Certified Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification Exam (CMLA) Candidate Handbook

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1. INTRODUCTION

National Healthcareer Association is a certification organization with their headquarters located in Stilwell, KS. The National Healthcareer Association (NHA) was established in 1989 with a vision of implementing national competency standards to promote patient safety and as an information resource and support network for allied healthcare professionals and the healthcare industry.

The allied healthcare field continues to be one of the fastest growing segments of the economy, demanding an ever increasing number of professionally trained, career oriented individuals. The increasing demand for skilled allied healthcare workers necessitated the development of an agency dedicated to testing the competencies defined by each profession.

The NHA's national examinations utilize a research and development team of psychometricians and test developers who strive to follow industry standards for certification exam development. Subject Matter Experts from the field with assistance from the test development experts define the competencies, write items, review them for appropriateness and set the cut score. Candidates who earn certification with the NHA have demonstrated at least the minimum level of knowledge to competently practice the profession.

The NHA certification is supported within the healthcare industry by technical schools, 4 and 2-year colleges, unions, hospitals, associations, governmental agencies and state health departments, and recognized by more and more employers. The U.S. Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs also recognizes and sponsors the NHA certifications and exams.

Since 1989, the NHA national certification exams have been offered in all fifty states. As of October 2010, more than 150,000 national certifications have been issued throughout the country, making the NHA the largest Allied Healthcare Certification agency.

The NHA strives on a continuing basis to:

- Develop valid competency assessments for Medical Laboratory Assistant professionals.
- Maintain industry confidence by providing high-quality certifications that will enhance the provision of healthcare.

A. The NHA's Primary Functions, Strategic Vision, Mission And Core Values

The National Healthcareer Association's vision is to be the premier allied health certification organization.

- To be recognized as the leader and preferred certification sought by allied health professionals throughout the world;
- To contribute to global efforts that improve patient care and safety by the development, implementation, and continuation of high-quality competency exams for allied healthcare professionals;

The Primary Functions of the NHA are:

- To build certification examinations and competency assessments which are used as benchmarks for national and international industry standards and frameworks;
- To work with stakeholders in the profession to develop comprehensive frameworks and skill standards.

The Mission of the Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification Program:

While the NHA offers several national certification exams, the mission of the Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification Program is to promote a high standard of practice among Medical Laboratory Assistants and to recognize Medical Laboratory Assistants, who are proficient in the knowledge and skills needed to adequately practice the profession.

B. The NHA's Core Values

In pursuit of the NHA's vision and mission, the quality of services will be guided by Excellence. We are committed to excellence by creating a culture that integrates best practices and professional development. Excellence at the NHA means the highest quality products, the most competent staff, and continuous improvement of our products and services. Our Core Values include:

- **Integrity:** Integrity at the NHA is being honest and ethical and having the moral strength to do the right thing. We incorporate this value in every aspect of our personal and professional lives, and in our commitment to promoting patient care and safety.
- **Accountability:** The NHA's work produces greater accountability in the healthcare system by ensuring that our certified professionals seek to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of patient care services. Additionally, we set and maintain standards of accountability for the individuals we certify by expecting all to adhere to the Code of Ethics.
- **Caring:** Caring is central to the NHA's customer-oriented approach to our work. It is an intrinsic value, predicated upon mutual respect, and engendering trust in all of our settings and relationships within the allied health care system.
- **Creativity:** Creativity requires an innovative perspective, openness to change, and a management system capable of adapting and able to respond to the dynamic nature of our health care and educational environments.
- **Teamwork:** We are committed to fostering an environment that promotes respect, communication, and collaboration among all members of our teams and our partnerships.
- **Advocacy:** At the NHA, we advocate for the allied healthcare workforce, promoting policies, programs, and practices to secure the highest level of worker education, yielding high-quality patient care and societal well-being.

