

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

AMERICAN CLINICAL BOARD OF NUTRITION

Last Updated: September 10, 2023

## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	5
About the Certification Board.....	5
Value of Certification.....	5
SECTION 1: HOW TO APPLY FOR CERTIFICATION.....	5
What is Certification?.....	5
Eligibility.....	5
Eligibility Rationale.....	6
Grandfathering.....	6
How to Apply.....	7
Certification Fees.....	7
Scheduling an Exam.....	7
Section 2: Preparing for the Examination.....	8
How the Examination is Developed.....	8
Subject Matter Experts.....	8
Job Analysis Studies.....	8
Examination Specifications.....	8
Item Writing and Review.....	8
Examination Assembly and Approval.....	8
Establishing a Passing Point.....	9
The Examination and Scoring.....	9
Topics Covered on the ACBN Examination.....	9
Section 3: Taking the Exam.....	12
What to Expect on Exam Day.....	12
Testing Sites.....	12
Proctors.....	13
Examination Admission.....	13
Taking the Exam.....	13
Special Accommodations.....	13
Cheating.....	14
Copyright Information.....	14
Certificates.....	14

Trademarks.....	15
Section 4: After the Exam.....	15
Exam Results.....	15
Re-Examination.....	15
Exam Appeals.....	15
Submitting a Request for Reconsideration.....	15
Review Process.....	16
SECTION 5: Maintaining Your Certification.....	16
Maintaining Your Certification.....	16
Requirements and Timeline.....	17
Rationale.....	17
Approved Providers.....	18
Certification Status.....	18
Limitations.....	18
Recertification Submission.....	18
Verification Process.....	19
Recertification Acceptance.....	19
New Certificants.....	19
Inactive Status.....	19
Emeritus Status.....	20
Section 6: Certificant’s Agreement.....	20
Purpose.....	20
Certificant’s Agreement.....	20
Section 7: Policies.....	20
Application Verification.....	20
Failure to Demonstrate Eligibility.....	21
Confidentiality.....	21
Certification Verification.....	21
Aggregate Data.....	22
Confidentiality Agreements.....	22
Confidential Materials.....	22
Access to Confidential Information.....	22

Records Retention.....	22
Statement of Nondiscrimination and Contention with All Laws.....	22
Use of Credential.....	23
Section 8: Complaints and Disciplinary Actions.....	23
Sanctions.....	23
Appeal.....	24
Resignation.....	25
Section 9: Forms.....	25
Application Form(s).....	25
Request for Accommodations Form.....	25

## INTRODUCTION

### About the Certification Board

The American Clinical Board of Nutrition (ACBN) is a testing agency that certifies qualified doctoral level health care providers seeking Board Certification in nutrition. The ACBN is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), and a member of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE). The ACBN adheres to a number of rigorous criteria regarding the conduct of its credentialing program. All ACBN examinations are constructed and administered in accordance with methodologies recognized by psychometric and credentialing communities.

### Value of Certification

The mission of the American Clinical Board of Nutrition is to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the public through an examination and certification process that assesses professional and clinical competence of health care providers in nutrition.

The purpose of the ACBN's DACBN certification program is to enact change on the traditional health care industry in the United States by certifying advanced, doctoral-level professionals who are focused on providing a nutritional model of preventative health care in a variety of professional settings. The ACBN conducts certification activities in a manner that upholds standards for competent practice in the healthcare specialty of clinical nutrition.

The ACBN conducts a certification exam that adequately measures the knowledge and skill required to earn and maintain the DACBN credential. A job analysis study is conducted every five years in order to ensure the validity and currency of the exam content. The ACBN conducts certification activities to assure public safety, quality assurance and clinical competence.

## SECTION 1: HOW TO APPLY FOR CERTIFICATION

### What is Certification?

A Diplomate of the American Clinical Board of Nutrition (DACBN) is an advanced-level professional who practices clinical nutrition as a model of preventative health care in their respective health care setting and role. The individual has earned a professional doctorate degree and completed specialized postgraduate training in the field of clinical nutrition and has a high level of knowledge and skill as demonstrated by meeting the DACBN eligibility requirements and successfully passing the DACBN exam. Certified professionals may work in a variety of health care professions such as chiropractic physicians, medical physicians, dentists, naturopathic doctors, doctors of pharmacy, and other physicians in the medical field. DACBNs practice throughout the United States in a variety of settings, such as private offices, hospitals, nursing homes, hospice care, health care facilities, community settings, and research facilities.

### Eligibility

ACBN has developed eligibility requirements for the certification program that ensure the application process is fair and impartial for all. Applicants for the DACBN-credential must meet the following criteria in order to earn certification:

1. Doctorate: The applicant shall be a healthcare professional, holding a professional Doctoral Degree with an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, an Agency having a reciprocal agreement with the recognized agency, or the foreign equivalent, in good standing and with no disciplinary actions.
2. Training: Have completed 300 clock hours of specialized training in nutrition from an institution/provider that meets at least one of the following criteria:
  - a. An accredited college, university, foundation, or other institution.
  - b. An agency having a reciprocal agreement with an accredited institution.
  - c. A healthcare provider who has completed a 300-hour residency program from an accredited college, university or other institution or an agency having a reciprocal agreement with an accredited institution:
    - i. The Board must approve residency programs used toward this criteria. The residency program must supply the number of hours of teaching experience, research, and training in which the applicant participates in a document on the organization's letterhead and signed by the program's director.
3. Writing Submission: Submit proof of publication or proof of acceptance for publication of a clinical nutrition article in a Board approved peer reviewed journal. Board approved peer-reviewed journals include, but are not limited to: Nutritional Perspectives, Journal of Nutrition, JMPT, American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Journal of Chiropractic Medicine, Nutrition Reviews, etc.
4. Experience: Have a minimum of one year experience in the practice of nutrition.
5. Application and Fees: Submit a completed application with all required documentation, including full payment, and receive the notice of eligibility from ACBN. Candidate must submit the application by emailing or mailing the application, and send payment payment to ACBN digitally or by mailed check.
6. Exam: Pass the DACBN written examination.

