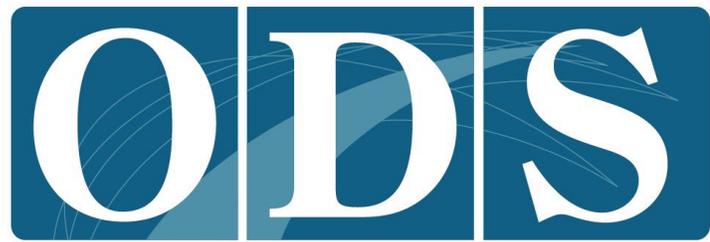**National Cancer Registrars Association**

COUNCIL ON CERTIFICATION

ODS

ONCOLOGY DATA SPECIALIST

CERTIFICATION

Exam Handbook & Candidate Application

December 2024

Table of Contents

The credential name of CTR, Certified Tumor Registrar, was updated to ODS (Oncology Data Specialist). Learn more at https://www.ncra-usa.org/ODS

Direct any questions and requests for information about the Oncology Data Specialist (ODS) credential to NCRA's Council on Certification
Phone: 703-299-6640 x312
Email: exam@ncra-usa.org
Web: https://www.ncra-usa.org/exam

About NCRA's Council on Certification

The National Cancer Registrars Association (NCRA) Council on Certification is an elected certification board created in 2002 to evaluate the professional competence of cancer registry professionals through its Oncology Data Specialist (ODS) certification. The purpose of the Council is to evaluate individuals requesting ODS certification, and other certifications as approved by the Council, and to establish, oversee and administer the mechanisms to accomplish this purpose.

Eligibility Requirements

Pursuing the Oncology Data Specialist certification – designated as ODS – should be a goal for those who have carefully reviewed the test blueprint and the eligibility requirements and determined that their educational and experience qualifications have sufficiently prepared them to sit for the exam.

All eligibility criteria for ODS certification must be met by each test window's application deadline.

Route A
• **Experience:** Successful completion of the NCRA Accredited Formal Education Program's practicum. *A practicum is the final step for all NCRA-Accredited Cancer Registry Management Programs. It provides students in-person experiences and/or online activities in the technical aspects of cancer registry operations and cancer surveillance methods to complement their coursework. NCRA's core online competency assessments are required to complete the practicum.*
AND
• **Education PATH A-1:** Successful completion of an NCRA-Accredited Associate Degree Program
OR
• **Education PATH A-2:** Successful completion of an NCRA-Accredited Certificate Program + successful completion of a minimum of an associate degree or equivalent (60 college-level credits)

Route B
• **Experience:** 1,950 hours (equal to one year full-time) experience in the Cancer Registry field
AND
• **Education:** Successful completion of a minimum of an associate degree or equivalent (60 college-level credits) including or in addition to coursework: Two college-credited semesters of 'Human Anatomy and Human Physiology' or equivalent. (Grade of C or better is required.)

Applying for Certification

Applicants for ODS certification must complete and submit the official application, meet established deadlines, pay all fees, and provide information required to demonstrate certification eligibility.

Nondiscrimination Statement

The NCRA and Meazure Learning do not discriminate against any individual or entity on the basis of religion, age, gender, race, disability, nationality, creed, socioeconomic status, or any other protected classification. All individuals submitting an application for the examination will be judged solely on published criteria. Candidates are not required to be a member of any organization to apply for NCRA certification.

Examination Windows and Deadlines

Examinations will be offered during the following windows:

Testing Window	Application Deadline
March 21-April 12, 2025	March 7, 2025
July 3-26, 2025	June 20, 2025
October 24-November 15, 2025	October 8, 2025

A candidate can test only once per examination window. Candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as they are eligible. Be aware that applying late may result in not receiving first choice of testing dates, locations, and/or times.

Examination Fees

Exam fees are required to be paid in advance at the time of application submission.

