

ACSM GET CERTIFIED GUIDE

BE THE GOLD STANDARD

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Welcome To ACSM!

A Better Life for All – with your help.

Are you ready to aim for the gold standard? The **ACSM Get Certified Guide** is the next step toward advancing your career in health and fitness.

It's true that ACSM was the first to certify health fitness professionals – and we've been based in science and research since day one. But what sets ACSM apart isn't just how long we've been around, how high our standards are, or how much ground our fitness, clinical and specialty certifications cover.

What sets ACSM apart? It's you.

With over 30,000 certified professionals working across diverse fields in over 44 countries – ACSM certified professionals bring the gold standard to life one day, and one life, at a time. Our professionals are creating an impact, whether sweating it out in front of a group exercise class, designing personalized exercise programs in a clinic, or training the next generation of athletes – they are building longer, healthier lives wherever their career takes them.

What's in store for you when you earn your ACSM certification?

- 1 Credibility** – An ACSM certification validates your advanced knowledge – and shows that you don't just aim for competency, you aim for excellence. Research-backed and science-based, an ACSM certification means you can confidently showcase your skills, whether working with clients or peers.
- 2 Respect** – Earn the respect of your peers by working hard for your ACSM certification. Be respected by clients who look for and expect the best. And, know that your ACSM certification is respected across the health fitness and sports medicine industry as the leading credential.
- 3 Recognition** – Your ACSM certification will make you stand out from the crowd. We know there are many certifications to choose from – but there's only one gold standard. Earning your ACSM certification means you'll be part of a group of passionate, high-achieving professionals recognized for making a difference.

We applaud your efforts and look forward to helping you achieve your certification, as well as celebrating the achievements you reach in the future! Your ACSM certification isn't a finish line – *it's the starting point for something greater.*



Why Get ACSM Certified?

Credibility. Respect. Recognition.

Earning an ACSM certification makes you uniquely qualified to work with all types of people, including those with health risks. Our certifications enhance your career potential – ACSM establishes the standards used in the health fitness industry. And, employers prefer an ACSM certification because it ensures a high standard of knowledge and service to clients.

Based on your qualifications, select from any of our fitness, clinical, or specialty certifications and find the choice that aligns with your education level, career goals and desired skills.

No matter what certification you choose, you can count on these **benefits**:



Marketing Support & Career Advancement

- Exclusive use of the ACSM Certified identity mark on your business cards, letterhead, brochures, websites, and other marketing material to enhance your credibility with potential employers and clients.
- Free listing in the ACSM ProFinder™ which provides you with marketing exposure to potential employers and the public worldwide.



Latest Health Fitness Research & Techniques

- First access to ACSM's research puts you on the leading edge in applying new concepts and techniques in your workplace and with your clients.
- Free subscription to ACSM's Certified e-News, our monthly newsletter written exclusively for ACSM certified professionals.



Influence & Involvement

- Exercise your voting right in the Committee on Certification and Registry Board elections – responsible for ACSM certification governance and exam procedures.
- Volunteer in one of ACSM's 12 Regional Chapters and help chart the course of health fitness, or join an interest-based committee.



Valuable Discounts

- Registration discounts on signature conferences, including the ACSM's International Health & Fitness Summit.
- Broaden your expertise with discounts on select ACSM workshops and continuing education opportunities.



Which Certification Do I Choose?

Only ACSM offers health/fitness, clinical and specialty certifications.

Health/Fitness Certifications – Launch your personal training career, empower your group exercise leadership, or get certified as an exercise physiologist.

Clinical Certification – Boost your clinical and advanced research credentials.

Specialty Certificate – Earn your qualification to be part of the EIM solution.

Specialty Certifications – Build your skillset across multiple areas from public health to ringside sports.

FITNESS CERTIFICATIONS

• ACSM Certified Group Exercise Instructor® (ACSM-GEI®)



WHAT THEY DO:

Fitness professional who leads and instructs exercise in a group setting using a variety of teaching and motivational techniques to create a positive exercise experience.

WHERE THEY WORK:

Health club, gym, university, corporate or community/public health settings

CERTIFIED TO:

- Demonstrate effective methods of group exercise by applying basic principles of exercise science.
- Instruct and motivate individuals to exercise safely and appropriately.
- Communicate healthy lifestyle behaviors.