## Eligibility Rationale

1. Doctorate: Candidates must demonstrate the level of competency and ability to provide care in the interest of a patient's health and safety as is obtained by holding a doctorate in good standing in the healthcare profession as a doctor.
2. Training: Considering the knowledge requirements of the content areas covered by the DACBN exam and the amount of time necessary to study these practice areas, in detail, in an accredited education course, the ACBN established the 300 clock hour education requirement to demonstrate that an applicant has received proper and extensive education in the field of clinical nutrition.
3. Writing Submission: Candidates must demonstrate the ability to apply competency in the scope of practice and professional writing and research documentation skills.
4. Experience: Holding the DACBN requires ample clinical practice experience within the doctor's scope of practice and in nutrition to demonstrate one's ability to practice competently and in the best interest of the health and safety of the patient.

5. Exam: Successful completion of the written DACBN exam, which covers the six domains identified by the job analysis survey as critical to the practice of clinical nutrition, demonstrates a candidate's knowledge and ability to recall and apply that knowledge to clinical scenarios.

## Grandfathering

The Board does not grandfather candidates and requires everyone earning the DACBN credential to have successfully fulfilled all published eligibility criteria, including passing of the examination.

## How to Apply

Applications may be downloaded from the ACBN website: [www.acbn.org](http://www.acbn.org)

When submitting an application, candidates should pay strict attention to the required documentation. It is the candidate's responsibility to keep abreast of the progress of the application and to aid in the timely response of references and required documentation.

The process is composed of the application, certificant agreement, non-disclosure form and two attestation forms. All forms must be completed, two passport photos, proof of 300 nutritional hours through an accredited college and payment in the amount of \$1,000 paid digitally or mailed to:

ACBN Headquarters  
1665 East 31st Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11234  
Phone: (540) 635 8844  
Email: [contact@acbn.org](mailto:contact@acbn.org)

The ACBN complies with all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal and state laws. The ACBN aims to provide an equitable testing opportunity for candidates to demonstrate the knowledge and skill measured by the examination. As such, ACBN will accommodate reasonable accommodation requests for those with a documented disability.

Applicants requesting a testing accommodation in accordance with the ADA should complete the Accommodations Request Form and include it with the exam application. Applicants requesting an accommodation should submit the application and request form at least three months prior to the exam date to allow proper time for ACBN to review the request and make preparations for the accommodation.

Appropriate documentation, such as an official, signed letter from a licensed healthcare provider confirming the disability and recommending a specific, reasonable accommodation, must be submitted with the request. The ACBN treats this information with strict confidentiality and it will not be shared with any source, without the candidate's express written permission.

## Certification Fees

The fee for examination is \$1,000 payable by check or online digital payment.

## Scheduling an Exam

The Examination leading to a diplomate in clinical nutrition may be given by an approved proctor at a college, library or legal office or an individual approved by the Board. The candidate is to make first contact with the proctor and the ACBN administrator will follow up with required documents of instruction. The candidate must sit for the Written Exam within six weeks of the date the application is approved.

If six (6) or more candidates graduate from one program and wish to take the exam as a group, the ACBN will provide proctor(s) to be at the location and time requested.

## Section 2: Preparing for the Examination

### How the Examination is Developed

The ACBN examination is intended to evaluate the competence of qualified health care providers in the field of clinical nutrition. The test addresses current areas defined and validated by subject-matter experts, educators and individuals working in their respective fields.

The Executive Board oversees the certification program's examination development and ongoing maintenance with the Examining Committee in order to ensure that the development and continuous maintenance of the examinations are conducted under generally accepted psychometric practices and national accreditation standards for certification programs.

### Subject Matter Experts

Consistent with the responsibilities of the Examining Committee, subject matter experts (SMEs) who contribute to exam development are selected to represent the certified population in terms of expertise and experience level, specialty area, and demographic characteristics.

SMEs are appointed as needed to committees or other work groups by the Executive Board President. Members of the Board are eligible to participate as SMEs, except for the public member who is eligible to participate in examination development activities as an observer. To act as an ACBN SME, an individual must meet the minimum requirements for eligibility for the DACBN credential. A SME may not teach classes or in any way participate in the development or administration of the 300-hour nutrition education program.

### Job Analysis Studies

Job Analysis Studies serve to identify and validate the knowledge and skills assessed by the examination of the DACBN credential. The results of the Job Analysis are the basis for the examination. The ACBN conducts a job analysis for the DACBN certification program every five years. This determination is based on the size of the candidate pool and the rate of change in the field of clinical nutrition.

### Examination Specifications

The DACBN examination content outline and corresponding content area weights are determined by the results of the Job Analysis Study. The final content outline and corresponding content weights are approved by the Executive Board after recommendation by the Job Analysis Committee.



## Item Writing and Review

Exam item development is directly linked to the approved content outline.

Once a SME writes an item, it is reviewed by the Item Writing Committee, the Exam Committee and the Executive Board. A SME does not review their own work. After any necessary edits and a satisfactory review, the item is added to the item bank. Items are reviewed a second time before being included in a test form (see Examination Assembly and Approval).

## Examination Assembly and Approval

A draft examination based on the current content outline will be assembled and reviewed by the Item Writers Committee and Examining Committee. Each draft will meet the requirements of the test specifications with respect to content and weighting. The Examining Committee and Item Writing Committee review the current exam form and remove outdated items as well as items that are poorly performing based on item-level statistics. The number of items replaced will be determined by how many candidates have taken the exam. New items are added to the exam form from the item bank as to ensure adherence to the exam content outline. New questions that are written for the examination are reviewed by the Examining Committee. The Examining Committee will review a final version of the exam and approve or make appropriate changes to reflect current trends in the field of nutrition identified in the job analysis survey.

