



MnCAT Step 4 – Recertification: Instructions

11/18/2016

Purpose

Provide instructions and guidance on the requirements for MnCAT Step 4 which is the recertification of Certified Assessors as required by Minn. Statute [§256B.0911 Subd. 2c](#).

Background

Certified Assessors are certified for a three year period. At the end of three years, the certification expires. Recertification must be completed prior to or within the same month of the third calendar year for certification to be uninterrupted. In developing the requirements for certification, we took into account the ongoing training requirements for social workers and registered nurses. We blended those two sets of requirements, and modified them slightly, to create the recertification requirements for MnCHOICES certified assessors.

Importance of Continued Learning

Participating in continued learning activities should be meaningful to assessors and enhance their professional knowledge and skills in a way that improves their practice as a MnCHOICES certified assessor. The main responsibilities of a certified assessor are to:

1. Conduct person-centered needs assessment interviews;
2. Develop person-centered community support plans; and
3. Participate in a multidisciplinary team.

It is essential that they continue to grow in their knowledge, skill and ability to perform their main job responsibilities.

Continued Learning Units

Certified Assessors are encouraged to use a variety of ways to improve their knowledge, skills and abilities as an assessor. To achieve recertification, assessors must acquire 45 continued learning units (CLUs) during the three year certification period.

Definition

A continued learning unit:

- Improves the practice of a MnCHOICES certified assessor
- Enhances their knowledge, skill or ability to:
 - Conduct person-centered needs assessment interviews; and/or
 - Develop person-centered community support plans
- Enriches their capacity to participate as a valued member of the agency's multidisciplinary team

Topics

There are limitless topic areas for Continued Learning Units (CLUs), but keep in mind that the activity must improve the practice of a MnCHOICES certified assessor. DHS encourages assessors to consider the following areas as vital to professional development and include them in each three-year recertification period:

- **Communication and interviewing style**
 - Examples:
 - How to do perception checking to prevent misunderstanding
 - Reading body language
 - Understanding cultural differences (age, disability, social role, etc.)
- **Expanding knowledge about different long-term service and support populations**
 - Examples:
 - Learning about a specific diagnosis and how it impacts daily living such as diabetes, hearing loss, multiple sclerosis, depression, autism, etc.
 - Learning about aging, brain injury, developmental disability, being medically fragile, adults with disabilities, children with special needs, etc.
- **Command of resources for targeted referrals**
 - Examples:
 - Financial resources such as Medical Assistance, Alternative Care, Family Support Grant, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Social Security, Veteran's benefits, etc.
 - Community resources such as Lions, Food Shelf, transportation, Salvation Army, Bridging, relocation/transition services, online resources, etc.
 - Further evaluation and assessment such as Rule 185, mental health, physical therapy, occupational therapy, special education, etc.
- **Building person-centered practitioner skills**
 - Examples:
 - The role of traditions and routines
 - Addressing health and safety while supporting individual choice and control
 - Using person-centered practices in support planning

Person Centered Practice

During the three year recertification period, at least 12 of the 45 CLUs must improve the ability of the assessor to practice in a more person centered way. We know that the University of Minnesota's Institute for Community Integration does much work to help people, providers, practitioners and administrators gain an understanding about Person Centered Thinking and Planning. However, it should be noted that to meet the criteria to count toward improving a person centered practice, the phrase person centered is not required to be in the title of the activity or even in the content.

A person centered practice is not a just a phrase. It is a way of conducting a practice that embodies an assessment and planning approach that helps people with disabilities or people who are aging to:

- Share their desires and goals
- Learn about and consider different options for support
- Provide meaningful input
- Make informed choices

This means that certified assessors can and should reflect about a learning activity to consider if it meets the requirements to improve their person centered practice for reasons such as:

This CLU results in improving a person centered practice because it helps me:

- Make it easier for people to visualize and share their desires and goals
- Know about lots of potential resources and options for each person's situation
- Put people at ease when we engage in difficult conversations
- Feel confident that when a person makes a choice they really understand all aspects of their decision

There is a decision tree to help determine if a particular learning activity meets the test for a CLU. This document is available on [MnCHOICES CountyLink](#).

Unit Length

A continued learning unit (CLU) is one hour (sixty [60] minutes) in length. If a qualifying learning unit is greater or lesser than an hour, credit is calculated to the nearest quarter hour. For example, if a learning unit is 15 minutes in length, it can be documented and calculated at .25 CLUs. In similar fashion, if a learning unit is 20 minutes in length it is also calculated at .25 units.

