



Certification Examination

C-ONQS

Obstetric
and Neonatal
Quality
and Safety



C-ONQS EXAMINATION REGISTRATION CATALOG

Recognition, Value, Expertise...

It is what certification is all about!



ABOUT CERTIFICATION

Certification is a process to validate, based upon predetermined standards, a professional's knowledge for safe and effective practice in a specialty or defined subspecialty. The National Certification Corporation™ (NCC) believes that what makes a credentialed health care provider different is the willingness of the individual to be accountable for their knowledge and to take the risk of undergoing a third-party review of their knowledge. **Professionals, who hold an NCC specialty or subspecialty certification, make a difference in the lives of their patients. They are unique professionals who have made the commitment to lifelong learning, patient advocacy and professional practice.**

Over 228,000 health care professionals have been certified in Neonatal, Antepartum, Obstetric, Gynecologic and Women's Health through the National Certification Corporation, demonstrating an ongoing commitment to practice. Core certifications for the registered nurse (RNC) validate to patients, families, peers, employers and the public, the RN's specialty knowledge of nursing care of the hospitalized patient. Core certification for the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse validates readiness to provide core knowledge-based care to critically ill neonates (NNP-BC®) or to women with needs in the Obstetric, Gynecologic and Primary Care areas (WHNP-BC®). Subspecialty certifications (C-EFM®, C-NPT®, C-NNIC, C-ONQS, C-OBE, C-RHI, and C-ELBW) validate the special knowledge and experience required in these focused areas of specialty practice.

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C-ONQS
EXAMINATION
REGISTRATION
CATALOG

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA > C-ONQS

Obstetric and Neonatal
Quality and Safety

**All eligibility criteria must be met
at the time of application**

CURRENT LICENSURE

Current/active/unencumbered licensure in the U.S. or Canada as a physician (MD/DO), registered nurse, advanced practice registered nurse (NP, CNS or CNM), certified midwife, physician assistant, licensed social worker or respiratory therapist is required. Candidates will need to upload their license or a print out of the verification of their license that includes their name, license number, licensing state or province, type of license and the date the license expires.

PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

No practice experience is required, but it is recommended that you have expertise in quality improvement and safety practices with a focus in obstetric and neonatal specialties, for the best possibility of successfully completing the credentialing process.



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RESOURCES

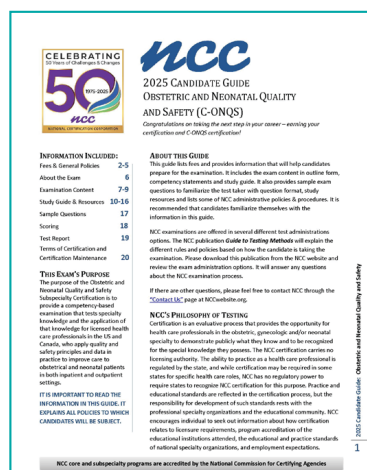
NCC Exam Candidates

Please download and review the below guides before registering for an NCC certification exam.

Candidate Guide

Select the Candidate Guide specific to your specialty. Each Candidate Guide includes the exam content outline, competency statements and study guide. It also provides sample exam questions, study resources and list some NCC administrative policies and procedures.

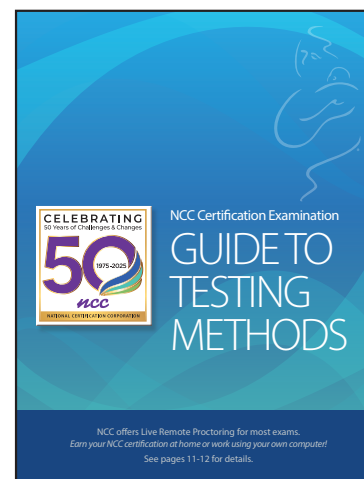
- » Request a verification
- » Download exam catalogs
- » Download maintenance catalogs
- » Download candidate guides
- » See the latest NCC news
- » Public Awareness Campaigns
- » Maintenance Due Date Changes



Testing Guide

The Testing Guide explains the rules, policies and procedures for the various test administration options and includes:

- Scheduling Your Exam
- Admission to the Test Site
- Restrictions and Security
- What to Expect
- Results Notification
- What Happens if You Cannot Take the Test



These Guides are accessible from the NCC website at any time. Registration or approval is not required to access this information.



