



ACHCA
American College of
Health Care Administrators

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION HANDBOOK

**Certified Nursing Home Administrators (CNHA)
Certified Assisted Living Administrators (CALA)**

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Life Care Centers of America included the following statement within its Corporate goals in 2004:

“...Continue to identify Life Care Centers of America as a leader in the long term care industry through participation in the American College of Health Care Administrators’ Certification Program.”

ACHCA Thanks Life Care Centers of America for its affirmation of the value of Professional Certification for distinguishing its leaders.

ACHCA's Professional Certification Programs

- Have the goal of defining excellence in the profession.
- Include Nursing Home Administration and Assisted Living Administration.
- Certify professionals who have demonstrated the knowledge, skills and values consistent with the high standards of management necessary to provide quality care to residents, families and communities.
- Provide visible and tangible evidence of public accountability for the efficient delivery of quality health care.
- Benefit professional nursing home administrators, assisted living administrators, public and private financing agencies, state licensure boards, state regulatory agencies, employees, and ultimately, residents and families who are served by health care services.

Certified Professionals

- Recognize that they are responsible for creating an organizational environment dedicated to the physical, social and emotional needs of residents.
- Are committed to a higher standard of quality care, which includes healing, empathy, and compassion for those in need and for those who love them.

DEFINITIONS

Certification:

- The Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) defines certification as “a voluntary process instituted by a non-governmental agency by which individuals are recognized for advanced knowledge and skill.”
- Professional Certification sets advanced professional standards.
- Is a voluntary process.
- ACHCA’s Professional Certification Programs require both educational and experiential qualifications for eligibility.
- Requires assessment including testing.
- Identifies and recognizes administrators and managers who are performing at an advanced level of skill and knowledge.
- Results in an advanced professional credential.

Licensure:

- Refers to the mandatory, state and federal requirement for practice in a particular profession or occupation.
- Other terms used by states for entry to practice requirements include registration and certification (not to be confused with Professional Certification).
- Sets minimum (entry-level) competence.
- Requires assessment including testing.
- Is meant to protect the public from incompetent practitioners.

Certificate Program:

- Not regulated or standardized.
- Not to be confused with Professional Certification.
- Generally consists of a prescribed course or curriculum with or without assessment or testing.
- Results in a Certificate of Completion issued by the program sponsor upon program completion.
- Is a voluntary process.

CNHA: NURSING HOME ADMINISTRATOR CERTIFICATION

ACHCA began certifying nursing home administrators in 1978 and, through the years, the program has been revised several times to reflect emerging trends in professional credentialing. The CNHA exam is based on the exam blueprint developed by Subject Matter Experts based on the Nursing Home Administrator job analysis. Subject areas have been identified as domains of practice for nursing home administrators.

CALA: ASSISTED LIVING ADMINISTRATOR CERTIFICATION

Not all states mandate licensure of assisted living administrators. Those that do have varying eligibility requirements to practice in the profession. With inconsistent administrator requirements across states, experienced assisted living administrators can demonstrate their knowledge and ability through ACHCA Professional Certification.

Since the assisted living sector does not have federal regulatory oversight and is regulated by the states, the ACHCA Professional Certification process provides a national standard for assisted living administration. The CALA exam is based on the exam blueprint developed by Subject Matter experts based on the assisted living administrator job analysis. Subject areas have been identified as domains of practice for assisted living administrators.

ACHCA's CALA program serves as a model for advanced practice in assisted living administration.

REASONS TO PURSUE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION:

National Recognition & Endorsement

The Professional Certification Program identifies and honors administrators and managers who are performing at an advanced level of skill and knowledge. Certified Nursing Home Administrators may be eligible for some form of licensure recognition in participating states/ jurisdictions (see insert at right).

Commitment to the Public

Professional Certification reflects a commitment to residents, families and staff. Certified administrators have advanced knowledge and experience to lead their facilities.

Enhancement of the Profession

Professional Certification promotes quality in the profession and improves the public image of administrators. The presence of a Certified Administrator in a long term care organization speaks well to consumers evaluating an Assisted Living Community or Skilled Nursing Facility.

Personal Satisfaction and a Sense of Achievement

Certification is a voluntary program, which allows experienced and practicing administrators to validate their knowledge, skill and abilities. Professionally Certified individuals cite a strong feeling of personal accomplishment. Candidates who sit for the certification exam receive detailed score reports so they can assess areas of strength and areas for development.

Employer Recognition

Some employers encourage their administrators to become professionally certified and others look for Certification as a condition of hire. Certification is considered a plus on a résumé.

