

# A Guide to Understanding National Board Certification: 2008 Candidacy Cycle



*A Joint Project  
of the American  
Federation of  
Teachers and the  
National Education  
Association*





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Members and affiliates of the AFT and the NEA are welcome to duplicate this guide.  
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Bound copies are available for \$5 each; \$3 each for five or more copies.  
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# A Guide to Understanding National Board Certification: 2008 Candidacy Cycle

*A Joint Project of the  
American Federation  
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National Education  
Association*



## Dear Colleagues:

**C**ONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR DECISION TO EXPLORE NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION. The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association strongly support your commitment to professional growth. Because we believe that teaching is at the heart of education, the single most important action we can take to promote quality teaching is to strengthen the skills, knowledge, professionalism, and recognition of teachers.

The more than 55,000 National Board Certified teachers tell us again and again that the process of National Board Certification is a challenging but deeply rewarding experience that provides rich professional development benefits and expanded opportunities for teacher leadership. Support for National Board Certification can be found in every corner of the education community: school boards, parents, administrators, universities, the AFT and the NEA and many of our state and local affiliates. National Board Certification continues to grow in importance because dedicated teachers like you embrace the challenge of examining their practice against the profession's highest standards.

In recent years, several research studies have found that the practice of National Board Certified Teachers has a greater impact on improving student learning than that of non National Board Certified Teachers. One recent study, released in the summer of 2005, examined the impact of National Board Certification on student achievement and found that

NBCTs developed and implemented instructional plans and assignments aimed at fostering deeper student understanding. According to researchers from Appalachian State University, students taught by NBCTs achieved deeper learning than students of non National Board Certified Teachers. The study, "Examining the Relationship between Depth of Student Learning and Teacher National Board Certification Status," found that there was a statistically significant difference between the depth of student learning of NBCTs and teachers who had attempted but did not achieve certification. This research continues to confirm the significance of National Board Certification as an important part of affiliate strategies to strengthen teaching and learning in U.S. public schools.

The AFT and the NEA have produced this candidate guide to help our members navigate the National Board Certification process. The guide provides practical advice and suggestions from National Board Certified Teachers, candidates, and candidate support provid-

ers. The guide complements the candidate materials provided by the National Board and contains many references and links to NBPTS resources. We hope you find it helpful, and we welcome your feedback.

On behalf of the AFT and the NEA, we thank you for your commitment to teacher quality and to America's children by investing your time and energy in National Board Certification. **We encourage you to contact your local union or state affiliate to discuss what support may be available to you during this process.**



**Edward J. McElroy**  
President,  
American Federation  
of Teachers



**Reg Weaver**  
President,  
National Education  
Association

## Foreword

**F**OR THE PAST TWO DECADES, AMERICANS HAVE RECOGNIZED THE GROWING CHALLENGES facing public education and have considered a host of ideas, programs, and strategies to enhance teaching and learning in schools. Educators have worked to strengthen their knowledge and skills as part of this national effort to make higher levels of achievement possible for all students.

Within this context of reform, the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession released its 1986 report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the Twenty-First Century*, which called for teachers and other stakeholders to join together to create the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Its mission is:

- To advance the quality of teaching and learning by maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.
- To provide a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards.
- To advocate related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification into American education and capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers.

Educators have been integrally involved in the board's work from the beginning. Teachers compose the majority of the board's membership, thereby having a real voice in establishing NBPTS policy. Teachers serve in leadership roles, help their colleagues better understand the certification process, provide candidate

support, score assessments, and work on all aspects of NBPTS products and services. Today, 55,312 teachers have achieved National Board Certification—the teaching profession's highest credential.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA) were among the founding organizations that established the National Board in 1987. Across the country, leaders, staff and members of AFT and NEA affiliates are working to support teachers who choose to pursue National Board Certification. They also are collaborating with other stakeholders to secure legislation, regulations, and contract language that facilitate teacher access to, and maximize benefits from, the certification process. Both organizations remain NBPTS's strongest supporters for several reasons:

- AFT and NEA members attest to the positive effects the National Board Certification process has on their teaching practice;
- The importance of advanced professional standards to guide teachers at all points in their careers;

- The expanded professional roles becoming available to teachers who complete National Board Certification; and
- The research that links National Board Certification with improved student achievement.

National Board Certification is a professional undertaking that requires the mastery and integration of both content and pedagogical knowledge. It also requires that teachers possess a repertoire of instructional strategies to help all students meet high standards. This guide is intended to help candidates and others understand the process of National Board Certification.

The observations, ideas, and suggestions contained in this guide were provided by AFT and NEA members who have achieved National Board Certification or who are experienced in supporting candidates through the certification process. Certainly there is no guarantee that these suggestions will lead to National Board Certification; rather, they are offered to help clarify the assessment process, suggest alternative ways of looking at or thinking about the requirements, and provide time-saving ideas.



## How to use this guide

**T**HIS GUIDE IS INTENDED TO lead you through the National Board Certification process and help you address some of the challenges that past candidates have identified. Although the guide supplements the wealth of information and instruction provided by the National Board—the portfolio instructions, the online assessment center orientation guide, scoring guide, and other information on the Web site—it is not intended to replace any of these. You still must read all of the NBPTS portfolio instructions and all other materials provided by NBPTS very carefully and thoroughly.

Most of your questions should be answered somewhere in the information provided by NBPTS. Use the Candidate Inquiry System for more information, or contact NBPTS for information and clarification. **Remember to save the response!**

This guide is divided into six sections:

**Section 1: Am I Ready?** contains information on those things you need to know and do before you begin putting together your portfolio or completing the exercises at the assessment center. It contains an introductory chapter, a chapter on certificate areas, a chapter on how to study the NBPTS Standards, and a chapter on collecting materials, planning and fees and frequently asked questions.

**Section 2: Putting Your Portfolio Together** contains information to help you create your portfolio entries. It includes chapters on following directions, collecting examples of your teaching practice, preparing written commentaries, and documenting your accomplishments.

**Section 3: The Assessment Center** provides information and tips to help you complete your assessment center exercises successfully.

**Section 4: Scoring** provides answers to some of the questions related to receiving and understanding scoring.

**Section 5: The Advanced Candidacy** helps candidates who are still on the journey to obtaining National Board Certification think about the issues involved with continuing their pursuit of National Board Certification. This section contains information on evaluating which, if any, exercises to retake.

**Section 6: The Renewal Candidacy** provides information about the Profile for Professional Growth for candidates who are ready to renew their National Board Certificates.

Throughout this guide, you will see helpful icons in the margins (shown at right) that will provide you with sources of information, good advice, and exercises that will help as you work your way through the certification process.



Good ideas and tips from NBPTS and past candidates and trainers.



Where to get help from NBPTS.



Exercises to help you hone the skills you will need to complete National Board Certification.



Reproducible handouts to be copied and shared with others who are helping you.

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# Empower Your Career! Be an NBPTS Assessor!

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards® (NBPTS®) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization created in 1987. NBPTS offers a voluntary, national assessment program for preK-12 classroom teachers and school counselors.

Choose summer employment that provides a unique professional development opportunity that offers in-depth interaction with other experienced teachers and exposure to more examples of teaching than most educators will typically see during their entire careers.

## Incentives

- ▶ Graduate credit opportunities from several institutions
- ▶ \$150/day honorarium paid while at the scoring site
- ▶ A partial fee waiver applicable for future candidacy after serving at least two years as a member of the scoring staff\*
- ▶ Excellent professional development opportunity

\* Fee waiver offer is subject to change each year.

## Eligibility Requirements

- ▶ Baccalaureate degree
- ▶ Valid teaching license/certificate if required by the state
- ▶ Three years of teaching experience in a preK-12 setting
- ▶ Currently teaching at least half-time in the certificate area for which you are applying to assess, or a National Board Certified Teacher® in the certificate area. Retired teachers or teachers with new assignments should visit [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org) for a complete list of eligibility criteria.
- ▶ Not be a current or nonachieving candidate for National Board Certification®
- ▶ Willing to successfully complete the required NBPTS assessor training

## Scoring Sessions

- ▶ Scoring sessions last 2 to 3 weeks
- ▶ Includes training
- ▶ Sessions held on weekdays from 8:30AM to 5:00PM
- ▶ Lunch and snacks are provided each day of scoring

*“Being a National Board assessor is the most rewarding professional development I have ever participated in.”*



## Contact NBPTS

- ▶ Call 1-800-22TEACH<sup>SM</sup> (select option 4) to find out more about this exciting opportunity or visit our Web site at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).



*National Board Certification Promotes  
Better Teaching, Better Learning,  
Better Schools*

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is a private, nonprofit organization governed by a board of directors comprised of education, corporate and government leaders, the majority of whom are classroom teachers. Through September 2005, NBPTS has been appropriated federal funds of \$149.1 million, of which \$136.7 million was expended. Such amount represents approximately 34 percent of the National Board Certification project. Approximately \$261 million (66 percent) of the project's cost was financed by non-federal sources.

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## Did You Know?

**The 2008 Candidacy Cycle** begins on January 31, 2007, and closes June 15, 2008.

**Assessment Center Testing Window**—The Assessment Center testing window opens July 1, 2007, and closes on June 15, 2008.

**Pay with E-Check**—Pay your assessment fees with NBPTS' new electronic check process. Payments are due no later than January 31, 2008, if you pay by e-check, but do not select the Extended Payment Option.

**Extended Payment Option for Candidates with E-Check**—With this new flexible plan you can pay your assessment fees by electronic check, and NBPTS will extend your payment deadline to March 15, 2008. How does it work? Simply agree to make all payments for which you are personally responsible for by electronic check. We'll send you monthly email reminders that payment is due. You decide the amount of your payment installments.

**Use DVD or VHS for videotaping entries**—Candidates are no longer limited to utilizing VHS within the video-based portfolio entries; they now have the option to submit DVDs or VHS tapes. There are strict requirements for submitting video evidence on DVDs. These requirements will be included in the portfolio boxes shipped to candidates and should be read before a candidate considers whether or not submitting their video recording on DVD is a viable option.

**Use My Profile To Manage Your Candidacy Online**—You can correct and/or update personal information, and verify whether the NBPTS has received your fees or forms—anytime, anywhere—by accessing your candidate record from the My Profile screen in the National Board Registration & Information Center (NBRIC). NBRIC is a secure, password-protected data management program that is tailored for your personal use. You can access NBRIC at any time after you apply by logging in with your username and password, or create them by keying in your candidate ID, last name and birth date.

The **For Candidates tab** at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org) replaces the Candidate Resource Center.

### **NBPTS Introduces Take One!**

Take One! is a new offering from NBPTS for educators interested in experiencing the highly praised professional development attributes of National Board Certification. It is a standards-based professional development opportunity that has been built from NBPTS' nationally respected assessment program—a program that has been rigorously studied by independent researchers and found to improve teacher quality and enhance student achievement. Take One! participants are expected to study the NBPTS Standards for their teaching discipline, complete a video portfolio entry using a classroom of students to demonstrate preK-12 teaching, and submit the entry to NBPTS to be scored, in accordance with the deadlines and policies of the current NBPTS assessment program.

As an added bonus, those who choose to subsequently become candidates for National Board Certification (within a three-year window) and who have submitted their portfolio entry in accordance with policies of the current NBPTS assessment program, can also choose to transfer their Take One! score and simply complete the remaining nine components of the assessment to continue their pursuit of National Board Certification.

### **Application for National Board Certification Renewal—**

National Board Certified Teachers who achieved certification prior to 1998 can apply online to take the National Board Profile of Professional Growth, the evaluation tool for renewal of National Board Certification (certification is valid for 10 years).

# Section 1: Am I Ready?

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## Overview

This section provides information on what you need to know and do before putting together your portfolio or participating in the Assessment Center exercises.



# Chapter 1: Introduction

**N**ATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION recognizes teaching excellence based on NBPTS Standards for accomplished teaching. A National Board Certificate attests that a teacher has met the highest standards established for the profession.

Attaining National Board Certification is a professional achievement. The assessments were developed in collaboration with practicing teachers who verified that they measure best practice and represent indicators of accomplished teaching. As teachers complete the certification process, they must continually connect their classroom practice to NBPTS Standards and provide evidence of that connection. Most teacher candidates find that the yearlong reflection and analysis process that National Board Certification candidacy entails is one of the most rewarding and meaningful experiences of their professional lives.

## If You Are Considering National Board Certification

If you are considering applying for National Board Certification, there are several ways to learn more about the process:

- First, go to the NBPTS Web site: [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org). There you can review the NBPTS Standards, certificate areas, portfolio instructions, candidate guide, Assessment Center orientation guidelines, and even apply online.
- Next, finish reading this guide to get a sense of what to expect from National Board Certification candidacy.

- Finally, talk to National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in your state or district because they can help you think about how certification will support your professional goals.

## Understanding the Commitment You Are Making

The National Board Certification assessment process examines how you plan, teach, analyze student work, and engage in reflection to meet the needs of your students. The purpose of the National Board Certification assessment process is to determine if candidates meet NBPTS Standards for their field. It is essential that you understand and accept this purpose and study the NBPTS Standards carefully.

The National Board Certification assessment process requires you to present samples of your teaching practice and write commentaries that demonstrate a level of professional practice that meets the NBPTS Standards. It is not enough merely to present what you do—successful candidates also must provide written analyses that clearly explain how their teaching practice meets the NBPTS Standards. In addition to being excellent teachers, NBCTs are able to clearly demonstrate how their teaching practice meets NBPTS Standards.

**Portfolio**—You will create a portfolio according to NBPTS specifications. The portfolio consists of four entries, each of which requires you to provide direct evidence that your teaching meets the NBPTS Standards. Each entry must be accompanied by written analytical, descriptive, and reflective commentary.



