



Taking on the Challenge of Advanced Practice Certification

One Nurse's Journey with the CWON-AP Process

Susan S. Thomason, MN, RN, APRN-BC, CRRN, CWON-AP; James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, Tampa, Florida

Certification has long been established as a method to validate expertise in multiple fields. Some credentials are more difficult to achieve than others, but all require merit in knowledge and clinical experience. One might wonder if certification merely authenticates these skill sets or instills a thirst for attaining an even greater understanding of the role; in my case, CWON-AP certification was a mixture of these two elements.

The challenge of advanced practice (AP) certification was presented when it was time to renew my basic CWON certification. Although I always attended to renewal with some rigor, the arduousness was brief and straightforward. However, I thought that I would explore the requirements of AP certification to determine if it was even a remote possibility. Albeit remote, I came to believe that it was certainly worth a try.

Eligibility for AP certification is forthright: RN license, basic WOCNCB® certification, graduate of a WOCN program, and completion of a graduate level NP or CNS program. Recertification is required every 5 years. Fees are delineated for 1-3 specialties: Wound, ostomy, and/or continence. The Advanced Practice Handbook and application may be downloaded from the WOCNCB website (www.wocncb.org/apcert). "Interactive" forms are placed into the wound/ostomy/continence categories for accessibility; I used these forms to justify points in each specific area.

Specific areas of AP concentration include Continuing Education Units, Programs/Projects, Research, Publications, Teaching, Professional Organizations, and Academic Education. A minimum number of points are required for most areas.

Since I had primarily focused on wound management for a number of years, I soon realized that the ostomy certification would be my Achilles heel. Kathleen D. Wright, RNC, MS, CWOCN, APRN was the exceptional WOCNCB® member who adroitly mentored me through the process of achieving ostomy certification in addition to wound certification. After clarifying why I did not attain the required points in ostomy with my first application submission, she provided helpful recommendations for point acquisition.

Initially, I faltered at doing the extra work to achieve the missing ostomy points; advanced practice clinicians know that every day is incredibly packed. However, my motivation was etched in the belief that the points could be accrued through initiatives in which I was currently involved (and previously did not think were applicable for some unknown reason), or this was an opportunity for new initiatives. For example, without fully appreciating the point applicability, I had been engaged in a performance improvement project with continent urinary diversions and I had recently submitted information to a national site for evidence-based neurogenic bowel management, in which ostomies were incorporated. Furthermore, I had intended to provide an educational series on total ostomy management for quite some time but had not yet committed the time; certification was the catalyst to launch this important didactic series. Would I surmount these hurdles if I had to meet AP certification requirements again? Absolutely!

In our careers as WOCN nurses, one reflects on the sheer importance of what we do –we directly affect morbidity, quality of life, and even mortality. AP credentials attest to the scientific foundation and in-depth clinical acumen of a subset of nurses. The WOCNCB® members are willing and quite astute at providing the advice that will facilitate AP certification to this unique nursing subset.

It is time to celebrate the CWON-AP certification and encourage other nurses to embrace the challenge of achieving this pinnacle of professional recognition and a culture of excellence.

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President's Message

By Kathleen D. Wright, RN BC MS CWOCN APRN



Many of you may have seen the service-themed posters that offer an attractive picture and an inspirational quote. One such print depicts a rocky mountaintop with a sole green-leaved tree and a thought on ACHIEVEMENT that proclaims, "Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow". What a motivational thought for incorporation into our personal and professional journeys!

I recently was contacted by a nursing leadership student who requested an e-interview regarding my nursing career. The thought-provoking queries facilitated some personal reflection, which forced me to take an introspective look at my life's work. I encourage each of you to take a moment to think about these questions related to your own practice:

- * What has been your greatest accomplishment in your nursing role?
- * What has your mentor made possible for you to do that you would not have otherwise accomplished?
- * What types of volunteer work/leadership has your employment lead to you become involved in?
- * How has membership in your specialty organization helped you grow professionally?
- * What is the best advice you can give to novice nurses?
- * How are you mentoring tomorrow's nursing leaders?

As President of the Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing Certification Board, I have been inspired to learn of the many professional achievements of our candidates! The entire Board enjoyed talking with those of you who were able to attend the WOCN national conference in Minneapolis this year, hearing about your practice either during visits to our booth in the exhibit hall or participation in the Board's Professional Growth Program (PGP) session. Many attendees noted that collecting information for the PGP portfolio provided insight into all that they have accomplished over their re-certification period, and motivated them toward a well-rounded practice. The Board is privileged to review your submissions and is gratified by the wonderful programs and projects presented by our Board-certified nurses. We have seen innovative patient/staff education tools, unique training techniques and creative outreach efforts to effective regulatory changes in advocacy for our patients. During the Board session this past summer, we also awarded the first Advanced Practice Wound Ostomy Nursing certification. In addition to the mandatory continuing education component, our new Advanced Practice certification program requires education, research and publication activities; applicants thus far have submitted impressively comprehensive portfolios with evidence of phenomenal work in the art and the science of our nursing specialty! Our patients, coworkers and our communities are served well by the many contributions each of you makes on a daily basis! THANKS...for all you do, for all you touch. Continue to achieve and motivate others!