ACHCA Recognition

Upon Certification, ACHCA will:

- Provide a certificate suitable for framing recognizing your achievement.
- Provide a sample press release you can send to your local newspapers.
- Provide a letter to your CEO (or a potential employer) informing him or her of your achievement and its significance (upon request).
- Publish your name in ACHCA's member publications.
- Recognize you before your peers at a special ceremony during Annual Convocation & Exposition.

State Recognition

The following states recognize ACHCA's CNHA program which in many cases "fast tracks" administrator eligibility for licensure in that state:

- Arizona
- Arkansas
- Illinois
- Iowa
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- Nevada
- New York
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Washington
- Wisconsin

Licensing rules and requirements vary by state. Check with your state licensing board for your state's reciprocity requirements. A list of state licensure boards and contact information is maintained on the NAB website at www.nabweb.org.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

Application and Registration

- For each Credential, candidates must complete and submit an application which demonstrates education, experience and continuing education (see page 20 for links to online applications).
- Submit a copy of current NHA or AL license if required by state.
- Acknowledge the ACHCA Code of Ethics (see page 19).
- Pass both the general Certification Exam (110 questions) and the specialty exam (40 questions).
- Submit credentialing fees once the exam is passed.

Eligibility Criteria (see pages 8-9)

All eligibility criteria are detailed on the Application for Professional Certification.

You must demonstrate:

- A minimum of two years of licensure, as defined by the state board.
- A minimum of 40 hours of continuing education provided through an approved provider of CE such as NAB/NCERS or a state approved provider of LTC CE over the past 2 years immediately preceding the date of the application.
- Both education/experience and continuing education requirements must be fulfilled to be eligible.
- ACHCA membership is preferred but not a requirement for Professional Certification.

Application Process

- A candidate's exam eligibility must be established before exam authorization can take place. Please review the eligibility criteria on pages 8-9 before submitting your application.

Scheduling the Professional Certification Exam

- Once the application is approved and the applicant receives an approval letter, which serves as the ATT (Admission to Test) letter, from ACHCA, the computer-based professional exam(s) may be scheduled for the day of your choice.
- Exams are administered at Prometric testing centers. Examination appointments may be scheduled with Prometric online or by phone. Prometric testing center locations can be located at www.prometric.com/achca.
- All candidates must schedule an appointment prior to testing. It is strongly recommended that appointments are scheduled once the ATT letter is received. Since Prometric test center seats fill up quickly, it is suggested that the candidate select a testing appointment carefully to minimize the need to reschedule in the future.
- Examination appointments may be scheduled with Prometric online or by phone. Online scheduling is encouraged because it is faster and more efficient. Candidates who schedule online will receive an email confirming their examination appointment and their confirmation number. To schedule online, go to www.prometric.com/achca and click on "Schedule a Test." To schedule an exam by phone, please call 1-800-488-5787.

Special Accommodations

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, special testing accommodations will be considered for individuals with disabilities recognized by the ADA. Requests for special accommodations to take the exam must be approved by ACHCA prior to scheduling your appointment. Requests can be made directly on the Professional Certification Application or by contacting ACHCA at professionaladvancement@achca.org.

Unemployed Applicants

Unemployed applicants are eligible for Certification providing all requirements are met. The experience verification may be signed by a previous employer. In instances where a license is required to meet eligibility requirements, the license must be current.

Refund and Cancellation

If a scheduled exam needs to be canceled Prometric must be notified as soon as possible.

The Prometric cancellation policy is as follows:

- If a candidate reschedules or cancels 31 or more calendar days before the scheduled appointment, there is no charge.
- If a candidate reschedules or cancels 3-30 calendar days before the scheduled appointment, Prometric will charge candidates \$50 per each reschedule or cancellation.
- Candidates will not be permitted to cancel or reschedule less than 3 calendar days before the scheduled appointment.

Candidates may change the test center locations, however doing so will cancel their previously scheduled appointment. Changing a test center location is considered a reschedule and the deadlines for changing and possible fees as described above, apply.

To cancel or reschedule an appointment, please notify Prometric at www.prometric.com/achca or 1-800-488-5787.

Candidates who have been approved for, but have not yet scheduled an exam, and who wish to cancel the exam authorization, may notify ACHCA within 30 days. The application fee minus a \$75.00 processing fee will be refunded within 30 days of the application. After 30 days, no refunds will be issued. For the credentialing fee, ACHCA will refund the entire credentialing fee, less \$75 processing fee within 30 days of payment. After 30 days, no refunds will be issued.

