application deadline date as technical support will not be available and logon requests will not be granted after 4:00 pm Central.

In order to have your application processed you must finalize your completed application by 11:59 pm Central time on the application deadline date. Any application that is not finalized by this time will not be accepted. In addition to a finalized application, UCNS must receive the examination fee postmarked on or before the

application deadline date if paying by check or money order. Check or money order payments are the only application items that may be mailed to the UCNS office.

Applicants who have taken the exam in a previous year but were not successful and wish to reapply must submit a new application, provide current supporting documentation, and pay the current reexamination fee. Documentation submitted with a previous application will not be accepted.

B. Deadlines and Fees

For the 2017 subspecialty examination, a completed application, supporting documentation and all appropriate fees must be received in the UCNS Executive Office by **August 15, 2016**. Applications received after August 15 will not be accepted.

Applications submitted without the appropriate fees will not be processed or submitted for review. Fees received without applications will be returned. **The application fee is not refundable. All fees are nontransferable.**

Fee Schedule*†

Application fee (non-refundable)	\$680
Examination fee	\$1020
Total certification fee	\$1700
Reexamination fee	\$1020
Recertification application fee (non-refundable)	\$600
Recertification examination fee	\$900
Total Recertification fee	\$1500
NSF check or declined credit card fee	\$50

**All fees must be submitted in U.S. currency.*

†For exams beginning in 2016

The UCNS reserves the right to revise fee schedules at any time.

UCNS accepts personal checks, cashier's checks, money orders, Visa, MasterCard, and American Express as payment. Applications submitted without the appropriate fees will not be processed. Fees received without applications will be returned.

C. Refunds

Application fees are non-refundable. Refunds will be issued in the same method in which the original payment was received. The complete policy regarding refunds can be found at <http://www.ucns.org/globals/axon/assets/11915.pdf>.

D. Withdrawals

The complete policy regarding withdrawal from the examination is located on the UCNS website at <http://www.ucns.org/globals/axon/assets/11915.pdf>.

E. Template Letters

Template letters must be used for the necessary application attachments. The template letters are located on the UCNS website at <http://www.ucns.org/go/subspecialty/neuroimaging/certification> and are available during the application cycle or upon request.

III. EXAMINATION PROCESS FOR NEUROIMAGING

A. General Information and Timeline

1. Submit completed application supporting documents and payment by August 15, 2016.
2. UCNS will review the application for completeness
3. UCNS will send notice of approval or non-approval to sit for examination only after the Certification Council has reviewed all applications.
4. If approved for the examination, the UCNS will provide information on:
 - a. scheduling at test locations via Pearson VUE;
 - b. admission to test locations; and
 - c. preparing for a computer-based examination.
5. Candidates must contact Pearson VUE for scheduling.
6. **Sit for examination on January 30 or 31 or February 1, 2, or 3, 2017.**
7. Results will be mailed approximately ten weeks following examination. In the interest of maintaining confidentiality, examination results are not given by telephone, facsimile transmission, or e-mail.

B. Initial Examination Format

The UCNS initial examination format is:

- Computer-based
- 200 question multiple-choice
- 5 hours

C. Recertification Examination Format

The UCNS recertification examination format is:

- Computer-based
- 150 multiple-choice questions
- 5 hours

IV. APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

A. General Information

The UCNS recognizes that physicians with disabilities may wish to take the certifying examinations and will attempt to make accommodations for applicants with verified disabilities. The Board supports the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will provide reasonable accommodations during testing to provide equal opportunity for persons with disabilities. Applicants are reminded, however, that “auxiliary aids (and services) can only be offered if they do not fundamentally alter the measurement of skills or knowledge the examination is intended to test” (Americans

with Disabilities Act, Public Law 101-336 & 309 [b][3]). To this extent, the UCNS will provide reasonable accommodations during testing to provide equal opportunity for persons with disabilities. Documentation requesting reasonable accommodations must identify the disability and provide a rationale for specified modifications to standard testing procedures.

Applicants who request accommodations because of a disability must do so at the time of application. The application and documentation substantiating the disability must be included with the examination application, and be submitted no later than August 15, 2016.

If the UCNS deems it necessary, an independent assessment may be requested at the expense of the UCNS. Documentation and other evidence substantiating the disability include, but are not limited to, each of the following:

- A report diagnosing the applicant's disability written by a professional appropriately qualified to evaluate the disability. The report must be printed on the certified examiner's letterhead, with the examiner's credentials, address, and telephone number given in the letterhead or title. The report must include the candidate's name, date of birth, date of testing, and it must be signed by the examiner.
- A history of the disability, including previous settings in which accommodations have been granted. Having had prior accommodations granted does not necessarily influence the decision of the UCNS to grant or deny a current request for accommodation. If there is no history of prior accommodations, the examiner must explain why current circumstances necessitate accommodations.
- Diagnostic information about the specified disability using standard nomenclature from sources such as the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) and the APA Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV (DSM-IV).
- Specific recommended accommodations with a rationale for why each accommodation is needed. A description of any functional limitations associated with the disability is important to the UCNS's evaluation of the request.

