

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

Audiology Assistants Certification Handbook

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ASHA Assistants Program

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

ASHA's Audiology Assistants Certification Handbook describes the process by which individuals obtain and maintain ASHA Audiology Assistants Certification (C-AA). This handbook includes the requirements and standards that must be met by all individuals to obtain C-AA certification, and provides information about the application process. As a quick reference guide, this handbook is designed to provide a fluid, high level outline of the most important components of ASHA assistants certification. If you'd like more information in a particular area, follow the hyperlinks to the ASHA website for greater detail.

Purpose

The C-AA is a voluntary, entry-level credential recognizing audiology assistants who have met established criteria and standards of practice to deliver high quality clinical service. The C-AA provides assurance to consumers, clients, healthcare professionals, employers, state licensure boards and third-party payers that certified individuals are keeping up with rapid changes in the professions' scopes of practice.

The C-AA designation demonstrates clinical skills and knowledge practice as an audiology assistant in all primary employment settings, including schools, hospitals, clinics, and private practice. [ASHA's Assistants Certification Program](#) was developed for audiology assistants within the United States. Individuals outside of the U.S. may apply for assistants certification; however, the requirements have been set to U.S. practice.

The Assistants Certification Program

- helps improve patient/client access to audiology services by creating a pipeline of qualified professionals who meet uniform standards of competency and are committed to delivering high-quality care;
- establishes a uniform standard for the knowledge and skill level expected of assistants; and
- ensures that all ASHA-certified assistants meet the same rigorous requirements.

ASHA Overview

ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for [211,000 members and affiliates](#) who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Audiologists specialize in preventing and assessing hearing and balance disorders as well as providing audiologic treatment, including hearing aids. Speech-language pathologists identify, assess, and treat speech and language problems, including swallowing disorders.



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ASHA Vision

Making effective communication, a human right, accessible and achievable for all.

ASHA Mission

Empowering and supporting audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and speech, language, and hearing scientists through:

- advancing science,
- setting standards,
- fostering excellence in professional practice, and
- advocating for members and those they serve.

Council for Clinical Certification in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CFCC)

The [CFCC](#) is a semi-autonomous credentialing body of ASHA. The charges to the CFCC are to define the standards for assistants certification; to apply those standards in granting assistants certification to individuals; to have final authority to withdraw assistants certification in cases where certification has been granted on the basis of inaccurate information; and to administer the assistants certification maintenance program.

The CFCC consists of 15 voting members, including at least five individuals who hold the ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology (CCC-A), at least five individuals who hold the ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP), two certified specialists in two different specialty areas, and two public members.

In addition to the above members, non-voting participants include 2 liaisons from the ASHA Board of Directors, an ex officio member from the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology (CAA), 2 student members from the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA), a liaison from the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD), and 1 National Office ex officio member.

All members, with the exception of the public members and ex officio members, must hold current ASHA certification in the appropriate area(s). Individuals from the profession of audiology and individuals from the profession of speech-language pathology must hold ASHA membership.

Role and Value of Assistants Certification

Being “certified” means holding ASHA audiology (C-AA) or speech-language pathology (C-SLPA) assistants certification. These nationally-recognized professional credentials represent a level of excellence in the audiology and speech-language pathology assistants fields.



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Assistants Certification Categories

A **certified assistant** is an individual who has met current assistant certification standards and requirements, has followed all published [policies and procedures](#), and who abides by the ASHA [Assistants Code of Conduct](#) (2020).

2020 Standards for ASHA Audiology Assistants Certification

The [2020 audiology assistants standards](#) are currently in effect, a summary of which is listed below.

Standard I: Degree

The applicant for ASHA audiology assistants certification (hereafter, “applicant”) must meet one of three degree requirements to apply for certification.

Standard II: Education

The applicant must complete mandatory course requirements in the areas of ethics, universal safety precautions, and patient confidentiality.

Standard III: Supervised Clinical Experience

The applicant must complete supervised clinical experience that consists of a minimum number of hours of supervised clinical experience under the supervision of an ASHA-certified audiologist.

