

Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination



Candidate Handbook 2024

| Application Deadline* | Testing Window |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| January 31, 2024 | March 2 – March 16, 2024 |
| July 17, 2024 | August 17 – August 31, 2024 |

***Applications will not be accepted after this deadline**

Administered by:



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www.ptcny.com/contact

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This Handbook contains necessary information about the Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination. Please retain it for future reference. Candidates are responsible for reading these instructions carefully. This Handbook is subject to change.

CONTACT INFORMATION

| | |
|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Professional Testing Corporation (PTC) www.ptcny.com (212) 356-0660</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for examination • Obtain general application information • Obtain information about testing policies • Transfer to a new testing period • Request Test Accommodations • Request Hand Score • Question about score reports • Recertification • Miscellaneous inquiries |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Prometric www.prometric.com/AHSCP (800) 741-0934</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule test appointment • Reschedule test appointment (within the same testing period) • Cancel test appointment • Find directions to test site • Questions regarding testing sites and appointments |
| <p style="text-align: center;">American Hypertension Specialist Certification Program (AHSCP) www.ahscp.org</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified Hypertension Clinician Study Guide • Certified Hypertension Clinician Directory |

ATTENTION CANDIDATES

This handbook contains necessary information about the Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination. It is required reading for those applying for and taking the Examination. All individuals applying for the examination must comply with the policies, procedures, and deadlines in this Handbook and attest to this by signing the Candidate Attestation found on the application. Please retain this handbook for future reference. This handbook is subject to change. See www.ptcny.com for handbook updates.

ACCESSING CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES AT ANY TIME WHILE YOU ARE TAKING THE EXAM IS PROHIBITED. YOU CAN ONLY REMOVE SNACKS, DRINKS, MEDICINE OR PERSONAL HEALTHCARE ITEMS FROM YOUR LOCKER- NO BACKPACKS, BAGS, POCKETBOOKS OR CLOTHING CAN BE REMOVED WHILE YOUR EXAM IS IN SESSION.

PURPOSE OF CERTIFICATION

The Certified Hypertension Clinicians Program was formed by the American Hypertension Specialist Certification Program (AHSCP), formerly the ASH Specialist Program, in 2014 in response to the growing recognition that the hypertension problem requires the coordinated effort of front-line health care providers with documented expertise in managing hypertension. The American Hypertension Specialist Certification Program created the Certified Hypertension Clinician (CHC) designation for the specific purpose of identifying and recognizing health care providers with expert skills and knowledge in the management of clinical hypertension.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Two years of direct patient care experience in hypertension is recommended.

2. Candidates must meet one of the following eligibility requirements:

NURSE PRACTITIONERS

Currently is licensed or certified as a nurse practitioner in the United States. **Please submit a copy of your current license or certification with your application.**

CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALISTS

Currently is licensed or certified as a clinical nurse specialist in the United States. **Please submit a copy of your current license or certification with your application.**

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

Currently is licensed or certified as a physician assistant in the United States. **Please submit a copy of your current license or certification with your application.**

PHARMACISTS

Currently is licensed as a pharmacist in the United States and has completed at least one year of residency (PGY-1) or equivalent patient care training, or three years of direct patient care practice experience (requires a signed attestation from current supervisor). **Please submit a copy of your Pharmacist license as well as proof of completion of residency and/or an attestation from your current supervisor confirming three years of direct patient care practice with your application.**

PHYSICIANS

Currently is licensed as a Doctor of Medicine (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathy (DO) in the United States and has completed residency in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics or Gynecology. **Please submit a copy of your current license and proof of completion of residency (or primary board certification) with your application.**

3. Complete and file the online application for the Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination.

4. Pay the required fee.

THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS



COMPLETION OF APPLICATION

Step 1 – Fill Out the Application

- Go to <http://www.ptcny.com/test-sponsors/AHSCP>
 - View testing periods and application deadlines
 - Fill out online application completely and upload supporting documentation.
 - Use your first and last name exactly as it appears on your current driver’s license, passport, state issued non-driver ID or military ID.
 - Applications are not complete until all information, documentation, and payment has been provided.
 - When you start a new application, you will be asked to create a PIN number. This PIN will be used if you need to come back to the application to finish it later. Keep the link to the application and your PIN number for later use.

