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RECERTIFICATION HANDBOOK

American Board of Certification for Gastroenterology Nurses
330 N. Wabash Avenue, Ste. 2000
Chicago, IL 60611
Phone: 855-252-2246
Fax: 312-673-6723
info@abcgn.org
www.abcgn.org

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Recertification Application Instructions

This Recertification Handbook has been published to help you through the recertification process.

You can make the recertification process easier for yourself by following these easy steps:

1. Read through the entire handbook to thoroughly understand each step of the process required.
2. Discard all previous handbooks, since the handbook is reviewed and updated annually.
3. Applications must be submitted electronically at http://www.abcgn.org/Recertification
4. Submit your application between January 1 and December 31 of the year you are due to recertify
5. Only include contact hours earned during the current recertification period. The certification period begins with the date certification is granted (exam date or date noted on last recertification certificate).
6. Use the information provided in this handbook to organize documentation of contact hours and to provide the appropriate documentation for all of the contact hours submitted.
7. You will be required to enter in your nursing license number and expiration date, you can use your state website or www.nursys.com to location that information.
8. Only submit 75 contact hours, the application system will not allow more than the required number of hours needed.

* Note, certificate and back-up documentation are required at initial submission. If a candidate is audited the provided documentation will be reviewed and approved for a candidates to pass recertification. Failure to provide documentation may result in loss of certification.

**All documentation uploaded in your recertification will be held in your digital wallet in the application platform.**
Eligibility Requirements for Recertification

To qualify for recertification, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- At the time of application, candidates must have been employed in a clinical, supervisory, administrative, teaching/education or research capacity in an institutional or private practice setting for a minimum of two years full-time, or its part-time equivalent of 4,000 hours, within the past five years.
- Full-time industry nurses whose focus is at least 40% clinical practice, education or research are eligible. Those whose principal focus is sales are not.
- Candidates must submit a current and unrestricted license as a Registered Nurse (RN) in the United States.

Recertification by Examination

To recertify by examination, candidates will take the current certification examination at the same times and in the same places as candidates for initial certification. When recertifying by exam, candidates must submit an application through the Certification Center and must meet all applicable deadlines and fees. For information regarding test sites and registration deadlines go online to [www.abcgnc.org](http://www.abcgnc.org), click the Certify section of the home page, and select the Certification Center button on the landing page. If you have further questions, contact ABCGN at info@abcgn.org or 855-252-2246.

Recertification by Contact Hours

To qualify for recertification by contact hours, a candidate must:

1. Meet the eligibility requirements listed above
2. Complete the online application and submit payment by December 31 of the year you are due to recertify. The application will close at 11:59 pm Eastern Standard Time.
3. Meet the contact hour requirements

Contact Hours Requirements:

- 75 contact hours
- At least 60 of which are GI-specific contact hours
- At least 30 of the 60 GI-specific hours must qualify as category 1: CE-approved nursing seminars and workshops.

One contact hour equals any of the following:

- 1 CNE (also referred to as CE)
- 0.1 CEU
- 1 CME
- 1 CERP
- 60 minutes of seminar/workshop time
- 50 minutes of seminar/workshop time from State Boards of Nursing maintaining that standard

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Ten contact hours equal the following:
1.0 CEU credit
1 quarter credit hour

Fifteen contact hours equal the following:
1 semester credit hour

Contact hours that are not approved as nursing contact hours (CNE/CE) can be used towards recertification but cannot be included in Category 1. Read the category descriptions carefully to determine where they belong.

Since contact hours are accepted in lieu of re-examination, approved contact hours must be in specific categories and must include specific content which mirror the content of the examination.

If you choose to submit contact hours from a variety of activities, remember, there are maximums in some categories.

Required Documentation
ABCGN reserves the right to request additional documentation to support an application at any time. You should keep complete records of your contact hours as you earn them. Records should include certificates, brochures, course descriptions, as well as all other documentation mentioned in each category.

Nothing will make completing the Recertification Application easier than complete, concise and careful record keeping. Backup documentation may be requested in the event your application is selected for audit. These records can help substantiate that portions of programs were GI specific and otherwise help you complete the Recertification Online Application.