Pursuing Multiple Credentials

- Candidates may take two specialty examinations on one test date.
- The same application form may be used to register for multiple exams.
- If two specialty exams are taken on the same test date, see the fees schedule on page 21.

Confirmation Notice

ACHCA will email a confirmation notice to applicants within two weeks after receiving the application for certification.

Prometric Test Center Locations

Please visit the Prometric website at www.prometric.com/achca to find the test center closest to you. Most Prometric centers are open Monday through Saturday. Prometric reserves the right to change test center locations as necessary. If Prometric needs to change or cancel your examination appointment, you will be contacted by Prometric directly via email or phone.

Change in Contact Information

Changes to your name or contact information should be submitted in writing via Fax to (866) 874-1585 or via email at professionaladvancement@achca.org.

Certification of Foreign Administrators

Foreign administrators are waived of all U.S. licensure requirements. Foreign administrators who meet all other requirements are eligible for ACHCA Certification. Certification exams, however, are only available at testing centers in the United States.

ASSISTED LIVING CERTIFICATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Option 1

Fulfillment of any state Assisted Living Administrator licensure requirement.

or

Completion of the NAB RC/AL Licensure Exam.

or

Current Nursing Home Administrator license.

and

Two years of full-time experience as an Assisted Living Administrator/Manager in an assisted living environment as defined by State law.

and

40 hours of continuing education (CE) during the two years prior to date of application in the Domain of Practice relevant to Assisted Living Administrator/Management.*

or

Option 2

Baccalaureate degree and two years of full-time experience as an Assisted Living Administrator/Manager in an assisted living environment. (as defined by State law)

and

40 hours of continuing education (CE) during the two years prior to date of application in the Domain of Practice relevant to Assisted Living Administration/Management.*

or

Option 3

Associate degree or Registered Nurse and four years of full-time experience as an Assisted Living Administrator/Manager in an assisted living environment.

and

- 40 hours of continuing education (CE) during the two years prior to date of application in the Domain of Practice relevant to Assisted Living Administration/Management.*

or

Option 4

- High School diploma, G.E.D. or LPN/LVN and six years of full-time experience as an Assisted Living Administrator/Manager in an assisted living environment.

and

- 40 hours of continuing education (CE) during the two years prior to date of application in the Domain of Practice relevant to Assisted Living Administration/Management.*

*This requirement can be satisfied if you are a licensed NHA in a state requiring 20 CE/year.
Submit a copy of your NHA license.

NURSING HOME CERTIFICATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Two year licensure as a Nursing Home Administrator, including a current NHA license.

and

Two years experience as a Nursing Home Administrator (excluding time as an AIT).

and

A baccalaureate degree if licensed after January 1, 1996.

and

40 hours of continuing education (CE) during the two years prior to date of application in the Domain of Practice relevant to Skilled Nursing Administration/Management.*

*CE documentation is required only if you are licensed in a state that does not require 40 hrs/2 years for re-licensure: CE documentation is needed for the following states: AK, CO, HI, ME.

EXAM OVERVIEW

Development

ACHCA has contracted with an outside vendor to provide testing and consulting services for the Professional Certification Exams. Professional Examination Service (ProExam) is the most experienced organization in professional credentialing, providing comprehensive services and technology to programs across a broad range of professions. Since 1941, ProExam has supported professional licensure and certification, training and continuing professional education with its full, flexible range of assessment and advisory services. ProExam is a not-for-profit organization with uniquely tailored services, a dedication to personal attention and insight into emerging credentialing trends.

The Exam Development Process

Although a new job analysis is utilized every five years, individual test items are written and revised year-round. New test questions are introduced in each exam administration and may be selected from the Exam Item Bank.

Subject Matter Experts, in conjunction with ProExam, review the individual item statistics and set the cut-scores (pass/fail rates). Using the Angoff-Criterion referenced method, these Experts judge the relevance of each item and the importance of a qualified candidate correctly answering that question. These judgments and the actual statistical results of the exams are factored to yield a cut-score for each exam.

ProExam and ACHCA have the responsibility to train Subject Matter Experts on an ongoing basis to write exam items to keep the exams current and relevant. Subject Matter Experts, or Item Writers, are vetted by the Professional Advancement Committee based on years of experience, knowledge, and area of expertise.

Exam Preparation

Because the Certification Exams are designed to draw on your experience, developing traditional study materials is difficult. Most candidates review the exam blueprint below and then focus their preparation on areas in which they may need a refresher. Certification Readiness sessions are also held at selected ACHCA national and chapter conferences. Candidates may contact the ACHCA National office for Certification Readiness session availability.