## Establishing a Passing Point

The American Clinical Board of Nutrition (ACBN)'s Diplomate of the American Clinical Board of Nutrition (DACBN) Certification Examination is intended for individuals who wish to be certified in the practice of clinical nutrition. The purpose of this certification is to protect the public through identification of qualified practitioners who meet the certifying body's established minimum competency requirements. The examination measures knowledge associated with the practice of clinical nutrition. Thus, the examination represents a comprehensive assessment of the knowledge base for this practice. To certify that a minimal level of knowledge has been acquired, it is necessary to identify the score, or pass point, on the examination that best signifies acquisition of this knowledge. The pass point is determined using a modified-Angoff method, which is a criterion-referenced passing point procedure and is used commonly to establish passing points for credentialing examinations. A committee of subject matter experts participate in the passing point procedure under the direction and guidance of a psychometrician.

## The Examination and Scoring

The written examination is in two (2) sections, each containing 75 multiple-choice questions, totaling 150 questions. Each section has a time limit of 1 1/2 hours with a 15-minute supervised break in between. The break is not required, but is allowed at the half-way point.

Each multiple-choice question has only one correct answer of the four choices provided. There is no penalty for guessing; therefore, candidates should provide responses to all questions. A candidate's score is based on the total number of questions answered correctly on the entire examination. Pass/fail status is determined on the entire examination.

On the date of the test administration, the candidate will be provided the examination and a separate answer sheet. The answer sheet may be a computerized form. All responses to the questions must be marked on the answer sheet.

### Topics Covered on the ACBN Examination

1. Nutritional consultation, case history & physical examination including anthropomorphic measurements.
2. Nutritionally related biochemistry, physiology & pathology to include carbohydrates, proteins, fats, energy metabolism, vitamins, minerals, trace elements, and water.
3. Diagnostic evaluation in clinical nutrition, including functional laboratory analysis by blood, stool, saliva, hair, urine, special studies and radiography
4. Geriatrics – anti-aging, longevity and degenerative diseases.
5. Pediatric nutrition, pregnancy, and lactation.
6. Female nutrition including menarche through menopause. This is also to include male nutrition including prostate and urological problems.
7. G.I. nutrition including parenteral nutrition.
8. Renal nutrition and male specific problems.
9. Endocrine and metabolic disorders, including stress.
10. Sports nutrition including trauma.
11. Musculo-skeletal disorders and syndromes.
12. Neurological and psychiatric disorders including neurotransmitters and neuromodulators.
13. Herbs, botanicals, and homeopathy, nutrient-nutrient, drug-nutrient, and herb-drug interactions and reactions.
14. How to write a scientific paper/case history for publication and perform literature searches.
15. Allergies and immunological disorders including HIV/AIDS and infections.
16. Cardiovascular and pulmonary nutrition.
17. Bariatrics including obesity, weight loss and eating disorders.
18. Nutritional considerations in cancer.
19. Psychology of nutrition, food preparation and public issues.
20. Cultural, religious, and ethnic dietary concerns.

Every candidate must write a nutrition oriented article with at least ten (10) references suitable for publication

The examination covers the following six domains: History, Examination, Assessment, Diagnosis, Treatment, and Follow-up.

Test Specifications		
Domains and Task Statements	Test Weights	Number of Test Questions
Domain I: History	19.00%	28.50
Task 1.1: Obtain the patient's reason for seeking consultation to determine why he/she is seeking care/advice using written and verbal intakes.	9.00%	13.50
Task 1.2: Obtain the patient's past history (e.g., medical, surgical, social, family) to evaluate the patient's problems using written and verbal intake data.	10.00%	15.00
Domain II: Examination	19.00%	28.50
Task 2.1: Evaluate patient to determine health status using anthropometric methods.	3.50%	5.25
Task 2.2: Evaluate patient to determine health status using physical methods.	4.00%	6.00
Task 2.3: Evaluate patient to determine health status using observational methods.	4.00%	6.00
Task 2.4: Evaluate patient to determine health status using biochemical methods.	4.00%	6.00
Task 2.5: Evaluate patient to determine health status using neuropsychological methods.	3.50%	5.25
Domain III: Assessment	15.00%	22.50
Task 3.1: Assess health status using anthropometrics to evaluate body composition.	3.00%	4.50
Task 3.2: Assess health status using imaging to evaluate structural components (e.g., neuromuscular, visceral, functional).	3.00%	4.50
Task 3.3: Assess health status using laboratory methods to evaluate physiological homeodynamics (e.g., blood, hair, tissue, urine, fecal, salivary).	3.00%	4.50
Task 3.4: Assess health status using electro diagnostic methods to evaluate neurodynamics (e.g., NCV, EMG, SEP, BAER, EEG).	3.00%	4.50

Task 3.5: Assess health status using questionnaires to evaluate patient's perception of current condition(s).	3.00%	4.50
Domain IV: Diagnosis	15.00%	22.50
Task 4.1: Describe the patient's clinical status using appropriate diagnostic or other descriptive terminology to classify conditions and to determine treatment or referral.		
Domain V: Treatment	19.00%	28.50
Task 5.1: Recommend and/or apply a therapeutic protocol to address the patient's diagnosed condition, using appropriate methodology (e.g., altering lifestyle, nutritional intervention, stress reduction).		
Domain VI: Follow-up	13.00%	19.50
Task 6.1: Document and evaluate response to treatment using serial testing (e.g., anthropometrics, imaging, physiological homeodynamics, neurodynamics, and questionnaires) to determine effectiveness of treatment and attainment of patient's expectations.		
Total	100.00%	150.00

## Section 3: Taking the Exam

### What to Expect on Exam Day

The following rules are enforced on exam day:

- Candidates may not bring personal belongings to their workstation on exam day. Any personal belongings, including coats, handbags, backpacks, cell phones, electronic devices, and other items, must be left at the front of the room with the proctor and may not be accessed during the exam. Candidates are advised to leave as many of their personal belongings in their cars or at home as possible.
- Cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off and stowed with the proctor. The use of these is prohibited in the testing area.
- Candidates are advised to visit the restroom before entering the exam room. A candidate who must use the restroom during the exam period, will be escorted by one of the proctors. Only one candidate may use the restroom at a time.
- Food, drinks, and tobacco are not permitted in the testing room.
- Caps with bills may not be worn during the testing session.
- No testing materials may be taken from the room. All test materials must be returned to the proctor at the end of the session.
- Late arrivals are not admitted.

