UCNS Certification in Neurocritical Care

Eligibility Criteria and Information for Applicants

Application Deadline: July 17, 2017

Revised 6/26/17
Eligibility Criteria

**General Eligibility Criteria**

**For graduates of UCNS-accredited fellowships, recertification, and practice track reexamination applicants:**

1. Applicants must be a diplomate in good standing of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) in neurology, neurological surgery, internal medicine, anesthesiology, surgery, emergency medicine, pediatrics, or possess equivalent certification by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Candidates who have qualified for examination by the ABMS or the RCPSC, but have not yet been certified, may sit for the Neurocritical Care (NCC) examination but may not receive notification of the results until UCNS receives confirmation of successful completion of their ABMS or RCPSC examination. Candidates must sit for the ABMS or RCPSC examination in the same year as the NCC examination.

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, i.e., 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; or
e. inactive as a result of an action taken by or a request made by a medical licensing board.

**For Faculty Diplomate applicants:**

1. Applicants must have a medical diploma from an institution registered in the International Medical Education Directory, the AVICENNA Directory for Medicine, or the World Health Organization World Directory of Medical Schools;

2. Applicants must be certified in a primary specialty by a competent medical board. Such a board may include: 1) an ABMS member board or the RCPSC, 2) a specialty board of the American Osteopathic Association, 3) an appropriate board of the European Union of Medical Specialists, or 4) the medical board of the applicant’s country of origin, such board to be approved by the Certification Council; **AND**

3. Applicants must have an active, unlimited license to practice medicine or be licensed to practice medicine at the institution at which she or he has, or will have, the faculty appointment.

**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.
Eligibility Criteria

**Application Pathways**
Applicants must have completed one of the following eligibility pathways:

1. UCNS-Accredited Fellowship
2. Recertification
3. Faculty Diplomate
4. Practice Track—Reexamination Only

**UCNS-Accredited Fellowship**
Applicants must have successfully completed a UCNS-accredited fellowship in NCC. 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 25 days prior to the examination week. Confirmation from the fellowship program director stating that the applicant has successfully completed the UCNS accredited fellowship program must be received within 20 days of the fellowship program completion date.

**Recertification**
Recertification applicants are required to submit evidence of 300 hours of AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™, 20% (60) of which are specific to NCC, 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. A phase-in timetable for those diplomates certified prior to January 1, 2011, can be found on the NCC certification page of the UCNS website.

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.

**Faculty Diplomate**
Faculty Diplomate applicants must have an active, full-time appointment as a faculty member of a UCNS-accredited NCC training program or have evidence of a current offer of such an appointment. Such an offer must be written by the chairperson of the appropriate department of the academic institution and state: 1) when the appointment began or will begin, 2) that the appointment is contingent upon the applicant sitting for, and passing, the next available UCNS certification examination, and 3) that retention or recruitment of the applicant is considered by the institution to be essential to the quality of the fellowship program.

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Eligibility Criteria

Practice Track—Reexamination Only
The NCC practice track closed after the 2013 examination. Application for reexamination must occur within six years of when the initial examination was first administered to the candidate. Only those who have taken and failed a prior examination (not to exceed three attempts) are eligible to apply for reexamination under the practice track pathway.

Practice track applicants must submit the following documentation for one of the three following areas NCC:

1. Satisfactory completion of 24 months of formal training (non-accredited) in NCC that has taken place after the completion of formal residency training in neurology, neurological surgery, internal medicine, anesthesiology, surgery, pediatrics, or emergency medicine. Training or exposure to NCC given to residents as part of their standard residency curriculum will not count toward the 12 months of training. The applicant must provide documentation from the appropriate program director at each institution where training occurred.

2. At least 100 hours of AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ specifically related to NCC over the 60 months prior to the application deadline. Specification of programs attended and relevance to the field of NCC must be provided.

3. An active, full-time academic appointment in which teaching responsibilities include instructing one or more of the following in NCC: medical students, residents, and/or fellows. A letter from the applicant’s department chair must accompany the application.

In addition to 1, 2, or 3 above, the application must also contain documentation of:

   a. A 48-month period of time in which the applicant has spend a minimum of 25% of her/his time in the practice of NCC, or
   b. A 36-month period of time in which the applicant has spent a minimum of 33% of her/his time in the practice of NCC, or
   c. A 24-month period of time in which the applicant has spend a minimum of 50% of her/his time in the practice of NCC, which has occurred after the completion of a formal residency training program.

