



Credentialing Excellence in Health Education

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Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES) Frequently Asked Questions

1. When will the MCHES designation be available?

- Target date for MCHES Experience Documentation Opportunity is October 2010.
- Target date for first MCHES exam is October 2011.

2. On what basis was MCHES chosen as the title of the advanced credential?

Master CHES (MCHES) is in line with the recommendation of the National Task Force on Accreditation (<http://www.healthedaccred.org/recommendation.html>). Also, personnel from Professional Examination Service (PES), who work with entry-level and advanced-level credentialing agencies, explained that numbers (CHES II, for example) are not typically used in an advanced credential title. Other ideas, Advanced CHES, for instance, revealed an inappropriate acronym (ACHES).

3. How were criteria for eligibility for MCHES established?

Eligibility criteria were based on the Competencies Update Project (CUP) findings regarding experience and academic preparation. The basis of the MCHES exam will be on all three levels of competencies (Entry, Advanced 1 and Advanced 2).

4. I just submitted CECH credits, will these count toward my eligibility for the MCHES designation?

Maybe. Activities that occurred within the past five years submitted for CECH credits may be applied towards the experience requirement, but you must meet all other eligibility requirements and document the experience as outlined in the MCHES Experience Documentation Opportunity. This information must be submitted by the applicant.

5. Why are non-CHES allowed to sit for the MCHES exam?

The NCHEC Board of Commissioners and PES personnel believe that it is important to recognize the value of existing CHES while also recognizing the benefit of advanced experience in health education practice. This will encourage "seasoned" health education professionals to gain a credential reflective of advanced practice. Since the Areas of Responsibility are built on a hierarchical model, core knowledge is essential for successfully passing the MCHES exam.

6. Many of us wanted portfolios used for assessing advanced certification, and we indicated that on the Feasibility Survey. Why was an objective examination chosen over portfolio?

Portfolios were considered as a means of assessment for the advanced-level credential, but problems with inter-rater reliability of assessors revealed that this type of assessment is prohibitive. Also, PES personnel explained that portfolios typically are not used in certification efforts because of the astronomical cost for MCHES applicants (e.g., \$1,200 to \$2,000).

7. How were the fees set for the MCHES exam determined?

Cost analysis revealed that this amount is needed for start-up costs as well as anticipated volume of applicants and certifying board meetings/work.

8. Will an individual's CHES identification numbers remain the same for current CHES who advance to MCHES status?

Yes, the number will remain the same. This avoids confusion for providers and certified individuals.

9. If an MCHES, who was previously a CHES, fails to comply with the continuing education requirements for the advanced credential, will their status revert back to a CHES status if they fulfilled the recertification requirements for a CHES (45 CAT I/ 30 CAT II)?

Yes, if the credential holder s had active CHES status prior to receiving the MCHES designation, individuals do not lose their CHES credential once they certify as an MCHES. Holders can only use one credential.

10. Will the MCHES take the place of the current CHES certification?

Not at all. The MCHES is an additional advanced-level certification and will not replace the current CHES certification. The largest distinction is the level of practical field experience.

11. Has NCHEC considered a "Grandfathering" opportunity for CHES to qualify for the MCHES designation without the need of an examination? What kind of documents would NCHEC need to consider for this?

Yes, NCHEC will be offering the MCHES Experience Documentation Opportunity (EDO), which is not technically called "grandfathering" because the EDO is an assessment of experience. For a period of six(6) months after the opportunity is announced by NCHEC, current CHES, who have been active for at least 5 continuous years, may submit documentation of advanced-level practice and leadership in health education to qualify for MCHES designation. Requirements include:

- a. a completed Experience Self Appraisal Form, whereby the applicant briefly details his/her engagement in four advanced health education activities (no more than a total of 100 words per activity). Each of the four activities must be linked to one advanced competency in the corresponding Areas of Responsibility
 - i. For the four (4) explained advanced health education activities, appropriate documentation must be included. Each copy must be labeled with the name of the appropriate Area of Responsibility and advanced Competency*
 - ii. A curriculum vitae/resume.*
 - iii. Two completed Testament of Practice forms from a current or past supervisor/manager who can attest to the applicant's advanced-level of service as a health educator.**

12. Is a CHES that has retired status eligible for the Experience Documentation Opportunity (EDO)?

No, Retired status is a permanent status. Once a CHES has changed his/her status to retired they are no longer considered an active CHES, therefore, they would not be eligible for the EDO.

13. Why is NCHEC implementing an advanced level certification when not all employers mandate the CHES as a hiring requirement for health education positions?

Health Education Specialists have criticized the current CHES credential because it is "entry-level" and, therefore, not reflective of the scope of practice of many in the profession. NCHEC is committed to the ongoing marketing of both entry and advanced- level credentials. The CHES credential establishes professional identify while the MCHES confirms professional development.