

**MASTER CERTIFIED HEALTH EDUCATION SPECIALIST
(MCHES®)**

EXAM APPLICATION HANDBOOK

Approved 1/22/18



PLEASE READ THIS HANDBOOK BEFORE COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc.

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About NCHCEC

The National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. (NCHCEC), founded in 1988 as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, develops and administers national competency-based examinations to entry- and advanced-level health education specialists. Additionally, it is the charge of NCHCEC to develop standards for professional preparation, and promote professional development through continuing education for health education professionals. Currently, there are over 13, 500 health education specialists that hold the Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES®) or Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES®) credential.

Mission:

The mission of NCHCEC is to enhance the professional practice of Health Education by promoting and sustaining a credentialed body of Health Education Specialists. To meet this mission, NCHCEC certifies health education specialists, promotes professional development, and strengthens professional preparation and practice.

Benefits of National Certification

NCHCEC's voluntary professional certification program establishes a national standard for individual health education practitioners. It is based on the Seven Areas of Responsibility; a comprehensive set of Competencies and Sub-competencies that have been verified by a job practice analysis. It differs from state and local certifications and registries in that the requirements do not vary from one locale to another. National certification benefits practitioners and the public by:

- Establishes a national standard of practice for all health education specialists
- Attests to the individual health educator's knowledge and skills
- Assists employers in identifying qualified health education practitioners
- Develops a sense of pride and accomplishment among certified health education specialists
- Promotes continued professional development for health education specialists

Furthermore, those individuals that achieve the Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES®) credential are differentiated from entry-level health education specialists in that it:

- Validates application and knowledge in advanced-level Responsibilities and Competencies for a health education specialist
- Recognizes experience and expertise in the health education field
- Provides advanced-level continuing education opportunities, in order for health education specialists to stay abreast of the latest research and practice in the field
- Demonstrates mastery of advanced skills in the profession

The Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES®) examination is used to assess the extent to which a candidate can possess, apply, and interpret knowledge relative to the Seven Areas of Responsibility of Health Education Specialist; delineated from **A Competency-Based Framework for Health Education Specialists — 2015**. The MCHES® exam reflects both the **entry and advanced-level Competencies and Sub-competencies of the Seven Areas of Responsibility**.

A MCHES® is an advanced-level practitioner that has:

1. Met required academic qualifications, worked in the field for a minimum of five years
2. Successfully passed a competency-based examination administered by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc.
3. Satisfies the continuing education requirement to maintain the national credential

The MCHES® examination is a criterion-referenced test that contains 165 multiple choice items; 150 of the items are used for the total score and there are 15 pilot items on each exam. Candidates are allotted 3 hours to complete the examination. The MCHES® examination is offered in paper-and-pencil format at college campuses throughout the United States. While there are approximately 130 testing sites currently registered, any campus with a testing service is eligible to become a testing site.

Health Education Code of Ethics

NCHEC adheres to the Health Education Code of Ethics established by the Coalition of National Health Education Organizations (CNHEO). See <http://cnheo.org/ethics.html>
This policy serves as a central guide and reference for all Health Education Specialist in ensuring their day to day activities are in line with professional conduct and industry standards.

By applying for certification you are attesting to reviewing and abiding by the Health Education Code of Ethics.

Nondiscrimination:

The National Commission for Health Education Credentialing does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, status as a veteran, or other legally protected status.

Disciplinary Policy

By applying for certification or recertification, Health Education Specialists recognize the authority of NCHEC to apply the Health Education Code of Ethics to those certified. If disciplinary actions are recommended as a result of an ethics investigation, the accused will be given full due process, including an appeal.

A Certified Health Education Specialist's (CHES®) or Master Certified Health Education Specialist's (MCHES®) certification may be suspended or revoked for reason(s) deemed appropriate by NCHEC including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Falsification of the certification application
2. Falsification of any information requested by NCHEC
3. Misrepresentation of certification status
4. Cheating (or reasonable evidence of intent to cheat) on the examination
5. The conviction or plea of guilty or plea of nolo contendere to a felony in a matter related to the practice of, or qualifications for, professional activity

6. Gross negligence or willful misconduct in the performance of professional services, or other unethical or unprofessional conduct based on demonstrable, verifiable, and serious violations of the Health Education Code of Ethics

Procedures

Complaints regarding possible ethics violations of a CHES®/MCHES® must be submitted in writing to the NCHEC Executive Director. The complaint must include the accuser's name and contact information. Individuals bringing complaints are not entitled to any relief or damages by virtue of this process, although they will receive notice of the actions taken.

