



TEXAS ASSOCIATION FOR SCHOOL NUTRITION

Certification Handbook

A simple guide to earning, renewing and advancing your TASN
Certification

Current as of September 2026

This handbook focuses on the TASN certification rules and requirements. For the current online certification form, page links, live status tools and any applicable fees, use the TASN website.

Texas Association for School Nutrition

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START HERE

How to Use This Handbook

Use this handbook for

- Certification level requirements
- Continuing education and college credit rules
- Managers Academy and Administrative Academy pathways
- Renewal timing and documentation rules
- General training sponsor guidance

Use the TASN website for

- The current online certification form
- Any applicable certification and renewal fees
- Your Membership Card & Certification Status page
- Current training resources, forms and support materials
- The latest TASN updates and links

Certification in five steps

1. **Choose the right level.** Review the level requirements and decide whether you are applying for a first certification, renewing your current level or moving to a higher level.
2. **Complete qualifying education.** Earn the CEUs, college credit or Academy completion required for your level, and keep your records.
3. **Submit online.** Use the TASN online certification process to complete your request and upload supporting documentation.
4. **Allow time for review.** TASN reviews completed requests and contacts you if additional information is needed.
5. **Maintain your certification.** Complete your renewal hours during each annual certification period and renew on time.

OVERVIEW

Certification Levels at a Glance

TASN offers five certification levels. The levels progress from foundational school nutrition knowledge to more advanced managerial and administrative responsibilities.

Level	Initial qualification	Annual renewal
Level 1	16 hours in required Level 1 topics • 4 hours Safety • 4 hours Sanitation • 4 hours Customer Service • 4 hours Recognizing Reimbursable Meals / Meal Patterns	6 hours
Level 2	40 hours: 10 hours in each USDA Key Area	6 hours
Level 3	50 hours: 10 hours in each Key Area plus 10 general hours	12 hours
Level 4	60 hours: 12 hours in each Key Area plus 12 general hours Or successful completion of Managers Academy	12 hours
Level 5	75 hours: 15 hours in each Key Area plus 15 general hours Or successful completion of Administrative Academy pathway OR qualifying related degree pathway	12 hours

General rules for all levels

- You must be a current, active TASN member to hold an active TASN Certification.
- Non-college CEUs used for initial certification or an upgrade generally may not be more than five years old on the date you apply.
- College transcript credit does not expire for initial certification purposes.
- Renewal hours must be completed during your current annual certification period.
- Duplicate certificates for the same course are not accepted as additional credit.
- Fees are collected through the online process when applicable.

REQUIREMENTS

Detailed Requirements:

Level 1

- 16 total hours in:
 - 4 hours Safety
 - 4 hours Sanitation
 - 4 hours Customer Service
 - 4 hours Recognizing Reimbursable Meals / Meal Patterns
- College credits do not expire for initial certification
- Annual renewal: 6 hours

Level 2

- 40 total hours in:
 - 10 hours in Key Area 1 Nutrition
 - 10 hours in Key Area 2 Operations
 - 10 hours in Key Area 3 Administration
 - 10 hours in Key Area 4 Communications & Marketing
- CEUs must be categorized by USDA Professional Standards Key Area
- Annual renewal: 6 hours

Level 3

- 50 total hours in:
 - 10 hours in Key Area 1 Nutrition
 - 10 hours in Key Area 2 Operations
 - 10 hours in Key Area 3 Administration
 - 10 hours in Key Area 4 Communications & Marketing
 - 10 hours in Key Area General (Any Key Area)
- Annual renewal: 12 hours

REQUIREMENTS

Detailed Requirements:

Level 4

- Two paths to earning Level 4:
 - **Path one:**
 - 60 total hours in:
 - 12 hours in Key Area 1 Nutrition
 - 12 hours in Key Area 2 Operations
 - 12 hours in Key Area 3 Administration
 - 12 hours in Key Area 4 Communications & Marketing
 - 12 hours in Key Area General (Any Key Area)
 - **Path Two:**
 - Successful completion of TASN Managers Academy within the last 5-years.
- Annual renewal: 12 hours

Level 5

- Three paths to earning Level 5:
 - **Path one:**
 - 75 total hours in:
 - 15 hours in Key Area 1 Nutrition
 - 15 hours in Key Area 2 Operations
 - 15 hours in Key Area 3 Administration
 - 15 hours in Key Area 4 Communications & Marketing
 - 15 hours in Key Area General (Any Key Area)
 - **Path Two:**
 - Successful completion of TASN Administrative Academy within the last 5-years.
 - **Path Three:**
 - A bachelor's degree related to nutrition, dietetics, foodservice, foodservice management, business management or a directly related fields.
- Annual renewal: 12 hours

If you are moving up a level: You do not need to renew a lower level before applying for a higher level. Submit the certification request that matches the level you are seeking.