C-ONQS EXAMINATION REGISTRATION CATALOG

Group Fee Payments

NCC will accept group payments for certification exams from institutions. Details are on the NCC website.

FEES

All fees are
non-refundable

Examination Fees

- All applications are subject to a non-refundable application fee.
- All fees are non-refundable except where otherwise noted.
- Payments can be made by credit card (Visa, American Express and MasterCard only).
- Payments can be made by check: bank routing number and account number required.
- For payments made by third parties, any refund will be issued to the third party and not to the applicant.
- All payments must be in US funds.
- NCC does not accept debit cards or split payments (part check and part credit card).
- Exam fees can be submitted only online at the NCC website. Applications will not be accepted by mail, phone or fax.



\$210

COMPUTER EXAM FEES

The above fee includes the non-refundable \$50 application fee.

Note: Applicants determined ineligible (for any reason) will not be refunded the \$50 application fee.

Other Non-refundable Payment Related Fees

Incomplete
Application Fee



All incomplete applications are subject to a non-refundable \$30 reprocessing fee upon the submission of proper documentation. See page 9 for more information.

License
Verification



If licensure information is requested requiring an additional submission, the candidate will have two weeks to provide the license with all the correct information and pay the non-refundable \$30 reprocessing fee. If this is not provided within the two weeks, the application will be marked ineligible. Ineligible applicants will receive a refund minus the \$50.00 non-refundable application fee. There are no refunds or withdrawals for applications using a bulk code.

Returned Checks
and Credit Card
Chargeback



A \$30 fee will be assessed for any check or e-check returned or a credit card payment disputed for any reason. Remittance thereafter of all fees and applications must be in the form requested by NCC.



C-ONQS EXAMINATION REGISTRATION CATALOG



Computer exam candidates can change their scheduled testing date to another date within their window **once for free**.

Candidates may do this from within their NCC account or handle directly with PSI. Refer to NCC Testing Guide for details.

FEES

All fees are
non-refundable

Other Exam Related Fees

Change Request*



Candidates who cannot take their currently scheduled examination, have missed their testing date or need to take a different exam - can request a change for a fee of \$125.
- see page 10 for details.

Withdrawal Fees



A computer testing candidate who withdraws from testing is subject to a \$105 withdrawal fee plus any outstanding charges.
- see page 11 for details.

Retest Fees



Retest candidates must pay full application and examination fees. There are no discounts and they must complete a 45-day wait period* before resubmitting an application for testing.

**See Retest Policy page 9*

Refunds

Ineligible Computer Testing Applicants

will receive a refund of \$160 minus any outstanding charges. (\$210 computer exam fee, less the non-refundable \$50 application fee.)

No refunds

will be issued for the following circumstances:

- Any candidate that is not successful in achieving certification
- For candidates who failed to take the exam via computer within their 90-day testing window and did not submit a change request within stated time frames
- Any candidate who is beyond the first 30 days of their eligibility window and is unable to schedule their exam within their eligibility window



C-ONQS EXAMINATION REGISTRATION CATALOG

STEPS TO REGISTER

HOW TO REGISTER TO TAKE NCC EXAM BY COMPUTER



Certification exams

[Learn more »](#)

[Apply for exam](#)

STEP

1

Are you eligible?

Determine your eligibility - see page 3

STEP

2

Submitting your application

Submit your application online at the NCC website [NCCwebsite.org](https://nccwebsite.org).

Applications can only be submitted online. You cannot submit an application by mail, telephone or fax. Payment must be made online by credit card or check. Individual or group payments can be made.

STEP

3

What information does the application require?

To get prepared to complete the application - see the application check list on the next page. It is a handy listing of all the information you will need to supply.

