



National Association of Catholic Chaplains



Application and Interview Process for Initial Certification with the NACC

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**Qualifications & Competencies**

**What is changing?**

1. "Standards" → "Qualifications & Competencies"
2. Numbering nomenclature
3. Headings
4. Wording
5. Combined
6. New competencies



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**Topics Covered in this Workshop**

1. Prerequisites of the Certification Process
2. Timeline Leading up to the Deadline
3. Timeline Following the Deadline
4. The Interview, Certification Commission Vote, and Appeals Processes
5. Detailed Breakdown of the Application Binder Submitted for Certification

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**Prerequisites**

There are several prerequisites to beginning the certification process:

- Full Membership
- Roman Catholic/Member of a church in union with Rome in good standing
- Undergraduate and graduate education
- Four completed units of Clinical Pastoral Education

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**Membership**

You must be a full member of the NACC in order to receive the certification application

- Current (2016) membership dues are \$300 annually
- Membership applications are available on the NACC website or Call the national office to speak with the Membership Specialist
- You may request the certification application on the second page of the membership application
- If you currently are a member at a different level (Student, Associate, etc.), you must upgrade to full membership before you may request the application

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**Membership**

- If you are certified, you must remain a full member of the NACC.
- Annual membership dues must be paid in full and on time.

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## Benefits of Full Membership

- Voting privileges
- Opportunity to serve on NACC Board of Directors, Committees, Commissions, and Panels
- Advocacy
- Member communications, including NACC Now and electronic *Vision*
- Educational and networking opportunities, including audio-conferences, special networking calls, local and regional events
- NACC task force involvement
- Receive member rates for conferences
- Volunteer opportunities
- State Liaison connectivity
- Website resources
- Annual national conferences

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## Roman Catholic Affiliation

- You must be Roman Catholic or a member of a church in union with Rome in order to apply for certification.

Note: If you are going through the RCIA process, you may apply for certification for the February 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. The National Office requires a letter from your pastor following Easter that states that you have completed the process.

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## Education Requirements

- You must have completed an undergraduate degree from a CHEA-accredited institution (any subject area).
- You must also complete a graduate-level degree in a theological area from a CHEA-accredited institution.
  - The NACC defines a graduate-level theological degree as a graduate degree in theology, divinity, religious studies, pastoral ministry, pastoral studies, or spirituality.
- For degrees in other related disciplines, please consult Ramona Zeb in the National Office.

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## Educational Requirements, Continued

- The NACC does not require a certain number of credit hours for the graduate-level degree.
- All degree transcripts to be considered for certification which were attained outside of the United States must be evaluated by an education evaluation service and the results sent to the NACC National Office.
- An equivalency for the undergraduate is not granted.
- Note: Colleges/universities do not have to be Catholic in order for the NACC to accept degrees from them.

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## Graduate Degree Equivalency

- Graduate Degree Equivalency is an application process by which an Applicant seeking certification may be granted an equivalency to meet the required Graduate Level Theological Degree (Qualification 301.QUA3) in a way other than that specified in the Qualifications.
- An equivalency may be granted providing the Applicant demonstrates and documents that the submitted graduate-level degree and supplemental education satisfactorily address the requirements of Qualification 301.QUA3.
- An equivalency is not granted based on ministerial experience.

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## CPE

- The NACC requires 4 completed units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) from an accredited CPE program.
- NACC accepts units from ACPE Accredited CPE Programs, CASC/ASCC Accredited Education Centers, and USCCB/CCA Accredited CPE Programs
- Units may be taken at any level and taken in any sequence

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## When/How to Get a Mentor

- Once you begin assembling your materials for certification, the NACC Certification Commission highly recommends you seek an **Active Board Certified Chaplain (CH)** or **CPE Supervisor (SU)** for mentoring during the preparation of your materials.
- For help finding a Mentor, Members may go to the "Online Membership Directory" located on the NACC website to find a (CH) or (SU) in their area.

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## Timeline Leading up to the Application Deadline

- The applicant must first apply for and become a full member of the NACC (anytime before the deadline).
- The applicant contacts NACC office for certification materials (Note: this request may be checked on the membership application).
- NACC office responds within 14 days.
- Applicant should begin compiling/requesting supportive documents such as letters of recommendation, transcripts, etc.
- Applicant submits supportive materials and fee by postmark deadline of February 15 for a Fall interview, and by September 15 for a Spring interview.