Registration Fee for the ODS Certification Examination
$435; $335 discounted rate for NCRA members

• Applications deemed ineligible will receive a full refund.
• Processed applications may be withdrawn but are subject to a de-registration fee.
• Checks returned for insufficient funds will be charged an administrative fee of $35.00.
• Non-domestic payments are preferred by credit card. If credit card payment is not possible, then payment may be made by international wire transfer or by check drawn in US dollars. Contact accounting@ncra-usa.org for wire transfer instructions. A fee of US $50 will be added to all orders paid by international wire transfer or checks originating outside the US.
• Dues for NCRA Membership may be submitted with your examination application.
• Online payment is not an option prior to application approval.
• DO NOT SEND CASH. MAKE CHECK/MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: NCRA
• Accepted credit cards: American Express, MasterCard, Visa

International In-Person Testing

Non-US candidates testing at an international test center will be charged an extra US $150. No fee is charged if candidates from outside of the United States opt to test via online remote testing.

International Fee: $150 for in-person testing; there is no extra fee ($0) for remote online testing

Transfers

Requests for transferring an examination appointment to a different testing window must be submitted to exam@ncra-usa.org. All transfers of examinations to a different testing window are subject to a **$125 transfer fee**.

Failure to keep an appointment or canceling an appointment without the appropriate notice (less than three business days prior to the scheduled appointment) will result in forfeiture of all applicable exam fees. Upon transferring your exam, you are no longer eligible for a refund and will forfeit all applicable exam fees should you decide to cancel your exam during a subsequent testing period.

Withdrawal

Candidates may withdraw approved examination applications. NCRA must receive a written request before the end of the candidate's testing window for the candidate to receive a refund minus a

processing fee. If you have previously transferred your exam to a new testing window, you are not eligible for a refund. Failure to schedule a test appointment at least three days before the end of the testing window will result in a withdrawal.

Contact exam@ncra-usa.org to withdraw your application. Refunds will be issued less a **$125 processing fee**.

Written requests for application withdrawal must be submitted by the following 2025 dates:
- April 10 for Spring Testing Window
- June 24 for Summer Testing Window
- November 13 for Fall Testing Window

Scheduling an Examination
Approved candidates will receive the notice to schedule (NTS) your examination via Meazure Learning Testing Support (testingsupport@meazurelearning.com). The examination scheduling process will begin approximately forty-five (45) days prior to the start of the examination window. Candidates are encouraged to check their junk or spam email folders to ensure they receive all email notifications. Contact exam@ncra-usa.org if you do not receive the NTS within the anticipated time frame.

When you receive the notice to schedule (NTS) an examination date, please select a date for the examination. Candidates will have a choice of:
• **In-person** at a computer-based testing center; or
• **Online remote testing** using your own computer

In-Person Testing at Meazure Learning Testing Centers
Each testing center maintains its own schedule, based on overall demand and scheduling constraints. Some centers have a limited schedule or limited seating. Testing appointments are fulfilled on a first-come, first-served basis. The Meazure Learning Test Center Network offers more than 1,400 test sites in 110 countries. https://www.meazurelearning.com/exam-proctoring/test-center-proctoring

Remote Testing via Meazure Learning Online Proctoring
Online remote testing allows you to interact with a live proctor via your Internet-connected computer's webcam and microphone. The examination is given using the same platform as an in-person testing center and the security requirements are the same. The test proctor will complete the authentication process to secure your digital and physical environments and will monitor you throughout the examination—just like an in-person testing center. The main difference is you will be in your residence or designated location using your own computer.

Remote testing requires downloading and installing the Guardian web browser for Windows or Mac operating systems. Your webcam and microphone must remain on for the duration of the examination. You should make arrangements to be in a private, quiet area and remain uninterrupted throughout the examination. (If another person enters the area or there appears to be a disruption or other irregularity, the examination is subject to end.)

There are specific equipment requirements for remote testing. Pre-check your computer to assess your computer's fundamental functionality. This automated equipment check will give you a general sense of compatibility but does not guarantee your equipment's functionality on exam day.

Effective online testing requires both reliable internet connectivity and appropriate computer hardware. Check your system's readiness at https://go.proctoru.com/testitout.

Identification requirements

Candidates are required to present a valid, government issued, photo identification to the proctor to gain access to the examination. Acceptable forms of identification (photograph and signature required) include:
• Government-issued driver's license
• Passport
• Non-US Military issued identification card
• Any physical government-issued identification card (must include photo)

The first and last names on your identification presented must match the candidate record as identified at the time of registration.