Step 2 – Submit Exam Fee and Application for Review

PTC will send you an email that says that your payment and application have been received and are being reviewed. Please allow up to 10 business days for review.

Step 3 – Receive Application Status Update

- After your application is reviewed PTC will update you with another email.
 - **REOPENED FOR MORE DOCUMENTS**
 - This means we are missing the required documentation. Follow the directions in the email.
 - Applications that are incomplete as of 14 days before the start of the testing window will be refunded minus the administration fee (see fees page 8).
 - **REJECTED**
 - This means you are not eligible to take the exam. The reason will be explained in the email.
 - Rejected applications will be refunded minus the administration fee (see fees page 8)
 - **APPROVED**
 - This means your application is approved. You will move on to Step 4.

Step 4 – Receive Scheduling Authorization and Schedule Testing Appointment

- Approved candidates will receive an email with their Scheduling Authorization, within 11 weeks before the start of the testing window. Scheduling Authorization emails come from notices@ptcny.com. Do not lose this email.
- If you don’t receive your Scheduling Authorization email 3 weeks before the start of your testing window, contact PTC.

The Scheduling Authorization includes important information including:

- Your PTC Candidate ID number
- Instructions on how to make your Exam appointment with Prometric.

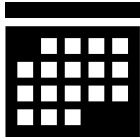
Applicants who are not approved to sit for the examination or whose applications are incomplete 21 days prior to the first day of the testing window will receive a refund of their application fee minus the \$75 administrative fee. Refunds will be processed approximately 30 days after the end of the testing period.

EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION AND SCHEDULING

The Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination is administered during an established two-week testing window on a daily basis, excluding holidays, at computer-based testing facilities managed by Prometric.

Scheduling Examination Appointments

Follow the steps on your Scheduling Authorization to schedule your examination appointment with Prometric.



- Appointment times are first-come, first-served, so schedule your appointment as soon as you receive your Scheduling Authorization.
- **Candidates who wait until the last minute run the risk of missing out on their preferred date, time, and/or testing center. Candidates unable to schedule an appointment will forfeit their fees.**

After you make your test appointment, Prometric will send you a confirmation email with the date, time, and location of your exam. Check this confirmation carefully and contact Prometric at (800) 741-0934 if you do not receive this email confirmation or if there is a mistake with your appointment.

Note: International candidates may also schedule, reschedule, or cancel an appointment online at <http://www.prometric.com/AHSCP>.

IMPORTANT!

You **MUST** present your current driver's license, passport, or U.S. military ID at the test center. Expired, temporary, or paper driver's licenses will **NOT** be accepted. The first and last name on your Scheduling Authorization must match the first and last name on your photo ID.

Fees will not be refunded for exams missed because of an invalid ID.

Rescheduling Examination Appointments within a Testing Period

Candidates can reschedule their examination appointments within the same testing period as long as the request is submitted within the timeframe described below. Reschedule within the permitted time frame by calling or going to the Prometric website: <http://www.prometric.com/AHSCP>.

| Time Frame | Reschedule Permitted? | Stipulations |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Requests submitted 30 days or more before the original appointment | Yes | None |
| Requests submitted 29 to 5 days before the original appointment | Yes | Candidate must pay Prometric a rescheduling fee of \$50. |
| Requests submitted less than 5 days before the original appointment | No | Candidates who do not arrive to test for their appointment will be considered a no-show and all their examinations fees will be forfeited. Candidates will need to reapply and pay full examination fees for a future testing period. |

Transferring to a New Testing Period

Candidates unable to take the examination during their scheduled testing period may request a **ONE-TIME** transfer to a future testing period. **There is a transfer fee of \$250.00.** After you have transferred once by paying the \$250.00 fee, you will need to pay the examination fee of \$600.00 in order to transfer a second time; so, *please plan carefully.*

Please note: requests to transfer to a new testing period must be received within 30 days of your originally scheduled testing period.

