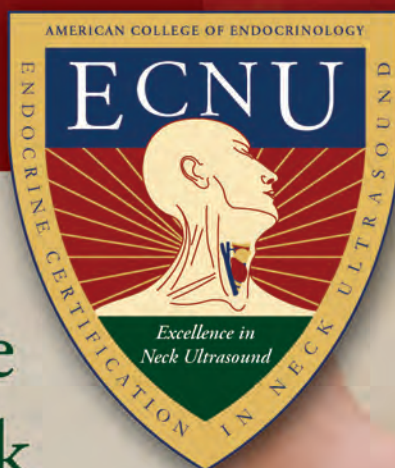


Endocrine Certification *in*
NECK ULTRASOUND
NOVEMBER 2010



Candidate
Handbook
& Application



EXAMINATION SESSION DATES:

November 5 – November 24, 2010

APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED:

August 30 – October 18, 2010

Computer-based examination at Prometric™ sites located throughout the United States



The Endocrine Certification in Neck Ultrasound Program is governed by the ACE Neck Ultrasound Certification Council. The Council reserves the right to expand the testing content for the CCE and ECNU validation process as new information or procedures arise over time and become incorporated into the scope of thyroid ultrasound practice. Candidates for ECNU will be notified in advance of any changes.

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Nondiscrimination Policy

The American College of Endocrinology (ACE) does not discriminate among applicants on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or marital status. The Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE) will be offered to candidates in environments that meet the standards established by the American Disability Act (ADA).

Please save this Candidate Handbook for future reference.

I. ENDOCRINE CERTIFICATION IN NECK ULTRASOUND

1.1. BACKGROUND

The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) represents subspecialty physicians who are recognized for their expertise in the care of patients with thyroid and parathyroid diseases. These clinicians routinely perform consultations and diagnostic evaluations for patients with thyroid and parathyroid disorders, which include both diagnostic ultrasonography (US) and ultrasound-guided fine needle aspiration (UGFNA). The American College of Endocrinology (ACE), which is the educational and scientific arm of AACE, recognizes that the certification process for US and UGFNA provides assurance for optimal quality in patient treatment outcomes.

This handbook has been developed to provide you with the information you will need to apply for the ACE Endocrine Certification in Neck Ultrasound (ECNU) Program. ACE recognizes the responsibility you take in participating in this certification program, and it is our aim to provide you with a smooth and positive application process. If you have further questions after reading this Handbook, please contact the Certification Coordinator via e-mail lcalderone@aace.com, or phone (904) 353-7878, ext.145. You can also visit the ECNU site at <http://www.aace.com/college/ECNU/>.

1.2. THE ECNU CREDENTIAL AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Endocrine Certification in Neck Ultrasound (ECNU) is a professional certification in the field of neck ultrasonography for endocrinologists who perform consultations and diagnostic evaluations for thyroid and parathyroid disorders through both diagnostic ultrasound and ultrasound-guided fine needle aspiration (UGFNA). The ECNU credential signifies that an individual has passed the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE) and successfully completed the Validation of Competency Process (VCP). Successful candidates can use the ECNU designation after their names.

Volunteer content experts from ACE worked for several years to develop the ECNU Program. The foundation of the examination is the practice/job analysis conducted by subject matter experts comprised of endocrinologists experienced in ultrasound and sonographers certified by the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers (ARDMS), who identified the areas of knowledge and application of knowledge required of individuals practicing neck ultrasonography and ultrasound-guided FNA procedures. An outline of the content areas covered on the examination can be found under section 7.1 of this Handbook.

ECNU is recognized by the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM), one of the preeminent, national accreditation bodies for ultrasound practices, and allows those with the ECNU credential to be directors of ultrasound laboratories and apply for AIUM Practice Accreditation. The AIUM ultrasound practice accreditation is a peer review process that examines practices against nationally recognized standards of excellence in training and qualifications of personnel, quality of ultrasound examinations, maintenance and calibration of machines, quality of reports, implementation of protection policies, and regular quality assurance activities. The AIUM recognizes successful completion of the ECNU Program as evidence of sufficient physician training in thyroid/parathyroid ultrasound, and certification in this area may become increasingly important for reimbursement from Medicare and third party payors.

Participation in the ECNU Program is voluntary and open to anyone meeting the eligibility requirements. Membership in the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) is not required. AACE members who apply for the ECNU Program enjoy a significant discount on their certification fees.

II. PATHWAY TO PHYSICIAN CERTIFICATION

The ECNU Program is comprised of the following steps. Please note that all candidates **must** satisfy both Step 1 and Step 2 in order to receive the ECNU designation.

STEP 1: Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE)

The Comprehensive Certification Examination is a multiple-choice, computer-based examination that covers major topic areas in neck ultrasound. Achieving a passing grade on the CCE will entitle the candidate to continue to the Validation of Competency Process (VCP). If the candidate fails the CCE, he/she must retake and successfully pass the examination prior to continuing to the VCP. To better prepare for the examination, candidates **must** participate in a Thyroid Ultrasound Course (minimum of 15.0 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*) within the past 3 years, prior to taking the CCE. A partial list of approved Neck Ultrasound Courses can be found at <http://www.aace.com/college/ECNU/> or in the Appendix section of this Handbook.

STEP 2: Validation of Competency Process (VCP)

The Validation of Competency Process assesses the physician's demonstrated competency, activity, and level of skills to interpret and report complete diagnostic ultrasound examinations (either performed by a supervised ARDMS-certified sonographer or personally by the physician), and to perform and report UGFNA procedures.

The VCP requires submission of a total of fifteen (15) ultrasound (US) studies and reports, and must be submitted in accordance to the VCP Instructions for Ultrasound Procedure Reports.

Refer to the Validation of Competency Process (VCP) section of this Handbook for detailed requirements and instructions regarding the validation process (Section IX).

STEP 3: ECNU Program Completion (Issuance of ECNU Certificate and ECNU Designation)

Endocrine Certification in Neck Ultrasound (ECNU) is a professional designation awarded to individuals who meet specified knowledge requirements, measured through a standardized examination and validation of competency process in diagnostic ultrasound and ultrasound-guided fine needle aspiration (UGFNA).

- Upon successfully completing the VCP, the candidate will have earned the right to use the ECNU designation after his/her name.
- A formal letter, ECNU Certificate, and ECNU lapel pin, will be sent to candidates who have successfully completed the ECNU Program.
- Certification is valid for 10 years.

2.1. TIME FRAME FOR COMPLETING THE ECNU PROGRAM

Upon written notification of achieving a passing score on the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE), candidates are given **12 months** to complete the ECNU Program by successfully completing the Validation of Competency Process (VCP).

The 12 months time frame begins upon the candidates' receipt of their score report. The 12 months timeframe does **not** begin on the date that candidates took the examination at a Prometric™ test center.

Example: If you took the CCE on November 27, 2010 and you received your score report on January 8, 2011, your deadline for VCP submission will be January 8, 2012.

IMPORTANT

Starting with the June 2010 CCE, the Council will no longer grant extensions to the 12 months time frame required for completing the VCP. It is the sole responsibility of the candidate to fulfill the requirements of the ECNU Program in its entirety. Failure to complete the VCP **within 12 months** of passing the CCE will result in the loss of certification eligibility, and the individual must reapply for the ECNU Program and pay the required fees.

III. CERTIFICATION FEES

The ECNU Program is comprised of two major steps – **Step 1**: the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE) and **Step 2**: the Validation of Competency Process (VCP). Candidates who wish to obtain the ECNU designation must complete the certification program and pay the fees for both the CCE and the VCP. The fee structure for the ECNU Program is as follows:

| CATEGORY | CCE | VCP | TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|
| AACE Member | \$350 | \$900 | \$1,250 |
| Non-AACE Member | \$550 | \$1,000 | \$1,550 |
| *Fellows/Retired AACE Members | \$250 | \$800 | \$1,050 |

**NOTE FOR FELLOWS: A letter from Department Chair verifying status must accompany application. Fellow's fees only apply if candidate is in his/her final year of fellowship program. Fellows who have completed the fellowship program will be charged the AACE Member rate.*

IMPORTANT

- ◆ Fees for CCE and VCP will be collected separately.
- ◆ Your first payment will be for the CCE, and this must be submitted with your ECNU Program Application.
- ◆ Do not submit the VCP fee until you receive official written notification from ACE that you passed the CCE. VCP payments submitted to ACE prior to passing the CCE will be returned to the candidate.

IV. CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The ECNU Program is open to both AACE and non-AACE members. The ACE Neck Ultrasound Certification Council has established the eligibility criteria to qualify for the ECNU Program. Candidates applying for the ECNU Program may qualify through one (1) of the three (3) routes outlined on the next page, and must satisfy all requirements for the chosen route in order to be eligible for ECNU.

ROUTE 1: Endocrinologists with formal training in the subspecialty of endocrinology with attainment of board eligibility/board certification status;*full time activity in the various fields of endocrinology, metabolism and diabetes as a clinician, academician, research physician or any combination of these.

*Full time activity refers to full time focus, not the hours spent in practice in a day/week. For example, an endocrinologist may work part-time, but dedicates 100% of his/her activities in the various fields of endocrinology, metabolism, and diabetes.

If applying under this route, you must:

- 1.a.** Have attended CME-accredited Thyroid Ultrasound Course(s) in which you have received at least **15.0** hours of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* **within the past 3 years** prior to applying to the ECNU Program. CME hours can be obtained from one or multiple courses, and can be earned from an AACE or other organizations' Thyroid Ultrasound Course(s). **Copy/copies of CME certificate(s) must be submitted with the ECNU Program Application.**
- 1.b.** Be currently performing at least **100 ultrasound studies per year** (70% diagnostic; 30% UGFNA). **Studies should include parathyroid ultrasound and thyroid cancer lymph node mapping in the neck.** A signed Attestation is required upon application.
- 1.c.** Have submitted a complete ECNU Program Application. Refer to the Appendix section of this Handbook for the ECNU Program Application form and documentation requirements. You can also download the application form from the AACE website: <http://www.aace.com/college/ECNU/>.

ROUTE 2: Endocrinologists who completed their endocrinology training prior to the initial 1972 endocrinology subspecialty certification exam of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM). Documentation confirming eligibility will be required.

If applying under this route, you must:

- 2.a.** Have attended CME-accredited Thyroid Ultrasound Course(s) in which you have received at least **15.0** hours of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* **within the past 3 years** prior to applying to the ECNU Program. CME hours can be obtained from one or multiple courses, and can be earned from an AACE or other organizations' Thyroid Ultrasound Course(s). **Copy/copies of CME certificate(s) must be submitted with the ECNU Program Application.**
- 2.b.** Be currently performing at least **100 ultrasound studies per year** (70% diagnostic; 30% UGFNA). **Studies should include parathyroid ultrasound and thyroid cancer lymph node mapping in the neck.** A signed Attestation is required upon application.
- 2.c.** Have submitted a complete ECNU Program Application. Refer to the Appendix section of this Handbook for the ECNU Program Application form and documentation requirements. You can also download the application form from the AACE website: <http://www.aace.com/college/ECNU/>.

ROUTE 3: Endocrinology fellows/trainees: Physicians in their final year of endocrinology training or in additional, post-endocrinology training or research may apply for the ECNU Program with written verification of status from their program director.

