



HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR CERTIFICATION

NSCA Recertification Policies and Procedures

2021 – 2023 REPORTING PERIOD



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This guide contains the policies and procedures for actively maintaining your NSCA certification. All certified individuals must understand and follow the requirements outlined in this document.

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INTRODUCTION

YOUR DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT

Holding an NSCA certification demonstrates that you are a dedicated, hardworking strength and conditioning professional. It also means you belong to the NSCA community, a global group of like-minded professionals striving to positively impact the health, lives, and athletic performance of others.

Your NSCA credentials indicate you have the specialized knowledge, skills and abilities to perform a specific job. An NSCA certification on your resume is the stamp of approval employers look for. They instantly understand the quality of your education and your ability to apply evidence-based research.

AN ONGOING COMMITMENT

It's important to remain competent in your field and continue to be educated about the constantly changing world of strength and conditioning. Maintaining your certification shows your commitment to your career, and ensures you are equipped to do your job to the best of your ability.

MAINTAINING YOUR CERTIFICATION

No matter which certification you hold — Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist® (CSCS®), Certified Special Population Specialist® (CSPS®), NSCA-Certified Personal Trainer® (NSCA-CPT®), and/or Tactical Strength and Conditioning Facilitator® (TSAC-F®) — there are vital parts to maintaining your credentials. There are two options for becoming recertified:

OPTION 1

Complete and report a certain number of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and pay the recertification fee

OR

OPTION 2

Retake and pass the appropriate certification exam

Whether you choose Option 1 or Option 2 for recertification, you **must maintain CPR/AED certification** throughout the three-year recertification cycle. You may renew your CPR/AED through an online program, if your CPR/AED certification did not lapse. If there is a lapse of your CPR/AED certification, then you must attend the CPR/AED course in person, to earn that certification again.

Note: Those who do not fulfill the recertification requirements from one of the options above before the recertification deadline of December 31, 2023, will lose their certification status. To become certified again, they will be required to retake and pass the appropriate certification exam and will be issued a new date of certification and a new certification number.

WHY CPR/AED CERTIFICATION IS REQUIRED

Your CPR/AED certification could help you save a life when every minute counts. Protecting the safety of your clients and athletes is first and foremost. A current CPR/AED certification means you've learned how and when to provide care for someone experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. Requiring this certification every cycle encourages you to refresh your memory and stay up to date on the latest techniques.

WHY CONTINUING EDUCATION IS REQUIRED

Continuing education is a critical part of any trusted certification program. Continuing education keeps your knowledge and skills sharp so that you can perform at a high level in the industry and retain the credibility your certification delivers. Some common ways to participate in continuing education include attending industry events, completing pre-approved home studies, volunteering your professional expertise with the NSCA, or contributing an article to an NSCA publication.

CONTINUING EDUCATION BENEFITS

Continuing education is a lifelong learning journey. The strength and conditioning industry continually evolves with new scientific knowledge and research, training techniques, equipment, and industry laws and regulations. When you are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills, you gain the advantage of that understanding and can outperform those who don't. Keeping up to date also makes a difference in the lives of your clients and athletes, ensuring they receive the highest standard of service possible.

THE RECERTIFICATION CYCLE

The NSCA recertification is based on a three-year cycle, ensuring NSCA-certified individuals stay up to date across industry trends, technology, regulations and laws. Three years also grants the time to gain continuing education units without causing a significant disruption or difficulty. We are currently in the 2021-2023 cycle, and the deadline for recertifying is December 31, 2023 for **all** certified individuals.



BREAKING DOWN THE CEU

WHAT IS A CEU?

CEU stands for Continuing Education Unit, and it's simply the way we measure your continuing education. CEUs range across a variety of topics. For example, you could pursue CEUs in nutrition, anatomy, physiology, biomechanics, training or sports psychology. You can earn CEUs in various ways such as attending in-person or virtual events, writing an article for publication, leading a Special Interest Group, or taking and passing a quiz.

HOW ARE CEUS CALCULATED?

The amount of CEUs you earn is generally based on the number of contact hours (or actual clock hours) you spend to complete an activity or event. For example, 1 contact hour equals 0.1 CEU, and 10 contact hours would equal 1.0 CEU.

Not all CEU activities are based on actual clock hours. There are exceptions, such as college or university courses, where 1 semester credit hour equals 0.5 CEU and 1 quarter credit hour equals 0.3 CEU. For example:

- » 3-unit, semester-long Exercise Physiology course equals 1.5 CEUs
- » 4-unit, quarter-long Functional Anatomy course equals 1.2 CEUs

HOW MANY CEUS DO I NEED?

