



PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION HANDBOOK

**Certified Nursing Home Administrators (CNHA)
Certified Assisted Living Administrators (CALA)**

American College of Health Care Administrators

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ACHCA's Professional Certification Programs

- Have the goal of defining excellence in the profession.
- Include Nursing Home Administration and Assisted Living Administration.
- Certify professionals who have demonstrated the knowledge, skills, and values consistent with the high standards of management necessary to provide quality care to residents, families, and communities.
- Provide visible and tangible evidence of public accountability for the efficient delivery of quality health care.
- Benefit professional nursing home administrators, assisted living administrators, public and private financing agencies, state licensure boards, state regulatory agencies, employees, and ultimately, residents and families who are served by health care services.

Certified Professionals

- Recognize that they are responsible for creating an organizational environment dedicated to the physical, social, and emotional needs of residents.
- Are committed to a higher standard of quality care, which includes healing, empathy, and compassion for those in need and for those who love them.

DEFINITIONS

Certification:

- The Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) defines certification as “a standardized process, often voluntary, by which individuals who have demonstrated the level of knowledge and/or skill required in the profession, occupation, role, skill, or specialty area are recognized and identified to the public and other stakeholders.”
- Professional Certification sets advanced professional standards.
- Is a voluntary process.
- ACHCA’s Professional Certification Programs require both educational and experiential qualifications for eligibility.
- Requires assessment including testing.
- Identifies and recognizes administrators and managers who are performing at an advanced level of skill and knowledge.
- Results in an advanced professional credential.

Licensure:

- Refers to the mandatory, state and federal requirement for practice in a particular profession or occupation.
- Other terms used by states for entry to practice requirements include registration and certification (not to be confused with Professional Certification).
- Sets minimum (entry-level) competence.
- Requires assessment including testing.
- Is meant to protect the public from incompetent practitioners.

Certificate Program:

- Not regulated or standardized.
- Not to be confused with Professional Certification.
- Generally consists of a prescribed course or curriculum with or without assessment or testing.
- Results in a Certificate of Completion issued by the program sponsor upon program completion.
- Is a voluntary process.

CNHA: NURSING HOME ADMINISTRATOR CERTIFICATION

ACHCA began certifying nursing home administrators in 1981 and, through the years, the program has been revised several times to reflect emerging trends in professional credentialing. The CNHA exam is based on the exam blueprint developed by Subject Matter Experts based on the Nursing Home Administrator job analysis.

CALA: ASSISTED LIVING ADMINISTRATOR CERTIFICATION

Not all states mandate licensure of assisted living administrators. Those that do have varying eligibility requirements to practice in the profession. With inconsistent administrator requirements across states, experienced assisted living administrators can demonstrate their knowledge and ability through ACHCA Professional Certification.

Since the assisted living sector does not have federal regulatory oversight and is regulated by the states, the ACHCA Professional Certification process provides a national standard for assisted living administration. The CALA exam is based on the exam blueprint developed by Subject Matter experts based on the assisted living administrator job analysis.

ACHCA's CALA program serves as a model for advanced practice in assisted living administration.

ACHCA's current professional certification exam blueprints are based on the 2009 Professional Practice Analysis (PPA) conducted by the National Association of Long-Term Care Administrator Boards (NAB).

REASONS TO PURSUE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION:

National Recognition & Endorsement

The Professional Certification Program identifies and honors administrators and managers who are performing at an advanced level of skill and knowledge. Certified Nursing Home Administrators may be eligible for some form of licensure recognition in participating states/jurisdictions (see insert at right).

Commitment to the Public

Professional Certification reflects a commitment to residents, families and staff. Certified administrators have advanced knowledge and experience to lead their facilities.

Enhancement of the Profession

Professional Certification promotes quality in the profession and improves the public image of administrators. The presence of a Certified Administrator in a long term care organization speaks well to consumers evaluating an Assisted Living Community or Skilled Nursing Facility.

Personal Satisfaction and a Sense of Achievement

Certification is a voluntary program, which allows experienced and practicing administrators to validate their knowledge, skill and abilities. Professionally Certified individuals cite a strong feeling of personal accomplishment. Candidates who sit for the certification exam receive detailed score reports so they can assess areas of strength and areas for development.

