Understanding the Renewal Decision

How Renewal Differs from Certification

The process for renewal of National Board Certification® is different from the initial certification process in several ways.

- In terms of structure, the renewal instrument has several interrelated components rather than entries and exercises that are independent of each other.
- The evaluation process is different in that a renewal candidate’s response is evaluated holistically rather than each component being considered separately.
- Renewal is not as lengthy a process as the original certification process; however, it is still a rigorous and demanding examination of professional growth since original certification.
- Renewal candidates will receive either a “Renewed” or “Not Renewed” decision.

As a result of these differences, the reports of renewal decisions will be different as will the resubmission process for renewal candidates who receive a “Not Renewed” decision.

What Counts in the Evaluation?

No one style or approach to teaching or professional growth is mandated by the National Board Standards or rewarded by the evaluation process. The process is open both to NBCTs who are in the classroom and to those who have left the classroom to work in some other educational capacity. However, in either case, renewal candidates have to meet the same requirements described by the rubric.

The renewal decision is based on the evidence that candidates submit

- the Component 1 descriptions and evidence of four professional growth experiences (PGEs),
- the evidence in Components 2 and 3 that focuses on the application of two of those PGEs,
- the overall Reflection.

Taken in its entirety, this evidence offers an opportunity to understand how a renewal candidate has grown professionally since National Board Certification. Evaluators are trained extensively to evaluate this body of information and to minimize the effects of personal biases on the decisions that they make when viewing the evidence. Evaluators are not permitted to evaluate a response that they do not feel they can evaluate objectively, nor can they evaluate a response from someone they know.
Due to the inter-related components of the renewal instrument, a holistic scoring approach is used. That is, a single decision, to renew or not renew, is made based on the entire body of evidence submitted by the renewal candidate.

Understanding the Rubric

The language of the evaluation rubric is identical for all candidates seeking renewal status regardless of certificate area. The language in the rubric is constructed so that it directly values what is being asked for in the renewal instrument.

The renewal rubric governs the type of evidence that the evaluators will look for in each renewal candidate’s submission. The rubric has two levels – renewed and not renewed.

**Renewed:** The renewal candidate has provided sufficient evidence of the identification of important needs in his or her professional context; of professional growth in areas which address those needs in a variety of rich and powerful contexts, including areas of content and/or pedagogical knowledge; and has provided sufficient evidence of the application of professional growth in ways that have a meaningful impact on student learning. The renewal candidate has provided sufficient evidence of the acquisition of knowledge of current technology and/or effective and appropriate incorporation of technology into teaching and learning; and has drawn on and/or contributed to the resources of the school, district and/or community. The candidate has provided evidence of teaching practice in his or her certificate-specific area in ways that recognize the needs of students, ensure equity of access and promote appreciation of diversity, and provide relevant and meaningful instruction for students. The candidate has provided evidence of professional growth that has evolved since certification and is varied and/or multifaceted. Although there may be unevenness in the level of evidence of professional growth presented, overall, there is sufficient evidence of professional growth since certification to support renewal of certification.

**Not Renewed:** The renewal candidate may have provided insufficient evidence of the identification of important needs in his or her professional context; or insufficient evidence of professional growth in areas to address those needs, or the professional growth activities may not exhibit variety or depth. The application of PGEs may not have impacted student learning either directly or indirectly. The candidate may not
have demonstrated the acquisition of knowledge of current technology and/or has incorporated technology into teaching and learning areas in trivial or inappropriate ways, or not at all. The renewal candidate may not have drawn on and/or contributed to resources of the school, district and/or community. The candidate may not have demonstrated teaching practice in his or her certificate-specific area in ways that recognize the needs of students, or may have done little to ensure equity of access, or promote appreciation of diversity, or may have provided irrelevant or meaningless instruction for students. The candidate may not have provided evidence of professional growth that has evolved since certification; professional growth may not be varied and/or multifaceted. There may be some examples of professional growth experiences or teaching practice that indicate some degree of growth, but overall there is insufficient evidence of professional growth since certification to support renewal of certification.

