



Changes to the Clinical Hour Requirement to sit for the Clinical Nurse LeaderSM Certification Examination begin January 1, 2024

The Commission on Nurse Certification (CNC) is the autonomous certifying body of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). The mission of the CNC is to govern the Clinical Nurse LeaderSM (CNL[®]) certification activities and promote CNL practice. CNC recognizes the certified Clinical Nurse Leader as an advanced nursing practice specialty role consistent with AACN’s *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education*, Level 2 (AACN, 2021).

On May 6, 2022, the Commission on Nurse Certification’s Board of Commissioners (CNCBOC) approved the revised clinical hour requirement for graduates of CNL education programs to sit for the CNL Certification Examination. The newly revised requirements to the exam eligibility criteria go into effect on January 1, 2024.

Clinical Hour Requirement through December 31, 2023

Until December 31, 2023, in order to sit for the CNL Certification Examination, and as part of the CNL education program requirements, students must complete a minimum of 400 clinical hours of which 300 hours must be in a clinical immersion experience.

Clinical Hour Requirement Beginning January 1, 2024

All newly enrolled students in a CNL education program on or after January 1, 2024, are required to complete a minimum of 500 total clinical hours to sit for the CNL Certification Examination. As part of this requirement, 300 out of the total 500 clinical hours must be in a clinical immersion experience as described in AACN’s [Recommended CNL Practice Experiences](#) (2017). All CNL education programs should begin making updates as necessary to demonstrate compliance with the new requirements to sit for the CNL Certification Examination and are expected to be in compliance with the revised clinical hour requirement by January 1, 2024.

CNC supports all CNL program faculty and students during this transitional period. Please contact CNC staff at CNL@aacnnursing.org to discuss concerns about the timeline to transition to the new Clinical Hour Requirement (beginning January 1, 2024).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How many clinical hours will students need to complete in order to sit for the CNL certification?

	Until December 31, 2023	Beginning January 1, 2024
Clinical Hour Requirement to sit for the CNL Certification Examination	Minimum of 400 total clinical hours of which	Minimum of 500 total clinical hours of which

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2. What is the difference between advanced practice nursing and advanced nursing practice specialty? The *advanced practice nursing* role is the APRN comprised of certified nurse practitioners, certified-nurse midwives, certified clinical nurse specialists, and certified registered nurse anesthetists. *Advanced nursing practice specialty* recognizes nursing’s diverse professional contributions and includes informatics, administration/ practice leadership, public health/population health, and health policy. The CNL core competencies align with the AACN Essentials Advanced-Level Nursing Education Competencies.

3. What are the eligibility requirements for faculty to sit for the Clinical Nurse Leader Certification Examination?

To be eligible to sit for the CNL Certification Exam, faculty must:

- Have an active and current Registered Nurse license.
- Hold a graduate degree in nursing or a related health care discipline (such as health care administration or public health) from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Teach in an existing CNL education program. Current teaching experience must include:
 - Clinical experience mentoring CNL immersion projects or;
 - Didactic experience focused on the CNL skill set and aligned with CNL competencies.

NOTE: If not teaching in an existing CNL education program, faculty may submit an appeal request letter to CNC's Appeals committee via email at CNL@aacnnursing.org before submitting the exam application. [View Appeals Request Letter Guidelines](#).
- Demonstrate relevant work experiences as it relates to the [CNL Competencies and Curricular Expectations for Education and Practice](#).
- Provide a letter from the Dean or equivalent explaining qualifications and current teaching (as part of the online exam application’s Faculty Eligibility Form).

Additional questions regarding the new clinical hour requirement to sit for the CNL Certification Examination should be addressed to CNC staff at CNL@aacnnursing.org.