Candidate Handbook

CPT CET CCMA CORST CPCT CMLA CMAA CEHRS CBCS

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NATIONAL HEALTHCAREER ASSOCIATION

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Contents

INTRODUCTION 3
About the National Healthcareer Association (NHA) 3
NHA's Mission 3
About the NHA Certification Board 3
NHA ALLIED HEALTH CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS AND APPLICATION FEES 4
CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS 4
GENERAL INFORMATION 5
REGISTRATION AND APPLICATION INFORMATION 5
CANCELLATIONS 5
SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS (ADA) 6
PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATION 6
STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION 7
CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY 7
EXAMINATION INFORMATION 8
STUDY MATERIALS 8
EXAMINATION TIMES AND NUMBER OF QUESTIONS 8
WHAT TO BRING TO THE TEST CENTER 9
GENERAL TESTING GUIDELINES 9
AFTER THE EXAMINATION 9
Scoring 9
Examination Updates 11
RETAKING AN EXAMINATION 11
RECERTIFICATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION 11
EXAMINATION CHALLENGES AND HAND SCORING 12
VIOLATION OF EXAMINATION PROCEDURES 13
APPEALS 13
Eligibility Appeals 14
Disciplinary Action Appeals 14

CODE OF ETHICS 14
HOW TO COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORM 15
Setting up a Candidate Profile 15
Registering to Sit for the Exam 15

INTRODUCTION

This candidate handbook provides information about:

- NHA allied health certification examinations and application fees
- Eligibility requirements
- Applying and sitting for NHA certification examinations
- What to expect after sitting for the certification examinations

About the National Healthcareer Association (NHA)

The National Healthcareer Association was established in 1989 to implement national competency standards in several fields within allied healthcare. The NHA strives to develop and administer high stakes certifications that serve as a resource for allied health professionals and the healthcare industry. NHA has helped nearly 300,000 individuals become certified in allied health professions. Certified healthcare professionals may earn higher pay, qualify for better job opportunities, and have more career advancement options.

NHA's Mission

Together with schools and healthcare providers, NHA is dedicated to improving the quality of patient care through the certification and ongoing development of successful allied health practitioners.

About the NHA Certification Board

The NHA Certification Board is the autonomous governing board that has the responsibility for overseeing all allied health certification programs with the exception of the Certified Pharmacy Technician examination program (ExCPT), which is governed by a separate board. The NHA Certification Board sets policy over essential certification activities. The Board has oversight responsibility for all allied health certification and recertification decisions, including governance, eligibility standards, disciplinary and appeals actions, and the development, administration and scoring of assessment instruments.

NHA ALLIED HEALTH CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS AND APPLICATION FEES

The following lists the NHA national certification examinations addressed in this handbook and associated fees:

Exam	Application Fee
Phlebotomy Technician Certification (CPT)	$105.00
EKG Technician Certification (CET)	$105.00
Clinical Medical Assistant Certification (CCMA)	$149.00
Operating Room Technician (CORST)	$225.00
Patient Care Technician Certification (CPCT)	$149.00
Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification (CMLA)	$105.00
Medical Administrative Assistant Certification (CMAA)	$105.00
Electronic Health Record Specialist Certification (CEHRS)	$105.00
Billing and Coding Specialist Certification (CBCS)	$105.00

CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to earn an NHA certification, the individual must meet both of the following requirements:

- Possess a High School Diploma, or the equivalent.
- Have successfully completed a training program or one year of work experience within the field.
    - Training/work experience must include a minimum of 30 successful venipunctures and 10 successful capillary sticks. These venipuncture and capillary sticks must be performed on live individuals. Candidates are prohibited from using mannequins to meet this requirement. **(For Phlebotomy Technician only)**
    - Training/work experience must include performing a minimum of 10 successful EKGs. These EKGs must be performed on live individuals. Candidates are prohibited from using mannequins to meet this requirement. **(For EKG Technician only)**

Candidates must be able to provide written proof of training or experience and/or documentation of education completion upon request.

Candidates are solely responsible for knowing and understanding state regulatory requirements that may pertain to their certification and/or ability to practice in their

profession in their particular state. NHA certification does not guarantee any candidate's ability to meet any or all regulatory requirements pertaining to their profession.

An applicant who is scheduled to graduate from an accredited high school or GED program may receive a provisional certification under the policies referred to in the "Provisional Certification" section of this handbook.

