Certification Exam Handbook

OTR® COTA®

NBCOT®

National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy

NBCOT Certification Exam Handbook

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Introduction

About NBCOT

The National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Inc. (NBCOT®) is the national certification body for occupational therapy professionals in the United States.

NBCOT protects the public through the validation of essential competencies for effective and safe occupational therapy practice. We envision everyone will benefit from high-quality services provided by certified occupational therapy professionals.

Currently, 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia require NBCOT initial certification for occupational therapy state regulation (e.g., licensing).

NBCOT certification programs are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) under their *Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs*.

- Visit NBCOT on Facebook *facebook.com/NBCOTCertification*
- Visit NBCOT on Instagram *instagram.com/nbcot*
- Visit NBCOT on Twitter *twitter.com/NBCOT*
- Visit NBCOT on LinkedIn *linkedin.com/company/nbcot*
- Visit NBCOT on YouTube *youtube.com/@NBCOTCertification*

About This Handbook

This handbook provides exam candidates with detailed information and steps to successfully complete and submit a certification exam application. NBCOT recognizes the responsibility exam candidates assume when completing their exam application.

Purpose of the Exams

The primary purpose of the NBCOT certification exams is to protect the public interest by certifying only candidates with the necessary knowledge of occupational therapy to practice. The Occupational Therapist Registered OTR® (OTR) and Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant COTA® (COTA) exams are constructed to measure entry-level competence of candidates who have met eligibility requirements for certification of the respective credential.

Exam Development

The OTR and COTA exams are constructed based on the results of practice analyses. The studies identify the domains, tasks, and knowledge required for occupational therapy practice relative to the respective credential. The ultimate goal of a practice analysis is to ensure that there is a representative linkage of exam content to current practice. The periodic performance of practice analyses assists NBCOT with evaluating the validity of the test specifications that guide the content distribution of the credentialing exams.

Exam Administration

Pearson is NBCOT's exclusive exam administration partner. Candidates take the OTR® and COTA® certification examinations at one of Pearson's highly secure testing locations, which include Pearson Professional Centers (PPCs), Pearson VUE Test Centers (PVTCs), and Pearson Authorized Test Center Select (PTC Select) sites.

Pearson is a global leader in computer-based certification and licensure testing and has extensive experience supporting the healthcare credentialing sector, having delivered exams on behalf of over 120 healthcare certification programs worldwide across a range of different professions. For more information, visit *www. pearsonvue.com*.

A standard NBCOT certification examination is a timed, four-hour, computer-based exam taken in person at a test center. The test center's standard testing environment provides a quiet, limited/reduced distraction test space with continuous monitoring throughout the exam.

For details on the test center environment and exam features and functionality in the computer-based testing environment, read the *Exam Day: Questions & Answers* section of this handbook, view the *What to Expect at the Test Center* video, and review the *online exam tutorial(s)*.

NBCOT Candidate/Certificant Code of Conduct

Preamble

The National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Inc. ("NBCOT," formerly known as "AOTCB") is a professional organization that supports and promotes occupational therapy practitioner certification. This Candidate/Certificant Code of Conduct enables NBCOT to define and clarify the standards of personal and professional conduct required for eligibility for both initial and continued certification, i.e., OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST REGISTERED OTR® (OTR) henceforth OTR, and CERTIFIED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT COTA® (COTA) henceforth COTA. Where the term "certificant" is used, the term "applicant or candidate" is included in its scope.

It is vital that NBCOT certificants conduct their work in a professional manner to earn and maintain the confidence and respect of recipients of occupational therapy, colleagues, employers, students, and the public.

As certified professionals in the field of occupational therapy, NBCOT certificants will at all times act with integrity; adhere to high standards for personal and professional conduct; accept responsibility for their actions, both personally and professionally; continually seek to enhance their professional capabilities; practice in a competent, fair, honest, equitable, and just manner; abide by all federal, state, and local laws and regulations; and encourage others to act in a professional manner consistent with the practice standards and responsibilities set forth below.

Principle 1

Certificants shall provide accurate, truthful, and timely representations to NBCOT, including, but not limited to:

- The submission of information on the exam application, certification renewal applications, or the renewal audit form;
- Answers to character review questions and, once certified, the disclosure of any criminal, legal, or other disciplinary matters within 60 days of any such matter;
- The submission of information requested by NBCOT for alleged violations of NBCOT's policies, requirements, and standards. Certificants shall cooperate with NBCOT concerning investigations and requests for relevant information; and
- The submission of information regarding her/his/their credential(s), professional license(s), and/or education.

Principle 2

Certificants shall abide by all exam-related security policies including, but not limited to, those involving copying or removing exam content and accessing prohibited devices or materials during their exam.

Principle 3

Certificants shall be accurate, truthful, and complete in any and all communications, direct or indirect, with any client, employer, regulatory agency, or other parties as they relate to their professional work, education, professional credentials, research and contributions to the field of occupational therapy.

Principle 4

Certificants shall comply with state and/or federal laws, regulations, and statutes governing the practice of occupational therapy.

Principle 5

Certificants shall not have pled guilty to or been found guilty of a serious crime.

Principle 6

Certificants shall not engage in behavior or conduct, lawful or otherwise that causes them to be, or reasonably perceived to be, a threat or potential threat to the health, well-being, or safety of recipients or potential recipients of occupational therapy services.

Principle 7

Certificants shall not engage in the practice of occupational therapy while one's ability to practice is impaired due to chemical (i.e., legal and/or illegal) drug or alcohol abuse.

Principle 8

Certificants shall not electronically post personal health information or anything, including photos, that may reveal a patient's/client's identity or personal or therapeutic relationship, without the patient's/client's written consent. (All statements, regardless of intent, about a patient/client can potentially contain sufficient information for a member of a community to recognize the patient/client thus, violating the state and/or federal law (i.e. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)).

Principle 9

Certificants shall not misuse NBCOT's intellectual property, certification marks, logos, or other copyrighted materials, including, but not limited to:

- Discussing or disclosing NBCOT examination content;
- Copying, uploading, downloading or sharing NBCOT study tool, continuing competency tool, website or other copyrighted content through any platform including web-based study tools, AI applications, social media outlets, discussion forums, email, etc.;
- Using an NBCOT certification mark when not actively certified;
- Displaying NBCOT logos without express written consent.

Revised February 2003
Revised June 2006
Revised October 2008
Revised January 2010
Revised November 2011
Revised October 2013
Revised February 2014
Revised March 2014
Revised October 2016
Revised June 2018
Revised July 2020
Revised March 2021
Revised July 2022
Revised May 2024

Exam Certification Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility Requirements

Candidates must meet the following eligibility requirements to sit for the NBCOT certification exam:

- Obtain an occupational therapy degree that meets current entry-level degree requirements:
  - ▷ OTR exam candidates must graduate with an entry-level occupational therapy degree from an ACOTE®- accredited occupational therapy (OT) program
  - ▷ COTA exam candidates must graduate with an entry-level occupational therapy degree from an ACOTE®-accredited occupational therapy assistant (OTA) program
  - ▷ Internationally educated candidates: If you did not earn your entry-level master's or doctoral degree in occupational therapy from a U.S.-accredited college/university, you must apply through the Occupational Therapist Eligibility Determination (OTED®) process. Please refer to the *NBCOT website* for details.
- Agree to abide by the NBCOT Code of Conduct
- Receive character review approval

Note: NBCOT may change or update exam eligibility requirements to meet industry standards. Changes in eligibility requirements will be communicated well in advance of taking effect.

Should eligibility requirements change in the future and a candidate has not attained certification, they have three (3) years from their graduation date reflected on the final transcript to take the exam under the prior eligibility requirements. After three years from the date of graduation, a candidate must meet current eligibility requirements to sit for the exam.

Eligibility Appeal Process

If a candidate is determined ineligible to take the certification exam, the candidate has the right to appeal that decision in writing to the NBCOT Board of Directors. Within 21 days from the date of the ineligibility notification, the candidate may submit a letter of appeal that **MUST** outline the grounds for the appeal, including reason(s) why the application should be recognized and accepted by NBCOT. All letters should be sent via traceable mail (i.e., certified, UPS, FedEx) to:

NBCOT, Inc. Attn.: President and Chief Executive Officer
One Bank Street, Suite 300
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

In the case of an ineligibility due to a violation of the *NBCOT Code of Conduct*, please refer to the *Procedures for the Enforcement of the Candidate/Certificant Code of Conduct*.

