American Culinary Federation Certification Matters!
ACF Certification exhibits a benchmark of excellence by demonstrating professional standards in culinary skills and knowledge of the food service industry. Certified chefs attain the well-deserved recognition and respect of their peers.
• Representatives from each Chapter make up this National Network who are available to assist members with their certification needs.
• This network is in communication with the National Office to keep up-to-date with any current certification news and information to share with you.
• Special forms, presentations, and helpful tips are made available to assist the local chapters.
• We are here to assist you—just ask!
Value of ACF Certification

- **Benefits the Chef**
  - Enhances career opportunities
  - Differentiates you from the completion
  - Shows personal pride
  - Increases job confidence
  - Provides clear career path

- **Benefits the Employer**
  - Affirms competence and expertise
  - Demonstrates professional standards
  - Exhibits benchmarks of excellence
  - Provides consistency among chefs’ skill sets

- **Benefits the Public**
  - Ensures safe and nutritious food
ACF certification requirements are based on your educational and work experience. These factors will help determine the level of certification in which you can apply.

ACF offers 16 certification designations, each with specific qualifications.

Certifications are open to:
- Cooking Professionals
- Baking and Pastry Professionals
- Culinary Administrators
- Culinary Educators
- Personal Cooking Professionals

NCCA Accreditation Awarded
- Certified Executive Chef® (CEC®)
- Certified Executive Pastry Chef® (CEPC®)
- Certified Sous Chef® (CSC®)
- Certified Culinary Educator® (CCE®)
Who Accredits Certification Programs?

Establish in 1977, the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) is the leading international membership organization representing the credentialing community. ICE fulfills its mission through the delivery of education and training programs, in setting quality standards for credentialing and by providing accreditation services through its accreditation division, the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

NCCA-accredited programs certify individuals in a wide range of professions and occupations including nurses, counselors and therapists, crane operators, emergency technicians, nutritionists, financial planners, home inspectors and many others, and now chefs. ACF and the CEC®, CEPC®, CSC®, and CCE® credentials are the first culinary certifications to receive NCCA accreditation.

To date, NCCA has accredited more than 200 programs from more than 100 organizations.
Certification Ladder Update

Certified Fundamental Cook® (CFC®)
Certified Fundamental Pastry Cook® (CFPC®)

Requirements:

• **Education:** High School diploma OR GED OR ACFEF Secondary Program Completion OR 75 CEH
• **Mandatory Coursework:** 30 hours in each Nutrition and Sanitation.
• **Work Experience:** No culinary work experience is required.
• **Written and Performance Exams:** ACF has partnered with NOCTI testing services to develop exams for these levels.
  • [Written and Performance Exam Information](#)
Certification Requirements

CEC®/CEPC® Requirement Update
Effective January 1, 2018

All CEC®/CEPC® applicants who submit a Step 1 application beginning 1/1/18 must include a **30 hour course in Cost Management**. No refresher will be required for this course. If you are in pre-approval or certified prior to the effective date, you will not be required to complete this course.

An online option is currently available through [www.123ce.com](http://www.123ce.com) and transcripts may also reflect this requirement. If you have a course that you believe will meet the requirement, please submit for review.

Please contact [certify@acfchefs.net](mailto:certify@acfchefs.net) with any questions.
Savory Certification Levels

**Certified Culinarian® (CC®):** An entry level culinarian within a commercial foodservice operation responsible for preparing and cooking sauces, cold food, fish, soups and stocks, meats, vegetables, eggs and other food items.

**Certified Sous Chef® (CSC®):** A chef who supervises a shift or station(s) in a foodservice operation. Equivalent job titles are sous chef, banquet chef, garde manger, first cook, a.m. sous chef and p.m. sous chef.

**Certified Chef de Cuisine® (CCC®):** A chef who is the supervisor in charge of food production in a foodservice operation. This could be a single unit of a multi-unit operation or a free-standing operation. He or she is in essence the chef of the operation with the final decision making power as it relates to culinary operations.
Certified Executive Chef® (CEC®): A chef who is the department head usually responsible for all culinary units in a restaurant, hotel, club, hospital or foodservice establishment, or the owner of a foodservice operation. In addition to culinary responsibilities, other duties include budget preparation, payroll, maintenance, controlling food costs and maintaining financial and inventory records.

