

Suzanne Letso, M.A., BCBA
Connecticut Center for Child Development, Inc.
And
Professional Affairs and Legislative Action Committee
Connecticut Association for Behavior Analysis

Please Support HB 5425, Section 2 Regarding Behavior Analysis
Please Oppose HB 5425, Section 3 Regarding the Burden of Proof

Senator Gaffey, and Representative Fleishmann, and members of the Education Committee,

Thank you for raising HB 5425, section 2. I hope you will support this section of the bill with one minor change. This bill should be enacted for all children with special needs rather than just for those with autism spectrum disorders.

This bill does not mandate methodology or require that any child receive Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services, but only that when a PPT has deemed these services are needed than someone with training provide those services, specifically those who either are a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), a Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA) or a Connecticut licensed or certified professional with ABA within their scope of practice.

It is imperative that school districts have clear direction from the State who meets the qualifications necessary to provide these services as is the case for all other professionals working with Connecticut's children at public expense. Hiring people who are not qualified to provide these services put school districts at risk of parent lawsuits (Norwalk has already been notified of intent to sue by three parents).

This bill will ensure that our children receive behavior analysis from qualified professionals. As a society we make the assumption that a trained and credentialed person is necessary in most every other profession: doctors, nurses, teachers, attorneys, accountants, manicurists, or hair dressers for example. However, There are peer reviewed studies published demonstrating that intervention for children with autism that was described as "ABA" was not effective when it was designed and overseen by "consultants" with little or no legitimate training in behavior analysis (see references at the end of this written testimony).

This bill is a cost neutral means of protecting our children and school districts. And those without credentials can charge the same or more than credentialed providers so the cost of actually providing these services would not be adversely impacted.

Last year at this time there were 134 people on the BACB registry. Today, there are 185. This exponential increase does not yet reflect the increase due to the creation of 2 new Connecticut-based programs at St. Joseph College and Elms College via CREC. Based on these figures, today

there is one BCBA for every 20 students who need services, and if the rate of new certificants does not increase (which is a likely expectation due to the new programs in place and reportedly in progress as SCSU and WCSU) than there will be 295 certificants per 15 students requiring services in 2 years. This does not take into account the number of BCBA's who reside out of state but practice in CT, nor other professionals who have ABA within their scope of practice, or any potential increase related to new program development or the impact of this legislation.

Numerous studies have shown that behavior analysis is effective for people with disabilities including but not only for children with autism.

This bill would put our public schools on par with both The Connecticut Birth to Three program and Insurance funded services for children with autism. The Connecticut's Birth to Three Program has required proof of certification for behavior analyst that provides services to children in that program for years, and last year's landmark insurance legislation recognizes BCBA as individuals qualified to provide these services.

BCBA is already a recognized credential in many states. The Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc. (BACB®) is a nonprofit corporation which oversees this certification. The Behavior Analyst Certification Board's credentialing programs are accredited by the National Council for Certifying Agencies in Washington, DC. Additional information regarding the BACB and the NCCA are attached to this document, and Dr. Shook would be happy to come to CT to meet with you and the Education Committee.

I would also like to thank Chris Lyddy, Cathy Abercrombie and Attorney General Blumenthal for their support and assistance with this legislation.

References:

Bibby, P. Eikeseth, S., Martin, N., Mudford, O.C., & Reeves, D. (2002). Progress and outcomes for children with autism receiving parent-managed intensive interventions. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 23*, 81-104.

Mudford, O.C., Martin, N.T., Eikeseth, S., & Bibby, P. (2001). Parent-managed behavioral treatment for preschool children with autism: Some characteristics of UK programs. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 22*, 173-182.

Attachments from Dr. Gerald Shook, Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc.

Shook cover letter regarding BCBA legislation

-----Original Message-----

From: Jerry Shook [mailto:shook@bacb.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 04, 2010 5:27 PM
To: Suzanne Letso
Subject: BACB credentialing information

Dear Ms. Letso:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) and credentialing as it applies to consumer protection in Connecticut.

I have attached information on the BACB and its certifications that will give you an overview of the BACB and its current status. I also have attached the National Commission on Certifying Agencies (NCCA) standards used in accrediting our certification programs.

I would be pleased to answer any questions of Connecticut legislators or government officials regarding BACB certification via email, telephonically, or in person.

Please contact me if you have any questions or if I may be of further assistance. I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Jerry

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- The Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) is an independent 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation. The BACB was founded in May of 1998 and was based on the successful State of Florida Behavior Analysis Certification Program.
- The BACB developed an agreement with the State of Florida to transfer all aspects of the Florida Certification Program, including the certification examination, to the BACB. The first BACB examination administration was conducted in May of 2000.
- Shortly after the BACB was formed, all states that used the Florida examinations as the basis of their state certification programs (CA, TX, PA, OK, NY & FL) transferred their certificants to the BACB and closed their programs.
- The BACB is endorsed but independent from:
 - The Association for Behavior Analysis International,
 - American Psychological Association, Division 25 (Behavior Analysis),
 - The Association of Professional Behavior Analysts,
 - The European Association for Behavior Analysis.
- The BACB certifies individuals as Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) level that requires a Masters' degree or above, 225 contact hours of specific university Graduate coursework in behavior analysis, and 1,500 hours, or equivalent, supervised experience. The Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst certification requires and individual to have a Bachelor's degree or above, 135 contact hours of university coursework, and 1,000 hours, or equivalent, supervised experience. BCBA's with Doctorate degrees may apply for the BACB-D designation. As with most professions, BACB certificants are required to obtain continuing education units to maintain their certification. BCaBA's must be supervised by BCBA's. Approximately 67 percent of the candidates who qualify for and take the examinations pass.
- BACB BCBA and BCaBA certification programs are accredited by the National Council for Certifying Agencies, of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence. The NCCA is one of two agencies that provide accreditation for national credentialing bodies such as the BACB. NCCA nationally accredited programs meet the high program and psychometric standards established by NCCA (standards attached).
- The BACB is the only professional certification program in applied behavior analysis and it has over 7,000 certificants in excess of 25 countries. Most states recognize BACB certification in one manner or another. Several states have included requirements for BACB certification in statute, rule, or regulations and 3 states use BACB certification as the basis for licensure.

- Over 165 universities worldwide have BACB approved course sequences. Over 20 of these universities offer distance-learning training that most meet the same approval standards, and typically results in essentially the same pass-rate, as campus-based university training.
- The BACB began the process of developing a specialty credential for BCBAs who work with individuals with autism. It elected not to pursue the specialty credential when a subject matter expert panel that was convened by the BACB to develop autism examination content determined that all behavior analysis content required to work with people with autism was already included in the BCBA examination. The non-behavior analytic content suggested by the panel is attached.
- The BACB recommends that states simply recognize certification rather than incur the expense and problems inherent with licensure. The BACB offers the only behavior analyst credentialing program and it has become accepted as the International standard. Its certifications are accredited by the NCCA and are recognized by most states (including CT in the recent insurance legislation and by the CT Birth-to-Three Program). BACB certification would be an appropriate substitute for a state-run licensure program because it adheres to the same high standards as licensure. BACB examination content and eligibility requirements undergo periodic review by expert behavior analyst practitioners and university faculty worldwide to ensure that they are current with the emerging field. Use of the BACB credential is a cost-neutral alternative to creating a state-run licensure program and would facilitate recruitment of qualified individuals from an international pool of certificants. In addition, it will ensure that the credentialing requirements for behavior analysts working in public school are the same as those required by insurance companies and the CT Birth-To-Three System. However, should a state find it is necessary to license behavior analysts, it can join the increasing number of states that have used BACB certifications as the basis of a cost-effective means to implement a robust behavior analyst licensure program.
- Pennsylvania has passed a law giving the commonwealth the authority to establish a license for behavior specialists. The license, as it appears in law, would not be in behavior analysis and would lack the requisite components and rigor to be a viable professional credential. The law requires that the individual have a Masters' degree and meet minimal and ill-defined education and supervision requirements. There is to be no written examination, which is the component that is at the heart of any legitimate professional licensure program. This "licensure" flies in the face of consumer protection because there is no system for meaningful determination of qualified individuals. In many respects it is worse than no credential at all. Consumers may believe that practitioners who are "licensed" by the state are vetted and qualified to provide applied behavior analysis services and ask no further questions.