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: I'm trying to verify my credentials online, but they haven't been updated. How long does it take for my information to appear online?

A: From the time of your certification exam, it may take up to 8 weeks to appear on the 'Credential Verification' section of the www.wocncb.org website. The WOCNCB will be happy to send you a letter of verification via fax or e-mail prior to the updates on our website. Please contact the WOCNCB at 1-888-496-2622 or info@wocncb.org to request information.

Q: I tested a month ago, and haven't received my certificate – when can I expect it in the mail?

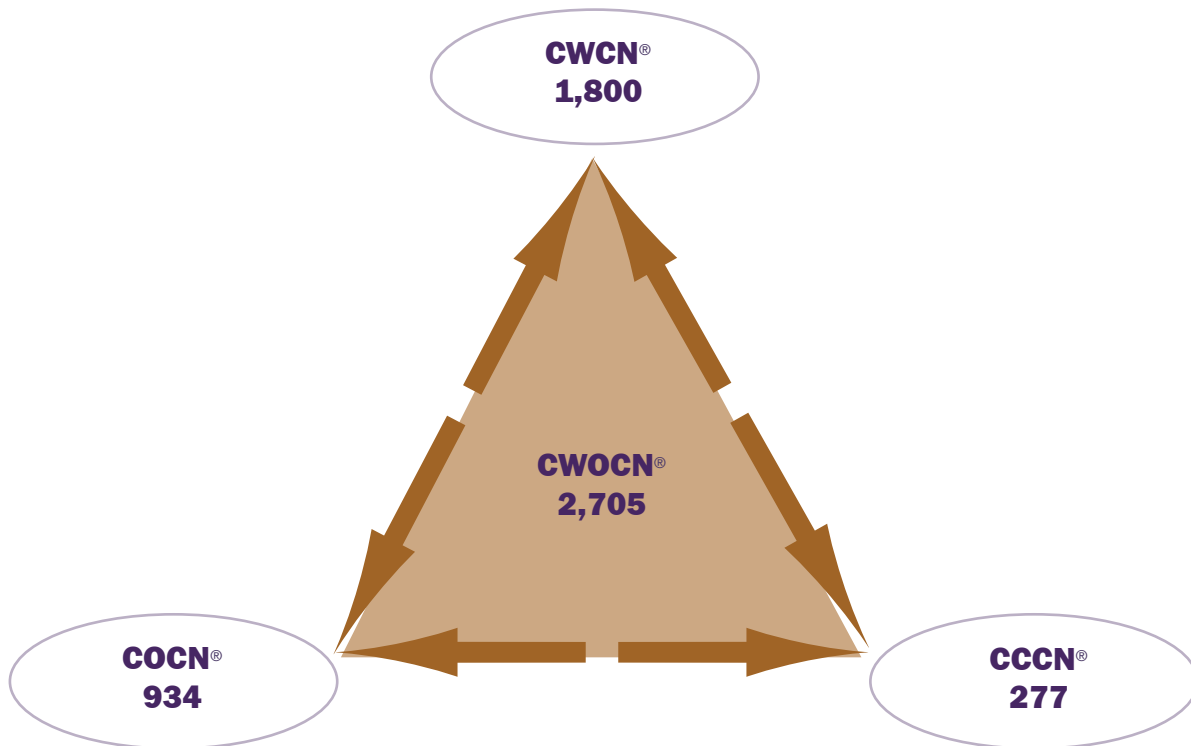
A: Certificates are issued quarterly, in order to capture the full scope of exams you may have taken in that three-month period.

Q: I sent my exam application about three weeks ago, but haven't received confirmation that it was processed. How may I check the status and schedule my exams?

A: Applications are processed by our testing service, Applied Measurement Professionals (AMP). Typically, it takes about 15 working days to process an application and notify the candidate they have been approved to test. Please contact AMP directly regarding the status of your application by calling 1-888-519-9901.

Are Your Nurses Board Certified?

Join more than 4,800 RNs certified by the WOCNCB



Recertification by PGP

Donna Loehner, RN, BSN, CWOCN
WOCNCB Board Liaison to PGP Committee



Have you ever experienced frustration with developing a presentation, or perhaps creating a teaching booklet and not receiving recognition? Well now is the time for you to get recognition for many of the projects, publications, research that you have completed.

Recertifying by PGP is one of the most rewarding experiences one can undertake. With the many changes that have occurred this year, you obtain points for many more activities.