Read everything NBPTS sends you.



Review standards, portfolio instructions, candidate guidelines, scoring guide, and Assessment Center orientation guidelines at the Candidate Resource Center at: [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).

- *Three entries* focus on classroom practice (and generally include two videotapes of teaching and evidence in the form of student work samples); and
- *One entry* documents accomplishments that focus on both your work within the profession and your outreach to families and the community.

**Assessment Center**—At the Assessment Center, you will be expected to demonstrate your knowledge of developmentally appropriate content across the full range of the certificate area you have chosen. There are six computer-delivered exercises, each of which allows up to 30 minutes for candidate response.



## Chapter 2: Certificate Areas

**Y**OU CAN FIND AN OVERVIEW OF each certificate at the NBPTS Web site ([www.nbpts.org/candidates/ckc.cfm](http://www.nbpts.org/candidates/ckc.cfm)) to help you decide which certificate is right for you.

The table at the right lists the 24 National Board Certificates that are offered.

### Low-demand Certificates

Due to a low candidate demand, first-time candidate registration for the certificates and specialty areas listed below will remain closed until further notice. Future administration of these certificates and specialty areas will be dictated by future candidate demand. Advanced candidates in these certificate areas are not affected, however, and renewal will be available for NBCTs who previously certified in these certificate areas.

- Early Adolescence/Generalist
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Health Education
- Early and Middle Childhood/World Languages Other than English
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/World Languages Other than English—German, Japanese, and Latin specialty areas only

The decision was not a judgment on any subject area and was based strictly on candidate demand. The decision is in accordance with the following published announcement:

NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATE AREAS	
Subject	Available Certificates by Developmental Level*
Generalist	EC/Generalist
	MC/Generalist
Art	EMC/Art
	EAYA/Art
Career and Technical Education	EAYA/Career and Technical Education
English as a New Language	EMC/English as a New Language
	EAYA/English as a New Language
English Language Arts	EA/English Language Arts
	AYA/English Language Arts
Exceptional Needs	ECYA/Exceptional Needs
Library Media	ECYA/Library Media
Literacy	EMC/Literacy: Reading-Language Arts
Mathematics	EA/Mathematics
	AYA/Mathematics
Music	EMC/Music
	EAYA/Music
Physical Education	EMC/Physical Education
	EAYA/Physical Education
School Counseling	ECYA/School Counseling
Science	EA/Science
	AYA/Science
Social Studies-History	EA/Social Studies-History
	AYA/ Social Studies-History
World Languages Other than English	EAYA/ World Languages Other than English

\*The developmental levels are Early Childhood (EC), ages 3-8; Early Childhood through Young Adulthood (ECYA), ages 3-18+†; Middle Childhood (MC), ages 7-12; Early and Middle Childhood (EMC), ages 3-12; Early Adolescence (EA), ages 11-15; Adolescence through Young Adulthood (AYA), ages 11-18+; Exceptional Needs (†), ages 0-21+.

NBPTS reserves the right not to offer an assessment, not to score an assessment after it has been offered, and/or not to render certification decisions if, in its discretion, NBPTS determines that low candidate volume may result in psychometric or financial problems. In the event that a problem arises due to insufficient candidate volume or with respect to any aspect of an assessment or scoring system that is not adequately resolved, in the judgment of NBPTS, such that a valid certification decision can be made within an appropriate time period, NBPTS will offer full fee refunds to affected candidates. —*NBPTS Board Policy on Low-demand Certificates*

Candidate registration for all other certificate fields remains open. A complete list of certificate offerings will be updated regularly on the NBPTS Web site ([www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org)).

# Commonly Asked Questions

## **Am I eligible to participate in the National Board Certification process?**

To be eligible for National Board Certification, you must submit proof that you meet the following education, employment, and licensure requirements.

- Possess a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution.
- Have completed three years of successful teaching (or as a school counselor if applying for the ECYA/School Counseling certificate) in one or more early childhood, elementary, middle, or secondary school(s).
- Hold a valid state teaching license (or valid state license as a school counselor if applying for the ECYA/School Counseling certificate) for each of the three years of employment you verify (if required in your state).

You will be required to submit written verification that you satisfy these requirements. If after review of the verification forms, NBPTS determines that you do not meet the eligibility requirements for certification at this time, you may be eligible to receive a refund of a portion of your fee payment in accordance with the NBPTS refund policy. The \$500 application fee is nonrefundable.

## **What are the fees associated with National Board Certification?**

The assessment fee for National Board Certification is \$2,500. This includes the nonrefundable \$500 initial fee. Additionally, the application charge for first-time applicants is \$65.

## **Why is NBPTS Certification not state-based?**

National Board Certification attests to a teacher's high-level skills and ability to satisfy rigorous professional teaching standards. However, because National Board Certification is voluntary, it is meant to complement, not replace, state licensing.

## **Why should I seek National Board Certification if my state does not offer any incentives?**

Even if your state does not offer incentives, the certification process is worth the effort because it provides opportunities for serious reflection about your practice, fosters self-examination, and encourages professional dialogue with colleagues. The National Board Certification process enables you to evaluate skills and knowledge against objective, peer-developed standards of accomplished practice, and thereby adjust and improve your teaching practice.

## **How do I know which certificate to pursue?**

NBPTS recommends that you carefully study the NBPTS Standards in the certificate field that best reflects the age range of students and the subject you teach, as well as the demands of the portfolio entries and Assessment Center exercises, to determine if the entries and exercises will allow you to demonstrate your level of accomplished teaching practice. One way to become familiar with the different certification areas is to visit the NBPTS Web site. What you will need to be able to do for each certificate is described at [www.nbpts.org/candidates/guide/2\\_certglance.html](http://www.nbpts.org/candidates/guide/2_certglance.html).

**If I apply for candidacy, how much time will the process require?**

The National Board Certification process requires a serious one- to three-year commitment of time and effort. Following the steps outlined in this guide and careful planning will help make the process manageable. NBCTs overwhelmingly report that seeking National Board Certification is one of the most rewarding professional development experiences of their careers and, therefore, well worth the effort.

**Do I need a computer, printer, and Internet access to complete certification?**

NBPTS support providers stress the importance of access to a computer, printer, and the Internet. It is very difficult to manage the portfolio work without word processing and its components such as spelling and grammar check. Also, the online resources (both content and support groups) are too valuable to miss. A printer helps with multiple drafts and revisions and, in a pinch, can serve as a copying machine.

**How will my entries be scored?**

All scoring is based on the evidence candidates submit—videos, student work samples, candidates' analyses, and the response to

Assessment Center prompts. Your National Board Certification assessment is evaluated by at least 10 classroom teachers, who must: possess a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution; have a minimum of three years of successful teaching experience; be actively teaching students in the certificate area domains for which they score responses (or be an NBCT in the certificate field); and successfully complete assessor training provided by NBPTS and qualify as an assessor prior to scoring. Submissions by ECYA/School Counseling candidates will be evaluated by actively practicing school counselors with at least three years of school counseling experience who successfully complete assessor training and qualify to evaluate responses.

**Does the fact that I did not certify mean that I am not a good teacher?**

No—absolutely not. It simply means that you did not show evidence of meeting the NBPTS Standards.

For answers to many more commonly asked questions, visit the NBPTS Web site online at [http://nbpts.org/for\\_candidates](http://nbpts.org/for_candidates).

## Chapter 3: Working With the NBPTS Standards

**A**LL TEACHERS ARE FAMILIAR WITH standards. In the last several years we have seen an explosion of standards from states, districts, and national organizations of various kinds. Typically, these standards focus on what students should know and be able to do. The NBPTS Standards on the Web site (and included on the CD-ROM in your box) focus on what accomplished teachers know and are able to do. To become a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT), you must clearly demonstrate that your teaching practice meets NBPTS Standards. To do this, first you must thoroughly understand the standards.

This chapter is designed to stress the importance of understanding the NBPTS Standards. It provides suggestions on how to study the standards and how to provide evidence that you are meeting them.

### Embodying the NBPTS Standards

Why is it important for you to spend time reading and understanding the NBPTS Standards? They are the only criteria used to determine certification.

The NBPTS Standards represent a professional consensus on the aspects of practice that distinguish accomplished teachers. The standards incorporate the essential knowledge, skills, dispositions, and commitment that allow teachers to practice at a high level. Following a nationwide search for outstanding educators, a standards committee—the majority of whom

are classroom teachers in the certificate field being considered—developed standards that describe what accomplished teachers know and are able to do. The standards are widely disseminated for public critique and comment and revised accordingly before being adopted.

National Board Certification is standards-based. You are asked to reflect on your teaching practices through the lens of the NBPTS Standards. These standards are the criteria for evaluating your work.

### Creating a Notebook To Study and Understand the NBPTS Standards

Although the standards for each certification area are specific to that area, they rest on a fundamental philosophical foundation expressed in the NBPTS policy statement *What Accomplished Teachers Should Know and Be Able To Do*. That statement identifies The Five Core Propositions:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.



- NBPTS Standards
- *Get Started*
- [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org)



NBCTs recommend that prior to starting the portfolio entries, you study and apply the standards to your own teaching practice.



### Exercise 1:

To understand the standards, start by reviewing the core propositions on which the standards are based. Write down two specific acts or activities that **you** do regularly that illustrate each of the five NBPTS core propositions.

CAN YOU ILLUSTRATE EACH OF THE NBPTS CORE PROPOSITIONS?	
PROPOSITION	ACTIVITIES
1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.	
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.	
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.	
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.	
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.	

The first step in approaching the NBPTS is to internalize their core propositions and to see yourself embodying these standards in your practice. Exercise 2 requires reading the standards **carefully** and understanding them **thoroughly**.

NBCTs recommend different strategies for studying the standards specific to your certification area. Some NBCTs recommend that candidates prepare a “standards notebook” using the exercises below. Identify the ones that work for you and use them to develop your own standards notebook.



Some NBCTs recommend reading and tape-recording the standards in your own voice to listen to while you do other things, drive to work, for example.



If you are having difficulty, this is a good time to talk to others about the standards—discuss them in your support group or talk to your mentor or colleague.



### Exercise 2:

1. **Read** the standards carefully.
2. **Reread** the standards and write notes in the margins about how you meet each one.
3. **Reread** the standards and highlight key statements that strike you as being important.
4. **Reread** the standards and, if possible, discuss the key elements with another candidate.



### Exercise 3:

Summarize each standard in your content area/developmental level. For each standard, answer the following questions. Be specific and provide personal examples when possible.

*Standard I: Knowledge of Students—Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of child development and their relationships with students to understand their students' abilities, interests, aspirations, and values.*

1. What do I know with respect to this standard?
2. What do I do with respect to this standard?
3. How might I demonstrate proficiency in this standard?
4. What do I do that provides evidence that I have met this standard?
5. How might I convince colleagues that I have met this standard?
6. How does the evidence meet the standard?

**Exercise 4:**

Make a T-chart to help you relate the standards to your practice. Write a concise summary of the NBPTS Standard at the top of a page. Divide the page vertically. On the left side, list the values associated with the standard. On the right side, note the things you do—or might do—to exemplify the standard.

## CONCISE SUMMARY OF STANDARD I

Associated values	What I do or might do to exemplify the standard

### Providing Evidence

Not only must you know what each standard says and means, but you must also think through:

- What **evidence** in your teaching practice demonstrates the standard?
- How does that evidence meet the particular standard?

Use the following formula when supporting student learning:

$$C = E + ISL$$

When you make a claim (C), you must give evidence (E) to support that claim and then state how this had an impact on student learning (ISL).

NBPTS assessors report that the majority of candidates who do not achieve National Board Certification have one thing in common: The portfolio entries did not provide convincing evidence that the candidates had met NBPTS standards.

The certification process requires that candidates show how they meet the particular NBPTS Standards required for each portfolio entry. You are required to collect and prepare evidence—student work samples, written commentaries, and videotapes—that demonstrate your teaching practice. You might think of your task as having three parts:

- Understanding the NBPTS Standards.
- Embodying the standards in your practice.
- Demonstrating to the assessors that you embody the standards in your practice.

Unsuccessful candidates typically quote the NBPTS text for the standards in their portfolio entries but do not provide student work and reflections that actually demonstrate how their teaching practice meets the standards and affects student learning. **A successful candidate is able to explain how the student work or the videotapes submitted show that the candidate has met a standard and how his or her teaching has affected student learning.**

## Chapter 4: Materials, Planning and Fees



### ■ Portfolio Instructions— Organizer



It is a good idea to make a master copy of the forms required for portfolio submission.



Save the box to mail your portfolio back to NBPTS when you are finished.

**T**HIS CHAPTER INCLUDES TIPS ON how to create a reasonable schedule for developing and submitting your portfolio and preparing for the Assessment Center, as well as strategies that help you manage the certification process. This chapter also includes sources of technical support and highlights recent changes in the NBPTS certification process.

### Download And Print Materials

About four weeks after your application and initial payment are received at the NBPTS, you will receive a box of materials necessary to submit your portfolio. Before your box arrives, we strongly encourage you to **download and print the assessment calendar, the NBPTS Standards, the scoring guide, portfolio instructions for your specific certificate area, and the Assessment Center orientation guidelines from the NBPTS Web site.**

Once the box arrives, be sure to check the packing list to make sure everything is enclosed. If something is missing, call NBPTS at 800-22TEACH. The box will include some necessary materials that are not available on the Web site and a CD-ROM.

**The CD-ROM** contains portfolio instructions, standards, and shipping information in a Web-enabled HTML format. You can navigate through the instructions and standards with a click of your mouse. A printer-friendly version is also available on the CD-ROM. If you choose to print the portfolio instructions, be aware that the materials you need to print out could total 300 pages or more. It is well worth the effort

to locate a printer capable of printing double-sided pages. If you don't have one, ask the technology coordinator at your school, your district office, or your union representative for help. A local copy store is another option.