### Testing Sites

All examination sites meet the following criteria:

- Examination rooms will be quiet and free of disruption
- Rooms will have adequate and comfortable ventilation, lighting, and temperature
- All exam administrations will be monitored by approved proctors as noted below
- Adequate seating space will be provided for the written exam to reduce distractions and so that test candidates cannot see each other's work (four feet apart in every direction)
- Entrances/exits will be monitored/controlled and working fire exits will be available
- A clock will be visible for all test candidates
- The test site will be accessible in compliance with the ADA
- Candidates will have access to water and restroom facilities

An ACBN representative may visit an examination site at any time to ensure its compliance with ACBN policies and procedures.

## Proctors

Before proctoring an exam, ACBN proctors will receive an introductory letter and the proctor instructions which outline the administration requirements and the testing process. The proctor will sign an attestation to uphold the policies and procedures of the ACBN and the exam administration rules. Proctors also sign a Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest agreement and are asked to disclose any interest in other nutrition organizations, schools or nutritionally-related companies that supply nutritional products. Training of exam administration rules is facilitated by ACBN Staff in consultation with the psychometric consultant if needed. A letter of introduction is included with the exam materials as well.

Every examination administration will be monitored by at least one qualified proctor at designated testing locations. Qualified proctors have been vetted by the ACBN and watched a training video.

Proctors at each test site will:

- Sign a confidentiality and conflict of interest agreement
- Manage candidate sign-in and verify candidate identity
- Administer pre-approved ADA accommodations as directed by ACBN Staff
- Address any candidate or other site problems as needed
- Maintain the confidentiality of the DACBN exam before, during, and after administration and ensure that all test materials are returned to ACBN
- Report any exam-related incidents or security concerns directly and promptly to ACBN Staff

## Examination Admission

Candidates arriving at the examination site, prior to receiving their name badge and before entering the examination room, must present to the proctors at least two forms of identification; one of these must be a government-issued, photo ID, such as a passport, driver's license, or military identification. The secondary form of identification may include any of the above or a credit card. Examinees not providing acceptable identification will be refused admission to test and will be required to pay a re-examination fee and reschedule the testing appointment. Proctors are responsible for maintaining the security and confidentiality of the examinations which will be mailed by sealed, traceable means to/from ACBN and the proctor.

## Taking the Exam

The DACBN examination consists of 150 multiple-choice questions. The examination is given by paper-and-pencil administration at testing sites determined by the ACBN. The examination is divided into two parts of 75 questions each, Part I and Part II, and 1 and ½ hours is allowed to complete each part with a 15-minute break between the two parts. The examination application, fee, deadlines, and other information are published in the Candidate Handbook and on the web site.

**Breaks:** Candidates are allowed a 15-minute supervised break between Parts I and II of the examination. Candidates are monitored during the break to ensure there is no communication or unauthorized behavior. If only one candidate is testing, he/she may elect to skip the break and continue with Part II of the exam.

## Special Accommodations

ACBN Staff will ensure that the designated proctor(s) is aware of the accommodation being provided and any of the proctor's responsibilities in delivering the accommodation. ACBN Staff will contact the applicant directly to confirm the determination of the request and advise how the accommodation will be administered.

## Cheating

Those suspected of cheating are subject to disciplinary actions as detailed in the complaints and disciplinary policy in this handbook.

Proctors are given specific instructions regarding cheating. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to candidates: copying from one another or speaking to one another during the test administration, using study notes or other information, copying or reproducing any test materials, or removing or attempting to remove test materials from the exam room.

If a proctor is witness to such behavior, the examinee will be allowed to finish that part of the examination so as not to disturb other test takers. Once the exam part is completed, the proctor will immediately gather up all test materials from the examinee in question and advise them of the infraction. This will conclude the candidate's testing session. If the ACBN reviews and confirms the allegations of inappropriate behavior, the examination will not be graded. Depending on the circumstances and severity of the inappropriate behavior, ACBN and the Executive Board have the right to refuse an additional testing opportunity for the candidate.

## Copyright Information

After a candidate receives written notice that he/she has earned the DACBN designation, the certificant may use the credential for as long as certification is maintained as active and in good standing. By the specified date, certificants must complete the recertification requirements to remain an active certificant in good standing.

Proper use of the credential includes displaying it in capital letters after a certificant's name, following any academic degree and licensure, such as John Doe, M.D., DACBN.

Use of the certification mark is only allowed in published materials, etc. and is only allowed during the time in which the certification is valid. Upon revocation or lapse of certification, individuals must discontinue use immediately.

Certificants who are retired and are not in active practice may hold the Emeritus status after providing sufficient evidence and receiving permission from ACBN to do so. Therefore, the individual would list his/her name as John Doe, M.D., DACBN-Emeritus.

## Certificates

Candidates who pass the ACBN examination will receive an official certificate within three months of the completion of scoring. Certificates will include the name, date of initial certification and a statement that the credential must be renewed annually. New certificants will also be added to the ACBN's published list of certificants as described in the Confidentiality Policy within three months of the completion of scoring.

## Trademarks

The ACBN holds the following trademarks:

Diplomate American Clinical Board of Nutrition

DACBN

American Clinical Board of Nutrition

ACBN

## Section 4: After the Exam

### Exam Results

Candidates use Scantron sheets to enter their answer selections. Once the ACBN receives the sheet, it is hand scored. ACBN will perform hand-scoring if any irregularities or other circumstances warrant it or if an official request and hand-scoring fee is submitted by the candidate within 60 days of the release of scores

Following scoring of the examination, candidates will receive a letter notifying them of their examination performance within six to eight weeks of completion of the exam. Candidates' examination results include the candidates' total score (i.e., the number of test questions answered correctly), the number of questions needed to pass the examination, and candidates' pass/fail status. Pass/fail status indicates whether the candidate has demonstrated the knowledge required to meet the certifying body's established minimum competency requirements.

