



Hong Kong College of Critical Care Nursing (HKCCCN)
Advanced Practice Critical Care Nurse (APCCN) Certification

CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION POLICY HANDBOOK

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CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION POLICY HANDBOOK
Hong Kong College of Critical Care Nursing (HKCCCN)
Advanced Practice Critical Care Nurse (APCCN) Certification

1. Definition & Value of APCCN Certification

1.1. Definition of APCCN Certification

Certification refers to the credentialing of individual nurse's qualification and knowledge for advanced practice in critical care area upon predetermined standards as validated by The Hong Kong Academy of Nursing. The APCCNs are models of professional accountability; they distinguish themselves through commitment to lifelong learning and professional advancement. By certification, the APCCN's knowledge and competence within the spectrum of critical care nursing is validated.

1.2. Values of Certification

Certification of APCCN is a structured credentialing system for nurses who do possess advanced knowledge and skills and demonstrate a wide spectrum of advanced competencies in critical care nursing. It is a paramount indicator for assurance of quality of critical care service that protects the community, patients, families, employers and nurses themselves in turn.

The HKCCCN believes in fairness, honesty to support our nurses to achieve certification with the ultimate goal of public protection. Thus, we will:

- ✧ be accountable to the public by upholding and consistently acting in consistence with ethical values and principles
- ✧ be accountable to the nursing profession by communicating openly and honestly; and
- ✧ vigilantly adhere to the laws of Hong Kong SAR.

Code of Ethics

Hong Kong College of Critical Care Nursing (HKCCCN) adopts and demands its members (APCCN) to comply with the ethical decision framework of *Hong Kong Nursing Council Code of Ethics for Nurses*. It acts as foundation for APCCN to fulfill responsibilities to the public, colleagues and the profession. HKCCCN believes that APCCNs have a duty to read, understand and act in a manner congruent with the *Hong Kong Nursing Council Code of Ethics for Nurses*.

To access the Hong Kong Nursing Council Code of Ethics for Nurses visit www.nchk.org.hk

2. Eligibility to Sit APCCN Certification Examination

Trainees of HKCCCN who are eligible to sit the APCCN Certification Examination should:

- be a holder of a valid license as a registered nurse certified by the Nursing Council of Hong Kong;

- be a holder of Master’s Degree in Nursing or related practice from an accredited/recognized university;
- be a registered nurse in critical care setting for at least 5 years in the most recent 6 years.
- be an associate member of HKCCCN who can provide evidence of supervised training in an intensive care setting (completed **Basic Training Log Book** with 90% signed), to demonstrate that the core content areas stipulated by HKCCCN are covered;
- have completed a recognized critical care nursing program and the charting of the **Intermediate Training Log Book**;
- have completed a minimum of 2,000 clinical practice hours in accredited training site(s) as stipulated by HKCCCN within the previous 2-3 years period, of which 1,000 Hours accrued in the most recent one year preceding the application; and
- be able to produce the signed **Higher Training Log Book**.

3. Assessment Methods & Scope of the Examination

Candidates should complete a paper with 150 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) in 3 Hours. Areas of specialization are clearly stated in the Competency Framework for Advanced Practice Nurses - Critical Care i.e. APN(CC) endorsed by HKCCCN in 2011 (Available at HKCCCN Website: www.hkcccn.org). The questions cover all the competence domains listed in the framework.

The cognitive level of test items are based on APN(CC). In addition to the questions which target at the recall of knowledge, majority of the test items are written to test candidates for their abilities at the levels of application and analysis/evaluation. Testing of the competence at higher cognitive levels provides a better indication of the candidates’ critical thinking abilities when caring for acute patients / critically ill patients and their families in the intensive care setting. Therefore, in the set of 150 MCQs, 30% to 60% should be scenario-based, and the 3 levels of cognitive ability would be addressed with recommended distribution as follows: knowledge/comprehension (20-30%); skills application (20-30%); and critical thinking (40-50%). The concerned aspects are numerous. There will be a reasonable distribution of questions under each physiological system, the synergy model of patient care recommended by AACN (American Association of Critical-care Nurses), and behavioral element as well as pharmacology element.

4. Certification Examination Administration

HKCCCN runs the certification examination once a year. Announcement will be made on the website. HKCCCN does not sponsor any revision courses for the certification examination.

