



**NCP Exam  
Guide Program  
Handbook**



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## Welcome to the NCP Guide Program!

You earned your NCP and are now able to facilitate another's journey by sharing the lessons you learned that enabled you to be successful. Your primary mission is to guide the NCP Candidate through the process of establishing and completing **a study plan**.

Remember all the questions you had when you began your journey? You will be able to answer questions about testing logistics and generally what to expect from the overall experience. You may discuss topics that relate to the NCP Exam Blueprint and the **process** to study and prepare to take the NCP exam. However, you are not permitted to teach or discuss any specifics about the exam questions.

The Guide serves as a valuable resource for the NCP Candidate – as a “buddy” to help:

- establish expectations;
- create a plan for study; and
- follow the plan.

The following Guide tools are available to help you support your NCP Candidate. These are suggestions for how to spend your time to achieve the best results. However, you may spend more or less time based on the agreement between yourself and the NCP Candidate:

- **Guide Checklist:** To show you suggested tasks to complete as a Guide.
- **Sample Call Program:** To assist you in potential topics of discussion for your phone calls or emails.
- **Sample Study Plan:** To share with your NCP Candidate to help determine an individual study plan.
- **General Tips:** To share with your NCP Candidate about the exam.

As the Guide, you should emphasize the importance of the study tools made available by ECCHO and those provided by the other NCP training partners. A strong study plan is one of the keys to success and encouraging use of the JumpStart Reading program and the NCP Roadmap as well as other resources is a great place to start.

## Continuing Education (CE) credits

Completing the tasks as a Guide can earn up to 5 NCP CE credits in a calendar year (max. 15 credits per each 5-year renewal cycle).



# Sample Guide Checklist

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- Step 1: Sign Up for The Guide Program
- Step 2: Read And Sign The Guide Oath
- Step 3: Get Assigned to NCP Candidate
- Step 4: Read This Guide Handbook
- Step 5: Introductory Call to Candidate
- Step 6: Review NCP Blueprint
- Step 7: Establish A Study Program
- Step 8: Suggest Exam Training
- Step 9: Discuss Successful Test Taking
- Step 10: Remind Candidate to Study
- Step 11: Jointly Review NCP Roadmap
- Step 12: Encourage NCP Candidate
- Step 13: Share Lessons Learned
- Step 14: Wish Candidate GOOD LUCK!





# Sample Guide Session

## Call #1: Introductory call

### Introductions: discuss who you are and what you do.

- Introductions.
- Discuss work backgrounds.
- Discuss check payments experience.

### Guide's role

Explain the Guide's role and what you may and may not do as a Guide.

### Do's:

- Provide encouragement and general guidance on the NCP program.
- Share lessons learned from your journey.
- Explain what the NCP Candidate may expect regarding exam logistics, testing center experience, etc.
- Talk about NCP Blueprint topics in a collegial way.
- Encourage self-study and participation in formal exam preparation training program.
- Help the NCP Candidate establish their own study plan.
- Remind NCP Candidate to study.
- Think of yourself as a development and accountability coach for the study plan.

### Don'ts:

- Do **not** discuss test questions or answers.
- Do **not** discuss what was or was not covered on the exam.
- Guides are not trainers and are not expected to answer educational questions. Refer your NCP Candidate to ECCHO to ask these questions as needed: [ncp@theclearinghouse.org](mailto:ncp@theclearinghouse.org).



# Sample Guide Session

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## Call #2: Setting expectations & baseline