• ACSM Certified Personal Trainer® (ACSM-CPT®)



WHAT THEY DO:

Fitness professional who develops and implements an individualized approach to exercise in healthy populations and/or those individuals with medical clearance to exercise.

WHERE THEY WORK:

Health club, gym, university, corporate or community/public health settings

CERTIFIED TO:

- Lead and demonstrate safe and effective methods of individual exercise leadership by applying the fundamental principles of exercise science.
- Write appropriate exercise recommendations.
- Motivate individuals to begin and continue practicing healthy behaviors.

FITNESS CERTIFICATIONS CONT'D

- **ACSM Certified Exercise Physiologist® (ACSM-EP®)**

**WHAT THEY DO:**

An advanced level health fitness professional who conducts and interprets physical fitness assessments and developing exercise prescriptions for people who are healthy or have medically controlled diseases.

WHERE THEY WORK:

Health club, gym, university, corporate or community/public health settings, hospital/clinical setting

CERTIFIED TO:

- Conduct risk stratification.
- Conduct physical fitness assessments and interpret results.
- Construct appropriate exercise prescriptions for healthy adults and individuals with health challenges who are able to exercise independently.
- Motivate apparently healthy individuals with medically controlled diseases to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyle behaviors.
- Motivate individuals to begin and continue practicing healthy behaviors.

CLINICAL CERTIFICATION

- **ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise Physiologist® (ACSM-CEP®)**

**WHAT THEY DO:**

Health care professional that has a minimum of a bachelor's degree in exercise science and 1,200 hours of practical experience OR master's degree in clinical exercise physiology and 600 hours of practical experience. ACSM-CEPs utilize scientific rationale to design, implement and supervise exercise programming for those with chronic diseases, conditions or physical limitations.

WHERE THEY WORK:

Hospital/clinic, rehab, physician's offices, research-based clinic, universities, corporate setting

CERTIFIED TO:

- Conduct exercise assessments (including cardiac stress testing) and training.
- Identify risk factors.
- Lifestyle management services.
- Perform clinical assessments.
- Perform tasks related to education and behavior change.
- Administer exercise programming.

SPECIALTY CREDENTIAL

• Exercise Is Medicine Credential® (EIM®)

WHAT THEY DO:

An exercise professional with a professional certification, bachelor's degree, or higher degree who works closely with the medical community to promote a collaboration between health care providers and exercise professionals.

WHERE THEY WORK:

Health club, gym, university, corporate or community/public health settings, hospital/clinical setting

CREDENTIALLED TO:

- Build relationships and receive referrals from health care providers.
- Develop and implement exercise training programs for a variety of acute and chronic disease conditions.
- Communicate information about the patient back to the health care provider.

SPECIALTY CERTIFICATIONS

• ACSM/ACS Certified Cancer Exercise TrainerSM (ACSM/ACS CETSM)

WHAT THEY DO:

Fitness professional with a current certification and Bachelor's degree or extensive training experience who utilizes a basic understanding of cancer diagnoses, surgeries, treatments, symptoms and side effects to assess, develop exercise programs and train clients who are cancer survivors and have been cleared by their physician for independent physical activity.

WHERE THEY WORK:

Commercial health club, community/public health setting, hospital/rehab, university, corporate fitness, private setting

CERTIFIED TO:

- Perform cancer exercise specific fitness assessments.
- Make appropriate exercise recommendations based on various cancer-survivor related stages.
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of cancer diagnoses, surgeries, treatments, symptoms and side effects.

• ACSM/NCHPAD Certified Inclusive Fitness TrainerSM (ACSM/NCHPAD CIFTSM)

WHAT THEY DO:

Fitness professional with a bachelor's degree in recreation therapy or current NCCA accredited fitness certification who assesses, develops and implements an individualized exercise program for persons with a physical, sensory or cognitive disability, who are healthy or have medical clearance to perform independent physical activity.

