

FAQs



Q: Does the Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association (GAPNA) provide certification?

A: GAPNA does **NOT** provide certification. Certification is provided through the Gerontology Nursing Certification Commission, GNCC, a separate commission established to provide APRN Gerontological Specialist certification.

Q: What certification exams are offered by GNCC?

A: We currently offer the APRN Gerontological Specialist certification exam.

Q: As an Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner or Family Nurse Practitioner, why should I get Gerontological Specialist-Certified (GS-C)?

A: The GS-C specialty certification distinguishes APRNs who possess expert knowledge, experience, and skill in managing the complex health needs of older adults. This certification recognizes expertise at the proficient level in managing complex older adults.

Q: If I already have a foundational nurse practitioner certification, why should I take the exam?

A: Foundational nurse practitioner certifications, such as the APRN-CNS(c), provide acknowledgement of the competency of the CNS in working with adults and older adults. The APRN Gerontological Specialist (GS-C) certification demonstrates expert proficiency for the management of complex older adults. With the retirement of the Gerontological NP and CNS certification, the validation for knowledge, skills, and experience on working with the health issues of the complex older adults is a missing piece to credentialing for this advanced experience.

Q: Does GNCC offer educational courses or training materials to prepare exam candidates to take the Gerontological Specialist certification exams?

A: No, GNCC is a certification agency and does not approve, develop, offer, or endorse any educational programs. The commission does provide a list of resources that may be helpful in preparing for the GS-C certification exam. We also recommend that you contact the Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association (GAPNA) for study materials.

Q: How many continuing education hours are required for eligibility to take the Gerontological Specialist certification exam?

A: The applicant must have completed fifty (50) contact hours of approved continuing education in gerontology within 3 years prior to submitting the exam application. Continuing education hours must be accredited by a provider or approver of continuing nursing education, or medical education, such as the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), a state board of nursing, nursing association, Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), or American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP).

For initial GS-C certification by exam, continuing education contact hours include online or on-campus coursework, attending conferences, lectures, etc., where the applicant is the learner. Alternatively, precepting hours, writing entries or articles for publications, giving presentations or lectures, etc., are considered professional contact hours, which can be used for recertification only, **NOT** for initial certification by examination.

Q: Do you want copies of my contact hour (CE) certificates?

A: No, do not send copies of your CE certificates when you submit your application. Just send your application and contact hour documentation forms. If your application is selected for random audit, copies of your certificates will be requested at that time.

Q: My practice is a mixture of patients from all age groups. Can I count all the hours for my practice hour requirement?

A: Yes, however, you may only count the hours and portions of working with gerontology patients.

Q: The program I am looking at to earn my 50 contact hours only partly pertains to gerontology. Would that count toward my 50 contact hours?

A: The candidate may submit CEs for partial credit. It is the candidate's responsibility to determine the portion of the CE content that was related to gerontology or applicable to gerontological populations. The candidate may also Submit the course's objectives and content outline for a determination on a case by case basis by the GNCC Board of Directors.

Q: I have more than the 50 required contact hours, should I include them?

A: It is not necessary to include anything over 50 contact hours.

Q: Can contact hours provided by my hospital count?

A: If your hospital is accredited by an approved provider, you can claim the contact hour.

Q: Are there websites that offer gerontology-specific contact hours?

A: The GAPNA Online Library at <https://library.gapna.org/gapna>.

Q: Are there currently any graduate programs or fellowship opportunities to meet the edibility requirements for the Gerontological Specialist certification?

A: No, however, GNCC encourages organizations and groups to pursue developing graduate programs and fellowship opportunities toward meeting the eligibility criteria to take the certification exam.

Q: How do I sign my name once I become certified? Is there a standard way that is recommended?

A: Yes, there is a standard way to list credentials after your name. Academic degrees are listed first because they are earned, are considered permanent. Nurse Practitioners are licensed by the State Boards of Nursing. National certifications are usually voluntary. When you become certified by GNCC, you should use the credentials GS-C to indicate your certification.

A: Can I or my employer verify my certification status?

Yes. GNCC certification status can be verified online at gerocert.org. However, all application information is considered confidential and is not shared with any outside party. It is used only by C-NET and GNCC for certification processing purposes. Information concerning any candidate for certification is released only upon written request of the certification applicant.

Q: Once I am certified, what additional privileges does the GNCC certification grant me?

A: GNCC certification does not grant any additional privileges or responsibilities above your basic license. It is a testimony to your hard work, knowledge, and experience with the specialty gerontology patients and managing the complex health needs of older adults

Q: What should I do if my contact information changes?

A: It is the professional responsibility of the applicant to notify GNCC of any name, address, phone numbers and/or e-mail change. You can make these changes to your online profile at www.gerocert.org after you log in with your username and password. If you already have an established online account with GAPNA, all changes made to your profile will be reflected in your GNCC certification record.

Q: How long is my GS-C certification valid?

A: The GS-C credential is valid for five (5) years. Recertification is available by exam or by continuing education. The number of continuing education hours will be set by the end of 2018. Generally, for recertification the applicant will have seventy-five (75) contact hours of approved continuing education specific to gerontology within the 5 years of certification prior to recertification.

Q: Approximately how long is the exam?

A: The exam consists of 175 multiple choice questions and the time allotted for the exam is four (4) hours.

Q: What is the current passing score for the GS-C exam?

A: The current passing score is 76%.

Q: If I don't pass the exam, how soon can I reapply?

A: If your results indicate that you did not pass, you may submit a First Time Re-Examination Application after 30 days. Note that a candidate who does not pass the examination had ONE YEAR in which to retake the exam with the reduced First Time Re-Examination Application.

Q: How do I know if contact hours are from an approved provider?

A: This is usually printed, usually in small type towards the bottom of your certificate. It should give you the provider, accrediting company, and the number of contact hours. If the information is not available on the certificate, it may be available on the provider's website.

Q: How early can I apply for recertification?

A: You can submit your recertification application on June 1 of the year that your certification expires.

Q: What would happen if I let my certification lapse?

A: You lose your right to use the credentials. And you must take the certification exam again in order to gain GNCC certification.