Special Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities

Meazure Learning complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and strives to ensure that no individual with a disability is deprived of the opportunity to take the examination solely by reason of that disability. Meazure Learning will provide reasonable accommodations for candidates with disabilities. Wheelchair access is available at all established Assessment Centers. Candidates with documented disabilities that would prevent them from taking the examination under standard conditions may request special accommodations and arrangements. To request special accommodations and arrangements, contact exam@ncra-usa.org.

A range of available accommodations are considered to assist test takers with disabilities or qualifying medical conditions. Exam applicants may request accommodations for the examination by completing a Request for Accommodation form upon application submission or at least 30 days in advance of the testing date and submitting the required supporting documentation.

Computer-Based Testing

Extensive computer experience is not needed to take a computer-based examination displayed on a single monitor. Benefits of computer-based testing include:
• Online tutorials for exam platform operation
• Ability to mark questions as a reminder to review later
• Ability to track and display time remaining during the exam
• Use of digital references during the open-book section
• Online notepad for note taking
• Online calculator for math functions

You are encouraged to view and familiarize yourself with the exam platform prior to your appointment. Registered candidates have unlimited access to an online tutorial of the Meazure testing platform.

Exam References

NCRA's Council on Certification has prepared the ODS certification examination using standard references significant to the cancer registry field. View the complete current list of testable references including specific references necessary for the open-book section of the exam at

. This list is subject to change without notice.

The necessary open-book resources will be made available as PDFs, with search functionality, within the exam platform during the exam. The open-book section may test on any primary site. Candidates should NOT bring any references to their exam appointment.

To access the allowed resources, candidates click on the "External Resources" button in the exam toolbar, then select the specific hyperlinked resource for it to appear in a browser tab.

Examination Content and Specifications

The content of the ODS certification examination is based on the test content outline which was developed from the role delineation study completed in 2022, which captured current practice in the cancer registry field and reflects the wide range of knowledge, skills, and abilities expected of entry-level professionals in the cancer registry field.

CLOSED BOOK
Legal and Ethical Aspects in the Cancer Registry Profession **(30 items)**
Cancer Registry Operations **(45 items)**
Cancer Registry Data Identification **(45 items)**
OPEN-BOOK
Cancer Registry Coding and Abstraction **(60 items)**

Detailed Content Exam Outline

Each major content domain is represented in every examination with the appropriate percentage of items. However, not all content sub-areas (https://www.ncra-usa.org/blueprint) are included on every form of the test.

Examination Format

The ODS certification exam is composed of one-hundred eighty (180), multiple-choice test items, based on four domains of practice. Test questions are prepared by subject matter experts in the cancer registry profession from diverse backgrounds and jobs. The examination is offered in English only.

The Council's exam committee assembled various versions of the test from the approved question bank. The examination consists of four option, multiple-choice questions that reflect different cognitive levels:
1. Recall: The ability to recall or recognize specific information.
2. Application: The ability to comprehend, relate or apply knowledge to new or changing situations.
3. Analysis: The ability to analyze and synthesize information, determine solutions and/or evaluate the usefulness of a solution. The emphasis is on application and analysis questions.

Time Allowance

Candidates have four (4) hours to complete the examination. You will have two (2) hours to complete the closed-book examination and two (2) hours to complete the open-book examination. Any remaining time from the first part (closed book section) will NOT carry over to the second part (open-book section). A mandatory break of exactly fifteen (15) minutes will be provided after you submit part 1 (closed book) and before you continue to the open-book section. Candidates are NOT permitted to return to part 1 once it has been submitted.

Section	Number of Items	Time Allowance
Closed book	120	2 hours
BREAK		15 minutes
Open-book	60	2 hours
TOTAL	**180**	**4 hours of testing time**

An on-screen clock will be provided and will track the allotted time for each section of the exam. You will not be permitted to continue beyond the allotted time limit.

You may take a restroom break at any time, though the exam timer will continue to run. Before leaving the testing area, please notify your proctor. For remote testers, your workspace needs to be resecured each time you return before you can continue with the exam.

Examination Rules

To provide a fair and consistent environment for all candidates, examinations are delivered using standardized procedures following strict security protocols. Candidates are required to follow all testing rules at all times. Failure to follow these rules may result in termination of a candidate's testing session, invalidation of the candidate's examination score, and/or disciplinary action.

