



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF
FORENSIC COUNSELORS, INC.**

**American College of Certified Forensic Counselors
Certification Commission**

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

PO Box 8827, Fort Wayne, IN 46898

www.Nationalafc.com

260-426-7234 – P

NAFC@Nationalafc.com

260-426-7431 – F

About the National Association of Forensic Counselors, Inc.

The National Association of Forensic Counselors, Inc. (NAFC), is a not-for-profit, voluntary membership organization.

The Founder of the National Association of Forensic Counselors ("NAFC") is the "Father of Forensic Counseling" and the originator of the titles and definitions of "Forensic Counselor" and "Criminal Justice Specialist".

Recognizing that the needs of offender treatment were distinctive, yet absolutely no standards or guidelines existed specific to working with offenders, the NAFC began identifying standards, skills, training and competencies that should be minimally required of professionals working with criminal offenders.

The NAFC was the first to establish post graduate standards, guidelines, and professional responsibility to identify a competent workforce in the mental health, criminal justice, addictions and corrections professions in the very specialized areas of forensic counseling and criminal justice counseling and supervision.

The establishment of the very first valid certification programs for the Forensic Counselor and Criminal Justice Specialist are efforts the NAFC has made to enhance delivery of safe and effective treatment of offenders in both civil and criminal cases, improve communication between the clinician and the criminal justice system as well as for the protection of the public.

Today, the National Association of Forensic Counselors is the first and largest independent multi-disciplinary credentialing board offering nationally accredited certifications representing the Forensic Counselor and Criminal Justice Specialist.

The NAFC is dedicated to promoting competency and training for professionals working with criminal offenders in addictions, criminal justice, mental health and corrections and improving communication between the clinician and the criminal justice system.

The American College of Certified Forensic Counselors (ACCCF) is the certification commission for the NAFC.

The NAFC offers certification programs for professionals in:

- Criminal Justice
- Mental Health
- Addictions
- Corrections

Working in fields including, but not limited to:

Private Practice	Military and Veteran's Administration	Crisis Intervention Programs
Mental Health Programs	Universities and Educational Institutions	Outreach Programs
Addictions Programs	Managed Care Facilities	Public Welfare Agencies
Domestic Violence Programs	Psychiatric Hospitals	Victim's Services
Sex Offender Programs	Social Services	Adult Correctional Facilities
General Offender Programs	Community Programs	Juvenile Correctional Facilities
Parole	Courts	Children Services
Probation	Justice Programs	Federal and State Programs

Purposes of NAFC:

- To promote competency and training for professionals working with criminal offenders in addictions, criminal justice, mental health and corrections.
- To improve communication between the clinician and the criminal justice system.
- To advance national standards in credentialing forensic counselors.

- To provide a competency based certification program which promotes public safety and protection.
 - To develop relationships with other organizations, courts, corrections, law enforcement, probation and parole departments, and others concerned with the quality and competency of services provided in the forensic counseling and criminal justice specialist professions.
-

1.0 Purpose of the Candidate Handbook

The purpose of the Candidate Handbook is to provide you with guidance and information about the NAFC application process, eligibility requirements, written examination process, appeals process, examination development, cut score determination, a brief outline of the domains of practice, and the competency foundation for forensic counselors.

NOTE: The NAFC Certification Policies and Procedures, the NAFC Ethical Standards and Code of Conduct, and other terms of membership, addressing the organization's policies, terms of membership for candidates with disabilities, our non-discrimination policy, ethics violations, appeals process, confidentiality policies, etc., is available for download from our website at www.Nationalafc.com, or by contacting our office. Please be certain to read the available publications. If you are unclear as to the information contained within this manual, or any other NAFC manual, please contact NAFC at 260-426-7234 for clarification.

Submission of any NAFC certification application is expressed consent and agreement by the certification candidate to the terms, conditions, policies, and procedures of the Candidate Handbook and all other terms of NAFC membership.

2.0 Application Submission

Applications for all NAFC issued certifications can be obtained by downloading from our website at www.Nationalafc.com, or by contacting our office. Applications may be submitted either by:

Mail: NAFC, PO Box 8827, Fort Wayne, IN 46898

Fax: 260-426-7431

E-mail: NAFC@Nationalafc.com

Applications are reviewed and verified by the certification commission as to education, experience, supervision, licensure status, and other information contained within and attached to the application.

All applications must be truthfully and accurately completed in their entirety and signed. No incomplete application will be processed. All requests for information or documentation, or additional information or documentation must be fulfilled by the certification candidate within thirty days of the request. If any request is not fulfilled within thirty days, the application will be denied.

The application fee must accompany the application. Applications will not be processed without the application fee. The application fee can be found on our website at www.Nationalafc.com, or by contacting our office.