Passing candidates receive a letter indicating their exam score relative to the passing score. Certificates will also be mailed to passing candidates within three months of exam scoring.

Candidates who have failed will receive a letter indicating their exam scores relative to the passing score. They will be advised they may re-examine in 30 days.

### Re-Examination

A candidate who fails the exam may retake the exam up to three times within three years of the initial application date. Each exam retake request must be made in writing to ACBN and requires a \$250 retake fee. Because

candidates are not provided with information about which questions they answered correctly/incorrectly, candidates are allowed to retake the exam after a 30-day waiting period.

A candidate may petition the Executive Board after the fourth attempt for a final testing opportunity within the eligibility period; however, the candidate must provide evidence of having a preceptorship by a DACBN-certified individual for at least one year and receive a letter of recommendation for the exam from the preceptor.

A candidate who fails after this final attempt must reapply for the exam and pay the full application fee after having completed an additional 100 hours of nutrition education as acceptable to the Board.

## Exam Appeals

### Submitting a Request for Reconsideration

An applicant whose eligibility for initial certification or a certificant whose eligibility for recertification has been denied, may request that ACBN reconsider the decision. Candidates who receive a failing grade on the exam may request the exam be rescored.

### Review Process

#### Initial or Recertification Eligibility

The request must be submitted in writing to ACBN Staff within 30 days of receiving notice of the adverse decision. Once ACBN Staff has received a written request for an appeal of the Executive Board's eligibility determination, a group of at least three Grievance Committee members not associated with the initial determination will review the request and applicable materials. This committee will meet within 30 days of the request to consider the appeal. The applicant may supply new information or additional details for the committee to consider. The committee's decision will be sent to the applicant by certified mail within 15 days of the meeting.

#### Exam Rescoring

ACBN must receive rescoring requests in writing no later than 60 days following the release of the candidate's original score. A non-refundable fee of \$50.00 must accompany the request. Candidates will receive the results of the hand scoring within 30 days of the request.

Requests received after 60 days of release of the original score will not be honored. Hand scoring of any previous examinations will not be honored.

#### Exam Decisions

Failing candidates who experience incidents during the testing experience in conflict with the requirements of the Exam Administration policy or negative behaviors of the exam proctor, may file an appeal to request further action within 7 days of the receipt of exam results. All supporting information should be submitted at this time.

The Grievance Committee will review these appeals and information from all involved parties to render its decision within 30 days of receipt of the appeal.



If the candidate wishes to appeal the decision of the Grievance Committee, it may file a final appeal to the Executive Board. The information submitted with the initial appeal will be reviewed. The Executive Board will review the appeal at its next regularly scheduled meeting, and the candidate will be informed of the decision. The Executive Board's decision is final.

## SECTION 5: Maintaining Your Certification

### Maintaining Your Certification

Since all certificants are physician-level providers; and it is reasonable to assume that they desire an active credential since they are engaged in some combination (any or all) of active clinical practice, research, and or teaching/academics, which exposes them to situations where the *most current* information is valuable to accomplishing those activities; therefore, annual, mandatory completion of 12 or more classroom hours of approved CE and/or doing the necessary investigation (review of current research and literature) to publish or teach is appropriate to maintain active certification.

ACBN requires certificants complete recertification activities each year of their two-year certification cycle to ensure that Diplomates stay abreast of advances in the ever-changing field of clinical nutrition. Fulfilling the recertification requirements ensures that certificants complete professional development activities that are within the scope of the DACBN credential and provide a means for certificants to enhance their competency in clinical nutrition. ACBN defines continuing competency as "demonstrating specified levels of knowledge, skills, or ability not only at the time of initial certification but throughout an individual's professional career."

The annual recertification fee is \$300.00. Recertification fees are due January 1 of the up-coming year. Per the recertification reminder letters, certificants can send in the fee until January 31 for no extra fee and between January 31 and February 28 with an additional \$500 fee.

### Requirements and Timeline

Recertification of the DACBN credential is required every year with completion of Year A or Year B requirements and payment of the recertification fee by December 31 of each year. Certificants must alternate their CE activities between the Year A and Year B requirements.

New certificants' first educational recertification cycle begins the year following that in which they pass the exam. For example, if a candidate takes and passes the exam in June, the first educational recertification begins the following year and will be due by the following December 31. Recertification fees are pro-rated according to the month the doctor receives the DACBN status.

Certificants must meet the following recertification requirements in order to maintain the designation in good standing:

1. Pay the annual certification fee.
2. Satisfy annual educational requirements on an alternating basis of Year A and Year B:
  - a. Year A: Attend at least one ACBN-approved educational seminar to earn a minimum of 12 CE credits

- b. Year B: Complete at least one of the following activities that demonstrates maintaining continuing competence in clinical nutrition:
  - i. Teach clinical nutrition at an accredited college, university, or other institution for a minimum of 12 credit hours. Typical courses are considered three (3) credit hours each, and so the requirement is met by teaching four (4) clinical nutrition courses (generally). If the certificant earns partial credit for this activity, the remainder can be made up by attending a nutritional seminar for the required number of credit hours (activity iv);
  - ii. Submit proof of publication or proof of acceptance for publication of a clinical nutrition article in a Board approved peer reviewed journal. Board approved peer-reviewed journals include, but are not limited to: Nutritional Perspectives, Journal of Nutrition, JMPT, American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Journal of Chiropractic Medicine, Nutrition Reviews, etc.
  - iii. Submit proof of publication or acceptance of publication for two clinical nutrition case studies in a Board approved peer reviewed journal. Board approved peer-reviewed journals include, but are not limited to: Nutritional Perspectives, Journal of Nutrition, JMPT, American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Journal of Chiropractic Medicine, Nutrition Reviews, etc.
  - iv. Attend an ACBN approved or recognized nutrition seminar for 12 credit hours. The reviewed and approved seminars for Year A and Year B are included in the Members Only section of the website under Recertification. These seminars have applied to the ACBN and been reviewed & approved, only seminars on the lists will be accepted.
- 3. Hold a professional healthcare doctorate in good standing and with no disciplinary actions.

