

Certification makes a difference

Certification as a professional chaplain makes a difference to:

- The recipients of our spiritual care in healthcare facilities, correctional institutions, long-term care units, rehabilitation centers, hospice, military, and other specialized settings
- Employers and administrators of institutions who seek to staff their organizations with skilled and experienced chaplains
- The individual chaplain who attains the BCC credential

What does it mean to be a Board Certified Chaplain?

Board certification is the process by which candidates demonstrate their competence, qualifications and ability to function as a professional chaplain. One purpose of board certification is to assure the public and the employing organization that the chaplain has met established national qualifications and competencies for professional chaplains, and is held to a code of ethics. A second purpose is to promote the continuing education and development of certified spiritual care providers.

Employers benefit from board certification

Employers who desire to recruit and train highly qualified chaplains find credentialing of professionals at every level of their organizations to be one essential tool for assuring and improving the quality of services provided to their customers. In addition, training and certification from recognized and reliable professional organizations brings the added benefit of promoting accountability to public standards for ethical conduct and professional competence. The Joint Commission is giving increasing scrutiny to organizations' understanding of the cultural, spiritual and religious needs of their customers, as well as their capacity to meet those needs.

Chaplains grow through certification

By preparing for certification, chaplains have an opportunity to increase their knowledge and clinical skills, which can increase their effectiveness in their practice of chaplaincy care. To maintain their board certification, chaplains must engage in 50 hours of continuing education annually and thus stay current with the knowledge, skills and best practices of their profession.

What are the requirements for becoming board certified?

A Board Certified Chaplain has demonstrated professional excellence as a chaplain, has completed eligibility requirements, has been recommended by a BCCI Area Certification Committee, approved by the Commission on Certification, and ratified by the BCCI® Board of Directors.

Qualifications for Certification

- Bachelor's Degree plus theological education at the graduate level, which involves a minimum of three years (amounting to 72 semester hours or 108 quarter hours of credit), taken at an accredited school. Accreditation needs to be from an accreditor who is a member of the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), such as the Association of Theological Schools or one of the regional Association of Colleges and Schools or its equivalent.
- Four (4) units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE provided by ACPE, NACC or CASC)
- Documentation of 1 year (2,000 hours) full-time chaplaincy experience after completion of four (4) units of CPE.
- Demonstrated competency in areas of chaplaincy care, as outlined by Certification for Professional Spiritual Care: Common Qualifications and Competencies.
- Endorsement/support by a recognized spiritual/faith group.