



**ACADEMY OF ONCOLOGY NURSE & PATIENT
NAVIGATORS (AONN+)**

**ONCOLOGY NURSE NAVIGATOR— CERTIFIED
GENERALISTSM**

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

AND

APPLICATION

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Academy of Oncology Nurse & Patient Navigators
Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM
Candidate Handbook and Application

VERSION 1.0

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Overview

About AONN+

The Academy of Oncology Nurse & Patient Navigators (AONN+) is the largest national specialty organization dedicated to improving patient care and quality of life by defining, enhancing, and promoting the role of oncology nurse and patient navigators. AONN+ is an independent, nonpartisan education and advocacy organization whose members are committed to improving patient navigation and survivorship services to better manage the complexities of the cancer care treatment continuum for their patients. Founded by navigators, for navigators, AONN+ has the pulse of the profession and empowers you with the resources you need to excel in your career. The organization is one consisting of “professional patient advocates” and, to that end, supports and serves all members.

AONN+ Mission/Vision

The mission of AONN+ is to advance the role of the nurse navigator in cancer care and survivorship planning by providing a network for collaboration and development of best practices for the improvement of patient access to care, evidence-based cancer treatment, and quality of life during and after cancer treatment. The vision of AONN+ is to achieve, through effective navigation, patient-centered superior quality cancer care coordination from prediagnosis through survivorship/end of life.

Scope of Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM

The purpose of the Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM certification is to assure that clinical nurse navigators have the knowledge to competently demonstrate effective navigation services across the cancer care continuum within their scope of practice.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

AONN+ endorses the principles of equal opportunity. Eligibility criteria for examination and certification as an Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM are applied equally to all individuals regardless of age, race, religion, gender, national origin, veteran status, or disability.

Application Process

Overview

The steps of the application process for AONN+ Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM certification are as follows:

1. Submit your application along with the required documents and fee at least 30 days prior to the desired testing date.
2. Within 14 business days of receipt of your application, AONN+ will send you an authorization-to-test e-mail confirming your eligibility status.
3. Take the exam at your confirmed location. The certification exams are held at the AONN+ Midyear and Annual conferences.
4. Within 45 business days of the exam date, AONN+ will send you a score report indicating whether you have passed the examination and achieved certification.

Each of these steps is explained in greater detail in the remainder of this Handbook.

Application and Fees

A completed online application will require the following:

- Completed online application
- Completed verification of experience – online submission of resume and/or curriculum vitae (CV) indicating at least 3 years of direct navigation experience
- Online submission of current job description
- Online submission of letter of recommendation from current employer
- Submission of active RN license number – must be in good standing
- Online submission of 15 CEU activities over the past 12 months
- Fees – see AONN+ website for full details

All the application materials are available at the back of this Handbook in the section titled **Forms** and online at

<https://www.aonnonline.org/certification/nurse-navigator-certification>.

Online Submission Deadlines

All deadlines are set by AONN+. Online application only.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants become eligible to take the AONN+ Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM certification examination upon successfully documenting the following requirements:

- Must have an active RN license in good standing
- Provide a copy of CV indicating at least 3 years of direct navigation experience
- Provide documentation verifying you have earned at least 15 CEUs within the last 12 months
- Provide job description and reference letter signed by employer.

Confirmation of Eligibility to Sit for Exam

Within 14 business days of receipt of your application, AONN+ will send you a response that will be either

1. an **authorization-to-test** letter sent via e-mail or
2. notification of the deficiencies in your application.

If you receive an authorization-to-test letter, it will confirm your eligibility status.

Fees

The current application fee is \$150 for AONN+ members and \$300 for nonmembers.

Examination Sites

The AONN+ Oncology Nurse Navigation–Certified GeneralistSM exam is held at the AONN+ Midyear and Annual conferences.

Special Circumstances and Fees

Cancellation/Fee Refund

The eligibility application review fee is nonrefundable. The examination fee is refundable (minus \$25 processing fee) if candidate notifies AONN+ of his or her test cancellation and refund request in writing 5 business days prior to the examination date. A candidate who does not request a refund by this deadline and does not sit for the exam forfeits all fees.

Extreme Circumstances/No-Fee Penalty

If a candidate has missed the examination due to an emergency or a hardship such as serious illness of either the candidate or an immediate family member, death in the immediate family, disabling traffic accident, court appearance or jury duty, or military duty, he or she will be permitted to reschedule the examination at no additional charge as long as the following requirement is met:

- Candidate submits written verification and supporting documentation of the situation to AONN+ within 20 days of the original examination date.