Application Process

Submitting the Application

Candidates apply for the certification exam online at *nbcot.org*.

The candidate must complete their exam application. Applications completed and/or submitted by third parties **(e.g., family members, recruiters, program directors, fieldwork coordinators, professors)** are not valid, and the candidate will be deemed ineligible for three (3) months with all application fees forfeited.

Once submitted, the exam application is valid for 90 days.

All application components must be fulfilled and approved (e.g., academic verification documentation, background check, testing accommodations if applicable) for the application to be processed and an Authorization to Test letter (ATT) generated *(refer to page 18)*. ATT letters are not processed and cannot be reissued on expired applications. Once an application has expired, candidates must submit a new exam application and pay all applicable fees.

Online Application for First-Time Exam Candidates:

1. Read the Certification Exam Handbook in full **BEFORE** applying for the exam. The handbook includes important information and instructions and is a required step in the application process.

2. Create a MyNBCOT account.

   ▷ **If you already have a MyNBCOT account**, log in using your unique email address and password.

   Note: an online account should only be created **once. A $35 USD fee will be assessed if a duplicate account is created. If you have forgotten your password, click the "Forgot Password?" link on the MyNBCOT login page. **If you are unsure whether you have an account or your SSN prevents you from making one, you may already have one. Contact NBCOT customer service at info@nbcot.org or call 301-990-7979 during business hours (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. eastern time) for assistance.***

   ▷ **For new users,** visit *nbcot.org*, click *Log In*, and select *Create Account*.

   ▶ Select the *I have never been OTR or COTA certified** button.

   **Note: an online account should only be created once. A $35 USD fee will be assessed if a duplicate account is created.*

   ▶ Complete your account information and click *Submit*.

   ▶ You will receive an email from NBCOT asking you to validate your email address to activate your MyNBCOT account (check your spam/junk folder for the email confirmation).

3. Apply for the exam.

   ▶ Plan ahead! Submit your application when you plan to test within 90 days of the submission date.

   ▶ If you are unable to complete the exam application in one session, you may click *Save and Quit* and complete the application later. You may change the exam application as long as it remains in the "New" status.

   ▶ Do not use the web browser's back button to review the application; it may cause the application to fail. Use the Continue and/or Back buttons within the application.

   ▷ **Log into your MyNBCOT Account.**

New and repeat applicants: Once logged into your MyNBCOT account, click the *Start My OTR/COTA Exam Application* button.

If you previously took and passed the COTA exam and are now eligible for the OTR exam, log into your existing MyNBCOT account. Go to *Student Dashboard* in the drop-down menu under your name. You will need to add an OT degree to your *Profile* before you can complete your OTR exam application.

▷ Review and complete your *Profile.*

Review and update your contact information. The email and address provided will be used to communicate important information.

IMPORTANT: You must provide a valid street address, NOT a P.O. Box, for the background check to be verified.

Click ***Continue***.

▷ Review and confirm your academic information.

Click ***Continue***.

▷ Honestly answer character questions and upload probation documentation, if applicable. (See "Character Review" on *page 13* for details.)

Click ***Continue***.

▷ Select ***Yes*** or ***No*** for Testing Accommodations.

If *Yes,* refer to the *Testing Accommodations* section of the NBCOT website and submit all the required information and documentation.

Note: Candidates requesting TA must upload at least one supporting document to continue. Candidates may upload additional documentation throughout the application approval process.

Click ***Continue***.

▷ Select your Services by clicking the appropriate ***Add to Cart*** button.

Note: Candidates may request one free Score Transfer and one free Eligibility Confirmation Notice per application. The discount is reflected upon checkout.

There is a $35 USD fee for each additional notice or transfer requested.

The one free Score Transfer and/or Eligibility Confirmation Notice request is only available before application payment. After the application payment is submitted, requests are $35 USD each.

Click ***Continue***.

▷ Select if you want your Performance Feedback Report sent to your program director under the Program Preferences section.

Note: You are not obligated to release this report.

Click ***Continue***.

▷ Read the Attestation statement and check the box.

Click ***Continue***.

▷ Review your cart and confirm your order is correct.

If the order is correct, click ***Proceed to Checkout***.

If edits are required, click *Return to your Cart*. Click *Remove*. Return to your Dashboard and click *Finish My Exam Application*. Make the desired changes.

▷ Complete shipping information (if applicable).

Click ***Continue to Payment***.

▷ Complete payment information.

Click ***Continue to Review Order***.

▷ Review your order.

If correct, check the box to agree to the *Terms and Conditions* and *Refund Policy*.

If edits are required, click *Remove*. Return to your Dashboard, click *Finish My Exam Application*, and make the desired changes.

Click ***Submit Order.***

4. Once the exam application is submitted:

▷ You may make the following revisions to your application when in *"New"* status:

- Change testing accommodations requests
- Change contact information
- Change name

▷ You may update your mailing address, email, phone, and password at any time by logging into your account and selecting ***Edit Profile***.

▷ If corrections are needed after the application has been moved from *"New"* status to *"Review in Progress"* or *"Processed"* (with the exception of address, email, or phone updates), contact *info@nbcot.org* or 301-990-7979 for assistance.

▷ Candidates can check on the status of their application by logging in to their MyNBCOT account.

Character Review

Exam applicants are required to answer the following questions as part of the NBCOT character review:

1. a. Have you ever pled guilty to a felony charge or been found guilty of a felony?

   b. Do you currently have a felony charge or charges against you?

2. a. Have you ever surrendered any professional license, registration, or certification or had one denied, revoked, suspended, or subject to probationary conditions by a regulatory authority or certification board, including NBCOT?

   b. Do you currently have a professional license, registration, or certification under review for possible disciplinary action?

3. a. Have you ever been found by any court, administrative, or disciplinary proceeding to have committed negligence, malpractice, recklessness, or willful or intentional misconduct which resulted in harm to another?

   b. Do you currently have a charge(s) of negligence, malpractice, recklessness, or willful or intentional misconduct that resulted in harm to another against you?

4. a. Have you ever been suspended and/or expelled from a college or university?

   b. Are you currently under active investigation that could lead to being suspended and/or expelled from a college or university?

The NBCOT character review also consists of a background check. It is important to note that failure to answer the character questions honestly is a violation of Principle 1 of the *NBCOT Code of Conduct*.

Applicants who answer ***"Yes"*** to any of the character questions on the exam application MUST submit the

following required documentation in their exam application:

- A detailed, written explanation regarding the incident(s). Please describe your involvement and behavior in the incident(s), including how your actions were discovered.
- If you have been on parole or probation at any point within the last seven (7) years, you must include documentation confirming your compliance with or completion of all terms and conditions imposed by the court. This can be a letter from your probation officer or other official court documentation.
- Please note that a Yes answer does not automatically deny your application, nor do certain behaviors automatically result in specific determinations. Each case is reviewed individually for a determination.

NBCOT may request additional information as needed or when warranted by the results of the background check.

All information **MUST** be submitted to and reviewed by NBCOT before the exam application may be approved. After NBCOT has completed its review, the individual is notified in writing about whether they will be eligible to sit for the NBCOT exam, provided that all other eligibility requirements are met.

If an exam candidate answered "Yes" to a character question and was cleared for the exam, or received a favorable *Early Determination Review* prior to applying, the candidate **MUST** answer the appropriate character question(s) on the exam application affirmatively when applying or reapplying for the exam.

If the affirmative response is in reference to the same issue that NBCOT previously reviewed, and no further incidents have occurred, the candidate **MUST** send written confirmation of this to *professional.conduct@nbcot.org* after reapplying. The candidate will not need to resubmit any previously submitted documentation.

If there have been additional incidents or further action resulting in an additional affirmative answer to one or more of the character questions, the candidate MUST answer the appropriate character question(s) affirmatively and submit information regarding the new incident to NBCOT for review. If the candidate fails to inform NBCOT, disciplinary action may result. Notifications should be sent to *professional.conduct@nbcot.org*.

If an exam candidate receives a favorable review from the Early Determination Review process, they will be required to undergo another background check as part of their exam application.

If a candidate answers "Yes" to a character question in error, the answer can be changed, provided that the application is still in "New" status. If the application has moved beyond the "New" status, the candidate should send an email noting the error to *professional.conduct@nbcot.org*.