Standard IV: Assessment

The applicant must pass the national examination created by ASHA and approved by the CFCC for purposes of certification as an ASHA-certified audiology assistant (C-AA).

Standard V: Assistants Code of Conduct

Applicants and C-AAs must abide by ASHA’s Assistants Code of Conduct.

Standard VI: Maintenance of Certification

C-AAs must complete the C-AA Maintenance of Certification Assessment (MOCA) at the end of their 3-year certification maintenance interval to show continued competency.



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II. INITIAL CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR AUDIOLOGY ASSISTANTS

Basic Requirements for Assistants Certification

To obtain ASHA assistants certification, individuals must submit a completed application and supporting documents, and pay the appropriate certification fees. All applicants for assistants certification must meet current [audiology assistant standards](#) and requirements, and follow all published [policies and procedures](#). Individuals who apply for assistants certification must abide by the [ASHA Assistants Code of Conduct](#).

Summary of Steps to Assistants Certification

Read the application page for [audiology assistants](#) to determine if you meet the eligibility requirements for assistants certification, which includes the following:

- Eligible degree
- [Three prerequisite courses](#) completed no more than 2 years before application
- Completion of ASHA [online education modules](#) (or equivalent) if required
- Completion of fieldwork/clinical hours requirement

If you meet the requirements, you may submit an application for assistants certification. Once your application and supporting documents have been reviewed and approved, you will be notified by e-mail and provided an Exam Eligibility ID to register for the national [Assistants Certification Exam](#).

Application Instructions

Here's a step-by-step guide to help you through the process of applying for [ASHA audiology assistants certification](#). It includes important requirements for the Assistants Certification Program as well as required documentation, fees, and exam information.

All applicants for assistants certification must meet current [audiology assistant standards](#) and requirements, follow all established [policies and procedures](#), and abide by the ASHA [Assistants Code of Conduct](#).

Step 1: Choose Your Pathway

Review the [three audiology assistant eligibility education pathway options](#) and choose the one that best fits your education and qualifications.

Step 2: Mandatory Requirements

- Complete a 1-hour course in ethics.
- Complete a 1-hour course in universal safety precautions.
- Complete a 1-hour course in patient confidentiality.
- Complete ASHA's [online audiology education modules](#), if required in your pathway option.



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[Prerequisite courses](#) must have been completed no more than two years before you apply for the C-AA.

Step 3: Submit Your Application

- Submit your application for the C-AA and pay the initial certification fee of \$249.
- Submit [official transcripts](#), certificates of completion, and/or military documents to ASHA within 60 days of submitting your application.

Your application isn't complete until you pay the certification fee.

Step 4: Application Review

The application review process can take up to 6 weeks from the date your last document is received.

Step 5: Exam Approval

- You'll be given an Exam Eligibility ID to register for the [Assistants Certification Exam](#) if your application, documents, and transcripts are approved.
- Once you have your Exam Eligibility ID, you have 365 days to register and take the exam.
- Your exam score will automatically be sent to ASHA for review, and you'll be notified if audiology assistant certification will be awarded. If a passing exam score was not achieved, you'll be eligible to retest up to two times by paying the \$99 retest fee (within one year of approval to test).

Step 6: Certification Awarded

A passing score for the C-AA exam is **162** or higher. If you passed the exam, you'll be awarded the C-AA. Your ASHA affiliate card will be mailed to your address on file and the award letter will be arriving soon. You may now use C-AA after your signature.

Official Transcript

Part of the required supporting documentation is your official transcript, which may be submitted

- electronically from the institution (not the applicant) to assistants@asha.org, or
- by mail to ASHA, 2200 Research Blvd #313, Rockville, MD 20850.

Transcripts must indicate when the degree was awarded to you and must name the degree that you earned. In lieu of a transcript, a letter from the registrar may be sent. Letters must state that the degree requirements were met, the date the degree was awarded, and the name of the degree that was earned. If a letter from the registrar is submitted instead of the official transcript and if, for any reason, your application must be reviewed by the CFCC, an official transcript will be required for that review.



