



COUNCIL ON CERTIFICATION



# ***Certification***

## **Exam Handbook & Candidate Application**

January 2024

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](mailto:exam@ncra-usa.org)

Web: <https://www.ncra-usa.org/exam>

The document is downloadable for individual use and as a reference for candidates. Candidates are responsible for knowing its contents. The 2024 Exam Handbook supersedes all previous versions of this handbook. NCRA's Council on Certification neither sponsors nor endorses review courses for the CTR Certification Examination.

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## 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 have determined that their educational and experience qualifications have sufficiently prepared them.

**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 Measure 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
April 5-27, 2024	March 29, 2024
July 19-August 10, 2024	July 12, 2024
October 18-November 9, 2024	October 11, 2024

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. Applications deemed ineligible will receive a full refund.

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

- Applications deemed ineligible will receive a full refund.
- 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](mailto: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 in-person test center will be charged an extra US \$150. No fee is charged if candidates from outside of the US opt to test via online remote testing.

**International Fee: \$150 for in-person testing; \$- there is no fee for remote online testing**

## Transfers

Registration fees, once processed, are nonrefundable. Candidates unable to take the examination within the testing window they registered for may request a transfer to the next testing period. The transfer request must be submitted to NCRA before the candidate's scheduled appointment.

**Transfer Fee: \$235; \$192 NCRA member-rate**

Submit payment with a new, completed application.

NOTE: The transfer fee is based on cost and is not punitive in nature. This fee must be paid prior to the subsequent testing window's application deadline. This fee is separate from the application fee.

## Scheduling an Examination

Approved candidates will receive the notice to schedule (NTS) your examination via Measure Learning Testing Support (testingsupport@measurelearning.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](mailto: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 Measure 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 filled on a first-come, first-served basis. The Measure Learning Test Center Network offers more than 1,400 test sites in 110 countries. <https://www.measurelearning.com/exam-proctoring/test-center-proctoring>

## Remote Testing via Measure 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 computer or laptop.

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.)

You may run a system check to confirm your computer meets technical requirements for remote proctoring. 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 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](mailto: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. A tutorial is also available prior to beginning your exam at the test site and is also available to reference during the exam if needed. Extra time is not provided once the exam is in progress.

## 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 <https://www.ncra-usa.org/examrefs>.

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 button with the blue "i" circle 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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>4 hours of testing time</b>



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.
- 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

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. 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

You must take the ODS certification examination during the testing appointment date and time that was scheduled. 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

You have the opportunity, time permitting, to return to answered questions, review and change previously answered questions, re-evaluate questions marked for review, and review responses for the entire exam. When your exam time expires, all questions will be included in the final calculation of your score, even if they are blank or marked for review. Once your allotted time has expired, or you exit the exam, you cannot see or review the questions again. Remember that your answers will not be lost and the clock will be stopped should Internet connectivity be lost during the exam.

### 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 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 cancel or reschedule your exam at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to your appointment time. To cancel or reschedule, navigate to Meazure's online Exams page and click the 'Withdraw' or '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, changes 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 six 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 Measure 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. The digital badge can be shared with others on social networking sites, email signatures, digital resumes, or 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 and pay a recertification 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 individual 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

**2024 Testing Period:**☐ April 5–27☐ July 12–August 10☐ October 18–November 9**CANDIDATE INFORMATION***Enter your first and last names EXACTLY as it appears on your official identification*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name, First Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
NCRA ID#

\_\_\_\_\_  
Suffix (Jr, Sr, etc.)

☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other  
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. MILITARY?**

☐ 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

**ELIGIBILITY ROUTE** *Select & complete only one route. A copy of appropriate transcripts must accompany the application.*

**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):

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Completion Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

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**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):

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Human "A&P" course titles:

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**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 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*

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**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](mailto: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: ☐ April 5-27 ☐ July 19-August 10 ☐ October 18-November 9

Application Deadline: March 29 | July 12 | October 11

### 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: ☐ \$235.00 (Regular rate) ☐ \$192.00 (NCRA member-rate)

### 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 method.

[exam@ncra-usa.org](mailto:exam@ncra-usa.org) (preferred), or fax 703-299-6620, or mail using address label on 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 details will be emailed **within 45 days** prior to the testing window opening.

NCRA ODS Certification Exam  
1330 Braddock Place #520  
Alexandria, VA 22314 USA