**BEHAVIOR ANALYST CERTIFICATION BOARD®
TASK LIST FOR BOARD CERTIFIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSTS®
WORKING WITH PERSONS WITH AUTISM®**

CONTENT AREA A: COMMUNICATE THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF AUTISM TO THE AUTISM COMMUNITY, CONSUMERS AND THE PUBLIC

#	TASK
A-1	Discuss key historical events with the autism community, consumers, and the public.
A-2	Discuss current and local cultural conditions influencing treatment choices for autism.
A-3	Explain myths, fads, and controversies to consumers and the public.
A-4	Discuss movements, legislation, and legal issues with consumers and the public.

CONTENT AREA B: ASSESS, DESIGN, AND IMPLEMENT INTERVENTIONS TAILORED TO CHARACTERISTICS OF AUTISM AND INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM

#	TASK
B-1	Understand general considerations.
B-2	Understand diagnostic practices and their implications; communicate to consumers and others.
B-3	Identify associated characteristics and conditions.

CONTENT AREA C: EXTRACT RELEVANT INFORMATION FROM VARIOUS SOURCES FOR PLANNING INTERVENTIONS AND COMMUNICATING WITH CONSUMERS

#	TASK
C-1	Research the relevance, reliability, validity, and proper use of various assessment instruments.
C-2	Understand limitations of norm-referenced measures for drawing inferences about behavior and planning intervention.
C-3	Extract relevant information from the following assessments to establish behavior analytic and collaborative intervention priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication skills assessments • mental health assessments • vocational skills assessments • adaptive skills assessments • motor skills assessments • academic skills assessments • cognitive skills assessments • developmental skills assessments • behavior problem checklists and other instruments • social skills assessments • medical and quasi-medical assessments
C-4	Research best scientific evidence regarding validity and necessity of medical and "biomedical" tests, limitations of inferences that can be drawn from them.

CONTENT AREA D: EXPLAIN DIAGNOSTIC PROCEDURES

#	TASK
D-1	Communicate status of current research on etiology.
D-2	Summarize diagnostic criteria - current and evolving.
D-3	Extract relevant information from diagnostic tools to establish behavior analytic and collaborative intervention priorities.
D-4	Distinguish among diagnostic categories.
D-5	Identify common co-morbid conditions.
D-6	Summarize information regarding epidemiology for consumers, public, etc.
D-7	Explain clinical, legal, educational, and research implications.
D-8	Refer consumers to professionals who can diagnose.
D-9	Use screening tools.

CONTENT AREA E: DEVELOP SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT	
#	TASK
E-1	Work with families.
E-2	Manage funding and resources.
E-3	Maintain public and professional relations.

CONTENT AREA F: IMPLEMENT CURRICULA	
#	TASK
F-1	Use existing curricula.
F-2	Customize curricula.
F-3	Develop a scope and sequence across domains.

CONTENT AREA G: NON-BEHAVIOR ANALYTIC INTERVENTIONS	
#	TASK
G-1	Differentiate behavior analytic from non-behavior analytic interventions.
G-2	Research best available scientific evidence on non-behavior analytic interventions.
G-3	Critically evaluate the evidence regarding effectiveness, efficacy, and side effects of a non-behavior analytic intervention (including documented or potential interference with behavior analytic intervention).
G-4	Educate consumers about risks and benefits of alternative interventions and combinations of interventions.
G-5	Educate other professionals and organizations (e.g., school districts, government, insurance companies) about risks and benefits of alternative interventions and combinations of interventions.

CONTENT AREA H: IMPLEMENT SAFE AND EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES	
#	TASK
H-1	Understand the philosophy and behavior analytic considerations when considering the use of emergency procedures (e.g., risks and benefits).
H-2	Develop and use emergency procedures.
H-3	Use physical and non-physical emergency management techniques.

CONTENT AREA I: USE RESEARCH TO DESIGN, IMPLEMENT, AND EVALUATE BEHAVIOR ANALYTIC INTERVENTIONS FOR PERSONS WITH AUTISM	
#	TASK
I-1	Search and evaluate the relevant literature.
I-2	Critically evaluate studies and reviews using scientific rules of evidence, considering efficacy, effectiveness, efficiency, side effects, and limitations.
I-3	Maintain a community that encourages keeping up to date on research developments.

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BEHAVIOR ANALYST CERTIFICATION BOARD®

Gerald L Shook, PhD, BCBA-D

Chief Executive

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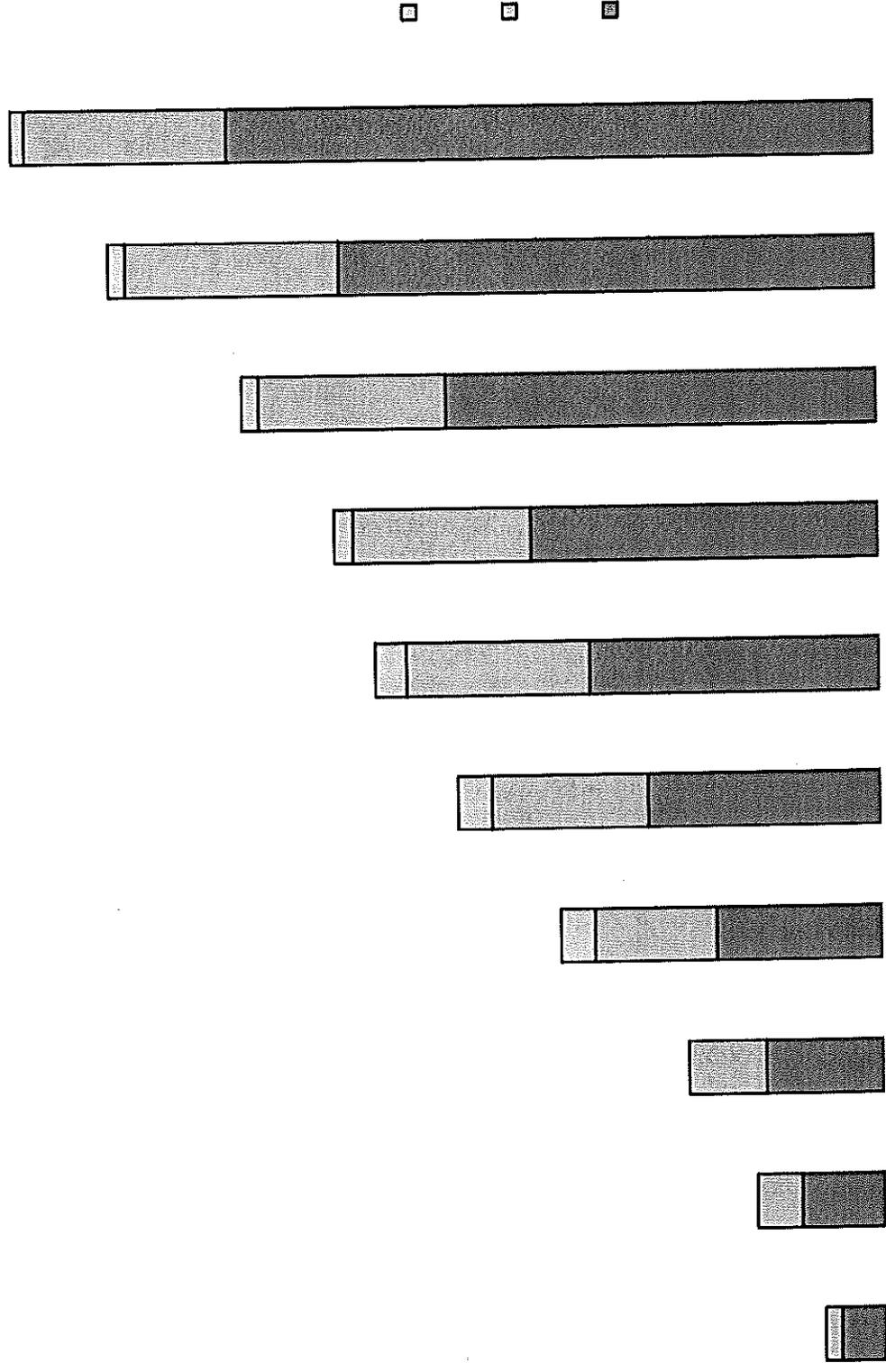
Shook@BACB.com