GENERAL INFORMATION

REGISTRATION AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

To register for any of NHA's allied health examinations, candidates may visit NHA's website at www.nhanow.com

NHA's examinations are administered in three formats: 1) paper and pencil, 2) school administered, computer-based, and 3) commercial test center computer-based (PSI/Lasergrade). Paper and pencil and computer-based examinations are offered at most schools that are NHA test sites. Candidates who wish to take the exam and may not currently be enrolled in a school program should first register for the exam at www.nhanow.com and then contact PSI online at www.psiexams.com or call PSI's Candidate Service center at 1-800-733-9267 to schedule an appointment to sit for an examination. PSI currently offers NHA examinations at more than 550 PSI/Lasergrade test locations throughout the United States.

CANCELLATIONS

Refunds are not offered for examination fees unless the scheduled examination date is cancelled by NHA. However, candidates may transfer an examination administration and fee to a new date for up to six months from the originally scheduled application date. Beyond this date, candidates will have to re-register, meet the applicable eligibility requirements, and pay the appropriate registration fee in order to sit for the examination. For examinations administered at NHA school testing sites, candidates must reschedule their examination at least 24 hours prior to the original test date. Candidates should contact the school where the most recent appointment had been scheduled. If the examination is scheduled at a PSI/Lasergrade testing center, the candidate must visit the PSI website (www.psiexams.com) at least 24 hours prior to the originally scheduled appointment in order to reschedule or cancel your examination without penalty. If a PSI testing center candidate does not cancel or reschedule their exam with PSI at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled time, the cost of the exam is forfeited and the candidate must re-register as well as repurchase the exam. In the event that severe weather or

another emergency forces the closure of a PSI test site on a scheduled examination date, the examination will be rescheduled by PSI at no additional charge. PSI personnel will attempt to contact candidates who are in this situation. However, candidates may also check the status of their examination schedules by visiting PSI at www.psiexams.com or calling PSI at 1-800-733-9267. Every effort will be made to reschedule the examination at a convenient time.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS (ADA)

Candidates who have a documented disability may submit an Accommodation Request form (http://www.nhanow.com/forms.aspx) along with the necessary supporting documentation. Accommodations will be granted in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 2101§ *et.seq.*).

Reasonable accommodations will be provided to qualified candidates who have a documented disability to the extent that such accommodations do not fundamentally alter the examination or create an unfair advantage. Approved accommodations which result in excessive cost to NHA shall be paid for by the candidate. Examinations will not be translated into languages other than English, and interpreters or language dictionaries will not be permitted to assist with translation. English as a second language is not considered a disability under the ADA and therefore does not qualify a candidate for special accommodations.

PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATION

An applicant who is scheduled to graduate from an accredited high school or GED program may receive a provisional certification under the policy outlined below:

- Candidates must take and successfully pass the examination no more than 12 months prior to graduation.
- The provisional certification expires 12 months after the examination date. The provisional certification cannot be renewed or reinstated. It must be converted to a full certification by meeting all certification eligibility requirements.
- When applying for full certification, candidates are required to provide proof of graduation (high school diploma or GED). In addition they must be able to provide written proof of training or work experience upon request.
- Once the provisional certification is converted to a full certification, the expiration date will follow the initial testing date and all requirements for continuing competency to renew the certification will be required.

A provisional certification issued by the NHA will be clearly marked with a provisional watermark. Provisionally-certified candidates will have a “P” associated with their certification number and can be verified as such through the NHA candidate verification system https://certportal.nhanow.com/certification_verification/.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The NHA does not discriminate or support the discrimination of or against any individual on the basis of gender, ethnicity, political affiliation, age, religion, marital status, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Confidential information (non-public information including, but not limited to, name, address, social security number, bank account numbers, financial or financial aid information, medical information, certification numbers, etc.) is protected by federal, state and local statutes. To protect privacy, NHA’s database of personal information is accessible only by designated staff and contractors operating under a nondisclosure agreement. This database may also be used in aggregate (such as pass rates, number of certificants, score trends, etc.) for the purpose of research reports and other published data.

Candidate information will remain confidential, with the exclusion of whether a candidate has a current/active certification. Unless required by law, written authorization by the candidate is needed to release test score information. Additionally, test scores or pass/fail status will not be provided over the phone.

