LEARNING BUILDER

WHERE CAN I FIND RESOURCES TO HELP ME WITH LEARNING BUILDER?
ABPANC has created quick guides for certification and recertification, which are available from the home page of the ABPANC website. Additionally, ABPANC has tutorial several easy-to-follow videos that guide you through the process of how to use the Learning Builder platform for your recertification activities, which are available here.

IS THE OLD ELECTRONIC LOG STILL AVAILABLE?
Yes. All historical activity added to the old electronic log over the past three years is now available in Learning Builder. You can find step-by-step instructions to access and verify your historical activity on the Recertification page of the ABPANC website.

DO CERTIFICANTS NEED TO UPLOAD SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION?
It is not required but strongly recommended. ABPANC recommends that recertification candidates use the upload feature on the continuing education log to manage their contact hours. Doing so will make it much easier for those candidates selected for audit. Moreover, uploading documentation is considered a best practice as Learning Builder can warehouse continuing education certificates and other documentation for easy access and reference.

WHAT SHOULD CANDIDATES/CERTIFICANTS TELL THEIR VERIFIERS?
Individuals applying for initial certification will need to show at least 1,200 hours of direct clinical experience in the last two years. Individuals applying for recertification need at least 900 hours of direct clinical experience during their three-year period of certification. For those individuals who are recertifying, it is important to communicate to verifiers that they only have to verify 900 hours of clinical experience, and that they are not verifying continuing education hours.

PAYING FOR THE EXAM

DOES ABPANC OFFER A “FAIL SAFE” PROGRAM?
Yes. ABPANC introduced Test Assured in the summer of 2019. The Test Assured program allows CPAN or CAPA exam candidates to take the exam twice in a 12-month period if the first attempt is unsuccessful. Now, candidates have the ability to take the exam a second time—if their first attempt is not successful – for an additional, nominal fee of $50.00 at the time of registration. Exam candidates can rest assured with Test Assured!

DOES ABPANC OFFER A VOUCHER PROGRAM?
ABPANC introduced a voucher program starting in the fall 2018 examination and recertification cycles. Employers may now purchase multiple exam registrations or CPAN/CAPA recertifications
for their employees at the discounted ASPAN member rate. Information about the voucher program is available on the ABPANC website.

I CAN’T AFFORD ALL OF THE REFERENCES. WHAT DO YOU RECOMMEND?
Individuals should see what references are available at their workplace or local library; ask other nurses in their unit who have passed the exam to borrow their references; speak to Component colleagues to see if any of them have the references; see if a study group has been formed locally – there may be an opportunity to share references; consider “renting” from Amazon, or buying the books used.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

IS IT SUFFICIENT TO JUST STUDY FROM ONE BOOK, LIKE THE CORE OR DRAIN?
No! If ABPANC was to develop their exams based on only one or two references, then the exams become a test about those references. ABPANC provides the Study References List that contains the only references used to validate the questions and answers used on the certification examinations. Reviewing the content outlined in the Test Blueprint will help the candidate identify study needs. While candidates are not expected to study from all the references listed, choosing multiple references based on specific learning needs is the best study plan.

The ABPANC practice exams and Study Question of the Week provide one current reference from the Study References List to validate the correct answer. ABPANC believes that empowering candidates to refer to the reference themselves to find the correct answer and understand the rationale makes them active participants in the learning process, which is ultimately better for their comprehension and retention.

WHY ARE THERE TWO EXAMS?
The CPAN and CAPA exams are based on the results of a Role Delineation Study (RDS) that is conducted every five years to determine the exam blueprint. The most recent study, conducted from 2015-2016, validated differences in the practice of CPANs and CAPAs based on time spent in the three domains of patient care: Physiological Needs, Behavioral Health and Cognitive Needs, and Safety Needs. Time spent caring for patients in different phases of anesthesia was also examined. The findings support the maintenance of two separate certification examinations in which the relative emphasis of test questions differs based upon the context of care.

THE CAPA EXAMINATION IS MOST RELEVANT TO MY PATIENTS. WHY ARE THERE QUESTIONS ON THE CAPA EXAMINATION RELATED TO PATIENTS IN PHASE I?
The CPAN and CAPA examinations are tests of knowledge. Even though you may not have experienced caring for Phase I patients while working in the aforementioned phases of the perianesthesia continuum of care, as a CAPA nurse, you still need to know about the care delivered in Phase I in order to anticipate the needs of your patients. Similarly, a CPAN nurse needs to know about the care delivered in the Pre-admission Testing, Day of Surgery, Phase II, and/or Extended Care in order to anticipate the needs of his/her patients. Therefore, questions
addressing all phases of the perianesthesia continuum appear on both the CAPA and CPAN exams. ABPANC data shows that there is a trend of perianesthesia nurses who are required to float between units or phases of perianesthesia care, thus making knowledge of unique patient issues across the perianesthesia continuum a safety priority for perianesthesia nurses.

