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# Candidate Handbook for State Credentialing

for the  
National Counselor Examination and  
National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination

**(NCE and NCMHCE)**



NATIONAL BOARD FOR  
**CERTIFIED COUNSELORS™**

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There are no barriers to certification on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, or national origin.

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

All questions and requests for information about **state licensure requirements** should be directed to the state credentialing board to which you are applying. (Refer to insert for state specific information.)

All questions and requests for information about the **NBCC examination program** should be directed to:

National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc.  
3 Terrace Way  
Greensboro, NC 27403  
Voice: 336-547-0607  
Fax: 336-547-0017  
Web site: [www.nbcc.org](http://www.nbcc.org)

All questions and requests for information about **examination scheduling** should be directed to:

Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc.  
18000 W. 105th Street  
Olathe, KS 66061-7543  
Voice: 913-895-4600  
Fax: 913-895-4650  
Web site: [www.goAMP.com](http://www.goAMP.com)

# INTRODUCTION

This handbook provides information about the examination and registration process for the National Counselor Examination for Licensure and Certification (NCE®) and the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE®). It outlines the design and content of the examination and guides candidates through the examination process from registration through test taking. For your convenience, this handbook may be downloaded from the NBCC Web site, located at [www.nbcc.org](http://www.nbcc.org).

## ABOUT NBCC

The National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC®) is internationally recognized as a leading provider of counselor credentialing examinations. Forty-eight states and the District of Columbia administer NBCC examinations as part of their counselor credentialing requirements. Based on its reputation for excellence in the field of examinations, NBCC has provided consultation services for examination and credential development to many other organizations in the United States and abroad.

## INDEPENDENT TESTING AGENCY

NBCC has contracted with Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc. (AMP) to assist in the administration and scoring of the NCE and NCMHCE examinations. AMP, located in the greater Kansas City area, is a leading provider of licensing and certification examinations for professional organizations.

## NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

NBCC and AMP do not discriminate among candidates on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, religion, national origin, disability, or marital status.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Please check with your state board for specific information about application procedures and any additional requirements. If you have previously achieved a passing score on an NBCC examination, contact your state board to determine if you are exam-exempt. You may be required to apply to your state board prior to sitting for the NCE and NCMHCE. (Please refer to insert for state specific information.) Candidates may not schedule an examination until they have registered with NBCC.

# EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION

The examination is delivered by computer at more than 150 AMP Assessment Centers located throughout the United States. Generally, there are no application deadlines and a candidate may submit a registration form and fee at any time. Testing is normally the first full week of each month. Please refer to insert for state specific information on both application deadlines and examination scheduling. The examination is administered by appointment only, Monday through Friday at 9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on dates authorized by NBCC. Certain sites offer Saturday testing; candidates should contact AMP for particular locations and details. Candidates are allowed four hours to take the exam. Available dates will be indicated when scheduling your examination. Candidates are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. Therefore, candidates are advised to submit registration material at least 30 days prior to desired exam period.

## HOLIDAYS

Examinations are not offered on the following holidays:

New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King Day  
Presidents' Day  
Good Friday  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day (July 4)  
Labor Day  
Columbus Day  
Veterans' Day  
Thanksgiving Day (and the following Friday)  
Christmas Eve Day  
Christmas Day  
New Year's Eve Day

## REGISTERING FOR AN EXAMINATION

Candidates should ensure that the NBCC Examination Registration Form has been properly completed and that the information provided is accurate. Careful attention will enable prompt and efficient processing. Candidates cannot schedule an examination appointment with AMP until the NBCC Registration Form has been processed. NBCC will then send written and e-mail notification (if e-mail address is provided on registration form) to registered candidates with examination scheduling procedures.

## REGISTRATION FORM EXPIRATION

A candidate who fails to test six months after registering with NBCC forfeits the registration form and all fees paid to take the examination.

## EXAMINATION REAPPLICATION

If you were unsuccessful in your examination attempt, you may retest again 3 months from your test date by completing another NBCC Examination Registration Form. The actual retest date will depend on the monthly testing schedule and site availability. Your state credentialing board may limit the number of times that you may retest. Please refer to insert for state specific information. Another examination fee is required.

