

# Candidate Handbook

A guide to earning and maintaining your GS-C



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# Gerontological Nursing Certification Commission (GNCC)

The Gerontological Nursing Certification Commission (GNCC) supports excellence in gerontological nursing by certifying nurses who provide high-quality care to older adults. GNCC certification programs recognize nurses who demonstrate specialized knowledge, skills, and professional commitment in gerontological practice.

GNCC promotes ongoing learning, professional growth, and accountability to ensure certified nurses remain current in their practice and prepared to meet the evolving needs of the aging population.

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## Gerontological Specialist-Certified (GS-C)

The Gerontological Specialist–Certified (GS-C) credential is designed for registered nurses who specialize in the care of older adults. Earning the GS-C demonstrates your knowledge, experience, and dedication to providing safe, effective, and person-centered care across a variety of healthcare settings.

The GS-C examination reflects current gerontological nursing practice and assesses key areas such as clinical care, care coordination, quality and safety, ethical and professional practice. Nurses who earn the GS-C credential are recognized as specialists committed to professional excellence and lifelong learning.

To maintain the GS-C credential, certified nurses must meet continuing competence requirements, ensuring their knowledge and skills stay up to date as practice standards and healthcare needs evolve.

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## Continuing Competence

Continuing Competence is the ongoing acquisition and maintenance of professional knowledge, skill, and ability. Continuing competence must be assessed throughout an individual's professional career and is achieved through the successful completion of educational and professional activities related to the care of older adults across healthcare settings.

Maintaining continuing competence helps ensure that GS-C–certified nurses remain current in their practice and continue to provide safe, high-quality care to older adults.

# Why Certification Matters

## 1 Professional Recognition

Certification validates your specialized knowledge and skills in gerontological nursing. It demonstrates your commitment to excellence and sets you apart as a recognized expert in the care of older adults.

## 2 Career Advancement

Holding the GS-C credential can enhance professional credibility, open doors for leadership roles, and create new opportunities for career growth.

## 3 Quality Patient Care

Certification assures patients and families that certified nurses meet standards of practice, delivering safe, effective, and compassionate care.

## 4 Lifelong Learning

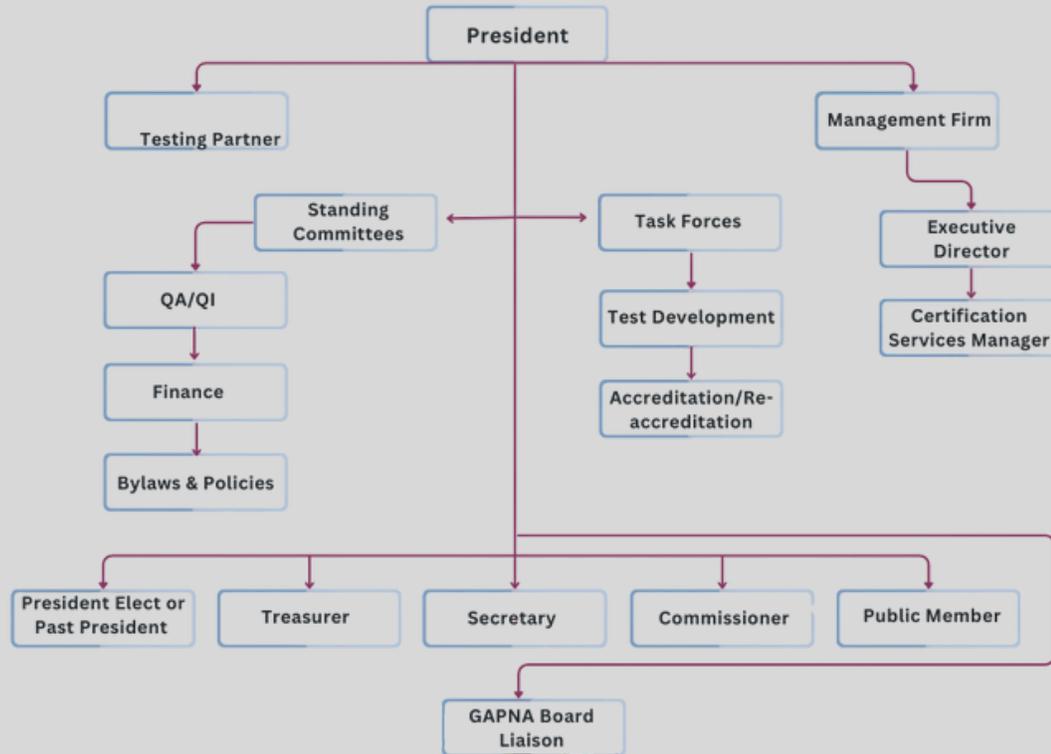
Certification encourages ongoing professional development, keeping nurses current with best practices and evolving standards in gerontological care.



