



American Council  
on Exercise



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# Certification Candidate Handbook

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GETTING PEOPLE MOVING

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# Requirements and processes necessary to earn and maintain ACE Certifications



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# Introduction



95,000  
CERTIFIED  
PROFESSIONALS  
HOLD MORE THAN  
100,000  
ACE  
CERTIFICATIONS

**FOUNDED IN 1985**, the American Council on Exercise (ACE) is a nonprofit organization committed to America's health and well-being. Over the past 30 years, we have become an established resource for health and exercise professionals and the public, providing comprehensive, unbiased research and validating ourselves as the country's trusted authority on health and fitness.

Today, ACE is the largest nonprofit health and fitness certification, education, and training organization in the world, with 95,000 certified professionals who hold more than 100,000 ACE Certifications. With a long heritage in certification, education, training, and public outreach, we are among the most respected organizations in the industry and a resource the public has come to trust for health and fitness education.

This *ACE Certification Candidate Handbook* covers the requirements and processes necessary to earn and maintain ACE Certifications.

## ACE Certification Programs

The American Council on Exercise has four core fitness certification programs, each with a unique population and/or programming focus. Each ACE Certification program is evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that it is up-to-date with the most current research and standards. Assessments for each certification program are also updated on a regular basis, and are designed to assess if candidates meet the established level of minimum competence to safely practice within the scope of practice of the specified certification.

### ACE PERSONAL TRAINER CERTIFICATION

The ACE Personal Trainer Certification is designed for health and exercise professionals providing one-on-one or small-group fitness instruction to individuals who are apparently healthy or have medical clearance to exercise.

### ACE GROUP FITNESS INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION

The ACE Group Fitness Instructor Certification is designed for health and exercise professionals teaching any form of exercise to apparently healthy individuals in a group setting.

### ACE HEALTH COACH CERTIFICATION

The ACE Health Coach Certification is designed for fitness, healthcare, corporate wellness, and allied health professionals coaching a wide variety of individuals and groups to adopt structured behavior-change programs that focus on lifestyle and weight management through physical activity, nutrition, and education necessary to improve and maintain health, fitness, weight, and total wellness.

### ACE MEDICAL EXERCISE SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION

The ACE Medical Exercise Specialist Certification is designed for advanced health and exercise professionals providing in-depth preventive and post-rehabilitative fitness programming for individuals who are at risk for, or are recovering from, a variety of cardiovascular, pulmonary, metabolic, and musculoskeletal diseases and disorders, as well as apparently healthy clients in special population groups, including older adults, youth, and prenatal and postpartum women.





# Accreditation

## NCCA ACCREDITATION

In 2003, ACE's four core certifications received accreditation from the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). The NCCA, created in 1987, is the accrediting body of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE), which was formerly known as the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA). The NCCA is an independent non-governmental agency that accredits certification programs in a variety of professions, including athletic training, dietetics, occupational therapy, financial services, and fitness, to help ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the public. The NCCA reviews the certification organization's procedures, protocols, and operations, and determines if the certification properly discriminates between those who are qualified and those who are not qualified to be awarded the respective credential. The NCCA evaluates the processes and systems used by an organization to identify professional role and scope of practice, develop exam content, and provide proper exam administration and scoring to ensure the following:

- + That the examination process is fair and unbiased
- + That the examination accurately measures the minimal competence of the candidate for the profession
- + That the public is protected from unqualified or ineffective practitioners
- + That the organization has the means to support its professionals

The NCCA has 24 Standards that a certification organization must meet and remain in compliance with in order to earn NCCA Accreditation. These NCCA Standards serve as a benchmark for how organizations should conduct certification programs.

For more information about the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, please go to the NCCA website: [www.credentialingexcellence.org/p/cm/ld/fid=86](http://www.credentialingexcellence.org/p/cm/ld/fid=86).

## What does the NCCA accreditation standard mean to you as a health and exercise professional?

The International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) and Medical Fitness Association (MFA) recommend that club owners and medical fitness facility operators hire exercise professionals with certifications that are accredited by the NCCA or an equivalent accrediting organization. In addition, the *Standards and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Educational Programs for Personal Fitness Training*, established by the Committee on the Accreditation for the Exercise Sciences (CoAES) of the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP), include students' performance on a national credentialing examination accredited by the NCCA as one of the primary outcomes for earning this accreditation. By earning an NCCA-accredited ACE Certification, health and exercise professionals demonstrate that they meet the qualifications to take a legitimate place in the healthcare continuum within their defined scope of practice. Earning and maintaining an NCCA-accredited certification can give you a competitive advantage when being considered as a candidate for employment with a company or organization that belongs to IHRSA or MFA, as it demonstrates that you have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide the public with safe and effective exercise programs.

## EUROPEACTIVE ACCREDITATION

The EuropeActive Organization [formerly the European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA)] sets standards throughout Europe for the accreditation of health and fitness credentials. Using a standards council comprised of industry experts, employers, academics, and practitioners from across Europe, EuropeActive sets standards for organizations to become approved as accredited training providers. In 2012, ACE became the first U.S. fitness certification provider to earn approval by the EuropeActive Standards Council. This designation means that ACE Certified Personal Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors are eligible to join the European Register of Exercise Professionals (EREPS), the principal resource for hiring qualified health and exercise professionals in Europe.

For additional information on the accreditation of ACE Certification programs by the NCCA and EHFA, go to the ACE website: [www.ACEfitness.org/ncca-accreditation/default.aspx](http://www.ACEfitness.org/ncca-accreditation/default.aspx).

## Statement of Nondiscrimination

ACE recognizes its responsibility to administer all of its policies in a manner consistent with federal, state and local laws and regulations. In particular, ACE recognizes that equal opportunity is fundamental to equality in all forms of human endeavor. Therefore, all administrative practices and procedures will be applied free of discrimination on the basis of race, creed, national origin or heritage, age, religion, sex, gender or gender expression or identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition, ancestry, marital status, or service in the uniformed services.



# Certification Exam Eligibility Criteria



**TO SIT FOR** an ACE Certification Exam, you must meet all eligibility requirements that have been established for that particular certification exam, as detailed below. On the day of the exam, candidates must present their exam admission ticket and a current government-issued ID with a photo and signature that matches the first and last name registered on the admission ticket.

## Eligibility Requirements

### ACE PERSONAL TRAINER AND GROUP FITNESS INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION EXAMS

- + You must be at least 18 years of age.
- + You must hold a current adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillator (AED) certificate including live skills check.\*
- + You must have completed high school (or the equivalent).

### ACE HEALTH COACH CERTIFICATION EXAM

- + You must be at least 18 years of age.
- + You must hold a current adult CPR and AED certificate including live skills check.\*
- + You must submit supporting documentation for **one of the following**:
  - Current NCCA-accredited certification<sup>†</sup> in fitness, nutrition, healthcare, wellness, human resources, or a related field; or
  - An associate's degree or higher from an accredited college or university in fitness, exercise science, nutrition, healthcare, wellness, or a related field; or
  - Completed health coach training and education program approved by the National Board for Health and Wellness Coaches (NBHWC)<sup>‡</sup>; or
  - A minimum of 2 years of documented work experience in coaching, leading, designing, implementing, or facilitating one or more of the following: behavior or lifestyle change, exercise, wellness, nutrition, or physical activity

\* CPR and AED are both required in the U.S. and Canada. Candidates outside the U.S. and Canada are required to hold only current CPR due to differing laws regarding AED use by non-medical professionals in some countries. Candidates taking an ACE exam via computer-based testing must hold a current CPR/AED certificate prior to registration.

<sup>†</sup> A list of NCCA-accredited certification programs can be found via the following link [www.credentialingexcellence.org/p/cm/ld/fid=121](http://www.credentialingexcellence.org/p/cm/ld/fid=121)

<sup>‡</sup> A list of NBHWC-approved training and education programs can be found at: [nbhwc.org/approved-programs](http://nbhwc.org/approved-programs)

Note: Candidates must submit supporting documentation of current NCCA-accredited certifications, degrees, and/or work experience used to meet eligibility requirements prior to registering for the ACE Health Coach exam.

\*\* Candidates for the ACE Medical Exercise Specialist exam must also submit documentation of their 500 hours of work experience prior to, or at the time of, exam registration.

### ACE MEDICAL EXERCISE SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION EXAM

- + You must be at least 18 years of age.
- + You must hold a current adult CPR and AED certificate including live skills check.\*
- + You must submit supporting documentation for **each of the following**:
  - A four-year (bachelor's) degree in exercise science or a related field<sup>†</sup>
  - 500 hours of work experience designing and implementing exercise programs for apparently healthy individuals and/or high-risk individuals, as documented by a qualified professional\*\*

Medical Exercise Specialist eligibility documentation information can be found here:

[ACEFitness.org/myace/exam-preapproval-mes](http://ACEFitness.org/myace/exam-preapproval-mes).

You may also contact the ACE Credentialing Department via email at [Credentialing@ACEfitness.org](mailto:Credentialing@ACEfitness.org) for additional information regarding the pre-approval process for Advanced Certifications.

For information regarding appeals for denied eligibility, refer to Appendix A.



## ACE Code of Ethics

The ACE Code of Ethics governs the ethical and professional conduct of ACE Certified Professionals when working with clients, the public, or other health and exercise professionals. Every individual who registers for an ACE Certification Exam must agree to uphold the ACE Code of Ethics throughout the exam process and as a professional, should he or she earn an ACE Certification. Exam candidates and ACE Certified Professionals must have a comprehensive understanding of the code and the consequences and potential public harm that can come from violating each of its principles. The ACE Code of Ethics reads as follows:

As an ACE Certified Professional, I am guided by the American Council on Exercise's principles of professional conduct whether I am working with clients, the public, or other health and exercise professionals. I promise to:

- + Provide safe and effective instruction
- + Provide equal and fair treatment to all clients
- + Stay up-to-date on the latest health and fitness research and understand its practical application
- + Maintain current CPR and AED certificates and knowledge of first-aid services
- + Comply with all applicable business, employment, and intellectual property laws
- + Uphold and enhance public appreciation and trust for the health and fitness industry
- + Maintain the confidentiality of all client information
- + Refer clients to more qualified health or medical professionals when appropriate
- + Establish and maintain clear professional boundaries

These principles of professional conduct make up the ACE Code of Ethics. During the exam registration process, candidates must affirm their agreement to uphold the ACE Code of Ethics throughout the ACE Certification process and in their professional work should they earn an ACE Certification.



