

Advanced Practitioner in Clinical Nutrition

Candidate Handbook

2026 – 2027



**Commission
on Dietetic
Registration**
the credentialing agency for the
**Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics**




Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Testing Agency	3
Statement of Nondiscrimination	3
Confidentiality	3
Non-Disclosure Agreement.....	3
Advanced Practitioner Certification Practitioner Definition.....	4
Eligibility Requirements	4
Eligibility Application.....	4
Eligibility Length (Test Authorization)	4
Authorization to Test	5
Advanced Practitioner Exam Reauthorization	5
Test Center Locations	5
Examination Appointments	5
Candidate Profile.....	5
Exam Scheduling and Advanced Practitioner Exam Fee Payment	6
Rescheduling or Canceling an Exam Appointment.....	6
Exam Accommodations	7
Admission to the Exam on the Day of Your Examination	8
Exam Rules	9
Exam Content	11
Exam Results	11
Pass/Fail Score Determination	11
Interpreting Your Score Report.....	11
Quality Control/Scoring.....	11
If You Pass the Examination	12
Reauthorization If You Fail.....	12
Recertification	12
Appendix A: Exam Study Resources	13
Questions.....	13

Introduction

The Advanced Practitioner Certification in Clinical Nutrition for registered dietitians is offered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR), the credentialing agency for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. This advanced practitioner certification is granted in recognition of the applicant’s documented practice experience and successful completion of a computerized examination in the clinical nutrition area. The examination is offered year-round and consists of 150 multiple-choice questions. It is essential that you keep this Candidate Handbook readily available for reference until you have successfully completed the examination. You are responsible for knowing its contents.

Testing Agency

Pearson is the professional testing agency retained by CDR to assist in the development, administration, scoring, and analysis of the advanced practitioner t examination, as well as the specialist, DTR and RD examinations.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

CDR does not discriminate among candidates based on race, color, creed, gender, religion, national origin, disability or marital status.

Confidentiality

Information about candidates for testing and their examination results is considered confidential. Test question drafts and other materials used to create examination questions (except for test content outlines or reference lists) are secure and confidential. All such materials shall be kept in secure, locked storage, accessible only by authorized personnel, and not disclosed to or shared with others. All questions written and materials developed for questions are considered a “work for hire,” and remain the property of CDR. Question writers are not allowed to conduct “review courses” or other programs designed to prepare candidates to take a CDR examinations. Studies and reports concerning candidates will contain no information identifiable with any candidate, unless authorized by the candidate.

Non-Disclosure Agreement

CDR asks that each practitioner work to maintain the integrity of the advanced practitioner examination so that we may continue to provide a quality certification—one that highlights the practitioner as the certified expert in the clinical nutrition area. It is important not to discuss the examination content, questions, and study resources. Each time examination content is discussed the exam is compromised and there is significant loss, not only in fiscal terms (cost of test development), but also in the many hours spent creating, reviewing, editing, and compiling statistics for examination questions. Discussing the examination content is unethical and provides exam candidates with an unfair advantage when taking the examination.

All candidates applying to take the certification exam must confirm at that time and then again at the time of testing that they have read and understand the terms written below and will neither give nor receive assistance of any nature.

“I understand that the content of this examination is confidential. No part of the materials conveyed during this examination may be copied, downloaded, reproduced, stored, disseminated, transferred, or used in any form by any means without prior consent of the Commission on Dietetic Registration. Violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Final adjudications will be reported to all applicable

administrative agencies. By accepting this non-disclosure agreement, you are also acknowledging that you have read and understand all policies and procedures in the Handbook for Candidates.”

Advanced Practitioner Certification Practitioner Definition

An experienced registered dietitian who has the clinical knowledge and skill required to autonomously apply the nutrition care process, using an evidenced based approach, at an optimal level of accuracy and efficiency. These advanced practitioners’ function above a specialist level with an expanded scope of practice and strategically select the most appropriate nutrition interventions. They are leaders in effectively planning, evaluating, and communicating targeted outcomes in clinical nutrition. Advanced clinical nutrition practice is the provision of direct nutrition care to individuals and/or groups or the provision of indirect nutrition care through management, education, quality improvement, or research linked to clinical nutrition

Eligibility Requirements

Review the [requirements](#) before completing the eligibility application.