The required number of CEUs needed to recertify is based on your certification date and where it falls within the three-year cycle. Refer to the table below to determine the number of CEUs you will need and the related fees. All CEUs must be earned between the date of your certification (or the beginning of the recertification cycle, whichever is later) and the end of the recertification cycle on December 31, 2023.

Note: Activity completed before an achieved certification, or the start of the current recertification cycle, cannot be applied for CEUs during the current cycle. (CEUs can still be applied during a different cycle for reinstatements and appeals.)

Individuals with Multiple Certifications

If you hold multiple NSCA credentials, you do not need to submit 6.0 CEUs separately for each certification. For example, if you became CSCS and NSCA-CPT certified before January 1, 2021, you are only required to submit a total of 6.0 CEUs for the 2021 – 2023 reporting period.

A more complex scenario exists if you became CSCS and NSCA-CPT certified at different times during the 2021 – 2023 reporting period. Special attention must be paid to the dates on your certificates to ensure that the required CEUs are completed after those dates. Please contact the NSCA if there is any confusion regarding your recertification requirements.

ORIGINAL CERTIFICATION DATE (SHOWN ON CERTIFICATE)	CEUS REQUIRED	CATEGORY A MAXIMUM	CATEGORY B MAXIMUM	CATEGORY C MAXIMUM	CATEGORY D MAXIMUM	MEMBER FEE FOR EACH CREDENTIAL HELD	NON-MEMBER FEE FOR EACH CREDENTIAL HELD
If certification was earned before 2021*‡	6.0	5.5	4.0	5.5	4.0	\$65	\$90
If certification was earned during 2021*^	4.0	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.0	\$55	\$80
If certification was earned during 2022*^	2.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	\$45	\$70
If certification was earned January 1, 2023 to June 30, 2023^	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	\$35	\$60
If certification was earned July 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023	0	0	0	0	0	\$0	\$0

* You must obtain CEUs from at least two categories.

‡ All CEUs must be earned after January 1, 2021, even if certification was earned prior to this date.

^ All CEUs must be earned after the date of certification

Recertification with Distinction (*D)

Recertified with Distinction is a program that honors certified professionals who have met a high standard for continuing education, and are acknowledged for their significant role and participation with the NSCA. The Recertified with Distinction program benefits those who qualify, by enhancing their professional status and by providing public recognition including:

- » A specially designed certificate honoring the accomplishment
- » The right to use the trademark protected “*D” as an extension of their CSCS, CSPS, NSCA-CPT, and/or TSAC-F credential(s)
- » Special notation on NSCA conference badges

To qualify for Recertified with Distinction status, certificants must:

1. Meet the standard recertification requirements established by the NSCA for the current recertification period
2. Acquire a total of 10.0 CEUs from NSCA activities in a recertification period (the requirements are not prorated for those certified after January 2021, and CEU category maximum rules do not apply)
3. Select the option to recertify *D on the recertification payment section of the NSCA website (Non-members will pay a \$25 fee; Members have no fee but must select the box)

Those who have multiple NSCA certifications must earn an additional 2.0 CEUs for the *D to count toward all certifications held. (Example: 12.0 CEUs for two certifications, 14.0 CEUs for three or more). The “*D” must be displayed following the appropriate NSCA certification credential(s), separated by a comma, with no space in between. (Example: CSCS,*D)

ACCEPTABLE CONTENT FOR CEUS

Only continuing education content that relates to the scope of practice and Detailed Content Outline (DCO) of an NSCA certification exam will be accepted. Below are some examples of acceptable and unacceptable content. **If you have questions about the acceptability of a particular activity’s content, contact the NSCA prior to engaging in the activity for credit.**

Examples of Acceptable Content:

- » Anatomy and Physiology
- » Nutrition
- » Biomechanics
- » Organization and Administration
 - Refer to current DCO for allowed content
- » Training Techniques
- » Sport Psychology
- » Program Design
- » Testing and Evaluation
- » Exercise Technique
- » Return to Play Reconditioning

Examples of Unacceptable Content

- » Surgery
- » Diagnosing
- » Kinesio Taping
- » Treatment
- » Radiology/Imaging
- » General Business
- » Group Fitness/Holistic Activities
- » Unrelated Alternative Health Topics (e.g., hypnosis, acupuncture)
- » Allied Health Topics beyond the NSCA credential scope of practice (e.g., athletic training, physical therapy or massage therapy specific techniques)



WAYS TO EARN CEUS

CEUs can be obtained in a wide variety of ways. They are divided into the four following categories:

Category A | Attendance

Attending clinics, conferences, seminars, workshops, or live-streamed events. The content provided must be related to the scope of practice and/or be consistent with the DCO for the NSCA certification held.

