

Quiz Policies

Eligibility

The NCSF online quizzes are open to any currently certified fitness professional, 18 years or older.

Deadlines

Course completion deadlines correspond with the NCSF Certified Professionals certification expiration date. Students can obtain their expiration dates by reviewing either their certification diploma or certification ID card.

Cancellation/Refund

All NCSF continued education course studies are non-refundable.

General Quiz Rules

- You may not have your quiz back after sending it in.
- Individuals can only take a specific quiz once for continued education units.
- Impersonation of another candidate will result in disqualification from the program without refund.

Disqualification

If disqualified for any of the above-mentioned reasons you may appeal the decision in writing within two weeks of the disqualification date.

Reporting Policy

You will receive your scores within 4 weeks following the quiz. If you do not receive the results after 4 weeks please contact the NCSF Certifying Agency.

Re-testing Procedure

Students who do not successfully pass an online quiz have the option of re-taking. The fees associated with this procedure total \$15 (U.S) per request. There are no limits as to the number of times a student may re-test.

Special Needs

If special needs are required to take the quiz please contact the NCSF so that appropriate measures can be taken for your consideration.

Quiz Rules

What Do I Mail Back to the NCSF?

Students are required to submit the quiz answer form.

What do I Need to Score on the Quiz?

In order to gain the .5 NCSF continued education units students need to score 80% (8 out of 10) or greater on the CEU quiz.

Where Do I Mail My Quiz Answer Form?

You will mail your completed answer form to:

NCSF

Attn: Dept. of Continuing Education

5915 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Suite 60

Coral Gables, FL 33146

How Many CEUs Will I Gain?

Professionals who successfully complete the any continuing education quiz will gain .5 NCSF CEUs per quiz.

How Much does each quiz cost?

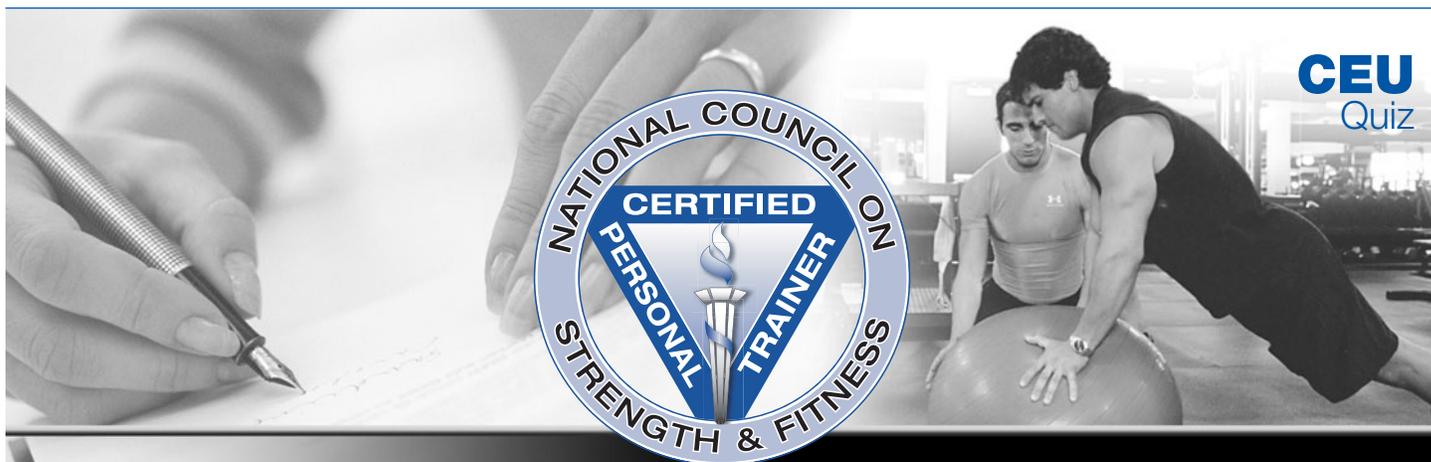
Each quiz costs the student \$15.00.

What Will I Receive When The Course Is Completed?

Students who successfully pass any of the NCSF online quizzes will receive their exam scores, and a confirmation letter.

How Many Times Can I Take The Quizzes For CEUs?

Individuals can take each NCSF quiz once for continuing education credits.



