



Intervener Microcredentials and National Intervener Certification ePortfolio (NICE)

Policies and Procedures

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Introduction

The policies and procedures outlined in this document apply to the new intervener micro-credential and NICE certification process, which will officially launch in June 2025. These policies may be updated based on feedback from NICE reviewers, advisors as well as interveners and their mentors participating in the revised process during the first year after launch. Any updates will be publicly announced, and stakeholders will be promptly notified of any changes.

Definitions

CEC Intervener Standards

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) has established professional standards for the preparation and practice of interveners who support students with deaf-blindness in educational settings. The seven [CEC Intervener Standards](#) outline the knowledge and skills required for interveners to be effective in their role.

Intervener Microcredential and Badge

A digital badge and a printable microcredential certificate are awarded by the Paraprofessional Research and Resource (PAR²A) Center at the University of Colorado Denver to interveners who demonstrate proficiency in all the knowledge and skills of a single CEC Intervener Standard, as assessed by expert reviewers on the *National Intervener Certification E-portfolio (NICE) Review Board*.

National Intervener Certification E-portfolio (NICE)

A certificate awarded by the Paraprofessional Research and Resource (PAR²A) Center, University of Colorado Denver, to interveners who successfully complete all seven intervener microcredentials by demonstrating attainment of all of the knowledge and skills under the seven CEC Intervener standards, as assessed by expert reviewers who are members of the NICE Review Board.

Microcredential Portfolio

A candidate's microcredential portfolio is a curated collection of their best work, showcasing their knowledge, skills, achievements, and experience aligned with each CEC Intervener Standard.

NICE History

In 2016, the National Intervener Certification ePortfolio (NICE) was launched as a strategic initiative by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). A collaborative effort between the PAR²A Center at the University of Colorado Denver and the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB), the initiative aimed to overhaul certification processes for interveners supporting students who are deaf-blind. NICE introduced an innovative e-portfolio system, providing a non-credit national certification through digital artifacts, virtual mentoring, online evaluations, feedback and analytics to ensure the reliability of the scoring process.

Before its official launch, NICE underwent two years of development and refinement, employing a participatory and iterative approach that incorporated feedback from interveners, state affiliates, academic experts, and reviewers.

Between 2016 and 2024, NICE has certified candidates across 20 states, with reviewers from 26 states and Canada. Initially funded entirely by NCDB, the financial support ended in 2023, prompting NICE to explore new avenues for innovation. Starting February 1, 2025, NICE embarked on a new phase, continuing to provide an alternative non-credit certification option affiliated with an institution of higher education (IHE) for interveners.

Overview: The New NICE

As part of our ongoing commitment to excellence and professional growth in the field of deaf-blind intervention, NICE is adapting its approach to better support interveners across the United States.

Over the past eight years, the PAR²A Center has collected valuable feedback from reviewers, mentors, interveners, and state deaf-blind projects. In response, and with input from the NICE advisory board and national experts in deaf-blindness, the PAR²A Center has made substantial changes to the process. NICE has shifted from a single portfolio that covered all seven [CEC Intervener Standards](#) to seven separate microcredential portfolios, each aligned with an individual CEC standard.

The table below illustrates the alignment of each microcredential with the corresponding CEC Intervener Standard:

CEC Intervener Standards	Microcredential Titles
Standard 1: Engaging in Professional Learning and Practice within Ethical Guidelines	Microcredential #1 – Intervener: Professional Learning/Ethical Practice
Standard 2: Understanding and Addressing Each Individual's Developmental and Learning Needs	Microcredential #2 – Intervener: Individual's Developmental and Learning Needs
Standard 3: Demonstrating Subject Matter Content and Specialized Curricular Knowledge	Microcredential #3 - Intervener: Subject Matter Content and Curricular Knowledge
Standard 4: Using Assessment to Understand the Learner and the Learning Environment for Data-Based Decision Making	Microcredential #4 - Intervener: Assessing the Learner and Learning Environment
Standard 5: Supporting Learning Using Effective Instruction	Microcredential #5 - Intervener: Supports in Effective Instruction
Standard 6: Supporting Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Growth	Microcredential #6 - Intervener: Supports for Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Growth

Standard 7: Collaborating with Team Members	Microcredential #7 - Intervener: Collaboration with Team Members
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This shift is designed to offer greater flexibility, specificity, and recognition, allowing interveners to complete each microcredential at their own pace. As a result of this change, interveners can earn each microcredential individually and they can still obtain full NICE certification by fulfilling the requirements for all seven microcredentials. This new approach also enables interveners to showcase expertise in specific areas of deaf-blind intervention, fostering professional development and enhancing career advancement opportunities.