1. Complaints will undergo an administrative review of documentation by the Disciplinary Committee of the NCHEC Board of Commissioners within 30 days of receipt by NCHEC to determine if the alleged action falls within the scope of disciplinary policy and warrants investigation.
2. The accused will be notified in writing of complaint within 14 days after the administrative review. Further, in the absence of unusual circumstances, the accused will receive the original complaint and documentation including the name of the accuser.
3. The accused will be given an opportunity to formally and in writing admit to or refute the accusation in 30 days from letter date, thus assuring due process in the review.
4. The investigation may require procuring additional materials and interviews with relevant people.
5. If it is determined that there was a bona fide violation of ethics, the consequences can range from a letter of reprimand with warning, requiring the accused to complete an educational intervention on ethics, suspension, or revocation of the certification. Complainant and the certificant will be notified of the final decision of the Disciplinary Committee.
6. Every effort will be made to reach a decision in a timely manner; however, extended time may be needed to ensure full due process.
7. Actions taken do not constitute enforcement of the law, although referral to appropriate federal, state, or local government agencies may be made about the conduct of the certificant in appropriate situations.
8. NCHEC will publish suspensions and revocations on the website.

Application Screening and Eligibility

Screening of exam applications begins six months prior to the exam date. Applicants will receive a written notification of eligibility determination within six weeks after all required documents are received. **The application fee INCLUDES a \$100 nonrefundable processing fee that will be deducted from any refunds if the candidate is found ineligible or withdraws from the exam.**

MCHES® Exam Eligibility:

- **For CHES®:** A minimum of the past five (5) continuous years in active status as a Certified Health Education Specialist. (No additional documentation is needed)
- **For Non-CHES® or CHES® with fewer than five years active status AND five years' experience:**

- A Master's degree or higher in Health Education, Public Health Education, School Health Education, Community Health Education, etc.,
- OR a Master's degree or higher with an academic transcript reflecting at least 25 semester hours (37 quarter hours) of course work in which the Seven Areas of Responsibility of Health Education Specialists were addressed.
- Five (5) years of documented experience as a health education specialist - *full-time or part-time. Volunteer experience does not qualify towards the five years of experience as a health education specialist.*
 - To substantiate experience in the health education field, applicants must submit:
 1. Two verification forms from a current or past manager/supervisor, and/or a leader in a health education professional organization.
 2. A current curriculum vitae/ resume

Any health education experience submitted by the applicant can be full-time, part-time and/or intermittent. Current employment at the time of application is not necessary, but the applicant must meet the requirement of five years' experience. On the verification form it must be indicated, and in the curriculum vitae/resume it must clearly be shown, that the applicant has been engaged in the Health Education Areas of Responsibility for at least five years (experience may be prior to completion of graduate degree).

Prescreening Service (Optional)

This is a separate optional service offered to **non-CHES®** and should **ONLY** be used if you are **not sure** you meet the academic requirement for the MCHES® exam. The prescreen service will review the academic component of eligibility. If you are found to be eligible the \$25 prescreen request fee will be deducted from the exam registration fee and an application and instructions will be mailed to you. If ineligible, course deficiencies will be identified and guidance will be provided. If you are interested in taking advantage of the prescreening service, visit our Web site, www.nchec.org, to download the Prescreen Request Form or submit an application online. You can also contact NCHEC to receive a form.

Prescreen Schedule:

April Cycle: **November 1- February 1**

October Cycle: **May 1- August 1**

Submitting Your Application:

PRINT your name on the application **EXACTLY** as it should appear on the MCHES® certificate. It is your responsibility to notify NCHEC of any changes in name and/or address before taking the exam.

Your application should include:

- Completed application form.
- CHES® that have been active for 5 years DO NOT NEED to submit extra documentation.
- For Non-CHES® or CHES® that have fewer than 5 years active status:
 - Will be required to submit a transcript showing that they have a minimum of a master's degree with either a specific health education major OR with 25 credits specific to the Health Education Areas of Responsibility. Overseas transcripts MUST be translated into

American credits through a transcript translation service before submitting your application for review.

- Two verification forms from a current or past manager/supervisor, and/or a leader in a health education professional organization
- A curriculum vitae/resume.
- Application fee (The application fee **INCLUDES** a \$100 non-refundable processing fee if the candidate is found ineligible or withdraws from the exam)
- Falsification of any documentation may result in suspension or revocation of the credential or denial of eligibility for future exams.