Testing Accommodations

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), NBCOT provides reasonable and appropriate testing accommodations (TAs) for exam candidates with disabilities who are otherwise eligible to take the OTR or COTA certification examination.

Candidates with a documented disability as defined by the ADA may request testing accommodations. The ADA defines an individual with a disability as "a person who has physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities beyond the testing environment (such as seeing, hearing, learning, reading, concentrating, or thinking) or major bodily function (such as the neurological, endocrine, or digestive system)" when compared to most people in the general population. A diagnosed disability does not automatically necessitate testing accommodations.

For details on requesting testing accommodations and to view a list of personal items that do not require a request for TAs, refer to the *Testing Accommodations* section of the NBCOT website. For specific questions, email *accommodations@nbcot.org*.

Please note that a request for testing accommodations may increase the time it takes to process an exam application.

Academic Verification Documentation

NBCOT accepts either an official final college or university transcript or a Degree Verification Form to determine eligibility for testing.

NBCOT requires an official final college or university transcript for OTR or COTA certification to be granted.

Transcript Requirements

Candidates **MUST** arrange to submit to NBCOT an official final college or university transcript that includes all information listed below.

Candidates may request their official final transcript after creating an NBCOT account or submitting the exam application and payment.

Internationally educated candidates approved through the Occupational Therapist Eligibility Determination (OTED) process are not required to submit another transcript.

The official final transcript MUST include ALL of the following:

- ☑ Candidate's full name
- ☑ Candidate's social security number OR student identification number
- ☑ Name of the institution awarding the occupational therapy degree
- ☑ Listing of all courses completed and required for the ACOTE-accredited entry-level degree
- ☑ Identification of the major: either "occupational therapy" or "occupational therapy assistant"
- ☑ Title of the entry-level degree awarded in occupational therapy
- ☑ The date on which the degree was awarded/conferred. The degree must have been awarded. Transcripts with a graduation date that is after the transcript issue date will not be accepted.
- ☑ The registrar's official seal, stamp, or signature

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT TRANSCRIPT REVIEW

- **Transcripts sent before an NBCOT account has been created will be destroyed after 30 days from the date of receipt.**
- **If the transcript does not contain all of the above information, NBCOT will notify the candidate via email that the application cannot be processed until the information is received.**
- **The following will not be accepted:** a transcript marked "unofficial copy," a photocopy, or a letter from the school.
- **The application process is not complete until educational documentation is on file with NBCOT.** Candidates may log in to their MyNBCOT account to check whether NBCOT has received a final transcript.
- **Transcripts are reviewed in the order they are received. This process can take up to 10 business days from the date received and may take longer during busy times.**

SENDING YOUR OFFICIAL FINAL TRANSCRIPT

Your official final transcript must be sent one of the following ways:

- **A secure document transcript service or clearinghouse.** NBCOT will only accept transcripts

electronically that are transferred using a secure and verifiable transcript service or clearinghouse. The documents should be sent to *transcripts@nbcot.org*. NBCOT does **NOT** accept transcripts emailed directly from your institution's registrar's office.

- **Directly from your institution's registrar's office.** A mailed transcript from the registrar's office must be placed in an envelope that either has a return address for the registrar's office OR is marked with a registrar's stamp, the registrar's initials, or "Transcripts Enclosed" on the back flap.

Transcripts should be mailed via USPS only to:

NBCOT, Inc.
One Bank Street, Suite 300
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Testing Using a Degree Verification Form

DEGREE VERIFICATION POLICY

Students enrolled in an ACOTE-accredited occupational therapy education program and scheduled to graduate with an associate, baccalaureate, entry-level master's, or entry-level doctoral degree may request that their university or college registrar submit a Degree Verification Form (DVF) within six (6) months of their anticipated graduation date. Students must have successfully completed all degree and graduation requirements, including occupational therapy education, Level I and Level II Fieldwork, and, for OTD students, the doctoral capstone experience and project. **The form may only be used within the same calendar year as the student's anticipated graduation date.**

Each academic program is responsible for determining if the DVF is appropriate for their students. Please refer to the full *Degree Verification Policy* for additional details, including military provisions.

Candidates who meet all requirements may log in to their MyNBCOT account and submit a DVF electronically for approval by their program director. The program director will then access pending DVF requests in their NBCOT Program Director Portal. After the program director reviews and approves a student's DVF, the program director will provide either a physical or electronic copy of the DVF to the university/college registrar. The registrar or registrar-authorized individual will complete the DVF and submit it to NBCOT.

DVF candidates will not have their pass/fail status released until NBCOT has received and approved an official final transcript that includes all information outlined in the *Transcript Requirements* section.

Reporting Services

NBCOT offers the following reporting services to candidates applying for the certification exam:

- Score Transfer
- Eligibility Confirmation Notice (State and Employer)

The candidate is responsible for contacting the occupational therapy state regulatory board or employer to determine which service(s) is required. For example, some states may require a Score Transfer for every exam attempt. Candidates may log in to their MyNBCOT online exam application to add services at any time under the "Services" section of the application.

SCORE TRANSFER

Candidates may request that NBCOT send an electronic *Score Transfer* to a state regulatory board. A state regulatory board will **NOT** automatically receive a score unless a Score Transfer service has been ordered. *All*

states accept scores except Hawaii.

Candidates may request one free Score Transfer with their exam application. There is a $35 USD fee for each additional Score Transfer request, and for any Score Transfer request made after the exam application is submitted. **A Score Transfer to a state may not be removed or substituted for a Score Transfer to another state.**

Score Transfers can be requested when applying for the exam, after the exam application has been submitted, or after the exam has been taken. If a candidate orders the service before sitting for the exam, the score will be sent electronically within 2-3 business days of the exam being scored. If the candidate orders the service after taking the exam, the score will be sent electronically within 2-3 business days of receipt of the request. Candidates can check on the status of their Score Transfer request in their MyNBCOT account. Click on ***Application*** and expand the ***Services*** section from the Student Dashboard. **Ordered items cannot be canceled or refunded after the request has been submitted.**

If a candidate requests a Score Transfer and the SSN provided to NBCOT does not match the SSN provided to the state regulatory board, the state cannot access the candidate's result. In this case, candidates must order a new Score Transfer and pay all applicable fees.

! Completing the NBCOT Certification Exam Application is not the same as applying for state licensure. Sending a Score Transfer to a state regulatory board does not initiate the process of obtaining a license or permit to work in that state. Certification by NBCOT is independent, different, and separate from any state or jurisdiction's law/licensure. Almost all jurisdictions, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, have some form of regulation of occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants. Before a candidate begins practicing in any state or comparable jurisdiction, all requirements of that jurisdiction must be met. To practice without a license or permit is against the law.

ELIGIBILITY CONFIRMATION NOTICE

This service confirms that a candidate has applied for and been deemed eligible to take the NBCOT certification exam. Candidates who want an Eligibility Confirmation Notice sent to a state regulatory board, employer, or themselves can select this service when applying for the exam. After the exam application has been approved, notices requested to state regulatory boards are sent via secure electronic transfer within 2–3 business days. Notices requested to companies or candidates via email are also sent within 2–3 business days. Those requested by mail are sent via USPS within 2 weeks.

Candidates may request one free confirmation notice (state or employer) with the exam application. There is a $35 USD fee for each additional notice ordered and any confirmation notice requests made after the exam application is submitted. Candidates can check the status of their confirmation notice in their MyNBCOT account. **Ordered items cannot be canceled or refunded after the request has been submitted.**

The notice includes:

1. Confirmation that the candidate's exam application and fees have been processed
2. Confirmation that NBCOT has received and accepted the candidate's official final transcript or Degree Verification Form (DVF)
3. Confirmation that the candidate is approved to schedule their test date with Pearson
4. The candidate's exam history: a listing of the candidate's exam dates from 1997-present

The following states do NOT accept Eligibility Confirmation Notices: Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Program Preferences

Candidates may choose to share their Performance Feedback Report with their program director. This is the same report posted in the candidate's MyNBCOT account after the exam score is released. The report will include the exam results and will be sent only if the candidate opts in and is unsuccessful on the exam. Candidates are not obligated to release this report.