The microcredentialing system will maintain a rigorous, objective assessment process. Candidates' portfolios will be evaluated based on their demonstration of knowledge and skills related to each CEC Intervener Standard, with the microcredential portfolio containing artifacts that align with each individual standard.

Overview of steps to Intervener Microcredential and Certification

An overview of the process for earning Intervener Microcredentials and achieving full NICE Certification is outlined below.

Step 1: Express Your Interest

Begin by contacting your State DeafBlind Project or the PAR²A Center at ritu.chopra@ucdenver.edu to express your intent to participate. **Before you can begin the process, a mentor must be identified with support from the State DeafBlind Project.**

Step 2: Review Policies and Complete Training

Read the Intervener Microcredentials and NICE Policies and Procedures document carefully and complete the required training module to understand the expectations and requirements.

Step 3: Choose Your Path

Work with your mentor to determine whether you will pursue individual microcredentials or full NICE Certification which includes all seven Microcredentials. .

Step 4: Register for Your Microcredentials or Certification

Once your decision is made, register and pay for your selected microcredential(s) or for the full certification.

Step 5: Receive Portfolio Templates

After registration, you will receive an email with downloadable templates to help you create your portfolio. You will have three months from the date of registration to complete and submit your microcredential portfolio, so it is important to register only when you are prepared to begin.

Step 6: Gather Required Documentation

Begin collecting the materials needed for your portfolio, as outlined in the training module and policy documents. You may include evidence from past experiences, training, or coursework if it demonstrates your competency.

Step 7: Build Your Portfolio

Using the provided templates, organize your portfolio to ensure clarity and consistency. Your portfolio must include four key sections: the Portfolio Submission Form, an About Me narrative, completed Media Releases, and your selected Artifacts.

Step 8: Mentor Recommendation

Before submitting, your mentor must review your portfolio and complete the Review Recommendation Form. Once this is submitted, you will receive a secure Qualtrics link for uploading your final portfolio.

Step 9: Submit Your Portfolio

After receiving the upload link, submit your complete portfolio.

Step 10: Portfolio Review

Your portfolio will be reviewed by experts in DeafBlindness through the PAR²A Center Review Board.

Step 11: Earn Your Microcredential and Digital Badge

If your portfolio is approved, you will earn an official microcredential along with a digital badge linked to the CEC standard. Completing all seven microcredentials qualifies you for NICE certification.

Step 12: Continue Your Professional Growth

Use review feedback to guide your continued development after successful completion of the process. If your portfolio is not approved, you may revise and resubmit. Recertification process is available to intervener five years after earning their final microcredential of the total seven.

Details about each step will be addressed in the Intervener Microcredential NICE Training module.

Prior Preparation and Requirements for Microcredential Process

Getting Started

Interveners who are interested in pursuing certification should first notify their state deaf-blind project or college/university program (if they have recently or are currently receiving intervener training through a college or university).¹ The state project or university partner may assist the

¹ See here, for a list of state deaf-blind projects on [the NCDB website: https://nationaldb.org/members/list?type=State+Project](https://nationaldb.org/members/list?type=State+Project). Potential candidates may also contact NCDB via an online form (<http://nationaldb.org/niceinformation>) for assistance connecting with their state deaf-blind projects.

intervener in assessing his or her readiness to engage in the certification process and, if the intervener decides to move forward, assign a mentor.

Mentoring

Every candidate must have a mentor, assigned by a state deaf-blind project or university partner, who provides guidance and feedback during the development of the portfolio for each microcredential. Ideally, this is a person from the intervener's home state who has expertise in both deaf-blindness and the role of the intervener. Mentors may be teachers, orientation and mobility specialists or related service providers who have received training and have significant expertise in deaf-blindness. State deaf-blind projects or university partner personnel may also serve as mentors.