## Rationale

Due to the advances in the ever-changing field of clinical nutrition, the ACBN requires that CE activities are completed each year.

- a. The Year A requirement ensures that the certificant is up to date on current nutrition trends and protocol to ensure the health and safety of the public.
- b. The Year B CE options demonstrate continued competence as follows:
  - i. Teaching a clinical nutrition course at an accredited institution demonstrates continued competency and knowledge of current nutrition procedures, protocol, and trends.
  - ii. The ability to research and write a nutritional paper with at least ten references, suitable for publication demonstrates a certificant's knowledge and continued competence of current clinical nutrition topics.
  - iii. The ability to research and write two case studies demonstrates a certificant's knowledge and continued competence of current clinical nutrition topics.
  - iv. Participating in a clinical nutrition course at an accredited institution demonstrates continued competency and knowledge of current nutrition procedures, protocol, and trends.

## Approved Providers

In adherence with the Year A recertification requirements, candidates must complete an ACBN-approved nutrition seminar for at least 12 CE credits. To be considered for approval, the sponsoring organization must submit the Seminar Application form. The seminar must meet the following criteria:

1. Submitted to ACBN for approval 120 days prior to the event; exceptions can be requested post seminar on a case by case basis.
2. Sponsored by an accredited college, university or other organization or by an organization with a reciprocal agreement with an accredited college, university, or other organization
  - a. Required Documentation: letter from the organization describing its sponsorship of the event, the number of approved credits for participants, and the states CE applies to, if applicable;
3. Demonstrate that the event's speakers have sufficient expertise in the subject matter presented
  - a. Required Documentation: Speaker's CV and documentation including the content of the speaker's lecture and corresponding credit hours and any potential conflict of interest, such as mention of a product or service during the presentation for which the speaker has a professional or personal interest
  - b. Lecture slides must be submitted in .pdf or powerpoint format to document nutrition content.
4. Demonstrate the event's nutritional content;
  - a. Include an hr x hr of the program
5. Include applicable administrative fees

Once ACBN Staff confirms receipt of the form, documentation, and fees, the application and documentation will be turned over to the Programs Review Committee which will review and issue a decision as to the acceptability of the course. If accepted, the seminar and a website link will be published on the web site as an approved seminar for certificant reference.

## Certification Status

A certificant's failure to complete all recertification requirements or pay applicable fees following the required timeline will result in loss of the DACBN credential. Certificants whose active certification status is allowed to lapse must stop use of the DACBN designation immediately.

## Limitations

While not all forms of continuing education provide equal professional development, ACBN aims to make best use of a certificant's continuing education opportunities by approving providers/seminars that are evaluated for quality and relevancy as part of the recertification requirements. Regardless of the source, all credits earned must be applicable to the field of clinical nutrition.

## Recertification Submission

Certificants receive notice of the educational and financial requirements of maintaining certification after initially earning the DACBN credential. The requirements are also available on the web site. Candidates who have not met the educational requirements by August 1st for the current year receive a reminder letter and a notice of fees due statement bi-weekly in August, September, October, November, and December until they have completed the requirements.

## Verification Process

Diplomates who are completing Year A requirements must mail or email to ACBN the certificate of attendance or college transcript from the completed educational seminar which should include the name and address of the individual, title of the course, sponsoring institution, number of hours completed, date, and location. ACBN will confirm that the seminar is an Approved ACBN Seminar for the Year A requirement. This list is on the website

acbn.org under Approved Seminars in the Members Only section. Completion of a seminar for the Year A or B requirement that is not pre-approved as indicated on the ACBN web site does not meet the requirements.

Diplomates who are completing Year B requirements must email ACBN the following documentation depending on the CE activity chosen as outlined in the Recertification Requirements policy:

- Teaching: Provide the seminar title and date, the college or university at which it was held
- Article Submission: Submit proof of publication or acceptance for publication of a clinical nutrition article in a Board-Approved peer reviewed journal.
- Case Study Submission: Submit proof of publication or acceptance for publication of two clinical nutrition case studies in a Board-Approved peer reviewed journal.
- Seminar: Provide the transcript from the Approved or Recognized Seminar that was attended.

## Recertification Acceptance

Diplomates who successfully complete all recertification requirements for the year will receive a letter of confirmation stating that the requirements have been met. Those who do not meet the recertification requirements will receive a letter stating such and advising the individual that they no longer hold the credential and are not authorized to use the DACBN for professional or personal purposes.

## New Certificants

New certificants' first educational recertification cycle begins the year following that in which they pass the exam. For example, if a candidate takes and passes the exam in June, the first educational recertification begins the following year and will be due by the following December 31. Recertification fees are prorated according to the month the doctor receives the DACBN status.

## Inactive Status

A certificant who is experiencing an extenuating life circumstance, such as a major illness, that prevents him/her from obtaining the necessary CE credits may enter an inactive certification status for a period of one (1) year, with an evaluation of the situation completed after the first year. A recertification fee of \$100 will be required during the year when on Inactive Status. The educational recertification requirements must be made up for the year the doctor was on Inactive Status prior to the doctor regaining his/her Diplomat Status.

If the certificant continues the Inactive Status the second year, educational requirements must ALSO be made up for that year prior to regaining active status and the recertification fee of \$100 is also payable. The Inactive Status requires prior Board approval and may be for one year unless a second year is required. Re-evaluation is done prior to the second year being granted. There is a two year limit on the Inactive Status, after which time, the doctor will either have to go back on Active Status and meet all requirements to maintain the DACBN credential or be decertified and lose the DACBN credential. If the individual loses the credential, he/she must submit an application and take and pass the DACBN Examination in order to regain the DACBN credential. Inactive certificants may not use the DACBN designation in any form except on their CV (and must indicate the inactive status) and will be listed on the DACBN website as Inactive Status.