Candidates may make this request when applying for the exam, after the exam application has been submitted through the *Exam Application Summary*, or after the exam has been taken through the *Exam Application History*. If a candidate opts in to release this report before their score is released, it will be posted electronically to their program director's portal immediately upon score release. If a candidate makes this request after their score is released, the report will be posted electronically to their program director's portal within 1-3 business days of receipt of the request. Once the report has been posted to the Program Director Portal, it cannot be removed.

Payment and Fees

Payment for exam applications and any extra services, such as Score Transfers or Eligibility Confirmation Notices, must be made when the request is submitted. NBCOT only accepts online payments for online purchases. The processing of an application will begin once payment is received.

Remember, you may request one free Score Transfer **AND** one free Eligibility Confirmation Notice **ONLY** if ordered at the time your exam application is submitted. **Service fees are discounted from your cart at checkout.** If multiple services are ordered with your exam application, each additional service is $35 USD. **AFTER** the exam application is submitted, Score Transfer or Eligibility Confirmation Notice requests are $35 USD each.

Approved Applications

Authorization to Test (ATT) Letter

The ATT letter authorizes candidates to schedule and take the certification exam. It will include details on how to schedule the exam directly with Pearson and how to reschedule or cancel an exam if necessary. If a candidate is approved for testing accommodations, the ATT letter will include the words "Testing Accommodations" at the top.

After NBCOT approves a candidate's exam application, they will receive an ATT letter by email (and in their MyNBCOT account) within three (3) business days.

Note: Some email providers filter NBCOT email notifications to spam/junk folders. Please check your spam/junk folder and add NBCOT to your preferred senders list.

The ATT letter is active for 90 days. Candidates must test during the date parameters outlined in the ATT letter.

Candidates may request an ATT letter reissue by clicking the ***I Need to Reissue My ATT Letter*** button in the candidate's MyNBCOT account.

- A request to reissue an ATT letter for an additional 90 days of eligibility must occur **before the exam application has expired.** Please check the exam application expiration date. Click on the *My Exam App* button located on the MyNBCOT dashboard and expand the summary section to view the expiration date.
- To successfully reissue an ATT letter, the candidate must cancel any existing exam appointment(s). Once a candidate reissues an ATT letter, the prior letter is voided. The candidate may no longer test on the prior ATT letter.
- When an exam application expires, the ATT letter can no longer be reissued; a new exam application and full application fee must be submitted.

Your application must not have expired to reissue your ATT letter.

Reasons ATT letters are reissued include:

- A name change
- Current ATT letter has expired
- Intent to schedule exam beyond the current ATT letter expiration date
- Cancellation of exam and unable to reschedule within current ATT letter dates
- Arrival at the test center more than 15 minutes after the scheduled exam start time and unable to test*
- Arrival at the test center without the proper ID and unable to test*
- Attempting to cancel or reschedule an exam appointment less than 48 hours before the scheduled date*
- Failure to appear for a scheduled exam appointment (no show)*

***There is a $115 USD fee for ATT reissue in this circumstance.**

It is the candidate's responsibility to check their email and MyNBCOT account to see whether the ATT letter has been sent to them. Candidates can view and print a copy of their current ATT letter from their MyNBCOT account.

Scheduling the Certification Exam

After receiving the ATT letter, candidates schedule their testing appointment directly with Pearson. Candidates **SHOULD ONLY** contact Pearson once they have received the ATT letter.

Candidates planning to receive their exam result on a specific scoring date MUST take the exam a minimum of three days before the desired score release date. The scoring schedule can be accessed on the *NBCOT website*. NBCOT aims to make exam results available on the scheduled score release date; however, there may be unforeseen circumstances when this is not possible. In these cases, scores will be posted as soon as possible.

Scheduling an Appointment Date

Pearson is NBCOT's exclusive test administration partner. Candidates can review test center locations, essential information, and log in to schedule on the *NBCOT/Pearson homepage*.

Candidates can link to their personalized Pearson dashboard by logging in to their MyNBCOT account and clicking the *Schedule My Appointment* button.

Exams must be scheduled a minimum of one day before the appointment. Same-day appointments are not available.

Candidates approved with testing accommodations should follow the scheduling instructions in their ATT letter with Testing Accommodations and the Testing Accommodations Approval Notice.

BIOMETRIC CANDIDATE NOTICE DURING SCHEDULING/ REGISTRATION

When scheduling, candidates will be presented with a biometric-enabled check-in notice. This notice will explain the collection and usage of biometric information. Please refer to "Exam Day: Questions & Answers" on *page 26* for more information on biometric-enabled check-in.

NAME AND ADDRESS CONSIDERATIONS AND CHANGES

The name (first and last) provided on the exam application is the name printed on the Authorization to Test (ATT) letter.

Candidates are required to present two forms of identification during check-in at the test center. Both forms of ID **MUST** match the first and last name indicated on the ATT letter. If the first and last names on the IDs do not match the ATT letter, the candidate will not be admitted to test. In this case, a new ATT letter is required to schedule a new appointment date.

For more information about acceptable forms of ID, see "Acceptable forms of primary identification include" on *page 26*.

The address on the ATT letter and the identification do not need to match. Please ensure the address in your MyNBCOT account is correct.

Name Change

Name changes cannot be made at the test center.

- Candidates with a legal name change **MUST** notify NBCOT of their new name.
- To request a name change: Log in to your MyNBCOT account and select ***Name Change*** in the drop-down menu under your name.

Please read the following information as you complete the name change:

- **If you require a name change and have been issued an ATT letter,** please do not schedule an exam appointment. If you have scheduled an exam appointment, you must cancel the appointment with Pearson. **NBCOT cannot complete a name change when you have a scheduled exam appointment.**
- Candidates retaking the exam who have had a legal name change since the last exam administration should complete an online name change request **before** reapplying.
- **Remember, if you request a name change and receive a new ATT letter, your required IDs must match your new name for security check-in at the test center.**
- **NBCOT does not charge a fee for candidate name changes.**
- NBCOT requires legal documentation to process a name change. Please upload copies of your official documents reflecting the name change and select *Add to Cart*. A scanned copy or a picture taken with a smartphone are both acceptable.
- Accepted government-issued ID documents for name change purposes include: driver's license, state-issued ID, military ID, passport, or signed social security card.
- The following documents are not accepted as proof of a name change: student ID, marriage certificate, or divorce decree.

- You must go to your cart and checkout to submit the name change order.
- Candidates are notified by email when the name is updated or contacted if additional documentation is required. Please allow up to three (3) business days for processing.
- Candidates can request a new ATT letter with their updated name after being notified of a completed name change (if applicable).

Address Change

Candidates can update their address online at any time by logging in to their MyNBCOT account and selecting *Edit Profile* in the drop-down menu under their name.

REFUND POLICY

Refund for Personal and/or Medical Emergencies

Candidates experiencing a personal or medical emergency who are unable to test when their application and eligibility are active (unexpired) should notify NBCOT at *credentialingservices@nbcot.org*. NBCOT reserves the right to request documentation verifying the event/circumstances related to the request. These inquiries will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

NBCOT Exam Products and Services Refund Policy

There are no refunds or exchanges for products or services except in cases of duplicate payments, over-payments, or exam application withdrawals. There is a $40 USD processing fee for all refunds.

Any refund granted will be issued by the same payment method and to the same party as the original transaction.

APPLICATION WITHDRAWAL

Candidates who withdraw their exam application may be eligible for a partial refund. Candidates must submit the withdrawal request BEFORE their application expires (date found in the application summary) and email the request, along with a brief explanation, to *info@nbcot.org*. If approved, refunds are processed within 30 days. After withdrawing, candidates can reapply for the exam three months from the withdrawal date. If a candidate is under a sanction of ineligibility, those sanction terms will remain.

CANCELLATION, RESCHEDULE, LATE ARRIVAL, NO SHOW POLICY

The following applies to exam candidates who cancel, reschedule, arrive late, or do not appear for their scheduled exam.

Candidates testing with Pearson can reschedule or cancel up to 48 hours before their exam appointment date. Candidates reschedule or cancel by clicking the *Manage My Appointment* button on their MyNBCOT dashboard.

Candidates who attempt to cancel or reschedule less than 48 hours before their appointment date or who do not appear for their appointment must request a new ATT letter after their appointment date passes. **There is a $115 USD fee to reissue your ATT letter in these circumstances.**

If you need to cancel your exam appointment 48 hours or less before the scheduled time due to an emergency, please contact NBCOT at *credentialingservices@nbcot.org* or NBCOT customer service at 301-990-7979.

