



Rules and Regulations

Certification Process for Anesthesiologist Assistants

**National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants, Inc.
8459 US HWY 42, Box # 160, Florence, Kentucky 41042**

www.nccaa.org

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IMPORTANT NOTE: The American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants, the American Society of Anesthesiologists, the National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants and the National Commission for Certification of Physician Assistants are separate, independent organizations. NCCAA does not share individual practitioner information with or obtain from any of these organizations. Practitioners must communicate directly with NCCAA concerning all certification matters and must inform NCCAA directly of any change in address or change in name.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication with the NCCAA

Five mechanisms are available for communicating with the National Commission:

Website: www.nccaa.org

Email: business.office@nccaa.org

US Postal Service: NCCAA
Box # 160
8459 US HWY 42
Florence, KY 41042

Phone: 859-903-0089

Fax: 859-903-0877

Notification

Communication from NCCAA via telephone, email or US postal service shall be considered valid notification. NCCAA will not be responsible for loss of communications by the US Postal Service, facsimile, email or by electronic communication via the NCCAA website.

Change of Address

NCCAA maintains on file the mailing address of each applicant/candidate/practitioner as he/she submits it via the practitioner portal of the NCCAA website. **It is the responsibility of the applicant/candidate/practitioner to maintain accurate contact information, including address, email and telephone number, with the NCCAA, by use of the practitioner portal available on the NCCAA website.** NCCAA will not make changes of address based on letterheads, return addresses on envelopes, plain text email requests et cetera. NCCAA will not be responsible for lost or missed communications due to failure by the applicant/candidate/practitioner to update the NCCAA of a change of address or contact information.

Change of Name

NCCAA maintains on file the name of each applicant/candidate/practitioner as he/she submits it via the practitioner portal of the NCCAA website. The name on file is used for communications, verification of certification and other documents. **It is the responsibility of the applicant/candidate/practitioner to maintain accurate name information with the NCCAA, by use of the practitioner portal available on the NCCAA website.** A name change is a two-step process within the NCCAA website. Upon changing a name within the practitioner account, notification must be made via email to business.office@nccaa.org before the change of name will appear on the certificate of certification. NCCAA will not make changes of names based on letterheads, return addresses on envelopes, plain text email requests et cetera. **NCCAA will not be responsible for lost or missed communications due to failure by the applicant/candidate/practitioner to update the NCCAA of a change of name or contact information.**

CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR ANESTHESIOLOGIST ASSISTANTS

Code of Conduct

CAAs and those in the process of certifying must protect the integrity and reputation of the certified credential offered by the NCCAA and the processes by which those credentials are earned, awarded and maintained. CAAs and those in the process of certifying:

- * shall not engage in deceptive behavior that violates the integrity of the NCCAA application process, testing process (including but not limited to unauthorized reproduction, distribution or sharing of test content) or representation of themselves as holding the credential of Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant.
- * shall behave in a manner that is lawful, ethical and upholds acceptable standards of professional practice as a CAA.

Anesthesiologist Assistants that have earned the certified credential, CAAs, expressly agree to conduct themselves in accordance with the policies of the NCCAA. NCCAA may, at its discretion, deny, or revoke a CAA's eligibility for certification or recertification permanently or for such time as may be determined by NCCAA; issue a reportable letter of censure; issue a non-reportable letter of concern, and/or take such other actions as may be deemed appropriate if NCCAA determines that the CAA is in violation of NCCAA code of conduct or NCCAA policy.

Process Overview

The ongoing certification process administered by NCCAA involves: (1) initial certification after successful completion of the Certifying Examination for Anesthesiologist Assistants; (2) registration of credit for continuing medical education [CME] and successful completion of any applicable CME audits; and (3) successful completion of Examination for Continued Demonstration of Qualifications [CDQ]. The certification process operates on a continuous six year cycle:

Year	
0	Certification Examination
1	No required submissions or testing
2	CME Registration
3	No required submissions or testing
4	CME Registration
5	No required submissions or testing
6	CME Registration & CDQ Examination

NCCAA awards a time-limited certification to each practitioner who successfully completes the Certifying Examination and graduates from an NCCAA approved educational program. Each anesthesiologist assistant is able to maintain current certification by registering the required number and type of CME credits every two years and successfully completing a CDQ examination every six years. The certification status of practitioners in NCCAA's practitioner database is available on the homepage of the NCCAA website via the "Verify Certification" tab at www.nccaa.org.

Certifying Examination

The Certification Examination for Anesthesiologist Assistants is the entry point into the certification process for anesthesiologist assistants in the United States. The Certification Examination is designed to test entry-level cognitive and deductive skills of the anesthesiologist assistant.

CDQ Examination

The Examination for Continued Demonstration of Qualifications of Anesthesiologist Assistants [CDQ Examination] is one component of the ongoing certification process for anesthesiologist assistants in the United States. The CDQ Examination is designed to test the knowledge and deductive skills necessary to meet the competencies of the practicing anesthesiologist assistant who has successfully entered and continues to participate in the certification process for anesthesiologist assistants administered by NCCAA.

Continuing Medical Education

Registration of CME credit is an ongoing part of the certification process. Any practitioner may have his/her CME submissions audited at any time. Should an audit occur, compliance with the audit process is mandatory for continued certification. **It is recommended that practitioners keep original records of CME credit earned in the event of an audit.**

Maintenance of Certification

To maintain certification, an anesthesiologist assistant must keep CME registration current and up to date. If the practitioner has not registered 40 hours of CME credit with the required CME registration fee in full by the deadline of June 1st, in the given year registration is due, then that practitioner will no longer be listed as certified and shall be considered certification expired by NCCAA.

The practitioner will have until August 31st of the CME registration year to register 40 hours of eligible CME credit and pay in full the CME registration fee of \$235 as well as the administrative late fee of \$500 to reactivate certification. If proper payment and registration of CMEs is not completed by August 31st of a CME registration year, the practitioner is officially decertified and can only re-establish certification by reapplying for certification and successfully passing the Certification Examination.