If such a request is not made, the candidate will forfeit the full examination fee. To apply for a future date, the candidate must complete a new application for examination, pay all applicable fees, and meet all eligibility requirements in effect at the time of reapplication.

The Examination

Examination Formats

The AONN+ Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM certification program consists of a 120-question multiple-choice examination.

Language

The examination is offered in English only.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Special arrangements shall be provided to candidates with a disability (as defined by Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act) who submit a written explanation of their needs along with appropriate medical documentation with their certification application. An application form for accommodations is included under the **Forms** section in this Handbook.

Preparing for the Examination

Examination Content Outline

The AONN+ Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM examination conforms to a content outline based on a national practice analysis of oncology nurse navigators. Below is the content outline for the Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM certification examination.

Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM (ONN-CGSM)
Test Blueprint

I. Community Outreach/Prevention – 9%

- A. Finding community resources
- B. Community needs assessment
- C. Identification of barriers to care
- D. Interventions to remove barriers to care
- E. Community education prevention and screening (health screening guidelines/practices)
- F. Population health (common diseases and/or risk behaviors)
- G. Risk assessment (smoking, diet, occupation, etc.)
- H. Cultural competency
- I. Behavior modification
- J. Genetics (family history)

II. Coordination of Care/Care Transitions – 27%

- A. Chronic Care Model (CCM)
- B. Identification/intervention of clinical and service barriers to care
- C. Patient care process/cancer care continuum (prevention/screening/risk assessment, diagnosis, clinical trials, treatment, survivorship/end-of-life care)
- D. Patient/family center education (screening, diagnosis, treatment, side effects and management, survivorship/end of life)
- E. Identify models of navigation
- F. Cultural competency
- G. Multidisciplinary approach to care
- H. Tumor board
- I. NCCN guidelines (national guidelines specific to tumor type)

III. Patient Advocacy/Patient Empowerment – 21%

- A. Patient problem solving
- B. Engagement in decision-making tools
- C. Relationship building/trust
- D. Assisting the patient with care team/communication
- E. Counseling: conduit between patient and providers

- F. Patient/family center education (assess educational needs)
- G. Provide culturally sensitive care and education

IV. Psychosocial Support Services/Assessment – 10%

- A. Distress screening
- B. Strategies for coping: disease, treatment, distress/anxiety
- C. Referrals to psychosocial support/resources

V. Survivorship/End of Life – 13%

- A. Goal setting—life goals
- B. Survivorship education: long-term/late effects
- C. Care planning
- D. Palliative care
- E. Hospice

VI. Professional Roles and Responsibilities – 8%

- A. Critical thinking
- B. Problem solving
- C. Ethics
- D. Team-building
- E. Leadership
- F. History/evolution of navigation
- G. Definition of navigation and types of navigators (community, lay, clinical navigator, RN/SW)
- H. Tracking workload
- I. Documentation

VII. Operations Management – 5%

- A. Healthcare reform
- B. Utilization of resources
- C. Workforce shortages
- D. Organizational structure, mission, and vision
- E. Organizational development

- F. Healthcare economics

VIII. Quality and Performance Improvement – 7%

- A. Value/role of nursing research to validate practice and build evidence-based practices
- B. Research
- C. Quality metrics (selection of metrics, develop measure, and create dashboards)
- D. Performance improvement (methodologies–PDSA, SMART goals)
- E. Role in identifying quality needs, areas of quality improvement
- F. Role in improving the process.

Authoritative References List

The Authoritative References List provides a concise yet detailed guide to informative oncology navigation peer-reviewed journals and textbooks. It serves as a valuable tool for all oncology navigators, especially those preparing for the certification.

This list is intended for use as a study aid only. AONN+ does not intend the list to imply endorsement of these specific references, nor are the test questions necessarily taken from these sources.

On the Day of the Examination

Test Admission Procedures

Candidates must report to the test location no later than 15 minutes prior to the posted start time of the exam. Candidates must present their authorization-to-test letter and a government-issued photo ID (such as a valid driver's license) with candidate's name on it. The name on the photo ID must match the name on the authorization-to-test letter.

Candidates without an authorization-to-test letter, photo ID, or who arrive less than 5 minutes prior to the posted start time will NOT be permitted to enter the test location, and their examination fees will be forfeited.

Seating of candidates, distribution of test materials, and testing instructions will begin immediately after the posted start time of the exam. The total testing time is 3 hours. Additional time has been allowed for instructions. You can expect to leave the test location at approximately 3 hours after the posted start time for the exam. There are no scheduled breaks.