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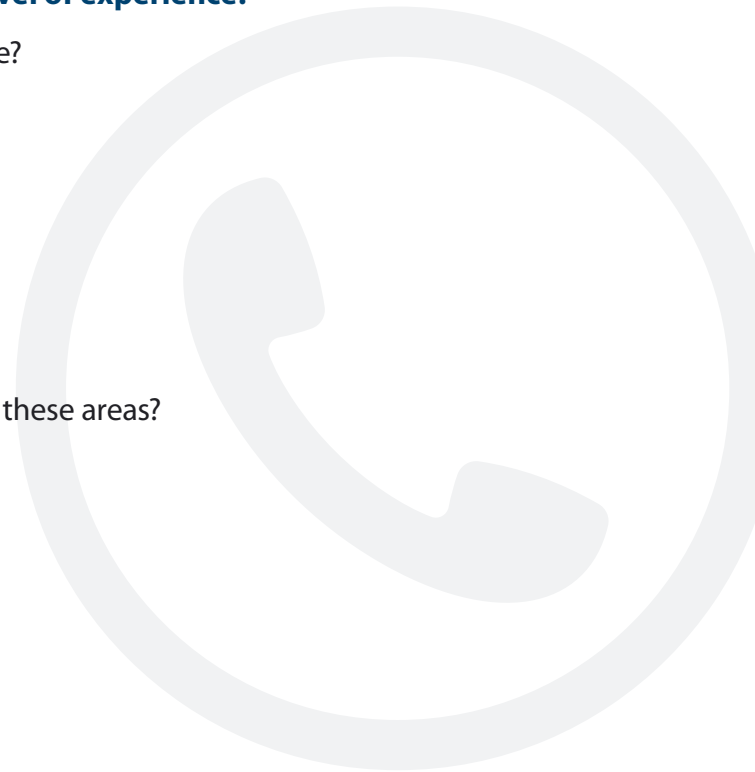
### Logistics: Format for your contact

- Discuss the “where/when/how” for these discussions?
- What are respective time zones for you and the NCP candidate?
- Preferred time of contact: Morning? Afternoon?
- Frequency of contact: Weekly? Monthly?
- Preferred method of contact. Phone? Email?
- Date to start/end this process?
- What to do if challenge arises and a planned call must be rescheduled?

**Tip:** Be persistent and provide accountability and focus for your NCP Candidate throughout this process.

### Setting the baseline: What is the NCP Candidate’s level of experience?

- How much check experience does NCP candidate have?
- How much knowledge in each area NCP exam:
  - Rules & Regulations
  - Fraud and Risk Mitigation
  - Check Operations
  - Check Products
- What are candidate’s strengths/weaknesses in each of these areas?
- What are the candidate’s preferred areas of focus?





# Sample Guide Session

## Call #3: NCP Program details

### NCP Communications

Discuss milestones that ECCHO will communicate and what to expect leading up to the exam:

- Confirm the candidate is receiving their emails from NCP Connection.
  - If they have not received an email after registration with ECCHO, have them contact the program administrator at [ncp@theclearinghouse.org](mailto:ncp@theclearinghouse.org).
- Verify the program email ([ncp@theclearinghouse.org](mailto:ncp@theclearinghouse.org)) is setup in their email client as a safe sender and [@theclearinghouse.org](mailto:@theclearinghouse.org) as a safe domain.
  - Emails may go to their Junk mailbox; suggest they work with their IT department to whitelist [@theclearinghouse.org](mailto:@theclearinghouse.org) domain.
- Work through the candidate's NCP Welcome Email and each of the study links included and point out the timeline.
  - ***This is an important email. It contains links to all ECCHO study aids that are provided following exam registration with ECCHO.***
- Suggest the training options available with NCP Partners.
- Remind them to look for Question of the Day emails starting in January and ending the Friday before the exam window opens.
- Remind them to review Question of the Day emails daily and/or print them to review later.
- Review the free "study tips" webinar: *Achieving Your NCP*.
- Register for their individual exam appointment with program test provider.

### What's next?

- You have taken the exam and await your results.
- Each candidate receives their individual Candidate Report which contains bar chart graphic showing performance in each of the exam categories tested (Rules and Regulations, Fraud/Risk, Operations and Products).
- Each candidate that passes the exam will also receive a printed NCP certificate and lapel pin by mail a few weeks after the exam window closes.