Appeal Process

The National Commission will review and rule on a practitioner's appeal of decertification. The appeal must be made in writing and must be received within 30 days of notification of decertification to the practitioner by the NCCAA. The written appeal must include a complete explanation of the basis for appealing the decertification. Should the NCCAA grant an appeal, administrative fees will apply.

CERTIFICATES

In keeping with the green initiative of the NCCAA, verification of certification may be obtained and printed from the homepage of the NCCAA website at www.nccaa.org. Online verification of certification is available to certified anesthesiologist assistants as well as the public. Verification

of certification data online is considered current and official and can be accessed at www.nccaa.org. The verification page may be printed and shall act as the certificate of certification.

VERIFICATION OF CERTIFICATION

By applying to enter the certification process (via the Certifying Examination for Anesthesiologist Assistants) or to continue in the certification process via the CDQ Examination and registration of CME credit, the applicant agrees that NCCAA may provide to those agencies, organizations, and other parties who shall so inquire as to information regarding that individual's application status (including but not limited to approved, not approved, withdrawn) and certification status (including but not limited to certified or decertified).

Complete information regarding verification of certification is available on the NCCAA website at www.nccaa.org. The verification page may be printed and shall act as the official proof of certification for all agencies, organizations and parties.

NCCAA assumes each anesthesiologist assistant is aware of his/her certification status. NCCAA will respond to all requests for verification of certification whether or not the anesthesiologist assistant is certified.

On-line Verification of Certification

On-line verification of certification is available on NCCAA's website, www.nccaa.org. Any individual or agency may inquire about a practitioner's certification status and immediately obtain a printout of verification of certification. Simply enter either the first or last name or the certification number and click "Search".

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION

CME Registration

Continued certification is contingent upon registration of 40 hours of eligible continuing medical education (CME) every two years, including the year in which the CDQ Examination is taken. As a courtesy but not requirement, practitioners may be reminded of CME submissions beginning in March and again in April. Omission of reminder notifications does not negate the practitioner's responsibility to register CME by the deadline of June 1st in the year CME registration is due. Continuing medical education must be registered according to the following regulations:

- Continuing medical education must be submitted using the online practitioner portal at www.nccaa.org. The practitioner should "Sign In" and complete the submission, including payment of the CME registration fee. CME may be entered within the practitioner's account as the credits are earned. The payment button will populate once all 40 hours are entered.
- The deadline for CME registration and payment of CME registration fee is June 1st of the CME submission year.

- ❑ CME registration fee is of \$235. Any change to the registration fee shall be posted on the NCCAA's website with the effective date of change.
- ❑ For each two-year CME registration cycle, forty (40) hours of eligible continuing medical education must be completed and registered in order to obtain CME credit for that two-year period. For each two-year CME registration cycle (June 1 - June 1), only CME credit awarded in the applicable two-year time period will be eligible for registration. Carrying over of previously earned credits is not acceptable.
- ❑ CME hours exceeding the forty (40) required hours for a registration period will not be registered.

Eligible Continuing Medical Education

- ❑ NCCAA will accept registration of CME credit awarded for CME activities accredited by the following organizations:
 - * American Medical Association (AMA)
 - * American Association of Physician Assistants (AAPA)
 - * Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME)
 - * Foundation for Advancement of the Anesthesia Care Team (FAACT)

Important Note: To be eligible for NCCAA CME registration, the CME activity sponsor must award CME credit to the Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant in a clear documented fashion, such as a certificate. Certificates of attendance or participation are not eligible for NCCAA CME registration, regardless of the CME activity sponsor.

The content for thirty (30) hours of each registration period must be in the field of anesthesia or one of its subspecialties. The content for the remaining ten (10) hours may be in any medical topic.

ACLS/PALS instruction will be tabulated as anesthesia-related content and shall be eligible for submission provided the instructional course is accredited by AMA, AAPA, ACCME, FAACT or the American Hospital Association (AHA). The practitioner must obtain and submit a certificate of CME credit awarded for the ACLS/PALS course to be eligible for registration. A maximum of 4 hours of CME credit will be recognized by NCCAA for any ACLS or PALS course regardless of the credit awarded on the certificate from the approved provider. CAAs must only claim the hours actually spent in the CME activity.

NCCAA will grant forty (40) hours of CME credit to any CAA practitioner who is a full-time student in good standing in an LCME-accredited school of medicine during a two-year CME registration cycle.

- ❑ The practitioner who fails to properly register CMEs and pay the CME registration fee by the June 1st deadline will be considered certification expired by NCCAA and will be notified immediately following the June 1st deadline that he/she:

- o Is certification expired
 - o Is subject to a \$500 administrative fee for late CME registration
 - o Has until August 31st to bring CME registration, including payment of CME registration fee and the late administration fee up to date
 - o Will only be able to regain certification by successfully completing the Certifying Examination if submission of CMEs and all fees are not received by August 31st.
- The practitioner who takes the CDQ Examination and fails to register CMEs and/or pay the CME registration fee, in the CDQ year, by the June 1st deadline will be considered certification expired by NCCAA and will be notified immediately following the June 1st deadline that he/she:
- o Is certification expired
 - o Is subject to a \$500 administration fee for late registration
 - o Has until August 31st, to bring CME registration, including payment of CME registration fee and the late administration fee up to date
 - o Examination results will be withheld until CME registration and payment of fees is current
 - o Will only be able to regain certification by successfully completing a Certifying Examination if submission and late fees are not received by August 31st.
- The practitioner who fails to register CMEs and/or pay the CME registration and administrative late fee shall be officially decertified on September 1st by NCCAA and will be notified immediately following the August 31st deadline that he/she:
- o Is decertified and
 - o Will only be able to regain certification by successfully completing the Certifying Examination.

CME Audit

The NCCAA randomly audits CME submissions of practitioners on an annual basis. The practitioner who is selected for audit must fully comply in order to remain certified.

- The basis for audit is the CME credit registered during the preceding two-year CME registration period.
- The practitioner who is selected for audit will receive notification of audit in which an audit form and directions will be included.
- CME programs from the preceding two-year CME registration period must be listed legibly on the CME audit form. Incomplete or illegible CME audit forms will not be processed.
- The CME audit form must be accompanied by complete, legible copies of the original documents of CME credit awarded by the credit granting organization. CME materials will not be returned.

