



BCC and BCC-VA

Application Instruction Booklet

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Introduction	3
BCC vs. BCC-VA	3
Prerequisites	3
Graduate Degree Considerations	4
Degrees Earned Outside of the United States	4
Graduate Degree Equivalency	5
CPE Considerations.....	5
CPE Equivalency	5
Questions about the Application Process	6
Preparing and Submitting Application Materials.....	7
Application Components.....	7
Graduate Transcript Submission.....	7
ERD Course and Post-Test.....	7
Documents to be uploaded through the portal on the NACC Website.....	8
Converting Files to PDF	12
Renaming files	12
Application Fee	12
Submitting Application Materials to the NACC	12

Application Review Process	13
Interview Process	13
Certification Decision.....	14
Certification Granted.....	14
Certification Denied.....	14
Ecclesiastical Endorsement Requirements.....	15
Policy	15
Procedure.....	15
Moving to a New Diocese.....	16

Introduction

This booklet contains instructions to guide Applicants in the process of preparing and submitting application materials for Board Certification or Board Certification for Veterans Affairs (BCC-VA). **Please read it cover to cover.**

The NACC encourages Applicants for Certification to engage in a mentoring relationship with a NACC Certified Chaplain or NACC Certified Educator upon entering the Certification process. Please consider engaging with the mentor several months before the Application deadline.

BCC vs. BCC-VA

Board Certified Chaplains for Veterans Affairs (BCC-VA) is another option for obtaining initial board Certification for priests who work in a Veteran's Affairs facility. BCC-VA follows the same application and Interview process as the Board Certified Chaplain; however, there are several additional requirements that are specific to their unique work with Veterans. These additional requirements are noted in this document.

Prerequisites

- Be a Catholic in good standing, either in the Roman Catholic Church or in [one the Eastern Catholic Churches in union with Rome](#). Ecclesiastical Endorsement is a requirement for Certification. See [Ecclesiastical Endorsement Requirements](#) in this document for details.
- Chaplaincy Ministry membership in the NACC (Qualification 301.QUA2).
- Completion of a graduate-level theological degree from a college, university, or theological school accredited by a member of the [Council for Higher Education Accreditation](#). See [Graduate Degree Considerations](#) for more information.
- Satisfactory completion of 4 units (Level I or Level II) of CPE from an accredited ACPE, USCCB/CCA, or CASC/ACSS CPE center (Qualification 301.QUA4). See [CPE Considerations](#) for more information.
- Adherence to the Code of Ethics for Spiritual Care Professionals and knowledge of the requirements of that Code (Code of Ethics 100).

- Per membership requirements, current completion of the NACC Ethics Accountability Statement (Code of Ethics 206.11.1).
- For BCC-VA only:
 - Be a priest employed by a Veterans Affairs facility (full time, part time, fee basis or contract basis) as a chaplain. (Qualification 801.QUA5)
 - Successful completion of VIRTUS or similar training. (Qualification 801.QUA6)

Graduate Degree Considerations

The NACC National Office reviews each Applicant's transcripts to ensure that the qualifying degree has a curriculum that meets the theological competencies for chaplaincy.

The NACC defines a graduate-level theological degree as a graduate degree in theology, divinity, religious studies, pastoral ministry, pastoral studies, or spirituality. Included among the acceptable degrees is the Bachelor of Sacred Theology (STB) degree of the Pontifical Universities and their affiliated institutions. (Qualification 301.QUA3).

For degrees in other related disciplines, please contact the Director of Pastoral Care and Certification at the National Office to confirm your degree meets the requirements of the NACC Standards, prior to entering the Certification Application process.

Degrees Earned Outside of the United States

The NACC requires transcript analysis at the Applicant's expense for all degrees acquired outside the United States, except degrees from Pontifical Universities or affiliated institutions. For a list of credential evaluation services, see the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) at: www.naces.org/members. Evaluations should be emailed to the NACC at certification@nacc.org.

A Bachelor of Theology (STB) from a Pontifical University or affiliated institution is equivalent to a Master's degree from an accredited institution in the United States. Therefore, in this case, the STB satisfies the graduate-level theology prerequisite for Initial Board Certification and **does not require foreign transcript analysis**.

Graduate Degree Equivalency

If an Applicant does not have the required graduate-level theological degree for Board Certification, the Applicant may be granted graduate degree equivalency, if he/she meets the following criteria:

- Applicant must have a completed graduate degree in another field.
- Applicant demonstrates completion of at least **thirty-two** graduate credits of equivalencies in core theological coursework pertinent to NACC Competencies for Board Certification.

See the [Education and CPE Equivalency](#) page on the NACC Website for details on how to apply for graduate degree equivalency.

