



**NATIONAL CERTIFICATION COUNCIL
FOR ACTIVITY PROFESSIONALS**

Enriching Lives Through Person-Centered Engagement

EXPERIENTIAL TRACK

Activity Director Certified (ADC)

National Certification Council for Activity Professionals
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Welcome to the Certification Standards of the National Certification Council for Activity Professionals, known as “NCCAP.”

NCCAP was created by the National Association of Activity Professionals (NAAP) in 1986 as the official credential of the Activity Profession. NCCAP certification is the only credential recognized by NAAP as meeting the Professional Standards of Practice to be an Activity Professional and Activity Director.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) accepts NCCAP certification based on Federal Tag 658 that explicitly recognizes NAAP as competent to establish professional standards of practice. Since 1986, NCCAP certification has been recognized as the Gold Standard for the highest quality knowledge and skills.

There are several paths to NCCAP certification. One path is to take the Modular Education Program for Activity Professionals (MEPAP). The MEPAP is the validated curriculum developed by NAAP to meet Professional Standards of Practice. The MEPAP leads to Activity Professional Apprentice Certification (APAC), Activity Professional Certification (APC), Activity Director Certification (ADC) and Activity Consultant Certification (ACC).

Another path to NCCAP certification is the Professional Equivalency Path. This includes Allied Health Professions who are currently credentialed as an Art Therapist Board Certified (ATR-BC), Music Therapist Board Certified (MT-BC), Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant (COTA), Certified Therapeutic Recreation Therapist (CTRS) and Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR).

The other path to NCCAP certification is the Experiential Track for individuals who are able to demonstrate they meet applicable competency requirements to be an Activity Director.

Individuals meeting the requirements of the Experiential Track can obtain Activity Director Certified (ADC) certification from NCCAP. The Experiential Track is designed for those individuals who possess verifiable work experience of 10 or more years including 5 years **currently** directing an activities program in a Skilled Nursing or related long-term care facility.

The Experiential Track is a pathway that fulfills the requirements needed to become NCCAP certified as an Activity Director. However, the Required Curriculum component is substituted with a rigorous essay writing and review process, plus a tailored practicum project.

These requirements are reviewed by the NCCAP *Clinical and Curriculum Advisory Board* of independent experts to verify an individual possesses the knowledge and skills that are ensured by NCCAP certification.

The Required Curriculum component for NCCAP Certification using the Experiential Path is fulfilled by successfully completing the essay and practicum requirements outlined in this document rather than by taking MEPAP-APC and MEPAP-ADC.

EXPERIENTIAL TRACK

Activity Director Certified (ADC)

QUALIFICATION COMPONENTS	
1. EDUCATION	High School, GED or higher.
2. ESSAY REQUIREMENT	Write a 500-word essay for each of 8 Domains of Practice that clearly demonstrates your knowledge and ability to implement the competencies listed under each Domain. <u>Note:</u> Advanced Education in related subjects may reduce the number of required essays. Submit transcripts and supporting documents related to the competencies in the 8 Domains of Practice for consideration.
3. WORK EXPERIENCE	List and submit evidence of at least 10 years of work experience in an Activities Department and with at least 5 years currently in the role of Activity Director.
4. PRACTICUM PROJECT	Successfully complete an assigned practicum project to demonstrate the implementation of specific skills and knowledge.
5. NATIONAL EXAM	Pass the NCCAP National Exam

1. **Education:** Submit proof of completion of High School, GED or higher such as a copy of your graduation diploma or GED certificate.
2. **Essay Requirement:** Write a 500-word essay for each of the 8 Domains of Practice that clearly demonstrates your knowledge and ability to implement the competencies listed for each Domain. Include detailed examples that demonstrate the specific skills you use to fulfill the objectives of these Domains. Clearly explain how you deliver the relevant care and services to residents and clients for each of the competencies listed under each Domain.
3. **Work Experience:** In order to verify you have at least **10** years of work experience in activities, including at least **5** years **currently** in the role of Activity Director, provide a chronological list of each position you have held.
 - a. Month and year, you started and ended each position.
 - b. Position title.
 - c. Name of supervisor.
 - d. Facility name, address, telephone, email and website.
 - e. Supporting evidence such as tax statements, pay stubs, employment records, etc.
4. **Practicum Project:** Demonstrate your current competency by successfully completing a Practicum Project under the direction of an assigned NCCAP Instructor.
5. **National Exam:** Successfully pass the NCCAP National Exam.

ESSAY REQUIREMENT

For each of 8 Domains of Practice listed below, write a 500-word essay that explains your knowledge and skills of each of the competencies listed in the Domain. The objective is to use actual examples from your work that clearly demonstrate your ability to successfully deliver activities services and care for each competency. Use detailed examples, experiences and scenarios from your work life. List the specific manuals, policies and resources you use to deliver care and services associated with the competencies listed in each Domain. Include the role, duties and responsibilities of both the activity professionals you work with as well as the other members of the integrated care team you work with.