## FEES AND REFUND POLICY

Candidates must submit the appropriate fee with the NBCC Registration Form. Payment may be made by credit card (VISA®, MasterCard®, or American Express®), cashier's check, money order, or personal check made payable to NBCC. Examination fees are not refundable or transferable and expire in six (6) months. Please refer to your Registration Form or state specific insert for the examination cost.

Checks for nonsufficient funds (NSF) will not be redeposited. If your check does not clear the bank for any reason, you will incur a fee of \$20. Credit card transactions that are declined are also subject to a \$20 handling fee. You must send a certified check or money order for the amount due, including the NSF fee, to NBCC to cover returned checks or declined credit card transactions. Postdated checks are not an acceptable form of payment.

## SCHEDULING AN EXAMINATION

After the candidate has received written or e-mail confirmation from NBCC, there are two ways to schedule an appointment for the examination.

1. Online Scheduling: The candidate may schedule an examination appointment online by using AMP's online scheduling service. To use this service, follow these easy steps:

- Go to **www.goAMP.com** and select "Candidates."
- Follow the simple, step-by-step instructions to select your examination program and register for an examination.

**-OR-**

2. Telephone Scheduling: Call AMP at **888-519-9901** to schedule an examination appointment. This toll-free number is answered from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Central Time) Monday through Thursday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday and 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday.

When scheduling an examination, be prepared to confirm a location, a preferred date and time for testing, and to provide your Social Security number as a unique identification number. AMP will use your Social Security number only as an identification number in maintaining your record. When you contact AMP to schedule an examination appointment, you will be notified of the time to report to the Assessment Center. Please make a note of it because you will NOT receive an admission letter.

If you call AMP by 3:00 p.m. Central Time on...	Depending on availability, your examination may be scheduled as early as...
Monday	Thursday
Tuesday	Friday
Wednesday	Monday
Thursday	Tuesday
Friday	Wednesday

## ASSESSMENT CENTER LOCATIONS

AMP Assessment Centers have been selected to provide accessibility to the most candidates in all states and major metropolitan areas. AMP Assessment Centers are typically located in H&R Block offices. A current listing of AMP Assessment Centers, including addresses and driving directions, may be viewed at AMP's website ([www.goAMP.com](http://www.goAMP.com)). Specific address information will be provided when a candidate schedules an examination appointment.

## SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES

NBCC and AMP comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and strive to ensure that no individual with a disability is deprived of the opportunity to take the examination solely by reason of that disability. NBCC and AMP will provide reasonable accommodations for candidates with disabilities.

Wheelchair access is available at all Assessment Centers. Candidates with visual, sensory, or physical disabilities that would prevent them from taking the examination under standard conditions may request special accommodations and arrangements. Please refer to insert for state specific information on special accommodations. Candidates testing with approved special accommodations should schedule their examination via AMP's toll-free number to ensure their accommodations are confirmed. Be sure to inform AMP of your need for special accommodations when calling to schedule your examination.

Candidates approved for extra time due to English as a second language must pay an additional fee of \$60 to receive this accommodation.

## TELECOMMUNICATION DEVICES FOR THE DEAF

AMP is equipped with Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD) to assist deaf and hearing-impaired candidates. TDD calling is available 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Central Time) Monday-Friday at 913-495-4437. This TDD phone option is for individuals equipped with compatible TDD machinery.

## EXAMINATION APPOINTMENT CHANGES

A candidate may reschedule an examination appointment at no charge **one time** by calling AMP at 888-519-9901 at least two business days prior to the scheduled testing session (See table below.)

If the Examination is scheduled on...	AMP must be contacted by 3:00 p.m. Central Time to reschedule the Examination by the previous...
Monday	Thursday
Tuesday	Friday
Wednesday	Monday
Thursday	Tuesday
Friday	Wednesday

## MISSED APPOINTMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

A candidate forfeits the examination registration and all fees paid to take the examination when he/she:

- Wishes to reschedule an examination but fails to contact AMP at least two business days prior to the scheduled examination session,
- Reschedules for a second time,
- Appears more than 15 minutes late for an examination,
- Fails to report for an examination due to illness, or
- Fails to report for an examination appointment.

