



2019 Examination

Neurocritical Care Certification Eligibility Requirements and Information

Online Application Period Opens:
April 1, 2019

Examination Date Options:
December 9-13, 2019

Early Application Deadline:
July 1, 2019

Extended Application Deadline:
July 15, 2019

Updated: 7/18/18

**Neurocritical Care
Certification Eligibility Requirements and Information**

Table of Contents

- I. Eligibility Criteria**
 - A. General
 - B. Pathways

- II. Application for Certification in Neurocritical Care**
 - A. Application
 - B. Deadline and Fees
 - C. Withdrawals
 - D. Template Letters

- III. Examination Process for Neurocritical Care**
 - A. General Information and Timeline
 - B. Initial Examination Format

- IV. Applicants with Disabilities and Qualifications for Testing Accommodations**
 - A. General Information
 - B. Review of Documentation

- V. Policies**
 - A. Refunds
 - B. Initial and Continuing Certification
 - C. Revocation of Certificates
 - D. Irregular Behavior Including Unethical Behavior of Candidates
 - E. Appeals

- VI. Contact Information**

Neurocritical Care

Certification Eligibility Requirements and Information

I. **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

The following are eligibility criteria for certification in the subspecialty of Neurocritical Care (NCC). There are general requirements that must be fulfilled as well as requirements for specific pathways of application.

A. **GENERAL**

General eligibility criteria for graduates of UCNS-accredited fellowships and reexamination applicants:

1. Applicants must be a Diplomate in good standing of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) in one of the following:
 - a. Neurology
 - b. Neurological Surgery
 - c. Internal Medicine
 - d. Anesthesiology
 - e. Surgery
 - f. Emergency Medicine
 - g. Pediatrics
 - h. Equivalent certification by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC)*.

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.

General eligibility criteria for Faculty Diplomate applicants:

- a. Applicants must have a medical diploma from an institution registered in the [World Directory of Medical Schools](#);
- b. 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 certification 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**

C.

- a. Applicants must have an active, unlimited license to practice medicine or be licensed to practice medicine in the institution at which he or she 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.

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

*Candidates who have completed a UCNS-accredited fellowship and have qualified for examination by ABMS or the RCPSC, but have not yet been certified by such board, may sit for the NCC 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 NCC examination.

B. PATHWAYS

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

1. UCNS-Accredited Fellowship
2. Faculty Diplomate
3. Practice Track – Reexamination Only
4. Recertification (not available in 2019)

1. UCNS-Accredited Fellowship

Accredited fellowship applicants must have successfully completed a [UCNS-accredited NCC fellowship program](#). The applicant must satisfactorily complete the fellowship training by the date of the application. The applicant must apply within 48 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.**

2. Faculty Diplomate

Faculty Diplomate applicants must have an active, full-time appointment as a faculty member of a UCNS-accredited 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.

3. Practice Track – Reexamination Only

The NCC practice track closed after the 2013 certification 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 examinations) are eligible to apply for reexamination under the practice track pathway.

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

- a. 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 neurology, neurological surgery, internal medicine, anesthesiology, surgery, pediatrics, or emergency medicine residents as part of their neurology, neurological surgery, internal medicine, anesthesiology, surgery, pediatrics, or emergency medicine curriculum will not count toward the 24 months of training. The applicant must provide documentation from the appropriate program director at each institution where training occurred.

OR

- b. At least 100 hours of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* specifically related to NCC over the 60 months prior to application. Specification of programs attended and relevance to the field of NCC 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 NCC: medical students, residents, or fellows.

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

- d. Documentation of a 48-month* period of time in which the applicant has spent a minimum of 25% of his or her time in the practice of NCC.

OR

- e. Documentation of a 36-month* period of time in which the applicant has spent a minimum of 33% of his or her time in the practice of NCC.

OR

- f. Documentation of a 24-month* period of time in which the applicant has spent a minimum of 50% of his or her time in the practice of NCC.

The practice must:

- i. Include direct diagnosis and management of the critically-ill neurological patient.
- ii. Have occurred in the United States, its territories, or in Canada.
- 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. If the applicant is in an academic or hospital setting, then a letter from the appropriate department chair or chief of staff will be required as one of the two letters. The letters must together address the entire 24-month, 36-month, or 48-month period of time submitted.

*If the applicant has completed unaccredited training, this may count towards the 48-month, 36-month, or 24-month period of time. For example, in option "e" above, if the applicant completed 24 months of unaccredited training in NCC, the UCNS will count these 24 months towards the 36-month period of time. Documentation of an additional 12-month period of time would then be required.

4. Recertification

No recertification examinations will be administered in 2019 during the development phase of a new continuous certification model. The UCNS is developing a new continuous certification process that will align with life-long learning and will include short online knowledge assessments. The new continuous certification process will launch in 2020. Additional information will be released as the new process is finalized.

II. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION IN NEUROCRITICAL CARE

A. Application

UCNS utilizes 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.

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.

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.

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 2019 subspecialty examination, a completed application, supporting documentation and all appropriate fees must be received in the UCNS Executive Office by July 1, 2019. Applications for certification will still be accepted until **July 15, 2019**; however, **a late fee of \$500 will be applied**. Applications received after July 15 will not be accepted.

<u>Fee Schedule</u>	<u>July 1 Early Deadline</u>	<u>July 15 Extended Deadline</u>
Initial Examination		
Application fee (non-refundable)	\$ 680	\$ 680
Examination fee	\$1,020	\$1,020
Late fee	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 500</u>
	\$1,700	\$2,200
Re-examination		
Examination fee	\$1,020	\$1,020
Late fee	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 500</u>
	\$1,020	\$1,520

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. All fees must be submitted in US currency. There is a \$50 fee for checks returned for nonsufficient funds or declined credit cards. Applications submitted without the appropriate fees will not be processed. Fees received without applications will be returned.

C. Withdrawals

The policy regarding withdrawal from the examination can be found in the [Certification Application and Examination Refund Policy](#).

D. Template Letters

Template letters must be used for the necessary application attachments. The template letters are [located on the UCNS website](#) and are available during the application cycle or upon request.

III. EXAMINATION PROCESS FOR NEUROCRITICAL CARE

A. General Information and Timeline

1. Submit completed application supporting documents and payment by July 1, 2019.
2. UCNS will review the application for completeness.
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 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 December 9, 10, 11, 12, or 13, 2019.**
7. 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 e-mail.

B. Initial Examination Format

The UCNS initial examination format is:

- Computer-based
- 200 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 July 2, 2019.

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.
- If the UCNS deems it necessary, an independent assessment may be requested at the expense of the UCNS.

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](#).

V. POLICIES

A. Refunds

Application fees are non-refundable. Qualifying refunds will be issued in the same method in which the original payment was received. The [Certification Application and Examination Refund Policy](#) outlines refund details.

B. Initial and Continuing Certification

Subspecialty certification in NCC 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 will be issued to all physicians who pass the examination. **Diplomates with certificates in the subspecialty of NCC must also maintain certification in their primary specialty. If certification in the primary specialty lapses, certification in the subspecialty is no longer valid.**

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](#).

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 [appeals policy](#).
- 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 [appeals process](#) is available to individuals who disagree with the UCNS's decisions regarding their admissibility to the examination, request for special accommodations, negative determination on examination, or revocation of certification.

VI. CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about certification, contact:

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