2. APPLYING FOR THE MEDICAL LABORATORY ASSISTANT CERTIFICATION EXAM

A. Eligibility

To be eligible to earn an NHA certification the individual must meet the requirements below:

- Possess either a High School Diploma, or equivalency, and,
- Recently successfully completed a training program or have one year of work experience within the field.

  (Candidates must be able to provide written proof of training or experience.)

Candidates are ultimately responsible for knowing any registration or licensure requirements in their state.

An applicant scheduled to graduate from an accredited high school or GED Program may receive a provisional certification under the policies below.

Policy for Provisional Certification:

- Candidates must sit for the exam no more than 12 months prior to graduation
- The provisional certification expires 12 months after test date if no high school diploma/GED is submitted to the NHA by the candidate
- The provisional certification cannot be renewed or reinstated until it is converted to a full certification by providing the documentation to the NHA of education and/or work experience.
- 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 certificate 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 accessible on the NHA website (www.nhanow.com).

B. Registration

Certification exams are offered in paper/pencil or computer-based at approved NHA test sites for students enrolled in those programs. Candidates not enrolled in a school program that meet the eligibility requirements and wish to challenge the NHA Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification Exam may register online and sit for the exam at PSI/Lasergrade test locations; there are currently over 550 PSI/Lasergrade test locations throughout the country. Candidates interested in sitting for an NHA certification exam should register online at the NHA website (www.nhanow.com). Registration requires payment in full for the exam, the cost of which is posted on the website.

C. Code of Ethics

Candidates certified by the NHA are expected to abide by the following code of ethics.

Professionals certified through the NHA, have a duty to:

- Use best efforts for the betterment of society, the profession, and the members of the profession.
- Uphold the standards of professionalism and be honest 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.
- Participate in activities contributing to the improvement of personal health, our society, and the betterment of the allied health industry.
- Continuously act in the best interests of the general public.
- Protect and respect the dignity and privacy of all patients.

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

1. Cheating or collaboration on the exam. If credible evidence of a candidate's misconduct is found, their certification will be placed in a pending state until an investigation is complete. Any right to retake the exam may be forfeited.

2. Unauthorized use of any NHA proprietary materials and or copyright infringement with regards to exams, study guides and any other materials distributed as property of the NHA.

3. Behavior that disregards the safety and rights of the patient.

4. Material misrepresentation or fraud in any statement to the NHA or to the public, including but not limited to statements made to assist the applicant, certificant, or another to apply for, obtain, or retain certification.

5. Any violation of the law as defined by individual states. This includes but is not limited to felonies (Class A-E). If a candidate or a certified NHA member has been convicted of a felony or been disciplined by a regulatory board and they wish to be considered for either exam registration or continuing education, individuals must submit court documents for consideration.

D. Cancellations

There are no refunds offered on certification exams unless the scheduled exam date is cancelled by the NHA. However, the exam fee may be transferred over to a new date for up to six months from the original date. All exams must be rescheduled a minimum of 24 hours in advance to avoid additional costs.

E. Special Accommodations (ADA)

If a special accommodation for testing due to disability or other reason is required, please consult our ADA Policy in Section IV of this document.

F. English as a Second Language

The exam is written in the English language. At this time there are no exams available in other languages. Translation assistance, including dictionaries, is not permitted during the exam.

G. Study Materials

Applicants may choose to receive the NHA Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification Exam Study Guide electronically or in print. Study guides are available on the NHA website where current pricing is listed. PLEASE NOTE: the purchase of an NHA Exam Review is not required. Candidates are strongly encouraged to review the Medical Laboratory Assistant exam outline as a guide to material on the exam.

H. Grandfathering

The NHA will not "grandfather" another certification, i.e., accept another organization's certification or alternate pathway in lieu of meeting the certification requirements or for waiving a passing decision on the Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification Exam examination. All candidates must take and pass the NHA Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification Exam to receive certification.

