



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

AAFCS/CFCS National Examination
Candidate Information Bulletin

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Introduction

1. About AAFCS

The American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) was established in 1909 as the American Home Economics Association. Since that time, AAFCS has been committed to optimizing the well-being of families and individuals by empowering members to act on continuing and emerging concerns; focusing the expertise of members for action on critical issues; and assuming leadership among organizations with mutual purposes. To this end, AAFCS is involved with a range of activities such as advocating the Code of Ethics, publishing a professional journal, accreditation of academic programs, and offering professional certification opportunities to those practicing in the field.

2. About Certification

The program for national certification of Family And Consumer Sciences professionals involves three components: specified prerequisites, a standards-based examination system, and continuing professional development. The Council for Certification (CFC), an autonomous unit within the AAFCS association, is charged with assuring the integrity and high standards of its professional certification program. The Council is responsible for developing criteria, standards, policies, and procedures that govern the national certification program for Family and Consumer Sciences professionals. Although the Council for Certification reports to the AAFCS Board of

Directors and Senate, the Board of Directors and Senate have no authority to overturn the Council's decisions on matters pertaining to professional certification, including the examination system. The Council regularly reviews, revises, and publicizes policies guiding the certification program. Information about the certification program appears in AAFCS publications, in newsletters of affiliate family and consumer sciences associations, and in annual mailings to those who are certified.

3. About The AAFCS/CFC National Examinations

AAFCS offers standards-based examinations that test the subject matter competence of professionals who plan to practice in family and consumer sciences or one of the areas within family and consumer sciences. Three examinations are currently offered. They are:

- Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) – Composite Examination
- FCS – Human Development & Family Studies (HD&FS) Concentration Examination
- FCS – Hospitality, Nutrition, & Food Science (HN&FS) Concentration Examination

These examinations serve multiple purposes. Colleges and universities can use them to test the subject matter competence of their graduates; credentialing agencies can use them to test subject matter competence of candidates, employers can use them to determine subject matter competence of potential employees and professional development needs of employees. Achieving a passing score on one of the exams is a way of assuring others that a family and consumer sciences professional has attained a threshold level of knowledge about the field.

Passing one of these examinations is a requirement for national certification in family and consumer sciences, known as Certified in Family and Consumer Sciences (CFCS). Becoming a CFCS, CFCS-HDFS, or CFCS-HNFS provides an important statement to others of your commitment to professionalism. Earning the right to use the credential designations after your name affirms your competence in family and consumer sciences and your commitment to continuing professional development. It assures others that you have current knowledge, skills, and abilities that enable you to improve the quality and standards of individual and family life through education, research, cooperative programs, and public information. See www.aafcs.org for more information about achieving CFCS certification status after passing the examination.

4. Goals of the Examination and the CFCS Credential

The AAFCS examinations are designed to:

- assure the public that family and consumer sciences professionals have attained a threshold level of knowledge and competence in family and consumer sciences subject matter that enables them to perform services as defined by the profession;
- foster excellence in the family and consumer sciences profession and to develop criteria for assessing such excellence; and

- promote the professional growth of individuals in family and consumer sciences by encouraging a systematic program of certification, professional development and continuing education.

Examination and Certification Eligibility

To be eligible to take the national examinations for FCS, FCS - HDFS, or FCS – HNFS, the candidate must have graduated from an accredited educational institution with a baccalaureate degree, or plan to graduate within the year. Some institutions use the national examination system as a pre-test; these candidates take the exam on the schedule established by their school.

Obtain the national CFCS certification, the candidate must:

1. Pass the examination for the certificate he or she is pursuing;
2. Subscribe to the AAFCS Code of Ethics;
3. Provide an official college transcript;
4. Submit a CFCS application and fee based on your status as a member of AAFCS, non-member, or graduating senior.

Examination Availability

FCS, FCS - HDFS, or FCS – HNFS examinations **may only be taken during the authorized examination periods or windows**. Please note the following examination schedule and associated deadlines:

Examination Window	Applications must be received at AAFCS by:
January 1 – January 31	December 20
March 1 – March 31	February 20
May 1 – May 30	April 20
July 1 – July 31	June 20
September 1 – September 31	August 20
November 1 – November 30	October 20

Examination Registration

There are two alternative ways in which the AAFCS certification examinations (FCS, FCS - HDFS, or FCS – HNFS) are offered to candidates:

1. Candidates may take the examination at LaserGrade®, Inc. - the computer-based testing center - at the location most convenient to the candidate’s geographical area.