A complete NBCC Examination Registration Form and examination fee are required to re-register for the examination.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER, POWER FAILURE, OR EMERGENCY

In the event of inclement weather or unforeseen emergencies on the day of an examination, AMP will determine whether circumstances warrant the cancellation, and subsequent rescheduling of an examination. The examination will usually not be rescheduled if the Assessment Center personnel are able to open the Assessment Center. If power to an Assessment Center is temporarily interrupted during an administration, your examination will restart where you left off and you may continue the examination.

Candidates may contact AMP's Weather Hotline at 800-380-5416 (24 hours/day) to determine if AMP has been advised that any Assessment Centers are closed. Every attempt is made to administer the examination as scheduled; however, should an examination be cancelled at an Assessment Center, all scheduled candidates will receive notification following the examination regarding rescheduling or reapplication procedures.

## PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION

Your primary objective in preparing for the examination is to pass. Other objectives such as learning new material and reviewing old material are critical toward this objective. Begin your study by developing your strategy for success.

A good study strategy includes preparation. To prepare, determine first what you need to learn, choose your study materials, and select a quiet, comfortable place that allows you to focus. Before you begin, check to make sure you have everything you need. Try to avoid interruptions.

Developing a study plan will allow you to learn the most as you study. Include setting goals in your study plan. Review what you have studied as often as possible. The more you review, the more you will retain.

## TAKING THE EXAMINATION

Your examination will be given by computer at an AMP Assessment Center. You do not need computer experience or typing skills to take the examination. On the day of your examination appointment, report to the Assessment Center at your scheduled test-taking time. Look for the signs indicating AMP Assessment Center Check-in. A CANDIDATE WHO ARRIVES MORE THAN 15 MINUTES AFTER THE SCHEDULED TESTING TIME WILL NOT BE ADMITTED.

## IDENTIFICATION

To gain admission to the Assessment Center, you must present two forms of identification, one with a current photograph. Both forms of identification must be current and include your current name and signature. You will be required to sign a roster for verification of identity.

Acceptable forms of photo identification include a current driver's license with photograph, a current state identification card with photograph, a current passport, or a current military identification card with photograph. Employment ID cards, student ID cards and any type of temporary identification are NOT acceptable as the primary form of identification.

You must have proper identification to gain admission to the Assessment Center. Failure to provide appropriate identification at the time of the examination is considered a missed appointment. There will be no refund of your examination fee.

## SECURITY

NBCC and AMP maintain examination administration and security standards so that all candidates have the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. The Assessment Center is continuously monitored by audio and video surveillance equipment for security purposes.

The following security procedures apply during the examination:

- No cameras, notes, tape recorders, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), pagers, or cellular phones are allowed in the testing room.
- No calculators are permitted.
- No guests, visitors, or family members are allowed in the testing room or reception areas.
- No personal items, valuables, or weapons should be brought to the Assessment Center. Only keys and wallets may be taken into the testing room. AMP is not responsible for items left in the reception areas.

## EXAMINATION RESTRICTIONS

- No personal belongings are allowed in the Assessment Center. Pencils will be provided during check-in.
- You will be provided with scratch paper to use during the examination. You must return the scratch paper to the proctor at the completion of testing, or you will not receive a score report. No documents or notes of any kind may be removed from the examination room.

- No questions concerning the content of the examination may be asked during the examination.
- Eating, drinking, or smoking is not permitted in the Assessment Center.
- You may take a break whenever you wish, but you will not be given additional time to test.

## MISCONDUCT

Individuals who engage in any of the following conduct may be dismissed from the examination and will forfeit their scores and fees. Examples of misconduct are:

- creating a disturbance, being abusive, or otherwise uncooperative;
- displaying and/or using electronic communications equipment such as pagers, cellular phones, PDAs;
- giving or receiving help or being suspected of doing so;
- attempting to take the examination for someone else; or
- being observed with notes, books, or other aids.

## COPYRIGHTED EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

All examination questions are the copyrighted property of NBCC. It is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute, or display these examination questions by any means, in whole or in part. Those who do so may be subject to severe civil and criminal penalties.

## PRACTICE EXAMINATION

After your identification has been confirmed, you will be directed to a testing carrel. You will be instructed on-screen to enter your Social Security number. You will take your photograph which will remain on-screen throughout your examination session. This photograph will also print on your score report.

Before beginning the timed examination, you will be given the opportunity to practice taking an exam on the computer. The time you use for this practice session is NOT counted as part of your examination time or score. When you are comfortable with the computer testing process, you may quit the practice session and begin the timed examination.

## **SCORES CANCELLED BY NBCC OR AMP**

NBCC and AMP are responsible for the validity and integrity of the scores they report. On occasion, occurrences such as computer malfunction or misconduct by a candidate, may cause a score to be suspect. NBCC and AMP reserve the right to void or withhold examination results if, upon investigation, violation of their regulations is discovered.

## **PASS/FAIL SCORE DETERMINATION**

The methodology used to set the minimum passing score is the Angoff method, applied during the performance of a Passing Point Study by a panel of experts in the field. The experts evaluated each question on the examination to determine how many correct answers are necessary to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to pass this examination portion. Your ability to pass the examination depends on the knowledge and skill you display, not on the performance of other candidates.

Passing scores may vary slightly for each version of the examination. To ensure fairness to all candidates, a process of statistical equating is used. This involves selecting an appropriate mix of individual questions for each version of the examination that meets the content distribution requirements of the examination content blueprint. Because each question has been pretested, a difficulty level can be assigned. The process then considers the difficulty level of each question selected for each version of the examination, attempting to match the difficulty level of each version as closely as possible. To assure fairness, slight variations in difficulty level are addressed by adjusting the passing score up or down, depending on the overall difficulty level statistics for the group of scored questions that appear on a particular version of the examination.

## **FOLLOWING THE EXAMINATION**

After completing the examination, candidates are asked to complete a short evaluation of their examination experience. Then, candidates are instructed to report to the examination proctor to receive their score report. Scores are reported in written form only and are not reported over the telephone, by electronic mail, or by facsimile.

Your score report will indicate a "pass" or "fail." Your pass/fail status is determined by your raw score. Additional detail is provided in the form of raw scores by major content category. A raw score is the number of questions you answered correctly.

## **IF YOU PASS THE EXAMINATION**

Candidates who pass the examination should follow their state board requirements for licensure. Please refer to insert for state specific information.

## **IF YOU DO NOT PASS THE EXAMINATION**

Candidates may take the examination once every 3 months. The candidate must re-register by submitting a new NBCC Examination Registration Form with the appropriate fee. Please refer to insert for state specific information.

## **FAILING TO REPORT FOR AN EXAMINATION**

A candidate who fails to report for an examination forfeits the registration and all fees paid to take the examination. A completed NBCC Registration Form and examination fee are required to reapply for examination.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information about candidates for testing and their examination results are considered confidential. Studies and reports concerning candidates will contain no personally identifiable information unless authorized by the candidate.

## **SCORE VERIFICATION**

Candidates may request a score verification for themselves or a third party at a cost of \$20 per verification. Requests must be submitted to NBCC in writing by mail or fax. The request must include the candidate's name (if tested under a different name, include test name), Social Security number, mailing address, telephone number, date of examination, name of examination, state in which the examination was taken, and where to send the verification. They should submit this information with the required fee payable to NBCC in the form of a money order or cashier's check. Please include credit card information (card number, expiration date, name as written on card, 3-digit verification number from the back, and signature) if you are faxing the request. Score verifications will be mailed within four to six weeks after receipt of the request and fee.

## The following pertains only to the NCE

# EXAMINATION CONTENT

## NATIONAL COUNSELOR EXAMINATION (NCE)

The National Counselor Examination for Licensure and Certification (NCE) is a 200-question, multiple-choice, non-sectioned examination representing each of the original eight CACREP® (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) content areas, with question content also emerging from the five job analysis factors. Thus, the NCE is not only anchored in the content validity of the eight original CACREP areas, but is also representative of the empirically determined five clusters of professional counselor work behaviors.

A different form (version) of the NCE is compiled for each administration of the examination. Each form's questions, which are drawn from the item pool for the NCE, have undergone extensive review and field-testing.

