

CPAN® and CAPA® Certification
Programs for Perianesthesia Nurses



Take a Closer Look at the Benefits of

CertificatioNOW

cpan®
capa®



Working together to fulfill our patient promise

Q+A

CertificationNOW

The American Board of Perianesthesia Nursing Certification, Inc. (ABPANC) offers two certification programs for perianesthesia nurses. Our mission is to assure a certification process that validates knowledge gained through professional education and experience, ultimately promoting quality patient care.

Depending on the types of patients you care for, you can earn one or both certifications:

CPAN® – Certified Post Anesthesia Nurse

CAPA® – Certified Ambulatory PeriAnesthesia Nurse

When you earn CPAN® and/or CAPA® certification, you:

- Enhance your marketability and job security.
- Demonstrate leadership to colleagues.
- Promote excellence in patient care.
- Experience professional and personal pride.
- Achieve a nationally recognized standard beyond licensure.

In this booklet, you'll find answers to the most frequently asked questions about certification. For more information, we encourage you to call 1-800-6ABPANC or visit our website at www.CPANCAPA.org.

ABPANC's Vision

Recognizing and respecting the unequalled excellence in the mark of the CPAN® and CAPA® credential, perianesthesia nurses will seek it, managers will require it, employers will support it, and the public will demand it.

The CPAN® and CAPA® examination programs are accredited by the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC).

Why should I become CPAN® or CAPA® Certified?

- Achieving and maintaining CPAN® or CAPA® certification reflects your commitment to your patients and their loved ones, your colleagues and the profession of nursing.
- Achieving CPAN® or CAPA® certification strengthens your sense of personal and professional pride.
- CPAN® or CAPA® certification validates your specialized knowledge and experience, promoting quality patient care.
- CPAN® or CAPA® certification demonstrates your commitment to life-long learning.
- Studying for and maintaining CPAN® or CAPA® certification keeps you up to date on the latest developments in your specialty.
- CPAN® or CAPA® certification can help give you a competitive edge in this unstable job market.
- The CPAN® and CAPA® credentials, nationally recognized in scope, give you flexibility and recognition when moving anywhere in the U.S.
- CPAN® and CAPA® certified nurses are viewed as leaders, mentors and role models in perianesthesia nursing.

What is certification and how is it different from licensure?

While RN licensure, granted by each individual state, provides the legal authority for an individual to practice professional nursing, private, voluntary certification, as sponsored by ABPANC, reflects achievement of a standard beyond licensure for specialty nursing practice. CPAN® or CAPA® certification validates the knowledge and experience required to care for perianesthesia patients.

What are the eligibility requirements for becoming CPAN® or CAPA® certified?

- An unrestricted Registered Nurse licensure in the United States or any of its territories which use the NCLEX examination as the basis for determining RN licensure.
- Candidates applying for *initial* CPAN® or CAPA® certification must have a minimum of 1,800 hours of *direct* perianesthesia clinical experience as a Registered Nurse during the two (2) years prior to application. Put another way – candidates must *participate actively in the individual patient experience*. One does not need to be “technically” employed in a “direct care” position. If one’s role (e.g., educator, manager, Clinical Nurse Specialist) involves bedside interaction with the patient and/or family in some capacity, those hours would count towards meeting the experience requirements.
- Submission of an application, all required documentation of eligibility and payment of fees.
- Successful completion of either the CPAN® or CAPA® certification exam.
A BSN degree is not required for CPAN® and/or CAPA® certification.

What is the difference between the CPAN® and CAPA® Certification Examinations?

Both exams are organized around the following four categories of perianesthesia patient needs: Physiological Needs; Behavioral and Cognitive Needs; Safety Needs; and Advocacy Needs. Specific patient needs are listed under each category.

An example of a Physiological Need is Stability of Respiratory System.

The specific knowledge required of perianesthesia nurses in order to meet these patient needs are also identified for each of the four categories. For example, knowledge of physical assessment and anatomy and physiology is required to meet the aforementioned physiological need.

The number of questions for each category of patient need varies, depending on whether you are taking the CPAN® or CAPA® examination.

Percentage of Exam Questions - Current thru Spring 2012

Patient Needs	CPAN® Exam	CAPA® Exam
Physiological Needs	50%	45%
Behavioral/Cognitive Needs	20%	20%
Safety Needs	20%	20%
Advocacy Needs	10%	15%

Beginning with the Fall, 2012 CPAN® and CAPA® examination administration, the categories of perianesthesia patient needs will change from four categories to three categories: Physiological Needs, Behavioral/Cognitive Needs, and Safety Needs.

Meeting advocacy needs of patients continues to be a key role for the certified perianesthesia nurse. Therefore, specific advocacy-related tasks and knowledge are now reflected in Safety Needs and all content in the entire delineation reflects advocating on behalf of patients.

Percentage of Exam Questions beginning Fall 2012

Patient Needs	CPAN® Exam	CAPA® Exam
Physiological Needs	57%	49%
Behavioral/Cognitive Needs	20%	24%
Safety Needs	23%	27%

How do I know which examination to take?

YOU decide which exam is most relevant to your practice, based on what your patients' needs are and the amount of time patients spend in the specific phases described by the Perianesthesia Continuum of Care (as defined in ASPAN's Scope of Practice, Perianesthesia Nursing).

