



The Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation (ONCC) offers certification in both adult and pediatric oncology nursing. The OCN® (Oncology Certified Nurse) credential is the basic certification focusing on adult care. The CPON® (Certified Pediatric Oncology Nurse) credential signifies a nurse has attained basic certification in pediatric oncology care.

Within advanced oncology certification, ONCC now offers three credentials, including AOCNP (Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse Practitioner), AOCNS (Advanced Oncology Certified Clinical Nurse Specialist), and AOCN® (Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse).

Beginning in January 2005, ONCC will offer two advanced certification examinations: the AOCNP and the AOCNS Examination. Eligibility criteria for both examinations are described in this brochure. Nurses who are currently AOCN®-certified, and who wish to maintain that certification, may renew their AOCN® credential through the Oncology Nursing Certification Points Renewal Option (ONC-PRO). AOCN® Examinations will not be offered after 2004.

Why is ONCC offering two advanced certification examinations?

In 2003, ONCC conducted a role delineation study of oncology advanced practice nurses. The results of this study indicated that, although there is a substantial core of knowledge important to both clinical nurse specialists and nurse practitioners in oncology, there are discernable differences in the work responsibilities of oncology clinical nurse specialists and oncology nurse practitioners. Two examinations are needed in order to accurately reflect current advanced practice nursing in oncology.

Are there different eligibility criteria for the AOCNP and AOCNS Examinations?

Yes. Nurses who wish to take the AOCNP (Oncology Nurse Practitioner) Examination must have:

- Current, active, unrestricted RN license at the time of application and examination; and
- Master's or higher degree in nursing from an accredited institution; and
- Successful completion of an accredited nurse practitioner program; and
- Minimum of 500 hours of supervised clinical practice as an oncology nurse practitioner. These hours may be obtained within the nurse practitioner program or following graduation from the program.

Nurses who wish to take the AOCNS (Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist) Examination must have:

- Current, active, unrestricted RN license at the time of application and examination; and
- Master's or higher degree in nursing from an accredited institution; and
- Minimum of 500 hours of supervised practice in an advanced practice role in oncology nursing. These hours may have been obtained within the graduate educational program or following graduation from the program.

Can a nurse who is certified as an AOCN® use the AOCNP or AOCNS credential?

No. In order to attain AOCNP or AOCNS certification, a nurse must meet the eligibility criteria and pass the respective certification test. AOCN®-certified nurses may not use the AOCNP or AOCNS credentials without passing the test, regardless of his/her practice role.

What options does an AOCN®-certified nurse have for maintaining advanced certification?

Nurses who are currently AOCN®-certified may continue to renew their AOCN® credential by using ONC-PRO. Or, AOCN®-certified nurses may attain AOCNP or AOCNS certification by passing the respective certification test. AOCN®-certified nurses who wish to take the AOCNP or AOCNS test must meet all eligibility criteria and will be considered initial certification candidates.

Can an advanced practice nurse who is not a nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist attain advanced certification in oncology nursing?

Yes, provided he/she meets the eligibility criteria. The eligibility criteria for the AOCNS Examination requires an RN license, a master's degree in nursing, and 500 hours of supervised practice in an advanced practice role in oncology. Many advanced practice nurses in oncology administration, education, or research will meet this criteria. However, the AOCNP Examination specifically requires 500 hours of clinical practice as an oncology nurse practitioner, and completion of a nurse practitioner program, in addition to the master's degree and RN license.

Will documentation of supervised practice be required?

Yes. Both AOCNP and AOCNS candidates will be required to submit a verification form with their certification application. This form will require the signature of a faculty member or supervisor who can verify completion of supervised practice.



What will be the format of the AOCNP and AOCNS Examinations?

Both examinations will contain 225 multiple-choice questions. Of these, 175 will count toward the candidate's score on the examination, and 50 will be pretest items that do not count toward the candidate's score. Both examinations will be offered by computer-based testing during quarterly test dates. In addition, a paper/pencil AOCNP and AOCNS Examination will be offered in the spring of 2005 and 2007, prior to the Oncology Nursing Society Annual Congress and at specially arranged international test sites outside North America, provided there are sufficient registrants.

How long is advanced certification valid?

All ONCC certifications are valid for four years.

How will the content of the AOCNS and AOCNP Examinations differ?

Because oncology clinical nurse specialists and oncology nurse practitioners share a core knowledge base, there will be overlap in the knowledge tested on each of the examinations. The weighting of the content areas will be significantly different on the AOCNP and AOCNS Examinations, based on the results of the most recent role delineation study of advanced oncology nursing practice. Content outlines for each examination can be found on the ONCC website at www.oncc.org.

Where can I find information about the AOCNP and AOCNS Examinations?

AOCNP and AOCNS test blueprints are available on the ONCC website (www.oncc.org). Complete information about AOCNP and AOCNS certification, including eligibility criteria, test dates, test blueprints, reference lists, and application materials will be published in the *2005 Oncology Nursing Certification Bulletin*, which will be available in late summer 2004.

Options in Advanced Oncology Nursing Certification

AOCNS • AOCNP • AOCN®

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