If applying under this route, you must:

3.a. Have attended CME-accredited Thyroid Ultrasound Course(s) in which they have received at least **15.0** hours of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* **within the past 3 years** prior to applying to the ECNU Program. CME hours can be obtained from one or multiple courses, and can be earned from an AACE or other organizations' Thyroid Ultrasound Course(s). **Copy/copies of CME certificate(s) must be submitted with the ECNU Program Application.**

Note: Fellows who have attended Endocrine University® within the past 3 years may use the CME credits obtained from the Neck Ultrasound and UGFNA portion of the curriculum. If the CME credits are less than the 15-hour requirement for ECNU, additional CME hours must be provided.

3.b. Submit notarized, validated imaging logs (signed by an office manager) of **at least 50** ultrasound studies (70% diagnostic; 30% UGFNA). **Studies should include parathyroid ultrasound and thyroid cancer lymph node mapping in the neck.** Logs submitted to the ACE Office should be HIPAA-compliant and should include the following information: total number of exams performed, date of service, type of exam, location, results/diagnosis and recommendations. Logs must be submitted with the ECNU Program Application.

3.c. Submit a signed attestation confirming that you have performed at least 50 of the required ultrasound studies at the time of your ECNU Application, and that the remaining 50 ultrasound studies be completed within the 12-month period after passing the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE).

3.d. Submit in writing, a letter from your program director, verifying your status as an Endocrinology Fellow.

3.e. Have submitted a complete ECNU Program Application. Refer to the Appendix section of this Handbook for the ECNU Program Application form and documentation requirements. You can also download the application form from the AACE website: <http://www.aace.com/college/ECNU/>.

**IMPORTANT
BEFORE YOU PROCEED WITH YOUR APPLICATION...**

- ◆ Please read all steps and required documentation to complete the ECNU Program (Step 1: CCE; Step 2: VCP).
- ◆ Candidates for **Routes 1 & 2** should perform at least **100 ultrasound studies** (70% diagnostic; 30% UGFNA) **per year**, in order to successfully meet the requirements of the ECNU Program.
- ◆ Candidates for **Route 3** should have performed at least 50 ultrasound studies (70% diagnostic; 30% UGFNA) at the time of ECNU application, and should attest that the remaining 50 ultrasound studies will be completed within the 12-month period after passing the CCE.
- ◆ Please note that if you are currently **not** performing the minimum number of ultrasound studies required under your chosen route, please do not apply to the ECNU Program at this time.

--FOR ENDOCRINOLOGY FELLOWS--

- ◆ If you have completed an endocrine fellowship program, but have not taken the endocrinology board, a certificate of fellowship program completion must be submitted with your application.

V. THE VALIDITY OF THE ECNU DESIGNATION

The ECNU designation is valid for ten (10) years. The ECNU recertification period will begin the first January **after** the year in which the ECNU designation is awarded. The certificant will have until January 1, ten (10) years later to complete the recertification requirements.

EXAMPLE

If you obtained your ECNU designation May 14, 2010, your recertification period will begin January 1, 2011 and you will need to complete all recertification requirements prior to January 1, 2021, when your certification will expire.

VI. THE COMPREHENSIVE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION (CCE) PROCESS

6.1. DEADLINES

- Application Deadline: **Monday, October 18, 2010**

Completed applications must be submitted and all fees paid by the deadline to be eligible for the examination. Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be returned to the applicant. The CCE is computer-based and offered at Prometric™ sites conveniently located throughout the United States.

The test window is **November 5 – November 24, 2010**. Upon acceptance of application, a written notification in a form of an Authorization to Test (ATT) letter will be mailed to the candidate, and the candidate will schedule the examination with Prometric™, the test vendor. Information regarding examination scheduling will be included in the candidate's ATT letter. For more information on Prometric™, please go to www.prometric.com.

6.2. EXAMINATION FEES

Examination fees are paid to ACE either online or by mail, depending on how the application is submitted. Fees must accompany the completed ECNU Program Application form and supporting documentation. The following fees only apply to the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE):

- **AACE Member: \$350**
- **Non-AACE Member: \$550**
- ***Fellows/Retired AACE Members: \$250**

***NOTE FOR FELLOWS:** A letter from Department Chair verifying status must accompany application. Fellow's fees only apply if candidate is in his/her final year of fellowship program. Fellows who have completed the fellowship program will be charged the AACE Member rate.

IMPORTANT

- ◆ Full payment in the form of check or credit card must be submitted with the application. Online credit card payment is also available by visiting www.ace.com/college/ECNU and completing the online application process. Applications will not be processed until fee has been received by the Certification Coordinator.
- ◆ Complete the payment application found in Section 6 of the ECNU Program Application form. Please make checks payable to the **American College of Endocrinology (ACE)**, not AACE.
- ◆ Fees are **non-refundable** in the event that you do not complete and submit your application and required documentation by the application deadline.
- ◆ If you submitted an ECNU application with payment, but failed to schedule your CCE without notifying ACE of your decision to postpone taking the exam, your fee will be **non-refundable**.

6.3 EXAMINATION APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. Candidate must complete the ECNU Program Application. Applications must be typed or clearly printed, and must be complete with examination fee and signatures on the Attestation and Confidentiality Statements. All required documentation must be submitted with the application (e.g., CME certificates/letters for 15.0 hours of CME credits obtained from one or more Thyroid Ultrasound Courses within the past 3 years, written verification of fellowship status, etc.) Incomplete applications and supporting documentation will be returned unprocessed. **Fees are non-refundable.**
2. ACE will acknowledge receipt of candidate's application via e-mail, within 5 business days of receipt of the application in the ACE Office.
3. ACE will review all applications. Once the candidate's application has been reviewed and accepted, candidates will be sent an Authorization to Test (ATT) letter, no later than two weeks before the test window. Instructions on how to schedule an exam with Prometric™ will be included with the ATT.
4. Candidate must complete the online registration process with Prometric™. Once completed, an electronic confirmation will be sent to the candidate containing the candidate's name, authorization number, address of the nearest test center, the date and time of the test, and name of the test.
Note: If a candidate loses the confirmation or has not received a confirmation two weeks before the test date, he/she should contact Prometric™ at 1-800-479-6376.

Examination Application Process at A Glance

Candidate completes application form ⇒ Candidate submits application, examination fees, and all required CME documentation to ACE ⇒ ACE acknowledges receipt of application via e-mail ⇒ ACE reviews application ⇒ ACE sends ATT to accepted candidates ⇒ Candidate registers for exam with Prometric™ ⇒ Prometric™ sends electronic confirmation to candidate ⇒ Candidate takes examination at Prometric™ site

Submit all applications and examination fees to:

Laurie Calderone
 Certification Coordinator
 American College of Endocrinology
 245 Riverside Avenue
 Suite 200
 Jacksonville, FL 32202
 Fax: (904) 404-4205

6.4. EXAMINATION SCHEDULE

Candidates must report to the test center no later than 15 minutes before the scheduled time of the examination. You will have **two (2) hours** to complete the examination. There are **no** scheduled breaks.

6.5. REQUIRED IDENTIFICATION

The following must be presented, in order to take the exam:

- ◆ **One form of photo ID:** current, non-expired driver's license, passport, medical license (only if medical license is a photo ID), or other government-issued photo ID
- ◆ **Authorization to Test (ATT) letter:** The name and address on the photo ID must match the name and address listed on the ATT.

IMPORTANT

Candidates without an Authorization to Test (ATT) letter and valid photo ID will **NOT** be permitted to enter the test center, and their examination fees will be forfeited.

6.6. TESTING CENTER RULES

The following rules are enforced at all test administrations:

- * All candidates must have proper photo ID to be admitted to take the exam.
- * Candidates will be admitted only to their assigned test center.
- * Candidates arriving less than 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time of the exam will not be admitted.
- * No guests are permitted in the examination rooms.
- * No reference materials, books, papers, or personal items (purses, briefcases, coats, etc.) are allowed in the examination room.
- * No electronic devices are permitted in the assessment site, including telephones, signaling devices such as pagers and alarms, personal digital assistants (PDAs) and other hand-held computers.
- * No weapons or instruments that may reasonably be used as weapons may be brought into the examination room.
- * No test materials, documents, or memoranda of any sort are to be taken from the examination room.
- * Candidates may not communicate with other candidates during the examination. Test Center Administrators (TCA) are authorized to maintain secure and proper test administration procedures, including relocation of candidates.
- * No questions concerning the content of the examination may be asked during the testing period.
- * Candidates will be provided with a survey at the end of the exam to comment on the exam administration.
- * Food and beverages are not permitted in the assessment center. Tobacco products and gum may not be used during the examination.
- * Breaks are not scheduled during the exam. Candidates are permitted to take breaks on an individual basis, but no additional time is allotted to candidates who take breaks, for completing the exam. Candidates who must leave the testing room must receive permission from the Test Center Administrator and may be escorted while outside the testing room.
- * Candidates will not be allowed to talk during rest room trips. Those who violate this requirement will be denied re-admittance to the testing room, forfeit all fees, and will not have their exam scored.
- * Test Center Administrators cannot take and/or relay phone messages to candidates during the testing period.

6.7. EMERGENCIES

Every attempt will be made to administer all examinations as scheduled. However, should any problems occur, due to the testing vendor, the examination will be rescheduled at no cost to the candidate.

6.8. NO SHOW, LATE ARRIVAL, INCLEMENT WEATHER, AND RESCHEDULING

Candidates who have scheduled with Prometric™, and are unable to sit for the examination at the assigned time must notify Prometric™ (the testing vendor) in advance of the scheduled examination date. The ACE office cannot schedule and/or make changes to the candidate's appointment, so candidates must make and confirm all changes through Prometric™.

IMPORTANT

- ◆ If advance notice is received 48 hours prior to **scheduled test**, the candidate may have the registration moved to another exam administration for a fee of **\$25** OR cancel the examination with a refund of the examination fee minus a **\$150** administrative fee.
- ◆ If notice is not received 48 hours prior to the scheduled exam or candidate fails to show for their scheduled exam, the registration **will NOT** be moved to another exam administration, nor is the examination fee refunded.
- ◆ Candidates will not be permitted to take the exam if they arrive less than fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled time of the exam. The examination fee will be forfeited.
- ◆ If the exam cannot be administered, or if a candidate is unable to arrive at a designated exam site due to inclement weather, terrorist acts, natural disaster, or other unforeseen emergencies beyond the control of the test vendor and the candidate, as determined by the ACE Certification Council, the candidate may receive an extended testing window (to be determined on an individual basis) and will be allowed to reschedule the exam without being charged a reexamination fee. Candidates will be responsible for their own associated expenses for future testing (travel, hotel, food, etc.).

6.9. CONDUCT DURING THE EXAMINATION

Any individual found by the ACE Neck Ultrasound Certification Council, at its sole discretion, to have engaged in conduct which subverts or attempts to subvert the examination process may have his or her scores on the examination withheld and/or declared invalid, and/or be subject to the imposition of other appropriate sanctions by the Council.

Conduct which subverts or attempts to subvert the examination process includes:

- Conduct which violates the security of the examination materials, such as removing from the examination room any of the examination materials; reproducing or reconstructing any portion of the licensing examination; aiding by any means in the reproduction or reconstruction of any portion of the licensing examination; selling, distributing, buying, receiving or having unauthorized possession of any portion of a current or future examination.
- Conduct which violates the standard of test administration, such as communicating verbally or otherwise with any other examinee during the administration of the examination; copying answers from another examinee or permitting one's answers to be copied by another examinee during the administration of the examination; having in one's possession during the administration of the examination any book, notes, written or printed materials, or data of any kind, other than the examination materials distributed or specifically listed as approved materials for the examination room.
- Conduct which violates the credentialing process such as falsifying or misrepresenting educational credentials or other information required for admission to the examination; impersonating an examinee, or having an impersonator take the examination on one's own behalf.