Although each form of the NCE contains different questions, the content area and the respective numbers of questions representing those areas are consistent. Within the set of 200 questions on each form of the NCE, 160 of the questions are counted for the purpose of determining whether you surpass the minimum criterion (i.e., "passing") score for that form. Thus, the maximum possible score a respondent can achieve is 160. The remaining 40 questions in each form of the NCE are being field tested to determine their appropriateness for future use.

The following is an outline showing the eight CACREP domains on which the examination questions are based:

**Human Growth and Development** - studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels.

**Social and Cultural Foundations** - studies that provide an understanding of issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society.

**Helping Relationships** - studies that provide an understanding of counseling and consultation processes.

**Group Work** - studies that provide an understanding of group development, dynamics, counseling theories, group counseling methods and skills, and other group work approaches.

**Career and Lifestyle Development** - studies that provide an understanding of career development and related life factors.

**Appraisal** - studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation.

**Research and Program Evaluation** - studies that provide an understanding of types of research methods, basic statistics, and ethical and legal considerations in research.

**Professional Orientation and Ethics** - studies that provide an understanding of all aspects of professional functioning including history, roles, organizational structures, ethics, standards, and credentialing.

The following is an outline of the five work behavior domains:

### **Fundamentals of Counseling**

*For example:*

- Assess client's progress toward counseling goals
- Assess client's psychological functioning
- Conduct diagnostic interview
- Assess need for client referral
- Diagnose based on DSM-IV-TR criteria

### **Assessment and Career Counseling**

*For example:*

- Use test results for client decision making
- Select and administer assessment instruments for counseling
- Provide career counseling for persons with disabilities
- Administer and interpret achievement tests
- Assess client's educational preparation

### **Group Counseling**

*For example:*

- Facilitate group process
- Assist group members in providing feedback to each other
- Conduct post-group follow-up procedures
- Identify behaviors that disrupt group process
- Assess progress toward group goals

### **Programmatic and Clinical Interventions**

*For example:*

- Participate as member of multi-disciplinary team
- Provide crisis counseling to victims of disaster
- Assess programmatic needs
- Conduct community outreach
- Administer and manage counseling program

### **Professional Practice Issues**

*For example:*

- Evaluate the performance of other counselors
- Provide diversity training
- Provide clinical supervision for professionals
- Engage in data analysis
- Conduct community needs assessment

# NCE SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Following are sample questions in the same style and similar content as will be on your examination. Use the sample questions to verify your understanding of the topics in the examination. Answers are provided for the sample questions.

- In attempting to understand the life perspectives and characteristics of their clients, some counselors use Kohlberg's theory of moral development as a theoretical framework. These counselors know that Kohlberg's theory includes three progressive levels culminating in
  - self-actualization, wherein the individual is fully humanistic.
  - principled thought, wherein the individual adopts a self-accepted set of standards of behavior.
  - androgyny, wherein the individual exhibits both male and female stereotypic behaviors.
  - personhood, wherein the individual is free from moral dilemmas.
- A professional counselor determines fees for monthly consultation services on a job-by-job basis. This is an example of which of the following types of reinforcement schedules?
  - variable interval
  - fixed interval
  - variable ratio
  - fixed ratio
- Research on the development of a person in a so-called "humanistic life outlook" has shown that it is facilitated by
  - formal educational experiences.
  - observational learning experiences.
  - diverse interpersonal interactions.
  - all of the above.
- When persons who are characteristically shy and withdrawn participate in "assertiveness training," initially they experience uncertainty and self-doubt. Counselors refer to this social psychological concept as
  - cognitive dissonance.
  - dissociation.
  - individuation.
  - acculturation.
- "Men (used here to mean all people) are disturbed not by things, but by the view which they take of them." This quote, attributable to Epictetus, most closely describes the counseling theory developed by
  - Rogers.
  - Carkhuff.
  - Freud.
  - Ellis.
- The counseling technique in which the counselor intensifies the client's emotional state in order to help the client understand the irrationality of the emotional reaction is known as
  - confrontation.
  - paradoxical intention.
  - systematic desensitization.
  - reconfiguration.
- Counselors know that groups are formed for different purposes. For example, in some groups the primary goal is to yield some specified outcome, or "product," while in others the primary goal is to focus on the "process" of interaction within the group. Which of the following types of groups is more product than process oriented?
  - Behavioral
  - Transactional-analysis
  - Adlerian
  - Client-centered
- In the context of group counseling, members that are high in conformity also tend to be high in
  - independence.
  - authoritarianism.
  - intelligence.
  - superiority.
- A counselor who structures a career counseling group to help group members understand a "fields and levels" approach to careers is following the theory of
  - Super.
  - Roe.
  - Holland.
  - Tiedeman.
- The concept of "career maturity" has been described and researched most extensively by
  - Crites.
  - Hoyt.
  - Tiedeman.
  - Ginzberg.

