



*CMSRN
Recertification
Guide*

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MEDICAL-SURGICAL NURSING Recertification and Exam Exemption Guide

Congratulations on your commitment to certification in medical-surgical nursing. This guide will assist you in either renewing your Certified Medical-Surgical Registered Nurse (CMSRN®) certification through our recertification process or becoming a CMSRN through our exam exemption process.

CMSRN TRACKER

The CMSRN Tracker offers you the online convenience of taking charge of your recertification plan. When you choose to recertify by continuing education, the Tracker is your online resource for planning, tracking, and applying for recertification.

Use the Tracker to enter and track contact hours, store your employment information, review the verification status of self-reported contact hours, and apply for CMSRN recertification.

The CMSRN Tracker is a simple tool that shows your certification information, how close you are to recertifying, and the contact hours counting toward your recertification. You can also print your certification wallet card right from your Tracker.

RECERTIFICATION

The CMSRN credential is valid for a period of 5 years. Recertification is required to maintain the CMSRN credential through the Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board (MSNCB®).

The recertification options are:

RECERTIFY BY CONTINUING EDUCATION

To recertify by continuing education, first you must meet specific eligibility requirements (see eligibility criteria on page 2), comply with any application deadlines, and pay the appropriate recertification fee. Self-report contact hours, update employer information, and apply online through your CMSRN Tracker at msncb.org/track-progress.

RECERTIFY BY EXAM

To recertify by examination, you must meet the exam eligibility criteria, complete the CMSRN Exam Application, and pay the appropriate application fee.

RECERTIFY BY EXAM EXEMPTION

Recertification by exam exemption is offered to those registered nurses who are already certified in *medical-surgical nursing* by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

An exam exemption application must be submitted thirty (30) days prior to the current certification expiration date, or up to one (1) year after the expiration date with a late fee*.

You must meet the same eligibility criteria as recertifying CMSRNs. Exam Exemption candidates must complete and submit a paper application by mail. Email msncb@msncb.org to request an application.

*If your ANCC certification has expired, you are required to pay a late fee in addition to the application fee to apply for the CMSRN credential. Contact hours earned after your expiration date may be used one time only.

Your application deadline date is 30 days prior to your certification expiration date.

RECERTIFICATION ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Hold a current certification in medical-surgical nursing through MSNCB or the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

AND

2. Hold a current, full, and unrestricted license as a registered nurse (RN) in the United States or its territories; OR Hold a current, full, and unrestricted license as a first-level nurse in the country in which one's nursing education was completed, and meet the eligibility for licensure as a registered nurse (RN) in the United States in accordance with the requirements of the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS).

AND

3. Have accrued a minimum of 1,000 hours of nursing practice over the last five years in a medical-surgical setting. Practice may include clinical, management, or education.

RN students in a nursing baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degree program can waive the employment requirement by submitting documentation signed by a school official verifying full-time status and matriculation along with the application. Academic courses must be biopsychosocial content and must be offered by an accredited educational institution.

AND

4. Have earned 90 approved contact hours (CH) over the five-year period. At least 68 of these approved contact hours must be medical-surgical related. The remainder of the contact hours may be professional development or other nursing related subjects.

CNE education programs must be presented by an individual, state, or national organization accredited as a provider of continuing nursing education.

For initial recertification, contact hours earned as of January 1 of the first year of initial certification are acceptable. For all following certifications, contact hours within the current certification period may be submitted. Contact hour entries may be used in one recertification period only.

MSNCB shall not discriminate against any certification candidate on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. MSNCB shall not publish materials with discriminatory content, graphics or language that may be offensive to population subgroups.

INACTIVE OR RETIRED STATUS

(Not applicable to exam exempt applicants.)

Inactive Status or Retired Status are alternatives for current CMSRNs. To apply for Inactive or Retired Status, the Recertification Application minus documentation forms must be submitted along with a detailed letter of explanation for requesting the status by mail **no later than 90 days prior to certification expiration**. If granted, the Inactive or Retired Status begins the day after CMSRN certification expires.

Email msncb@msncb.org to request an application.

Inactive Status:

CMSRNs unable to meet the continuing educational or practice requirements may apply for Inactive CMSRN Status. Inactive status is for one 3-year period only and is a one-time career option. There are no exceptions or extensions to this time frame.

Inactive Status lasts for three years during which the certificant may not use the CMSRN credential. A nurse who uses CMSRN during Inactive Status will have the certification revoked. Nurses on Inactive Status will receive reminders in the last year of Inactive Status and must meet current recertification requirements.