STEP

4

Email confirmation of your registration

After completing and submitting the application, you will receive an email confirmation within 30 minutes. **This will be the ONLY confirmation notice you will receive for your application. If you do not receive it, please make sure the email in your profile is accurate and check your email folders.**

STEP

5

Application approval procedure

The application will be reviewed to determine qualification to take the examination. This process can take up to two weeks, depending on the volume of applications received at the time of submission. If the application is incomplete, see page 10 to learn how to resubmit the application and what fees will need to be paid.

STEP

6

Notification of eligibility to take the exam

Once the application is approved, an examination eligibility letter with instructions to setup your test appointment will be sent **via email and available in your NCC account**. You are required to schedule a test appointment within the first 30 days of your eligibility window for a time that is within your 90-day eligibility window (see eligibility letter).

Please note, that if you did not schedule your exam within 30 days of being approved to test, you may be unable to obtain a testing date within your window and will have to pay a change fee to change your 90-day eligibility window.

NCC is not responsible for lost or misdirected email. **Please make sure the email in your profile is accurate and check your account 5-7 days after you have registered** to ensure your application was complete and additional information is not needed. If you do not receive your examination eligibility letter within 2 weeks of your examination application submission confirmation, use the "Contact Us" link on [NCCwebsite.org](https://nccwebsite.org) and select "Application I already submitted" from the drop down menu, to inform NCC.



APPLICATION CHECK LIST

Before filing your application look over the below check list and gather the information needed to complete it.

☐**PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

You have your complete contact information including, address, phone and email.

☐**ELIGIBILITY:**

You have read the eligibility requirements and are eligible to take this exam.

☐**LICENSURE:**

You have your license or a verification of your license that includes your name, license number, licensing state or province, type of license and the date the license expires in a format that is ready to be uploaded with your application.

☐**APPLICATION AGREEMENT:**

Demonstration of your agreement to abide by NCC policies through a check off box procedure is required. By checking the designated box, this is deemed as equivalent to providing your signature. Applications cannot be submitted without the below agreement being stipulated.

I have read the policies on this website and in the Registration Catalog, the Candidate & Testing Methods Guides and understand that I will be subject to them. To the best of my knowledge, I certify that all information contained in this application is complete and correct. I understand and agree that any knowingly false information provided by me or others may result in denial or revocation of my certification. I understand that my application may be subject to audit for verification of the information provided and I authorize NCC to make contact with individuals listed for this purpose.



ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Incomplete Application Processing

Incomplete applications are defined as:

- missing or incomplete information
- incorrect information
- **lack of licensure with all required information, including expiration date**
- inadequate fees (*Returned Checks, Credit Card Declines or Credit Card Chargebacks*)
- any reason resulting in an inability to determine candidate eligibility status

Incomplete applications will be returned with instructions on how to upload the missing information and provide the required non-refundable \$30 reprocessing fee. Upon resubmission, applications that do not include this fee or do not adequately address the identified deficiencies will be declared ineligible. All filing deadlines will apply.

Retest Policy

Retest candidates must submit a new application, meet the then current eligibility criteria and pay all applicable fees. NCC does not limit the number of times a candidate can retake an NCC examination; however, the maximum number of times a candidate can take an NCC exam in any given calendar year is two. Retest candidates will be assigned a different form of the examination. **All retest candidates must wait 45 days from the date they took their exam before they can submit a new application to retest.**

- this date is provided in the candidate's results notification
- this 45-day wait period affects all modes of testing

Any loss of power or internet during an exam in which there was more than 15 minutes of testing with exposure to more than 10% of the exam requires a retest after 45 days. There is no need to complete a new application but you will need to notify NCC to move your eligibility window so it begins 45 days after the exam attempt. Please notify NCC immediately if this occurs so that a new window can be set.

If a retest application is submitted prior to the 45-day wait period, the application will be returned as ineligible. The applicant will be subject to the \$50 non-refundable application fee.