# ACE Certification Exam Development



## ACE Credentialing Department

The ACE Credentialing Department functions independently in its oversight of American Council on Exercise certification activities. This includes governance over exam development and administration, eligibility requirements to sit for and then earn an ACE Certification, issuance of certifications, criteria for maintaining ACE Certifications through enhanced continued competence, and developing and implementing disciplinary procedures.

The ACE Credentialing Department upholds ACE's established policies and procedures in maintaining the integrity of all examinations set in accordance with NCCA accreditation standards. ACE Certifications are awarded only to individuals who meet the eligibility requirements for the certification and then demonstrate that they meet or exceed the established level of professional competence by passing the certification examination.

Governance for ACE Certification program direction is provided by the ACE Board of Directors and the ACE Executive Team. Under the direction of ACE's Executive VP of Engagement, the ACE Director of Credentialing oversees all administrative acts of the ACE Credentialing Department, including management of all ACE meetings and processes focused on ACE Certifications, exam development, disciplinary committees, and management of ACE's business relationships with Scantron, the testing service provider that ACE contracts for the development, delivery, scoring, validation, and security of all ACE Certification examinations.

The ACE Credentialing Department functions to achieve the following professional objectives:

- + To create and publish standards, policies, and procedures for the development and administration of ACE Certification programs
- + To determine candidate eligibility criteria to sit for each ACE Certification examination and for recertification
- + To establish policies, procedures, and requirements for continuing education and recertification for all ACE Certified Professionals
- + To confer recognition to individuals who successfully earn the ACE credential and who successfully complete the continuing education and recertification requirements established by ACE
- + To define the scope of practice for each ACE Certification
- + To develop standards for professional conduct, known as the ACE Code of Ethics, and implement procedures for addressing violations according to ACE's Professional Practices and Disciplinary Procedures (see Appendix B)
- + To uphold and promote the validity of the ACE credential to stakeholders
- + To comply with standards of, implement policies and programs for, and submit relevant certification and recertification information to regulatory bodies to support the validity and reliability of ACE credentials
- + To earn and maintain accreditation for ACE's certification programs from accrediting and regulatory bodies in the U.S. and Canada (e.g., NCCA, ANSI) and abroad (e.g., Registers of Exercise Professionals)
- + To acquire, develop, distribute, and maintain information relative to the certification functions of ACE

## Testing Service Provider

ACE utilizes the services of Scantron (formerly known as Castle Worldwide) to develop, administer, score, and report all ACE Certification exams. Scantron offers comprehensive content services built on a history of developing quality high-stakes certification examinations for organizations that license or certify the expertise of professionals in various fields, including medical technology, engineering, athletic training, occupational therapy, and fitness. Their specific exam development services include:

- + Job/task analysis and role delineation studies
- + Development of test specifications
- + Content validation studies
- + Establishing cut score standards
- + Computerized item banking and examination production
- + Item writing (virtual and in-person) and test assembly
- + Editorial and psychometric reviews
- + Delivery of exams in computer-based testing format
- + Proctor and exam site identification and training

Scantron is located at the following physical address:

Scantron  
 6001 Hospitality Court, Suite 100  
 Morrisville, NC. 27560 USA  
 Phone: 919.572.6880  
 Web: [www.ScantronAssessment.com](http://www.ScantronAssessment.com)  
 Email: info@Scantron.com

Scantron administers proctored computer-based certification and licensure examinations to candidates almost anywhere in the world. Exam administration services provided include:

- + Establishing domestic and international test sites
- + Hiring and training proctors
- + Adhering to Americans with Disabilities Act requirements for special-needs candidates
- + Providing exam registration services
- + Verifying candidate identification
- + Developing test administrator and proctor manuals
- + Scoring, equating, and scaling of examinations
- + Secure reporting of exam results to candidates
- + Secure storage of examination results and candidate information

Scantron provides individual and aggregated score reports. Individual reports provide final scaled score, pass/fail status, and domain performance (percentage correct). Aggregated score analysis evaluates item performance, to help certification programs in identifying questions that continue to effectively measure knowledge and skills and those that merit retirement or rewriting. Scoring and reporting services include:

- + Scoring, scaling, and equating as appropriate for the certification program
- + Post-examination item analysis and summary statistics review
- + Generating customized score reports
- + Hand-scoring upon request
- + Preparing diagnostic reports

## Exam Development Procedures

Scantron specializes in offering comprehensive content services, including high-stakes certification examination development, and upholds these rigorous standards for exam development, administration, scoring, and equating. ACE works collaboratively with Scantron to uphold these rigorous standards for all ACE

Certification programs. This ensures that certified professionals meet minimum standards of knowledge and skills necessary to provide safe and effective fitness instruction for the protection of the public.

All ACE Certification Exam questions and exam forms are developed by national and representative panels of industry experts called subject matter experts (SMEs), who are recognized by ACE for their expertise in one or more areas relating to at least one ACE Certification program. The composition of exam development committees varies for each certification program due to the different focus and scope of practice for each program. These committees are composed to fulfill the qualification requirements for each certification weighted according to the exam content outlines.

All ACE Certification Exams are developed using the six-point exam development process guided by standards accepted by the American Psychological Association, the American Educational Research Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education. These steps are facilitated by the psychometric team at Scantron and include:

- + **JOB ANALYSIS/ROLE DELINEATION:** A group of industry experts analyzes the specific job requirements in order to develop an outline of the tasks, knowledge, and skills required to perform the job effectively (e.g., group fitness instruction, personal training).
- + **VALIDATION STUDY:** A research survey is conducted to determine the validity of the job analysis. The survey is sent for validation to a large, random, national sample of health and exercise professionals who currently hold the certification for which the job analysis was conducted.
- + **ITEM WRITING:** A national and representative panel of industry experts develops exam questions that are tied to exam specifications and referenced to acceptable texts or documents. Once completed, each exam item, or question, must be validated by three SMEs who were not involved in writing the question.
- + **EXAM ASSEMBLY:** The questions are reviewed, selected, and approved by an exam committee. The constructed exam is then forwarded to Scantron for final editing.



- + **CUT SCORE DETERMINATION:** The passing score is determined as a standard for public protection. Each question is rated by a group of industry experts using criterion-referenced procedures. The experts estimate the percentage of minimally competent professionals that will answer each question correctly. The passing score is then calculated and based on the overall degree of difficulty.
- + **CONTINUAL EXAM EVALUATION:** Following an exam administration, there is a continual evaluation and analysis of each question to help ensure validity. If a question is determined to be flawed, it is reworked or replaced. Exam questions and exam forms will also be retired once they have had significant exposure in terms of exam candidates.

A new exam development process begins every five years, beginning with a new job analysis/role delineation. ACE Certification Exams are developed using the six-point exam development process and are guided by standards accepted by the American Psychological Association, the American Educational Research Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education. All ACE Certification programs adhere to the 24 Standards of the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

## ACE Certification Committees

ACE has a pool of committed and qualified volunteer SMEs for each certification program. Each SME for a given program must hold that certification or qualifications that are equivalent to or exceed the certification, and they must work in the role of the certified professional, or supervise or educate professionals who serve in the specific certificant role. Some SMEs are qualified to sit on committees for more than one ACE Certification program due to their combination of credentials, education, and work experience. Due to professional roles and personal commitments, most SMEs are not available for every possible meeting for which they are qualified. As such, the ACE Director of Credentialing assembles ad hoc committees of qualified SMEs for each certification committee meeting. The ACE Director of Credentialing takes care to ensure that each committee includes representation from the major areas of function for the credential, and that it is representative of the geographic and gender distribution of the certified population, with a focus on ethnic diversity as well.

## Objectivity in Exam Development

ACE recognizes that equal opportunity is fundamental to equality in all forms of human endeavor. Therefore, all administrative practices and procedures will be nondiscriminatory on the basis of race, creed, national origin or heritage, age, religion, sex, gender or gender expression or identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition, ancestry, marital status, or service in the uniformed services. This includes all certification and exam development activities.

ACE SMEs go through training at the beginning of each certification committee meeting and before virtual item writing to ensure that the objectives of the meeting are understood and that the panel understands the target population of the certification examination. One key element that is part of the instructions for ACE Certification Committee meetings, covered collaboratively by the ACE Director of Credentialing and the Scantron Psychometric Team, is to instruct SMEs that all ACE Certification Exam questions should be unbiased and objective. This includes avoiding any gender, age, ethnicity, geography, or other biases in exam items developed, edited, and included on ACE Certification Exam forms. ACE does allow for exam questions to include gender or age information when that information is critical for candidates to be able to differentiate between correct and incorrect responses. Examples of these exceptions include risk-factor guidelines that differ for men and women, and exercise programming guidelines that differ for certain age groups, such as youth.

## Security

Disclosure of examination content or information to persons outside of the exam development committees is prohibited and constitutes a breach of security, compromising and invalidating the examination and certification in question. All exam development members are required to sign non-disclosure agreements prior to participation, agreeing to abide to security procedures established by the psychometric staff to prevent compromise of any examination. All documents created during exam development meetings are shredded upon conclusion of the meeting by the ACE Director of Credentialing and Scantron Psychometric Project Manager.

# Earning an ACE Certification



**IN ORDER TO EARN** an ACE Certification, candidates must first meet the eligibility requirements, and then must register for and pass the certification examination. ACE will not grant a certification to any individual based on education and/or experience, as all ACE Certifications must be earned. ACE Certifications are valid for two years, and must be renewed through submission of 20 hours or more of ACE-approved continuing education, current cardiopulmonary resuscitation/automated external defibrillator (CPR/AED) certificate, and applicable renewal fees. Information regarding ACE Certification Exams, including eligibility criteria, registration, format, design, administration, scoring, passing criteria, professional code of conduct, and maintaining an ACE Certification can be found in the sections that follow.