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## Postmark Deadline

- If the 15<sup>th</sup> is a Sunday or holiday, the next business day is acceptable for the postmark.
- All materials (letters, transcripts, etc.) must be postmarked by the deadline.
- Materials that are submitted after the deadline will not be accepted. Participation in the interview process will be delayed until the next available application deadline.

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## Tips for applicants whose last CPE unit will end in the month of August

- You may work on your certification materials over the final summer of CPE so that most of the materials are ready to be submitted by September 15th.
- The National Office allows a late turn-in ONLY of final unit evaluations (self/supervisor) to accommodate August CPE students.
- All other materials must be submitted by the postmark deadline.
- **If you would like to take the option of late CPE evaluation submission, please contact the National Office to inform us of your circumstance prior to sending in an incomplete set of application materials.**

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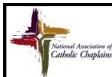


## Timeline Following the Deadline

- Immediately after the deadline, your materials are initially processed (internal database is updated, payment of the fee is processed, etc.)
- Within several weeks of the deadline, the NACC Office Staff conduct a Materials Review.

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## Materials Review

- The NACC National Office will conduct a simple review of materials and check that all components have been received. We do not check for the quality of the content of your materials.
- You will receive notification via email from the NACC if:
  - Your materials are complete and you are eligible for an interview –OR–
  - Your materials require editing/an additional item to be submitted –OR–
  - Your materials are incomplete/insufficient for an interview.

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## Interview Set-Up

- If you have been approved by the NACC National Office to move forward with an interview, the NACC will arrange a 3 member interview team and will set up a date/time/location for the interview.
- The National Office will contact you once this information is available (approx. in March for a spring interview, approx. in July for a fall interview).

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## Materials to Interview Team

- Upon notification of your interview and interview team details by the NACC National Office (via email and postal mail), a binder of materials (Tab 1-8) is to be sent by the applicant to each of the interview team members. The team must *receive* these materials no later than 45 days prior to the interview.
- This is the responsibility of the applicant.
- Unless you are asked to correct a document following the binder review, the materials sent to the interview team must be exactly the same as originally submitted to the NACC.
- No additional materials may be sent.

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## Interview Prep Call

- The NACC will offer a conference call for all current applicants who have been accepted for an interview.
- If you apply for certification and are accepted for an interview, please watch for communications from the National Office regarding this opportunity.

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## Interview

- The interview is 50 minutes long.
- The team will have reviewed your materials and noted areas that require additional clarification.
- The Presenter's Report Part I will note the Competencies that require clarification. Three to five (3-5) questions will be raised based on Competencies the interview team indicates need further clarification after thorough review of written materials. These questions form the basis of the interview.
- You will have one hour before your interview to review the PRP I and to prepare responses for the interview.
- You are expected to initiate conversation/discussion based on the questions that the interview team has prepared.

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## Interview, Continued

- After the interview, you will be instructed to leave the room while your team members deliberate and compose your *Presenter's Report Part II*.
- This process takes approximately ninety minutes plus an additional ten minutes for the team to review the report with the Interview Team Educator.
- Then you will be called back into the interview to receive feedback from your team and oral notification of the team's recommendation to the Certification Commission.

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## Certification Commission Vote

- At its next available meeting, the NACC Certification Commission will vote on all interview team recommendations.
- All interview team recommendations will be individually reviewed by the Commission. In the review, the PRP I and II are considered.
- The applicant will be notified of the Commission's decision in writing within 30 days of the Commission meeting (provided that the ecclesiastical endorsement has been received).

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## Appeals Process

- The appeals process is intended for applicants who have been denied certification by the Certification Commission and can demonstrate that NACC Competencies and/or Procedures were violated during the interview process.
- The Appeals Panel only addresses the issue of a violation of Competencies and/or Procedures. No other grounds will be considered.

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## Appeals, Continued

- If you choose to appeal the decision of the Certification Commission, you must write a **Formal Letter of Appeal**.
- The formal appeal will cite relevant NACC Competencies and/or Procedures that are alleged violations.
- You must reference specific Competencies/Procedures (by alphanumeric label and in detail) in your letter of appeal.
- You have twenty (20) days from the postmark of the Appeal Packet to send a formal appeal to the Chair of the Certification Appeals Panel in care of the NACC National Office via certified mail.