Certified Master Chef® (CMC®): The consummate chef. A CMC® possesses the highest degree of professional culinary knowledge, skill and mastery of cooking techniques. A separate application is required, in addition to successfully completing an eight-day testing process judged by peers. Certification as a CEC® or CEPC® is a prerequisite.
Pastry Certification Levels

Certified Pastry Culinarian® (CPC®): An entry level culinarian within a pastry foodservice operation responsible for the preparation and production of pies, cookies, cakes, breads, rolls, desserts or other baked goods.

Certified Working Pastry Chef® (CWPC®): A pastry chef who supervises a pastry section or shift within a foodservice operation and has considerable responsibility for preparation and production of all pastry items.

Certified Executive Pastry Chef® (CEPC®): A pastry chef who is a department head, usually responsible to the executive chef of a food operation or to the management of a pastry specialty firm. A CEPC® has supervisory responsibility as well as administrative duties.

Certified Master Pastry Chef® (CMPC®): A CMPC® possesses the highest degree of professional knowledge, skill and mastery of cooking techniques as they apply to baking and pastry. A separate application is required, in addition to successfully completing an 8-day testing process judged by peers. Certification as a CEC® or CEPC® is a prerequisite.
Personal Certified Chef™ (PCC™): A chef who is engaged in the preparation, cooking and serving of foods on a “cook-for-hire” basis. Must also have knowledge of menu planning, marketing, financial management and operational decision making. Has at least three years of cooking experience and one full year of Personal Chef experience.

Personal Certified Executive Chef™ (PCEC™): An advanced chef who is engaged in the preparation, cooking and serving of foods on a “cook-for-hire” basis. Must also have knowledge of menu planning, marketing, financial management and operational decision making. Has at least three years of Personal Chef experience.
Certified Culinary Administrator® (CCA®): This is an executive-level chef who is responsible for the administrative functions of running a professional foodservice operation. This culinary professional must demonstrate proficiency in culinary knowledge, human resources, operational management and business planning skills.

Certified Secondary Culinary Educator® (CSCE®): An advanced-degree culinary professional who is working as an educator at an accredited secondary or vocational institution. A CSCE® is responsible for the development, implementation, administration, evaluation and maintenance of a culinary arts or foodservice management curriculum. In addition, a CSCE® demonstrates the culinary competencies of a CCC® or CWPC® during a Practical Exam.

Certified Culinary Educator® (CCE®): An advanced-degree culinary professional, with industry experience, working as an educator in an accredited postsecondary institution or military training facility. A CCE™ is responsible for the development, implementation, administration, evaluation and maintenance of a culinary arts or foodservice management curriculum. In addition, a CCE™ demonstrates the culinary competencies of a CCC® or CWPC® during a Practical Exam.
Approval Process

Step 1: Determine Eligibility (based on Education & Experience)

Step 2: Initial Pre-Approval Application + Supporting Documentation

Step 3: Certification Examinations (Written & Practical Exams)

Step 4: Final Application
## Certification Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Experience (must be within the past 10 yrs)</th>
<th>Additional Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFC - Certified Fundamentals Cook</td>
<td>High School Diploma or GED#</td>
<td>No experience required</td>
<td>NOCTI ACF Written and Performance Certification Assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFPC - Certified Fundamentals Pastry</td>
<td>or 75 CEH#</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>or Graduation from ACFEF Secondary program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC® - Certified Culinarian®</td>
<td>High School Diploma or GED</td>
<td>2 yrs. entry level culinarian/pastry</td>
<td>Written Exam Practical Exam (exempt if graduate of ACFEF Postsecondary program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPC® - Certified Pastry Culinarian®</td>
<td>or 100 CEH</td>
<td>1 yr. entry level culinarian/pastry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or Culinary Arts Program Certificate (1 year)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or Associate’s Degree in Culinary Arts</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or ACFEF Apprenticeship program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSC® - Certified Sous Chef®</td>
<td>High School Diploma plus 50 CEH</td>
<td>5 yrs. entry level culinarian/pastry</td>
<td>Written Exam Practical Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWPC® - Certified Working Pastry Chef</td>
<td>or GED plus 50 CEH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or 150 CEH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or Associate’s Degree in Culinary Arts</td>
<td>3 yrs. entry level culinarian/pastry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or ACFEF Apprenticeship program</td>
<td>Min. 4000 hrs. on the job training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC® - Certified Chef de Cuisine®</td>
<td>High School Diploma plus 100 CEH</td>
<td>3 yrs. as Sous Chef or chef who supervises a shift or station(s) in a foodservice operation. Must have supervised at least 2 FT people in the preparation of food</td>
<td>Written Exam Practical Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or GED plus 100 CEH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or 200 CEH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or Associate’s Degree in Culinary Arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or ACFEF Apprenticeship program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEC® - Certified Executive Chef®</td>
<td>High School Diploma plus 150 CEH</td>
<td>5 yrs. as Chef de Cuisine or Executive Sous Chef/Pastry Chef or chef in charge of food production in a foodservice operation. Must have supervised at least 5 FT (3 for CEPC®) people in the preparation of food</td>
<td>Written Exam Practical Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEPC® - Certified Executive Pastry</td>
<td>or GED plus 150 CEH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chef</td>
<td>or 250 CEH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or Associate’s Degree in Culinary Arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or ACFEF Apprenticeship program plus 50 CEH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 2: Initial Pre-Approval Application and Supporting Documents

