

Standard 4.2: Oncology Nursing Credentials Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Scope of Standard?

The following professionals are included within the scope of *Standard 4.2: Oncology Nursing Credentials* if the professional provides direct oncology care and works continuously at the facility for more than one calendar year:

Registered Nurses (RN)
Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APN/APRN)
Nurse Practitioners (NP)
Nurse Navigators
Contract nurses
Oncology clinical trials RNs, APRNs, and nurse navigators

More specifically, *Standard 4.2: Oncology Nursing Credentials* applies in the following scenarios:

- RNs, APRNs, and nurse navigators who work on a dedicated oncology unit, ambulatory cancer care, or infusion center
- RNs, APRNs, and nurse navigators who work in radiation oncology
- RNs, APRNs, and nurse navigators who work in a dedicated cancer clinic or center employed by the institution.

The following professionals are not included within the scope of the standard

Medical Assistants (MA)
Physician Assistants (PA)
Travel RNs, APRNs, nurse navigators
Locum Tenens RNs, APRNs, nurse navigators
Nursing administrators (directors, managers etc.) that do not provide direct patient care
Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)

The standard does not apply to nurses that work on units not dedicated to oncology, operating room nurses, recovery room nurses, or emergency room nurses. It does not apply to nurses who have occasional contact with a cancer patient on another floor or unit. At this time, locum tenens or travel nurses are not included within the scope of the standard.

Must an oncology clinical trials/clinical research nurse meet the requirements?

Yes, if providing direct patient care (for example, but not limited to: screening for eligibility, administering medications, or evaluation of adverse events).

Are nursing administrations (directors, managers, etc.) that do not provide direct oncology patient care included in the standard?

No.

Should infusion nurses in medical oncology be included in Standard 4.2?

Yes, if the nurse provides direct patient care and works at the facility for more than one calendar year.

We are a multi-specialty cancer hospital with all units and floors designated to cancer care and treatment. Are all of our nurses included in the standard?

No. The same guidance described in the “What is the Scope of Standard?” section of this FAQ also applies to dedicated cancer hospitals.

Are there exceptions for magnet hospitals?

No. Magnet designation does not evaluate oncology nursing competency or excellence.

How Many Credits?

During the implementation of the standard, how many Continuing Nurse Education (CNE) contact hours are required for site visits?

If a site visit is reviewing less than three years of activity for Standard 4.2 during the standard’s phase-in period, then the nurses must accrue an average of 12 CNEs per calendar year for the number of years the standard is being reviewed. Continuing Medical Education (CME) may also be acquired in lieu of CNEs.

For example, if a program is undergoing its initial site visit in 2023, nurses (who have been employed for at least one calendar year) need to accrue 12 CNEs/CMEs for 2022.

Can CNEs/CMEs that have been accrued in 2020 (during the standard’s phase-in period) count toward future site visits?

Yes, if 2020 is included in the accreditation cycle being reviewed during the site visit. This applies only to site visits being held in 2022 and 2023.

When do newly hired nurses need to start accruing CNEs/CMEs?

The nurse must start accruing CNEs/CMEs as of January 1 following the date of hire.

For example, if a nurse is hired March 1, 2022, the nurse will need to start accruing CNEs/CMEs as of January 1, 2023.

If a nurse is employed for 13 months during the accreditation cycle, but not a calendar year, (e.g. September 2021 to October 2022) does the nurse need to meet the standard?

No. CNEs/CMEs need to be accrued as of January 1 after the date of hire. If a nurse leaves prior to December 31 of that year, the nurse does not need to demonstrate compliance for that calendar year.

For example, if a nurse was hired in September 2021 and leaves the facility in October 2022, no CNEs/CMEs are required to be submitted for compliance.

If a nurse was hired in September 2021 and leaves the facility in October 2023, the nurse would need to accrue CNEs/CMEs for calendar year 2022.

If a newly hired nurse is not employed by the facility during the full three-year accreditation cycle, how many credits must the nurse accrue?

The nurse must average at least 12 CNEs/CMEs per calendar year for the number of calendar years employed during the accreditation cycle.

For example, if the nurse is employed for two calendar years during the three-year accreditation cycle, then the nurse must demonstrate completion of 24 CNEs/CMEs. Oncology nurses who provide care to oncology patients, whether contracted or employed etc., are expected to meet criteria with this standard.