CT data

LEVELS OF CERTIFICATION

- **Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)
Requires Master's degree or above**
 - **Board Certified Behavior Analyst-Doctorate
(BCABA-D) Requires Doctorate**
- **Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst
(BCaBA)
Requires Bachelor's degree or above**

CUMULATIVE # OF CERTIFICANTS



RECENT PASS RATES

DECEMBER 2005 68% pass

MARCH 2006 68%
AUGUST 2006 67%
NOVEMBER 2006 67%

MARCH 2007 65%
AUGUST 2007 68%
NOVEMBER 2007 65%

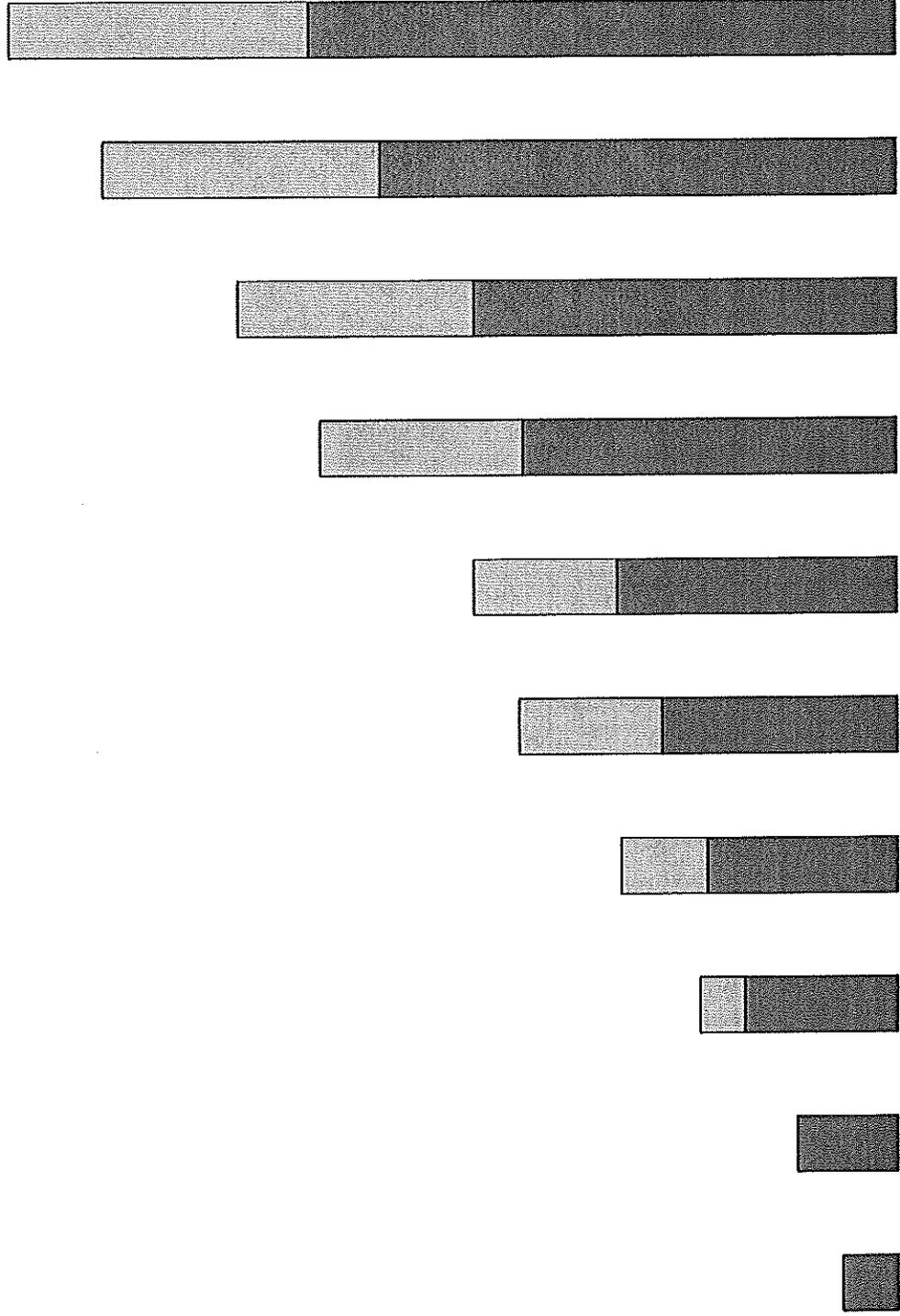
MARCH 2008 67%
AUGUST 2008 67%
NOVEMBER 2008 66%

MARCH 2009 66%
AUGUST 2009 68%
NOVEMBER 2009 68%

BACB-APPROVED COURSE SEQUENCES

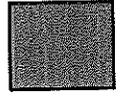
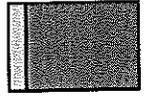
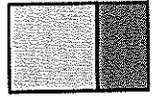
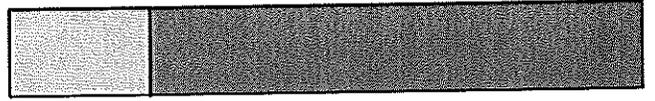
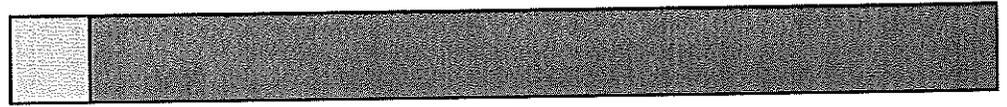
- 80-90% QUALIFY w Approved Course Sequence
- 169 UNIVERSITIES - 237 ACS
- 33 NON-US UNIVERSITIES - 41 ACS
- 25 DISTANCE LEARNING ACS - Train Worldwide
- 212 ON-CAMPUS ACS
- 157 BCBA - 20 BCaBA ACS
- 50 ACS w Approved University Experience

CUMULATIVE COURSE SEQUENCES



□ ■

US & NON-US COURSE SEQUENCES PER ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT



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National Commission for Certifying Agencies

Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs



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Table of Contents

Preamble.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Structure and Development of the Standards.....	2
Standards.....	4
Purpose, Governance and Resources.....	4
Responsibilities to Stakeholders.....	7
Assessment Instruments.....	10
Recertification.....	18
Maintaining Accreditation.....	19
Glossary.....	20
Project Donors.....	25
2002 NCCA Commission.....	26
2002 NOCA Board of Directors.....	27
Steering Committee.....	28
Task Force on Purpose, Governance and Resources.....	28
Task Force on Responsibilities to Stakeholders.....	29
Task Force on Assessment Instruments.....	29
Task Force on Recertification.....	29

Preamble

INTRODUCTION

The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) accredits certification organizations complying with its Standards. The mission of NCCA is to help ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the public through the accreditation of certification programs/organizations that assess professional competence. The NCCA uses a peer review process to establish accreditation standards, to evaluate compliance with these standards, to recognize organizations/programs which demonstrate compliance, and to serve as a resource on quality certification. The purpose of NCCA accreditation is to provide the public and other stakeholders the means by which to identify certification programs that serve their competency assurance needs. NCCA Standards address the structure and governance of the certifying agency, the characteristics of the certification program, the information required to be available to applicants, certificants, and the public, and the recertification initiatives of the certifying agency. NCCA is a separately governed accreditation arm of the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA), a membership association of certification organizations providing technical and educational information concerning certification practices.

Since the Standards were first issued in the late 1970s, NCCA has observed fundamental changes in the nature, scope, and importance of certification. First, the certification community has expanded dramatically to include a broader variety of occupational and professional credentials offered by non-profit organizations, for-profit entities, governmental agencies, and industries. Second, it is increasingly common for a certification organization to offer multiple certification programs. Third, the certification community has expanded internationally. Fourth, the certification and testing communities have introduced the computer as a means of both developing items and new assessment formats, as well as administering assessments. This change has also led to the implementation of modern testing methodologies to capitalize on the power of the computer to score and scale the assessment instruments. Fifth, an increasing number of certification programs are recognized by state and provincial regulatory authorities, a practice that expands the traditional definition of certification.

