

**Board of Chaplaincy Certification Inc.**

an affiliate of Association of Professional Chaplains  
 2800 West Higgins Road, Suite 295 • Hoffman Estates, IL 60169  
 bcci@professionalchaplains.org • www.professionalchaplains.org/BCCI  
 Phone: 847.240.1014 • Fax: 847.240.1015

**BCCI Competency Essay Writing Guide**

The following is a writing guide for the Competency Essays to be written by you, the Applicant, in regard to the Common Competencies for Certification for Professional Chaplains. It is designed to give you a clearer understanding behind the meaning for each competency and what your committee members will be looking for when reading your essays.

As you write your essays, please keep these thoughts in mind:

1. The essays provide an opportunity for you to articulate the theory and practice that you have developed through your education, formation, training and experience.
2. Your committee will be looking for a balance of theory and practice. What is your understanding of each of the competencies and then how do you apply it to your provision of spiritual care? Be clear in your working definition of each and then give examples to demonstrate them.
3. Writing your essays is not a time to be shy about your competence. Let your committee know how you demonstrate these competencies. If you don't tell the committee, then they will determine you do not understand the competencies and/or you are not demonstrating them. Claim your strength and value as a quality spiritual care provider!

For each of the following competencies the Applicant for certification will demonstrate the ability to:

<b>Section I: Integration of Theory and Practice Competencies</b>		<b>ACPE Outcomes</b>	<b>The primary emphasis of these competencies is your theory and its congruence with your provision of spiritual care.</b>
ITP1:	Articulate an approach to spiritual care, rooted in one's faith/spiritual tradition that is integrated with a theory of professional practice.	L1.1 L2.1	What are the roots and foundation of your faith/spiritual tradition? Demonstrate how you integrate these theoretical beliefs in your practice of spiritual care.
ITP2:	Incorporate a working knowledge of psychological and sociological disciplines and religious beliefs and practices in the provision of spiritual care.	L1.2 L2.2 L2.3 L2.4	Psychology and sociology inform what professional spiritual care providers understand and how they practice. What are the psychological and sociological theories and insights that influence and support what you do within the context of spiritual care? Demonstrate how you integrate these key theories in your spiritual care.
ITP3:	Incorporate the spiritual and emotional dimensions of human development into one's practice of care.	L1.7 L2.2 L2.4	The cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions and needs of individuals evolve as they progress through each stage of human development. Spiritual care providers relate in distinct ways with children and adults. How do you understand those differences? How do you as a spiritual care provider adapt your practices in light of those differences?

ITP4:	Incorporate a working knowledge of different ethical theories appropriate to one's professional context.	L2.2	How do you understand the commonly used principles of ethics - personal, religious, organizational, situational, medical, etc.? What ethical theories do you draw from that inform your spiritual practice? Using examples from your professional context, demonstrate how you incorporate these theories in your spiritual care.
ITP5:	Articulate a conceptual understanding of group dynamics and organizational behavior.	L1.2 L1.5 L2.2 L2.5 L2.7	Essential to the provision of effective spiritual care is the understanding that people interact with others differently depending on the dynamics, size, and focus of the group in the contexts in which they are located. What concepts and theories have been useful to you in understanding how people interact in family systems, group settings, interdisciplinary teams, and organizations? Articulate your understanding of how relational dynamics impact people's behavior in both group and organizational settings.
ITP6:	Articulate how primary research and research literature inform the profession of chaplaincy and one's spiritual care practice.	L1.6	Spiritual care providers integrate research literacy and may conduct research to ensure that their spiritual care is current and innovative in their practice. Using examples, demonstrate how you are utilizing current research literature in your spiritual care practice and work with interdisciplinary team members. If applicable, what primary research have you participated in and what were the key findings? How are you integrating your findings in your spiritual care practice?
<b>Section II: Professional Identity and Conduct Competencies</b>		<b>ACPE Outcomes</b>	<b>The primary emphasis of these competencies is your understanding of your professional identity and how it influences your conduct as a spiritual care provider.</b>
PIC1:	Be self-reflective, including identifying one's professional strengths and limitations in the provision of care.	L1.2 L1.9 L2.1 L2.6 L2.9	Being self-reflective – including awareness of our strengths and limitations – is critical in the provision of spiritual care. What are your self-perceived strengths and how do these contribute your provision of spiritual care? How do you adapt, manage, or work through your self-perceived limitations? Provide examples of how you assess and self-supervise these tendencies in your professional practice.