A request to reissue an ATT letter for an additional 90 days MUST occur while the exam application is still active (unexpired).

Preparing for the Exam

Exam

Exam content is derived from the results of practice analyses and developed to measure the knowledge required for practicing as an entry-level OTR or COTA professional.

The following presents the domain areas and proportion of test items established for the OTR and COTA blueprints of the certification examination content outlines from January 2024.

OTR DOMAIN DESCRIPTIONS

Domain 01: Evaluation and Assessment — 23%

Acquire information regarding factors that influence occupational performance on an ongoing basis throughout the occupational therapy process.

Domain 02: Analysis, Interpretation, and Planning — 23%

Formulate conclusions regarding client needs and priorities to develop and monitor an intervention plan throughout the occupational therapy process.

Domain 03: Select and Manage Interventions — 38%

Select and implement interventions for managing a client-centered plan throughout the occupational therapy process.

Domain 04: Competency and Practice Management — 16%

Manage professional activities of self and relevant others as guided by evidence, regulatory compliance, and standards of practice to promote quality care.

COTA DOMAIN DESCRIPTIONS

Domain 01: Collaborate and Gather Information — 27%

Under the supervision of the OTR, acquire information on an ongoing basis regarding factors that influence occupational performance.

Domain 02: Select and Implement Interventions — 55%

Implement interventions, under the supervision of the OTR, in accordance with the intervention plan and level of service competence to support client participation in areas of occupation throughout the occupational therapy process.

Domain 03: Uphold Professional Standards and Responsibilities — 18%

Uphold professional standards and responsibilities by achieving service competence and applying evidence-based interventions to promote quality in practice.

VALIDATED DOMAIN, TASK, AND KNOWLEDGE STATEMENTS FOR THE EXAM

Within each domain area of the exam, there are a number of associated task and knowledge statements. All items on the NBCOT exams are classified according to these domain, task, and knowledge statements. The *2022 OTR Examination Content Outline* and *2022 COTA Examination Content Outline* for the exams are available online. Candidates should refer to our website for the most up-to-date information regarding the content of the exam.

FORMAT OF TEST ITEMS ON THE EXAMS

NBCOT exams contain the following:

- **OTR:** 180 items comprising a mix of three- and four-option single-response multiple-choice items and six-option multi-select scenario sets
- **COTA:** 190 items comprising three- and four-option single-response multiple-choice items and six-option multi-select items

Three- and Four-Option Single-Response Multiple-Choice Items

Each single-response multiple-choice item starts with a stem or premise written in the form of a question. Either three or four possible response options are listed beneath the stem. From the options listed, there is only **ONE** correct response; the other options are incorrect responses.

Candidates need to decide the **ONE** best response based on the information presented in the stem. Highlight and strike out features are available on the computer to assist the candidate during their decision-making process.

Candidates will use the computer mouse to click the button to the left of **ONE** response option to indicate their selection. Candidates can change selected responses by clicking the button to the left of a different response option. Candidates receive credit for selecting the correct response option. Points are not deducted for selecting incorrect response options.

Example: Three-option multiple-choice question (first response is the correct answer)

During which task would a stereognosis deficit secondary to a CVA be **MOST EVIDENT**?

A. Getting coins from a pocket

B. Pouring water into a cup

C. Putting on a pair of socks

Example: Four-option multiple-choice question (first response is the correct answer)

During which task would a stereognosis deficit secondary to a CVA be **MOST EVIDENT**?

A. Getting coins from a pocket

B. Pouring water into a cup

C. Putting on a pair of socks

D. Opening a pill bottle

Six-Option Multi-Select Items (COTA Exam Only)

Each six-option multi-select item includes a question stem followed by six response options. Of the six response options provided, there are **THREE** correct responses; the other three options are incorrect responses. Highlight and strike out features are available on the computer to assist the candidate during

their decision-making process. Candidates receive credit for each correct response option selected. Points are not deducted for selecting incorrect response options.

Of the six response options provided the candidate must select **THREE** responses.

Example: Six-Option Multi-Select Item

A client has right homonymous hemianopsia secondary to a CVA several months ago. Deficits in the client's right visual field interfere with the client's ability to participate in IADL. One of the client's goals is to improve visual perceptual skills to be able to resume a hobby of cooking meals using recipes from a favorite cookbook. Which adaptive strategies should the COTA teach the client to use in order to achieve this goal?

Select the three **BEST** responses. *(First, second, and fourth options are correct.)*

- ☑ Place boundary markers on the right side of the printed recipe.
- ☑ Mark off each step of the recipe instructions as it is completed.
- ☐ Use a fluorescent pen to highlight key words in the recipe instructions.
- ☑ Place a ruler under each line of print that is being read on the recipe.
- ☐ Scan the page to search for the first letter of each word in the recipe.
- ☐ Direct eye gaze towards the left margin of the recipe instruction page.

Multi-Select Scenario Sets (OTR Exam Only)

Each multi-select scenario set consists of an opening scene that contains general background information about a practice-related situation, followed by four related items.

Each item is followed by six response options, three of which are correct and three of which are incorrect. Candidates must select the three best choices.

Candidates receive credit for each correct response option selected. There are no deductions for selecting incorrect response options.

We offer access to sample scenario sets so candidates can familiarize themselves with the structure of the item type. These sample items do not replicate the candidate experience on exam day.

Please view the *exam tutorial* for more information.

Sample Scenario Set 1

Sample Scenario Set 2

HIGHLIGHT, STRIKE OUT, AND OTHER FEATURES

During the exam, candidates can highlight text in the passage area that they feel is important to refer back to as they progress through the exam. A strike-out feature is also available to help candidates visually eliminate possible options from consideration. Candidates can modify the color scheme by changing the exam's background and text colors at any time. Candidates can change the size of the content up to 200% by zooming in or out on the screen. For details on these features, and additional exam functionality in the computer-based testing environment, view the *online exam tutorial(s)*.

Study Tools: NBCOT Aspire®

Designed using the exam content outline on which the certification exam is based, Aspire study tools are optional resources to include in your personalized study plan in whatever way works best for you.

NBCOT EXAM STUDYPACK®

Mobile-friendly, dynamic, and interactive, the StudyPack is a comprehensive collection of tools that includes My Study Plan, an electronic study guide, flashcards, mini tests, Knowledge Match games, practice tests, a full practice exam, and much more.

- **Available for $85 USD**
- **Access to the StudyPack remains until a passing score is earned on the certification exam.**
- **Candidates who purchase the StudyPack and have an unsuccessful attempt on the exam will have the StudyPack refreshed for no additional cost.**

NBCOT STUDY GUIDE

Learn all about the exam, test-taking strategies, tips to develop a personalized study plan, and so much more. Includes practice questions with answers, rationales, and references.

- **Available for $60 USD (hard copy) or $40 USD (electronic)**
- **The study guide is available in the NBCOT Exam StudyPack as an electronic version. Please note that you cannot print the online (electronic) version.**

NBCOT FLASHCARDS

Flashcards are grouped by the domains of the exam content outline and can be filtered by topic areas to help organize your studying!

- **Available for $15 USD**
- **Flashcards are available in the NBCOT Exam StudyPack and include even more cards to prepare for the exam.**

KNOWLEDGE MATCH GAME

Interactive and challenging matching games to test your OT knowledge. Choose a topic and get ready to play!

- **Available for $9 USD**
- **The Knowledge Match Game is available in the NBCOT Exam StudyPack.**

NBCOT PRACTICE TESTS

Based on the exam outline and created to mirror the format and flow of the certification exam, practice tests provide an opportunity to build confidence and use test-taking strategies.

- **Some practice tests are available in the NBCOT Exam StudyPack, and some are available for individual purchase.**

NBCOT study tools are designed to assist candidates with their exam preparation. NBCOT does not guarantee enhanced performance on the NBCOT certification exams for those using these products.

NBCOT's Aspire study tools are copyrighted and protected by the United States Copyright Office. Copying, sharing, or posting NBCOT's materials is illegal and violates the code of conduct. Individuals in violation of the code are subject to disciplinary action and could jeopardize their ability to sit for the certification examination and/or be certified to obtain a license to practice.

NBCOT does not require, approve, or endorse any preparatory courses or study materials relating to the NBCOT certification exams. Individuals who participate in the development of NBCOT Aspire study tools have no access to confidential examination content.

