



North American Association of Central Cancer Registries

Education

# Oncology Data Specialist Training Guide

Revised 2023

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## Overview

The NAACCR Oncology Data Specialist Training Guide is intended for use by central cancer registries (CCRs) in training individuals new to the cancer registry profession especially as practiced in central cancer registries. The primary goal of such training is to prepare inexperienced staff to become productive, effective members of the central registry workforce using existing education and training resources. The training recommended by NAACCR in this guide includes one-on-one mentorship, independent learning, hands-on exercises, and practical experience. NAACCR recommends that each trainee work with a preceptor who is a Oncology Data Specialist (ODS-C) with experience in central cancer registry operations.

**This ODS Training Guide is to be used as a guide ONLY.** The trainer/preceptor can revise as needed. Also, for the aspiring ODS, make sure that you take notes and ask questions of your trainer/preceptor. They can help explain details and find additional exercises to ensure you have the knowledge to be an excellent ODS.

## Format

Based on the experience of preceptors using the first edition of this guide in the field, we have revised the format from one organized by a calendar to one organized by training topic. The topics are organized in general from the more basic to the more complex. For example, Module 4 Lung/Prostate to Module 13 Pancreatic/Biliary Breast. The method behind creating these modules were to address the “easier” sites and progress to the more “difficult” sites.

For each topic, the guide first provides a list of recommended readings followed by exercises, all from existing manuals and websites produced by authorities in the field. In the first edition of this guide, the training program consists of 51 weeks of training content with topics assigned to weeks and days. The new format allows more flexibility in planning the order of topics and time spent on each.

## Content and Required Resources

With few exceptions, all training resources referenced in the guide are free of charge and published and maintained by cancer registry standard-setters and professional organizations. Additional training materials, including webinars, in-person and online workshops, and sample exams are available for a fee and may be utilized for supplemental learning.

Trainees will need to register for free accounts with:

- SEER\*Educate  
<https://educate.fredhutch.org/LandingPage.aspx>
- NAACCR  
<https://www.naacccr.org>
- CAnswer Forum for the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Cancer Programs  
<http://cancerbulletin.facs.org/forums/CAnswerForumHome>

- National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN)  
<https://www.nccn.org>

Every attempt has been made to ensure resources and web links are accurate and up to date. Please report broken or incorrect links and references to [info@naaccr.org](mailto:info@naaccr.org).

Trainees must purchase or otherwise have access to the textbook, ***Cancer Registry Management Principles and Practice for Hospitals and Central Registries***, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., available as a print or e-book from the National Cancer Registrars Association, <https://www.ncra-usa.org/About/Store/4th-Edition-Textbook>.

Trainees must also have access to the American Joint Committee on Cancer's ***AJCC Cancer Staging Manual***, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Throughout this course we will refer to this book as AJCC 8.

## Preceptor Responsibilities

The intention of this guide is not to place an undue burden on the preceptor, but one-on-one mentorship is a key component of successful Oncology Data Specialist training. The preceptor should become familiar with the resources covered and should meet regularly with the trainee to assess progress, give feedback, and answer questions. Mentorship should occur in person but may occur via the web or over the phone if necessary.

The preceptor should also supplement the training guidelines with material specific to that state's central registry, such as state-specific reporting requirements and program manual. The preceptor should help the trainee find the appropriate resources and trainings for cancer primary sites that do not fall under the specific sites covered in this guide.

The preceptor is responsible for assigning direct tasks in various aspects of registry operations (e.g., consolidation), reviewing work for accuracy, and providing feedback. Preceptors may wish to set quality and productivity benchmarks for trainees to meet.

Where appropriate and feasible, it is recommended that the preceptor arrange for the trainee to shadow experienced staff performing specialized tasks, such as death clearance, quality control, auditing, and data utilization. The preceptor should also identify Commission on Cancer-accredited health care facilities where the trainee can attend cancer committee meetings and cancer conferences.

As a preceptor, please help your trainee find the appropriate resources and trainings for sites that do not fall under specific sites that may not be listed in this guide.

