

Certification Comparison ^[1]

Which certification is right for me?

There are two certification exams offered in the specialty of medical-surgical nursing. The Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board (MSNBC) provides this table of comparisons between the two certification programs to help you make an informed choice of which one is right for you.



[2]

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Certification Comparison

	CMSRN	RN-BC
Credential	Certified Medical-Surgical Registered Nurse (CMSRN)	Registered Nurse-Board Certified (RN-BC)
Certifying Body	Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board (MSNBC) msncb.org	American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) nursecredentialing.org
Endorsement from Specialty Nursing Organization	Yes, by AMSN (Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses)	No
Accreditation by ABSNC (Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification)	Yes	Yes
Accepted by ANCC for Magnet Recognition Status	Yes	Yes
Certification Duration	5 years	5 years

Certification Eligibility Criteria

	CMSRN	RN-BC
Practice as an RN	2 Years	2 Years
Type of Practice	Clinical, management, or education	Clinical
Practice Hours in Past 3 Years	2,000 Hours	2,000 Hours
Contact Hours	None	30 CH/3 Years

Certification Exam

	CMSRN	RN-BC
# of Questions	150 (25 unscored experimental)	175
Testing Options	Computer-Based Testing (CBT)	Computer-Based Testing (CBT)
Based on Practice Analysis	Yes	Yes
Special Test Site at Your Facility	Yes, \$300 per site	No

Certification Pricing and Discounts

	CMSRN	RN-BC
Application Fees	\$375	\$395
Member Fees	\$255 AMSN Member*	\$270 ANA Member
Facility Registration Program	Yes, FailSafe Certification Program™ which does not charge hospitals for unsuccessful candidates	Yes

Recertification Options

	CMSRN	RN-BC
By Contact Hours	Yes	Yes
By Exam	Yes	Partially
By Exam Exemption	Yes	No

Recertification Eligibility Criteria

	CMSRN	RN-BC
Current Certification in Medical-Surgical Nursing	Yes	Yes
Type of Practice	Clinical, management, or education	Clinical or direct clinical supervision only
Practice Hours in 5 Years	1,000	1,000
Contact Hours in 5 Years	90 CH (including academic courses, presentations, publications, preceptorship, research)	Mandatory 75 CH + 1 or more of 8 renewal categories

Recertification Pricing and Discounts

	CMSRN	RN-BC
Recertification Fee	\$275	\$350

	CMSRN	RN-BC
Member Fee	\$175 AMSN Member*	\$250 ANA Member
Examination Prep Resources		
	CMSRN	RN-BC
Sample Questions	Yes	Yes
Online Prep Test	Yes, from MSNCB	Yes, through Credentialing Knowledge Center
Publications/Online	Yes, many through AMSN	Yes
	Yes, through AMSN \$6,000	
2 Day Certification Review Course at your Facility	\$5,000 for FailSafe Facilities + faculty hotel expenses	Yes
	Unlimited Participants	

* AMSN Dues = \$85/year

Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board (MSNCB)

Box 56
Pitman NJ 08071-0056
msncb@msncb.org
866-877-2676

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Affiliate Organizations

- [Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses \(AMSN\)](#)
- [American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing \(AAACN\)](#)

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[2] <https://msncb.org/files/CMSRNvsRNBC.pdf>