Meazure Learning follows industry standard testing rules as outlined below.
• The examination will be given only on the date and time noted on the examination confirmation email.
• No electronic devices (cell phones, pagers, tablets, etc.) may be taken into the testing room.
• No books, papers, or other reference materials may be taken into the testing room.
• Instructions by testing center personnel are to be followed.
• Visitors are not permitted at the testing center.
• Bring an extra layer without a hood or pockets for air-conditioned rooms.
• No questions concerning the content of the examination may be asked during the examination period. You should listen carefully to the directions given by the proctor and carefully read the directions shown on the computer monitor.
• You are only allowed to have one (1) monitor running during the examination. If you have more than one monitor being used, please disconnect the other monitor, and ensure it is turned around or completely covered so that the screen is not facing you upon connection to the proctor. (Remote testing)
• Before the start of the test, you will be asked to scan the room with your webcam to show that you are alone and the area around you is clear. The webcam and microphone must remain on for the duration of the examination. (Remote testing)
• You should make arrangements to be in a private, quiet area and remain uninterrupted throughout the examination. (Remote testing)
• If another person enters the area or there appears to be a disruption or irregularity, the examination is subject to terminate. (Remote testing)

Testing Remotely

Effective online testing requires both reliable internet connectivity and compatible computer functionality for the entirety of the exam. Your answers will be saved, and the timer will be stopped should Internet connectivity be lost during the exam.

You will need to login to your candidate testing account to initiate the examination appointment and launch the online examination. Once you have connected with the proctor, you will be required to show your ID and scan the room with your webcam to demonstrate you are alone and the area around you is clear. Also, you will be required to use a mirror or reflective surface to show the proctor your monitor. This can include a phone with a front-facing camera. The webcam and microphone must remain on for the duration of the test. The proctor will monitor you throughout the examination and has the ability to end the session if a disturbance or other irregularity occurs.

Arriving at the test center for in-person testing

The ODS certification exam can only be taken during the date and time of your scheduled testing appointment. If it becomes necessary for Meazure Learning to change the scheduled examination date, you will be notified of any changes as far in advance of the examination as possible. In the event of an emergency, go to Meazure's online Exams page (https://ncra.ysasecure.com/login) and click the 'Withdraw' or 'Reschedule' button. Candidates who do not have substantiated emergencies and who miss their testing appointments must reapply and pay the examination fees again.

Arrive at the testing site at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the examination. You must bring your confirmation notice and your photo identification with signature to the examination site when you arrive for your scheduled testing appointment. You will not be admitted to the examination once the examination has begun. If you arrive late or not at all, you forfeit your testing appointment and your examination fee.

During the Exam

If time allows, during each exam section, you can revisit answered questions to review or change your responses. You can also re-evaluate questions you've marked for review and review your responses for the section you are testing. Once your allotted time for each section has expired, or you submit the exam section, you cannot revisit or review the questions. All questions will be included in your final score calculation, even those left blank or marked for review.

Disqualification

Any candidate who gives or receives assistance on the examination during the testing appointment will be required to turn in their examination materials immediately and leave the testing room. The candidate's examination will not be scored, and the incident will be reported to Meazure Learning and the Council on Certification for further action.

Rescheduling Due to Extenuating Circumstances

If for a reason beyond the candidate's control, the candidate cannot meet a scheduled examination time, the examination may be rescheduled for another time during the testing window for that examination period, if sufficient notice is provided, availability exists, and verifiable documentation of the extenuating circumstance is provided. You may reschedule your exam at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to your appointment time. To reschedule, navigate to Meazure's online Exams page and click the 'Reschedule' button.

Exit Survey

At the end of the exam, Meazure Learning will ask you to complete a brief survey with an evaluation of your testing experience. Your survey answers are anonymous and confidential. All comments are reviewed and, if possible or necessary, modifications are implemented.

Exam Scoring

The candidate must receive a passing score on the total examination (scores from closed-book and open-book are combined) to earn certification. Examination scores will be available approximately 6-8 weeks after the exam window. You will receive an email from Meazure Learning with instructions on how to access the score report portal. Your score report will indicate whether you passed or failed the examination. Passing or failing is based on the number of items you answered correctly, and it is reported as a total score indicated on your score report. Score reports will provide scores within each content domain of the content outline.