You may start your online application at any time and keep track of your contact hours in the online application.

If Certification Expires...
Contact hours will NOT be accepted to regain certified status. The only way to be reinstated as a certified professional is to retake the examination. For this reason, candidates are urged to begin the recertification process early to allow themselves plenty of time to make deadlines and allow time for review.

Hardship Extension
Any candidate who is unable to fulfill the necessary requirements for recertification by the December 31st deadline in any given year due to circumstances of a serious nature may request a hardship extension. The request for extension must be received by ABCGN Headquarters no later than January 15 of the year following the candidate’s December 31 expiration date. The request must be accompanied with a $75 fee and proof that 50% of Category 1 GI specific contact hours (15 hours) have been earned. Requests should be mailed to ABCGN,
330 N. Wabash Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611. If approved, the candidate will be granted a 6-month extension to earn the remaining hours.

Not Certain You Have Enough Hours or the Right Hours?
For those candidates who are not certain that they have sufficient contact hours or that their hours are in the right categories or for those who have other questions, ABCGN offers a pre-review process. For a fee of $100, experienced members of the ABCGN Recertification Audit Committee will review your application packet (without documentation) and provide feedback.

The $100 pre-review fee is an additional fee and does not count toward your recertification fee.

***Recertification Pre-Review Applications may be submitted any time before October 31 of the year in which a candidate is due to recertify. This allows enough time for review and for the candidate to earn additional hours if necessary. **Note that the registration deadline for the fall exam is July 31, if you think you may need to retake the exam but choose to submit a pre-review application, it must be submitted before June 30.** For additional information, contact ABCGN headquarters at info@abcgn.org, or refer to the Recertification Pre-View Application.

Deadline for Receipt of Materials
Submit your application between January 1 and December 31 of the year your certification expires. Your certification will always expire on December 31 of the year you are due to recertify.

The application will close at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on December 31.

You will be notified of the results of the Recertification Audit Committee's review of your application within 6-8 weeks following submission. At the completion of your audit, you will receive an email and letter advising you of the results. Successful candidates will also receive their certificate.

All of this must be done very carefully because of its importance to candidates and to ABCGN. Therefore, it takes time. We appreciate your patience.

**Fees**
SGNA Member: $350  
Non-Member: $435
The entire payment is due in U.S. dollars upon submission of the completed application. Please note that failure to pay fees is grounds for revocation of certification. Refunds are not available to those who do not achieve recertification by contact hours. **Note:** fees are subject to change.
Recertification Audits
10% of applications are randomly selected for audit. Per ABSNC rules, as an accredited certifying board, ABCGN is required to adhere to this standards.

Candidates will be notified by email within two weeks following the submission of their application if they are selected for audit.

Audited candidates will be assigned a committee reviewer to look at all documentation included in the application. The reviewer may request additional documentation that may be found insufficient, such as brochures, course descriptions, etc. for any contact hours listed.

Insufficient Contact Hours
If it is determined that insufficient contact hours were submitted the candidates will be notified. If it is prior to December 31, the candidate will be allowed to earn additional contact hours to meet all requirements. If it is after December 31, candidates that do not meet the contact hour requirements will be denied recertification. If CGRN status is to be regained, the exam must be retaken.

You will be notified of the results of the Recertification Audit Committee’s review of your application within 6-8 weeks of submitting your certificates and documentation.

Review and Appeal
A review process and an appeal procedure are available for candidates whose applications for recertification by contact hours have been denied or for those whose certifications have been revoked. Please contact ABCGN headquarters for more information regarding the process and polices for review and appeals.

Revocation of Certification
ABCGN has the right to revoke any certificate which it has issued in the event that the recipient engages in past or current conduct found to be not in compliance with the program’s procedures or professional standards.

Revocation of certification does not constitute evidence that the practitioner acted wrongly or became incompetent. Gastroenterology certification may be revoked for any of the following reasons:
1. Falsification of the certification or recertification application.
2. Falsification of any information requested by ABCGN.
3. Failure to maintain eligibility requirements.
4. Failure to pay fees.
5. Misrepresentation of SGNA status.
7. Cheating on the examination.
Non-Discrimination
ABCGN does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, political beliefs disability or national origin.