Recent changes:

There is now a *new pricing tier* for recertifying by PGP. If you refer to the www.wocncb.org web site, you will see that the price of recertifying by PGP is in alignment with the exam fee. The price for tri-specialty \$425, dual specialty is \$350 and single specialty is \$300. Please refer to our web site for further information.

Our newest trademark is up and running. Certificants have been asking for a trademark indicating certification in wounds and ostomy, hence, you may now use the WOCNCB's newest trademark CWON™ credential if you select to recertify as a Wound and Ostomy Nurse.

Times are changing frequently in the medical and electronic

field. As we move through the times, you can now *submit your portfolio electronically*. Instructions are more specific, so please pay close attention to the details.

We have *defined more activities* to complete your portfolio. Some of these include: arranging a product fair, developing or revising a product formulary, expert reviewer for WOCN best practice, national buying group committee, webmaster, and developing standardized care plans. We have also added points for developing initial patient education tool. How exciting to receive credit for projects we develop to enhance not only our practice, but to provide the quality of care that we promote so well.

Providing preceptorships offer so many rewards. We now recognize the time, effort and expertise that is associated with preceptorships. As you peruse the website under PGP recertification, you will see that we have *doubled the points for WOCN preceptorships*.

At last, we have added an exciting category called *self-assessment*. This is designed to assess the impact that the PGP has on the WOC nurse. Self-assessment demonstrates the depth, breadth and specificity to an activity in each of the specialty tracks.

Take the time to visit our web site and find out more about PGP. "Go beyond" your routine practice from a novice to an expert and recertify by PGP. This is a wonderful accomplishment both professionally and personally.

2006 WOCNCB® Election Results CONGRATULATIONS!



Marilyn Swindle
RN, BSN, TNCC, CWOCN
San Antonio, Texas



Jeannine Thompson
RN, MSN, CWOCN
McKinney, Texas

Marilyn and Jeannine were selected by a vote of their peers to be members of the Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing Certification Board. Their term of office is from January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2010. Please join us in welcoming them both to the WOCNCB.

The future of the WOCNCB is exciting, as the Board is involved in marketing initiatives and decision making that will take WOCNCB certification to new heights. We know that Marilyn and Jeannine will make significant contributions to the direction and goals of the WOCNCB that will maintain the credibility, validity and visibility of the wound, ostomy, continence and foot care certifications.



LIMITED OFFER

Through December 23, 2007

Discounted Fees for Certified Foot Care Nurse (CFCN™)

The WOCNCB will continue to offer a **DISCOUNTED** fee to candidates applying for the foot and nail certification exam, valid for those testing through December 23, 2007. The discount offering covers four (4) certification exams for the price of three! CWOCNs who qualify for this discount are essentially earning a **FREE** CFCN exam.

For anyone taking two specialty exams (choose from Wound, Ostomy, or Continence) and the CFCN exam, you may also qualify for a DISCOUNTED exam fee: pay only \$425 for three exams. This is a total savings of \$275!

Please read the information below to determine if you qualify:

- Must take the foot and nail certification exam within one year of wound, ostomy, and continence exams.
- Offer expires on December 23, 2007. Applications must be submitted between November 15, 2005 and November 15, 2007 and applies to candidates testing between January 1, 2006 through December 23, 2007.
- If applying for all four exams prior to taking tests, indicate the discount offer code: WOC403 on your application in Section 2 of the WOC Examination Application. Payment is for three exams (\$440 if sending credit card payment, or \$425 discounted price for check payments.) This means your Foot and Nail certification exam is **FREE**.
- If applying for foot and nail certification exam within one year of successfully passing the wound, ostomy, and continence exams, indicate the discount offer code: WOC403 on Section 2 of your Foot & Nail Care Examination Application. A copy of your current WOC certification must also be submitted as proof of discount eligibility. Previous payment for three exams will be verified by AMP upon receipt of application. This means your Foot and Nail certification exam is **FREE**.
- If applying for wound, ostomy, and continence exams within one year of successfully passing the foot and nail certification exam, indicate the discount offer code: WOC403 on your application in Section 2 of the WOC Examination Application. Payment of \$75 for the cost difference of three WOC exams (\$425) and foot/nail exams (\$350) must be included. This means your Foot and Nail certification exam is **FREE**.
- If applying for two specialty exams (choose from wound, ostomy, or continence) within one year of successfully passing the foot and nail certification exam, indicate the discount offer code: WOC403 on your application in Section 2 of the WOC Examination Application. Payment of \$75 for the cost difference of the foot/nail exams (\$350) and three exam fees (\$425) must be included. This is a total savings of \$275!

A graphic with a white background and a large, stylized, light brown swoosh that curves from the bottom left towards the top right. The text is centered within the swoosh.