- ❑ The documents awarding CME credit must state the source of accreditation of the CME granting organization.
- ❑ The CME audit form must be signed and dated by the practitioner.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT TESTING

The NCCAA offers two different computer-based examinations annually – a Certifying Examination and a Continued Demonstration of Qualifications Examination – which are prepared in cooperation with the National Board of Medical Examiners and offered on several different dates each calendar year. Thomson Prometric, a part of the Thomson Corporation, provides scheduling and test centers for the computer-based examinations.

Testing Format

Each examination contains 200 items divided into four blocks of 50 items, with one (1) hour to complete each block. The examination will be administered in the following format:

Pre-test tutorial: 15 minutes

Examination: 4 hours and 15 minutes – 4 one (1) hour blocks of 50 questions each with 15 minutes of total break time to be taken between the first, second, or third examination blocks

Post-test survey: 15 minutes

Scheduling a Test

Once an application is approved, and the registration period had closed, the candidate will be sent notification to access to an electronic Scheduling Permit which contains instructions for contacting Prometric to schedule a test appointment. In order to schedule on line, the candidate will need the program code, exam code, and scheduling number, which are located on the Scheduling Permit.

Immediately upon receiving a Scheduling Permit, the candidate should check the spelling of his/her name against the name appearing on the identification that will be presented at the test center. If there is misspelling or any other problem, the candidate should contact the NCCAA immediately. Name changes or corrections cannot be made within fifteen (15) business days of a scheduled test date.

Prometric schedules testing appointments on a first-come, first-serve basis. Scheduling should be completed immediately upon receipt of the Scheduling Permit, as there are a limited number of seats available at each test site and prompt scheduling will increase the likelihood of securing testing at the desired location. **No scheduling or change in scheduling may be made within fifteen (15) business days of a scheduled test date.**

NCCAA should be contacted if the candidate does not receive a scheduling permit, needs a replacement scheduling permit, or has other scheduling issues:

Email: business.office@nccaa.org

Phone: 859-903-0089

Fax: 859-903-0877

Candidate Identification Number: The Scheduling Permit contains a unique Candidate Identification Number (CIN). The CIN must be used to access the exam on test day and to start the examination.

Day of Examination

Arrival: The candidate should arrive at the Prometric Test Center at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled test time. The candidate who arrives at the test center within 30 minutes after scheduled test time may or may not be admitted. **The candidate who arrives at the test center more than 30 minutes after scheduled test time will not be admitted.**

Identification: Upon arrival at the test center, the candidate must present his/her Scheduling Permit and an **unexpired** government-issued form of identification (driver's license or passport) that contains the candidate's photograph and signature. **The name on the candidate's identification must exactly match the name on the Scheduling Permit.**

No candidate will be admitted to a test center without a scheduling permit and valid identification.

Check-in: After presenting the Scheduling Permit and valid identification, the candidate will sign a test center log, be photographed, and store personal belongings in an assigned locker. All personal belongings, including cell phone, pager, wallet, watch, fitness tracker, food, and beverages must be placed in the assigned locker. Pager and cell phone must be turned off before placing them in the locker.

Testing: The Test Center Administrator (TCA) will instruct you to write your name and CIN discussed above on the laminated writing surface provided for making notes. The TCA will then collect the permit and escort you to the testing room. You will enter your CIN into the computer at your workstation to initiate your exam and to resume testing after breaks. **Do not erase your name and CIN** from the laminated writing surface until the end of your test day. If a personal emergency requires you to take a break during an examination block, an Irregularity Report will be filed. **The test center administrator will report this irregularity to the NCCAA.**

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT EXAMINATIONS

Examination Format

Each examination will be comprised of single best answer questions and matching questions, as illustrated in the following examples:

SINGLE BEST ANSWER

Select the single **BEST** answer

1. In which of the following states can London Bridge be crossed today?
 - A. New Mexico
 - B. New Hampshire
 - C. Arizona
 - D. New York
 - E. None of the above

MATCHING

Match each item with the correct answer. Each answer may be used once, multiple times or not at all.

Match each of the following states with the designation landlocked or with the body of water which the state borders.

1. Nevada
 2. California
 3. Vermont
-
- A. Atlantic Ocean
 - B. Pacific Ocean
 - C. Gulf of Mexico
 - D. Landlocked

Nonstandard Examination Administration

NCCAA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and is committed to providing appropriate accommodations for exam candidates with documented physical or mental impairments that substantially limits one or more major life activities. NCCAA may also approve and provide accommodations for exam candidates with documented medical conditions that may be temporary or are not covered by the ADA.

The NCCAA has established a process to consider requests from applicants that a Certifying Examination or a CDQ Examination be administered to them under nonstandard conditions because of medical, religious, or other reasons. The steps include:

- Initiate the request by contacting NCCAA at business.office@nccaa.org
- Provide clear legible copies of all supporting documentation for your request including documentation of prior exam accommodations.

Supporting Documentation Requirements:

Appropriate supporting documentation of a disability or qualifying temporary medical condition from a qualified medical professional must be submitted to NCCAA.

A qualified medical professional is defined as an individual with the education, training, and expertise to diagnose the reported disability. The relationship of the attesting professional to the individual must be that of a treating medical professional to a patient; there must be no familial, intimate, supervisory or other close relationship between the qualified professional and the individual requesting the accommodation.

Further the documentation must:

- * Be on letterhead, signed, dated and include the name, title, and professional licensing credentials of the qualified medical professional providing the report.
- * Contain contact information including address, telephone number and e-mail address of each professional providing documentation.
- * Include the date of assessment upon which each professional's report is based and any relevant follow up dates.
- * Include a detailed description of the medical, psychological, educational, and/or cognitive functioning tests that were conducted, the results of those tests and a comprehensive interpretation of the results.
- * The name of the specific disability or medical condition and a description of the specific impact on daily life activities and day-to-day functional limitations to major life activities including a history of the impact of the disability on academic functioning if the disability is due to a learning disability or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder.
- * The specific examination accommodations that are recommended and how each will compensate for those limitations and reduce the impact of the identified limitations.