For each of the 8 essays required, include your name, date of completion and the specific Domain of Practice on each. When you have completed all 8 essays you are required to upload them all as part of the online the application process. You are also required to upload the documents associated you're your Practicum Project. After all documents are uploaded, the review process takes 4-6 weeks.

DOMAINS OF PRACTICE

1. Therapeutic Activity Concepts

- A. Knowledge of the underlying concepts and framework of the activity profession within health care organizations.
- B. Possesses the skills to succeed within a health care community and successfully carry out facility and departmental goals and objectives.

2. Introduction to Standards, Regulations and Survey Process

- A. Projects a professional image by demonstrating a positive attitude, takes pride in one's work and abides by the Standards and Scope of Practice of the activity profession.
- B. Consistently broadens skills through continuing education, participates in professional groups, complies with applicable regulations and ensures company policies and procedures are met.

3. Communication Strategies for the Activity Professional

- A. Establishes interpersonal relationships and responds effectively to feelings and concerns communicated in various formats such as writing, speech, and nonverbal communications.
- B. Persuasively presents thoughts and ideas to gain commitment and to garner support, possesses knowledge of workplace culture and has the ability to effectively function using written, verbal and non-verbal communication.

4. Aging Through the Life Span

- A. Effectively utilizes theories of behavior, personality and psychosocial development including specific knowledge of the quality of life needs of the older adult and can adapt approaches, engagement and activities to ensure individual needs are met as age-related changes occur.
- B. Implements individual and group approaches based on individual needs as it relates to the Six Dimensions of Wellness established by the National Wellness Institute.
- C. Upholds, honors and creates opportunities for spiritual, value and belief systems and can assist in end of life transitions, Right to Die issues, bereavement, hospice and palliative care.

5. Cognitive and Behavioral Health

- A. Possesses the ability to practice a holistic, person-centered approach to care and embrace a positive approach to support persons living with dementia.
- B. Effectively responds to family and community influences, behavioral risk factors, and socio-cultural patterns that influence the physical and mental health status of the individual receiving care.
- C. Advocates for non-pharmacological interventions when working with individuals who have psychiatric and psychological disorders and implements non-pharmacological practices that are person-centered, evidence-based, and feasible.

6. Documentation Skills for the Activity Professional

- A. Adheres to and maintains regulatory compliance of documentation and possesses the skills to translate this information into meaningful approaches, engagement and activities.
- B. Uses assessment as an opportunity for information gathering, relationship-building, education, and support including advancing collaboration across the integrated care team.
- C. Has the knowledge and skills to gather and document personalized information for individualized care programming and uses observational skills to record progress and changes.

7. Person-Centered Engagement Programs

- A. Creates person-centered group and individual programs with opportunities for growth, socialization, comfort and overall quality of life.
- B. Uses creativity and flexibility to meet the functional, cognitive and age-related variances of the population being served to attain their highest physical and cognitive potential.
- C. Creates opportunities for volunteer engagement within and outside the community.

8. Professional Growth and Self-Care

- A. Possesses knowledge of self-care including the skills to identify triggers of stress and define personal solutions within the care partner relationship.
- B. Performs consistent self-care while maintaining motivation and establishes boundaries in relationships with the individual receiving care, the family, other care practitioners, and the interdisciplinary care team.

PRACTICUM PROJECT

As a final demonstration of competency, you are required to undertake a project that requires you to apply your knowledge and skills through real interaction with a resident or person in your care. Please note that you must maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the person you choose to work with for this project. Include your name, date of completion on each document for this project. You will upload these documents during the online application process. After all documents are uploaded, the review process will take 4-6 weeks.

PRACTICUM PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

1. Select a resident/client with a particular need or challenge (cognitive, physical, psycho-social).
2. Assess the resident/client and develop an individualized plan of care.
3. Create, develop and implement an individualized activity, tool, or approach for this resident.
4. Train staff to use the developed approach or tool and support materials.
5. Create a policy or protocol for use of the items required for the approach, tool or activity.
6. Write a 500-word article defining the benefits of the approach, tool or activity with this person.
7. Summarize your success, lack of success, barriers, and what you could do differently.

APPLYING FOR ADC CERTIFICATION USING THE EXPERIENTIAL TRACK

1. Start the process by completing the online Application and paying the \$235 Application Fee.
2. The \$235 fee is required to be paid online at the start of the application process using a credit, debit or stored value card.
3. After you have completed all essays and the practicum project, you are required to upload all these documents into your saved online application for review.
4. During the review process we may send you a request for clarification or additional information necessary to fulfill the requirements for ADC certification.
5. The review process takes up to 4 weeks.
6. Please note that ADC Certification must be renewed every 2 years with 30 CE hours.
7. Contact us via email if you have any questions: info@nccap.org.