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Transcripts, or letters from the registrar, must be received at ASHA within 60 days of your application being submitted. We must be able to verify your degree before we can give you approval to take the national exam.

Disclosure Questions

When applying for assistants certification, you are required to answer the following certification disclosure questions:

1. Have you have been convicted, found guilty, or entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to any misdemeanor involving dishonesty, physical harm to the person or property of another, or a threat of physical harm to the person or property of another, or any felony?
2. Are you presently indicted on or charged with any misdemeanor involving dishonesty, physical harm to the person or property of another, or a threat of physical harm to the person or property of another, or any felony?
3. Have you been disciplined or sanctioned by any professional association, professional licensing authority or board, or other professional regulatory body, or denied a license or a professional credential by any professional association, professional licensing authority or board, or other professional regulatory body?

An answer of “yes” to any of the mandatory disclosure questions requires that you also submit the following:

- Certified copy of each court record or docket entry of the finding, conviction, or plea.
- If applicable, a certified copy from the governmental agency or agencies that includes the pleas and/or convictions and demonstrates remediation.
- Certified copy of documentation from that professional agency or agencies that includes the denial, discipline, or sanctions imposed and demonstrates, if applicable, remediation.
- Résumé reflecting your work history since the time of the offense.

A certified copy is a copy of an original document where that copy has been officially certified as a true and correct copy by an authorized person. The person may certify the copy of the original document through a dated stamp, a dated written notation, or both.

Applications submitted with a “yes” response to a disclosure question will require additional processing time and will be reviewed by the CFCC. Answering “yes” to any disclosure questions will not automatically prevent certification from being awarded. All relevant factors are given consideration in the review process.



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Education Pathways to Audiology Assistants Certification

Audiology assistants who want to become ASHA-certified and hold the C-AA credential must meet the requirements set forth in the [Standards for Audiology Assistants Certification](#), which include

- meeting degree and education requirements,
- passing a national examination, and
- abiding by the [Assistants Code of Conduct](#).

Eligibility Pathways

To be eligible to take the [audiology assistants certification exam](#), applicants must complete one of three pathway options that best fits their education and qualifications. In addition to finishing all the requirements of that option, applicants must complete the following mandatory requirements:

- Completion of a 1-hour of ethics course*
- Completion of a 1-hour course in universal safety precautions*
- Completion of a 1-hour patient confidentiality training course (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, etc.)*

* [These three prerequisite courses](#) must be completed no more than 2 years prior to application. These requirements may also be met as part of an academic course.

Education Option 1

- Bachelor's degree in communication sciences and disorders from an accredited institution
- Field work: 500 hours providing patient services within the scope of practice for an audiology assistant under the supervision of an ASHA-certified audiologist**

** Field work/clinical hours will be verified as part of the online application process; no documentation needs to be submitted. Any hours completed January 1, 2020, or after must have been supervised by an ASHA-certified audiologist who has met [2020 Standard III](#). Family members or individuals related in any way to an applicant may not serve as clinical educators/supervisors to that applicants.



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Education Option 2

- College degree (non CSD), high school diploma, or GED from an accredited institution
- Complete ASHA's [online audiology education modules](#) or equivalent (i.e. associate's degree or certificate program in becoming an audiology assistant)
- Field work: 1,000 hours providing patient services within the scope of practice for an audiology assistant under the supervision of an ASHA-certified audiologist***

*** Field work/clinical hours will be verified as part of the online application process; no documentation needs to be submitted. Any hours completed January 1, 2020, or after must have been supervised by an ASHA-certified audiologist who has met [2020 Standard III](#). Family members or individuals related in any way to an applicant may not serve as clinical educators/supervisors to that applicants.

