



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF
FORENSIC COUNSELORS, INC.**

**American College of Certified Forensic Counselors
Certification Commission**

Policies and Procedures

INTRODUCTION

The National Association of Forensic Counselors (NAFC) was established in 1993, incorporated in 1995 in Indiana as a not-for-profit corporation, and re-incorporated in 1999 as a not-for-profit corporation in the State of Nevada.

MISSION & PURPOSE

The mission and purpose of NAFC and its certification commission the American College of Certified Forensic Counselors (ACCFC) is to advance the profession of forensic assessment and counseling through the development and maintenance of a valid, credible, and reliable certification program that upholds standards for competent practice in forensic counseling and assessment based upon a sound structure and quality psychometric standards.

1.0 POLICY: Candidates with Disabilities

It is the policy of NAFC to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regulations governing both facilities and administration.

PROCEDURE:

NAFC shall take steps reasonably necessary to make its examination program accessible to persons with disabilities. Appropriate and effective modifications and/or auxiliary aids will be provided to persons with a disability unless doing so would impose an undue burden on the commissions program or fundamentally alter the measurement of skills and knowledge the program is intended to assess.

2.0 POLICY: Non-Discrimination

NAFC shall not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

3.0 POLICY: Certification Commission Autonomy

The Certification Commission shall have control over all certification and renewal decisions.

PROCEDURE:

The certification commission shall have autonomy in the management of, and administration of its certification program without permission, approval, or undue influence from outside sources in order to serve the best interests of stakeholders and the public. The Chief Executive Officer and Executive VP shall be responsible for the overall operation of the commission.

4.0 POLICY: Certification Commission Composition and Elections

The Certification Commission shall be comprised of nine (9) Clinically Certified forensic and substance abuse members from within the association and one (1) public member not attached to the profession who will be responsible for establishing policies, developing procedures, and establishing standards for the certification program.

PROCEDURE:

The commission shall meet quarterly to review the programs standards, new applications for certification, review examination statistics, as well as any projects that may be in progress.

In the event of a vacancy on the commission, the nominating committee will propose a slate of qualified candidates from the pool of applications in response to the vacancy announcement. The commission shall review all candidates curriculum vitae and vote. Terms for members on the certification commission shall be two (2) years.

5.0 POLICY: Eligibility for Certification

All candidate applying for certification must meet the NAFC eligibility requirements

PROCEDURE:

The certification Commission Shall be responsible for determining the eligibility requirements for certification.

The screening committee shall review and verify all applications submitted to take the certification examination monthly.

The screening committee shall:

Verify the information on the application as to experience, education, supervision, and State licensure as a mental health professional is accurate and signed by the applicant.

The screening committee shall make certain that the candidate holds a minimum of a masters degree from a regionally accredited college or university by contacting the institution the candidate graduated from.

The screening committee shall verify with the state the candidate is licensed in to assure that the candidates licensure is in good standing with no ethic complaints within the past five (5) years.

The screening committee shall with cooperation from the Allen County Sheriffs Office assure that the candidate has had no felony or misdemeanor convictions within the past ten (10) years for any violent offense.

Require the applicant to read, agree with and sign the NAFC code of ethics which shall remain in force for the life of the certification.

Pass a written examination at the established cut score.

6.0 POLICY: Examination Preparation

NAFC shall not offer any course of study leading to a Clinical Certification. NAFC shall from time to time endorse a seminar or workshop provided by independent providers for examination preparation or continuing education.

PROCEDURE:

NAFC shall assist candidates in preparing for the clinical examination by suggesting certain reading materials which shall be included in the candidates application packet.

7.0 POLICY: Eligibility Appeals

Applicants denied access to taking the Clinical Examination because the screening committee determined they are ineligible shall have a right to appeal the committees decision.

PROCEDURE:

The denied applicant shall in writing appeal to the Hearing Review Panel the reasons they believe they should not have been found to be ineligible within 30 days after denial. All appeals shall be reviewed and investigated by the Hearing Review Panel. The Hearing Review Panel shall contact the denied applicant in writing of its findings and decision. The decision of the Hearing Review Panel shall be final.

8.0 POLICY: Confidentiality

All personal information placed on a candidates/member application for certification shall be confidential. All examination scores shall be confidential. Applicant/certified member information and test scores shall not be disclosed without a written release of information designating to whom the information shall be released.

NAFC shall release information without a release to a State or Federal authority which may be required by law.

NAFC shall verify an applicants certification status to employers or an individual purchasing the certified members services.

All contractors retained by the commission shall agree to and sign a confidentiality agreement.

PROCEDURE:

No employee of the NAFC shall release any information pertaining to its members without first securing from the member a written release of information designating to whom the information may be released to and the date the release may expire.