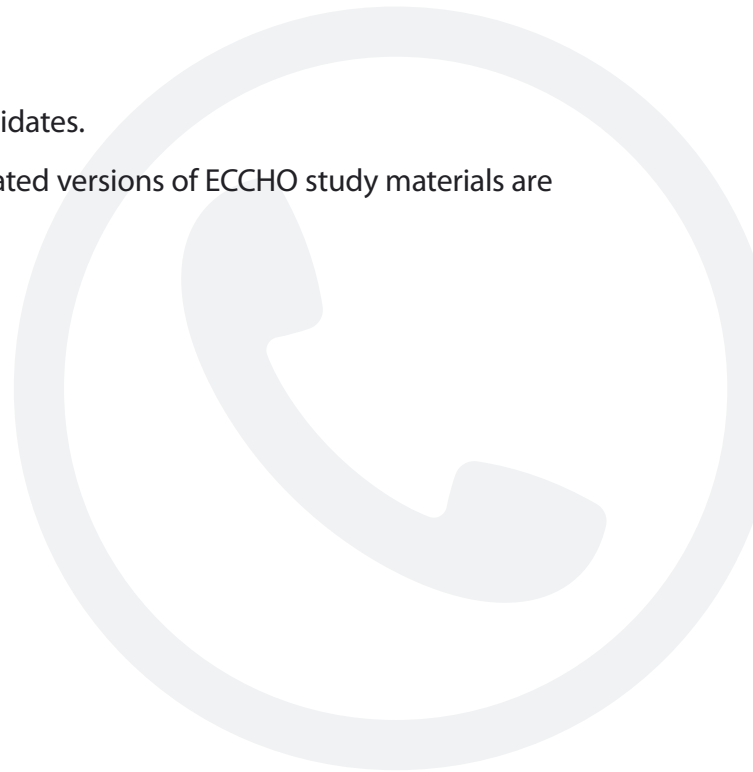


# Sample Guide Session

## Call #4: Beginning a study program

**Ensure that NCP Candidate has the following materials and utilizes them.**

- Review NCP Jump Start program [Jump Start](#).
- Review [NCP Exam Blueprint](#) to ensure the candidate knows what is covered on the test and the percentage of questions for each section.
- Review the [NCP Roadmap](#).
  - Discuss the exam topics at a high-level and the type of information covered on the exam.
  - Go through the “Study Stops” in the NCP Roadmap (pages 12 -18) and assist the candidate in building their personalized plan of study.
- Verify the NCP Candidate has access to and is using the NCP Study Center tools (available upon registration with ECCHO) including:
  - NCP P.R.E.P. Guide.
  - Question of the Day Summary (prior year).
  - Other materials available to all registered exam candidates.
    - Be aware and remind the NCP Candidate that updated versions of ECCHO study materials are released in Q4 each year.







## Call #5: Establishing a study plan

### Discuss the NCP Candidate's plan for studying.

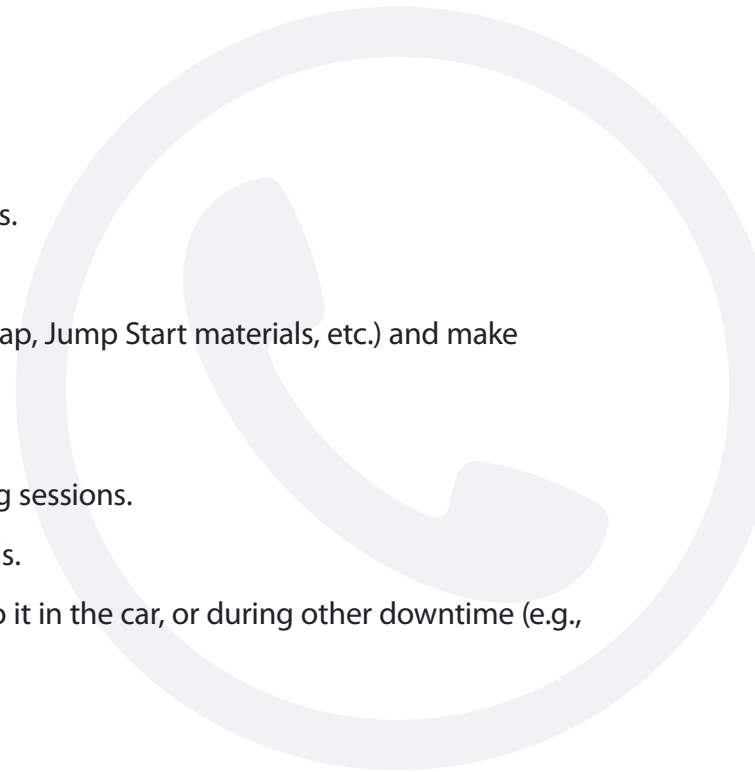
- Discuss the value of taking an NCP Exam prep training course.
  - Refer to options available from [NCP Trusted Partners](#).
- Discuss the candidate's study plan. See APPENDIX A.
- Make suggestions on studying.
  - Discuss things that helped you to study or retain information.
- Discuss learning techniques and determine how the NCP Candidate learns best.
  - Assist the candidate in developing a plan that incorporates techniques best suited for their learning style (see examples below).