So...regardless of the setting in which you practice, if most of your time is spent caring for patients in Postanesthesia Phase I, the CPAN® examination is most relevant. If most of your time is spent caring for patients in the phases of Preadmission or Day of Surgery/Procedure, Postanesthesia Phase II or Extended Observation, the CAPA® examination is most relevant.

What are the CPAN® or CAPA® exam like?

Both the CPAN® and CAPA® certification examinations consist of 175 multiple-choice questions. In addition to the 140 questions which are scored, there are 35 questions which are being pretested (piloted) and these questions will not count towards the final score. These questions are randomly distributed throughout the examination and are not specifically identified. Candidates may take up to three hours to complete the exams. Candidates are tested on their ability to recall facts or understand principles, to relate two or more facts to a situation or analyze a group of facts and to synthesize information and evaluate situations, in order to choose a correct course of action.

Each exam question has been verified for accuracy, currency and reliability and referenced to a published source. Exam questions are written by practicing perianesthesia nurses who are also CPAN® or CAPA® certified.

Are the CPAN® and CAPA® examinations given on computer?

Yes - ABPANC uses computer-based testing (CBT) to deliver its examinations. Two testing windows a year are offered - in the Spring and Fall with a total of 60 days available for testing (as compared to just two days when the examinations were given using paper/pencil.) Candidates apply for the CPAN® and/or CAPA® examinations online during two registration windows per year at www.cpancapa.org. The registration windows and deadlines are noted in Appendix E of the Certification Candidate Handbook.

How much does it cost?

The examination fees for ASPAN members is \$285 and for non ASPAN members, \$385. Candidates must be members of ASPAN at the time of application and have their membership number available to enter into the application. Candidates must pay by credit card. Fees are subject to change without notice.

A system to purchase vouchers for a discount on examination fees is available on the ABPANC website. Vouchers can only be purchased in sets of ten for a flat fee of \$335 per voucher (total price - \$3,350).

Where are the exams given and when?

The exams are administered by computer at hundreds of Prometric testing centers nationwide (and APO sites). The most up-to-date list of test centers is available at www.Prometric.com/abpnc. The “examination administration window” is the time period during which an examination may be taken. The examination windows open the first Monday in April and October and extend for 6 weeks. All dates and deadlines are listed in Appendix E of the Certification Candidate Handbook.

How do I prepare for the examination?

Preparing for either the CPAN® or CAPA® examination is based on the individual candidate's learning needs. Many candidates form study groups and study from reference books and articles, and, while not required, attend review courses. Study tips are found on the ABPANC website under the Certification section.

Descriptions of examination content for CPAN® and CAPA® examinations and references are found in the Certification Candidate Handbook and on the website. On-line practice examinations are also available for purchase and may be accessed through the ABPANC website at www.cpancapa.org.

Once I'm certified, am I certified forever?

To ensure that certified nurses possess the most up-to-date knowledge and have recent and current experience, the CPAN® and CAPA® certification credentials are awarded for three years and must be renewed. To renew credentials, CPAN® and CAPA® certified nurses must have 1200 hours of experience during the three year certification period, current and unrestricted RN licensure, and successfully complete the examination *or* earn 90 contact hours related to continual learning.

Must I be a member of ASPAN to become certified?

While membership in ASPAN is not required for CPAN® or CAPA® certification, ASPAN members are eligible for reduced examination and recertification fees. For ASPAN membership information, call (877) 737-9696 or visit their web site at www.aspan.org.

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“ I am proud to have achieved the CAPA® status because of the opportunity for professional achievement and recognition. Being a CAPA® provides me the capability to maintain and update my knowledge, as well as validate the specialized knowledge base required for PACU nursing. ”

Lois Schick, MBA, MN, RN, CPAN®, CAPA®

“ Certified Ambulatory PeriAnesthesia nurses are the key to the future of an exciting and growing specialty. The CAPA® examination was right on target in validating the knowledge base of the ambulatory specialist. CAPA® designation rewards professional and personal achievement. ”

**Nancy Burden, BS, RN, CPAN®, CAPA®, Author,
Ambulatory Surgical Nursing**

“ Being CPAN® certified has enabled me to provide comprehensive nursing care to my patients. With a wide variety of post anesthesia patients in my unit, I feel confident in providing specific care to meet each need of the patient, ranging from infancy to geriatrics. ”

Patricia A. Reiff, CPAN®

“ Twenty years ago, I took the CPAN® examination for the same reason I have maintained my credential for twenty years – because of my own personal goal of meeting standards and professional accountability. ”

Lizabeth Rapoza, CPAN®

“ Certification takes you to the edge, not just the edge of your profession but to your personal edge. It challenges you not only as a professional but also as a person. Certification is not just something you do – it is more about who you are - Committed, Knowledgeable, the Best. That's why you become certified!” ”

Rich Ruhmann, former ABPANC Consumer Representative

“ Certification is my personal commitment to professional development. I have greater job satisfaction and career enhancement. Enjoying the respect and recognition of my colleagues, patients and my employer is definitely a boost to my professional identity and confidence. ”

Anita Deasis, CPAN®

“ My goal as a nurse has always been to provide the best, most knowledgeable and safest care for the patients entrusted to my care. Taking the CPAN® examination and maintaining certification (for twenty years) was one way that I could accomplish this goal. ”

Ellie Carlberg, CPAN®



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