## ACE Certified Professionals

ACE Certifications are valid for two years and must be renewed through continuing education. The numbers below represent the total number of currently certified ACE Professionals as of December 31, 2019:

ACE CERTIFICATION	CURRENTLY CERTIFIED AS OF 12/31/2019
Personal Trainer	67,745
Group Fitness Instructor	21,051
Health Coach	7,581
Medical Exercise Specialist	931

## ACE Certification Exams

All four ACE Certification programs have competency-based assessments comprised of multiple-choice exams, with 125 scored items and 25 experimental items that make up the entire credentialing exam. Candidates are given three hours to complete an ACE multiple-choice exam for any of the four ACE Certification programs.

ACE employs Scantron, a full-service, third-party testing company, to ensure that ACE Certifications adhere to national testing standards. ACE Certification Exams are developed by committees of working health and exercise professionals who have been identified as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) for that particular ACE Certification program. Each multiple-choice question that is developed must be referenced to an appropriate text or resource, such as ACE or other exercise science-related manuals, and current industry standards, guidelines, and position papers (e.g., ACSM, AHA, ACOG, and USDA). Each multiple-choice question is written by at least one SME, and then reviewed and validated by a minimum of three more SMEs to ensure that each question is objective, clear, fair, current, maps to the exam content outline, and has only one clearly correct answer (response) and three incorrect responses.

## Exam Content Outlines

ACE uses competency-based examinations to assess if candidates meet the established level of competence to earn the specific ACE Certification. All ACE Certification exams are comprised of 150 multiple-choice questions, with 125 scored and 25 experimental questions. The 25 experimental questions are not included in the candidate's score, as they are being evaluated to determine if they perform well enough statistically to be introduced as scored items on a future exam. Only the 125 scored items count toward a candidate's finals score that determines if the candidate passed or failed the exam. The 125 scored items are distributed according to the test specifications, called the exam content outline, for the specific certification program.

Exam content outlines for ACE Certification programs are updated each time that ACE conducts a role delineation study for the certification program, which occurs on a five-year rotating basis for the ACE Personal Trainer, Group Fitness Instructor, and Health Coach Certification programs and every five to seven years for the ACE Medical Exercise Specialist Certification program. This is a critical step to ensure that professional certification programs stay relevant and current, with examinations that reflect the composition and focus as established and validated through the role delineation study.

Exam content outlines serve as blueprints for the development of each exam for a given certification program. ACE exam content outlines are typically divided into major areas of responsibility called Domains. Each Domain represents a logical grouping of Task Statements that detail the job-related functions under each domain. Each Task Statement has associated knowledge and skills deemed necessary to perform the task in a practical setting.

Detailed exam content outlines with complete knowledge and skill statements for each ACE Certification program can be found in Appendix B of the manual for that program and at: [ACEfitness.org/fitness-certifications/certification-exam-content](https://www.acefitness.org/fitness-certifications/certification-exam-content). Abbreviated versions of all four exam content outlines can be found in Appendix C of this document.



## Study Materials and Resources

ACE produces manuals and associated study materials for each ACE Certification program. These manuals are produced first and foremost as resources to help candidates prepare for professions in health and fitness. While these materials also help candidates prepare for the corresponding ACE Certification exam, it is critical that candidates view these study materials as helpful resources rather than the sole authority for a particular profession or examination. Candidates do themselves and the industry a disservice if they believe that studying an ACE manual alone is a comprehensive resource for their health and fitness knowledge and their career.

ACE has Study Coaches available to help candidates with questions as they prepare for their ACE Certification Exam. These experts have no involvement in the development and delivery of ACE Certification Exams; however, they are ACE Certified Professionals who have experience working in the field and they can help candidates navigate the exam content outline for each of the certification programs. You can schedule a private tutoring session with a Study Coach, register for a live webinar or virtual study session, and access commonly asked questions, exam preparation blogs, and helpful videos by visiting ACE Answers at [ACEfitness.org/fitness-certifications/ace-answers/](https://www.acefitness.org/fitness-certifications/ace-answers/). You can also connect with ACE Study Coaches and other exam candidates by joining the ACE Answers Facebook Page at [www.facebook.com/ACEFitnessAnswers/](https://www.facebook.com/ACEFitnessAnswers/).

## Suggested Reading

### PERSONAL TRAINER CERTIFICATION

American College of Sports Medicine (2017). *ACSM's Resources for the Personal Trainer* (5th ed.). Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

American Council on Exercise (2014). *ACE Personal Trainer Manual* (5th ed.). San Diego: American Council on Exercise.

National Strength and Conditioning Association (2012). *NSCA's Essentials of Personal Training* (2nd ed.). Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics.

### GROUP FITNESS INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION

American Council on Exercise (2016). *ACE Group Fitness Instructor Handbook*. San Diego: American Council on Exercise.

Desimone, G. (2012). *ACSM's Resources for the Group Exercise Instructor*. Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Kennedy-Armbruster, C. & Yoke, M. (2020). *Methods of Group Fitness Instruction* (4th ed.). Champaign, Ill: Human Kinetics.

### HEALTH COACH CERTIFICATION

American Council on Exercise (2019). *The Professional's Guide to Health and Wellness Coaching*. San Diego: American Council on Exercise.

Brehm, B. (2014). *Psychology of Health and Fitness*. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company.

Weinberg, R. & Gould, D. (2018). *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology* (7th ed.). Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics.

### MEDICAL EXERCISE SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION

American College of Sports Medicine (2017). *ACSM's Resources for the Exercise Physiologist*. Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

American Council on Exercise (2015). *ACE*

*Medical Exercise Specialist Manual*. San Diego: American Council on Exercise.

Goodman, C. & Helgeson, K. (2011). *Exercise Prescription for Medical Conditions*. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company.

National Academy of Sports Medicine (2018). *NASM Essentials of Corrective Exercise Training* (6th ed.). Burlington, Mass.: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

### ALL PROGRAMS

American Council on Exercise (2014). *ACE Senior Fitness Manual*. San Diego: American Council on Exercise.

American Council on Exercise (2012). *ACE Essentials of Exercise Science for Fitness Professionals*. San Diego: American Council on Exercise.

American College of Sports Medicine (2018). *ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription* (10th ed.). Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

American College of Sports Medicine (2018). *ACSM Health/Fitness Facility Standards and*

*Guidelines* (5th ed.). Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics.

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# The Certification Exam Process



## Exam Registration: Computer-based Testing

Candidates registering for computer-based testing (CBT) may utilize one of the following options:

- + **ONLINE/PHONE REGISTRATION:** Permissible for all ACE Certification Exams based on eligibility criteria\*
- + **FAXED OR MAILED REGISTRATION:** Permissible for all ACE Certification Exams based on eligibility criteria\*

For CBT, the prerequisite of holding a current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certificate with CPR verification on file with ACE is mandatory. As examination results are immediately provided with CBT, candidates cannot register for an ACE Certification examination without first submitting current CPR certificate details.

**Note:** All CPR courses must include a live skills check. Online-only courses cannot be accepted. Exam candidates in the U.S. and Canada must also have AED training included in their CPR course.

Candidates may register for CBT examinations as early as 10 days prior to the date of the exam, and may have the option to register as far out as six months in advance of the exam date provided, that such dates are available on the ACE website. Once a candidate registers for a CBT examination, the requested examination location and timeslot requires approval through the third-party contracted testing centers.

\*ACE Health Coach and ACE Medical Exercise Specialist Certification exams require pre-approval prior to registering online, over the phone, or by faxed or mailed registration.

The confirmation process for CBT exam registrations is automated, with email confirmation of registration dates being either approved or unavailable generally received by candidates within minutes of submitting their registration. On occasion, when there are technical issues, this process can take up to two to three business days following registration. Once a candidate's preferred examination choice is approved, the candidate will receive his or her admission ticket via email and is subject to ACE's reschedule and cancellation policy. If the preferred examination choice is unavailable, the candidate will receive an email with direction as to how to request a new exam choice through the ACE Exam Registration portal at no additional charge.

## CBT Special Accommodations

Candidates with a special testing need will be accommodated as best as possible. Candidates requesting testing accommodations may not register online. All Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) candidates must submit proper documentation to support ADA requests. This documentation must be submitted, along with a completed registration form, at least 15 to 30 days prior to the requested exam date. Please contact ACE Exam Registration at 800.825.3636, Ext. 783 for further assistance. The confirmation process for CBT exam registrations with special accommodations

requires approval through the third-party contracted testing centers. The confirmation process for these types of registrations results in a confirmation email to be received roughly 24 to 72 hours after the registration is initially processed. On occasion, special accommodations cannot be made on the requested exam date or at a specific location. In this instance, a member of the ACE Exam Registration Department will contact the candidate for alternate testing locations, dates, and/or times.

## International Exams

ACE offers its four certification exams via CBT internationally at select locations. To find an ACE exam offered outside the U.S., please go to [ACEfitness.org/fitness-certifications/schedule-your-exam/](https://www.acefitness.org/fitness-certifications/schedule-your-exam/). Select "Find an exam location" and then choose a country in the "Select Country" dropdown bar.

The ACE Personal Trainer certification exam is available in the following foreign languages: Finnish, Hindi, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Simplified Chinese, and Thai. The ACE Health Coach certification exam is available in Greek.

A list of International ACE Educational Partners can be found here: [www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/business/partners/international-partners](https://www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/business/partners/international-partners)

### RETAIL EXAM PRICING – U.S. and CANADA

CBT FORMAT	ACE PT AND HC EXAMS	ACE GFI EXAMS	ACE MES EXAMS
First Time	\$399	\$249	\$499
Reschedule	\$149	\$149	\$149
Retake*	\$199	\$199	\$199
Second ACE Certification	\$199	\$199	\$199
Formerly ACE Certified Professional	\$199	\$199	\$199

\* Candidates have up to one year after a failed exam date to receive retake pricing.

