CERTIFIED SPECIAL POPULATION SPECIALIST

Computer-Based Exam Candidate Handbook

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Introduction

About the NSCA

The National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) is an international, nonprofit, educational association representing strength training and conditioning professionals, sports science researchers, athletic trainers, sports medicine therapists and physicians, personal trainers, students and others interested in fitness and strength and conditioning activities and their relationship to overall sport and fitness performance.

The NSCA publishes two of the world's premier strength and conditioning journals – *Strength and Conditioning Journal* and the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*. They link what is being learned in the sport science research laboratories to what is being taught by fitness professionals, thereby bridging the gap between theory and practice.

About NSCA Certification

Founded in 1978, the NSCA established its first credential in 1985 in order to administer a certification program for those in the field of strength training and conditioning. The NSCA's original certification program, the Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist® (CSCS®), continues to be the only nationally-accredited certification that is specifically designed to assess the competencies of those who strength train and condition athletes. Accredited in 1993, the CSCS became the first credential in the industry to be accredited.

As the fitness industry continued to grow, the NSCA saw a need for a personal training certification that would earn the same prestige and credibility as the CSCS. Thus, in 1993, the NSCA-Certified Personal Trainer® (NSCA-CPT®) credential was established. Today, more than 36,000 CSCS and NSCA-CPT credentials are held by professionals around the world.

The CSPS™ Credential

In 2012, the NSCA established the Certified Special Population Specialist™ (CSPS™) credential. This credential was created for fitness professionals interested in working with individuals with chronic and temporary health conditions. The CSPS credential is the result of the NSCA's vision of the increased need for qualified fitness professionals to work with this unique population.

The CSPS Exam

The CSPS credential identifies those individuals who have the knowledge necessary to train clients with chronic and temporary health conditions reach their health and fitness goals. The exam is developed by the CSPS Exam Development Committee. This is a group of content experts in the fields of health, fitness, and medicine. The committee develops specifications that define the content areas to be covered, the number of questions on the exam and the abilities and skills measured by the exam.

The exam consists of 100 scored questions (plus 10 non-scored questions) which cover the following content areas: basic pathophysiology and science of health status or condition, disorder, or disease; client consultation; program planning; and safety, emergency procedures, and legal issues. The testing time allowed to take the exam is 2 ½ hours.

The CSPS exam is continually monitored for content validity and updated on a regular basis. It is designed to ensure a minimal level (as defined by the Exam Development Committee) of competency among fitness professionals working with special population clients and creates a better awareness among the public of the nature and purpose of the profession. A focal point of the exam is to ensure candidates possess appropriate knowledge of industry guidelines to design safe and effective exercise programs.

Explanation of Non-scored Exam Questions

The CSPS exam contains non-scored questions that are being "pretested" or evaluated for future use. Including these types of questions allows the CSPS Exam Development Committee to collect meaningful information about items that may appear on future exams.

Pretesting is accomplished by interspersing new ("untried") questions throughout the exam (10 non-scored questions appear in the CSPS exam). Only this small number is included so that additional testing time will not be needed by exam candidates. The non-scored questions are scattered throughout the exam so candidates will answer them with the same effort that they give to the actual scored questions. These questions are not scored as part of a candidate's certification exam, and they do not affect an individual's pass/fail status.

The CSPS exam reflects current job-related duties and industry practices. As such, new items are continuously introduced and evaluated. Pretesting is an accepted testing practice that creates a statistically sound exam, and allows candidates to receive scores that are based solely on previously verified ("tried") items.

Non-scored pretest questions appear on both paper/pencil and computer-based exam formats. This provides a similar testing experience to all candidates.

Scope of Practice

Certified Special Population Specialists (CSPSs) are fitness professionals who, using an individualized approach, assess, motivate, educate, and train special population clients of all ages regarding their health and fitness needs, preventively, and in collaboration with healthcare professionals. Special populations include those with chronic and temporary health conditions. CSPSs design safe and effective exercise programs, provide the guidance to help clients achieve their personal health/fitness goals, and recognize and respond to emergency situations. Recognizing their own areas of expertise, CSPSs receive referrals from and refer clients to other healthcare providers as appropriate.

Exam Administration

The NSCA Certification Committee has the overall responsibility for exam development and policies governing eligibility and administration of the exam. It is also responsible for contracting with a professional testing agency that is responsible for the establishment of test centers, administration of the exams and exam security, as well as providing psychometric expertise.

Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc. (AMP) is the testing agency retained by the NSCA to assist in the development, administration, scoring and analysis of the CSPS exam based on the exam specifications developed by the NSCA Certification Committee and the CSPS Exam Development Committee (EDC). AMP is a research and development firm that conducts professional competency assessment research and provides exam services for a number of health practitioner credentialing programs.

Neither the NSCA, nor the NSCA Certification Committee members, or their staff are involved with the handling or scoring of any exam in any way. This is the testing agency's responsibility.

Exam Development

The CSPS EDC, comprised of individuals whose knowledge and experience in exercise sciences, strength training and conditioning, personal training, and medicine qualifying them as "content experts," develops the exam questions. The committee develops specifications from a job task analysis study that is completed every five years that defines the content areas to be covered, the number of questions on the exam and the abilities and skills measured by the exam.

Introduction / Registration Policies

Quality Control

Each exam undergoes quality control checks. A thorough item analysis is completed and is used as a part of the statistical review of the performance of the exam. The NSCA, AMP and the EDC review exam data and candidate comments. All of these materials are reviewed during a key validation meeting with the EDC to ensure that the scoring of the questions is appropriate. Candidates can provide written comments about any exam question. However, those comments do not have a bearing on a candidate's exam score. Rather, they serve a purpose of "requesting attention" of the EDC. All candidate comments are reviewed for relevance and accuracy, but these comments are not taken as statements to argue or challenge the exam (either at the time of the exam or afterward).