*Note: The resource links provided are current as of publication of this guide. Make sure that you are always using the correct resource(s) based on the reference year for your training, for example, when you are training about a data element that has changed over time, such as stage or treatment.*

## Trainee Responsibilities

The activities in the guide are meant to be completed independently by the trainee with minimal direction from a trainer or preceptor. It is the trainee's responsibility to complete the assigned work in a timely fashion, track progress, and report problems or difficulties to the preceptor. Trainees are

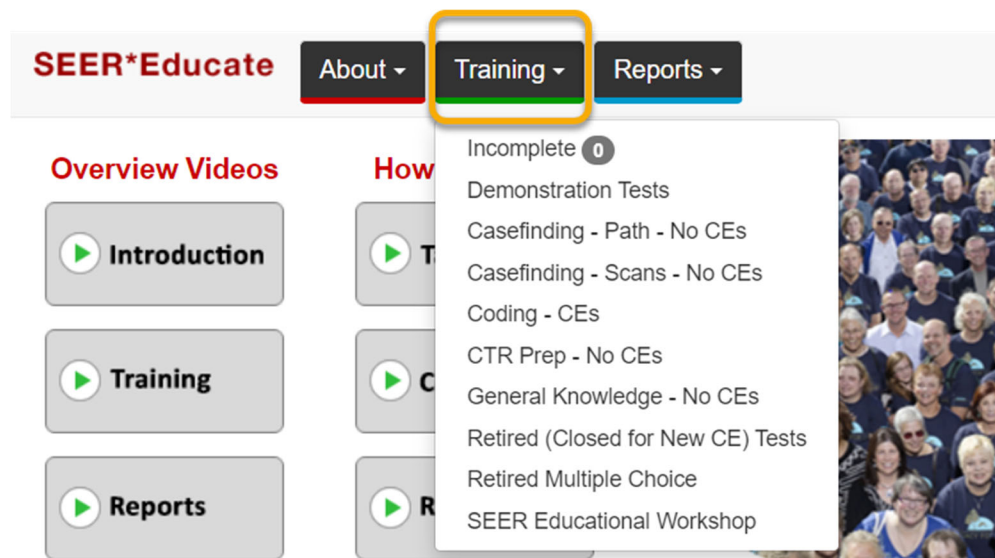
expected to make every reasonable effort to find answers by reading materials and manuals before seeking guidance from the preceptor. When completing tests in SEER\*Educate, the trainee should read the rationale for any answers marked incorrect to improve future performance.

## Timeline

The lessons in this guide are designed to be completed over the course of 51 weeks but may be completed over a shorter period, if necessary, by reducing or eliminating content in areas in which the trainee has already demonstrated proficiency (e.g., anatomy and physiology.)

## How to Navigate to Exercises on SEER\*Educate

After logging in at <https://educate.fredhutch.org/Index.aspx>, select the Training menu indicated in yellow on this screenshot.



This will open a list of sections as shown. This guide will specify the section with the relevant exercises for each module, for example, “Coding – CEs.” Select the appropriate section, then scroll down to an area labeled “Select Test.” Click the plus signs as needed to drill down to the exercises/tests specified in this guide.



Select Test | Filter ▾ ?

**-** Coding - CEs

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Updated for Manual Changes Effective 1/1/2023

- + Dx 2021-2023 EOD, Summary Stage, Grade, SSDI Mashup (Closes for
- + Dx 2018-2023 Heme (Closes for CEs on 12/31/2024)
- + Dx 2021-2023 Histology (Closes for CEs on 12/31/2023)
- Dx 2018-2023 Solid Tumor Rules (Closes for CEs on 12/31/2024)
  - + Breast 2018-2023
  - + Colon 2018-2023
  - + Head and Neck 2018-2023
  - + Kidney 2018-2023
  - Lung 2018-2023
    - Lung 01
    - Lung 02
    - Lung 03
    - Lung 04
    - Lung 05
  - + Malignant CNS 2018-2023
  - + Non Malignant CNS 2018-2023

*Note: Check the section and test names carefully because many of the names are similar and rules differ by year of diagnosis.*

## MODULE 1: Cancer Registration and Surveillance

This module will review multiple chapters within the book, *Cancer Registry Management Principles and Practice for Hospitals and Central Registries*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. It provides details on the background of cancer registries and the various organizations that set uniform standards for registration. Other topics reviewed include medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, and statistics as related to cancer. Exercises will reinforce the concepts learned.

### Readings

*Cancer Registry Management Principles and Practice for Hospitals and Central Registries*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.

