

*CPAN and CAPA Certification
Programs for Perianesthesia Nurses*



Q+A

CertificationNOW



*CPAN and CAPA Certification:
Nursing Passion in Action®*

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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 visit our website at www.cpancapa.org and read the *Certification Candidate Handbook*.

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 exam 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, 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.

HOW DO I KNOW WHICH EXAM 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 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** exam 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 Care, the **CAPA** exam is most relevant.

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 caring for patients in either Perianesthesia Phase 1 (for CPAN) OR Preanesthesia Phase, Date of Surgery/Procedure, Postanesthesia Phase II and/or Extended Care (for CAPA).

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.

HOW DO I QUALIFY TO BECOME CERTIFIED AS BOTH A CPAN AND A CAPA?

To be eligible for both the CPAN and CAPA exams you must meet the direct care requirements and have at least 1800 hours in both Postanesthesia Phase I AND at least 1800 hours in Preanesthesia Phase, Day of Surgery/Procedure, Postanesthesia Phase II and/or Extended Care.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CPAN AND CAPA CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS?

Both exams are organized around the following three domains (categories) of perianesthesia patient needs: Physiological Needs; Behavioral Health and Cognitive Needs; and Safety Needs. Specific patient needs are listed under each domain. 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 three domains. For example, knowledge of physical assessment and anatomy and physiology is required to meet the aforementioned physiological need.

The patient needs and nursing knowledge required to meet these needs are listed on the Test Blueprint, found in **Appendix C** of the *Certification Candidate Handbook*.

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

PERCENTAGE OF EXAM QUESTIONS ON THE CPAN AND CAPA EXAMS

Patient Needs	CPAN Exam	CAPA Exam
Physiological	57%	50%
Behavioral Health & Cognitive	18%	21%
Safety	25%	29%

WHAT ARE THE CPAN AND CAPA EXAMS LIKE?

Both the CPAN and CAPA certification exams consist of 185 multiple-choice questions. In addition to the 140 questions which are scored, there are 45 questions which are being pretested (piloted) and these questions will not count towards the final score. These questions are randomly distributed throughout the exam 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 published sources as found in **Appendix D** of the *Certification Candidate Handbook*. Exam questions are written by practicing perianesthesia nurses who are CPAN or CAPA certified.

ARE THE CPAN AND CAPA EXAMS GIVEN ON COMPUTER?

Yes — ABPANC uses computer-based testing (CBT) to deliver its exams.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

The Registration fee for ASPAN members is \$314 and for non ASPAN members, \$424. To receive the ASPAN member discount, candidates must be members of ASPAN at the time of application and have their membership number available to enter into the online application. Candidates must pay by credit card. Fees are subject to change without notice.

WHEN ARE THE EXAMS GIVEN?

Two testing windows a year are offered — in the Spring and Fall with a total of 48 days each window available for testing. Candidates apply for the CPAN and/or CAPA exams online during two registration windows per year at www.cpancapa.org.

The “exam administration window” is the time period during which an exam may be taken. The exam windows usually open the first Monday in April and October and extend for 8 weeks. All dates and deadlines are listed in **Appendix E** of the *Certification Candidate Handbook*.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE EXAMINATION?

Exam questions are referenced to the listing of publications found in Study References (**Appendix D**). Candidates are encouraged to study a variety of references based on their review of the test blueprint (found in **Appendix C**) and their own learning needs. Pick a variety of these references; studying from only one or two references will not provide the depth and breadth of the CPAN/CAPA test blueprints.

Several other study tools are provided by ABPANC. A listing of study tools are found on the ABPANC website under Resources — Study Tools, and include Study Question of the Week, Certification Coaches, Mobile Study App, 4 Practice Exams (per program), webinars on Test-Taking Strategies and Fear of Failure, 12 Week Study Plan and Study Tips Brochure.

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 unencumbered RN licensure, and either successfully complete the exam 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 exam and recertification fees. For ASPAN membership information, call **(877) 737-9696** or visit their web site at www.aspan.org.

Please review the ***Certification Candidate Handbook*** for information about what is required in order to receive the discount when applying for an exam online.

"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



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