

NURSE NAVIGATION CERTIFICATION: Q & A

We recognize the confusion created by the terms “Certification” and “Certificate” programs. It is our intent to help Navigation Summit participants differentiate and understand these terms as they relate to professional oncology nurse navigation.

Q: What is Certification?

A: Certification is a voluntary process by which a nongovernmental agency formally recognizes specialized knowledge, skills and experience in a designated area. Certification establishes minimum competency standards in the specialty and offers recognition for those who have met the standards. A primary purpose of certification is the protection of the public through a means of measurement of current skills and knowledge through a standardized comprehensive examination. *Institute for Credentialing Excellence: Certification: The ICE Handbook, 2nd edition.*

Q: What's the Difference Between Certification and a Certificate Program?

A: The Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) defines the differences between certification and certificate programs.

Professional Certification

“The voluntary process by which a non-governmental entity grants a time-limited recognition and use of a credential to an individual after verifying that he or she has met predetermined and standardized criteria. It is the vehicle that a profession or occupation uses to differentiate among its members, using standards, sometimes developed through a consensus-driven process, based on existing legal and psychometric requirements.” *ICE Guide to Understanding Credentialing Concepts*

Certificate Program

“A training program on a topic for which participants receive a certificate after attendance and/or completion of the coursework. Some programs also require successful demonstration of attainment of the course objectives. One who completes a professional certificate program is known as a certificate holder. A credential is usually NOT granted at the completion of a certificate program. There are three types of certificate programs: knowledge-based certificate, curriculum based certificate, and certificate of attendance or participation.” *ICE Guide to Understanding Credentialing Concepts (2nd Edition)*

Certificates of attendance, participation or completion are “issued after an individual attends, participates in, and/or completes a particular meeting or course.” Most often, no knowledge is assessed before such a certificate is issued, and such a certificate is not a credential since recipients need not demonstrate competence according to identified standards.

The benefits of a certificate program is the educational process, shared information, and networking experienced throughout the program. A certificate of completion is NOT an entry into practice, validation of competencies, or certification as an oncology nurse navigator.

Q: Does approval by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Magnet Recognition Program indicate that the certification program is accredited?

A: No: The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association, does not accredit certification programs. ANCC's credentialing programs certify and recognize individual nurses (Clinical Nurse Specialists, Nurse Practitioners, and nurses in ANA-designated specialty areas) and healthcare organizations for promoting safe, positive work environments, and accredit continuing nursing education

organizations. ANCC's Magnet Recognition Program acknowledges superior nursing practices and outcomes. The Magnet Recognition Program® approves a list of programs that Magnet-recognized and Magnet-applicant organizations may report in the Demographic Data Collection Tool™ (DDCT) used in Magnet application and renewal processes.

Accreditation is the process by which a credentialing or educational program is evaluated against defined standards by a third party. When in compliance with these standards, it is awarded recognition

Q: How does one obtain certification in oncology nurse navigation?

A: At this time (June 2015), no oncology nurse navigation certification program is accredited by the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) or meets standards for accreditation established by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). Neither certification nor certificate of completion are standard requirements for oncology nurse navigators in most settings at this time.

Q: Does the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation offer Oncology Nurse Navigator Certification?

A: No. The ONCC conducted a nurse navigation role delineation study (RDS) in 2011 as a potential initial assessment of feasibility of nurse navigation certification. This RDS process failed to differentiate tasks, knowledge and skills of oncology nurse navigators from other oncology nursing roles represented in the eight certification processes offered by the ONCC. These findings did not support investment of resources to development of a navigation certification program, and there is as yet no publicly stated intention to perform a second RDS.

ONCC Certification is highly recognized in the oncology care arena. The original ONS Joint Position Statement (2010) lends support to educational preparation and professional certification in nurse navigation practice. According to this position, nurse navigators should “have education and knowledge in community assessment, cancer program assessment, resolution of system barriers, the cancer continuum, cancer health disparities, cultural competence, and the individualized, provision of assistance to patients with cancer, their families, caregivers, and survivors at risk.” (ONS, 2010)

The Navigation Summit Advisory Board nurse-members support the following statement. ***“At this time, in lieu of an accredited oncology nurse navigation certification program, nurses in oncology nurse navigation roles should possess certification through one of the National Commission for Certifying Agencies-accredited certifications offered by the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation - minimally Oncology Certified Nurse®”*** This statement is consistent with the ONS Position “Oncology Nurse Navigation Role and Qualifications”, approved June 23, 2015. View the complete Position on the ONS website:

<https://www.ons.org/advocacy-policy/positions/education/onn>.

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