EXAM CONTENT

New items are routinely added to the exam bank of questions, and some topics may or may not be covered. Please use this information as a guide for preparation. Candidates for CNHA and CALA must complete both the General Administration portion of the exam and a Specialty section.

Part I – General Administration (110 questions)

Resident Care (25%) -Resident services including nursing, food, social, therapeutic activity, pharmaceutical and medical; health information management; resident's rights

Human Resources (16%) -Recruitment/retention, educational requirements, staff development, evaluations, compensation and benefits, recognition, labor and government laws, HR policies, independent contractor qualifications and services

Finance (20%) -Budgeting, analysis, accounting principles, client's fund and account procedures, rate setting, revenue sources, loan acquisition, reimbursement, third party contracts, cost structures, billing procedures

Environment (15%) -Maintenance and improvement of building grounds and equipment, environmental safety programs, emergency preparedness programs

Leadership (24%) -Strategic planning, goal setting, creating a mission, accountability, managing change, crisis management, maintaining formal channels of communication, resource acquisition, information planning and control, ethics, liability issues

Part II – Specialty Portion for Nursing Home Administration and Assisted Living Administration (40 questions each section)

Specialty exams emphasize those aspects of the Domains of Practice that are unique their specialty. Specialty exam questions are distributed in approximately the following percentages.

Resident Care (26%) -see above

Human Resources (14%)-see above

Finance (24%)-see above

Environment (14%)-see above

Leadership (22%)-see above

Examination Day

Presenting Positive Proof of Identity

All candidates must provide positive proof of identity. Identity proof includes an unexpired government-issued photo ID with a signature. Examples of government-issued IDs include a driver's license with a photograph, a military photo ID, or a passport. The name of the ID must match exactly the name used on the application and the ATT letter and the photo must validate the candidate's identity. Applicants applying for the examination using a nickname or a maiden or married name, must ensure that the identification and ATT letter matches exactly to this name. Candidates who arrive at the test center without the required identification, or if the name on their identification does not match the name on their ATT letter will not be allowed to test and will forfeit all fees.

Validation of Candidate Identification

Prometric's reader and scanner system authenticates a candidate's driver's license (or other national identification) when presented during check-in at the testing center. This validation process enables a test center administrator to verify that the license presented is valid and that the individual presenting the license is who he/she claims to be.

Prometric Test Center Rules

The following rules are enforced at all Prometric test centers to ensure a fair and consistent test experience for all candidates.

- All candidates must arrive at the testing center at least 30 minutes before their scheduled reporting time. Latecomers may be prohibited from taking the exam.
- All candidates must present positive proof of identity in order to be admitted to the test center.
- Admittance to the testing center is by appointment only. Candidates must be present at the time and location of their appointment to be admitted.
- Candidates must not use written notes, published materials, or other testing aids.
- Smoking is prohibited.
- Candidates may not ask test center proctors or any other individuals questions about examination content.
- Candidates will be continuously monitored by video, physical walk-throughs, and the observation window during testing. All testing sessions are video and audio recorded.
- No breaks are scheduled during the examination. Candidates who need to leave the testing room to take a break (e.g., to use the restroom), will not be given extra time on the examination. To re-enter the testing room, candidates must sign-in, present their identification documents, and undergo security screening again.
- Candidates may not leave the test center while the examination is in progress.
- ACHCA and ProExam reserve the right to cancel any test score believed to be obtained in a questionable manner.
- Candidates must not bring any personal/unauthorized items into the testing room. Such items include but are not limited to: outerwear, hats, food, drinks, purses, briefcases, notebooks, pagers, watches, cellular telephones, recording devices, and photographic equipment. Weapons are not allowed at any Prometric Testing Center. The candidate will be asked to empty and turn clothing pockets inside out prior to every entry into the test room to confirm that the candidate does not possess prohibited items.

Prometric Rules continued

- Candidates will be scanned with a metal detector wand prior to every entry in the test room. If a candidate refuses, the candidate will not be permitted to test.
- It is expressly prohibited to disclose, publish, reproduce, or transmit any part of the examination, in any form, by any means, verbal or written, for any purpose without express written permission of the certifying organization. Violation will result in civil and/or criminal prosecution.
- Religious headwear may be worn into the testing room; however, it may be subject to inspection by a testing center administrator before entry into the testing room is permitted.
- Individuals who are not scheduled to test are not permitted to wait in the testing center.
- Any request to bring medical equipment of any kind, or food (if a candidate is diabetic or subject to hypoglycemia) into the test administration room must be made when registering for an examination as a special accommodation. If this request is not made as described in this *Handbook*, candidates will not receive the accommodation at the test center and the candidate may not be able to test.