Candidates wishing to transfer to a new testing period need to follow the steps below.

1. Go to <http://secure.ptcny.com/apply>.
2. Click "Start New Application."
3. Choose AHSCP-CHC in the first drop-down menu; then choose the new examination period in the second drop down menu and fill out the rest of the information on the page.
4. Fill out the application making sure you answer yes to the question asking if you are transferring.
5. When you have finished the application, click "Submit Transfer Request."
6. PTC Support will send you an email letting you know your transfer application was approved and that you can log back into your application and pay the one-time \$250.00 transfer fee.

Call 212-356-0660 if you have any questions regarding the transfer process.

If candidates are unable to attend the examination on the date for which they registered and elect not to transfer to another testing period, the application will be closed and all fees will be forfeited. There will be no refund of fees.

The transfer fee is based on costs and is not punitive in nature. The transfer fee must be paid at the time the request is approved.

Note: Transferring your Examination only refers to instances when a candidate is unable to take their exam during a testing period for which they have already applied. Candidates who did not pass their examination and are retaking the examination need to pay the full Examination Fee.



Failing to Report for an Examination

If you fail to report for an examination, you will forfeit all fees paid to take the examination. A completed application form and examination fee are required to reapply for the examination.

EXAMINATION FEES

| Fee Type | Amount | Details |
|--|-------------|--|
| Application Fee | US \$600.00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-refundable • Non-transferable • Includes testing center fees • Includes non-refundable \$75 administrative fee |
| Transfer Fee (Moving to a new testing window; see page 7) | US \$250.00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies to candidates who need to move to a new testing period • Must submit new application & fee to PTC |
| Rescheduling Fee (29-5 days prior to scheduled appointment; see page 7) | US \$50.00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies to candidates who need to move their appointment within their current testing period • Payable directly to Prometric • Reschedule with Prometric online or over the phone |



- **There will be no refund of fees unless applicants are ineligible for the examination.**
- **Ineligible candidates will be refunded their fees minus an administrative fee.**
- **No refunds will be issued for applying for the incorrect examination or testing period, for failing to make an examination appointment, or for failing to appear at your scheduled appointment.**

Be advised: Prometric does not have the authority to grant transfers to another testing period or refunds.

TEST ACCOMMODATIONS

AHSCP and PTC support the intent of and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will take steps reasonably necessary to make certification accessible to persons with disabilities covered under the ADA. According to the ADA, an individual with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity (such as seeing, hearing, learning, reading, concentrating, walking) or a major bodily function (such as neurological, endocrine, or digestive system).

The information you provide and any documentation regarding your disability and test accommodations is confidential and is not included in scoring or reporting.

All approved testing accommodations must maintain the psychometric nature and security of the examination. Accommodations that fundamentally alter the nature or security of the exam will not be granted.

To request test accommodations, follow these 4 steps:

1. Download the Request for Test Accommodations Form, available from www.ptcny.com or by calling PTC at (212) 356-0660.
2. Complete Test Accommodations Form with your doctor/healthcare professional.
3. Upload the completed and signed Test Accommodations Form with the online exam application.
4. Submit fully both the Test Accommodations Form and the application at least 8 weeks prior to the start of your chosen testing period.

NOTES:

- Only those requests made and received on the official Request for Test Accommodations Form will be reviewed.
- All requests must be made at the time of application. Accommodations cannot be added to an existing exam appointment.
- If you miss the 8-week deadline, you may not be able to test during your chosen testing period and you will be subject to rescheduling or transfer fees.
- Do not go to www.prometric.com or contact Prometric to request test accommodations as they are not authorized to approve accommodations. All requests for test accommodations must be submitted on the PTC Request Form.
- If you need to use your cell phone or another electronic device to monitor a medical condition, such as diabetes, please be sure to include this on Part 1 of the Request for Test Accommodations Form so that we can notify Prometric in advance.
- Only pre-approved test accommodations will be permitted on the day of the examination. Test center personnel are not authorized to make any changes to the test accommodations on the day of the testing session and any such change may result in your examination score being canceled.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION

- Check your driver's license, passport, non-driver state issued ID or U.S. Military ID.
 - Is it expired?
 - Does the first and last name on your ID match the first and last name on your Scheduling Authorization email?
 - Proctors at the Prometric testing center will refuse admission to candidates with expired ID, IDs with names that do not match their records, and temporary paper IDs. Candidates will be marked as no-shows and will forfeit their exam fees.
- Check your PTC Scheduling Authorization email and Prometric Appointment Confirmation email to make sure everything is accurate (i.e., your first and last name, exam name, appointment date, time and location).
- Make yourself familiar with the location of your test center and parking options and check the weather and traffic conditions before you leave for the test center. Allow plenty of time as late arrival may prevent you from testing.
- In the event of inclement weather, check the Prometric website for site closures: <https://www.prometric.com/closures>
- Prometric's website provides information on what you can expect on your test day, including a walkthrough of check in and security procedures: <https://www.prometric.com/test-center-security>.
- This Handbook provides the Content Outline for the Examination (see appendix). Use this to help you start studying for the examination.
- Review What to Expect at the Test Center and Rules for the Examination on the next pages before your appointment.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE TESTING CENTER

- Candidate Check-In
 - Candidates will be asked to:
 - present their IDs.
 - empty and turn out their pockets.
 - walk through a metal detector or get “wanded”.
 - Eyeglasses, jewelry, and other accessories will be inspected.
 - Jewelry other than wedding and engagement rings is prohibited.
 - Leave these at home or place them in your locker.
 - Religious headwear may be worn into the testing room; however, it is subject to inspection by test center staff.
 - Prometric provides lockers to store purses, backpacks, mobile phones, jackets, food, drinks and medical supplies.
 - Water in a clear plastic containers (no labels) may be brought into the testing room.

- During the Exam
 - No breaks are scheduled during the exam.
 - Candidates are only permitted to leave the testing room to use the restroom or access food, drink, or medicine from their assigned locker. The exam timer will NOT be paused.
 - Smoking is prohibited at the testing center.
 - All examinations are monitored and may be recorded in both audio and video format.

- Keep in mind:
 - Other exams will be administered at the same time as your examination.
 - You may hear ambient noises such as typing, coughing, or people entering and exiting the testing room that cannot be avoided.
 - Prometric is unable to provide a completely noise-free environment.
 - Headphones may be requested to minimize the impact of ambient noise.
 - Proctors will periodically walk through the testing room as part of their monitoring process.
 - See [Prometric’s website](#) for more information about what to expect on testing day.

RULES FOR THE EXAMINATION

Read the information below carefully. You are responsible for adhering to the examination rules while at the testing center.

- DO NOT BRING

These items are strictly prohibited at the testing center. Leave these items in your car or your assigned locker.

- Cell phones and all other electronic devices
- Watches
- Jackets/coats/bulky clothing such as sweatshirts
- Hats (except hats worn for religious reasons)
- Jewelry, including watches and wearable technology.



- ⇒ You may NOT access the following at any time during your exam or breaks: papers, books, any reference materials; electronic devices including your cell phone. Candidates may access the following items from their locker: snacks, drinks, medicine, or other personal healthcare items.
- ⇒ No questions concerning content of the examination may be asked during the examination session. Read carefully the directions that are provided on screen at the beginning of the examination session.
- ⇒ You are prohibited from leaving the testing room while your examination is in session, except for going to the restroom. Candidates who do go to their lockers or the restroom will need to repeat the security screening before being permitted to reenter the testing room. **Candidates who leave the center will have their examinations terminated.**
- ⇒ See [Prometric's statement on Test Center Security](#) for more information.

Contact PTC at (212) 356-0660 or www.ptcny.com/contact with any questions about the Examination Rules.