- Chapter 1 – History and Overview of Cancer Registries
- Chapter 2 – Standard Setters
- Chapter 3 – Cancer Organizations
- Chapter 4 – Legal and Ethical Aspects of Cancer Registry
- Chapter 11 – Follow-up

### **SEER Program: Coding and Staging Manual 2023**

[SEER Program Coding and Staging Manual 2023 \(cancer.gov\)](https://www.cancer.gov/seer/coding-and-staging-manual-2023)

- Reportability – Pg 6-15
- Section III Demographic Information – Pg 30-80
- Section IV Description of this Neoplasm – Pg 82-125
- Section V Stage of Disease at Diagnosis – Pg 126 - 133
- Section VI Stage-related Data Items – Pg 134-154
- Section VII First Course of Therapy – Pg 158-234
- Section VIII Follow Up Information – Pg 237-257

### Exercises, SEER\*Educate

Training -> CTR Prep -> ***Cancer Registry Management***, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition: Intro to Cancer Registries

- Intro to Cancer Registries - Exercises to review reading in CRMPP Book
- Data Collection and Abstraction - Exercises to review reading in CRMPP Book
- Data Aggregation and Quality - Exercises to review reading in CRMPP Book
- Uses of Cancer Registry Data - Exercises to review reading in CRMPP Book

Training -> CTR Prep -> 2023 SEER Manual Plus

- Tumor Description and Stage - Exercises to review reading in SEER Manual
- Treatment - Exercises to review reading in SEER Manual



Training -> General Knowledge

- Anatomy and Physiology
- Medical Terminology
- Statistics Theory

#### [Cancer Registration & Surveillance Modules](#)

Training -> Cancer Registration and Surveillance

- Cancer Registration
- Cancer Registry Operations and Procedures
- Cancer Treatment

#### [Registry Best Practices \(cancerregistryeducation.org\)](#)

- Follow-up

#### [SEER Training Modules](#)

- Summary Stage 2018
- Intro to Summary Stage
- How to Assign Summary Stage
- Determining Lymph Node Involvement
- Tips for Assigning Summary Stage

## MODULE 2: Case Finding

This module will review reportability of cancer cases and how to determine whether a report represents a reportable cancer case. This module will also cover the variety of reporting facilities and the resources that are used to identify cases that are reportable per standard setters.

### Readings

- ***Cancer Registry Management Principles and Practice for Hospitals and Central Registries***, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Chapter 6 – Reportability and Case Finding
- ACoS - [STORE Manual 2024](#) – “Case Eligibility,” pages 38-42
- NCRA - [Registry Best Practices](#) – Two videos, “Casefinding” and “Class of Case: Analytic or Non-Analytic?”
- SEER Training, Cancer Registration and Surveillance Modules - [Casefinding](#)

### Exercises, SEER\*Educate

- Section - EER\*Educate - [Casefinding - Path - No CEs](#)
- SEER\*Educate - [Case finding - Scans - No CEs](#)

### Essential Resources

- [SEER Program Coding and Staging Manual 2018](#)
- SEER - [2024 Solid Tumor Rules](#)
- SEER – [Solid Tumor Rules General Instructions](#)
- SEER - [Hematopoietic Project](#)
- SEER - [ICD-10-CM Casefinding List, 2024](#)
- [SEER Inquiry System](#)

## MODULE 3: ICD-O

This module will review ICD-O, Topography, Histology and Solid Tumor Rules. This module will guide you through determining the correct codes based on the type of cancer diagnosed, whether it is benign or malignant, and will introduce you to additional resources to determine histology based on the disease site.

### Readings

- ***Cancer Registry Management Principles and Practice for Hospitals and Central Registries***, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Chapter 8 - ICD-O, Topography, Histology and Solid Tumor Rules
- NAACCR – [ICD-O-3 Coding Updates](#)
- NAACCR – [V23 Update: ICD-O, Solid Tumor Rules, SSDI](#)
- SEER - [Solid Tumor Rules General Instructions](#)
- SEER Training, Cancer Registration and Surveillance Modules – [ICD-10-CM](#)

### Exercises, SEER\*Educate

- Section - Coding CEs, “Dx 2021-2023 Histology,” Groups 01-10

## MODULE 4: Lung and Prostate

This module will review coding for lung and prostate cancers. Solid Tumor Rules for each of these sites are to be utilized to determine histology and multiple primaries. Each chapter in the Solid Tumor Rules for the mentioned sites will need to be reviewed. This will familiarize you with the terminology and anatomy for each site.