OR

2. AAFCS also allows academic institutions to conduct special administrations of the examinations to its candidates (students) in paper-and-pencil format at their school locations. This option is available if an academic institution has made prior arrangements with AAFCS. Availability of this option can be determined by checking with the family and consumer sciences unit administrator at an institution or by contacting the Director of Certification at AAFCS headquarters.

INSTRUCTIONS AND PROCEDURE REQUIRED FOR TAKING THE EXAMINATION AT A LASERGRADE® COMPUTER-BASED TESTING CENTER:

- *Step I. Application Form.* Complete the application form on the last page of this candidate information brochure. Incomplete applications or applications that have not been signed will not be processed, but will be returned to the candidate. During a month-long testing window, a candidate may take only one of the three examinations and may take it only once.
- *STEP II. Submit Form.* Submit application form to:

American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences

Attn: Certification Department
400 North Columbus Street, Suite 202
Alexandria, VA 22314

(800) 424-8080 (toll-free phone)
(703) 706-4663 (facsimile)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Do NOT attach the \$150.00 examination fee to the application form. Candidate taking the examination at a LaserGrade® Computer Based Testing Center will pay examination fee directly to LaserGrade®.

- *Step III. Authorization Letter.* The application form will be reviewed by the AAFCS Certification Department to verify completeness and the candidate's eligibility to take the examination. Then, the candidate will receive, via First-Class U.S. Mail, a non-transferable authorization letter to take the exam.
- *Step IV. Appointment to Take the Exam.* The authorization letter from AAFCS will contain information and instructions, including the toll-free phone number to make an appointment to take the exam at one of over 400 LaserGrade® Computer Based Testing Centers in North America. Using the candidate's zip code, the customer service operator will provide the three centers closest to the candidate. Appointments are available weekdays and some evenings and weekends, depending upon the specific center selected. The candidate will be required to pay the \$150.00 (U.S.D) examination fee at this time. Payments are made by credit card (Visa, Master Card, American Express). If the candidate cannot charge the examination fee to a credit card, special arrangements for payment by check or money order will be made. The appointment will not be finalized

until LaserGrade® receives payment of the examination fee. The candidate will be sent a non-transferable **Admission Letter** directly from LaserGrade® to confirm the appointment location, date, and time. The customer service representative can also help with directions to the test center if necessary.

IMPORTANT NOTES: The examination fee is non-refundable. If a candidate finds it necessary to reschedule a LaserGrade® appointment, he or she must call the same toll-free number and do so **at least 48 weekday hours prior to the appointment time**. Failure to do so will forfeit the examination fee.

If a candidate fails to attend the examination (in other words, a “no show”) or cannot be admitted for any reason, the examination fee will be forfeited. A new appointment and examination fee of \$150.00 will be required.

Retaking the Examination

If the candidate does not achieve a passing score on the examination, he or she may sit for the examination again. To take the examination again, the candidate must submit a new application and examination fee, following the complete 4-step procedure outlined above. During a month-long testing window, a candidate may take only one of the three examinations and may take it only once.

The report issued to a candidate who has not passed the test provides (a) an overall scale score, and (b) a diagnostic breakdown of the candidate’s strong and weak areas. This information is provided in order to enable the candidate to use this information to focus study efforts on weak areas in preparation for taking the examination again.

Examination Administration

The candidate is to arrive at the test center at the time noted on the authorization admission documents. In order to be admitted, the **Admission Letter** and a **photo identification** is required. **A candidate will not be admitted without proper identification.** The only acceptable forms of identification are: driver’s license, government-issued identification card, or a passport. No other forms of identification will be accepted. If the candidate’s name has changed since receiving the admission letter, the candidate must bring legal documentation showing the previous name and current name (for example, divorce decree, court order, marriage license, or notarized affidavit).

No candidate will be admitted without the required documents. This policy is applicable for both original candidates and those who take the examination again. No walk-in candidates will be admitted.