In order to protect the safety and privacy of our membership, no members name address, etc, shall be placed in a written directory or web directory without written permission from the member to do so.

9.0 POLICY: Professional Practice Rule Violations and Discipline

The NAFC Ethics Committee shall meet as may be required and be responsible for investigating any complaints or allegations of a code of ethics rule received from other professionals or the public about an NAFC member.

PROCEDURE:

The Ethics Committee chair shall in writing advise the member of the charges against them. The member shall be advised of their right to an oral hearing and the

allegations made against them, and if they choose to attend that they must bear the expenses in connection with any such hearing. They shall also be advised that they may respond to the allegations in a notarized document.

If the member fails to respond to the complaint, the allegations shall be taken as being true. The member will then be deemed to have consented to the imposition of sanctions by the committee.

Both the plaintiff and the respondent may submit at least 15 days prior to the hearing the any documents, testimony or any other evidence to establish innocence or guilt.

The decision of the Ethics Committee shall be rendered in writing containing factual findings, conclusions and any sanctions applied. The committee chair shall deliver the committee's decision by certified mail, return receipt required.

The Ethics Committee shall be authorized to administer any of the following sanctions as they think appropriate according to the severity of the ethics violation:

- Suspension of certification for a designated period
 - Revocation of certification
 - Censure
 - Reprimand
 - Suspension
 - Training or remediation
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10.0 POLICY: APPEALS

A member may file a written appeal of the decision of the Ethics Committee's decision directly to the Certification Committee within 30 days of receipt of the Ethic Committee's decision.

PROCEDURE:

The Certification Committee shall review the member's written appeal and the reasons the member believes the decision to be inequitable or unfair. The Ethics Committee shall be required to file a written response to the member's appeal. Upon receipt of all information pertaining to the appeal, the Certification Commission shall render a decision in writing without an oral hearing of the case. The decision of the Certification Commission shall be final and forwarded to the member in writing by certified mail, return receipt required.

11.0 POLICY: Quality Control

It shall be the policy of NAFC to monitor the established and approved standards pertaining to all aspects of its certification process as well as management information systems presently in place.

PROCEDURE:

The certification Standards Committee shall oversee all aspects of the certification program and program accreditation requirements to assure that there are no deviations from either policies, procedures or standards in all aspects of the certification program or the programs accreditation requirements. The committee chair shall in a written report submitted to the Certification Commission identify any deviations from the established certification standards it may find along with any recommendations the committee may have.

Upon discovery of any deviations from the standards, the Standards Committee shall be responsible for correcting any oversight and bringing it into immediate compliance.

The Executive Vice President or his/her designee shall be responsible for the performance of all support staff as well as the efficiency of the associations management information system (MIS). It shall be the responsibility of the VP to identify problems within the MIS and make recommendations for corrections. The VP shall stay abreast of new MIS technologies that may contribute to the overall quality and effectiveness of the organization.

12.0 POLICY: Role Delineation Studies

The NAFC shall perform a new role delineation study every three (3) years in order to stay abreast of changes within the forensic counseling and substance abuse counseling profession. The role delineation study shall be performed utilizing only accepted psychometric principles.

PROCEDURE:

The Certification Committee shall order a new role delineation study every three years to be performed by Indiana University-Center for Social Research. Information and technical reports from the role delineation study shall be forwarded to the examination development committee for use in examination development. The results shall also be published in the association's magazine and on its web site.

13.0 POLICY: Examination Passing Score

The Certification Commission shall determine the passing score for all examinations that is consistent with the purpose of its credential as well as the established standards of competence within the profession of forensic counseling. The Commission shall place on its official web site the procedures and methods used to establish the passing score.

PROCEDURE:

The Certification Commission shall utilize a Modified Angoff method to establish a valid examination cut score. The panel of Angoff judges shall be trained clinical members of the association who shall judge each individual item as to whether a minimally competent practitioner can answer this item correctly.

The procedure, methods used to assess the reliability of the test score, the passing score shall be published on the Association's official web site.

14.0 POLICY: Annual Examination Revision

Because of the low volume of candidates taking the certification examination annually, NAFC shall maintain one (1) test form for each certification which shall be revised annually.

PROCEDURE:

The examination shall be revised annually by removing approximately 10% of items from each practice domain. Items removed shall be replaced with equivalent items for each domain of practice from the NAFC item bank. The procedure utilized to assure equivalency shall be an Angoff judging of each new item.

15.0 POLICY: Scoring and Reporting Examination Results & Retention

All NAFC examinations shall be administered at ACT test sites in the United States and Canada by a professional testing agency ProXams and electronically scored by the testing agency. NAFC shall retain all examination results in a secure manner for a period of five (5) years.