Types of Learning Activities

It is the responsibility of each assessor to determine if an activity meets the CLU requirements. We recommend certified assessors use a variety of types of learning activities during each three year recertification period. The list below is not intended to be all inclusive, but rather provide examples of types of learning activities:

1. Participate in an in-person or virtual training provided by a person qualified to teach the subject matter
2. Complete on-line training provided by a recognized organization such as DHS, trade associations, institutes of higher learning, etc.

3. Develop and present a training session on assessment/support planning, long-term services and supports, specific diagnosis, etc.
4. Publish an article or book, or deliver a professional paper
5. Participate in a work related quality improvement project such as a focus group with people who need/use long-term services and supports
6. Participate in a data analysis/research project about assessment/support planning for long-term services and supports
7. Coach a qualified candidate or new certified assessor and share important strategies that will help them through their training/certification or beginning their career as a certified assessor
8. Self-study through reading books, online resources, journal articles and other professional publications

Getting Re-Certified After Loss of Certification

When an assessor does not complete the recertification process within required statutory timelines, they lose their certification. To become recertified, the noncertified assessor must take and pass, with at least 80% proficiency, a recertification test that includes knowledge about Steps 1, 2 and 3 of MnCAT. The decertified assessor will be given eighty (80) questions from a random pool of questions. They may take the test as often as needed until they pass. They may choose to review some, or all, of MnCAT to help them pass the test and reacquire certification. Until they are once again certified, they may not create, conduct or complete an assessment in MnCHOICES or a support plan. The agency must take immediate steps to revise the decertified assessor's security access to MnCHOICES.

Documentation

Assessors need to document each learning activity and maintain their records for at least three years following recertification. The information on record will vary, depending on the type of CLU that is completed.

Certified Assessor Tasks

1. Prerequisite: Review online training module about how to use TrainLink to record CLUs:
[MnCHOICES Step 4: Recertification](#). There are now two courses in TrainLink for Recertification:
 - Assessors' first recertification: MNCH8012
 - Assessors' second recertification: MNCH8015
2. Complete one or more CLUs
3. Record CLU information in [TrainLink](#)
4. Develop portfolio to save supporting documents
5. When 45 or more CLUs are recorded in TrainLink, features such as the "Total CLUs earned in the current recertification period" will turn to bright green (make sure at least 12 CLUs are connected to improving person centered practice)
6. Click the Save All Activities button
7. Email a transcript to yourself and/or your supervisor

8. Close the documentation by clicking the X in the upper right corner of the screen
9. Follow the instructions to obtain a new certificate
10. Present recertification package to lead agency administrator for final approval:
 - a. Newly issued certificate
 - b. Portfolio with supporting documents
 - c. Print out/email of TrainLink record of CLUs
11. If your lead agency administrator approves your CLUs, they will co-sign the certificate to make it official.

NOTE: *CLUs completed prior to the release of these instructions, may be entered in TrainLink using an “**express method**” described below:*

- a. Use the date of the most recently completed CLU as the activity date
- b. Choose “other” for the type of activity
- c. Enter “CLU Retro Collection” for the activity title
- d. In the notes field, type a brief statement explaining that you are logging multiple CLUs completed since the time of your initial certification
- e. Add up all the hours and minutes of completed CLUs and enter that amount into the “time spent doing activity field”
- f. If total CLUs are 45 or greater, proceed to follow directions to obtain new certificate
- g. If total CLUs are less than 45, continue to document individual CLUs as they are completed until CLUs number 45 or greater
- h. While CLUs completed prior to these instructions can be entered using the express method, the certified assessor must be able to provide the portfolio with the required documentation

Lead Agency Supervisor/Manager

1. It is recommended that during annual performance evaluations, supervisors review individual assessors' strengths and areas for growth. Together with the assessor, develop an annual professional development plan including recommending CLU topics and activities to pursue
2. Check that recertification materials are presented by assessor (list, portfolio, certificate)
3. Decide if there are at least 45 CLUs to meet the requirements for recertification
4. If all requirements are met, co-sign the newly issued certificate
5. Return to assessor and communicate decision to approve or not
 - a. If the requirements are met, you may want to acknowledge several CLUs you believe were significant to their growth as a MnCHOICES certified assessor
 - b. If there are not 45 qualifying CLUs, explain to assessor
6. If the lead agency administrator determines the portfolio does not contain 45 qualifying CLUs:
 - a. Review the portfolio with the person to discuss why you are not able to co-sign the new certificate
 - b. If the assessor still has time remaining on the "old" certification help them plan how they will meet the impending deadline with the number of non-qualifying CLUs
 - c. If requirements are met, before the expiration date of the "old" certification, co-sign the newly issued certificate
 - d. Take any necessary steps to support this person to meet the recertification requirements or guide them to find a more suitable position in the agency
 - e. Immediately notify the designated MnCHOICES Mentor to update the MnCHOICES security access so the former certified assessor can no longer create or edit a MnCHOICES Assessment