WHERE THEY WORK:

Community/public health setting (e.g. YMCA, parks/recreation dept.), health club/gym, corporate fitness, university recreation center

CERTIFIED TO:

- Lead and demonstrate safe, effective and adapted methods of exercise.
- Write adapted exercise recommendations while understanding precautions and contraindications to exercise for people with disabilities.
- Understand current ADA policy specific to recreation facilities and standards for accessible facility design.
- Provide motivational techniques and appropriate instruction to individuals with disabilities to begin and continue healthy lifestyles.

SPECIALTY CERTIFICATIONS CONT'D

• ACSM/NPAS Physical Activity in Public Health SpecialistSM (ACSM/NPAS PAPHSM)



WHAT THEY DO:

Health professional with a bachelor's degree or higher who promotes physical activity in public health at the national, state and/or local level.

WHERE THEY WORK:

Community/public health setting, federal/state/local government

CERTIFIED TO:

- Engage and educate key decision makers about the impact and need for legislation, policies and programs that promote physical activity.
- Develop and lead partnerships with private and public associations to catalyze the promotion of population-based physical activity.
- Work with communities to create active, safe, and healthy places that provide all people an equal opportunity to be physically active.

• ARP/ACSM Certified Ringside Physician[®] (ARP/ACSM CRP[®])

WHAT THEY DO:

Certified physician who is involved in the care of boxers, mixed martial artists and other competitors in the combat arts.

WHERE THEY WORK:

Boxing, MMA, and other ring events; many are MDs/DOs by day.

CERTIFIED TO:

- Have extensive knowledge of ringside protocol.
- Provide care before, during and after a bout.
- Have basic understanding of various fields of medicine, which include wound care, orthopaedics, neurology, cardiology, dermatology, infectious disease, emergency medicine and psychology.



Exam Preparation

The study options you need.

No matter how you prefer to study – ACSM Certification has the test prep selection for you. Prefer textbooks? We've got single editions, bundles and digital versions. On the move and need online help? Try prepU, our adaptive quiz platform. Love learning from experts? Get in-person training at workshops, or enjoy online learning classes with an ACSM webinar.



Textbooks / eBooks

For most certifications, ACSM offers suggested books to provide comprehensive knowledge of your subject. Our books are also available digitally as ebooks – so you can study anytime, anywhere. And – be sure to check out our book bundles, and save if you plan to purchase multiple titles.



prepU

A unique online studying experience – prepU is a online test prep quiz that continually assesses and adapts to your level of expertise. Use it along the way as you study certification materials, and prepU's questions grow with your knowledge. prepU is available in different subscription levels, and is accessible 24/7 Online.

Note: prepU is currently available for ACSM-CPT and ACSM-EP exams only.



Workshops

Want a practical, hands-on experience that allows you to actively put your knowledge to the test in a health fitness-focused atmosphere? Learn from experienced, ACSM certified experts at our one, two, and three-day in-person workshops. Available every month all across the country – find what works best with your study schedule.



Webinars

Prefer a weekly class format to keep your education on track? Our exam prep webinars are a convenient, easy to access six-week series. And, you can sign up for a single session, multiple or the complete series. Participants also have access to their webinar presentations for six months afterwards, so you can review and refresh your knowledge before your exam date.

Five Steps For Exam Prep

- 1. Pick a test date that gives you plenty of time to prepare.** We recommend 3 to 6 months in advance. But keep in mind: because our candidates' current education and study habits vary it matters less how many months you spend, but how much time you invest in studying.
- 2. Purchase recommended textbooks.** Although not required, we strongly encourage all candidates to use our textbooks to prepare. Visit [acsm.org/certification](https://www.acsm.org/certification) to make sure you are studying the correct edition.
- 3. Review the content outline.** Every question on the exam is associated with one of the knowledge or skill statements that can be found in the Exam Content Outline. You'll also find the percentage of questions within each domain of the exam. Visit the certification of your choice at [acsm.org/certification](https://www.acsm.org/certification) to download the content outline.
- 4. Schedule or apply for your exam at www.pearsonvue.com/acsm.** When you schedule your exam, you should have a general idea of how much time you still need to study. Don't worry if you need to reschedule, you can do so up to 24 hours in advance of your exam time at no charge.
Note: ACSM-CEP candidates will need to apply and be approved before scheduling your exam.
- 5. Participate in a workshop or webinar.** Test your knowledge in a new setting – sign-up for an in-person workshop, or participate in a live webinar. Enhance your knowledge by participating: ask questions and get answers from industry experts.