Retired Status:

CMSRNs who have retired within the current certification period but wish to stay connected with other CMSRNs may apply for Retired Status.

CMSRN Retired designation is renewable every five years. The retired nurse may use "CMSRN Retired" on a resume or below their name and credential on a business card, but may NOT be used after your signature (e.g. patient chart, name badge). If a CMSRN Retired nurse re-enters the nursing workforce within the first year of the status, the nurse may regain the CMSRN credential via continuing education. If the CMSRN-Retired nurse re-enters the nursing workforce after the first year of the status, the nurse must regain CMSRN by examination.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

When your 90 contact hours have been entered and verified, you've entered the required employment information, and you are within the application time frame, the online application and payment screen can be accessed from your Tracker at msncb.org/track-progress.

Recertification applications will be accepted online only via your CMSRN Tracker by selecting "recertify now."

Recertification Application Deadlines

You are eligible for CMSRN recertification starting one year prior to and up to one year after your current certification expiration date.

If your certification expires, you have a one year grace period in which to recertify (with a late fee). The CMSRN credential cannot be used with an expired certification.

Your application deadline date is 30 days prior to your certification expiration date.

Allow up to 10 business days for self-reported contact hours to be reviewed and verified. After all required CHs are verified, submit your application no later than 30 days prior to your certification expiration date to avoid a late fee.

RECERTIFICATION FEES

Prices are subject to change. It is the applicant's professional responsibility to have the most current information which can be found at msncb.org.

Application Fees

These fees include a non-refundable administrative fee of \$75.

\$275	Regular
\$175	AMSN member

Inactive Status Fee

\$165 Regular
\$105 AMSN member

Retired Status Fee

\$100 Regular
\$75 AMSN member

Membership Discount

To receive the member discount, AMSN membership must be active at the time of application.

If you are joining AMSN at the same time as applying for recertification:

First join AMSN at amsn.org *before* completing the recertification application.

Late Application Fee (non-refundable) - \$75

Applications and fees are due at least 30 days prior to your certification expiration.

Applications submitted after the application deadline will incur a \$75 late fee in addition to the application fee.

Returned Check Fee - \$30

An applicant whose personal check is returned for insufficient funds is required to pay this fee. Remittance of fees thereafter must be made by money order, certified check, or credit card.

Grants

Recertification Grants are available through AMSN to its members. For more information, visit amsn.org.

AUDIT

Random audits of applications are conducted to ensure candidates are eligible for recertification. Candidates selected for random audit will be notified by email or letter requesting copies of contact hour certificates, supervisor verification letter, and any additional information by a deadline date. Failure to provide this information by the deadline date will delay your recertification and could result in your recertification being denied. Retain all contact hour certificates in your personal files in the event of an audit.

APPROVAL

If the CMSRN credential is granted, the applicant will receive a wall certificate and a lapel pin with number of years credentialed as a CMSRN. Allow one week from time of approval for mailing. The certification wallet card can be printed online through the CMSRN Tracker.

DENIAL AND REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION

The occurrence of any of the following actions will result in the denial, suspension or revocation of certification by the Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board:

1. Failure to meet certification or recertification criteria.
2. Any restrictions to professional RN license, such as revocation, suspension, probation, or other sanctions by a nursing authority.
3. Failure to pay any appropriate and required fees.
4. Failure to supply requested material by deadline.
5. Falsification of information on the MSNCB examination/recertification applications, or supporting documentation.
6. Cheating on the certification examination.
7. Misrepresentation of certification status.

Any other claims or causes for denial, suspension or revocation will be decided on a per case basis by the MSNCB Directors after thorough investigation. If certification is denied, suspended, or revoked for any reason, no fee will be refunded.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

An appeal must be submitted in writing to the President of the Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board within 30 days of recertification denial notification. The appeal shall state specific reasons why the candidate is entitled to recertification.

The President will submit the appeal to the MSNCB Appeals Task Force which has 30 days to review blinded copies of all materials related to the appeal request. The Task Force Chairperson will notify the appeals applicant and MSNCB of the decision in writing. Any action required by the appeals decision will be carried out by the MSNCB Directors.

CONTINUING EDUCATION CONTACT HOURS

Ninety (90) contact hours (CH) are required for recertification by continuing education. Of these, at least 68 CHs must be medical-surgical nursing specific.