Education Option 3

Military: Active Duty

- A military job series awarding certificate (audiology/ENT)
- A copy of service member training record

Military: Veteran

- Honorable discharge
- A military job series awarding certificate (audiology/ENT)
- A copy of military transcript

Prerequisite Courses

The following courses are mandatory for assistants who are applying for [ASHA assistants certification](#).

- 1-hour course in [ethics](#)
- 1-hour course in [universal safety precautions](#)
- 1-hour course in [patient confidentiality](#)
- ASHA's [online education modules](#) for assistants, if required in your pathway option

The three 1-hour courses in ethics, universal safety precautions, and patient confidentiality are available from a variety of providers; you don't have to take any specific course, nor does the course have to be from ASHA or an ASHA-approved provider. Many employers offer these courses as part of in-service training or professional development. Courses must have been completed no more than two years before you [apply for the C-AA](#).

Applicants may complete and submit a [Verification of Attendance form](#) [PDF] if they are not provided a certificate of completion. Certificates of completion must (1) include the name of the course, (2) include the date of completion, and (3) be at least one hour in length.

Documentation may be e-mailed to assistants@asha.org.



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Ethics

Coursework should cover one or more of the topic areas listed below.

- Codes of ethics: interpretation, application, preventing and reporting violations
- Professionalism and inter-professionalism
- Ethical decision making
- Confidentiality and conflicts of interest
- Ethics and advertising, marketing, and social media
- Client/patient records and technology platforms, security
- Misrepresentation of services, competency
- Ethics and research, human participants
- Cultural competence, diversity, and multicultural issues

Universal Safety Precautions

Coursework should cover the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) definition as the approach to infection control to treat all human blood and body fluids as if they contain blood borne pathogens.

Patient Confidentiality

Coursework may cover patient confidentiality in administrative, physical, and technical aspects of maintaining patient/client/student records, social media, and other areas. Coursework may also cover the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

ASHA Online Education Modules for Assistants

Applicants who have not had specific academic training in the roles and responsibilities of working as an assistant are required to complete ASHA's [online education modules](#) for assistants, or an equivalent course. If necessary, verification of equivalent coursework will be [confirmed by transcript](#) and course descriptions.

Register for Modules

- Select “My Account” at the top right of any ASHA website page.
- If you have an ASHA account, sign in with your username and password.
- If you don’t have an ASHA account, select “create a new account” and choose a username (your email address) and password.



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Purchase Modules

The module sets are available in the ASHA Store for \$49. The set for [audiology assistants](#) is made up of 10 modules and will take about 3½ hours to complete.

- Login to your ASHA account and select “ASHA Store” at the top of the page.
- Select “CE Courses” on the banner underneath the ASHA Store logo, then “Assistants” on the left side of the page.
- Add the module to your cart and check out.

Access and Complete Modules

- Login to your ASHA account.
- Select “Access Your ASHA Courses.”
- On the “My Dashboard” page, select the course to get started.
- After you complete the course, your account will be updated automatically. If you like, you can print out a certificate of completion from the My Dashboard section by selecting the course link under “Courses You’ve Completed.”
- Do not send this certificate to ASHA; it is for your records only. When your application is reviewed, we will confirm that you have met this requirement by reviewing the list of completed courses in your account.

Assistants Certification Fees

ASHA’s assistants certification is based upon a calendar year and is subject to the rates listed below. Applications received between September 1 and December 31 will be processed for the current year but will include certification through the following year. Please submit full payment of the initial fee with your application. Applicants who are deemed ineligible for ASHA assistants certification, or who voluntarily withdraw their application for ASHA assistants certification, will receive a refund of the initial application fee, less a \$50 nonrefundable processing fee.

- initial certification fee: \$249 (includes assistants certification exam and one year of affiliation)
- annual renewal fee: \$125
- retest fee: \$99

Review of Application Materials by ASHA National Office Staff

When an application is submitted, an ASHA certification manager will review your application to ensure that the following materials have been completed or included:



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- Official transcripts (or letter from registrar) confirming degree
- Certificates of completion of three prerequisite courses meeting required content or equivalent coursework on transcript
- Completion of [online education modules](#) (or equivalent), if required
- Completion and confirmation of fieldwork/clinical hours by ASHA certified supervisor

The application review process can take up to 6 weeks from the date your last document is submitted.