All policies and procedures are subject to change without notice



ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Change your Testing Date, Method of Testing or Exam Category

Candidates who cannot take their currently scheduled examination, have missed their testing date or need to take a different exam - can request a change. Candidates may request to change their examination category, reschedule their testing date or even change their method of testing, provided that they meet the requirements listed below. **Candidates are only allowed one change option** (ex. if you reschedule your examination date, you will not be able to change your examination category).

All change requests must be approved by NCC and you may be required to provide additional information. **There will be no refund of original fees or Change Request fees.** Candidates who fail to take the examination under this change option must re-apply with full fees.

Computer exam candidates can change their scheduled testing date to another date within their window **once for free**. Refer to NCC Testing Guide for details.

All candidates requesting a change **MUST:**

- Submit the change request within one calendar year from the first date of their original assigned eligibility window.
- Cancel their exam date with PSI (if they have one scheduled), before submitting a change. Scheduled exams may also be canceled using the "Schedule or Launch exam" link in your account.
- Use the NCC website online Change Request Form (*changes requested in any other format, will not be accepted*).
- Submit a non-refundable fee of \$125 with the Change Request Form.

To change examination category:

- Eligibility must be re-established for the new exam category, and additional documentation and fees may be required.
- The time to consider eligibility for the new category will count toward the original assigned 90-day computer testing window.
- **Examinees must take the exam for which they have been determined eligible. No changes will be permitted on examination day.** If a candidate knowingly or unknowingly takes an examination other than they were found eligible to take, the examination will not be scored. No refunds will be allowed, and all fee policies will apply if the candidate reapplies for an examination.
- Examination category cannot be changed from a subspecialty or RN Core application to a NNP or WHNP certification. Candidates who registered for an RN Core exam or subspecialty exam and need to change to NNP or WHNP will have to submit an exam withdrawal for a partial refund and complete the full registration for one of these APRN certification exams.
- Candidates must submit their request at least 30 days prior to the end of their testing window.



ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Withdrawal Policy - Computer Testing

- Only the applicant/candidate can withdraw from the examination process.
- Candidates withdrawing from a ONQS Certification exam will receive a \$105 refund of their \$210 payment.
- All withdrawal requests must be submitted online at the **NCC website** **BEFORE the final day of the assigned testing window** and provided that:
 - > the candidate has not made an appointment to take the exam at a PSI center or
 - > if the candidate has made an appointment with PSI, it must be cancelled no later than four business days prior to the scheduled testing date.
- A withdrawal request cannot be submitted on the last day of the eligibility window.
- No refund will be considered after the original eligibility window expires.

Withdrawal Policy - Bulk Purchase Voucher

Withdrawals are not allowed. Once the candidate is determined eligible for the exam, withdrawal from the process will not be allowed.

Substitution Policy

Candidate substitutions are not allowed for any reason.

Score Cancellation

NCC reserves the right to cancel test scores when there is reason to believe that scores are invalid. Proof of misconduct is not required to cancel scores.

Auditing Applications

All applications are subject to audit and individual applicants may have to provide corroborating documentation of practice time on demand or supervisors may be individually contacted for verification. By submitting an application, the applicant agrees to be subject to these rules.

All policies and procedures are subject to change without notice



GENERAL POLICIES

How Exams are Scored

NCC examinations are criterion referenced. This means the passing score is based on predetermined criteria. The passing score is established by the NCC Board of Directors.

NCC utilizes the item response theory of psychometrics for the analysis of its examinations. Item Response Theory (Rasch analysis) is the study of tests and item scores based on assumptions concerning the mathematical relationship between abilities and item responses. Each test item has a difficulty and ability level. The higher the difficulty of an item, the greater the ability score one achieves. Pass/fail is determined based on the number of questions answered correctly. As a question is answered correctly, the ability score is increased and it decreases when a question is answered incorrectly. The difficulty of the examination determines the actual number of questions that must be answered correctly in order to achieve the passing ability level.

Because more than one form of the examination is given, a process called equating is used. This procedure converts all results to a common scale. Someone who takes a slightly more difficult form of the examination will need to answer fewer questions correctly than someone who takes a slightly easier form of the examination.