Other supplies to have on hand as you start getting organized are:

**A calendar** with both a week-by-week view and a month-by-month view—this calendar will help you keep focused and on schedule during the certification process. Set up a realistic calendar and stick with it.

**School and personal calendar** so you are able to incorporate those dates into your planning.

**Printer paper** to print portfolio instructions from the CD-ROM and other useful information from the NBPTS Web site.

**Blank notebooks**—National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) recommend that you keep notebooks and pens in places where you will have time to think—for example, at your bedside and in the kitchen. One of these notebooks will serve as your “standards notebook,” which is described in Chapter 3.

**Highlighters**—Some NBCTs recommend that you use highlighters to help you study the standards and portfolio directions and color-code your calendar.

**Two three-ring binders with pockets**—Put your NBPTS portfolio instructions and related materials in one and your NBPTS Standards in the other.







Color-code the events on your calendar so that you can quickly see which events are personal, school-related, or NBPTS-related.

wrapped in managing LIFE during the process. National Board Certified Teachers offer words of wisdom below:

**Build a support system**—Many candidates find it helpful to work through the certification process with one or more colleagues. Previous candidates have suggested many different ways to find or create a good support system:

- Determine whether an organized support system is available through your union, your school district, a local teacher center, or a nearby university.
- Check for candidate support providers through your school system, the unions, or the universities.

- Identify a colleague who is also completing the certification process—even if the buddy isn't in the same certification area. Having someone you trust to offer honest feedback and make suggestions can be invaluable. (Always remember, though, it is the NBPTS Standards you must meet, not your colleague's.)
- Identify at least two colleagues to review your portfolio; different perspectives are helpful in ensuring that you have written clear and compelling commentary. Make sure these readers know what the requirements are for each entry. Go over the directions and relevant NBPTS Standards with them and show them the *How Will My Response Be Scored?* section of the portfolio entry directions as a reference.

January 2008						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2 Mail in Eligibility Forms	3	4	5 Mom and Dad's 50th Anniversary Weekend
6 Mom and Dad's 50th Anniversary Weekend	7 Send NBPTS student release forms home with other beginning of the year forms to be signed by the parent	8 NBPTS Support Group 3:00-5:00	9 Work on NBPTS Portfolio 3:30-5:30	10 Maria's Soccer practice 5:00-7:00	11	12 Movie with Dave—babysitter for Carole
13	14	15 NBPTS Support Group 3:00-5:00	16 Work on NBPTS Portfolio 3:30-5:30	17 Maria's Soccer practice 5:00-7:00	18	19
20	21	22 NBPTS Support Group 3:00-5:00	23 Work on NBPTS Portfolio 3:30-5:30	24 Maria's Soccer practice 5:00-7:00	25 Videotape second period	26
27	28	29 NBPTS Support Group 3:00-5:00	30 Work on NBPTS Portfolio 3:30-5:30	31 Maria's Soccer practice 5:00-7:00		

**When can I work on my portfolio entries each week?**

**What are the nonnegotiable NBPTS due dates?**

**What recurring activities require my time?**

**What important personal commitments do I have during the certification process?**

**Have I scheduled time to work with other teachers who are going through, or have gone through, the NBPTS certification process?**

**What details can I take care of early?**

**When will I do my different NBPTS activities, and what is required in preparation?**

**Have I included time to relax?**

MY NBPTS DUE DATES (Partial list)	Date
When are my application and the nonrefundable \$65 administration fee and \$500 payment due to NBPTS?	
When are my full fee payment and all eligibility forms due?	
When <b>must</b> I make my Assessment Center appointment?	
When is my portfolio due at NBPTS?	



### Exercise 5:

Use this chart to map your application/eligibility path.

- Talk to your students about this endeavor. Tell them that you are stretching yourself as a professional because you want to be a better teacher. Share with them that this is the “Olympics” of teaching (or any other appropriate metaphor) and that you will need their help to win the gold!

- Seek advice and help from NBPTS—[www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates).

**Ask for help**—Candidates who have completed the process recommend that you ask for help when you need it. There are no penalties for seeking help, so it makes sense to take advantage of every available resource.

Your first two stops should be your union representative and your school administration. Find out if they can provide assistance. Examples of candidate support that might be available include:

- Paper
- Photocopying and printing
- Release time to visit other teachers
- Release time to prepare your portfolio
- Videotaping equipment and assistance
- Computer loan
- Sponsoring support groups or study groups
- Securing professional materials and resources

If you feel uncomfortable with the writing requirement, find colleagues who can read your writing for clarity. Although the writing requirement is intensive, the portfolio does not require anything beyond clear, concise prose.

If you are responsible for children or adults who need a caretaker, organize this early on

in the process and explain the portfolio and Assessment Center timelines to your support provider. As each deadline nears, you may need more time, more frequently to work on your entries and prepare for the Assessment Center.

**Know thyself**—Set reasonable deadlines based on your way of accomplishing a task.

Talk to your friends and family. Solicit their assistance and encouragement. You will need large doses of encouragement throughout this journey. Talk to someone who will build you up when you are down.

Set two specific goals:

- I will turn in all portfolio entries and complete all Assessment Center exercises.
- I will achieve National Board Certification.

**Ethics**—NBPTS encourages collaboration with colleagues. However, **all of the work that you submit as part of your response to any entry must be yours and yours alone.** This means that if you work as a member of a team, your written analyses, the student work samples you submit, and your videotape must all feature teaching you did and work you oversaw. **If more than one member of a team is going through the assessment, you have an excellent opportunity to collaborate.** But, it is mandatory that each candidate submit different videotape segments, separate and different analyses, and separate and different student work samples. If you submit materials identical to those of another candidate, both of you will be disqualified from the certification process.



Use the NBPTS tracking form (found in the introduction to the NBPTS portfolio instructions) to record the classes you have videotaped, the unit you were teaching, and the student work you chose for each entry.

## Confidentiality Statement

At the Assessment Center, you will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement. If you do not sign it, you will not be permitted to take the test. By signing the statement, you agree to maintain the full confidentiality of all test questions—

specifically, not to reproduce or disclose any test question, in whole or in part, to any person or entity. If you fail to adhere to this agreement, you will be subject to serious consequences, up to and including legal prosecution.

**FEES AND CHARGES** The following chart lists the various fees and charges applicable to the NBPTS certification process. Candidates are responsible for confirming receipt by NBPTS of any fees, charges, forms, and notices. After applications have been processed, candidates can check the status of fees and charges posted to their individual accounts by accessing My Profile from the National Board Registration and Information Center (NBRIC). Credit card payments will appear in a candidate's record on the next business day after payment.

TYPE OF FEE/CHARGE	WHAT TO SUBMIT	AMOUNT OF FEE/CHARGE	DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT BY NBPTS
<p><b>Application processing charge for first-time candidates</b>            This processing charge is required for all first-time applications and has been established to offset the rising cost of processing applications from candidates who subsequently do not pursue full certification.</p>	<p>Payable online, via credit/debit card (Visa or MasterCard only) or by submitting a check payment online.</p>	<p>\$65</p>	<p><b>2007-08 candidates:</b>            Must be paid at the time of application submission, and no later than December 31, 2007. NBPTS will not accept your application without payment of this processing charge, and all information provided on your application will be lost. NBPTS cannot accept paper checks or money orders for this charge.</p>
<p><b>Assessment fee</b>            This fee is required for all new candidates for National Board Certification.</p>	<p>Complete the online candidate application. After your candidate application has been submitted, NBPTS can apply personal or third-party payments (for example, money from your state) to your account. If payment will be made by a third party, the candidate is responsible for taking appropriate steps to ensure payment is made on his or her behalf.</p>	<p>\$2,500            Personal payments can be made using credit/debit card (Visa or MasterCard only), personal check, or money order. Visa and MasterCard payments must be made online by accessing My Profile.</p>	<p><b>2007-08 candidates:</b>            January 31, 2008 (March 15, 2008, for candidates choosing the extended payment option).</p>
<p><b>Returned check fee</b>            This fee is assessed if your personal check is returned. This fee applies to both paper and electronic checks.</p>	<p>Information regarding the returned check and the fee.</p>	<p>\$35</p>	<p>30 days after notification.</p>
<p><b>Record modification fee</b>            This fee is required for NBPTS to make changes to personal information in a candidate's online record, which can be made by the candidate through My Profile.             Note that this fee is not charged to make changes to information in a candidate record that can only be made by NBPTS.</p>	<p>Written request for the change and the applicable fee.</p>	<p>\$40 per change requested.</p>	<p>Upon receipt of record modification request.</p>

(Continued)

TYPE OF FEE/CHARGE	WHAT TO SUBMIT	AMOUNT OF FEE/CHARGE	DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT BY NBPTS
<p><b>Late eligibility verification fee</b> This fee is required for NBPTS to accept required fees or eligibility verification forms after the January 31, 2008, deadline for submission. Candidates who do not submit eligibility verification forms or all required fees will not have portfolio submissions scored and will not be able to schedule an Assessment Center appointment.</p>		\$75	This fee must be received no later than five calendar days after the deadline for your portfolio submission in order to have any materials scored or to schedule an Assessment Center appointment.
<p><b>Change of certificate area</b> To change your certificate area after you have submitted your application, a fee is required to cover the cost of changing information in the candidate database and sending another portfolio kit. (Available for first-time candidates only.)</p>	Request for change (include candidate ID number and mailing address) and the fee. If your new certificate area requires selection of a specialty area, you must provide this information at the time of your request. Change of certificate area requests must be submitted in writing.	\$75	January 31, 2008, and prior to scheduling an Assessment Center appointment and submitting any portfolio entries for scoring.
<p><b>Change of specialty area</b> To change your specialty area after you have submitted your application, but prior to scheduling or attending your Assessment Center appointment, a fee is required to cover the cost of changing information in your candidate record and sending Assessment Center materials. If you inadvertently select a specialty area at the Assessment Center that is different from the specialty area recorded in your candidate record, you will be assessed this fee, and your score may be affected. (Available for first-time candidates only.)</p>	Request for change (include candidate ID number and mailing address) and the fee. Change of specialty area requests must be made in writing.	\$75	Prior to scheduling or attending an Assessment Center appointment.
<p><b>Rescheduling of Assessment Center appointment</b> This fee is required when you reschedule your testing appointment.</p>	You must call to reschedule.	\$50	Call as soon as possible and at least three full business days <b>before</b> the day of your appointment to reschedule unless you are an Art candidate. Art candidates must call at least 10 days before the day of the appointment to reschedule.  New appointments must be scheduled prior to the end of your testing window.
<p><b>Reinstatement of eligibility</b> If you miss or cancel your appointment, you must reinstate your eligibility before you can schedule a new appointment. This fee also applies to World Languages Other than English and Music candidates who do not schedule an appointment at a supplemental site on one of the dates specified via the online Music/WLOE Appointment Application.</p>	You must call to reinstate your eligibility.	\$175	

(Continued)

TYPE OF FEE/CHARGE	WHAT TO SUBMIT	AMOUNT OF FEE/CHARGE	DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT BY NBPTS
<b>Printed score report</b> Score results for the three most recent reporting years are available online at any time. This fee is charged for a printed copy of a score report that is available through My Profile.	Request for the copy (include candidate ID number and mailing address) and the fee.	\$25	Three years from the date the scores were originally released.
<b>Printed copy of retake application</b> The retake application will be available online when scores are released to candidates. This fee is charged for a printed copy requested from NBPTS.	Request for a printed retake application (include candidate ID number and mailing address) and the fee.	\$25	Candidates receiving score results in 2007: <b>January 31, 2008.</b>
<b>Retake fee (per entry/exercise)</b> This fee is required for each portfolio entry or Assessment Center exercise that you choose to retake. You must apply to retake entries/exercises in the same certificate area (and same specialty code, if applicable) that you were assessed in as a first-time candidate.  Retake fees are nonrefundable, regardless of the circumstances.	Retake application and the fee. The retake application will be available online following score release. After your application has been submitted, NBPTS can apply personal or third-party payments (for example, money from your state) to your account. If a third-party payer will make payment, the candidate is responsible for taking appropriate steps to ensure payment is made on his or her behalf.	\$350 per entry/exercise.  Personal payments can be made using credit/debit card (Visa or MasterCard only), e-check, personal check, or money order. Visa and MasterCard payments must be made online by accessing My Profile.	Candidates receiving score results in 2007: <b>January 31, 2008.</b>
<b>Application processing charge for retake application</b> This processing charge is required for all retake applications and has been established to offset the rising cost of processing applications from candidates who subsequently do not continue pursuit of certification. Your retake application will not be accepted by NBPTS without payment of this processing charge, and all information provided on your retake application will be lost.	Payable online, via credit/debit card (Visa or MasterCard only) or by submitting an online check payment. NBPTS cannot accept paper checks or money orders for this charge.	\$15	<b>Retake applications submitted after September 1, 2007:</b> Upon submission of retake application, and no later than January 31, 2008.
<b>Change of retake selection fee</b> Fee required to change a retake entry/exercise after application has been submitted. This change fee does not apply to entries that you add or deselect prior to paying the \$350 retake fee. Retake fees are nonrefundable, regardless of the circumstances. You may not deselect an entry after you have paid the retake fee, but you may defer that entry.	Request for the change (include candidate ID number and mailing address) and the fee. Change of retake selection fee requests must be made in writing.	\$75 per change.	<b>Candidates receiving score results in 2008: January 31, 2008.</b>  Note: Change of selections <b>cannot</b> be made if a candidate has scheduled an appointment.
<b>Retake deferment fee (per entry/exercise)</b> This fee is required for each portfolio entry or Assessment Center exercise that you choose to defer after you have paid the retake fee. <i>(This service is not available to candidates in their last year of eligibility.)</i>	Written request for deferment prior to your portfolio deadline or Assessment Center appointment. In addition, a new retake application must be submitted the following year with the appropriate retake fee.	\$125 per entry/exercise deferred.	Deferment request for portfolio entries: the portfolio deadline for assessment for the year to which you are deferring.  Deferment request for assessment centers: 10 days prior to any scheduled appointment or at the end of the Assessment Center testing window if no appointment has been scheduled.