Testing Center Rules

The following are the rules enforced at all test administrations:

- All candidates must have proper photo ID and an authorization-to-test letter to be admitted to the test center
- Candidates are admitted only to their assigned test location at their assigned time
- Candidates arriving more than 5 minutes late will not be admitted and will have to contact the Registrar at AONN+ and pay a \$25 reschedule fee before they will be able to reschedule the examination
- No guests are permitted in the examination rooms
- No reference material, books, papers, or personal items (purses, briefcases, coats, etc.) are allowed in the examination room
- No electronic devices are permitted in the assessment center, including telephones, signaling devices such as pagers and alarms, personal digital assistants (PDAs), and other handheld computers
- No weapons or instruments that may reasonably be used as weapons may be brought into the examination room
- No test materials, documents, or memoranda of any sort are to be taken from the examination room
- Candidates may not communicate with other candidates during the examination. Proctors are authorized to maintain secure and proper test administration procedures, including relocation of candidates
- No questions concerning the content of the examination may be asked during the testing period
- Candidates will be provided with an item challenge form to comment on any exam question he or she believes is misleading or deficient in accuracy or content at the time of the examination
- Food is not permitted in the assessment center. Tobacco products and gum may not be used during the examination
- Breaks are not scheduled during the examination. Candidates are permitted breaks on an individual basis, but no additional time is given to candidates who take breaks. Candidates who must leave the testing room must receive permission from the proctor and may be escorted while outside the testing room
- Candidates will not be allowed to talk during individual breaks. Those who do will be denied readmittance to the testing room, forfeit all fees, and will not have their examination scored
- Candidate may not copy in writing or otherwise record or transmit to others any examination questions and/or answers or other aspects of the nature or content of the examination
- Candidates may not offer or assist, or solicit assistance from other candidates, examiners, or those responsible for the administration of the examination

- Candidates may not engage in any other conduct or inappropriate behavior that is injurious to the integrity of the examination or to any of its participants.

Dismissal

Any candidate who is observed engaging in any misconduct will be subject to dismissal from the examination, may be barred from future examinations for a period ranging from 1 year to permanent dismissal, and may be required to forfeit his/her current examination fee and/or period of eligibility. Proctors are authorized to take immediate, appropriate measures against candidates who are caught violating testing rules. The candidate is entitled to appeal the dismissal determination.

Inclement Weather

If any candidate is unable to arrive at a designated examination site because of inclement weather, terrorist acts, a natural disaster, or other unforeseen emergencies beyond the control of the candidate as determined by AONN+, the candidate will be allowed to take the next regularly scheduled examination without being charged a re-examination fee.

If for any reason the exam is unable to be administered, then the examination will be rescheduled within a reasonable period of time. Candidates may take the examination at the next administration without being charged a re-examination fee. Candidates will be responsible for their own associated expenses for future testing.

Examination Irregularities

Any problems, suspected instances of cheating, alleged inappropriate examination administration, environmental testing conditions severe enough to cause disruption of the process, or other irregularities related to test administration should be addressed to the onsite proctor or to staff. All such matters will be reported, investigated, and subject to further action based on policies and procedures adopted by AONN+.

Handling of Tests

AONN+ will take all available precautions to ensure the appropriate and secure handling of completed tests. In the rare and extreme case in which the tests become lost or unreadable, candidates will be required to undergo retesting, without being charged a re-examination fee. Candidates will be responsible for their own travel-associated expenses for future testing.

After the Examination

Notification of Results

Candidates are notified in writing of the examination results within 45 business days of the test administration. For security reasons, results will not be given over the phone or sent by fax or e-mail.

Results – Passing

Candidates who successfully complete the examination and whose credentials and application entitle them to certification will be notified by letter and granted AONN+ Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM certification, a sample of which is displayed below.

The certification remains the property of AONN+, Incorporated, which may withdraw, cancel, revoke, change the scope of, or otherwise annul the certification for cause.



Results – Failing

Candidates who did not successfully pass the examination will be notified by letter and given a diagnostic report on the reason for their failing, a sample of which is displayed below.

AONN+ Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM Certification
November 17, 2018, Administration
Score Report

Score by Domain

Thank you for striving to be ONN-CGSM Certified. Your test has been reviewed in relation to the ONN-CGSM testing blueprint. The outline below shows the total number of questions in each category, and the number you got incorrect. For example, if the numbers in the parentheses read 2:14, two questions out of fourteen total in that category were incorrect.