### Readings

- SEER - [Solid Tumor Rules General Instructions](#)
- SEER - [Solid Tumor Rules 2023](#). Familiarize yourself with the introductions of multiple primary rules, histology coding rules and anatomy photos. These photos will include lymph node chains for the lung as well.
  - Lung, p. 170
  - Other Sites (includes Prostate), p. 385
- AJCC 8
  - Lung, chapter 36, p. 431
  - Prostate, chapter 58, p. 715
- SEER Training, Cancer Registration and Surveillance Modules
  - [Lung Cancer](#)
  - [Prostate Cancer](#)

### Exercises, SEER\*Educate

- Section - Coding – CEs, “Dx 2021-2023 EOD, Summary Stage, Grade, SSDI Mashup”
  - Lung 01-05
  - Lung 06-10
  - Prostate 01-05
  - Prostate 06-10
- Section - CTR Prep – No CEs, “Coding Drill – Dx 2018 – 2023 Histology (Solid Tumors)”
  - Lung – Groups 01 through 09
- Section – CTR Prep – No CEs, “Disease Information”
  - Lung, Lung 01-Lung 11
  - Prostate, Prostate 01-Prostate 08

## MODULE 5: Urinary Sites (Kidney, Ureter, Bladder)

This module will review the Kidney, Ureter and Bladder. Solid Tumor Rules for each of these sites will be used to determine histology and multiple primaries. Each chapter in the Solid Tumor Rules for the mentioned sites will need to be reviewed. This will familiarize you with the terminology and anatomy for each site.

### Readings

AJCC Cancer Staging Manual

- Chapter 60 – Kidney
- Chapter 61 – Renal Pelvis and Ureter
- Chapter 62 – Urinary Bladder

### SEER Training Modules

- Bladder Cancer
- Kidney & Ureter Cancer

### Solid Tumor Rules 2022

- Urinary Sites
- Kidney

### Exercises, SEER\*Educate

- Section - Coding – CEs, “Dx 2021-2023 EOD, Summary Stage, Grade, SSDI Mashup”
  - Kidney Parenchyma 01-05
  - Renal Pelvis and Ureter 01-05
  - Bladder 01 – 05
- Section – Coding Drill
  - Kidney 01 - 04
  - Urinary 01 - 04

## MODULE 6: Melanoma

This module will review the Melanoma. Solid Tumor Rules will be used to determine histology and multiple primaries. The chapter in the Solid Tumor Rules for the mentioned site will need to be reviewed. This will familiarize you with the terminology and anatomy for each site.

### Readings

AJCC Cancer Staging Manual

- Chapter 47- Melanoma

### [SEER Training Modules](#)

- Skin Cancer: Melanoma

### [Solid Tumor Rules 2022](#)

- Cutaneous Melanoma

### Exercises, SEER\*Educate

- Section - Coding -CEs, "Dx 2021-2023 EOD, Summary Stage, Grade, SSDI Mashup"
  - Melanoma 01-05
- Section - Coding -CEs, "Dx 2021-2023 Solid Tumor Rules Melanoma"
  - Melanoma 2021 – 2023 01 - 05
- Section - CTR Prep, "Coding Drill – Dx 2018 – 2023 Histology (Solid Tumors)"
  - Cutaneous Melanoma-Group 01 – 03
- Section - CTR Prep, "Disease Information"
  - Melanoma 01- 07

## MODULE 7: Brain/CNS

This module will review the brain and central nervous system. This module will review using the Solid Tumor Rules to determine histology and multiple primaries. Please note that reportability for the brain and central nervous system differs from other solid tumor rules in that benign tumors are reportable.

### Reading:

AJCC Cancer Staging Manual

- Chapter 72- Central Nervous System

### SEER Training Modules

- Brain & Other Nervous System

### Solid Tumor Rules 2022

- Malignant CNS and Peripheral Nerves
- Non-Malignant CNS

### Exercises:

Exercises, SEER\*Educate

- Training -> Coding -CEs
  - Dx 2018-2023 Solid Tumor Rules
  - Malignant CNS 2018-2023
  - Non-Malignant CNS
- Training -> CTR Prep
  - Coding Drill- Dx 2018 – 2023 Histology (Solid Tumors)
  - Malignant CNS 01 – 03
  - Non-Malignant CNS 01 – 03

## MODULE 8: Reproductive Sites

This module will review the Male & Female Reproductive Sites. This module will review using the AJCC Staging Manual as well as the Solid Tumor Rules to determine histology and multiple primaries. You will begin to familiarize yourself with the terminology and anatomy for this site.