Applicant Confidentiality

Information about an applicant/certificate holder will only be released to that applicant/certificate holder unless the release is authorized in writing by the applicant/certificate holder or is required by law. All personal and application information submitted by applicants/certificate holders is considered confidential and will not be shared with any party other than ASHA's certification staff or administration vendors for certification processing purposes. An individual's certification status as well as aggregate, unidentifiable exam score summary data is not considered confidential and will be made available on the ASHA website or as requested by phone or in writing.

How to Contact ASHA

You may reach ASHA by e-mailing assistants@asha.org or by calling 800-498-2071 between 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

III. NATIONAL EXAM FOR ASSISTANTS CERTIFICATION

ASHA Assistants Certification Exam

The ASHA Assistants Certification Exam is a national exam created by ASHA and approved by the Council for Clinical Certification in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CFCC). The exam was developed to establish standards of knowledge and competency for [audiology assistants](#) or a [speech-language pathology assistants \(SLPAs\)](#). It assesses assistants' knowledge and skills to ensure that they clearly understand (a) their appropriate Scope of Practice, (b) how an assistant must be supervised, and (c) the basic tasks performed in an assistant's role.

Applicants for assistants certification must pass the national exam to be considered an ASHA-certified assistant in audiology or speech-language pathology and be awarded the C-AA or C-SLPA credential.

In order to take the exam, applicants for assistants certification must first have (1) received approval of their application and required documentation, and (2) paid the initial certification fee of \$249 (includes assistants certification exam and one year of affiliation). The exam is administered by Prometric on behalf of ASHA and it will be available at testing centers throughout the U.S. and online through live proctoring.



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Passing Exam Score

The CFCC makes the final determination for the passing score.

- The current passing score for audiology assistants is **162**.
- The current passing score for SLPAs is **162**.

Preparing for the Exam

To prepare for the Assistant Certification Exam, become familiar with the format and the content of the exam by (1) reviewing the exam blueprint, (2) using the exam resources, and (3) studying the practice exam questions available. Then, develop a study plan based on the exam content and your knowledge in each topic area. (See the next page for audiology assistant-specific resources.)

The exam is made up of 100 multiple choice questions that were created by peers in the field, including educators, audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and assistants.

Registering for the Exam

- Once you are approved to take the exam, a unique Exam Eligibility ID and link to register for the national exam will be emailed to you by ASHA staff.
- Select the link in the email to register for the exam and to select the test date and location that best meets your needs.
- You have one year to schedule and take the exam once you've been approved.

ADA Accommodations

ASHA is dedicated to making the testing process accessible to all and strives to provide access—to the fullest extent possible—to activities based on awareness of the registrants' needs. The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) provides protection to individuals with disabilities, with a record or history of an impairment/disability or who is regarded as having an impairment/disability. The ADA requires the provision of reasonable accommodations to support access to goods, services, facilities, advantages or accommodations offered. However, reasonable accommodations will not alter the nature of the exam, result in undue financial and administrative burden, or affect the health and safety of an individual or others.

If you require ADA accommodations for the exam as part of the application process, you will be required to provide documentation from a qualified professional who has made an individualized assessment that supports the need for the requested testing accommodation. Appropriate documentation will vary depending on the nature of the disability and the specific testing accommodation requested. Examples of types of documentation include:



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- recommendations of qualified professionals
- proof of past testing accommodations
- observations by educators
- results of psycho-educational or other professional evaluations
- an applicant's history of diagnosis
- an applicant's statement of his or her history regarding testing accommodations

All personal and application information submitted by applicants and/or certificate holders is considered confidential and will not be shared with any party other than ASHA's Certification staff or administration vendors for certification testing purposes. Mail documentation to:

ASHA
c/o Certification Department
2200 Research Blvd., #313
Rockville, MD 20850

Retest Policy

After you take the exam, your score will automatically be sent to ASHA for review and you will be notified of your results. If you didn't receive a passing score of 162 or higher, you will be eligible to retest up to two more times within one year of your initial approval to test. You may take the exam again by paying the \$99 retest fee and then scheduling a retest date.