ELIGIBILITY

WHY DOES ABPANC HAVE A DIRECT CARE REQUIREMENT?
The importance of nursing practice stems from its connection to patient care. In order to translate nursing knowledge and judgment into practice, one needs to have practiced direct “hands-on” care prior to being CPAN® and/or CAPA® certified. The CPAN and CAPA certification programs are intended to assure the public that the certified nurse has both the knowledge and experience to meet their needs. Patients should logically be able to assume that the certified perianesthesia nurse has actually provided direct, “hands-on” care to perianesthesia patients.

WHAT DOES THE DIRECT CARE REQUIREMENT MEAN FOR INITIAL CERTIFICATION?
Individuals seeking initial certification must have a minimum of 1,200 hours of direct perianesthesia clinical experience as a Registered Nurse during the previous two years prior to application. 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, then you are actively participating in the individual patient experience and those hours would count toward meeting the experience requirement.

DOES WORKING IN THE PRE-ADMISSION DOING PRE-SCREENING BY PHONE COUNT AS DIRECT CARE?
Yes. Perianesthesia nurses in this role have direct interactions with this population of patients – screening and providing guidance for them as they prepare for surgery, including but not limited to taking a pre-anesthesia history, determining need for pre-operative labs and testing, and teaching patients about medical and pharmacological management in preparation for surgery. The CAPA examination is the examination most relevant to the needs of their patients. Carefully review the examination blueprint because there will be patient needs you may not have encountered in this role but you will still need to know about these needs and the knowledge required to meet them.

WHAT IF I DON’T MEET ABPANC’S DIRECT CARE REQUIREMENT BUT STILL WANT TO BE CERTIFIED?
For those who do not have “hands-on” experience, we encourage them to seek certification in an area more relevant to their role, such as ANCC’s NE-BC or NEA-BC certification for nurse executives, or their staff development certification program. In addition, NLN offers certification for academic educators.

TESTING
IF I PASSED THE EXAMINATION WHY CAN’T I KNOW MY SPECIFIC SCORES?
ABPANC only provides “You Passed” information to Passers, primarily because scores are often misused by Passers and Employers. The score is not intended to be used as a criterion for hiring or making a hiring decision between two employees. For credentialing exams, the purpose of the examination is to distinguish between candidates who have mastered the knowledge for entry level. The exams are not designed to rank order employees – which is the danger of providing total scores.

WHY AREN'T THE CPAN AND CAPA EXAMINATIONS GIVEN YEAR-ROUND?
The number of times the CPAN® and CAPA® examinations are given each year is largely driven by the number of test-takers. Currently, our volume is not nearly that of programs that test candidates year-round. In addition, giving examinations more frequently requires a robust bank of questions that have been pre-tested. Our ability to pre-test items is also driven by the number of test-takers. Pretested items are needed to develop examinations. When the number of test-takers increases, the ABPANC Board of Directors will carefully review the efficacy of adding a third examination registration and administration window.

ARE THE CPAN/CAPA EXAMS GIVEN INTERNATIONALLY?
Yes. Nurses working overseas in perianesthesia nursing must meet the eligibility requirements of having current and unrestricted RN licensure in the United States and the clinical practice eligibility as defined in the Candidate Handbook, and must contact PSI at 1-800-733-9267 at least 4-6 weeks prior to taking the exam. They must sit for the exam during one of the exam administration windows.

RECERTIFICATION

I AM DUAL CERTIFIED SO CAN I USE THE CONTACT HOURS EARNED FOR BOTH THE CPAN AND CAPA OR DO I HAVE TO OBTAIN 90 FOR EACH?
You may use the same contact hours earned to recertify both CPAN® and CAPA® credentials. However, contact hours accrued in the spring and fall cycles are date-specific. The Learning Builder system will not allow you to apply contact hours out of cycle.

OTHER QUESTIONS

DOES ABPANC HAVE A RETIRED STATUS?
ABPANC introduced a retired status in 2017. More information is available on the ABPANC website, under recertification.

WHY ISN’T THERE A PEDIATRIC-SPECIFIC PERIANESTHESIA EXAMINATION?
Ten percent of the content of the CPAN® and CAPA® exams address needs of pediatric patients specifically. There are also many other questions that apply to pediatric nurses and their patients. The Role Delineation Study Advisory Team always includes a participant who is a CPAN or CAPA pediatric perianesthesia nurse. ABPANC continually evaluates the possibility of doing a feasibility study in the future to create a pediatric perianesthesia nursing assessment.
WHY SHOULDN’T I JUST TAKE THE CCRN EXAM?
The focus of the CPAN® and CAPA® examinations, unlike the CCRN examination, is on meeting the specific needs of perianesthesia patients. If you compare the test blueprints for each examination you will see some overlapping content; however, content related to the knowledge required to care for patients receiving anesthesia, analgesia, and sedation is specific to the CPAN and CAPA examinations.

ARE THE CPAN AND CAPA EXAMINATION PROGRAMS ACCREDITED?
Yes. The CPAN® and CAPA® certification programs are accredited by the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC).