

2020
REGISTRATION CATALOG



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 his/her 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 175,000 health care professionals have been certified in Neonatal, 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, and C-ELBW) validate the special knowledge and experience required in these focused areas of specialty practice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- About Introductory Exam Phases 3
- Eligibility Criteria..... 4
- Resources for Exam Candidates..... 5
- Fees 6-7
- Steps to Register for Computer Testing..... 8
- Application Checklist 9
- Administrative Policies..... 10-12
- General Policies 13-15
- Content Outline for Exams..... 16
- About NCC..... 17
- ICP Program 18



ABOUT INTRODUCTORY EXAM PHASES

This new exam will be introduced in two phases. (time frames)

The exam delivered during each phase has delayed scoring until a minimum of 100 candidates have completed the exam. **Due to a delay in the score, those who participate in phase I and II testing will be eligible for NCCs Second Chance Free promotion.** See the details on the NCC website.

Phase I: Introductory examination period begins with registration on June 1, 2020, and testing beginning July 1, 2020. The introductory phase registration period begins on June 1, 2020 and is open until July 31, 2020. Testing windows will open on July 1, 2020 and will remain open until September 30, 2020. Testing during phase I must occur during this time frame. Candidates who register in June will have a 90-day testing window. Those who register in July will have a 60-day testing window. The testing window will close after September 30, 2020. Any candidate who registers after July 31, 2020, will be put into the phase II testing window with an eligibility window starting on November 1, 2020.

Phase II: Second Introductory examination phase begins with registration on August 1, 2020, and testing beginning on November 1, 2020. The Second examination phase will include a registration period from August 1, 2020, through October 31, 2020, followed by a 90-day testing window that begins November 1, 2020. Testing during phase II must occur during this time frame. Any candidate who registers after October 31, 2020, will not be part of the phase II trial and will be put into the open testing window with an eligibility window starting on March 1, 2021. Please note the testing window is delayed.

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 or DO), registered nurse, advanced practice registered nurse (NNP, CNS or CNM), certified midwife, physician assistant, or respiratory therapist. 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.

RESOURCES

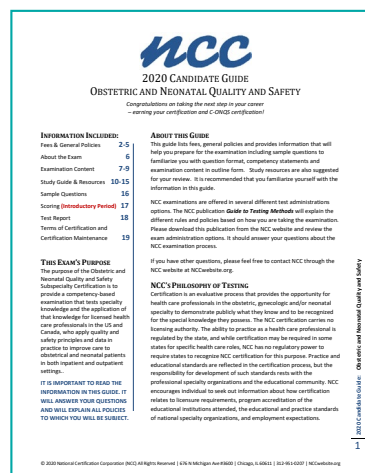
NCC Exam Candidates

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

Candidate Guide

Select the Candidate Guide specific to your specialty. The Candidate Guide details all NCC policies & procedure, includes test outlines & competency statements, provides sample exam questions and lists study resources.

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

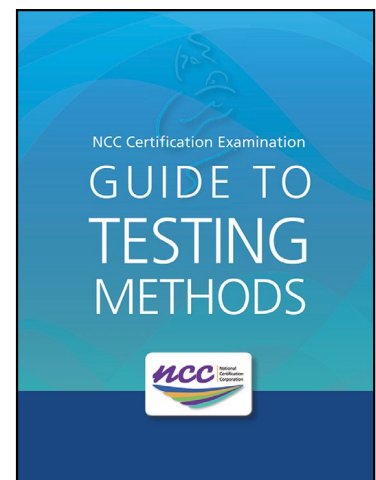


Testing Guide

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.



FEES

All fees are non-refundable



\$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.

Group Fee Payments

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

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 reimbursement 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.

Other Non-refundable Payment Related Fees

Incomplete Application Fee



All incomplete applications (those applications submitted with missing information, containing incomplete or incorrect information, missing required licensure information and upload, or do not include full fee payment) are subject to a non-refundable \$30 reprocessing fee upon the submission of proper documentation.

License Verification Fee



If licensure information is requested requiring an additional submission the candidate will have 2 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, NCC will attempt to verify the license and a \$50 verification fee will be added to your account as arrears placing a hold on your account until it is paid. If NCC is unable to verify the license, you will be found ineligible and you will be refunded your registration fee minus \$100 (\$50 non-refundable application fee and \$50 non-refundable license verification fee).

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.

FEES

All fees are
non-refundable



Computer exam candidates can change their scheduled testing date to another date within their window **once for free**. Candidates must handle this directly with PSI/AMP. Refer to NCC Testing Guide for details

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 90-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.)

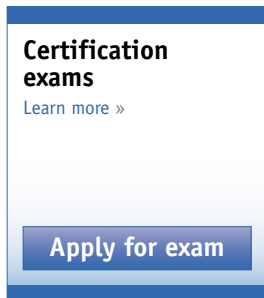
No refunds

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

STEPS TO REGISTER

HOW TO REGISTER TO TAKE NCC EXAM BY COMPUTER



- 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. 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 will be sent **via email** with instructions on how to schedule your testing appointment. You are required to schedule the appointment date within the first 30 days of your eligibility window for a time that is within the start and end dates of 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.** 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 and select "Application I already submitted" from the drop down menu, to inform NCC.

APPLICATION CHECK LIST

Before you file your application look over the below check list and gather the information needed for your application.

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

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 print out of the 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
- missing license with all required information
- 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 and the candidate will need to resubmit with an additional 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.

If the requested documentation is a license verification and is not provided within the additional submission time frame given, NCC will attempt to verify your license and you will be charged a \$50 verification fee. This charge will be added to your account as arrears placing a hold on your account until it is paid. If NCC is unable to verify the license or find the required license information, the application will be deemed ineligible. You will be refunded your registration fee minus \$100 (\$50 non-refundable application fee and \$50 non-refundable license verification fee).

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 90 days from the date their exam was scored before they can submit a new application to retest.

- **this date is provided in the candidate's results notification**
- **this 90-day wait period affects all modes of testing**

If a retest application is submitted prior to the 90-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

This 90-day wait period...

- Affects computer examinees who wish to retest by computer.
- Affects Institutional Certification Program (ICP) examinees who wish to retest at another ICP test administration, or computer testing.

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 Form 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.

To request a change you must:

- Submit the change request within one calendar year from
 - the date of the exam you are changing for ICP or PEC candidates
 - the first date of your assigned testing window for computer candidates
- Submit a non-refundable fee of \$125 with the Change Request Form
- Use the NCC website online Change Request Form (*changes requested in any other format, will not be accepted*)
- Candidates changing a current computer test must have canceled or never made their appointment to take the exam at a PSI/AMP center
- Candidates changing from an ICP test must have their assigned test site code
- Candidates changing from a PEC test must have their assigned PEC class code
- Candidates changing to a PEC test must have already enrolled in the PEC course and have their assigned PEC class code

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 the one she/he was 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.

- **Computer Candidates** must submit their request at least 30 days prior to the end of their testing window
- **ICP Candidates** must have their assigned test site code and submit their request at least 45 days prior to testing date
- **PEC Candidates CANNOT change their examination category**



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/AMP center or
 - > if the candidate has made an appointment with PSI/AMP, it must be cancelled no later than four business days prior to the scheduled testing date.
- No refund will be considered after the exam date.

Withdrawal Policy - PEC and ICP Testing

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.



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.



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 and documentation forms. The special request form can be downloaded from the NCC website. Upon receipt of such requests for special accommodations, NCC will contact the applicant. 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.

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 have been received from NCC in writing.** NCC cannot verify certification until after it 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. Where available, NCC has listed on the website email addresses of the state boards of nursing who have provided them.

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](#)

All policies and procedures are subject to change without notice

CONTENT OUTLINES 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

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 obstetric, gynecologic, and neonatal specialties. Multidisciplinary subspecialty certifications are awarded for Electronic Fetal Monitoring, Neonatal Pediatric Transport, Care of the Extremely Low Birth Weight Neonate, Neonatal Neuro-Intensive Care and Obstetric and Neonatal Quality and Safety.

Since its inception in 1975, NCC has awarded certifications to more than 175,000 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).



Institutional Certification Program (ICP)

In 2004, NCC launched the Institutional Certification Program which allowed institutions to sponsor NCC certification and subspecialty exam testing at their own institutions. ICP provides institutions flexibility in testing times. If the institution has between 25 and 100 participants, the institution can select up to a 21-day period during which time the testing will occur. If a test site has over 100 participants, fee discounts are also offered. All NCC core and subspecialty examinations can be used to qualify for the minimum participation.

Under the plan, an institution designates a test coordinator who serves as the main contact person for NCC. The program is operated under a written contract between NCC and the individual hospital or hospital system. Individuals CANNOT participate in the program on their own. There must be a sponsoring institution. For more information about ICP, visit the NCC website or email Betty Sobala, ICP coordinator at bsobala@nccnet.org.

Rules for those applicants taking the test under ICP which is sponsored by an employer or other organization may be different than what is listed in this catalog. A memo of understanding is signed by the applicant taking an NCC exam under these special circumstances that outlines specific policies to which each individual applicant is subject.