Candidates are reminded that other examinations are being administered at the same time that the candidate is scheduled for examination and the candidate may hear typing on keyboards for an essay examination, coughing, and/or people entering and leaving the testing room. It is impossible to provide a completely noise-free testing environment. The Prometric test centers allow candidates to bring small earplugs that can be inserted inside the ear. Candidates are not allowed to bring in headsets or headphones. Earplugs and glasses are subject to inspection by the test center administrator before entry into the testing room is permitted.

For a complete list of Prometric's Exam Guidelines and Test Center Rules, please [click here](#) or contact ACHCA at professionaladvancement@achca.org or 202-253-6522.

Three hours are allotted to complete the 110-question general exam and a 40 question specialty exam (either nursing home administration or assisted living administration). Those candidates taking a second specialty exam will have an additional hour to answer the additional 40 question exam. Candidates are notified immediately after the exam if the exam is passed.

After the Exam

Upon notification from ACHCA of successful completion of the Certification process, the candidate will receive an invoice for the remainder of the credentialing fee.

Upon receipt of the credentials and fee(s), the ACHCA will send the Certificant a press release, a CEO notification form and a certificate suitable for framing at which time the Certificant may use the certification credential.

Questions or comments regarding the professional Certification exam must be submitted to ACHCA in writing via email at professionaladvancement@achca.org or call ACHCA at 202-253-6522.

EXAMINATION PROCESSES

Determination of Passing Scores

Passing scores are determined using the Angoff Criterion-referenced method, the most accepted method in the testing industry. Candidate scores are not affected by others who take the exam on the same day.

Examination Results

Candidates are given a Pass/Fail score for both Parts I and II. A candidate must pass both the general and the specialty examinations to receive the credential.

Exam scores are valid for three years. A candidate who has previously passed Part I, the General Administration Section, may apply the score from that section to seek an additional credential within the three-year period. For example, a CALA may seek the Nursing Home Administrators Certification by taking only the CNHA Specialty exam within this three-year period.

Confidentiality of Exam Scores

Only designated ACHCA staff, staff of ACHCA's contracted testing company and members of the Professional Advancement Committee (when necessary) have access to exam scores. Scores will not be released to anyone other than the examinee without written permission.

Retaking Exams

If the candidate fails either the general or the specialty examination, he/she may apply to retake only the failed examination. There is no limit to the number of times a candidate may retake either the general exam or either of the specialty exams. Exam scores are valid for three years.

Challenging Scores & Appeals

Candidates may appeal a decision of the Professional Advancement Committee (PA Committee) or any aspect of a Certification Exam. All appeals must be submitted in writing to the PA Committee. Appeals related to the calculation of exam scores must be received within 30 days following the exam. Candidates may request to have exams reviewed by the PA Committee. However, actual scores very rarely change as a result of a review. Candidates must submit a written request for appeal and payment for \$45.00 to the attention of ACHCA Certification staff. The fee includes checking for omitted questions, or any conditions that may have interfered with the scoring process. Information on responses to specific questions cannot be provided to ensure exam security. Appeals should be sent by return receipt certified or registered mail. The request should state the reason why the scores are contested and should include any information to be considered by the PA Committee.

Exam Updates

The ACHCA Exam Development Subcommittee, ProExam, and Subject Matter Experts are continually developing new exam items. The tests are updated annually.

Disciplinary Policy

The PA Committee may revoke the application or certification of an individual or otherwise take disciplinary action in accordance with the PA Committee Professional Practice (ACHCA Code of Ethics) and Disciplinary Procedures.

Such procedures currently allow revocation of application or certification, and allow other disciplinary action in the case of:

- ✓ ineligibility;
- ✓ irregularity in connection with the exam;
- ✓ unauthorized possession or distribution or other use of exam materials;
- ✓ misrepresentation in any statement to the PA Committee or public regarding Certification;
- ✓ loss or suspension of other health care provider licenses required for the field covered by Certification;
- ✓ conviction or plea of guilty to a felony or misdemeanor related to the practice of medical management or administration;
- ✓ not adhering to the eligibility requirements for Certification candidacy or ensuring compliance with proficiency requirements; or
- ✓ violating the ACHCA Code of Ethics (page 19).

ACHCA may amend these Disciplinary Procedures as needed.

In the event disciplinary review is required, the PA Committee shall serve as a Hearing Panel and follow established policy for such hearings and review. Copies of the Disciplinary Process policy are available by contacting ACHCA.