CPE Considerations

The NACC National Office reviews each application to ensure that the four CPE Units meet our accreditation requirements. Applicants may only apply for Certification if the fourth unit of CPE is completed before the Certification application deadline.

Applicants are required to submit a self-evaluation and a signed educator evaluation for two CPE Units as part of the application portfolio. If you do not have your evaluations and, after due diligence, are unable to obtain them, please contact the Director of Pastoral Care and Certification at certification@nacc.org for further instructions.

CPE Equivalency

For Board Certification, an Applicant may be granted 1 unit of equivalency for CPE, providing the Applicant demonstrates that an educational program, acquired in a way other than through a traditional unit of CPE, successfully meets the NACC Qualifications and Competencies.

See the [Education and CPE Equivalency](#) page on the NACC Website for requirements and details on how to apply for CPE equivalency.

Questions about the Application Process

Please contact Anita Houghton, Director of Pastoral Care and Certification at certification@nacc.org for any questions about preparing or submitting your application materials.

Preparing and Submitting Application Materials

Application Components

The application portfolio is composed of the following:

1. Graduate transcripts to be emailed directly to the NACC Office.
2. Completion of an ERD Course and successful completion of an ERD Post-Test.
3. Documents to be submitted through a portal on the NACC website.

Graduate Transcript Submission

Please do not send transcripts via US Mail to the National Office. Official graduate transcripts (or transcript analysis of foreign degrees) must be **emailed** from the academic institution to certification@nacc.org. The NACC must have the Applicant's transcripts before the Application deadline; however, transcripts may be emailed up to twelve months before the application deadline.

It is advisable to have the transcripts emailed **in advance of preparing application materials** to ensure that the degree meets the requirements for Certification.

ERD Course and Post-Test

NACC Competency ITP4.1 requires Applicants to understand the Ethical and Religious Directives published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

To meet the requirements of Competency ITP4.1, the Applicant must read the Ethical and Religious Directives (ERDs) for Catholic Health Care Services, and take a 10 question Post-Test. The Applicant is required to score 80 percent or better to pass the test to be considered for an Interview. The [ERDs, CHA eLearning module, and Post-Test](#) are accessible from the NACC website.

Documents to be uploaded through the portal on the NACC Website

The following checklist outlines all the document submission requirements.

Document	Document Instructions	Required File Name
✓ Supervisor Letter of Recommendation	<p>For all Applicants - A letter of recommendation from the person to whom the Applicant reports in his/her current place of ministry. If the Applicant is not currently ministering, a letter from anyone in a reporting position that can attest to the ministerial experience of the Applicant is required.</p> <p>-Letter must be dated within one year of application for Certification. -Letter must be addressed to the Chair of the Certification Commission. -Must be on letterhead addressed to the NACC. -Must be signed.</p>	0-SupervisorLetter-Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓ Priest Letter of Recommendation (if applicable)	<p>For lay persons only* - A letter of recommendation from his/her pastor or from a priest in active ministry within the Applicant's Diocese of Ministry. Letter templates are included in the downloaded materials for priests who wish to use them.</p> <p>-Letter must be dated within one year of application for Certification. -Letter must be addressed to the Chair of the Certification Commission. -Must be on letterhead addressed to the NACC. -Must be signed.</p> <p>*Priests and deacons do not need a priest letter.</p>	0-PriestLetter-Lastname-Firstname.PDF

Document	Document Instructions	Required File Name
✓ Superior Letter of Recommendation (if applicable)	<p>For religious sisters and religious brothers only* - A letter of recommendation from major superior of the religious congregation.</p> <p>-Letter must be dated within one year of application for Certification.</p> <p>-Must be on letterhead addressed to the Chair of the Certification Commission.</p> <p>-Must be signed.</p> <p>*Religious priests do not need a Superior Letter of Recommendation.</p>	0-SuperiorLetter-Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓ Verification of Employment (if applicable)	For BCC-VA Applicants only - Evidence of employment by a Veterans Affairs facility (full time, part time, fee basis, contract basis) as a chaplain. A copy of the Applicant's listing in the National Chaplain Center Chaplain Directory will suffice.	0-EmploymentVerification-Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓ Application Form	All applicable fields must be completed. Form must be signed by Applicant.	1-InitialCertificationApplication-Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓ Autobiography	<p>Addresses personal, professional, and faith development.</p> <p>Applicant must use the Autobiography template. The template contains writing instructions, page limits and formatting guidelines.</p>	2-Autobiography-Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓ Spiritual Care Encounter	<p>Describes one current example (within 1 year of application for Certification) of the Applicant's provision of Spiritual Care.</p> <p>Applicant must use the Spiritual Care Encounter template. The template contains writing instructions, page limits and formatting guidelines.</p>	3-SpiritualCareEncounter-Lastname-Firstname.PDF