### RETAIL EXAM PRICING – INTERNATIONAL

CBT FORMAT	ACE PT AND HC EXAMS	ACE GFI EXAMS	ACE MES EXAMS
First Time	\$399	\$349	\$499
Reschedule	\$299	\$299	\$299
Retake*	\$299	\$299	\$299
Second ACE Certification	\$299	\$299	\$299
Formerly ACE Certified Professional	\$299	\$299	\$299



## Exam Fees

Checks or money orders should be in U.S. funds, drawn on a U.S. bank, and payable to ACE. ACE does not accept cash, purchase orders, or invoices and will return all incomplete registration applications and/or registration applications with cash, purchase orders, invoices, declined credit cards, or returned checks. Active military, veterans, and eligible spouses and dependents can receive reimbursement for their ACE Certification Exam fees from the government by submitting appropriate paperwork as directed at [benefits.va.gov/gibill/](https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/); this includes both first time and retakes fees. For the most up-to-date exam pricing, please refer to the Exam Registration webpage: [ACEfitness.org/fitness-certifications/schedule-your-exam/](https://ACEfitness.org/fitness-certifications/schedule-your-exam/).

## Exam Administration

ACE Certification Exams are managed by Scantron, the testing service company that ACE contracts for the development, administration, scoring, and security of ACE Certification exams. Scantron offers ACE Certification Exams in a CBT format for all four certification programs. Scantron offers ACE Exams at over 800 CBT facilities throughout the U.S. and Canada, and multiple locations internationally. For security purposes, CBT exams are offered only at proctored testing facilities. To register for an ACE Certification Exam, go to [ACEfitness.org/fitness-certifications/schedule-your-exam/](https://ACEfitness.org/fitness-certifications/schedule-your-exam/).

## Test-taking Strategies for ACE Certification Exams

All exam questions are based on an exam content outline for the specific certification program, which can be found at [ACEfitness.org/fitness-certifications/certification-exam-content](https://ACEfitness.org/fitness-certifications/certification-exam-content), and as Appendix B of each respective ACE manual. Abbreviated versions of all four exam content outlines can be found in Appendix C of this document. The exam content outline lists the specific Task Statements that make up the exam blueprint for a given ACE Certification program's examinations, and

the percentage of questions that are mapped to each Domain of grouped Task Statements. Similar to the principle of specificity that helps guide effective fitness programs, ACE Certification candidates familiar with the exam content outline can use it to guide their studies, helping to alleviate test anxiety as they prepare for their examinations and a career in the field.

The following strategies may prove helpful for candidates taking ACE Certification Exams as well as other standardized tests:

- + Pace yourself and make efficient use of your time. You should be halfway through the exam (or slightly more) when half of your time is up.
- + Read each question carefully and avoid skimming or speed-reading. Be sure you understand what the question is asking. Pay special attention to phrases such as BEST, MOST, etc.
- + Try to anticipate what the answer is but still read all response options carefully before finalizing an answer. Remember that there is only one correct answer and two response options may appear to be similar without careful reading.
- + Do not overanalyze or read into the question. Each question is written as clearly as possible and should be interpreted as it appears. There is no hidden meaning or attempt to be tricky.
- + Eliminate the least plausible response options. Eliminating one or two response options will increase your chances of selecting the correct answer.
- + Take care in marking your selected response correctly on paper answer sheets and/or the computer if testing at a CBT facility.
- + Answer every question. Remember, there is no penalty for guessing.
- + Although first instincts are best, change your answer if you feel strongly about it.
- + Response options on ACE Certification Exams are randomized. If you know absolutely nothing about a question, it is best to simply guess and move on.



## ANATOMY OF A MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTION

A multiple-choice question consists of a stem and response options. The stem is a statement or a question and often includes key words to help candidates understand what is being asked or assessed. The stem may be presented as a direct question, an incomplete statement, or a best-answer format. For instance:

Direct: *What muscle flexes the elbow joint?*

Incomplete statement: *The muscle that flexes the elbow joint is:*

Best-answer format: *Which exercise MOST effectively strengthens the flexors of the elbow joint?*

Response options consist of one correct or clearly best answer and distractors (all of which are incorrect). Distractors usually contain common errors and are often drawn from the same conceptual category as the correct response. Distractors are also similar in length, complexity, grammatical construction, etc., to the correct response. For example:

Which of the following muscles is a prime mover for lateral flexion of the spine?

- A. Latissimus dorsi
- B. Rhomboid major
- C. Transverse abdominis
- D. Quadratus lumborum

*(The correct answer is D.)*

### Recall questions

Recall questions assess facts, terminology, and comprehension of important principles. A relatively small number of recall questions is presented on the ACE Exams since they assess candidates' abilities to remember information rather than apply it to solve problems. For example:

Which muscle flexes the elbow joint?

- A. Bicep brachii
- B. Triceps brachii
- C. Biceps femoris
- D. Triceps surae

*(The correct answer is A.)*

Application questions

An application question poses a problem or situation that would most likely be encountered while working in the profession. Application questions assess candidates' abilities to recognize the proper use of factual information and principles in solving problems health and exercise professionals might experience on the job. For example:

A new client has been sedentary for five years and is eager to begin resistance training. Results from the client's Thomas test with each leg reveal that the back of the lowered thigh does not touch the table, but the knees do flex beyond 80 degrees. Based on this information, what stretch would be MOST important to include in the client's initial program?

- A. Iliotibial band stretch
- B. Quadriceps stretch
- C. Half-kneeling triplanar stretch
- D. Hamstring stretch

(The correct answer is C.)

Analysis questions

Analysis questions assess candidates' abilities to examine information and understand the relationship between its components. In other words, how do the parts work together to make a whole? In this manner, a candidate who can correctly analyze the facts can identify a problem and its appropriate solution.

For example:

The food label on a 12-ounce bag of candy (right) provides the following information:

What is the total amount of kilocalories (kcal) and percentage of calories that come from fat in the entire bag?

- A. 27 kcal, 4 percent
- B. 160 kcal, 7 percent
- C. 216 kcal, 17 percent
- D. 252 kcal, 30 percent

(The correct answer is C.)

Nutrition Facts

8 Servings Per Container	
Serving Size	6 pieces (40g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	160
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 3g	4%
Saturated Fat 0.5g	3%
Trans Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 30g	11%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Total Sugars 30g	11%
Protein less than 1g	

\* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

## Exam Scoring and Passing Criteria

ACE Certification Exams are scored according to procedures accepted by the American Psychological Association, the American Educational Research Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education. The candidate's score is derived from the number of questions answered correctly, and is then converted to a scaled score ranging from 200 to 800 points, with the passing point set at a scaled score of 500 points. Candidates who earn a scaled score of 500 or more points will be awarded the ACE Certification for which they tested.

All test forms for an examination are built to a standardized test blueprint. Using a test specification ensures that test forms are comparable in content coverage, that test content is weighted in accordance with the requirements for competent performance, and that all forms of the examinations adhere to standards for content validity. However, the actual items for an exam change over time. This is done to ensure the content is up-to-date and relevant, and to enhance test security. Since items differ in terms of how easy or hard they are, different test versions may not be equally difficult. As a result, ACE conducts reviews of the test forms to ensure that the passing score required is adjusted so that it is equivalent across the different test forms. ACE uses scaled scores to enable us to compare candidate performance on different test forms, or with people who may have taken different test forms.

ACE candidates who sit for examinations at CBT facilities receive their exam scaled score and pass/fail status upon submission of the examination for scoring. This is referred to as immediate score reporting, which requires ACE Certification Exams to be launched with an established passing point. All ACE Certification Program examinations use a process known as item response theory (IRT) to establish an equivalent passing score across different test forms. This robust method is an industry standard for larger certification programs, especially when programs provide immediate score reporting. The psychometricians at Scantron perform IRT equating for all ACE Certification Programs. The only exception to this rule is the very first ACE-CPT, ACE-GFI or ACE-CHC

examination built according to a new exam content outline, which is rated by subject matter experts (SMEs) for the certification program at a standard setting.

## Exam Results

ACE CBT exams are administered via Scantron's secure internet-based testing system at proctored CBT facilities in the U.S., Canada, and internationally. Exams are scored upon completion, with candidates receiving their exam scaled score and pass/fail status immediately upon submission of their completed examination.

The scaled score and pass/fail status on the results candidates receive from Scantron constitute a candidate's official score and pass/fail status. Only the scaled score determines pass/fail status. Any details that go beyond this scaled score (e.g., domain performance in percentages) is provided only as a guide for failed candidates to identify the domains where they have the greatest room to improve, should they choose to take the examination another time.

Candidates who achieve a final scaled score of 500 or more points on their certification exam will be awarded the ACE Certification for the exam that they successfully passed. Candidates who pass their ACE Certification Exam will receive their certification within four to six weeks after the scores are released. Candidates who achieve a final scaled score below 500 points will receive a "failed" status on the examination. These candidates have the ability to sit for a certification exam for the specific program at a reduced rate (see "Exam Fees" earlier in this chapter).

Scantron also sends the score reports to ACE on a daily basis, via secure data transfer, for all candidates who complete an ACE examination on a given day. These exam results are stored in the specific candidate's password-protected and secure ACE web account.

For information on exam scoring appeals and rescoring; pass rates for ACE Certification Exams; and rescheduling and retaking exams and refunds, refer to Appendices D, E, and F, respectively.



## Verification of Certification Status

ACE allows the public and employers to easily verify if an individual currently holds an ACE Certification. This information is readily available via the “Is my professional certified with ACE?” search engine at [ACEfitness.org/ACEFit/Locate-Trainer/](https://ACEfitness.org/ACEFit/Locate-Trainer/). Only currently certified ACE Professionals will be found using this search tool. Individuals who have let an ACE Certification expire, and are still in their six-month grace period following their expiration date, will not show up in this search engine until they complete all steps required to renew their certification.

It is important to note that certifications are issued by legal name (first and last). Searches using nicknames, middle names, or abbreviated versions of full names will not retrieve the desired professional. As such, ACE provides a link to “view all of our professionals” and a phone number that the public and employers can call to verify if a professional holds an ACE Certification.