ACHCA's Professional Certification Programs do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender, health status, lifestyle, membership status, nationality, race, religion or sexual orientation.

Certification Renewal

In order to ensure continued competency, Certified Administrators must renew their Certification *every five years*. The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) and the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE), a national, nonprofit association dedicated to defining standards in certification, strongly recommends renewal as part of any certification program.

The ICE Guidelines state "technology is advancing too fast for a certificate of competence earned at the beginning of one's career to constitute proof of competence many years later. Demonstrations of continuing competence are as reasonable and necessary as are required demonstrations of entry-level competence." There is no profession where change is more evident than in health care.

One of the following options may be completed to renew certification:

- ✓ Complete an Executive Portfolio
- ✓ Complete an Executive Level Course
- ✓ Pass the Certification Specialty Exam (*CNHA & CALA only*)

A recertification application must accompany any of the above renewal options. A link to the recertification application can be found on page 20, or on the ACHCA website, www.achca.org.

The Executive Portfolio

The Executive Portfolio allows an administrator to demonstrate professional activity and development during the certification renewal period. Requirements include a total of 150 CE credits: 1) in five Domains of Practice categories as noted below; 2) covering the immediate five year period; and 3) approved by a continuing education provider such as NAB/NCERS, or a state approved provider of LTC CE credit.

✓ **Human Resources (24 CE Credits)**

Recruitment/retention, educational requirements, staff development, evaluations, compensation and benefits, recognition, labor and government laws, HR policies, independent contractor qualifications and services

✓ **Resident Care (40 CE Credits)**

Resident services including nursing, food, social, therapeutic activity, pharmaceutical and medical; health information management; residents rights

✓ **Leadership (35 CE Credits)**

Strategic planning, goal setting, creating a mission, accountability, managing change, crisis management, maintaining formal channels of communication, resource acquisition, information planning and control, ethics, liability issues

✓ **Environment (21 CE Credits)**

Maintenance and improvement of building grounds and equipment, environmental safety programs, emergency preparedness programs

✓ **Finance (30 CE Credits)**

Budgeting, analysis, accounting principals, client's fund and account procedures, rate setting, revenue sources, loan acquisition, reimbursement, third party contracts, cost structures, billing procedures

As of October 1, 2013 ACHCA will once again require the submission of the Executive Portfolio to document the achievement of continuing education (CE) at the time of renewal. In addition, the Professional Advancement committee will conduct random audits, 10% or no less than eight, of certification renewal applications within the year the renewal is received to ensure compliance with CE renewal requirements. These audits will include the verification of *both* the required Executive Portfolio and related CE certificates.

It is suggested that you gather and save the associated CE certificates, along with the Executive Portfolio, for this five year renewal period in the event you are selected for the audit. Please be aware, that should an audit reveal fraudulent submission of CE documentation, the Professional Advancement committee reserves the right to disqualify this credential.

The same Executive Portfolio may be submitted for renewal of multiple credentials; multiple credentials do not have to be renewed at the same time; although it may be more efficient and economical to do so to have a single certification expiration date.

~CE sessions and titles are not by themselves defining for the domains of practice categories; ACHCA relies on your best judgment for assigning the category in which the CE are applicable. Single topic seminars should go into a single category and conferences may be broken down by session topic to equal the total number of CE awarded. Magazine tests can be claimed under the category that best fits their description.

The Executive Level Course

Executive Level Courses are intended primarily for senior executives, should be in the area of general management or health services management, are at least 40 hours in length and are offered by a college, university or nonprofit organization. Candidates are asked to *seek prior approval* from the Professional Advancement Committee (PA Committee) for the Executive level Course option.

Example: The University of Washington Certificate Program in Gerontology fulfills this option requirement. To seek prior approval of an executive level course, please email professionaladvancement@achca.org or call (202) 253-6522.

Passing the Certification Specialty Exam

The Certification Specialty Exam is used to recertify in the event that an administrator has not earned the required 150 continuing education credits within their five year certification period. An applicant must contact professionaladvancement@achca.org to be approved to recertify by exam. If approved to recertify by exam, the applicant must pass the exam before the end of their certification grace period. *It is recommended that an applicant who wishes to recertify by exam requests approval no later than six months before the end of their certification grace period.*

Certification Expiration

Certification renewal may be completed up to one year prior to the expiration date or during a one-year grace period after the expiration date. The renewal dates continue in five year increments from the original Certification date, regardless of the date of renewal. If the Certificant does not renew she/he will be decertified. If a Certificant wishes to regain Certification after being decertified, the candidate must apply for and pass the Certification Exam.