In keeping with its service to the public and to various other stakeholders of professional certification, and in order to address fundamental changes in certification, NCCA undertook the review and revision of its accreditation standards. In 1997, NCCA established two Task Forces to address the feasibility of revising the accreditation Standards to address the changes described above and to ensure the currency of the Standards for the foreseeable future. The Task Forces were eventually combined at the end of 1997 to form a Steering Committee.

In August 1998, NCCA obtained approval from the NOCA Board of Directors to conduct fundraising activities in support of the continued work of the Steering Committee. As an outcome of this effort, NCCA hired an independent project manager.

During 1999 and early 2000 the Steering Committee conducted activities through the formation of four Task Forces, each focusing on a different set of accreditation standards: (1) Purpose, Governance, and Resources (2) Responsibilities to Stakeholders (3) Assessment Mechanisms, and (4) Recertification. The Task Forces represented a cross section of currently accredited groups, testing services, and other professionals with expertise in certification.

Members of the Steering Committee and the Task Forces reported to NCCA in November, 1999, and to the NOCA Board and Membership in December, 1999. A complete report of the Standards Revision Project was prepared and submitted to NCCA by the Steering Committee in March, 2000. After NCCA review and revision of the Steering Committee's report a draft of these documents was made available for public comment. Following numerous revisions and review periods throughout 2001 the draft Standards were presented to the organizations accredited by the NCCA for ratification in January, 2002. The Standards were approved in February, 2002.

In November of 2006, the Commission approved a revised definition of "Public Member." This was considered an editorial revision.

STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STANDARDS

The Standards focus on certification programs and are organized into five sections: (1) Purpose, Governance, and Resources, containing five Standards (2) Responsibilities to Stakeholders, containing four Standards (3) Assessment Instruments, containing nine Standards (4) Recertification, containing two Standards, and (5) Maintaining Accreditation, containing one Standard.

To earn or maintain accreditation by NCCA, the certification program must meet *all* Standards and provide evidence of compliance through the submission of required documentation.

The statements describing the Standards are numbered consecutively. Accompanying each Standard are *Essential Elements*, which are directly related to the Standard and specify what a certification program must do to fulfill requirements of the Standard.

A second subsection under each Standard is called *Commentary*. The Commentary section clarifies terms, provides examples of practice that help explain a Standard, or offers suggestions regarding evidence that must be documented to demonstrate compliance. NCCA reserves the right to revise the Essential Elements and the Commentary sections in response to changes in certification practice.

The development of the Standards was guided by the following assumptions:

1. A number of previous NCCA Standards, such as the requirement that the certifying agency be non-governmental, nonprofit, and national in scope, are restrictive. Further, by opening the accreditation process to include certification programs in for-profit organizations, NCCA more effectively achieves its public service mission.
2. The appropriate unit of accreditation is the certification program rather than the certifying organization. In fact, NCCA accreditation previously required that all certification programs offered by an agency meet all standards in order for the agency to achieve accreditation.
3. NCCA accreditation should be awarded for a period of five years for the initial program certification. If organizations or agencies apply for NCCA accreditation of additional programs following accreditation of the original program(s), any new programs will be accredited until the date the organization's initial accreditation expires. All of an organization's accredited programs will be eligible for renewal on the same the five-year renewal cycle.
4. Autonomy in the management and administration of certification protects certification programs from undue influence. Autonomy is required in order for certification programs to serve stakeholder interests, primarily those of consumers of professional services. However, since certification programs take different forms for different professions and occupations, a variety of structures may be effectively employed to prevent undue influence from competing interests.

5. The term stakeholder has been used to refer to candidates and the public, as well as to members of a profession, occupation, or regulatory body. The term denotes the primary interest of the public and other consumers of the certification program. The term also encompasses certificants and the entities offering certification, as well as educators, and employers. It is appropriate to acknowledge the legitimate influence of all stakeholder bodies.
6. The NCCA Standards pertaining to assessment instruments should be consistent with the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education, 1999), as well as other standards and guidelines related to certification accreditation developed by specific professions, occupations, governmental agencies, and international organizations, or certification activity criteria more generally, such as (but not limited to) Principles of Fairness: An Examining Guide for Credentialing Boards (Council on Licensure Enforcement and Regulation and the National Organization for Competency Assurance, 1993) and the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Civil Service Commission, U.S. Department of Labor, and U.S. Department of Justice, 1978).
7. Recertification is valuable for all certification programs. Demonstrating continuing competence through a variety of recertification mechanisms is in the best interests of both the public and the discipline certified.

Standards

PURPOSE, GOVERNANCE, and RESOURCES

Standard 1

The purpose of the certification program is to conduct certification activities in a manner that upholds standards for competent practice in a profession, occupation, role, or skill.

Essential Element:

- A. It is the responsibility of the certification program applying for NCCA accreditation to identify the population being certified and to provide justification for the appropriateness of its certification activities. Typically, a certification program issues a credential or title to those certified. If the applying program does not, an explanation should be provided explaining why the issuance of a credential or title is not appropriate to the profession, occupation, role, or skill.

Commentary:

- A. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met may include a mission statement, bylaws, articles of incorporation, a policy and procedures document, a governing committee charter, or candidate brochures.

Standard 2

The certification program must be structured and governed in ways that are appropriate for the profession, occupation, role, or skill, and that ensure autonomy in decision making over essential certification activities.

Essential Elements:

- A. The certifying program must show that the governance structure, policies, and procedures that have been established protect against undue influence that could compromise the integrity of the certification process.
- B. The governance structure, policies, and procedures must provide for autonomy in decision making regarding important aspects of the certification program such as eligibility standards; the development, administration, and scoring of the assessment instruments; selection of personnel; and operational processes.
- C. The development, administration, and scoring of assessment instruments must promote the purpose of the certification program.
- D. To avoid conflicts of interest between certification and education functions, the certification agency must not also be responsible for accreditation of educational or training programs or courses of study leading to the certification.

Commentary:

- A. The appropriate structure and governance of a certification program will reflect the interests of the general public in the credential. In traditional forms of professional or occupational certification, public interest requires direct protection of essential certification decisions from undue influence. Such protection is especially important when a certification program is sponsored by a professional membership association or proprietary entity. In these cases it is appropriate that the certification program's structure and governance protect the integrity of essential certification decisions.

When the certification program involves a proprietary product or service, the issue of undue influence is different. In these cases it is assumed that the proprietor has a clear and reasonable self-interest in preventing external or competing influences from diminishing the quality of the certification. It is recognized that the public is often not a direct consumer of the activities of the certified population. The public interest will be adequately protected when the needs of the proprietor, employers, or purchasers who rely on the credential provide significant direction over certification policy and decision making.

- B. Pressure to adjust certification standards either to limit the number of certificants or to reduce or elevate the established standard by changing requirements could interfere with the maintenance of standards established for a given certification.
- C. Certification programs may satisfy the requirement for autonomy of the governing body or governing committee in a number of ways. Incorporation of the certifying agency as an independent unit usually ensures autonomy. The bylaws of a parent organization may be constructed so that certification program governance and decision-making are defined as the responsibility of a specific unit of the organization with complete authority over all essential certification decisions. A governing committee may be given such authority in the policies and procedures and organizational chart of a corporation.
- D. In addition to not *accrediting* programs leading to the initial certification, the certification organization must not require that candidates complete that organization's program for certification eligibility. If a certification organization *provides* an educational program (including but not limited to primary education, exam preparation courses, study guides), the organization must not state or imply that: 1) this program is the only available route to certification; or 2) that purchase or completion of this program is required for initial certification.
- E. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met may include a mission statement, bylaws, articles of incorporation, business plans, a policy and procedures document, a governing committee charter, or organizational charts.

Standard 3

The certification board or governing committee of the certification program must include individuals from the certified population, as well as voting representation from at least one consumer or public member. For entities offering more than one certification program, a system must be in place through which all certified populations are represented, with voting rights, on the certification board or governing committee.

Essential Elements:

- A. A system or structure must be established for ensuring appropriate stakeholder involvement by designating certain representative positions on the governing body. To ensure a balance of

program input, the governing body may implement a rotating system of representation over a set period of time.