Prerequisites

1. Current NSCA Certification
Candidates are required to have a current NSCA certification (CSCS or NSCA-CPT).

2. Bachelor's degree in Exercise Science or a related field.
Candidates must submit an original, official transcript of their academic work, showing attainment of at least a Bachelor's degree (BS/BA) in Exercise Science or related field from an accredited institution. Exam scores are not released until complete documentation has been processed.

United States and US Territories: The accrediting institutions are Middle State Association, New England Association, North Central Association, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Southern Association and Western Association.

Other Countries: The college/university must be recognized by the ministry of education in that particular country, as a degree-granting institution on the same level as other universities recognized with campuses in that country and be recognized as equivalent to a Bachelor's degree in the United States.

College seniors of an accredited institution are eligible to take the CSPS exam. They will receive a pass/fail notification after the exam administration. However, college seniors who pass the CSPS exam do not become CSPS certified until the NSCA receives their original, official transcript verifying graduation and degree earned and have met all other pre-requisites. Once the NSCA receives the required documentation the NSCA will release the actual score reports and if they have successfully passed the exam, issue the certificate.

3. Advanced CPR/AED training
Current CPR for Healthcare Provider (American Heart Association), Professional Rescuer (American Red Cross), or higher is also a requirement. Basic CPR and AED certification will not be accepted for the CSPS pre-requisites. If candidates do not have current the aforementioned certification, they can still register and take the CSPS exam. The NSCA will not release a candidate's exam scores until we have received documentation of this certification. A photo copy (front / back of card) is acceptable.

4. Practical Experience
Candidates must have a minimum of 250 hours of related practical experience. Related hours must be consistent with the CSPS Scope of Practice, and describe a candidate's principle or supporting role in managing clients with unique needs. A CSPS Practical Experience Form must be completed and submitted as part of the registration process. This form is subject to a random audit within one year of your registration.

Scores remain valid for one calendar year. If holds are not released after one year (i.e. the pre-requisites have not been met) the scores become void. Please refer to page 14, Reporting of Results.

Please mail your documentation to:
National Strength and Conditioning Association
c/o Certification Department
1885 Bob Johnson Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

Registration Policies

Registration

Candidates can register by mail, fax or online. Once a candidate has completed their registration, they will receive a confirmation notice from the testing center, (AMP), within three business days. This confirmation notice will contain instructions on how to schedule your exam. Each candidate will have 120 days to sit for their exam.

Candidate Ineligibility

A candidate may be determined ineligible for either of the following reasons:

1. Insufficient documentation to assess eligibility.

2. Documentation provided, or fees submitted, do not meet eligibility requirements for the exam.

The NSCA Certification Committee reserves the right to cancel exam scores if an individual is deemed ineligible to meet the certification requirements. If a candidate is determined to be ineligible, a refund of his/her registration fee will **NOT** be provided. If a candidate has any questions regarding eligibility, contact the NSCA at 800-815-6826 or exams@nsca.com BEFORE registering for an exam.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

The NSCA and AMP do not discriminate among candidates based on race, color, creed, gender, religion, national origin, disability or marital status.

Special Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities

The NSCA and AMP comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and strive to ensure that no individual with a disability is deprived of the opportunity to take an exam solely by reason of that disability. AMP will provide reasonable accommodations for candidates with disabilities.

When a candidate requests special accommodations, the candidate must:

1. Submit the Request for Special Examination Accommodations Form provided at the end of this document at least 45 calendar days prior to the desired exam date.

2. Call AMP at 888-519-9901 to schedule the exam. When scheduling the exam, candidates need to inform AMP of the need for special accommodations.

    a. Wheelchair access is available at all established assessment centers. Candidates must advise AMP at the time of scheduling that wheelchair access is necessary.

    b. Candidates with visual, sensory or physical disabilities that would prevent them from taking the exam under standard conditions may request special accommodations and arrangements.

If the candidate does not provide the information within the specified time frame (at least 45 calendar days before the exam) or if the NSCA and/or AMP determine that the provided information is inadequate to assess special needs requirements, candidates will be asked to provide additional information/documentation and given a deadline by which they need to respond. If the required information is not received by the specified deadline, AMP will deny the request for accommodations.

(Special language accommodations will not be made for those whose primary language is not English.)

AMP is equipped with Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD) to assist deaf and hearing-impaired candidates. TDD calling is available 8:30am to 5:00pm (Central time) Monday-Friday at 913-495-4437. This TDD phone option is for individuals equipped with compatible TDD machinery.

Registration / Exam Policies

Exam Appointment Changes

Candidates who do not schedule an exam appointment and take the exam within 120 days from the date of registration will forfeit their entire registration fee. A completed registration and exam fee are required to reschedule for the exam.

Exam Refunds/Forfeiture

- ❑ Candidates deemed ineligible for an exam will not receive a refund of their registration fee. If you have any questions regarding your eligibility, contact the NSCA at 800-815-6826 or exams@nsca.com **BEFORE** registering for an exam.
- ❑ Refunds are not granted on cancelled computer-based exam registrations. Candidates wishing to cancel their exam appointment will forfeit their entire registration fee.
- ❑ A candidate who arrives for the exam more than 15 minutes late—for any reason—forfeits the registration and all fees paid to take the exam. A completed registration and exam fee are required to reschedule for the exam.