The blueprint for ONN-CG weighting is:

- I. **9% Community Outreach/Prevention (2:9)**
- II. **27% Coordination of Care/ Care Transitions (4:27)**
- III. **21% Patient Advocacy/Patient Empowerment (6:21)**
- IV. **10% Psychosocial Support Services/Assessment (3:10)**
- V. **13% Survivorship/End of Life (4:13)**
- VI. **8% Professional Roles and Responsibilities (1:8)**
- VII. **5% Operations Management (0:5)**
- VIII. **7% Quality and Performance Improvement (4:7)**

We hope that you will retake the certification exam in the future. We encourage you to study in the areas where there are higher percentages of missed questions. A review of the learning modules at <https://www.aonnonline.org/certification/nurse-navigator-certification> can be helpful as well as the references contained in the modules. Additionally, navigators have found the book [Team-Based Oncology Care: The Pivotal Role of Oncology Navigation](#) helpful as an overall review.

Each of the domains is weighted differently, as indicated in the exam Blueprint, appearing earlier in this Handbook, so you cannot average scores on all the domains to determine your specific score. Domain analysis is provided solely for the purpose of preparing for the next exam.

Retesting: Candidate Fails

In the event that a candidate fails his or her first attempt to pass the certification test, AONN+ requires a waiting period of at least 6 months between the first and second attempts to pass that same test. Additionally, before any candidate's third attempt or

any subsequent attempt to pass any certification test, the candidate is required to wait for a period of at least 6 months from the date of his or her last attempt to pass the test.

Candidates unsuccessful on the examination are permitted to sit for the next exam administration at a reduced fee of \$45.

Retesting: Candidate Passes

In the event that a candidate passes any AONN+ certification test, the candidate is prohibited from retaking the same certification test, unless AONN+ has changed the test specifications for the test.

Appeals Policy

Candidates may appeal the results of eligibility determination or the examination within 30 days of the date of the results. The appeals process and an application for submitting an appeal can be found at www.AONNOnline.org/certification

Code of Professional Conduct

All AONN+ certified individuals must agree to comply with the certificant Code of Professional Conduct as outlined below:

- I will conduct my business and/or professional activities with honesty and integrity.
- I will represent my certifications and qualifications honestly and provide only those services for which I am qualified to perform.
- I will strive to maintain and improve my professional knowledge and competence through regular self-assessments and continuing education or training.
- I will act in a manner free of bias and discrimination against clients or customers.
- I will maintain the privacy of individuals and confidentiality of information obtained in the course of my duties unless disclosure is required by legal authority.
- I will follow all certification policies, procedures, guidelines, and requirements of AONN+.

Certificants

Appropriate Use of the Certification

An individual who has been granted the AONN+ Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM certification may list the certification on stationery, websites, business cards, and other promotional materials as:

First name Last name, Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM

First name Last name, ONN-CG

Should the certification be suspended or withdrawn for any reason, the individual must immediately cease the use of the title “Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM” and acronym designation on stationery, websites, business cards, and any and all promotional materials.

Request for Hand Scoring

Any candidate may request a hand score of his or her answer sheet. Requests must be made in writing to AONN+ postmarked no later than 10 calendar days after the examination date. A fee of \$25 must be included with the request. A notice of the hand score results will be sent by certified mail to the candidate within 2 weeks of receipt of the request. The results of the hand score will be final.

Request for Duplicate Certificates

Any certificant may request additional copies of his or her certification document. Requests must be made in writing to AONN+ and may be made at any time. A fee of \$15 must be included with the request. The request for a duplicate certificate appears in this Handbook under **Forms**.

Ongoing Requirements and Recertification

To maintain Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM (ONN-CGSM) certification, the Nurse Navigator must document participation in 45 continuing education hours every 36 months as follows:

- Continuing education hours must consist of AONN+ education in the following knowledge domains:

- Patient Advocacy & Patient Empowerment
- Quality & Performance Improvement
- Coordination of Care & Care Transitions
- Psychosocial Distress Screening
- Survivorship
- Community Outreach & Prevention
- Professional Roles & Responsibilities
- Organizational Management
- End of Life

- Must maintain direct navigation experience
- Must maintain active RN license in good standing

Documentation of 45 continuing education hours must be every 36 months. To retain ONN-CGSM certification, please upload documentation:

<https://aonnonline.org/certification/nurse-navigator-certification>.

Submission of CEUs and renewal fee of \$150 for AONN+ members and \$300 for nonmembers is required

The request for Ongoing Maintenance of the AONN+ Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM appears in this Handbook under **Forms**.

Forms

Application

AONN+ Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM Application

This application is for AONN+ Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM certification. The purpose of the Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM certification is to assure that clinical nurse navigators have the knowledge and skills to competently demonstrate effective navigation services across the cancer care continuum within their scope of practice.