Medical-Surgical Nursing Contact Hours:

These hours include content related to direct patient care in a medical-surgical setting. If the content of the activity is included in the CMSRN exam blueprint, then the contact hours will be considered medical-surgical nursing. A minimum of 68 contact hours in this category is required; however, it is permissible to have all 90 med-surg contact hours with no professional development.

Professional Development and Other Health Related Contact Hours:

These contact hours include the broad area of health care, general nursing, and professional development. Topics include leadership, how to conduct research, nursing theory, informatics, pediatrics, ethics, blood matching, and more. A maximum of 22 contact hours in this category is permitted.

Contact Hours Awarded:

Contact hours will be given according to the number awarded. Contact hours earned from January 1 of the first year of initial certification may be submitted for initial recertification. For all following certifications, contact hours within the current certification period may be submitted.

CONTACT HOUR REPORTING

Here are some helpful tips and reminders for earning and reporting contact hours.

- Earn your contact hours continuously throughout your five-year certification period.
- Enter your hours in your CMSRN Tracker as you earn them.
- Self-reported contact hours are manually verified. Allow up to 10 business days for your Tracker to be updated.
- **Your application deadline date is 30 days prior to your certification expiration date.**

Applications submitted after the application deadline will incur a \$75 late fee in addition to the application fee.

When reporting preceptor/mentor hours, you must submit the Preceptor/Mentor Verification Form found at the end of this guide or on the MSNCB website for the hours to be considered.

If reporting academic courses, you must submit a copy of your unofficial transcript before your contact hours will be verified.

You may mail, fax, or email these forms to the National Office.

Do not send certificates with your renewal. Copies of certificates are required only if audited.

ACCEPTABLE CONTACT HOUR ACTIVITIES

Continuing Nursing Education (CNE) Activities

1. Continuing Nursing Education (CNE) Activities

CNE contact hour activities provide a contact hour certificate. Activities include journal articles, courses, workshops, and independent study.

- Contact hours in this category may be counted toward medical-surgical or professional development, depending on the content.
- Education programs must be presented by an individual, state, or national organization accredited as a provider or approver of continuing nursing education.
- ACLS course work is accepted.
- BLS course work *is not* accepted, as it is typically required for registered nurses.
- Contact hours earned at an education convention or seminar with multiple sessions may be listed as a total amount for the entire convention or seminar. MSNCB reserves the right to request additional information on convention or seminar content or objectives.
- All contact hours provided by the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (AMSN) are considered entirely as medical-surgical CH.
- Continuing Medical Education (CME) activities are acceptable when the content is also applicable to nursing. If audited, course outline and/or objectives must be submitted. One CME = 1 CH.

ACCEPTABLE CONTACT HOUR ACTIVITIES

non-Continuing Nursing Education (non-CNE) Activities

2. Preceptorship/Mentoring

Preceptors/Mentors must provide medical-surgical focused clinical supervision to baccalaureate, masters or doctoral degree students and/or newly hired nurses.

- Contact hours in this category may be counted toward medical-surgical CH.
- The Preceptor/Mentor Verification form, found at the end of this guide or at msncb.org, must be completed and submitted for the contact hours to be included.
- 30 hours as a preceptor/mentor = 5 CH, with a maximum of 20 CH per recertification period.

3. Academic Courses

A registered nurse enrolled in an accredited baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degree program may receive CH for academic course work related to medical-surgical nursing.

- Contact hours in this category may be counted toward medical-surgical or professional development, depending on the content.
- General education courses may not be used.
- A copy of a transcript must be provided for the contact hours to be included. In the event of an audit, an official transcript must be provided.
- One academic hour (credit) = 15 CH, with a maximum of 75 CH allowed per recertification period.

4. Presentations

This category includes the preparation and presentation of content for academic courses and CNE programs.

- Contact hours in this category may be counted toward medical-surgical or professional development, depending on the content.
- Presentations must be awarded academic credit or contact hours. Contact hours must be awarded by an accredited or approved provider of continuing nursing education.
- Each course applies one time only in the recertification period regardless of how many times the course is taught.
- One hour of presentation = 3 CH, with a maximum of 45 CH per recertification period.
 - Example 1: A college level medical-surgical course of 12 one-hour class sessions is presented during a semester for a 3-credit course. ($12 \times 3 = 36$ CH) The educator may claim 36 CH.
 - Example 2: An RN presents a 2-hour CNE class one time only within the health care system. ($2 \times 3 = 6$ CH) The RN may claim 6 CH.
- If audited, a letter from the event organizer must be provided.