Employer Recognition

Some employers encourage their administrators to become professionally certified and others look for Certification as a condition of hire. Certification is considered a plus on a résumé.

ACHCA Recognition

Upon Certification, ACHCA will:

- Provide a certificate suitable for framing, recognizing your achievement.
- Provide a sample press release you can send to your local newspapers.
- Provide a letter to your CEO (or a potential employer) informing him or her of your achievement and its significance (upon request).
- Publish your name in ACHCA's member publications.
- Recognize you before your peers at a special ceremony during the Annual Convocation & Exposition.

State Recognition

The following states recognize ACHCA's CNHA program which in many cases "fast tracks" administrator eligibility for licensure in that state:

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- Illinois
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- Montana
- Nevada
- New York
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Washington
- West Virginia

Licensing rules and requirements vary by state. Check with your state licensing board for your state's reciprocity/endorsement requirements. A list of state licensure boards and contact information is maintained on the NAB website at www.nabweb.org.

American College of Health Care Administrators

Certification Value Statement

Evidence is growing about the importance and value of the long term care administration profession to the delivery of quality care and quality services to elders, and is being advanced by corporations and both the public and practitioners in recent years. Progressive corporate leaders and facility owners embrace the value of professional certification. By undertaking the certification process, administrators have shown a commitment to excellence and best practices in their profession and to providing a higher quality of care to the populations they serve. When hiring administrators, those with certification also have licensure reciprocity in a number of states, which is a competitive advantage to finding and retaining the best talent in the industry.

Research about the value of certification reflected that ACHCA members, certified members, and fellows were leading facilities with better quality than non-members in 13 of the 19 quality indicators examined. These findings support the value of professional membership, as well as voluntary certification or fellow credentialing with respect to quality improvement and better survey outcomes. Achieving national certification can be an external benchmark of the organization's effectiveness in implementing culture transformation and to meet accreditation requirements.

Residents and the consumer in general expect knowledgeable organizational leadership. Professional Certification verifies to the public that administrators are highly skilled and possess the knowledge needed to strive toward excellence in providing high quality care and services. When compared to non-certified administrators, ACHCA certified administrators oversee facilities associated with:

- ◇ **Higher Quality of Care**
- ◇ **Higher Occupancy Rates**

ACHCA's commitment to promoting excellence in long term care leadership is reflected in our strong educational and mentoring programs which reflect the ongoing industry changes. Our partnering and collaboration with other long term care stakeholders provides coordinated efforts industry alignment and recognition. Clearly, the investment in leadership development embedded within ACHCA and their associated advancement programs, equips the new and seasoned long term care administrator with the skills, knowledge and resources necessary to provide excellent quality care and services to our residents and patients.

The complete article titled The Importance and Value of Professional Membership of Nursing Home Administrators, can be found in *The Journal of Health and Human Services Administration*, Vol. 37, Number 4, Spring 2015.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

Application and Registration

- For each credential, candidates must complete and submit an application which demonstrates education, experience and continuing education (see page 20 for links to online applications).
- Submit a copy of current NHA or AL license if required by state.
- Acknowledge the ACHCA Code of Ethics (see page 19).
- Pass both the general Certification Exam (110 questions) and the specialty exam (40 questions).
- Submit credentialing fees once the exam is passed.

Eligibility Criteria (see pages 9-10)

All eligibility criteria are detailed on the Application for Professional Certification.

You must demonstrate:

- A minimum of two years of licensure, as defined by the state board.
- A minimum of 40 hours of continuing education provided through an approved provider of CE such as NAB/NCERS or a state approved provider of LTC CE over the past 2 years immediately preceding the date of the application.
- Both education/experience and continuing education requirements must be fulfilled to be eligible.
- ACHCA membership is preferred but not a requirement for Professional Certification.

Application Process

- A candidate's exam eligibility must be established before exam authorization can take place. Please review the eligibility criteria on pages 9-10 before submitting your application.