(Continued)

TYPE OF FEE/CHARGE	WHAT TO SUBMIT	AMOUNT OF FEE/CHARGE	DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT BY NBPTS
<b>Score verification service fee</b> The fee is required to request that your score be verified by NBPTS. Service is available for a limited period of time after scores are released.	Online application indicating what service you are requesting and payment of the fee online by credit/debit card (Visa or MasterCard only).	\$75 per score verified.	30 days after the date printed on the score report.
<b>Appeal filing fee</b> Fee to appeal your assessment results.	Written request for the appeal and the fee.	\$500	60 days after the date printed on the score report.

## Refunds

If a candidate's account becomes overpaid for a particular cycle, refund requests for all overpaid fees must be submitted no later than March 1 of the year after the release of scores for the specific cycle in which fees were overpaid. It is the responsibility of the candidate to review charges assessed and payments made against those charges by accessing My Profile, and to

the extent that payments from any payer cause the candidate's account to be in an overpaid situation, the candidate must inform NBPTS as to which payee should be refunded the amount of the overpayment. Additional information about NBPTS refunds is available at: [www.nbpts.org/Become\\_a\\_candidate/fees\\_financial\\_support/methods\\_of\\_payment](http://www.nbpts.org/Become_a_candidate/fees_financial_support/methods_of_payment).

### WHERE TO SEND PAYMENTS

#### By mail:

NBPTS  
 c/o Bank of America - Illinois  
 P.O. Box 99406  
 Chicago, IL 60693

#### By courier:

NBPTS  
 c/o Bank of America - Illinois  
 99406 Collections Center Drive  
 Lockbox 99406  
 Chicago, IL 60693

## Additional Support

**General Information**—Use the NBPTS toll-free help line (800/22TEACH). Calling the help line does not count for or against you in any way. The content of calls is tracked only to identify frequently asked questions, provide information, and help clarify future instructions.

**Help with Fees**—To find out about fee support, interest-free loans, or incentives where you live, ask your local or state union leaders, district administrators and access online information about the National Board Scholarship Program at [www.nbpts.org/become\\_a\\_candidate/fees\\_financial\\_support](http://www.nbpts.org/become_a_candidate/fees_financial_support).

**AFT-JOIN Loan**—If you are a member of the AFT, you can participate in a low interest loan program that lets you borrow money to cover the NBPTS assessment fees. Through this program, you can set up affordable payments and take 12, 18, or 24 months to repay your loan. For more information or to request a loan application, call the toll-free AFT-JOIN line (888/AFT-JOIN) Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**NEA National Board Certification Loan**—NEA members seeking National Board Certification have access to a revolving line of credit. Upon approval, MBNA Bank of America, N.A. will assign you a \$3,000 credit limit with repayment terms from 12 to 36 months, no application fees, no transaction fees, and no collateral required. As a special enhancement, the loan also features a 90-day deferred payment option. For more information, or to apply, call (800/545-4094 from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday; from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Friday; or from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturday (all hours are Eastern Time).

**National Board Registration and Information** — Candidates can monitor the status of their application online by using the National Board

Registration and Information Center (NBRIC) or The Online Candidate Inquiry Service ([www.nbpts.org/help\\_and\\_faqs](http://www.nbpts.org/help_and_faqs)). The NBRIC site is a secure, password-protected data management program that candidates can access any time after they create a username and password by keying in their candidate ID, last name and birth date. From there, candidates can:

- Review their application information, such as certificate area, name, mailing address, phone number(s), etc.
- Review the status, and track the receipt at NBPTS of fee payments, eligibility forms, and portfolio materials.
- Change their profile (e.g., mailing address and contact information); special considerations (e.g., nonstandard testing accommodations, third-party agencies and donors that provide fee support and scholarships, submitting student work in Spanish, or submitting student work in a manual language); or password.
- Review and print a copy of their official score report (after scores have been released).

**Online Candidate Inquiry Service**—This part of the Web site includes important information on eligibility requirements, available certificates, retake information, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to other valuable resources. ([www.nbpts.org/help\\_and\\_faqs](http://www.nbpts.org/help_and_faqs)).

**Digital Edge** ([www.apple.com/ali/digitaledge](http://www.apple.com/ali/digitaledge)) showcases NBCTs generated lessons including videotapes on a wide range of grades and subject matter. Components include professional standards, specific lessons for all grade levels, student work samples, parental involvement, assessment, reflections, resources and technology.

For more information, use the NBPTS Web site [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates).





## SECTION 2:

# The NBPTS Portfolio

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### Overview

Now that you have developed a timeline and studied the NBPTS Standards, it is time to start putting your portfolio together. This section provides information and activities to help you prepare a portfolio that presents your teaching in the way NBPTS requires.

If you are seeking National Board Certification, you are required to submit a total of four entries in your portfolio.

Three of the entries will be classroom-based. Generally, two of these will require videotapes that document your teaching practice. One entry will require that you document your professional accomplishments beyond the classroom in working with families and the community. All entries require written commentaries that describe, analyze, and reflect on your teaching practice.

If you indicated intent to use the Spanish language option on your application, you will complete the same portfolio entries and Assessment Center exercises as your certificate-area colleagues; the difference is that you may submit student work and videotapes that are in Spanish. The written commentary accompanying each portfolio entry and your responses to the Assessment Center exercises, however, must be in English.

As you proceed through this guide, you might find it helpful to have your portfolio instructions next to you so you can follow along.



Portfolio instructions—  
Introduction, Spanish  
language option

## Chapter 5: Following Directions

**T**HIS CHAPTER DESCRIBES HOW you can improve your likelihood of achieving National Board Certification by carefully reading and following the portfolio instructions.

In the Introduction section of the NBPTS portfolio instructions, there is a useful chart entitled Summary of the Portfolio Entries that provides a “big picture” of the entries you will submit as part of your portfolio. You can consult this chart as you complete your portfolio to make sure you have fulfilled all of the requirements. The chart has four sections:

**Entry**—the name of each entry.

**Requirements**—this is what you must do to demonstrate that you have met the targeted NBPTS Standards: (1) prepare the materials that demonstrate you have met the standards; and (2) describe, analyze, and/or reflect on them in written commentaries.

**Required materials**—this is an itemized list of the assignments, prompts, materials, videos, other documentation, and forms you are asked to prepare for each entry.

**Rules for submission**—these are the technical specifications for video and student work entries that must be followed for the entries to be scored.

The directions for each entry have a common format. Use the following summary as a guide to help you become familiar with each entry.

### Format of the Portfolio Instructions

- Entry Overview
- What Do I Need To Do?

- How Will My Response Be Scored?
- Composing My Written Commentary
- Making Good Choices
- Format Specifications
- Cover Sheets and Required Forms (including video layout forms, release forms, teacher attestation forms, and the candidate final inventory form)

### Rules for Submission

For the purpose of establishing a fair and equitable playing field for everyone, the portfolio instructions include format specifications you must follow as you prepare and compile your evidence. If you do not follow these rules, you risk having your entry disqualified or receiving a score that is not reflective of your practice.

Look for, highlight, and abide by the specifications, including those for:

**Page limits**—for written commentaries, student work samples, and other instructional materials. Remember, **assessors will stop reading at the page limits**. Print on one side only. If you submit pages with text or pictures on both-sides, each side will count as one page.

**Length of video entries**—remember, **assessors will not watch more than the specified time limits**. If you decide to use a DVD, be sure to use a DVD-R for submission.

**Format descriptions**—size of print/type, line spacing, margin size, preferred fonts, and page layouts.

**Use of names**—do not use last names and do not use identifiers such as school names, colleagues’ names, or city names. Remove your own name from written commentaries and student work.

## AVOID MISTAKES

To avoid mistakes made by not following directions, past candidates suggest that you:

- Concentrate on the standards addressed by each entry.
- Prepare your responses and materials according to the specifications set forth in the directions.
- **Answer all questions in each entry.**
- Provide evidence and/or link evidence to what you write in your commentaries and link it to the impact on student learning.
- Be clear, convincing, and consistent.
- Analyze and reflect—don't just describe—in your written commentaries.

### Spanish Language Option

#### Clarification of Rules for Classroom-Based Entries

The Spanish Language Option allows candidates to submit student work and video recording in Spanish.

This option provides an opportunity for generalists and content-area teachers who have a large number of Spanish-speaking students in their classes, and who, therefore, deliver instruction in both English and Spanish, to become National Board Certified Teachers. The Spanish Language Option is available to candidates in all certificate areas except the English Language Arts, and World Languages Other than English certificate areas. (Note that candidates in Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading-Language Arts may elect to use the Spanish Language Option.) Candidates who

exercise this option complete the same portfolio entries and Assessment Center exercises as their certificate-area colleagues. The written commentaries accompanying each portfolio and the responses to the Assessment Center exercises must be in English. In addition, candidates who exercise the Spanish Language Option are required to submit a written English translation of any written student work submitted in Spanish and/or an English transcript of any video recorded evidence submitted in Spanish. Candidates must check the appropriate box on the entry envelope label and provide the required English translation or transcript or the response will not be scored. English language translations provided with evidence in Spanish must meet all format specifications for written portfolio materials and must include the candidate's ID number and the entry title in English.

## Chapter 6: Collecting Examples of Your Teaching Practice



Some NBCTs recommend that you include teacher comments on the student work you submit. Comments should be constructive and should reflect that you understand the particular difficulty the student is having.



■ *Get Started: Practice Activities*

**F**OR THE PORTFOLIO, YOU ARE required to prepare specific instructional materials—video segments of your teaching, student work samples, assignments/prompts, etc.—as evidence of your teaching practice. The directions for each entry include a section entitled *Making Good Choices*. **Read this section carefully!** Here you will find specific guidelines for the most appropriate assignments and lessons from which to collect student work and video/DVD footage. Following are some general guidelines that apply to all types of instructional materials:

- Choose assignments that allow you to elicit and demonstrate a range of students' understanding of the lesson content.
- Choose complex assignments that will challenge your students to think deeply and/or across disciplines.
- Follow the directions for the type of work that must be submitted. Make sure your instructional materials, if required, meet the unique specifications for each entry.

### Student Work Samples

You will be required to submit entries focused on student work samples along with written commentaries. All written materials submitted as part of the assessment **must** be in English (unless otherwise indicated).

When collecting student work, save copies of class sets to ensure you have the widest selection. It is also a good idea not to make early decisions about which students to feature, because students can move or be transferred to different classes and because your choices may change as you become more familiar with the NBPTS Standards and portfolio entry requirements. There are many kinds of student work. The examples you choose should reflect the types of student work that are most important to your certificate area. Be sure to include only the precise number of students specified in the directions for each entry.

**Exercise 6:**

To analyze student work, select a recent lesson that you taught and collect copies of student work. Complete this exercise based on the lesson.

**ANALYZING STUDENT WORK**

**Portfolio entry:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Standards addressed in this entry:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. What was the learning goal(s) of this assignment?
2. How does this work assignment demonstrate the learning goal(s)?
3. What did the student understand about the concept?
4. What did the student misunderstand about the concept?
5. What patterns of errors are evident in the work?
6. What criteria did I use to assess this work sample? (Not “What grade did I give the paper?”)
7. How did the student assess his/her own work?
8. How did I give the student constructive feedback?
9. How is this feedback evident to the assessors?
10. What do I need to explain or reteach about this concept?
11. Based on the analysis of this work sample, what does the student need to learn next?
12. How can I connect future instruction to this learning?

**Exercise 7:**

To help provide evidence for written commentary and videotapes, ask your critical friend to observe your teaching and complete this worksheet.

## CRITICAL OBSERVATION WORKSHEET

The observer should cite evidence in your teaching that addresses each of the following questions:

1. What is the evidence of the teacher's ability to plan a thoughtful sequence of learning experiences that:
  - Fosters development of clearly delineated \_\_\_\_\_ concepts?
  - Employs the \_\_\_\_\_ process as an integral part of the activities?
2. What evidence suggests that the individual employs activities that:
  - Are directly relevant to the \_\_\_\_\_ concepts?
  - Tap the students' natural curiosity and interests?
  - Allow for the students to have some control of the activity?
3. What evidence indicates that the learning experiences are designed to help students discover \_\_\_\_\_ principles for themselves?
4. What evidence exists to show that the teacher helps students understand the relevance of the featured activities to the concepts being addressed?
5. What evidence indicates that the students are deeply engaged intellectually as they actively participate in \_\_\_\_\_?
6. What evidence indicates that the teacher encourages posing questions and formulating and discussing ideas?
7. What evidence reveals that the teacher challenges students' thinking while interacting with them?
8. What evidence verifies that the students engage in \_\_\_\_\_ as they work with other students and/or they engage in independent activities?
9. What evidence shows the teacher's ability to:
  - Reflect on students' learning?
  - Examine her or his own role in fostering engagement and learning?
  - Identify areas that need improvement?

## Video/DVD Entries

When selecting lessons to videotape/record on DVD-R, pay attention to how you will show the “total picture” of your classroom. You want your video to convey—to the extent possible—the classroom climate, student engagement, interactions (both verbal and nonverbal), and your role in promoting classroom discourse. Always refer to the *Making Good Choices* section of the portfolio directions as you make decisions about the content for each entry.