Note: Live attendance does not need to be pre-approved.

Note: Attendance at exercise science-related exam preparation courses for NCCA-accredited certifications will be accepted.

Category B | Share Your Expertise

- » **NSCA Volunteer Work** | Serving as a State or Provincial Director or as a member of an NSCA committee, SIG Executive Council, Board of Directors, or Editorial and Grant Reviewers. [Learn more.](#)
- » **Presentations** | Participation as a speaker or panelist at clinics, conferences, seminar, workshop, etc. [Learn more.](#)
- » **Publications** | Published works in which the certified individual serves as author or co-author. [Learn more.](#)

Note: Item must be published during the current recertification cycle. CEUs are not applied for articles that are published ahead of print.



Category C | Educational Activities

- » **First Aid** | Completing the requirements for certification or recertification in [First Aid](#).
- » **Post-certification College Course Work** | Successfully completing post-certification college/university-level courses that are related to the scope of practice and/or is consistent with the DCO for the NSCA certification held. [Learn More.](#)
Note: Teaching academic courses do not qualify for CEUs.
Note: College courses must be started after date of certification (during the current reporting cycle) and completed before the recertification cycle ends.
- » **Internships** | (non-college credit) Completion of a 150-hour internship relevant to strength and conditioning or personal training. [Learn more.](#)
Note: All activity must be related to the scope of practice and/or be consistent with the DCO for the NSCA certification held.
- » **Earning an NSCA Certification Not Currently Held** | Once certified, CSCS, CSPS, NSCA-CPT, or TSAC-F, certified individuals are allowed to obtain CEUs towards their first credential by earning an additional NSCA credential. [Learn More.](#)
- » **Earning an NCCA-accredited certification** | The NSCA will award CEUs when a CSCS, CSPS, NSCA-CPT, or TSAC-F certified individual passes a certification exam offered by a fitness, sport or exercise nutrition organization program currently accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). [Learn More.](#)

Note: Required coursework completed in the process of earning a non-NCCA-accredited certification may be reported according to usual recertification guidelines.

Note: CEUs will be awarded at the time of the original certification only. Recertifying the NCCA-accredited certification do not qualify for CEUs.

- » **Pre-approved Home Study Courses** | Completing pre-approved Home Study courses offered by other organizations/businesses and approved by the NSCA. Check the NSCA website, under Continuing Education, for the current pre-approved course listings. [Learn more.](#)
- » **Personal Development** | Any activity undertaken to keep current with the NSCA certification held, and does not fit into another category, is considered personal development. Some examples of activities include reading journals, magazines and books and/or listening to podcasts that are related to strength and conditioning and/or personal training; participating in self-improvement seminars, and/or completing home studies that are not pre-approved. [Learn more.](#)

Category D | Quizzes and Assessments

Passing a quiz found on the NSCA website, through Strength and Conditioning Journal, and/or NSCA Videos. [Learn more.](#)