Taking Your Exam

What you need to know about your test day.

All ACSM certification exams are delivered in a fixed form, computer-based testing format to optimize security of exam data and results, and to standardize the exam delivery for all candidates.



Identification Requirements

Candidates must provide **two forms of proper identification**. Candidates will not be seated for the exam if the proper ID is not provided.

The **primary ID** must contain a *permanently affixed photograph and signature* and must be *valid* (not expired). An ID must be an original document and not a photocopy or a fax. Acceptable primary IDs are listed below. A **secondary ID** must contain the candidate's *signature*. Acceptable secondary IDs are listed below.

IDs are considered to be valid (non-expired) as long as they do not contain an expiration date that has passed. If there is no expiration date on an ID, it is considered to be valid. The candidate must sign the ID before arriving at the testing center; it is not acceptable for the candidate to sign the ID when checking in.

The following are acceptable forms of identification:

PRIMARY ID (*picture and signature, not expired*)

- Government-issued driver's license
- Employee ID or work badge
- School ID
- Passport
- Military ID
- Alien registration card (green card, permanent resident visa)
- Credit card*
- Other government-issued ID, such as a state/country identification card

SECONDARY ID (*signature, not expired*)

- U.S. Social Security card
- Bank automatic-teller machine (ATM) card
- Any form of ID on the primary list

**A note about credit cards: A credit card can be used as a primary form of ID only if it contains both a photo and a signature and is not expired. Most credit cards do not meet these requirements. Any credit card can be used as a secondary form of ID, as long as it contains a signature and is not expired. This includes major credit cards, such as VISA®, MasterCard®, American Express® and Discover®. It also includes department store and gasoline credit cards.*



Testing Environment

Candidates should dress accordingly so that they will be comfortable in wide range of room temperatures.



Personal Belongings

Candidates are discouraged from bringing any personal belongings to the testing center. These items must be stored in a secure space and are not permitted in the testing room.

In general, candidates are not allowed to bring any items into the testing room. For details about which items are and are not allowed, please refer to the list that follows.

The following are examples of items generally **not** allowed in the testing room:

- Purses
- Wallets
- Coats or jackets
- Hats and head coverings; although religious head coverings such as scarves are permitted
- Brief cases
- Cell phones
- Backpacks
- Watches
- Calculators
- Pens and pencils belonging to the candidate
- Dictionaries, including language translation dictionaries
- Food, drinks or tobacco
- Notes, notebooks and study guides



Comfort Aids

Certain items defined as “minor comfort aids” may be allowed in the testing room as long as the item is checked by the test center administrator before they are brought into the testing room including: tissues, cough drops, pillow for supporting neck, back or injured limb, sweater or sweatshirt, eyeglasses and hearing aids, earplugs, neck braces or collars (worn by people with neck injuries).

A candidate must provide his or her own comfort aids. These are not considered to be accommodations and therefore do not need to be pre-approved by Pearson Vue or ACSM. Eyedrops, water bottles, asthma inhalers, diabetic testing equipment and other medical devices are not allowed in the testing room unless the candidate has been granted an accommodation for the item in advance. Candidates should follow the accommodations policy for consideration of a comfort aid.

If you require special accommodations, please request a special accommodations form, e-mail certification@acsm.org.



Approved Exam Supplies

The candidate will be provided with an erasable noteboard and erasable pen, or blank notepaper. Scratch paper of any kind is never permitted in the testing room. Candidates are not allowed to use their own paper or notebooks, and notepads of any kind are not allowed.

Candidates are not permitted to bring their own writing instruments into the testing room. The testing center must provide any pens or pencils that are required for an exam. Candidates are not permitted to write on the erasable noteboards or notepaper until after the exam has been started.

A standard or scientific calculator will be provided within the exam. The Metabolic Equations for Gross VO₂ in Metric Units table will be supplied within the necessary exams. All other formula (including but not limited to: heart rate calculations, body mass index (BMI), waist-to-hip ratio, etc.) to complete an answer will NOT be made available within the exam.



