

What is the NBPNS certification exam?

This is a voluntary credentialing exam that is an indication of expertise in nutrition and its application to clinical practice.

Why should I take the examination?

NBPNS certification will be a benchmark for assuring mastery of knowledge and training by Physician Nutrition Specialists®. It will help to distinguish physicians who are truly specialists in nutrition and will assist the public in choosing a Physician Nutrition Specialist®. It will assist health professionals and organizations to assess the competence of individual Physician Nutrition Specialists®.

NBPNS board certification can be invaluable in terms of establishing a trust with patients and the doctors who refer them.

When speaking publicly about nutritional management, NBPNS board certification can add to your credibility.

In addressing this question with regard to the American Board of Internal Medicine, Harry Kimball, M.D., ABIM President, said it "boils down to pride in ourselves, our profession, and a willingness to be accountable and transparent".

How long is NBPNS certification valid?

NBPNS certification is valid for 10 years, at which time recertification will be necessary in order to remain valid.

What if I decide not to take the exam?

Failure to take the exam will not prevent you from practicing nutrition as a specialty. However, you will not have the NBPNS certification that will serve as the benchmark for assuring competence in the practice of nutrition.

For what sort of physician is the NBPNS credential most appropriate?

NBPNS certification is intended for physicians who have broad interests in nutrition, generally including both preventive and therapeutic aspects. The NBPNS examination covers all the topic areas in the [NBPNS Curriculum Guide for Physician Nutrition Specialists](#), in the broad categories of nutrient metabolism and requirements; nutritional changes through the life cycle; nutritional aspects of health promotion and prevention and therapy of specific diseases including

obesity; malnutrition; and enteral and parenteral nutrition support. The weights assigned to these topic areas on the examination are approximately:

General aspects of nutrition	15%
Nutrients	20%
Nutritional status assessment	10%
Obesity and related disorders	20%
Disease-specific nutrition	25%
Enteral & parenteral nutrition support	10%

Is NBPNS part of the ABMS?

There is no accreditation mechanism for nutrition fellowships. During the development of the NBPNS, consultation with representatives of ABMS boards concluded that it is not possible for NBPNS to become an ABMS member board. Therefore, NBPNS is independent.

What is ABMS certification?

ABMS is the umbrella for all major medical specialty boards. More details can be found at their website, <http://www.abms.org/>. The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), a not-for-profit organization comprising 24 medical specialty boards, is the pre-eminent entity overseeing physician certification in the United States. For more than 70 years, ABMS' mission has been to maintain and improve the quality of medical care by assisting its Member Boards in developing and implementing educational and professional standards to evaluate and certify physician

specialists. Through its coordination of Member Board activities, ABMS also serves as a unique healthcare industry influencer, bringing focus to issues involving specialization and certification in medicine. ABMS is recognized by the key healthcare accreditation organizations as a primary equivalent source of board certification data on medical specialists for credentialing purposes.

Why is NBPNS not part of the ABMS or other credentialing organization?

The NBPNS is aware that the discipline of clinical nutrition could gain greater credibility and visibility if its credential were recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties or one of its member boards, perhaps as a Certificate of Added Qualification. In its earliest discussions, the Intersociety Professional Nutrition Education Consortium received significant input from the President of the American Board of Internal Medicine, a Senior Vice President of the American Board of Pediatrics, and a former Chair of the American Board of Gastroenterology on this issue. Recognition by the ABMS or its member boards would require that a minimum of 200, and perhaps more, physicians take the NBPNS exam each year. That appears unlikely. In addition, such recognition would preclude the combination of nutrition training with related fellowship programs (e.g., gastroenterology or endocrinology) because time in training can be credited toward eligibility for only one ABMS board certification. For these reasons, the Board has no current plans to pursue ABMS recognition.

What about other Nutrition Board Examinations currently in existence, such as the American Board of Nutrition?

The American Board of Nutrition has discontinued its certification examination and in order to recognize the NBPNS Examination as the most appropriate certification examination for Physician Nutrition Specialist®. For physicians whose interests are focused only on enteral and parenteral nutrition support, the Certified Nutrition Support Clinician® examination offered by the [National Board of Nutrition Support Certification](#) may be an appropriate alternative to NBPNS certification.

What are the criteria for taking the NBPNS certification exam?

To be eligible to take the NBPNS exam, a candidate must meet three requirements:

* Requirements for eligibility have been revised due to the fact that at the present time, positions for formal training in clinical nutrition are limited. Requirements will be re-evaluated on an annual basis, as increasing opportunities for training emerge in the future.