Understanding the
Process of

Professional Credentialing

The fitness industry has recently experienced a positive shift toward legitimizing fitness certifications. As many of you are aware, the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) has made a recommendation that trainers seek fitness certifications from certifying organizations that have been accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). This recommendation has had a tremendous impact on the way the industry views certification, and in particular, the organizations providing the certifications. Although the recommendation is a definite positive step towards legitimizing the credentialing aspect of the industry, it has led to confusion among stakeholders. The confusion has occurred mainly due to the fact that most people, including many administrators of the certifying organizations, do not fully understand the purpose of certification or what valid certification actually represents. Consequently, many people have become fearful of how they will be affected by the impending change. Certifying organizations fear they will go out of business, club owners fear it may affect their ability to provide personal trainer services, and personal trainers fear their current credential may be invalid or unacceptable. The reality is that all these fears have some level of legitimacy, but in all cases the opportunities and the benefits overwhelmingly outweigh the consequences. Everyone knows that whenever change takes place there is an expected level of fear and anxiety which causes people to react. Some people are proactive while others act defensively or try to take advantage of the situation, which is the reason for so much misinformation and spin online and in the industry media.

The first step to stopping the fear and clearing up the confusion is to fully comprehend the situation. And the best place to start is to understand exactly what certification is in the first place. So what is certification? Professional certification is most often defined as a voluntary process, the purpose of which is to provide professional recognition of knowledge, skills, and clinical practice. Most commonly, a non-governmental agency or association grants professional recognition to an individual who has met certain

predetermined qualifications. These qualifications are validated by performance and/or compliance with the requirements of established standards as specified by that agency or association. Certification is granted once an individual has successfully completed the process of testing and evaluation against the specifications designed to document, verify, and recognize the competence of that person to perform a function or service, usually for a specified time. Some important words to take from this definition are standards, validation and process, as you will see they form the ground work for credible certification.

In the present environment, certification has been routinely misrepresented by tests created to assess some measure of knowledge usually based on specific content or an assessment used as part of an educational curriculum designed to fit the needs of rapid certificate attainment. This often results in unqualified practitioners holding a credential, a non-valid credential, but a credential none-the-less. This is not to suggest that all certification exams are questionable, but rather that many exams have been written by an individual or small group with the intent of a high success rate rather than ensuring competency. Some exams use short answer or other subjective means to determine competency, while others are take home tests frequently sent with course materials with the review or grading of the exam often under question. Some of these exams are ethically administered while many others are not. Many trainers simply want a piece of paper for employment purposes, while some certificants want a valid measurement of their skills and abilities.

In order for certification to be valid, the certification exam must be constructed in compliance with education standards and scientific rigor so that the assessment measures exactly what it is supposed to measure (validity) and the measure is repeatable (reliability). The assessment tool must match the domain (content area of expertise) and skill set (practical skills) required for successful completion of the task or job. This is attained through multiple steps starting with a test definition and an expansive *job task analysis* or *role delineation study*. The job task analysis is

used to define the roles and responsibilities of the job. It is first outlined by a group of subject matter experts and then sent out to thousands of knowledgeable stakeholders to determine the actual job tasks and the ranking of those tasks in an order of importance. The determinations set the framework, or *Test Blue Print*, for the exam. For this reason, it is impossible for a test to be written and administered without appropriate development procedures and construct protocols. Additionally, one or two experts can not make a profession specific exam unless they are the only two experts in the particular discipline or field of practice. There is a need for many people to be involved so the assessment tool appropriately represents the opinions and knowledge of the masses.

The exam development process requires the application of scientific principles and research of the exam scores to see how each item on the exam performs when the tests are administered. Testing the exam's performance is called *Beta-testing*. The research and statistics applied to the exam scores identify possible errors and biases which may occur on certain questions. Questions that do not perform well are removed. Once the appropriate number of questions have been validated, test forms can be created to match the test blueprint formed from the Job Task Analysis. The test blueprint identifies the number of questions from each content area on the exam. The number of questions in a particular domain is based on the need for that knowledge to successfully perform the job. If the task or knowledge is very important for the job there are more questions on the exam from that area compared to a task or competency which is used occasionally on the job, which is therefore represented by a smaller number of exam questions. This process allows a test to accurately measure what the certificant needs to know as determined by a large consortium of the profession in the areas that are deemed most relevant to performing the job. Hence, the creation of a valid exam.

This whole process is specific to the assessment of the required skills and knowledge of a competent professional for a certain role. It is not dependent on a particular educational process. This is why a certification is different from education. Taking an educational course or participating in a discipline-specific curriculum does not necessarily qualify a person for a job or task. Likewise, how the knowledge is attained is irrelevant to the performance of that job or task. Someone can pass a class, but this does not necessarily ensure that they have the minimum competencies to do a job. It does suggest that they are likely to possess these competencies but does not statistically ensure it. Similarly, tests that are given as part of an education serve as an assessment of the education not necessarily of a particular task or skill set required of a profession. An example of this is passing a final exam in

exercise physiology does not guarantee an ability to screen a participant for exercise or to instruct proper biomechanics. With this being said, it is important to realize that properly developed certification exams are by no means a 100% guarantee, but they are a standardized way that a level of competency can be validly and reliably measured. This is important for assessments applied to a large number of candidates. It is essentially a way to assess with a higher statistical level of assurance that the person's score reflects their ability to perform, particularly as it relates to multiple areas of knowledge.