I. Retaking the Exam

Candidates who fail the exam, will have two chances to retake the exam. Candidates must wait at least one month before retaking an exam. Candidates that are unsuccessful after these two attempts will be required to wait one year before testing again. This year should be used to remediate and prepare for the exam. Candidates may utilize the appeals process to request a waiver of this requirement.

3. EXAMINATION INFORMATION

A. Exam Format and Administration

The Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification Exam is a 125-item multiple choice exam administered in paper/pencil or computer-based formats. Candidates who meet the eligibility requirements but are not enrolled in a school program may register online to take the Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification Exam at PSI/Lasergrade test

centers; there are currently over 550 PSI/Lasergrade test locations throughout the country.

Candidates have 130 minutes to complete the 125-item Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification Exam.

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

Candidates will be expected to attest to meeting the eligibility requirements, upholding the profession's Code of Conduct and agreeing to the exam copyright and confidentiality policies.

General Testing Guidelines

- Eating or drinking in the testing room will not be allowed unless deemed necessary due to a documented medical condition.
- Use of beepers, radios, cellular phones, watch alarms, translators, dictionaries, and all other electronic devices are prohibited in the testing room. All electronic devices must be in the OFF position.
- Test misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated, examples of which include, but are not limited to: consulting textbooks or notes; discussing or reviewing any items on the exam with anyone else during the exam period; and talking to other students during the exam. If the exam proctor suspects anyone of talking or cheating during the exam, the proctor has the right to stop the exam. Candidates may be required to retake the exam at full price, if allowed to retest.
- Candidates should answer every question on the exam. Test results will be sent to candidates via mail. Please do not call the office for results; the NHA will not release grades on the telephone. Please allow approximately 30 days after the test date.
- The proctor will not answer any questions once the exam begins.

1) Paper/Pencil Exam

All exams will be proctored. Proctors are trained to follow specific requirements to maintain exam security and uniformity of the testing experience. Candidate instructions for taking the paper and pencil exam will be provided onsite. Candidates should be aware of the following requirements:

- ONLY A #2 PENCIL may be used.
- The candidate's full name, test ID and social security number must be clearly printed on the answer sheet in the appropriate boxes, as well as on the sign-in sheet along with a complete mailing address. A complete mailing address is required to process the exam and certification.
- Candidates should review the answer sheet for completeness and clarity.
- On the testing date and at the scheduled time, the candidate's identity is verified against a current government-issued photo ID and is checked in by the proctor. The identification must be clear and legible. The name on the photo identification must be the same as on the original registration. If the names are different, then a certified or notarized copy of a marriage license, divorce decree, adoption papers or other legal documentation of name change must be provided. If the address on the government-issued photo identification is different from that supplied at the time of registration, the candidate must show proof of address, such as a current utility bill.

2) Proctored Internet testing

The general process for the internet-based exam includes:

- Prior to the exam, the NHA will provide a letter to the testing site that lists all of the candidates who have enrolled, the organizational codes, the candidate's e-mail address and their password. For security purposes.
- On the testing date and at the scheduled time, the candidate's identity is verified against a current government-issued photo ID and is checked in by the proctor. The identification must be clear and legible. The name on the photo identification must be the same as on the original registration. If the names are different, then a certified or notarized copy of a marriage license, divorce decree, adoption papers or other legal documentation of name change must be provided. If the address on the government-issued photo identification is different from that supplied at the time of registration, the candidate must show proof of address, such as a current utility bill.
- Candidates complete testing using the internet delivered exam. Candidates should review for completeness.