Exam Scoring

You will receive your score immediately following the exam. The passing score is set in advance, and is 550 on a scale of 200 to 800, similar to other standardized exams.

Fifteen percent of test-takers who pass are randomly audited to determine if eligibility requirements were met. Auditees need to provide verification for each eligibility requirement. ACSM-CEP candidates are exempt from audits since they are pre-approved.

More information on standardized scoring and the exam audit process can be found on [acsm.org/certification](https://www.acsm.org/certification).



Staying Certified

Keep your certification current with ACSM Continuing Education.

Once you've become ACSM certified, you are required to keep your certification current with Continuing Education Credits (CECs). Continuing education ensures ongoing competency and to maintain a high standard that ACSM has set for health fitness professionals. There are many ways to earn CECs, from conferences and workshops, to courses and publications, and more.

Certification Renewal

To ensure ongoing competency and to maintain a high standard for certified professionals, every ACSM credential is renewed on a three-year basis. Certification renewal is granted to candidates who successfully:

Option 1

1. Earn the required number of Continuing Education Credits (CECs); **and**
2. Maintain a current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification; **and**
3. Pay the required three-year recertification/renewal fee.

Option 2

Retake the certification examination for which they wish to be recertified if exam is available and candidate still meets the minimum requirements).

Required CECs and Renewal Fee

CREDENTIAL	NUMBER OF CECS	RENEWAL FEE
Group Exercise Instructor®	45	\$45
Certified Personal Trainer®	45	\$45
Certified Exercise Physiologist®	60	\$55
Certified Clinical Exercise Physiologist®	60	\$55
Certified Inclusive Fitness Trainer ^{SM*}	15	\$35
Certified Cancer Exercise Trainer ^{SM*}	15	\$35
Physical Activity in Public Health Specialist ^{SM*}	45	\$35

**Must maintain NCCA accredited certification for renewal*

How To Earn CECs

Visit [acsm.org/learn-develop-professionally](https://www.acsm.org/learn-develop-professionally) to view current online continuing education opportunities.

1. **Attending professional education meetings**, or taking continuing education self-tests (such as those found in professional journals), that offer CECs, CMEs or CEUs from ACSM or other nationally recognized organizations.
2. **Completing education programs**, meetings, conferences, workshops and other at-home study programs from ACSM Approved Providers.
3. **Taking and receiving a passing grade** in a health fitness or exercise science-related course from an accredited college or university that maintains or enhances professional development.
4. **Authoring or co-authoring** the publication of books, peer reviewed journal articles, or accepted abstracts.
5. **Attending an ACSM workshop**, webinar or earning an additional ACSM certification.
6. **Completing** online continuing education programs that are consistent with the content of your certification.

If attending a program that is not offered by an ACSM approved provider, please obtain CEC documentation. Examples of CEC documentation includes official continuing education certificate or letter stating amount of CECs earned.



ACSM Membership

Broaden your professional experience.

Grow beyond your certification by becoming an ACSM member. Our members are a diverse set of sports medicine and exercise science professionals from many career backgrounds (physicians, researchers, scientists, educators, and more). ACSM members have access to – and produce – the latest research in their fields, and the opportunity to grow and develop their career through learning, networking and volunteering.



Why Become a Member?

- Save money on your Certification Exam.
- Discounts on CECs and conference registration.
- Access to even more cutting-edge research.



Who Can Become a Member?

ACSM offers two different membership options focused on your background:

- **ACSM Membership** – for exercise professionals focused on applied exercise science and clinical sports medicine.
- **ACSM Alliance Membership** – for health fitness professionals and students focused on practical application of exercise science and sports medicine.
- **ACSM Student Membership** – for full-time undergraduate students studying in a field related to exercise science or sports medicine and is currently enrolled in 12+ credit hours, OR graduate students who earned a bachelor’s degree in a field related to exercise science or sports medicine and is carrying at least 6+ credit hours. Medical Student membership is open to any college student who has been accepted into a medical school and is carrying at least one-half of a full academic load, as defined by the attending institution.

Learn more at acsm.org/join.

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