All terms of NAFC membership shall remain in force for the life of the NAFC membership and all are subject to the most recent revision of terms of NAFC membership. The NAFC member is required, and is their sole responsibility, to keep themselves updated on all. The most recent revision of all will be available for download on our website at www.Nationalafc.com or by contacting our office.

2.1 Eligibility Requirements for Clinical Level Certification

To take any of the NAFC Clinical level certification examinations, the applicant must:

Be state licensed in their profession where licensure is required, unless:

- Exempt from licensure, i.e., legislatively exempt, federal or state employee, etc.;
- No licensure exists for your profession, i.e., parole, probation, etc.;
- State in which they practice does not require licensure to practice in their profession.

Meet all other requirements for the clinical level certification being applied for. A complete list of requirements can be found within the application.

Pass the written clinical level certification examination at the established passing score.

Any application that is denied will be refunded any fees that may have been paid in connection with the application, except the twenty-five dollar application fee, which is non-refundable.

No refunds of any funds in connection with the application will be issued if an application is approved.

2.2 Eligibility Requirements for Non-Clinical Level Certification

Professionals that do not fully meet the eligibility requirements for clinical certification may apply for non-clinical level certification until they fulfill all the requirements for clinical level certification. Non-Clinical candidates shall at a minimum:

Hold a minimum of a Bachelors degree applicable to their profession from an accredited educational institution.

Be state licensed in their profession where licensure is required, unless:

- Exempt from licensure, i.e., legislatively exempt, federal or state employee, etc.;
- No licensure exists for your profession, i.e., parole, probation, etc.;
- State in which they practice does not require licensure to practice in their profession.

Non-clinical level certification candidates must have two years (4,000 hours) of full time working experience within the profession applicable to the certification for which they are applying.

Be employed under the clinical supervision of a Clinically Certified Forensic Counselor or other qualified clinician, i.e., licensed psychologist, psychiatrist, clinical social worker.

Be involved in residential or at-a-distance forensic counselor training through a forensic training institute of their choice where the focus of training is the assessment, treatment planning, dynamics of criminal behavior, court processes, and counseling of criminal justice and corrections clients.

No felony or misdemeanor convictions within the past 10 years for any violent or sexual offense.

Meet all other requirements for the clinical level certification being applied for. A complete list of requirements can be found within the application.

Pass the written non-clinical level certification examination at the established passing score.

Any application that is denied will be refunded any fees that may have been paid in connection with the application, except the twenty-five dollar application fee, which is non-refundable.

No refunds of any funds in connection with the application will be issued if an application is approved.

2.3 Transition from Non-Clinical Level to Clinical Level Certification

Once a Non-Clinical certified member completely fulfills all the requirements for clinical level certification, they may make application to the NAFC for clinical level certification and, upon approval, take the clinical level certification examination in their specialty.

3.0 Preparation for the Clinical or Non-Clinical examinations

The Certification Commission does not offer any course of study leading to any clinical level or non-clinical level certification. The Certification Commission, however, does suggest reading references which may assist in the preparation for the examination. A list of reading references are available within the application. All suggested readings may be available at your public library, for purchase online, or found at the NAFC online bookstore on our website at www.Nationalafc.com.

4.0 Examination Development

The development of a content valid examination begins with a role delineation study or job task analysis study which begins with a clear and concise definition of the knowledge, skills, and tasks required for competent job performance. Using interviews, observation, surveys, and group discussion, NAFC works with subject matter experts in the fields of criminal justice and forensic counseling to clearly delineate critical job components. Once clearly defined, studies are performed of which the results provide a blue print for the development of the examination. All of the knowledge and skill bases for the examination questions are derived from the critical elements that are required for competent, entry level practice in the forensic counseling profession.

5.0 Examination Content

The 2009 NAFC Job Analysis Study identified five (5) domains of practice for the Clinically Certified Forensic Counselor. Within each of these performance domains there are a number of identified tasks that provide for the questions in the examination. The 2009 job analysis study was somewhat different from previous years in that several domains were combined such as Assessment and treatment planning, counseling and case management. The reason for combining the two domains was that it is difficult to separate assessment and treatment planning because it is imperative that assessment results drive the treatment plan. Counseling and case management was combined because case management is part of effective counseling, etc. Following is a brief outline of the five (5) practice domains and several of the tasks within the domain:

Domain 1: Clinical Assessment & Treatment Planning

Discuss with client the exact nature, purpose, and procedures associated with the clinical assessment being performed.

Discuss and inform the client of "limited confidentiality" issues related to the assessment.

Screen and assess the client for co-morbid psychiatric disorders.

Select and administer appropriate psychological assessment instruments.

Interpret assessment results in order to formulate a DSM diagnosis and develop a written report of the assessment results.

Discuss the diagnostic assessment with the client to initiate an individualized problem oriented treatment plan.