VII. THE EXAMINATION STRUCTURE

ACE offers the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE) for endocrinologists in neck ultrasonography who perform consultations and diagnostic evaluations for thyroid and parathyroid disorders through both diagnostic ultrasound and ultrasound-guided fine needle aspiration (UGFNA).

7.1. CONTENT OUTLINE

The examination will cover the following major topic areas:

- I. Principles of Ultrasound Imaging – 15%
- II. Neck Anatomy – 15%
- III. Thyroid Pathology – 34%
- IV. Parathyroid Pathology – 10%
- V. Lymph Node Pathology – 10%
- VI. Ultrasound-Guided Fine Needle Aspiration (UGFNA) – 16%

7.2. EXAMINATION SPECIFICATIONS

The CCE is a multiple-choice, **computer-based** examination consisting of 100 questions. Candidates should answer each question by selecting the best alternative from the four choices presented. Each correctly answered question is one point, and points are not deducted for incorrect answers. There is no extra penalty for wrong answers or for guessing on the examination, so you should answer every question. Candidates are given two (2) hours to complete the examination.

7.3. SAMPLE QUESTIONS (Correct answers are in **bold**)

1. A 45-year-old patient is found to have a 1 cm nodule in the thyroid. Which of the following ultrasound characteristics would necessitate an ultrasound-guided FNA?
 - (A) Nodule is 30% cystic
 - (B) Nodule has increased vascularity**
 - (C) Nodule has comet tail signs
 - (D) Nodule has eggshell calcifications
2. A 25-year-old patient is seen for follow-up three years after having a total thyroidectomy for papillary thyroid cancer. An ultrasound reveals a lymph node without a hilum in the lateral neck at Level 2. What ultrasound characteristic of the lymph node would NOT warrant an ultrasound-guided FNA?
 - (A) Size is 1.5 X 0.6 cm**
 - (B) Coarse calcifications
 - (C) Enhancement distally
 - (D) Vascularity in the periphery
3. A patient presents with serum calcium of 12 mg% and a PTH of 125. Ultrasound shows a mass posterior to the thyroid. What ultrasound characteristic would the endocrinologist expect to find?
 - (A) Mass is hyper echoic
 - (B) Power Doppler shows mass is a vascular
 - (C) A hyper-echoic line separates mass from thyroid**
 - (D) Mass is heterogeneous

7.4. REFERENCES

The examination questions are mapped to the references listed below:

Reference List

1. AACE Ultrasound Course Syllabus
2. Ahuja A; Evans R. Practical Head and Neck Ultrasound. 2000. Greenwich Medical Media.
3. Baskin HJ. New Applications of Thyroid and Parathyroid Ultrasound. *Minerva Endocrinol* 2004;29:195-206
4. Baskin HJ, Duick DS and Levine RA. Thyroid Ultrasound and Ultrasound-Guided FNA. Springer Publishing. 2008.
5. Caruso D.; Mazzaferri E. Fine Needle Aspiration Biopsy in the Management of Thyroid Nodules. *Endocrinologists* 1991; 1:194-202.
6. Ahuja A, Ying M. (2002) An Overview of Neck Node Sonography. *Investigative Radiology* 37; 333-342.
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10. Management Guidelines for Patients with Thyroid Nodules and Differentiated Thyroid Cancer. *Thyroid* 2006; 2.

VIII. EXAMINATION RESULTS

8.1. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Candidates will be officially notified of the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE) results via **postal mail**, within approximately four to six weeks following the close of the examination window. No results will be provided by telephone, fax, or e-mail. Scores will be released **ONLY** to the individual candidate. Requests to release examination scores via e-mail or phone will not be considered.

IMPORTANT

If you wish to authorize a person to inquire regarding the status of your application and/or results, a copy of the proof of power of attorney must be submitted to the ACE Office. Only persons authorized as power of attorney may act on behalf of a candidate. Inquiries from unauthorized individuals will not be considered.

8.2. CUT SCORE (PASSING SCORE)

The passing score, or cut score, was established through a Passing Score study. ACE has contracted with Prometric™ to conduct the study and convene a panel of subject matter experts (SMEs) in the field of thyroid ultrasound. During the process, the panel was presented with the final standard of minimal knowledge, skills, and abilities composed of specific statements about what the candidate needed to know to be considered minimally acceptable for certification, as developed in the test development process. After reaching consensus on the definition of the minimally qualified candidate, the panel rated each question in reference to the proportion of minimally qualified candidates that will get the answer right.

A summary report documenting the methods and results of the standard setting study was then presented to the Certification Council. The report outlines the discussion conducted with the panel of experts regarding selection of the recommended cut score for the exam. Upon approval of the recommended cut score by the Certification Council, the minimum score necessary to pass the CCE was established. The passing score is reflective of what a candidate needs to know and be able to know at a minimum, to pass the examination.

When the relative merits and drawbacks of various cut score possibilities are evaluated, it is important to consider that each possible cut score will have some degree of decision error.

- ◆ Setting a cut score too low undermines the purpose of credential testing by permitting a large number of people who are not minimally competent to practice in the field.
- ◆ Setting a cut score too high helps ensure no true “not qualified” pass, but creates an injustice by preventing a large number of candidates who are minimally competent from becoming credentialed after preparation for the test.

8.3. SCORING PROCEDURES

The minimum passing score for the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE) is a scaled score. All questions on the examination are weighted equally during scoring. The use of scaled scores is an established practice for many state and national examinations. It allows the use of a passing score, which can remain constant from one examination to the next. While this procedure does not affect whether an examinee passes or fails, it will better enable comparison of the results from one administration to another.

The CCE scale score range is 200 to 800 and a total scaled score of 500 is needed to pass the examination.

If you pass the examination, your results will NOT include a numeric scale score. It will only contain a statement that you passed. The examination is designed as a minimum competency test for credentialing purposes and is not intended to distinguish between passing scores. This policy is established as a safeguard against misuse of the examination scores by passing candidates.

If you fail the examination, your results will include your total failing scale score. Your failing score report will also contain diagnostic levels in each of six sub score categories based on the six content areas outlined in this Handbook.

THE SIX SUBSCORE AREAS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- I. Principles of Ultrasound Imaging
- II. Neck Anatomy
- III. Thyroid Pathology
- IV. Parathyroid Pathology
- V. Lymph Node Pathology
- VI. Ultrasound-Guided Fine Needle Aspiration (UGFNA)

Sub score results are reported in three diagnostic levels: Proficient, Marginal, or Deficient. To avoid confusion with total examination scores, the percentage of questions you answered correctly in each sub score area is not reported. Pass/fail decisions are not made using sub scores because sub scores alone do not provide sufficient information for pass/fail decisions.

DIAGNOSTIC LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

- ◆ **Deficient:** The score you obtained is below an acceptable level; substantial study of this content area is recommended prior to retaking the examination.
- ◆ **Marginal:** The score you obtained is marginally unacceptable. Your understanding in this domain does not appear to be strong, and additional study is suggested.
- ◆ **Proficient:** The score you obtained in this domain is *at* or *above* the acceptable level; you have demonstrated an acceptable understanding of the domain. A review of this area may be helpful to you prior to retaking the examination.

8.4. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EXAMINATION

Candidates have two options to raise questions regarding the examination:

- * Candidates will receive a survey at the end of the examination, and may use this opportunity to express comments and questions about the examination.
- * Candidates may forward their comments in writing, to ACE (c/o Certification Coordinator) within 10 business days after the examination.

IMPORTANT

All questions regarding the examination will be reviewed by the Certification Council, and candidates will receive an individual response following the Council review.

8.5. REEXAMINATION INFORMATION

If a candidate fails the CCE, he/she may retake the examination the next time it is offered by ACE. Such registration will be subject to the current guidelines and fees established by ACE.

8.6. APPEALS

All appeals regarding examination scores must follow these procedures:

- * Appeals must be filed within 15 business days of receipt of the score report.
- * An appeal letter must be sent to ACE via postal mail, stating the specific issue/concern and the reason(s) for the appeal. Letters sent via e-mail or fax will not be processed.
- * Certification Coordinator will acknowledge receipt of the appeal letter within 3 business days of receipt from candidate.
- * The Certification Council will review the appeal letter, and a response will be forwarded within 15 business days of receipt of the appeal letter. The response will outline the reasons for the approval/denial of the request.

Please send appeal letter to:

Laurie Calderone
 Certification Coordinator
 American College of Endocrinology
 245 Riverside Avenue, Suite 200
 Jacksonville, FL 32202

IX. THE VALIDATION OF COMPETENCY PROCESS (VCP)

9.1. BACKGROUND

The Validation of Competency Process assesses the physician's demonstrated competency, activity, and level of skills to interpret and report complete diagnostic ultrasound examinations (either performed by a supervised ARDMS-certified sonographer or personally by the physician), and to perform and report UGFNA procedures.

Successful completion of the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE) will entitle the candidate to continue to the Validation of Competency Process (VCP). If the candidate fails the CCE, he/she must retake and successfully pass the examination prior to continuing to the VCP. Documentation and fees submitted for VCP will be returned unprocessed if the candidate has not passed the CCE.

There are two segments to the Validation of Competency Process:

- ① Proper submission of diagnostic-quality ultrasound (US) images with interpretation, (submitted in **CD or USB Flash Drive, in PowerPoint® format**).
- ② Signed attestation of the total number of US examinations and UGFNA procedures performed by the candidate in the twelve (12) months preceding submission of the required images and reports.

IMPORTANT

All images and reports must be submitted in **PowerPoint® format** and **stored in CD or USB Flash Drive**. Paper images or reports will **NOT** be accepted.

9.2. VCP FEES

AACE Member: \$900

Non-AACE Member: \$1,000

Fellow/Retired AACE Members: \$800

IMPORTANT

- ❖ Full payment must be submitted with ultrasound reports and completed VCP Form. Reports will not be graded until fee has been received by the Certification Coordinator. Do not send advance payment for VCP. Your payment must be sent along with your complete VCP Package.
- ❖ Complete the VCP payment found in Section 2 of the Validation of Competency Process Form. Please make checks payable to the **American College of Endocrinology (ACE)**, not AACE.
- ❖ Online credit card payment is available by visiting www.aace.com/college/ECNU and completing the online payment process.
- ❖ For AACE Members Paying Online: In order to receive the member rate for the VCP fee, you must log on to the AACE website using your member log in ID, before completing the online payment process for VCP.

9.3. INSTRUCTIONS FOR ULTRASOUND PROCEDURE REPORTS

9.3.1. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Ultrasound examinations may be performed by either the ECNU-qualified endocrinologist or by an ARDMS-certified sonographer under the direct supervision of the ECNU-qualified endocrinologist. **Although the static images may be obtained by the physician or ARDMS-certified sonographer, it is necessary that the physician participate in and view the images in real-time ultrasound.**

Upon notification of successful completion of the CCE, the qualified candidate must submit appropriate ultrasound images for evaluation purposes within the ensuing twelve (12) month period. Ultrasound studies performed prior to passing the CCE may be submitted provided that they meet the criteria for submission, and the studies submitted were conducted in a time frame not to exceed twelve (12) months prior to passing the CCE.

Example: If you passed the CCE in December 2009, you may submit ultrasound studies performed between December 2008 and December 2009.