Exam Day: Questions & Answers

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION TO THE TEST CENTER?

Appointment Arrival Time

You **MUST** arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled appointment.

ID Information

You must present two forms of ID: one primary and one secondary, or two primary. Refer to the Acceptable forms of identification lists below.

The first and last name on both IDs **MUST** match the first and last name on the ATT letter. The middle name/initial is not required for ID purposes.

The address on the ATT letter and the identification do not need to match. Please ensure the address in the MyNBCOT account is correct.

All forms of ID **MUST** be original and **MUST** have a signature that matches the first and last name of the ATT letter.

Acceptable forms of primary identification include:

Valid, unexpired government-issued photo ID with legal name and legible signature.

- **Driver's license requirements:** Current issue date, legal name, signature, photograph
- **Passport requirements:** Current issue date, legal name, signature, photograph
- **State-issued ID requirements:** Current issue date, legal name, signature, photograph
- **Permanent Resident/Green Card requirements:** Current issue date, legal name, signature/barcode, photograph
- **Military ID requirements:** Current issue date, legal name, signature/barcode, photograph

Acceptable forms of secondary identification include:

Unexpired ID from the secondary list must contain both printed name and legible signature.

- Current major credit card with expiration date (Visa, Mastercard, American Express, or Discover)
- ATM card
- Employee ID card
- Student ID card
- Original social security card
- Any ID from primary ID list

FACE MASKS

Face masks are not required at the test center; however, individual test centers may be required to comply with any local or government social distancing requirements, which are subject to change.

Face masks are included on Pearson's *Comfort Aid List*. Candidates who choose to wear a face mask during testing will be asked to lower their mask as part of the check-in/identity verification process.

ARE BIOMETRICS COLLECTED AT THE TESTING CENTER?

Pearson will take a digital candidate photo and collect a digital signature to match with the primary ID. They also utilize palm-vein biometric screening, a non-invasive and highly accurate measure of identity. You will place your palm on the scanner, which uses a near-infrared light source (similar to a TV remote) to scan the veins in your palm. The information is converted to a digital template and used to prevent anyone from testing under your identity. There is video surveillance in all candidate-accessible areas of the testing center.

WHAT ITEMS ARE PROHIBITED WHILE TAKING THE EXAM?

Prohibited items include ANY electronic device (cell phones, smartphones, tablets, computers, or any camera device), any watch, any jewelry outside of wedding and engagement rings, weapons, or any hard copy documentation. These items are not allowed in any area of the testing facility, including, but not limited to, the lobby, bathroom, test administration check-in and/or waiting rooms, or the test administration room.

Purses, backpacks, totes, and other bags must remain in your locker and may not be accessed at any time during the exam appointment.

Test center staff conducts inspections of **all** eyeglasses, jewelry, and other accessories. Candidates may be asked to remove these items for inspection. Questionable items should not be brought into the test center. Questionable items brought into the test center may need to be placed in your locker. To avoid delays at check-in and upon return from breaks, candidates may wish to take the necessary steps to leave such items at home or in their car.

If you are found accessing a cell phone, using an electronic device, in possession of any type of camera device, or referencing exam-related material during any part of the test administration process, test center staff will require you to step out of the test administration area. The staff member will inform you that you have violated test center rules, and a detailed report will be filed with NBCOT. You will be dismissed, and the exam terminated. Pearson will confiscate any type of camera device. Your future exam eligibility status will be determined by NBCOT.

CAN I USE EARPLUGS?

Noise-reducing headphones and earplugs are available for use at Pearson Professional Centers and Pearson VUE Test Centers.

These centers are easily identified on the scheduling dashboard by the words “Pearson Professional Center” or "Pearson VUE Test Center" preceding the test center location.

Pearson Authorized Test Center Select (PTC Select) locations are not required to provide noise-reducing headphones or earplugs. If headphones and/or earplugs are essential for your exam administration experience, choose a Pearson Professional Center or Pearson VUE Test Center option when scheduling.

To research test center locations, click *here*.

If a candidate wants to bring/use their own custom pair of earplugs, formal testing accommodations approval is required. Earplugs must be stand-alone earplugs, with no wires, and are subject to visual inspection at the test center. Please refer to the *NBCOT Testing Accommodations Handbook* for further information.

WHAT CLOTHING AM I ALLOWED/NOT ALLOWED TO BRING INTO THE TESTING ROOM?

- A light sweater or jacket may be worn in the testing room and taken on or off as needed. Heavier jackets or coats are not allowed to be worn in the testing room.
- Once in the testing room, you cannot remove your shoes.
- Head coverings are prohibited in the testing room unless worn for religious purposes (such as hats, turbans, scarves, and yarmulkes). If the item is worn for religious purposes, it will be visually inspected before you are admitted into the testing room and **MUST** remain in full view at all times. If you need to reposition or remove a head covering or religious item, you will be asked to step out of the testing room and into the waiting area. All types of hair accessories, ties, and bow ties are subject to inspection, and you may be prohibited from wearing them in the testing room.
- Jewelry outside of wedding and engagement rings is prohibited in the testing room.

DO I HAVE TO REQUEST A TESTING ACCOMMODATION TO BRING A MEDICAL DEVICE SUCH AS A HEARING AID OR COCHLEAR IMPLANT, INSULIN PUMP, OR DIABETES MONITORING EQUIPMENT INTO THE TESTING ROOM?

A list of preapproved personal items that do not require a request for testing accommodations is available *here*. Candidates are not permitted to plug any device into the computer workstation. If the device makes any noise, you must request and be approved for testing accommodations in advance. If the medical device includes an accompanying external remote-control device, and there is a need to take the external remote-control device **into the testing room**, including a cell phone, candidates must apply and be approved for a testing accommodation. Please review the *Testing Accommodations Handbook* and contact *accommodations@nbcot.org* to review diabetes monitoring requirements, including the use of a cell phone.

HOW MUCH TIME WILL I HAVE FOR THE EXAM?

The OTR and COTA exams are four hours long (this is your exam time). Your appointment time will be longer than your exam time to allow time for check-in, exam tutorials, surveys, check-out, and other administrative procedures (approximately four hours and 45 minutes). Please note, accepting the terms of the Acknowledgment section before launching the exam is mandatory. If the terms are not accepted within the seven-minute time limit, the exam will automatically close and the appointment will be forfeited. Candidates must contact NBCOT at *credentialingservices@nbcot.org* to reissue their ATT letter for a fee.

WILL THERE BE OTHER CANDIDATES TESTING AT MY TEST CENTER?

There will likely be other candidates taking different exams at your test center during your exam appointment. The layout of the testing cubicles ensures you have ample workspace and privacy from other test takers.

CAN I TAKE A BREAK DURING THE EXAM?

Yes, you may take breaks during the exam. However, the exam clock will continue to run while you are on the break. You must complete all check-in procedures to re-enter the testing room. This may require waiting for other test takers to complete check-in procedures. Candidates may not exit the test center building while taking a break. Exiting the test center during your exam could result in you being dismissed and the exam terminated. Exam fees could be forfeited and your future exam eligibility status will be determined by NBCOT.

IS COMPUTER KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY?

No. The optional tutorial(s) accompanying the exams walk you through the process of selecting answers and progressing through the exam on the computer. Tutorial time does not count toward your allotted exam time. You can repeat the tutorial(s) if you wish. You can also view the exam tutorial(s) online in advance by clicking *here*.

CAN I TAKE NOTES DURING THE EXAM?

Note-taking is not allowed during the tutorial, acknowledgment, or at any time before test time starts to count down. You can request to use a wet marker note board from the test center staff during your exam. If you require additional materials, you must wait for the test center staff to clean the originally issued note board before reusing it. Writing on your hand or anywhere on your body is strictly prohibited and a violation of test center rules and the *NBCOT Candidate/Certificant Code of Conduct*.

CAN I EAT/DRINK IN THE TESTING ROOM?

Food and beverages, including water, are not permitted in the testing room. Food and beverages must be stored in lockers and consumed in the test center waiting area.

DOES PEARSON HAVE A POLICY REGARDING CONDUCT IN THE TESTING CENTER?