4.1. Examination Dates (Exact dates to be confirmed in January each year – www@hkcccn.org)

- ✧ Opening Month for Examination Application: April

- ✧ Closing Month for Examination Application : June
- ✧ Examination Month : August

4.2. Examination Fees

- ✧ The Examination fee is HK\$1,000, which covers the cost of processing candidate's application and Pre-Membership Examination Workshop.
- ✧ Cheque should be made payable to Hong Kong College of Critical Care Nursing. Post-dated cheque will not be accepted.
- ✧ All fees must accompany the completed application form for HKCCCN to proceed with the application. Fees are subject to change without notice.
- ✧ Fees, once paid, are neither refundable nor transferable. Exceptional conditions are:
 - A charge of half of the examination fee would be required for deferral cases.
 - In the event of extreme weather or unforeseen emergencies on the day of examination, the College will determine the need to cancel and reschedule the examination. Fee will be refunded for candidates who cannot attend the rescheduled examination.
- ✧ An additional HK\$100 will be charged for a bounced cheque.

5. Application Process and Instruction for APCCN Certification Examination

5.1. Application Process

- ✧ Candidates are advised to ensure that they are an eligible candidate before processing the application procedure for examination.
- ✧ Download the examination application form & Honor Statement from HKCCCN website: www.hkcccn.org.
- ✧ Candidates must date and sign the Honor Statement before returning it to HKCCCN.
- ✧ Candidates must fill in the required documents and mail them back to HKCCCN together with the payment cheques before deadline of submission.
- ✧ Incomplete or missing information may delay the processing of application.
- ✧ HKCCCN will notify candidates via email when their applications are incomplete or when clarification is required, or if they are not eligible for the examination.
- ✧ HKCCCN will send an examination notification letter upon approval of candidate's application. The process normally takes 3-4 weeks from receiving of application.
- ✧ If candidates do not receive any reply from HKCCCN within 4 weeks of applying for an examination, candidates should contact HKCCCN via e-mail.
- ✧ If candidates desire verification of receipt of their application, they may mail their application "return receipt requested" and include a self-addressed stamped envelope, which will be mailed to them when their application are received.
- ✧ Return of the "return receipt requested" envelope indicates receipt of their application only, **NOT acceptance**.

- ✧ Candidates may be randomly selected for an audit of their examination eligibility, which could occur any time after application. If they are selected, they will be notified by email and will have 14 days to respond. Failure to respond on time or fulfill the requirements as requested, candidate will be ineligible to sit the examination.
- ✧ Once candidates have received their confirmation letter from HKCCCN, please confirm that their name on the letter matched the name on their Hong Kong Identify Card. If the information they received from HKCCCN is incorrect, please email to HKCCCN for amendment.
- ✧ Candidates should sit for the written examination according to schedule and instructions listed in the confirmation letter.
- ✧ Confidentiality of Examination Application Status
Information regarding the status of an examination application submitted to HKCCCN will not be released to anyone without the candidate's written authorization.

5.2. Acceptance

Six weeks before the examination, another official examination confirmation letter will be issued to all qualified candidates. This confirmation letter indicates the time to report for the examination and the exact address of the examination site. Candidates must bring this letter to sit for the examination.

5.3. Certification Examination Preparation

HKCCCN will endorse a "Pre-Membership Examination Workshop" to prepare candidates for the examination. Study bibliographies / references could be found at the back of this Handbook to provide candidates with resources to prepare for certification examination. To inquire about the Pre-Membership Examination Workshop, please visit www.hkcccn.org in due course.

5.4. On the day of Examination

- ✧ Candidates are advised to arrive at the examination venue 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the examination.
- ✧ Candidates are required to bring with the confirmation letters and Hong Kong Identification Card for identity verification
- ✧ If candidates bring along books, papers, other reference materials, they should leave these items with their personal belongings including purses, briefcases, and coats under their seat. HKCCCN will not be responsible for loss or damage to personal items.
- ✧ Mobile phone must be switched off throughout the examination.
- ✧ Please place your identity card and the notification email on your desk for verification.

5.5. Examination Rescheduling and Cancellation

- ✧ Special Circumstances
 - In the event that a candidate CANNOT sit for a scheduled examination due to the reasons that are beyond her/his control, e.g. illness or emergencies, she/he should apply to HKCCCN for re-scheduling of examination date. Such application has to be supported by strong reason(s) and documentary evidence, e.g. medical certificate from a doctor in case of illness. HKCCCN reserves the right to approve or disapprove an examination re-scheduling request.
 - Supporting document of the event must be submitted to HKCCCN in writing (by mail) no later than 10 days after the scheduled examination.
 - Email requests would not be accepted.
 - An administrative fee of HK\$300 would be charged.
 - Second re-scheduling request would not be entertained.
- ✧ Examination Deferral
 - Requests to defer from a scheduled examination must be received in writing one month prior to the examination date. Requests should be supported by sound reason(s). HKCCCN reserves the right to approve or disapprove an examination deferral request.
 - Email requests would not be accepted.
 - An administrative fee of HK\$300 will be charged.
 - Second deferral request would not be entertained.
- ✧ In the event of extreme weather or unforeseen emergencies on the day of examination, the College will determine the need to cancel and reschedule the examination. Fee will be refunded for candidates who cannot attend the rescheduled examination.
 - Adverse weather - If the Typhoon No. 8 or the Black Rainstorm signal is /will be* hoisted on or after the following times, examination will be cancelled:
 - 0630: All examinations before 1400 will be cancelled
 - 1000: All examinations between 1400-1800 will be cancelled
 - 1400: All examinations in that evening will be cancelled
 - The re-arrangement of examination will be announced as soon as possible. Candidates are advised to check the latest announcement at HKCCCN website:
www.hkcccn.org