Scheduling the Professional Certification Exam

- Once the application is approved and the applicant receives an approval letter, which serves as the ATT (Admission to Test) letter, from ACHCA, the computer-based professional exam(s) may be scheduled for the day of your choice.
- Exams are administered at PSI testing centers. Examination appointments may be scheduled with PSI by phone. PSI testing center locations can be located at <http://cert.psiexams.com/locateall.html>.
- All candidates must schedule an appointment prior to testing. It is strongly recommended that appointments are scheduled once the ATT letter is received. A candidate has a six-month authorization period in which to take the exam(s).
- Examination appointments may be scheduled with PSI by phone. To schedule an exam, please call 1-800-211-2754 .

Special Accommodations

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, special testing accommodations will be considered for individuals with disabilities recognized by the ADA. Requests for special accommodations to take the exam must be approved by ACHCA prior to scheduling your appointment. Requests can be made directly on the Professional Certification Application or by contacting ACHCA at professionaladvancement@achca.org.

Unemployed Applicants

Unemployed applicants are eligible for Certification providing all requirements are met. The experience verification may be signed by a previous employer. In instances where a license is required to meet eligibility requirements, the license must be current.

Refund and Cancellation

If a scheduled exam needs to be canceled, PSI/Lasergrade must be notified no less than 24 hours before the exam date. If adequate notice is not provided, a \$75.00 processing fee will be charged. The exam can be rescheduled.

Candidates who have been approved for, but have not yet scheduled an exam, and who wish to cancel the exam authorization, may notify ACHCA within 30 days. The application fee, minus a \$25.00 processing fee, will be refunded within 30 days of the application. After 30 days, no refunds will be issued. For the credentialing fee, ACHCA will refund the entire credentialing fee, less \$25.00 processing fee, within 30 days of payment. After 30 days, no refunds will be issued.

Pursuing Multiple Credentials

- Candidates may take two specialty examinations on one test date.
- The same application form may be used to register for multiple exams.
- If two specialty exams are taken on the same test date, see the fees schedule on page 21.

Confirmation Notice

ACHCA will email a confirmation notice to applicants within two weeks after receiving the application for certification.

PSI Test Center Locations

Please visit the PSI website at <http://cert.psiexams.com/locateall.html> to find the test center closest to you.

Change in Contact Information

Changes to your name or contact information should be submitted in writing via Fax to (866) 874-1585 or via email at professionaladvancement@achca.org.

Certification of Foreign Administrators

Foreign administrators are waived of all U.S. licensure requirements. Foreign administrators who meet all other requirements are eligible for ACHCA Certification. Certification exams, however, are only available at testing centers in the United States.

ASSISTED LIVING CERTIFICATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Option 1

Fulfillment of any state Assisted Living Administrator licensure requirement.

or

Completion of the NAB RC/AL Licensure Exam.

or

Current Nursing Home Administrator license.

and

Two years of full-time experience as an Assisted Living Administrator/Manager in an assisted living environment as defined by State law.

and

40 hours of continuing education (CE) during the two years prior to date of application in the Domain of Practice relevant to Assisted Living Administrator/Management.*

or

Option 2

Baccalaureate degree and two years of full-time experience as an Assisted Living Administrator/Manager in an assisted living environment. (as defined by State law)

and

40 hours of continuing education (CE) during the two years prior to date of application in the Domain of Practice relevant to Assisted Living Administration/Management.*

or

Option 3

Associate degree or Registered Nurse and four years of full-time experience as an Assisted Living Administrator/Manager in an assisted living environment.

and

40 hours of continuing education (CE) during the two years prior to date of application in the Domain of Practice relevant to Assisted Living Administration/Management.*

or

Option 4

High School diploma, G.E.D. or LPN/LVN and six years of full-time experience as an Assisted Living Administrator/Manager in an assisted living environment.

and

40 hours of continuing education (CE) during the two years prior to date of application in the Domain of Practice relevant to Assisted Living Administration/Management.*

*This requirement can be satisfied if you are a licensed NHA in a state requiring 20 CE/year.
Submit a copy of your NHA license.

NURSING HOME CERTIFICATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Two year licensure as a Nursing Home Administrator, including a current NHA license.

and

Two years experience as a Nursing Home Administrator (excluding time as an AIT).

and

A baccalaureate degree if licensed after January 1, 1996.

and

40 hours of continuing education (CE) during the two years prior to date of application in the Domain of Practice relevant to Skilled Nursing Administration/Management.*

*CE documentation is required only if you are licensed in a state that does not require 40 hrs/2 years for re-licensure: CE documentation is needed for the following states: AK, CO, HI.