Establish Timeline

ACF Certification Timeline

Month 1
- Locate and create file with education & work experience (i.e., copy of school transcripts, work documentation form)
- Take Nutrition Course 30 hour or 8 hour refresher
- Obtain any missing documentation

Month 2
- Purchase Practice to establish a baseline for which domains to study. Refer to recommended reading material.
- Take Supervision Course 30 hour or 8 hour refresher
- Study for written exam, practice for practical exam

Month 3
- Take Sanitation Course 30 hour or 8 hour refresher
- Study for written exam, practice for practical exam

Month 4
- Send in application and documentation to ACF for approval.
- Receive approval. Register for written and practical exam + host site fees

Month 5
- Send in application and documentation to ACF for approval CEC
- Take written Exam score Valid 2 years
- Take practical Exam score Valid 1 year

Month 6
- Start accumulating CEM hours to recertify in 5 years.

Certification can be achieved between 3 to 6 months; depending on a candidate’s readiness (required courses completed and current).
Step 2: Initial Pre-Approval Application and Supporting Documents

Establish Budget

### American Culinary Federation Certification Cost Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member Estimated Costs</th>
<th>Application Fee</th>
<th>Written Exam Fee</th>
<th>Practical Exam</th>
<th>Final Fee</th>
<th>Estimated Total***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certified Culinary® (CC®)</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Sous Chef® (GSC®)</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$70</td>
<td>$245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Chef de Cuisine® (CCG®)</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$90</td>
<td>$255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Executive Chef® (CEC®)</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$160</td>
<td>$335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Certified Chef™ (PCC™)</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$70</td>
<td>$245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Certified Executive Chef™ (POEC™)</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$160</td>
<td>$335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Pastry Culinarian® (CPC®)</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Working Pastry Chef® (CWPC®)</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$70</td>
<td>$245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Executive Pastry Chef® (CEPC®)</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$160</td>
<td>$335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Culinary Administrator® (CCA®)</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$325</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certified Secondary Culinary Educator® (CSE®)</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$90</td>
<td>$255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Culinary Educator® (CCE®)</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$160</td>
<td>$335</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• **Documentation of education and continuing education hours (CEHs).**
  – A candidate can take a variety of educational paths to meet the education requirement. Hours earned for mandatory courses and/or refreshers can be counted towards hours required for continuing education.

• **Completion of mandatory education courses**
  – Candidates should provide documentation of three 30-hour courses—one in Nutrition, one in Food Safety and Sanitation, and one in Supervisory Management.
    • CFC/CFPC Certifications do not have the Supervisory Management requirement.
  – If these courses were taken more than five years ago, an eight hour refresher course is required in each topic. These courses are available online or may be taken at a school or another authorized source.

• **Documentation of work history**
  – A candidate’s eligible work history is limited to the past 10 years.

• **Initial Application**
  – Documentation should be included with the Step 1 Pre-Approval Application.
Step 3: Certification Exams

Written Exams

Comira is a full-service, customer-focused testing provider with over 500 testing centers nationwide. You can register for the exam near you by calling (800) 947-4228, option 4, Mon.–Fri. 6 a.m.–5 p.m. Pacific time, Sat. 8 a.m.–noon Pacific time, or you can register 24/7 at the ACF/Comira Online Registration Site.

