

Clinical Nurse LeaderSM (CNL[®]) Certification

Quality

Excellence

Recognition

Leadership

Knowledge



CNC | COMMISSION ON
NURSE
CERTIFICATION

Certification

The Clinical Nurse Leader SM (CNL[®]) certification is a unique credential that recognizes graduates of master's and post-master's CNL programs who have demonstrated accepted standards of practice. The CNL mark of excellence promotes safe, quality practice through its ongoing requirements for professional growth.

CNL certification is based upon a national standard of requisite knowledge and experiences, thereby assisting employers, the public and members of the health profession in the assessment of a CNL. Certification candidates must meet all eligibility requirements, adhere to the CNL Standards of Conduct, and pass the CNL Certification Examination to earn the credential of "CNL."

“Certifying CNL program graduates is an effective way to ensure that nurses are expertly prepared to provide clinical leadership at the point of care.”

*Jeanette Lancaster, PhD, RN, FAAN
2006-2008 AACN President*

“CNL certification emphasizes leadership by example and collaborative/team approaches. Preparing for certification provides you with tools for evaluation of clinical problems.”

Jean M. Roberts, MSN, RN, CNL, PHN

Eligibility and Application

To be considered for certification, a candidate must meet the following requirements:

- Registered Nurse licensure
- Graduation from a CNL master's or post-master's degree program, accredited by a nursing accrediting agency recognized by the U.S Secretary of Education, that prepares individuals with the competencies delineated in the AACN white paper on *The Education and Role of the Clinical Nurse Leader*.

NOTE: Students may sit for the exam during their last term of a CNL education program and prior to RN licensure. Students are responsible for notifying CNC of meeting eligibility requirements to be formally certified.

The application and required documents for certification must be received at the CNC by the deadline of the testing period.

Exam Administration

The computer-based CNL Certification Exam is offered during testing periods set by the CNC and includes multiple choice and case study items. A CNL partner school registers to serve as an exam site and selects a date within the testing period.

What is a Clinical Nurse LeaderSM (CNL)[®]

The CNL is a fast emerging nursing role developed by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) in collaboration with leaders from the education and practice arenas. AACN is advancing the CNL to improve the quality of patient care and to better prepare nurses to thrive in the health care system. The CNL role was developed following research and discussion with stakeholder groups as a way to engage highly skilled clinicians in outcomes-based practice and quality improvement.



Resource Materials

Program information and resource materials are posted on <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC> and on <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNL>. Resources include:

- CNL Certification Examination Handbook
- Self-Assessment Examination
- Recommended Reading List
- Sample Case Study Item
- CNL Online Discussion Group
- AACN white paper on *The Education and Role of the Clinical Nurse LeaderSM*

Recertification

The initial CNL certification is granted for a period of five (5) years. Recertification must be renewed prior to the expiration date on one's certificate. Certification renewal ensures that previously certified individuals continue to expand their knowledge relevant to the role of the CNL.



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- The CNL is an advanced generalist nurse prepared at the master's level.
- The CNL, in practice, oversees the care coordination of a distinct group of patients and actively provides direct patient care in complex situations.
- The CNL evaluates patient outcomes, assesses cohort risk, and has the decision-making authority to change care plans when necessary.
- The CNL puts evidence-based practice into action to ensure that patients benefit from the latest innovations in care delivery.
- The CNL is a leader in the healthcare delivery system, and the implementation of this role will vary across settings.

Commission on Nurse Certification

The Commission on Nurse Certification (CNC) is the autonomous arm of AACN responsible for all certification functions. Governed by the Board of Commissioners, CNC offers certification to graduates of CNL programs who meet the eligibility requirements established by CNC.

CNC promotes high quality patient care through the certification of qualified individuals by:

- recognizing formally those individuals who meet the eligibility requirements of the certification program and pass the examination;
- encouraging continued professional growth in one's practice; and
- providing a national standard of requisite knowledge and experience required for certification, thereby assisting communities of interest in the assessment of certificants.



For questions regarding the CNL Certification Program, contact:

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CNL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The Standards of Conduct applies to Clinical Nurse Leaders (CNLs) certified and recertified by the Commission on Nurse Certification (CNC).

I. Altruism

- Demonstrate understanding of cultures, beliefs, and perspectives of others;
- Advocate for clients, particularly the most vulnerable;
- Take risks on behalf of clients and colleagues; and
- Mentor other professionals.

II. Accountability

- Evaluate client care and implement changes in care practices to improve outcomes of care;
- Serve as a responsible steward of the environment, and human and material resources while coordinating care;
- Use an evidence-based approach to meet specific needs of individuals, clinical populations or communities;
- Manage, monitor and manipulate the environment to foster health and health care quality; and
- Prevent or limit unsafe or unethical care practices.

III. Human Dignity

- Provide culturally competent and sensitive care;
- Protect the client's privacy;
- Preserve the confidentiality of clients and health care providers; and
- Design care with sensitivity to individual client needs.

IV. Integrity

- Provide honest information to clients and the public;
- Document care accurately and honestly;
- Seek to remedy errors made by self or others; and
- Demonstrate accountability for own actions and those of other health care team members under the supervision of the CNL.

V. Social Justice

- Support and promote availability and access to health care;
- Support fairness and non-discrimination in the delivery of care; and
- Encourage legislation and policy consistent with the advancement of nursing care and health care.