- After NCCAA has received and reviewed the documentation, the applicant must comply with any additional requests for documentation of support including prior exam accommodations utilized by the applicant. If accommodation is approved, the NCCAA will provide the details of the accommodation and the applicant must acknowledge, sign and return a copy of the accommodation notification.
- The NCCAA will notify the exam vendor of the accommodation and work with the applicant to complete the application and scheduling process.

NCCAA must receive written notification of the requested special accommodations for examination administration and the rationale **at the time of application**. NCCAA reserves the right to request further information from the applicant's physician, Program Director, or other persons concerning the reason and requirements for nonstandard conditions for examination administration.

The NCCAA decision to accommodate a request that is not covered by the ADA remains at the sole discretion of the NCCAA.

Behavior During an Examination

The candidate is not permitted to bring any personal belongings into the testing room, including but not limited to written or printed materials, mechanical or electronic devices, handbag, wallet,

notes, study materials, calculator, watch, recording or filming devices, cell phone, food, or beverages.

The candidate is not permitted to communicate with, seek aid from, or provide aid to any other candidate during the examination.

During the examination, calculations may be performed by using the marker board and marker provided by the test center. An online calculator will be presented to you during the examination. The calculator icon can be found on your computer screen.

Test center staff monitor all testing sessions during examinations.

Test center staff is not authorized to answer questions from candidates regarding examination content, testing software, or scoring.

Restrooms are provided at the test center, and a candidate may be excused from testing to use the restroom according to test center regulations.

Audio and video monitoring is employed at all test centers. Inappropriate behavior during testing may result in termination of testing. Inappropriate behavior during testing may result in the candidate's examination being declared invalid.

Inappropriate Behavior

Inappropriate behavior is any act or attempt to subvert the processes of application, testing, or certification as administered by the National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants. Inappropriate behavior may occur prior to, during, or following the administration of an examination. NCCAA considers any inappropriate behavior a threat to the integrity of its examination and certification processes.

Inappropriate behavior which might occur prior to an examination includes, but is not limited to, falsification of information required for application, including the application itself and supporting documents; material misrepresentation of information related to the application; omission of pertinent information from the application or supporting documents; impersonation of another examination applicant; misconduct; having or attempting to obtain access to contents of an examination.

Inappropriate behavior which might occur during an examination includes, but is not limited to, falsification of information required for admission to the examination; impersonation of another examination candidate; copying of answers from another examinee; permitting one's answers to be copied by another examinee; providing or receiving unauthorized information during the examination; removing or copying or reproducing examination materials; attempting to remove or copy or reproduce examination materials; communicating or attempting to communicate with anyone except an examination proctor during testing regardless of whether inside or outside the room in which the examination is being conducted; disruptive activity during an examination.

Inappropriate behavior which might occur following an examination includes, but is not limited to, altering or misrepresenting an NCCAA document (eg, examination score report, certificate, or

other official information reported by NCCAA); reproducing or attempting to reproduce examination materials; misconduct, including any act or attempt to disrupt NCCAA's certification process. Counterfeiting NCCAA examination score reports, certificates, or other official documents not only represents inappropriate behavior but also will result in legal action being taken.

Anyone who has information or evidence that any inappropriate behavior might have occurred should submit a written report to NCCAA providing a detailed description of the inappropriate behavior, including copies of any supporting documentation or other evidence. In so far as possible, such written reports will be treated as confidential. Proctors at a test site may receive reports of inappropriate behavior at any time during testing.

NCCAA may take the following actions for inappropriate behavior discovered prior to or during an examination:

- Loss of current examination eligibility;
- Loss of future examination eligibility.

NCCAA may take the following actions for inappropriate behavior discovered after an examination has been completed but before examination results are reported:

- Loss of future examination eligibility;
- Withholding of examination score;
- Withholding of certification.

NCCAA may take the following actions for inappropriate behavior discovered subsequent to certification:

- Loss of future examination eligibility;
- Recalling of examination scores;
- Revocation of certification.

Depending upon the severity and scope of a candidate's inappropriate behavior, NCCAA may take appropriate legal action.

In each case where NCCAA takes action on the basis of inappropriate behavior, the individual(s) involved will be notified of the evidence and of the action being taken. The individual(s) will be informed of the NCCAA appeal process in the same communication. If for reasons of inappropriate behavior, an application is denied, scores are invalidated, or certification is revoked, NCCAA reserves the right to notify other agencies who have legitimate interests. Possible notified agencies include, but are not limited to, the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States; individual state licensing boards; current and potential employers; educational programs; other agencies that make decisions about the individual based, at least in part, upon examination scores or the NCCAA certification process. By making application for a Certifying Examination or a CDQ Examination, an applicant fully and unconditionally consents to disclosure by NCCAA as described above.

Validity of Scores

NCCAA makes every effort possible to assure that scores awarded examinees are valid scores. When NCCAA feels that an examinee's score does not represent a reasonable assessment of the examinee's knowledge, this irregular score may be judged invalid, neither pass nor fail. A score may be considered irregular for any one of several reasons, including, but not limited to, inappropriate behavior on the part of the examinee or other examinees; failure to complete all required components of the examination; aberrations in the examination process beyond the examinee's control; statistical analysis indicating irregular score(s).

A score irregularity that is under investigation will not be released. Following analysis of all available information and evidence pertaining to the score irregularity, NCCAA will make a determination as to the validity of that score.

When an investigation is initiated by NCCAA, the examinee will be notified of that investigation. The examinee may be requested to provide written information during NCCAA's investigation.

If NCCAA, based upon all available information, decides that an irregularity has occurred, the score may be ruled invalid. An invalid score will not be reported. Depending upon the circumstances of the irregularity and upon NCCAA's decision concerning validity, NCCAA may require the examinee to be reexamined no later than the next regularly scheduled examination, may revoke certification, and may take other corrective action deemed appropriate, including denial of admission to any future examinations. The examinee will be notified of the decision and related NCCAA determinations within ten days following the decision. At the time of notification, the individual will receive written information pertaining to the appeal process of NCCAA.

