Recognition of Strategic Partner Certification Application Instruction Booklet
Updated October 2024

Introduction

A NACC member who holds Certification with one of the NACC Strategic Partners in Spiritual Care may apply to have his/her Certification recognized by the NACC. This booklet contains instructions to guide Applicants in the process of preparing and submitting application materials for Recognition of Certification.

The Strategic Partners approved for recognition of Certification by the NACC are listed below.

Board Certified Chaplain (BCC):

- Association of Professional Chaplains (APC)
- Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC/ACSS)
- National Association of Veterans' Affairs Chaplains (NAVAC)

Certified Associate Chaplain (CAC):

- Association of Professional Chaplains (APC)

Educator Certification:

- ACPE
- Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC/ACSS)

Palliative Care and Hospice Advanced Certification (PCHAC):

- Association of Professional Chaplains (APC)
- National Association of Veterans' Affairs Chaplains (NAVAC)

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).

- Documented proof of membership and valid Certification by one of the accepted Strategic Partners.

- 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).

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. Completion of an ERD Course and successful completion of an ERD Post-Test.
2. Documents to be submitted through a portal on the NACC website as indicated in the table below:

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 complete an eLearning module by the Catholic Health Association (CHA), 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
✓ Priest Letter of Recommendation (if applicable)	**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. -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. *Priests, deacons, religious sisters, and religious brothers do not need a priest letter.	0-PriestLetter-Lastname-Firstname.PDF

Document	Document Instructions	Required File Name
✓Superior Letter of Recommendation (if applicable)	**For religious sisters and religious brothers only*** - A letter of recommendation from major superior of the religious congregation. -Letter must be dated within one year of application for Certification. -Must be on letterhead addressed to the Chair of the Certification Commission. -Must be signed. *Religious priests do not need a Superior Letter of Recommendation.	0-SuperiorLetter-Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓Proof of Current Membership from Strategic Partner	Evidence of membership from the Strategic Partner.	0-MembershipVerification-Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓Peer Review	A report from the initial Certification process may be submitted if a peer review process has not yet been completed.	0-PeerReview-Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓Application Form	All applicable fields must be completed. Form must be signed by Applicant.	1-RecognitionApplication-Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓Narrative Statement I	**For BCC, CAC, and PCHAC only** - Documents how the Applicant meets the NACC-Specific Competencies outlined in the Narrative Statement I Template. Applicant **must use** the Narrative Statement I template. The template contains writing instructions, page limits and formatting guidelines.	2-NarrativeStatementI-Lastname-Firstname.PDF
✓Integrative Theological Essay	**For BCC, CAC, and PCHAC only** - Addresses Applicant's familiarity with the documents and theologies of Competency ITP1.1. Applicant **must use** the Theological Essay template. The template contains writing instructions, page limits and formatting guidelines.	3-TheologicalEssay-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.
- Before saving, make sure to choose "PDF" as the file format. Then click "Save".

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-RecognitionApplication-**Smith-John**.PDF

Submitting Application Materials to the NACC

Once the above documents are completed, converted to PDF, and renamed, the documents must be uploaded through the online portal on the Recognition of Strategic Partner Certification 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.

Once the portfolio is approved, the NACC Staff requests ecclesiastical endorsement from the Applicant's Diocese of Ministry, as appropriate, and forwards the portfolio to the Certification Commission

Certification Decision

The Certification Commission reviews the materials and determines if the Applicant meets the Competencies for NACC Certification recognition.

The Certification Commission's decision to grant or to deny Certification is communicated to the Applicant within thirty (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, and a certificate. 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 Recognition of Certification. Information about the appeals process is included with the notification of denial of Certifications.

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.