A verification system is available to any health care professional or member of the general public who would like to verify an individual’s certification. This functionality is accessible on the NHA website at https://certportal.nhanow.com/certification_verification/ and requires the input of the individual’s last name, certification number, and certification expiration date. The system will return a positive confirmation for any individual who holds a current or provisional NHA credential.

EXAMINATION INFORMATION

STUDY MATERIALS

Candidates are strongly encouraged to prepare for their exam in advance. Applicants may choose to purchase the appropriate ATI Allied Health certification preparation materials including study guides and online practice tests. Study materials may be found at http://www.atialliedhealth.com/student/certification.aspx. [1]

In addition, candidates are encouraged to review and be familiar with the appropriate detailed test plan and sample questions for the exam they will be sitting for which can be found on NHA's website at www.nhanow.com, in addition to utilizing other study materials that may be available under a separate cover.

EXAMINATION TIMES AND NUMBER OF QUESTIONS

Exam	Number of Questions [2]	Exam Time
Phlebotomy Technician Certification (CPT)	110	1 Hr 50 Min
EKG Technician Certification (CET)	110	1 Hr 50 Min
Clinical Medical Assistant Certification (CCMA)	160	2 Hrs 40 Min
Operating Room Surgical Technician Certification (CORST)	200	3 Hrs 30 Min
Patient Care Technician/Assistant Certification (CPCT)	110	1 Hrs 50 Min
Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification (CMLA)	125	2 Hrs 10 Min
Medical Administrative Assistant Certification (CMAA)	110	1 Hr 50 Min
Electronic Health Record Specialist Certification (CEHRS™)	110	1 Hr 50 Min

[1] PLEASE NOTE: The purchase of ATI Allied health certification preparation materials is not required in order to become eligible to sit for an NHA exam, and does not guarantee a passing score on an examination.
[2] Questions for all examinations are four-option multiple choice items.

Billing and Coding Specialist Certification (CBCS)	100	1Hr 45 Min

WHAT TO BRING TO THE TEST CENTER

Candidates will be expected to validate their identity with a current government-issued photo ID. A copy of this ID may be kept.

GENERAL TESTING GUIDELINES

- No reference books will be allowed during any NHA examination administration.
- Eating or drinking in the examination room will not be allowed unless deemed necessary due to a documented medical condition and approved prior to the examination date.
- Pagers, radios, cellular telephones, watches, translators, dictionaries, and all other electronic devices and paper materials are prohibited in the examination room.
- Test misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated. Examples of possible misconduct include but are not limited to: consulting textbooks or notes, discussing or reviewing any examination items with another individual, and talking to other candidates during the examination. If the proctor suspects anyone of misconduct during the examination, the proctor has the right to stop the examination.
- The proctor will not answer any questions pertaining to the examination content.
- Candidates must provide their own #2 pencils for paper-pencil examinations.
- A demonstration of the PSI/Lasergrade software is available at http://candidate.psiexams.com/. A brief demonstration session is available to candidates prior to the beginning of the examination. This is not a practice examination, but rather a demonstration of the software interface.

AFTER THE EXAMINATION

Scoring

NHA examinations are currently scored using two formats: percent correct and scaled scores. A percent correct score is calculated by dividing the number of items the candidate answers correctly by the total number of items on the examination. Scaled scores can range from 200 to 500 and represent a conversion of the candidate's raw

score to allow for comparison between different forms of the same examination. The use of a scaled score provides consistency in reporting passing standards by accounting for the difficulty level of the examination form. The same level of performance is required to meet the scaled passing score of 390 regardless of which form of an assessment a candidate takes.

Below is a table of current score reporting methods and passing scores for each examination:

Examination	Score Reporting Method	Passing Score
Phlebotomy Technician Certification (CPT)	Scaled Score	390
EKG Technician Certification (CET)	Scaled Score	390
Clinical Medical Assistant Certification (CCMA)	Scaled Score	390
Operating Room Surgical Technician Certification (CORST)	Percent Correct	70%
Patient Care Technician/Assistant Certification (CPCT)	Scaled Score	390
Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification (CMLA)	Percent Correct	70%
Medical Administrative Assistant Certification (CMAA)	Scaled Score	390
Electronic Health Record Specialist Certification (CEHRS™)	Scaled Score	390
Billing and Coding Specialist Certification (CBCS)	Percent Correct	72%

PLEASE NOTE: It is NHA's intent to eventually move all examinations over to the scaled scoring methodology.
Examination results will be available on the NHA website (www.nhanow.com) within two (2) business days from when the examination form is received by NHA. Upon passing the certification exam, the candidate will receive via US mail an official certificate and wallet card within approximately 7 to 10 business days from the date your exam form

was received for scoring by NHA. Certifications are valid for two (2) years and expire on the date provided on your certificate.