1. **Current licensure to practice medicine in the US, or the equivalent in other countries.** All candidates for certification and recertification must be licensed to practice medicine in the country in which they reside.
2. **ABMS Board certification or the equivalent outside the US .**
3. **Demonstrated expertise in nutrition defined by one or more of the following: ***
 - a. Mentored training in clinical nutrition (requires letter of recommendation from mentor).
 - b. Dedicated service on a hospital Multidisciplinary Nutrition Team (requires letter of recommendation from hospital chief of staff or physician head of department).
 - c. Performance of research with publications in nutrition (provide documentation on curriculum vitae).
 - d. Teaching position involving nutrition at an academic medical center (requires letter of recommendation from department chairman).
 - e. Committee membership and/or leadership role in a national nutrition society (provide documentation on curriculum vitae).
 - f. Completion of a minimum of 150 hours of Continuing Medical Education (CME) devoted to clinical nutrition (provide CME documentation).
 - g. Regional peer-recognized leadership role in nutrition (requires letter of recommendation from peer in community).

Final acceptance of eligibility is subject to satisfactory review by the NBPNS Board.

I am a foreign medical graduate. Will NBPNS certification help me obtain a license to practice medicine in the U.S.?

No. The NBPNS credential is not creditable toward the requirements for licensure to practice medicine in the U.S.

Will there be any reference materials to review?

A list of general references, sample questions, and a topic outline are provided in the [NBPNS Handbook for Candidates](#) . The National Board of Physician Nutrition Specialists (NBPNS) [Curriculum Guide for Training Physician Nutrition Specialist®](#) contains an extensive list of suggested resources.

How will I receive my exam results?

Exam results will be mailed to you. They are not provided by phone, fax, or email.

Will I receive a certificate?

Certificates are mailed to individuals who pass the NBPNS exam. They are mailed from the Professional Testing Corporation (New York; 212-356-0660). There will probably be a delay due to the end-of-year holidays.

Is PNS a title after MD?

NBPNS does not endorse the use of acronyms such as PNS, BCPNS, DNBPNNS, or others by its diplomates. NBPNS owns the copyright only to the fully spelled-out term Physician Nutrition Specialist®. Another organization already owns the copyright to the acronym PNS®, and NBPNS did not seek to copyright other acronyms. Initials commonly used by physicians, such as FACP, FACS, FRCP, etc., originate from status as a fellow of a restricted society, and not from board certification, such as by an ABMS board. To our knowledge, other ABMS boards do not use or endorse the use of acronyms by their diplomates, so neither do we encourage it. NBPNS diplomates who choose to append acronyms to their names do so at their own discretion. You may wish to hang your certificate where your patients can see it. You can also put your certification on your CV.

What is the pass rate of the examination in years past?

The pass rate has generally been 70-75%.

Is CME credit available for taking the NBPNS exam?

No, CME credit is not available.

I am interested in the examination for nutrition boards and what to use as a study guide. Can you advise me?

Recommended study resources are listed in the [Curriculum Guide for Physician Nutrition Specialists](#) on the [NBPNS Website](#). The General Resources link lists some good general study sources. The Handbook and Application for Candidates, which provides a more limited list, can also be found on the website.

Do I need to memorize equations for the exam?

Common equations that are part of ordinary and routine nutritional care may be tested. However, you do not need to memorize complex equations such as the Harris-Benedict equations.

Do the test items provide normal ranges for the micronutrients? Do we need to memorize?

It's not necessary to memorize normal values, especially for micronutrients. The test items provide normal ranges, where needed.

Are there any schools that you would recommend going to to learn about Nutrition? I want to be a Nutritionist.

If you are an MD, you will find a list of programs for nutrition fellowships on the [NBPNS website](#) . Click on the left side bar item [Physician Nutrition Specialist](#) and then click on the listing [Clinical Nutrition Fellowship Programs](#) . This will give you a listing of Clinical Nutrition Fellowship Programs. NBPNS is an organization that governs a board exam for physicians only.

I just took my internal medicine boards. I was previously a registered dietitian and already completed a year-long clinical nutrition internship. Does that qualify me to sit for the exam or would I need to complete a nutrition fellowship?

Mentored clinical nutrition refers to "medical nutrition" performed as an MD. While valuable training, involvement in clinical nutrition as an RD does not fulfill NBPNS eligibility requirements.

I am currently doing my residency and I am interested in pursuing clinical nutrition. Hence I would like to take the NBPNS examination to assess my own competence in this field. Am I eligible for this exam?

As you have not completed your residency at this time, you are not eligible to take the exam this year. You will be eligible **AFTER** you complete your residency, become board-certified in your primary specialty, and complete mentored clinical nutrition experience.

