



**NATIONAL CERTIFICATION COUNCIL  
FOR ACTIVITY PROFESSIONALS**

*Enriching Lives Through Person-Centered Engagement*

**EXPERIENTIAL TRACK**

**for**

**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 (AT-BC), Music Therapist Board Certified (MT-BC), Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant (COTA), Certified Therapeutic Recreation Therapist (CTRS), Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR), Certified Professional Gerontologist (CPG) and Licensed Nursing Home Administrator (LNHA).

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 5 or more years including 2 years currently directing, managing, or supervising an activities or life enrichment program.

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, and passing the National Certification Exam.

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 1-APC and MEPAP 2-ADC.

## EXPERIENTIAL TRACK for ADC

QUALIFICATION COMPONENTS	
<b>1. EDUCATION</b>	High School, GED or higher.
<b>2. ESSAY REQUIREMENT</b>	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.
<b>3. WORK EXPERIENCE</b>	List and submit evidence of at least <b>5</b> years of work experience in an Activities Department and with at least <b>2</b> years <b>currently</b> directing, managing, or supervising an activities or life enrichment program.
<b>4. NATIONAL EXAM</b>	Pass the NCCAP National Certification 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. Your essays should reflect your actual experience and knowledge. As a general rule, no more than 25% of any essay should come from other sources, and any external sources should use proper citations.
  - a. **Work Experience:** To verify you have at least **5** years of work experience in activities, including at least **2** years **currently** directing, managing or supervising an activities or life enrichment program, provide a chronological list of each position you held.
  - b. Month and year that you started and ended each position.
  - c. Position title.
  - d. Name of supervisor.
  - e. Facility name, address, telephone, email and website.
  - f. Supporting evidence of employment such as tax statements, pay stubs, etc.
3. **National Exam:** Successfully pass the NCCAP National Certification Exam.
4. **One Year Limit.** You have one year from the date you apply to complete the process.

## **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. 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 as a Manager 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 as a Manager 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 Responsibilities for the Activity Professional**

- A. Advances and maintains regulatory compliance of documentation and possess 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 managing collaboration across the integrated care team.
- C. Has the knowledge and skills to gather and document information related to policy development, budgeting and quality assurance.

**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 Management of Others**

- A. Possesses knowledge of self-care including the skills to identify triggers of stress and define personal solutions within the care partner relationship.
- B. Practices skills and techniques associated with departmental planning, personnel management including staff selection, training, supervision and engagement, and the management function of controlling quality assurance.

## APPLYING FOR ADC CERTIFICATION USING THE EXPERIENTIAL TRACK

1. After you are pre-qualified to apply, NCCAP will send you an email with a link to an online application. Start by completing the required information and paying the \$235 fee using a credit card, debit card or stored value card.
2. After completing the information and paying the fee, you will receive an email with a password and link to your personal account to upload all required documents.
3. Upload the required proof of education and work experience when you have it.
4. After you have completed the essays, upload all these documents into your account for review.
5. During the review process we may send you a request for clarification or additional information.
6. The review process takes 4-6 weeks.
7. ADC Certification must be renewed every 2 years with 20 CE hours and payment of renewal fee.
8. Contact us with any questions: [info@nccap.org](mailto:info@nccap.org).

## EVALUATION AND APPROVAL

Essays will be evaluated using the following process.

### 1. ESSAYS

- A. Each Applicant is required to write 8 500-word essays that demonstrate their knowledge and skills to understand, use, apply and implement the specific competencies under 8 different Domains of Practice.
- B. Each essay will be evaluated to assess that the Applicant adequately and clearly uses language, content and subject matter, including specific examples and details that demonstrate their ability to apply and implement required competencies.

### 2. APPROVAL PROCESS

- A. For initial review and grading, NCCAP assigns each completed application to a certified Activity Professional selected for their knowledge and experience to evaluate and grade the essays.
- B. After review and grading of essays, successful applications are sent for a final review and approval by the NCCAP Board after which the Applicant is awarded ADC certification.
- C. Applicants whose essay content is determined to require additional clarity or information will be given the opportunity for a one-time re-write of the essays in question, after which the rewritten essays will be reviewed and graded a final time.