



National Commission for
Certification of
Anesthesiologist Assistants



Anesthesiologist
Assistant
Certification
Program

YOUR CERTIFICATION
YOUR FUTURE



Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant



As a Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant (CAA), you have achieved a significant accomplishment and are held in high-esteem among your advanced practice provider peers.

This recognition is based on your achievements through your graduate studies, clinical experience, continuing education courses, and ongoing rigor of passing your continuing certification examinations to maintain this designation.

The NCCAA has a comprehensive process to develop the certification exam. The rigorous process involves a robust and regular assessment of the anesthesiologist assistant professional practice. This process ensures that your credential:

- Elevates the value of your role as a CAA, with demonstrated relevance to new, current, and future practice.
- Demonstrates an understanding in critical knowledge areas.
- Instills confidence in clinical practitioner partners, employers, patients, and their families in the capabilities, skills, and professionalism of CAAs.

The process outline in this program provides greater transparency to the practice analysis, test development, exam standards, and score reporting. Use this insight to empower you as you focus your continuing education activities for the upcoming year.

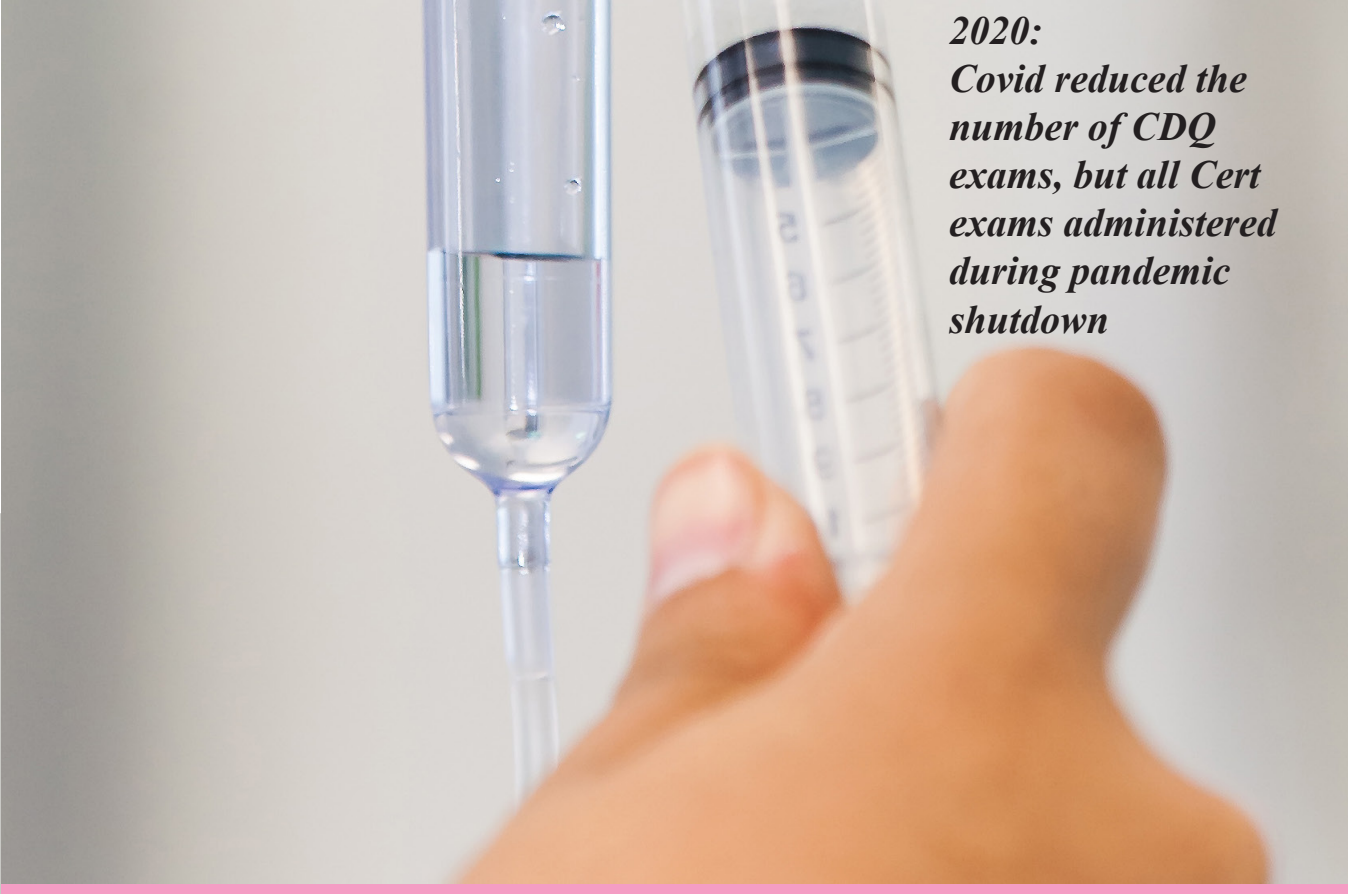


Total Number of CAAs

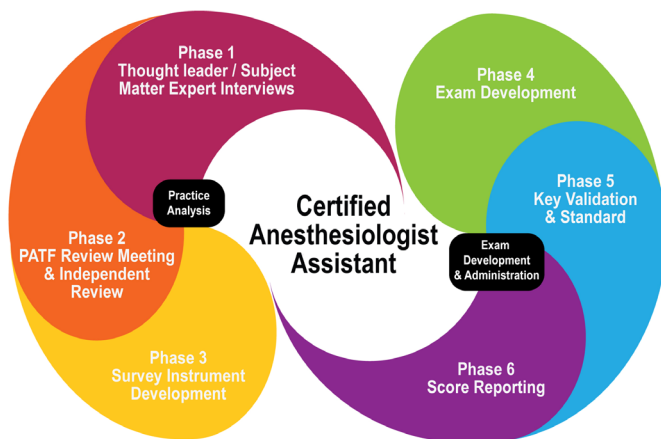
2016: 1875
2017: 2105
2018: 2336
2019: 2625
2020: 2916

Number of Certifications & Continued Demonstration of Qualifications Exams Administered:

2016: 499
2017: 466
2018: 535
2019: 593
2020: 494
2021: 773 Projected



2020:
Covid reduced the number of CDQ exams, but all Cert exams administered during pandemic shutdown



The NCCAA utilizes a Practice Analysis Task Force (PATF) to drive the practice analysis and examination development process. The PATF works with a third-party examination development partner to:

- Seek professional practice insights.
- Establish competency requirements.
- Develop the examination process through a multi-phased approach (timeframe of 6-8 months).

Practice Analysis

1 THOUGHT LEADER / SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT INTERVIEWS

The accreditation partner conducts a series of anesthesiology thought leader / subject matter expert (SME) and CAA employer telephone interviews to identify new and critical areas within the structure of the professional practice, recent changes in practice techniques, and anticipate potential future changes of practice. This process may take several weeks to complete.