The cut score or passing point used in this examination is determined by a criterion-referenced approach called the Modified-Angoff method. This technique is currently considered one of the most defensible criterion-referenced methods available for setting passing points.

Cancelled Scores

NCRA's Council on Certification and Meazure Learning are responsible for the validity and integrity of the scores it reports. On occasion, occurrences, such as computer malfunction or misconduct by a candidate, may cause a score to be suspect. NCRA reserves the right to void or withhold examination results if, upon investigation, violation of their regulations is discovered.

If You Pass the Examination

Each successful candidate will receive a [digital badge](#) and certificate of attainment from NCRA and will have earned the designation "ODS" to indicate certification. After being awarded the designation, candidates will be issued a digital badge via email. Your personalized digital badge can be shared with others on social networking sites, email signatures, digital resumes, and websites. Allow three (3) weeks after receiving your passing score for your certification materials to be distributed to you.

Recertification

The NCRA's Council on Certification oversees the maintenance of the ODS credential. To retain credentialed status, ODS-certified individuals must submit twenty (20) continuing education hours to NCRA every two years, eight (8) Continuing Education In-Person (CEIP) hours every four years and pay a certification maintenance fee on an annual basis.

Credential Verification

NCRA offers a free-of-charge verification service allowing employers and future employers to verify if an ODS certification is currently valid. All ODS-certified individuals - regardless of credential status - are automatically enrolled.

Examination Retakes

Candidates not successful during their examination attempt can reapply to take the certification examination. The reapplication process includes submitting an updated application and paying the examination fees. The certification exam may be taken only once during a testing window. However, an exam may be taken in subsequent testing periods, upon submission of a new application and payment of the examination registration fee.

Confidentiality

Information about candidates for testing and their examination results are considered confidential. Studies and reports concerning candidates will contain no information identifiable with any candidate, unless authorized by the candidate.

Application for ODS Certification Examination

2025 Testing: ○ March 21 - April 12   ○ July 3 - July 26   ○ October 24 - November 15

CANDIDATE INFORMATION   *Enter only your first and last names EXACTLY as it appears on your official identification*

_____

⌃ Last Name, First Name

_____   _____   ○ Female ○ Male ○ Other

NCRA ID#   Suffix (Jr, Sr, etc.)   Gender

_____

Home Street Address

_____

City, State/Province, ZIP/Postal Code   COUNTRY (if outside of USA)

Email address: _____

_____   _____/_____/_____

Telephone #   Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION   *Darken only one choice for each question.*

1. HIGHEST ACADEMIC LEVEL:
   ○ 60 college-level credits   ○ Associate Degree   ○ Bachelor's Degree   ○ Master's Degree   ○ Doctorate

2. WORK EXPERIENCE IN CANCER REGISTRY:
   ○ Practicum   ○ Less than 1 year   ○ 1 to 2 years ○ 3 to 5 years   ○ 6 to 10 years ○ 10+ years

3. PRIMARY PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT:
   ○ Hospital Registry   ○ Academic Institution ○ Private Industry   ○ Professional Organization
   ○ Central/State Registry   ○ Federal Registry   ○ Student   ○ Other: _____

4. IS YOUR CANCER PROGRAM COC-ACCREDITED?
   ○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Not Applicable

5. HAVE YOU EVER SERVED IN THE U.S. MILTARY?
   ○ Yes, currently serving   ○ Yes, past service   ○ No

6. PERCENT OF TIME CURRENTLY SPENT IN CANCER REGISTRY WORK:
   ○ 0%   ○ 1% to 25%   ○ 25% to 50%   ○ 51% to 75%   ○ More than 75%

7. NUMBER OF CASES ACCESSIONED ANNUALLY AT YOUR INSTITUTION:
   ○ Under 300   ○ 301 to 500   ○ 501 to 700   ○ 701 to 1000   ○ Over 1000   ○ Not Applicable

8. PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND PRIOR TO ENTRY INTO CANCER REGISTRY:
   ○ Medical Records   ○ Nursing ○ Radiation ○ Public Health ○ Other: _____.