EXAM OVERVIEW

Development

ACHCA has contracted with an outside vendor to provide testing and consulting services for the Professional Certification Exams. HumRRO is a national testing company founded in 1951. It designs, develops and implements effective and reliable testing assessment programs. Their clients include an array of association certification programs. HumRRO's experience and expertise, combined with select ACHCA volunteers and Subject Matter Experts, ensure that the programs are top-notch in terms of professional testing standards and candidate expectations.

The Exam Development Process

Although a new job analysis is utilized every five years, individual test items are written and revised year-round. New test questions are introduced in each exam administration and may be selected from the Exam Item Bank.

Subject Matter Experts, in conjunction with HumRRO, review the individual item statistics and set the cut-scores (pass/fail rates). Using the Angoff-Criterion referenced method, these Experts judge the relevance of each item and the importance of a qualified candidate correctly answering that question. These judgments and the actual statistical results of the exams are factored to yield a cut-score for each exam.

HumRRO and ACHCA have the responsibility to train Subject Matter Experts on an ongoing basis to write exam items to keep the exams current and relevant. Subject Matter Experts, or Item Writers, are vetted by the Professional Advancement Committee based on years of experience, knowledge, and area of expertise.

Exam Preparation

Because the ACHCA certification exams are designed to draw on your experience, developing traditional study materials is difficult. Most candidates review the exam blueprint on the next page and then focus their preparation on areas in which they may need a refresher. Certification Readiness sessions are also held at selected ACHCA national and chapter conferences. Candidates may contact the ACHCA National office for Certification Readiness session availability.

EXAM CONTENT

New items are routinely added to the exam bank of questions, and some topics may or may not be covered. Please use this information as a guide for preparation. Candidates for CNHA and CALA must complete both the General Administration portion of the exam and a Specialty section.

Part I – General Administration (110 questions)

Resident Care (25%) -Resident services including nursing, food, social, therapeutic activity, pharmaceutical and medical; health information management; resident's rights

Human Resources (16%) -Recruitment/retention, educational requirements, staff development, evaluations, compensation and benefits, recognition, labor and government laws, HR policies, independent contractor qualifications and services

Finance (20%) -Budgeting, analysis, accounting principles, client's fund and account procedures, rate setting, revenue sources, loan acquisition, reimbursement, third party contracts, cost structures, billing procedures

Environment (15%) -Maintenance and improvement of building grounds and equipment, environmental safety programs, emergency preparedness programs

Leadership (24%) -Strategic planning, goal setting, creating a mission, accountability, managing change, crisis management, maintaining formal channels of communication, resource acquisition, information planning and control, ethics, liability issues

Part II – Specialty Portion for Nursing Home Administration and Assisted Living Administration (40 questions each section)

Specialty exams emphasize those aspects of the Domains of Practice that are unique to their specialty. Specialty exam questions are distributed in approximately the following percentages.

Resident Care (26%) -see above

Human Resources (14%)-see above

Finance (24%)-see above

Environment (14%)-see above

Leadership (22%)-see above

Examination Day

Three hours are allotted to complete the 110-question general exam and a 40 question specialty exam (either nursing home administration or assisted living administration). Those candidates taking a second specialty exam will have one (1) additional hour to answer the additional 40 question exam. Candidates are notified immediately after the exam if the exam is passed. Please note that exam scores received at the testing center are not official. ACHCA receives exam score 1-2 business days after completion of an exam. Candidates will be notified of official exam scores by ACHCA within ten (10) days of receipt of the official score report.

After the Exam

Upon notification from ACHCA of successful completion of the Certification process, the candidate will receive an invoice for the remainder of the credentialing fee.

Upon receipt of the credentials and fee(s), the ACHCA will send the Certificant a press release, a CEO notification form, and a certificate suitable for framing at which time the Certificant may use the certification credential.

Questions or comments regarding the professional Certification exam must be submitted to ACHCA in writing via email at professionaladvancement@achca.org or call ACHCA at 202-536-5120.

EXAMINATION PROCESSES

Determination of Passing Scores

Passing scores are determined using the Angoff Criterion-referenced method, the most accepted method in the testing industry. Candidate scores are not affected by others who take the exam on the same day.