QUALIFYING EDUCATION

Continuing Education, College Credit & Key Areas

How CEUs are counted

- 1 continuing education unit (CEU) equals 1 hour of training for Professional Standards.
- TASN encourages one-hour trainings whenever possible.
- Two 30-minute trainings may be combined as 1 CEU when they are within the same USDA Key Area and the same year.
- Four 15-minute trainings may be combined as 1 CEU when they are within the same USDA Key Area and the same year.
- Multiple certificates for the same course are not accepted as duplicate credit.

College credit

- A college transcript is a permanent record, so qualifying college credit does not expire for initial certification purposes.
- College courses may be used for renewal only when they are taken during the annual renewal period.
- College courses must be part of a degree plan related to nutrition, dietetics, foodservice, foodservice management, business management or a directly related field.
- Each 4 semester hours of qualifying college credit is equivalent to 16 hours of TASN Certification credit.

Special notes

- Qualifying Texas Food Handler training from state-accredited sources may count for up to 2 hours of Level 1 certification credit **OR** Key Area 2 Operations renewal credit when completed during the annual renewal period, unless otherwise specified by TASN.
- Renewal CEUs must be completed during your current annual certification period.

Pre-Approved TASN Programs

TASN accepts courses from the following programs:

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- American Heart Association
- American Red Cross
- Dietary Manager's Association

- Institute of Child Nutrition
- National Restaurant Association
- School Nutrition Association
- School Nutrition Foundation
- Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- Texas Association of School Business Officials
- Texas Department of Agriculture
- Texas Department of Health and Human Services
- Texas Education Agency
- Texas Education Service Centers
- United States Department of Agriculture

USDA Professional Standards Key Areas

Code	Key Area	Examples
Key Area 1	Nutrition	Menu planning, nutrition education and general nutrition
Key Area 2	Operations	Food production, serving, point of service, procurement, storage and food safety/HACCP
Key Area 3	Administration	Eligibility, program management, financial management, human resources and facilities/equipment planning
Key Area 4	Communications & Marketing	Communications and marketing

Managers Academy, Administrative Academy & the Online Process

Managers Academy — Level 4 pathway

TASN Managers Academy is a 32-hour program focused on the competencies, knowledge and skills of school nutrition managers. For the Level 4 certification pathway, the published requirements include 2 years of school food service experience plus successful completion of Managers Academy with a score of 75% or higher on the exit exam.

No other “Manager” Academy is accepted for Level 4 certification credit unless it has been preapproved by the TASN Education Committee.

Administrative Academy — Level 5 pathway

TASN Administrative Academy supports directors, assistant directors, supervisors and other administrative school nutrition roles. Published Level 5 certification pathways include Administrative Academy options based on experience and education.

Before you begin an online certification request

- Make sure your TASN membership is current.
- Review the requirements for the level you are requesting.
- Gather course certificates, transcripts, Academy records or other supporting documentation.
- Have payment information ready if a fee applies.
- Use an email address you monitor regularly so TASN can contact you if needed.

How the online process works: Use the TASN Certification Program page to start a new certification, renewal or request for a higher level. After you submit, TASN reviews your request. During review, members can use the Membership Card & Certification Status page to see their current approved certification and whether a request is under review.

Maintaining & Renewing Your Certification

Renewal timing

- TASN Certification is valid for one year.
- You may submit a renewal no more than 120 days before your certification expiration date.
- TASN provides a 90-day grace period after the certification expiration date to renew at the same level or submit a request for the next level.
- If you do not renew your current level or move to the next level within the 90-day grace period, the current published policy requires restarting the certification program with Level 1.
- Your certification renewal hours must be earned during your annual certification period.

After you submit

- Please allow up to three weeks for TASN to review and process a completed certification request.
- No action is needed during the review period unless TASN contacts you for additional information.
- Once approved, your certification level and certification expiration date are updated in your member account.

Audits and documentation

TASN may verify continuing education through a random audit at renewal. Keep a file of your course certificates, transcripts and related records. A course certificate may be used only once per certification level or renewal, and duplicate certificates for the same course are not accepted as additional credit.

RESOURCES

Training Sponsors, Resources & Support

Training sponsors and course approval

Courses offered by local TASN chapters, school districts, ESCs or industry partners may require TASN approval before they can be used for TASN Certification or renewal credit. Training sponsors should use the current Request for Approval of Certification Training materials published by TASN for exact timelines, forms and submission instructions.

Remember to:

- Submit approval requests early enough to meet current TASN deadlines.
- Provide syllabi, training materials and other supporting information when requested.
- Use only approved content when teaching an approved course.
- Participant certificates should include the information required by TASN, including Professional Standards code(s) and number of CEUs.
- After the course is complete, sponsors should submit any post-course records required by TASN.

Instructor qualifications

TASN's current approval materials describe the accepted instructor qualification pathways. In general, instructors must demonstrate relevant certification, education, experience or training qualifications and provide supporting documentation when required.

Key resources

- TASN Certification Program page
- Membership Card & Certification Status page
- ICN Online Training Resources
- Request for Approval of Certification Training materials
- TASN Headquarters: info@tasn.net | 512-371-0087

Final note: Certification requirements, procedures and approval guidance are subject to review and change. When preparing a certification or course-approval request, always use the most current information published by TASN.