Exam Transfers

- ❑ Candidates can transfer ONLY into an exam for which there are available testing slots (dates and times).
- ❑ Candidates wishing to extend their 120-day window with an additional 120 days = $100 fee. 120 days starts from the day the transfer is processed.
- ❑ Candidates wishing to transfer from a paper/pencil exam to a computer-based exam = $150 transfer fee.

Failure to Report

A candidate who fails to report for an exam, forfeits the registration and all fees paid to take the exam. A completed registration and exam fee are required to reschedule for the exam.

Inclement Weather, Power Failure or Emergency

In the event of inclement weather or unforeseen emergencies on the day of an exam, AMP will determine whether circumstances warrant the cancellation, and subsequent rescheduling of an exam. Candidates may contact AMP's Weather Hotline at 913-495-4418 (24 hours/day) prior to the exam to determine if AMP has been advised that any assessment centers are closed.

Typically, the exam is NOT rescheduled if the assessment center personnel are able to open the assessment center. If power to an assessment center is interrupted temporarily during an administration, AMP will restart the exam from where it left off so that candidates may continue the exam.

Every attempt is made to administer the exam as scheduled; however, should an exam be cancelled at an assessment center, all scheduled candidates will receive information about rescheduling procedures.

On the Day of the Exam

On the day of your exam appointment, report to the assessment center no later than your scheduled testing time. Signs indicating AMP Assessment Center check-in will be posted in the H&R Block office. A CANDIDATE WHO ARRIVES MORE THAN 15 MINUTES AFTER THE SCHEDULED TESTING TIME WILL NOT BE ADMITTED.

To gain admission to the assessment center, a candidate needs to present two forms of valid identification, one with a current photograph. Both forms of identification must be current and include the candidate's current name and

signature. Acceptable forms of identification include a current:

1. Driver's license with photograph
2. State identification card with photograph
3. Passport
4. Military identification card with photograph
5. Social security card (secondary form)

Employment ID cards, student ID cards and any type of temporary identification are NOT acceptable as primary identification. Candidates are prohibited from misrepresenting their identities by falsifying information to obtain admission to the assessment center.

Security

The NSCA and AMP maintain exam administration and security standards that are designed to assure that all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. The assessment center is continuously monitored by audio and video surveillance equipment for security purposes.

The following security procedures apply during the exam:

- ❑ Exams are proprietary. No cameras, notes, tape recorders, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), pagers, cellular phones, or the like are allowed in the testing room. Use of a cellular phone or other electronic devices is strictly prohibited and will result in dismissal from the exam and forfeiting the entire registration fee.
- ❑ Pencils will be provided during check-in. Candidates will be provided with scratch paper to use during the exam. If a second piece of scratch paper is needed, candidates may ask the test proctor for another piece of paper and turn in the one they used before. Candidates must sign and return the scratch paper to the supervisor at the completion of testing or they will not receive a score report.
- ❑ No documents or notes of any kind may be removed from the exam room.
- ❑ No calculators are permitted in the assessment center or testing room.
- ❑ No guests, visitors or family members are allowed in the testing room or reception areas.
- ❑ No personal belongings are allowed in the assessment center. Only keys and wallets may be taken into the testing room. AMP, the NSCA, and the testing center are not responsible for items left in the reception area.

Other Restrictions:

- ❑ No questions concerning the content of the exam may be asked.
- ❑ Eating, drinking or smoking are not permitted in the assessment center.
- ❑ Candidates may take a break whenever they wish, but they are not allowed additional time to make up for time lost during breaks.

Misconduct

Individuals who engage in any of the following conduct may be dismissed from the exam, their scores will not be reported and exam fees will not be refunded. Examples of misconduct are when a candidate:

- ❑ Creates a disturbance or is abusive or otherwise uncooperative;
- ❑ Displays and/or uses electronic communications equipment such as pagers, cellular phones, PDAs;
- ❑ Gives or receives help, or is suspected of doing so;

Exam Policies

- ❑ Attempts to record exam questions or make notes;
- ❑ Attempts to take the exam for someone else; or
- ❑ Is observed with notes, books or other aids.

Copyrighted Exam Questions

All exam questions are the copyrighted property of the NSCA. It is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute or display these exam questions by any means, in whole or in part. Doing so may subject you to severe civil and criminal penalties.

Release of Information

Both the NSCA and its testing agency are committed to protecting the confidentiality of candidate records. For this reason, exam scores are never released by telephone. Also, information regarding individual candidate scores is never released to any third party. Verification of the certified status of an individual, however, is provided upon receipt of a written request.

Confidentiality

Information about candidates for testing and their exam results are considered confidential. Studies and reports concerning candidates will contain no information identifiable with any candidate, unless authorized by the candidate.

Privacy Policy

The NSCA is committed to the right of privacy for certified individuals (Certified Special Population Specialist, Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist, and NSCA-Certified Personal Trainer) and exam candidates. The NSCA will exercise care with customer property and personal information while it is under our control, or used by the NSCA. The NSCA staff will handle and protect customer property/information as is done with all NSCA property. Only employees authorized by the Executive Director (or designee) will have access to customer files. The designated employees are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of the information in those files. The NSCA staff will not discuss, disclose or release any information submitted for certification purposes to any third party without the certificate holder's or candidate's written consent.

- ❑ The exam candidate needs to make all inquiries pertaining to material submitted for certification exams and/or information related to the exam administration.
- ❑ With the exception of verification of certification, written consent from the certificate holder or exam candidate is required prior to the release of any information from the individual's record.

To complete and submit the "Authorization to Release Information Form," please visit the downloads section of the NSCA Website at www.nsca.com or contact the NSCA at exams@nsca.com to receive a faxed or mailed copy of this release form.

