

National Board Certification Third-Party Payer Guide

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NATIONAL BOARD

for Professional Teaching Standards®

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Introduction

This Guide provides key dates, fee information, and instructions for third-party payers (TPPs) making payments for National Board Certification and Maintenance of Certification (MOC) candidates.

Overview of Certification

Candidates beginning the National Board Certification process will be able to choose the order in which they complete the components during their candidacy, noting three important requirements:

1. **the initial attempt of all four components must be completed in the first three years of candidacy,**
2. there are two retake opportunities per component (*For Component 1, candidates may elect to retake one or more of the three constructed response items/exercises and/or the selected response item part. Candidates have up to two retakes for each of the four parts of Component 1 at any time during the five-year window.*), and
3. components must be completed in the cycle year in which they are purchased.

At its maximum, the process could span five years. Each year, candidates must register and pay for the components they plan to complete. There is no requirement to complete all components in a single year, but candidates may do so if they choose.

National Board Partner Portal

During the 2024-25 cycle, the National Board introduced the [Partner Portal](#), a new system enabling National Board Partners, third-party organizations that support candidates, to fund and track candidates through the National Board certification process in real-time.

The Partner Portal has streamlined processes in the following areas:

- Designation processing timelines
- Visibility into candidate funding use
- Timing of financial reports

User guides and previously recorded webinars on navigating the Partner Portal are available on our [Third-Party Payer web page](#).

Candidate Fees

Fees and payment processing are subject to change.

This chart lists the various fees applicable to National Board Certification and Maintenance of Certification candidates. Refer to the [Important Dates and Deadlines](#) for payment deadlines.

Type of Fee	Amount
Registration Fee* Charged once per assessment cycle. Candidates will not be able to select a component/MOC without payment of this nonrefundable and nontransferable fee.	\$75
Component 1 Initial Fee Required for the initial attempt of the component.	\$475
Component 1 Retake Fee Required for each individual part of Component 1 that a candidate elects to retake.	\$125, per part
Components 2, 3, and 4 Fee Required for each attempt (initial and retake) of these components.	\$475
Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Fee Required to for each attempt of MOC. (NBCTs have two MOC opportunities.)	\$495
Component 1 Reauthorization Fee If a candidate misses their Component 1 testing appointment or does not cancel/reschedule the appointment at least 24 hours in advance, a reauthorization is required before scheduling a new appointment. The payment is due at the time the service is requested.	\$175

**Note: This fee must be paid online through the candidate's National Board account via credit or debit card (Visa and MasterCard only). TPPs may submit funding for this fee; however, it must be paid by credit card first. After TPP funding is applied, the initial payment will be refunded.*

Important Dates and Deadlines

All dates and deadlines are subject to change.

The following chart is applicable to all candidates submitting components for scoring during the 2024-25 assessment cycle.

2024-25 Important Dates and Deadlines	
Third-Party Payer Deadlines	
Third-Party Payer Funding*	February 7, 2025
Third-Party Payer Designations/Changes**	February 21, 2025
Candidate Deadlines	
Registration Window (all candidates)	May 23, 2024-February 28, 2025
Candidate Registration and Fee Payment Deadline	February 28, 2025
Change of Certificate and/or Specialty Area (first-time candidates only)	March 21, 2025
Change of Component Selection	February 28, 2025
Withdrawal Deadline	February 28, 2025
Component 1 Scheduling Window Opens	January 13, 2025
Component 1: Content Knowledge Testing Window	March 1-June 15, 2025
ePortfolio Submission Window	April 1-May 17, 2025
Score Release (all candidates)	December 6, 2025

The following chart is applicable to all candidates submitting components for scoring during the 2025-26 assessment cycle.

2025-26 Important Dates and Deadlines	
Third-Party Payer Deadlines	
Third-Party Payer Funding*	February 6, 2026
Third-Party Payer Designations/Component Changes**	February 20, 2026
Candidate Deadlines	
Registration Window (all candidates)	May 22, 2025-February 28, 2026
Candidate Registration and Fee Payment Deadline	February 28, 2026
Change of Certificate and/or Specialty Area (first-time candidates only)	March 20, 2026
Change of Component Selection***	February 28, 2026
Withdrawal Deadline	February 28, 2026
Component 1 Scheduling Window Opens	January 15, 2026
Component 1: Content Knowledge Testing Window	March 1-June 15, 2026
ePortfolio Submission Window	April 1-May 16, 2026
Score Release (all candidates)	December 5, 2026

This is the final date we will accept funding from TPPs. ** This is the final date for TPPs to allocate new funding or to change existing funding designations (component selections) to candidate accounts. Candidates will be allowed to purchase components through February 28, 2026. *Candidates who change to a non-TPP funded component after the designation deadline will have to pay the component fee out of pocket.*

Candidate Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to achieve National Board Certification, initial candidates must meet the education, licensure, and employment requirements described below. World Languages candidates must also meet the language proficiency requirement. The rules for meeting eligibility for candidacy are described in the [Guide to National Board Certification](#), but teaching situations across the country vary widely, and the rules may not address a candidate's particular circumstances. Candidates should contact Customer Support for assistance if they are not sure they meet the eligibility requirements. The score requirements for achieving National Board Certification can be found in the [Scoring Guide](#). The chart below provides the certification eligibility requirements for beginning the National Board Certification process and when each requirement must be met.

Eligibility Requirement	Requirement Must be Met
Candidates must possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. (Candidates for the Career and Technical Education certificate are required to hold a bachelor's degree only if their state requires one for their current license.)	<i>Before</i> a candidate registers and purchases their first component for National Board Certification.
Candidates must hold a valid state teaching license or meet the licensure requirements established by their state.	<i>Before</i> a candidate registers and purchases their first component for National Board Certification. Note: A candidate must also hold a valid license for each of the three years they verify towards the employment requirement.
Candidates must have successfully completed three years of teaching at one or more early childhood, elementary, middle, or secondary schools to achieve Board certification. (Applicants for ECYA/School Counseling must have successfully completed three years serving as a school counselor.)	<i>No later than June 30</i> of a candidate's third year of candidacy. *This requirement must be met for a candidate to be eligible to achieve certification. When a candidate meets the score requirements and all eligibility requirements, including the teaching employment requirement (if not already met), the candidate will achieve National Board certification. Meaning, if a candidate does not meet the employment requirement prior to the score release in which they meet the score requirements, their certification will be awarded during the next cycle's score release.
World Language candidates: ACTFL language proficiency requirement.	<i>No later than June 30</i> of the assessment cycle in which a candidate completes initial testing on all four National Board components. When a candidate meets the ACTFL and score requirements and the teaching employment requirement (if not already met), the candidate will achieve National Board certification.

*This policy was revised in the fall of the 2022-23 registration cycle. Refer to the [Policy Change for Certification Requirements FAQs](#) for additional details.

Third-Party Payer Accounts

Setting Up a Third-Party Payer Account *

The first step to funding candidates is to create a third-party payer account with the National Board. If your organization is interested in funding candidates, please [contact us](#) and provide the following information: organization name and mailing address, the name, email and telephone number of the primary contact for your organization who will manage the funding.

Your request will be forwarded to a member of our team for review and account creation—this will take up to seven business days. Once your third-party payer account has been created, you'll be asked to sign a user agreement, then given access to the Payment Portal. Check your email regularly for updates and be sure to have No-Reply@NBPTS.org added to your organization's whitelist.

*If your organization funded candidates prior to the implementation of the Partner Portal, your third-party payer account data has been migrated to the Partner Portal. In mid-April, you were sent an email containing instructions for accepting the user agreement and accessing your account in the Partner Portal. If you didn't receive the email or if you aren't sure if your organization already has an account with us, please [contact us](#) for assistance.

Managing Candidate Payments

Acceptable Payment Types

The National Board accepts payment from third-party payers in the form of purchase orders, checks, wires, ACH transactions, credit cards, and the use of existing escrow funds (funds remaining on your TPP account from a previous assessment cycle).

All payments must be made payable to the National Board and should include a copy of the invoice provided to you by the National Board when paying for outstanding purchase orders.

If you require a W-9, a preliminary invoice, or additional documentation for payment processing, please [contact us](#).

Payment Requirements for All Candidates

Candidates are required to have an active account in the National Board's candidate management system to receive third-party payments*.

Before submitting new designations, please ensure that each candidate has completed the steps required to create an account and obtain a National Board candidate ID number – this applies to new candidates only. All returning, retake, and MOC candidates with existing National Board accounts will use the candidate ID number for their existing account.

*In addition to creating an account, candidates will need to agree to the release of their name and candidacy details to third-party organizations – without this release, they will not appear on candidate reports.

Candidates have the option to indicate they are expecting funding for each selected component. Candidates who utilize this option will have the components automatically purchased when you designate funding to their account. Candidates who do not utilize this option will need to complete their purchases themselves, using the available funding.

To learn more about the National Board's candidate management system and the registration process, please review the [Guide to National Board Certification](#).

Submitting Payments

Purchase orders, credit card payments, and requests to use existing escrow funds must be submitted via the [Partner Portal](#).

All checks must be submitted to the National Board at one of the following addresses:

- If sending via regular mail:

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
P.O. Box 715105
Philadelphia, PA 19171-5105

- If sending by courier service: (All mail by special couriers should be sent to the actual site address listed below and should reflect Lockbox Services and the Lockbox Number in the reference section of the air bill.)

Lockbox Services - #0075105
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
MAC Y1372-045
401 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Reminder: As of the 2024-25 cycle, Third-Party Payers no longer submit a transmittal memo with payment.

Payment Processing

Approximately 5-7 business days after receipt of your payment, you will be able to designate funding to candidate accounts directly through the Partner Portal. A user guide for this process is available [online](#) and accessible within the Partner Portal when available. If you have questions about your account balance or the status of a candidate account, please [contact us](#).

