

**21 NCAC 36 .0228 CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST PRACTICE**

(a) Only a registered nurse who meets the qualifications outlined in Paragraph (b) of this Rule shall be approved by the Board as a clinical nurse specialist to perform advanced practice registered nursing activities listed in Paragraph (f) of this Rule.

(b) The Board shall approve an applicant who:

- (1) has an active, unencumbered license to practice as a registered nurse in North Carolina or a state that has adopted the Nurse Licensure Compact;
- (2) has an unrestricted previous approval, registration, or license as a clinical nurse specialist if previously approved, registered, or licensed as a clinical nurse specialist in another state, territory, or possession of the United States;
- (3) has successfully completed a master's or higher-level degree program that is accredited by a nursing accrediting body approved by the United States Secretary of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and meets the qualifications for clinical nurse specialist certification by an approved national credentialing body under Subparagraph (b)(4) of this Rule; and
- (4) has current certification as a clinical nurse specialist from a national credentialing body approved by the Board, as defined in Paragraph (h) of this Rule and 21 NCAC 36 .0120(33).

(c) An applicant certified as a clinical nurse specialist by a national credentialing body prior to January 1, 2007 who has maintained that certification and active clinical nurse specialist practice and holds a master's or higher degree in nursing or a related field shall be approved by the Board as a clinical nurse specialist.

(d) New graduates seeking first-time clinical nurse specialist approval in North Carolina shall hold a master's or higher-level degree or a post-graduate certificate from a clinical nurse specialist program accredited by a nursing accrediting body approved by the United States Secretary of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and shall meet all requirements in Subparagraph (b)(1) and Part (g)(3)(A) of this Rule.

(e) A certified clinical nurse specialist seeking Board approval who has never practiced as a clinical nurse specialist or has not practiced in more than two years shall complete a clinical nurse specialist refresher course approved by the Board in accordance with 21 NCAC 36 .0220(o) and (p), consisting of common conditions and their management related to the clinical nurse specialist's area of education and certification. A clinical nurse specialist refresher course participant shall be granted limited clinical nurse specialist recognition that is specific to clinical activities taught in the refresher course.

(f) The scope of practice of a clinical nurse specialist shall incorporate the basic components of nursing practice as defined in Rule .0224 of this Section as well as the understanding and application of nursing principles at an advanced practice registered nurse level in the area of clinical nursing specialization in which the clinical nurse specialist is educationally prepared and for which competency is maintained, including:

- (1) assessing clients' health status, synthesizing and analyzing multiple sources of data, and identifying alternative possibilities as to the nature of a healthcare problem;
- (2) diagnosing and managing clients' acute and chronic health problems within the essential core competencies for professional nursing education;
- (3) assessing for and monitoring the usage and effect of pharmacologic agents within the essential core competencies for professional nursing education;
- (4) formulating strategies to promote wellness and prevent illness;
- (5) prescribing and implementing therapeutic and corrective non-pharmacologic nursing interventions;
- (6) planning for situations beyond the clinical nurse specialist's expertise and consulting with or referring clients to other health care providers as appropriate;
- (7) promoting and practicing in collegial and collaborative relationships with clients, families, other health care professionals, and individuals whose decisions influence the health of individual clients, families, and communities;
- (8) initiating, establishing, and using measures to evaluate health care outcomes and modify nursing practice decisions;
- (9) assuming leadership for the application of research findings for the improvement of health care outcomes; and
- (10) integrating education, consultation, management, leadership, and research into the clinical nurse specialist role.

(g) A registered nurse seeking approval by the Board as a clinical nurse specialist shall:

- (1) submit a completed application that includes the following:

- (A) evidence of a master's or higher-level degree or a post-graduate certificate, as set out in Subparagraph (b)(3) or Paragraph (d) of this Rule; and
  - (B) evidence of current certification in a clinical nursing specialty from a national credentialing body, set out in Subparagraph (b)(4) of this Rule.
- (2) renew the approval every two years at the time of registered nurse renewal; and
- (3) submit evidence of the following:
- (A) initial certification and re-certification by a national credentialing body at the time such occurs in order to maintain Board recognition, consistent with Paragraphs (b) and (h) of this Rule; or
  - (B) if recognized by the Board as a clinical nurse specialist without national certification prior to April 1, 2023, at least 1,000 hours of practice and 75 contact hours of continuing education with 25 contact hours of pharmacotherapeutics as a portion of the mandatory 75 contact hours every five years; or
  - (C) if recognized by the Board as a clinical nurse specialist without national certification prior to April 1, 2021, 150 contact hours of continuing education with 50 contact hours of pharmacotherapeutics as a portion of the 150 contact hours every five years.
- Part (B) and (C) of this Subparagraph does not apply to first time CNS' renewing their application for the first time.
- (4) maintain documentation of clinical practice hours and continuing education for the previous five years and made available upon request of the Board.
- (h) The Board shall approve those national credentialing bodies offering certification and recertification in a clinical nursing specialty that have established the following minimum requirements for applicants:
- (1) active unencumbered licensure as a registered nurse; and
  - (2) certification as a clinical nurse specialist that is limited to applicant prepared with a master's or higher-level degree or a post-graduate certificate.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 90-171.20(4); 90-171.20(7); 90-171.21(d)(4); 90-171.23(b); 90-171.42(b); Eff. April 1, 1996; Amended Eff. January 1, 2015; April 1, 2008; January 1, 2007; November 1, 2005; August 1, 2005; April 1, 2003; Readopted Eff. January 1, 2019; Amended Eff. April 1, 2023; November 1, 2020.*