Administration of the Examination at a LaserGrade® Computer Based Testing Center:

After establishing positive identification, the candidate will be escorted to a computer station to begin. Before beginning the test, the candidate will fill out a series of screens that will gather

basic identifying information (name, address, Social Security number, etc.). The system then compares this information to the registration record as a second quality assurance measure. Following the identifying information screens, a practice test is presented to train the candidate on how to use the computer mouse or keyboard to take the test. Additionally, the proctor is trained to assist candidates if they have any questions about how to use the system. The system is extremely user-friendly and can be completely operated with a few keys or a computer mouse. After the demonstration test, which is un-timed, the candidate will be asked if he or she wishes to begin the test. If yes, the clock begins and the first question appears and the screen will continuously show how much time has elapsed. Each test question is an independent item. The best answer should always be selected. The candidate will have the option to “tag” questions for review later. At any time, candidates can ask the computer to display a list of the questions that have been tagged, review them, change the answers, etc. The test ends when 3 hours have elapsed (after a 10 minute and 5 minute warning), or when the candidate asks the computer to end the test. Warnings will be given at 10 minutes and 5 minutes before the 3 hours elapse. The system will then ask the candidate to fill out a short questionnaire about the experience at the test center (the proctor’s behavior, level of service, ease of use, etc.). After completion of the examination, the candidate will receive an immediate grade report. If the candidate has passed the examination and is eligible for certification, AAFCS will contact the candidate via U.S. First Class Mail within 2-3 weeks following your examination.

Examination Rules

1. Dress is “business casual” (neat...but certainly comfortable).
2. Failure to follow test center instructions will result in the candidate’s application being voided and forfeiture of the application fee. Conduct that results in a violation of security or disrupts the administration of the examination could result in dismissal from the examination. In addition, the examination will be considered void and will not be scored. Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to,
 - Writing on any material other than the answer sheet, exam booklet or comment sheet
 - Talking to a person other than a Exam Supervisor or a Proctor during the examination
 - Looking at another candidate’s exam materials
 - Allowing someone to look at or copy from your exam materials
 - Writing after time is called
 - Removing, or attempting to remove, any secure material or information from the examination room.
3. Candidates must not discuss or possess reference materials or any other examination information at any time during the **entire** examination period. Candidates are articularly cautioned not to do so after having completed the exam and checked out of the test room, as other candidates in the area could be taking a break and might not have completed the examination. Candidates may not attend the examination only to review or audit test materials. Candidates may not copy any portion of the examination for any reason. No unauthorized persons will be admitted into the testing area. Please be further advised that

all examination content is strictly confidential. **At no other time, before, during, or after the examination, may candidates communicate orally, electronically or in writing with any person or entity about the content of the examination or individual examination questions.**

4. Candidates writing on anything other than an answer sheet will be in violation of the security policies above. Reference materials are not allowed in the testing room. Candidates are asked to bring as few personal and other items as possible to the testing area.
5. While the site climate is controlled to the extent possible, candidates should be prepared for either warm or cool temperatures at the testing center to reduce the likelihood of becoming uncomfortable. Cellular phones and beepers are prohibited in the testing area. Electrical outlets will not be available for any reason. The use of headphones inside the testing area is prohibited. Earplugs for sound suppression are allowed. No smoking or use of tobacco will be allowed inside the testing area. Food and drinks are not allowed in the testing room. Candidates must vacate the testing area after completing the examination. Due to limited parking facilities at some sites, candidates should allow ample time to park and reach the testing area.

Examination Scoring

The examination consists of 150 multiple choice questions with four (4) choices for each question. Thirty of these questions are included for research purposes only. The research questions are not identified; therefore, all questions are to be answered to the best ability of the candidate. Examination results will be based only on the 120 scored questions on the examination. There are multiple versions of the examination. It is important that each candidate have an equal opportunity to pass the examination, no matter which version is administered. Expert FCS practitioners have provided input regarding the difficulty level of every question used in the examinations. That information is used to develop examination forms that have comparable difficulty levels. When there are differences in difficulty in different versions of an examination, a mathematical procedure is used to equalize the difficulty scores. Because the number of questions required to pass the examination may vary for different test versions, the scores are converted to a reporting scale to ensure a common standard. The passing grade required is a scale score of 240 out of a possible 300 points on the scoring scale.

Should a candidate who fails the exam request that their examination be re-scored, the request and reason must be made in writing and submitted to the Certification Department at AAFCS with a \$25.00 rescoring fee. If the examination is rescored and an error is found in the scoring, the \$25.00 rescoring fee will be refunded and the corrected score will be reported. If the original score is found to be accurate, the \$25.00 rescoring fee will not be refunded.