### Visual learners:

- Turn notes into pictures, charts, etc.
- Develop and/or use flash cards.
- Color code the new concepts you have learned.
- Learn the big picture first and then focus on the details.
- Avoid distractions.
- Print educational materials (P.R.E.P. Guide, NCP Roadmap, Jump Start materials, etc.) and make notebook or similar study tool(s).

### Auditory learners:

- Listen and then re-listen to recordings of exam training sessions.
- Read materials aloud then put them in your own words.
- Record your own lesson on a smartphone and listen to it in the car, or during other downtime (e.g., lunch break, doctor's office, train, plane, etc.).
- Discuss materials in a study group.

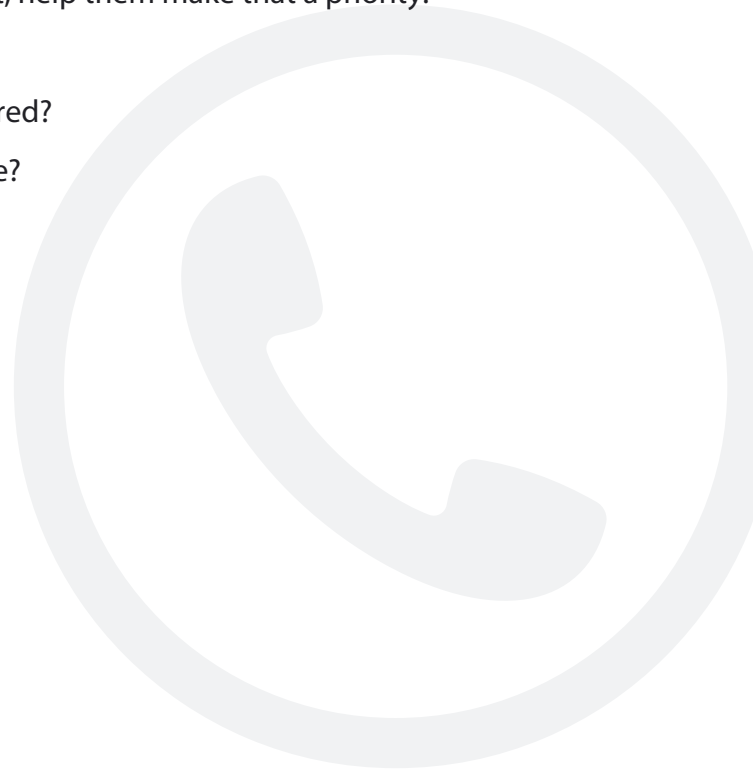




# Sample Guide Session

## Call #6: Open session (Topic chosen by NCP Candidate)

- Suggest a call on a topic of interest provided by the NCP Candidate.
- Search Question of the Day, P.R.E.P. Guide, training materials, regulations and other resources on that topic to use as a reference.
  - Discuss the topic in a collegial way but not to teach/train the NCP Candidate.
    - Detailed check questions or other program or educational questions should be forwarded to ECCHO at [ncp@theclearinghouse.org](mailto:ncp@theclearinghouse.org).
- Invite ad hoc inquiries – encourage the candidate to call or email you with questions about exam logistics, ways to study, what you experienced, etc. on an as-needed basis.
- Set up status calls (at agreed upon intervals near the exam window).
  - Use this time to discuss how the candidate is progressing with their study plan. For example:
    - Do they have an established plan of study? If not, help them make that a priority.
    - Do they spend regular time studying?
    - How much of the exam material have they covered?
    - Are they actively participating in a training course?
    - What are their main concerns at this point?