If prior Board approval is not requested before the recertification due date, the certificant must apply for and take the DACBN exam in order to reinstate the credential.

## Emeritus Status

A certificant who is retired and not in active practice may hold the DACBN-Emeritus credential. A certificant must provide evidence of absence from active practice and will not be considered an active certificant. The certificant will be listed as DACBN-Emeritus on the credential verification page. Certificants who hold Emeritus Status pay a \$100 annual fee to maintain the DACBN-Emeritus but have no continuing education obligations.

## Section 6: Certificant's Agreement

The ACBN Certificant's Agreement applies to all DACBN applicants, candidates, and certificants. Applicants will attest to the professional responsibilities outlined in the Agreement as part of the application process for initial certification. Disciplinary action as outlined in the Disciplinary Policy may result from a violation of any portion of Certificant's Agreement. The Certificant's Agreement will be publicly available.

### Purpose

The Certificant's Agreement establishes the basic ethical guidelines for professional behavior and standards of practice of the ACBN. It applies to all DACBN prospective and current certificants.

### Certificant's Agreement

ACBN provides a certification program for postdoctoral, licensed healthcare providers who practice clinical nutrition in their patient services. Certificants are required to follow the standards for professional and ethical practice as outlined in the Agreement. Failure to follow these requirements or inform ACBN of changes to professional status as outlined in these requirements may result in revocation of the credential in accordance with the ACBN Disciplinary Policy.

The Agreement is found on the ACBN web site at <http://www.acbn.org/agreement.pdf>.

## Section 7: Policies

### Application Verification

The ACBN Credential Verification Committee will verify information supplied on an application according to the procedures outlined below. In the event that any of the eligibility requirements is not approved, the applicant will be given opportunity to provide additional information as outlined in the Incomplete Applications section of this policy.

1. Doctorate: Applicants are required to provide documentation of the healthcare doctorate earned. ACBN Staff will verify the accredited status of the doctorate through the state accrediting college. In case of adverse information found as part of this verification, ACBN Staff will provide the information to the Executive Board for review. The Board will discuss at the next scheduled meeting (unless the matter is urgent) and decide to (1) request further information from the applicant or (2) deny the application based on the adverse findings.
2. Training: Applicants must provide proof of completion of a 300-hour clinical nutrition course from an accredited institution.
3. Writing Submission: Clinical nutrition article proof of publication or acceptance of publication is confirmed by the ACBN Staff and/or Executive Board.
4. Experience: Candidates must provide a current resume or CV.

5. Attestation: ACBN will verify that the applicant has signed all required attestations

ACBN Staff will review the application and ensure that it is complete. ACBN Staff will distribute the clinical nutrition article proof of publication or acceptance of publication along with the application packet to the Credential Verification Committee.

In the event that an applicant is approved to take the DACBN exam and does not pass it within the allowed opportunities, ACBN may conduct additional reviews of the candidate's application to understand if there were any application deficiencies that may have been missed in the initial review.

### Failure to Demonstrate Eligibility

Applicants who fail to demonstrate that they meet any of the eligibility requirements will not be permitted to take the exam.

### Confidentiality

ACBN and the Executive Board is dedicated to protecting the confidential information of its applicants, candidates, certificants, and its own proprietary information such as materials related to exam development and administration. The confidentiality policy applies to Board members, employees, subject-matter experts (SMEs), all volunteers, proctors, vendors and consultants, and anyone else permitted access to confidential material.

Confidential materials include, but are not limited to: an individual's application status; personal applicant/certificant information; candidate pin numbers; exam development, administration, and maintenance documentation (including role delineation study reports, technical reports, and cut score studies); exam items and answers; exam forms; and individual exam scores.

ACBN Executive Board members, employees, subject-matter experts (SMEs), and all those with access to confidential exam information are prohibited from developing or delivering examination preparation products during their tenure and for a period of two years following the end of their access to examination content.

### Certification Verification

DACBN credential holders' names and status as a certified individual will be published by the ABCN on its web site and by other means. This information is not considered confidential. ACBN Staff will maintain the online registry of certificants.

If a certificant does not wish to be included in the online registry, the individual may withhold his/her name by indicating this desire on the candidate application or by contacting ACBN directly.

Certification status of an individual may be verified, regardless of publication status, by contacting ACBN Staff. No other information, including application or exam status, score information, and personal details, will be released. If a candidate/certificant wishes to release his/her exam results to a third party, this may be done by written consent of the candidate/certificant.

Certificants who are retired and are not in active practice may hold the Emeritus status after providing sufficient evidence and receiving permission from ACBN to do so. Therefore, the individual will be listed in ACBN's credential verification publication as DACBN-Emeritus, if so desired.

### Aggregate Data

Yearly aggregate exam statistics are publicly available and include the number of candidates taking the exam, the pass/fail rates for each examination period, the number of individuals renewing, and the total number of certificants. No information that individually identifies a candidate/certificant is supplied.

### Confidentiality Agreements

Applicants for certification are required to read and acknowledge a confidentiality statement as part of the application process agreeing not to disclose any exam or other confidential information.

Signed confidentiality agreements are maintained in accordance with the Record Retention policy.

### Confidential Materials

All confidential materials are retained in a secure manner as required by the Security Policy. Executive Board members keep confidential and secure any confidential materials that are sent to them. These materials are kept in a secure and private location at all times until they are returned to ACBN Staff or are destroyed as directed by the staff.

### Access to Confidential Information

Access to confidential information is limited to those individuals who require access in order to perform necessary work related to the certification program. Access is granted in compliance with the provisions of the Security Policy.

### Records Retention

All documents created or received by the certification program will be retained according to the records retention policy. The use of the term "documents" in this policy includes all printed copy and electronic materials. Documents received in hard copy may be converted to electronic format for storage. All confidential materials will be retained in compliance with the security policy.

