

National Certified School Counselor™ (NCSC®) Certification Eligibility Policy

A. POLICY INTRODUCTION.

The National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc. (NBCC) administers a rigorous professional certification program titled as the NBCC National Certified School Counselor (NCSC) Program. This certification is designed to recognize counselors in school settings who have completed training requirements to prepare them to meet the mental health needs of students and youth. Professional school counselors who wish to be granted the NCSC credential must show that they have completed specific educational and training requirements in both school counseling and clinical mental health counseling, preparing them to work collaboratively with educators and other health professionals. Professional school counselors holding the NCSC must also demonstrate an ongoing professional commitment to meeting the mental health needs of youth in educational settings by satisfying the other requirements of this Program.

Effective as of June 16, 2021, this Policy establishes and explains the NCSC eligibility rules, which must be satisfied in order to obtain certification, including the relevant NBCC certification standards, policies, and procedures (NCSC Certification Program). Questions concerning this Policy or the certification process should be directed to the Director of Certification and Credentialing Services.

B. POLICY PURPOSES.

The purpose of this Policy is to define the National Certified School Counselor (NCSC) certification eligibility requirements. Among other rules, the NCSC Certification Program establishes valid and appropriate eligibility requirements concerning: professional education necessary for competent practice as a counselor in an educational setting; professional knowledge demonstrated by holding current, examination-based national counselor certification; professional experience requirements; and ethical conduct rules.

Candidates for NCSC certification understand and agree that their professional qualifications, including education, clinical knowledge, and ethical standing, will be objectively and appropriately evaluated by NBCC, and that such NBCC eligibility determinations are final. NBCC has the exclusive authority to make and issue all certification eligibility decisions.

C. PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.

In order to be eligible for the NCSC certification, the candidate must currently be a National Certified Counselor (NCC) in good standing.

D. CERTIFICATION EDUCATIONAL AND EXPERIENTIAL REQUIREMENTS.

In order to qualify for NCSC certification eligibility, the candidate must satisfy certain education and experiential (training) rules, which include specific requirements relative to: educational degree attainment; credit/semester hour fulfillment; counseling specialization–related training content completion; and supervised counseling field experience. Consistent with the terms of this Policy, the candidate must complete the following educational requirements in order to be eligible for certification.

1. Degree Requirement: A master's, education specialist/educational specialist, certificate of advanced study (CAS), or doctoral degree (graduate degree) in counseling from either a CACREP-accredited degree program or a counseling program administered by a regionally accredited educational institution is required for eligibility for NCSC certification.

[NOTE: Graduate degrees other than master's, education specialist/educational specialist, certificate of advanced study, and doctoral degrees in counseling may not qualify for NCSC certification eligibility and will be subject to NBCC review and approval. Such degree reviews will determine whether the degree is properly aligned with approved graduate-level counseling program content. NBCC has the exclusive authority to make all decisions concerning the eligibility of non-counseling degrees for NCSC certification.]

2. Credit/Semester Hours Requirement: The successful completion of at least forty-eight (48) semester hours or seventy-two (72) quarter hours of the required graduate degree courses taken from a CACREP-accredited program or a counseling program administered by a regionally accredited institution.
3. Specialization Content Requirement: The submission of an accurate and verified transcript issued by a qualified institution showing the successful completion of required graduate degree program courses, including one course of two (2) semester or three (3) quarter hours in foundations of school counseling; six (6) semester hours or ten (10) quarter hour credits of supervised school-based field experience, and the completion of coursework in three of the following content areas.
 - Counseling Consultation and Program Development
 - Family Counseling
 - Counseling Children, Adolescents, or At-Risk Youth
 - Addictions Counseling
 - Counseling for Trauma, Violence, and/or Abuse

Additional materials, including course syllabi and other course documentation, may be required by NBCC to demonstrate the successful completion of coursework in any content areas.

[NOTE: All courses, except the supervised school-based field experience, must carry (include) at least two (2) semester or three (3) quarter hours of graduate degree program credit.]

4. Alternative Supervised Field Experience Requirement: In lieu of six (6) semester hours or ten (10) quarter hour credits of supervised field experience, NBCC will accept certain alternative educational, license, and/or counseling practice qualifications. Specifically, and subject to NBCC approval, a candidate will satisfy the supervised field experience requirement with submission of verifiable proof of one of the following field experience requirements:
 - a. Three (3) semester or five (5) quarter hours of graduate supervised school field experience and ten (10) continuous years as a fully state-licensed school counselor.
 - b. Three (3) semester or five (5) quarter hours of graduate supervised school field experience and an additional one hundred twenty (120) hours of direct supervision by a qualified professional counselor.

5. Supervised, Post-Master's Counseling Work Experience Requirement: The successful completion of: at least three thousand (3,000) hours of documented, supervised postgraduate program counseling work experience over a period of at least twenty-four (24) months; and at least one hundred (100) hours of supervision by a supervisor who has held a graduate degree in counseling for a period of at least twenty-four (24) months. The candidate's completion of this experience requirement must be verified by the candidate's supervisor(s).
6. Professional Endorsement Requirement: The submission of a positive endorsement from a professional colleague who holds a graduate degree in counseling. The individual providing the endorsement cannot be related to the candidate by blood or marriage.
7. Verification of Educational Requirements: Educational requirements must be verified by NBCC through the review of an official graduate program transcript(s), sealed by the college or university (educational institution), which shows the conferral of a master's, education specialist/educational specialist, or doctoral degree from a qualifying counseling program. Digital transcripts submitted by the educational institution, bearing the educational institution's digital seal, are preferred. Non-degree educational credits related to qualifying counseling program courses must be verified by the submission of an official transcript sealed by the college or university showing the successful completion of such graduate program credits in counseling. NBCC also may require the submission of qualifying course syllabi and other documentation necessary to verify course alignment with the required school counseling specialization content areas.
8. Certification Educational Eligibility Appeals: Under certain limited circumstances, a candidate who is denied eligibility for the NCSC certification concerning the educational and training requirements may submit an appeal and request for reconsideration of their eligibility. All such appeals must be submitted consistent with the requirements of the NBCC Application and Certification Appeals Procedures, which is published at: https://www.nbcc.org/assets/Policies/certification_eligibility_appeals_policy.pdf

E. CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS.

1. Ethics Requirement: NCSC candidates and certificants must ensure that their professional and public behaviors are consistent with the conduct standards set forth in the NBCC Code of Ethics, the Certification Eligibility Ethics Policy, and the Ethics Case Procedures. These important policies should be carefully reviewed by the candidate and are published at: <https://www.nbcc.org/ethics/certification>.
2. Ethics Disclosure Requirement: As a condition of certification eligibility, the candidate must accurately and fully complete the required NCSC Application Sections titled Ethics Attestation and Candidate Agreement and Release Authorization, which require the disclosure of all prior legal, criminal, and disciplinary matters related to the candidate. All such Application ethics-related disclosures are reviewed by NBCC in accordance with the NBCC Certification Eligibility Ethics Policy, which is published at: <https://www.nbcc.org/ethics/certification>.