3) PSI/Lasergrade testing

The general process for testing at PSI/Lasergrade centers includes:

- Testing at the PSI/Lasergrade centers is a computer-based exam offered during business hours and some evenings and weekends.
- A demonstration of the PSI/Lasergrade software used for the exam is shown on the PSI/Lasergrade website at candidate.psiexams.com. A brief practice/demonstration session is available for candidates to practice on the computer before the exam actually starts. This is not a practice exam but a demonstration of the software interface.
- Candidates are given an opportunity to comment on any item that they believe is ambiguous, inaccurate or deficient. Candidates are also asked to complete a brief survey at the end of the exam to rate the exam registration procedures, the testing facility and the testing experience. This information is reviewed by test development staff and referred as necessary to the Governing Committee/Board.
- Upon arrival at the PSI/Lasergrade test center, candidates will be required to present a current valid government-issued photo ID (e.g. valid passport or driver's license). The identification must be clear and legible. The name on the photo identification must be the same as on the original registration. If the names are different, then a certified or notarized copy of a marriage license, divorce decree, adoption papers or other legal documentation of name change must be provided. If the address on the government-issued photo identification is different from that supplied at the time of registration, the candidate must show proof of address, such as a current utility bill.

B. Examination Content

The content of the Medical Laboratory Assistant examination is based on the competencies outlined below. The Certified Medical Laboratory Assistant examination consists of 125 multiple-choice items covering detailed competencies listed below.

1. The student will learn how a laboratory is staffed and the role of the medical laboratory assistant.

2. The student will demonstrate understanding of laboratory safety including: OSHA; Universal precautions; hand washing; and the use of gloves.

3. The student will learn the appropriate way to dispose of sharps and non-sharps medical waste.

4. The student will demonstrate understanding of the chain of infection.

5. The student will be able to properly set up Medical laboratory equipment.

6. The student will learn proper use and maintenance of laboratory equipment, i.e., microscopes, centrifuge, autoclave and auto analyzers.

7. The student will become familiar with different quality control protocols:

   a. Pre-testing activities

   b. Testing activities

   c. Specimen collection, transport and preservation

   d. Reporting of test results

8. The student will become familiar with blood collection tubes, types, additives and tests.

9. The student will gain a broader understanding of medical terminology and laboratory abbreviations.

10. The student will demonstrate understanding of CLIA88 and classification of laboratory testing. (Category I; II and III tests.)

11. The student will demonstrate ability to perform the following main tests in the laboratory

   a. Urinalysis – three part routine UA; sedi-stain technique

   b. Hematology – CBC; Blood smear; Wright stain; hemoglobin measurement; ESR

   c. Coagulation theory – PT and PTT

d. Microbiology – Bacteria; virus; fungi; protozoa; parasites; Gram stain technique; culture and sensitivity

e. Chemistry – profiles or panels; glucose; electrolytes; lipids; enzymes; drug testing and pregnancy testing.

f. Immunology and immunohematology – antigen; antibody reaction; agglutination. The concept of Blood typing and cross matching.

12. The student will become familiar with the identification system used by immunohematology department

13. The student will demonstrate understanding of the patient's bill of rights; informed consent; disclosure of lab test results.

14. The student will demonstrate understanding of the theory of Medical Laboratory Assistant by scoring a minimum of 70% on the National Certification written exam.

C. Exam Scoring

The NHA Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification Exam is designed to assess the competencies of the Medical Laboratory Assistant and award the NHA Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification Exam credential only to those Medical Laboratory Assistants competent in the knowledge and abilities to perform Medical Laboratory Assistant work safely and effectively.

Paper and pencil exam answer sheets are scanned and software is utilized to score the answer sheets and record the results electronically. Online exams are scored immediately by the web-based testing software and record the results electronically. All exam data is stored on the NHA's own servers. Exam scores (name, overall score, passing decision) will be sent to the candidate's home address within approximately 3-5 business days after completed answer sheets are received by NHA. Score results include a letter that reports the candidate's score and if they passed or failed. If a candidate doesn't receive a passing score, the letter includes information regarding retaking the exam. If a candidate passed, they also receive a wallet sized certification ID card and certificate with the NHA seal as proof of certification. A score of 70% or better is required to earn the Medical Laboratory Assistant certification.