9. [OPTIONAL] RACE:
   ○ African American   ○ Asian   ○ Latino   ○Native American   ○ White   ○ Other

10. HAVE YOU TAKEN THIS EXAMINATION BEFORE?
   ○ No   ○ Yes   Month & Year: _____

11. ELIGIBILITY ROUTE:
   ○ Route A-Path 1   ○ Route A-Path 2   ○ Route B

ROUTE A EDUCATION
○ **Route A-1** NCRA-Accredited Associate Degree
OR
○ **Route A-2** NCRA-Accredited Certificate +
Associate Degree or equivalent (60 college credits)

NCRA-ACCREDITED PROGRAM
Name of Institution(s):

_____

_____

_____

Completion Dates: _____

_____

ROUTE A PRACTICUM
All NCRA-Accredited Programs require the successful completion of a practicum to earn the degree or certificate.

☐ Online Competency Assessments
Submit all completion certificates.

Practicum Activity*:   ☐ On-Site   ☐ Virtual
* Practicum can be documented on transcripts, Practicum Completion Form(s), or in the Experience Verification section.

ROUTE B EDUCATION
○ **ROUTE B.** Associate Degree or equivalent (60 college credits) including or in addition to 2 semesters of Human Anatomy and/or Physiology coursework.
College/University & completion date(s):

_____

_____

Human "A&P" course titles:

_____

_____

_____

ROUTE B CANCER REGISTRY EXPERIENCE
○ **ROUTE B.** Minimum of 1,950 hours (equivalent to 1 year) full-time or equivalent experience in the Cancer Registry field. *Include start/end dates, employer, plus location*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

EXPERIENCE VERIFICATION *To be completed by supervisor or H.R. who has knowledge of applicant's registry experience.*
By my signature below, I verify that to the best of my knowledge the applicant's experience is accurate, correct, and complete, plus meets the eligibility route selected above; Route A (practicum with ODS-credentialed supervisor) or Route B (minimum of 1950 hours in the cancer registry field).

_____

Print name   Title   Telephone #

_____

Signature   Date   Email

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE (REQUIRED)   *Complete entire application before signing.*
 I have read the Handbook for Candidates and NCRA's Code of Ethics and understand I am responsible for knowing their contents.
I certify that the information given in this Application is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. I consent to NCRA performing verification of my provided experience and education.

_____

Candidate Signature   Date

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATION & PAYMENT TO: exam@ncra-usa.org OR
NCRA, 1330 BRADDOCK PL #520, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314 OR FAX 703-299-6620

PAYMENT FORM

Complete this form and return it with your application.

Applicant Name: _____

Name (as it appears on your credit card) _____
Billing Address:

_____

Testing Period: ☐ March 21-April 12   ☐ July 3-26   ☐ October 24-November 15
Application Deadline: March 7 | June 20 | October 8

Fee(s)
Registration fee: ☐ $435.00 (Regular rate)   ☐ $335.00 (NCRA member-rate)

International fee: ☐ $150.00 in-person testing   ☐ $0 online testing

Transfer fee: ☐ $125.00

ONLINE PAYMENT
☐ Pay fees via my NCRA account. (Invoice will be shared after your application is processed.)

CREDIT CARD PAYMENT
☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Card Number: ____,____,____,____-____,____,____,____-____,____,____,____-____,____,____,____

Expiration Date: _____/_____   **CVC:** _____

Signature: _____

CHECK PAYMENT *Make checks payable to NCRA, in US dollars, and drawn on a US bank.*
☐ Money Order/Check #: _____

SUBMITTING *Send completed application & payment by one of the following methods.*

- Email exam@ncra-usa.org (preferred), *or*

- Fax 703-299-6620, *or*

- Mail using the address label on the next page

REMINDERS…

- **Sign** your application
- Include proper **payment**
- Include **documentation** (e.g. transcripts, degrees) to support chosen Eligibility Route
- **Unofficial documentation** (e.g. transcripts, degrees) is accepted
- Submitted supporting documentation will **not be returned**
- **Make a copy** of your completed application for your records
- Do **not** staple any enclosures
- Do **not** send duplicate materials
- Do **not** send your resume or CV
- Do **not** send pages of the handbook; **only** send the application and payment form

NEXT STEPS…

1. After your application is received and approved, your payment will be **processed**.

2. A **payment receipt** will be sent to the email address provided on your application.

3. **Test scheduling info** will be emailed **within 45 days** prior to the testing window opening.

MAILING LABEL…

NCRA ODS Certification Exam

1330 Braddock Place #520

Alexandria, VA 22314