Examination Results

Candidates are given a Pass/Fail score for both Parts I and II. A candidate must pass both the general and the specialty examinations to receive the credential.

Exam scores are valid for three years. A candidate who has previously passed Part I, the General Administration Section, may apply the score from that section to seek an additional credential within the three-year period. For example, a CALA may seek the Nursing Home Administrators Certification by taking only the CNHA Specialty exam within this three-year period.

Confidentiality of Exam Scores

Only designated ACHCA staff, staff of ACHCA's contracted testing company, and members of the Professional Advancement Committee (when necessary) have access to exam scores. Scores will not be released to anyone other than the examinee without written permission.

Retaking Exams

If the candidate fails either the general or the specialty examination, he/she may apply to retake only the failed examination. There is no limit to the number of times a candidate may retake the general exam or either of the specialty exams. Exam scores are valid for three years.

Challenging Scores & Appeals

Candidates may appeal a decision of the Professional Advancement Committee (PA Committee) or any aspect of a Certification Exam. All appeals must be submitted in writing to the PA Committee. Appeals related to the calculation of exam scores must be received within 30 days following the exam. Candidates may request to have exams reviewed by the PA Committee. However, actual scores very rarely change as a result of a review. Candidates must submit a written request for appeal and payment for \$45.00 to the attention of ACHCA Certification staff. The fee includes checking for omitted questions, or any conditions that may have interfered with the scoring process. Information on responses to specific questions cannot be provided to ensure exam security. Appeals should be sent by return receipt certified or registered mail. The request should state the reason why the scores are contested and should include any information to be considered by the PA Committee.

Exam Updates

The ACHCA Exam Development Subcommittee, HumRRO, and Subject Matter Experts are continually developing new exam items. The tests are updated annually.

Disciplinary Policy

The PA Committee may revoke the application or certification of an individual or otherwise take disciplinary action in accordance with the PA Committee Professional Practice (ACHCA Code of Ethics) and Disciplinary Procedures.

Such procedures currently allow revocation of application or certification, and allow other disciplinary action in the case of:

- * ineligibility;
- * irregularity in connection with the exam;
- * unauthorized possession or distribution or other use of exam materials;
- * misrepresentation in any statement to the PA Committee or public regarding Certification;
- * loss or suspension of other health care provider licenses required for the field covered by Certification;
- * conviction or plea of guilty to a felony or misdemeanor related to the practice of medical management or administration;
- * not adhering to the eligibility requirements for Certification candidacy or ensuring compliance with proficiency requirements; or
- * violating the ACHCA Code of Ethics (page 19).

ACHCA may amend these Disciplinary Procedures as needed.

In the event disciplinary review is required, the PA Committee shall serve as a Hearing Panel and follow established policy for such hearings and review. Copies of the Disciplinary Process policy are available by contacting ACHCA.

ACHCA's Professional Certification Programs do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender, health status, lifestyle, membership status, nationality, race, religion or sexual orientation.

Certification Renewal

In order to ensure continued competency, Certified Administrators must renew their Certification *every five years*. The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) and the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE), a national, nonprofit association dedicated to defining standards in certification, strongly recommends renewal as part of any certification program.

The ICE Guidelines state "technology is advancing too fast for a certificate of competence earned at the beginning of one's career to constitute proof of competence many years later. Demonstrations of continuing competence are as reasonable and necessary as are required demonstrations of entry-level competence." There is no profession where change is more evident than in health care.

One of the following options may be completed to renew certification:

- Complete an Executive Portfolio
- Complete an Executive Level Course
- Pass the Certification Specialty Exam (*CNHA & CALA only*)

A recertification application must accompany any of the above renewal options. A link to the recertification application can be found on page 20, or on the ACHCA website, www.achca.org.

Certification Expiration

Certification renewal may be completed up to one year prior to the expiration date or during a one-year grace period* after the expiration date. The renewal dates continue in five year increments from the original Certification date, regardless of the date of renewal. If the Certificant does not renew she/he will be decertified. If a Certificant wishes to regain Certification after being decertified, the candidate must apply for and pass the Certification Exam.