Prioritize mutually agreed upon problems, goals and measurable objectives.

Domain 2: Counseling and Case Management

Develop a therapeutic alliance with clients.

Educate the client regarding the counseling process.

Utilize appropriate counseling strategies in order to facilitate progress towards completion of treatment.

Assist the client in the development of a cognitive-behavioral relapse prevention plan in order to strengthen ongoing recovery.

Document all counseling activities.

Communicate with community resources in order to meet the identified needs of the client.

Obtain written release of information according to best practices.

Protect the client's right to privacy and confidentiality in preparation and handling of client records.

Apply knowledge of individual, group and family therapy theories in order to provide the client with appropriate services.

Domain 3: Psychosocial Dynamics of Criminal Behavior & Substance Abuse

Possess and apply theories of criminal behavior including sociological, biological, psychological theories in order to provide the client with appropriate counseling and treatment services.

Apply knowledge of substance abuse and its relationship to criminal behaviors.

Apply knowledge of human growth and development.

Understand the effects of and relationship of substance abuse in sexual offending, domestic violence, and other violent crimes.

Domain 4: Criminal Justice Processes

Have a thorough understanding of the function of the judge, prosecutor, defense counsel, probation officers, parole agents, court appointed special advocates, and guardian ad litem.

Understand and apply knowledge of local jurisdictional regulations and criminal court processes.

Understand alternative sentencing options.

Understand both state and federal correctional settings.

Understand various criminal justice theories such as prevention, punishment, rehabilitation, deterrence, and restorative justice.

Domain 5: Legal, Ethical and Professional Responsibility

Know and adhere to established NAFC professional code of ethics and conduct.

Assure continuing competency by engaging in professional development, reading professional journals and literature, and continuing education activities.

Obtain informed consent to treatment from all clients

Adhere to agency and jurisdictional regulations in order to protect participants rights and the safety of the public.

Recognize counter-transference issues, biases, feelings, concerns and other issues that may interfere with treatment and criminal justice processes.

Coordinate client services with their probation/parole agent in order to provide effective services.

5.1 Competency Foundations

Although each discipline, i.e., criminal justice, psychology, mental health counseling, psychiatry, addictions, etc, have very specific skills and applications that vary across each of the disciplines, the knowledge, skills and competency components required to treat criminal justice and correction clients remains the same. The development of effective criminal offender treatment in forensic counseling depends on the presence of the knowledge, skills and competencies required, as well as the willingness of the clinician to explore alternative approaches when necessary. A competent forensic counselor should minimally:

Understand criminal acting out behaviors, that is, have knowledge of abnormal behavior, particularly of the personality disorders.

Understand the psychosocial problems of criminal justice clients.

Understand the dynamics of domestic violence, sexual offending, violent crime and their relationship to alcohol and drugs.

Understand the concepts of social, political, economic, and cultural systems and their impact on poverty and crime.

Understand the psychological, social, family and emotional dynamics of alcohol and drug abuse/addiction.

Recognize the importance of social networks, community systems and the family in the treatment and recovery process.

Have a thorough knowledge of the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) diagnostic criteria for mental disorders.

Have the skill to recognize and diagnose co-occurring co-morbid psychiatric disorders in offenders with and without personality disorders and substance abuse disorders.

Have knowledge of "Best Practice" approaches to offender treatment.

Understand the need for a interdisciplinary approach to the treatment of criminal justice and correctional clients.

Understand the need for the use of methods for measuring treatment outcomes.

Understand the need for risk assessment of all offenders in order to assign a risk level of high, medium, or low for risk of re-offending.

Understand the importance of providing treatment services appropriate to the cultural identity and language of the client.

Be familiar with and stay abreast on offender research, outcome data, and their application to clinical practice.

Possess a wide variety of assisting strategies skills as well as treatment modalities for criminal justice clients.

Understand the civil and criminal justice system within the jurisdiction of their clinical practice, i.e., policies, procedures, administrative rules, and other court processes.

Be familiar with direct and cross-examination procedures used by both defense attorneys and prosecution.

Have knowledge of the court's expectations for expert testimony.

Understand the importance of therapist-probation officer collaboration in offender treatment in order to facilitate a positive treatment outcome.

6.0 Examination Dates & Administering

The NAFC certification examinations are administered by Comira Testing, a professional examination proctoring service, through ProExams. Comira Testing is an established full service international examination proctoring company serving the needs of licensing boards and certification boards with a wide range of test development, and computer based administration services at over 500 locations in the U.S. A list of examination sites in each state can found online at www.Comiratesting.com.

Upon approval of the certification candidate's application, a username and password are authorized by the NAFC. The certification candidate will receive notification from the examination service detailing instructions on scheduling the certification examination by the certification candidate.