### Statement of Nondiscrimination and Contention with All Laws

ACBN does not discriminate against any applicant or candidate for certification/recertification on the basis of race, color, creed, age, gender, national origin, religion, disability, family status, ancestry, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected status. All applicants/candidates will be evaluated only on the published eligibility criteria for the certification.

ACBN complies with all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal and state laws. ACBN aims to provide an equitable testing opportunity for candidates to demonstrate the knowledge and skill measured by the examination. As such, ACBN will accommodate reasonable accommodation requests for those with a documented disability.

## Use of Credential

After a candidate receives written notice that he/she has earned the DACBN designation, the certificant may use the credential for as long as certification is maintained as active and in good standing. By the specified date, certificants must complete the recertification requirements to remain an active certificant in good standing.

Proper use of the credential includes displaying it in capital letters after a certificant's name, following any academic degree and licensure, such as John Doe, M.D., DACBN.

Use of the certification mark is only allowed in published materials, etc. and is only allowed during the time in which the certification is valid. Upon revocation or lapse of certification, individuals must discontinue use immediately.

Certificants who are retired and are not in active practice may hold the Emeritus status after providing sufficient evidence and receiving permission from ACBN to do so. Therefore, the individual would list his/her name as John Doe, M.D., DACBN-Emeritus.

A certificant who is experiencing an extenuating life circumstance, such as a major illness, that prevents him/her from obtaining the necessary CE credits may enter an inactive certification status for a period of one (1) year, with an evaluation of the situation completed after the first year. A recertification fee of \$100 will be required during the year when on Inactive Status. The educational recertification requirements must be made up for the year the doctor was on Inactive Status prior to the doctor regaining his/her Diplomate Status.

## Section 8: Complaints and Disciplinary Actions

### Sanctions

The sanction imposed upon an individual whom the Executive Board has determined to have violated the policies and rules of its certification program must reasonably relate to the nature and severity of the violation, focusing on reformation of the conduct of the member and deterrence of similar conduct by others. Any of the following sanctions may be imposed by the Executive Board upon an individual:

1. written reprimand;
2. suspension of the certificant for a designated period; or
3. suspension of applicant's ability to submit an application for certification/examination; or
4. termination of the individual's certification; or
5. termination of the individual's certification application status including prohibiting the individual from applying for certification in the future.

For sanctions that include suspension or termination, the published list of ACBN certified individuals will be updated to reflect that the individual's certification is not current and in good standing. Other ACBN publications may also indicate a change in the standing of the involved individual.

Reprimand in the form of a written notice from the President normally is sent to the involved individual who has received his or her first substantiated complaint. Suspension normally is imposed on an individual who has received two substantiated complaints. Termination normally is imposed on an involved individual who has



received two substantiated complaints within a two year period, or three or more substantiated complaints. The Executive Board may at its discretion, however, impose any of the sanctions, if warranted, in specific cases.

Certificants who have been terminated shall have their certification revoked and may not be considered for certification in the future. If certification is revoked, any and all certificates or other materials requested by the Executive Board must be returned promptly to the Executive Board.

## Appeal

Within thirty (30) days from receipt of notice of an adverse determination by the Executive Board that an individual violated the certification program policies and/or rules, the affected individual may submit a request for an appeal. Appeal requests must be submitted in writing to the Executive Board.

Upon receipt of a request for appeal, the President establishes an appellate body consisting of at least three (3), but not more than five (5), DACBN certified individuals. This Appeal Committee may review one or more appeals, upon request of the President. No current members of the Grievance Committee or the Executive Board may serve on the Appeal Committee; further, no one with any personal involvement or conflict of interest may serve on the Appeal Committee. Members of the Appeal Committee may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in connection with the activities of the Committee.

The Appeal Committee may only review whether the determination by the Executive Board of a violation of the certification program policies and/or rules was inappropriate because of:

1. material errors of fact, or
2. failure of the Grievance Committee or the Executive Board to conform to published criteria, policies, or procedures.

Only facts and conditions up to and including the time of the Executive Board's determination as represented by facts known to the Executive Board are considered during an appeal. The appeal shall not include a hearing or any similar trial-type proceeding. Legal counsel is not expected to participate in the appeal process, unless requested by the appellant and approved by the Executive Board and the Appeal Committee. The Executive Board and Appeal Committee may consult legal counsel.

The Appeal Committee conducts and completes the appeal within sixty (60) days after receipt of the request for an appeal. Written appellate submissions and any reply submissions may be made by authorized representatives of the involved individual and of the Executive Board. Submissions are made according to whatever schedule is reasonably established by the Appeal Committee. The decision of the Appeal Committee either affirms or overrules the determination of the Executive Board. The decision of the Appeal Committee, including a statement of the reasons for the decision, is reported to the Executive Board.

The Appeal Committee decision is binding upon the Executive Board, the individual who is subject to the sanction, and all other persons involved.

## Resignation

If an individual who is the subject of a complaint voluntarily surrenders his or her certification (or in the case of an applicant, surrenders his or her ability to apply for certification in the future) at any time during the pendency of a

complaint under these Procedures, the complaint is dismissed without any further action by the Grievance Committee, the Executive Board, or an Appeal Committee established after an appeal. The entire record is sealed and the individual may not reapply for certification. However, the Executive Board may authorize the President to communicate the fact and date of resignation, and the fact and general nature of the complaint which was pending at the time of the resignation, to or at the request of a government entity engaged in the administration of law. Similarly, in the event of such resignation, the certificant's employer (if deemed appropriate by the Executive Board) and the person or entity who submitted the complaint are notified of the fact and date of resignation and that Executive Board has dismissed the complaint as a result.

## Section 9: Forms

### Application Form(s)

All application paperwork – the Application, Certificant's Agreement, two Attestation Forms and Non-disclosure Forms may be found on the website: [acbn.org](http://acbn.org), under: Forms to Sit for Exam.

### Request for Accommodations Form

The Request for Accommodations Form may be found on the website: [acbn.org](http://acbn.org), under Application and Forms to Sit for Exam.