ACE also provides a “Find an ACE Certified Professional” search tool on this same page, allowing the public to find qualified health and exercise professionals in their area. Profiles will vary from basic certification validation to fully developed

professional profiles. The basic certification validation is provided to allow for verification of ACE Certified Professionals. The expanded professional profiles are an option that ACE provides to its certified professionals who want to provide the public with additional information about the services they provide.

## Exam Delivery and Security

All ACE Certifications are delivered by Scantron, which utilizes an extensive network of examination testing site administrators, proctors and CBT centers.

Scantron assumes responsibility for all exam administration arrangements and provisions for special exam accommodations as needed. They will ensure that all examination centers conform to local building, sanitation, ADA, health, and safety codes, and are maintained in good, clean condition. Scantron will train testing site administrators to provide a site that has accessible parking spaces within reasonable distance to the examination rooms, as well as examination rooms that are quiet, free from any known environmental distractions and interruptions, and comfortable in temperature.

## CBT Administration and Security

Candidates are emailed admission tickets upon approval of exam location, date, and time and must bring the following to the examination location:

- + Admission ticket
- + Current government-issued identification with photo ID and signature

Every attempt within reason is made to ensure a quiet and comfortable testing environment for all candidates. However, some environmental distractors cannot be anticipated. Candidates are encouraged to bring appropriate clothing (see admission ticket for clothing restrictions) to help adapt to cooler or warmer examination rooms and to bring ear plugs if one is sensitive to noise distractions. Ear plugs will be subject to inspection by the proctor.

Only the individual named on both the admission ticket and registration roster and whose name on the photo identification matches the registration roster will be permitted to take the examination. Candidates are strongly advised to contact ACE if an admission ticket is not received via email. Failure to notify ACE may prevent entry into the examination center.

Candidates have three hours to complete the 150-question multiple-choice exam unless provided with special time accommodations.

Candidates must arrive on time. Candidates are required to adhere to the following examination policies:

- + No visitors are allowed in the examination rooms.
- + Candidates must perform all of their own work, without assistance. Sharing information or disturbing others is cause for dismissal with no refund.
- + Impersonating another candidate, giving or receiving help on the exam, or removing exam materials or notes from the examination site is cause for dismissal with no refund.

- + No dictionaries or other supplies are allowed during the exam.
- + No purses, bags, or any powered communication devices such as cell phones and PDAs are allowed in the examination room.
- + No food or drinks are allowed in the examination room unless approved in advance by ACE for medical reasons.

Candidates may be disqualified from taking or continuing forward in the examination process, or from receiving exam results, if ACE, Scantron, and/or the examination proctor determine, either through direct observation or through statistical analysis, that the candidate engaged in collaborative, disruptive, cheating, or other unacceptable behavior before, during, or following the administration of the ACE Certification Exam.

## Calculator Policy

Exam candidates for all four ACE Certification programs will have access to a basic four-function calculator with the following functions: addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Candidates will have access to an online calculator that is part of Scantron's CBT testing platform. CANDIDATES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BRING THEIR OWN CALCULATORS. THIS ACT WOULD CONSTITUTE CHEATING AND BE SUBJECT TO "ACE'S PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES" [ACEfitness.org/Fitness-Certifications/Certified-Code.aspx](https://www.acefitness.org/Fitness-Certifications/Certified-Code.aspx). See Appendix B.

## Confidentiality Policy

The purpose of the ACE Certification Exams is to protect the public and other stakeholders against ineffective practices and procedures. The examinations are intended to ensure minimal entry-level competency of health and exercise professionals. Sharing of examination information with and between candidates compromises the validity of the examination. Consequently, in order to maintain the integrity and security of all ACE Certification Exams, examination questions, answers, or other source materials are never released to candidates under any circumstance.

Candidates are expected to prepare for and pass examinations on their own merit. Candidates who intentionally pursue examination information beyond what is legally and ethically shared by ACE and ACE employees, including pursuit of previous examination candidates, are considered to be engaging in unethical and illegal acts and will be disqualified from eligibility. All candidates who take the ACE Certification Exams voluntarily agree to maintain examination confidentiality and are contractually obligated to uphold this agreement. Printed examinations are the copyrighted property of the American Council on Exercise and should any confidentiality agreement be violated, the culpable person or persons will be prosecuted by the American Council on Exercise.

ACE does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of religion, gender, ethnic background, age, national origin, or physical disability.

No information submitted to ACE and Scantron will be released to a third party without authorization and a written consent from the candidate. This includes examination results and pass/fail status.

The only situation where ACE provides individual pass/fail status to an organization is in conjunction with the MyCAA program. In this program, military spouses who meet eligibility criteria with MyCAA can receive reimbursement from the Department of Defense for expenses associated with ACE examinations and associated study materials. Candidates eligible for and interested in receiving MyCAA funding give written consent for their pass/fail status to be sent to MyCAA, allowing their expenses to be paid through the MyCAA funding.

ACE does verify if an individual currently holds an ACE Certification. This information is readily available to the public and employers via the “Is my professional certified with ACE?” search engine at [ACEfitness.org/education-and-resources/lifestyle/find-ace-pro](https://ACEfitness.org/education-and-resources/lifestyle/find-ace-pro).

## Cheating and Other Testing Violations

The purpose of the ACE examination is to protect the public by ensuring that candidates for certification have achieved entry-level competence to work in a designated role within health and fitness (e.g., personal trainer). Candidates are expected to pass the ACE Certification Exam based on their own merit and without assistance (e.g., without referencing study materials or websites). Previous exam candidates who share exam information with future exam candidates undermine the very purpose of the exam by putting the public at risk should an unqualified candidate achieve a passing score through means other than their own merit.

All ACE Certification Exams are legally defensible, proctored examinations ensuring candidates the most valid test experience. You may be disqualified from taking or continuing in the examination process, or from receiving exam results, if ACE, Scantron, Scantron proctors, or personnel at the contracted testing center have determined at any time during the exam registration, administration, or scoring process, through examiner observation or statistical analysis that a candidate was engaged in collaborative, disruptive, or other unacceptable behavior before, during, or following the administration of the ACE Certification Exam. This includes irregular behavior associated with any aspect of the examination and violations of the ACE Code of Ethics.

## Candidate Comments

Upon completion of an ACE Certification Exam, candidates are given the chance to submit comments about the examination and testing environment. At the conclusion of an ACE computer-based exam, candidates are asked to complete a brief online survey about the testing environment. These comments are also reviewed by the Testing Manager at Scantron, and then copied and forwarded to the ACE Director of Credentialing. Where necessary, the ACE Director of Credentialing will follow up with Scantron to determine if further action is warranted.

# Maintaining Your ACE Certification



**ACE CERTIFICATIONS** are valid for two years, expiring on the last day of the month in which the certification was earned two years prior. In order to maintain current certification, ACE Certified Professionals are required to complete 20 hours of continuing education biannually, which equates to 2.0 continuing education credits (CECs), as one hour equals 0.1 CEC. As stated in the ACE Code of Ethics, ACE Certified Professionals agree to remain up-to-date on the latest health and fitness research and understand its practical application.

First and foremost, the purpose of continuing education is for the protection of the public. By completing continuing education that advances knowledge, skills, and abilities, ACE Certified Professionals stay current with the latest research, professional standards, and guidelines in the fitness industry, healthcare, and allied health. This helps the health and exercise professional to be better prepared to provide safe and effective fitness instruction. The second purpose is to help the professional advance his or her career.

Given the dynamic nature of the fitness industry and the vast amount of exercise science research published annually, it is imperative for health and exercise professionals to complete continuing education on a regular basis. With new research and standards being released every couple of years, ACE has set a two-year term for each certification period to help ensure that ACE Certified Professionals are completing continuing education at least every other year to remain current. During this two-year period, ACE Certified Professionals are required to complete at least 20 hours of ACE-approved continuing education. Both the two-year term for ACE Certifications and the average of 10 hours per year of continuing education are in line with other NCCA-accredited certification programs in fitness and other areas of allied health.

ACE encourages its certified professionals to complete additional continuing education as necessary to help advance their careers and services provided to the public.



## Recertification Policies and Procedures

ACE Certified Professionals must comply with the following every two years to renew their ACE Certifications:

- + Complete at least 20 hours of ACE-approved CECs (2.0 CECs)
- + Renew your cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillator (AED) certificate(s), which must include a live skills check. You must be current at time of renewal.
- + Remain in good standing with the American Council on Exercise.
- + Submit your renewal online or via fax or mail along with the appropriate renewal payment prior to the expiration date for the certification. Renewal rates are scheduled to recognize individuals who hold multiple credentials, and to provide discounts to those renewing online.

First Certification	
On-Time Renewal	\$129
Additional Certifications*	
On-Time Renewal For 2 Certifications	\$69 each
On-Time Renewal For 3 Certifications	\$59 each
On-Time Renewal For 4 Certifications	\$49 each
Late Renewals	
Up To 3 Months Late	\$169 each
Up To 6 Months Late	\$199 each

Prices subject to change

\* Rate based on total number of current certifications at time of recertification.

ACE Certified Professionals are allowed to renew their certification at any point during their certification cycle; however, CECs should be accrued for the current certification cycle and cannot be applied to future cycles. Renewals can be completed online via your My ACE Account and must contain all the necessary information to be processed.

ACE mails renewal informational reminders six and 12 months prior to the expiration date of the professional certification, and also sends email notifications 90 and 30 days prior to the expiration date, informing individuals of how they can attain ACE-approved CECs and renew their certification. ACE Certified Professionals can access their web account at any time to check the status and expiration dates of their certifications, update and verify CEC information on file, update and verify CPR/AED information on file, and renew certifications.

Professionals who hold more than one ACE Certification can apply the same CECs to more than one certification for renewal, provided that the subject matter is appropriate for continuing education for all ACE Certifications to which the CECs are applied. Each certification has a renewal fee (see table above) and CPR/AED certificate must be current at the time of renewing an ACE Certification.

If you have any questions about maintaining your ACE Certification, please contact ACE Educational Services via phone at 800.825.3636 or 858.576.6500, Ext. 782, or via email at [Support@ACEfitness.org](mailto:Support@ACEfitness.org).