Irregular or improper behavior that is observed, made apparent by statistical analysis, or uncovered by other means before, during or after the examination will be considered a violation of these rules and may constitute grounds for invalidation of a candidate's examination. AHSCP will initiate an investigation and request suitable analyses and appropriate documentation.

TESTING CONDITIONS OR EXAMINATION FEEDBACK

Any candidate who feels that the examination effort was negatively impacted by the test center conditions should notify the proctor immediately. The situation should also be reported to PTC at www.ptcny.com/contact within 15 days of the test appointment. Any comments about the test itself should also be reported to PTC at www.ptcny.com/contact within 15 days of the test appointment.

REPORT OF RESULTS

All candidates will be notified via email by PTC, of their official scores (scores on the major areas of the examination and on the total examination will be reported) within approximately four weeks of the close of the testing period. Please note that this time is necessary to allow for the psychometric review and administration time required to ensure accurate and reliable scores.

Confidentiality of Examination Scores

The American Hypertension Specialist Certification Program will release the individual examination scores in writing ONLY to the individual candidate.

Requesting a Handscore

Candidates who fail the examination may request a hand scoring of their data file. Hand scoring is a manual check of the data file by the testing service to determine if there have been any errors in scoring. Although the probability of such an error is extremely remote, this service is available. Requests for hand scoring must be received by PTC no later than 90 days after the date of the examination by completing and returning the Request of Handscore form on www.ptcny.com with payment of \$25. Candidates who fail the examination will not be permitted to see the examination questions. For reasons of test security, no candidate is allowed to review the examination or any of its items.

To ensure correct reporting of results, PTC automatically performs handscores of examinations of candidates who score within 3 points of passing as a quality control measure. Thus, it is extremely doubtful that any examination results will change from “fail” to “pass” through handscoreing.

Reexamination

The Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination may be taken as often as desired, upon filing of a new Application and fee. There is no limit to the number of times the examination may be repeated; however, candidates may not retest during the same testing period.

EXAMINATION SECURITY

Candidates seeking admission to take the examination do so for the purpose of pursuing registration, and for no other purpose. Because of the confidential nature of the examination, candidates may not make or keep copies, excerpts, or notes of examination materials, and to not use or divulge information learned from the examination. The examination is the exclusive property of AHSCP and candidates may not use examination information in any way without the express prior written consent of AHSCP.

The Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination is confidential. Candidates are required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to the start of the examination.

Candidates agree to abide by the testing rules in effect at the time of their test appointment. AHSCP, PTC, and/or Prometric staff may refuse a candidate admission to the examination if they do not have the proper identification as detailed in the Candidate Handbook. Candidates who do not abide by the testing rules may have their exam terminated during the exam administration in order to maintain a secure and proper exam administration and/or exam scores invalidated.

ATTAINMENT OF CERTIFICATION & RECERTIFICATION

Eligible candidates who pass the Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination are eligible to use the designation CHC after their names and will receive certificates from AHSCP. A registry of Certified Hypertension Clinicians will be maintained by AHSCP and may be reported in its publications.

Certification as a CHC is recognized for a period of ten years at which time the candidate must retake and pass the current Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination or meet such alternative requirements as are in effect at that time in order to retain certification.

CONTENT OF THE EXAMINATION

The Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination is a computer-based examination composed of a maximum of 175 multiple-choice, objective questions with a total testing time of two (2) hours. The content for the examination is described in the Content Outline on the next page.

The questions for the examination are obtained from individuals with expertise in clinical hypertension and are reviewed for construction, accuracy, and appropriateness by AHSCP.

AHSCP, with the advice and assistance of the Professional Testing Corporation, prepares the examination.

The Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination will be weighted in approximately the following manner:

| | | |
|------|------------------------------------|-----|
| I. | Scientific Foundations | 15% |
| II. | Assessment and Diagnosis | 15% |
| III. | Secondary Hypertension | 10% |
| IV. | Treatment | 40% |
| V. | Special Populations and Conditions | 20% |

I. SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS

- A. Physiology (e.g. hemodynamics, renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system, sympathetic nervous system)
- B. Pathophysiology
- C. Epidemiology (e.g. risk, prevalence, importance of systolic hypertension, control rates)
- D. Clinical Trials
- E. Principles of Drug Action (e.g. Pharmacology)

II. ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS

- A. Blood Pressure Measurement/Monitoring
- B. History and Physical Exam Findings
- C. BP Classification
- D. Diagnostic Testing
- E. Target Organ Damage

III. SECONDARY HYPERTENSION

- A. Renal Parenchymal Disease
- B. Renovascular
- C. Endocrine
- D. Obstructive Sleep Apnea
- E. Pharmacologic (e.g. prescription, non-prescription, illicit, complementary therapies)
- F. Vascular (e.g. coarctation)

IV. TREATMENT

- A. Prevention
- B. Population Health and Screening (e.g. Million Hearts, Healthy People Initiatives)
- C. Lifestyle Modification
- D. Goals of Therapy (e.g. targets, evidence based therapy, guidelines)
- E. Drug Therapy (e.g. drugs, combination therapy, approaches)
- F. Drug Interactions
- G. Adherence

- H. Barriers to Treatment and Control (e.g. psychosocial, socioeconomic issues)
- I. Ongoing Management
 - 1. Referral, Frequency of Follow-up (visits and labs)
 - 2. Self-measurement and Out of Office Monitoring
 - 3. Team Based Care (handoffs, review with collaborating team)
- J. Cardiovascular Risk Factor Assessment and Management

V. SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND CONDITIONS

- A. Hypertensive Crisis/Emergencies/Urgencies/Malignant Hypertension
- B. Difficult to Treat/Resistant Hypertension
- C. Orthostatic Hypotension
- D. Co-existing Kidney Disease (e.g. proteinuria, diabetic nephropathy, renal failure, transplant)
- E. Co-existing Heart Disease (e.g. coronary artery disease, myocardial infarction, heart failure)
- F. Co-existing Vascular Disease (e.g. aortic aneurysm, stroke, peripheral arterial disease)
- G. Treatment of Hypertension in Hospitalized Patients (e.g. perioperative)
- H. Hypertension in Pregnancy (e.g. drug choice, when to refer)
- I. Vulnerable Populations (e.g. indigent, frail elderly)
- J. Environmental Situations (e.g. altitude, noise)
- K. Psychiatric Disorders (e.g. panic)
- L. Children and Adolescents

SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

The following are samples of the types of questions that may appear on the Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination. These sample questions are intended for candidates to view how test questions are structured. Please note these are samples and these specific questions will not appear on the examination.

1. As men and women age from 20 to 80 years, the average level of systolic blood pressure generally
 1. increases.
 2. decreases.
 3. stays the same.
 4. plateaus then decreases.

2. Doxazosin in combination with other drugs is the most appropriate treatment for patients with hypertension and
 1. heart failure.
 2. mild depression.
 3. benign prostatic hypertrophy.
 4. chronic obstructive lung disease.

3. Patients adherent to the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet typically show
 1. weight gain.
 2. increased sodium excretion.
 3. reduction of systolic and diastolic blood pressure.
 4. blood pressure reduction only when combined with pharmaceutical therapy.

4. A hypertensive emergency would most likely be produced by an abrupt withdrawal of
 1. prazosin.
 2. atenolol.
 3. lisinopril.
 4. clonidine.

| ANSWER KEY | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Q | A |
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 3 |
| 4 | 4 |

REFERENCES

The CHC Task Force has developed a Study/Reference List for the Certified Hypertension Clinicians (CHC) Examination. The CHC Study/Reference List can be downloaded at <http://www.ahscp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CHC-Study-Guide.pdf>. Those who are preparing to take the Examination for the CHC Certification may find this a useful document. However, the CHC Study/Reference List may not include all relevant material and references; nor is it suggested that the Examination will be exclusively based on the CHC Study/Reference List.

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