The UCNS does not discriminate among applicants on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or marital status.

B. Review of Documentation

Each report is reviewed carefully before accommodations are provided. If the UCNS does not find appropriate and sufficient evidence to grant accommodations, the applicant will be informed that the request has been denied. If a request has been denied, a written appeal may be submitted in accordance with the UCNS Certification Appeals Policies and Procedures, which can be found at <http://www.ucns.org/globals/axon/assets/11915.pdf>.

V. POLICIES

A. Refunds

Application fees are non-refundable. Refunds will be issued in the same method in which the original payment was received. The complete policy regarding refunds can be found at <http://www.ucns.org/globals/axon/assets/11915.pdf>.

B. Certification and Recertification

Subspecialty certification in NI is awarded to all candidates who meet the necessary requirements and who successfully pass a proctored examination in the subspecialty. Subspecialty certification is a voluntary process by which the UCNS grants recognition to a physician subspecialist who has met predetermined qualifications specified by the UCNS.

Subspecialty certification and the certificate recognize those physician subspecialists who have successfully completed the UCNS's requirements and demonstrated their skills and abilities at the time of evaluation. Certification is not a guarantee of the competence of the physician subspecialist.

Certificates issued in the subspecialty of NI are ten-year, time-limited certificates. All UCNS time-limited certificates, regardless of their exact dates of issuance, are considered to expire on December 31 following the tenth anniversary of the date of issuance. **Diplomates with certificates in the subspecialty of NI must also maintain certification in their primary specialty. If certification in the primary specialty lapses, certification in the subspecialty is no longer valid.**

Diplomates who are not recertified before their certificates expire are no longer UCNS-certified in that area of certification. Once a former diplomate completes the maintenance of certification process, however, he or she will regain certification status. Diplomates with certificates in the subspecialty of NI must also maintain certification in their primary specialty in order to apply for recertification in the area of subspecialization.

C. Revocation of Certificates

The UCNS has the authority to revoke any certificate issued by it for cause or to place a certificate holder on probation for a fixed or indefinite period of time. If a certificate is revoked, a written appeal may be submitted in accordance with the UCNS Certification Appeals Policies and Procedures, which can be found at <http://www.ucns.org/globals/axon/assets/11915.pdf>.

D. Irregular Behavior Including Unethical Behavior of Candidates

The UCNS believes that the ethics of candidates for certification are of concern. The following rules apply:

- Falsification of credentials will be cause for the UCNS refusal to admit a candidate to examination for up to five years.
- The UCNS will consider legal action against anyone who forges a UCNS certificate, copies a UCNS examination, or otherwise uses them in conflict with copyright laws

or in any other way violates the legal prerogatives of the UCNS. Such activities will cause for the UCNS's refusal to admit a candidate to examination for up to five years.

- Scores on examinations may be invalidated for reasons of irregular behavior. Statistical analyses may be used to confirm suspected cheating. If an examination score is invalidated, the candidate may submit a written appeal within 30 days of the notice of invalidation in accordance with the appeal policy located at <http://www.ucns.org/globals/axon/assets/11915.pdf> . If an examination score is invalidated because of irregular behavior, the UCNS will not consider the candidate for examination for a period of up to five years, depending on the irregular behavior. A new application, current application, and examination fees will be required.
- Irregular behavior shall include, but not be limited to, the following conduct:
 - Copying answers from another candidate's examination.
 - Knowingly permitting another candidate to copy one's answers on an examination.
 - Unauthorized possession, reproduction, or disclosure of examination materials or content at any time.
 - Offering any financial benefit or other benefit to any director, officer, employee, proctor, diplomate, or other agent or representative of the UCNS in return for any right, privilege, or benefit that is not granted by the UCNS to other similarly situated candidates or persons.
 - Not complying with proctors' instructions.
 - Disregarding time limits.
 - Bringing food, drink, cellular phones, pagers, books, study materials, personal belongings, or other prohibited material into an examination.
 - Making telephone calls during an examination.
 - Any other form of disruptive behavior, including repeated or excessive verbal complaints.
- Notification of the UCNS action may be sent to legitimately interested third parties, including the American Medical Association, state medical societies, medical licensing boards, and appropriate specialty societies.

E. Appeal of Decisions

An appeal process is available to individuals who disagree with the UCNS's decisions regarding their admissibility to the examination, request for special accommodations, accuracy of scoring procedure, or revocation of certification. The UCNS Certification Appeals Policies and Procedures can be found on the UCNS Website at <http://www.ucns.org/globals/axon/assets/11915.pdf>.

VI. CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about certification, contact:

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