- B. The certification program must establish bylaws and/or policies and procedures for the selection of individuals who serve on the board or governing committee. This information must show that the selection of these individuals prevents inappropriate influence from a parent or outside body.

Commentary:

- A. It is important that stakeholders (e.g., the public and other consumers, employers, regulators, and certificants) are represented on the body(ies) that sets policies regarding the certification program, including activities related to eligibility and the development, administration, and scoring of the assessment instrument.
- B. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met may include a mission statement, bylaws, articles of incorporation, business plans, a policy and procedures document, a governing committee charter, or organizational charts.
- C. The public member is considered by NCCA to be a person who represents the direct and indirect users of certificants' skills/services. Because this may be defined very broadly, a rotating system for representation of various publics may be implemented over time. The public member may be a professional, but should not have similar credentials to the certificants. The public member should not be a member of a related profession or a profession that provides services that are complementary to certificants' services. The NCCA recommends, but does not require, that the public member has been or is a potential a consumer of the certificants' skills or services. It is also recommended that public members have experience with public advocacy.

The public member should not be:

- A current or previous member of the profession encompassed by the certification programs of the certification organization.
- A member of a related profession or a profession that provides complementary services to the certificants' services.
- An employer or an employee of individuals in the profession encompassed by the certification programs of the certification organization.
- An employee of an individual certified by the certification organization or of an employer of individuals in the profession encompassed by the certification programs of the certification organization.
- An employee of any certification organization.
- Currently deriving more than 5% of their total income from the profession encompassed by the certification programs of the certification organization.

The public member should not have:

- Derived in any of the five years preceding my appointment as a public member on the governing body more than 5% of their total income from the profession encompassed by the certification programs of the certification organization.
- Worked for or provided contract services to the certification organization at any time during the five years preceding my appointment as a public member on the governing body.

Standard 4

The certification program must have sufficient financial resources to conduct effective and thorough certification and recertification activities.

Essential Element:

- A. Financial reports of the certification program must demonstrate adequate resources available to support ongoing certification and recertification processes.

Commentary:

- A. The certification program should be able to document that monies used for the certification program are readily available.
- B. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met includes financial statements for the certification program.

Standard 5

The certification program must have sufficient staff, consultants, and other human resources to conduct effective certification and recertification activities.

Essential Elements:

- A. Key staff and non-staff consultants and professionals must possess adequate knowledge and skill to conduct certification program activities.
- B. The certification program must have adequate resources to conduct the activities (e.g., processing of applications, administering the assessment instrument, storage of records) of the certification program.

Commentary:

- A. Documentation of resource availability and activity occurrence does not mean that every certification program must have its own office or building; in some cases, all activities could be adequately handled with services from a testing company, consultants, or management service.
- B. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met may include resumes or curriculum vitae of key staff, non-staff consultants, and professionals, and associated organizational charts describing the inter-relationships among the individuals providing services to the certification program.

RESPONSIBILITIES to STAKEHOLDERS

Standard 6

A certification program must establish, publish, apply, and periodically review key certification policies and procedures concerning existing and prospective certificants such as those for determining eligibility criteria; applying for certification; administering assessment instruments; establishing performance domains, appeals, confidentiality, certification statistics, and discipline; and complying with applicable laws.

Essential Elements:

- A. Published documents that clearly define the certification responsibilities of the organization must include the following:

- The purpose of the certification program
 - Eligibility criteria and application policies and procedures
 - Materials outlining all examination processes and procedures
 - A detailed listing and/or outline of the performance domains, tasks, and associated knowledge and/or skills
 - A summary of certification activities (number of candidates examined, pass/fail statistics, and number of individuals currently certified) for each program
 - Discipline, nondiscrimination, and confidentiality policies and procedures
 - Appeals policies and procedures
- B. Confidentiality policies must (a) ensure that candidate application status and examination results are held confidential, and (b) delineate the circumstances under which this information may be disclosed or made public.
- C. Policies and procedures must be published and must include guidelines by which candidates may question eligibility determination, assessment instrument results, and certification status.
- D. Disciplinary policies must include procedures to address complaints that may concern conduct that is harmful to the public or inappropriate to the discipline (e.g., incompetence, unethical behavior, or physical/mental impairment affecting performance). These policies must ensure appropriate treatment of sensitive information and fair decision making.

Commentary:

- A. Publications concerning eligibility criteria, applications, assessment instruments, appeals, discipline, confidentiality, etc., are required to inform candidates and other stakeholders about program policies.
- B. Applicable laws and regulations include nondiscrimination, disabilities, and other issues which may affect fairness to candidates or protection for consumers.
- C. Procedures for requesting accommodations for disabled candidates should be stated clearly and published in an appropriate agency document. The process should include mechanisms that will ensure that proper evidence is submitted to the agency to assist the agency in making a determination regarding the requested accommodation.
- D. Any accommodation provided should be reasonable and not compromise the validity and reliability of the assessment instruments.
- E. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met may include a policy and procedures manual, a candidate handbook, and any written documents or forms regarding procedures for obtaining approval for an accommodation.

Standard 7

The certification program must publish a description of the assessment instruments used to make certification decisions as well as the research methods used to ensure that the assessment instruments are valid.

Essential Element:

- A. Procedures related to assessment instruments must address development and validation, eligibility requirements, and administration (e.g., availability and location, fees, reporting of results).

Commentary:

- A. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met may include a candidate handbook, brochures about the certification program, and other public documents.

Standard 8

The certification program must award certification only after the knowledge and/or skill of individual applicants has been evaluated and determined to be acceptable.

Essential Elements:

- A. If any current certificants (at the time the application for accreditation is made) were granted certification without having to meet the examination requirements established for certification, a rationale must be provided to explain how the competence of those individuals was evaluated and found to be sufficient. The period during which such test exemptions were granted must have been terminated before the certification program is eligible for accreditation.
- B. Once a program is accredited, "grandfathering," or any other procedure for granting a credential in the absence of evaluating the knowledge and/or skill of an individual, is not acceptable.

Commentary:

- A. Grandfathering is generally seen as a conflict with stakeholder interests. It is used from time to time in licensure as a means of protecting the rights of individuals who entered a profession prior to its regulation and should not be excluded from the right to practice. Professional certification does not normally carry such potential to restrict the right to practice.
- B. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met may include a policy and procedures document, a candidate handbook, brochures about the certification program, and other public documents.

Standard 9

The certification program must maintain a list of and provide verification of certified individuals.

Essential Element:

- A. The certification program must maintain a list of current and previous certificants.

Commentary:

- A. The certification program should provide and verify that a certificant possesses currently valid certification upon request from any member of the public. Policies governing verification should allow disclosure of whether or not the certificant is currently in good standing, without communicating other information which may violate the confidentiality rights of certificants or applicants.
- B. The certification program may discard information about previous certificants after a reasonable time period when such information is no longer valuable to the certification program's stakeholders.
- C. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met may include a policy and procedures document, a candidate handbook, brochures about the certification program, directories in which certificant names are published, and other public documents.

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

Standard 10

The certification program must analyze, define, and publish performance domains and tasks related to the purpose of the credential, and the knowledge and/or skill associated with the performance domains and tasks, and use them to develop specifications for the assessment instruments.

Essential Elements:

- A. A job/practice analysis must be conducted leading to clearly delineated performance domains and tasks, associated knowledge and/or skills, and sets of content/item specifications to be used as the basis for developing each type of assessment instrument (e.g., multiple-choice, essay, oral examination).
- B. A report must be published that links the job/practice analysis to specifications for the assessment instruments.

