

CTR Exam Eligibility Route | History & Rationale

In 2003...

- Council on Certification seeks to eliminate Eligibility Route 1 - being able to sit for the exam with only two years experience (no education).

Rationale: There needs to be an educational requirement in our field to sit for the exam, either certificate programs or beyond. Job experience only should not be an option. We cannot advance the image of the profession to push for higher wages and classifications without some educational requirement.

We are sending a mixed message that the job is technically difficult and we deserve higher wages, but so easy that anyone can learn as they work without any education, not even a high school diploma. We are the probably the last allied health field without education requirements to be credentialed. We need to make our profession a valid career path by including an educational requirement.

In 2005...

- Council agreed to the very first recommendation from the Workforce Study that 'NCRA certification body should consider implementing a minimum Associate's degree requirement for entry into the field.'

Rationale:

The Council considered NCRA's 15-month study conducted by the University of California, San Francisco, Center for Health Professions and School of Nursing. The study's primary goal was to develop a baseline understanding of the current workforce in the cancer registry field. Study methods included focus groups, key informant interviews, and an online survey. Information was tabulated from 615 participants. The final report of this study is titled *Frontline Workers in Cancer Data Management: Workforce Analysis Study of the Cancer Registry Field*. [Source]

From the report, of those participants currently working in the profession, 55% agree that an Associate's degree would best prepare students for working as a cancer registrar. They also felt that the lack of a degree requirement impacts both public awareness and the ability to recruit to the profession. There was nearly uniform agreement by participants that a minimum college degree should be a prerequisite to certification testing. They believe that a requirement of a minimum degree would improve the profession by increasing the public profile of cancer registration, improve the credibility of the job as a profession, and improve the quality of cancer data.

Additional Rationale: Based on a Strategic Management survey of 1400 NCRA members, **9 out of 10 respondents felt that CTR candidates should be required to complete a minimum level of education (91.4%)**, and of these respondents half said the education level required should be that of an **Associates degree (51.0%)**

In 2006...

- Published changes to CTR Exam eligibility routes in spring newsletter of The Connection. (<http://www.ncra-usa.org/i4a/pages/Index.cfm?pageID=3415>) Announcement was made two years in advance before implementation to give enrolled students a chance to meet future eligibility.
- Updated Eligibility Route 1 to include an education minimum for Route 1:

“Route 1. Minimum **two years** full-time (24 months or 3,900 hours) or equivalent experience in the Cancer Registry field and a **high school** or General Education Development (GED) **diploma.**”

In 2008...

- **Began phase-out of Route 1; started steps toward an Associate’s Degree education minimum.**

“Route 1. Minimum two years full-time (24 months or 3,900 hours) or equivalent experience in the Cancer Registry field AND **2 semesters/3 quarters of college-level courses in Human Anatomy and/or Physiology.**”

In 2009...

- **Continued Route1 phase-out; added criteria towards an Associate’s Degree education minimum.**

“Route 1. Minimum **two years** full-time (24 months or 3,900 hours) or equivalent experience in the Cancer Registry field AND **twelve credit hours of college-level course** education that **includes 2 semesters/3 quarters of Human Anatomy and/or Physiology, 1 semester of Medical Science/Biology, plus 1 semester in Medical Terminology.**”

In 2010...

- **Eliminated Route 1; an Associate’s Degree is required for all exam candidates.**

In 2011...

- **Approved the Eligibility Committee’s recommendation on eligibility of experienced candidates who lack an Associate’s Degree (“grandfathering”).**

Recommendation: To not allow a grandfathering option for current CTR Exam eligibility, requiring all candidates to meet the current eligibility routes – including the education criterion).

Rationale: The years of experience do not necessarily equate to the required education minimum level for eligibility. NCRA’s Council on Certification started updating eligibility requirements in 2007 - meant to elevate the field to similar allied health fields.

- **Consider additional testing window in 2014 and 2015 in anticipation of the CoC standards deadline.**

Rationale: Meeting potential demand for candidates, especially in light of not allowing grandfathering.

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Council on Certification

<http://www.ctrexam.org>