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## Materials Submitted to the National Office for Certification

- Basic set-up:
  - Place required materials, according to the “Checklist for Supportive Materials” in a 3-ring, 1.5” binder.
  - Include numbered tabs to coincide with the tab order in the Checklist. Application binder materials that are not submitted in the order on the Checklist will not be accepted for an interview.
  - Create an original Table of Contents. The Checklist is NOT sufficient as a Table of Contents.
  - Keep a complete copy for yourself and send a complete copy to the NACC National Office.
  - Instructions on sending binder materials to your interview team will come at a later date.
  - Application documents are to be single-spaced, 12-point type with one-inch margins using Arial, Garamond or Times New Roman font.

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## Materials Submitted to the National Office for Certification, Continued

Please, carefully and accurately, follow the instructions in the “Checklist for Supportive Materials Required for Certification Interview.”

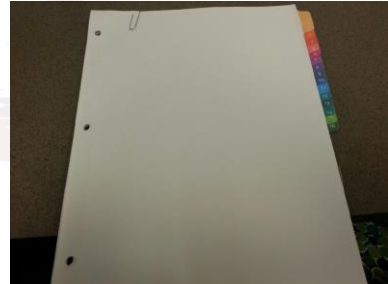
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### Tab 1: Application

- One copy of the completed NACC Certification Application
- Be sure to thoroughly complete the Application and sign and date it at the end.
- Please contact the National Office for the application form once you are a full member.

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### Tab 2: Autobiography

- Addresses personal, professional, and faith development
- Not to exceed seven (7) pages
- Format: single spaced, 12 point type, one-inch margins, numbered pages.

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### Tab 3: Spiritual Care Encounter Cover Sheet

- One current example of your provision of Spiritual Care utilizing the Spiritual Care Encounter Cover Sheet with numbered pages.
- Minimum of five pages and a maximum of ten pages in length.
- Spiritual Care Encounter should be current. Current is defined as within one year of application for certification.
- Spiritual Care Encounter should include the Cover Sheet and follow the instructions as set forth in the Cover Sheet.
- It will address, at minimum, Competencies ITP2, PPS10 and PPS11.

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### Tab 4: CPE Self-Evaluations

- Final evaluations by the Applicant of the final completed unit of CPE and any additional unit of the Applicant's choice which demonstrates the Applicant's ability and willingness to grow as a professional chaplain.
- Each evaluation is to be clearly dated and separated by a sub-tab or a colored page.
- Even though NACC only requires the two evaluations to be submitted, please be sure to list your four most recent units of CPE on your Certification Application.

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### Tab 5: CPE Supervisor Evaluations

- Final evaluations by the CPE supervisor of the final CPE Unit and corresponding CPE Unit of the Applicant's choice as referenced in Tab 4.
- Each evaluation is to be clearly dated, signed, and separated by a sub-tab or a colored page.
- The CPE Supervisor and Applicant must have signed and dated the Supervisor evaluations.

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### Missing/Destroyed Records

#### What do I do if my CPE evaluations were lost or destroyed?

- Please inform the NACC.
- You will be advised to contact the CPE center as records must be held by the center for at least ten years.
- If the center does not have copies, the NACC requires a letter from the center explaining this circumstance.
- You must recreate the documents to the best of your ability and include a note of explanation in your application materials.

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## Tab 6: Narrative Statement I – NACC-Specific Competencies

- Not to exceed three (3) pages.
- Documents how the Applicant meets each of the NACC-Specific Competencies (excluding ITP2.1 which will be assessed through the Integrative Theological Narrative and ITP4.1 which will be assessed through an e-learning module).
- The Applicant is encouraged to use examples from his/her ministry to illustrate his/her competency.
- The Applicant must use the Narrative Statement I Template and retain the headings which list each Competency's alphanumeric label and description.
- If this is not the Applicant's first interview for certification, the Applicant must include an additional page addressing how the Applicant has grown in the Competencies that were recommended from the Presenter's Report Part II from each previous interview.
- Separate Narrative Statement I & II and the Integrative Theological Essay with a tab or colored page.

