



## NCCA and the Accreditation Process

The Activity Professionals National Credentialing Center is in the process of working towards accreditation through the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, which is the Accrediting body for the Institute for Credentialing Excellence. There are 21 standards, some encompassing numerous components, which must be in place before applying for accreditation. A large fee is also required. APNCC has already met many of the standards as are listed below and is well on the way to seeking accreditation. This is a process that normally takes credentialing bodies many years. APNCC feels it is best to follow the guidelines, even while not yet accredited, to assure others of the credibility of the program. APNCC is above reproach and conducts itself under the highest and utmost professional standards.

Listed below are the standards that APNCC has already met. Copies of the NCCA standards can be purchased at their website.

### 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.

Standard 1 is met by APNCC; evidence includes Bylaws, Mission statement, website information, a brochure and policies and procedures in place.

### 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 activities.**

*Essential element:*

- 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. 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 certificant.
- 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 education or training programs or course of study leading to certification. 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.

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Standard 2 is met by APNCC; evidence includes policies and procedures, bylaws, APNCC is a separate entity from the education branch and APNCC offers no education; no specific course is required by APNCC and exam policies and procedures. APNCC has a separate Board from any education branch and there is no decision making by entities from any other organization, state or national.

### **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.**

*Essential element:*

- 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 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 organization.

Standard 3 is met by APNCC. APNCC has a policy for a public member in place and currently HAS Public Member on the Board who has full voting privileges. APNCC meets the rest of the standard with evidence including Bylaws, policies and procedures and job descriptions for board members.

### **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.

Standard 4 is met by APNCC; evidence includes financial records, bank statements and an annual budget.

### **Standard 5**

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

*Essential element:*

- 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.

Standard 5 is met by APNCC; evidence to include resumes or vitae of each board member

### **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.**

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APNCC is currently working on this standard and has completed several components with policies and procedures in place, several other policies are in process. Code of ethics is completed.

### **Standard 7**

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

Most components of standard 7 have been met. Some policies are still in process. Evidence includes a brochure, research, website information, and policies and procedures.

### **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 element*

- A. If any current certificants were granted certification without having to meet the examination requirements established for certification, a rationale must be provided to explain how 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.

Standard 8 has been met by APNCC; grandfathering period ended January 1, 2013. All certificants must take the APNCC exam as part of the certification requirements. Evidence includes a brochure, website information, exam information and the certification application.

### **Standard 9**

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

#### *Essential element*

- A. The certification program should provide and verify that a certificant possesses currently valid certification upon request from any member of the public.

Standard 9 has been met by APNCC; all records are kept in digital format and easy to access and verify a certificant's current certification status, without disclosing any other information about the certificant.

**APNCC is currently completing work on some of the above standards and working on standards 10 – 21.**

As you might see, this accreditation is a lengthy process and takes time on the part of all board members to complete necessary policies, research, etc. APNCC has come a long way. The most critical components have been met, that of assuring an autonomous organization with no undue influence from outside sources, no conflicts of interest, no education provided and no course requirement. APNCC stands by their decisions and can show evidence these high standards are upheld. The integrity of the organization is of utmost importance to all the board members of APNCC. The board holds themselves to high standards and to a high ground. They will at all times conduct themselves in a paramount professional manner and will not be party to underhanded actions. All certification criteria are to assist the applicants in reaching a certification goal and none are there to help benefit any other Board member, association, organization, or anyone associated with the Board.

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