



APPLIED MEASUREMENT PROFESSIONALS, INC.

Advanced Oncology Certified Clinical Nurse Specialist (AOCNS[®]) Role Delineation Study Final Report

Conducted for the
Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify the responsibilities of Advanced Oncology Certified Clinical Nurse Specialist (AOCNS[®]) professionals as a first step in the continuing development of job-related certification examinations. The Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation (ONCC) requested the services of Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc. (AMP) to design and conduct a study which would provide the support necessary to develop specifications upon which content valid certification examinations could be built. The ONCC identified the need to ensure that the examination specifications would be representative of advanced practice nurses in oncology, and specifically appropriate to the practice of Clinical Nurse Specialists.

This study was conducted in concert with the Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse Practitioner (AOCNP[®]) role delineation study. The online survey created for the role delineation study (RDS) was identical for both the Nurse Practitioner (NP) role and the Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) role. After data collection, the analyses were considered and evaluated separately for the two roles, to allow for a determination of whether there existed a common role for advanced practice nurses in oncology, or separate and distinct roles for NPs and CNSs.

The ONCC Advanced Oncology Role Delineation Advisory Committee (AC), which included a balance of NPs and CNSs, worked to conduct the activities necessary to identify advanced oncology nurses' responsibilities and develop examination specifications. The diversity of this group was reflective of the specialty areas within advanced oncology nursing, and all committee members had demonstrated expertise in their respective areas of specialization.

The study involved development of a role delineation survey, distribution of that survey to practitioners, and an analysis of the responses, both together for all advanced practice nurses and separately by role (i.e., NP and CNS). Examination specifications for the advanced oncology nurse, separately by role, were developed on the basis of these data.

The AC met January 29 and 30, 2009 to initiate the following six tasks:

1. Identify the target practitioner the test is designed to assess.
2. Develop and organize a listing of job activities and tasks to be included in the final practice analysis survey.
3. Develop and organize a listing of knowledge statements to be included in the final practice analysis survey.
4. Determine an appropriate sample and sampling plan for the practice analysis survey.
5. Develop the set of demographic questions to be included in the survey, such that this information can be summarized to describe the respondent group and form subgroups for further analysis to support the appropriateness of the results.
6. Discuss how the knowledge statements will be used to create examination specifications and the role that tasks statements will play in creating those specifications.

A total of 2,610 e-mails containing a link to the online role delineation survey were sent to oncology nurses in advanced practice. After adjusting for undeliverable addresses and other invalid responses, the 897 usable responses represented a return rate of approximately 35.34%. The responses to the demographic questions indicated that there were sufficient numbers of respondents in relevant groups for subsequent analysis. Approximately 99% of the CNS respondents indicated that the list of knowledge statements at least adequately covered the knowledge required to perform critical tasks required of an Advanced Oncology Certified Clinical Nurse Specialist (AOCNS®). In addition, 99% of the CNS respondents indicated that the list of task statements at least adequately covered the critical tasks required of an (AOCNS®). Respondents used all rating scales with an acceptable level of reliability.

A second meeting of the AC was held on June 18 and 19, 2009, during which decision rules were adopted and used to determine which knowledge and task statements were appropriate for assessment, and therefore for inclusion in the final detailed content outline. Application of the decision rules resulted in retention of 81 knowledge and 97 task statements. The statements were grouped within eleven domains of practice, using the same domain headings as used on the survey. The AC established the percentage of items within each domain that would be reasonable to allow sampling of an oncology CNS's competence related to the domain. It was determined that a total of 150 scored multiple-choice items would be sufficient to assess the knowledge required for safe practice as an advanced practice oncology clinical nurse specialist. Following adoption by the ONCC Board, the examination specifications will begin to be used to create examination forms for the AOCNS® (Advanced Oncology Certified Clinical Nurse Specialist) credential.