5. Professional Publications

The format must be a manuscript, research paper, book, or book chapter and must be published by a recognized publisher or professional journal.

- Contact hours in this category may be counted toward medical-surgical or professional development, depending on the content.
- A maximum of 25 CH per recertification period is allowed for this category.
- Authors, co-authors, or editors of a book earn 25 CH.
- Authors or co-authors of a book chapter earn 10 CH.
- Authors or co-authors of a published article earn 5 CH.
- If audited, the following materials must be submitted: Title of publication; Name of publication, if book chapter or article; Publisher; Date; Objectives; and Bibliography.

6. Conference Poster Presentation

The poster must be relevant to medical-surgical nursing and presented at a regional or national meeting.

- Contact hours in this category may be counted toward medical-surgical or professional development, depending on content.
- Each poster will be counted only once during the recertification period, regardless of how many times the poster is presented.
- One poster = 5 CH, with a maximum of 20 CH per recertification period.
- If audited, proof of poster development and presentation must be provided (e.g., meeting syllabus).

7. Multimedia Program Development

This category includes the development of program content and script for videotapes, audiotapes, or other electronic media.

- Contact hours in this category may be counted toward medical-surgical or professional development, depending on content.
- The program must be awarded contact hours.
- The production of one 60-minute program = 5 CH, with a maximum of 20 CH per recertification period.
- If audited, the following materials must be submitted: Media type; Objectives; Script or program outline; and Bibliography.

8. Research and Evidence-Based Practice Projects

This category includes research projects that have been approved by the Investigational Review Board (IRB) in your facility in which you are clearly identified as being one of the primary investigators.

This category also includes evidence-based practice projects that have been given exempt status by the IRB or have been implemented in your facility and are reflected in its policies, procedures or clinical guidelines. You must be clearly identified as being one of the primary champions in the development, implementation and evaluation of the project.

- Contact hours in this category may be counted toward medical-surgical nursing practice or professional development.
- A copy of the research proposal submitted to your facility's IRB or the evidence-based practice project must be included.
- One research project = 30 CH, with a maximum of 30 CH per recertification period.
- One evidence-based practice project = 15 CH, with a maximum of 15 CH per certification period.

9. Member of a National Nursing Organization Board or National Committee Chair

- Contact hours in this category may be counted toward professional development.
- One hour of participation = 1 CH with a maximum of 5 CH per recertification period.
- If audited, a letter verifying service from the president of the national nursing organization must be provided.

10. Test Development/Item Writing/Item Reviewing for MSNCB

Members of any MSNCB Test Development/Item Writer & Item Reviewer Committee may count their volunteer time when recertifying.

- Contact hours in this category may be counted towards the specific practice designated by MSNCB.
- One weekend session = 5 CH with a maximum of 20 CH per recertification period.

11. MSNCB Recertification Committees

Members of any MSNCB Recertification Committee may count their volunteer time when recertifying.

- Contact hours in this category may be counted towards professional development.
- 2 CH/year with a maximum of 20 CH per recertification period.

12. Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses Volunteer Units

Members of most AMSN Volunteer Units may count their volunteer time when recertifying. Contact AMSN's Volunteer Relations Coordinator to determine your eligibility.

- Contact hours in this category may be counted toward the specific practice designated by AMSN.
- 5 CH/year with a maximum of 20 CH per recertification period.

CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION

MSNCB and its testing agency will retain electronic records of all candidates and certificants for at least five (5) years. It is the professional responsibility of the applicant to notify MSNCB of any change in name, mailing address, phone number and/or email address. These changes may be made online by updating your account at msncb.org after logging in or may be directed to MSNCB National Office.

INFORMATION ABOUT MSNCB

The Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board (MSNCB™) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to validate excellence in medical-surgical nursing and care coordination and transition management.

MSNCB is composed of seven board members: five who hold an MSNCB certification, a public member, and an ex-officio member (the current AMSN president or designee). MSNCB nurse members are appointed to represent the diverse roles and settings in which medical-surgical nurses and care coordination nurses practice as well as varied demographic characteristics.

INFORMATION ABOUT AMSN

The Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (AMSN) is the only national professional nursing specialty organization dedicated to the practice of medical-surgical nursing. For further information about AMSN, please visit their website at amsn.org.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CMSRN RECERTIFICATION AND EXAM EXEMPTION

When do I need to submit my recertification application?

Your application deadline date is 30 days prior to your certification expiration date. Complete your application by selecting "Recertify Now" from your CMSRN Tracker. Applications submitted after the deadline date will incur a \$75 late fee.