### Reading:

AJCC Cancer Staging Manual

- Chapter 50 – Vulva
- Chapter 51 – Vagina
- Chapter 53 – Corpus Uteri – Carcinoma and Carcinosarcoma
- Chapter 55 – Ovary, Fallopian Tube, and Primary Peritoneal Carcinoma
- Chapter 57 – Penis
- Chapter 59 - Testis
- Version 9 – Cervix Uteri

### SEER Training Modules

- Cervical & Uterine
- Ovarian Cancer
- Testicular Cancer

### Solid Tumor Rules 2022

- Other Sites

### Exercises, SEER\*Educate

- Section - Coding – CEs, “Dx 2021-2023 EOD, Summary Stage, Grade, SSDI Mashup”
  - Ovary, Fallopian Tube, & Primary Carcinoma 01 -05
  - Ovary, Fallopian Tube & Primary Carcinoma 06 – 10
  - Testis 01 – 05
  - Vulva 01 – 05
- Section - Coding – CEs, “Dx 2023-2023 Solid Tumor rules Other Sites”



## MODULE 9: Breast

This module will review the Breast Site. This site is extensive and requires more data collection than other sites. This module will review the Solid Tumor Rules for the breast and help you determine histology codes and learn the multiple primary rules for this site. This will familiarize you with the terminology and anatomy regarding the breast.

### **Reading:**

AJCC Cancer Staging Manual

- AJCC Eighth Edition Update to Breast Chapter <https://cancerstaging.us10.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=e4fcf2de02afbcaa9a2820fea&id=08450ea96e>

Solid Tumor Rules – Breast

[https://seer.cancer.gov/tools/solidtumor/2023/Breast\\_STM.pdf](https://seer.cancer.gov/tools/solidtumor/2023/Breast_STM.pdf)

### SEER Training Modules

- Breast Cancer

### Solid Tumor Rules 2022

- Breast

Exercises, SEER\*Educate

- Section – Coding – CE’s “Dx 2021-2023, EOD, Summary Stage, Grade, SSDI Mashup”
  - Breast 01 – 05
  - Breast 06 – 10
- Section – Coding – CE’s “Dx 2018 – 2023 Solid Tumor Rules”
  - Breast 2018 – 2023
- Section – CTR Prep – Disease Information
  - Breast 01 - 06

## MODULE 10: Colorectal and Upper GI

Colorectal and upper GI sites come with a lot of information. This module will review how to use the Solid Tumor Rules for each of these sites to determine histology and multiple primaries. You will need to review each relevant chapter in the Solid Tumor Rules to familiarize yourself with the terminology and anatomy for each site.

### Readings

- SEER - [Solid Tumor Rules 2023](#)
  - Colon, Rectosigmoid, and Rectum, p. 61
  - Other Sites (includes Esophagus and Stomach), p. 385
- AJCC 8, Colon and Rectum, Chapter 20, p. 251
- AJCC 8, Chapters 16-19, Upper GI, plus Appendix, p. 185
- SEER Training, Cancer Registration and Surveillance Modules
  - [Colorectal Cancer](#)
  - [UGI Tract Cancer](#)

### Exercises, SEER\*Educate

- Section - Coding – CEs, “Dx 2021-2023 EOD, Summary Stage, Grade, SSDI Mashup”
  - GIST 01 - GIST 05
  - Colon and Rectum 01 - Colon and Rectum 05
  - Stomach 01 – Stomach 05
  - Small Intestine 01 – Small Intestine 05
  - NET 01 – NET 05
  - Esophagus and GE Junction 01 - Esophagus and GE Junction 05
- Section - Coding – CEs, “Dx 2021-2023 Solid Tumor Rules”
  - Colon 2018 – 2023 01 - 05
- Section – CTR Prep – No CEs, “Disease Information”
  - Colon 01 – Colon 05

## MODULE 11: Head and Neck

This module will review the Head & Neck Sites. This module will review using the AJCC Staging Manual as well as the Solid Tumor Rules to determine histology and multiple primaries. You will begin to familiarize yourself with the terminology and anatomy for this site.

### Readings

#### AJCC Cancer Staging Manual

- Chapter 5 - Head and Neck Staging Overview
- Chapter 7 - Lip and Oral Cavity
- Chapter 11 - Oropharynx (p16-) and Hypopharynx
- Chapter 13 - Larynx

### SEER Training Modules

- Head & Neck Cancer

### Solid Tumor Rules 2022

- Head & Neck

### Exercises, SEER\*Educate

- Section - Coding – CEs, “Dx 2021-2023 EOD, Summary Stage, Grade, SSDI Mashup”
  - Oropharynx HPV – Mediated (p16+)
  - Lip & Oral Cavity
- Section - Coding – CEs, “Dx 2021-2023 Solid Tumor Rules”
  - Head & Neck 01 – 05
- Section – CTR Prep – “Coding Drill – Dx 2018 – 2023 Histology (Solid Tumors)”
  - Head & Neck 01 - 07

## MODULE 12: Hematopoietic

This module will review lymphomas and leukemias. This module will review using the Hematopoietic and Lymphoid Coding manual as well as the Hematopoietic database to determine primary site, histology, and multiple primaries.