General Exam References

1. Acello, Barbara (2013) *The Long Term Care Legal Desk Reference* Danvers, MA HcPro Publishing
2. Acello, Barbara (2009) *The Long Term Care Nursing Desk Reference* Danvers, MA HcPro Publishing
3. Kavalier, Florence & Alexander, Raymond, S. (2014) *Risk Management in Healthcare Institutions* Sudbury, MA Jones & Bartlett Learning
4. McDonnell, Alice (2012) *Managing Geriatric Health Services* Sudbury, MA Jones & Bartlett Learning
5. Gilster, Susan (2006) *A Way of Life: Developing an Exemplary Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Program* Baltimore, MD Health Professions Press
6. McLaughlin, Daniel B., & Olson, John R. (2012) *Healthcare Operations Management* Chicago, IL Health Administration Press
7. Walston, Stephen (2014) *Strategic Healthcare Management: Planning and Execution* Chicago, IL Health Administration Press
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Code of Ethics



PREAMBLE: The preservation of the highest standards of integrity and ethical principles is vital to the successful discharge of the professional responsibilities of all long-term health care administrators. This Code of Ethics has been promulgated by the American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA) in an effort to stress the fundamental rules considered essential to this basic purpose. It shall be the obligation of members to seek to avoid not only conduct specifically proscribed by the code, but also conduct that is inconsistent with its spirit and purpose. Failure to specify any particular responsibility or practice in this Code of Ethics should not be construed as denial of the existence of other responsibilities or practices. Recognizing that the ultimate responsibility for applying standards and ethics falls upon the individual, the ACHCA establishes the following Code of Ethics to make clear its expectation of the membership.

Expectation I

Individuals shall hold paramount the welfare of persons for whom care is provided.

PRESCRIPTIONS: The Health Care Administrator shall:

- Strive to provide to all those entrusted to his or her care the highest quality of appropriate services possible in light of resources or other constraints.
- Operate the facility consistent with laws, regulations, and standards of practice recognized in the field of health care administration.
- Consistent with law and professional standards, protect the confidentiality of information regarding individual recipients of care.
- Perform administrative duties with the personal integrity that will earn the confidence, trust, and respect of the general public.
- Take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination on basis of race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, citizenship status, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, past, present or future status in the U.S. uninformed services, genetics or any other characteristic protected under applicable law.

PROSCRIPTION: The Health Care Administrator shall not:

- Disclose professional or personal information regarding recipients of service to unauthorized personnel unless required by law or to protect the public welfare.

Expectation II

Individuals shall maintain high standards of professional competence and personal conduct.

PRESCRIPTIONS: The Health Care Administrator shall:

- Possess and maintain the competencies necessary to effectively perform his or her responsibilities.
- Practice administration in accordance with capabilities and proficiencies and, when appropriate, seek counsel from qualified others.
- Actively strive to enhance knowledge of and expertise in long-term care administration through continuing education and professional development.
- Demonstrate conduct that is in the best interest of the profession.

PROSCRIPTIONS: The Health Care Administrator shall not:

- Misrepresent qualifications, education, experience, or affiliations.
- Provide services other than those for which he or she is prepared and qualified to perform.
- Conduct themselves in a manner detrimental to the best interest of the profession.

Expectation III

Individuals shall strive, in all matters relating to their professional functions, to maintain a professional posture that places paramount the interests of the facility and its residents.

PRESCRIPTIONS: The Health Care Administrator shall:

- Avoid partisanship and provide a forum for the fair resolution of any disputes which may arise in service delivery or facility management.
- Disclose to the governing body or other authority as may be appropriate, any actual or potential circumstance concerning him or her that might reasonably be thought to create a conflict of interest or have a substantial adverse impact on the facility or its residents.

PROSCRIPTION: The Health Care Administrator shall not:

- Participate in activities that reasonably may be thought to create a conflict of interest or have the potential to have a substantial adverse impact on the facility or its residents.

Expectation IV

Individuals shall honor their responsibilities to the public, their profession, and their relationships with colleagues and members of related professions.

PRESCRIPTIONS: The Health Care Administrator shall:

- Foster increased knowledge within the profession of health care administration and support research efforts toward this end.
- Participate with others in the community to plan for and provide a full range of health care services.
- Share areas of expertise with colleagues, students, and the general public to increase awareness and promote understanding of health care in general and the profession in particular.

PROSCRIPTION: The Health Care Administrator shall not:

- Inform the ACHCA Standards and Ethics Committee of actual or potential violations of this Code of Ethics, and fully cooperate with ACHCA's sanctioned inquiries into matters of professional conduct related to this Code of Ethics.
- PROSCRIPTION:** The Health Care Administrator shall not:
- Defend, support, or ignore unethical conduct perpetrated by colleagues, peers or students.

To Apply for ACHCA Professional Certification

Please apply online for authorization to take the ACHCA professional certification examinations. Please click the link of the certification application you would like to submit. [CNHA Application](#) [CALA Application](#) At the time that you apply, you will be asked to upload your long term care license (if required by your state), college diploma (if applying for CNHA and licensed after 1/1/1996 or if applying for CALA under Option 2) and a completed [affidavit form](#). It is strongly suggested that you scan and save all of the required documentation to your computer *before* beginning the application.

Your online application will not be complete until you have paid the certification application fee. The certification fees can be found on the following page.

To Apply for ACHCA Professional Recertification

Please apply online for recertification of your ACHCA professional certification. [Click here](#) to access the online recertification application.

ACHCA requires the submission of the Executive Portfolio to document the achievement of continuing education (CE) at the time of recertification application submission. To access the Executive Portfolio, please [click here](#).

If the candidate selects to submit an Executive Level Course in lieu of the Executive Portfolio, please upload a copy of the approved course description or syllabus and the earned transcript at the time of application submission. *Please note that Executive Level Courses must be pre-approved by the Professional Advancement Committee.*

If the candidate has taken the Specialty Exam in lieu of the Executive Portfolio, please upload a copy of the notification letter. (*CNHA and CALA certifications only.*)

ACHCA Professional Certification Fees		
Application Fees	Member	Non-Member
Join ACHCA NOW to receive member pricing *ACHCA membership is individual, not facility based	N/A	\$295.00
Single Credential Certification Exam (check only one)	\$150.00	\$150.00
Add Additional Credential exam (same day)	\$135.00	\$135.00
Add Additional Credential exam (different day)	\$150.00	\$150.00
Retake Certification Exam (failed section)	\$75.00 per section	\$75.00 per section
Credential Fees (Paid once exam has been successfully passed)	Member	Non-Member
Single Credentialing fee	\$250.00	\$350.00
Second Credentialing fee (same day)	\$135.00	\$135.00
Second Credential fee (different day)	\$185.00	\$235.00
Recertification Fees	Member	Non-Member
Single recertification fee	\$339.00	\$389.00
Additional recertification fee	\$100.00 per credential	\$100.00 per credential

Note: The application fee includes the application, testing center, and processing fees. The credential fee is paid upon successfully passing the certification exam.

****Prometric Refund and Cancellation Policy for Scheduled Exams****

If a scheduled exam needs to be canceled, Prometric must be notified as soon as possible.

The Prometric cancellation policy is as follows:

- If a candidate reschedules or cancels 31 or more calendar days before the scheduled appointment, there is no charge.
- If a candidate reschedules or cancels 3-30 calendar days before the scheduled appointment, Prometric will charge candidates \$50 per each reschedule or cancellation.
- Candidates will not be permitted to cancel or reschedule less than 3 calendar days before the scheduled appointment.
- For more detailed information about Prometric's Refund and Cancellation Policy, please [click here](#), or contact ACHCA at professionaladvancement@achca.org.

Payment Options

Online with credit card (preferred)

-This can be done at the time of application submission, or you can [click here](#) to access the Certification Store.

Check

-Please mail to: ACHCA, Attn: Certification, P.O. Box 75060
 Baltimore, MD 21275-5060

Fax with credit card

-Please fax the following information to (866) 874-1585
 Card type (AMEX, VISA, MASTERCARD), Credit Card #, Exp. Date, Name on Card, Signature of cardholder

****ACHCA Refund and Cancellation Policy ****

Requests for refunds and cancellations of the *certification application fee* or *certification credentialing fee* must be made in writing. For the certification application fee, if no exam has been scheduled or if 24 hours notice was given to cancel an exam, ACHCA will refund your entire certification application fee, less \$25 processing fee within 30 days of application. After 30 days no refunds will be issued. For the credentialing fee, ACHCA will refund your entire credentialing fee, less \$25 processing fee within 30 days of payment. After 30 days, no refunds will be issued.

Certification Promotes:

- **Professional Development**
- **Employer Recognition**
- **Customer Confidence**
- **National Recognition**
- **Quality Outcomes**

The American Health Care Association recognizes the American College of Health Care Administrators professional certification programs and mentoring initiatives as important tools in the development of a well rounded, skilled health care professional.



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