In most cases, you will be required to submit two videos of yourself teaching, accompanied by written commentaries. The videos provide an opportunity to show an authentic and complete view of your teaching. Because National Board assessors do not visit your classroom, the videos are the only way they can see you in action. Until you and your students are accustomed to the video-recording process, however, it is unlikely that you will be able to make one that accurately portrays your class.

Inhibition, self-consciousness, and silliness can keep people from acting naturally on a video. The only solution to this problem is practice, practice, and more practice.

Review the *Video Practice* part in the *Get Started* section of your portfolio directions. It contains important information on equipment, technique, and the required release forms. Your CD-ROM provides pictures to help you see the best camera angles in two different classroom settings. Ask for help from your media specialist, a friend, a teacher assistant, or a student who will be able to help you on several occasions during the certification process. You must be familiar with the detailed requirements for producing your videos. The handout at the end of this chapter can be used to provide your cameraperson with the basic information needed.

Next, complete the following exercises, including selecting practice lessons to record, answering the analysis questions, and completing the analysis practice worksheet. Keep in mind that assessors are looking for (1) climate, (2) pedagogy, (3) instruction, and (4) interactive communication. They must see your face and the faces of your students. Working with these practice videos will provide a unique opportunity to learn from studying your practice and also to hone your skills of observation, analysis, and reflection. These are the skills that will help you complete the assessment process and will enhance your skill as a teaching professional.



It is a good idea to begin recording early and often until you are adept at getting a video that provides a complete picture of your teaching.



For each class that you record, make a few notes that will help you recall that class session. Also, be sure to label the videos and your notes in such a way that you can quickly and correctly match them when you begin to analyze the recording.



The assessors **must see your face and the faces of the students** in the class on camera. When making your video, make sure you follow the directions for your specific certificate area.



**Exercise 8:**

Use this worksheet to help you think about what lesson(s) will best fulfill the requirements for the recorded entries.

**VIDEO WORKSHEET**

Entry #: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Minutes of video required: \_\_\_\_\_

Standards addressed: \_\_\_\_\_

Content area: \_\_\_\_\_

Grouping specifications (e.g., individual students, small group, whole class):

What does NBPTS want to see in this video?

What lessons might fulfill these requirements, and approximately when will they be presented?

LESSON/UNIT	APPROX. DATE



**Exercise 9:**

Use this worksheet to take notes that will help you recall the recording of the class session once you are ready to analyze it.



Use actual quotes or actions from the video as evidence to support your statements.

**VIDEO NOTES**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson Objectives:**

1. What particular instructional challenges did the students in the class offer?
  
2. How successful was the lesson (i.e., were the lesson objectives achieved)? What worked? Cite and analyze the evidence you have to support your opinion.
  
3. What might you do differently next time?
  
4. Describe the instructional materials used in the lesson.
  
5. Describe evidence of student learning for each lesson objective.

Lesson Objectives	Evidence of Student Learning
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



Use this guide as a handy checklist for producing your video.



## VIDEO RECORDING GUIDE

### Purpose

The purpose of the video is to provide the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards with as authentic and complete a view of the candidate's teaching as possible. This guide presents requirements that NBPTS has established that **must** be followed and suggestions for producing a high-quality recording.

### Minimum equipment needed

- Video camera
- VHS videotapes and CDs (high quality)
- Recordable DVDs (submit in DVD-R form)
- Tripod
- Extension cord (*remember to tape down cords*)

### Optional equipment

- External microphone
- Headphones (*for monitoring sound as it is being recorded*)

### NBPTS requirements

- **Do not stop and restart the camera at any time** because this may result in the video being unacceptable.
- Make sure to follow the directions and time lengths for your specific certificate area.
- **The video must show the faces of the teacher and the students.**
- The video must **not** show a child or adult whom the teacher has identified as not having a release form because this will result in the video being unacceptable.

### Tips to improve video quality

- Before recording, make sure all cables are securely connected and the medium is in the camera.
- Use a tripod.
- Position the camera at the side of the room, not facing windows. In general, the camera

should be aimed at the speaker, but in a position to capture the participating students. Do not move the camera back and forth between speakers.

- If chalkboard writing is important to the lesson, take care to ensure that it is captured on the video and that it is legible. Suggestions include:
  - Refocus lens on the board during the lesson.
  - Check the angle before you start recording; you may need to move the camera to avoid distractions such as glare.
  - Consider using dark markers on chart paper taped to the chalkboard.
- If it is necessary to move the camera while recording, set the zoom lens to its widest setting to reduce the amount of shakiness.
- Increase the amount of light in the room by turning on all of the lights and opening window blinds. However, **do not aim the camera at a source of bright light.**

### Tips to improve sound quality

- Turn off fans, air conditioners, fish tank pumps, etc.
- Avoid recording when there is extraneous noise (e.g., band practice, recess, lawn mowing, fire drills).
- Use an external microphone that can be kept close to the person who is speaking. Place a piece of felt under the microphone to diminish noise.
- Put a "Do Not Disturb" sign on the classroom door to avoid interruptions.
- Check with the office for unscheduled activities (i.e., fire drills, assemblies, etc.).

## Chapter 7: Preparing Written Commentaries

**T**HROUGHOUT THE PORTFOLIO, you will be asked to prepare written commentaries that will include **descriptive**, **analytic**, and **reflective** writing. In these commentaries, you will demonstrate your understanding and provide your interpretation of the significance of what you have submitted. Most practicing teachers do not spend a lot of time thinking and writing about teaching in this way because they are too busy preparing lessons and teaching classes.

For this reason, it is important that you review the special characteristics of each type of writing and then practice both describing and interpreting your work in the classroom.

### Description vs. Analysis vs. Reflection Description is an objective retelling.

When you are asked for description, you must relate what happened accurately and in logical order, so that your reader can have the best sense possible of how your lesson unfolded. Be sure to include all key features that would help a reader feel that he or she was in the classroom with you.

**Analysis** and **reflection** overlap. Both of these types of writing ask you to answer the questions “**why?**” and “**how?**” Analysis is interpretation of the facts, so if you are asked to provide analysis, do not tell what happened (that is description); instead, explain **why** you think it happened and how you feel it influenced the course of the lesson, or your students’ understanding. Reflection is self-analysis. When you are asked

what you would do differently in a lesson, you are being asked to reflect on your own practice. **Analysis and reflection require supporting evidence.** Although the focus of this kind of writing is on your interpretation of the events and outcomes, be sure to include the relevant facts to support your statements.

In *Get Started: Writing About Teaching* in the NBPTS portfolio instructions, there is a clear review of the characteristics of the different kinds of writing you will need to do. Read this section carefully and then complete the activities that follow. Do not think of these exercises as extra work, because completing them will help you later as you prepare each portfolio entry.

It is important that you take the time to think about them before you write your responses. Realize that it takes time, effort and multiple drafts to understand, recognize, and develop the different kinds of writing required for each entry. The process of writing and the analytical and reflective thinking behind it are inseparable. This work will broaden and deepen your practice as well as enable you to present your work to the assessors more effectively.

The directions for each portfolio entry will specify when each type of writing—descriptive, analytic, and/or reflective—is required. Your written commentaries must present an argument, complete with concrete evidence, that you meet the specified NBPTS Standards. In essence, your commentary itself is considered as evidence because it demonstrates that you are able to think about, analyze, and reflect on



When preparing written commentaries, ask a colleague who is familiar with the NBPTS Standards to review your work and let you know if you are communicating clearly.



Remember, if you are using the Spanish language option, you may submit student work and videotapes in Spanish, but all written commentaries **must** be in English.



The *Level 4 Rubric* specifically requires **clear, consistent, and convincing** evidence in your responses. Consult the scoring guide to review all rubrics for each entry.

your teaching practice in relation to the NBPTS Standards. Your commentary is your response to the question, “**What** did you do and **why** did you do it?”

You will be asked to describe and analyze your practice as it relates to NBPTS Standards, so make special note of **which** standards are being assessed in **each** entry. You must spend considerable time thinking about the standards and reflecting on your teaching in relation to those standards, so don’t expect to read the standards once and then complete the entry. Rather, identify the specific standards being addressed in each entry and then review the standards notebook you created using the exercises in Chapter 4 of this guide.

Think about how you are teaching and what you do that embodies the standards. Then go into your classroom and teach. Set aside time later for reflection on how effective your teaching was in relation to those standards. Ask yourself these questions:

- How would I describe and analyze what I did in relation to these particular standards?

- How would I convince someone that my teaching embodies these standards?

**Keep in mind that no single teaching style or approach is expected or desired.** The classroom-based entries assume well thought out teaching practices that show students engaged in learning. Candidates are expected to demonstrate that they:

- Know their students;
- Are able to set appropriate learning goals for them;
- Implement learning experiences to engage students in learning; and
- Analyze these experiences and reflect on their practice.

Read through all of the entry directions before beginning to make choices about which lessons to use for your entries. Now is the time to start thinking about the units you usually teach that might fit the requirements. As you read through the entries, use Exercise 10 (below) to help you study the parameters for each one.



### Exercise 10:

Complete one of these forms for each portfolio entry.

## PORTFOLIO ENTRY EXERCISE

Certificate Area: \_\_\_\_\_ Entry Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Period: \_\_\_\_\_

What is valued in this entry?

Key words and phrases (look for these in the italicized section at the beginning of the entry and in the section called *How Will My Response Be Scored?*):

Topic and restrictions:

What must be submitted?

Standards assessed:

- a. Identify which standards are being assessed
- b. Briefly summarize each standard

## HANDOUT FOR REVIEWING WRITTEN COMMENTARIES



Use this guide as you prepare your written commentaries and share it with the colleagues you have asked to review your work.

### Description

Description is called for when the prompt uses verbs like **state**, **list**, **describe**, or asks “**what**” or “**which**.” If the commentary asks for description, then review your response against the following criteria:

- Do you provide accurate and precise enumeration and/or explanation of critical features?
- Do you provide clear and logical ordering of the elements or features of the event, person, concept, or strategy being described?
- Do you include all of the features or elements that would allow an outsider to see as you see whatever is described?

### Analysis and Reflection

Analysis and reflection overlap. **Analysis** involves interpretation and examination of **why** the elements or events described are

the way they are. **Reflection** is a particular type of analysis—it suggests **self-analysis** or **retrospective consideration** of one’s teaching practice and its outcomes in terms of this assessment. (Note: If the subject of the analysis [the student work or videotape] is not available to the colleague who is reading your analysis, be sure to provide a clear description.)

If the commentary asks for analysis or reflection, review the response against these criteria:

- Is the focus of your writing on the “**why**” (which is analytical and reflective) and not the “**what**” (which is descriptive)?
- Does your response provide an explanation and interpretation of **what** happened, **why** it happened that way, and your understanding of what should come next or **how** you would change the lesson if you could do it again?

## Chapter 8: Documenting Accomplishments

**T**HE THIRD SOURCE OF EVIDENCE about your teaching practice that must be included in your portfolio is documentation of your work activities and accomplishments in each of three categories: (1) as a partner with students' families and the community, (2) as a learner, and (3) as a leader/collaborator.

Make sure you carefully read the directions and the rubrics in the Documented Accomplishments entry so that you know what is expected and required before you begin collecting evidence and writing about your accomplishments.

This step will save you time in the long run and help ensure that you demonstrate how you meet the NBPTS Standards.

You should begin collecting evidence early in the process. Evaluate the evidence as you collect and select it. Only include evidence that is **directly connected** to the standards identified in the Documented Accomplishments entry and that can be **directly connected** to student learning.

To document your accomplishments related to collaboration in the professional community, you can submit copies of awards, certificates, or diplomas that show the impact and significance either on your class, school or community, or on a wider scale with relation to the NBPTS Standards. **If an accomplishment does not show an impact on student learning, do not include it.** Make sure that you can prove that your accomplishment shows an impact on student learning. If you can't prove the impact, rethink whether or not you want to include it.

To help document your accomplishments for outreach to families, keep a contact log throughout the year. Record whom you contacted, the type of contact, why the contact was significant, and the outcome of the contact. Keep copies of your correspondence with families and community members, including their responses. Reflect on and analyze the significance and impact of each contact. When considering including a particular activity, you should analyze the activity or the contact in relation to the standards. If something appears routine, analyze it and show why it was not simply routine. Focus on the interactive component of your contacts. Show how you built ongoing two-way relationships rather than simply focusing on your own input.

The Documented Accomplishments entry requires (1) a written description and analysis, and (2) a reflective summary. You must explain what the accomplishment is, why it is significant, and what impact it has on student learning.

Use the questions in the Reflective Summary section of the Documented Accomplishments entry of your portfolio instructions to guide your discussion of the patterns and significance of your accomplishments.

As always, you must be sure that you provide evidence that connects your work to the NBPTS Standards. As you make your selections of what to include, pay close attention to how the evidence documents the importance and significance of your efforts in direct relation to the NBPTS Standards. For example:

■ **Saying you attended a workshop is not enough**—You need to show how you used the information from the workshop to improve your practice, the practice of colleagues, and your students' learning. In your written commentary, you need to explain why the evidence you have presented is important.

■ **Showing the notes you sent home to parents is not enough**—You need to explain why you did it, how it was interactive communication, and what it accomplished.

Make sure you follow the directions and specifications in the Documented Accomplishments

entry (e.g., page limits, time frame, use of the same person for different evidence). Remember, your response will be assessed on the extent to which it provides clear, convincing, and consistent evidence of your ability to advance student learning through your work with families and the community, with colleagues and other professionals, and as a lifelong learner.

Assessors look for clear connections between what you say in the description analysis, what you attach as documentation to support it, and its connection to student learning.