Document	Document Instructions	Required File Name
✓CPE Evaluations 1	<p>Final evaluations of a CPE Unit of choice:</p> <p>Scan the evaluations into one PDF document and order the pages as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Cover sheet (if one exists) with signatures of educator and student, unit dates, and unit location. 2. Educator Evaluation 3.Corresponding Applicant Self Evaluation <p>Rename the file to follow the naming convention indicated.</p>	4-CPE-UnitOfChoice-Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓CPE Evaluations 2	<p>Final evaluations of a final CPE Unit:</p> <p>Scan the evaluations into one PDF document and order the pages as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Cover sheet (if one exists) with signatures of educator and student, unit dates, and unit location. 2. Educator Evaluation 3.Corresponding Applicant Self Evaluation <p>Rename the file to follow the naming convention indicated.</p>	5-CPE-FinalUnit-Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓Narrative Statement I	<p>Demonstrates how the Applicant meets the NACC-Specific Competencies outlined in the Narrative Statement I Template.</p> <p>Applicant must use the Narrative Statement I template. The template contains writing guide, page limits and formatting guidelines.</p>	6-NarrativeStatementI-Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓Narrative Statement II	<p>Demonstrates how the Applicant meets the Common Competencies outlined in the Narrative Statement II Template.</p> <p>Applicant must use the Narrative Statement II template. The template contains writing instructions, page limits and formatting guidelines.</p>	7-NarrativeStatementII-Lastname-Firstname.PDF

Document	Document Instructions	Required File Name
✓ Narrative Statement III (if applicable)	<p>For BCC-VA Applicants only – Demonstrates NACC-Veterans Affairs Specific Competencies outlined in the Narrative Statement III template.</p> <p>Applicant must use the Narrative Statement III template. The template contains writing instructions, page limits and formatting guidelines.</p>	8-NarrativeStatementIII- Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓ Integrative Theological Essay	<p>Addresses Applicant's familiarity with the documents and theologies of Competency ITP1.1.</p> <p>Applicant must use the Theological Essay template. The template contains writing instructions, page limits and formatting guidelines.</p>	9-TheologicalEssay-Lastname- Firstname.PDF
✓ Presenters Reports Parts I and II from each previous Interview (if applicable)	<p>This document is submitted only if the Applicant has previously Interviewed for Board Certification.</p> <p>For each previous Interview, create one PDF document with both the PRPI and PRPII in it. Include the Interview date in the file name as indicated.</p>	10-PRPs(MMDDYYYY)-Lastname- Firstname.PDF
✓ Education Equivalency Granted Letter (if applicable)	This document is only applicable if the Applicant has been granted graduate degree equivalency. Applicant includes the letter from the Certification Commission stating that the equivalency was granted.	11-EducationEquivalencyLetter- Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓ CPE Equivalency Granted Letter (if applicable)	This document is only applicable if the Applicant has CPE Equivalency for 1 unit of CPE. Applicant includes the letter from the Certification Commission stating that the equivalency was granted.	12-CPEEquivalencyLetter- Lastname.Firstname.PDF

Please note: all final documents must be converted to PDF and follow the file naming conventions listed above.

Converting Files to PDF

- Open the Word document you want to convert.
- Click the “File” tab at the top-left corner. A drop-down menu will appear.
- Select the “Save As” option. This will open a new window.
- Choose where to save the file and the name.
- Choose the PDF file type from the drop down list and save the file.

Renaming files

- Navigate to the location of the Word document you want to rename.
- Right-click and select 'Rename' from the menu.
- The file name will be highlighted, allowing you to type in the new name.
- Retain the file name of the template but replace the Lastname and Firstname with your name.
- Press 'Enter' on your keyboard.

For example, 1-InitialCertificationApplication-**Smith-John**.PDF

Application Fee

The Application fee for BCC and BCC-VA Initial Certification is \$395. This fee is in addition to any fees required to upgrade or renew membership.

Submitting Application Materials to the NACC

The application submission windows are Jan 4 – Feb 15 and Aug 4 – Sep 15 of every year.

Once the above documents are completed, converted to PDF, and renamed, the documents must be uploaded through the online portal on the [BCC web page](#) or the [BCC_VA web page](#) on the NACC website. As part of the application submission process, the Applicant updates his/her member profile, submits bishop/religious superior contact information, and pays the Application fee.

Application Review Process

Upon receipt of the Applicant materials, the NACC Staff reviews the documents to assess the proper completion of the Application Portfolio. If any materials are missing or formatted improperly, the NACC Staff communicates the required corrections to the Applicant. An Interview will not be scheduled until the portfolio is approved.

Once the portfolio is approved, the NACC Staff requests ecclesiastical endorsement from the Applicant's diocese of ministry.