Test result reports will identify pass/fail status and give feedback on the various content areas of the exam in the form of word descriptors: very weak, weak, average, strong, very strong. Pass/fail rates for previous NCC exams can be viewed on the NCC website, NCCwebsite.org.

Retention of Computer Answer Strings

Computer answer strings are kept for at least one year from the date of the examination.

Test Disclosure

NCC does not make test questions available for review. Because test questions may be used for more than one examination administration, distributing this information would compromise the security of the test questions and would increase the cost of certification if the questions had to be replaced each year.

All policies and procedures are subject to change without notice



C-ONQS EXAMINATION REGISTRATION CATALOG

Designation Authorization

Certification is a non-transferable, revocable, limited, non-exclusive license to use the certification designation "C-ONQS", subject to compliance with the policies and procedures, as may be revised from time to time.

Any use or display of NCC certification marks and/or logos without the prior written permission of the NCC is prohibited. Any candidate or certificant who manufactures, modifies, reproduces, distributes or uses a fraudulent or otherwise unauthorized NCC certificate, NCC designation or other credential may be subject to disciplinary action, including denial or revocation of eligibility or certification. Any individual who engages in such behavior also may be subject to legal action.

GENERAL POLICIES

ADA and Nondiscrimination Policies

It is the policy of NCC that no individual will be excluded from the examinations as a result of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status or gender identity.

Any requests for special testing accommodations pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act must be made in writing and submitted with the application. The accommodation request form can be downloaded from the NCC website. Upon receipt of a request for special accommodations, NCC will review the application and contact the applicant by email. Such requests must be signed by a clinician, physician, or other qualified specialist with training and experience appropriate to diagnose and treat the specified disability.

Appeals Procedure

Any request to waive any policy of the NCC Board of Directors relative to eligibility, administration, examination content issues, or certification maintenance must be received in writing within 60 days of the dispute. All requests should be sent to the attention of the NCC president at nccpresident@nccnet.org. The correspondence should contain a detailed account as to why the NCC policy should be waived or the candidate's status should be changed. Such requests are referred to the NCC Policy Review Committee of the Board of Directors. All decisions will be provided in writing. Cases not resolved by the Policy Review Committee will be referred to the full Board of Directors.

Revocation

Your certification may be revoked for falsifying any information submitted to determine eligibility to take the certification examination or for maintaining certification, for losing your license to practice, or for failing to pay designated certification or maintenance fees.

All policies and procedures are subject to change without notice



C-ONQS EXAMINATION REGISTRATION CATALOG

For further details, visit the NCC website NCCwebsite.org and download the maintenance catalog for a full description of the maintenance process. Click on **Maintain your Certification** on the home page.



**Maintain your
certification**

[Learn more »](#)

Submit application

- » [Request a verification](#)
- » [Download exam catalogs](#)
- » [Download maintenance catalogs](#)
- » [See the latest NCC news](#)

GENERAL POLICIES

Maintaining Your Certification

The NCC Maintenance Program requires professionals to maintain their certification every three years. The purpose of the maintenance program is to insure that each certified individual maintains their specialty knowledge competencies over time through continuing education.

Those maintaining certification must earn continuing education in the specified specialty area. Each certified professional is required to complete a maintenance application and pay a maintenance fee in addition to documentation of the appropriate continuing education activities. Individuals who allow their certification to lapse can regain their status only through re-examination. If that occurs, the then current examination eligibility criteria will need to be met.

NCC randomly audits maintenance applications. If you are chosen for audit you will be required to upload an electronic CE certificate and a description of the CE earned. These records should be maintained during each maintenance cycle until your maintenance application has been approved.

Verification of Your Credential

A third party verification of the newly held certification must be processed by request through the NCC website. Click on **Request a Verification** on the home page.

A verification cannot be requested until official results with score report have been uploaded to your NCC account.

NCC cannot verify certification until after certification is achieved.

There is a \$30 charge for each request. Verifications are sent instantaneously via email to the designated party. Verifications include original date of certification, maintenance due date, certification specialty and NCC President's signature and the NCC corporate seal. An email address is needed to use the process. NCC has listed on the website email addresses of the state boards of nursing who have provided them.

