The certification is based on a distinct and well-defined field of nursing practice that subscribes to the overall purpose and functions of nursing. The nursing specialty is distinct from other nursing specialties and is national in scope. There is an identified need for the specialty and nurses who devote most of their practice to the specialty.

A tested body of research/data-based knowledge related to the nursing specialty exists. Mechanisms are established for the support, review, and dissemination of research in the specialty. Activities within the specialty contribute to the advancement of nursing science within the specialty.

The certification board is an entity with organizational autonomy. However, a collaborative relationship exists between the certification body and a nursing specialty association that supports the specialty and sets standards for specialty practice.

There is a provision for public consultation/representation on the certification board.

The eligibility criteria for basic certification include Registered Nurse (RN) licensure and educational and experiential qualifications as determined by the individual specialty certification organization.

The eligibility criteria for advanced certification include RN licensure and a minimum of a graduate degree in nursing or the appropriate equivalent, including content in the specified area of specialty practice.

Certification tests are constructed and evaluated using methods that are psychometrically sound and fair to all candidates.

The certifying body has conducted validation studies to assure that inferences made on the basis of test scores are appropriate and justified.

The certifying body assures that test scores, including subscores, are sufficiently reliable for their intended uses.

The certifying body does not discriminate among applicants as to age, gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.
Certification tests are administered in a manner that minimizes construct-irrelevant variance.

Procedures are in place to maximize the security of all certification test materials.

Passing scores for the certification examination are set in a manner that is fair to all candidates, using methods that are psychometrically sound.

The certifying body has a mechanism in place to periodically evaluate certificate holders for continued knowledge necessary to maintain competence in the specialty.

The certifying body provides information that clearly describes the certification process to candidates and other stakeholders.

The certifying body assures that confidential information about candidates and certificate holders is protected.

The certifying body has an appeal process in place for nurses who have been denied access to an examination or renewal of certification or who have had certification revoked.

The certifying body has a mechanism in place to respond to instances of noncompliance with eligibility criteria or certification board rules.