The NSCA reserves the right to modify its Privacy Policy without prior notification. In the event that we make a material change to our policy, we will post a notice of the change on the NSCA Website (www.nsca.com).

Cancelled Scores

The testing agency is obligated to the NSCA to report scores that accurately reflect the performance of each candidate. For this reason, the testing agency maintains exam administration and exam security standards that are designed to ensure that all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and to prevent some candidates from gaining an unfair advantage over others due to testing irregularities or misconduct. The testing agency routinely reviews irregularities and exam scores suspected of resulting from unusual or nonstandard circumstances and reports such to the NSCA.

Exam Policies

The NSCA Certification Committee reserves the right to withhold or cancel exam scores if, in its opinion, there is reason to question their validity or to investigate a violation of the testing regulations. Scores considered for cancellation by the NSCA Certification Committee may be grouped into two categories:

1. Suspected candidate misconduct: In such cases, the NSCA may initially withhold exam scores and notify the candidates so that they have the opportunity to provide additional information as requested by the NSCA Certification Committee. The NSCA Certification Committee may also undertake a confidential review of the circumstances giving rise to questionable score validity. If it is determined that there is sufficient cause to question score validity, the NSCA Certification Committee may cancel the score(s) and inform the involved parties.

2. Irregularities: Scores may be withheld and/or cancelled because of circumstances beyond the candidate's control, such as computer malfunctions. In such cases, candidates will be informed and, if the NSCA determines that scores must be cancelled, offered an opportunity to retake the exam.

In addition to the reasons listed, the NSCA Certification Committee may withhold or cancel exam results if, upon investigation, a violation of policies, as outlined in this publIcation, is found to have been committed.

No Shows

Candidates who do not arrive to take the exam, and who do not cancel or transfer their registration, will forfeit the registration fee.

Reasons for Disciplinary Action

The NSCA Certification Committee has approved the following items as reasons why candidates for the CSPS exam may be refused or for which exam candidates or credentialed individuals may be disciplined, up to and including the revocation of their certified status:

1. Obtaining or attempting to obtain certification by fraud, deception or artifice.

2. Knowingly assisting another person or other persons in obtaining or attempting to obtain certification by fraud, deception or artifice.

3. Illegal use or falsification of certification certificates, credentials or any other CSPS documents.

4. Unauthorized possession and/or distribution of any official CSPS testing materials to include copying and/or reproduction of any part of the CSPS exam questions or scenarios.

5. Unauthorized use of any of the registered trademarks owned by the NSCA. These include the association and certification logos.

6. Not accumulating and/or reporting the required number of CEUs, or not paying the recertification fee within the applicable time period.

When the NSCA becomes aware of an incident that may fall into one of the preceding categories, a judicial committee is convened to begin a structured investigation to determine whether any disciplinary action will be taken.

Upon receipt of the notice of the judicial committee's decision, the charged party has 30 days to file a written appeal of the decision to the NSCA. Upon receipt of an appeal, the NSCA Certification Committee reviews the record of the case and determines whether to affirm or modify the judicial committee's decision.

Exam Scheduling

Assessment Center Locations

Exams are administered by computer at more than 160 AMP Assessment Centers geographically distributed throughout the United States. Assessment centers are typically located in H&R Block offices. AMP Assessment Center locations, detailed maps and directions can be found at www.nsca.com. Specific address information will be provided when a candidate schedules an exam appointment.

Scheduling an Exam Appointment

After you have received notification of your scheduling eligibility from the NSCA, you may schedule an exam appointment by one of the following methods. Candidates can schedule up to two days before the testing date. *NOTE: Be prepared to confirm a date and location for testing and to provide your assigned ID number, which you will receive after you have completed your online registration.*

1. Online: The candidate may schedule an exam appointment online at any time by using our online registration scheduling service at www.nsca.com.

OR

2. Telephone: Call AMP at 888-519-9901 to schedule an exam appointment. You can reach an AMP representative from 7:00am to 7:00pm (Central time) Monday through Thursday, 7:00am to 5:00pm on Friday and 8:30am to 5:00pm on Saturday.

The exams are administered by appointment Monday through Friday at 9:00am and 1:30pm (with some select Saturday appointments available). Individuals are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. Refer to the chart below.

If you call to schedule an exam appointment by 3:00pm Central time on ...	Depending on availability, your exam may be scheduled beginning ...
Monday	Wednesday
Tuesday	Thursday
Wednesday	Friday
Thursday	Monday (Saturday, if available)
Friday	Tuesday
Saturday	Wednesday

When the appointment is made, the candidate will choose a time to report to the assessment center. Candidates will receive a confirmation email with the location, date and time. The candidate can only take the exam for which the appointment has been made; no changes in exam type can be made at the assessment center. *NOTE: Unscheduled candidates (walk-ins) will not be admitted to the assessment center.*

Holidays

The exams are not offered on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day (July 4), Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Eve Day.

What to Expect at the Assessment Center

After confirming the candidate's identification, the candidate will sign in and will be directed to a testing station. The candidate will receive on-screen instructions to enter his/her assigned ID number. The candidate's photograph will be taken and displayed throughout the exam session. This photograph will also print on the score reports.

Prior to attempting the exam, the candidate will be given the opportunity to practice taking an exam on the computer. Please note that this practice exam is to help the candidate become familiar with the computerized exam format. Also note that it is possible that the practice exam questions will not relate to strength and conditioning. The time used for this practice session is NOT counted as part of the exam time or score. When the candidate is comfortable with the computer-testing process, he/she may quit the practice session and begin the timed exam.