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## Tab 6: Narrative Statement II – Common Competencies

- Not to exceed ten (10) pages.
- Documents how the Applicant meets each of the Common Competencies (excluding PIC8 & PIC9 which will be assessed through materials and within the interview) required for certification.
- The Applicant is encouraged to use examples from his/her ministry to illustrate his/her competency.
- The Applicant must use the Narrative Statement II Template and retain the headings which list each Competency's alphanumeric label and description.
- If this is not the Applicant's first interview for certification, the Applicant must include an additional page addressing how the Applicant has grown in the Competencies that were recommended from the Presenter's Report Part II from each previous interview.
- Separate Narrative Statement I & II and the Integrative Theological Essay with a tab or colored page.

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## Tab 6: Integrative Theological Essay

- Not to exceed three (3) pages in length.
- Addresses the Applicant's familiarity with the documents and theologies of the competency, including ministerial examples demonstrating how the theologies have enhanced the Applicant's practice of spiritual care.
- Separate Narrative Statement I & II and the Integrative Theological Essay with a tab or colored page.

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## Narrative Statement Tips

- Start early - Don't think this is something that can be written in a day or two.
- Take time to become familiar with the Competencies. As you are reading through them, make notes about a ministerial encounter or a situation that seems to connect to the Competency.
- Then, at a later time, try to capture in words how your interaction/intervention/ involvement speaks to your knowledge, skill, and competence.

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## Narrative Tips, continued

- Vignettes (brief stories) are one way to convey to the interview team that you are competent.
- Do not define what the Competency means. This is your opportunity to demonstrate competence. This is your opportunity to present why you are a competent chaplain, why a person would want you to minister to them, why an employer would want to hire you, why co-workers would consider you to be a professional.

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## Narrative Tips, Continued

- Brevity in composition is an art and can be extremely difficult - that's another reason to start on this portion of your materials very early in the process.
- Each Competency must be addressed individually.

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## Narrative Tips, Continued

- You may find yourself thinking that a story you shared for a Competency you addressed earlier in the narrative could also be used for another Competency and this is quite possible/ probable.
  - You may use the same vignette, but remember to indicate how it speaks to your competence relative to the current Competency.
  - Your response to a Competency must not be a cross-reference to another Competency (i.e. See Competency IIP2).

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## Tab 7: Equivalency for CPE

- If applicable, insert the letter from the Certification Commission granting equivalency for one unit of CPE.
- If not applicable, include TAB 7 as an empty tab.
- If you need to apply for an equivalency for CPE, the process must be finalized before you can apply for certification with the NACC.
- Please review the CPE Equivalency section of the NACC website and contact Ramona Zeb with questions about the CPE Equivalency process.

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## Tab 8: Presenter's Reports

- If applicable, for those reapplying for certification, submit Presenter's Reports Part I and II from all past NACC certification interviews.
- If not applicable, include TAB 8 as an empty tab.

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## Tab 9: Certification Application Fee

- Certification Application Fee (\$475.00 in U.S. Currency).
- Two-thirds of the fee is non-refundable if the process is discontinued for any reason.
- If paying by check or money order, please clip the check or money order to the tab (or place in envelope in tab, etc.)
- Payment by credit card is available. Please call the National Office for this option.

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## Tab 10: Letter of recommendation (employer)

- Letter of recommendation from the person to whom the Applicant reports in one's 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.
- Letter must be a signed and dated original on official letterhead sent directly to the NACC National Office (tab to be included in binder for the NACC National Office, but kept empty).
- Letter must be current (valid for one year from the date of origin).
- NACC does not accept electronic letters of recommendation.

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## Tab 11: Letter of Recommendation (Pastor)

- For lay Applicants, a letter of recommendation from one's pastor or from a priest in active ministry is submitted by the priest directly to the NACC Office.
- Letter must be a signed and dated original on official letterhead (tab to be included in binder for NACC National Office, but kept empty).
- Letter must be current (valid for one year from the date of origin).
- NACC does not accept electronic letters of recommendation.

