



## **Provisional Certification Policy for Delayed Discovery of Score Reporting Errors in PNCB Exams not Linked to Licensure**

### **Purpose**

PNCB is responsible for the validity, accuracy, and integrity of the scores reported for its certification exams, including but not limited to, exams that are not linked to licensure and the fairness of its certification processes. The scope of this policy is limited to PNCB certification exams that do not serve as a proxy or prerequisite for licensure in any state or province. For clarity, this policy and all internal references to exams and exam scores only apply to certification exams for the Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist (PMHS) and the Certified Pediatric Nurse (CPN).

On occasion, human error, computer or software error, and/or other sources of technical error (collectively, “Technical Error”) may cause an invalid exam score to be reported in error, which could result in a passing score being reported for a candidate who did not, in fact, achieve a passing score on the exam. PNCB reserves the right to invalidate an exam score and/or issue a corrected score report if, upon investigation, PNCB determines in its sole discretion that Technical Error has rendered the score invalid or caused the score report to reflect an inaccurate score for that exam. Although Technical Errors are rare, most are discovered by PNCB as part of routine quality assurance measures conducted after the issuance of a PNCB certification number and then any erroneous score report is promptly corrected by PNCB. If PNCB determines within ninety (90) calendar days of the issuance of a PNCB certification number that Technical Error caused the issuance of an invalid score and/or an inaccurate score report, the impacted candidate is not eligible for provisional certification under this policy and PNCB will simply invalidate the exam score in question and the candidate will be required to comply with the exam retake procedures provided in the Candidate Handbook if they desire to pursue certification.

PNCB recognizes that the delayed discovery of Technical Error can potentially cause adverse professional impacts that are neither within a certificant’s control nor reasonably foreseeable to an impacted certificant. The purpose of this policy is to ensure fairness in such circumstances by allowing a certificant who otherwise meets certification eligibility requirements but did not achieve a passing score on their exam to maintain the status of “provisional” certification for a limited period of time in the rare circumstance where PNCB initially issued the certificant a PNCB certification number and notified them of a passing score but did not determine until more than ninety (90) calendar days after the issuance of the PNCB certification number that Technical Error caused them to receive an invalid score and/or an inaccurate score report. During this limited provisional certification period, if the impacted certificant accepts the conditions of provisional certification set forth below

and complies with PNCB's requests, they will be provided one additional opportunity to retake the certification exam without having to pay the exam registration fee.

### **Conditions of Provisional Certification and Applicable Procedures**

1. More than ninety (90) calendar days after the issuance of a PNCB certification number to certificant, PNCB determines that Technical Error rendered the certificant's score invalid or caused the score report to reflect an inaccurate score for that exam and that certificant did not in fact achieve a passing score.
2. PNCB notifies the individual in writing within ten (10) business days of discovery of the Technical Error by delivering a Notice of Technical Error and Potential Eligibility for Provisional Certification, which informs the certificant that their prior score report was issued in error and is now invalidated, and provides written instructions to the impacted certificant of their option to comply with the procedures set forth in this policy in order to determine their eligibility to maintain provisional certification pending scheduling and passage of one no-cost retake attempt for the exam in question.
3. Within fifteen (15) business days of PNCB's provision of written notice to the impacted certificant, they must agree to comply with this policy and the procedures for provisional certification and produce to PNCB a Curriculum Vitae and documentation of all professional learning activities relevant to the certification program, completed by certificant as of the date of PNCB's written notice of Technical Error. If the certificant does not submit these materials or PNCB determines in its sole discretion following review of the submitted materials that certificant is not eligible for provisional certification under this policy, PNCB will notify the certificant. The certificant is not entitled to appeal PNCB's decision regarding eligibility for provisional certification. If PNCB determines in its sole discretion that certificant is eligible for provisional certification under this policy, the certificant will be required to successfully pass the certification exam within the applicable limited time period set forth below to achieve nonprovisional certification.
4. During the period of time that certificant is provisionally certified pursuant to this policy, the certificant may represent themselves only as "provisionally certified." During the period of provisional certification, although the certificant may continue to use the applicable certification trademark, it must be modified with the parenthetical "(provisional)." For example, for PMHS, the designation of certification should read, "PMHS (provisional)."
5. Scheduling the certification exam:
  - a. If the certification previously granted offers year-round testing, the certificant must test and successfully pass the certification exam within ninety (90) calendar days. The certificant may request one additional 90-day extension of the original 90-day time period to retest and must do so by submitting a written request for extension at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the expiration of the initial ninety (90) day period. In any request for extension,

the certificant must explain why additional time is needed. PNCB will not grant any request to a one-time extension if the request is not submitted in writing, or does not include an explanation, or is submitted less than thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of the original time period.

- b. If the certification is offered in limited testing windows, the certificant must test successfully and pass the certification exam within one of the next two published testing windows for which exam applications are being processed as of the date of PNCB's written notice.
  - c. PNCB will provide a code for certificant to use for exam registration that waives the cost of one retake for the exam.
6. Exam Results:
- a. If the certificant passes the retake exam in question, PNCB will remove provisional status from their certification record and restore their status to fully certified.
  - b. If the certificant fails the retake exam in question or does not take the exam at the scheduled time, PNCB will revoke their provisional certification, and the candidate will be required to comply with the exam retake procedures provided in the Candidate Handbook if they desire to pursue certification. Provisional certification is not subject to extension under circumstances. The candidate may no longer represent themselves as a CPN or PMHS and is required to immediately discontinue using the trademarked credential.
7. PNCB will revoke the applicable certification of any certificant who receives a Notice of Technical Error and Potential Eligibility for Provisional Certification and who fails to comply with the above conditions and procedures or where PNCB determines in its sole discretion that the person is not eligible for provisional certification under this policy. Notwithstanding any other policy of PNCB, decisions by PNCB related to this policy or arising out of its actions under this policy cannot be appealed under any circumstances.

### **Exclusion of Exams Linked to Licensure**

This provisional certification policy explicitly excludes certification exams that serve as prerequisites for state licensure, including the Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner–Primary Care (CPNP-PC) and Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner–Acute Care (CPNP-AC) examinations. Because the CPNP-PC and CPNP-AC exams directly inform state nursing licensure boards' decisions regarding eligibility and approval for licensure, provisional certification cannot be granted without potential conflict with state regulatory obligations and licensure standards. State nursing boards rely on the integrity of exam scores reported by PNCB to confirm practitioners' readiness for licensed practice; thus, provisional status arising from delayed discovery of scoring errors would undermine regulatory certainty. PNCB reserves the right to invalidate any CPNP-PC or CPNP-AC exam score and/or issue a corrected score report at any time if PNCB determines in its sole discretion that

Technical Error has rendered the score invalid or caused the score report to reflect an inaccurate score for that exam, regardless of when the Technical Error is discovered.