IMPORTANT

In accordance with HIPAA regulations, all patient identifying information **must** be removed from **the images and/or patient and cytology reports, prior to submission to the ACE Office.** Patient identifying information includes name, address, phone number, birth date, and social security number. Images and reports with patient identifying information **will not** be accepted and will be returned to the candidate unprocessed.

9.3.2. FORMAT FOR IMAGES AND REPORTS

Ultrasound **images** for evaluation must be technically acceptable, properly annotated, and submitted in **CD or USB Flash Drive of stored images in PowerPoint® format only**. Images and reports submitted on paper will **not** be accepted, and will be returned to the candidate ungraded. All submitted ultrasound examinations must be in accordance with the **VCP Instructions for Ultrasound Procedure Reports**.

A. WHAT TO SUBMIT

A total of **fifteen (15)** separate US cases and reports, with a **different patient** for each case. These must include:

- 1. Ten (10) diagnostic US studies comprised of the following:**
 - a. Five (5) must demonstrate a thyroid nodule(s)
 - b. Two (2) must demonstrate parathyroid adenoma pathology
 - c. Two (2) must demonstrate a malignant lymph node(s)
 - d. One (1) must demonstrate autoimmune or Hashimoto’s thyroiditis findings
- 2. Five (5) UGFNA procedures (must include cytology report)**

B. HOW TO LABEL YOUR REPORTS

Each page and each corresponding image **must be labeled** in the manner listed below. All cytology reports must also be labeled. VCP Packages that are not labeled in this required format will be returned to the candidate.

- **Cases 1-5:** Thyroid Nodule US
- **Cases 6-7:** Parathyroid Adenoma
- **Cases 8-9:** Malignant Lymph Node
- **Case 10:** Hashimoto’s Thyroid Case
- **Cases 11-15:** UGFNA

For example: Page 1 of your report is on Thyroid Nodule US, make sure you label the top page as follows: **Case 1: Thyroid Nodule US**

C. WHAT INFORMATION TO INCLUDE IN ALL REPORTS

While some may use a checklist to record ultrasound features, the Ultrasound Reports must be in a **narrative form**. They should be concise and contain all pertinent **positive and negative** findings. Reports and accompanying cytology/pathology reports **must** be in English.

All reports must be typed and contain the following information:

1. Measurement (Longitudinal X Anterior-Posterior X Transverse) of each thyroid lobe & isthmus Anterior-Posterior
2. The indication for performing the exam.
3. A diagnostic impression or differential diagnosis.
4. Disposition/plan indicating specifically what is to be done with the information obtained from the US (e.g., surgery, follow-up in six months, FNA, etc.). Terms like “**Clinical correlation**” are **NOT acceptable**.
5. Signature of the endocrinologist.

9.3.3. SCORING PROCEDURES AND CONTENT CRITERIA FOR REPORTS AND IMAGES

Certification status will be determined on a pass/fail basis. In addition to the requirements listed for all Ultrasound Reports, there are additional requirements for each category. These are listed below.

All reports will be reviewed by the ECNU Validation Panel and will be graded according to the criteria specified under each category (e.g., Thyroid Diagnostic US Reports, Parathyroid Adenoma Cases, etc.). Points will be deducted from images and reports missing the required information.

A. THYROID DIAGNOSTIC US REPORTS: 5 nodules required

Thyroid Diagnostic US reports must contain the following criteria:

1. Indication for performing examination
2. Measurement (Longitudinal x Anterior-Posterior x Transverse) of each thyroid lobe & isthmus Anterior-Posterior
3. Measurement (Longitudinal x Anterior-Posterior x Transverse) of dominant and/or suspicious nodule(s)
4. Description of thyroid parenchyma (homogeneous, heterogeneous, fibrosis, pseudonodules, etc.)
5. Evaluation of nodules
 - a. Describe echogenicity of nodule(s)
 - b. Description of nodule margins (irregular, smooth, halo, invasion, etc.)
 - c. Description of Grade (I thru IV) of vascularity with Doppler image
6. Description and characterization of any abnormal findings
 - a. Calcifications (presence or absence of)
 - b. Cysts- Description (Simple, complex, mural components)
 - c. Comet tails
 - d. Posterior Acoustic Enhancement
7. Description of surrounding lymph nodes in neck area
8. Diagnostic impression
9. Recommendations for additional studies, procedures or treatment provided

IMPORTANT
At least one (1) Doppler image (Black & White acceptable) **MUST** accompany **each thyroid nodule** case.

B. PARATHYROID ADENOMA CASES: 2 required

Parathyroid Adenoma cases must contain the following criteria:

1. Indication for performing examination
2. Location of parathyroid
3. Measurement of parathyroid adenoma (Longitudinal x Anterior-Posterior x Transverse)
4. Echogenicity (hypoechoic, homogeneous) of parathyroid
5. Doppler image of parathyroid
6. Comment on vascularity of parathyroid
7. Parathyroid **must be verified** by surgery or FNA (PTH in needle washout)
8. Diagnostic impression
9. Recommendation for additional studies, procedures or treatment provided

IMPORTANT
At least one (1) Doppler image (Black & White acceptable) **MUST** accompany **each parathyroid** case.

C. MALIGNANT LYMPH NODE US REPORTS: 2 required

Malignant Lymph Node US reports must contain the following criteria:

1. Indication for performing examination. The indication should state on which side of the thyroid the primary malignancy occurred (right, left, or bilateral). If this is not known (primary occurred years earlier and records not available), this should be stated.
2. Location (Compartment I thru VI, right or left)
3. Measurement of short and long axis in transverse (provide the S: L ratio)
4. Comment on echogenicity
5. Evaluation of vascularity (central or peripheral)
6. Provide Doppler image
7. Comment on presence or absence of Hilar line, calcifications and Cystic Necrosis
8. Malignant Lymph Node **must be verified** by surgery or FNA (Tg in needle washout)
9. Diagnostic impression
10. Recommendations for additional studies, procedures or treatment provided

IMPORTANT

At least one (1) Doppler image (Black & White acceptable) **MUST** accompany **each malignant lymph node** case.

D. HASHIMOTO'S THYROID CASE: 1 required

Hashimoto's Thyroid case must contain the following criteria:

1. Indication for performing examination
2. Measurement (Longitudinal x Anterior-Posterior x Transverse) of each lobe, Isthmus Anterior-Posterior
3. Comment on echogenicity
4. Comment on vascularity
5. Description of parenchyma (fibrosis, pseudonodules, etc.)
6. Diagnostic impression
7. Recommendations for additional studies, procedures or treatment provided

E. ULTRASOUND GUIDED FNA REPORTS: 5 required

Ultrasound Guided FNA reports must contain the following criteria:

1. Indication for performing examination
2. Image marked clearly showing needle bevel in target
3. Cytologist report provided showing adequate cells
4. Diagnostic impressions provided based on cytologist report
5. Recommendations for additional studies, procedures or treatment provided

REMINDER

- ◆ At least one (1) Doppler image (Black & White acceptable) **MUST** accompany **each thyroid nodule, parathyroid and malignant lymph node** cases. Doppler image is **not** required for Hashimoto's Thyroid Case and UGFNA.
- ◆ In accordance with HIPAA regulations, all patient identifying information **must** be removed from **the images and/or reports, prior to submission to the ACE Office**. Patient identifying information includes name, address, phone number, birth date, and social security number. Images and reports with patient identifying information **will not** be accepted and will be returned to the candidate unprocessed.

9.4. FAILURE TO MEET THE VCP INSTRUCTIONS FOR ULTRASOUND PROCEDURE REPORTS

IMPORTANT

The VCP Panel will reject images and reports that do not meet the criteria specified under the Instructions for Ultrasound Procedure Reports.

The VCP Panel has the right to request additional information about images and reports that do not meet the specified criteria for grading.

The VCP package containing the rejected images will be returned ungraded, and the candidate will be asked to submit corrected images within **ninety (90) days** of receipt of the rejected VCP package.

If the candidate does not submit the images within ninety (90) days, or still does not pass the VCP after resubmission of corrected images, he/she may complete the entire VCP again (including payment of fees and submission of all reports), provided that the candidate completes the certification process **within the required twelve (12) month period** after notification of successfully completing the CCE.

9.5. ATTESTATION OF ULTRASOUND PROCEDURES

A signed attestation form of the total number of US examinations and UGFNA procedures performed in the twelve (12) month period preceding submission of the required images and reports according to the following:

1. 100 total US studies (70% diagnostic; 30% UGFNA) if performed under the supervision of an ECNU-qualified endocrinologist
2. 125 total US studies (70% diagnostic; 30% UGFNA) if performed without the supervision of an ECNU-qualified endocrinologist

A verification process will be performed through the random selection of candidates testing for ECNU certification each year. The verification process is structured to be in compliance with HIPAA regulations. Selected individuals will be required to submit the following for review by the Certification Council:

1. Imaging logs (including date of service and type of exam)
2. Code-specific billing statements or chart notes to verify the total number of exams performed and specific types of exams performed
3. Validation by an office manager with a notarized signature to attest that all information is accurate

9.6. SUBMISSION OF VCP REQUIREMENTS

Submission of the VCP requirements must be contained in **one (1) complete package**, resulting in one (1) mailing. If your VCP package is missing any of the required components, it will not be graded.

IMPORTANT

A complete VCP package must include:

A. Completed/signed VCP Form (see Appendix section)

- Section 1: Candidate Information
- Section 2: VCP Payment
- Section 3: Attestation of Ultrasound Procedures

B. CD or USB Flash Drive containing the fifteen (15) ultrasound cases with accompanying patient and cytology reports, in PowerPoint® format only

Submit VCP package and fee to:
 Certification Coordinator
 American College of Endocrinology
 245 Riverside Avenue
 Suite 200
 Jacksonville, FL 32202

9.7. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Upon successful completion of the VCP, you will receive your official notification of certification via postal mail **approximately six (6) to eight (8) weeks after submission of your completed VCP package.**

The ACE confidentiality policy ensures that candidate VCP results are held confidential; therefore, results **CANNOT** be given out over the telephone. **DO NOT CALL OR E-MAIL THE ACE OFFICE FOR THIS INFORMATION.**

IMPORTANT

Ultrasound images and reports submitted for the VCP will **not** be returned to the candidate. The ACE office will archive the images and reports for a period of six (6) months. After that time, all submitted images and reports will be destroyed.

X. FAILURE TO COMPLETE THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

It is the sole responsibility of the candidate to submit all VCP requirements and supporting documentation in order to complete the certification process.

Upon **written notification** of successful completion of the CCE, candidates are given 12 months to complete the ECNU Program. **Starting with the June 2010 CCE, the Council will no longer grant extensions to this 12 months time frame required for completing the Validation of Competency Process.**

The 12 months timeframe begins upon the candidates' receipt of their score reports. The 12 months timeframe does **not** begin on the date that candidates took the examination at a Prometric™ test center. **Example:** You took the CCE on November 27, 2009 and you received your score report on January 8, 2010. Your deadline for VCP submission will be January 8, 2011.

Failure to complete the entire certification process within the required **twelve (12) month period** after notification of successfully completing the CCE will result in the loss of certification eligibility, and the individual must reapply for the ECNU Program and pay the required fees.