11. Person A and Person B both took the same test. Person A got a score of 100 while Person B got a score of 75. In order for a counselor to determine whether the difference between their scores was because of "chance," the counselor would need to know which of the following characteristics of the test?
- mean
  - standard deviation
  - standard error of measurement
  - standard error of the mean
12. A counselor conducted a study intended to evaluate the effectiveness of on-going group career counseling on the vocational maturity of high school sophomores. The study was begun in September and continued until June. This study is particularly susceptible to which of the following threats to the validity of an experiment?
- regression
  - maturation
  - reactive effects of experimentation
  - multiple treatment interference
13. A counselor designs a study where two experimental groups and one control group complete pre- and post-experiment measures of self-concept. The subjects were not randomly assigned to the groups because of scheduling problems. Which of the following techniques is MOST appropriate for analyzing the resultant data?
- analysis of covariance
  - correlated t-tests
  - analysis of variance
  - Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test
14. You have been providing career counseling to a client who is seeking employment. Concurrent with the counseling, and with your knowledge, the client has made application for employment with several employers. A potential employer calls you and asks for your opinion as to your client's suitability for the employer's job opening. Under which of the following conditions are you free (i.e., not in violation of professional ethics), to provide the information requested?
- When it is clear that the client will not get the job unless the information is given
  - When you are certain that the information you would provide would assure that the client would get the job.
  - When in your best judgment you believe the information would enhance the client's chances for getting the job.
  - None of the above.
15. As applied to professional licensure of counselors, the term "reciprocity" means that
- one licensing agency agrees to accept the licensing standards of another as sufficient for its own.
  - a licensed counselor may legally perform the functions of a licensed psychologist.
  - certification is synonymous with licensure.
  - graduation from a fully accredited counselor education program automatically constitutes eligibility for licensure.

#### Sample Answer Key

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. B  | 11. C |
| 2. C | 7. A  | 12. B |
| 3. D | 8. B  | 13. A |
| 4. A | 9. B  | 14. D |
| 5. D | 10. A | 15. A |

**The National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc. (NBCC) has developed a preparation guide for the NCE that includes general information about the exam, a practice test, tips and strategies for test taking, and additional references. This guide can be purchased for \$24.95. An order form can be printed from the Web site: [www.nbcc.org/orderform](http://www.nbcc.org/orderform).**

**Address: NBCC,  
3 Terrace Way,  
Greensboro, NC 27403-3660**

**Phone: 336-547-0607**

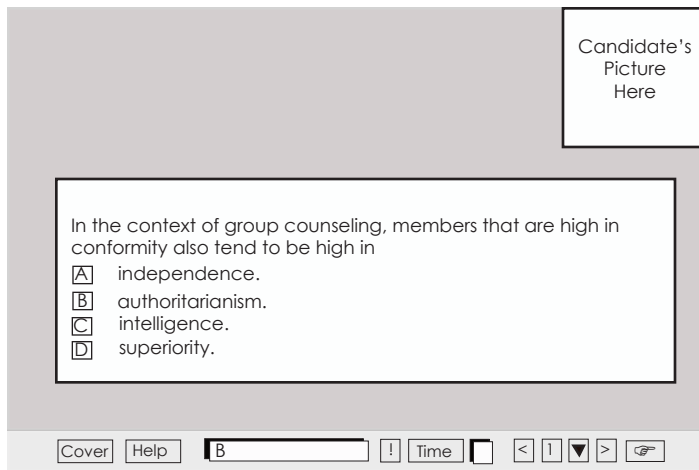
**Fax: 336-547-0017**

**Web site: [www.nbcc.org](http://www.nbcc.org)**

# TIMED EXAMINATION

## Multiple-choice software

Following the practice examination, you will begin the timed examination. Before beginning, instructions for taking the examination are provided on-screen.