The practice must:
   i. Include diagnosis and management of the critically-ill neurologic patient.
   ii. Have occurred in the United States, its territories, or Canada.
   iii. Have occurred in the 60 months immediately preceding the application deadline but need not be continuous.

The application must contain letters from two physicians who are familiar with the applicant’s practice pattern during the practice time submitted in the application. The letters together must address an entire 48-month, 36-month, or 24-month period of time. Training or exposure to NCC given to residents as part of their standard residency curriculum cannot be counted towards the practice time requirements.

If the applicant has completed unaccredited subspecialty training, this may count towards the required 48, 36, or 24 months of practice time. For example, if an applicant completed 24 months of unaccredited training in NCC, the UCNS will count those 24 months towards the required 48, 36, or 24 months of practice time. Documentation of an additional 12 or 24 months of practice time may be required to meet the minimum requirement.
Application for Certification and Examination Process

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. UCNS provides template letters that must be used for the necessary application attachments. The template letters are available during the application cycle or upon request. Paper applications are no longer available.

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 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.

Reexamination
Candidates who fail the initial examination under the accredited fellowship or practice track pathway may repeat the examination up to two additional times; however, no candidate may take the examination more than three times. Application for reexamination must occur within six years of when the examination was first administered to the candidate. 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.

General Information and Timeline
1. Applicant submits a completed application and supporting documents and payment by July 17, 2017.
2. UCNS will review the application for completeness and contact you with questions, if any.
3. UCNS will send notice of approval or non-approval to sit for the examination only after the Certification Council has reviewed all applications.
4. If approved to sit for the examination, UCNS will provide information on scheduling your exam with Pearson VUE, admission to test locations, and preparing for a computer-based examination.
5. Applicant sits for the examination on December 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8, 2017.
6. Results will be mailed approximately ten weeks following the examination. In the interest of maintaining confidentiality, examination results are not given by telephone, facsimile transmission, or email. Please notify UCNS immediately of any address changes.

Examination Format
The NCC certification and recertification examinations are computer-based and scheduled for five hours. Initial certification examinations contain 200 multiple-choice questions. Recertification examinations contain 150 clinically based multiple-choice questions.
Payment and Fees

For the 2017 NCC examination, a completed application, supporting documentation, and all appropriate fees must be submitted to UCNS no later than **July 17, 2017**. Applications received after July 17 will not be accepted.

UCNS accepts personal checks, cashier’s checks, money orders, Visa, MasterCard, and American Express for payment. All fees must be submitted in US currency. For the examination, a completed application, supporting documentation and all appropriate fees must be received in the UCNS office by the application deadline. Applications received after the late application deadline 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 UCNS reserves the right to revise the fee schedule at any time.

**Fee Schedule**

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<th>Initial Examination</th>
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<tr>
<td>Application fee (non-refundable)</td>
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<td>Examination fee</td>
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<th>Recertification Examination</th>
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<tr>
<td>Examination fee</td>
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Applicants with Disabilities and Qualifications for Testing Accommodations

**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 the application deadline.**

If UCNS deems it necessary, an independent assessment may be requested at UCNS’s expense. 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.**

**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 to UCNS. Please visit the [Policies](#) section of this document for more information on the appeal process.
Policies

Withdrawals and Refunds
Applicants withdrawing from the examination may be eligible for a refund of their examination fee. Applicants must notify the UCNS Executive Director in writing of her/his decision to withdraw from the examination no less than three months prior to the first day of the examination week. Application fees are non-refundable. Refunds will be issued in the same method in which the original payment was received.

Certification and Recertification
UCNS 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 and who successfully passes a proctored examination in the subspecialty. 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 a UCNS subspecialty 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 all UCNS subspecialties 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 must also maintain certification in their primary specialty in order to apply for recertification.

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.

Irregular Behavior Including Unethical Behavior of Candidates
The UCNS believes that the ethics of candidates for certification are of concern. The following rules apply:

a. Falsification of credentials will be cause for the UCNS refusal to admit a candidate to examination for up to five years.
b. 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.
c. 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. 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.
Irregular Behavior Including Unethical Behavior of Candidates (continued)

d. 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.

e. 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.

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 full list of UCNS Certification Policies can be viewed on the UCNS website.
Contact

For more information regarding UCNS certification, please contact:

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