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### Tab 12: Certificate of Completion of E-Learning Module and Post-Test

- Use the instruction sheet “**Required eLearning Module and Post-Test for NACC Competency ITP4.1**” to complete this e-learning module and post-test.
- You must be a Full Member of the NACC, and use your login credentials to access both the module and post-test.
- The post-test is eight (8) questions in length.
- A score of 86 percent is required to pass the test. The post-test may be taken more than once to achieve the required score.

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### Tab 13: Undergraduate Transcript

- An official transcript of the basic academic degree (B.A. or B.S. Degree) from an institution accredited with the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- Transcripts are requested by the Applicant to be delivered directly from the institution to the NACC National Office.
- The Certification Commission requires transcript analysis at the Applicant’s expense for all degrees acquired outside the United States.
- It is the responsibility of the Applicant to check with the NACC National Office to make sure the necessary transcripts have arrived by the application deadline (tab to be included in binder for the NACC National Office, but kept empty).

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### Tab 14: Graduate Transcript

- An official transcript of the graduate-level theological degree (theology, divinity, religious studies, pastoral ministry, pastoral studies, or spirituality) from an institution accredited with the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- Transcripts are requested by the Applicant to be delivered directly from the institution to the NACC National Office.
- The Certification Commission requires transcript analysis at the Applicant’s expense for all degrees acquired outside the United States.
- It is the responsibility of the Applicant to check with the NACC National Office to make sure the necessary transcripts have arrived by the application deadline (tab to be included in binder for the NACC National Office, but kept empty).

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### Tab 15: Ethics Accountability Statement

Signing the Ethics Accountability Statement Means:

- 1) That no disciplinary or corrective action arising from a complaint of unethical and/or criminal conduct imposed on and no complaint for unethical and/or criminal conduct is pending in a civil, criminal, ecclesiastical, employment, or other professional organization’s forum
  - 2) That you have never resigned, been transferred or terminated, nor negotiated a settlement from a position for reasons related to unethical and/or criminal conduct.
- If you cannot sign the statement, you must follow the Ethics Accountability Statement Procedures (EP11-EP14)
  - Be sure to sign and date the top and bottom of the statement. Your signature should be original. Digital signatures are not acceptable.

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### Tab 16: Ecclesiastical Endorsement

- The NACC National Office requires and requests a current letter of ecclesiastical endorsement on the Applicant’s behalf after materials have been deemed sufficient to move forward with an interview.
- Current is defined as within one year of application for certification.
- The NACC will complete the endorsement request on the applicant’s behalf. Do not initiate the endorsement request on your own.
- This is formal approval for ministry by:
  - The Bishop of the diocese of the Applicant’s ministry if the Applicant is a lay person or;
  - The major superior if the Applicant is a member of a religious order or;
  - The Ordinary (understood as the Bishop of the diocese where the priest or deacon is incardinated) if the Applicant is a diocesan priest or deacon.

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### Ecclesiastical Endorsement, Continued

- If you are a layperson, your letter of recommendation from your priest will be used to help the NACC request the letter of ecclesiastical endorsement.
- While you are not required to do so, you are encouraged to schedule a meeting, to make a phone call or to write a letter to the bishop which may help you to build a relationship with your diocese of ministry.
- Please include this tab in the binder for the NACC National Office, but leave it empty.
- Note: Lay men and women ministering in the Archdiocese of New York, please contact the National Office for further instructions.

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## Returning Applicants

- If you previously interviewed and were not certified, you must follow these guidelines:
  - All materials from the most current Checklist must be submitted as part of your new certification application (please contact the National Office to confirm if any materials from previous interviews are still on file).
  - Presenter's Reports Part I and II from past certification interview(s) must be submitted.
  - Recommendations from the previous NACC certification interview(s) from Presenter's Report Part II are to be included and addressed in the Narrative Statement I & II (one additional page allowed for each previous interview and each Narrative Statement).
  - Payment of the current certification application fee is required.
  - If changes have been made to the process, your new application must be in compliance with the revised Certification Procedures.
  - Applicants can apply again after receiving their official certification denial letter from the Certification Commission for the following Application deadline.

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## Contact Person

- If you have any questions or concerns regarding the certification process, please contact the Administrative Specialist/Certification at the NACC National Office by email or phone at:

rzeb@nacc.org  
(414) 483-4898 ext. 304.

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