Eligibility Application

The eligibility application is available when you log into your [MyCDR](#) page:

- 1) Click on Advanced Practitioner Certification on the left.
- 2) Select Certification and Apply Now or Recertify.
- 3) Add new application and then select the application (under Pending Applications) to complete it.
- 4) Once the application is complete, the submit option will be under the Final Checklist. The advanced practitioner examination fee is paid when scheduling an examination appointment (not when the application is submitted).

Note: Candidates only need to document the required hours, not more. When documenting hours candidates can go back five years (from the date the application is submitted), if needed. Documented hours need to be verified before the application can be submitted. Once submitted and reviewed, candidate receives an eligibility email.

For planning purposes, please note application processing time with CDR and Pearson (the testing vendor) can take up to two full weeks. In addition, there is a 60-day waiting period to re-test should a candidate not be successful on their first attempt.

Eligibility Length (Test Authorization)

The advanced practitioner examination authorization/eligibility period is one year. If an appointment is not scheduled within the one-year period, candidates will have to complete the eligibility application to obtain another one-year window.

Recertifying candidates *must schedule and pass your examination before your current certification expires* to maintain your specialist or advanced practitioner credential without a lapse. Recertifying early is acceptable; however, please note your five-year recertification period resets based on the month you pass the exam. For example, passing the exam in January 2026 will credential you as a specialist or advanced practitioner through January 2031.

Authorization to Test

When a candidate is approved for exam eligibility, they will receive an Authorization to Test (ATT) email from Pearson (CDR's testing vendor) within 48 hours. This email indicates the authorization/eligibility dates, explains the process to schedule the exam and create login credentials on Pearson's website.

If a candidate cannot locate their ATT email, they should check their spam folder and then contact Pearson customer service at 888-874-7651.

Authorization expires when the:

- Candidate takes the examination.
- One-year authorization/eligibility period ends.
- Candidate fails to cancel the testing appointment within the specified timeline.
- Candidate arrives late for the scheduled testing appointment.
- Candidate does not complete the examination during the test appointment.
- Candidate fails to present a qualifying ID.
- Candidate fails to agree to the Non-Disclosure Agreement.

Advanced Practitioner Exam Reauthorization

Candidates can reauthorize by sending an email to advanced@eatright.org. Candidates will need their CDR registration number (excluding any leading zeros). Candidates can only request reauthorization if they are within their one-year authorization/eligibility window, otherwise they will need to submit the eligibility application and exam fee again.

Test Center Locations

The advanced practitioner examination is administered at over two hundred and fifty Pearson professional test centers in the United States and select international locations. A Pearson Test Center Locator can be found on the CDR/Pearson homepage (www.pearsonvue.com/cdr) under the "Find a Test Center header"

Examination Appointments

Candidates will submit the eligibility application. Once it is approved, they will receive an eligibility email from CDR.

48 hours later, candidates will receive the Authorization to Test email from Pearson. **Registering, paying, and scheduling for the exam must be completed on Pearson's website, Pearson chat, or by calling Pearson (888-874-7651).**

Candidates who want to schedule with accommodations should refer to the Accommodations section of this Handbook.

Candidate Profile

Once the authorization to test email is received, candidates can create an account and log into the Pearson website. **NOTE:** If you have an account with Pearson already, you can use that information when you log in.

Once logged in to the Pearson website, candidates are responsible for reviewing their Pearson candidate profile. In the My Account section, profile information can be viewed under the My Profile tab.

Any changes to profile information must be made in writing to CDR (advanced@eatright.org). However, name changes must be submitted to CDR through the CDR website:

<https://www.cdrnet.org/change-of-name-address-policy>

NOTE: Only a candidate's legal name as it appears on an original, valid (unexpired) government issued ID that includes their name, photograph, and signature, will be accepted. A candidate's name in Pearson's scheduling system profile **MUST** match the name on the government-issued photo identification card to be admitted to their examination (address does not need to match). Please allow enough time to process a name change before your examination appointment.