If a nurse is employed for 18 months (one calendar year and 6 months) during the accreditation cycle, does the nurse have to obtain 12 CNEs/CMEs or 24 CNEs/CMEs?

The nurse would need to accrue 12 CNEs/CMEs for the full calendar year that the nurse was employed.

Can a nurse earn all 36 hours within one year of the accreditation cycle?

Yes, that is acceptable.

If a nurse is not yet eligible for Oncology Certified Nurse (OCN) certification, are the 36 CNEs/CMEs still mandatory?

Yes, if the nurse works for more than one calendar year and is one of the professionals included within the scope of this standard.

Which Certifications Count?

What makes a certification applicable for the standard?

The certification must include cancer-specific criteria and be accredited by the [Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification \(ABSNC\)](#) or [Institute for Credentialing Excellence \(ICE\)](#). Both organizations provide lists of accredited certifications.

What if my certification is “retired”?

If the certification is “retired,” it will still qualify as long as the certification was accredited at the time the certification was earned. The certification must have been continuously maintained by the nurse through the certification’s renewal process.

Does the Certified Navigator-Breast Nurse (CN-BN) certification from the National Consortium of Breast Centers (NCBC) count as a certification under this standard?

No, this certification is not accredited.

Does the CBPN-IC credential for oncology nursing qualify?

No, this certification is not accredited.

Does the Oncology Nursing Society's Chemotherapy/Biotherapy Certificate Course qualify as a certification?

No. But the contact hours earned to maintain the certificate will meet the CNE requirement for Standard 4.2.

Is the Certified Registered Nurse Infusion (CRNI) certification acceptable?

Yes.

Does certification through the Academy of Oncology Nurse and Patient Navigators(AONN+) qualify?

Yes. Oncology Nurse Navigator-Certified Generalist (ONN-CG) meets the certification requirement.

Does certification through The Joint Commission qualify?

No. The Joint Commission does not grant oncology nursing certification to individuals, so it does not qualify under Standard 4.2.

Does a certification through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) qualify?

ANCC certification does not automatically meet the standard. The certification must include oncology-specific criteria.

What is Applicable Continuing Education?

Are Continuing Medical Education (CME) hours accepted in lieu of CNE?

Yes.

Can CME be used for all 36 continuing education hours?

Yes.

Does in-house education count?

Yes. As long as the program awards CMEs or CNEs and addresses cancer care/cancer topics, then it qualifies for the standard.

Must internal education offered by the program offer CNE or CME for it to qualify for the standard?

Yes. Programs will have to apply for CNE or CME credit.

Do multidisciplinary conferences/tumor boards/cancer conferences qualify as continuing education?

Yes, as long as CNE contact hours or CMEs are awarded for attendance.

Can multidisciplinary conferences/tumor boards/cancer conferences be used for all 36 nursing contact hours?

Yes, as long as CNE contact hours or CMEs are awarded for attendance.



Do the CNE hours have to be official category 1 CEs?

CNE does not have categories. As long as the program awards CNEs and addresses cancer care/cancer topics, then it qualifies for this standard.

What are examples or sources for CNEs specific to clinical trial/clinical research nurses that meet this standard?

Any CNE qualifies as long as it covers cancer care/cancer topics. The [Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation](#) (ONCC) and [Oncology Nursing Society](#) (ONS) provide lists of suggested CNE.

Can the CNE/CME be on any cancer topic?

Yes.

Can UpToDate contact hours be counted toward the continuing education requirement?

Yes, if all requirements for receiving CNE or CME are completed.

Do college credits qualify as Continuing Education Units (CEU) under this standard?

No. CNE or CME must be awarded, and the education must address cancer care/cancer topics.

Can the nurse providing the oncology-related education count those CEUs for themselves?

No. In line with requirements by ANCC, these will not count under Standard 4.2.

What Documentation is Required?

What documentation is required to demonstrate compliance with Standard 4.2?

Programs will complete a CoC-provided template that lists each applicable RN, nurse navigator, and APRN. Information on the certification or required continuing education must be provided.

It will not be required that certificates be uploaded in the pre-review questionnaire, however, the site reviewer may choose to review certification certificates or continuing education certificates on-site or within three days of the site visit.

What qualifies as evidence of “progress toward certification”?

Examples of sufficient documentation would be contact hours per year or demonstrating that the exam is scheduled.