XI. RECERTIFICATION

Recertification is required at ten (10) year intervals effective as of the date of ECNU certification. Recertification is inherent in the process of documenting both continuing clinical activity in diagnostic US and UGFNA procedures and maintenance of high level skills in this activity. To complete the recertification process, the candidate must complete the following:

1. Perform a minimum of 70 diagnostic US examinations and 30 UGFNA procedures annually.
2. Provide written attestation to the total number of all diagnostic US examinations and UGFNA procedures performed within the twelve (12) months preceding the recertification process.
3. Present documentation verifying the completion of a minimum of 25 CME hours of AMA recognized Category 1 CME in ultrasound performed at each five (5) year segment during the prior ten (10) year interval (equaling 50 or more total CME credit hours during the ten (10) year cycle). Documentation must be in the form of certificates or letters issued by the accrediting organization.
Note: *Approved ultrasound course subjects for CME credit include: thyroidology, parathyroidology, thyroid and endocrine cancer, advanced procedures (interventional ultrasonography, PEI, etc.) Doppler applications in neck ultrasound and vascular ultrasonography.*
4. Pass a computer-based Recertification Examination (RE).

It is the sole responsibility of the candidate to verify and to successfully complete the requirements for a ten (10) year ECNU Recertification Certificate. Failure to complete the recertification process at each ten (10) year interval will result in revocation of the ECNU certification.

During any 10-year recertification cycle, it is the responsibility of a certificant to maintain a current address and contact information with the ACE office. Changes to a certificant's professional information will be updated regularly in the ACE Certification Registry.

Detailed recertification guidelines and application information will be posted on the AACE website in the near future.

XII. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Complete the ECNU Application Form (see Appendix section). The form is also available for download at www.aace.com/college/ECNU.

General Instructions:

- ❖ Please type or handwrite applications in a legible manner. If application is incomplete or illegible, it will be returned to the applicant and will cause a delay in processing.
- ❖ All application materials and required documents must be sent to ACE before the given deadline.
- ❖ The application review process cannot be conducted by ACE until all components of the application and associated documentation and fees have been received.

Itemized Instructions:

The following provides detailed instructions for each section on the application:

Section 1: Candidate Information

- ❖ **Name** – Please print your name as it appears on your Driver's License or photo ID. This name will be used in your Authorization to Test (ATT) letter.
- ❖ **ACE Membership Number** (If applicable)
- ❖ **Home Address** – All correspondences from ACE, including the authorization letter, will be sent to this address.
- ❖ **Phone/Fax/E-mail** – Include city and country and city codes on phone and fax numbers. Please print clearly.
- ❖ **Organization/Company** – Please name the organization/company of your primary practice setting (where you spend the most time per week).
- ❖ **Job Title** – Please specify your current position or job title in the above organization/company (e.g., Associate Professor, Clinical Director, etc.).
- ❖ **Special Testing Accommodations (STA) Request:** please see Appendix section for the STA Request form. If applicable, complete and submit this form with your application.

Section 2: Attestation of Ultrasound Studies – It is important that you read and understand the attestation statements before signing.

- 2.1. Must be completed by **Routes 1 and 2** applicants
- 2.2. Must be completed by **Route 3** applicants

Section 3: Continuing Medical Education (CME) Credits – Please list the Thyroid Ultrasound Courses that you have attended prior to submitting your application. Candidates must have at least 15.0 hours of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* obtained from one or multiple thyroid ultrasound courses within the past 3 years prior to applying to the ECNU Program. Copy/copies of CME certificate(s) and/or letters from accrediting organization(s) must be submitted with your application.

Section 4: Candidate Attestation Statement and **Section 5: Candidate Confidentiality Agreement** – It is important that you read and understand the declaration statements before signing.

Section 6: Application Payment – The appropriate fee must be sent with the application. Your application will not be processed until payment has been received. Application fee is non-refundable if complete application and required documentation are not received by the application deadline.

Section 7: Submitting Your Application – Please forward your application and supporting documentation to the address provided. It is recommended that the application package be sent via USPS certified mail, or via a traceable mailing method.

XIII. CONTACT INFORMATION

QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Certification Coordinator for information regarding the ACE Endocrine Certification in Neck Ultrasound (ECNU) Program.

Laurie Calderone
Certification Coordinator
American College of Endocrinology
245 Riverside Avenue, Suite 200
Jacksonville, FL 32202
E-mail: lcalderone@ace.com
Phone: (904) 353-7878 ext. 145
Fax: (904) 404-4205

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If an address change occurs after submission of your application, please send written notification to:

Laurie Calderone
Certification Coordinator
American College of Endocrinology
245 Riverside Avenue, Suite 200
Jacksonville, FL 32202
E-mail: lcalderone@ace.com

CHANGE OR CORRECTION OF NAME

Please send a copy of the notarized document to the following address within 30 days after the name change becomes effective:

Laurie Calderone
Certification Coordinator
American College of Endocrinology
245 Riverside Avenue, Suite 200
Jacksonville, FL 32202
E-mail: lcalderone@ace.com

APPENDICES

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**Please note that the forms provided with this handbook can also be
downloaded from the ACE website.**

Please visit <http://www.ace.com/college/ECNU/>.

APPENDIX I

STANDARDIZED ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| AACE | American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists |
| ACE | American College of Endocrinology |
| AIUM | American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine |
| CT | Computerized Tomography |
| FNA | Fine Needle Aspiration |
| ¹²³ I | Radioiodine 123 |
| ¹³¹ I | Radioiodine 131 |
| INR | International normalized ratio (Protime) |
| MEN | Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia |
| MRI | Magnetic Resonance Imaging |
| PE | Physical Exam |
| PET | Positron Emission Tomography |
| PTH | Parathyroid Hormone |
| Tc-99m Sestamibi scan | Technetium-99m sestamibi scan |
| TSH | Thyroid Stimulating Hormone |

APPENDIX II

ACE Glossary of Ultrasound Terminology

Acoustic Impedance

Product of density and velocity of sound in a particular material. The amount of reflection of a sound beam is determined by the difference in the impedances of the two tissues. ¹

Acoustic Power

Quantity of energy generated by the transducer, expressed in watts. Also *transmit power*. ¹

Acoustic Scattering

Reflections from small objects that are the size of the wavelength or smaller. ²

Acoustic Shadow

Loss of echo signals from distal structures due to attenuation of overlying structures. ²

Acoustic velocity

The speed of sound through a medium as determined by the stiffness and density of the medium.

Also: speed of sound; propagation speed; sound velocity. ³

Aliasing

A technical artifact occurring when the frequency change is so large that it exceeds the sampling view and pulse repetition frequency. The frequency display wraps around so that the signal is seen at both the top and bottom of the image. ¹

Amplitude

Strength or height of the wave, measured in decibels. ¹

Amplitude mode (A-mode)

A one-dimensional image displaying the amplitude strength of the returning echo signals along the vertical axis and the time (the distance from the transducer) along the horizontal axis. ¹

Anechoic

Refers to a structure that returns no echoes. This could be a simple cyst or cystic structure such as the gall bladder, urinary bladder, or chambers of the heart. Also, *sonolucent*, *echo-free*, echolucent, transonic. ⁴

Attenuation

Reduction in amplitude and intensity with increasing distance traveled due to scatter, reflection and absorption. Dependent on frequency; higher frequencies give less penetration. ²

Axial Resolution

Depth resolution; ability to separate two objects lying in tandem along the axis of the beam. ²

Azimuthal

The dimension perpendicular to the image slice, the thickness of the slice of anatomy. ⁵

Bandwidth

The frequency range represented in a pulse from the transducer; *quality factor*. ²

APPENDIX II

ACE Glossary of Ultrasound Terminology Continued

B-Scan

A two-dimensional cross-sectional image displayed on a screen in which the brightness of echoes and their position on the screen are determined by the movement of a transducer and the time it takes the echoes to return to the transducer. Also *static scan*. ¹

Cineloop

The system memory stores the most recent sequence of images in a series of frames before the freeze button is pressed allowing a continuous loop of images to be reviewed. ¹

Color Flow Doppler

Operating mode in which a two-dimensional image is generated that portrays moving reflectors in color simultaneously with B-mode images. ²

Complex

Refers to a structure that is heterogeneous and may contain both cystic (fluid-filled) and solid components. ¹

Compression

Regions of high pressure and density as sound travels through a medium. ⁶

Crystal

The active transducer component that actually generates and receives ultrasonic energy by converting electrical impulses into sound waves and vice versa. ¹

Cystic

A sac or pouch with a definite wall that contains fluid or semisolid material ⁷

Decibel (db)

A unit used to express the intensity of amplitude of sound waves; does not specify voltage. ¹

Density

Concentration of matter (mass per unit volume). ⁶

Doppler Shift

The perceived frequency change that occurs dependent upon whether the source and listener are moving toward or away from one another. ²

Dynamic Range

(Log Compression). The range of intensity from the largest to the smallest echo that the system can display. ⁸

Echo

Reflected sound. ³

Echogenic

Capable of producing echoes. Correlate with the terms hyperechoic, hypoechoic and anechoic which refer to the quantity of echoes produced. ⁹

APPENDIX II

ACE Glossary of Ultrasound Terminology Continued

Echopenic

Few echoes within a structure; less echogenic. Echo-poor. ¹

Echolucent

Without internal echoes; anechoic. ¹

Edge Enhancement

An electronic postprocessing function which makes contours of structures within the image more distinct and clear. ⁴

Electronic Focusing

Each crystal element within a group is pulsed separately to focus the beam at a particular area of interest. ¹

Enhancement

Because sound traveling through a fluid-filled structure is barely attenuated, the structures distal to a cystic lesion appear to have more echoes than neighboring areas. Also called *through transmission*. ¹

Far Gain

Control that affects the strength of the distant echoes in the image. ¹

Focal Zone

The depth of the sound beam where resolution is the highest. ¹

Focusing

The act of narrowing the beam to a small width at a set depth. ¹

Footprint

Shape of the transducer that is in contact with the patient. ¹

Frame rate

Rate at which the image is refreshed in a real-time system display. ¹

Frequency

The number of times in a given interval of time that a particular action occurs. ¹

Gain

Regulates the amplification (brightness) of returning echoes to compensate for loss of transmitted sound caused by absorption and reflection. ¹

Gray Scale

Display mode in which echo intensity is recorded as degrees of brightness or shades of gray. ⁹

Hertz

Unit for wave frequency (cycles per second); pulse repetition frequency (pulses per second); frame rate (frames per second). ³

APPENDIX II

ACE Glossary of Ultrasound Terminology Continued

Heterogeneous

Refers to an uneven echo pattern or reflections of varying echodensities. ⁹

Homogeneous

Refers to an even echo pattern or reflections that are relative and uniform in composition. ⁹

Hyperechoic

A relative term that refers to the echoes returned from a structure. Hyperechoic refers to a lesion or tumor which produces a stronger echo than surrounding structures or tissues. ⁴

Hypoechoic

Refers to structures that contain fewer or weaker echoes than surrounding tissues. ⁴

Interface

Surface forming the boundary between media having different properties. ²

Isoechoic

Refers to a lesion or tumor which produces an echo of the same strength as that of the surrounding structures or tissues. ⁴

Kilohertz

1000 hertz or 10^3 cycles/s ²

Lateral Resolution

Ability to separate two objects that are positioned perpendicular to the axis of the ultrasound beam. Related to *beam width*. ²

Linear Array

Many small electronically coordinated transducers producing a rectangular image. ¹

Megahertz

1,000,000 hertz ²

Near Gain

The amplification of echoes returning from the near field. ¹

Noise

Artifactual echoes resulting from too much gain rather than echoes from true anatomic structures. ¹