Please Note: Continuing education credits earned as a CHES® do not carry over; however if you earned more than 75 credits in your CHES® cycle, a maximum of **15** credits are eligible to be carried over into the MCHES® certification cycle.

The philosophy behind the policy is that continuing education toward recertification needs to be part of the ongoing commitment to professional development, not something done in the past. This becomes especially important as the Responsibilities, Competencies and Sub-competencies that are the basis of the certification and the continuing education requirement for recertification are updated every 5 years. The 75 credits must be earned within the current 5 year period and also at least 30 of them must be in the advanced level.

We recommend completing applications online or sending applications via Certified Mail, Federal Express or Second Day Mail.

Incomplete applications will not be processed until all necessary information is received. Exam fees are nonrefundable. NCHEC is not responsible for missing information, such as transcripts sent separately. All documentation must be submitted by final deadline. Delays may result in an automatic transfer to the next exam date with an additional **\$100** transfer fee. Please be sure to include all items at the time of application.

Online Application:

Individuals may complete their application online and mail or fax transcripts by the deadline. Applicants can then track the processing status and update contact information by logging onto our Web site. To apply online, access the Web site at www.nchec.org and follow the step-by step instructions for completing the application process. After your application is submitted, mail your transcripts to NCHEC as soon as possible to continue the review process and determine eligibility. At any time, you have the ability to log on to NCHEC’s Web site and view your status.

Please only use one method to apply: online or mail to avoid duplicate applications.

Application Fees & Deadlines

April MCHES® Exam (postmarked on or before)	CHES® Fee	Non-CHES® Fee
1st Registration Deadline: 11/1 thru 12/1	\$250	\$300
2nd Registration Deadline: 12/2 thru 1/2	\$260	\$310
3rd Registration Deadline: 1/3 thru 2/1	\$290	\$340
Final (Late) Registration: 2/2 thru 3/1	\$340	\$390

Fee includes a \$100 nonrefundable processing fee if found ineligible or withdrawal from the exam

Appeal of Denial of Eligibility

Filing the Appeal

1. An appeal will only be considered if postmarked, emailed or faxed within thirty (30) calendar days following the email date in which the Appellant was notified of the adverse decision.
2. NCHEC strongly suggests appeals be sent by certified mail or overnight courier service (such as FedEx) with return receipt requested. Appeals by facsimile or email are accepted.
3. A fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) must be paid and is not refundable if the appeal is denied.
4. An appeal must be submitted in writing (preferably typewritten) to the NCHEC Executive Director who will, in turn, submit it to the appropriate NCHEC decision making body. The appeal must contain the original notification from NCHEC showing the date of the adverse decision.
5. The appeal should identify the adverse decision being appealed and explicitly state the reasons for the appeal. The appeal shall set forth any new or additional information to be considered. To expedite the appeal process, applicants are encouraged to include course descriptions, syllabi and any other pertinent information about specific courses in which the major emphasis was health education. Support documents provided by applicants will become property of NCHEC and not be returned to appellants.
6. The only additional information that may be submitted after the initial filing is that which is requested by the appropriate NCHEC decision making body.

Please see the attached link for the full appeal policy <http://www.nchec.org/ches-exam-eligibility>

Requests for Testing Accommodations

In accordance with Americans with Disability Act (ADA), NCHEC will strive to ensure that no individual with a disability is deprived of the opportunity to take the examination solely by reason of that disability. A candidate who has a disability may request accommodations and arrangements to take the examination. Such requests must be in writing and accompany the application. Verification of disability and statement of assistance needed must be included. Documentation by a competent individual (e.g. physician) of specific disability must be submitted with the application and completed form. All requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis and are subject to approval. Test center personnel will be prepared to handle approved accommodations.

Those requiring an alternate test date due to religious restriction need to provide a letter from a religious leader documenting that need.

All requests must be received by application final deadline.

MCHES® Exam Scoring & Background:

The format of the MCHES® exam will be similar to the CHES® exam. Applicants will have three hours to complete 165 multiple choice questions (150 scored, 15 pilot-tested). The MCHES® exam will be given at the same times and places as the CHES® exam; however, the MCHES® exam will contain a number of

scenario-based questions that involve advanced-level practice. The scenarios, which will range in length from two to five sentences, will provide the context for answering two to four questions. Though questions will all relate to the same scenario, they will be independent items; that is answering one item correctly or incorrectly will have no effect on answering another question correctly or incorrectly. It should be noted that the majority of the 165 items will not be scenario-related questions.