**The one-year grace period for certification renewal is for the submission of the application, documents, and fee, and is not intended to be used to earn additional CE toward the current renewal.*

The Executive Portfolio

The Executive Portfolio allows an administrator to demonstrate professional activity and development during the certification renewal period. Requirements include a total of 150 CE credits: 1) in five Domains of Practice categories as noted below; 2) covering the immediate five year period; and 3) approved by a continuing education provider such as NAB/NCERS, or a state approved provider of LTC CE credit.

- **Human Resources (24 CE Credits)**
Recruitment/retention, educational requirements, staff development, evaluations, compensation and benefits, recognition, labor and government laws, HR policies, independent contractor qualifications and services
- **Resident Care (40 CE Credits)**
Resident services including nursing, food, social, therapeutic activity, pharmaceutical and medical; health information management; residents rights
- **Leadership (35 CE Credits)**
Strategic planning, goal setting, creating a mission, accountability, managing change, crisis management, maintaining formal channels of communication, resource acquisition, information planning and control, ethics, liability issues
- **Environment (21 CE Credits)**
Maintenance and improvement of building grounds and equipment, environmental safety programs, emergency preparedness programs
- **Finance (30 CE Credits)**
Budgeting, analysis, accounting principals, client's fund and account procedures, rate setting, revenue sources, loan acquisition, reimbursement, third party contracts, cost structures, billing procedures

As of October 1, 2013 ACHCA will once again require the submission of the Executive Portfolio to document the achievement of continuing education (CE) at the time of renewal. In addition, the Professional Advancement committee will conduct random audits, 10% or no less than eight, of certification renewal applications within the year the renewal is received to ensure compliance with CE renewal requirements. These audits will include the verification of *both* the required Executive Portfolio and related CE certificates.

It is suggested that you gather and save the associated CE certificates, along with the Executive Portfolio, for this five year renewal period in the event you are selected for the audit. Please be aware, that should an audit reveal fraudulent submission of CE documentation, the Professional Advancement committee reserves the right to disqualify this credential.

The same Executive Portfolio may be submitted for renewal of multiple credentials; multiple credentials do not have to be renewed at the same time; although it may be more efficient and economical to do so to have a single certification expiration date.

~CE sessions and titles are not by themselves defining for the domains of practice categories; ACHCA relies on your best judgment for assigning the category in which the CE are applicable. Single topic seminars should go into a single category and conferences may be broken down by session topic to equal the total number of CE awarded. Magazine tests can be claimed under the category that best fits their description.

The Executive Level Course

Executive Level Courses are intended primarily for senior executives, should be in the area of general management or health services management, and are offered by a college, university, or nonprofit organization. Candidates are asked to *seek prior approval* from the Professional Advancement Committee (PA Committee) for the Executive level Course option. Example: The University of Washington Certificate Program in Gerontology fulfills this option requirement. To seek prior approval of an executive level course, please email professionaladvancement@achca.org or call (202) 536-5120.

ACHCA College Credit to CE Conversion Chart

College Semester credit*	College Quarter Credit*	Certificate Program (UW Certificate in Gerontology cited in the <i>Handbook</i>)
Generally 15-17 weeks or one hour per each hour of college credit	Generally 11-12 weeks or 1 ½ hour per each hour of college credit	
1 semester hour course= 15 clock hours or 15 CE; converts to 3 Fellow points	1 quarter hour course x 12 weeks x 1.5 = 18 clock hours or 18 CE; converts to 3.6 Fellow points	
4 semester hour course = 60 clock hours; converts to 12 Fellow points	4 quarter hour course x 12 weeks = 72 clock hours or 72 CE; converts to 14.4 Fellow points	
10 Semester hours = 150 clock hours or 150 CE; converts to 30 Fellow points	10 Quarter hours x 12 weeks = 180 hours or 180 CE; converts to 36 Fellow points	
	3 hour course x 11 weeks x 1.5= 49.5 clock hours or 49.5 CE; converts to 9.9 Fellow Points	The certificate is equivalent to 12 credits over 12 months; OR <i>Four courses lasting 11 weeks each. Each course is worth 3 quarter hours</i> 12 hour course x 11 weeks x 1.5 = 198 clock hours or 198 CE; converts to 39 Fellow points

* One semester credit is equal to 1.5 quarter credits

- conversion of quarter credit to semester credit: 36 quarter credits/1.5= 24 Semester credits
- conversion of semester credits to quarter credit: 24 x 1.5= 36