Following the practice session, instructions for taking the exam will be provided on-screen. Then the candidate will begin the actual timed exam.

Actual Exam

The computer monitors the time the candidate spends on the exam. The exam will stop when the testing time has expired. Candidates can click on the "Time" box in the lower right-hand corner of the screen or select the "Time" key to monitor the time. A digital clock indicates the time remaining for the candidate to complete the exam. The "Time" feature may be hidden during the exam.

Only one exam question is presented at a time. The question number appears in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. Choices of answers to the exam question are identified as A, B, or C. Candidates must indicate the answer choice by either typing the letter into the response box in the lower left-hand corner of the computer screen, or by clicking in the option using the mouse. To change the answer, just enter a different option by pressing the A, B, or C key or by clicking on the option using the mouse. Candidates can change their answer as many times as they wish during the exam time limit.

To move to the next question, click on the forward arrow (>) in the lower right-hand portion of the screen or select the "NEXT" key. This action will move the candidate forward through the exam, question by question. Should the candidate wish to review any question(s), he/she can click the backward arrow (<) or use the left arrow key to move backward through the exam.

Candidates may leave an exam question unanswered for return later in the testing session. Questions may also be bookmarked for later review by clicking in the blank square to the right of the "Time" button. Click on the hand icon or select the "NEXT" key to advance to the next unanswered or bookmarked question on the exam. To identify all unanswered and bookmarked questions, repeatedly click on the hand icon or press the "NEXT" key. When the exam is completed, the number of exam questions answered is reported. If not all questions have been answered and there is time remaining, return to the exam and answer those questions. Be sure to provide an answer for every question before ending the exam. Any blank answers will be scored as incorrect.

Candidate Comments

During the exam, online comments may be provided for any question by clicking on the button displaying an exclamation point (!) to the left of the "Time" button. This opens a dialogue box where comments may be entered. Comments will be reviewed, but individual responses will NOT be provided. Comments will not be considered in the grading process, but will be used during future exam development. If the candidate leaves the test center and still has comments to provide about the exam and/or the test administration, he/she should forward written comments to the NSCA at exams@nsca.com. All comments should be sent no later than five business days after the test date.

At The Exam

Conclusion of the Exam

After completing the exam, candidates are asked to complete a short evaluation of their testing experience.

Reporting of Results

If a candidate has met all of the eligibility requirements and paid all of the fees, he/she will receive a score report at the assessment center.

If a candidate is a college senior who is taking the CSPS exam but he/she has **NOT** yet graduated, he/she will receive a "Passed" or "Failed" notification at the assessment center. The actual exam scores will **NOT** be released until the candidate sends an official transcript confirming that at least a Bachelor's degree was earned. College seniors who pass the CSPS exam do **NOT** become certified until they graduate and send a transcript to the NSCA.

If a candidate has a "hold" placed on his/her registration, he/she will **NOT** receive the results; instead he/she will receive a notice that indicates additional documentation is needed and information on how to contact the NSCA. Scores will be sent out within 10 business days after the NSCA receives all required documentation.

If a candidate indicates that he/she is an NSCA Member but his/her membership status cannot be verified, he/she will receive a notice that indicates additional documentation is needed and information on how to contact the NSCA. The exam results will not be sent until proof of membership is provided.

Score reports will be held for one calendar year from the date of the exam. If the hold has **NOT** been cleared in that time (i.e., the candidate has **NOT** provided the required documentation), the exam results become void. If a candidate wants to become certified after that point, he/she is required to submit a registration with the appropriate fee and retake the exam. Scores are not reported over the telephone —even to the exam candidate.

Pass/Fail Score Determination

The total scaled score will determine whether the candidate passed. This scaled score is statistically derived from the raw score and can range from 1 through 99. The passing scaled score is 70 for the exam.

The reason for calculating scaled scores is that different forms (or versions) of the exam may vary in difficulty. As new forms of the exam are introduced, a certain number of questions in each content area are replaced by new questions. These changes may cause one form of the exam to be slightly easier or more difficult than another form. To adjust for these differences in difficulty, a procedure called "equating" is used. The goal of equating is to ensure fairness to all candidates.

The methodology used to set the minimum passing score is called the Angoff method, based upon the data which is gathered during the performance of a passing point study and is conducted by a panel of experts in the field. The experts evaluated each question on the exam to determine how many correct answers are necessary to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to pass this exam.

A candidate's ability to pass the exam depends on the amount of knowledge displayed and is not based upon the performance of others taking the exam (i.e., the exam is not based on a "curve").

Review of Exam Questions

The NSCA will not accommodate a request to review missed or incorrect exam questions. From the initiation of the exam program, the NSCA has not permitted any candidate access to the exam materials (test booklet and answer forms) other than during the time that he/she was actually taking the exam. This policy is consistent with other nationally recognized certifying or licensing bodies. The NSCA has devoted a significant effort to develop valid and reliable exams. Allowing candidates to review exams would compromise the security of our exams and their reliability.

After the Exam

If You Pass the Exam

All candidates who pass the exam will receive a certificate and recertification information within 15 business days.

Reestablishing Exam Eligibility

A candidate who fails the exam may reregister for the CSPS exam online at www.nsca.com. Candidates who fail the exam are eligible to retest after a 90-day waiting period. Note that candidates are allowed to immediately reregister for an exam and schedule for a date as long as the date selected is beyond the 90-day window.

Exam Scoring Appeals

In computer-based testing, the computer accepts responses from a keyboard or mouse in digitized form. As a result, computer-based testing eliminates problems that may have previously arisen with scanning paper/pencil answer sheets, since all responses are recorded by candidates during their exam. Therefore, scoring appeals are not accepted for computer-based testing.