**As advised by the Hong Kong Observatory*

5.6. Integrity of APCCN Candidates

Individual who removes or attempt to remove materials from the examination site by whatever means, or who receives, discusses, discloses, produces, distributes, displays or otherwise misuses a test question or any part of an examination question will be subject to legal action and monetary damages.

6. APCCN Certification Examination Result

6.1. Examination Panel

- ✧ An Examination Panel under Examination & Accreditation Committee is appointed by HKCCCN Council.
- ✧ The panel consists of 7 persons who are experienced in education and examinations:
 - 1 chief examiner
 - 6 members
- ✧ The panel shall be responsible for :
 - Approval of new examination questions which are recommended by the Education Committee.
 - Confirmation of examination questions for APCCN Certificate Examination
 - Reporting examination results and making recommendation to the HKCCCN Council through Examination & Accreditation Committee

6.2. Examination Result Endorsement

- ✧ Each examination paper will be marked and the result will be verified by 2 individual markers.
- ✧ 10% of the highest and lowest marks examination papers will be checked by Examination Panel randomly.
- ✧ Examination Panel will report examination result to Examination & Accreditation Committee together with recommendations.
- ✧ Result will be endorsed by HKCCCN council and candidate will be informed of the result by Examination & Accreditation Committee 6-8 weeks after the examination.

6.3. Passing score

The passing score required to achieve APCCN certification is the number of correctly answered questions on an examination. **The proportion is 70% of all items in the set of examination questions.** The questions are designed to test both your abilities to recall specific facts / knowledge and to apply knowledge through critical analysis / evaluation in order to perform your practice as a critical care nurse at the APCCN level. The examination is designed to assess your competence in all areas of critical care nursing at an advanced level; you are therefore required to achieve a higher percentage of correct responses than merely passing the examination.

6.4. Examination Result Notification

Candidates will receive their results about 6-8 weeks after the examination. This official result will indicate a “pass” or “fail”. Examination results are released to individual candidates in written form only. Results are **NOT** reported over the telephone or via e-mail.

6.5. Duplicate Copies of Results

Candidates are allowed to request an additional copy of their result for \$100 per copy. Candidate needs to submit her / his request and payment (by a cheque) to HKCCCN. The request must include:

- Name
- Hong Kong ID card number (first 4 alpha-numeric characters), e.g. A123
- Address
- Telephone number
- Date and type of examination taken
- Signature and date of request.

The duplicate result will be mailed to applicant within 4 weeks after receiving application.

6.6. If Candidates Do Not Pass the Examination

If candidates do not pass the examination, candidates may re-apply for examination again. The examination is to be held once every year.

6.7. Cancelled Scores

HKCCCN is responsible for the integrity of the reported scores. Occasionally a computer malfunction or misconduct of a candidate may occur and causing a score which does not truly represent competence of the candidate. HKCCCN is committed to rectify such situation as quickly as possible. HKCCCN may void examination results if investigation shows that the regulation has been violated.

6.8. Disposal of Marked Examination Paper

Marked examination paper will be destroyed by HKCCCN three years after the examination. Request to view the examination paper must be submitted to the HKCCCN in writing no later than 3 months after the result notification. HKCCCN will inform the candidates the arrangements for viewing the examination paper. Proof of identity is required. Candidates are not permitted to take a copy of the paper or take any notes. Candidates are only able to view examination paper for 15 minutes under supervision. HK\$300 fee will be charged for each request.

7. Award of APCCN Certification

7.1. APCCN Certificate

Subsequent to successful completion of the APCCN Examination, you will be conferred APCCN certification and become a full member of HKCCCN. Parchment will be available for collection at HKCCCN office about 4-8 weeks after result notification. The collection period and schedule will be posted up on HKCCCN website.

If a candidate is unable to come in person to collect the parchment, she/he may authorize another person in writing (with the HKID number of the authorized person provided) to collect it on her / his behalf. A copy of the HKID card of candidate must be attached to the authorization letter.

HKCCCN is not responsible for the safe custody of any uncollected parchment after the collection period. Uncollected parchment may be destroyed after the stipulated collection period. It is necessary for candidates to collect the parchment according to the stipulated schedules.