The computer monitors the time you spend on the examination. The examination will terminate if you exceed the time allowed. You may click on the "Time" box in the lower right-hand corner of the screen or select the Time key to monitor your time. A digital clock indicates the time remaining for you to complete the examination. The Time feature may be turned off during the examination.

Only one examination question is presented at a time. The question number appears in the lower right portion of the screen. Choices of answers to the examination question are identified as A, B, C, or D. You must indicate your choice by either typing in the letter in the response box in the lower left portion of the computer screen or clicking in the option using the mouse. To change your answer, enter a different option by pressing the A, B, C, or D key or by clicking on the option using the mouse. You may change your answer as many times as you wish during the examination time limit.

To move to the next question, click on the forward arrow (>) in the lower right portion of the screen or select the NEXT key. This action will move you forward through the examination question by question. If you wish to review any question or questions, click the backward arrow (<) or use the left arrow key to move backward through the examination.

An examination question may be left unanswered for return later in the examination session. Questions may also be bookmarked for later review by clicking in the blank square to the right of the Time button. Click on the hand icon or select the NEXT key to advance to

the next unanswered or bookmarked questions. To identify all unanswered and bookmarked questions, repeatedly click on the hand icon or press the NEXT key. When the examination is completed, the number of examination questions answered is reported. If not all questions have been answered and there is time remaining, return to the examination and answer those questions. Be sure to provide an answer for each examination question before ending the examination. There is no penalty for guessing.

## CANDIDATE COMMENTS

During the examination, online comments may be provided for any question by clicking on the button displaying an exclamation point (!) to the left of the Time button. This opens a dialogue box where comments may be entered. Comments will be reviewed, but individual responses will not be provided.

**The following pertains only to the NCMHCE**

## **EXAMINATION FORMAT**

### **EXAMINATION CONTENT**

#### **NATIONAL CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING EXAMINATION (NCMHCE)**

The problems on the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE) are designed to sample a broad area of competencies, not the recall of isolated facts. Therefore, the problems assess clinical problem-solving ability, including identifying, analyzing, diagnosing, and treating clinical problems.

The examination consists of 10 clinical mental health counseling cases. Each case is divided into 5-8 sections classified as either *Information Gathering (IG)* or *Decision Making (DM)*. The examination covers the following areas:

#### **Evaluation and Assessment**

*For example:*

- Identify precipitating problems or symptoms
- Conduct mental status exam
- Identify individual and relationship functioning
- Provide other referral sources

#### **Clinical Diagnosis and Treatment Planning**

*For example:*

- Integrate client assessment and observational data with clinical judgement to formulate a differential diagnosis
- Develop a treatment plan in collaboration with the client
- Coordinate treatment plan with other service providers
- Monitor client progress toward goal attainment

#### **Clinical Practice**

*For example:*

- Determine if service meets client's needs
- Discuss ethical and legal issues
- Understand scope of practice parameters
- Provide prevention interventions

A clinical mental health counselor is required to make important clinical decisions regarding the well-being of clients. Therefore, a clinical simulation examination is used to more realistically assess knowledge in such decision making.

The NCMHCE is a clinical simulation examination. Each problem will consist of three components: Scenario, Information Gathering (IG) sections, and Decision Making (DM) sections. Each problem begins with a scenario. The scenario provides the setting and introductory client information (e.g., age, gender, presenting problem(s)).

In Information Gathering (IG) sections, you are expected to gather all relevant information for answering the questions. This might include family background, status of physical health, previous experience in counseling, etc. Read all responses before choosing the responses that you consider necessary for responding to the question about the client. You should select all options that are appropriate at that time. If you select more or less options than are appropriate, this will adversely impact your information gathering score.

Decision Making (DM) sections provide opportunities for making clinical judgements or decisions. These sections may be formatted in one of two ways:

1. Single Best Option- There may be more than one acceptable option, but one option is generally regarded as most acceptable.
2. Multiple Options- Several options are considered appropriate. These sections address decisions in which a combination of actions is required.