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF CEUs AWARDED	REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION*†
A	ATTENDANCE	Attending strength and conditioning and/or personal training clinics, conferences, seminars, workshops, or live-streamed events, etc. <i>Note: Attending exercise science exam prep courses for NCCA certifications is accepted.</i>	0.1 CEU per hour of attendance (Ex: 8-hour clinic x 0.1 CEU = 0.8 CEU) <i>Note: A maximum of 2.0 CEUs may be earned for any one event</i>	Photocopy of attendance certificate or letter verifying participation date and number of hours for non-NSCA events An outline of event may be requested (this activity is applicable for *D if NSCA event)
B	NSCA Volunteer Work	Serving as a State/Provincial Director, NSCA committee member, on the NSCA SIG Executive Council, or on the NSCA Board of Directors	0.5 CEU per year of committee involvement <i>Note: CEUs are applied after a full year has been served.</i>	(this activity is applicable for *D)
		Editorial and grant reviews	0.1 CEU per review	(this activity is applicable for *D)
	Presentations	Serving as a speaker or panelist at clinics, conferences, seminar, workshop, etc.	1.0 CEU per hour of presentation <i>Note: a maximum of 2.0 CEUs allowed for each presentation</i>	Photocopy of brochure or flyer showing participation, or a letter of verification from the event host An outline may be requested (this activity is applicable for *D if presented at an NSCA event)
	Publications	Authoring or co-authoring articles, abstracts, chapters in books, or full books <i>Note: Item must be published during the current recertification cycle</i>	Articles: 1.5 CEUs for NSCA publications 1.0 CEU for peer-reviewed journals 0.5 CEU for all others Abstracts: 1.0 CEU per published abstract Chapters of books: 1.5 CEUs per published chapter Books: 3.0 CEUs per published book	Articles/Abstracts: Photocopy of periodical cover and first page of article/abstract Chapters/ Books: Photocopy of book cover and table of contents (this activity is applicable for *D if NSCA publication)
C	First Aid	Becoming certified or recertified in First Aid	0.5 CEU awarded at time of certification/recertification	Photocopy of certification card or certificate
	College Course Work	Passing post-certification college course work	0.3 CEU per quarter credit hour 0.4 CEU per trimester credit hour 0.5 CEU per semester credit hour <i>Note: a maximum of 2.0 CEUs per course may be earned.</i>	Photocopy of grade report or unofficial transcript
	Internships	Completion of non-academic credit granting internship of at least 150 hours	2.0 CEUs per internship	Photocopy showing internship completion (this activity is applicable for *D if NSCA internship)
	Earning Additional Certifications	Earning an additional NSCA certification not currently held	2.0 CEU per additional NSCA certification	Photocopy of certificate (this activity is applicable for *D if additional NSCA certification is earned)
		Earning a fitness, sport or exercise nutrition certification from other NCCA-accredited program	2.0 CEU per NCCA-accredited certification	
	Pre-approved Home Studies	Successfully completing a pre-approved home study course through another organization	CEUs awarded for pre-approved courses only; refer to course listings at www.nasca.com for number of CEUs awarded	Photocopy showing course completion from pre-approved provider (Human Kinetics courses are applicable for *D)
Personal Development	Educational activities not covered by any other category (e.g., reading articles, journals, books, completing quizzes, or home studies not pre-approved)	0.5 CEU per year	Statement of nature of activities completed	
D	QUIZZES AND ASSESSMENTS	NSCA SCJ quizzes, NSCA Video quizzes, USADA quiz	0.2-1.0 CEUs for each quiz that is submitted and passed <i>Note: CEU values vary per quiz</i>	(this activity is applicable for *D)

*Documentation for NSCA activities not required †Documentation only required if selected for an audit or requesting an appeal or reinstatement.

WHERE TO FIND CEU OPPORTUNITIES

The NSCA works diligently to provide new and ongoing CEU opportunities — these include setting up industry events, creating quizzes, offering volunteer opportunities, and accepting contributions to NSCA publications. We have also partnered with a variety of third-party providers who are approved to offer additional CEU opportunities.

REPORTING YOUR CEUS

Periodic reporting of your CEUs is required to ensure that all certified individuals are adhering to the continuing education requirements. We encourage self-reporting as it helps our certificants plan out their own continuing education opportunities, while bestowing a sense of responsibility and accountability.

The NSCA's online CEU reporting process is a convenient way to review, record, and edit activities. To access the online CEU reporting page, visit www.nsc.com/recertify.

Online reporting allows certified individuals to:

- » View certification summaries
- » Determine CEUs required
- » Review category maximums
- » View certification number
- » Determine certification expiration date
- » Track accumulated CEUs
- » Record and edit CEUs
- » Submit recertification fee(s)

A paper application is available for individuals without internet access; however, it must be requested in writing.

NSCA CEUs Reported on Your Account

When you obtain CEUs through the NSCA, those CEUs will be applied in your recertification record. This process can take a few weeks to be reflected in your account. The following CEUs will also be applied toward Recertified with Distinction (*D®).

- » Attending or presenting at NSCA events
- » Authoring articles, abstracts, and/or books for NSCA publications
- » Passing NSCA quizzes
- » Participating on NSCA committees
- » Serving as an NSCA State/Provincial Director
- » Serving as an NSCA SIG Executive Council Member
- » Serving on the NSCA Board of Directors
- » Earning additional NSCA credential(s)
- » Serving as an NSCA Intern

Note: NSCA/Human Kinetics home study courses must be self-reported

Documenting Your CEUs

Keeping documentation of CEUs is the responsibility of each certified individual. A record of all documentation must be maintained for completed activities; see the table on the previous page for documentation requirements.

Documentation does not need to be submitted to the NSCA for the standard recertification, unless requested, and/or in conjunction with the random recertification audit conducted at the conclusion of a recertification cycle.