Examination Results

Examination results will be provided immediately following the examination if the candidate sits for it at a LaserGrade® computer-based testing center. Consistent with testing industry standard

practices, passing candidates will be given pass-status information only, not numeric scores. Failing candidates will be provided with an overall numeric scale score and diagnostic information of strong and weak areas.

Should a candidate need a duplicate of the results provided at the test center, a written request must be submitted to the Certification Department at AAFCS. The request must include the candidate's current mailing address. Results will be mailed to the candidate. Results WILL NOT be released over the phone because positive identification cannot be established.

Passing candidates will receive a packet of information and application form for national certification from AAFCS approximately 2-3 weeks following the successful completion of the examination.

Special Accommodations and Language Policies

AAFCS provides special accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 (ADA). If a disability prevents a candidate from taking the examination under normal conditions, he or she may request special accommodations. The request must be in writing, accompany the application form, explain the name of the disability (i.e. the diagnosis), the type of accommodation the candidate is requesting, and must include attached supporting documentation of the diagnosis from a qualified healthcare professional. After receiving the request and appropriate documentation, the candidate will be contacted to make arrangements for special accommodation.

Please note that for reasons related to examination standardization, security, and cost, the AAFCS examinations are offered only in English at this time. If English is not the primary language, AAFCS recommends (but does not require) that candidates consider sitting for the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) examination before sitting for the AAFCS examination. Candidate scores on the TOEFL® will provide a useful gauge for understanding if reading and comprehending English will provide difficulty for the candidate on the AAFCS examination. The TOEFL® examination is offered at multiple locations both domestically and internationally throughout the year at Sylvan Learning Centers®. More information is available on the Sylvan web site.

Examination Preparation

This Candidate Information Brochure was developed to outline the administrative policies, procedures, and other information relevant to taking one of the AAFCS/CFC national examinations. It is intended to be used in concert with the companion document, the *AAFCS Examination Study Guide*, which is available in downloadable format on the AAFCS website (www.aafcs.org). This manual provides comprehensive information important for preparing for the AAFCS/CFC national examinations, including examination specifications, sample test items, suggested reference sources, etc.

Examination Administration Mode:

Check the administration mode:

- I wish to take the Examination at a LaserGrade® Computer Based Testing Center
- I wish to investigate taking the Examination via **Special Administration** at my educational institution. Please send me information about how to proceed. The family and consumer sciences administrator or instructor at my institution is:

Name: _____

Educational Institution name: _____

Phone: _____ E mail: _____

Affidavit and Examination Agreement (Read the statement carefully and sign in ink):

I hereby affirm that:

- I am eligible to sit for the AAFCS examination based upon the requirements that are described in this bulletin.
- I will treat all information related to the examination as confidential, whether provided to me by AAFCS or received from other sources.
- All information provided by me in this application is true to the best of my knowledge. AAFCS may, in its sole discretion, make inquiry of individuals and organizations directly or indirectly referenced in any part of this document to verify the accuracy and completeness of the information I have provided. I have fully read the contents of the Candidate Information Bulletin and agree with all examination and other policies contained therein.
- I understand that my successful performance on one of the exams in the AAFCS examination system will satisfy one of the requirements for the CFCS national professional certification. Subsequently, obtaining the CFCS credential would be optional and would require submitting a CFCS certification application and fee, agreeing to abide by the following Code of Ethics, and meeting ongoing professional development requirements.
- I understand that my test score will be reported to me. Additionally, I understand that if I have taken the exam as part of a program requirement, the entity in whose program I am participating may prearrange for a report of my test score.
- If I am taking an AAFCS examination to satisfy requirements for a university program or credential from an entity other than AAFCS, I understand that it is my responsibility to make formal notification/application for credit from that program.
- I understand that the cost of the electronically administered examination is \$150 to be paid directly to LaserGrade®, Inc. when the examination date and time is scheduled.

Applicant Signature (must be in ink)

Date

<p>Mail or FAX completed examination application but <u>no payment</u> to: American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Attn: Certification Department 400 North Columbus Street, Suite 202 Alexandria, VA 22314 (703) 706-4663 (facsimile) (800) 424-8080 (toll-free phone)</p>
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Code of Ethics

Preamble

These principles are intended to aid members of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences individually and collectively in maintaining a high level of ethical conduct. They are guidelines by which a member may determine the propriety of conduct in relationships with clients, with colleagues, with members of allied professions and with various publics.