Recertification Requirements

Candidates who pass the exam will receive information concerning requirements associated with the NSCA's Recertification Program. It is important that newly certified individuals thoroughly read and understand this information in order to retain their certification. Certified Special Population Specialists are required to earn 6.0 Continuing Education Units (typically 1 contact hour equals 0.1 CEU) over specific three-year periods (2009 – 2011, 2012 – 2014, etc.) to maintain their certification. Those certified within an existing three-year period will have their initial CEU requirement prorated to the end of the reporting period.

A recertification fee for each certification is assessed for each three-year period. Those holding more than one certification (CSPS, CSCS and NSCA-CPT) may not need to acquire separate CEUs for each certification, as CEUs acquired will apply to multiple certifications in most cases.

No CEUs will be awarded for activities completed prior to becoming certified. In addition to earning and reporting CEUs, or retaking the exam, all certified individuals must maintain current adult CPR certification in order to retain the CSPS credential.

More information regarding recertification requirements can be found in the NSCA Recertification Policies and Procedures, which can be downloaded at www.nsca.com.

Recertification Appeals

Any action taken by the NSCA Certification Committee affecting the status of a certificate holder may be appealed. Appeals must be in writing and received within 90 days after receipt of such notice. You can send appeals to the NSCA Certification Committee at 1885 Bob Johnson Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80906 or to exams@nsca.com.

After The Exam

Address Changes

The address provided on a candidate's registration will be used for future mailings. If candidates have a change of address, they should notify the NSCA. Candidates can update their address with the NSCA in one of the following ways:

1. Log into your profile at www.nsca.com
2. Call 800-815-6826
3. Email exams@nsca.com
4. Send a fax to 719-632-6367
5. Mail the information to NSCA,
   1885 Bob Johnson Drive,
   Colorado Springs, CO 80906

Certification Verification

To request verification of a CSPS certification, the Certification Verification Form located at www.nsca.com/contact/certification_verification.html must be submitted to the NSCA.

Code of Ethics

With the credibility possessed by the CSPS exam comes the responsibility to ensure the integrity of the credentials awarded. The Code of Ethics of the NSCA was established to make our certified individuals aware of the standards of ethical behavior that should be followed in the practice of their profession (strength training and conditioning and personal training). The Code presents fundamental standards of behavior that all certified individuals should strive to achieve. It serves to increase ethical sensitivity and judgement, strengthen support for certified individuals' moral courage and sharpen their sense of identity as an integral part of the NSCA and its continued success. To review the entire Code of Ethics for Certified Individuals, visit the downloads section at www.nsca.com.

Certified individuals shall:

1. Respect the rights, welfare and dignity of all individuals.
2. Strive to provide equal and fair treatment to all individuals and not discriminate against anyone.
3. Provide and maintain a safe and effective training environment.
4. Comply with all general laws of the land including, but not limited to, applicable business, employment and copyright laws.
5. Accept responsibility for the use of sound judgment when working with their clientele.
6. Respect the confidentiality of their clientele while remaining accountable.
7. Refer their clientele to more qualified fitness, medical or health professionals when appropriate.
8. Remain current on practical and theoretical foundations through continuing education activities.
9. Avoid engaging in any behavior or form of conduct that would constitute a conflict of interest or actions that adversely reflect on the profession or the National Strength and Conditioning Association.
10. Strive to safeguard the public by reporting violations of this Code of Ethics.

CSPS Exam Content

DOMAIN	PERCENT OF EXAM	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS*
1. Basic Pathophysiology and Science of Health Status or Condition, Disorder, or Disease	40%	40
2. Client Consultation	19%	19
3. Program Planning	31%	31
4. Safety, Emergency Procedures and Legal Issues	10%	10
Total	100%	100

*__NOTE:__ There are an additional 10 non-scored questions on each exam.

1. BASIC PATHOPHYSIOLOGY AND SCIENCE OF HEALTH STATUS or CONDITION, DISORDER, or DISEASE (40 scored questions)

A. Cardiovascular: Individuals with...
   1. Myocardial infarction
   2. Angina
   3. Hypertension
   4. Peripheral vascular disease (e.g., deep vein thrombosis, peripheral artery disease)
   5. Congestive heart failure
   6. Valvular disorders
   7. Revascularizations
   8. Conduction defects or disorders (e.g., atrial fibrillation, pacemakers)

B. Pulmonary: Individuals with...
   1. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) (e.g., emphysema, chronic bronchitis)
   2. Chronic restrictive pulmonary disease (CRPD) (e.g., fibrosis, sarcoidosis)
   3. Asthma
   4. Pulmonary hypertension

C. Metabolic
   1. Individuals with diabetes mellitus (Type 1 and 2)
   2. Individuals who are overfat
   3. Individuals with pre-diabetes
   4. Individuals who have metabolic syndrome
   5. Individuals with thyroid disorders (hypo/hyperthyroidism)
   6. Individuals with end stage renal disease

D. Immunological and Hematological: Individuals with...
   1. AIDS/HIV
   2. Chronic fatigue syndrome

3. Fibromyalgia
4. Anemia
5. Auto-immune disorders (e.g., lupus, rheumatoid arthritis)
6. Bleeding/clotting disorders

E. Musculoskeletal/Orthopedic: Individuals with…
1. Osteoporosis and other low BMD conditions
2. Limb amputations
3. Osteoarthritis
4. Lower back conditions
5. Chronic musculoskeletal conditions (e.g., OA, osteoporosis, low back pain)
6. Frailty
7. Joint disorders (e.g., muscle, labrum, ligament, cartilage, tendons)
8. Joint replacements (e.g., shoulder, knee, hip)
9. Sarcopenia
10. Posture conditions
11. Cystic fibrosis