## Renewing an Expired Certification

ACE extends a professional courtesy of an extension to individuals unable to submit renewal information by their expiration date. During this “grace” period, the certification is technically expired and the individual is not a current ACE Certified Professional for the given certification.

In these situations, there are penalty fees associated with processing the application. Individuals submitting renewal applications up to three months late will be assessed a renewal fee of \$169 per late certification, while those submitting renewal information three to six months late will be assessed a \$199 renewal fee per late certification. Individuals in situations where they must submit their renewals within the six-month grace period following their expiration date must submit the renewal via mail or fax,

with all appropriate paperwork including the renewal fee plus the penalty fee. Individuals who are unable to submit their application within this grace period will lose their certification and have no option but to re-register to take the exam to re-earn the certification.

Exceptions to the extension policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis for documented cases of serious illness, bereavement, natural disasters, and other emergencies. In these instances, candidates must contact ACE Credentialing Department via phone at 800-825-3636, ext. 783, or via email at [Credentialing@ACEfitness.org](mailto:Credentialing@ACEfitness.org), to request reinstatement of their certification. Individuals in this situation must provide documentation to support their request for reinstatement, along with proof of 2.0 CECs, current CPR/AED certificate, and a reinstatement fee of \$219 per certification. Reinstatement will only be considered for individuals who are within 6 to 12 months beyond their expiration date. Reinstatement is only offered one time per certification. All reinstatement requests are reviewed by the ACE Director of Credentialing, who ultimately makes the final decision regarding all reinstatement requests.

Late renewal periods will be activated based upon the original renewal cycle period and not rolled forward from that date renewed. For example, original renewal period is July 31, 2018 to July 31, 2020 and renewed in the grace period on November 30, 2020. The next proceeding renewal period would be July 31, 2020 to July 31, 2022. CECs earned to renew one's certification in the grace period do not roll forward towards the next renewal cycle including any CECs earned beyond the 2.0 CEC requirement.

## Retired/Inactive/Emeritus Status

The purpose of holding a professional credential is to practice and demonstrate continued competency in a given field. Therefore it is ACE's policy not to grant retired, inactive, or emeritus status.

If you have questions about renewing an expired certification in situations that meet the parameters above, please contact ACE Educational Services via phone at 800.825.3636 or 858.576.6500, Ext. 782, or via email at [Support@ACEfitness.org](mailto:Support@ACEfitness.org).

## Continuing Education Credits

The ACE Professional Education Department reviews and approves more than 3,000 continuing education courses from more than 300 providers each year. This

provides ACE Certified Professionals with ample opportunities to earn their CECs for certification renewal. All ACE-approved CECs can be found at [ACEfitness.org/ContinuingEducation/default.aspx](https://www.acefitness.org/ContinuingEducation/default.aspx), where ACE approved CECs can be searched by career track specializations, topic, CEC provider, course format (at home, conference, in class), CEC value, course start date, and location. This is a professional benefit to all ACE Certified Professionals and can be searched by all fitness and allied health professionals worldwide. Always look for the ACE approved logo and a notation of how many CECs each course is worth. If you are unsure if a course is ACE approved, contact ACE Educational Services via phone at 800.825.3636 or 858.576.6500, Ext. 782, or via email at [Support@ACEfitness.org](mailto:Support@ACEfitness.org) for confirmation.

Repeating the same continuing education courses during subsequent renewal periods does not demonstrate continued competence for a certified professional and therefore would not be granted towards the certified professional renewal cycle. CECs for same courses would only be awarded once.

ACE recognizes that professional development and continuing education can come from sources other than traditional ACE approved continuing education courses. Such sources include the following:

- + College course completion with a grade of C or higher, with 0.8 CECs awarded per quarter unit and 1.0 CEC awarded per semester unit.
- + Passing an additional ACE Certification Exam results in 2.0 CECs for the studying involved in preparing for an ACE Certification.
- + Professional presentations can earn up to 0.5 CECs per renewal cycle for the research involved in developing the presentation.
- + Authorship of a correspondence course, or publishing fitness-related articles, book chapters, books, or peer-reviewed journal articles can result in a maximum of 0.5 CECs per renewal cycle.
- + Serving on an ACE committee results in 0.5 CECs per calendar year.
- + Obtaining another NCCA-accredited fitness-related certification results in 0.5 CECs.
- + Clinical observation of surgical procedures that can enhance the understanding of human systems that relate to the certification can be worth a maximum of 0.2 CECs per renewal cycle.

- + Internships in a fitness or related setting can result in up to 0.2 CECs per renewal cycle (for college credit internships, see college course information above).
- + Community outreach in a fitness-related event or similar can result in 0.1 CEC per renewal cycle.

For more information on how to maintain your ACE Certification, log in to your My ACE Account and go to: [ACEfitness.org/CP/Certified-Maintain.aspx](https://ACEfitness.org/CP/Certified-Maintain.aspx).

## Continuing Education Petitions

ACE recognizes that there are quality educational courses, workshops, and conferences that are not submitted in advance to the ACE Professional Education Department for review and awarding of ACE CECs, and therefore has developed the ACE Continuing Education Petition process. In the event that an ACE Certified Professional completes educational coursework that has not been reviewed and approved for ACE CECs, he or she may submit a petition for each individual course completed for consideration as continuing education for certification renewal. A \$25 petition fee is assessed for each course being submitted. Each petition must contain a copy of the course materials with course syllabus or outline, learning objectives, the course instructor's resume or curriculum vitae, including academic background and/or certifications, and verification of course completion.

Petitions are reviewed by the ACE Professional Education Department according to criteria established with input from the ACE Director of Credentialing. A petitioned course will be awarded CECs only if it meets similar criteria to what is required for courses to be approved in advance by the ACE Professional Education Department. This includes the instructor holding either an ACE Certification or a four-year college degree in exercise science or a related field to the subject areas taught (e.g., nutrition degree for nutrition-related topics), and the course content must be appropriate to advance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the professional holding the specific ACE Certification for which the course is being petitioned. For each hour of educational content, 0.1 CEC will be awarded. No CECs are awarded for activity classes, topics that fall outside of the scope of practice or are deemed inappropriate for the credential, or time dedicated to testing at the completion of a certificate program. Reviews will be completed within 30 days of receipt, after which the individual will be notified as to

the final decision from the ACE Professional Education Department. Courses that are not approved will not be refunded the \$25.00 petition review and processing fee. To submit a petition, log into your My ACE Account, and under Manage My CECs, click on Petition for CECs.

## Maintaining Your CPR and AED Certificates

As a health and exercise professional, you never know when you may be called upon to step in during a life-threatening event. With this in mind, ACE requires its professionals to maintain a current adult CPR/AED certificate, which must include a live skills check.

Note: AED certification is required in only the U.S. and Canada.

## ACE Educational Services

The ACE Educational Services Department is available to help ACE Certified Professionals maintain their ACE Certifications and advance their careers. Everyone working in ACE Educational Services holds at least one ACE Certification and has experience in the field. This professional team can help you with questions you may have about many topics, including:

- + Certification renewal process
- + Use of the ACE Pro Site
- + Career benefits
- + Status of certification
- + CEC status
- + Liability insurance
- + Secondary certification
- + Available CEC courses
- + Eligible CEC activities (alternative to attending a class)

You can contact ACE Educational Services via phone at 800.825.3636 or 858.576.6500, Ext. 782, or via email at [Support@ACEfitness.org](mailto:Support@ACEfitness.org).

## Career Development

ACE is committed to helping ACE Certified Professionals develop their careers through quality continuing education, advanced fitness certifications, and business opportunities.

### *Discounted insurance:*

- + Gain exclusive access to discounted liability insurance.

### *Professional discount program:*

- + Receive professional discounts and special offers on fitness apparel, educational programs, products, and more.

### *Find an ACE Pro:*

- + Located on the consumer side of the ACE website, this searchable online database puts you in front of thousands of consumers each month, and provides peace of mind to a potential employer or client by allowing them an easy tool for verifying your ACE Certification.

### *Focus groups and surveys:*

- + From ACE decision-makers to the media, we rely on ACE Professionals for valuable feedback.

## ACE Certification Marks

Individuals who have met ACE's Certification standards are authorized to the exclusive use of the following marks issued by ACE:

- + ACE Certified Personal Trainer; ACE-CPT
- + ACE Certified Group Fitness Instructor; ACE-GFI
- + ACE Certified Health Coach; ACE-CHC
- + ACE Certified Medical Exercise Specialist; ACE-CMES

Individuals granted an ACE Certification will be entitled to use ACE's marks in conjunction with the individual's name to demonstrate this accomplishment, so long as they abide by the policies adopted by ACE. It is essential that the marks are displayed in a clear and consistent way. ACE's policies on the use of these marks explain when and how to display them are provided to each ACE Certified Professional upon passing their respective certification exam. ACE Logo Usage Guidelines and access to the ACE Certified logos are available to ACE Certified Professionals through their password-protected My ACE Account [ACEfitness.org/MyACE](https://www.acefitness.org/MyACE). Failure to comply with these policies may result in disciplinary action and/or revocation of certification.



# Privacy, Security, and Records Retention



## Protection of privacy

No individual under employment, contractual agreement, or volunteering with ACE shall dispense candidate or professional information without the expressed, written consent from the individual. Individuals requesting their information be released to third parties must submit a signed letter of consent to permit information release. All individuals under employment, contractual agreement, or volunteering with ACE are required to sign non-disclosure agreements before commencing service.

All candidates are assigned customer identification numbers for ACE administrative purposes and will select their own username email addresses and passwords to access their own accounts. In the event a candidate forgets a username email address or password, he or she may contact ACE customer service via email or phone, which will then release the login information via an email to the candidate's email address on file.

Confidential information will be made available to the appropriate parties if subpoenaed by a court of law or if the candidate or professional violates the ACE Code of Ethics, whereby the appropriate authorities must be notified.