If candidates have lost their parchment, no replacement will be issued. However, candidates can apply a letter to certify the award obtained.

7.2. Certification of True Copy

If candidates request HKCCCN to verify their copies of certificates as true copies, candidates should make arrangement with HKCCCN in writing and bring along the original document together with a completed application form to HKCCCN office for processing. Application form will be available in HKCCCN website.

Normally, HKCCCN will only certify one copy for each application. Additional copies will only be entertained under special consideration.

8. Name and Address Changes

Candidates are responsible for notifying HKCCCN should their name and / or address change at any time before or after they become certified. Failure to do so may result in not receiving information necessary for certification renewal. Besides, candidates are responsible for renewing their certification even if they do not receive a renewal notice.

Please notify HKCCCN of any change of name or address. Candidates may update their profile through:

- ✧ Email to hkcccn@yahoo.com
- ✧ Mail to HKCCCN office: Room 6, LG1, School of Nursing,
Princess Margaret Hospital,
232 Lai King Hill Road,
Lai Chi Kok, Kowloon,
Hong Kong

9. Candidate Comments or Complaints

Should there be comments or complaints related to the certification examination, please send mail to the address below:

Hong Kong College of Critical Care Nursing
Room 6, LG1, School of Nursing,
Princess Margaret Hospital,
232 Lai King Hill Road, Lai Chi Kok, Kowloon,
Hong Kong

Full Name and address of candidate should be provided in all correspondence.

9.1 Appeal against Examination Result

All requests for appeal must be submitted in writing and should include the following:

- The reason(s) the individual believes the examination result should be reconsidered
- Any additional information requested was not submitted, if applicable
- The expected outcome of appeal

Upon receipt of a request for appeal, the Appeal Panel consisting of at least three members will review the case. Candidate will be notified in writing of the Appeal Panel's decision which shall be final.

For questions about the appeal process, please visit the HKCCCN website at www.hkcccn.org

10. Application for Fellowship

After passing the APCCN certificate examination, candidates are full members of HKCCCN. HKCCCN will recommend HKCCCN full members to be ordinary members of HKAN and full members to be fellow members of The Hong Kong Academy of Nursing (HKAN) after they have completed all the requirements and demonstrated significant contributions in nursing practice and service development. Full members who want to become fellows should complete the application form downloaded from HKCCCN website: www.hkcccn.org and mail the completed applications to HKCCCN for consideration.



Hong Kong College of Critical Care Nursing APCCN Certification Examination Application Honor Statement

Complete and submit with the application form. Please print clearly.

Processing will be delayed if this statement is incomplete or illegible

NAME: (Surname) _____ (Given Name) _____

HKCCCN Associate Membership No.: _____

I hereby apply for the Advanced Practice Critical Care Nurse (APCCN) Certification Examination offered by Hong Kong College of Critical Care Nursing (HKCCCN). I have read and understand the examination eligibility requirements, and acknowledge that certification depends upon successful completion of the specified requirements.

I possess a valid Hong Kong Registered Nurse practicing certificate which is due to expire on _____ (date). **I am/am not currently the subject of any on-going disciplinary proceeding(s) by any professional body in HK or elsewhere.** I understand that I must notify HKCCCN within 30 days if any disciplinary action is taken against my RN registration in the future.

PRACTICE: I have fulfilled the clinical practice hour requirements of 2,000 hours of direct bedside care of acutely and /or critically ill patients in the intensive care setting as Registered Nurse within the previous 3-year period, with 1,000 hours accrued in the most recent one year preceding this application.

PRACTICE VERIFICATION: The following is contact information of my clinical supervisor or a professional associate who can verify that I have met the clinical hour eligibility requirements:

Verifier's Name: _____ Facility Name: _____

Verifier's Phone Number: _____ Verifier's Correspondence Address: _____

ETHICS: I understand the importance of ethical standards and agree to act in a manner congruent with the *Code of Professional Conducts and Code of Ethics for Nurses in Hong Kong developed by the Hong Kong Nursing Council.*

AUDIT: I understand that my information supplied is subject to audit and failure to respond to a request for further information may be a sufficient cause for HKCCCN to refuse me from attending the examination, invalidate the results of my examination, withhold certification, revoke certification or take another appropriate action/s as necessary.

NON-DISCLOSURE OF EXAMINATION CONTENT: My signature on this form indicates my agreement to keep the contents of the examination confidential and not disclose or discussed with anyone except HKCCCN. By complying with and enforcing this obligation, I help maintain the integrity of the APCCN Certification Examination and the value of its certification credentials.

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in the application is true, complete, and correct and is made in good faith. I am aware that the information acquired in the certification process may be used for statistical purposes and for evaluation of the certification program.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

This form may be photocopied and is also available online at www.hkcccn.org

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