# Sample Guide Session

## Call #7: Exam tips for success

- Determine when the NCP candidate last took a multiple-choice exam?
  - Was it online?
  - Is the NCP candidate a good test taker?
- Guide the NCP Candidate to look at relevant suggestions offered by universities and other resources on successful test taking techniques; an example: [Test Taking Strategies Southwestern University](#)
- Discuss the style of the test language.
  - Questions may not be worded in a manner that is familiar or immediately recognizable.
- Emphasize that candidates slow down, remain calm, read each question carefully:
  - Read it more than once.
  - Look for key words and/or clues to related references (e.g., "According to UCC" or "According to Reg CC").
- Discuss the style of scenario-based questions that test the level of knowledge and ability to apply that knowledge to a business situation.
  - Explain about how to map out challenging questions into scenarios and/or create diagrams to assist in answering the questions.
  - Discuss ways to utilize the paper and pencil provided during the exam.
- Talk about the testing center: what to expect – what was the setup for you (each center is a little different). See APPENDIX B
  - What you may/may not take into the center with you.
  - What to do with personal belongings if test center does not offer lockers.
  - How to sign up for a desired exam date/time.
- Remind the candidate they will need to have two (2) forms of ID to present at the testing center – One must be a photo id (drivers' license or passport, etc.).
  - ID must identify NCP Candidate using the same name they used to register with ECCHO and to make the testing appointment.
- Or, if they choose to take the test virtually at home or at the office via [OnVue online](#) make sure they follow all instructions and registration requirements, and review the ECCHO OnVue recording.



# Suggestions for re-taking exam

## **Suggestions if your Candidate is re-taking the Exam:**

If you are paired with someone who has already taken the NCP exam, it may be more challenging to guide them on this journey. Following are some ideas on how to navigate in this situation.

### • **Inquire about their study process for the prior test:**

- How much time did they spend studying?
- Type of study techniques they utilized:
  - Study Partners: independent, study group.
  - Study Aids: design flash cards, make recordings of material for themselves, ECCHO study materials (P.R.E.P. Guide, Question of the Day, NCP Roadmap).
  - Additional resources: NCP preparation training, original documents (UCC 3 & 4, Reg CC, etc.).

### • **Discuss gaps in these areas that you might be able to address to help them focus this time:**

- Walk through all available study techniques even if they believe they know why they failed. Much can be learned by discussing with an objective party and examining other opportunities.
- Suggest ways to succeed based on available resources and your own experience.

### • **Ask them about their performance on the exam (only if they are willing to share):**

- Focus on areas where they did not perform as well.
- Work with candidate to focus their study more on these weaker areas.
- Remind them to also review areas where they performed well as exam questions change.

### • **Review pitfalls and ways to overcome them:**

- Not studying enough – not enough time:
  - Develop a plan and carve out time on a consistent basis.
  - Start earlier this year.
  - Use a trainer and don't multi-task while taking classes or studying.
  - Create your own study aids.
  - Get into a study group and/or have a study buddy, etc.
- Not a good test taker:
  - Look at resources online that provide test taking tips.
- Get too nervous:
  - Remove stress by arriving at the test site early and take a walk or meditate before the exam.
  - Review notes a final time before entering the testing center.
  - During the exam, read each question at least twice before answering.



# Appendix A: Sample Study Program

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- Complete Jump Start reading program; Determine items you need to review.
  - NCP Blueprint lists the topics covered on exam.
  - NCP Roadmap provides more detailed outline of subjects covered on exam.
- Study the NCP P.R.E.P. Guide.
  - Review the section quizzes and check your answers (provided in exhibits).
  - Take the Sample Exam included in the Guide exhibits.
- Review each Question of the Day.
  - Try to answer the Question each day as it comes in.
  - Check your answer the next day.
    - Mark any that you miss for further review.
  - Print Question of the Day and create notebook for future review.
- Sign up for NCP Partner Exam Prep Training Series.
  - Print out materials and read through before each session.
  - Note questions in advance and ask during and/or after each session.
  - Take notes during class.
  - Summarize highlights onto index cards or other useful format for review.
  - Turn off all other phones/email.
  - Do not multi-task during classes.
  - If recording of session is available, go back and listen to it as often as needed.
- Form a study group.
  - Meet with others at your organization that are taking the exam; or
  - Form an online or phone study group.