A member of the family and consumer sciences profession and of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences shall:

- Maintain the highest responsible standard of professional performance, upholding confidentiality and acting with intelligence, commitment, and enthusiasm.
- Fulfill the obligation to continually upgrade and broaden personal professional competence.
- Share professional competence with colleagues and clients, to enlarge and continue development of the profession.
- Support the objectives of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences and contribute to its development through informed, active participation in its programs.
- Advance public awareness and understanding of the profession.
- Maintain a dedication of enhancing individual and family potential as a focus for professional efforts.

Principles of Professional Conduct

The following Statement of Principles are intended to aid members of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences individually and collectively.

Statement of Principles for Professional Practice

Preamble

The mission of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences is to affect the optimal well being of families and individuals by:

- empowering members to act on continuing and emerging concerns;
- focusing the expertise of members for action on critical issues;
- assuming leadership among organizations with mutual purposes.

These Principles of Professional Practice guide American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences members in all categories; those Certified in Family and Consumer Sciences; applicants for membership in the Association; and applicants for the Certified in Family and Consumer

Sciences designation. The Principles also provide members of the Association with guidelines and with descriptions of the actions required for ethical professional practice.

Professional Competence

AAFCS members base their competence on educational degrees earned from regionally accredited institutions and from training, experience, and certification programs recognized by AAFCS.

AAFCS members seek continuing education reflecting new expectations, procedures, and values.

AAFCS members assure accurate presentation of their work by organizations with whom they are affiliated.

AAFCS members identify themselves as Certified in Family and Consumer Sciences in cases in which this designation is consistent with the procedures and guidelines of the AAFCS Council for Certification. They may use the CFCS acronym in this identification and designation.

AAFCS members claim competence only in an area or areas for which they have education, training, and experience.

AAFCS members accurately present competencies of students, supervisors, colleagues, and others with whom they work.

AAFCS members practice within the law and within the recognized boundaries of their education, training, and experience.

AAFCS members verify the credentials of their employees and supervisors.

AAFCS members refrain from professional practice when impairment due to mental or physical causes, including chemical and alcohol abuse, affects professional competence. Members seek appropriate professional help for such impairments.

Respect for Diversity

AAFCS members respect differences in the abilities and needs of the people with whom they work.

AAFCS members recognize that differences exist among individuals and families and do not discriminate against or patronize others.

AAFCS members obtain education, training, and experience to provide competent services to persons of diverse backgrounds or persuasions.

AAFCS members conduct research relating to the uniqueness of individuals and families.

AAFCS members utilize and present subject matter in such a way as to recognize and develop appreciation of diversity.

Scholarship and Research

AAFCS members conduct, utilize, and report research using recognized research procedures and facilitate professional standards for the respective research foci.

AAFCS members secure review and approval of research designs by knowledgeable professionals consistent with standards used by institutional review boards.

AAFCS members, as part of research efforts, secure review of research designs by knowledgeable professionals not directly involved in the investigation.

AAFCS members secure the informed consent of research participants based on disclosure of the research design and potentially harmful effects of participation. Investigators are especially sensitive to consent among at-risk and protected populations.

AAFCS members honor individuals' choice to decline participation or withdraw at any time from research studies.

AAFCS members acknowledge through publication credit and other avenues the efforts and contributions of others to research activities.

AAFCS members are obliged to take steps to ensure that their research findings are accurately and clearly understood by consumers.

Confidentiality

AAFCS members maintain and guard the confidentiality of persons with whom they have professional relationships.

Conflict of Interest

AAFCS members avoid conflicting roles and take active steps to prevent and avoid exploitation of the individuals with whom they work.

AAFCS members assume responsibility for fair treatment of consumers, other professionals, and individuals and/or families.

AAFCS members make financial arrangements with clients, third-party payers, and supervisors that conform to commonly accepted professional practices and that are easily understood by all populations served.

AAFCS members report truthfully all professional services rendered.

Responsibility to the Profession

AAFCS members support the objectives of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences and contribute to Association roles and development through active, informed participation.

AAFCS members advance public awareness and understanding of the Association and its mission.

AAFCS members respect the rights and responsibilities of peers.

AAFCS members devote time and energy to public policy issues and to the public good.

AAFCS members speak on behalf of the Association in ways consistent with the directives and policies of the Association Board of Directors.

AAFCS members utilize the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences logo only in ways approved by the Association Board of Directors.