Use the *Communication Log* in the *Documented Accomplishments* entry to guide your recording of contacts with parents and the community.

### COPY ALL MATERIALS PRIOR TO SUBMISSION

Be sure to make photocopies of all materials you submit as part of your portfolio. Copy all written commentaries, student work samples, and instructional materials. Make copies of your videos using the directions provided in the Get Started section of the portfolio instructions. Keep all materials in a safe, easily accessible place. This will be an invaluable step if your submission is lost or damaged en route to NBPTS. The copies you retain also will be useful when reviewing your score results. Due to the complexity and volume of materials received, NBPTS will not be able to return your original materials.



Do you have proof that your accomplishment impacted student learning? Have you included this evidence in your documentation, description, and analysis?

## SECTION 3:

# NBPTS Assessment Center

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### Overview

The Assessment Center component of the National Board Certification process consists of six computer-delivered exercises, each of which must be completed within 30 minutes, at an Assessment Center near you. The exercises are designed to test your content knowledge specified in the NBPTS Standards for your certificate area.

Your first step should be to review the Assessment Center Orientation Guidelines found on the NBPTS Web site. These guidelines are the most important study aid available to candidates preparing for the Assessment Center. Your district or teachers association/union may also offer Assessment Center preparation sessions.





## Chapter 9: Assessment Center Experience

**T**HE ASSESSMENT CENTER COMPONENT of the National Board Certification process is administered at assessment centers nationwide. A site near you can be located by calling the Prometric NBPTS Registration Center at 800/226-7958 (select option 3) or by visiting [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/assessment\\_center/scheduling\\_an\\_appointment](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/assessment_center/scheduling_an_appointment).

### Assessment Center Appointment

You will be mailed an *Authorization To Test (ATT)* confirmation after you submit your (1) eligibility verification form(s), (2) nonstandard testing accommodation form (if applicable), and (3) full candidate fee(s).

After you have received your ATT and carefully read all the Assessment Center instructions, the next step is to make an appointment to take the assessment. You will need to refer to your ATT when calling to schedule your appointment. Most candidates will have a six- to 12-month window in which to test. **NBPTS strongly encourages you to schedule early** to ensure your desired test location and time. (Note: Some testing centers are unable to schedule appointments more than 45 days in advance, so it is **very** important to call your center to determine how early you can actually make your appointment.)

To make your appointment, follow the directions in Step 3—*Make an Appointment* at the online Assessment Center Orientation Web page at [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/assessment\\_center/scheduling\\_an\\_appointment](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/assessment_center/scheduling_an_appointment).

### Regulations and Procedures

After you have scheduled your appointment and arrived at the Assessment Center, the staff will use a set of standardized procedures for

admitting and testing candidates. It is important that prior to arriving at the Assessment Center, you review the online information that describes regulations and test-day procedures, and that you follow the directions you receive from the staff and the computer instructions while you are at the Assessment Center.

**You must have your *Authorization To Test (ATT)* and two valid forms of identification** (the name on your photo ID must match the name on your NBPTS application) when you arrive at the center.

In addition, if you are applying for any of the following certificates (EA/Math, AYA/Math, EA/Science, AYA/Science, EMC/Art, EAYA/Art, EMC/Music, EAYA/Music, EMC/World Languages Other than English and EAYA/World Languages Other than English), you must have your sheet of Assessment Center ID labels with you. If you are pursuing certification in EMC/Art or EAYA/Art, you should have your art product in a plastic bag. The only other materials you will be allowed to take into the Assessment Center are pens (black ink), pencils, and an approved calculator (described online).

You will not be allowed to take handwritten notes, photocopies, or bound NBPTS materials into the Assessment Center.

Scratch paper and extra pens and pencils are available at each Assessment Center.

All candidates are required to take the Assessment Center exercises on a computer at a Prometric Testing Center. Some handwriting responses are necessary in certain certificate areas such as mathematics, science, due to specific prompt requirements. This applies to all first-time and retake candidates.



Remember, you will not receive your *Authorization To Test* document or be able to make your Assessment Center appointment until you have met all eligibility requirements, submitted all required forms, and paid all of your fees.



NBCTs recommend making your Assessment Center appointment as soon as possible to help improve your chances of getting the time and location you prefer.



Make sure you visit the NBPTS Assessment Center Orientation Web page to review the step-by-step guidelines and explore links to helpful information.



Contact NBPTS about name changes.



The NBPTS online Assessment Center tutorial is very helpful. Don't skip it! [www.nbpts.org/tutorial/index.html](http://www.nbpts.org/tutorial/index.html).



Call your local Assessment Center to confirm your appointment.



Check for possible unique Assessment Center requirements in your certification area.

## What the Exercises Are About and How To Prepare

Assessment Center exercises focus on your content area or discipline and, therefore, are specific to each of the certificate areas for National Board Certification.

An Assessment Center exercise can consist of one or more prompts (or steps) that direct you to respond to a series of questions designed to gauge your content knowledge. For every certificate except art, the stimulus materials needed for the exercises are presented on the computer screen. For example, in some instances, a classroom scenario or student profile might be presented on the computer screen for you to consider before responding to a question within an exercise. Only the art certificate has on-site stimulus materials provided during the exercises. In either case, it is very important that you read each question carefully and follow the instructions.

### Review Content

The Assessment Center exercises address teaching and learning issues for the full age range included in your certificate; therefore, you are required to demonstrate your knowledge of developmentally appropriate content across the entire certificate age range. If you have not taught the subjects or age group covered, reviewing the objectives for each area and grade level is recommended. Team with other candidates to review prompts, standards, and age range considerations. Textbooks, a curriculum guide, or refresher courses offered by your school system or a local university might

be helpful. **Meeting with colleagues who teach subject areas or age ranges you do not currently teach—but that are covered by the certificate area—also is recommended.**

When scoring responses, the assessors value specific detail and clarity, not length. Your responses must specifically refer to the stimulus materials (if provided).

**The Assessment Center exercises do not assess your writing ability. You should present your answers in the manner that best conveys what you want to say.** In some cases, you may choose to use connected paragraphs, while in other cases you may decide to use bulleted lists.

### Online Tutorial

You can access the online tutorial on the NBPTS Web site [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/assessment/prepare\\_for\\_your\\_appoint](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/assessment/prepare_for_your_appoint) to prepare for your appointment. Read through the system requirements before launching the tutorial. Be sure you are using a computer with enough memory to run the tutorial; and a relatively fast Internet connection also is recommended. This will help you to better approximate the conditions you will experience in the Assessment Center.

The tutorial will take you through the entire Assessment Center experience, including assessment directions, and tips on planning your time. Although practicing with the tutorial will help ease your test-day jitters, it is no substitute for being prepared for the content to be tested within the actual assessments.

Retired prompts are available for each certificate area in the scoring guide. Timed practice on a computer is extremely helpful.

## Assessment Center Anxiety Tips

National Board Certified Teachers who have completed the Assessment Center process offer some helpful suggestions in the box below.

Additionally, and perhaps even more importantly is that “if a prompt requests that you provide two examples of appropriate actions to take in a given educational situation, only the first two examples you provided will be scored.”



Prior to your testing day, check the exact location of the Assessment Center.

### HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE BIG DAY

- Eat a good breakfast.
- Arrive early so you have time to relax before your assessment.
- Draw on your **content knowledge** and what you know about the process of teaching in answering the questions.
- Do not let one question rattle you so much that you are not at your best for the other questions.
- Dress comfortably. Bring a sweater, or dress in layers so that you can adapt to the room’s temperature.
- Prepare for distractions. As a result of staggered assessment schedules, people will be moving around and taking breaks at different times.
- Bring a mini first-aid kit for a headache, scratchy throat, runny nose, or contact lens trouble.
- Plan a special activity (dinner, vacation, or a party) to celebrate completing the assessment.

## Answering the Prompt

Just as there are several successful ways to create accomplished portfolio entries, there are ways to approach answering the Assessment Center exercises. Your method for answering the prompts will depend on your preference. You may want to try several different ways of responding to prompts to help determine your comfort level.

The one nonnegotiable: **read the prompt carefully**. Level 4 Rubric responses are not only clear, consistent, and convincing, they are also appropriate and focused to the prompt.

The NBPTS 2007 Assessment Center Orientation publication specifically states that “assessors are looking for depth and quality” in the candidate’s response, not “quantity.”

## What’s the best way to read the exercise?

Many candidates say that they found it helpful to read the entire prompt first before beginning their response. This means you would scroll through the screens that show all of the prompts for a single Assessment Center exercise. (The software prevents you from reading the prompts for all six Assessment Center exercises before responding.) One advantage to this method is that you will be aware of the entire question before beginning.

A few candidates report running out of time before getting to the last screen – they either mismanaged time or didn’t realize the Assessment Center exercise included three or even four prompts. Other candidate’s reported that they did not look ahead because it increased their stress. They simply read one screen, answered the question and moved to the next.



For actual retired prompts, visit the Candidate Resource Center on the NBPTS Web site for the Scoring Guide [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/scoring](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/scoring) in your certificate area. The Scoring Guide will give you a better idea of the kinds of questions you may be asked on your assessment.

## Preparing for the Assessment Center Exercises

### Retired Prompts

There are some released/retired prompts found in the Scoring Guides available on the NBPTS Web site for each certificate area. Naturally, these are the best and most reliable examples of what you can expect to see at the Assessment Center. However, most certificate areas have only two released prompts that candidates can practice answering. This means you may want to generate some of your own practice prompts.

Many candidates find that writing their own practice prompts based on their intensive study of the descriptors and rubrics is very helpful. However, remember at no time, in no instance, can you ask NBCTs or candidates who have taken their Assessment Center exercises to create practice prompts for you, nor should they review the prompts or responses. This violates the confidentiality statements that candidates sign at the Assessment Center.

If you should decide to create practice prompts, remember that you are creating them based on what you “believe” will be assessed. There is no guarantee that you will write the perfect prompt aligned to the Assessment Center exercise. However, the more practice you have answering prompts, the more comfortable you’ll likely be on test day.

## How Long Will I Be At The Assessment Center?

First-time candidates in most certificate areas follow the same testing schedule as shown below. At this time, Music and World Languages Other than English have modified testing schedules.

First-time candidates can expect to be at the Assessment Center for a little over four hours. This allows for 30 minutes early arrival, check-in, computer tutorial, Assessment Center exercises and a 15-minute break.

According to the NBPTS Web site, the testing schedule will look like this:

Check-in	15 minutes
Computer Tutorial	30 minutes
Exercises 1–3 (each 30 minutes)	90 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Exercises 4–6 (each 30 minutes)	90 minutes
<b>Total time at Assessment Center</b>	<b>4 hours</b>

## USING THE RUBRICS: PREPARING FOR THE ASSESSMENT CENTER



### Exercise 11

In each National Board Scoring Guide, NBPTS has included two required prompts, “Selected Assessment Center Exercises.” In addition, you will find rubrics 1–4 for each of the six prompts for the previous year. Although the actual prompts will differ in specific substance, current candidates can learn helpful information by examining these six rubrics along with the two retired prompts.

This worksheet suggests a way to glean helpful hints from the rubrics supplied in your own category.

For each of the six prompts, the rubrics tell you what the scorers are expecting from you. For example, from Early Childhood Generalists, Exer. 1 Literacy: Scoring Rubric Requirements – Provide evidence of the following:

1. Identify and explain two strengths of student reading development.
2. Give a developmentally appropriate goal and instructional strategy for two strengths.
3. Discuss appropriate resources/materials to further reading development.
4. Present rationale to connect student strengths, strategy and materials.

### Now distinguish among the four scores possible on this prompt: THE EVIDENCE

	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
	Clear, Convincing, Consistent	Clear	Limited	No
1. Accurate	Detailed ID of two strengths	Accurate ID	Inaccurate or vague ID	
2.				
3.				
4.				

From this exercise, what direction do you expect the prompt to take?

What do you need to know and do in order to complete these tasks?

What should you learn/do/think about to prepare for this exercise?

Using this worksheet model, examine the rubrics provided in your category as a preparation for your Assessment Center prompts.

## SECTION 4:

# Scoring

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### Overview

The scoring process can seem complicated, but NBPTS is committed to making sure that its assessments are valid and meaningful and that the scoring of candidates' responses is reliable, accurate, and fair. This section addresses some of the questions raised by candidates after receiving their scores.



## CHAPTER 10: Receiving Scores

**YOU CAN VIEW YOUR SCORES ONLINE** and print a copy of your score profile at the National Board Registration and Information Center (NBRIC) (<https://nbpts3.ets.org>) as soon as scores are released **if you have given NBPTS your Social Security number**. The official policy states that scores will be released on or before December 31.

Past candidates suggest being careful about when and where you first view your scores. If you are nervous, you might want to be alone or have a close friend with you for support. If you think you might become emotional, no matter what your score, you may not want to be in front of your class when you find out.

When you view your score profile, you will find an explanation of your raw exercise scores, the weights for each exercise, the uniform constant that is added to each candidate's weighted exercise total, and your total weighted scaled score (TWSS). You must earn a TWSS of at least 275 points to achieve National Board Certification. See the figure on the right for an example of what your score profile will look like.

If you achieve National Board Certification on your first attempt, congratulations! Complete the online form to submit the name you want to have on your certificate, tell your administration, your teachers union, and celebrate! Start thinking about how you are going to share the good news with your colleagues, your community, and the people and organizations that have helped you along the way. One way to share the news is to use the press release template that comes with your certificate.


If you are still on the journey to achieving National Board Certification, congratulations are still in order—you are closer than you were before. It is natural to be disappointed but recognize that making this effort has already positively affected your teaching. Your scores have been banked automatically. Remember, you have 24 months from the date of your initial score report to complete the National Board Certification process.