Preparing for the Examination

NCHEC publishes study materials to help you prepare for the exam. Materials available for purchase are *The Health Education Specialist: A Companion Guide for Professional Excellence (7th Edition)* which includes the MCHES[®] Examination Practice Questions Supplement and *A Competency-Based Framework for Health Education Specialists - 2015*. See the enclosed publication order form for details. You may want to contact the nearest college or university with a health education department or visit our Web site at www.ncheec.org to determine if there is a MCHES[®] exam review session offered near you. It is important to remember that the exam is national in scope. You are encouraged to keep your resources broad and use your own text books as well as others. The companion guide should not be your sole source of information.

The Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES[®]) examination is used to assess the extent to which a candidate can possess, apply, and interpret knowledge relative to the Seven Areas of Responsibility of Health Education Specialist; delineated from **A Competency-Based Framework for Health Education Specialists — 2015**. The MCHES[®] exam reflects both the **entry and advanced-level Competencies and Sub-competencies of the Seven Areas of Responsibility**. A MCHES[®] is an advanced-level practitioner that has:

4. Met required academic qualifications, worked in the field for a minimum of five years
5. Successfully passed a competency-based examination administered by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc.
6. Satisfies the continuing education requirement to maintain the national credential

The MCHES[®] examination is a criterion-referenced test that contains 165 multiple choice items; 150 of the items are used for the total score and there are 15 pilot items on each exam. Candidates are allotted 3 hours to complete the examination. The MCHES[®] examination is offered in paper-and-pencil format at college campuses throughout the United States. While there are approximately 130 testing sites currently registered, any campus with a testing service is eligible to become a testing site.

MCHES[®] Exam Blueprint

Below is the MCHES[®] examination blueprint based on the Health Education Specialist Practice Analysis (HESPA) 2015 and the percentages of questions by the **Seven Areas of Responsibility**.

Area of Responsibility of Health Education Specialists	% of Questions on MCHES[®] Exam
Assess Needs, Resources, and Capacity for Health Education/Promotion	10%
Plan Health Education/Promotion	16%
Implement Health Education/Promotion	15%
Conduct Evaluation and Research Related to Health Ed/Promotion	20%
Administer and Manage Health Education/Promotion	18%
Serve as a Health Education/Promotion Resource Person	12%
Communicate, Promote and Advocate for Health and the Profession of Health Ed/Promotion	9%

Changes to Your Application

It is the applicants' responsibility to notify NCHEC of any changes in address or contact information.

Address: Changes can be made by visiting our Web site, www.nchec.org, and logging on with your username and password or by contacting the NCHEC office via fax or e-mail. Please note: address changes made after admission tickets are printed may result in a ticket reprint fee.*

Test Site Relocations: Changes to your test site choice must be made in writing no later than 30 days prior to the exam date.

Disclaimer: Every effort will be made to schedule a candidate to his/her first test site choice. In the event a minimum required number of candidates does not register for a given test site, NCHEC reserves the right to assign the second test site choice.

Admission Tickets

Approximately two weeks before the exam, you will be emailed an admission ticket showing test date, time, site location/address, room number and map/directions (if available). You will need to print this ticket and take along to the exam location. If you do not receive an admission ticket, or if the information on the ticket is incorrect, please notify NCHEC immediately at (888) 624-3248.

Examination Administration

The exam period is 8:30a.m.-11:30a.m., however you are expected to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the start time for registration. Once the exam period begins, **NO ONE** will be admitted to the testing room. You will have three hours to complete the exam. Candidates approved for testing accommodation, with proper documentation, will be allowed up to six hours for completion.

What to bring on the Examination Day

1. Original admission ticket
2. Photo identification (i.e., driver's license, employee/student ID card, passport). If a photo ID is not available, two (2) pieces of valid identification bearing your signature must be presented. SOCIAL SECURITY cards are NOT acceptable.
3. Several sharpened No.2 pencils. Pencils **will not** be supplied.

Not permitted in the Testing Room: books, papers, calculators, reference material, food including beverages, cell phones, electronic or smart devices, smoking, or visitors.

Security

No part of the exam may be copied or reproduced in part or in whole by any means what-so-ever, including memorization. Candidates may not solicit questions or discuss items that were on previous exams with other NCHEC candidates or individuals who hold the MCHES® credential. Candidates are required to sign an affirmation and agreement statement on the application. Violation of the affirmation and agreement may result in suspension or revocation of the MCHES® credential from those who have earned it or suspension or denial of eligibility for future exams.