Exam Scheduling and Advanced Practitioner Exam Fee Payment

To schedule an appointment online:

- 1) Sign into the [CDR/Pearson web portal](#) using the username and password received upon creating a Pearson account. If you have an account with Pearson already, you can use that when you log in.
- 2) Select the appropriate exam and follow scheduling prompts. Examination appointments must be made at least 48 hours prior to the desired date/time.
- 3) The advanced practitioner examination fee (\$450) must be paid by credit card at the time of exam appointment registration.
- 4) Upon successful payment, the scheduling system will send an email confirming the appointment. **It is important that this confirmation is received to ensure an exam was successfully scheduled.**

For further assistance, if needed, contact Pearson at 888-874-7651, 7:00 am – 7:00 pm Central Time, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Please note, federal regulation prohibits Pearson from accepting payments from sanctioned countries.

Rescheduling or Canceling an Exam Appointment

Rescheduling, changing, or canceling an appointment is completed on the [CDR/Pearson web portal](#).

****Any appointment changes must be made at least 48 hours in advance of exam date/time whether the change is made online or by calling Pearson. ****

- Candidates may cancel an appointment and obtain a refund provided the cancellation is done online a minimum of 48 hours before the appointment.
- Candidates may reschedule the exam appointment, provided the candidate's authorization to test period does not expire on or prior to the new testing appointment and it is done a minimum of 48 hours before current scheduled appointment.

- If a candidate wishes to reschedule and cannot do so within their authorization period, the candidate must cancel their exam, receive a refund, and reestablish eligibility with CDR. Once they have reestablished eligibility, they can schedule and pay for a new exam.
- Refunds are not provided for candidates who fail the examination or who do not arrive for an appointment.
- When rescheduling by telephone, the call must be placed at least 48 business hours in advance of the current test appointment.
- Anytime an appointment is scheduled, changed, or canceled, the candidate will receive confirmation of the transaction by email. **It is the candidate's responsibility to verify the receipt of the scheduling or cancellation email and the testing appointment date, time, and location. If a confirmation email is not received, and exam has NOT been successfully scheduled/rescheduled/canceled.**
- If assistance in scheduling a test appointment is needed, please call Pearson Candidate Service Center at 888-874-7651 during business hours.
- Scheduling outside of business hours must be done on the [CDR/Pearson web portal](#).
- If the test center is closed due to weather or other emergency conditions, Pearson will email candidates to inform them of the closure and provide them with the opportunity to reschedule their examination at no cost.

If a candidate becomes ill within the 48 hours before their exam, they must obtain documentation from their physician documenting their inability to sit for their exam and email it to CDR (cdrexams@eatright.org). Once documentation is accepted by Pearson, a candidate will be free to reschedule. Documentation should be obtained before the scheduled exam or within 3 business days.

Exam Accommodations

Candidates applying for test accommodations must read and follow the instructions provided at www.pearsonvue.com/accommodations before scheduling their appointment. This page contains information about accommodations and the application process. It also includes information on comfort aids which do not require an accommodation application.

Follow the instructions in the Guidelines for Candidates. All documentation for accommodation applications must be sent together to the fax number in the Guidelines for Candidates. Accommodation requests and supporting documents must be submitted for evaluation every time accommodations are requested for an examination. Candidates must be eligible for the examination to submit for accommodations.

CDR makes every reasonable effort to accommodate applicants for the registration examination for dietitians who are disabled, as that term is defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 2008.

Under the ADA, a person is disabled if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits him or her in a major life activity.

To make the specialist or advanced practitioner exams equally accessible to applicants with disabilities, testing accommodations are made available for candidates with diagnosed physical, mental, sensory, or learning disabilities, and who provide appropriate documentation. All accommodations requests are evaluated by qualified professionals. Requests may also be submitted for independent external reviews by specialists in a particular impairment. It is important to understand that the mere documentation of the presence of a disability does not entitle the examination candidate to accommodation(s). Rather, the impact of the disability on the candidate's ability to take this examination must be quantifiably documented.

