



National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE)

Comparison: Old and New Examination Formats

	Old Format	New Format
Availability	Certification candidates: until Spring 2022 Licensure candidates: until October 2022	Certification candidates: beginning Fall 2022 Licensure candidates: beginning November 2022
Examination Description	Ten (10) clinical simulations designed with a focus on clinical decision-making. Each simulation is divided into 5–10 sections classified as either Information Gathering or Decision-Making.	Eleven (11) case studies designed to replicate the actual work of a clinical mental health counselor, working with a client over time, through intake and in clinical sessions. The case studies are designed to capture an examinee's ability to identify, analyze, diagnose, develop, and implement plans for treatment of clinical concerns. Each case study includes one narrative and 9–15 multiple-choice questions.
What content is measured?	The examination covers the following content areas: Assessment and Diagnosis; Counseling and Psychotherapy; and Administration, Consultation, and Supervision.	The examination covers the following content areas based on the new Content Outline : Professional Practice and Ethics; Intake, Assessment, and Diagnosis; Treatment Planning; Counseling Skills and Interventions; and Core Counseling Attributes.
Duration	195 minutes	255 minutes
Number of Items on a Test Form	350–500	130–150
Test Administration Mode	In test centers	In test centers and online
Structure	3 parts <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Scenario</u> – provides setting and introductory client information <u>Information Gathering</u> – examinee gathers all relevant information <u>Decision-Making</u> – examinee makes decisions based on the information gathered 	3 parts <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Intake</u> – provides setting and introductory client information, presenting concerns, and diagnosis <u>A Clinical Session</u> – the counselor works with the client on their presenting concerns using evidence-based approaches <u>Another Clinical Session</u> – the counselor continues the work from Part 2
Is the client's diagnosis provided to the examinee?	No, the examinee arrives at a diagnosis through information gathering.	Yes, the client's initial diagnosis is provided at the beginning of each case study. Candidates are asked to evaluate how that judgment was made. However, candidates may be asked to provide co-occurring diagnoses or may need to change a diagnosis as the therapeutic relationship evolves within the case study.

	Old Format	New Format
Are candidates penalized for incorrect answers through negative marking?	Yes	No
Item Format	Includes both <u>Multiple Options</u> questions (select as many as are appropriate for the client) and <u>Single Best Option</u> questions (choose only one)	All questions are <u>standard multiple choice</u> : choose the correct answer among options A–D.
Candidate Handbook	Candidate Handbook for National Certification Candidate Handbook for State Licensure	Coming Soon
Cut score (passing score)	Scoring at or above the cut score, for both information gathering and decision-making, is required.	Scoring at or above the cut score, based on the total number of correct responses, is required.
Timing of <i>unofficial</i> score report	Upon examination completion (for both formats)	
When does state board receive <i>official</i> score report?	For both formats: If you pass the examination, your official score will be forwarded to your state licensure board within 30 days of the end of the testing window. You should contact your state board for the next steps for licensure.	
Application fee	The application fee is the same for both.	
How to register?	Register via ProCounselor (for both formats). Certification candidates register here . Licensure candidates register here . Licensure candidates for standard-setting cohort with \$50 discount register here .	
How to schedule?	Schedule through Pearson VUE (for both formats).	
Accommodations	The same for both. See the NBCC/CCE Special Examination Accommodations Policy .	
Appeals Process	The same for both. See the NBCC/CCE Examination Appeal Policy .	