A candidate who feels their exam was scored incorrectly may file a formal request of the scoring process as stated in the Rescoring (Hand Scoring) section of this document. Candidates who wish to appeal the exam results should review the conditions under which appeals may be submitted and the full appeals process in the Appeals Section of this document.

In the event a school has made the certification exam available to their students, schools only receive an aggregate pass rate of candidates identified with that school compared to national and state pass rates. Individual candidate pass fail results are only reported to schools for those students who specifically consent to release.

D. Recertification

The purpose of recertification is to promote high standards of practice for Medical Laboratory Assistants to encourage continued competency in the field and promote safe and effective patient care. It is required that all certificants who wish to maintain their credential complete the necessary continuing education.

The NHA recertification program supports the professional Medical Laboratory Assistants' desire to stay current in their field of expertise. The health care field is in constant change and the certified Medical Laboratory Assistant must keep up with those changes. Therefore the NHA requires recertification every two years to stay current in the discipline, through evidence of at least 10 continuing education credits in every two year cycle.

The NHA believes a two year period reflects a duration that accommodates the rate by which new information, skills and techniques are introduced into the Medical Laboratory Assistant field.

Continuing education credits may be acquired through the NHA 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 meets any or all of the criteria, the credit will equal half the number of hours in attendance.

Submission of 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 certificant will receive a new wallet-sized ID Card and certificate.

All recertification documents and fees must be submitted to the NHA national office by the certification's expiration date, with a one month grace period. The required pieces are: 1) evidence of 10 continuing education credits and 2) annual fee of $79.50 per year ($159 total).

Should a certification expire, reinstatement (recertification) is permitted within one year of the expiration date. If reinstatement is initiated within one year of the expiration date, the person must submit:

- A completed recertification application
- Evidence of 15 continuing education credits
- Annual fee of $79.50 per year ($238.50 total for the three years), and
- $99 reinstatement fee.

After one year from the expiration date, reinstatement is not permitted and a person must apply and again take the Medical Laboratory Assistant Certification Exam to become certified.

4. OTHER EXAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Special Accommodations (ADA)

Candidates with documented disabilities may submit an accommodations request form. Any accommodations will be granted in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Upon request, the NHA shall make reasonable accommodations to assist candidates with disabilities. Special accommodations can be provided for individuals with documented disabilities by submitting an Accommodations Request form available on the NHA website (www.nhanow.com), along with the supporting documentation listed on the form.

Accommodations will be provided to qualified candidates with disabilities to the extent that such accommodations do not fundamentally alter the examination, create an unfair advantage, or cause an undue burden to the NHA or partner testing agent. The cost of excessive accommodation requirements is to be borne by the candidate (i.e., electronic communication equipment, etc.). Exams will not be translated into foreign languages, and interpreters will not be permitted to translate the examination.

B. Nondiscrimination Policy

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

C. 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, student numbers, medical information, certification numbers, etc.) are protected by federal, state and local statutes, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). To protect privacy, the 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 purposes of research reports and other published data. Schools may receive upon request to the Compliance Office various aggregate statistical information, such as regional or national score averages and pass/fail rates for school accreditation purposes.

Candidate information including certification, registration and testing information will remain confidential, with the exclusion of whether a candidate has a current/active certification, i.e., “certification status”. Unless required by law, written authorization by the candidate is needed to release test score information. Additionally, test scores will not be provided over the phone. This policy helps to maintain confidentiality for the student and helps ensure accuracy of results.

A new verification system is available to any healthcare professional or member of the general public wishing to verify a candidate’s credential. This functionality is accessible on the NHA website (www.nhanow.com) and requires the input of a candidate’s last name, certification number and expiration date. The system will return a positive confirmation for any candidate that holds an NHA credential.

D. Disciplinary Policy

The NHA has established a code of ethics and guidelines in order to protect the public and the profession and certificants agree to follow the code of ethics and guidelines. The NHA reserves the right to revoke a member’s certification for the following reasons:

1. Cheating or collaboration on the exam. If credible evidence of a candidate’s misconduct is found, their certification will be placed in a pending state until an investigation is complete. Any right to retake the exam may be forfeited.