Candidates will be notified by email whether their accommodation has been approved. If accommodation is approved, a letter will provide instructions on how to schedule the exam by telephone. A credit card is required to schedule when contacting the Accommodations Program Coordinator. Candidates who have been approved for accommodations cannot test without the accommodation granted. All appointments with accommodations **MUST** be scheduled by phone, using the instructions provided in the accommodations approval letter.

Candidates should apply for accommodations as early as possible as accommodations must be approved in advance of scheduling an exam. It is the candidate's responsibility to notify Pearson of the need for accommodations. Pearson reserves the right to independently evaluate documentation submitted by all candidates who request accommodations. Pearson may refuse accommodations if adequate notice accompanied by complete documentation as set forth above is not provided. If accommodations are denied, the candidate will be required to test under standard conditions.

Please register, pay, and schedule for your exam by following the instructions outlined in the Application Procedures of this Handbook. Direct any questions regarding a disability, required documentation, or an accommodation that has been already been granted to Pearson at 888-874-7651 and ask for an Accommodations Program Coordinator

Admission to the Exam on the Day of Your Examination

- Candidates are required to present one form of original, valid (unexpired) government issued ID that includes their name, photograph, and signature.
- If the candidate does not have the qualifying ID issued from the country they are testing in, a passport from their country of citizenship is required. The identification must reflect the candidate's current legal name and match the information on their Pearson profile.
- Workplace or university identification will not be accepted.
- All examination candidates who report to the Pearson Test Center will be required to remove their eyeglasses and present them to the Testing Administrator for visual inspection. Eyeglasses are considered a comfort aid item, which means they are allowed in the testing room following visual inspection to ensure examination security.

- Candidates will be scanned with a security wand to ensure that no unauthorized electronic devices are brought into the test center. Pearson will enforce a zero-tolerance policy regarding the possession and/or use of unauthorized electronic devices in the testing area. This policy mandates that, unless pre-approved (an accommodation), all electronic devices are strictly forbidden at the proctor station or inside the testing area. Candidates will be instructed to power off and store all electronic devices including but not limited to mobile phones, smart watches, and camera glasses before heading to the proctor station. Candidates found to be in possession of any electronic device at the proctor station prior to entering the testing room will not be permitted to test and will forfeit any exam fees paid.
- For identity authentication, Pearson may scan candidates' palms using "Palm-Vein Recognition" biometric technology. Pearson utilizes Palm-Vein Recognition at many testing centers to maintain the examination's integrity.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Academy) and the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR), the credentialing agency for the Academy does not collect, possess, or have access to candidates' Palm-Vein Recognition scan, nor does it have control over the methods or processes of identity authentication utilized by Pearson.

All Palm-Vein Recognition scans and any data related thereto are collected, possessed, and maintained exclusively by Pearson. To the extent a candidate has questions concerning Pearson's Palm-Vein Recognition and any collection, retention, or destruction of such data, those questions should be directed to and resolved by Pearson.

- Candidates who arrive late for their testing appointment will not be seated. Candidates must be reauthorized to test and will be required to pay the examination fee to reschedule.

Exam Rules

- 1) None of the following types of personal items may be taken into the testing room: cell phones, tablets or other electronic devices, watches, wallets, purses, hats (and other head coverings), bags, coats, books, or notes. Studying is not allowed in the test center.
- 2) Candidates must store personal items in a secure area indicated by the administrator. Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off prior to placing them in the designated secure area. Note, the testing center is not responsible for lost, stolen or misplaced personal items.
- 3) The proctor may dismiss a candidate from the examination for any of the following reasons:
 - If the candidate's name on their the government-issued photo identification does not match the name in Pearson's system.
 - If a candidate's admission to the examination is unauthorized.
 - If a candidate creates a disturbance, is abusive or otherwise uncooperative.
 - If a candidate gives or receives help or is suspected of doing so.
 - If a candidate attempts to remove test materials or notes from the test center.