Note: Documentation is required when requesting an appeal or reinstatement.

Random Audit

The NSCA will conduct a random audit of a percentage of certified individuals that complete the recertification process. Those individuals selected for the audit will be required to submit their CEU documentation to the NSCA for verification.

The randomly chosen audit group will be notified by mail no later than March 2024. Once contacted, certified individuals have 45 days to submit the documentation that supports the information previously reported online or on the CEU Reporting Form. If supporting documentation is not provided within the time allotted (45 days), does not substantiate the activities reported, or is found inadequate of meeting CEU requirements (i.e., activity falls outside the scope of practice for the NSCA certification held), then the conditions for recertification will have not been met. Those individuals will have their certification revoked.



RECERTIFICATION FEE

The recertification fee is the fee you will pay at the end of the recertification cycle, after you have reported your required CEU amount. Be aware of additional fees within the NSCA that are distinct, such as membership, recertified with distinction (*D), and RSCC. Your recertification fee is a separate cost, and must be paid in order for your recertification process to be complete.

ORIGINAL CERTIFICATION DATE (SHOWN ON CERTIFICATE)	MEMBER FEE FOR EACH CREDENTIAL HELD	NON-MEMBER FEE FOR EACH CREDENTIAL HELD
If certification was earned before 2021*‡	\$65	\$90
If certification was earned during 2021*^	\$55	\$80
If certification was earned during 2022*^	\$45	\$70
If certification was earned January 1, 2023 to June 30, 2023^	\$35	\$60
If certification was earned July 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023	\$0	\$0

LATE FEES

There will be a late fee of \$35 for certificants who earned the CEUs during the reporting period (January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2023), but failed to report by the deadline. A late reporting option is available through January 31, 2024. Individuals do not need to submit any supporting documentation when paying a late fee.

FAILURE TO REPORT AND APPEALS

Once certified, you will continue to be certified as long as you fulfill the minimum CEU requirements, maintain your CPR/AED certification, and pay your recertification fee before the deadline. Alternately, you may continue your certification by passing the appropriate certification exam before the deadline and maintain your CPR/AED certification. The NSCA Certification Committee will be notified of those failing to meet CEU requirements so that appropriate actions may be taken. Those who fail to meet the recertification requirements will be sent a Notice of Certification Revocation.

APPEALS

Appeals may be made for revocation letters, audit results, or not meeting recertification requirements due extenuating circumstance(s). Those wishing to appeal, can do so by submitting an appeal letter to the Certification Committee. Appeals must include an explanation as to why the appeal is being requested and include all relevant supporting and education documentation. The Certification Committee will review appeals at the Committee's next scheduled meeting and render a final decision.

Note: There is a \$25 appeal fee, which is due at time of appeal submission. This fee may be returned upon full or partial approval of appeal. Send appeals to certification@nsca.com

Note: Appeals cannot be expedited.

REINSTATEMENT

Sometimes, life gets in the way and certifications may lapse. Thankfully, if your NSCA certification has expired, and you maintained your CEUs, you can ask to receive reinstatement. To petition the NSCA for reinstatement, please perform the following steps:

1. Submit the Reinstatement application, along with documentation that all required CEUs were earned within the missed recertification period(s) and earned in accordance with the requirements of the recertification policy in effect at that time
2. Present verification of current CPR/AED certification
3. Pay reinstatement fee, plus all related recertification fees of previous recertification period(s)

The fee for reinstatement is \$200 plus previously unpaid recertification fees. The appropriate forms can be found online at nsca.com/certification/recertification.

If you are granted reinstatement, you will maintain your original certification date, but a new certification number may be issued. If your request is denied, you may still appeal to the Certification Committee. The Certification Committee will review appeals at the Committee's next scheduled meeting and render a final decision.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The NSCA Disciplinary Procedures were established as a means to enforce the NSCA Professional Code of Ethics and protect the public, as well as the integrity of NSCA certification programs. Consistent with the obligation of candidates and certificants in regards to the NSCA Professional Code of Ethics, the Disciplinary Procedures provide a formal process for submitting complaints of unethical behavior to NSCA for consideration and investigation. The NSCA Professional Code of Ethics and the NSCA Disciplinary Procedures are found within the NSCA Codes, Policies, and Procedures (Appendix E), or online at nsca.com/codes-policies-procedures.

Any action taken by the NSCA Ethics Committee affecting the status of an exam applicant or candidate, or of a certified individual may be appealed in accordance with the procedures outlined in the NSCA Codes, Policies, and Procedures (Appendix E).



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