Confidentiality Policy
ABCGN respects the privacy of all candidates. All materials submitted with applications and the results of any review of application packets will be held in confidence except as required by law.

ABCGN, however, has an obligation to the public. Therefore, it responds to questions from employers, payers and others regarding whether or not an individual is certified. Additionally since publishing and releasing the names of certified nurses and/or successful candidates recognizes those individuals and encourages certification, ABCGN reserves the right, without limitation, to release the names of certified individuals or successful candidates. Application for certification through this program constitutes acknowledgment and acceptance of ABCGN’s policy with regard to publication and release of names.

Assessment Criteria to Identify GI Specific Continuing Education Units

Gastroenterology is a medical specialty concerned with the study of digestive diseases. A GI-specific contact hour should provide a knowledge or skill that is essential to providing care to a patient with a gastrointestinal disease or problem. The information imparted should enable the Gastroenterology nurse to anticipate the care and interventions needed to treat the patient; provide the necessary care and interventions, and supply follow-up care and teaching.

- **GI-specific courses** identify the knowledge that the certified gastroenterology nurse is required to know to stay current in the field of gastroenterology.

- **Non-GI specific courses** may relate to gastroenterology, but do not address the science of nursing or medicine as it relates to the field of gastroenterology and digestive disease.

**GI-specific criteria identifies:**

GI Specific Content:
- Anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology of the GI tract.
- Diagnostic, therapeutic and interventional gastroenterology / hepatology procedures.
- Diagnostic tests related to gastroenterology / hepatology.
• *Example:* Pathology specimen collection specific to endoscopy procedures or to GI diagnosis.

• Surgical procedures related to gastroenterology.
  – *Examples:* Bariatric Surgery, Gastric Bypass, Gastrectomy, Colorectal surgery, Colostomy, Bowel resection, Esophageal.

• Post-operative complications of surgical procedures related to gastroenterology.
  – *Examples:* Ulcers, strictures, issues with absorption / malabsorption, changes in anatomy, resections, anastomosis.

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• Disease processes that effect or are affected by the GI system.

• Pharmacology pertaining to digestive diseases.

• Sedation and monitoring, including capnography.

• Patient teaching related to gastroenterology / hepatology.

• Eating disorders and their effects.

• Nutritional and Enteral Therapy pertaining to digestive diseases.
  – *Examples:* Low residue, high fiber, gluten free diets

• Holistic care related to the GI patient.
  – *Examples* include: Acupuncture, Massage Therapy

• Electrosurgery usage and safety.

• Laser training and safety related to GI / Endoscopy.

• GI related radiological procedures.
  – *Example:* ERCP, TIPS

• Radiology use and safety in the GI Lab.

• Infection prevention as it relates to gastroenterology / hepatology.

• Cleaning, Disinfection and Reprocessing of equipment and supplies.

• Environmental safety as it relates to gastroenterology / hepatology.

• Research and technology in gastroenterology / hepatology.

• Competencies as they relate to the GI Nurse / Staff.

• Quality / Performance Improvement / Benchmarking activities related to the GI Lab.
  – *Examples:* Scope culturing, scope reconciliation.
  – *Examples:* Quality indicators for GI procedures, Cecal intubation rates, Colonoscopy prep quality, Adenoma detection rate (ADR)

• Legal issues related to the GI setting.

• Universal Precautions
  – *Examples:* PPE use during procedures and reprocessing, caring for patients w/infectious disease, handling body fluids and tissue samples.
• Regulatory / Accreditation
  • CMS, CDC, OSHA, Joint Commission, AAAHC.
    – Example: Reducing risks of infection associated with medical equipment in the GI setting (Devices and Supplies).

• Standards of Practice
  • As they relate to gastroenterology / hepatology.

