



Academy of Oncology Nurse & Patient Navigators®

Oncology Patient Navigator— Certified Generalist (OPN-CG) Candidate Handbook

E-mail: certification@aonnonline.org

Website: aonnffl.org

About AONN+ Foundation for Learning

MISSION

AONN+ FFL's mission is to have oncology navigation recognized as a professional specialty by national, regulatory, and community organizations, as well as by healthcare and nursing peers, physicians, institutional leadership, patients, and their families.

VISION

To establish an accredited, standardized validation of oncology navigation practice based on navigation roles, responsibilities, educational level of knowledge, and evidence-based best practices to ensure consistent delivery of optimized patient care across the continuum.

Scope of the Oncology Patient Navigator–Certified Generalist (OPN-CG) Exam

This exam is intended for anyone providing navigation services who does not hold RN licensure. Job descriptions appropriate for this certification may include, but are not limited to, the following:

LPNs, social workers, patient navigators, community navigators, financial navigators, lay navigators, virtual navigators, patient coordinators, call center coordinators, and survivorship navigators

Again, please note that this list is not exhaustive. It is simply meant to provide a brief overview of the many roles/job titles providing navigation services across the healthcare landscape.

The purpose of the OPN-CG is to validate the knowledge and critical thinking of oncology patient navigators while supporting a clear scope of practice to ensure delivery of competent, safe, and effective patient navigation services across the cancer care continuum.

Exam Format

The exam, consisting of 120 multiple-choice questions, is currently offered only in paper-pencil format only.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

AONN+ FFL endorses the principles of equal opportunity. Eligibility criteria for examination and certification are applied equally to all individuals, regardless of age, race, religion, gender, national origin, veteran status, or disability.

Language Requirement

The OPN-CG exam is currently available in English only. Candidates must possess the ability to read complex medical terminology and patient scenarios in English. If there is concern about English reading comprehension, please contact AONN+ FFL at certification@aonnonline.org.

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, alongside their application, a written explanation of needs and appropriate medical documentation. Additional information and related forms can be found at the website under the Additional Resources tab at <https://aonnffl.org/additional-resources>

Eligibility Requirements

- Must be able to provide proof of a minimum of 1 year or 2000 hours of direct navigation experience

What Qualifies as Direct Navigation Experience?

AONN+ FFL recognizes that many individuals may be new to a patient navigation role but possess a work history full of navigation-related practice. When reviewing applications to sit for the exam, we assess each candidate's resume for proof of a work history that includes activities such as assessing and removing barriers to care, coordinating patient care, and providing care across the cancer continuum. We do not require the word "navigator" to appear in one's job title to be eligible to sit for the exam.

Application and Fee Requirements

Applications can be completed online at <https://aonnffl.org/apply>. At time of application, each of the following must be submitted:

- Resume demonstrating current employment in patient navigation and at least 1 year or 2000 hours of direct navigation experience
- Current, official job description
- Signed reference letter from your employer, verifying your role
- Application fee
 - ▶ \$300
\$150 for AONN+ National Members—excludes Local Navigator Network membership (Annual AONN+ membership fees of \$150 help support the certification program initiatives; therefore, the application fee structure remains financially equitable for all applicants, as all applicants pay \$300.)

Approval Process

Please submit all application materials at least 30 days prior to your desired testing date. AONN+ FFL only accepts applications once a verified exam site/date is confirmed and listed on the Apply Here section of the website.

Once your application materials have been submitted, you will receive notification from AONN+ FFL regarding application status

- Once your application materials have been submitted, you will receive notification from AONN+ FFL regarding application status
- Your application may be approved, rejected, or additional information may be requested for processing
- All communications will occur via e-mail
 - ▶ Approval e-mail will include an authorization to test and provide instructions for exam day

Exam Site Selection

Exams are currently offered via paper and pencil format only.

- 1) Midyear AONN+ Conference
- 2) Annual AONN+ Conference
- 3) Regional sites based on AONN+ FFL survey results
- 4) Collaboration with AONN+ Local Navigator Networks

Cancellation/No Show

Any candidate who needs to postpone or cancel a certification exam should contact AONN+ FFL as soon as possible. If contacted prior to the exam day, AONN+ FFL will allow the candidate to postpone testing until a later date at no additional fee. The approved application will be held on the candidate's behalf and authorization to test will be released when a new site is selected. If a refund is required, please note that a \$25 processing fee may be incurred.