7.0 Examination Rules

You will be advised at the time of testing by professional proctors at testing location that no electronic or non-electronic devices or references, i.e., books, papers, writing devices, video or audio recording/capturing devices, examination materials, reference materials, documents, electronic devices of any kind, or memoranda may be taken into the testing area.

No examination materials, documents, memoranda, or other materials of any type may be taken from the testing area by the certification candidate.

Listen carefully to all instructions and directions given by the professional proctor, as the proctor will not answer questions concerning the examination before, during, or after the examination period that does pertain exclusively to examination taking instructions.

The certification candidate will be notified of the results of their examination within five to seven business days after results are received from the professional examination service.

Certification candidates who miss their scheduled examination will be required to pay an additional fee to reschedule to take the

certification examination.

No refunds will be issued to certification candidates who miss their scheduled examination appointment or fail the examination.

8.0 Special Examination Accommodations

Candidates with disabilities or religious obligations that may require modifications to the testing environment or administration may request, in writing at least 60 days prior to the scheduled examination date, specific modifications that will need to be made. Candidates requesting any modifications must provide official documentation for the requested changes. Reasonable and appropriate modifications will be made if documentation supports the request.

9.0 Scoring

ProExams will electronically score all examinations and send the score reports to the NAFC. Upon request, scores may be broken down by domains of practice so the certification candidate can see areas of strength and weakness.

10.0 Appeals, Hand Scoring, and Test Disclosure

If you wish to appeal your examination score you may do so, in writing to the NAFC, within thirty (30) days of receiving the examination results. ProExams will hand score the examination and mail the results directly to the certification candidate. There will be a fee charged for hand scoring, which is to be determined by ProExams. You should be aware that the NAFC certification examination security and item banking procedures do not permit candidates access, in any form, to examination questions, answers, or any other secure examination materials.

11.0 Display of Certification Certificate

Upon granting of NAFC certification, the NAFC member may advertise and promote themselves, and the NAFC certification issued to them. Please refer to the NAFC Ethical Standards and Code of Conduct and the NAFC Policy and Procedure manuals pertaining to advertising.

NAFC members must display, conspicuously, their most recently issued NAFC certification certificate in their place of practice unless forbidden by their employer. If an employer does not permit conspicuous display, then the NAFC member must keep accessible the original NAFC certification certificate or NAFC issued wallet card and present it upon request to any member of the public to inform the public of your certification status and level.

NAFC member may make copies of their NAFC issued certificate for the purposes of professionally related submissions or activities. All copies must be complete and may not be altered in any way, or otherwise missing any information.

12.0 Continuing Education and Renewal Requirements

The NAFC requires continuing education as part of certification renewal. All certified members are required to document twenty (20) hours of continuing education annually from in-service training, workshops, seminars, conferences, etc., or other NAFC approved continuing education source. Please refer to the NAFC Ethical Standards and Code of Conduct and the NAFC Policy and Procedure manuals pertaining to continuing education.

NAFC performs random audits to ascertain that this requirement has been met. In the event an NAFC member is audited, they are required to submit verifiable evidence of having met this annual renewal requirement, i.e., attendance certificates, etc. Annual renewal requirements are:

1. Maintain state licensure active and in good standing, if applicable;
2. Complete and sign the renewal application;
3. Obtain twenty (20) hours of continuing education;
4. Pay the applicable recertification fee

Suggested Reading and Study References

Contact NAFC at 260-426-7234 for recommendations as to which books that would best serve your needs for the particular examination you are applying for.

American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic Statistical Manual.

Barsky, Allan, and Gould, Jonathan - Clinicians in Court: A guide to Subpoenas, Depositions, Testifying. The Guilford Press, 2002.

Beech, Anthony, Craig and Brown - Assessment and Treatment of Sex Offenders. Wiley-Blackwell Publishers, 2009.

Corey, Gerald - Theory and Practice of Group Counseling, 7th ed. Brooks and Cole, 2008.

Deisler, Francis - Contemporary Assessment and Treatment of Criminal Justice Clients. Tate Publishing, 2009.

Doweiko, Harold - Concepts of Chemical Dependency. Brooks and Cole, 2009

Fisher, Gary, Harrison, Thomas - Substance Abuse Information for School Counselors, Social Workers, Therapists, and Counselors. Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

Masters, Ruth - Counseling Criminal Justice Offenders. Sage Publications, 1994.

Wilson, K.J. - When Violence Begins at Home. Hunter House Publications. 2006.

Wright, Richard - Sex Offender Laws. Failed Policies, New Directions. Springer Publishing Company. 2009.

Wettstein, Robert, M. - Treatment of Offenders with Mental Disorders. The Guilford Press. 1998

Van Hoose, W.H, Kottler, Jeffrey A. - Ethical and Legal Issue in Counseling and Psychotherapy. Jossey-Bass Publishers. 1988.