### **Reading:**

AJCC Cancer Staging Manual

- Chapter 78- Introduction to Hematologic Malignancies
- Chapter 79 – Hodgkin and Non-Hodgkin Lymphomas
- Chapter 80 – Pediatric Hodgkin and Non-Hodgkin Lymphomas
- Chapter 81- Primary Cutaneous Lymphomas
- Chapter 82 – Plasma Cell Myeloma and Plasma Cell Disorders
- Chapter 83 - Leukemia

### SEER Training Modules

- Leukemia
- Lymphoma

[Hematopoietic & Lymphoid Neoplasm Coding Manual](#) : pages 11-24 (Also explore Hematopoietic & Lymphoid Database)

### Exercises, SEER\*Educate

- Section - Coding – CEs, “Dx 2021-2023 EOD, Summary Stage, Grade, SSDI Mashup”
  - Hodgkin & Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma
- Section – 2018 – 2023 Heme
  - Heme 2018 – 2024 Series 1 – 6
- Section – Coding Drill – Dx 2018 – 2023 Histology (Heme & Lymphoid)
  - Heme Histo Group 01 - 24

## MODULE 13: Pancreatic/Biliary

This module will review the Pancreatic & Biliary Sites. This module will review using the AJCC Staging Manual as well as the Solid Tumor Rules to determine histology and multiple primaries. You will begin to familiarize yourself with the terminology and anatomy for this site.

### **Reading:**

AJCC Cancer Staging Manual

- Chapter 23 – Intrahepatic Bile Ducts
- Chapter 26 – Distal Bile Duct
- Chapter 28 – Exocrine Pancreas

### SEER Training Modules

- Pancreatic & Biliary Cancer

### Solid Tumor Rules 2022

- Other Sites

### Exercises, SEER\*Educate

- Section - Coding – CEs, “Dx 2021-2023 EOD, Summary Stage, Grade, SSDI Mashup”
  - Distal Bile Duct 01 – 05
  - Exocrine Pancreas 01 – 05
  - Intrahepatic Bile Ducts 01 – 05
- Section - Coding – CEs, “Dx 2021-2023 Solid Tumor Rules”
  - Other Sites 2023
- Section – CTR Prep – “Coding Drill – Dx 2018 – 2023 Histology (Solid Tumors)”
  - Other Sites

## Resources List

AJCC Principles of Cancer Staging [principles\\_cancer\\_staging.pdf \(facs.org\)](#)

2023 SEER Program Coding and Staging Manual

- [https://seer.cancer.gov/manuals/2023/SPCSM\\_2023\\_MainDoc.pdf](https://seer.cancer.gov/manuals/2023/SPCSM_2023_MainDoc.pdf)

AJCC 8<sup>th</sup> Edition Chapter Updates & Corrections

- <https://cancerstaging.org/references-tools/deskreferences/Pages/8EUpdates.aspx>

CAnswer Forum

- <http://cancerbulletin.facs.org/forums/>

Store Manual – 2023

- [store-manual-2023.pdf \(facs.org\)](#)

Summary Stage Manual

- <https://seer.cancer.gov/tools/staging/>

EOD General Instructions Manual

- <https://seer.cancer.gov/tools/staging/>

Site Specific Data Items (SSDI)

- <https://www.naaccr.org/SSDI/SSDI-Manual.pdf>

Grade Manual

- <https://www.naaccr.org/SSDI/Grade-Manual.pdf>

SEER\*Rx

- <https://seer.cancer.gov/tools/seerrx/>

Solid Tumor Rules

- <https://seer.cancer.gov/tools/solidtumor/>

Hematopoietic and Lymphoid Neoplasm Database

- <https://seer.cancer.gov/tools/heme/>

ICD-O-3.2

- [http://www.iacr.com.fr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=149:icd-o-3-2&catid=80:newsflashes&Itemid=545](http://www.iacr.com.fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=149:icd-o-3-2&catid=80:newsflashes&Itemid=545)