My understanding from having gone through the NBPNS website is that candidates need to have mentored nutrition experience to be eligible to take the exam. Being part of a university hospital program I can actually obtain that kind

of experience from the dietitians both inpatient and outpatient during my residency. I would like to know if that experience will be acceptable or not.

NBPNS has reviewed this issue and determined that mentored training is to be under the direction of a qualified physician.

I am a physician interested in taking the physician nutrition certification board offered in Nov. Can you give me any additional information about this exam/course preparation?

Our [NBPNS website](#) has information about National Board of Physician Nutrition Specialists. The [curriculum guide](#) has reference material and the Handbook and Application for Candidates, also available on the website, contains even more information.

Do the sample questions on the exam brochure represent the level of difficulty of the actual exam? It's very important to know this to know how to appropriately review.

The sample questions in the [Handbook for Candidates](#) are intended to convey format rather than level of difficulty. As a subspecialty certification exam, the NBPNS exam is written at a level of difficulty intended to identify expertise in the subspecialty of clinical nutrition. No specific exam preparation materials, including old NBPNS exams, are offered by NBPNS or any other organization at this time. The [NBPNS website](#) has a [curriculum guide](#) with material that will be helpful to study for the exam.

Our company would like to advertise a job opening to your organization. Do you have a publication or mail list available?

We do not have advertising capabilities (journals, newsletters, etc.) or a mailing list that is available to anyone outside our member societies. A list of our members is available on our website.

I did not participate in a formal clinical nutrition fellowship. However, I have extensive experience in nutrition working with a mentoring physician to satisfy clinical training requirement. How do I know if my mentor is likely to be acceptable to the NBPNS?

And clinical nutrition expertise as demonstrated by at least one of the following:

A mentor must have the following:

- Licensed to practice at site(s) of practice
- ABMS or equivalent certification in a Medical Specialty
- NBPNS certification
- Nutrition research and/or clinical publications
- Medical nutrition curriculum development
- Extensive clinical nutrition patient consultation

I want to mentor a trainee to make them eligible for the NBPNS exam. What are the required training elements that must be completed to make them eligible to take the exam?

These details are outlined in the [NBPNS Training Standards for Physician Nutrition Specialists®](#)

I am considering additional training in Clinical Nutrition, but I plan to pursue this training outside of a formal clinical nutrition fellowship program. Can you assure me my mentor will be acceptable to the NBPNS before I start my training?

The NBPNS can determine if your mentor meets the current requirements listed above. Please contact the NBPNS office for further information.

What is ABMS equivalency?

The NBPNS interprets ABMS equivalency to be certification following post-graduate medical training (generally 3 or more years) and successful completion of an examination which leads to national and professional/hospital recognition of qualifications to practice a Medical Specialty in the country of residence.

My practice is located in (foreign country). Am I eligible to take the NBPNS examination?

The NBPNS will certify licensed physicians who meet their training requirements from any country. You must be licensed to practice medicine in your country of residence, have been certified in a primary medical specialty by the ABMS, or its equivalent in your country, and have completed the requisite additional mentored clinical nutrition training to be eligible to take the NBPNS examination.

In my country we do not have formal medical specialty training. What do I need to do to be able to take the NBPNS examination?

The NBPNS examination is for licensed physicians who have completed postgraduate medical training and then completed additional training in clinical nutrition. In order to be able to be eligible to take the NBPNS examination, you would need to satisfy those minimum requirements.

My medical training, including specialty and additional nutrition training, was completed in (foreign country). I now reside in the United States where I am not licensed to practice medicine. Am I eligible to take the NBPNS examination?

The NBPNS certification is intended for practicing licensed physicians. The NBPNS Board recommends that you consider applying to take the examination when you are in a position to practice medicine in your country of residence.

I practice medicine in (foreign country). I successfully completed a Medical Residency in the US, have completed additional nutritional training and I have excellent references. Although I did not sit for the examination in my primary specialty, I would like to take the NBPNS examination to show proficiency in nutrition. Am I eligible to take the examination?

Eligibility requirements for taking the NBPNS examination include completing all the requirements for certification in a primary medical specialty. You would need to be certified in your primary specialty before you can be eligible to apply to take the NBPNS examination.

I earned my medical degree and achieved certification in my primary specialty in (foreign country). I have met the additional training requirements in clinical nutrition. I am now licensed to practice in the US. I am not certified by an ABMS board. Am I eligible to apply to take the NBPNS examination?

Because you have met the training requirements of the NBPNS by being a licensed physician, are certified in a medical specialty and have completed the additional required training in clinical nutrition, the NBPNS would likely determine that you are eligible to take the examination.