If you do not pass your certification exam, you will be provided with diagnostic information on content areas requiring improvement. Candidates who wish to re-take an examination must go to the NHA website and log in as a returning candidate to schedule the examination and submit the appropriate fee.

Examination Updates

To continually provide the highest quality certification examinations and ensure practitioner competency, NHA examinations go through the job analysis process on a periodic basis (typically every 3 to 5 years). Knowing that allied health practitioner job duties continually evolve, it is important that NHA regularly complete these job analyses and make adjustments to its examinations to ensure they adequately reflect the job responsibilities and expectations of employees in these roles. Job analysis results are used to create a detailed test plan through the determination of the eligible content domains for each examination and the weights given to each major content area. Using the detailed test plans, psychometricians work in conjunction with subject matter experts to develop the examination content. The resulting examination provides evidence to support the content validity of the assessment. The final exam must be approved by the NHA Certification Board prior to its release.

When new exams are released, pilot scoring is used to ensure candidates are scored appropriately and pass/fail scores are set fairly. During the pilot scoring period, the new test is released but candidates are not given their scores or pass/fail results immediately. Using data from at least 100 pilot candidates, psychometricians make any necessary scoring adjustments and conduct cut score studies. Once the scoring adjustments are complete and the pass/fail scores are set, NHA progresses to full release and candidates receive their results immediately from that point forward.

RETAKING AN EXAMINATION

Candidates who fail an examination will have two chances to retake it and must wait at least 30 calendar days between attempts. Candidates who are unsuccessful after these two additional attempts will be required to wait one (1) year before testing again. This year should be used to remediate and prepare for the examination.

RECERTIFICATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

The NHA recertification program supports its certificants' need to stay current in their field of expertise. Because allied healthcare practitioners' job responsibilities are continually evolving, NHA requires recertification every two (2) years, through evidence of at least 10 continuing education credits every two-year cycle.

Continuing education credits may be acquired through the NHA's Continuing Education Program or through other outside educational programs or institutions. The NHA reviews credits based on the following criteria: current events, industry trends, and relevance to the allied healthcare field. If the credit/activity meets these criteria, the credit will equal half of the number of hours in participation.

Continuing education credits and fees can be submitted to the NHA annually or at the end of the two-year certification period. Upon recertification, the certified individual will receive a new wallet-sized ID card and certificate.

All recertification documents and fees must be submitted to NHA at www.nhanow.com by the certification's expiration date, with a 30-day grace period. Evidence of 10 continuing education credits must be submitted along with the fee of $79.50 per year ($159 total).

Should a certification expire, reinstatement is permitted within one (1) year of the expiration date. If reinstatement is requested within one year of the expiration date, the individual must submit:

- A completed recertification application (www.nhanow.com)
- Evidence of 15 continuing education credits
- Fee of $79.50 per year ($238.50 total for the three-year period)
- $99 reinstatement fee

If more than one year has passed since the expiration date on the certification, reinstatement is not permitted. The individual must reapply, meet NHA's eligibility requirements, and take the certification examination again in order to become certified.

EXAMINATION CHALLENGES AND HAND SCORING

Questions about the examination content or a score report will be accepted and reviewed as part of NHA's quality control processes, but are not considered an acceptable reason to appeal the examination results. No formal actions will be taken with regard to these types of questions.

For security reasons, candidates will not be able to review their examinations or obtain information on specific test questions. Although it is highly unlikely that a rescoring will result in a change of score, any candidate who feels that there was an error in examination grading and wants his or her examination rescored by hand must submit a written request with an explanation. There will be an additional fee of $25 (payable by money order only) for this service. The request for a rescore, along with the applicable fee, must be received by the NHA within 60 days of the examination date.