Certain information is not considered confidential, as it is accessible within the public domain. This information includes:

- + Certification status
- + State of residence
- + Position of standing with the American Council on Exercise
- + Personal information that the professional willingly permits to be posted on the ACE “Find a Professional” search engine on the ACE website

The American Council on Exercise posts the ACE Privacy Policy information on its website at [ACEfitness.org/Privacy.aspx](https://www.acefitness.org/Privacy.aspx). To protect the privacy of all candidates, consumers, and current and former ACE Certified Professionals, ACE posts a direct link to this ACE Privacy Policy at the bottom of every page of the ACE website ([ACEfitness.org](https://www.acefitness.org)). This policy explains ACE’s online information practices and the choices individuals can make about the way their information is collected and used.

ACE requests only the information needed in order to provide the highest level of service to individuals using the ACE website or contacting ACE via email or phone.

The types of personal information collected include:

- + Name
- + Address
- + Phone number
- + Company information
- + Email address
- + Credit/debit card Information (for purchases only – credit card information is encrypted)
- + Our site logs IP addresses and browser types for the purposes of system administration and user functionality. These logs will be analyzed to improve the value of the materials available on our website. While user sessions are tracked, users remain anonymous. We do not link IP addresses to any personally identifiable information. We use non-identifying and aggregate information to better design our website.

We use the information you provide about yourself or someone else when placing an order or making a request only to the extent necessary to complete that order or request.

We will not sell your email address or any other personal information. From time to time, we may send information about our services to the email or mailing address provided by you. We may lease your mailing address to organizations that share our mission and meet our criteria and standards of excellence. As an email recipient, your email address is confidential. When an email message is sent to you, the sender does not see your name or email address. The sender of a message, however, is always identified and the sender’s return email address is disclosed. This policy promotes responsible use of email and directs you to the right source if you feel that you are receiving inappropriate messages.

ACE will share and disclose any information posted by certified health and exercise professionals to the ACE database with IDEA Health & Fitness Association and/or other third parties.

To avoid receiving any mailings, you may contact ACE Customer Service. Unless we think that such action is necessary to comply with the law or legal process or to protect the interests of ACE or others, we will not release personal information about you without your consent.

Individuals can access or correct the personally identifiable information that ACE maintains on them by contacting ACE Customer Service. To better protect privacy and security, the individual’s email address must match the email address used to establish the account. ACE uses this procedure to better safeguard private information. To prevent unauthorized access, maintain data accuracy, and ensure the correct use of information, ACE has put in place appropriate physical, electronic, and managerial procedures to safeguard and secure the information ACE collects. ACE website users are responsible for keeping their password secret and are encouraged to never give their password to anyone, even someone claiming to be an ACE employee. The ACE website may link to other websites that may collect user information or solicit personal information. ACE does not control these sites; therefore, ACE is not responsible or liable for the privacy practices or content of such sites.

Any candidate, consumer, or current or former ACE Certified Professional who has questions about his or her information on file and ACE policies for the protection of their private information should contact the ACE Customer Service Department.

#### HOW TO CONTACT ACE CUSTOMER SERVICE

- + 800.825.3636
- + Support@ACEfitness.org
- + Visit the ACE store at [ACEfitness.org](https://www.acefitness.org) and click on "My Account"

## Length of Records Retention

The American Council on Exercise shall indefinitely retain records of all candidates and current and former ACE Certified Professionals as long as they remain affiliated

with ACE as an organization or until they request (in writing) that the information be removed. While public record of their information will then be removed, ACE will retain the member's records securely for a period of five years. Records of ACE continuing education providers shall be retained for five years. Professionals holding an ACE credential are encouraged to retain certification and continuing education information for a period of four years.

## Security

ACE information is maintained in secure databases and archived electronically to a secure local network. Individual information is accessible only via that person's ACE web account, which is protected by the username email address and password selected by the individual. Any hard copy records are stored in locked filing cabinets in secure areas within the ACE administrative building.

# Appendices



## Appendix A: Appeals for Denied Eligibility

ACE reserves the right to reject any registration application that does not meet the specified eligibility requirements. If a registration application for an ACE Certification Exam is not accepted, an individual can appeal and request the application be reviewed again. The appeal must include a detailed explanation of the reason(s) why the individual believes they should be eligible, plus all supporting documentation. Submit all eligibility appeals for review via mail, email, or fax to:

ACE Credentialing Department  
4851 Paramount Drive  
San Diego, CA 92123  
Email: [Credentialing@ACEfitness.org](mailto:Credentialing@ACEfitness.org)  
Fax: 858.576.6564

Eligibility appeals will be reviewed and responded to within 10 working days of their receipt. Individuals submitting the appeal will receive notice that their eligibility appeal was either “approved” with instructions for moving forward with exam registration, or “denied” with notification of the reason for the denial. Individuals who have an eligibility appeal denied can submit a new eligibility appeal if they have additional supporting documentation that meets the requirements noted in the denial.

## Appendix B: ACE Professional Practices and Disciplinary Procedures

The professional practices and disciplinary procedures of the American Council on Exercise (ACE) are intended to assist and inform certificants, candidates for certification, and the public of the ACE Application and Certification Standards relative to professional conduct and disciplinary procedures. ACE may revoke or otherwise take action with regard to the application or certification of an individual in the case of:

- + Ineligibility for certification
- + Irregularity in connection with any certification examination
- + Unauthorized possession, use, access, or distribution of certification examinations, score reports, trademarks, logos, written materials, answer sheets, certificates, certificant or applicant files, or other confidential or proprietary ACE documents or materials (registered or otherwise)



- + Material misrepresentation or fraud in any statement to ACE or to the public, including, but not limited to, statements made to assist the applicant, certificand, or another to apply for, obtain, or retain certification
- + Any physical, mental, or emotional condition of either temporary or permanent nature, including, but not limited to, substance abuse, which impairs or has the potential to impair competent and objective professional performance
- + Negligent and/or intentional misconduct in professional work, including, but not limited to, physical or emotional abuse, disregard for safety, or the unauthorized release of confidential information
- + The timely conviction, plea of guilty, or plea of *nolo contendere* in connection with a felony or misdemeanor, which is directly related to public health and/or fitness instruction or education, which impairs competent and objective professional performance. These include, but are not limited to, rape, sexual abuse of a client, actual or threatened use of a weapon of violence, and the prohibited sale, distribution, or possession with intent to distribute, of a controlled substance.
- + Failure to meet the requirements for certification or recertification

ACE has developed a three-tiered disciplinary process of review, hearing, and appeals to ensure fair and unbiased examination of alleged violation(s) of the Application and Certification Standards in order to (1) determine the merit of allegations; and (2) impose appropriate sanctions as necessary to protect the public and the integrity of the certification process.

Note: As an ACE Certification candidate and/or Certified Professional, you are deemed to be familiar with, and comply with, the ACE Code of Ethics and ACE Professional Practices and Disciplinary Procedures. Please contact ACE to request a complete copy of ACE Professional Practices and Disciplinary Procedures.

## Appendix C: Exam Content Outlines

### ACE PERSONAL TRAINER EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

#### Domain I: Interviews and Assessments – 23%

1. Obtain comprehensive health, medical, exercise, and lifestyle information using questionnaires, interviews, and appropriate documents to determine risk for exercise participation, identify the need for medical clearance and referrals, and facilitate program design.
2. Assess client readiness for behavior change and evaluate exercise attitudes and beliefs through effective communication to build rapport and establish appropriate goals.
3. Identify and evaluate the quality of foundational movements through observations and assessments to develop appropriate exercise programming that enhances function, health, fitness, and performance.
4. Select and conduct baseline physiological assessments based on client interviews, questionnaires, and standardized protocols to facilitate safe and effective program design and monitor changes over time.

#### Domain II: Program Design and Implementation – 31%

1. Establish appropriate functional, health, fitness, or performance goals by interpreting client interview and assessment data to design personalized exercise programs.
2. Design personalized exercise programs by applying appropriate exercise principles and guidelines to enhance cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength and endurance, and flexibility.
3. Select appropriate exercises and equipment and integrate them into client programs in accordance with evidence-based research to improve function, health, fitness, and performance.
4. Instruct clients on safe and effective equipment use and exercise techniques using verbal, visual, and kinesthetic cues to achieve program goals.

#### Domain III: Program Modification and Progression – 26%

1. Promote program adherence through motivation, education, and modification to achieve client goals.

2. Recognize and respond to lapses in program adherence by identifying barriers and providing solutions to ensure consistent client engagement.
3. Routinely evaluate progress by using data, observations, and client feedback to modify programs as needed.

#### Domain IV: Professional Conduct, Safety, and Risk Management – 20%

1. Apply risk-management strategies in accordance with recognized standards, guidelines, laws, and regulations to protect the client, personal trainer, and other relevant parties to minimize liability.
2. Document and secure client data, communications, and progress in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements to maintain confidentiality and minimize liability.
3. Enhance competency by using credible resources to stay current with evidence-based research, theories, and practices.
4. Prevent injury by identifying and reporting potential hazards in accordance with recommended industry or facility protocols.

## ACE GROUP FITNESS INSTRUCTOR EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

#### Domain I: Class Preparation – 34%

1. Create a plan based on the class format, class objectives, and anticipated participants to establish a structure for safe and effective experiences.
2. Select and organize exercises in sequences that align with exercise science principles, class components, and class elements (e.g., music, equipment) to meet class objectives.
3. Identify appropriate exercise options (e.g., regressions, progressions, modifications) to reduce the risk of injury, improve performance, and create an inclusive class environment.
4. Rehearse the class content and refine the plan as needed to ensure a positive

and successful experience.

#### Domain II: Group Instruction and Leadership – 39%

1. Assess the space, equipment, environment, and participants to identify potential issues and make appropriate adjustments to the class plan to ensure a safe and effective experience.
2. Communicate with participants in a welcoming, positive, and engaging manner prior to, during, and after class to build rapport and promote class adherence.
3. Instruct participants by demonstrating proper exercise movements and modifications (e.g., regressions and progressions) while using verbal and nonverbal communication to improve technique, reduce the risk of injury, and improve performance.
4. Motivate class participants using appropriate methods to increase participant engagement and confidence, improve performance, and create a positive and inclusive environment.
5. Educate participants on general health and fitness principles and the benefits of physical activity to improve performance, reduce risk of injury, and increase participant self-efficacy.