# Appendix A: Sample Cont.

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- Agree on regular meeting times for study.
  - Pick a topic and discuss it thoroughly at each study group session.
- Ask your training provider if they have a study group.
- Ask experts at your organization to discuss topics or answer questions.

## **Tips to establish an individual study plan:**

- Consider your current activities.
  - When is time available to study?
- Set aside study time of an hour or more as often as possible
  - Pressed for time? Even 15 – 20 minutes set aside regularly can be beneficial to preparing for the exam.
- Mark off study time on your calendar.
  - Block your calendar at that time.
  - Make study time a priority.
- Determine goals for what you will accomplish each week or month.
  - Frequency may depend on when you begin your studies.
- Plot your course by adding specific subject areas to cover each day.
  - Use this as a checkpoint to ensure that you do not fall behind.
- Stick to your schedule.
  - If you fall behind, catch up at night or on weekends, etc.
  - Cramming last minute for the NCP exam does not generally yield positive results.



# Appendix B: General Tips

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## **Prior to the Exam:**

- Register for the test as early as possible with ECCHO.
  - Exam registrants receive study aids from ECCHO upon registration.
- Spend time working through study topics and scenarios.
- Read and re-read Question of the Day, P.R.E.P. Guide and other resources for several weeks before your scheduled test date.
- Take an exam prep training course.
- Study a little every day to give your mind time to absorb the material.
- Depending upon your learning style, the day before the exam:
  - Relax to give your mind a break to be refreshed and ready on test day, OR
  - Take the day away from work to concentrate on reviewing notes as final study before the exam.
- Carry your study aids with you. If you are struggling with terminology or facts, make flashcards and keep them in your pocket.
  - Review while you are standing in line, on train or plane, or waiting for class.
- Put together a study group. If you know other people who are preparing for the same test, get together for study time.
  - Participants may be able to explain things others in the group don't understand.

## **Night before Exam appointment:**

- Get a good night's sleep the evening before the exam.
- Eat a healthy, protein-rich breakfast the morning of your exam.
- Arrive at the provider's testing facility 30 minutes early. Or if testing via OnVue Online, log in 30 mins before to perform system testing prior to exam appointment.
- Plan ahead to set up your room if taking the exam virtually (to avoid interruptions on test date)
- Plan for traffic or other delays.
- Relax your mind before the test begins.
- Take a deep breath – GOOD LUCK!

## **You can do it!**



# Appendix B: General Tips *Cont.*

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## **During the test:**

- Testing Center Proctor is there to assist!
  - Ask proctor to resolve any issues with desk, chair, computer, etc.
- Read the exam instructions carefully.
  - Know how to use the keyboard and special keys.
  - Ask for assistance if anything is unclear.
- Read each question carefully, paying attention to details.
  - Then read all four possible answers.
  - Go back and read the question again before answering.
- Don't get distracted by other testers in the room .
  - Wear the earplugs provided by the testing center if needed.
- Begin by answering the questions that you know.
  - Skip ones you don't and "mark" them to come back and answer later.
- Don't know a question? Eliminate the answers that cannot be correct resulting in fewer choices.
- For difficult questions, use paper & pencil to draw it out to assist in understanding.
- Be careful not to spend too much time on any one question.
  - If needed, mark it for later review, move on and come back to it at the end.
  - Pay attention to time passing in relation to the time allotment.
- Don't second guess yourself by changing answers unless you are 100% certain.
- Don't fall into the trap of looking for patterns in the answers.
  - NCP exam questions are randomized each year so there isn't any pattern.
- When you are finished, ensure you have answered all questions before clicking on the option to end and complete your test.
- After the test, CELEBRATE!
  - Go out and do something enjoyable.
  - Treat yourself to a favorite meal or other activity.
  - Celebrate your accomplishment of studying for and taking a national certification exam!





# Your guidance can pave the way to success!

Thank you for supporting the future of the NCP program and the development of expert check professionals.

If you have any questions during your NCP Guide journey, please email [ncp@theclearinghouse.org](mailto:ncp@theclearinghouse.org) or call 214-273-3218.