# Governing Body (GNCC)



## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## Contact Information

For questions regarding certification, recertification, eligibility, or appeals, please contact the Gerontological Nursing Certification Commission (GNCC).

### Email:

 [gncc@gerocert.org](mailto:gncc@gerocert.org)

### Phone:

 856-256-2345

### Website:

 [www.gapna.org/certification](http://www.gapna.org/certification)

### Mailing Address:

**Gerontological Nursing Certification Commission (GNCC)**  
East Holly Ave, Box 56  
Pitman, NJ 08071

# Certification Process



## Determine Eligibility

You must meet all eligibility requirements prior to your application for the GS-C exam. This includes licensure, professional practice hours, and professional development.

### Licensure Requirements

The applicant must:

- hold a full and unrestricted RN license in the United States or its territories.
- meet state requirements to perform as an APRN
- hold current national certification in the APRN role.

### Professional Practice Hours

The applicant must complete 2500 professional practice hours as an APRN working with older adults within the last 5 years. These hours can be fulfilled through direct practice hours, alternative hours of equivalence, or a combination of the two.



[Accepted Alternative Hours](#)

If alternative practice hours are submitted, a CV highlighting the stated activities must be included in your application.

### Continuing Education

Applicants must complete 50 gerontology-specific NCPD contact hours within the last 3 years. Gerontology-specific courses focus on adults aged 65 or older and may come from any accredited source, including the GAPNA Online Library. If unsure, include the course objective; the review committee will determine eligibility.

For initial certification, hours must come from learning activities such as coursework, conferences, or lectures. Professional activities like precepting, publishing, or presenting count only toward recertification. Continuing education must be accredited by a recognized provider, such as ANCC, a state board of nursing, a nursing association, ACCME, or AANP.

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## Requirement Rationales

- Learn the rationale behind each GS-C requirement by scanning the QR code or visiting the GNCC website.



[GNCC | About](#)



## **Prepare for the Exam & Application**

The certification examination consists of 175 multiple-choice questions. Four hours are allotted to complete the examination. The current passing score approved by the GNCC Board for the GS-C exam is 73%.



**GAPNA GS-C Review Course**



**Sample Questions**



**Review Bundle**



**GNCC Prep Guide**

# Examination Overview

## Exam Blueprint

| Area | Proficiency  | % of Test |
|------|--|-----------|
| I    | Performs comprehensive assessment of the complex older adult.  | 20%       |
| II   | Performs appropriate screening, diagnostic testing, treatment and planning of care for the complex older adult.              | 20%       |
| III  | Prescribes medications, including consideration of risks and benefits of pharmacotherapy, for the complex older adult.       | 20%       |
| IV   | Uses a system-based approach to design and implement educational strategies to optimize health outcomes.                     | 14%       |
| V    | Anticipates and manages transitions of care between sites and providers, including transition to palliative or hospice care. | 20%       |
| VI   | Uses a systems-based approach to anticipate and deploy resources to optimize outcomes for older adult populations            | 6%        |

## Fees

Please visit the link or scan the QR code for the most up-to-date application and examination fees.



# Applying & Taking the Exam

After confirming you meet the eligibility requirements, you may apply for and take the GS-C exam.

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## Apply for Certification

Submit your completed application and required fees to the GNCC National Office online using the Initial Certification Exam Application link. Applicants re-taking the exam after an initial failing score must mail their application and fee to the GNCC office. The review committee will process all submissions.

Once approved, you will receive an examination permit by email with a link to schedule your exam at a computer-based testing center. The testing center will then confirm your exam date, time, and location.

If your application is incomplete, you will be contacted for missing information and any applicable fees. Failure to provide requested materials within the stated timeframe will result in the application being closed and a refund minus the administrative fee.