Applicants may take the exam no more than three times within one year. If you don't receive a passing score within one year, your application will be closed. If you wish to reapply for assistants certification, you may do so by submitting a new application under the assistant certification standards in effect at the time.

Audiology Assistant Exam Blueprint

The [Audiology Assistant Exam Blueprint](#) [PDF] was developed through a research-based practice analysis by audiology assistants, audiologists, and educators to ensure that the certification reflects emerging data, applied knowledge, and best practices. The audiology assistants national exam will be based on the information in the blueprint.

Audiology Assistant Practice Exam Questions

[Sample questions for review and study purposes](#) are an example of the types of questions that appear on the audiology assistants exam. Sample questions are not representative of the breadth of the material or the capability of candidates sitting for the exam.



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Audiology Assistants Exam Resources

The ASHA resources provided are not exclusive to the audiology assistant exam but will allow you to review topic material. Please refer to the [Audiology Assistant Exam Blueprint](#) [PDF] for specific topic areas.

- [Issues in Ethics: Audiology Assistants](#)
- [Medicaid Toolkit](#)
- [Medicare Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Practice Portal](#)
- [Preferred Practice Patterns for the Profession of Audiology](#)
- [Self-Assessment for Cultural Competence](#)
- [Hearing and Balance](#)
- [Infection Control](#)

IV. CFCC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELATED TO CERTIFICATION APPEALS

Certification Disclosure Appeals

When the CFCC [Disclosure Committee](#) votes to deny eligibility based upon disclosure, the notification will include the justification for the decision and will inform the applicant of the opportunity to request a Further Consideration review of the decision by the CFCC and, subsequently, appeal the decision to an Appeal Panel.

Certification Revocation Appeals

The CFCC will review any complaint regarding the application or supporting materials of a certification applicant, reinstatement applicant, or certificate holder. These complaints may include but are not limited to the authenticity of application materials, misrepresented credentials, national examination scores, misrepresentation of required affirmative disclosures, tampering with official documents, or cases where certification may have been granted in error.

If the CFCC withdraws certification based on misrepresentation of credentials, authenticity of application materials, nondisclosure of criminal offenses, disciplinary action by regulatory bodies, or certification granted in error, the applicant may [request that the CFCC reconsider its decision](#) in accordance with the appropriate policies and procedures.



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V. MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION ASSESSMENT (MOCA)

Individuals who hold audiology assistants certification (C-AA) or speech-language pathology assistants certification (C-SLPA) must complete the certification maintenance assessment module/MOCA module during the third and final year of each 3-year maintenance interval. During the third year of the interval, the assistants certificate holder will be able to access the modules by logging into their ASHA My Account page. Completed MOCA modules will be reviewed by ASHA Certification staff. Individuals will be notified via e-mail whether or not they have successfully completed the MOCA, and those successful will progress to a new 3-year interval.

Requirements for Maintaining Assistants Certification

Assistants certificate holders must do the following to maintain their C-AA or C-SLPA.

- Successful completion of the [certification maintenance assessment module](#)
- Adherence to the ASHA [Assistants Code of Conduct](#)
- Payment of annual certification fees

Certification Maintenance Intervals

A certification maintenance interval is three years in duration (e.g., 2020–2022, 2021–2023) and you will be assigned to an interval based on the date you were awarded [assistants certification](#). Your interval will begin January 1 following the year you received initial certification or reinstatement of certification.

Maintenance intervals are continuous, meaning when you complete one 3-year interval you will start the next 3-year interval, provided you have completed your [certification maintenance assessment module](#). ASHA does not grant interval changes.

VI. APPENDIX

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