Content important to GI practice but applicable to many different nursing practices or business is not GI specific
  • IV Therapy.
  • QI/QA unless directly specifically to GI.
    • Specific = ADR
    • Non-specific = staff turnover time, on time starts
  • Bronchoscopy.
  • Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation.
  • Basic or Advanced Life Support.
  • HR
    • Examples: Dealing with difficult people, humor in the GI Lab.
  • Obesity as a general topic.
    • Trendy diets, i.e. Adkins or South Beach
  • Complications of obesity, i.e. diabetes, hypertension.
  • Management
    • Patient and staff satisfaction, hiring and firing.

Such contact hours may be included among the 15 non-GI contact hours permitted. You may use the same course more than once on your application, provided you took the two offerings at least one year apart.

**ABCGN Content Categories**

**Category 1**
Category 1 covers attending nursing CE-approved seminars or workshops. You must have a minimum of 30 hours in Category 1.

In order to be counted in category 1, contact hours MUST be approved by one of the following: √ The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC); √ An agency, organization, or educational institution accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) or whose continuing educational hours are accepted by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC); √ A state Board of Nursing (all states included); or √ A state nurses’ association.

If you attended a multi-session conference, such as the SGNA May meeting, it is
not necessary to list individual sessions. Simply list the name of the conference, the total number of contact hours for the conference and the number of GI and non-GI hours in the columns provided.

Interactive, live webinars, with appropriate approvers/providers, may be submitted under Category 1.

Rebroadcasts, tapes or online CE’s should be included in Category 5.

Contact hours approved as CME, CEU, or by other accredited bodies not specific to nursing may be included in Category 7.

The following DO NOT meet the criteria for recertification and are, therefore, not acceptable:

1. Handwritten accreditation statements or provider numbers.
2. Certificates of attendance without an appropriate accreditation statement and/or acceptable provider or otherwise not including the required information.
3. Contact hours acquired before the beginning of the certification period or after the deadline for submission for recertification by contact hours.

**Category 2**
Category 2 covers providing presentations at seminars and workshops approved by an accredited provider or approver. Such seminars or workshops need not be approved by a nursing organization, as in Category 1, but may include any allied health provider, any academic institution or other accredited provider. You may submit a maximum of 36 contact hours in this category.

You will receive 3 contact hours for each hour of presentation. If audited, as documentation, please submit a contact hour certificate and a copy of the program which must include title, date, length of program and approver. Highlight the important information on the copy of the program to aid the Recertification Audit Committee in evaluating your submission. Each time you repeat the same presentation (up to two repeats), you may earn an additional contact hour.

**Category 3**
Contact hours in Category 3 are awarded for authoring articles in professional journals or chapters in textbooks for health care professionals. All authors listed will earn credit. Ten contact hours are awarded for each article or chapter. You may submit a maximum of 40 contact hours in this category.

**Category 4**
Category 4 covers academic course work offered by an accredited educational institution. The course must be health care-related but need not specifically
address nursing. Science courses, social sciences courses, statistics and similar topics are acceptable while general education courses such as history, art, music or English are not. You must earn a grade of "C" or better to count course work. If audited, you will need to submit a copy of your transcript as documentation.

One semester credit counts as 15 contact hours while one quarter credit counts as 10 contact hours. You may submit a maximum of 20 contact hours in Category 4.

**Category 5**
Category 5 includes independent home-study courses offered by an accredited contact hour provider. Courses must be specific to nursing practice or nursing research. To be acceptable, contact hours in Category 5 MUST be approved by one of the following:

- The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)
- An agency, organization, or educational institution accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) or whose continuing educational hours are accepted by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC);
- A state Board of Nursing (all states included);
- A state nurses' association

You may submit a maximum of 45 contact hours in this category.

**Category 6**
Contact hours in Category 6 are awarded for participation in the ABCGN Item Writers Workshop. These contact hours are GI-specific. Contact hours awarded may vary. See certificate. You may submit a maximum of 15 contact hours in this category.