All policies and procedures are subject to change without notice



C-ONQS EXAMINATION REGISTRATION CATALOG

How to Study

NCC does not provide review courses or study materials for the examination. NCC views the examinations as an evaluative process. NCC believes your practice experience is your best preparation. Candidates can review detailed test outlines and suggested resources in the Candidate Guide.

CONTENT OUTLINE FOR C-ONQS EXAM

QUALITY AND SAFETY ASSESSMENT AND GAP ANALYSIS (21%)

- Methods to assess organization, institutional and environmental culture and patient experience
- National Quality and Safety standards and clinical guidelines
- Quality and Safety metrics to identify state of performance, gaps and opportunities

INTEGRATE QUALITY AND SAFETY IN PRACTICE (21%)

- Quality and Safety aims, tools, checklists and communication strategies
- Team function, leadership, empowerment
- Training exercises, learning principles, mock codes and simulation
- Advocating for ongoing resources, risk assessment
- Inform and disseminate outcome data, benchmarking and transparency

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT QUALITY AND SAFETY INTO PRACTICE (25%)

- Selecting and monitoring key quality metrics
- Identify population, measures and data collection
- Integration into workflow, error prevention strategies and auditing

EVALUATION AND MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS (23%)

- Tools of evaluation (Fishbone, flow chart, run chart, control charts)
- Evaluate the balance between quality, outcomes and cost
- Strategies for sustainment and positive change

PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES (10%)

- Adverse events, disclosure, transparency, patient trust and mitigation
- Professionalism and ethical principles

NCC has no input into any certification preparation endeavor. You should carefully review any certification preparation opportunities before participating.

Nurse Builders

Offers exam prep review e-courses, practice question books and study guides for RNC (NIC, LRN, MNN, IAP, OB) and C-ELBW, C-ONQS and C-EFM.

www.nursebuilders.net

Obstetric and Neonatal Quality and Safety Review Program

<https://my.awhonn.org/productdetails?id=a1BVO00000AGfXi2AL>

Perinatal Quality and Safety Resources C-ONQS Study Guide Book

www.obneonatalstudyguide.com/the-study-guide

NCC has no involvement in the development of these courses.



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ABOUT NCC



The National Certification Corporation™ (NCC) is a not for profit organization that provides a national certification program for nurses, physicians, and other licensed health care professionals. Certification is awarded to nurses and advanced practice nurses in the antepartum, obstetric, gynecologic and neonatal specialties. Multidisciplinary subspecialty certifications are awarded for Electronic Fetal Monitoring, Neonatal Pediatric Transport, Obstetric and Neonatal Quality and Safety, Care of the Extremely Low Birth Weight Neonate, Neonatal Neuro-Intensive Care, Obstetric Emergencies, and Reproductive Health and Infertility.

Since its inception in 1975, NCC has awarded certifications to more than 228,000 licensed health care professionals.

NCC'S PHILOSOPHY OF CERTIFICATION

Certification is an evaluative process that provides health care professionals in women's health, obstetric, gynecologic, and neonatal specialties the opportunity to demonstrate publicly what they know and to be recognized for the knowledge they possess. As a voluntary process, the NCC certification and subspecialty examinations are designed to test for special knowledge.

The NCC credential carries no licensing authority. The ability to practice is regulated by the relevant state boards of licensure and while certification may be required in some states, NCC has no regulatory power to require states to recognize certification for this purpose. Practice and educational standards are reflected in the certification process but the responsibility for development of such standards rests with the professional specialty organizations and the education community.

NCC encourages individuals to seek out information about how certification relates to state licensure requirements, program accreditation of the educational institutions attended, the educational and practice standards of the relevant national specialty organizations and employment expectations in their community. Contact with state boards of licensure, universities and colleges, professional specialty organizations and individual employers for specific requirements is highly recommended.

NCCA & ABSNC Accreditation

NCC nurse and subspecialty certification programs are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

NCC nurse practitioner certification programs are accredited by both the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC) and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).