PIC2:	Articulate ways in which one's feelings, attitudes, values, and assumptions affect professional practice.	L1.1 L1.2 L2.1 L2.6 L2.9	Your feelings, attitudes, values, and assumptions impact the way you assess, make meaning, connect with, and provide care to others. Identify your understanding of feelings, attitudes, values, and assumptions as it relates to your spiritual care. Using examples, demonstrate how you assess and evaluate these concepts' impact on your spiritual care. How do you use them as resources to provide competent spiritual care?
PIC3:	Attend to one's own physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.	L1.3 L1.9 L2.5 L2.7 L2.9	In order to provide effective spiritual care for others, you must practice holistic self-care. Discuss using examples from your professional context how you attend to your own physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. What is your practice of self-care? Demonstrate how your personal practice of self-care impacts your ability to care for others more competently in your professional practice.
PIC4:	Function in a manner that respects the physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual boundaries of others.	L1.2 L1.7 L2.2 L2.3 L2.4 L2.6	Demonstrating competence in spiritual care relies on knowing and respecting your boundaries and those of your care-recipients. Discuss your understanding of boundaries as it informs your spiritual care. Using examples, demonstrate how you practice humility and respect within the boundaries of the physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual needs of diverse populations you serve.
PIC5:	Use one's professional authority as a spiritual care provider appropriately.	L1.4 L1.5 L2.3 L2.5 L2.6 L2.7 L2.9	Authority, appropriately engaged, is an inherent dynamic in your role as a spiritual care provider. What is the foundation of your professional authority? How might your own personal authority inform your professional authority? Using examples, demonstrate how you live into your professional authority as a spiritual care provider.
PIC6	Advocate for the persons in one's care.	L1.7 L2.2 L2.3 L2.4 L2.7	Advocacy is central to ensuring the provision of competent spiritual care. How do you understand the concept of advocacy? Using examples, demonstrate from your professional context how you incorporate advocacy in your spiritual practice. What informs when and how you step into the role of advocate?
PIC7:	Function within the APC Code of Ethics.	L1.5 L2.2 L2.5 L2.8 L2.9	You have read the <u>APC Code of Ethics</u> . How do you ensure that you abide by this Code in your provision of spiritual care? Select one principle from the <u>APC Code of Ethics</u> and demonstrate how you integrate it into your spiritual practice.

PIC8:	Communicate effectively orally and in writing.	L1.3 L1.4 L2.5 L2.6 L2.7	The ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, is critical to ensuring effective interaction with members of the interdisciplinary care team and with care-recipients. In addition, effective communication in your written materials and congruence of your self-presentation with your written materials will be assessed in your engagement with the Certification Committee. This is an <b>observed competency</b> . No writing needed.
PIC9:	Present oneself in a manner that reflects professional behavior, including appropriate attire, and grooming.	L1.3 L1.4 L2.5 L2.6 L2.7 L2.9	Your visual presentation and self-presentation in interactions with others contributes to their perceptions of your degree of professional competence. This holds true in your appearance with the Certification Committee as well. Congruence between your self-perception and others' perceptions of you also suggests a degree of self-awareness of how who you are as a person impacts your relationships. This is an <b>observed competency</b> . No writing needed.
<b>Section III: Professional Practice Skills Competencies</b>		<b>ACPE Outcomes</b>	<b>The primary emphases of these competencies are your skills in providing spiritual care.</b>
PPS1:	Establish, deepen and conclude professional spiritual care relationships with sensitivity, openness, and respect.	L1.4 L1.5 L1.7 L2.2 L2.3 L2.7	The ability to connect spiritually with care-recipients while engaging them with sensitivity, openness, and respect is essential to developing rapport and building relationships, especially as they evolve over time. Using examples, demonstrate the skills you employ to initiate, deepen, and conclude spiritual relationships with care-recipients.
PPS2:	Provide effective spiritual support that contributes to well-being of the care recipients, their families, and staff.	L1.5 L1.7 L2.2 L2.3 L2.4 L2.6	What are indicators of "effective spiritual support" and "well-being" from your perspective? How do you assess them? Using examples, demonstrate the skills, strategies, and interventions you utilize to provide effective spiritual support and foster well-being with care-recipients, their families, and staff.
PPS3:	Provide spiritual care that respects diversity and differences including, but not limited to culture, gender, sexual orientation and spiritual/religious practices.	L1.5 L1.7 L2.2 L2.4 L2.6	Competent spiritual care respects diversity and differences. How do you act with openness to serve all people with cultural and spiritual humility? Using examples, demonstrate how inclusiveness of culture, gender, spiritual/religious practices, and sexual orientation are demonstrated in your practice.