#### Domain III: Professional Conduct and Risk Management – 27%

1. Solicit and incorporate feedback from a variety of sources (e.g., participants, peers, supervisors, self) to enhance professionalism and future class experiences.
2. Respond to and manage class incidents and high-risk situations following established protocols to ensure safety and reduce liability.
3. Maintain and enhance competency by staying current on science-based research, technology, and best practices using credible resources (e.g., professional organizations, peer-reviewed journals) to provide safe and effective classes.
4. Adhere to recognized standards, guidelines, policies, laws, and regulations to manage risk and liability.

## ACE HEALTH COACH EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

### Domain I: Coaching Behavior Change – 33%

1. Establish rapport with clients using effective communication strategies in order to build and maintain collaborative relationships.
2. Help clients take responsibility for personal health by identifying strengths, challenges, and available resources in order to make healthful lifestyle choices.
3. Facilitate client-directed behavior change using evidence-based coaching strategies to promote healthful lifestyle choices.

### Domain II: Conducting Assessments and Developing Plans – 26%

1. Use available health, medical, wellness, and lifestyle information by employing appropriate assessment tools and standards in order to stratify risk, identify the need for medical clearance and referrals, establish baselines and facilitate plan development.
2. Design individualized plans based on interviews, screenings, assessment data, and goals in order to progress clients toward healthful lifestyle management.

### Domain III: Implementing and Adjusting Individualized Plans – 25%

1. Implement individualized plans using evidence-based coaching practices in order to progress clients toward healthful lifestyle and behavior change.
2. Evaluate plan effectiveness in collaboration with clients to monitor outcomes and support progress toward goals.
3. Collaborate with clients to adjust plans based on ongoing evaluations in order to promote adherence, personal responsibility, and success.

### Domain IV: Professional Conduct and Legal Responsibility – 16%

1. Adhere to legal requirements, the ACE Code of Ethics, and scope-of-practice guidelines in order to protect clients, maintain professional standards, and manage risk.

2. Maintain accurate and confidential records using applicable standards in order to ensure quality care and manage risk.
3. Respond to emergencies and high-risk situations following established protocols in order to ensure safety and reduce liability.
4. Maintain professional competence by staying current on research, technology, and industry standards in order to build proficiency as a health coach and optimize client outcomes.
5. Create an inclusive environment by developing awareness of, and demonstrating sensitivity to, diverse populations.

## ACE MEDICAL EXERCISE SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

### Domain I: Interviews and Assessment – 27%

1. Gather health, fitness, and lifestyle information from client interviews and journals, electronic medical records, questionnaires, and communication with other healthcare providers to ensure accurate screening and assessment of the client.
2. Evaluate health, fitness, and lifestyle information using industry guidelines and recommendations to assess an individual's readiness for physical activity, facilitate program design, optimize adherence, identify at-risk clients, and make appropriate referrals.
3. Perform baseline and periodic follow-up screens and assessments using recommended guidelines and protocols in order to optimize program design, ensure safety, and enhance effectiveness.

### Domain II: Program Design, Implementation, and Modification – 35%

1. Set realistic and appropriate goals based on client expectations and limitations, assessment data, and recommendations from healthcare professionals.

2. Design preventive programs for at-risk clients in order to help them improve health, fitness, and function while mitigating the risk of diseases, disorders, ailments, and injuries.
3. Design programs for clients in all stages of medical intervention in order to complement treatment and improve health, fitness, and function.
4. Modify a client's program and goals based on reassessment data; exercise, nutrition, and lifestyle logs; client- and healthcare provider-reported information in order to ensure program safety and success.
5. Collaborate with other members of the healthcare team in order to deliver complementary programs that promote improved health, fitness, and function.

#### Domain III: Communication and Behavior Change – 21%

1. Develop rapport with clients using purposeful questioning and attentive listening to facilitate communication, compliance, and a positive working relationship.
2. Educate the client on specific health behaviors and self-monitoring tools in order to enhance program adherence, safety, and success.
3. Instruct clients on safe and effective exercise techniques using appropriate communication, coaching, and cueing strategies in order to optimize program outcomes and build self-efficacy.
4. Apply coaching strategies in order to facilitate lasting healthy behavioral change.

#### Domain IV: Professional Conduct and Risk Management – 17%

1. Maintain detailed records using policies and procedures that adhere to professional guidelines in order to track progress, make appropriate

adjustments, and communicate (as necessary) with other healthcare professionals.

2. Comply with applicable laws, regulations, ACE Code of Ethics, and industry guidelines in order to protect the interests of all stakeholders and minimize risk.
3. Recognize and respond to acute medical conditions and injuries by following an emergency action plan in order to provide appropriate care and comply with risk-management practices.
4. Pursue information from professional resources in order to provide services consistent with accepted standards of care.

## Appendix D: Exam Scoring Appeals and Rescoring

### EXAM SCORING APPEALS

Any candidate who feels that his or her examination effort was negatively impacted by improper instruction, unprofessional proctoring standards, or unreasonable environmental or other distracters, must report the grievance to the exam proctor immediately. The proctor will document the complaint and submit it to Scantron, where the complaint will be forwarded to the ACE Exam Registration Department for further investigation. Following any examination administration where a candidate feels that his or her examination effort was negatively impacted, ACE mandates that candidate also contact ACE Exam Registration via phone at 800.825.3636 or 858.576.6500, ext. 783, or email [ExamRegistration@ACEfitness.org](mailto:ExamRegistration@ACEfitness.org) to report the incident and how it negatively impacted performance within 30 days of the examination. ACE will make an equitable decision based upon the information gathered from all relevant sources, including the candidate, proctors, and Scantron.



## EXAM RESCORING

Should a candidate not pass the examination, yet believes that a scoring error was involved during the computer scoring, he or she may appeal and request to have their entire examination manually rescored. While the results of a manually scored examination rarely, if ever, differ from the result obtained through the automated process, the candidate does have the right to pursue this option. In order to request a manual rescore, candidates must contact ACE Exam Registration via phone at 800.825.3636 or 858.576.6500, Ext. 783, or email ([ExamRegistration@ACEfitness.org](mailto:ExamRegistration@ACEfitness.org)) to receive a manual rescore form. Candidates must then submit the completed form, along with the \$50 rescoring fee to Scantron. All requests for a manual rescore must be made within 30 days of the original examination date. Scantron will inform the candidate of their rescored results within two to four weeks of receiving the rescore request.

## Appendix E: Pass Rates for ACE Certification Exams

### PERSONAL TRAINER

CALENDAR YEAR	CANDIDATES	PASS RATE (%)
2019	20,069	71%
2018	22,923	70%
2017	20,129	65%

### GROUP FITNESS INSTRUCTOR

CALENDAR YEAR	CANDIDATES	PASS RATE (%)
2019	5,301	63%
2018	5,265	63%
2017	5,727	62%

## HEALTH COACH

Formerly titled: Lifestyle & Weight Management Coach

CALENDAR YEAR	CANDIDATES	PASS RATE (%)
2019	1,862	72%
2018	2,592	75%
2017	2,111	76%

## MEDICAL EXERCISE SPECIALIST

Formerly titled: Advanced Health & Fitness Specialist

CALENDAR YEAR	CANDIDATES	PASS RATE (%)
2019	118	61%
2018	104	65%
2017	144	57%

## Appendix F: Rescheduling, Retakes, and Refunds

### RESCHEDULING: COMPUTER-BASED TESTING

If a candidate is unable to sit for an examination on the date he or she is registered, then the candidate has until 11:59 p.m. PST on the day preceding the examination to reschedule the exam date. This reschedule can be done through the candidate's ACE account. The fee to reschedule a CBT exam is \$149 in the U.S. and Canada, and \$299 in any other country.

Candidates may only reschedule their examination date once and may only reschedule for another CBT format exam.

Exceptions to the reschedule fee will be considered on a case-by-case basis for documented cases of serious illness, bereavement, natural disasters, and other emergencies. In these instances, candidates must contact ACE Exam Registration prior to, or on the day of, the exam. Candidates must then provide proper documentation verifying their reason for missing their ACE Certification Exam. Candidates must also work with the Exam Registration Department to receive assistance in rescheduling their exam date. No refunds will be given for rescheduled exams.

## RETAKES

Candidates who do not pass a certification examination are eligible to sit for the exam another time for the retake fee of \$199 in the U.S. and Canada, and \$299 in any other country, for a period of one year after the date of the initial examination. After this one-year period, the candidate must submit the first-time candidate exam fee.

## REFUNDS

### Exam Voucher Policy

Candidates who purchase certification bundles that include an exam voucher are subject to the following policies:

- + Materials/products returned within 30 days of purchase are eligible for a return. Exchanges of materials/products are not permitted. ACE does not offer partial refunds.
  - If materials are in good condition, no restocking fee will apply. Good condition is defined as being undamaged, unused, and able to be re-sold without issue. The determination of any returned items' condition will ultimately be decided by ACE.

- If the items are not returned in good condition, a 20% restocking fee will apply, which is applied to the total full cost of the program or materials (excluding sales tax and shipping costs), regardless if paid in full or through a full or partial payment plan.
- Study programs that include an exam voucher that has been redeemed within 30 days of purchase are not eligible for return or refund.
- + Exam vouchers are non-refundable and non-transferable.
- + Exam vouchers must be redeemed within six months from the original date of purchase.
- + Cardiopulmonary resuscitation/automated external defibrillator (CPR/AED) certification is required to register for the exam and must remain current through the exam date. Course must include a live skills check; online-only CPR/AED courses are not accepted.
- + Extensions are not given on exam vouchers.
- + Retake vouchers (included in select study bundles) must be redeemed within 60 days of the original failed exam date.

Exceptions to the refund deadline will be considered on a case-by-case basis for documented cases of serious illness, bereavement, natural disasters, and other emergencies. In these instances, candidates must electronically date-stamp or postmark their request no later than 30 days after the examination date and provide any and all supporting documentation. With proper documentation, candidates will be offered the option to apply their examination fee towards a future registration to be scheduled within the next six months, or they can request a full refund of examination fees. No refunds will be given for rescheduled exams.



Getting People Moving

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