Another important consideration for a certification is autonomy in decision making. Essentially, this suggests that decisions made regarding the certification program are void of influence. The decisions made are in the interests of the stakeholders and not an interest group or financial investor. For this reason, boards have been created to oversee certification exams. Boards are made up of representatives from the different stakeholder categories, so the decisions reflect everyone's best interest including the consumer, which in most cases is the general public. A board can not simply be put together because of the influence the decision makers would have over the board. Boards must be voted in or developed through a similar democratic process, so the individuals are not influenced by outside sources and do not have an agenda other than providing for the good of the stakeholders. In most cases of professional boards, a large population of practicing professionals

nominates the individuals they want to represent their interests and vote on the qualified nominees for their new board members. This process is defined in the bylaws of the organization. It is intended to prevent an individual or group from putting a board together for personal gain, often referred to as "Puppet Boards". These puppet boards are a more common practice than most people realize, particularly in the fitness industry. The easiest way to identify a puppet board is to look at the process by which the board was created and the duration of time the organization existed. Boards that were developed in short periods of time with a questionable democratic process and that represent a limited constituency should be questioned.

The last major consideration for credible certification is the duration of time the certification is valid. Certifications that are issued for life must be questioned as to how the minimum competency is maintained with the changes and advancements in the profession. How many people would be able to pass their physics or calculus midterm from high school five years later? Re-certification is designed to serve as a competency audit intended to keep practitioners current with the theories and practices of the profession. This process is usually done in one of two ways; the most common

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re-certification practice is to participate in educational courses during the period of certification. Credits are granted based on the time involved, level of difficulty, credibility of the provider and the subject matter of the program or course. Once the appropriate number of credits have been earned and validated or qualified by the certification organization a renewal of certification is authorized. The other method used by many organizations that offer certification is to simply retake the board exam. The term for recertification is often the same duration as the original certification.

So what is the role of accreditation in the process of certification? Accreditation is broadly defined as a voluntary, self-regulatory process by which governmental, non-governmental, voluntary associations or other statutory bodies grant formal recognition to programs or institutions that meet stated quality criteria. Recognized accreditation is a peer-reviewed process designed to protect the public interest by applying specific standards to the quality of a program or institution. It essentially serves as an external audit. The purpose is to enhance confidence in a product or service to the consumer. In accreditation for certification, the audit looks at the governance of the certification program, the development and administration of the certification exam, the policies and procedures of the organization and the validity of the recertification program. The benefit is two-fold. Accreditation benefits the organization by making it perform an internal audit which helps to streamline operations and identify weaknesses. The other benefit is to the consumer. The accreditation signifies the organization has met the minimum qualifications of legitimate practices as it pertains to the particular standards applied and the specific areas reviewed. This way a consumer can have confidence in engaging in the certification programs that have been reviewed. The key is to realize only the programs reviewed have been validated. If a person offers 30 certifications and one is accredited, it does not mean the other 29 have met the same scrutiny. A common unethical practice is to represent unaccredited programs under the accreditation of a completely different credential.

Finally, the last and possibly the most important question to ask is “why is all this necessary for a credential?” Certifications are not necessary for eligibility for many other jobs and some uncertified personal trainers are better than certified ones. The main reason for certification is to instill confidence in consumers as to having at least a minimum competency (or qualification) to perform a job and to provide legal defensibility to the individuals (credentialed) assessed level of competence. A test is legally defensible if it has been developed under sound practices resulting in a quality examination that is psychometrically sound and can be defended in the event of a legal challenge. The defensibility for a professional credential in a court of law is often referred to as the “bullet proof test” or measure of psychometric soundness. Psychometric soundness means that the examination has been developed according to guidelines set forth for valid measurement and assessment. Generally, the test development complies with the standards put forth by the American Psychological Association, American Educational

Research Association, National Council on Measurement in Education, and the Association of Test Publishers.