PROCEDURE:

All examinations taken at ACT centers shall be electronically scored by the testing agency ProXams. Results of the examination taken shall be sent to the examinee advising them of their score as well as what domains of practice they may need remediation. The examinee may request that the examination be rescored. If the examinee requests a hand scoring of the examination they shall be advised of the fee associated with their request.

All examination results shall also be retained on the NAFC secure data base with an encrypted password available only to authorized Certification Commission personnel.

16.0 POLICY: Test Administration

All examinations shall be administered and proctored at ACT testing sites nation wide in a secure testing environment.

PROCEDURE:

All testing sites shall have adequate lighting and free from any distractions. Examinations shall be proctored by thoroughly trained professional ACT test site proctors. All candidates must present a picture ID at the time of testing and not be permitted to take any items into the testing area.

17.0 POLICY: Security of Examination Data, documents Retention

NAFC shall retain all examination forms and information necessary to establish the validity and reliability of its examinations if challenged for a period of five (5) years. Membership personal information shall also be kept retained on a secured computer with an encrypted password for access available only to authorized personnel

PROCEDURE:

The commission shall store on a secured computer with an encrypted password only available to authorized personnel practice domain items, item writing reports, examination development procedures, technical reports, cut score studies, cut score reports, role delineation studies, membership information, etc. The Commission shall ensure that all examination records are retained for a period of no less than five (5) years.

18.0 POLICY: Certification Renewal

The Certification Commission shall be responsible for establishing standards for the recertification of its members.

PROCEDURE:

The commission shall require that members recertify annually. A requirement of certification eligibility is to maintain one's State licensure in good standing. Annually upon recertification application the commission shall check with the applicants state board their licensure status.

The commission shall require that each applicant provide evidence of 20 hours of continuing education that is specific to the certification being renewed and payment of their annual renewal fee. Such training events must be approved by an appropriate Board, e.g., NASW, APA, ACA, NAADAC, ICRC, etc. If a member fails to produce evidence of 20 hours of continuing education they shall be provided 120 days to attain their CEUs. The purpose of 20 CEUs is for the members professional development and to stay abreast of any changes within the profession that may affect their practice..

If significant changes in technology, theory or practice occurs within the profession as evidenced by a job task analysis, members will be required to retake an updated examination for renewal.

The commission shall periodically review all recertification policies and publish on its official website any changes to present policy.

19.0 POLICY: Notification of Changes in Certification/renewal requirements

The Certification Commission shall be responsible for periodically reviewing the standards for certification eligibility and recertification.

PROCEDURE:

The commission shall continuously evaluate the standards for certification eligibility and recertification. Any and all changes made shall as soon as practical be placed on the associations website detailing the exact changes made to eligibility or recertification requirements, and the effective date of such change.

20.0 POLICY: Issuing of Certification Certificates

Upon successful completion of all certification requirements and passing the written examination, the certification candidate shall be certified and issued a Certification Certificate attesting to their certification. Issued certificates remain the property of the NAFC. The certified member may use the proper certification acronym after their name CSOTS, CCFC, CCDVC, MAC, CCDC, etc, corresponding with their certification.

PROCEDURE:

The Certification Commission upon receipt of the examinees passing test score results shall issue a Certification Certificate attesting to the candidates certification status. At a minimum the certificate shall include a) the certified members name, b) the name of the certification body, c) type of certification, d) certificate number, e) expiration date, e) commission seal, f) signature of the Commission Chairperson,

21.0 POLICY: Retaking of Examinations After Failure

Examinees who do not achieve a passing score on their certification examination may retake the examination after 60 days. Failure a second time shall require the examinee to wait for a period of six (6) months before retaking the examination. If a candidate fails on the third attempt they shall be advised to seek remediation and provide evidence of further training before being allowed to sit for the examination again after one (1) year.

22.0 POLICY: Disposal of Records and Other Data

The NAFC shall dispose of all records in a secure manner.

PROCEDURE:

The records coordinator shall be responsible for the disposal of records. All disposed records of members, examination development data, examinations, etc, shall be shredded and cross shredded to assure they cannot be retrieved by unauthorized parties,

23.0 POLICY: Use of Subject Matter Consultants

The association may from time to time hire independent subject matter experts to assist in its examination development or other business of the association. Independent subject matter consultants shall not be related to any NAFC employee, or member of the Certification Commission, or be a member of the organization, have a conflict of interest,

or any other vested interest in the outcome of the work or study being performed. Subject Matter Expert Consultants shall be required to provide a contract and confidentiality agreement clearly delineating the services to be provided.

PROCEDURE:

Retained Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) retained to assist in examination development activities shall only be from independent testing agencies that are members of and approved by the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA). All SMEs must provide a contract of the work to be performed clearly stating the time frame for starting and completion of the project, project cost, and a statement that all work performed for NAFC is the property of NAFC, is confidential and not to be released without the written permission of an authorized NAFC officer.