Overall Gain Control

Single gain control that increases amplification at all depths. ²

Phased Array

Electronically steered system where many small transducers are electronically coordinated to produce a focus wave front. ¹

APPENDIX II

ACE Glossary of Ultrasound Terminology Continued

Piezoelectric Effect

Electric current created by pressure forces. Certain types of ceramic materials can convert pressure to electricity and vice versa. Transducer elements utilize this phenomenon, which is also referred to as piezoelectricity. ⁴

Persistence

The accumulation of echo information over a specified period of time. ¹

Power Doppler

The presentation of two-dimensional Doppler information by color-encoding the strength of the Doppler shifts. Power Doppler is free of aliasing and angle dependence and is more sensitive to slow flow and flow in small or deep vessels. ⁶

Pulse-echo Principal

Sending pulses of ultrasound into the body so that they react with tissue and return reflections. ²

Pulse Repetition Frequency (PRF)

The number of times per second that a transmit-receive cycle occurs. ⁶

Refraction

Bending of waves as they pass from one medium to another. ²

Resolution

Ability to distinguish between two adjacent structures (interfaces). ¹

Reverberation

The phenomenon of multiple back-and-forth reflections created by two strong reflectors that causes the echoes to be misplaced in the display thereby representing a false image; *ring-down effect*. ²

Scattering

Redirection of ultrasound from a reflector which is small compared to the wave length of the beam. This occurs with rough surfaces or heterogeneous substances such as a solid organ. ⁴

Shadowing

Failure of the sound beam to pass through an object. ¹

Slice thickness

Elevational resolution. The size of the beam *perpendicular* to the image plane. ²

Sonodense

A structure that transmits sound poorly. ¹

Spatial Resolution

How closely positioned two reflectors can be to one another and still be identified as separate reflectors on an image display. *Reflector* resolution. ²

APPENDIX II

ACE Glossary of Ultrasound Terminology Continued

Spekle

Interference effects of the scattered sound from the distribution of scatterers in the tissue that is not related to the scattering properties of tissue (echo texture). Produces granular appearance. ⁹

Specular Reflectors

Reflections from surfaces, which are smooth, compared to the wavelength of sound thereby creating a bright echo on the monitor. ¹

Stiffness

Resistance of a material to compression. Hardness. ⁶

Temporal Resolution

The ability of a display to distinguish closely spaced events in time and to present rapidly moving structures correctly. Improves with frame rate. ⁶

Texture

The echo pattern within an organ. ¹

Time Gain Compensation (TGC) or Depth Gain Compensation

Control that compensates for the loss (attenuation) of the sound beam as it passes through tissue. ¹

Transducer

An electromechanical device that is part of an ultrasound system. The device that contacts the patient and converts electrical energy into mechanical energy and vice versa. ²

Wavelength

Distance a wave travels in a single cycle. As frequency becomes higher, wavelength becomes smaller. ¹

ACE Glossary of Ultrasound Terminology Bibliography

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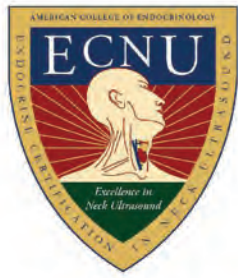
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⁸ Curry, AC and Tempkin, BB, Ultrasonography: An Introduction to Normal Structure and Functional Anatomy, Philadelphia, WB Saunders, 1995

⁹ Tempkin, BB. Ultrasound Scanning, Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders, 1999



APPENDIX III

Endocrine Certification in Neck Ultrasound (ECNU) Program Frequently Asked Questions

What is the ECNU Program?

ECNU stands for **E**ndocrine **C**ertification in **N**eck **U**ltrasound.

Endocrine Certification in Neck Ultrasound (ECNU) is a professional certification in the field of neck ultrasonography for endocrinologists who perform consultations and diagnostic evaluations for thyroid and parathyroid disorders through both diagnostic ultrasound and ultrasound-guided fine needle aspiration (UGFNA). The ECNU credential signifies that an individual has passed the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE) and successfully completed the Validation of Competency Process (VCP). Successful candidates can use the ECNU designation after their names.

Why is it important that I participate in the ECNU Program?

ECNU is recognized by the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM), one of the preeminent, national accreditation bodies for ultrasound practices, and allows those with the ECNU credential to be directors of ultrasound laboratories and apply for AIUM Practice Accreditation. Also, it is expected that achieving ECNU certification will become increasingly important in the future for reimbursement from Medicare and third party payors.

Who is eligible to participate in the ECNU Program?

The ECNU Program is open to both AACE and non-AACE members. The ACE Neck Ultrasound Certification Council has established the eligibility criteria to qualify for the ECNU Program. Candidates applying for the ECNU Program may qualify through one (1) of the three (3) routes outlined below, and must satisfy **all** requirements for the chosen route in order to be eligible for ECNU.

ROUTE 1: Endocrinologists with formal training in the subspecialty of endocrinology with attainment of board eligibility/board certification status;*full time activity in the various fields of endocrinology, metabolism and diabetes as a clinician, academician, research physician or any combination of these.

*Full time activity refers to full time focus, not the hours spent in practice in a day/week. For example, an endocrinologist may work part-time, but dedicates 100% of his/her activities in the various fields of endocrinology, metabolism, and diabetes.

If applying under this route, you must:

- 1.a.** Have attended CME-accredited Thyroid Ultrasound Course(s) in which you have received at least **15.0** hours of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* **within the past 3 years** prior to applying to the ECNU Program. CME hours can be obtained from one or multiple courses, and can be earned from an AACE or other organizations' Thyroid Ultrasound Course(s). **Copy/copies of CME certificate(s) must be submitted with the ECNU Program Application.**
- 1.b.** Be currently performing at least **100 ultrasound studies per year** (70% diagnostic; 30% UGFNA). **Studies should include parathyroid ultrasound and thyroid cancer lymph node mapping in the neck.** A signed Attestation is required upon application.
- 1.c.** Have submitted a complete ECNU Program Application. Refer to the Appendix section of this Handbook for the ECNU Program Application form and documentation requirements. You can also download the application form from the AACE website: <http://www.aace.com/college/ECNU/>.

ROUTE 2: Endocrinologists who completed their endocrinology training prior to the initial 1972 endocrinology subspecialty certification exam of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM). Documentation confirming eligibility will be required.

If applying under this route, you must:

- 2.a.** Have attended CME-accredited Thyroid Ultrasound Course(s) in which you have received at least **15.0** hours of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* **within the past 3 years** prior to applying to the ECNU Program. CME hours can be obtained from one or multiple courses, and can be earned from an AACE or other organizations' Thyroid Ultrasound Course(s). **Copy/copies of CME certificate(s) must be submitted with the ECNU Program Application.**
- 2.b.** Be currently performing at least **100 ultrasound studies per year** (70% diagnostic; 30% UGFNA). **Studies should include parathyroid ultrasound and thyroid cancer lymph node mapping in the neck.** A signed Attestation is required upon application.
- 2.c.** Have submitted a complete ECNU Program Application. Refer to the Appendix section of this Handbook for the ECNU Program Application form and documentation requirements. You can also download the application form from the AACE website: <http://www.aace.com/college/ECNU/>.

ROUTE 3: Endocrinology fellows/trainees: Physicians in their final year of endocrinology training or in additional, post-endocrinology training or research may apply for the ECNU Program with written verification of status from their program director.

If applying under this route, you must:

- 3.a.** Have attended CME-accredited Thyroid Ultrasound Course(s) in which they have received at least **15.0** hours of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* **within the past 3 years** prior to applying to the ECNU Program. CME hours can be obtained from one or multiple courses, and can be earned from an AACE or other organizations' Thyroid Ultrasound Course(s). **Copy/copies of CME certificate(s) must be submitted with the ECNU Program Application.**

Note: Fellows who have attended Endocrine University® within the past 3 years may use the CME credits obtained from the Neck Ultrasound and UGFNA portion of the curriculum. If the CME credits are less than the 15-hour requirement for ECNU, additional CME hours must be provided.
- 3.b.** Submit notarized, validated imaging logs (signed by an office manager) of **at least 50** ultrasound studies (70% diagnostic; 30% UGFNA). **Studies should include parathyroid ultrasound and thyroid cancer lymph node mapping in the neck.** Logs submitted to the ACE Office should be HIPAA-compliant and should include the following information: total number of exams performed, date of service, type of exam, location, results/diagnosis and recommendations. Logs must be submitted with the ECNU Program Application.
- 3.c.** Submit a signed attestation confirming that you have performed at least 50 of the required ultrasound studies at the time of your ECNU Application, and that the remaining 50 ultrasound studies be completed within the 12-month period after passing the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE).
- 3.d.** Submit in writing, a letter from your program director, verifying your status as an Endocrinology Fellow.
- 3.e.** Have submitted a complete ECNU Program Application. Refer to the Appendix section of this Handbook for the ECNU Program Application form and documentation requirements. You can also download the application form from the AACE website: <http://www.aace.com/college/ECNU/>.

Who is not eligible to participate in the ECNU Program?

Non-endocrinologists (i.e., Endocrine Surgeons, Cytopathologists, ENTs), Technologists, Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, or other allied health professionals are **NOT** eligible to participate in the ECNU Program at this time.

I have attended an AACE Thyroid Ultrasound Course in the past. Am I considered “certified” in thyroid ultrasound if I took the AACE Thyroid Course?

No, completion of the AACE Course does not mean an individual is certified in Thyroid Ultrasound. The AACE Thyroid Course was accredited for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*, and participants who completed the AACE Course were awarded *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* and issued a CME credit certificate. To receive the ECNU designation, one must complete the ECNU Program.

What is the pathway to certification for the ECNU Program?

The ECNU Program is comprised of the following steps:

STEP 1: Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE)

The CCE is a multiple choice, computer-based examination. Achieving a passing grade on the examination will entitle the candidate to continue to the Validation of Competency Process (VCP). If the candidate fails the CCE, he/she must retake and successfully pass the examination prior to continuing to the VCP. To better prepare for the examination, candidates **must** participate in a Thyroid Ultrasound Course (minimum of 15.0 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*) **within the past 3 years**, prior to taking the CCE.

STEP 2: Validation of Competency Process (VCP)

The Validation of Competency Process assesses the physician’s demonstrated competency, activity, and level of skills to interpret and report complete diagnostic ultrasound examinations (either performed by a supervised ARDMS-certified sonographer or personally by the physician), and to perform and report UGFNA procedures.

The VCP requires submission of a total of fifteen (15) ultrasound (US) studies and reports, and must be submitted in accordance to the VCP Instructions for Ultrasound Procedure Reports.

Detailed requirements and instructions regarding the validation process are outlined in the Candidate Handbook, and will be made available via the AACE website.

STEP 3: ECNU Program Completion (Issuance of ECNU Certificate and ECNU Designation)

Endocrine Certification in Neck Ultrasound (ECNU) is a professional designation awarded to individuals who meet specified knowledge requirements, measured through a standardized examination and validation of competency process in diagnostic ultrasound and ultrasound-guided fine needle aspiration (UGFNA).

- Upon successfully completing the VCP, the candidate will have earned the right to use the ECNU designation after his/her name.
- A formal letter, ECNU Certificate, and ECNU lapel pin will be sent to candidates who have successfully completed the ECNU Program.
- Certification is valid for 10 years.

What if I do not pass the CCE?

You can register to re-take the examination at another scheduled testing window.

How many times can I sit for the CCE?

There is no limit to the number times you can sit for the CCE.

When and where can I take the CCE?

