

## **Consultants**

### **Procedures for Maintaining Certification**

#### **Refreshing**

Consultants must refresh by the end of the fifth calendar year of the date following the last course or refresher event by one of the following means:

- ☼ Attending, in full, a GSS Course (no exams required)
- ☼ Attending, in full, a Refresher Event or Tour which has been accepted by the State GSS Chairman and approved by the NGC GSS Chairman.
- ☼ Attending, in full, an NGC accredited Gardening Study Refresher Event or Multiple Refresher approved for Gardening Study credit.

Credit for refresher events can be granted only once within a calendar year.

#### **Record Keeping**

After verifying each individual's records, the State GSS Chairman distributes new Refresher Cards to Consultants who complete a course or approved State Refresher Event. The State GSS Chairman sends a roster of those refreshing to the NGC Accrediting Chairman for the region, who sends the roster to the Schools Secretary at NGC Headquarters. The State GSS Chairman lists the out-of-state refreshing Consultants and notes their state affiliation. The Schools Secretary then notifies the State GSS Chairman in the home state, where the Consultant's records are kept, and the NGC Accrediting Chairman for that region.

The NGC Accrediting Chairman for the region mails Refresher Cards for Consultants who refresh at any NGC accredited Refresher Event directly to the home State GSS Chairman, who is responsible for maintaining the Consultant's records.

A Consultant who moves to another state must request a transfer of records in order to be listed locally as an NGC Gardening Consultant.

#### **Extensions**

A Consultant unable to refresh within five calendar years may request an extension from the State GSS Chairman before the certification has expired. The State GSS Chairman forwards the request form to the appropriate NGC GSS Chairman. If the request is granted, the NGC GSS Chairman records the extension, notifies the NGC Schools Secretary and the State GSS Chairman, who then notifies the Consultant of the time limit of the extension.

#### **Reinstatement**

Lapsed Consultants can be reinstated within a seven-year time period from the last year of their certification by completing two courses with a passing grade of 70% for each exam. If the consultant is over seventy years old, the exam requirement is waived. No waiting time is required between courses.

#### **Removal of records**

Consultants' records are retained for a period of seven years from the last year of accreditation. After this period, an individual's records are removed from all files.

#### **Master Consultant**

After a Consultant's fourth refresher, the State GSS Chairman automatically applies for the Consultant's Master Certification Card. If some of the Consultant's refreshers have taken place out-of-state, the Consultant must verify that the home State GSS Chairman, who maintains the Consultant's records, has been notified of such refreshers. Master Consultants must refresh their certification every five years.

#### **Consultant Emeritus**

Emeritus status is granted to Master Consultants who apply to the State GSS Chairman indicating that they no longer wish or are able to continue active participation. Unlike Master Consultants, Emeritus Consultants need not attend refresher events to maintain their accreditation.

# **National Garden Clubs, Inc.**



## **Gardening Study Schools**

## **Guide for Students and Consultants**

**[www.GardenClub.org](http://www.GardenClub.org)**

## **Gardening Study Schools**

The Gardening Study Schools (GSS) provide continuing education in the study of horticulture. Course content is established by National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC). Four sequenced courses (I through IV) comprise a series. Each course consists of ten hours of instruction, which may include field tours of botanic or test gardens. Optional exams are offered for those wishing to become NGC Accredited Gardening Consultants.

After passing two courses a student may become a Provisional Consultant and join a Gardening Consultants Council, a group that provides programs and tours that further the education of its members. Those garden club members completing all four courses receive a Gardening Consultant Certification Card, which is recognized as a special achievement among NGC members, but does not convey professional status.

Those who have become NGC Gardening Consultants are eligible to judge contests and displays as representatives of the Gardening Study Schools program in events participated in by councils and clubs.

### **NGC Educational Programs**

Avail yourself of the knowledge to be gained through National Garden Clubs' other educational programs:

**Environmental Studies School** – focusing on the land, water, air, and earth on which we live.

**Flower Show School** – focusing on the study of horticulture, design, and flower show procedure.

**Landscape Design School** – focusing on recognizing and practicing good land use.

## **Students**

### **Member Students**

A member student belongs to a garden club affiliated with a state garden club in NGC or to one of NGC's International Affiliate clubs.

### **Non-member Students**

The courses and exams are open to everyone. However, the Consultant Certification Card is issued only to members of NGC. A non-member student who has successfully completed the four courses may apply for Consultant certification upon joining a garden club affiliated with NGC within one year after completing the series. Certificates of Completion may be awarded to non-NGC students attending a full series.

### **Certification of Students**

Requirements: To become eligible for a Gardening Consultant Certification Card, students must have a passing grade of 70% on all required exams in the four courses. The four courses must be completed within seven years of beginning the first course. While the courses are most useful to the student when taken in order from I through IV, taking them in any order is permitted.

Member students attending courses for credit and Consultants are required to read *The National Gardener*, the official publication of NGC. Updated information pertaining to the Gardening Study Schools (and all NGC schools) can be found in each issue of *The National Gardener* (and in *Keeping in Touch*).

When a student obtains his Consultant status, an NGC Gardening Consultant pin may be purchased from NGC Headquarters, Member Services.

### **Application for Consultant Credit**

The State GSS Chairman in the state where the fourth course is taken prepares the application for a student's certification. If any of the student's courses have been taken out-of-state, the student must submit evidence of having passed such courses to the State GSS Chairman of the state where the final exam was taken. The State GSS Chairman sends the application with the course roster to the NGC Accrediting Chairman for the region, who notifies the Schools Secretary at NGC Headquarters. The NGC Accrediting Chairman sends the certification cards to the State GSS Chairman, who updates the records and forwards the cards to the new Consultant. The certification card carries date of the student's fourth course (date Consultant status was achieved) and the expiration date.

### **Extension for Students**

A student unable to complete the four courses within seven years may request an extension from the State GSS Chairman. The request must be made before the seven years have elapsed. The State GSS Chairman forwards the request form to the appropriate NGC GSS Chairman. If the request is granted, the NGC GSS Chairman notifies the Schools Secretary at NGC Headquarters and the State GSS Chairman. The State GSS Chairman notifies the student of the time limit of the extension.

### **NGC 4-Star and 5-Star Members**

Members who have successfully completed all four of NGC's educational programs are honored as **NGC 4-Star Members**. Members who complete all four NGC educational programs and refresh their certificates to the Master Status in all disciplines are honored as **NGC 5-Star Members**.