Watch our website
For the most up-to-date information
www.wocncb.org

Experiential Pathway

Effective January 1, 2007, there is a change in eligibility requirements to the Experiential Pathway. Please be aware that at least 375 of the required 1,500 clinical experience hours must be completed within one year prior to certification application.

Eligibility Requirements

- Have 50 contact hours (CEU) over the last five years within each specialty for which certification is sought.
- Have 1,500 clinical experience hours over the last five years within each specialty for which certification is sought. At least 375 of the clinical experience hours must be completed within the year prior to certification application.

Credentialing and Review

Written by: Carol Caliano, RN, MSN, CWOCN
Chair, WOCNCB Credentialing & Review Committee



To be valuable and credible, any certification must be protected. Your certification is accredited by the ABNS [American Board of Nursing Specialties] and NCCA [National Commission of Certifying Agencies]. It is also protected by the Credentialing Review and Appeals Committee.

The purpose of the Credentialing Review and Appeals Committee is to conduct structured investigations of credentialing violations of which they have been formally notified. Examples of credentialing violations include:

- Falsification of application materials
- Use of expired credentials
- Falsification of credentials
- Assisting another person to falsify credentials
- Unauthorized possession or use of WOCNCB testing materials
- Unauthorized use of WOCNCB registered trademarks

When notified of a credentialing violation, the committee chairperson will notify the individual of the investigation and give them an opportunity to respond and defend the allegations. Based on their response a hearing may be held. If a formal hearing is held, testimony of investigated party and any witnesses are taken and a transcribed record of the proceeding is made. A case decision is based on all the information submitted and the investigated party has 30 days to appeal the decision. Possible outcomes for a case include:

- No violation found
- Violation found – certification and/or eligibility to obtain re-certification will be revoked for a minimum of two years

It is the responsibility of all healthcare providers, the public, and all WOCN certificants to report incidents that require action by the Credentialing Review and Appeals Committee. By maintaining our integrity, we assure the public and employers the highest level of quality – The Gold Standard - in Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing.

Fond Farewells



Mary Walden, RN, MSN, CWOCN

Board Member 2000/01

President 2002/03 & 2004/05

Immediate Past President & Board Member: 2006

Mary has so graciously given her personal time in her commitment to serving as the WOCNCB President. The WOCNCB would like to thank her personally for her sense of dedication, talent and creativity – all of which have brought us towards a new dimension. We must bid a fond farewell to her as a Board Member for six years and serving on the Board in an advisory capacity as Immediate Past President this past year.



Cathy Thomas Hess, RN, BSN, CWOCN

Marketing Chair and Newsletter Editor, 2003 – 2006

Cathy has shown a dedication to the WOCN profession that brought forth many new and exciting projects and marketing opportunities to promote WOCN practice. We thank her for showing enthusiasm and bringing expertise to the WOCNCB. The Board has grown personally and professionally with Cathy's contributions these past four years.

Benevolence Funds Available in **2007**

The road of life can provide unexpected curves that can impact us financially. The WOCNCB does not want its certificants to forfeit their certification because of financial constraints. The Benevolence Fund will be ready for distribution beginning in January 2007. This fund was established to provide financial assistance to those individuals that are currently certified through the WOCNCB and undergoing financial hardships.

To qualify for this fund the certificant must:

- Currently be certified through the WOCNCB.
- Demonstrate financial hardship that prevents the candidate from recertifying in a specialty/specialties.
- Submit requested information in its entirety.

The application for this fund is available by visiting www.wocncb.org. For questions please call 1-888-496-2622.

International Testing



Wound, Ostomy, Continece examination is scheduled to be held in Seoul, Korea for the first time on October 29. Thirty students have registered to take the exam. Their instructor, Victoria Park, is a graduate of Emory University Wound, Ostomy, Continece program. She is tutoring her students in taking the exam in English. Their enthusiasm and determination to become certified is inspiring. We are now truly an international organization.

Online Credential Verification Available

The WOCNCB® now has online credential verification on its website. This resource allows employers to quickly access credentialing information. It also benefits certificants who want to check the expiration date of their credentials. This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week by visiting www.wocncb.org.



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Information Update

If your name, address and/or phone number have recently changed, please fill out the form below. Thank you for helping us keep our information current. Note: You must complete this form for the WOCNCB® even if you've notified the WOCN Society; the two organizations are completely separate entities.

Please Print.

Your Name: _____

If different from when you last certified, enter "old" name here:

My address and/or phone number has changed

From: _____

(Street address)

(City, State, ZIP)

(Phone)

(Email)

To: _____

(Street address)

(City, State, ZIP)

(Phone)

(Email)

Return to Kathy Meyer, WOCNCB® Executive Office, 555 E. Wells St. Suite 1100, WI 53202-3823 or send the information by e-mail to Kmeyer@wocncb.org



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