

NCCAOM Adopts New Recertification Requirements

Editorial Staff

The National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine's (NCCAOM) Board of Commissioners has voted to revise existing recertification requirements. The new requirements, adopted at a board meeting in September 2004, cover areas such as continuing education, research and clinical supervision, and - with one exception - will be implemented Jan. 1, 2006.

In adopting the new policies, the Board of Commissioners considered input from a blue ribbon panel on recertification and the NCCAOM's Continuing Education Task Force, as well as feedback solicited from the professional community over a period of four years, including NCCAOM diplomates and staff. The commission's Subcommittee on Recertification then presented a proposal to the board at its September meeting. The board agreed to adopt the proposals unanimously.

As in the past, NCCAOM diplomates are required to demonstrate 60 Professional Development Activity (PDA) points over each four-year certification cycle; the fee to recertify each certification is \$200. The new requirements, however, impose limits on the number of points allowed in each category, and mandate a prescribed number of hours in continuing education.

Specific NCCAOM Recertification Requirements

A recertification policy which went into effect Dec. 31, 2004 requires diplomates to provide documentation to verify all PDA points submitted for recertification. Diplomates do not need to send original documents to the certification commission; copies are acceptable. Appropriate documentation includes transcripts, certificates of completion, letters on letterhead, etc. Diplomates are advised to consult the NCCAOM's *Recertification Handbook* for examples of appropriate documentation. (*Editor's note: A copy of the *Recertification Handbook* can be accessed online at www.nccaom.org.*)

Beginning Jan. 1, 2006, the following new recertification policies will be implemented:

- Diplomates must demonstrate a minimum of 60 PDA points attained during the four years prior to recertifying. Diplomates may earn all 60 PDAs from continuing education.
- Continuing education: A minimum of 30 PDA points must be earned from continuing education, 15 of which must be in any of the five branches of Oriental medicine, and four of which must be in ethics and/or safety. Courses in CPR and first aid will satisfy the safety requirement, as will a four-hour ethics course, or a combination of the two.
- Teaching/lecturing: A maximum of 20 PDA points may be awarded for teaching and lecturing.
- *Tai chi /qigong*: A maximum of 10 PDA points may be awarded for *tai chi* and *qigong* courses.
- Language: A maximum of 10 PDA points may be awarded for the study of a second language relevant to a practitioner's practice.
- Supervised clinical experience or clinical supervision: A maximum of 10 PDA points may be

awarded for completing a supervised clinical experience or clinical supervision. Acceptable documentation for this procedure includes a letter from the institution documenting the internship, or a letter from the senior practitioner, who must be an active NCCAOM diplomate for a minimum of five years prior to undertaking supervision.

- Research: A maximum of 20 PDA points may be awarded for documented research; however, the diplomate must be the primary researcher, and the research must be externally funded (not self-funded).
- Publications: A maximum of 30 PDA points may be awarded for publications. Diplomates will be awarded 30 PDA points for a book, 15 PDA points for primary authorship in a peer-reviewed journal, and 10 points per non-peer-reviewed article.

New NCCAOM Recertification Requirements (Effective Jan. 1, 2006)			
Activity	Minimum Points	Maximum Points	Documentation Required
Continuing Education	30 points minimum; 15 points must be in any of the five branches of Oriental medicine	No max Diplomates may earn one point for each clock hour of continuing education	Dates, location of CE courses, number of hours, course title/content, instructor's name, and name of approving organization or governmental agency, if any. Certificates of completion, transcripts, or letter on letterhead.
Ethics and/or Safety	4 points	No max Diplomates may earn one point for each clock hour of continuing education	Dates, location of CE courses, number of hours, course title/content, instructor's name, and name of approving organization or governmental agency, if any. Certificates of completion, transcripts, or letter on letterhead.
Teaching/Lecturing	N/A	20 points max Diplomates may earn one point for each hour of instruction.	Dates and locations of courses, course titles and hours that are shown by brochures, flyers, and an enrollment record.
<i>Tai Chi/Qigong</i>	N/A	10 points max Diplomates may earn one point for each hour of <i>tai chi/gigong</i> courses.	Dates, location of courses, number of hours, course title/content, instructor's name, and name of approving organization or governmental agency, if any. Certificates of completion, transcripts, or letter on letterhead.

Language Study	N/A	10 points max Diplomates may earn one point per clock hour of instruction. The language study must be relevant to the practitioner's practice.	Dates, location of courses, number of hours, course title/content, instructor's name, and name of approving organization or governmental agency, if any. Certificates of completion, transcripts, or letter on letterhead.
Supervised Clinical Experience of Clinical Supervision	N/A	10 points max Diplomates may earn one point for each clock hour of supervision and one and one-half points for each clock hour of supervised clinical experience.	Letter on letterhead from the institution documenting the internship or letter from the senior practitioner, who must be an NCCAOM certified practitioner for a minimum of five years.
Research	N/A	20 points max Diplomates may earn one point for every two hours of documented research.	Dates, location, and subject/title of research documented in the form of a notarized affidavit from a school, hospital, or other official agency detailing the activity.
Publications	N/A	30 points Diplomates may earn 30 points for a book, 15 points for primary authorship in a peer-reviewed journal, and 10 points per non-peer-reviewed journal.	Dates, titles and publishers, documented by a photocopy of the title page.

Benefits of Maintaining Diplomate Status

Earning a credential (or multiple credentials) from NCCAOM represents a significant professional achievement and makes an important statement about one's professional competency. NCCAOM certification is recognized by regulatory agencies, third-party payers, the profession, and the public. Maintaining certification indicates to those parties a practitioner's commitment to continued professional development in order to maintain the highest possible standard of care for the benefit of his or her patients and clients. It also demonstrates a practitioner's commitment to adhere to the NCCAOM Code of Ethics and to promote the NCCAOM's mission of protecting the public through the safe practice of acupuncture and Oriental medicine. The NCCAOM strongly encourages its diplomates to maintain their certification through the recertification process. The majority of NCCAOM

diplomates also recertify because of the many benefits of certification, and because they know NCCAOM is working on their behalf.

The NCCAOM has undertaken a marketing campaign to educate the public about the benefits of seeing an NCCAOM certified provider. In the past year, the NCCAOM has run public service announcements in *USA Today* and *The Washington Post* encouraging consumers to seek certified providers by using the "Find a Practitioner" database of providers on its Web site. NCCAOM is developing service marks that diplomates will be able to use to market their credential(s) to the public. Additionally, NCCAOM will be providing new diplomates with sample press packets to promote their certification within their communities. In the near future brochures will be available for NCCAOM diplomates to distribute to the public about the benefits of seeing an NCCAOM certified provider.

Additional benefits of maintaining NCCAOM certification include:

- the right to use the designation "NCCAOM Diplomate";
- a listing on the NCCAOM Web site for consumer and professional referrals;
- the right to run for election to the NCCAOM Board of Commissioners as a professional member;
- the right to vote in elections for the Board of Commissioners and thus have a voice in setting certification and recertification policies and promoting the value of NCCAOM credentials;
- complimentary verification of status to insurance companies that require NCCAOM certification as a criterion for reimbursement;
- discounted fees for release of NCCAOM test results and certification status to state licensure boards;
- a complimentary subscription to NCCAOM's newsletter, *The Diplomate*; and
- eligibility to participate in national board examination development activities.

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