

CRN-BC™ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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General

1. How do I begin to obtain a certification as a clinical research nurse (CRN)?

The *Clinical Research Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (2024) defines Clinical Research Nursing as “The specialized practice of professional nursing focused on maintaining equilibrium between care of the research participant and fidelity to the research protocol while ensuring ethical rigor. This specialty practice incorporates human subject protection; care coordination and continuity; contribution to clinical science; clinical practice; and study management throughout a variety of professional roles, practice settings, and clinical specialties.”

This definition, along with the eligibility and application requirements outlined in the [candidate handbook](#) will help you determine if you are eligible for Clinical Research Nurse Certification by Portfolio.

General requirements include:

- Having a current, unencumbered RN license or country equivalent
- Working in clinical research for at least 4,000 practice hours over the 3 years preceding submission of the application
- Meeting the minimum point requirements for CE and PA points (CE + PA points ≥ 100 points)

The certification application also includes other requirements such as completing a resume and exemplar. The handbook reviews in detail all application requirements.

2. Is certification for nurses in the United States (U. S.) only?

No. CRN certification is available for those clinical research registered nurses working outside of the U. S.

3. Do I need to have a U.S. Registered Nursing (RN) license to apply for this certification?

No, you do not need to be licensed in the U. S. to apply for CRN certification. You must have a current, unencumbered country equivalent license.

4. Are RNs working in clinical research but not having direct contact with research participants eligible to apply for CRN certification?

Clinical research nurses directly or indirectly engage with research participants in the research process in various roles including:

- Direct care provider
- Clinical research nurse study coordinator

- Advanced clinician
- Administrator
- Educator
- Regulatory Specialist
- Nurse scientist
- Advocate

As long as the RN meets the certification requirements as defined in the [candidate handbook](#) and briefly described in FAQ #1 above they would be able to apply for certification in an indirect clinical research role.

5. Are clinical trials infusion nurses (i.e., those who perform infusion and other protocol-specific activities at the bedside) eligible for this certification?

Yes, if the individual infusion nurse meets the certification requirements as defined in the [candidate handbook](#) and briefly described in FAQ #1 above.

6. How do I name files that I am submitting to support activity participation?

The naming conventions for the components of the application that need to be uploaded (e.g., exemplars, preceptor form, IACRN committee verification document) can be found on the [application checklist](#).

7. Is there a time zone associated with the deadline for submitting the certification application?

The deadline is midnight in your time zone.

8. Is this certification a certificate course in clinical research?

No. This is a professional nursing certification via portfolio. The portfolio consists of confirmation of nursing licensure, practice hours in clinical research nursing, resume, documentation of professional development activities, and an exemplar. Detailed information outlining eligibility and application requirements can be found in the [candidate handbook](#).

9. Is there a CRN certification for advanced practice nurses?

There is one certification for clinical research nurses regardless of their role as outlined in FAQ #4.

10. Is this certification identified as a Magnet Recognized certification?

Not at this time. The CRNCC is in the process of obtaining accreditation through the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC). When accreditation

is achieved for the certification, those CRNs who have previously certified as CRN-BC will be included in the new designation.

11. How many professional development points are required?

There is a total of 100 professional development points required for initial certification. These points are a combination of continuing education (CE) activities and professional activities. A minimum of 36 CE points and maximum of 50 CE points are required. One contact hour is equivalent to one CE point. The remaining points are determined through other professional activities. See the [candidate handbook](#) for more information.

Continuing Education (CE) Record

12. Does the National Institute of Health (NIH) course *Introduction to the Principles and Practice of Clinical Research (IPPCR)* certification course qualify for CEs for the CRN certification?

No. As per the NIH IPPCR course [website](#), it states “There is no academic credit or continuing medical education (CME) credit offered for this course.” Additionally, no nursing professional development credit is given for this activity.

13. Can I use CE activities awarded by another professional nursing organization or another professional organization?

Yes, if the activity meets the requirements outlined in section 3.2.1 of the [candidate handbook](#). Specifically, the contact hours must be from an accredited or approved provider or an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center Corporation (ANCC) or recognized by the ANCC (e.g. Joint Accreditation Interprofessional Continuing Education). The certificate must include your name, the number of contact hours and the name of the accredited approved provider. For initial certification, all CE activities MUST be in clinical research. No topics other than clinical research will be accepted.

14. How do I know if the continuing education activity (e.g., CNE or CME) I have earned is from an approved provider?

The CE certificate will contain the language that supports the activity is from an accredited approved provider, specifically the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation (ANCC) or the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) and any other CE provider that has joint collaboration with ANCC and AACCME (e.g., Joint Accreditation for Interprofessional Continuing Education). See Appendix A of the [candidate handbook](#) for examples.

Professional Activities (PA) Record

15. Can I include all investigator meetings and site initiation visits I have attended during the appropriate time period? Can I list all trials I have been listed on the FDA Form 1572?