You are eligible for recertification as early as one year before your certification expiration date, and up to one year after this time (with a late fee).

How far back can I claim contact hours?

You can include any contact hours beginning from January of the year you were initially certified, or from your most recent recertification date.

How come my category type changed to Professional Development (PROFDEV)?

Recertification staff review and verify each contact hour activity. Activities with topics that cover the broad area of health care and general nursing are categorized as professional development. Staff adjust the category before verifying the activity.

How do I know if my contact hours are medical-surgical or professional development?

There are several ways to determine if the content of your contact hours is medical-surgical or professional development. If the topic is also covered on the exam blueprint, the activity is acceptable for medical-surgical. Topics like leadership, how to conduct research, nursing theory, informatics, pediatrics, and ethics are considered professional development.

Do all medical-surgical nursing contact hours (CH) need to be awarded through AMSN?

No. CNE activities must be provided or co-provided by any individual, state, or national organization accredited as a provider or approver of continuing nursing education. However, AMSN is an excellent resource for medical-surgical nursing education and all AMSN awarded CHs may be counted toward medical-surgical practice.

Do I send in copies of my contact hour certificates?

No, do not send copies of your certificates when you apply. Retain your certificates in case your application is selected for random audit and copies are requested at that time.

I went back to school. Can I use classes from my degree for contact hours?

If you have been accepted into an accredited baccalaureate, master or doctoral degree program, academic courses may be counted toward medical-surgical practice or professional development, depending on the content. A copy of a transcript must be submitted for approval. Each academic hour = 15 contact hours with a maximum of 75 CH allowed per recertification period.

I have more contact hours of continuing education than the required amount. Should I list more activities I attended?

Yes. Please limit additional contact hours to 5 to 10.

Do I have to wait until my current ANCC medical-surgical certification is about to expire to apply for the CMSRN?

You may apply for exam exemption 30 days prior to the current certification expiration date, or up to one (1) year after the expiration date with a late fee.

What will happen if I am unable to meet the continuing education requirements for certification via exam exemption?

If you are unable to meet the continuing education requirements for certification via exam exemption, you can either obtain certification by taking the CMSRN examination or obtain contact hours prior to application.

I attended a medical-surgical program that offered continuing medical education (CME) credit, but not nursing contact hours. Can I use this?

Yes, as long as the content is also useful for nursing.

I am the second author of a medical-surgical nursing article published in a recognized professional journal. Can I receive partial or full credit for publication?

Both authors and co-authors receive full credit.

I attended a certification review course before taking the exam. Will I be able to use this course's contact hours when I recertify?

Yes, for your first recertification, provided you took the course the year you were certified. For initial recertification, you can include any contact hours, including additional review courses you attended, beginning from January of the year you were certified.

Where is the preceptor form?

The preceptor form is found at the end of this guide or at msncb.org.



MEDICAL-SURGICAL NURSING
CERTIFICATION BOARD



PRECEPTOR/MENTOR VERIFICATION FORM

When reporting preceptor/mentor hours, this form must be submitted.

MSNCB National Office

Mailing Address
MSNCB
PO Box 56
Pitman, NJ 08071

Delivery Service
MSNCB
200 East Holly Avenue
Sewell, New Jersey 08080

Toll-Free: 866-877-2676
Fax: 856-589-7463
Email: msnbc@msncb.org
Website: msnbc.org

Hours claimed are for providing clinical supervision to baccalaureate, masters or doctoral degree students and/or newly hired nurses in educational and professional settings.
Courses taken about preceptorship or mentoring should be reported as CNE activities.

30 hours as a preceptor/mentor = 5 CH, with a maximum of 20 CH per recertification period

This preceptorship must be verified by the signature of the faculty member or educator who supervised your preceptorship/mentorship.

Please Print

Preceptor's Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

1. The individual named above has completed hours of med-surg focused preceptorship/mentorship.
Provide only the **number of hours worked** as a preceptor/mentor.

2. The preceptorship/mentorship was with (Name of nurse): _____

Nursing Student

New Graduate Nurse

Newly Hired Nurse

3. The dates of preceptorship/mentorship were _____ through _____

4. Name of the facility/institution **OR** name of the educational institution for which preceptorship/mentorship occurred: _____

SUPERVISOR:

I attest that the above named candidate has completed the number of preceptor/mentor hours indicated:

Print Supervisor Name: _____

Signature: _____

Facility Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: (____) _____

An original signature is required for contact hours to be considered.