As should now be evident, valid test development is a rigorous process. It begins with identifying the skills and knowledge that define the practice of the profession through a role delineation or job analysis study. The intensive study forms the basis upon which test items are created and linked back to the job analysis, forming the basis for the credential's validity. The whole process ensures that the test items have been developed to cover content deemed essential for the practice of the profession and that the test adequately assesses a candidate's knowledge, skills, and judgments within the practice domain. The test must be *valid*, meaning it tests what it is supposed to test; *reliable*, meaning it provides a consistent way to measure different candidates with predictable results; and *fair*, meaning that the test gives no advantage to one candidate over another, except by having more of the knowledge or ability being measured. If the credentialing test is developed with these characteristics, if subsequent research confirms the presence of these characteristics, and if documentation exists to provide this evidence, the test would be termed *legally defensible*. A legally defensible test can withstand a legal challenge as to its appropriateness for the purposes for which it is being used.

It is the responsibility of the certification organization to take the appropriate steps to ensure the credentials that they provide are developed, administered, issued and managed in the best interest of all stakeholders. Likewise, it is important for consumers to learn more about what certification is and what it represents. Even if an organization does not pursue third party accreditation, it needs to ensure the exams they offer have a level of legal defensibility. Organizations that do not have the means to provide valid certification should recognize the shortcomings of their offerings. In most cases, the programs are better classified as continued education, and simply exchanging the word certification for continued education would not only be ethical but would better serve the common good.

This article is brought to you by the NCSF Board for Certification as a public service announcement in an attempt to help consumers and certification stakeholders better understand the process of professional credentialing.

The National Council on Strength & Fitness Board for Certification has met the highest standard for testing put forth by the American Psychological Association, American Educational Research Association, National Council on Measurement in Education, the Association of Test Publishers and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies and is proud to offer legally defensible exams through Thomson Prometric Testing Centers in over 400 locations around the country everyday. The NCSF Board for Certification is made up of 12 elected members representing stakeholders from the Personal Training Industry, Medical Community, Allied Health Fields, and the General Public to ensure the organization offers the highest quality certification program to fitness professionals. ●

CEU Quiz

The Process of Professional Credentialing

- When is an examination valid?
 - When the results can be repeated under the same conditions.
 - When at least 50% of the participants pass the exam.
 - When the test measures what it is supposed to measure.
 - When the questions were developed by an expert.
- What is a job task analysis used for?
 - To determine the ranking of importance of job tasks
 - To define the roles and responsibilities of a job
 - To set the frame work for a certification exam
 - All the above
- Which test development tool determines the percentage of questions from each content area?
 - Test definition
 - Cut score
 - Test blueprint
 - Beta-test
- What is the purpose of Beta-testing certification exam test questions?
 - To see if the test questions are valid.
 - To see how long it takes certain individuals to take the exam.
 - To check for typographical errors.
 - To see how many people will pass the test.
- Why are the boards that oversee certification composed of stakeholders of the certification?
 - To ensure decisions are in the best interest of the certification candidate and consumer.
 - To reduce the potential of undue influence.
 - To avoid decisions based only on financial gain or specific interests.
 - All of the above.
- Which of the following is a voluntary process, the purpose of which is to provide professional recognition of knowledge, skills, and clinical practice?
 - Certificate of completion
 - Accreditation
 - Professional certification
 - Professional development
- What is the purpose of a certification expiration date?
 - To ensure a minimum competency is maintained.
 - To re-evaluate the certification procedures.
 - To force people to re-test every couple of years
 - To help people keep track of their continued education.
- Which of the following is a voluntary, self-regulatory process by which governmental, non-governmental, voluntary associations, or other statutory bodies grant formal recognition to programs or institutions that meet stated quality criteria?
 - An internal audit.
 - A professional certification.
 - Accreditation
 - Testimonial
- What makes a certification legally defensible?
 - When the certification exam has been developed and is administered in compliance with appropriate standards.
 - The exam content areas have been deemed essential for the practice of the professional.
 - The test is valid, reliable and fair.
 - All of the above
- What is a "Puppet Board"?
 - A temporary board
 - A board put together to support specific interests
 - A democratically elected board of stakeholders
 - All of the above

Quiz Answer Form

FIRST NAME _____ LAST NAME _____ M.I. _____

TITLE _____

ADDRESS _____ APT. _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

COUNTRY _____ POSTAL CODE _____

CERTIFICATION NO. _____ CERTIFICATION EXP. ____/____/____

MEMBERSHIP NO. _____ MEMBERSHIP EXP. ____/____/____

Quiz Name	Member Price	Total
	\$15	



Discover



Visa



Mastercard



Amex



Check/Money Order

Account No. _____

Exp. Date _____

Security Code _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Quiz Answers

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Fill in each blank with the correct choice on the answer sheet. To receive 0.5 CEUs, you must answer 8 of the 10 questions correctly.

Please mail this Quiz answer form along with the proper enclosed payment to:

NCSF
5915 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Suite 60
Coral Gables, FL 33146

Questions? 800-772-NCSF