If a candidate is a no-show on the day of exam due to emergency or hardship, written verification and supporting documentation must be submitted to AONN+ FFL within 20 days of the examination date to be considered for a refund. If a request is not made, the candidate forfeits the full examination fee. To apply for a future date, a new application would need to be submitted along with the application fee.

PREPARING FOR EXAM

The OPN-CG Preparation Guide can be located on the website. Download this document to assist you in creating your study plan.

Additionally, the content outline or exam blueprint is shown below.

Patient Care – 20%

- A. Assist patients in accessing cancer care and navigating healthcare systems
 - 1. Assess barriers to care (financial, practical, and social)
 - 2. Create potential solutions to barriers
- B. Identify appropriate and credible resources (practical, social, physical, emotional, spiritual)
 - 1. Patient-centered reading level, health literacy, culture, language, and amount of information desired)
 - 2. For physical concerns, emotional needs, or clinical information, refer to licensed clinicians
- C. Educate patients and caregivers on the multidisciplinary nature of cancer treatment (roles and healthcare system)
 - 1. Provide evidence-based information
 - 2. Refer to clinical staff to answer questions about clinical information, treatment choices, and potential outcomes
- D. Empower patients to communicate their preferences and priorities for treatment to their healthcare team
 - 1. Facilitate shared decision-making
- E. Empower patients (self-management and health promotion resources and referrals)
- F. Support patient adherence to agreed-upon treatment plan (continued non-clinical barrier assessment, referrals to supportive resources, collaboration with the clinical team)

Knowledge for Practice – 24%

- A. Basic knowledge of medical and cancer terminology
- B. Access and reference evidence-based information (cancer screening, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship)
- C. Basic knowledge of cancer, cancer treatment, and supportive care options (clinical trials and integrative therapies)
- D. Basic knowledge of health system operations
- E. Physical, psychological, social, and spiritual impacts of cancer and its treatment
- F. General understanding of healthcare payment structure and financing
 - 1. Referral sources regarding insurance coverage and financial assistance

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement – 10%

- A. Patient navigation program development, implementation, and evaluation
- B. Collaboration to improve navigation process and participate in quality improvement
 - 1. Use barriers to care, patient encounters, resource provision, population health disparities data, and quality indicators
- C. Performance feedback utilization
- D. Information technology (use and time efficiency)
- E. Continuous analysis of barriers to care
- F. Metric maintenance (records capturing ongoing patient barriers, patient interactions, barrier resolution, and other evaluation data)
- G. Promote navigation role
 - 1. Value to patients, providers, and the larger community

Interpersonal and Communication Skills – 14%

- A. Assessment of patient capacity to self-advocate (prioritize questions, clarify information with treatment team)
- B. Communication skills involving patients, families, and the public (range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds)
- C. Active listening (solutions-oriented)
- D. Interactive communication (optimize patient outcomes)
- E. Team communication (leverage community resources to assist patients)
- F. Difficult conversations (empathy, integrity, honesty, and compassion)
- G. Knowledge of National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care
- H. Understanding about emotions and human responses to emotions

Professionalism – 14%

- A. Knowledge application role differences (clinically licensed and non-licensed professionals)
 - 1. Professional boundaries
- B. Scope of practice (accessible, accurate, supportive)
- C. Efficient and effective use of organization, time management, problem-solving, and critical thinking
- D. Responsiveness to patient needs (within scope of practice and professional boundaries)
- E. Knowledge of patient rights
- F. Sensitivity and responsiveness to a diverse patient population (gender, age, culture, race, religion, abilities, and sexual orientation)

Systems-Based Practice – 3%

- A. Transition of patients (screening, diagnosis, active treatment, survivorship and/or end-of-life care)
 - 1. Work within the patient’s clinical care team
- B. Patient advocate (quality patient care and optimal patient care systems)
- C. Organization and prioritization of resources

Interprofessional Collaboration – 8%

- A. Positive working climate – mutual respect, dignity, diversity, ethical integrity, and trust
- B. Role knowledge (personal and team)
 - 1. Patient and populations needs to optimize health and wellness
- C. Interprofessional team participation (safe, timely, efficient, effective, and equitable)

Personal and Professional Development – 7%

- A. Identify gaps in knowledge (skills, attitudes, and abilities)
 - 1. Perform learning activities that address gaps
- B. Healthy coping mechanisms to respond to stress (self-care strategies)
- C. Personal and professional responsibilities conflict management
- D. Ambiguity recognition
 - 1. Response by utilizing appropriate resources in dealing with uncertainty
 - 2. Demonstrate a commitment to ethical principles pertaining to confidentiality, informed consent, business practices, and compliance with relevant laws, policies, and regulations (eg, HIPAA, agency abuse reporting rules, Duty to Warn, safety contracting)
 - 3. Perform administrative duties accurately and efficiently

EXAM DAY

Test Administration Procedures

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

Candidates without authorization to test, photo ID, and/or who arrive less than 5 minutes prior to the posted start time WILL NOT be permitted to enter the testing site and all exam fees will be forfeited.

Seating of candidates, distribution of exam materials, and verbal instructions will begin immediately after the posted start time. The total testing time is 3 hours. There are no scheduled breaks.

Inclement Weather

If the exam cannot be administered due to inclement weather or a related issue, the exam will be rescheduled within a reasonable period of time. All candidates will be allowed to take the exam at the next administration without any additional fee.

Examination Irregularities

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

Exam Security

AONN+ FFL takes all available precautions to ensure appropriate and secure handling of completed exams. In the rare and extreme case in which exams are lost or are unreadable, candidates may be required to undergo retesting. In this instance, no additional fee will be charged; however, candidates remain responsible for their own travel-related expenses.

EXAM DAY

Testing Site Rules The following rules are enforced at all test administration sites:

- Candidates must present proper photo ID
- Candidates are admitted only to their assigned test location on the designated date/time
- No guests are permitted in the testing area
- No reference materials, books, or personal items (purses, coats, cell phones, etc) are allowed to stay with the candidate during the exam. There will be a designated table for these items
- Smart watches cannot be worn during the exam
- No weapons or instruments that could reasonably be used as a weapon may enter the examination room
- No test materials, documents, or memoranda of any sort are to be taken from the exam room
- Candidates may not communicate with each other during the exam
- Proctors are authorized to maintain secure and proper test administration procedures
- No questions concerning the content of the exam may be asked during the testing period. An item challenge form will be provided to comment on any exam question a candidate finds misleading or deficient in accuracy or content
- Food items, tobacco products, and chewing gum are not allowed
- There are no scheduled breaks during the exam. Candidates are permitted breaks on an individual basis, but no additional time is given to candidates who take breaks. Candidates who leave the testing area must receive permission from a proctor and may be escorted while outside the testing room
- Candidates are not allowed to talk during individual breaks. Those who do will be denied re-admittance to the testing room and will forfeit all fees
- Candidates may not copy exam questions or answers in any way
- Candidates may not offer or assist other candidates, or solicit assistance from other candidates or proctors regarding exam questions
- Candidates may not engage in any inappropriate behavior deemed injurious to the integrity of the exam or other candidates
- Any candidate observed engaging in misconduct will be subject to dismissal from the exam and may be barred from future examinations for a period of 1 year to permanent dismissal and may be required to forfeit all current exam fees and/or period of eligibility
- Proctors are authorized to take immediate, appropriate measures against candidates caught violating testing site rules

EXAM RESULTS

Notification of Results

Candidates will be notified of exam results via official e-mail within 45 business days of administration

Results—Successful

Candidates who successfully complete the exam by achieving the minimum required score, will receive an official certificate via e-mail. Any successful candidate is prohibited from retaking the same certification exam, unless AONN+ FFL changes test specifications and re-exam is required. Additional copies of the certificate can be requested via e-mail. The cost of each additional certificate is \$15.

Using the OPN-CG Credentials

An individual who has successfully achieved certification may use the OPN-CG credentials on professional communications such as stationery, websites, business cards, e-mail signatures, and other promotional materials. Should the certification be suspended or withdrawn for any reason, the individual must immediately cease use of this credential. The OPN-CG credential remains the property of AONN+ FFL and may be withdrawn, revoked, re-scoped, or otherwise annulled at any time.

Results—Unsuccessful

Candidates who did not meet the minimum required score on the certification exam. These individuals will be provided a diagnostic report to outline areas of deficiency for focus prior to future re-testing.

Retesting

In the event a candidate fails to pass the certification exam, AONN+ FFL requires a waiting period of least 6 months before sitting for exam again. Additionally, these candidates are permitted to sit for their next attempt at a reduced fee of \$45.