2. Unauthorized use of any NHA proprietary materials and or copyright infringement with regards to exams, study guides and any other materials distributed as property of the NHA.

3. Behavior that disregards the safety and rights of the patient.

4. Material misrepresentation or fraud in any statement to the NHA or to the public, including but not limited to statements made to assist the applicant, certificant, or another to apply for, obtain, or retain certification.

5. Any violation of the law as defined by individual states. This includes but is not limited to felonies (Class A-E). If a candidate or a certified NHA member has been convicted of a felony or been disciplined by a regulatory board and they wish to be considered for either certification or recertification, individuals must submit court documents for consideration along with a completed Appeals Form which is available on the NHA website (www.nhanow.com).

If a consumer or other party reports an incident involving a candidate or certified member of the NHA, the candidate/certified member of the NHA will be notified of the report by registered mail. The candidate/certificant must provide a written response to the NHA Disciplinary and Appeals Committee within 15 days of receiving the letter. Upon review of the report, any supporting evidence, and the candidate's/certificant's response, the Committee will determine if further investigation is warranted. Upon the conclusion of any resulting investigation, the Committee shall determine whether grounds for disciplinary action exist and, if so, what disciplinary action should be taken. The Committee shall notify the charged member of their decision by certified U.S. mail, return receipt requested. If applicable, the charged member shall also be notified of his/her right to appeal.

E. Eligibility Appeals

The NHA reserves the right to deny certification applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements as set forth by the NHA. Appeals to a denied application must be submitted in writing within 30 days of receiving the notice of ineligibility and must include an explanation for consideration. Eligibility appeals will be reviewed by the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee. The Committee shall notify the candidate of their decision in written form. Appeals may be filed by submitting an Appeals form.

F. Exam Question Challenges

Questions about the examination content, passing standard or specific items will be accepted and reviewed as part of NHA's quality control processes, but are not considered an acceptable reason to appeal the exam results and no formal actions will be taken. Any formal challenges must be submitted in writing to the NHA within 5 business days of the completion of the exam. The NHA does NOT provide an individual response to all challenges; however, every challenge is considered individually and acted on accordingly. Exam challenges may be faxed to NHA, Attn.: NHA APPEALS Department, 913-661-6241, or may be sent via overnight courier to the following address: National Healthcareer Association, Attn.: NHA Appeals Department, 7500 160th, Stilwell, KS 66085

Correspondence must be signed by the candidate and include:

- Candidate's full name
- Complete contact information (Address, Phone, Email)
- Exam taken (e.g. Phlebotomy, Clinical Medical Assistant, etc)
- Date taken
- Location taken
- Specific item comments

G. Violation of Exam Procedures

If there are any deviations from standard testing policies, or if candidates or proctors witness improper behavior by a proctor, instructor or other candidate, NHA should be notified as soon as possible. Incidents involving instructors and candidates should also be brought to the proctor's attention at the time of the exam. Candidates experiencing such incidents may appeal exam results. An Incident Report must be submitted on the designated Incident Report form and must include an explanation of the incident and how it negatively impacted performance. The NHA will need verification of the event to render a decision. The report will be reviewed by the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee and will be responded to in written form. The decision of the NHA is final. Any notifications of the incident must be made within thirty (30) days of examination to: Attn: Compliance, NHA, 7500 160th, Stilwell, KS 66085.

Correspondence must be signed by the candidate and include:

- Candidate's full name
- Complete contact information (Address, Phone, Email)
- Exam taken (e.g. Phlebotomy, Clinical Medical Assistant, etc)
- Date taken
- Location taken
- Specific item comments

H. Appealing Decisions

The Disciplinary and Appeals Committee is appointed by the Executive Director. Decisions of the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee may be appealed by the individual on the following grounds only:

- The NHA Disciplinary and Appeals Committee violated its policies and procedures for processing complaints of ethical violations.
- The decision of the Committee was arbitrary and capricious and was not supported by the materials provided by the complainant and the charged member.
- The sanctions imposed are inconsistent with or disproportional to the violations found.