Content for Certifying and CDQ Examinations

The content for the Certifying and CDQ Examinations is organized into three (3) Core Competencies and the applicable sub-domains. The Core Competencies, sub-domains and bodies of knowledge were developed by the NCCAA from data obtained the Practice Analysis of Anesthesiologist Assistants survey administered by Professional Examination Service in 2013. The weighting and number of questions per competency differs with respect to the Certifying and CDQ examinations.

NCCAA Core Competencies for Anesthesiologist Assistants

Competency 1: Team-based Direct Patient Care

Subcategory A: Patient Assessment

1. Obtain and review current and previous medical/anesthetic records to determine problems and solutions as well as potential risks so that known complications that may result in patient morbidity or mortality are avoided.
2. Interview patients and/or families, gather pertinent patient history, and confer with OR team and other healthcare colleagues to formulate the care plan.

3. Identify and assess implications of patient's current medications and other treatments or therapies (for example, supplements, CPAP/BiPap) to provide optimal patient care.
4. Perform an anesthesia focused physical examination in order to identify any potential concerns that may require additional work up, consultation, or evaluation.
5. Obtain and analyze pre-operative test results for the purpose of identifying anesthetic considerations that require treatment, intervention or additional consultation.
6. Determine patient's NPO status with respect to the ASA NPO guidelines/ institutional NPO guidelines in order to foster patient safety.

Subcategory B: Planning and Preparation

7. Contribute to the development of the anesthetic care plan, in collaboration with the ACT, by incorporating results from the patient assessment, which addresses the specific requirements of the procedure.
8. Review and discuss anesthetic choices, including the explanation of risks and benefits to obtain/verify informed patient consent.
9. Ensure the availability of personnel and resources (for example, intra-operative monitoring, equipment, blood products, medications) required for patient management.
10. Establish communication with the peri-operative team to discuss pertinent information (for example, patient care hand-off, lab results, surgical plans, anesthetic concerns) to maximize patient safety.
11. Verify completion of required documentation related to patient assessment, planning, and preparation of patient care.
12. Plan for immediate post-operative needs for the patient (for example, post-op mechanical ventilation, direct admission to an ICU) to ensure a smooth and safe transfer of patient care between providers.

Subcategory C: Implementation and Management

13. Perform anesthetic related procedures and utilize evidence-based best practice to optimize patient, anesthetic and surgical care.
14. Ensure optimal patient positioning with respect to the surgical procedure to prevent injury.
15. Anticipate and manage common and critical events with consideration of co-existing diseases, to optimize patient outcomes and prevent patient injury.
16. Communicate concerns to the attending anesthesiologist and to members of the peri-operative team, to ensure continuous safe and effective patient care.
17. Implement and interpret the results of continuous physiologic monitoring, to evaluate and respond to changes in the patient's physiologic parameters through use of medical equipment and pharmaceuticals.

18. Perform proper transfer of care with effective hand-off to other healthcare providers, by exchanging all relevant information, in order to ensure safe post-anesthesia care.

Competency 2: Clinical Practice Management and Development

1. Advocate for the practices and principles of the anesthesiologist-directed Anesthesia Care Team to deliver safe and quality anesthetic care.
2. Participate in quality improvement/assurance activities to enhance safety and effectiveness of patient care.
3. Integrate evidence-based practice from validated contemporary research and clinical case reviews.
4. Promote adherence to regulations, standards of care, and evidence-based practice recommendations.
5. Practice cost effective healthcare that optimizes resource allocation and quality of care.
6. Practice truthfulness and transparency as they relate to patients, families, healthcare professionals and the public.

Competency 3: Professionalism

1. Establish a true and transparent relationship of care with patients and families by describing the role of the CAA on the healthcare team.
2. Demonstrate sensitivity, empathy, accountability, and respect to diverse patient populations.
3. Accept and adhere to professional codes of ethics.
4. Participate in professional development activities (for example, continuing medical education, conferences and workshops).
5. Maintain active membership in AAAA and other anesthesia-related professional organizations.
6. Maintain NCCAA certification.
7. Contribute to the anesthesia body of knowledge (for example, participate in peer review process, research, publish scholarly literature, deliver presentations) to advance the delivery of quality care and improve patient safety.
8. Provide education, mentoring and support to CAA students and other healthcare providers.
9. Identify prospective CAA leaders and mentor toward teaching and administrative roles in order to foster the development and promotion of the CAA profession.
10. Advocate for the role and contribution of CAAs to the public, healthcare providers, health systems, and policy makers.

11. Maintain personal wellness (for example, stress management, work/life balance) in order to provide the safest possible patient care.

Bodies of Knowledge

Foundational Knowledge

Knowledge of the following basic sciences, as related to anesthesia:

1. anatomy
2. physiology
3. pathophysiology
4. pharmacology
5. principles of physics
6. mathematics
7. biochemistry

Principles of Clinical Anesthesia

Knowledge of:

8. preoperative evaluation and assessment techniques
9. lab value assessment
10. special tests (e.g., PFT, ECHO)
11. peri-operative pain management
12. universal precautions
13. anesthetic monitoring procedures
14. pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics
15. drug calculations
16. drug interactions and toxicities
17. anesthetics and techniques of administration (e.g., general, regional, MAC, TIVA)
18. stages of anesthesia
19. airway management
20. ventilation modes and techniques
21. patient positioning
22. respiratory gas measurement
23. fluid management
24. cardiopulmonary resuscitation (BCLS, ACLS, PALS, NALS)
25. transfusion therapy
26. special techniques (hypothermia, hemodilution, blood conservation)
27. allergic reactions
28. situational awareness
29. hazards (e.g., airway fires, burns, electrical)
30. methods to prevent infection
31. imaging
32. post-operative patient management
33. complementary and alternative medicine

Equipment and Technology

Knowledge of:

34. anesthesia delivery systems
35. airway devices (e.g., fiberoptic and glide scopes, LMA, DLT)

36. ventilation assist devices (e.g., BiPAP, CPAPm)
37. oxygen delivery systems (e.g., nasal cannula, simple mask)
38. invasive and non-invasive cardiopulmonary monitors
39. cardiac assist devices (e.g., pacemakers, LVAD, cardiopulmonary bypass)
40. blood salvage and rapid infusion devices
41. point of care devices (e.g., glucometers, blood gas analyzer, coagulation)
42. neurophysiologic monitors (e.g., BIS, SSEP, cerebral oximetry, neuromuscular monitor)
43. temperature measurement devices
44. body and fluid warming devices
45. ultrasound
46. electrocautery and laser technology
47. electromagnetic equipment (e.g., MRI machines, magnets for pacemakers)