[GS-C Initial Application](#)



[First-Time Re-Examination App ONLY](#)

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## Take the Exam

You must have your examination permit and valid government-issued photo ID to be admitted to the exam. Substitutions are not allowed. Your permit is valid for 90 days from the issue date, and you must test within that window. If you do not test before it expires, both the permit and application become void, and you must submit a new application and fee.



[Computer-Based Testing Centers](#)

## Get Recognized

Congratulations to those who have earned their GS-C certification! Display your new credentials proudly, explore the directory of certified peers, and learn how to maintain your GS-C throughout your career.

### List Your Credential

Academic degrees are listed first because they are earned, are considered permanent. Nurse Practitioners are licensed by the State Boards of Nursing. National certifications are usually voluntary. When you become certified by GNCC, you should use the credentials **GS-C** to indicate your certification.

# Recertification Process



## Choose Your Recertification Pathway

### Re-Examination

Complete the exam application and return with appropriate fees to the GNCC National Office. If you choose this option for recertification, proceed right to the exam application which can be found here: [GS-C Exam Application](#). From here, the process is exactly the same as your initial certification process.

### Continuing Education

To recertify through continuing education, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- *Licensure*: Hold a current GS-C and meet all eligibility requirements of the Gerontological Specialist.
- *Professional Practice*: Complete the required 1,000 professional practice hours as an APRN working with older adults within the last 5 years.
- *Continuing Education*: Complete 80 ANCC contact hours within the last 5 years.



## Continuing Education Pathway

### Keep Track of Your Education

The Recertification Portal makes it easy to keep track of the contact hours you earn over the course of your certification period. Once you log in and save your information, you can access and add education at your pace – saving you time when your recertification date approaches.



[C-NET Recertification Portal](#)

### GAPNA Online Library

Use the GAPNA Online Library to view completed educational sessions, download ANCC contact hour certificates, and earn additional quality contact hours to meet recertification requirements.



[GAPNA| Online Library](#)



## Continuing Education Hours

Applicants applying for recertification must complete a total of eighty (80) ANCC contact hours within the 5 year certification period.

A minimum of (50) continuing education hours must be gerontology-specific health care topics. This means they must have reference to those topics in the session title or description. It is the applicants responsibility to prove that the contact hours fit this requirement.

Remaining (30) continuing education hours can be a combination of general nursing, health care, and academic.



[GNCC| Recertification| Examples of Accepted Hours](#)



## Submit Your Recertification Application

You may apply for recertification up to 6 months before your certification expires. Once approved, your new expiration date will be 5 years from your current expiration date. Late applications are accepted up to 90 days after expiration with applicable fees.

If you do not recertify, your certification will become inactive and you will need to reapply and test as a new applicant.

## Receiving Your Certificate

Your initial GS-C certificate will be mailed to you by the National Office. When it's time to recertify, your updated certificate will be sent electronically through C-NET for your convenience.

*Congratulations!*

# Appeals

Any candidate whose certification is denied, suspended, or revoked, or who fails the exam, may appeal the decision. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 30 days of notification and sent to [gncc@gerocert.org](mailto:gncc@gerocert.org). Appeals received after this timeframe will not be considered. The appeal must clearly state the reasons the decision is believed to be in error or arbitrary or capricious.

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# Audited Applications

The first recertification application of each quarter will go through our audit process. The following materials will be requested for all audited applications in order to verify content, attendance, and completion of the submitted contact hours.

- Copies of all certificates of completion for seminars, sessions, or conferences.
  - Copies of published materials, presentations, or multimedia productions.
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# Certificant Directory

Explore the GS-C Certificant Directory to connect with fellow certified professionals, verify credentials, and celebrate the growing community of gerontological specialists.



[GS-C| Certificant Directory.](#)



## *Cycle of Certification*

The GS-C exam is carefully developed to ensure it accurately measures the knowledge and skills essential for gerontological nursing specialists. This page outlines the rigorous process behind the exam, including test design, item writing, review, and validation. Learn how GNCC works with subject matter experts to maintain high standards, fairness, and reliability in every examination.



[Cycle of Certification](#)

## *Annual Reports*

Access the Gerontological Specialist Certification (GS-C) yearly reports, offering a comprehensive overview of exam trends, pass rates, and other key data. These reports are designed to inform candidates, educators, and stakeholders about the GS-C exam, supporting transparency and ongoing improvement in gerontological nursing certification. Explore past and current reports to gain insight into the performance and outcomes of the GS-C examination.



[2024 Annual Report](#)