Commentary:

- A. No single method exists to define performance domains, tasks, and associated knowledge and/or skills. Appropriate strategies include (a) committees of representative experts to define performance domains and tasks and associated knowledge and/or skills, including a review of related practice- or job-based information, or a review of the information from a previous study (b) rating scales (e.g., frequency and importance) to identify and select critical performance domains, tasks, and associated knowledge and/or skills (c) collection of job/practice information using logs, observations of practice, and/or interviews, or (d) review of proposed performance domains, tasks, associated knowledge and/or skills, and rating scales by an independent panel of experts.
- B. Validation of performance domains, tasks, and associated knowledge and/or skills is typically accomplished by conducting a survey of current certificants and/or individuals providing services or performing a job consistent with the purpose of the credential. It is important to sample widely within the profession, occupation, or role, or among those who use or support a product, to ensure representation in terms of major practice areas, job titles, work settings, geography, ethnic diversity, gender, and work experience. Stakeholders such as educators, supervisors, and employers may be included, as appropriate. An adequate sample size should be used to ensure that the estimated level of measurement error is defensible.
- C. Analysis of ratings information collected in the survey should determine how and to what degree the performance domains, tasks, and associated knowledge and/or skills relate to the purpose of the credential. Linkages to the content of the assessment instruments should be based on the use of ratings data. Empirical algorithms or other psychometric methods used to analyze or combine ratings from different scales should be specified. Analyses of demographic information collected from survey participants should also be examined to evaluate representativeness of the findings.
- D. A table of specifications should be prepared for each assessment instrument specifying the weighting of performance domains, tasks, and associated knowledge and/or skills to be included. The weighting system should be based primarily on data collected from survey participants, with informed review and interpretation provided by a panel of subject-matter experts. Decision rules used to eliminate performance domains, tasks, and associated knowledge and/or skills from the specification table should be explained. The specifications may also include instructions to the item writers to be used in developing assessment instruments.

- E. Because rapid changes may occur in knowledge and/or skills and in technology, it is important that certification programs periodically review performance domains, tasks, and associated knowledge and/or skills in the specifications to ensure that they are current. Since it is impossible to specify with precision how often the review should be conducted, each certification agency should develop its own timeframe and rationale. For existing certification programs, any changes between new specifications and previous specifications should be noted and explained.
- F. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met requires a complete report summarizing the results of the job/practice analysis, which may include:
- A description of the background and experience of subject-matter experts and professionals who participated in various phases of the job/practice analysis
 - Identification of the psychometric consultants or organization used to conduct the job/practice analysis or important phases of it
 - A description of methods used to delineate performance domains, tasks, and associated knowledge and/or skills
 - A copy of the job analysis survey, including all instructions, rating scales, open-ended questions, and background demographic information collected from participants
 - A description of the survey's sampling plan and its rationale
 - Documentation of survey results, including return rate, analysis of ratings data, algorithms or other psychometric methods used to analyze or combine ratings data, and a rationale supporting representativeness of survey findings
 - A table of specifications for each assessment instrument specifying weighting of the performance domains, tasks, and associated knowledge and/or skill, along with any decision rules used to eliminate any of these elements from the table of specifications
 - Date of the study and description of a plan to update periodically the job/practice analysis
- G. The formal report of the job/practice analysis study to be provided to demonstrate compliance with this standard may be considered by the organization to be a confidential document, and therefore, the organization may decide to not make it widely available. However, in these cases, the organization must publish and make available a summary of the study or statement(s) describing the exam specifications development process for dissemination to prospective candidates and other interested members of the public.

Standard 11

The certification program must employ assessment instruments that are derived from the job/practice analysis and that are consistent with generally accepted psychometric principles.

Essential Elements:

- A. Assessment instruments, including assessment items, exhibits, instructions to examinees, scoring procedures, and training procedures for administration of assessments, must be products of an appropriately designed and documented development process.
- B. The content sampling plan for test items or other assessment components must correspond to content as delineated and specified in the job/practice analysis.
- C. An ongoing process must exist to ensure that linkage between the assessment instruments and the job/practice analysis is maintained, as assessment components are revised and replaced over time.

This linkage between assessment content and job/practice analysis must be documented and available for review by stakeholders.

- D. Certification programs must follow a valid development process that is appropriate for assessment instruments.
- E. A systematic plan must be created and implemented to minimize the impact of content error and bias on the assessment development process. Assessment content must be reviewed by qualified subject matter experts.

Commentary:

- A. Documentation for assessments should include a detailed description of the delivery format for each portion of the assessment and the type of response required of candidates. Developers should take reasonable steps to ensure that modes of presentation and response are justified by job relatedness. If the form of the assessment instrument is to be delivered on computer, the documentation of item selection rules or display features should be described. Certification programs should document how background and experience factors of the candidate population were considered in selecting item types or other assessment formats.
- B. Qualifications of subject matter experts, assessment development professionals, content reviewers, and others involved in assessment development should be appropriate to the content area tested and assessment procedures used and documented.
- C. Training provided to item writers, item reviewers, and others who produce assessment content should be structured, delivered, and documented in a professional and consistent manner.
- D. The development and assembly process for assessment instruments should be documented.
- E. The development process should include pilot testing of new items with a representative sample of the target population, with revision based on statistical analysis of results, where appropriate.
- F. Certification programs should document procedures used to examine the performance of items or other assessment components and describe the criteria used to identify components for revision or removal from the assessment.
- G. The size of the item pool must be sufficient to sample specifications for the assessment and to provide adequate item exposure control to safeguard the security and integrity of the item bank and test forms, particularly in relation to computer-based administration.
- H. Provision should be made for monitoring continued validity of each assessment item and assessment form during the period in which they are active.
- I. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met may include: specifications for the assessment instruments; training materials, agendas, and reports on item development; procedures for the development of assessment instruments; and technical reports.

Standard 12

The certification program must set the cut score consistent with the purpose of the credential and the established standard of competence for the profession, occupation, role, or skill.

Essential Elements:

- A. Cut scores must be set using information concerning the relationship between assessment performance and relevant criteria based on the standard of competence.

- B. A report must be published documenting the methods and procedures used to establish the standard of competence and set the cut score, along with the results of these procedures.

Commentary:

- A. No single method exists to set cut scores. Appropriate strategies include the use of judges or panelists who focus their attention on assessment content by rating each item or task, or who consider the candidates or their completed assessments.
- B. The raters in a cut score study must understand the purpose of the assessment, the standard of competence, and how to apply the cut score process that is to be used. Raters should have a sound basis for making required judgments. If data are available, estimates of the effects of setting the cut score at various points should be provided.
- C. The cut score study should be documented in sufficient detail to allow for replication, including full descriptions of the procedures followed, results, and how they should be interpreted.
- D. Suggested evidence to document that the standard has been met includes a report of the cut score study that addresses the following:
- Overview of the cut score process
 - Qualifications of those designing and implementing the process
 - Number of panelists, manner of selecting the panelists, and their qualifications
 - Material used
 - Data collection procedures
 - Descriptions or conceptualizations developed by the panelists
 - Data collection activities
 - Meeting agendas
 - Any adjustments made to the cut score by a governing body or policy group
- E. This formal cut score report may be considered confidential by the organization; however NCCA accreditation review requires that a formal report of the cut score be submitted with the application. In these cases, the organization must make available a summary of the study or statement regarding the study to prospective candidates and other interested stakeholders. The summary can be in journal articles, candidate bulletin, or other information accessible to candidates and stakeholders.

Standard 13

The certification program must document the psychometric procedures used to score, interpret, and report assessment results.

Essential Elements:

- A. The certification program must describe procedures for scoring, interpreting, and reporting assessment results.
- B. For responses scored by judgment, developers must document training materials and standards for training judges to an acceptable level of valid and reliable performance. Any prerequisite background or experience for selection of judges must also be specified.

- C. Candidates must be provided meaningful information on their performance on assessment instruments. Such information must enable failing candidates to benefit from the information and, if psychometrically defensible, understand their strengths and weaknesses as measured by the assessment instruments.
- D. Reports of aggregate assessment data in summarized form must be made available to stakeholders without violating confidentiality obligations.

Commentary:

- A. Certification programs are responsible for establishing quality control procedures that regularly monitor the precision of calculations used to compute assessment scores and their conversion to standardized, equated, or scaled scores, if performed.
- B. The certification program should publish an explanation of the appropriate uses and misuses of reported score information.
- C. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met may include descriptions of scoring procedures, training documents, quality control procedures, and sample score reports for passing and failing candidates.
- D. Evidence in support of essential element D should include documentation of aggregate assessment data to the various stakeholder groups on interest. For example, details of the aggregate assessment data might be appropriately reported to representatives of the program sponsor (e.g. a board or committee) and documented in the NCCA Accreditation application. In addition, however, some aggregate data must be available to the public and the certificant population, at a minimum addressing the number of candidates and the number of individuals attaining the certification credential during a specified period of time.