If attending Site Investigation Meetings and being listed on the 1572 is a requirement of your position, these activities do not count as Professional Activities for the purposes of CRN Certification. Professional Activities, are typically activities that are above and beyond the requirements of a position or employment. They are activities that the CRN has participated in as a means of furthering their CRN practice and moving the CRN from novice to expert. Section 3.2.2 of the candidate handbook outlines the requirements for documenting professional activities, it further defines professional activities as “those in which the applicant participates (i.e., initiates or develops).”

16. Can a volunteer faculty member position be considered as a professional development activity under the "Academic Education" category?

Section 3.2.2.5, Academic Education, of the [candidate handbook](#) refers to *personal study*. Your position as “volunteer member of faculty” itself does not meet the requirements for Academic Education, but the professional activities within this role would apply. For example, if you are precepting or mentoring nurses or other clinical research professionals within the context of clinical research, that would be applicable to 3.2.2.4 Advanced Professional Activities.

17. In a research dedicated institution/unit, would a hospital-based committee such as infection control, medical records review committee, or Electronic medical record committee count towards Category 4 activity e, *Committee member or chair for hospital-based or unit-based research council.*

Per category 4 item e, the committees would need to be research councils at either the institution or unit level. General hospital committee memberships would not be included.

18. Can you explain more how you differentiate between mentorship and preceptorship? Is it acceptable to claim 10 points in each of these categories?

As per Section 3.2.2.4 I and j of the [candidate handbook](#), mentorship is defined in the context of mentoring new investigators as it related to protocol development and implementation and preceptorship is related to nursing students (e.g., practicum) or other research professions (e.g., new CRN, non-nurse study coordinator). They are unique categories; therefore, you can claim a maximum of 10 in each category.

19. Is a manuscript that has been submitted or accepted for publication the same as publication?

No. A manuscript that has only been submitted and one that has then been accepted is not considered a publication for professional development points. Consider submitting this work under Category 3 Research and Scholarly projects, not Category 2 Scholarly writing.

20. Can I claim 5 PA points for my initial portfolio submission?

These points are not applicable to initial certification. The "Professional Activity Record" is used for both initial certification and recertification. The points for initial portfolio submission would only apply for your first certification renewal submission. After a candidate earns CRN Certification by Portfolio, certification renewal is required every five years to retain the designation. Certification renewal information is located in sections 4 and 5 of the [candidate handbook](#) and more specifically in section 5.3.3.4 for one-time credit for completing certification by portfolio.

21. Can I claim PA points for being an active member of a planning committee for a research related conference or symposium?

Certification points are not offered for this activity due to the variability of involvement. However, if you are on the IACRN conference planning committee, that does meet the criteria for PA points (see section 3.2.2.4 g). You may also qualify if PA activities in section 3.2.2.4 c, d, or f are applicable.

22. Can I claim points for moderating a webinar (e.g., providing opening remarks, introducing the speaker and moderating the Q&A).

Certification points are not offered for this activity.

Exemplar

23. How many exemplars are required? Is it one or four?

There is **one** exemplar that includes the four topics; Professional Growth and Development, Professional Practice, Team Focus and Interprofessional Collaboration, and Quality and Safety. Each of the 4 topics serves as a heading and the content in that section of the exemplar shows how the experience you are writing about exemplifies you as an expert CRN. You can choose to use the same or different experiences for each topic you are writing about.

24. What is the total word count for the exemplar?

The total word count for the exemplar is a minimum of 1000 words and a maximum of 1500 words. The four topics serve as headings for the exemplar and are included in the total word count. Please see the [candidate handbook](#), section 3.4 for information on the exemplar and section 7.5 (Appendix E) for the exemplar scoring rubric.

25. Do you have a template that you wish to see the exemplar on or is this a word document submission from the applicant without a formal template?

There is no template for the exemplar but there are some guidelines to be followed. You should include the four topic headings to begin each of the topics you will be writing about. The TOTAL word count for all 4 topics combined is a minimum of 1,000 words and not to exceed 1,500 words including topic headers. The exemplar should be typewritten and double-spaced, with applicant's name as a header in the upper left corner so it can be redacted for blinded review. Please see detailed information/instructions in section 3.4 of the [candidate handbook](#).

26. Does CRNCC provide any examples for an exemplar?

CRNCC does not provide examples of exemplars. In addition to sections 3.4 and 7.6 in the [candidate handbook](#), you can find instructions for writing the exemplar in a PowerPoint presentation entitled [Exemplar Writing Tips for CRN-BC Applicants](#).

27. What is the exemplar review process?

The exemplar is initial reviewed by the CRNCC administrator for word count and removal of names that would not allow the review to be blinded. Then the exemplar reviewers receive and review the blinded exemplar document and use the scoring rubric found in the [candidate handbook](#) (Appendix E) for the scoring of the exemplar. There is a minimum of 3 reviewers per exemplar.

28. Can I get more information and details for my exemplar score?

Exemplars undergo blinded review from multiple CRN experts whose scores are then compiled for the final score. Therefore, we are unable to provide specific feedback. The Candidate Handbook, Section 3.4 and Appendix E, outlines requirements and the scoring Rubric. In addition, please be aware that because of the blinded review process, exemplars are reviewed without knowledge of the applicant's resume, CE or PA activities.