If you do not feel comfortable notifying the press, ask your mentor or someone else in your school to do it for you.

My Scores: Score Profile - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by ETS

Print Cancel Print Full Score Report

 Candidate ID:  
Certificate: Early and Middle Childhood/Music

To achieve National Board Certification as an Early and Middle Childhood/Music teacher, a candidate must earn a total weighted scaled score on the assessment that equals or exceeds 275.

**FULL SCORE PROFILE**

Entry or Exercise Name	Raw Exercise Score (RES)	Weight (W)	Weighted Scaled Score (RES x W)
Planning	2.500	16.000	56.00
Delivering Instruction	2.750	16.000	44.00
Demonstrating and Developing Musicianship	3.000	16.000	48.00
Doc Accom: Contrib to Student Learning	2.875	12.000	34.50
Diagnostic Skills	2.250	6.670	15.00
Historical Repertoire	2.375	6.670	15.84
Applied Theory/Composition	2.125	6.670	14.17
Instructional Strategies	3.500	6.670	23.34
Music From a World Sample	2.875	6.670	19.17
Cumcular Applications	2.375	6.670	15.84
<b>Sum of Scaled Scores</b>			<b>286</b>
<b>Uniform Constant</b>			<b>12</b>
<b>TOTAL WEIGHTED SCALED SCORE</b>			<b>298</b>

Scores should be used solely for the purpose of determining National Board Certification. Any other use would be a misrepresentation of these score data.

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## CHAPTER 11: Understanding Scoring

**C**ANDIDATES OFTEN HAVE MANY questions after receiving their scores. NBPTS provides information at [www.nbpts.org/helps\\_and\\_faqs/scoring](http://www.nbpts.org/helps_and_faqs/scoring) and answers many questions at the Candidate Inquiry Service at [https://nbpts3.ets.org/cis/faqs/faqs\\_0304\\_scorebanking.html](https://nbpts3.ets.org/cis/faqs/faqs_0304_scorebanking.html). Some of the more frequently asked questions are addressed below.

**What do these scores mean?** National Board Certification is a standards-based assessment. A candidate's score reflects the degree to which assessors were able to locate clear, consistent, and convincing evidence that the candidate met the standards specific to his or her certificate field. It is vital that candidates who did not achieve National Board Certification on the first attempt understand that their scores reflect the quality of the evidence they provided in the assessment—not necessarily the quality of their teaching!

**Who are the assessors?** Assessors are practicing classroom teachers, just like you, who have received intensive training on how to score the exercises. One or more assessors score each of the 10 candidate responses for certificate areas that have been offered for more than one year. Therefore, each candidate's completed assessment is scored by at least 10 different classroom teachers. Each entry for new certificates is double-scored. Each year NBPTS conducts analyses to determine the level of assessor reliability (i.e., the level of agreement between independent assessors). The results of these reliability

analyses indicate that NBPTS assessors are consistently making reliable, accurate, and fair evaluations of candidates' responses.

**Why does it take so long to receive my scores?**

Extensive quality controls and psychometric analyses are conducted to ensure the statistical reliability and legal defensibility of all score results. This important work is done after all scoring has been completed and before your results can be sent out.

**What does it mean to get a non-scorable entry?**

Retake entries that are found to be identical or amended versions of your original entry will not be scored, the retake fee will be forfeited, and the entry will receive an "NS" ("Not Scored") designation on your score profile. (Note: Advanced candidates can resubmit a revised response to entry 4 without penalty.) Entries missing a critical component will receive an "NS."

**Can I appeal my score?** Yes. NBPTS has an appeals process. If you think you have "good cause" to believe that the process was fundamentally unfair for you, you can appeal a scoring and/or certification decision. It is difficult to establish good cause to support a request for reconsideration of a certification or scoring decision. You must identify some particular circumstance or condition that explains why you believe it is fundamentally unfair for NBPTS to maintain the certification and/or scoring decisions previously released to you. To appeal a decision, you must submit a letter



of request that includes all pertinent details and materials relevant to the appeal, along with the appropriate filing fee; NBPTS must receive the letter within 60 calendar days of the date printed on the score report. The fee to file a certification appeal is \$500; the appeal may take several months. For information about the appeal policy and all related procedures, refer to your *Guide to Understanding National Board Certification* or visit the NBPTS Web site at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).

**What if I think one of my scores was reported incorrectly?** NBPTS conducts rigorous quality control procedures before releasing scores. If, however, you still want to have a score verified, you may choose to use the Score Verification Service for a fee. The portfolio entry(ies) or Assessment Center exercise(s) you want to have verified are not rescored for this fee. For information about the Score Verification Service, fees, and procedures for requesting this service, see the NBPTS Web site at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).

**Why isn't feedback provided with the score report?**

A candidate's score reflects the degree to which assessors were able to locate clear, consistent, and convincing evidence that the candidate has met the standards specific to his or her certificate field. Assessors are instructed to identify, record, and evaluate only the evidence that candidates provide—"missing evidence" is not identified. Assessors make no suggestions for improvement. They instead focus on the evaluation of evidence, not on feedback to candidates. Providing suggestions for improvement implies that there is a template for success in National Board Certification. In fact, there is an infinite number of ways to certify, and all are based on meeting the standards. Providing suggestions for improvement is not a part of the scoring process.

## SECTION 5:

# The Advanced Candidacy

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### Overview

It is not unusual for teachers to achieve National Board Certification over the course of two or three years. This section provides information to help candidates think about retaking portions of their assessment if they do not achieve National Board Certification on their first attempt. Seeking National Board Certification is challenging, but the rewards for both you and your students are worth the effort.



## CHAPTER 12: Deciding What's Next

**I**F YOUR SCORE FELL BELOW THE performance standard used by the National Board in awarding National Board Certification, you are not alone; not everyone succeeds on the first try. Candidates often feel as if they have failed. They feel angry or cheated. These are all common, reasonable emotions that must be overcome before planning your next steps.

Take some time to think about whether you want to continue toward achieving National Board Certification. Think about the reasons you initially decided to seek certification and about whether continuing your effort fits with both your personal and professional goals.

If you elect not to pursue National Board Certification, you should feel satisfied at having completed the profession's most intensive professional development program.

If you decide to continue with the process, you need to start thinking about which exercise(s) you will retake and how you can improve your score(s).

### Determining Which Exercises To Retake

There are several things to consider before deciding which exercises to retake. You need to determine how likely it is that you can increase your score on a given exercise and how much improvement will affect your total weighted scaled score (TWSS). NBPTS provides an online interactive calculator that will help you make your decisions.

Accompanying your score report is an online tool that performs all the calculations necessary

to consider when making your decisions. You may also choose to use Exercise 12, which suggests a six-step process to help you determine which exercises to retake. As you work through this process, you will need to have your score report and the worksheet on page 59. Many National Board Certified Teachers also recommend that you work through this process with a friend.

**Exercise 12:** *Determining Which Exercises to Retake.* Use the worksheet on the next page as you think about which exercises to retake.

*Step 1:* Use your score report to determine how many points your total weighted scaled score differs from the performance standard of 275.

For example, if you received a TWSS of 268, you need to increase your TWSS by at least 7 points ( $275 - 268 = 7$ ) to receive National Board Certification.

*Step 2:* Determine which individual exercises you are eligible to retake. You are only eligible to retake exercises on which you scored below a 2.75. These exercises are marked with an asterisk (\*) on your score report.

*Step 3:* Using the worksheet, write down the individual raw exercise scores you received on each of the entries and/or exercises that you are eligible to retake. These numbers are located in the raw exercise score (RES) column of your score report.

*Step 4:* Estimate a reasonable score increase that you might attain on each of the individual entries and/or exercises you are eligible to retake. Write these down.



Review online guidance to help you determine which exercises to retake at [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/retake\\_candidates](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/retake_candidates).

What was the score you received on an exercise? The lower the score, the more room for improvement, but if you scored very low on an exercise, you must decide how likely it is that you can improve it significantly. Also, remember the greater the weight associated with a specific exercise, the more impact an increased score will have on your TWSS. Be realistic and consider the factors discussed in Steps 5 and 6.

*Step 5:* Assess your personal strengths and weaknesses relative to each of the exercises you are eligible to retake. Consider the following questions:

- Are you more comfortable responding to portfolio entries (where prompts are known in advance) or responding to Assessment Center exercises (where the prompts are not known in advance)?
- Do you become anxious during timed assessments?
- When comparing your portfolio responses to the rubric for the entry, are you **absolutely clear** about why your score is not higher?
- Do you have good ideas about how to improve your performance on portfolio entries and Assessment Center exercises?

*Step 6:* Consider other factors when deciding which individual exercise(s) to retake.

Factors to consider include:

- Are you still teaching in the same certificate area?
- What are your personal obligations during the retake timeframe?
- Are your school-related or professional obligations likely to increase, decrease, or remain the same across the retake eligibility period?
- Are your other outside activities likely to increase, decrease, or remain the same?
- Is funding an issue? Remember that each portfolio entry or Assessment Center exercise you retake will cost \$350, so you will want to identify sources of financial assistance if needed.
- How difficult will it be for you to complete the exercise(s) process if you delay your retake(s) by a year?

Following these six steps should help you identify the exercise(s) that make most sense for you to retake. Make sure you have selected exercise(s) that, if you improve your score, will earn you enough points to attain National Board Certification. Finally, it is important to remember that when you complete a retake of an exercise, your new score replaces your original score, **even if it is lower than your original score.**

<b>EXERCISE 12: DETERMINING WHICH EXERCISES TO RETAKE</b>					
<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Expected New Raw Score</b>	<b>Current Earned Raw Score</b>	<b>Reasonable Raw Score Increase</b>	<b>Weight x Reasonable Raw Score Increase =</b>
Portfolio Entry 1	16.00				
Portfolio Entry 2	16.00				
Portfolio Entry 3	16.00				
Portfolio Entry 4	12.00				
Assessment Center					
Exercise 1	6.67				
Assessment Center					
Exercise 2	6.67				
Assessment Center					
Exercise 3	6.67				
Assessment Center					
Exercise 4	6.67				
Assessment Center					
Exercise 5	6.67				
Assessment Center					
Exercise 6	6.67				
Uniform Constant					12
				<b>TOTAL</b>	

## CHAPTER 13: Preparing To Retake



Remember, you can find the standards for your certificate area at [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/certificate\\_areas1](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/certificate_areas1).



Candidate support works. Try it!!! Consider joining a support program.

**O**NCE YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED which exercise(s) you are going to retake, you can begin your preparation. If you are a first-time candidate, you may continue to pursue National Board Certification for a period of 24 months from the date printed on your initial score report. One of your first activities should be to reconnect with those who can help you during the retake process. In addition some National Board Certified Teachers who achieved National Board Certification on their second try suggest including a new colleague who might bring a different perspective to your work.

### Portfolio Exercises

If you have decided to retake one or more portfolio entries, you will be responding to the same entry from your original portfolio. However, some of the instructions may contain clarifications or additions, so you should follow the retake instructions carefully.

**Begin by planning a new lesson.** Although you are not prohibited from using the same lesson for your retake entry as you did for your original entry, many mentors suggest selecting a new lesson to help you get a fresh start. However, if you opt to use the same lesson, be very careful that all of your written commentaries, including your analyses, videotape, student work samples, responses, artifacts, and reflection are completely new. (Entry 4 is an exception. See [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/retake\\_candidates](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/retake_candidates).) All retake entries are com-

pared to the corresponding original entries. Retake entries that are found to be identical or amended versions of your original entries will not be scored, the retake fee will be forfeited, and the entries will receive an “NS” (“not scored”) designation on your score profile.

Next, review the standards that are the focus of the entry or entries you are retaking. Even though you are familiar with the standards, take the time to thoroughly study the relevant standards by reviewing the exercises in Chapter 3 of this guide. Also review the *How Will My Response Be Scored?* section of your portfolio instructions so that you are familiar with what is expected in your response. Taking the time to review the standards and how your responses are scored will allow you to build on what you have learned from submitting your original portfolio material. You also should focus on providing *clear, consistent, and convincing evidence* that your teaching meets these standards.

Finally, it will be helpful to review the different types of writing—descriptive, analytic, and reflective—that are required in the written commentaries. See Chapter 7 of this guide or *Get Started: Writing About Teaching* in the NBPTS portfolio instructions for useful advice on developing your written commentaries.

## Assessment Center

If you have chosen to retake one or more Assessment Center exercises, you can begin to prepare by collecting the resources you will need to review the content-area knowledge specified in the NBPTS Standards.

It is important that you review the *Scoring Guide* for your certificate area. The guide provides information that will help you understand the features of all four levels of response. The guide also contains a brief description of each Assessment Center exercise, the rubrics used by the assessors to evaluate performance on each of the Assessment Center exercises, and selected Assessment Center prompts used in a previous assessment cycle (retired prompts are not available for newly released certificate areas).

If you are uncomfortable with the computerized format of the Assessment Center, it will be helpful to practice the online tutorial at the NBPTS Web site at: [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/assessment\\_center/prepare\\_for\\_your\\_appoint](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/assessment_center/prepare_for_your_appoint).

## The Retake Process

You can apply and pay for your retake exercises online. All of the information you need is provided online when you view your scores.

If you decide to begin the retake process immediately, you must apply and pay your fee on or before January 31 of the year following your score receipt. After completing the process, you will be notified of your new scores and your recalculated total weighted scaled score. New scores will be available on or before December 31 of the year you submit your retake materials.

## The Retake Fee

A candidate is charged a fee of \$350 for each portfolio entry and \$350 for each Assessment Center exercise that he or she chooses to retake. There is a retake application fee of \$15. Retake fees are nonrefundable, regardless of the circumstances.