The CCE will be offered twice a year using computer-based testing (CBT), each with a two or three week testing window. It will be administered at Prometric™ testing centers located throughout the United States.

Is the examination scored immediately?

The examination scoring process can take up to six (6) weeks. After scoring is complete, the candidates will receive their score report by mail.

If you pass the examination, your results will NOT include a numeric scale score. It will only contain a statement that you passed. The examination is designed as a minimum competency test for credentialing purposes and is not intended to distinguish between passing scores. This policy is established as a safeguard against misuse of the examination scores by passing candidates.

If you fail the examination, your results will include your total failing scale score. Your failing score report will also contain diagnostic levels in each of six subscore categories based on the six content areas outlined in the Candidate Handbook.

Where can I find the study materials for the CCE?

There are no official study materials for the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE); however, you may use the reference list found in the Candidate Handbook. The examination questions are mapped to these references.

What topics will be covered in the examination?

The examination will cover the following major topic areas:

- I. Principles of Ultrasound Imaging – 15%
- II. Neck Anatomy – 15%
- III. Thyroid Pathology – 34%
- IV. Parathyroid Pathology – 10%
- V. Lymph Node Pathology – 10%
- VI. Ultrasound-Guided Fine Needle Aspiration (UGFNA) – 16%

How much will it cost to participate in the ECNU Program?

The ECNU Program is comprised of two major steps – **Step 1**: the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE) and **Step 2**: the Validation of Competency Process (VCP). Candidates who wish to obtain ECNU designation must complete the certification program and pay the fees for both the CCE and the VCP. The fee structure for the ECNU Program is as follows:

| CATEGORY | CCE | VCP | TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|
| AACE Member | \$350 | \$900 | \$1,250 |
| Non-AACE Member | \$550 | \$1,000 | \$1,550 |
| *Fellows/Retired AACE Members | \$250 | \$800 | \$1,050 |

**NOTE FOR FELLOWS: A letter from Department Chair verifying status must accompany application. Fellow's fees only apply if candidate is in his/her final year of fellowship program. Fellows who have completed the fellowship program will be charged the AACE Member rate.*

How will the fees be collected for CCE and VCP? Do I need to pay the total amount when I apply for the ECNU Program?

Fees for CCE and VCP will be collected separately. Your first payment will be for the CCE, and this must be submitted with your ECNU Program Application. Do not pay for the VCP fee until you receive official written notification from ACE that you passed the CCE.

How do I apply for the ECNU Program?

Please read the Candidate Handbook (<http://www.aace.com/college/ECNU/>) to learn more about the ECNU Program, and to find out if you are eligible to apply. ECNU Program Application form can be downloaded from the AACE website.

Applications can be submitted to ACE either online or by postal mail, depending on your preference.

1. Paper Application

You can download the paper application from the AACE website during the application period. For your reference, all forms are also included in the Candidate Handbook.

Paper applicants must include their payment with the application, may use a credit card or personal check as form of payment. Please make checks payable to the American College of Endocrinology (ACE). Checks must be in U.S. dollars and drawn on a U.S. bank.

An application cannot be processed until all fees are paid in full. For a detailed fee structure, see the payment section of the application.

2. Online Application

You can access the online application via the AACE website. The link will be provided during the application period. Online applicants must provide a valid (working) e-mail address that is capable of receiving e-mail from ACE.

Proceed through each screen of the application, carefully following the on-screen instructions and providing the information required. Applicants must complete all sections of the online application. Incomplete applications will not be processed.

What happens next after I submit my ECNU application?

Examination Application Process At A Glance

Candidate completes application form ⇒ Candidate submits application and all required documentation to ACE ⇒ ACE acknowledges receipt of application via e-mail ⇒ ACE reviews application ⇒ ACE sends Authorization to Test (ATT) letter to accepted candidates ⇒ Candidate registers for exam with Prometric™ ⇒ Prometric™ sends electronic confirmation to candidate ⇒ Candidate takes examination at Prometric™ site

Upon confirmation of eligibility to take the CCE, the candidate will receive an Authorization to Test (ATT) letter, via postal mail. The ATT letter authorizes the candidate to take the CCE, and will include the following information:

- The contact information for Prometric™, so the candidate can schedule an examination based on the identified testing window
- Details on how to schedule an examination date with Prometric™
- Information on how to reschedule or cancel an examination, should that become necessary

Who is Prometric™?

Prometric™ is a wholly-owned, independently operated subsidiary of Education Testing Service (ETS). Prometric™ provides computer based testing sites, allowing the greatest access possible to take the ACE Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE). For more information on Prometric™, please go to www.prometric.com

How do I find a Prometric™ testing center?

Information on how to register at a Prometric™ testing center will be included with your Authorization to test (ATT) letter.

How long is the ECNU designation valid?

The ECNU designation is valid for ten (10) years. Your recertification period will begin the first January *after* the year in which the ECNU designation is awarded. The certificant will have until January 1, ten (10) years later to complete the recertification requirements.

For example, if you obtained your ECNU designation May 14, 2010 your recertification period will begin January 1, 2011 and you will need to complete all recertification requirements prior to January 1, 2021, when your certification will expire.

Additional information regarding the ECNU recertification process will be posted on the AACE website in the near future, so please continue checking <http://www.aace.com/college/ECNU/>.

Where can I find more information regarding the ECNU Program?

To learn more about the ECNU Program, please go to <http://www.aace.com/college/ECNU/>. The 2010 ECNU Candidate Handbook is also available for download on the AACE website.

When is the next CCE test window and when will ACE start accepting applications?

Test Window:

The next test window is **November 5, 2010 – November 24, 2010**. Upon notification of acceptance, the candidate will schedule the examination with Prometric™, the test vendor.

Application Deadline:

All application information and requirements will be posted on the AACE website on **August 30, 2010**, and you can complete the application process from **August 30, 2010 – October 18, 2010**. The deadline for submission is **Monday, October 18, 2010**. Application must be submitted and all fees paid by the deadline to be eligible for the examination.

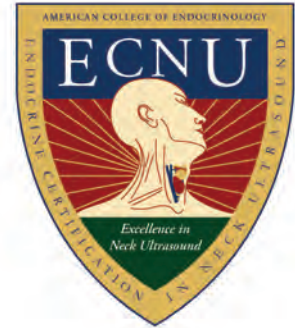
Questions about the ECNU Program?

Please contact the CERTIFICATION COORDINATOR for information regarding the ACE Endocrine Certification in Neck Ultrasound (ECNU) Program.

Laurie Calderone
Certification Coordinator
American College of Endocrinology
245 Riverside Avenue
Suite 200
Jacksonville, FL 32202
E-mail: ecnucoordinator@aace.com
Phone: (904) 353-7878 ext. 145
Fax: (904) 404-4205

2010 Endocrine Certification in Neck Ultrasound (ECNU) Program Application

Application Deadline: **October 18, 2010**



To apply and be accepted for the ECNU Program, the following is required:

- Meet eligibility criteria for the ECNU Program (choose from 3 routes)
- Completed Candidate Information (Section 1 of this form)
- Signed Attestation of Ultrasound Studies (Section 2 of this form)
- CME certificate(s) and/or letters from accredited organization(s) as proof that you have received at least **15.0** hours of *AMA PRA Category I Credits*[™] from one or more Thyroid Ultrasound Course(s) within the past 3 years (Section 3 of this form)
- Signed Candidate Attestation Statement (Section 4 of this form)
- Signed Candidate Confidentiality Agreement (Section 5 of this form)
- Examination Fee (see Section 6 of this form for details)
- For Fellows: Written letter from program director verifying status as Endocrinology Fellow
- For Fellows: Notarized, validated imaging logs of at least 50 ultrasound studies

This application form consists of seven (7) sections (**Section 1.** Candidate Information; **Section 2.** Attestation of Ultrasound Studies; **Section 3.** CME Credits; **Section 4.** Candidate Attestation Statement; **Section 5.** Candidate Confidentiality Agreement; **Section 6.** Application Payment; and **Section 7.** Submitting Your Application). Incomplete applications will be returned unprocessed.

SECTION 1: CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Name:

FIRST

MIDDLE

LAST

Route # for which you qualify to apply for ECNU:

Home Address *(Do not use PO Box)*

City:

State:

Zip/Postal Code:

Country:

Phone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Organization/Company:

Job Title:

Check one that applies: First Time Applicant

Previously Applied but
withdrew/canceled

Repeat Test Taker

Special Testing Accommodations (STA) for Candidates with Disabilities Request:

If you have special testing requirements, please complete the STA Request Form, and attach with your application. Candidates will be sent a Notice of Approval from ACE included with your Authorization to Test (ATT) letter.

SECTION 2: ATTESTATION OF ULTRASOUND STUDIES

Note: If you are applying under Routes 1 or 2, please skip section 2.2. and complete only section 2.1. If you are applying under Route 3, please skip section 2.1. and complete only section 2.2.

2.1. The following attestation must be completed by **Routes 1 & 2** applicants. Please read the following statement. By signing the attestation, you are agreeing to abide by this statement.

- I attest that I am currently performing at least **100 ultrasound studies per year** (70% diagnostic; 30% UGFNA). These studies include parathyroid ultrasound and thyroid cancer lymph node mapping in the neck.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

2.2. The following attestation must be completed by **Route 3** applicants (Endocrinology Fellows/Trainees). Please read the following statement. By signing the attestation, you are agreeing to abide by this statement.

- I attest that I have performed at least 50 of the required ultrasound studies at the time of my ECNU Application, and that the remaining 50 ultrasound studies will be completed within the 12-month period after passing the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE).

Signature: _____

Date: _____

SECTION 3: CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION (CME) CREDITS

All candidates must complete this section.

List the total number of CME hours accrued in the area of Thyroid Ultrasound. You must have received at least 15.0 hours of AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ within the past 3 years to be eligible for the ECNU Program. CME certificates or letter from accrediting organization **MUST** be submitted with this application.

| Course Title | Course Date | Sponsoring Organization | CME Hours Earned |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Total CME Hours



SECTION 4: CANDIDATE ATTESTATION STATEMENT

All candidates must read and sign the following statement. By signing the agreement, you are agreeing to abide by this statement.

I hereby apply for the Endocrine Certification in Neck Ultrasound (ECNU) credential. I understand that my certification depends on my ability to meet all requirements and qualifications. I certify that the information contained in this application is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and is made in good faith. I further understand that if any information is later determined to be false, ACE reserves the right to revoke any certification that has been granted on the basis thereof.

I hereby release, discharge, and exonerate ACE, its directors, officers, members, examiners, representatives, and agents, from any actions, suits, obligations, damages, claims or demands arising out of, or in connection with, any aspect of the application process, including results or any other decision that may result in a decision to not issue me a certificate.

I understand that individuals who apply for the ECNU Program, or are currently certified by ACE, are subject to the certification policies and procedures of ACE and its Certification Council. In order to maintain my certification, I understand that from time-to-time, ACE may amend its requirements, fees, policies, and procedures for certification and recertification.

During my certification and recertification cycle, I agree to notify ACE in writing immediately if I fail to comply with the requirements of the ECNU Program. I also agree to notify ACE in writing of any address or name changes within thirty (30) days after the change becomes effective. If requested to do so, ACE may verify my certification status.

I attest that I meet the eligibility criteria for the ECNU Program, including 15.0 hours of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits*™ obtained from a Thyroid Ultrasound Course(s) within the past 3 years. I further attest that I have performed the required ultrasound studies at the time of my ECNU application.

I attest that I have reviewed and understand this handbook.