F. Neuromuscular: Individuals with…
1. Stroke or brain injury
2. Spinal cord disabilities
3. Multiple sclerosis
4. Cerebral palsy
5. Down's syndrome
6. Parkinson's disease
7. Epilepsy
8. Balance conditions
9. Muscular dystrophy

G. Post Rehabilitation: Individuals with…
1. Musculoskeletal disorders/conditions
2. Cardiopulmonary disorders/conditions
3. Neuromuscular disorders/conditions

H. Individuals with Cancer

I. Female Specific Conditions
1. Pregnant and postpartum
2. Female athlete triad
3. Menopausal/post-menopausal

J. Individuals with Behavioral/Psychological Disorders
1. Disordered eating patterns
2. Body image
3. Depression
4. Chemical dependency

K. Older Adults
L. Children and Adolescents

2. CLIENT CONSULTATION (19 scored questions)

A. Determine the Fitness Professional's Role in the Wellness Continuum
   1. Align goals of the medical professional, client, and fitness professional
   2. Maintain lines of communication with the primary healthcare provider
   3. Optimize communication between the fitness professional and medical professionals
   4. Verify physician's clearance to exercise

B. Perform Health Appraisal
   1. Understand basic medical terminology
   2. Interpret medical history (e.g., contraindications, continuity of care, goal viability)
   3. Administer life-style questionnaire
   4. Interpret "levels of pain" or prognosis (severity of condition; e.g., kurtzke expanded disability status scale)
   5. Interpret medical documentation
   6. Document subjective client feedback and observations relevant to medical condition
   7. Contact medical professionals for needed information or clarification on medical history, restrictions, etc.
   8. Identify signs and symptoms that indicate an individual should be referred for medical care
   9. Understand the roles of health professionals that prescribe exercise (e.g., physicians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, athletic trainers)
   10. Perform nutritional review

C. Fitness Evaluation
   1. Conduct fitness evaluation
      a. vital signs (e.g. heart rate, blood pressure)
      b. height and weight
      c. body composition (e.g., "Bod Pod" and DXA reports)
      d. girth measurements
      e. muscular strength and endurance
      f. speed/agility/power
      g. cardiovascular endurance (e.g., submaximal VO_2 max test on treadmill and bike)
      h. flexibility
      i. lipid profile
      j. lung function
      k. postural assessment
      l. balance

m. functional assessment
n. evaluations specific for individuals with limited ability (e.g., 6-min walk, modified sit-and-reach from a chair, 8 lb. curl test, chair stands)

2. Prioritize need for clients with multiple diseases
3. Adjust fitness evaluation based on medical conditions and restrictions
4. Determine testing measures for the client
5. Document client progression with objective and subjective criteria

3. PROGRAM PLANNING (31 scored questions)

A. Develop SMART Goals
1. Manage fear and expectations
2. Increase functional capacity
3. Improve health risk factors (e.g., muscle wasting)
4. Improve confidence and self-image
5. Improve quality of life

B. Program Design
1. Develop individual training programs that are adapted to specific health condition (types, duration, frequency, intensity, progression, rest)
2. Develop group training programs that are adapted to specific health condition (types, duration, frequency, intensity, progression, rest)
3. Identify exercises indicated and contraindicated for client's condition
4. Identify environmental risks (e.g., MS and heat tolerance)
5. Evaluate communicable disease risk (client to fitness professional OR fitness professional to client)
6. Modify the warm-up and cool-down program to coincide with the limitations and capacities of a client
7. Modify the exercise program to coincide with the limitations and capacities of a client
8. Instruct a client on therapeutic exercise technique and equipment (including body position, speed/control of movement, movement/range of motion, breathing, and spotting/safety guidelines)
   a. aquatic
   b. range of motion
   c. exercise with accessory equipment (e.g., chairs, walker/cane, gait belt)
   d. balance/perturbation training
   e. partner-assisted (support person and conduction exercises beyond the medical fitness center/facility, or how they can help during the process of exercise)
   f. home programs

9. Understand exercise-induced changes to body systems
    a. neuromuscular system
    b. cardiorespiratory system
    c. musculoskeletal system
    d. endocrine
    e. psychological

C. Apply Motivational/Coaching Techniques
    1. Motivational interviewing
    2. Stages of change
    3. Transtheoretical model
    4. Behavioral economics
    5. Planned behavior theory
    6. Cognitive theory
    7. Relapse prevention
    8. Positive psychology
    9. Solution-focused coaching

D. Monitor Client Outcomes

E. Recognize Need for Referral to Healthcare Professional

4. SAFETY, EMERGENCY PROCEDURES, AND LEGAL ISSUES (10 scored questions)

A. Comply with Scope of Practice Requirements

B. Practice Safety Procedures

C. Follow Emergency Procedures

D. Recognize Professional, Legal, and Ethical Responsibilities

E. Comply with HIPAA regulations

Sample Exam Questions

1. The initial strength training program for a client with Stage I hypertension should include which of the following variables?

	Reps	% 1RM	Rest Periods
A.	10	70	1 minute
B.	15	60	1 minute
C.	20	50	2 minutes

2. Which of the following exercises are CONTRAINDICATED for a client who suffers from spondylolysis?

A. lying trunk extension
B. lat pulldown
C. abdominal curls

3. A 25-year-old male client visits his physician because he wants to begin an exercise program. Results of a maximal graded exercise test indicate he has episodes of supraventricular tachycardia at a heart rate of 160 bpm. The physician clears him for exercise. Based on this information, which of the following should the fitness professional do?