In the Decision Making section described as "Single Best Option," the instructions are to "CHOOSE ONLY ONE" option. You should not assume that your response is incorrect if you are directed to make another selection. The simulation examination format sometimes uses this direction. The multiple option type of decision making described as "Multiple Options" will have instructions to "SELECT AS MANY."

The procedure for taking the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE) is different from that of the more common multiple-choice examinations. Each simulation problem is identified by a number and the client's name and each section is identified by a letter.

**The National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc. (NBCC) has developed a preparation guide for the NCMHCE that includes 5-problem sample examination with directions for scoring, explanations for each choice, latent image pen, and additional references. This guide can be purchased for \$34.95. An order form can be printed from the Web site: [www.nbcc.org/orderform](http://www.nbcc.org/orderform).**

# SAMPLE CLINICAL SIMULATION PROBLEM

The following is an example of an IG and DM section as it might appear in a problem on the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE). Remember that in an actual problem, there will be 5-8 sections and 4-14 selections per section (depending on the nature of the section). The responses in the shaded right-hand column are covered here. In the actual examination you will not be able to see the response unless you select it.

**Simulation 1- Ms. Wagner:** You are a clinical mental health counselor in a small group private practice. Ms. Wagner is a 37-year-old female who has scheduled an appointment with you. She states, "My primary care physician said you probably could help me." For the past 3 months, Ms. Wagner has been feeling stressed, had problems sleeping, and has not been able to focus on her work.

## Section A- Ms. Wagner

During the first session, which of the following would be most important to assess in order to formulate a provisional DSM-IV diagnosis? (**SELECT AS MANY** as you consider indicated in this section.)

A-1.	Mental status	A-1.	Unremarkable **
A-2.	Stressors	A-2.	Single parent of a 10-year-old girl, elementary teacher at a new school, and father had a heart attack 3 months ago**
A-3.	Previous counseling	A-3.	None**
A-4.	Recreation activities	A-4.	Not relevant at this time**
A-5.	Family history of mental illness	A-5.	None**

**7-9 more choices would appear here on a complete problem.**

When you have completed your selections in this section, **UNCOVER RESPONSE A-13**

A-13.	Go to section D**
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## Section D- Ms. Wagner

Based on the information obtained about Ms. Wagner, what is the provisional DSM-IV diagnosis?

(**CHOOSE ONLY ONE** unless you are directed to "Make another selection in this Section.")

D-1. Generalized Anxiety Disorder

D-1.

Not indicated.  
Make another selection in this section.\*\*

D-2. Major Depressive Disorder,  
Single Episode

D-2.

Not indicated.  
Make another selection in this section.\*\*

D-3. Adjustment Disorder with  
Depressed Mood

D-3.

Go to Section \_\_\_\_.\*\*

D-4. Dysthymic Disorder

D-4.

Not indicated.  
Make another selection in this section.\*\*

***This section might have 1-2 more alternatives on a complete problem.***

## SELECTED REFERENCES

*NBCC does not endorse any particular study materials for the NCMHCE. The following references are presented as possible helpful options in preparing for the NCMHCE. NCMHCE performance enhancement is neither implied nor expressed.*

American Counseling Association, (2005). ACA Code of Ethics. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

American Psychiatric Association. (1994). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (4th ed.) Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.

Corey, G. (1996). Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy (5th ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Hood, A.B., & Johnson, R.W. (1997). Assessment in counseling: A guide to the use of psychological assessment procedures (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

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# Request for Special Examination Accommodations

If you have a disability covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act and require examination accommodations, please complete this form. You will also need to provide, on letterhead, supporting documentation from a qualified professional stating your condition and need for special examination arrangements. The information you provide and any documentation regarding your disability and your need for examination accommodation will be treated with strict confidentiality.

**All states do not use this special accommodations request form.**

**Please check your individual state specific insert for further instructions. ([www.nbcc.org/stateboardmap](http://www.nbcc.org/stateboardmap))**

## Candidate Information

Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Last, First, Middle Initial, Former Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

State

Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daytime Telephone Number

## Special Accommodations

I request special accommodations for the \_\_\_\_\_ examination.

Please provide (check all that apply):

Special seating or other physical accommodation

Reader

Extended examination time (time and a half)

Distraction-free room

Other special accommodation(s) (Please specify.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_