Sources:

<http://www.ace.edu/student-experience/current-students/quarter-to-semester-conversion-guide>

http://pcc.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/60/~what-is-the-difference-between-quarter-and-semester-credits%3F

Recertification by Specialty Exam

The Certification Specialty Exam is used to recertify in the event that an administrator has not earned the required 150 continuing education credits within their five year certification period. An applicant must contact professionaladvancement@achca.org to be approved to recertify by exam. If approved to recertify by exam, the applicant must pass the exam before the end of their certification grace period. *It is recommended that an applicant who wishes to recertify by exam requests approval no later than six months before the end of their certification grace period.*

General Exam References

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Code of Ethics

PREAMBLE: The preservation of the highest standards of integrity and ethical principles is vital to the successful discharge of the professional responsibilities of all long-term health care administrators. This Code of Ethics has been promulgated by the American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA) in an effort to stress the fundamental rules considered essential to this basic purpose. It shall be the obligation of members to seek to avoid not only conduct specifically proscribed by the code, but also conduct that is inconsistent with its spirit and purpose. Failure to specify any particular responsibility or practice in this Code of Ethics should not be construed as denial of the existence of other responsibilities or practices. Recognizing that the ultimate responsibility for applying standards and ethics falls upon the individual, the ACHCA establishes the following Code of Ethics to make clear its expectation of the membership.

Expectation I

Individuals shall hold paramount the welfare of persons for whom care is provided.

PROSCRIPTIONS: The Health Care Administrator shall:

- Strive to provide to all those entrusted to his or her care the highest quality of appropriate services possible in light of resources or other constraints.
- Operate the facility consistent with laws, regulations, and standards of practice recognized in the field of health care administration.
- Consistent with law and professional standards, protect the confidentiality of information regarding individual recipients of care.
- Perform administrative duties with the personal integrity that will earn the confidence, trust, and respect of the general public.
- Take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination on basis of race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, citizenship status, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, past, present or future status in the U.S. uniformed services, genetics or any other characteristic protected under applicable law.

PROSCRIPTION: The Health Care Administrator shall not:

- Disclose professional or personal information regarding recipients of service to unauthorized personnel unless required by law or to protect the public welfare.

Expectation II

Individuals shall maintain high standards of professional competence and personal conduct.

PROSCRIPTIONS: The Health Care Administrator shall:

- Possess and maintain the competencies necessary to effectively perform his or her responsibilities.
- Practice administration in accordance with capabilities and proficiencies and, when appropriate, seek counsel from qualified others.
- Actively strive to enhance knowledge of and expertise in long-term care administration through continuing education and professional development.
- Demonstrate conduct that is in the best interest of the profession.

PROSCRIPTIONS: The Health Care Administrator shall not:

- Misrepresent qualifications, education, experience, or affiliations.
- Provide services other than those for which he or she is prepared and qualified to perform.
- Conduct themselves in a manner detrimental to the best interest of the profession.

Expectation III

Individuals shall strive, in all matters relating to their professional functions, to maintain a professional posture that places paramount the interests of the facility and its residents.

PROSCRIPTIONS: The Health Care Administrator shall:

- Avoid partisanship and provide a forum for the fair resolution of any disputes which may arise in service delivery or facility management.
- Disclose to the governing body or other authority as may be appropriate, any actual or potential circumstance concerning him or her that might reasonably be thought to create a conflict of interest or have a substantial adverse impact on the facility or its residents.

PROSCRIPTION: The Health Care Administrator shall not:

- Participate in activities that reasonably may be thought to create a conflict of interest or have the potential to have a substantial adverse impact on the facility or its residents.

Expectation IV

Individuals shall honor their responsibilities to the public, their profession, and their relationships with colleagues and members of related professions.

PROSCRIPTIONS: The Health Care Administrator shall:

- Foster increased knowledge within the profession of health care administration and support research efforts toward this end.
- Participate with others in the community to plan for and provide a full range of health care services.
- Share areas of expertise with colleagues, students, and the general public to increase awareness and promote understanding of health care in general and the profession in particular.