- If a candidate attempts to take the examination for someone else.
 - If a candidate has access to a cellular phone or other electronic device during the testing session.
- 4) No visitors are allowed at the test center.
 - 5) An erasable note board may only be used after the exam has started. The candidate cannot remove this item from the testing room at any time during the exam, and it must be returned to the administrator immediately after the exam.
 - 6) A simple pop-up calculator is provided on-screen, at each computer workstation. A handheld test center simple calculator may be provided, if requested. The calculator must be examined and tested by the candidate prior to the beginning of the examination. **Examinees are NOT permitted to bring their own calculator.**
 - 7) Candidates will sit in an assigned workstation until escorted out by a Test Administrator. Candidates who require assistance must raise their hands to alert the Test Administrator
 - 8) Eating, drinking, smoking, chewing gum and making noise that creates a disturbance for other candidates are prohibited during the exam.
 - 9) Candidates will have three hours (3) hours to complete the examination once the timer begins. The timer will begin with question one of the examination. The examinee will have the option to hide the clock during the examination. Examination testing appointments are three hours and twenty minutes long; twenty (20) minutes to complete an introductory tutorial and three (3) hours to take the examination.
 - 10) Candidates are continuously monitored by the administrator during testing. The session may be videotaped or otherwise recorded for security or other purposes.
 - 11) Candidates must raise their hand to notify the administrator immediately if there is a problem that affects the candidate's ability to take the exam.
 - 12) The exam timer will not be stopped for any unscheduled breaks. If the candidate has received approval for special accommodations for a break, the administrator will set the workstation to the break mode, and the candidate must take their ID when leaving the room. The administrator will verify the ID before the candidate can return to their seat. The exam will then be restarted.
 - 13) Taking an unscheduled break, candidates are NOT allowed access to personal items other than medication required at a specific time and with the approval of the test administrator.
 - 14) Candidates are required to answer the current question before moving on to the next question.
 - 15) Candidates cannot remove exam questions and answers from the testing center and cannot share or discuss the questions or answers with other candidates.

- 16) At the end of the exam, the administrator will ensure that the candidate's exam ended properly. The exam score will display on the computer screen after the exam and the Test Administrator will provide a printed score report after the erasable note board and other materials have been returned.

Exam Content

The examination consists of 150 multiple-choice questions (125 questions scored questions and 25 pretest questions) and is constructed using the number of items indicated in the Content Outline. Pretesting is done to see how well items perform before they are used in the scored portion of the examination. The pretest questions cannot be distinguished from those that will be scored, so it is important that all questions are answered to the best of your ability. Candidates will have to choose the best answer from the four options provided. Candidates will have 3 hours to complete the examination.

Exam Results

After completing the exam, candidates will receive a printed score report. Should candidates not receive a score report, they can obtain one by going to the [CDR/Pearson web portal](#) or by contacting Pearson. Score reports provide content areas and pass or fail results. All test results are subject to verification.

In order to protect the security and integrity of the examinations CDR does not release the examination questions or the correct answers.

Pass/Fail Score Determination

The methodology used to set the minimum passing score is the Angoff method, based upon data gathered during the performance of a Passing Point Study by a panel of subject matter experts in the advanced practitioner field. The experts evaluated each question on the examination to determine how many correct answers are necessary to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to pass this examination portion. Your ability to pass the examination depends on the knowledge and skill you display, not on the performance of other candidates.

Passing scores may vary slightly for each version of the examination to accommodate for variances in examination difficulty. To ensure fairness to all candidates, a process of statistical equating is used. Slight variations in difficulty level are addressed by adjusting the passing score up or down, depending on the overall difficulty level statistics for the group of scored questions that appear on a particular version of the examination.

Interpreting Your Score Report

The content area scores on the score reports are not used to determine pass-fail decision outcomes. They are only provided to offer a general indication regarding candidate performance in each content area. The examination is designed to provide consistent and precise determination of a candidate's overall performance and is not designed to provide complete information regarding a candidate's performance in each content area. Candidates should remember that areas with a larger number of items will affect the overall score more than areas with a fewer number of items. The precision and consistency of scores diminishes with fewer items and therefore, sub-scores should be interpreted with caution, especially those that correspond to content areas with very few items.

Quality Control/Scoring

Before the examination is administered, each form undergoes quality control checks. A thorough item analysis is completed and is used as part of the statistical review of the performance of the examination.