Prior to candidate's starting the NICE process, the mentor must get in touch with the PAR²A Center stipulating who they are mentoring and give a short synopsis of the intervener training the candidate has already received. Mentors are required to provide a minimum of three sessions (face-to-face or virtual) for a total of at least six hours providing feedback and support. Some state projects may offer more than the minimum depending upon the requirements or needs of their programs. Mentors are required to sign a mentoring agreement outlining their roles and responsibilities and share it with the relevant state deaf-blind project/university partner and the candidate, who will review it and sign a statement indicating that he or she has read and understood the content. The purpose of the agreements ([Mentor](#) and [Candidate](#)) is to help the candidate stay on track and ensure that he or she receives the agreed-upon support.

Training and Professional Development in Deaf-Blindness Requirements

Interveners must have completed some form of intervener training to be eligible to submit for a NICE Microcredential. Additionally, they are required to review and follow the submission policies and procedures for each microcredential.

As part of their training and preparation, interveners should collect evidence to demonstrate their competence in the specific Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standard associated with their chosen microcredential. This evidence may include documentation, work samples, videos, assessments or other artifacts that highlight their skills, knowledge and experiences. Candidates are more likely to succeed in earning their microcredentials and certification when they begin gathering evidence during their training or in-service work. While formal training is required, candidates should also provide documentation from their practice as interveners

Training for Intervener Credential and NICE Process

Before starting to develop their artifacts, candidates must complete the following activities to gain a clear understanding of the Intervener microcredential and NICE process:

1. Thoroughly review the document *Intervener Microcredentials and Certification - Policies and Procedures*.
2. Review the [Intervener Microcredential and Certification Training Packet](#)

- Attend one of the quarterly NICE information sessions for additional details about the process and/or application. For more information, please contact Dr. Ritu Chopra at ritu.chopra@ucdenver.edu

Cost and Payment

At the time of registration, interveners have two payment options. They can choose to register and pay for one microcredential at a time, or they can pay for all seven standards upfront and complete them at their own pace. If a candidate decides to discontinue their pursuit of certification, no refund will be issued for any incomplete standards. The Intervener Microcredential Fee Schedule is as follows:

Microcredential	Number of Competencies	Cost
Microcredential #1 – Intervener: Professional Learning/Ethical Practice	10	\$50.00
Microcredential #2 – Intervener: Individual's Developmental and Learning Needs	19	\$75.00
Microcredential #3 - Intervener: Subject Matter Content and Curricular Knowledge	9	\$50.00
Microcredential #4 - Intervener: Assessing the Learner and Learning Environment	2	\$25.00
Microcredential #5 - Intervener: Supports in Effective Instruction	19	\$75.00
Microcredential #6 - Intervener: Supports for Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Growth	12	\$50.00
Microcredential #7 - Intervener: Collaboration with Team Members	2	\$25.00

If a candidate's microcredential portfolio is not successful, they may resubmit once at no additional cost. Any further resubmissions will be subject to the fees outlined above.

Completion Timeline and Request for Extension

The time required to complete the portfolio for a standard varies based on the number of knowledge and skill sets within that standard. On average, a trained intervener can complete it in less than three months, depending on the number of competencies involved. Candidates who are highly motivated and have already gathered relevant artifacts and documentation from previous training, professional development or their daily practice may be able to submit their portfolio more quickly.

The Review Process

Microcredential portfolios are reviewed by two members of the NICE Review Board, who receive training on the review process from the PAR²A Center. If the reviewers' scores show less than 80% agreement, a third reviewer from the board will be assigned to evaluate and score the portfolio.

Typically, it takes up to two months for a microcredential portfolio to be scored, depending on the number of competencies within a standard. However, if there is significant disagreement between the initial reviewers' scores, resulting in the need for a third reviewer, the review process may take longer.

Reviewers are volunteers with the following qualifications:

- Expertise in training, preparing, or mentoring interveners in educational, community or home settings.
- Experience evaluating, supervising, mentoring or supporting interveners, instructional assistants, direct service personnel, teachers or related service providers working with individuals who are deaf-blind.
- At least 7 years of experience in the field of deaf-blindness, in roles such as technical assistance provider, university faculty, teacher, interpreter, intervener, related service provider, trainer, parent adviser, or consumer leader.
- A strong interest in national intervener certification and recognition of intervener practice.

