



## ***Study Tips***

**For Nurses Seeking  
Perianesthesia Nursing  
Certification**

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***American Board of Perianesthesia  
Nursing Certification***

## CONGRATULATIONS!

You have made the commitment to take an important step in your professional career — to seek CPAN or CAPA certification! You are an experienced perianesthesia nurse having spent hundreds of hours caring for perianesthesia patients and their families and meeting the needs of your patients. This brochure is designed as a quick reference guide with tips for organizing a study outline, identifying study resources, and dealing with test anxiety. Nearly 12,000 of your colleagues have taken this next step successfully. Best wishes as you take the certification journey!

### Quote From Candidate:

*“I view my PACU nursing career as Before Certification (BC) and After Certification (AC). There is no doubt that by preparing for the certification exam, I have learned the how and why of meeting the needs of perianesthesia patients and their families.”*

## ORGANIZE YOUR STUDY AND TIMETABLE

Begin your test taking journey by carefully reading the ABPANC ***Certification Candidate Handbook***. Using the test blueprint published in **Appendix C** of the *Handbook*, and ABPANC’s 12-week study plan, develop your outline of study topics, focusing on areas of weakness first. If you are unsure of your strengths and weaknesses, consider taking a practice exam to help focus your study efforts. Identify a sufficient timeframe for studying that allows you to address the perianesthesia patient needs and nursing knowledge required to meet those needs as identified on the test blueprint.

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ABPANC’S RESOURCES

ABPANC has developed resources to help you prepare! Most of these resources are available at no-cost, and can be found on the ABPANC website in the Resources section, under Study Tools. ABPANC’s free resources include:

- The ABPANC ***Certification Candidate Handbook***
- **Appendix D** — listing of study references
- The ABPANC Certification Coach Program
- The 12-Week Study Lesson Plan based upon the test blueprint
- Webinars on *Test Taking Strategies* and *Overcoming Test-Taking Anxiety and Fear of Failure*

- A guide on how to use Mind Mapping to study for the exam
- In addition, ABPANC offers Practice Exams for purchase. The link to the Practice Exams is found on the ABPANC website ([www.cpancapa.org](http://www.cpancapa.org)) in the Resources section, under Study Tools

## CONSIDER A COACH

ABPANC's certification coaches are group facilitators who can help you identify and use the helpful study strategies, access study resources, and use the ABPANC lesson plan. Coaches facilitate study groups, work with candidates on a one-on-one basis, and can assist you in identifying references to help you in your testing journey. For more information, or to find a Certification Coach near you, please contact Zelda Williams at [zwilliams@proexam.org](mailto:zwilliams@proexam.org) or by phone at **212-367-4236**.

## RALLY SUPPORT

A clear benefit of studying with a partner or forming a study group is the psychological support that members receive from each other throughout the study process. Whether you choose to study alone, with a partner, or in a study group, you need to begin by setting some ground rules regarding meeting times, study timelines and responsibilities of group members. Carefully read the ***Certification Candidate Handbook*** — noting all application deadlines. If you have any questions about information in the *Handbook*, contact the ABPANC national office.

## CHOOSE YOUR REFERENCES

The definitive list of study references for the CPAN and CAPA exams can be found on **Appendix D** of the *Handbook*. **Appendix D** contains the only study references that are approved by ABPANC and used to write the CPAN and CAPA exam questions.

You do not need to purchase or study from all of these publications, however you need to study from a variety of these references based on your learning needs. Don't just study from one or two references. Where can you find these references? Consider borrowing them from your hospital library and even a public library; identify which references your unit might have or other CPAN and/or CAPA colleagues. If you wish to purchase some references, check large internet retailers where you can purchase used books, or even rent some.

## STUDY TIPS

- Start with a positive attitude — be proud of what you know.
- Make a manageable study routine (and stick to it!). A little each day is much better than a lot all at once.
- Your study place should be conveniently located, quiet, well lit, cool, undisturbed and comfortable.
- Pick a time to study when you are most alert. Research indicates that morning and early evening are the most productive times to study.
- Study like a sprinter — pick a topic to study in a completely uninterrupted fashion for 20-30 minutes at a time, and then take a break.
- Take breaks but only rest for about 3-5 minutes.
- Each day, briefly review what you have learned. At the end of a week, conduct a weekly review.

## STUDY TO YOUR LEARNING STYLE AND LEARNING NEEDS

- Spend more time on subjects that are your weaknesses and areas that don't pertain to the patients whom you work with.
- If you are an auditory learner, read aloud and say the answers to yourself.
- If you are a visual learner, mind mapping might be helpful. ABPANC has a mind mapping guide available in the Study Tools section of the ABPANC website.
- Make flashcards — you will learn as you write them and as you review them.
- Each day you study, write down 5-10 questions from your notes and then practice answering them.
- Use outlines to summarize the topics in the Test Blueprint **(Appendix C)**.
- If you are taking an exam review course, decide if the purpose of doing so is to learn new material or to review. Learning new material should take place earlier in your study program while reviewing material can occur later in the process. In addition, watch ABPANC's free Test-Taking Strategies webinar.

## TIPS FOR THE HOME STRETCH

- As you near the exam date, study preparations should come to a close. Spend the last week before the exam reviewing materials, rather than trying to learn new information.

- Don't study the night before the exam. Get a good night's rest.
- On test day, dress in layers to make sure you are comfortable in the room.

## TIPS FOR EXAM DAY

- Be sure you have all of the required information to take to the test site, as described in the ATT Letter and ***Certification Candidate Handbook***.
- Know what you can and cannot take into the test site.
- It is impossible to have a noise-free testing environment. You may want to bring soft earplugs.
- Plan to be there at least 30 minutes early! You will not be admitted to the exam if you are late.
- When you arrive at the test, calm yourself by practicing relaxation techniques. Have confidence — you have studied and prepared well.
- You will be required to take a 15 minute online tutorial on taking a computer-based exam. The time does not count against your test taking time.
- Read all test directions before you begin.
- Pace yourself. There is a timer on the screen that shows the time remaining. Divide your time according to the number of questions and the time allotted.
- Read each question and all of the answer choices carefully.
- Bookmark questions you are not sure about and come back to them. The computer will keep track of the questions you skipped and prompt you to come back to them.

## AFTER THE EXAM

- An unofficial, preliminary pass/fail score is available immediately after the exam. An official, final score report will be mailed to you within two to three weeks.
- Take an opportunity to celebrate the journey, whether or not you passed.
- Know that the study process, in and of itself, represents learning and growth. You are a better perianesthesia nurse for having taken this journey.

**Quote From Candidate:**

***"I think time is the best asset as this exam is not something you can prepare for in just one or two weeks. I appreciated the instructions on the website to plan for 12 weeks of study and the outline to use as a guide to layout study materials in an organized manner to cover all of the topics."***



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