

Credential Maintenance Program (CMP)

FAQs

The 2018 2nd quarter issue of *Horizons* included information about upcoming changes to the Continuing Competency Program (CCP). The FAQs below are provided as a supplement to the article to help credentialed practitioners better understand why and how the CCP is changing. We will continue to share information about the new Credential Maintenance Program (CMP) as the implementation date approaches.

Q: Why is the Continuing Competency Program (CCP) changing?

A: As a credentialed practitioner, you already know that maintaining and enhancing the knowledge established on initial credentialing is a key component to professional development and career advancement, as well as patient care. Changes in accreditation standards encouraged the NBRC to evaluate how the Continuing Competency Program could become more valuable and meaningful to those who document their continued competencies and to the public served by these persons. As a result, key elements for a modified program were recommended to the NBRC by a Recertification Commission (stakeholder representatives including two people required to participate in the CCP). The CCP has been renamed the Credential Maintenance Program to better represent the purpose of the program.

Q: Do I have to participate in the CMP?

A: If you earned your credential July 1, 2002 or after – Yes. Anyone currently holding a credential that expires will be required to meet the requirements of the current CCP through their current certification cycle and begin using the new CMP for their next certification cycle. The new CMP still has three options to maintain your credentials; 1) earn another NBRC credential, 2) take quarterly assessments and/or document up to 30 continuing education credits, or 3) pass the same credentialing examination again. Your performance on the assessments will determine whether or not you have to also document CE with the NBRC.

Q: Why does the Credential Maintenance Program (CMP) have an assessment component?

A: The goal in using assessments is to strengthen the relationship between competencies of credential holders and expectations linked to those credentials. Quarterly assessments are a component of the CE option to maintain credentials through the promotion of learning. Practitioners will not be required to take the assessments but are encouraged to do so to demonstrate their competency and knowledge.

Q: What will the assessments cover?

A. Each assessment is designed to focus on content that changes most rapidly and puts the public at highest risk. Practitioners who participate in the credential maintenance process were surveyed to identify changing content and public risk issues. New assessment items will be created each year, so content will continue to cover hot topics as they emerge. Assessments designed this way will be more meaningful and valuable in comparison to the current system that relies on an accumulation of general continuing education credits.

Q: What is the format of the questions on the assessment?

A: Each assessment question is in multiple-choice format with four potential answers to choose. Each question must be answered within five minutes of being displayed. Content of the assessments is focused on tasks that put the public at high risk and have a high pace of change. Assessments are taken in an open-book format which means you can access resources during the five minutes before selecting a response. However, no other person should help you.

Q: How much will it cost?

A: The fee will remain the same at \$125.00, collected annually in \$25 increments over the 5-year credential period.

Q: Do I still have to document CE with NBRC?

A: CE may be required depending on your assessment performance. Your assessment score and number of CE required will be updated each quarter on your credential maintenance dashboard within the Practitioner Portal. If your assessment score is high enough, no documentation of CE will be required to renew your credential(s). Other results will place you into one of two groups: those in the yellow zone who will be required to document 15 CE credits and those in the red zone who will be required to document 30 CE credits.

Maintaining a credential is separate from maintaining a license. Even if high assessment performance exempts you from documenting CE for the NBRC, the state in which you live is likely to require CE documentation for your license.

Q: When will the assessment option be available?

A: Individuals who earn a specialty credential in the fourth quarter of 2018 or in the first nine months of 2019 will be eligible to participate in a pilot program of the new credential maintenance program. All new specialty credentials earned beginning October 1, 2019 will fall under the new program. CRT and RRT credentials earned after January 1, 2020 will participate in the new CMP.

| Assessment Group | Year of Implementation |
|------------------|------------------------|
| RT | 2020 |
| PFT | 2019 |
| NPS | 2019 |
| SDS | 2019 |
| ACCS | 2019 |

Q: Where do I take my assessment?

A: The assessment is accessible online at nbrc.org and may be completed on a mobile device, tablet, or personal computer. Some questions contain images and graphics whose details may be easier to see while using a device with a larger screen. Make the decision about the device you use before starting an assessment because the timer cannot be paused once a question is opened. The timer will continue despite closing a browser or powering off the device.

Q: When do I take my assessment and how much time do I have to complete it?

A: An email notifying you that an assessment is available will be sent each quarter. The assessment should be completed within 60 days of availability.

Q: How many questions will be on my assessment?

| Assessment Group | Credentials | Number of Items Each | |
|------------------|------------------|----------------------|------|
| | | Quarter | Year |
| RT | CRT, RRT | 10 | 40 |
| PFT | CPFT, RPFT | 5 | 20 |
| NPS | CRT-NPS, RRT-NPS | 5 | 20 |
| SDS | CRT-SDS, RRT-SDS | 5 | 20 |
| ACCS | RRT-ACCS | 5 | 20 |

Q. What is the best way to prepare for the assessments?

A: Reviewing the specific detailed content outline (DCO) to identify your personal areas of strengths and weaknesses before you begin an assessment is suggested. An explanation for all possible responses and a reference citation is provided for each question for use in further researching the topic. This feedback provides an excellent opportunity for professional development, as well as improving performance on future assessments.

Q. What information does the CMP Detailed Content Outline (DCO) provide?

A. The DCO provides the number of questions you can expect for a one-year period and describes the content areas and complexity levels (recall, application, analysis) covered on each assessment. Tasks are identical to those found on the credentialing examination. However, because CMP assessments are purposely limited to content that put patients at increased risk and tasks that change rapidly, some tasks will not be included on the CMP assessments and are shaded on the DCO to indicate this.

Q: How do I track my assessment progress?

A: After each assessment, you will be directed to your credential maintenance dashboard within the Practitioner Portal to view your progress. Progress is displayed in red, yellow, and green zones reflecting success while responding to assessment questions. The color-coded progress indicator will include responses from CRT or RRT assessments plus specialty assessments. For example, a therapist who has achieved RRT and RRT-NPS credentials will observe progress after one quarter that is based on 10 RRT questions plus 5 RRT-NPS questions for a total of 15 questions.

You will find learning content in your progress dashboard explaining more about the best response to each question. Continuing education should be sought that builds one's knowledge about content the assessments cover. Each assessment question has been linked to high patient risk tasks.

Q. What does my progress dashboard show at the beginning of a five-year cycle?

A. Each person starts at the top of the green zone so quarterly assessment performances will determine whether green-zone status is retained as the cycle continues.

Q. What if I have one credential that expires and one that does not expire?

A. When an individual has a credential that expires plus a lifetime credential, there will only be one opportunity to opt-in at the beginning of the 5-year cycle for the credential that expires. Opting-in signals an individual's intent to access assessments linked to both the lifetime credential and the credential that expires. However, an individual may opt-out of participating for the lifetime credential at any time thereafter.

Q. Why is the CMP voluntary for practitioners credentialed before July 2002?

A. Credentialing standards were different at the time those credentials were earned. Imposing a new requirement for maintaining a credential after someone has started a professional career is different than creating a new requirement for someone who subsequently enters the profession. The NBRC believes that more of these practitioners may participate in the CMP if they know they cannot lose their credential by doing so. The patients served by these practitioners will be better protected because of participation and the learning that is expected to follow.