Systems, Special Populations, Settings, and Surgical Specialties

Knowledge of relevant anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, pathophysiology, potential complications, and anesthetic considerations for patients of all ages and degrees of illness in the following surgical specialties:

48. Cardiac
49. Vascular
50. Thoracic
51. Pediatric and neonatal
52. Geriatric
53. Gynecologic, Obstetric and Perinatal
54. Neurologic
55. Orthopedic
56. Bariatric
57. Renal and genitourinary
58. Transplantation
59. Ophthalmologic
60. Critical Care
61. Otolaryngologic
62. Gastroenterologic and hepatic
63. Oncologic
64. Plastic
65. Ambulatory
66. Trauma
67. Interventional Radiology
68. Interventional Cardiology
69. General and laparoscopic
70. Dental
71. Colorectal
72. Burn
73. Endocrine
74. Craniofacial
75. Acute & Chronic Pain management

Professional, Legal, Regulatory, and Ethical Standards and Guidelines

Knowledge of:

76. Professional practice standards
77. Patient safety guidelines
78. ASA practice standards
79. Clinical documentation requirements
80. Ethical principles and issues
81. Occupational Health (e.g., infection from patients, exposure to anesthetic agents, substance abuse, emotional considerations)
82. Applicable laws and regulations

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT EXAM

Incomplete Applications

Incomplete applications will not be considered. The applicant shall be responsible for complying with all application requirements including completion of the application by the application deadline. **Any application that is not complete at the application deadline will be declared void, and the applicant will be notified that he/she has been withdrawn from the application process.**

CERTIFYING EXAMINATION

Eligibility

The following criteria have been established by NCCAA for eligibility for the certification process, including the Certifying Examination.

AGE: The candidate must have attained the age of 21 years.

EDUCATION:

Graduate Applicant: The graduate applicant must have graduated from an approved educational program for anesthesiologist assistants. The program must be accredited or eligible for accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs [CAAHEP], as described in the latest edition of the CAAHEP publication, *Essentials of an Accredited Educational Program for the Anesthesiologist's Assistant* or an equivalent successor organization as deemed by the NCCAA.

-OR-

Student Applicant: The applicant must be a student in good standing in an approved educational program accredited or eligible for accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs [CAAHEP], as described in the latest edition of the CAAHEP publication, *Essentials of an Accredited Educational Program for the Anesthesiologist's Assistant* or an equivalent organization successor as deemed by the NCCAA. In order for an application to be processed, NCCAA must receive a verification directly from the applicant's educational Program Director attesting to the student's good standing in the educational program at the time of filing the application.

The applicant's examination will be scored with the examinations of all other candidates. However, no scoring information will be released to the applicant or to any other party until appropriate documentation of graduation has been received by NCCAA. Educational program administration often provide documentation of graduation. **However, it is the applicant's responsibility to confirm appropriate documentation of graduation has been provided to NCCAA.** In the event that the applicant fails to graduate from his/her educational program or NCCAA does not receive appropriate documentation of the student's graduation within 180 days following administration of the Certifying Examination, then that applicant's examination shall be declared an examination failure, and the applicant will have used one of his/her successive opportunities for the Certifying Examination.

Upon receipt of a complete application and all requisite supporting documentation, the NCCAA will notify an eligible applicant by providing an exam scheduling permit and instructions.

Examination Candidacy

The eligibility period for the initial Certifying Examination shall extend for no more than two years from the date of graduation from a NCCAA approved anesthesiologist assistant educational program and shall begin on the date of first attempt at the Certifying Examination. During the period of eligibility, the examination candidate shall have a maximum of six (6) opportunities to take the Certifying Examination. Exam candidates will be responsible for reapplication fees for successive exam attempts while in the eligibility period.

During the eligibility period, the following shall be considered use of an examination opportunity:

- 1) An examination candidate fails to appear for a scheduled Certifying Examination, or
- 2) An examination candidate fails to complete a scheduled Certifying Examination, or
- 3) An examination candidate fails to pass a Certifying Examination, or

When either the two year eligibility period or the maximum six attempts at the Certifying Examination have been exhausted, the candidate loses eligibility to take the Certifying Examination. The only way to establish new eligibility to take the NCCAA Certifying Examination is to enter and complete an unabridged NCCAA approved educational program for anesthesiologist assistants. The program must be accredited or eligible for accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs [CAAHEP], as described in the latest edition of the CAAHEP publication, *Essentials of an Accredited Educational Program for the Anesthesiologist's Assistant* or an equivalent successor organization as deemed by the NCCAA.

Application

Certifying exam candidates must apply for the Certifying Examination online at www.nccaa.org.

Submission of Online Application

1. Visit www.nccaa.org to complete online application
2. Click the "Get Certified" tab in the upper right hand corner and follow the instructions.

The application must be complete and must be received by NCCAA no later than the application deadline for examination.

Incomplete applications will not be considered. The applicant shall be responsible for complying with all application requirements including completion of the application by the application deadline. Any application that is not complete at the application deadline will be declared void, and the applicant will be notified that he/she has been withdrawn from the application process and prompted to apply utilizing the late application process, should the candidate still desire to apply.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to meet the application deadline. Any additional materials not eligible for online submission must be received by NCCAA at Box # 160 US HWY 42, Florence, KY 41042 prior to the application deadline. NCCAA shall not be responsible for misdirected mail, lost mail, et cetera.

To be complete, an application must include all of the following:

- Completion of application form
- Documentation of graduation for graduate applicant.
- Documentation of academic standing for student applicant.
- The applicant's acknowledgment on the application attesting to the completeness and correctness of all information and documentation being submitted and signifying his/her willingness to abide by the Rules and Regulations of the National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants.
- Payment of application fee and/or registration fees. (See **Examination Failure** section for statement about registration fee.)