Standard 14

The certification program must ensure that reported scores are sufficiently reliable for the intended purposes of the assessment instruments.

Essential Element:

- A. Certification programs must provide information to indicate whether scores (including any subscores) are sufficiently reliable for their intended uses, including estimates of errors of measurement for the reported scores. Information must be provided about reliability or consistency of pass/fail decisions. When appropriate, information should be provided about the standard error of measurement or similar coefficients around the cut score.

Commentary:

- A. The level of reliability required for an assessment instrument depends on the type of assessment device and the purpose for which scores will be used.
- B. Different types of assessment instruments require different methods of estimating reliability. Reliability should be estimated using methods that are appropriate for characteristics of the assessment instruments and the intended uses of the scores.
- C. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met may include:
 - Methods used to assess reliability of scores (including subscores), and the rationale for using them
 - Characteristics of the population involved (e.g., demographic information, employment status)

- A reliability coefficient, an overall standard error of measurement, an index of classification consistency, an information function, or other methods for estimating the consistency of scores
- Standard errors of measurement or other measures of score consistency around the cut score
- Information about the speededness of performance on the assessment instruments
- Any procedures used for judgmental or automated scoring
- The level of agreement among judges

Standard 15

The certification program must demonstrate that different forms of an assessment instrument assess equivalent content and that candidates are not disadvantaged for taking a form of an assessment instrument that varies in difficulty from another form.

Essential Elements:

- A. Equating or other procedures used to ensure equivalence and fairness must be documented, including a rationale for the procedure used.
- B. When assessment instruments are translated or adapted across cultures, certification programs must describe the methods used in determining the adequacy of the translation or adaptation and demonstrate that information attained from adapted and source versions of the assessment instruments produce comparable test scores and inferences.

Commentary:

- A. Different ways exist to link assessment scores, ranging in rigor from strict equating models to judgmental methods.
- B. When certification programs use more than one mode of administration (e.g., paper/pencil and computer-based testing), it is important to document equivalence of score information and any score adjustment method used to achieve equivalence.
- C. A rationale should be provided for the reporting scales selected and methods used to determine score scales.
- D. The scales on which scores are reported should not encourage finer distinctions among candidates than can be supported by the precision of the assessment instruments. The scale values should be chosen in a manner that avoids confusion with other scales that are widely used by the same population of candidates.
- E. Raw scores should not be reported except under one or more of the following circumstances:
 - Only one form of the assessment instrument is to be offered
 - Scores on one form will not be compared with scores on another form
 - Raw or percentage scores on all forms are comparable, or
 - Raw or percentage scores are reported in a context that supports intended interpretations.
- F. When scaling scores, the stability of the score scale should be checked periodically. When indicated, steps should be taken to minimize score misinterpretations. If a change to the assessment instrument or to the composition of the candidate population alters the meaning of

scores, it may be appropriate to rescale the scores to minimize confusion between the old and new scores, or in the absence of rescaling, to ensure that the differences between the old and new scores are clearly communicated to candidates and to other stakeholders.

- G. Certification programs should, whenever possible, conduct pilot studies prior to implementation of the adapted version of the assessment instruments. Field study research should be part of a program of ongoing maintenance and improvement. Tryout and field studies should be part of a larger research program to ensure comparability and quality of cross-cultural information on the assessment instruments.
- H. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met may include:
- A description of the methods used to determine that different forms of an assessment instrument measure equivalent content and ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged for taking a form of the assessment instrument that varies in difficulty from another form
 - An equating and scaling report

Standard 16

The certification program must develop and adhere to appropriate, standardized, and secure procedures for the development and administration of the assessment instruments. The fact that such procedures are in force should be published.

Essential Element:

- A. Assessment instruments must be administered securely, using standardized procedures that have been specified by the certification program sponsor.

Commentary:

- A. Non-standardized administration procedures may adversely influence scores as well as the inferences drawn from these scores. When administration procedures deviate from the expected, such irregularities must be thoroughly documented.
- B. Chief examiners and proctors should be thoroughly trained in proper administration of the assessment instruments in an effort to minimize the influence of test administration on scores. Similarly, all candidates should have equal access to preparatory materials and instructions available from the sponsor.
- C. Certification programs are responsible for protecting the integrity of assessment information. This responsibility requires a security program that restricts access to assessment information to authorized personnel.
- D. Administration sites should offer similar conditions, such as adequate lighting, comfortable seating, and an environment free from noise and other distraction.
- E. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met may include:
- Candidate handbook or similar document
 - Chief examiner and/or proctor manual
 - Quality control policy and procedures documents
 - Security procedures manual

Standard 17

The certification program must establish and document policies and procedures for retaining all information and data required to provide evidence of validity and reliability of the assessment instruments.

Essential Element:

- A. Policies and procedures must ensure that items and forms of the assessment instruments are stored in a medium and method that emphasizes security, while being accessible to authorized personnel. Such policies must not only describe procedures for a secure system but also address actions required of personnel.

Commentary:

- A. Policies should establish a time period for retention of physical or electronic copies of forms of the assessment instruments and of reports and analyses related to the development process. The documents may be used in matters relating to challenges concerning scores, validity, or other essential issues. Documentation of the secure retention of assessment instruments and development information (e.g. cut score studies, technical reports) must be provided as part of the NCCA Application Accreditation. Note here how this information is securely maintained.
- B. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met should include policy and procedures documents.

Standard 18

The certification program must establish and apply policies and procedures for secure retention of assessment results and scores of all candidates.

Essential Element:

- A. Organizational policy must determine the length of time that assessment results will be retained.

Commentary:

- A. Organizational policy concerning the length of time that assessment results will be retained and score reports provided should be stated clearly in information provided to candidates.
- B. Certification program policy should prevent assessment results and other personal information from the candidate's file being provided to a third party without the candidate's documented permission. The policy should be stated in information provided to candidates.
- C. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met should include policy and procedures documents.

RECERTIFICATION

Standard 19

The certification program must require periodic recertification and establish, publish, apply, and periodically review policies and procedures for recertification.

Essential Elements:

- A. The published policy must contain a statement of the basis and purpose for recertification and all recertification requirements.
- B. The rationale for the recertification time interval must be included in the policy.
- C. Recertification policies and procedures in handbooks, guides, and/or electronic media must be published and made available to certificants and the public.

Commentary:

- A.. The goals of recertification can differ for different organizations. Examples might include: to assess core knowledge and skills; to assess knowledge and skills in specific areas of practice; to encourage continued professional development; to ensure maintenance of competence; to promote lifelong learning; etc. An organization's recertification policy should clearly state the purpose of recertification.
- B. An explanation of consequences for the certificant when recertification requirements are not met should be provided.
- C. In the case of a certification program involving a proprietary product or service, the proprietor may describe recertification on the basis of a systemic process of upgrading the product or service in connection with steps taken to withdraw technical support provided by the proprietor for the previous version of the product.
- D. Suggested evidence to document the Standard has been met should include renewal policy and procedure documents and a candidate handbook.

Standard 20

The certification program must demonstrate that its recertification requirements measure or enhance the continued competence of certificants.

Essential Element:

- A. If the purpose of recertification is to *measure* continued competence of certificants, then the certification program must substantiate the validity and reliability of the assessment instruments used to measure continued competence.
- B. If the purpose is to *enhance* continued competence of certificants, then the certification program must demonstrate how the policy contributes to professional development of the individual certificant.

Commentary:

- A. If an assessment method is used (e.g. self-assessment, third-party assessment, peer review, up to date version of the initial certification exam, portfolio), then the application and documentation must include an explanation of the validity and reliability of the assessment or process.
- B. If the enhancement method is used (e.g. continuing education, mentoring, clinical skills or practice improvement modules, institutional or web-based learning), then the application and

documentation must include the applicant's rationale for how the method(s) supports the professional development and enhances the competence of the certificant (e.g. how an enhancement method is related to an individual certificant's needs assessment; how the applicant evaluates the quality and relevance of the competency enhancement methods; whether the enhancement method includes a mechanism, such as a post-test, to assess whether certificant knowledge and/or practical skills have been enhanced.)