PPS4:	Triage and manage crises in the practice of spiritual care.	L1.5 L1.7 L2.2 L2.3 L2.4 L2.6	Many situations present with more spiritual needs than can realistically be addressed. How do you establish priorities in the face of a crisis to provide the most effective spiritual care? Using examples, demonstrate from crises how you assess the underlying dynamics, triage, develop, and evaluate interventions in your spiritual care?
PPS5:	Provide spiritual care to persons experiencing loss and grief.	L1.5 L1.7 L2.2 L2.3 L2.4 L2.6	The experience of grief and loss is a universal phenomenon and part of what it means to be human. How do you understand grief holistically? Using examples, demonstrate how you attend to grief, mourning, and bereavement needs in a variety of settings.
PPS6:	Provide religious/spiritual resources appropriate to the care recipients, families, and staff.	L1.5 L1.7 L2.2 L2.3 L2.4	What are effective religious/spiritual resources you provide in your professional practice? How do you determine the effectiveness of these resources? Using examples, demonstrate how you assess and provide religious/spiritual resources appropriate to the needs of care-recipients, families, and staff.
PPS7:	Develop, coordinate, and facilitate public worship/spiritual practices appropriate to diverse settings and needs.	L1.5 L1.7 L2.2 L2.3 L2.4 L2.6	People of diverse religious/spiritual traditions may engage their spirituality privately and/or by gathering in community to worship the Holy as they understand it. They may also participate in spiritual practices, rituals, rites, and sacraments from their faith tradition. Using examples, demonstrate how you assist in the observance of or use ritual, worship, and other faith or spiritual practices as resources for persons and communities.
PPS8:	Facilitate theological/spiritual reflection for those in one's care practice.	L1.1 L1.2 L2.2 L2.3 L2.4	Facilitating care-recipients' theological/spiritual reflection often leads to increased understanding and insight. This process may support them in finding purpose, value, and direction in their lives. Using examples, demonstrate how you assist those in your care to reflect on the meaning of their situation and employ their beliefs as resources for their healing.
PPS9:	Facilitate group processes, such as family meetings, post trauma, staff debriefing, and support groups.	L1.4 L1.5 L1.7 L2.2 L2.3 L2.4 L2.6	Understanding group process depends on your ability to assess, understand, and evaluate relational dynamics in your spiritual care relationships. How do you facilitate spiritual care through group processes? Using examples, demonstrate as listed in the competency how you utilize your skills and/or coordinate with other professionals to facilitate group processes.

PPS10:	Formulate and utilize spiritual assessments, interventions, outcomes, and care plans in order to contribute effectively to the well-being the person receiving care.	L1.5 L1.7 L2.2 L2.3 L2.4	Conducting spiritual assessments are an essential contribution to the needs and well-being of care-recipients. What type of spiritual assessment tools do you use? Using examples, demonstrate how your spiritual assessment and care planning process assists the persons you serve. How do you integrate and evaluate their effectiveness in terms of your care-recipients' well-being?
PPS11:	Document one's spiritual care effectively in the appropriate records.	L1.7 L2.4 L2.5 L2.7	Documentation of your spiritual care is one way to facilitate interdisciplinary communication. How do you communicate the facets of your emotional and spiritual care effectively for the benefit of other disciplines? Using examples, demonstrate the process you follow to document your assessment and provision of spiritual care.
<b>Section IV: Organizational Leadership Competencies</b>		<b>ACPE Outcomes</b>	<b>The primary emphasis in these competencies is your ability to lead within the setting(s) in which you provide spiritual care.</b>
OL1:	Promote the integration of spiritual care into the life and service of the institution in which one functions.	L1.1 L1.2 L2.1 L2.2 L2.5 L2.7	Drawing from your professional context, identify your institution's mission, core values, and/or vision. Using examples, demonstrate how spiritual care is integrated in your institution. How does your leadership facilitate and benefit the mission of your organization/institution?
OL2:	Establish and maintain professional and interdisciplinary relationships.	L1.3 L1.4 L1.7 L2.2 L2.5 L2.6 L2.7	Spiritual care providers are key members of the interdisciplinary team. How do you relate with and attend to these professional relationships? Using examples, demonstrate how you build, lead, and maintain these professional relationships. How do you educate about spiritual care and the role of spiritual care providers on the interdisciplinary team?
OL3:	Understand and function within the institutional culture and systems, including utilizing business principles and practices appropriate to one's role in the organization.	L1.2 L1.4 L1.5 L2.2 L2.5 L2.6 L2.7	Describe your institution's culture and systems. How do you learn about the culture and systems within your organization and become a functioning, contributing leader within them? Using examples, demonstrate how you lead within your institution's identified culture and systems. Include how principles and practices from leadership and management, as applicable to your spiritual care provider role, have proven effective.

OL4:	Promote, facilitate, and support ethical decision-making in one's workplace.	L1.1 L1.4 L2.2 L2.3 L2.5 L2.6 L2.7 L2.9	Professional organizations define and abide by a set of ethical principles. What is your role and function in promoting, facilitating, and supporting ethical decision-making and care in your particular setting? Using examples, demonstrate how you lead by promoting, facilitating, and supporting ethical decision-making in your context.
OL5:	Foster a collaborative relationship with community clergy and faith group leaders.	L1.1 L1.7 L2.2 L2.3 L2.6 L2.7	As a spiritual care provider, you serve as a liaison, connecting care-recipients to their spiritual/religious communities. How do you establish and maintain relationships with area faith group leaders? Using examples, demonstrate how you lead in fostering collaborative relationships with community clergy and faith group leaders.