If You Pass the Examination

All candidates who pass the examination will receive an orientation email within two weeks

Reauthorization If You Fail

A candidate who fails the examination must reauthorize to test again. Reauthorization does not occur automatically. Candidates will be allowed to retest 60 days after taking the examination unsuccessfully.

If a candidate's one-year eligibility window has expired or will expire during the 60-day waiting period, they cannot reauthorize, they will need to submit the eligibility application again

Candidates who are required to pass the exam before their 60-day wait period, to retain employment, may request a **ONE**-time, 60-day waiver. To obtain a 60-day waiver, a candidate must email advanced@eatright.org a letter from their employer (written on company letterhead) which stipulates the individual needs to pass the exam before the 60-day wait period to retain employment.

The 60-day wait period between exams is standard for professional examinations and is in place for the security of the item bank. Exam candidates will only be allowed to utilize a 60-day waiver **ONCE**.

If a waiver is granted, candidates will be required to reschedule using a case number provided by Pearson. Obtaining a 60-day waiver takes between 48-72 hours.

Appeals Process

An individual may appeal decisions regarding Commission policy/procedures (certification eligibility, certification maintenance, and recertification) by filing a written appeal. The following exam-specific appeals will not be accepted:

1. the receipt of a failing score on a CDR examination,
2. the examination or other measurement tool or individual test items, or
3. test content validity.

To move forward with the appeals process, you will need to complete the appeals application found within your [myCDR account](#). For additional information of how to submit an appeal, please refer to the following information the CDR website: <https://www.cdrnet.org/appeals>

Appeals must be submitted within 30 calendar days after notification of an adverse decision and will be considered by the CDR Advanced Practitioner Certification Panel at its next scheduled meeting. A \$20.00 appeal review fee will be required with every appeal submitted.

Recertification

At the end of the advanced practitioner five-year certification period, RD-APs, RDN-APs, who wish to recertify must be a current Registered Dietitian with CDR and:

- Successfully complete an eligibility application – including the required minimum number of practice hours
- Submit an examination fee
- Pass the advanced practitioner examination

Appendix A: Exam Study Resources

Click on the CDR website link's below to view the content outline and reference list. Periodically check the website for updates. Sample questions are provided to help familiarize the candidate with the format of the examination and are not reflective of the depth and breadth of the content covered. Note, sample questions may be formed from retired items from the examination. Sample questions do not appear for all areas of the examination. Please refer to the content outline for an updated comprehensive list of examination content areas.

[Content Outline](#)

[Reference List](#)

Sample Questions:

1. A 34-year-old with history of obesity is newly diagnosed with nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. A primary focus of treatment is weight loss through lifestyle modification and dietary intervention of at least what percentage of body weight
 - A. 1-2%
 - B. 3-5%
 - C. 5-7 %
 - D. 7-10%

2. After starting a patient on progestins (megestrol acetate and medroxyprogesterone acetate), the dietitian would expect to see which of the following, indicating a clinical response to the medication?
 - A. Increased appetite and fat-free mass but not body weight
 - B. Increased appetite and body weight but not fat-free mass
 - C. Increased appetite, body weight, and fat-free mass
 - D. Decreased appetite, weight and fat-free mass

3. A dietitian refers an adult with obesity at high risk of type 2 diabetes to an intensive lifestyle behavior change program, aligning with the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP). The dietitian suggests the patient begins a dietary and activity log. What physical activity goal would be suggested to achieve through self-tracking?
 - A. Low-intensity physical activity at least 120 min/week
 - B. Moderate-intensity physical activity at least 120 min/week
 - C. Low-intensity physical activity at least 150 min/week
 - D. Moderate-intensity physical activity at least 150 min/week

4. A child with a hypersensitive bite and gag reflex is referred to a speech language pathologist and a registered dietitian. Which other referral would be most appropriate?
 - A. Psychologist
 - B. Occupational Therapist
 - C. Physical Therapist
 - D. Psychiatrist

Answers: C, B, D, B

Questions

advanced@eatright.org

<https://www.cdrnet.org/board-certification-in-advanced-practice>