Requests for rescoring may be faxed to NHA, Attn: NHA Scoring Department, 913-661-6241. Alternately, rescore requests may be mailed to the following address: National Healthcareer Association, Attn: NHA Scoring Department, 11161 Overbrook Road, Leawood KS 66211

All correspondence must be signed by the candidate and must include the following:

- Candidate's full name
- Complete contact information (address, phone number, email)
- Name of assessment taken (e.g., Billing and Coding Specialist)
- Date of examination
- Location of test site
- Specific item comments

VIOLATION OF EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

NHA has the right to invalidate examination scores if it suspects that any irregularities or deviations from standard testing policies may have occurred during an examination administration. This includes but is not limited to testing irregularities involving the candidate, test site or agents administering the exam (proctor or test administrator). Candidates may appeal an invalidation of an exam score using the Appeals procedure noted in the following section.

APPEALS

An appeal is a formal request for reconsideration of the following:

1.) A candidate's eligibility to sit for the exam
2.) A certificants eligibility to maintain his/her credential
3.) A decision by the NHA regarding disciplinary action taken against a candidate/certificants

Eligibility Appeals

The NHA reserves the right to deny certification applications or recertification requests that do not meet the eligibility requirements as set forth by the NHA Certification Board. It is the responsibility of the candidate to submit an Exception Request/Appeals form and supporting documentation in the event he/she does not meet the eligibility requirements. Eligibility appeals will be reviewed by the NHA Disciplinary and Appeals Committee. The NHA shall notify the candidate of the committee's decision in written form. Appeals may be filed by submitting an NHA Certification Exception Request/Appeals form found on the NHA website at www.nhanow.com/forms.aspx.

Disciplinary Action Appeals

The NHA reserves the right to deny or remove a certification based on a disciplinary action taken against an individual. It is the responsibility of the candidate/certificant to submit an Exception Request/Appeals form and supporting documentation in the event he/she wishes to challenge the disciplinary action. Appeals received will be reviewed by the NHA Certification Governing Board. The NHA shall notify the candidate of the committee's decision in written form. Appeals may be filed by submitting an NHA Certification Exception Request/Appeals Form found on the NHA website at www.nhanow.com/forms.aspx.

Once the Exception Request/Appeals form is received by NHA, candidates/certificants can expect a written response in approximately 30 to 45 days.

Appeal decisions by the Certification Board are final and are not subject to further appellate review.

CODE OF ETHICS

Professionals certified by the NHA are expected to abide by the following Code of Ethics:

- Use best efforts for the betterment of society, the profession, and the members of the profession
- Uphold the standards of professionalism and maintain honesty in all professional interactions
- Continue to learn, apply, and advance scientific and practical knowledge and skills; stay up to date on the latest research and its practical application
- Continuously act in the best interest of the general public

- Protect and respect the dignity and privacy of patients

The NHA reserves the right to take disciplinary action against a candidate's certification for documented violations of the Code of Ethics.

HOW TO COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORM

NHA only accepts electronic certification applications. Paper applications are no longer available.

To register to sit for one or more of the NHA allied healthcare certification exams, you must visit NHA's website at www.nhanow.com and set up a Candidate Profile within the NHA Certification Portal and then register to sit for one or more certification examinations.

Setting up a Candidate Profile

To set up a Candidate Profile, follow these procedures:

- Go to www.nhanow.com
- Click on "REGISTER" link on the left-hand side of the NHA home page to go to the Certification Portal Screen
  Complete the "New Candidate Profile" information in the Certification Portal Screen and click on "Register" at the bottom of the screen

Registering to Sit for the Exam

Once you have entered the appropriate information and set up a Candidate Profile, you must do the following to register to sit for one or more examinations.

Log in to the Certification Portal screen using the email address and log in password you established when you created your profile. Once you have done this, click on the "Apply" link on the left-hand side of the Certification Portal screen (or if you have just completed the Registration information in the "New Candidate Profile" click on "Register" at the bottom of the screen).

Follow the prompts which will take you through a simple six-step process to register for one or more NHA certification examinations:

- Step 1: Choose a Certification Type: Choose the exam or exams you wish to register for
- Step 2: Respond to Attestation: Read and Agree/Disagree with the Attestation Agreement
- Step 3: Registration Prerequisite Questions: Answer educational requirement question
- Step 4: Chose Exam Section: Provides information on where and how your exam will be administered. (NOTE: Candidates testing at a PSI/LaserGrade center will need to contact them to schedule an appointment once the registration process has been completed)
- Step 5: Summary: Summarizes examinations chosen and administration location
- Step 6: Confirmation: Reaffirms Step 5 and allows for finishing process and paying for examinations you have registered