A. Perform a cardiorespiratory evaluation up to 85% of the age-predicted HRmax.
B. Recommend a heart-healthy diet and begin a low intensity exercise program.
C. Conduct a fitness examination using 150 bpm as the maximum heart rate.

4. A client has been medically diagnosed as having tendonitis of the supraspinatus. Which of the following exercises is CONTRAINDICATED?

A. supine triceps extension
B. dumbbell pullover
C. seated row

Sample Exam Questions

SCENARIO

A new 45-year-old female client is a business owner and has three small children. Her medical history reveals the following

Height:	5 feet 5 inches (165 cm)
Weight:	220 pounds (100 kg)
TC:	290 mg/dL
Triglycerides:	214 mg/dL
ECG:	Normal
Blood pressure:	150/100 mm Hg
Resting heart rate:	68 bpm
Maximum heart rate:	179 bpm
Additional history:	Congenital heart murmur
	Gained 80 pounds (36.3 kg) within the last 2 years
Family history:	Mother had a malignant breast tumor removed
	Aunt died of breast cancer at age 41
	No family history of coronary artery disease

Her primary goals are to "get healthy" and "increase stamina" to keep up with her children. The client states that she feels very flexible in her low back and legs. Her ankles sometimes swell. She owns a treadmill and enjoys walking.

END OF SCENARIO

5. Which of the following is this client's major coronary risk factor?

A. known heart murmur
B. diastolic blood pressure of more than 90 mm Hg
C. ankle edema

Answers: (1) C (2) A (3) C (4) B (5) B

Study Tips

Tips for taking the CSPS Exam

Below are some general preparation tips that might be helpful to you—please note that these tips do not guarantee success on the exam.

General Study Tips

- ❑ Examine the content outline (page 18). Concentrate on areas you feel would be most beneficial to you and locate these areas in the study materials. The content outline can also be found in the downloads section at www.nsca.com.

- ❑ Review for the exam anywhere from three to nine months, depending on your educational and professional background.

Tips for Taking the Exam

- ❑ Read every question and all of the choices carefully before choosing an answer. If necessary, make sure to use the scroll bar to view all of the answers.

- ❑ Do not read too much into the questions. Use common sense in tandem with your expertise when reviewing the question/answers. Remember that the answers are based on the reference information and not individual practices dictated by physicians, facilities where you work, etc.

- ❑ You are allowed only one piece of scratch paper at a time. If you need a second piece, you will need to ask the proctor for another piece of paper and turn in the used one.

- ❑ During the exam, online comments may be provided for any question by clicking on the button displaying an exclamation point (!), which is found to the left of the "Time" button. This opens a dialogue box where you may enter your comments. Comments are reviewed, but individual responses are NOT provided or considered in the grading process.

- ❑ Please note that you are not allowed to take purses or other personal belongings, including cell phones, into the exam room.

- ❑ You are allowed to take restroom breaks; however, you will only have the designated time to complete the exam.

- ❑ Use of a calculator, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), etc. are not permitted.

- ❑ Exam room sizes and climates vary, so dress in layers to ensure personal comfort.

REQUEST FOR SPECIAL EXAMINATION ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have a disability covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act, **please complete this form and the Documentation of Disability-Related Needs on the reverse side and submit it with your application at least 45 days prior to your requested examination date.** The information you provide and any documentation regarding your disability and your need for accommodation in testing will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Candidate Information

Requested Location _____

Social Security # or ID #_____ Requested Examination Date: _____

_____
Name (Last, First, Middle Initial, Former Name)

_____
Mailing Address

_____

_____
City State Zip Code

_____
Daytime Telephone Number

Special Accommodations

I request special accommodations for the following examination: ☐ CSCS ☐ CPT

Examination delivery method: ☐ Computer-based Testing ☐ Paper-and-pencil Testing

Please provide (check all that apply):

_____ Reader

_____ Extended testing time (time and a half)

_____ Reduced distraction environment

_____ Please specify below if other special accommodations are needed.

_____

_____

_____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

PLEASE READ AND SIGN:

I give my permission for my diagnosing professional to discuss with AMP staff my records and history as they relate to the requested accommodation.

Signature: _____ Date:_____

Return this form to:

Examination Services, AMP, 18000 W. 105th Street, Olathe, KS 66061-7543, Fax 913/895-4650.

If you have questions, call the Candidate Support Center at 888/519-9901.

Rev. 6/21/2010

DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY-RELATED NEEDS

Please have this section completed by an appropriate professional (physician, psychologist, psychiatrist) to ensure that AMP is able to provide the required examination accommodations.

Professional Documentation

I have known _____ since _____ / _____ / _____ in my capacity as a
Candidate Name Date

_____.
Professional Title

The candidate discussed with me the nature of the examination to be administered. It is my opinion that, because of this candidate's disability described below, he/she should be accommodated by providing the special arrangements listed on the reverse side.

Description of Disability: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signed:_____ Title:_____

Printed Name: _____

Address:_____

_____

Telephone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Date: _____ License # (if applicable): _____

Return this form to:
Examination Services, AMP, 18000 W. 105th Street, Olathe, KS 66061-7543, Fax 913/895-4650.
If you have questions, call the Candidate Support Center at 888/519-9901.

NSCA
1885 Bob Johnson Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80906
Toll-free: 800-815-6826
Phone: 719-632-6722
Fax: 719-632-6367
Web site: www.nsca.com
Email: certification@nsca.com

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