Audit

Recertification records are subject to audit from DHS and must be maintained for at least three years following recertification. For example:

- Re-certification issued on November 1, 2016
- Effective until November 1, 2019,
- Portfolio holds documents related to completion of CLUs between November 1, 2013 and November 1, 2016
- Maintain and make portfolio and its contents available, upon request, until November 1, 2019

Record Content

MnCHOICES certified assessors must document and maintain records that include information such as:

1. Dates, times and locations of training events along with the name and qualifications of the presenter, agendas and learning objectives
2. Names of online courses, learning objectives, length of time to complete learning module including dates and organization which provided the course. If possible include the URL
3. Copy of the training/instruction or job tools/aids they developed including why and time spent, including dates

4. Copy of published articles/books including why they wrote them, intended audience and time spent, including dates
5. Copy of professional papers delivered, why they were written, intended audience, outcome and time spent, including dates
6. Description of a quality improvement project in which they participated, their role in the project, why they agreed to participate, what changed and time spent, including dates
7. Description of the data analysis/research project, their role in the project, why they agreed to participate, results/outcome and time spent, including dates
8. Identify the topic researched/evaluated, explain why they wanted to learn more about the topic, what/how they conducted the research/evaluation, lessons learned and time spent, including dates
9. Name of the qualified candidate/certified assessor they coached, the type of information they shared, how they approached their role as an advisor, evaluation from candidate/assessor or comments about what they learned and the time spent, including dates
10. Dates and times of Certified Assessor community of practice meetings, approximate number of attendees, new practice information you gained, practice information you shared.
11. Dates and time spent including agenda when participating as an active member of a professional board connected to long term services and supports

NOTE: A cover sheet to help provide the information is available on [MnCHOICES CountyLink](#). You are not required to use this document. It is for your convenience to help support your memory in the event of an audit. If you decide to use it, attach one to each CLU in your portfolio.

Timelines

The typical certification/recertification process is simple:

1. Become a certified assessor and note the end date on the certificate.
2. During the three year certification period, complete, record and document at least 45 CLUs.
3. In the month prior to the end date on the certificate, create new certificate and present to designated agency administrator along with portfolio.
4. Obtain co-signature and start three year process over.

Exceptions

There may be situations that complicate the typical process and need additional clarification to the process. These situations may be related to the first recertification and/or extenuating circumstances.

First Launchers

Some lead agency staff did not have access to online Step 3 training and learning labs. Assessors in those agencies received a manually issued certificate as opposed to one issued electronically by TrainLink. Staff, who received a manually issued certificate, have two options:

1. Use the end date of your manually issued certificate as the date by which you need to complete your first 45 CLUs and obtain recertification by completing the process above; or
2. Participate in and complete Step 3 training including Parts 1, 2 and 3. Take the Step 3 Test and obtain a new three year certificate from TrainLink. A MnCHOICES Mentor/Supervisor can provide the necessary links and materials to complete Step 3 training.

Completed vs. Documented

Situations may arise when a certified assessor has completed the required learning activities but has not yet recorded them in TrainLink. Without recording, they are not able to obtain their new certification. If this happens, the assessor must:

1. On or before the expiration date of their current certification organize and provide their portfolio of documentation to their designated agency administrator with a note indicating that the learning activities are complete but not yet recorded.
2. Designated agency administrator will check the portfolio of documentation to determine if the continued learning required to maintain certification is complete
 - a. If satisfactorily completed, give the assessor a timeframe, not to exceed thirty (30) calendar days to document the CLUs in TrainLink and produce the new certificate
 - b. If not satisfactorily completed, alert the person that they may not practice as a certified assessor until such time as they can attain status as a certified assessor

Early Completion

There may be individuals who complete the recertification process before the end of the three year period. This is not a problem. When creating the new certificate, the assessor is asked to enter the beginning and ending dates on the certificate last issued. The new certificate begins on the date the previous certificate ends. This provides the assessor with continuous certification.