If the Interview is not scheduled for any reason:

- The Applicant will have the opportunity to reapply for Certification.
- One-third of the Certification application fee will be refunded.

Interview Process

Once all the application portfolios for the given submission cycle are approved, the NACC Staff forms Interview Teams in preparation for the Certification Interviews. Interview Teams are composed of NACC certified chaplains. For BCC-VA Applicants, at least one member of the Interview Team must be currently certified in Veterans Affairs (BCC-VA).

Prior to the Interview, the NACC Staff sends the Applicant the names of the Interview Team members and the date and time of the virtual Interview. The Applicant reviews Interview Team names for a potential conflict of interest and alerts the NACC Staff if any conflict exists.

The NACC staff gives the Interview Team access to the relevant Applicant application materials via a secured web portal at least 45 days of the Interview. The Interview Team meets in advance of the Certification Interview to write the Presenter's Report Part I (PRPI). The PRPI contains questions that the Applicant will address in the Interview. The PRPI is emailed to the Applicant 24 hours before the Interview; the Applicant must verify receipt of PRPI by email to the NACC Staff.

The virtual Interview is 60 minutes in length and is conducted in a Zoom environment.

Following the Interview, the Interview Team deliberates and votes whether to recommend or not to recommend the Applicant to the Certification Commission for Certification. The Interview Team considers all written materials as well as the content and the dynamics of

the Interview in determining its recommendation for Certification. These findings are summarized in a Presenter's Report Part II (PRPII).

Following the deliberation process, the Applicant is provided an oral summary of the team's recommendation.

Certification Decision

The Certification Commission reviews the Presenter's Reports and the recommendation of the Interview Team and determines whether the Applicant meets the Competencies for Board Certification.

The Certification Commission's decision to grant or deny Certification is communicated to the Applicant within 30 days of the Certification Commission's action.

Certification Granted

- If Certification is granted and the ecclesiastical endorsement has been received, the Applicant receives a notification packet, a certificate, and a copy of his/her Presenter's Report Part II. The Applicant is recognized at the Missioning Ceremony of those newly certified during the Eucharistic Celebration at the next annual conference.
- When Certification recognition is granted and ecclesiastical endorsement has been received, the Applicant will follow the requirements for maintenance of Certification as per the current NACC Certification Policies & Procedures Manual.

Certification Denied

- If Certification is denied, the Applicant has the right to appeal the decision (Competency 307.ACD) or reapply for Certification. Information about the appeals process is included with the notification of denial of Certification along with the Presenter's Report Part II.

Ecclesiastical Endorsement Requirements

For Initial Certification, Renewal of Certification, Recognition of Certification, and Reinstatement of Certification for BCC, BCC-VA, and CAC, the NACC National Office requires a current letter of ecclesiastical endorsement (Qualifications QUA1 and MNT3) before granting Certification. Current is defined as within one year of application for Certification.

Ecclesiastical endorsement is formal approval for ministry. For ordained clergy, the endorsement assures the NACC that the ordained minister has faculties to administer the sacraments and is in good standing with the Church. Ecclesiastical endorsement also assures the NACC that any Safe Environment Training requirements (of the endorsing body) have been met by the Applicant.

Policy

Ecclesiastical endorsements are required as follows:

1. All Applicants (lay, religious, and ordained) require an ecclesiastical endorsement from the Ordinary of the diocese of the Applicant's current ministry.
2. If the Applicant is applying for BCC-VA (Veteran's Affairs) Certification, the Ordinary of the Applicant's ministry is the Ordinary of the Archdiocese of the Military.
3. If the Applicant (lay or clergy) is a [member of an Eastern Catholic Church in communion with Rome or a member of a church in the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter](#), then the ecclesiastical endorsement is required from the Bishop of the Eastern Catholic Church or the Bishop of the Personal Ordinariate. This endorsement takes the place of the endorsement required from the Ordinary of the diocese of the Applicant's current ministry.

Procedure

If the Applicant applying for Initial Certification has been approved for an Interview or if the member is applying for Renewal of Certification, Recognition of Certification, or Reinstatement of Certification, **the NACC requests ecclesiastical endorsement from the Applicant's diocese of ministry on behalf of the Applicant.** The request will include a copy of the Applicant's Priest/Superior Letter of Recommendation (for lay persons, religious brothers, and religious sisters).

Moving to a New Diocese

If a priest or deacon moves to a new Diocese of Ministry after the above endorsement is granted, the NACC requires that the priest/deacon notifies the NACC and provides a copy of the letter of good standing that grants faculties to the new Diocese of Ministry.

If a lay person or religious brother/sister changes his/her Diocese of Ministry, ecclesiastical endorsement will be obtained upon the next renewal of certification.

It is the responsibility of the Chaplain to contact the new Diocese to receive safe environment training and background checks as required.