**Category 7**
Category 7 covers allied health education seminars, workshops and home study courses. Such workshops and courses include Continuing Medical Education (CME) offerings approved by the American Medical Association (or one of its affiliates or approved providers) or by the American Osteopathic Association (or one of its affiliates or approved providers) or courses approved by accredited pharmacy, hospital administration or similar providers. These contact hours may not substitute for nursing contact hours described in Category 1 because they have a different focus. For example, CME workshops ordinarily focus on anatomy and pathology only, while nursing workshops include not only physiological, but psychological and social implications for patients and their families. CME, pharmacy and hospital administration seminars and workshops, while worthwhile, do not replace nursing contact hours for the purpose of recertifying in a specialty nursing field.
Candidates may submit a maximum of 20 contact hours in allied health workshops, whether they are GI-specific or non-GI specific.

**Category 8**
Nursing research projects may be included in Category 8. A candidate may submit up to 20 contact hours in Category 8, with up to 20 contact hours awarded per research project. If audited, the candidate must submit either a published manuscript or proof the manuscript has been accepted for publication or validation by a panel of experts as documentation of research work. This research project may only be submitted once for contact hours and may not be used in a second recertification. The work must be an independently funded project designed to increase the nursing knowledge base or improve patient care and/or safety. If the project is specific to GI, it can be included in the 80 GI-specific hours.

**Category 9**
Poster presentation may be included in Category 9. A candidate may submit a maximum 6 contact hours in this category as either GI Specific or Non-GI Specific. An Education Poster would qualify for 2 contact hours and a Research Poster would qualify for 3 contact hours. Posters are required to have an Educational/Teaching or Educational/Research component to them. A photo copy of the poster must be submitted along with the Verification Form for Poster Presentations. Credit will be allowed only for the initial poster presentation during the 5-year recertification period. All authors of the poster qualify for contact hours.

**Category 10**
Precepting activities may be included in Category 10. Five (5) contact hours will be awarded to the CGRN for 80 hours of precepting one RN/LPN/GI tech within a GI work setting. A GI work setting is defined as working in a gastroenterologist or hepatologist office or GI Unit in a hospital, ambulatory or surgery/endoscopy center. The maximum amount awarded is 5 GI Specific contact hours in a 5-year period. No contact hours will be awarded for Non-GI Specific work settings. Contact hours cannot be split for partial orientation.

**Category 11**
Volunteer involvement in these professional organizations or publications by ABCGN, SGNA or SIGNEA may be included in Category 11. Three (3) contact hours per year will be awarded for involvement in these GI focused professional organizations as an officer, committee/task force member at the regional or national level or as an appointed publication editor/reviewer. Minimum GI-specific hours granted will be 3, maximum 12. Non-GI specific contact hours will not be awarded. (Item Review Committee and Item Writing Panel use Category 12.)
**Category 12**
Contact hours in Category 12 are awarded for participation in the ABCGN Item Review Committee and/or Item Writers Panel. Up to 12 GI-specific hours will be accepted per year with a maximum of 36.

**Category 13**
Involvement in other GI-related organizations or publications may be included in Category 13. Three (3) contact hours per year will be awarded for involvement in other GI focused professional organizations as an officer, committee/task force member at the regional or national level or as an appointed publication editor/reviewer. (Minimum: None - Maximum: 9)

Please note: Candidates must submit a total of 75 contact hours. Of those, 60 must be GI-specific contact hours, at least 30 of which must be in approved nursing seminars or workshops. Any application not including 60 GI specific contact hours, 30 of which are in approved nursing seminars, will be rejected.

Reminder: Your application must be submitted no later than December 31, of the year you are due to recertify!

**Rationale for Recertification Requirements**
Recertification requires that the candidate update their knowledge and skills that reflects continuing competence. Recertifying by contact hours requires that nurses actively practice gastroenterology nursing and obtain 75 contact hours of continuing education. Of these 75 hours, 60 must be specifically related to gastroenterology nursing. The rationale for requiring this significant amount of gastroenterology-specific hours is because of the advances in technology in this field. One half of the GI-specific hours must be earned at a live course, so there is the opportunity for interaction. ABCGN feels it is vitally important for candidates to have the opportunity to interact with instructors. There are an additional 12 categories which encourage research, authoring articles, academic course work, participation in item writing and reviewing, precepting, poster presentations and leadership involvement. The rationale for the additional categories is to provide professional growth in all domains of the practice.