

CMSRN® and RN-BC What's the Difference?

There are two certification exams offered in the specialty of medical-surgical nursing. The Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board (MSNCB) provides this table of comparisons between the two certification programs to help you make an informed choice of which one is right for you.

	CMSRN	RN-BC
Credential	Certified Medical-Surgical Registered Nurse (CMSRN)	Registered Nurse-Board Certified (RN-BC)
Certifying Body	Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board (MSNCB)	American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)
Endorsement from Specialty Nursing Organization	Yes, by AMSN (Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses)	No
Accreditation by ABSNC (Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification)	Yes	Yes
Accepted by ANCC for Magnet Recognition Status	Yes	Yes
Certification Eligibility Criteria		
RN License	Yes	Yes
Practice as an RN	2 Years	2 Years
Type of Practice	Clinical, management, or education	Clinical
Practice Hours in Past 3 Years	2,000 Hours	2,000 Hours
Contact Hours (CH)	None	30 CH/3 Years
Certification Duration	5 Years	5 years
Certification Exam		
# of questions	150 (+25 trial questions - PP)	175
Testing Options	PP (Paper & Pencil) or CBT (computer-based testing)	CBT only
Average Pass Rate/Last 3 Years	80.3%	80.0%
Based on Practice Analysis	Yes	Yes
Special Test Site at Your Facility	Yes, \$300 per site	No
Online Application	Yes	Yes
Pricing & Discounts		
Certification	\$375	\$395
Certification Discount	\$255 AMSN Member*	\$270 ANA Member**
Military/VA Discount	\$260 (through 5/31/11)	\$55 discount off \$395

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Recertification Options		
By Contact Hours	Yes	Yes
By Exam	Yes	Yes
By Exam Exemption	Yes	No (Ended 12/31/2010)
Recertification Eligibility Criteria		
Current Certification in Medical-Surgical Nursing	Yes	Yes
Practice Hours in 5 Years	1,000	1,000
Contact Hours in 5 Years	90 CH	150 CH or 75 CH + academic course work, presentations, publications, preceptorship, or research
Pricing & Discounts		
Recertification	\$275	\$350
Recertification Discount	\$175 AMSN Member*	\$200 ANA Member**
Examination Prep Resources		
Publications/Online	Yes, many through AMSN	Yes
2 Day Certification Review Course at your Facility	Yes, through AMSN \$5,000 + faculty hotel expenses Unlimited Participants	Yes Minimum of 28 participants at \$310 = \$8,680
FREE Contact Hours	Yes, with AMSN membership At least 18 free CH per year specific to medical-surgical nursing	No
Web Site	msncb.org	nursecredentialing.org
* AMSN Dues = \$84/year		
** ANA Dues = \$290/year Average		



www.msncb.org