- C. Suggested evidence to document that the Standard has been met should include certification renewal policy and procedure documents and a candidate handbook.

MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

Standard 21

The certification program must demonstrate continued compliance to maintain accreditation.

Essential Elements:

- A. The certification program must annually complete and submit information requested on the current status of the certification agency and its programs.
- B. The certification program must report any change in purpose, structure, or activities of the certification program.
- C. The certification program must report any substantive change in examination administration procedures.
- D. The certification program must report any major change in examination techniques or in the scope or objectives of the examination.
- E. The certification program must submit any information NCCA may require to investigate allegations of lack of compliance with NCCA Standards.

Glossary

Accommodation—

A reasonable modification in an assessment instrument or its administration made to compensate for the effects of a qualified disability without altering the purpose of the assessment instrument.

Accountability—

Responsibility of a certification board, governing committee, or other sponsor of a certification program to its stakeholders to demonstrate the efficacy and fairness of certification policies, procedures, and assessment instruments.

Accreditation—

1. **General use:** Approval of an educational program according to defined standards.
2. **As related to NCCA:** Status awarded to a certification program that has demonstrated compliance with the *Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs* set forth by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies.

Administrative Independence—

An organizational structure for the governance of a certification program that ensures control over all essential certification and recertification decisions without being subject to approval by or undue influence from any other body. See *Autonomy*.

Applicant—

An individual who declares interest in earning a credential offered by a certification program, usually through a request for information and the submission of materials. See *Candidate*.

Assessment Instruments—

Any one of several standardized methods for determining if candidates possess the necessary knowledge and/or skill related to the purpose of the certification.

Autonomy—

Control over all essential certification and recertification decisions without being subject to approval by or undue influence from any other body. *Autonomy* in the management and administration of certification enhances the ability of certification programs to serve stakeholder interests, primarily those of consumers of professional services. See *Administrative Independence*.

Bias—

IN THE CONTEXT OF SCORING: a systematic error in a score on an assessment instrument.

IN THE CONTEXT OF EXAMINATION FAIRNESS: may refer to the inappropriateness of content in the assessment instrument, either in terms of its irrelevance, overemphasis, or exclusion.

IN THE CONTEXT OF ELIGIBILITY AND RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS: may refer to the inappropriateness or irrelevance of requirements for certification or recertification if they are not reasonable prerequisites for competence in a profession, occupation, role, or skill. See *Fairness*.

Candidate—

An individual who has met the eligibility qualifications for, but has not yet earned, a credential awarded through a certification program. See *Applicant*.

Certificant—

An individual who has earned a credential awarded through a certification program.

Certification—

A process, often voluntary, by which individuals who have demonstrated the level of knowledge and skill required in the profession, occupation, role, or skill are identified to the public and other stakeholders.

Certification Agency—

The organizational or administrative unit that offers and/or operates a certification program.

Certification Board—

A group of individuals appointed or elected to govern one or more certification programs as well as the certification agency, and responsible for all certification decision making, including governance.

Certification Committee—

A group of individuals appointed or elected to recommend and implement policy related to certification program operation. (See governing committee)

Certification Program—

The standards, policies, procedures, assessment instruments, and related products and activities through which individuals are publicly identified as qualified in a profession, occupation, role, or skill.

Commentary—

Comments, remarks, and observations that clarify terms, provide examples of practice that help explain a standard, or offer suggestions regarding evidence that must be documented to demonstrate compliance.

Content Domains—

The set of organized categories characterizing subject matter under which knowledge and skills may be represented in specifications for assessment instruments.

Consumer—

See also “Public Member”

Continuing Competence—

The ability to provide service at specified levels of knowledge and skill, not only at the time of initial certification but throughout an individual’s professional career. See Recertification and Continuing Education.

Continuing Education—

Activities, often short courses, that certified professionals engage in to receive credit for the purpose of maintaining continuing competence and renewing certification. See Recertification and Continuing Competence.

Cut Score—

A specific score on an assessment instrument or instruments at or above which passing decisions are made and below which failing decisions are made.

Discipline—

A formal, published process for the enforcement of standards governing the professional behavior (i.e., ethics) of certificants.

Eligibility Requirements—

Published criteria, often benchmarks for education, training, and experience, with which applicants must demonstrate compliance in order to qualify for certification.

Equating—

A statistical process used to convert scores on two or more alternate forms of an assessment instrument to a common score for purposes of comparability and equivalence.

Essential Element—

A statement that is directly related to a Standard and specifies what a certification program must do to fulfill the requirement of the Standard.

Fairness—

The principle that all applicants and candidates will be treated in an equitable manner throughout the entire certification process. See Bias.

Grandfathering—

The process by which individuals are granted certification without being required to meet a formal examination requirement. This process is frequently invoked when a certification program is initiated, as a way of recognizing the experience and expertise of long-term experts, and/or to allow grandfathered individuals to develop the initial form(s) of the certification examination. Individuals initially certified through grandfathering may, in the future, be required to pass a form of the certification examination they did not participate in developing in order to maintain certification.

Governing Committee—

A group of individuals appointed or elected to formulate and implement policy related to certification program operation. The NCCA uses this term to denote those committees that are given complete authority over all essential certification decisions.

Incorporation Status—

Legal recognition granted by states to organizations; determines IRS classification as for-profit or nonprofit.

Item—

A general term referring to problems and/or questions that appear in assessment instruments and to which candidates must respond.

Item Bank—

The system by which test items are maintained, stored, and classified to facilitate item review, item development, and examination assembly.

Item Type or Format—

The structure of a problem or question in an assessment instrument (i.e., multiple choice, open-ended).

Job/Practice Analysis/Role Delineation Study—

Any of several methods used singly or in combination to identify the performance domains and associated tasks, knowledge, and/or skills relating to the purpose of the credential and providing the basis for validation.

Parent Organization—

The legal entity under which a certification program is established when the certification program is governed as part of a larger organization.

Performance Domains—

The set of organized categories characterizing a role or job under which tasks and associated knowledge and/or skills may be represented in the job/practice analysis.

Public Member—

A representative of the consumers of services provided by a defined certificant population, serving as a voting member on the governing body of a certification program, with all rights and privileges, including holding office and serving on committees. The public member should bring a perspective to the decision and policy making of the organization that is different from that of the certificants, and helps to balance the organization's role in protecting the public while advancing the interests of the profession.

(remove "consumer" from the glossary, as it has no definition)

Publish—

Make available in hardcopy, electronic, or web-based formats and easily accessible and available on request. The degree of accessibility may be a function of the level of confidentiality of the information.

Recertification—

Requirements and procedures established as part of a certification program that certificants must meet in order to ensure continuing competence and renew their certification. See Continuing Competence and Continuing Education.

Reliability—

The degree to which the scores on an assessment instrument are free of measurement error.

Role—

A more specific or narrower set of knowledge and skills than may be encompassed by the term *profession* or *occupation*, and may also be the focus of certification for a particular product or service to the public.

Self-Assessment—

A process by which an assessment instrument is self-administered for the specific purpose of providing performance feedback rather than a pass/fail decision.

Stakeholders—

The various groups with an interest in the quality, governance, and operation of a certification program, such as the public, certificants, candidates, employers, customers, clients, and third party payers.

Standard—

An accreditation requirement that must be met by a certification program submitting an application to the National Commission for Certifying Agencies.

Standardization—

IN THE CONTEXT OF ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS: ensuring that the process is conducted according to a specified plan in order to provide the same conditions for all candidates.

IN THE CONTEXT OF SCORING: ensuring that candidate responses are judged using predefined criteria in order to provide a consistent basis for evaluating all candidates.

Technical Report—

A summary of psychometric procedures and their results as implemented in the assessment instruments used in a certification program, often addressing such issues as content validity, item writing, test assembly, reliability analysis, cut score development, scoring, and equating.

Undue influence—

Control of decision making over essential certification policy and procedures by stakeholders or other groups outside the autonomous governance structure of a certification program.

Validity—

The degree to which accumulated evidence supports specific interpretations of all components of a certification program (e.g., education, experience, and assessment instruments).

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