Candidate conduct is addressed in *Pearson's Candidate Rules Agreement*. Any candidate who does not follow test center regulations may be dismissed from the test center and the exam terminated. Exam fees could be forfeited and your future exam eligibility status will be determined by NBCOT. In addition, an NBCOT sanction may be imposed due to a violation of the NBCOT Code of Conduct.

WHAT CAN I DO IF THE COMPUTER MALFUNCTIONS WHILE I AM TAKING THE EXAM?

You **MUST** alert the test center staff immediately. Staff will make every effort to remedy the situation as soon as possible. The time spent to remedy the problem will not count as part of your exam time. Due to the nature of the exam delivery system, all previously entered exam data is saved.

If the problem cannot be remedied within 30 minutes, you have the right to reschedule the exam for another day within your eligibility period.

You must contact NBCOT at *credentialingservices@nbcot.org* or 301-990-7979 (ask for credentialing services) for rescheduling approval and instructions.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I EXPERIENCE AN ADMINISTRATIVE OR TECHNICAL ISSUE DURING MY EXAM?

Examples of administrative or technical issues include: computer screen freezing, power failure, physical disruption within the testing center, or the exam or an approved testing accommodation not being available at the scheduled time.

NBCOT cannot address any administrative or technical complaints with Pearson if you did not first file a complaint at the test center. Administrative or technical complaints submitted after your pass/fail status is posted will not be investigated.

The following procedures must be followed for your complaint to be reviewed.

Administrative or Technical Complaints Checklist:

1. ☐ I, the examination candidate, **MUST** file a complaint immediately with the test center staff or before leaving the test center. Test center staff will file a case report.
2. ☐ I **MUST** request a confirmation of the complaint.
3. ☐ I **MUST** contact NBCOT by email at *credentialingservices@nbcot.org* within 24 hours after the incident occurred to describe the incident in detail and provide the case report number, if applicable.
4. ☐ NBCOT will confirm initial receipt of the complaint.

! *ALL* exam scores are held when an exam complaint is submitted. Exam results will NOT be posted or released until the complaint has been fully investigated and resolved.

! If you wait until AFTER your pass/fail status has been posted to submit your exam administrative or technical complaint, your exam complaint will NOT be acknowledged.

Please note that all exam scores are held until the exam complaint has been fully investigated and resolved. As a result, the posting of pass/fail status to the NBCOT website and the release of exam results to a state board(s) may be delayed.

NBCOT will respond within 21 business days of receipt of the complaint. After you receive a decision from NBCOT regarding the administrative or technical complaint, you have the right to appeal. You can only appeal **AFTER** (1) you have already submitted a complaint, (2) NBCOT has reviewed the complaint, and (3) a decision has been rendered.

Appeals must be sent in writing via traceable mail and received by NBCOT within 21 days of the candidate's receipt of NBCOT's complaint response. The candidate will be notified of the status of the appeal investigation within 30 days of receipt of the appeal.

After the Exam: Questions & Answers

WHAT IS MY OBLIGATION TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY AFTER I TAKE THE EXAM?

The NBCOT certification exams and the items contained therein are protected by federal copyright law. No part of an exam or NBCOT study materials may be copied, reproduced, or shared in any manner, in part or whole, by any means whatsoever, including memorization, verbal, written, and/or electronic transmission, which includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, cell phone, study tool sharing sites, blogs, and discussion forums. Posting exam or study tool questions to social media or other networking sites constitutes a test security and copyright violation, as noted in Principles 2 and 9 of the *NBCOT Candidate/Certificant Code of Conduct*. Violations of the *NBCOT Code of Conduct* are investigated to determine appropriate disciplinary action.

HOW ARE THE EXAMS SCORED?

For information on how the certification exams are scored, please review the *Foundations of the NBCOT Certification Exams*.

HOW WILL I GET MY EXAM RESULT?

After the exam is administered, your exam will be scored by NBCOT. Scores are released according to the *NBCOT Exam Scoring Calendar*. You can view your results through your MyNBCOT account after the exam has been scored.

Candidates with a passing score will be notified via email when your exam result has been posted online. You will receive a separate email with information about your certification benefits and how to access/download your digital certificate, badge, and wallet card verifying Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR) or Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) certification. If you do not receive an email within five business days of receiving your score, please send an email to *info@nbcot.org* that includes your full name and certification number.

Candidates with a failing score will be notified via email when the exam result has been posted online. Your feedback report will include the overall score along with domain-level performance information and an explanation for interpreting your overall and domain-level performance. The information on the domain areas is provided for diagnostic purposes only. The feedback report also includes answers to frequently asked questions about the feedback report and preparing to retake the exam. Refer to the "Retaking the Exam" section on *page 33* of this handbook for additional information about reapplying to take the exam.

If you are a U.S.-educated candidate who takes the exam within one year of graduating, NBCOT will report aggregate pass/fail information (without names) to the U.S. occupational therapy education program from which you graduated. NBCOT only provides program directors with a list of candidates who pass the OTR or COTA certification exams.

Upon receipt of the feedback report, candidates who hold a state-issued limited or temporary permit(s) or license(s) that allows them to practice are advised to immediately contact the regulatory agency in that jurisdiction to determine whether their limited or temporary permit/license remains valid. Since each jurisdiction's laws and regulations vary, the regulatory agency must be contacted directly.

Score information will not be released to anyone via telephone, fax, or email. Certification numbers can be accessed through your MyNBCOT account.

A candidate's name and score will not be released to any third party without the candidate's prior written consent unless required by law.

CAN I APPEAL MY EXAM RESULT?

You may appeal your exam result by following the procedures listed below.

Exam Appeal Procedures Checklist:

1. ☐ I, the examination candidate, **MUST** send an appeal letter that specifically states the reason(s) for the appeal and why the appeal should be granted.
2. ☐ I understand that failing the exam alone is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.
3. ☐ I understand that administrative and technical issues/complaints that were not addressed according to procedure *(see page 30)* are not sufficient grounds for an appeal.
4. ☐ The appeal letter **MUST** be sent to NBCOT by traceable mail with signature confirmation to the address below and received within 14 days of the date the exam pass/fail results were posted. I understand that NBCOT will not accept correspondence received after this date or submitted via email.
5. ☐ I understand that NBCOT will not discuss my appeal by phone or email until the appeal letter is received.
6. ☐ I understand that NBCOT will address communications to me only unless NBCOT receives written authorization to do so with a third party. This authorization must include name, telephone number, email address, and how long this authorization is in effect.
7. ☐ I understand that the examination and examination items are the sole property of NBCOT. Any content pertaining to the examination will not be released under any conditions as part of the appeal process.
8. ☐ I understand that I will receive a response from NBCOT within 21 business days of NBCOT's receipt of the appeal letter.

Appeal letters must be sent to NBCOT by traceable mail with signature confirmation to:

Attention: Vice President, Credentialing Services
One Bank Street
Suite 300
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Candidates may appeal the decision in writing via traceable mail to the address above no later than 21 days after the candidate's receipt of NBCOT's response. Submissions must outline the grounds of the appeal, including reasons why the appeal should be considered. Appeals received after 21 days or submitted via email, phone, or non-traceable mail will not be acknowledged or reviewed. Candidates will receive notification from NBCOT regarding the status of the review within 30 business days of NBCOT's receipt of the written appeal.

Retaking the Exam

Candidates who do not pass the exam may reapply for another exam administration. The following information describes the requirements and steps for reapplying.

- The following waiting periods apply to all exams:
  - ▷ **Attempts 2, 3 and 4:** 30 days from the date of the last exam administration
  - ▷ **Attempts 5, 6 and 7:** 60 days from the date of the last exam administration
  - ▷ **Attempts 8 +:** 90 days from the date of the last exam administration

Candidates are strongly encouraged to use the waiting period between attempts to engage in additional preparation, as research indicates that those who actively strengthen and review their knowledge are more likely to see improved scores on subsequent attempts.