If after paying the retake fee for one or more portfolio entries or Assessment Center exercises, you find that you cannot complete your portfolio retake entries or take your Assessment Center retake exercises, you may choose to defer submitting a new response for up to one year, provided you are still eligible to retake. Your retake fee will not be refunded, and NBPTS will require \$125 per portfolio entry or Assessment Center exercise to reinstate your deferred retakes. To defer, you must submit your request in writing to the NBPTS Processing Center. The written request to defer portfolio entries must be received prior to the portfolio deadline. The written request to defer Assessment Center exercises must be received 10 days prior to your scheduled Assessment Center appointment or at least 10 business days prior to the end of the Assessment Center testing window, whichever comes first. To reactivate your application, you must complete a new retake application and pay the deferment fee in the next assessment year. If you do not complete a new retake application and pay the deferment fee, you will forfeit all fees paid. **Note that you cannot defer any portfolio entries or Assessment Center exercises if you are in your last year of eligibility. Retake submissions can only be deferred once.**



You can find the Scoring Guide for your certificate area at [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/scoring](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/scoring).



Check with your state union and district to see if they offer financial support for retake fees.



## SECTION 6: The Renewal Candidacy

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### Overview

National Board Certificates are issued for a period of 10 years. NBCTs are, and continue to be, accomplished teachers. Their accomplishment reflects an inherent desire to pursue professional growth in order to increase their impact on student learning.

In the eighth year of certification, it is time to start thinking about renewing your certificates. NBPTS has developed the *Profile of Professional Growth*, the instrument for the renewal of National Board Certification. This instrument provides a comprehensive portrait of an NBCT's professional growth since achieving National Board Certification. It focuses on increasing student learning and maintaining high and rigorous standards, which are the mainstays of the National Board Certification process. A demonstration of preK-12 classroom teaching is required.



Visit the NBPTS Web site  
[www.nbpts.org/for\\_nbcts/  
certification\\_renewal](http://www.nbpts.org/for_nbcts/certification_renewal) for  
more information about  
the *Profile of Professional  
Growth*.



## CHAPTER 14:

# The *Profile of Professional Growth*

**T**HE *PROFILE OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH (PPG)* has its basis in and is drawn from the Five Core Propositions and the Architecture of Teaching. It is designed to promote continued professional development consistent with the high and rigorous standards that National Board Certification represents. It provides an avenue for NBCTs to articulate what certification means to them years later and how their teaching continues to embody NBPTS Standards.

Although the *Profile of Professional Growth* is separated into three components, the parts are integrated and complementary, designed so that NBCTs can demonstrate the connections they make between their continued professional development and student learning.

**Component #1** requires submission of responses to prompts related to four activities that have become a major focus of professional growth. These professional growth experiences, including effective and appropriate use of technology and current knowledge of the field, are ongoing and multifaceted. They must reflect the NBCT's continuous commitment and contributions to the professional activities that ultimately affect student learning.

**Component #2** focuses on the application of one of the professional growth experiences featured in the first component. Component

#2 requires a videotape in which the NBCT demonstrates preK-12 classroom teaching. The video and accompanying written commentary must demonstrate student learning in an environment that promotes equity and appreciation of diversity as well as the application of certificate-specific content knowledge. **There must be a date stamped on the video.**

**Component #3** focuses on the application of a second professional growth experience featured in Component #1. This third component offers several options, including the choice of featuring work with preK-12 learners or with professional colleagues. The basis for this component must be a different professional growth experience from that used in Component #2.

Throughout each of the three components, the NBCT's activities must demonstrate meaningful and rigorous learning experiences tied to certificate-specific content knowledge. In responding to the prompts, the commentary must reflect the fact that the NBPTS Standards continue to be embedded in the NBCT's practice.

The final section is **Reflection**, in which the NBCT analyzes the connections and patterns among all three components of the *Profile of Professional Growth* from the perspective of his or her role as an educator. The NBCT must focus on challenges encountered, and must describe plans for continued professional growth and efforts to affect student learning.

## CHAPTER 15:

# When And How To Renew




Once you begin the renewal process, be sure to review the current standards because many of the standards have been revised to better reflect current teaching practices.

**YOU MUST COMPLETE THE NATIONAL Board's *Profile of Professional Growth (PPG)*** prior to the expiration date of your certificate and can only renew certification in your original certificate area. You may begin formal work on the Profile of Professional Growth as early as year eight of your certification period. The table below shows the dates for current renewal cycles.

You may begin your application process online at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org). The total fee for certificate renewal is \$1,150 which includes a \$300 non-refundable application fee. Your renewal must be in your original area of certification. If you are teaching in a different field or are no longer actively teaching, you may still apply for certificate renewal. However, because the PPG

requires classroom teaching in the area of your original certificate, you will need to establish a relationship and work with students of a colleague as part of the renewal process.

You are encouraged to begin your renewal process in the eighth year of certification, in part, to allow two attempts to successfully renew your certificate. The fee to attempt to renew certification the second time is the same as the initial application. You will be required to resubmit your entire PPG for evaluation because the PPG is evaluated holistically so there can be no score banking in the application process. If you do not successfully complete the renewal process before your certificate expires, you will need to apply and go through the National Board Certification process as a first-time candidate.

 <b>THE COLOR OF YOUR NBCT FUTURE</b>						
Find the date you achieved certification...			→ Then find the dates that apply to your renewal process			
Date Certified	Certificate Expiration Date	→	Renewal Application Window	Fee Deadline	Submission Deadline	Decision Date
Nov 30, 1998	Nov 30, 2008	→	First Opportunity: Nov 13-Dec 31, 2006	Jan 31, 2007	April 1, 2007	Oct 2007
			Second Opportunity: Nov 13-Dec 31, 2007	Jan 31, 2008	April 30, 2008	Oct 2008
Nov 30, 1999	Nov 30, 2009	→	First Opportunity: Nov 13-Dec 31, 2007	Jan 31, 2008	April 30, 2008	Oct 2008
			First Opportunity: Nov 13-Dec 31, 2008	Jan 31, 2009	April 30, 2009	Oct 2009
Nov 30, 2000	Nov 30, 2010	→	First Opportunity: Nov 13-Dec 31, 2008	Jan 31, 2009	April 30, 2009	Oct 2009
			Second Opportunity: Nov 13-Dec 31, 2009	Jan 31, 2010	April 30, 2010	Oct 2010
Nov 30, 2001	Nov 30, 2011	→	First Opportunity: Nov 13-Dec 31, 2009	Jan 31, 2010	April 30, 2010	Oct 2010
			Second Opportunity: Nov 13-Dec 31, 2010	Jan 31, 2011	April 30, 2011	Oct 2011
Nov 30, 2002	Nov 30, 2012	→	First Opportunity: Nov 13-Dec 31, 2010	Jan 31, 2011	April 30, 2011	Oct 2011
			Second Opportunity: Nov 13-Dec 31, 2011	Jan 31, 2012	April 30, 2012	Oct 2012

\*\*\* NBCTs who are certified after November 2002 can find their schedule for renewal by adding one year to each date shown in the chart. For example: If you are an NBCT who certified in November 2003, your window to apply for your "First Opportunity" to renew your certification is January 1– December 31, 2011. Reprinted with permission from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org). All Rights Reserved.

## Understanding the Renewal Decision

### How does renewal differ from initial certification?

The process for renewal of National Board Certification is different from the initial certification process in several ways.

- In terms of structure, the renewal instrument has several interrelated components rather than entries and exercises that are independent of each other.
- The evaluation process is different in that a renewal candidate's response is evaluated as a whole rather than each component being considered separately.
- The renewal process is shorter than the original certification process; however, it is still a rigorous and demanding examination of professional growth since original certification.
- Renewal candidates will receive either a "renewed" or "not renewed" decision. The reports of renewal decisions will be different as will the resubmission process for renewal candidates who receive a "not renewed" decision.

### Is the renewal process based on revised NBPTS standards?

Renewal is based on the NBCT's application of the current standards within the original area of certification. Many of the standards have been revised to better reflect current teaching practices, and NBCTs will need to read and review these standards as part of the renewal process.

### Can I attempt certificate renewal if I am teaching in a field different from the field in which I was originally certified? What if I am no longer actively teaching?

Yes. However, because renewal requires classroom teaching in the area of your original certificate, you will need to establish a relationship and work with students of a colleague as part of the renewal process.

### Can I attempt renewal after my certificate expires?

No. If you do not successfully complete the renewal process prior to expiration of your certificate, you will need to apply and go through the National Board Certification process as a first-time candidate.

### When will renewal submissions be evaluated?

The evaluation of the Profile of Professional Growth is expected to take place in July each year. National Board Certified Teachers seeking renewal will need to plan accordingly to ensure they have adequate time to complete the process based on the timeframe for evaluation.

## SECTION 7: Conclusion

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**W**E HOPE YOU FIND THIS GUIDE USEFUL AS YOU BEGIN THE National Board Certification process. We know from surveys and anecdotes of candidates who have preceded you that the NBPTS process, although time-consuming, is intellectually challenging and an excellent professional development experience. Candidates report that the process has a positive impact on their teaching and on the way in which they interact with colleagues and work with students.

The AFT and the NEA hope that this guide assists you with understanding the National Board Certification process. We commend you for your commitment to strengthening the profession and wish you much success on your journey to National Board Certification.

## Glossary of Terms

National Board portfolio instructions use terms that you may be familiar with, but not necessarily in the context they are used by NBPTS. This section provides general definitions for some of these terms. For a more complete list, see *Resources: Portfolio-Related Terms* in the portfolio instructions.

**Assessment**—The formal or informal process of collecting evidence about progress, analyzing and evaluating progress, communicating about progress, and adjusting teaching practice based on reflection of a teacher’s practice. There are multiple forms of assessment, including formal measurement tools such as achievement or other standardized tests. Informal assessment can take place throughout the school year, and includes evaluating data from multiple sources, such as exercises or assignments that enable you to measure student progress, as well as student work itself, and feedback from parents or other family members.

**Assessment/Prompt** (as in “show how you use an assessment/prompt with your students”)—Any formal or informal means of creating an occasion that will allow a teacher to assess student work or progress. A prompt used to assess student work or progress need not be a formal testing device—it can be a quiz, oral question, problem, or exercise you select, create, or adapt for the purposes of measuring.

**Assessor(s)**—The teacher(s) trained to score NBPTS portfolio entries and Assessment Center exercises.

**Assignment/Prompt**—This is a term frequently used to describe directions from the teacher to elicit written student work. It could be a defined assignment, such as “write a paragraph

about ...,” or it might be a situation in which the teacher presents something (a photograph, a verbal scenario, a piece of writing, or a set of mathematics problems) and directs the students to respond to it in writing.

**Concrete Evidence**—Evidence that has a solid foundation in fact and that would be convincing to most people. The basis for this kind of evidence is strong, clear, and convincing. It is not easily disproved by a difference in interpretation.

**Instructional Materials**—Items used or produced during a teaching sequence that will help assessors better understand the activity featured in your videotape or written commentary.

**Interpretation**—The explanation of a conclusion you reached about the results of a teaching situation. An interpretation explains to assessors how you understand the results of an event and what these results mean to you. This is a basic definition. See *Overview: Composing My Written Commentary* in the portfolio instructions for more detailed explanations and writing samples.

**Prompt**—Anything that causes or stimulates students to produce responses. A prompt can be formal or informal, and could be anything from a specific assignment to a piece of art, a photograph, or a theory in your field of teaching.

**Retired Prompts**—An Assessment Center exercise administered in a previous NBPTS assessment cycle. These exercises have been included in the Scoring Guide to help you become familiar with the structure of Assessment Center exercises and to help you understand the rubrics.

**Scoring Guides**—The NBPTS Scoring Guides are designed primarily to help you understand how scores are determined in each certificate area assessment. More specifically, the guides are intended to provide you with information that will enable you to understand the features of Level 4 and Level 3 responses that are consistent with the standards assessed by each entry and exercise and the criteria in the rubrics.

**Scoring Rubric**—Assessors use a four-level rubric to score each candidate response, where a Level 3 or Level 4 score represents accomplished practice for that particular entry. The *How Will My Response Be Scored?* section in each portfolio entry provides the Level 4 criteria that are used by the assessors for that particular entry.

**Student Response**—Any kind of student work that results from an assignment by the teacher. This may be a formal writing assignment, a drawing, a journal entry, or any other work a student completes under a teacher's guidance.

**Student Work**—Student work samples submitted with your portfolio should follow the requirements in the Format Specifications section of each entry. Be sure to submit only the number of student work samples that is required by the entry. Remember that nothing submitted with your portfolio will be returned, and all student work should show only the first names of students to ensure their anonymity. Consult the directions in each portfolio entry for page limits on student work samples submitted.

# A Guide To Understanding National Board Certification 2008 Candidate Cycle Survey

**W**E WOULD LIKE TO GET A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW THIS GUIDE IS BEING USED in the field. Please take a few moments and respond to our usage survey below. Thank you for providing us with information that will help us to continue to refine this document.

**Check the item(s) below that best describe you:**

- National Board candidate
- Candidate support provider
- National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please describe.)

**How did you get a copy of *A Guide to National Board Certification: 2008 Candidacy Cycle*?**

- Local affiliate/union of the AFT or the NEA
- State affiliate/federation of the AFT or the NEA
- Candidate support provider
- School district personnel
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please identify the source.)

**On a scale of 1 to 5, circle how well this guide provided you with a solid overview of the National Board Certification process.**

Lowest 1      2      3      4      5      Highest

**How likely are you to recommend this guide to another teacher or counselor who is interested in understanding the National Board Certification process?**

Lowest 1      2      3      4      5      Highest

**Use the space below to share suggestions on how this document might be improved to assist candidates. (If you need additional space, continue your comments on the back of this form.)**

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