Complaints and Appeals

A complaint is a formal request, other than an appeal, for resolution of an issue related to the certification program or the professional behavior of a certificant. The complaint process is located on the AONN+ FFL website, and the official Complaint Form can be found here: https://aonnffl.org/images/documents/AONN_Forms_-_Complaint_Submission.pdf

An appeal is a formal request for reconsideration of an adverse decision made by the Certification Advisory Commission or its representatives related to an individual's achievement of a certification. Candidates may submit an appeal of exam results within 6 weeks of the exam date. The appeals process is located on the website, and the Appeals Form can be found here: https://aonnffl.org/images/documents/AONN_Forms_-_Appeal_Submission.pdf

All complaints and appeals are reviewed by the Director of Certification and the Certification Advisory Commission. Decisions will be made by the Advisory Commission, and all decisions rendered are final.

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

All AONN+ FFL–certified individuals must agree to comply with the Certificant Code of Professional Conduct as outlined below. The OPN-CG credential awarded through AONN+ FFL may be suspended or revoked if a certificant fails to meet the outlined Code of Conduct:

- 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+ FFL.

Ongoing Requirements and Recertification

OPN-CGSM certification is valid for 3 years from the date of testing. To renew the Oncology Patient Navigator–Certified GeneralistSM (OPN-CGSM) credential, the following must be submitted:

1. Documentation of a minimum of 24 CE credits over the past 36 months.

CE hours must consist of education in the following knowledge domains:

- ▶ Patient Care
 - ▶ Professionalism
 - ▶ Knowledge for Practice
 - ▶ System-Based Practice
 - ▶ Practice-Based Learning and Improvement
 - ▶ Interprofessional Collaboration
 - ▶ Interpersonal and Communication Skills
 - ▶ IPersonal and Professional
2. Current resume or curriculum vitae, showing direct navigation experience
 4. Updated and signed letter of recommendation
 5. Current, official job description from employer
 6. Payment of renewal fee
 - \$300
 - \$150 for AONN+ National Members—excludes Local Navigator Network membership (Annual AONN+ membership fees of \$150 help support certification program initiatives; therefore, the application fee structure remains financially equitable for all applicants, as all applicants pay \$300.)

CANDIDATE COMPLAINT FORM

Please submit by e-mail to:
certification@aonnonline.org

Or by postal mail to:

Complaints | AONN+ FFL | 1249 South River Road, Ste 202 | Cranbury, NJ 08512

AONN+ FFL Certification Candidate Complaint

Name: _____ Date: _____

Date of Exam: _____ Candidate ID: _____

Examination: _____ Item # (optional): _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Signature: _____

Statement of the Complaint

This statement should include, but is not limited to, the nature of the complaint, the facts, supporting items, and the remedy requested. (Use additional sheets if needed and attach):

FOR AONN+ FFL USE ONLY

REVIEWED BY: _____	DATE: _____
REVIEWED BY: _____	DATE: _____
REVIEWED BY: <u>Certification Commission</u>	DATE: _____
ACTION: _____	

CANDIDATE APPEAL FORM

Please submit by e-mail to:
certification@aonnonline.org

Or by postal mail to:

Complaints | AONN+ FFL | 1249 South River Road, Ste 202 | Cranbury, NJ 08512

Appeals must be submitted within 6 weeks of the examination date to be considered.

AONN+ FFL Certification Candidate Appeal

Name: _____ Date: _____

Date of Exam: _____ Candidate ID: _____

Examination: _____ Item # (optional): _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Signature: _____

Statement of the Appeal:

This statement should include, but is not limited to, the nature of the appeal, the facts, supporting items, and the remedy suggested. (Use additional sheets if needed and attach):

FOR AONN+ FFL USE ONLY

REVIEWED BY: _____	DATE: _____
REVIEWED BY: _____	DATE: _____
REVIEWED BY: <u>Certification Commission</u>	DATE: _____
ACTION: _____	

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS REQUEST FORM

AONN+ FFL Special Accommodations Request Form

Individuals 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.

Please submit by email to: certification@aonnonline.org

Or by postal mail to: AONN+ FFL | 1249 South River Road, Ste 202| Cranbury NJ 08512

Contact Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Special Accommodations

Exam Date and Location (test center) for which you are requesting accommodation:

I would like to request the following testing accommodation(s):

- Circle answers in test booklet
- Extended testing time (time and a half)
- Large print test. Point size: _____
- Reader
- Separate testing area
- Special seating, please describe: _____
- Wheelchair accessible testing site
- Other special accommodations (please specify):