PROSCRIPTION: The Health Care Administrator shall not:

- Inform the ACHCA Standards and Ethics Committee of actual or potential violations of this Code of Ethics, and fully cooperate with ACHCA's sanctioned inquiries into matters of professional conduct related to this Code of Ethics.
- PROSCRIPTION:** The Health Care Administrator shall not:
- Defend, support, or ignore unethical conduct perpetrated by colleagues, peers or students.

To Apply for ACHCA Professional Certification

Please apply online for authorization to take the ACHCA professional certification examinations. At the time that you apply, you will be asked to upload your long term care license (if required by your state), college diploma (if applying for CNHA and licensed after 1/1/1996 or if applying for CALA under Option 2) and a completed [affidavit form](#). It is strongly suggested that you scan and save all of the required documentation to your computer *before* beginning the application. The certification application must be completed in one sitting. If you navigate away from the application window, you may lose your work and will need to begin the application again.

Your online application will not be complete until you have paid the certification application fee. The certification fees can be found on the following page.

To Apply for ACHCA Professional Recertification

Please apply online for recertification of your ACHCA professional certification. [Click here](#) to access the online recertification application.

ACHCA requires the submission of the Executive Portfolio to document the achievement of continuing education (CE) at the time of recertification application submission. To access the Executive Portfolio, please [click here](#). A signed copy of the [affidavit form](#) is also required.

If the candidate chooses to submit an Executive Level Course in lieu of the Executive Portfolio, please upload a copy of the approved course description or syllabus and the earned transcript at the time of application submission. *Please note that Executive Level Courses must be pre-approved by the Professional Advancement Committee.*

If the candidate has taken the Specialty Exam in lieu of the Executive Portfolio, please upload a copy of the notification letter. *(CNHA and CALA certifications only.)*

ACHCA Professional Certification Fees		
Application Fees	Member	Non-Member
Join ACHCA NOW to receive member pricing *ACHCA membership is individual, not facility based Click Here to join ACHCA!	N/A	\$310.00
Single Credential Certification Exam (check only one)	\$150.00	\$150.00
Add Additional Credential exam (same day)	\$135.00	\$135.00
Add Additional Credential exam (different day)	\$150.00	\$150.00
Retake Certification Exam (failed section)	\$75.00 per section	\$75.00 per section
Credential Fees (Paid once exam has been successfully passed)	Member	Non-Member
Single Credentialing fee	\$250.00	\$350.00
Second Credentialing fee (same day)	\$135.00	\$135.00
Second Credential fee (different day)	\$185.00	\$235.00
Recertification Fees	Member	Non-Member
Single recertification fee	\$339.00	\$389.00
Additional recertification fee	\$100.00 per credential	\$100.00 per credential

Note: The application fee includes the application, testing center, and processing fees. The credential fee is

Payment Options

Online with credit card (preferred)

-This can be done at the time of application submission. A payment page will appear at the end of your application.

Check

-Please mail to: ACHCA, Attn: Certification, P.O. Box 75060
Baltimore, MD 21275-5060

Fax with credit card

-Please fax the following information to (866) 874-1585
Card type (AMEX, VISA, MASTERCARD, DISCOVER), Credit Card #, Exp. Date, Name on Card, Billing Address, and Security Code (CVC)

****PSI Refund and Cancellation Policy for Scheduled Exams****

If you have scheduled an exam, and need to cancel it, PSI/Lasergrade must be notified no less than 24 hours before the exam. If adequate notice is not provided, a \$75.00 processing fee will be charged.

****ACHCA Refund and Cancellation Policy ****

Requests for refunds and cancellations of the *certification application fee* or *certification credentialing fee* must be made in writing. For the certification application fee, if no exam has been scheduled or if 24 hours notice was given to cancel an exam, ACHCA will refund your entire certification application fee, less \$25 processing fee within 30 days of application. After 30 days no refunds will be issued. For the credentialing fee, ACHCA will refund your entire credentialing fee, less \$25 processing fee within 30 days of payment. After 30 days, no refunds will be issued.

Certification Promotes:

- Professional Development
- Employer Recognition
- Customer Confidence
- National Recognition
- Quality Outcomes

The American Health Care Association recognizes the American College of Health Care Administrators professional certification programs and mentoring initiatives as important tools in the development of a well rounded, skilled health care professional.



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