After the charged person has received written notification of the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee's decision, the person may appeal the Committee's decision within thirty (30) days by sending a written response to Attn: Compliance, NHA, 7500 W. 160th St, Stilwell, KS 66085. This appeal will be reviewed by individuals not associated with the initial decision. The decision of this committee is final.

The NHA will render a decision regarding the appeal and deliver the verdict in writing. The NHA is limited to the following types of decisions:

- Upholding the decision of the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee.
- Upholding the decision of the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee, but altering sanctions. These sanctions will be outlined in the letter.
- Reversing the decision of the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee.

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

I. Rescoring (Hand Scoring)

For security reasons, candidates will not be able to review their exam or obtain information on particular test questions. Although it is highly unlikely that a rescoring will result in a change of scores, any candidate who feels that there was an error in exam grading and wants his/her exam rescored by hand must submit a written request with reasoning. There will be an additional fee of $25.00 (payable with Money Order) assessed for rescoring. Within 60 days of the examination date, the candidate must send the written request to: National Healthcareer Association, Attn: Processing Dept., 7500 160th Street, Stilwell, KS 66085.

Letters must be signed by the candidate and include:

- Candidate's full name
- Complete contact information (Address, Phone, Email)
- Exam taken (e.g. Phlebotomy, Clinical Medical Assistant, etc)
- Date taken
- Location taken
- Specific item comments

J. Record Retention

The purpose of NHA's Record Retention policy is to ensure that necessary records and documents are adequately protected and maintained and to ensure that records that are no longer needed or of no value are discarded at the appropriate time. The NHA requires that its records be maintained in a consistent and logical manner and be managed so that the NHA:

1. Meets legal standards for protection, storage and retrieval;
2. Protects the privacy of its members and those associated with the NHA;
3. Optimizes the use of space;
4. Minimizes the cost of record retention; and
5. Destroys outdated records in an appropriate manner.

The NHA maintains a current list of certificants and provides verification of certification status to the general public accessible on the NHA website. Electronic candidate records are kept on file indefinitely and are not destroyed. In the event an individual's certification has lapsed, the records are still maintained in the database under "inactive" status. Electronically, the NHA will indefinitely maintain candidate personal information, scores, type of certificate, expiration dates and recertification information.

The item pool and master exam forms will be stored indefinitely in an electronic format as will be exam development documents such as the JTA Reports, Standard Setting Reports and item analyses. The item pool and master electronic exam forms are stored on password protected NHA servers and are accessible only to the exam development team and only shared with subject matter experts as needed for item development and review.

There is very limited personnel access to this area and only the exam coordinator, the coordinator's assistant, director of operations and the Compliance Team are allowed access. The printed exam form masters, as well as all existing printed exam forms, are shredded upon the creation of a new exam form.

Paper pencil booklets are destroyed once answer sheets are scored.

Paper Pencil answer sheets are stored as follows:

- Sent to Iron Mountain for storage one month after received by the NHA office
- At the time they are ingested by Iron Mountain for storage, all paper pencil answer sheets are scanned and digital copies are loaded onto a disc which NHA will retain for 7 years
- Paper answer sheets will be retained by Iron Mountain for one year after the date they accepted into storage.

Continuing Education documentation is stored as follows:

- External CE Documentation (non-NHA provided) is scanned. Digital copies are retained by NHA for 7 years. Paper copies are kept in long term storage for one year.

NHA produced CE is kept with the candidate information electronically; original paper documentation is retained for one month. All compliance related documentation (accommodations requests, disciplinary reports, appeals, security issues, and NHA activities) are retained permanently.