- The written exam fee is $75 and is paid directly to Comira.
- An ACF number is required at time of registration. To request an ACF identification number contact certify@acfchefs.net prior to registration.
- Written exam scores are valid for two years.
Step 3: Certification Exams

Written Exam

- Use the optional practice exams to guide you toward areas you may want to study.
  - The purchase or completion of the practice exams(s) is not required for certification nor does it guarantee a candidate’s success in passing, but should be a good indicator of the candidate’s readiness to test.
- The ACF website has study materials for your level for review. Some levels have more detailed information in the Candidate Handbooks.
- Study in a quiet place with minimal distractions.
- Before your exam, get a solid night’s sleep if possible.
- Eat a solid, nutritious breakfast on the morning of the test. Studies show food stimulates the brain.
- Arrive early and bring all materials you will need.
- Take your time through the test.
- If you don’t know an answer, skip it and return later.
- If you are struggling with a question, eliminate answers that you know are incorrect first.
Practical Exams

When you are ready to take the practical exam for your ACF Certification, complete the Practical Exam Candidate Registration Form and return to the ACF national office.

The test fee due to ACF is $50 for ACF members and $100 for non-members. Payment must be made prior to the exam date.

- You must contact the test administration to confirm test time, host site fee and specific details about the testing facility.

- Test sites may charge an additional host site fee that is payable to the organization hosting the exam.

- Payment for any host site fees are separate from the amount due to ACF and are coordinated by the test site administrator.
The assessment for certification practical testing is divided into four general areas: Safety & Sanitation Skills; Organization; Craftsmanship Skills; Finished Product Skills.

The candidate’s skills are evaluated during the examination period through frequent monitoring by the evaluators.

The practical examination is scored overall as pass or fail.
Step 3: Certification Exams

Practical Exams

- Review the Practical Exam Candidate Manual for general guidelines, processes and the skills that will be evaluated.
- Ask a certified chef for advice and to watch one of your practices and offer suggestions.
- Conduct a self-assessment of your strengths and weaknesses. It is important to practice “correct” techniques.
- Prepare a checklist containing every tool, item, ingredient and task.
- Develop a timeline. Break down tasks and calculate the minutes necessary to successful complete each one.
- Practice your complete routine until it becomes second nature.
Step 4: Final Applications

Upon successful completion of the written and practical exam, submit final application along with appropriate documentation: written and practical exam passing forms along with remaining certification fee.

Approved Certifications

The ACF Certification Department will review final application, exam documentation and will notify candidates of approval.

- Please allow 2–3 weeks for processing
- You will be notified by email that application is received.
- Once certification is approved your certificate will be mailed.
ACF Recertification

ACF requires certification renewal every five years* to remain current with present-day trends in the culinary industry.

To maintain your certification:

- Fill out a Recertification Application
- Show documentation of a minimum of 80 Continuing Education Hours (CEHs) during the five-year* certification period.
- 8 Hour refreshers in Food Safety and Sanitation, Nutrition, and Culinary Supervisory Management are included in the 80 hours.
- CEHs are experiences that assist in the development or enhancement of the knowledge and skills directly related to the individual’s professional occupation.

*Recertification for CC® and CPC® which are required to recertify every three years (48 CEHs required).
*CFC® and CFPC® are three year certifications that are not eligible for recertification.
*Lifetime Certification can be achieved when one of the following criteria has been reached: 62 years of age, 55 years of age and fully retired from the industry, or if you are retired due to permanent disability.
ACF Recertification

CEH Opportunities - Online Courses

To find upcoming CEH opportunities in your area, select your region below. Online courses are also available and ongoing in all regions. Schedules are subject to change.

Sort by Date/Title | Category

The following courses and events have been approved for ACF CEHs. Contact the CEH Provider for more information and registration details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>CEHs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1, 2016–March 31, 2018</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Curriculamb - Culinary Education Program on American Lamb</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13, 2016–August 19, 2017</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>The Nutrition Facts Label: What's Changed and Why It Matters - FREE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 16, 2016–October 17, 2017</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Nutrition Strategies for Managing Diabetes in Healthcare 2.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 17, 2017–March 17, 2018</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Comfort Food and the Dining Experience</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We encourage you to consider upgrading your certification as you develop professionally.

ACF has developed the only “stackable industry credentials” in the US for the culinary industry to encourage this professional growth.

What if I would rather upgrade my certification than recertify?

How do I upgrade?

Choose the level which best fits your current experience.
• Submit certification application for pre-approval with documentation.
• Complete written and practical exams.
• Submit final application with documentation

Remember: ACF keeps your information in a digital archive that could help you with this documentation.
Any Questions?

Call the Certification HOTLINE!

The ACF Certification Department is here to assist in any way we can.

We are ready to help you…

• Navigate the Certification process
• Determine your appropriate Certification level
• Provide your next steps
• Update your application status
• Become a test site, Certification Evaluator, or Test Administrator
• And much more…