I acknowledge that I have read and agree to the Attestation Statement.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

SECTION 5: CANDIDATE CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

All candidates must sign the Candidate Confidentiality Agreement. The agreement follows:

I understand, acknowledge, and agree:

1. That the questions and answers of the Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE) are the exclusive and confidential property of ACE and are protected by ACE intellectual property rights;
2. That I may not disclose the exam questions or answer or discuss any of the content of the exam materials with any person, without prior written permission and approval of ACE;
3. Not to remove from the examination room any exam materials of any kind provided to you or any other material related to the examination, including any notes or scrap paper;
4. Not to copy or attempt to make copies (written, photocopied, or otherwise) of any examination material, any examination questions or answers;
5. Not to sell, license, distribute, give away, or obtain from any other source other than ACE the examination materials, questions or answers;
6. I agree that my obligations under this Agreement shall continue to be in effect after the examination and, if applicable, after termination of my certification, regardless of the reason or reasons for termination, and whether such termination is voluntary or involuntary.

Signature: _____

Date: _____



SECTION 6: APPLICATION PAYMENT

The appropriate fee must be sent with this application. Fees are **non-refundable** (e.g., in the event you do not complete and submit your application by **October 18, 2010**).

Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE) Fees:

- AACE Member: \$350
- Non-AACE Member: \$550
- *Fellows/Retired AACE Member: \$250
*NOTE FOR FELLOWS: A letter from Department Chair verifying status must accompany application.

Candidate's Complete Name: _____

AACE Member Number: *(if applicable)*: _____

Choose a Payment Method: Check Visa MasterCard AMEX Discovery

Checks must be made payable to the American College of Endocrinology (ACE)

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: (mm/yr): _____

Credit Card Holder's Name: _____

Card Holder's Complete Address (required): _____

Signature of Cardholder (required): _____ Total Payment: _____

I authorize the \$ _____ CCE Fee to be charged to my credit card.



SECTION 7: SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Thank you for applying for the ECNU Program. Please forward your application, payment form/examination fee, and other supporting documentation to the mailing address shown below. We recommend that the application package be sent via USPS certified mail, or via a traceable mailing method (e.g., UPS, FedEx, etc.).

Laurie Calderone
 Certification Coordinator
 American College of Endocrinology
 245 Riverside Avenue, Suite 200
 Jacksonville, FL 32202

CANDIDATE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Completed ECNU Program Application Form
- Signed Attestations (Sections 2, 3, 4, and 5)
- CME Certificates/Transcripts/Letter from Accrediting Organization(s)
- Payment Application for Examination Fee
- Fellowship Letter from Department Chair Verifying Status (If applicable)
- Imaging logs (if applying under Route 3)

SECTION 2: VCP PAYMENT

The appropriate fee must be sent with your complete VCP package.

Validation of Competency Process (VCP) Fees:

- AACE Member: \$900
- Non-AACE Member: \$1,000
- *Fellows/Retired AACE Member: \$800

Candidate's Complete Name: _____

AACE Member Number: (if applicable): _____

Choose a Payment Method: Check Visa MasterCard AMEX Discovery

Checks must be made payable to the American College of Endocrinology (ACE)

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: (mm/yy): _____

Credit Card Holder's Name: _____

Card Holder's Complete Address (required): _____

Signature of Cardholder (required): _____ Total Payment: _____

I authorize the \$_____ VCP Fee to be charged to my credit card.

CANDIDATE VCP CHECKLIST

- Complete VCP Form, including the **Candidate Information** page
- Signed Attestation for Ultrasound Procedures Form
- Payment Application for VCP Fee
- 15 ultrasound Cases and Reports (CD or USB Flash Drive of stored images with patient and cytology reports, in PowerPoint® format only)
- All patient identifying information removed from the images and reports prior to submission



SECTION 3: Attestation of Ultrasound Procedures

This attestation must be submitted with your VCP package. Please read the following statement. By signing the attestation, you are agreeing to abide by this statement.

During the past twelve (12) months*, I attest that I have performed: *(please check the appropriate box)*

- 100 total ultrasound studies (70% diagnostic; 30% UGFNA) if performed under the supervision of an ECNU-qualified endocrinologist
- 125 total ultrasound studies (70% diagnostic; 30% UGFNA) if performed without the supervision of an ECNU-qualified endocrinologist

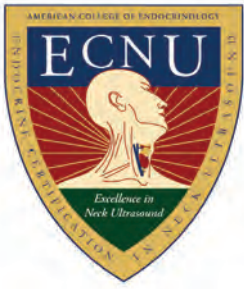
Candidate Signature

Date

*EXAMPLE: If you are signing the Attestation Form on December 3, 2009, you are attesting that you have performed the appropriate number of ultrasound studies between December 3, 2008 and December 3, 2009.

Please mail your completed VCP package via certified USPS mail, or via a traceable mailing method to:

Certification Coordinator
American College of Endocrinology
245 Riverside Avenue, Suite 200
Jacksonville, FL 32202



Endocrine Certification in Neck Ultrasound (ECNU) Program

**Special Testing Accommodations (STA)
for Candidates with Disabilities Request**

SECTION 1: To be completed by ECNU Candidate

First Name: _____ Middle: _____ Last: _____

Address (do not use a PO Box): _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

E-mail: _____ Daytime Phone: _____

Are you repeating the ACE Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE)? Yes No

If yes, did you receive special accommodations before? Yes No N/A

Please describe your disability:

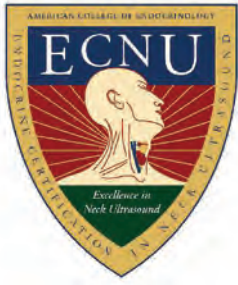
What accommodation(s) are you requesting from ACE?

I understand that ACE will use the information obtained by this authorization to determine eligibility for a reasonable accommodation in regard to the ACE Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE), by reason of my disability. I understand that ACE reserves the right to make additional inquiries regarding my disability and previous accommodations before making a determination as to whether to provide the accommodations I have requested above. Under penalty of perjury, I declare that the foregoing statements, and those in any required accompanying documents or statements, are true. I understand that false information may be cause for denial or revocation of certification. I hereby certify that I personally completed Section 1 of this form, and that I may be asked to verify this information at any time.

Candidate Signature: _____ Date: _____

I hereby authorize and request the health care professional identified in Section 2 to release the information requested by ACE relating to my disability and the accommodation appropriate to my disability to sit for the ACE Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE).

Candidate Signature: _____ Date: _____



Endocrine Certification in Neck Ultrasound (ECNU) Program

**Special Testing Accommodations (STA)
for Candidates with Disabilities Request**

SECTION 2: To be completed by healthcare professional

Dear Healthcare Professional:

The individual identified above is requesting accommodation to sit for the ACE Comprehensive Certification Examination (CCE). ACE's policy requires that candidates requesting special testing accommodation submit current documentation of the disability from an individual qualified to assess the disability. The individual listed above is requesting that you provide such documentation. You must complete the following:

1. The remainder of this form (Section 2).
2. An evaluation, on professional letterhead, that includes the following information. If submitting an existing report, it must have been written within the past three (3) years.
 - a. Confirmation of diagnosis and functional impairment
 - Date (month/day/year) of first consultation
 - Date (month/day/year) the individual was last seen by you
 - Diagnosis, summary history, and course of the disability
 - Individual's current functioning and limitations in major life activities
 - Diagnostic tests administered, scores, and interpretation of scores
 - b. Confirmation of Treatment
 - Name and title of the professional
 - Duration of treatment
 - Outcomes of treatment
 - c. Recommended Accommodation
 - The healthcare provider's specific recommendation for accommodation(s) that directly relates to the impairment, and is supported by functional information in the evaluation. The file is considered incomplete if this specific recommendation is not included.

Name: _____

Title/Occupation: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Are you licensed/certified in an area that allows you to diagnose the disability? Yes No

If yes, please provide your:
Jurisdiction: _____

License/Certification Number: _____

If no, please identify the credentials that allow you to diagnose the disability: _____

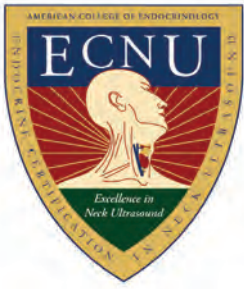
Please read and sign the following declaration:

I hereby certify that the above information is true and is given pursuant to the authorization to release information by my patient. Under penalty of perjury, I declare that the foregoing statements and those in any required accompanying documentation are true. I hereby certify that I personally completed Section 2 of this form, and that I may be asked to verify the above information at any time.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____



Endocrine Certification in Neck Ultrasound (ECNU) Program Partial List of Approved Neck Ultrasound CME Courses

OPTIONS FOR CME COURSES

Please note that course titles for the following educational offerings may change, so please check the organization's website to get the most recent course listing and titles.

- ACE – Endocrine University for Fellows (<http://www.ace.com/>): 2 days devoted to thyroid and ultrasound
- AACE - Advances in Differentiated Thyroid Cancer (DTC) Management (<http://www.ace.com/>)
- AACE – Diagnostic Endocrine Neck Ultrasound and UGFNA Course (<http://www.ace.com/>)
- AACE – Advances in Diagnostic and Interventional Endocrine Neck Ultrasound (<http://www.ace.com/>)
- AACE - Diagnostic and Therapeutic Advances in Ultrasound and other Modalities for the Treatment of Thyroid and Parathyroid Disorders (<http://www.ace.com/>)
- AIUM – Update on Thyroid and Parathyroid Ultrasound: Imaging and Intervention (<http://www.aium.org/>)
- AIUM – Differentiation of Thyroid Nodules with Micro Calcifications: Role of Suspicious Sonographic Findings (<http://www.aium.org/>)
- AIUM – Ultrasonographic Differentiation of Benign from Malignant Neck Lymphadenopathy in Thyroid Cancer (<http://www.aium.org/>)
- AIUM – Sonographic Features of the Follicular Variant of Papillary Thyroid Carcinoma (<http://www.aium.org/>)
- AIUM – Hurthle Cell Neoplasms of the Thyroid: Sonographic Appearance and Histologic Characteristics (<http://www.aium.org/>)
- American Thyroid Assoc.- Annual Meeting and lectures (<http://www.thyroid.org/>)
- Beth Israel Medical Center – Annual Controversies in the Management of Thyroid and Parathyroid Disease (<http://www.wehealny.org/>)
- Beth Israel Medical Center – Multidisciplinary Management of Head and Neck Cancer and Thyroid and Parathyroid Diseases (<http://www.wehealny.org/>)
- The Endocrine Society – Thyroid Sonography Hands-On Workshop (Held during Annual Meeting) (<http://www.endo-society.org/>)
- The Endocrine Society – Advanced Thyroid Ultrasound Workshop (Thyroid Ultrasound and Ultrasound-Guided FNA of Thyroid Nodule) (<http://www.endo-society.org/>)
- The Endocrine Society – “Thyroid Sonography Workshop”- Clinical Endocrinology Update (<http://www.endo-society.org/>)
- Radiological Society of North America – Ultrasound Features of Thyroid Malignancy: Pearls and Pitfalls (<http://www.rsna.org/>)
- University of Miami School of Medicine- “Thyroid Ultrasound Course” (<http://www.med.miami.edu/>)

OTHER EDUCATIONAL SITES

Please check the following sites for various CME courses related to Neck Ultrasound:

- <http://www.biosound.com/>
- <http://cme.alphamedpress.org/>
- <http://www.sonocredits.com/>