



## Continuous-Certification Frequently Asked Questions

*Below is a list of anticipated questions and answers relating to the new United Council for Neurologic Subspecialties (UCNS) Continuous-certification (C-cert) process. This list will be updated as additional questions arise. Can't find the answer to your question? Contact Todd Bulson, Senior Manager, Certification at [tbulson@ucns.org](mailto:tbulson@ucns.org).*

### Transition to C-cert

#### **When does C-cert begin?**

There will be transitional continuing medical education (CME) reporting requirements in 2019. C-cert officially begins January 1, 2020. All current UCNS diplomates who meet the transition criteria will automatically be enrolled in the C-cert process.

#### **Why is UCNS phasing out the 10-year certificate?**

We listened to our diplomates. Advances in medicine are ongoing and change happens quickly. The previous 10-year, time-limited certification cycle did not provide a timely assessment that diplomates were staying up-to-date on the latest science, treatments, and therapeutics relating to their subspecialty. C-cert is designed to be more convenient, flexible, current, and practice-related. The goal is to support diplomates in improving the care they provide, while upholding the high standards of UCNS certification. Supported by the findings of a 2017 UCNS diplomate survey, the C-cert model was preferred over the previous high-stakes certification examination model.

#### **Why isn't UCNS C-cert being offered as a pilot program?**

The UCNS reviewed 13 different C-cert pilot programs during the development process of the UCNS program. The C-cert process being launched by the UCNS meets the life-long learning and assessment criteria of many American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) pilot programs but is scaled to meet the unique needs of the UCNS and its diplomates while maintaining respected certification standards. Due to the size of the UCNS subspecialties, running pilot programs concurrently with the former program are not financially or administratively possible. The UCNS is committed to ongoing assessment and improvement of the new C-cert process and will seek ongoing feedback from its diplomates.

#### **My certificate states my certification is valid until the year I am due for recertification under the previous 10-year certification cycle. Why do I need to participate in C-cert?**

Effective in 2020, all UCNS diplomates who meet the requirements under the C-cert transition plan have their certification status updated to reflect compliance with the new C-cert requirements. Once the transitional and first year C-cert requirements are met, Diplomates will receive a new certificate that shows there is no expiration date. The status of all diplomate certifications will be updated annually and readily available on the UCNS website for verification by the medical community and patients.

**Are there fees for C-cert?**

Beginning in 2020, diplomates will pay an annual fee as part of their C-cert requirements. The annual \$175 administrative fee is used to offset the cost of administering the C-cert process. With the smaller annual fee, versus the large recertification examination fee, diplomates will find it easier to budget other life-long learning opportunities relative to their subspecialty and practice.

## CME Requirements

**What are the CME requirements for C-cert?**

All current diplomates will be required to attest to meeting the subspecialty-only *AMA PRA Category 1 credits™* requirements according to the pro-rated schedule. The schedule is based upon the initial or recertification examination year. This one-time, last-time reporting of subspecialty-only CME is to confirm that diplomates have kept up on their life-long learning during their previous time-limited certificate. The attestation must be completed by 12/2/19 to meet the life-long learning expected during the previous time-limited certification.

**How do I attest to my CME?**

In April 2019, the UCNS will launch a new website with improved functionality that will allow diplomates to log into their online profile to update their contact information and attest to meeting the general eligibility and CME requirements. Once the new site is ready, we will send an email to all diplomates with login information.

**Will I need to submit my CME certificates during the online attestation?**

CME certificates are not required at the time of CME attestation. Diplomates are encouraged to have their supporting documents readily available as the UCNS will conduct a CME audit in 2020, which will require selected diplomates to provide copies of the supporting CME documentation within 30 days of request.

**Will I need to submit CME credits in the future?**

After completion of the initial attestation of the subspecialty-only *AMA PRA Category 1 credits™* there will be no additional CME reporting required when C-cert requirements are met annually. Primary specialty boards have CME requirements, and since primary certification is part of the UCNS general eligibility requirements, we have reduced the redundancy of requiring diplomates to report their primary specialty CME to the UCNS. All diplomates will be emailed their CME requirements and a copy of the *CME Transition Requirements Table* can be found on the UCNS website.

## C-cert Life-long Learning

### **How will the UCNS know if I am keeping up-to-date in my subspecialty field if I am not required to submit CME credits?**

Diplomates and the subspecialty sponsoring organizations will annually identify the topics and journal articles that reflect the latest research and developments in their subspecialty field. These topics and journal resources will be compiled into an annual reading list that will be posted online for diplomates and brief annual online quizzes will assess diplomate knowledge of the reading list content. Diplomates are encouraged to pursue other life-long learning opportunities within their primary and subspecialty fields but the UCNS will not require reporting of the activities.

### **How many journal articles will I need to read annually for C-cert?**

A reading list of up to 10 journal articles for each subspecialty will be released in the early part of each year.

### **Who selects the required reading list and develops the quiz questions?**

The UCNS Examination Committees for each subspecialty are responsible for selecting the annual reading list and developing the 25-question quizzes. Examination committee members are subject matter experts nominated by the subspecialty's sponsoring organization(s).

## C-cert Learning Assessment

### **What will be the format of the new annual C-cert quizzes?**

The annual C-cert quizzes will have 25 multiple choice questions that are based on the material covered in the selected reading list of journal articles that are selected for a specific subspecialty. These quizzes are not proctored and may be taken online at your convenience. At the end of the quiz, any questions answered incorrectly will display along with the correct answers with rationale to provide an additional learning opportunity.

### **What is considered "passing" on a C-cert quiz?**

Diplomates must have a minimum score of 80% to pass the annual C-cert quizzes.

### **What if I fail the annual quiz for my subspecialty?**

Diplomates will have three opportunities to pass each of the annual subspecialty assessment quizzes. If a diplomate fails the quiz three times their status will be changed to "Not certified" and they must take and pass the next initial certification examination to reinstate their certification.

### **How much time will I have to complete an annual quiz?**

Once a diplomate starts an online quiz, they will be provided up to 100 minutes to complete the session.

### **What if I don't take the annual quiz for my subspecialty?**

Diplomates who choose not to take the annual quiz will be considered as "Certified - Not Meeting Requirements." Diplomates' certification status will reflect this until the requirements are met per the policy or their certification lapses, at which time their status is changed to "Not Certified."

## Other

### **What if I hold multiple UCNS subspecialty certifications?**

Diplomates who have multiple UCNS certifications will need to meet the C-cert requirements for each of their subspecialty certifications and pay the associated annual fees for each certification.

### **I do not intend to maintain my primary ABMS or Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) certification. Can I still participate in UCNS C-cert?**

No. Part of the UCNS diplomate eligibility requirements includes that diplomates must maintain their current ABMS or RCPSC primary certification.

### **I let my certification lapse. Is there a way I can reinstate my certification?**

Yes. Certification can be reinstated within two years of lapsing if the reinstatement criteria are met.