To be considered for eligibility to take the AONN+ Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM examination, submit the application via the AONN+ website and upload the requested documentation and complete the online application. The Registrar must receive applications at least 30 calendar days prior to the desired exam date.

<https://aonnonline.org/certification/nurse-navigator-certification>

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants become eligible to take the AONN+ Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM certification examination upon successfully documenting the following requirements:

- Must have an active RN license in good standing
- Provide a copy of CV indicating at least 3 years of direct navigation experience
- Provide documentation verifying you have earned at least 15 CEUs in the past 12 months
- Provide a job description and reference letter signed by employer

Candidate Application Statement

All candidates must sign the following Candidate Application Statement and agree to all policies, procedures, and terms and conditions of certification to be eligible for the certification. The statement follows.

I hereby apply for certification as an Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM (ONN-CGSM). I understand that my certification depends on my ability to meet all requirements and qualifications. I certify that the information contained in this application is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and is made in good faith. I understand that AONN+ may need to gather additional information to clarify or supplement this application, and I agree to supply it. I further understand that if any information is later determined to be false, AONN+ reserves the right to revoke any certification that has been granted on the basis thereof.

Should I be awarded Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM certification, I agree to abide by the Code of Professional Conduct, and to notify AONN+ if at any time I develop the incapacity to perform my professional responsibilities in accord with the standard of AONN+.

Should AONN+ suspend my certification at any time, during the time of suspension I will not use the logo or marks of certification.

I acknowledge that I may submit application for accommodation of disability-related needs.

Should AONN+ withdraw my certification at any time, I will return my certificate and cease use of the ONN-CG designation and the logo of ONN-CG.

In using the ONN-CG designation and the logo I will abide by the restrictions and conventions stated in this Handbook. If notified of misuse by AONN+, I will correct my use of ONN-CG designation and logo as requested by AONN+.

I hereby release, discharge, and exonerate AONN+, its directors, officers, members, examiners, representatives, and agents, from any actions, suits, obligations, damages, claims, or demands arising out of, or in connection with, any aspect of the application process, including results or any other decision that may result in a decision to not issue me a certificate.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Candidate Confidentiality Agreement

To ensure the integrity of the Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM examination, all candidates must sign the Candidate Confidentiality Agreement that follows:

I understand, acknowledge, and agree:

- That the questions and answers of the exam are the exclusive and confidential property of AONN+ and are protected by AONN+'s intellectual property rights;
- That I will not disclose the exam questions or answers or discuss any of the content of the exam materials with any person, without prior written approval of AONN+;
- That I will not remove from the examination room any exam materials of any kind provided to you or any other material related to the exam, including, without limitation, any notes or calculations;
- That I will not copy or attempt to make copies (written, photocopied, or otherwise) of any exam material, including, without limitation, any exam questions or answers;
- That I will not sell, license, distribute, give away, or obtain from any other source other than AONN+ the exam materials, questions, or answers;
- That I will not create or contribute to certification efforts competitive with the ONN-CG scheme for a period of 3 years from taking the examination;
- I agree that my obligations under this Agreement shall continue in effect after the examination and, if applicable, after termination of my certification, regardless of the reason or reasons for termination, and whether such termination is voluntary or involuntary.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Payment of Application Fee

The current application fee is \$150 for AONN+ members and \$300 for nonmembers.

Payment is due at certification exam registration website at time of application.

Verification of Experience

AONN+ Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM Verification of Experience Form

A reference letter and current job description are to be provided by an individual, such as an employer, supervisor, or human resources personnel, who can verify that the applicant holds a current position as an oncology nurse navigator and has a minimum of 3 years of direct navigation experience. After completion it should be provided back to the applicant for submission with his or her application to be uploaded with the online application.

Change of Address

Change of Address Form

If your address changes during the course of your application to become an Oncology Nurse Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM, submit a change of address as soon as possible to ensure our database is accurate and you receive important communications about your application or examinations. Change of address notification should be submitted via e-mail to info@aonnonline.org with the words *Change of Address* in the subject line of the e-mail, and the new information in the e-mail.

ADA Accommodation Request

Special Testing Accommodation Request Form

Candidates with disabilities covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act must complete this form and have an appropriate licensed professional complete the Documentation of Disability-Related Needs Form in order for their accommodations request to be processed. www.AONNOnline.org/certification

Documentation of Disability-Related Needs by Qualified Provider

This form must be completed by a licensed healthcare provider or an educational/testing professional. The nature of the disability, identification of the test(s) used to confirm the diagnosis, a description of past accommodations made for the disability, and the specific testing accommodations requested must be included. www.AONNOnline.org/certification

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