

Which Credential is Right for My Program?

Assessment-Based Certificate Program

Key Characteristics

An assessment-based certificate program is a non-degree granting program that provides evidence-based education on a narrow subset of knowledge and skills that adds value to the clinician and the healthcare consumer. A certificate is awarded upon completion of the education program and successful performance on an outcomes-based assessment. The type and content of the assessment is determined by the program sponsor. A certificate awarded for an assessment-based program is not given for attendance only. The candidate must complete both the education and the assessment components to earn the certificate. There is no certification designation for this credential.

- Eligibility for the credential requires attendance at the specific educational program.
- The assessment can be of any type that is appropriate for the knowledge and skills (for example, examination, portfolio, performance assessment, research paper).
- The quality of the education component is evaluated.
- Practice analysis and standard setting are not required.

Examination-Based Certification Program

Key Characteristics

An examination-based certification program is based on an independent assessment of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for competent performance of a professional role. The assessment takes the form of an examination. Certification also measures continued competence through recertification requirements. Individuals who are certified may use the certification designation.

- Eligibility is not limited to candidates who have completed a specific training course from one training provider, though it can include requirements for having completed generally available training in particular subject areas or areas of practice.
- The assessment must be an examination, that is, a distinct scheduled event that requires the candidate to respond to specific questions or prompts. Note that the format of the examination can include different question or prompt types, for example multiple choice, performance of tasks, or written output.
- Formal documentation of a practice analysis and standard setting are required.

Portfolio-Based Certification Program

A portfolio certification program is based on an independent assessment of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for competent performance of a professional role. The assessment takes the form of a portfolio, a body of work submitted by candidates that represents the defined knowledge, skills, and abilities in a professional role corresponding to an independent assessment of the knowledge, skills and abilities determined for competent performance. Individuals who are certified may use the certification designation.

Key Characteristics

- Eligibility is not limited to candidates who have completed a specific training course from one training provider, though it can include requirements for having completed generally available training in particular subject areas or areas of practice.
- The assessment must be a portfolio, that is, a collection of work the candidate has put together over time, typically including samples based on the candidate's actual practice.
- Formal documentation of a practice analysis and standard setting are required.