Interpreting the recommendations for focus

If a renewal candidate in his or her 8th year of certification receives a “Not Renewed” decision, he or she will also receive recommendations for focus generated as part of the evaluation process, to guide his or her resubmission of a renewal response. These recommendations will be specific to the renewal candidate’s submission but are of a standardized nature based on the evaluation rubric. A renewal candidate in his or her 9th year receives no recommendations for focus since he or she is unable to resubmit.

In the original certification process candidates do not receive any feedback about their submission. However, they receive scores on each entry or exercise that direct candidates to areas of strength and weakness and so guide retake decisions. Since the renewal process generates a single holistic decision, these recommendations for focus are intended to direct the renewal candidate who is not renewed on the first attempt to areas where the level of evidence needs to be strengthened as he or she completes resubmission.

There will be two concerns addressed in the decision letter for candidates who do not renew. The first will identify whether there were any major omissions that resulted in the “Not Renewed” decision. A major omission would include missing evidence such as failure to submit evidence for any of the three components, or to omit a major part of one such as video, learner work or commentary. Additionally, the students featured in Component 2 must be in the age range for the certificate in which the renewal candidate originally certified, and the content focus of the lesson must be from the original certificate area. Failure to meet this requirement will result in an automatic “Not
Renewed” Decision. This concern will only be included in the decision letter if this situation applies to the candidate’s response.

The second concern addressed in the “Not Renewed” decision letter is a list of the key aspects identified in the rubric and an indication of whether there was an appropriate level of evidence, or if the level of evidence for this particular area needs to be strengthened.

There are eight aspects, each of which is part of the holistic rubric. The table below lists these aspects on the left and provides an example on the right of what the recommendations for focus might look like.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification of needs</th>
<th>You have provided an appropriate level of evidence in this area.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition or deepening of current or certificate-specific content knowledge</td>
<td>You need to strengthen the level of evidence you have provided in this area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition or deepening of current or certificate-specific pedagogical knowledge</td>
<td>You have provided an appropriate level of evidence in this area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition and/or effective and appropriate use of current technology</td>
<td>You have provided an appropriate level of evidence in this area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involvement of others</td>
<td>You need to strengthen the level of evidence you have provided in this area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstration of standards-based relevant and meaningful instruction</td>
<td>You have provided an appropriate level of evidence in this area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equity of access and appreciation of diversity</td>
<td>You have provided an appropriate level of evidence in this area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on student learning</td>
<td>You need to strengthen the level of evidence you have provided in this area.</td>
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When evaluators make a decision about the evidence that a renewal candidate submits, they collect evidence for each of these aspects (although each aspect does not have to be demonstrated in every PGE or in every Component) and make a holistic decision about the overall strength of the response and whether the renewal candidate has demonstrated sufficient professional growth since certification.

Two evaluators independently read a renewal candidate’s submission, taking notes as they go. They then discuss the submission, the evidence for each of the eight aspects, and come to a joint holistic decision. In the instance when they agree on a “Not Renewed” decision, a trainer further reviews the evidence.

If a candidate receives a “Not Renewed” Decision, he or she should re-read his or her submission, with the rubric and the decision letter that indicates the areas identified as in
need of strengthening. For areas where the level of evidence is in need of strengthening, the candidate should consider whether there are alternative professional growth experiences that would provide richer evidence.

Resubmission

When resubmitting a response to the renewal instrument, a candidate must present a complete submission. Because of the holistic nature of the evaluation process, all components and the reflection need to be viewed as one entity. The renewal candidate may modify as little or as much of original submission as he or she feels necessary. For example, a renewal candidate might decide to change what was submitted only for Component 3, or a candidate might replace one or more PGEs. Alternatively, a renewal candidate might realize that while he or she submitted evidence of a professional growth experience that was very important, the description of its relevance to renewal may not have been adequately described.