- Candidates can apply 30 days before their next eligible exam date. The date you can reapply is listed on your MyNBCOT dashboard.
- Candidates must submit a new exam application to retest. Candidates log in to their existing MyNBCOT account and follow the steps to reapply. **DO NOT** create a new account. A $35 USD fee will be assessed for duplicate accounts.
- The exam application, Score Transfer requests, Eligibility Confirmation Notices, and any other services are subject to all applicable fees.
- Candidates may request one free Score Transfer **AND** one free Eligibility Confirmation Notice **ONLY** if ordered when the exam application is submitted. These requests do not transfer from one application to the next. If multiple services are ordered with the exam application, each additional service is subject to a $35 USD fee. AFTER the exam application is submitted, Score Transfer or confirmation notice requests are $35 USD each.
- If candidates have a name change since the last exam administration, they **MUST** complete a **Name Change Request** through their MyNBCOT account. This should be done before reapplying for the exam. See the "Exam Day: Questions & Answers" on *page 26* of this handbook for acceptable forms of ID to be admitted to the test center.
- Candidates do not need to submit another transcript, unless requested by NBCOT.
- Candidates who previously tested with testing accommodations should refer to the *Testing Accommodations Handbook* for details on how to reapply with TA.
- Candidates who previously answered "Yes" to a character question and were cleared for the exam **MUST** answer the appropriate character question(s) on the exam application affirmatively each time a new application is submitted. If the affirmative response is in reference to the same issue that NBCOT previously reviewed, and no further incidents have occurred, the candidate **MUST** send written confirmation of this to *professional.conduct@nbcot.org* after reapplying. The candidate will not need to resubmit any previously submitted documentation.
- If there have been additional incidents or further action resulting in an additional affirmative answer to one or more of the character questions, the candidate **MUST** answer the appropriate character question(s) affirmatively and submit information regarding the new incident to NBCOT for review. If the candidate fails to inform NBCOT, disciplinary action may result. Notifications should be sent to *professional.conduct@nbcot.org*.

- After eligibility is approved, candidates will receive a new ATT letter with a new 90-day testing eligibility period. The eligibility will begin no sooner than the applicable waiting period from your previous test date.
- After receiving the ATT letter, candidates should schedule their exam directly with Pearson as instructed in the ATT letter. (See "Scheduling the Certification Exam" on *page 19*.)

NBCOT Certification Renewal: Keep Your Credential Active

Candidates who take and pass the certification exam will have an initial renewal date four years from the year they passed the exam. After their first renewal, they will enter a three-year renewal cycle for all subsequent renewals. This creates an equal opportunity for new certificants to earn professional development.

The certification renewal season occurs between January and March annually, regardless of the month the initial certification was received. For example, students who pass the exam in 2026 will have their first renewal take place during January through March 2030. After their first renewal, they will enter the three-year renewal cycle and be scheduled to renew between January and March 2033.

The requirements for certification renewal are:

- Accrual of required units: Certificants must accrue 36 units in the time between their initial certification date and the date that they are due to renew their certification
- Abidance by the *NBCOT Code of Conduct*
- A completed certification renewal application
- The appropriate renewal application fee

Certification renewal is required to maintain active certification. Fulfilling the certification renewal requirements entitles a certificant to continue using the OTR or COTA credential.

Why Renew?

When an OTR or COTA professional renews their national certification, it shows that they place value in professional development and evidence-based practice. One benefit of certification renewal is the continued use of the NBCOT credential. To identify yourself to the public using the OTR or COTA certification mark, your certification status must be active and in good standing. The OTR and COTA credentials are representative of practitioners who satisfy national standards in education, experience, and professional conduct, and demonstrate that they possess the knowledge and skills to be accountable for the delivery of professional services.

NBCOT Navigator®

Another benefit of certification is continual access to the latest evidence-based research through the NBCOT Navigator suite. The NBCOT Navigator is a set of interactive tools that enable you to demonstrate knowledge of contemporary practice and sharpen your skills using interactive case simulations, games, and mini practice quizzes. By renewing your certification, you will also receive 24/7 access to ProQuest® and RefWorks®

to stay on top of current developments and trends in occupational therapy research. For more information on the Navigator suite, visit *nbcot.org/navigator*.

How to Renew Certification

There are two ways to renew certification:

1. Log in to your MyNBCOT account online.
2. Complete and mail in a paper application.

Before a certificant's renewal due date, NBCOT sends a courtesy reminder notification and renewal instructions. For this reason, it is essential that certificants keep their contact information updated with NBCOT. You can update your information anytime by logging in to your MyNBCOT account. Select *Edit Profile* in the drop-down menu under your name.

You will receive an email with information on how to access/download your digital certificate, badge, and wallet card after your renewal application is processed. For complete details on the renewal process, visit the *renewal section* of the website.

Summary of Exam Candidate Service Requests

- **Name change:** Log in to your MyNBCOT account and select *Name Change* in the drop-down menu under your name. Upload a copy of one form of government-issued ID reflecting the name change (e.g., driver's license, state-issued ID, military ID, passport, or signed social security card). Proceed through checkout and pay any necessary fees as applicable. See "Name Change" on *page 20*.
- **Repeat exam candidates:** A new application and fee must be submitted. Log in to your existing account – do not create a new one. One free Score Transfer and/or one free Eligibility Confirmation Notice may be requested at the time of exam application submission. Fees apply to any additional request(s). See "Payment and Fees" on *page 18*.
- **Mailing address change:** Candidates can update their address online at any time through their MyNBCOT account. A valid street address is required for the background check. The address on file is used to send important NBCOT certificant correspondence. See "Address Change" on *page 21*.
- **Email address change:** Candidates can update their email address through their MyNBCOT account. It is the candidates' responsibility to keep their email address current with NBCOT.
- **Reissue of ATT letter:** The ATT letter is active for 90 days. If the exam is not taken within the 90-day period, the ATT letter can be reissued for an additional 90 days **if requested while the exam application is still active (unexpired)**. Reissue of an ATT letter may be requested online through the MyNBCOT account. See "Authorization to Test (ATT) Letter" on *page 18*.
- **Score Transfer request to state regulatory boards:** Request by logging in to your MyNBCOT account and selecting the service. One free Score Transfer is included with your exam application submission. The fee is $35 USD for each additional request. See "Score Transfer" on *page 16*.
- **Eligibility Confirmation Notice:** Request by logging in to your MyNBCOT account and selecting the service. One free confirmation notice is included with your exam application submission. The fee is $35 USD for each additional request. See "Eligibility Confirmation Notice" on *page 17*.

- **If an exam candidate has been convicted of a felony at any time, either before or after receiving an Authorization to Test (ATT) letter:** they are required, under the *Code of Conduct* agreed to when signing the exam application attestation, to notify NBCOT of the conviction. Failure to report may result in disciplinary action. For details, see "Exam Certification Eligibility Requirements" on *page 10*.

Exam Application Procedures Checklist

Completing the NBCOT Exam Application and Submitting Fees:

☐ I have read the NBCOT Certification Exam Handbook.

☐ Graduates with an accredited U.S. entry-level occupational therapy degree: I am cleared for graduation (i.e., graduation is certain), or I have been awarded the degree, and I have completed the required fieldwork **BEFORE** submitting my exam application.

☐ **If applying online for the first time**, I have set up an NBCOT account with my working email address, valid street address, and password.

☐ **If I have an existing NBCOT account from a previous application or I am a COTA professional applying for the OTR exam**, I have logged in and I will follow the steps to reapply.

☐ If I want NBCOT to send a *Score Transfer* or *Eligibility Confirmation Notice* to a regulatory entity or employer, I have indicated so on my application. See "Reporting Services" on *page 16*.

☐ I have paid all applicable fees and reviewed the invoice in my NBCOT account.

Changing My Name

☐ If applicable, I have submitted a *Name Change Request*.

Graduates with an Accredited U.S. Entry-level Occupational Therapy Degree:

☐ I have requested my registrar to submit my official final transcript to NBCOT through a secure electronic document transfer service or in a sealed envelope. See "Transcript Requirements" on *page 15*.

☐ If submitting a DVF, I have requested that my program director approve my DVF and send to my college/university registrar to sign, seal, and send the DVF to NBCOT within six (6) months of my anticipated graduation date. The form may only be used within the same calendar year as my anticipated graduation date. See "Degree Verification Policy" on *page 16*.

Requesting Testing Accommodations

☐ I have read the *NBCOT Testing Accommodations Handbook*.

☐ I have applied for testing accommodations in my exam application and have submitted required documentation.

Character Review

☐ If I answered "Yes" to a character question, I have submitted the required documentation.

Scheduling the Exam with Pearson

☐ I have received my ATT letter, and I have scheduled my appointment.

☐ If I need to cancel/reschedule my exam date, I will follow the procedures outlined in the cancellation policy. See "Cancellation, Reschedule, Late Arrival, No Show Policy" on *page 21*.