Payment of fee must be complete on or before the application deadline of the examination for which the fee is being submitted.

The NCCAA accepts credit card and debit card payment through a secure online fee processing system. Application fees for all examinations must utilize this form of fee submission. In extreme circumstances, an applicant may contact the NCCAA about other acceptable forms of payment. In such a case, if the submission of application fee extends the application beyond the application deadline, then the applicant will not be eligible for the forthcoming Certifying Examination. The applicant would be required to apply in full for the next available Certifying Examination.

If an applicant is ruled ineligible for the Certifying Examination for which he/she has applied, then his/her application fee minus a \$100 processing fee will be refunded.

Payment of any refund will be made directly to the party who paid the application fee.

Late Application

Late Application for Certifying Examination is an application received by NCCAA after the published application deadline. The application window and deadlines are published on the NCCAA website at www.nccaa.org. Late applications for Certifying Examination will be accepted until the late application deadline published on the NCCAA website. **Late application, including payment of late application fee, must be complete by the published late application deadline or the incomplete application will be withdrawn from processing, and the applicant's fee will be returned minus a \$100 processing fee.**

Candidates must file a late application for Certifying Examination online by visiting www.nccaa.org and clicking the "Get Certified" tab. Any supporting documentation not receivable as an online submission by the NCCAA, must be mailed to NCCAA, Box # 160, US HWY 42, Florence, KY 41042.

The application must be complete and received by the NCCAA no later than the published late application deadline to be considered.

Incomplete applications will be not be considered. Any late application that is not complete at the late application deadline will be declared void, and the applicant will be notified that he/she has been withdrawn from the application process.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to meet the late application deadline. All requisite materials must be received by Box # 160, US HWY 42, Florence, KY 41042. NCCAA shall not be responsible for misdirected mail, lost mail, et cetera.

To be complete, a late application must include all of the following:

- Completion of application form.
- The applicant's acknowledgement on the application attesting to the completeness and correctness of all information and documentation being submitted and signifying his/her willingness to abide by the Rules and Regulations of the National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants.
- Late application fee for Certifying Examination. (See the **Examination Failure** section for statement about processing fee.)

If an applicant is ruled ineligible for the Certifying Examination for which he/she has applied, then his/her application fee minus a \$100 processing fee will be refunded.

Payment of any refund will be made directly to the party who paid the application fee.

Application Withdrawal

Any examination candidate may withdraw from the examination application process by notifying NCCAA in writing which must be received by NCCAA on or before thirty (30) days prior to the examination. Any examination candidate who voluntarily withdraws his/her application for a Certifying Examination may be eligible to receive a refund of his/her application fee minus a

processing fee of \$100, if the written request for withdrawal and refund of application fee is received by NCCAA on or before the application withdrawal deadline.

Any candidate who voluntarily withdraws an application for a Certifying Examination must apply in full for any subsequent Certifying Examination. Subsequent Certifying Examinations will have their own application processes, fee schedules, and rules and regulations.

Late Application Withdrawal

Students who are approved to take the Certifying Examination but who become ineligible by the examination day due to failure to maintain good standing within their educational program will be withdrawn from the application process. The applicant may be eligible to receive a refund of his/her application fee minus a \$100 processing fee, if notification of the student's failure to maintain good standing is received by NCCAA from the program director at least seven (7) days prior to the scheduled examination date.

Reporting Examination Results

Each examinee will be notified of his/her examination results. Both a numeric score and a pass/fail designation will be reported.

Examination Failure

Failure of an examination occurs when the examinee's score falls below the passing score established for that examination. If an examination candidate does not pass the Certifying Examination, he/she will be notified by the NCCAA.

Notification of exam failures, with remaining attempts available, will include instructions for registration for the next Certifying Examination. Registration for subsequent Certifying Examination requires payment of a \$150 registration processing fee.

Reapplication

The application of an examination candidate who fails to pass the Certifying Examination during his/her period of examination candidacy will be declared void. The individual may reapply only after he/she has fulfilled the requirements to gain examination candidacy by entering and completing an unabridged NCCAA approved educational program for anesthesiologist assistants. The program must be accredited or eligible for accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs [CAAHEP], as described in the latest edition of the CAAHEP publication, *Essentials of an Accredited Educational Program for the Anesthesiologist's Assistant* or an equivalent successor organization as deemed by the NCCAA.

CDQ EXAMINATION

Eligibility

The following criteria have been established by NCCAA for eligibility for the certification process, including the CDQ Examination.

AGE: The candidate must have attained the age of 21 years.

EDUCATION: The graduate applicant must have graduated from an approved educational program for anesthesiologist assistants. The program must be accredited or eligible for accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs [CAAHEP], as described in the latest edition of the CAAHEP publication, *Essentials of an Accredited Educational Program for the Anesthesiologist's Assistant* or an equivalent successor organization as deemed by the NCCAA.

PRACTICE: The candidate must be practicing as an anesthesiologist assistant or eligible to practice as an anesthesiologist assistant in at least one of the fifty states of the United States of America or in the District of Columbia.

CERTIFICATION: The candidate must be currently certified as an anesthesiologist assistant by the National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants, where *current* means at the time of application.

Upon receipt of a complete application and any requisite supporting documentation, the NCCAA will notify an eligible applicant by providing an exam scheduling permit and instructions.

Examination Candidacy

Eligibility timeframe for the CDQ Examination shall extend for three consecutive CDQ Examination offerings beginning with the June administration of the CDQ Examination the calendar year of CDQ Examination requirement for maintenance of certification (year 6, 12, etc.). During the period of eligibility, the examination candidate will have a maximum of three consecutive opportunities to take and pass the CDQ Examination. Should the candidate for CDQ Examination choose to take an earlier offered CDQ Examination (e.g. February) within the calendar year of CDQ Examination requirement for maintenance of certification (year 6, 12, etc.), then the eligibility timeframe for the CDQ Examination shall extend for three consecutive CDQ Examination offerings from the date of the initial CDQ Examination. (Eg. If the candidate takes the CDQ Exam in February of year six of certification, then the candidate has 2 more attempts and they must be consecutive offerings of the CDQ Exam). Reapplication for successive exam attempts will incur a registration fee established by the NCCAA.