Changing Funding Designations

If you need to transfer funding from one candidate to another, change the component being funded for a candidate, or remove funding from a candidate completely, you will be able to do so at any time through the Partner Portal. A user guide for this process is available [online](#) and accessible within the Partner Portal when available. All changes must be made by the funding designation deadline - refer to the [Important Dates and Deadlines](#) chart for the exact date.

Refunds

In the event a candidate withdraws before the withdrawal deadline, you will be eligible for a refund of the fees paid on behalf of the candidate (except those designated as nonrefundable). Unused funds for withdrawn components will remain designated to the candidate. You will not be eligible for a refund of any fees paid on behalf of a candidate if the candidate did not withdraw prior to the withdrawal deadline.

You can request a refund by accessing the *Manage Refunds* tab within your [Partner Portal](#) account at any time. Refund processing time is 6 weeks.

Reports and NBConnect

As part of our efforts to streamline third-party payer processes, we will be moving our NBConnect* reports to the Partner Portal. In addition to candidate data, you'll also have access to financial reports specific to your organization, such as: balances and designation reports, year-end reconciliation reports, and completer reports, directly through the portal. Note: Not all reports will be available at the start of the registration cycle. Information will be provided as it becomes available.

Review [Quick Start Guide: Partner Portal](#) Reports for detailed instructions.

*While the National Board plans to sunset [NBConnect](#) in the near future, it will remain accessible during the 2025-26 school year.

Exceptions

This Third-Party Payer exception policy takes into consideration the exception policy for candidates. Please review the candidate exception policy in the [Guide to National Board Certification](#).

If you, or a critical team member, have encountered a hardship that has caused you to miss funding and designation deadlines, the National Board may consider offering an exception to deadlines and policies. All requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis and will be reviewed until the registration deadline.

The National Board will consider Third-Party Payer exception requests based on personal and/or family illness, military deployment, death of an immediate family or school community member, adoption, visa rejection, divorce, and natural disaster. Administrative errors in candidate designations are not considered a hardship and will not qualify for an exception request.

Requesting an Exception

For an exception request to be considered, you must submit evidence of the hardship that will prevent or has prevented you from meeting the deadlines. Submitting a request with supporting documentation does not guarantee an exception to policy will be approved.

To submit an exception request:

1. **Describe your situation that qualifies for an exception.** You should include the specific amount of extra time (or other relief) you are requesting.

2. **Collect documentation to support your exception request.** Screenshots of your documentation are permitted. Documentation may include, but is not limited to, evidence of:
 - a. a medical leave of absence from work, e.g., approved FMLA documentation,
 - b. a personal or family medical condition on physician/medical group letterhead, signed and dated, or
 - c. a hardship or leave of absence from work on school/district administrative letterhead, signed and dated.
3. **Prepare your documentation:**
 - a. Do not include Sensitive Personally Identifiable Information (SPII). SPII is defined as information that if lost, compromised, or disclosed could result in substantial harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to an individual. Black out SPII such as social security numbers, medical insurance information, credit and debit card numbers, and driver's license and state ID information.
 - b. Do not submit copies of text messages, news articles, invoices, bills, or insurance claim documents, as they are not considered sufficient documentation for an exception request. Ensure that your documentation clearly demonstrates the direct impact of the hardship on your ability to meet the required deadlines.

Send your documents using the [Partner Portal web form](#).

Candidate Exceptions Impacting a Third-Party Payer

If an exception granted to a candidate causes a delay in meeting your funding or designation deadlines, the National Board will offer you an exception to the deadlines.

For an exception to be considered, you must include the candidate's ID for the approved exception and the specific amount of extra time you are requesting to fund or designate.

For more information on this exception service, please contact our Partner Portal Customer Support team using the [Partner Portal web form](#) or by phone at 877-370-1524.

Contact Us

You can contact our Partner Portal Support team by phone at 877-370-1524, Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm, CT. Please note that due to the complex nature of some questions, you may need to contact us via the [Partner Portal web form](#). See the chart below for details:

Topic	Phone	Web Form
Account Support and Set-Up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance related to setting up accounts, user profiles, and permissions. Guidance on navigating the Partner Portal. 	X	X
Processing User Agreements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitting and reviewing user agreements. 		X
Password Resets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help with resetting passwords for secure access. 	X	X

System Troubleshooting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing technical issues or errors encountered within the portal. 	X	X
Reporting Help (Portal-Specific) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifications on generating reports or understanding data within the portal. 	X	X
General Third-Party Payer Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-level inquiries about processes, policies, and procedures. 	X	X
Account Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed account-related queries requiring comprehensive research. 		X

For questions regarding National Board Certification candidate processes, please continue to contact our Customer Support team by calling 1-800-22TEACH (83224), Monday-Friday, 8am-6pm, CT or by using the [Customer Support web form](#).