

COUNCIL ON CREDENTIALING IN PHARMACY

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CERTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUALS IN PHARMACY

The provision of leadership, guidance, public information and coordination regarding the development and application of credentialing standards for the pharmacy profession are integral components of the Council on Credentialing in Pharmacy (CCP) vision and mission statements. The *CCP Guiding Principles for Certification of Individuals in Pharmacy* are intended as guidelines for the development and assessment of new and established certification efforts serving individuals in pharmacy.

The Guiding Principles are based, in part, on the “Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing” (revised 1999) developed jointly by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education; ISO/IEC 17024, “General Requirements for Bodies Operating Certification of Persons” (2003) developed by the International Standards Organization; “Standards for Accreditation of Certification Programs” (revised 2004) developed by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies; and the Council on Credentialing’s Resource Document, *Continuing Professional Development*.^{*} This document is a companion piece to CCP’s *Guiding Principles for Accreditation of Organizations, Sites or Programs in Pharmacy*.

The following definition is used in this guideline and is adapted from the **CCP Resource Paper “Credentialing in Pharmacy”**:^{*}

Certification is a voluntary process by which a non-governmental agency or an association grants recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications specified by that organization. This formal recognition is granted to designate to the public that this individual has attained the requisite level of knowledge, skill, and/or experience in a well-defined, often specialized, area of the total discipline. Certification usually requires initial assessment and periodic reassessments of the individual's knowledge, skills, and/or experience.

Certification is to be differentiated from the term “certificate,” which is a document issued to an individual upon successful completion of the predetermined level of performance of a certificate program or of a pharmacy residency or fellowship.

^{*} *CCP documents are posted at www.pharmacycredentialing.org.*

A certification program serving individuals in pharmacy should adhere to the following guiding principles:

I. ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR A CERTIFICATION ACTIVITY

Purpose

- Has written vision and mission statements and a published statement in support of pharmacy practice.
- Is a peer-reviewed program reflecting the discipline's scope and standards of practice.

Structure

- Is organized in such a way that the certification process is free from inappropriate external influence.
- Has an autonomous governing board that is representative of appropriate stakeholders and public representation (or provision for public consultation or representation).
- Adheres to the principle that certification and education for the discipline should be performed by different bodies.

Resources

- Has adequate financial and staffing resources to fulfill its mission.

II. PROGRAMMATIC PRINCIPLES FOR A CERTIFICATION ACTIVITY

Testing/Evaluation Mechanism

- Adheres to rigorous industry standards in its testing and evaluation activities (e.g., those standards developed by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, the National Council on Measurement in Education, the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, the International Standards Organization, or other organization recognized as authoritative).
- Maintains a thorough and effective orientation, training, and professional development program for all persons involved in the certification processes, appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.

Responsibilities to Candidates

- Has in place mechanisms to ensure fairness and due process for individuals that are candidates for the credential.
- Publishes documents that describe the eligibility requirements of the credential and announces plans for any changes.

Responsibilities to Public and Employers

- Has in place mechanisms to ensure credibility and understanding of certification credentials.
- Maintains and publishes a current listing of certified individuals.
- Publishes and makes readily available information about organization responsibilities, purpose, policies, procedures, and appropriate certification-related information about the certificants.

Confidentiality and Security

- Assures that confidentiality of records, documents, and processes is clearly delineated in writing, and that appropriate security procedures are developed and implemented, including procedures related to transportation of materials, housing of data, and who has access to information.

Re-Evaluation

- Has a process of periodic re-evaluation of the program and the individuals or programs holding the credential.

Use of Logo/Credentialing Mark

- Ensures that policies and procedures are in place to protect the mark.

III. EXTERNAL REVIEW

- Meets all above guidelines and/or seeks to meet requirements for appraisal/accreditation by a recognized third party, as appropriate.