During the eligibility period, the following shall be considered use of an examination opportunity:

- 1) An examination candidate fails to appear for a scheduled CDQ Examination, or
- 2) An examination candidate fails to complete a scheduled CDQ Examination, or
- 3) An examination candidate fails to pass a CDQ Examination, or
- 4) A candidate for reexamination fails to register for the next available CDQ Examination.

Continuance of Certification

The certification of a CDQ Examination candidate shall remain in effect during the period of CDQ examination candidacy so long as the following conditions are met:

The CDQ Examination candidate's registration of continuing medical education remains complete and on schedule; AND

The CDQ Examination candidate's fees for CME registration are paid in full and on schedule and the CDQ examination candidate completes application for the next consecutive offering of the CDQ examination.

Application

Eligible anesthesiologist assistants must apply for the CDQ Examination online at www.nccaa.org.

Submission of Online Application

1. Visit www.nccaa.org to complete online application
2. Click the “Sign In” tab in the upper right hand corner and follow the instructions to apply of the CDQ Examination.

The application must be complete and received by NCCAA no later than the application deadline for examination.

Incomplete applications will not be considered. The applicant will remain responsible for complying with all application requirements including completion of the application by the deadline. Any application that is not complete at the application deadline will be declared void, and the applicant will be notified that he/she has been withdrawn from the application process and requested to apply utilizing the late application process.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to meet the application deadline. NCCAA shall not be responsible for misdirected mail, lost mail, et cetera.

To be complete, an application must include all of the following:

- Complete application form.
- The applicant's acknowledgement on the application attesting to the completeness and correctness of all information and documentation being submitted and signifying his/her willingness to abide by the Rules and Regulations of the National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants.
- Payment of application fee. (See **Examination Failure** section for statement about registration fee.)

Payment of fee must be complete on or before the application deadline of the examination for which the fee is being submitted.

The NCCAA accepts credit card and debit card payment through a secure online fee processing system. Application fees for all examinations must utilize this form of fee submission. In extreme circumstances, an applicant may contact the NCCAA about other acceptable forms of payment. In such a case, if the submission of application fee extends the application beyond the application deadline, then the applicant will not be eligible for the forthcoming CDQ Examination. The applicant would be required to apply in full for the next available CDQ Examination.

If an applicant is ruled ineligible for the CDQ Examination for which he/she has applied, then his/her application fee minus a \$100 processing fee will be refunded.

Payment of any refund will be made directly to the party who paid the application fee.

Late Application

Late application for CDQ Examination is an application received by NCCAA after the published application deadline. The application period and deadlines are published on the NCCAA website at www.nccaa.org. Late applications for CDQ Examination will be accepted until the late application deadline published on the NCCAA website. **Late application, including payment of late application fee, must be complete by the published late application deadline or the incomplete application will be withdrawn from processing, and the applicant's fee will be returned minus a \$100 processing fee.**

Candidates must file a late application for CDQ Examination online by visiting www.nccaa.org and clicking the “Sign In” tab and following instructions to apply for the CDQ Examination. Any additional materials not eligible for online submission must be received by the NCCAA at Box # 160, US HWY 42, Florence, KY 41042. NCCAA shall not be responsible for misdirected mail, lost mail, et cetera.

The application must be complete and must be received by NCCAA no later than the published late application deadline.

Incomplete applications will be not be considered. Any application that is not complete at the application deadline will be declared void, and the applicant will be notified that he/she has been withdrawn from the application process. A failure to make complete application to the June CDQ Examination or any subsequent CDQ Examination shall be considered a use of examination opportunity with regard to the three consecutive attempts rule for the CDQ Examination.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to meet the application deadline. All requisite materials not eligible for online submission must be received by NCCAA at Box # 160, US HWY 42, Florence, KY 41042. NCCAA shall not be responsible for misdirected mail, lost mail, et cetera.

To be complete, a late application must include all of the following:

- Complete application form.
- The applicant's acknowledgment on the application attesting to the completeness and correctness of all information and documentation being submitted and signifying his/her willingness to abide by the Rules and Regulations of the National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants.
- Late application fee for CDQ Examination. (See the **Examination Failure** section for statement about processing fee.)

If an applicant is ruled ineligible for the CDQ Examination for which he/she has applied, then his/her application fee minus a \$100 processing fee will be refunded.

Payment of any refund will be made directly to the party who paid the application fee.

Application Withdrawal

Any examination candidate may withdraw from the examination process by notifying NCCAA in writing which must be received by NCCAA on or before the application withdrawal deadline, which is thirty (30) days prior to the examination. **Failure to register for reexamination following an exam failure would immediately render a CDQ applicant in non-compliance with Continuance of Certification.** Any examination candidate who voluntarily withdraws his/her application for a CDQ Examination may be eligible to receive a refund of his/her application fee minus a processing fee of \$100, if the written request for withdrawal and refund of application fee is received by NCCAA on or before the application withdrawal deadline.

The candidate who withdraws his/her application for CDQ Examination will automatically become decertified by the NCCAA (except in the case of application for examination earlier in the calendar year than the June CDQ Examination of the year of CDQ Examination requirement). That individual may re-enter the certification process by applying for and successfully completing a Certifying Examination.

Reporting Examination Results

Each examinee will be notified of his/her examination results. Both a numeric score and a pass/fail designation will be reported.

Examination Failure

Failure of an examination occurs when the examinee's score falls below the passing score established for that examination. If an examination candidate does not pass the CDQ Examination, he/she will be notified by the NCCAA.

Notification of exam failures with remaining attempts available will include instructions for registration for the next CDQ Examination. Registration for subsequent CDQ Examination requires payment of a \$150 registration fee. The completed registration form and the fee must be received on or before the next application deadline by NCCAA at Box # 160, 8459 US HWY 42 Street, Florence, Kentucky 41042.

Reapplication

The application of an examination candidate who fails to pass the CDQ Examination during his/her period of examination candidacy will be declared void. Continuance of certification shall cease immediately upon failure of the third opportunity for examination and the individual shall immediately be decertified by the NCCAA. The individual may re-enter the certification process by applying for and successfully completing the Certifying Examination.