

FAQs: ACSM Certification Title Changes

What are the new titles of the certifications?

The ACSM Health/Fitness Instructor® will now be titled ACSM Certified Health Fitness SpecialistSM. The ACSM Exercise Specialist® will now be titled ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise SpecialistSM.

Why did you change the names?

ACSM certifications are the oldest and most well-respected certifications for fitness professionals. In order to maintain our leadership status and provide the best possible services to ACSM-certified fitness professionals, the ACSM Committee on Certification and Registry Boards (CCRB) determined that it was necessary to make relatively minor yet strategically significant modifications to the ACSM Health/Fitness Instructor® and ACSM Exercise Specialist® certification titles.

CCRB intends to more clearly communicate the actual roles and responsibilities of the given certification, and at the same time, raise the customer's perception of the certified instructor to a level that is consistent with the work they are performing.

For example, the use of "instructor" in "Health/Fitness Instructor" is frequently confused with a group exercise *instructor*, when in reality this certification is meant for the fitness professional who has the knowledge and skills to work with individuals with health challenges, who have been cleared by their physician for independent physical activity.

It is much the same for our "Exercise Specialist" certification. The ACSM Exercise Specialist® is one of two ACSM clinical certifications. ACSM conducted research that found most consumers had the impression that an ACSM Certified Personal TrainerSM had more academic preparation than an Exercise Specialist. Adding "clinical" to the title elevates it and more accurately describes the work of the given certified professional.

How long have these certification titles been used?

Both titles have been associated with the certification from the time they were originally developed. The ACSM Exercise Specialist® certification was created in 1975 and the ACSM Health/Fitness Instructor® certification was developed in 1987.

There was considerable research and planning put into the naming of these certifications at the time. Jobs within the fitness industry have evolved and there is now a need to better distinguish the specific work of both the ACSM Health/Fitness Instructor® and the ACSM Exercise Specialist®.

When can I start using the new title?

Please begin integrating your new title into business and promotional materials as soon as it is convenient for you. The name change transition will be complete on October 1, 2008.

Do I have to use the new titles?

After October 1, 2008, only the new titles will be used and recognized by ACSM.

Will I receive a new certificate and identification card?

New certificates and identification cards will be provided as your certification is renewed on its anniversary date.

Will the content of the respective examinations be changing?

No, we routinely re-evaluate the related knowledge, skills and abilities of each certification every four to five years. Title changes have had no influence on that timeline or process.

Will this affect the NCCA-accreditation of my certification?

No, since nothing about the exam development process will be changing, the accreditation will carry over with the new titles.

What happens to the individuals who pass the exam between now and September 30, 2008?

They will receive a certificate with the current titles and then will receive a certificate with the new titles when they renew on their anniversary date.