Examination Grievance

Any complaints regarding testing conditions or irregularities must be submitted in writing within two weeks after the examination date. We value constructive feedback to help us provide a comfortable exam environment.

Examination Results

Exam results will be mailed approximately eight weeks after the exam date. No scores or pass/fail information will be given by phone, e-mail, or fax.

Rescoring Your Exam Results

In the event you wish to have the results rescored, this service is available through Prometric. The results would be hand-scored at a charge of **\$75** to you. Written request must be received at NCHCEC offices within **60 days** upon receipt of exam results.

Retaking the Exam

If you do not pass the exam, you may take the next scheduled exam at a reduced fee of \$150. This reduced fee is only valid for the next scheduled exam date. To exercise this option, you must submit an exam registration form by the final exam deadline. It is the decision of the candidate regarding the number of times to retest. Remediation after multiple unsuccessful attempts is highly encouraged.

Rescheduling the Examination:

Withdrawal

This option is available and intended to be used if you are not anticipating taking the exam in the future. Candidate will be refunded the exam free minus a **\$100 nonrefundable processing fee**. This request is required to be submitted in writing no later than **30 days** prior to the exam date. If notification is not received within 30 days prior to the exam date, candidates will automatically be considered a “no-show” as outlined below. **Refunds are only available the exam cycle in which you originally applied.**

Deferral

This option is available for candidates who wish to reschedule to the next exam date and will be charged a **\$100** deferral fee. This request is required to be submitted in writing no later than 30 days prior to the exam date. If notification is not received within 30 days prior to the exam date, candidates will automatically be considered a “no-show” as outlined below.

No-Show

If you do not take the exam on the scheduled date you are considered a “No-Show” and will be charged a **\$150 rescheduling fee to register for the next exam. This reduced fee is only valid for the next scheduled exam date.** NCHCEC will send registration instructions for the next scheduled exam approximately 30 days after the exam date. Unexpected circumstances will be considered and written fee waiver requests will be reviewed.

Transfer

Incomplete applications will automatically transfer to the next exam date along with an additional **\$100** transfer fee. Exam fees are nonrefundable for incomplete applications.

MCHES® Certification

By passing the exam, you become a **Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES®)** and earn the honor of using this credential. Each MCHES® will receive a certificate suitable for framing.

Acceptable Use of Credential

After receiving official notification of passing the MCHES® examination, the designation (MCHES®) may be used only as long as certification remains valid and in good standing. Certified individuals must comply with all re-certification requirements to maintain use of the respective credential and its associated acronym. Certified individuals may not make misleading, deceptive, or confusing statements regarding their certification status. If an individual allows their certification to fall into lapsed/expired status, he or she must immediately discontinue use of the associated acronym and is prohibited from stating or implying certification is current.

Maintaining the Certification

The MCHES® certification is valid for a period of five years. All MCHES® must **renew** their credential annually, and **recertify** every fifth year. Renewal requires paying the annual renewal fee. Recertification requires accruing a total of 75 continuing education contact hours (CECH) by the end of the fifth year. At least 45 of these CECH must come from offerings by NCHEC preapproved designated providers (Category I); the remaining 30 CECH may come from other providers (Category II). Of the 75 CECH, 30 of those CECH must be linked to advanced-level Sub-competencies from Category I and/or II for each certification cycle. It is recommended that MCHES® accumulate a minimum of 15 hour each year. A Renewal/Recertification Policies and Procedures booklet is available on our Web site.

Please Note: Continuing education credits earned as a CHES® do not carry over; however if you earned more than 75 credits in your CHES® cycle, a maximum of **15** credits are eligible to be carried over into the MCHES® certification cycle.

The philosophy behind the policy is that continuing education toward recertification needs to be part of the ongoing commitment to professional development, not something done in the past. This becomes especially important as the Responsibilities, Competencies and Sub-competencies that are the basis of the certification and the continuing education requirement for recertification are updated every 5 years. The 75 credits must be earned within the current 5 year period and also at least 30 of them must be in the advanced level.

Application Checklist

For Non-CHES® or CHES® with fewer than 5 years of active status:

- Transcript showing a minimum of a completed master's degree with either a specific health education major OR with 25 credits specific to the Health Education Areas of Responsibility**
- Two verification forms**
- A curriculum vitae/ resume**
- Application Form**
- Application Fee**

CHES® that have been active for 5 years:

- Application form**
- Application fee**

Effective 5/1/2011 | Revised 11/2012; 3/15; 07/15; 10/15; 1/16; 9/16, 4/17, 6/17,1/18