Reviewers sign agreements to ensure impartiality and confidentiality, which include the following commitments:

- They must notify the PAR²A Center if they have trained, mentored, advised, or observed a candidate whose submission they are assigned to review, so the submission can be reassigned to another reviewer.
- They agree to review submissions confidentially and not share any details of a candidate's submission with anyone except PAR²A Center staff, including not discussing submissions with the candidate or their mentor.
- If reviewers download submission materials to their own devices, they will delete them after completing the review.

Scoring

To successfully obtain a microcredential, candidates must achieve a score of 75% or greater on their portfolio submission for each standard. Candidates who do not achieve a score of 75% or greater will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work once at no additional cost. Interveners who successfully complete all seven microcredentials will be awarded a NICE Certificate.

All communication regarding scores, microcredential attainment, and certification decisions will come directly from the PAR²A Center staff to the candidate and their mentor/s. This information will not be shared with anyone other than the candidate and their mentor/s. The PAR²A Center may share summarized evaluation data about certification results with NICE reviewers and advisors in reports, but no identifying information will be included without the candidate's explicit written consent.

Advisors provide input regarding the overall NICE process based on the needs of the deaf-blind community (e.g., they may make recommendations regarding ways that interveners from diverse backgrounds can participate more effectively). Advisers attend some Review Board meetings, but do not review submissions.

Duration of Certification

Certificates are valid for five years. After five years, an intervener may submit documentation of ongoing professional development and apply for recertification.

Media Permissions

Candidates are required to obtain signed media release forms from all individuals featured in photos or videos, including students or clients who are able to sign for themselves. For students under the age of 18 or those under guardianship, a parent or guardian must also sign the form. Candidates should consult with their schools or agencies for guidance on the process for obtaining consent from students, clients, and staff. Additionally, candidates must submit media release forms for themselves.

The PAR²A Center may request permission from successful candidates to use specific examples from their submissions to train new NICE Review Board members, mentors, or future certification candidates. Granting permission is at the candidate's discretion, and they have the right to decline the request.

Honesty

All submitted work must be the candidate's own original content. Candidates must sign an agreement confirming that their submission reflects their personal practice and learning experiences, and that they will not share their materials with other NICE candidates.

If external sources, such as words, ideas, or documents from articles, websites, or books, are used, they must be appropriately cited. While using external resources is not required, if included, citations (e.g., title, author, publication year, publisher, website) must be provided.

Any instances of cheating or plagiarism will be handled by PAR²A Center administrators and may lead to the candidate's disqualification from the microcredential and/or certification process.

Confidentiality

All candidates, mentors, and reviewers are required to sign and comply with confidentiality agreements. The requirements for reviewers are outlined above. Candidates and mentors agree not to share videos, photos, or other materials featuring students, clients or other participants with anyone not authorized to view them, as specified by the NICE Media Release form (including PAR²A Center staff, the candidate, their mentor, and reviewers) or individuals with official authorization from another source (e.g., a classroom teacher may have permission to review a video clip of a student and intervener).

Mentors also agree to the following:

- Not to share or use any content from a candidate's submission with anyone other than the candidate and PAR²A Center staff.
- Not to communicate about a candidate with NICE Review Board members who are serving in a review capacity for the candidate.

Removal Policy

All Microcredential/NICE participants are expected to treat each other with courtesy and respect. Candidates who demonstrate disrespectful behavior or violate confidentiality may be removed from the program and forfeit any progress they have made.

Who to Contact for Assistance

Candidates who have questions about the microcredentials and/or NICE process or their own portfolio development, should contact their mentors.

Candidates or mentors who have concerns or questions about a candidate-mentor relationship, should contact their designated state deaf-blind project.

Questions, comments, or concerns about policies and procedures presented in this document should be directed to Dr. Ritu Chopra (ritu.chopra@ucdenver.edu) at the PAR²A Center.

Reference

Council for Exceptional Children. (2022). Specialty Set: Special Education Paraeducator Intervener for Individuals With Deafblindness (PDBI)
<https://dvidb.exceptionalchildren.org/standards/specialty-set-special-education-paraeducator-intervener-individuals-deafblindness-pdbi>