2 PATF REVIEW MEETING & INDEPENDENT REVIEW

The accreditation partner leads a 2-day meeting with the Practice Analysis Task Force (PATF) to review the data collected from the interviews and create a process-based exam outline to establish competency domains that focus on the key areas of responsibility performed by CAAs. The competency domains are supported by primary knowledge areas.

An independent review of the exam outline and delineation of job practice is conducted by SME individuals not involved in the initial phases. Feedback is used in a follow-up PATF meeting, which leads to the development of the survey instrument.

Competency Domains	Team Based Direct Patient Care		Clinical Practice Management & Development		Professionalism
Sub-Domains	Patient Assessment Planning & Preparation Implementation & Management				
Knowledge Areas	Foundational Knowledge	Principles of Clinical Anesthesia	Equipment & Technology	Systems, Special Populations, Settings, & Surgical Specialties	Professional, Legal, Regulatory, & Ethical Standards and Guidelines



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SURVEY INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

A web-based survey is sent to all CAAs. This survey is designed to assess the frequency of performance, importance, and severity of consequences of the competencies. CAAs are provided 1 month to complete the survey. Survey results are used to:

- Further develop the core competencies of an CAA.
- Create the exam item bank needs.
- Build the Exam Blueprints.

The three phases of the Practice Analysis stage of the certification exam process leverage:

- Thought leader/SME interviews
- PATF committee and independent reviews
- Input from CAAs to ensure the certification exam includes current practice techniques and competencies in order to develop the exam blueprints

This forms the foundation for the next stage of the process - Exam Development & Administration.

NCCAA CERT Exam Blueprint

Total	Knowledge (K)	Numerical Problem Solving (N)	Clinical Management
20	10-12	0-3	5-8

Exam Development & Administration



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EXAM DEVELOPMENT

Each exam item developed goes through multiple review processes before being finalized and released. This helps validate content accuracy, applicability, and exam design format. This phase may take 3 to 5 months.

The exam item bank is reviewed and cross referenced with the exam blueprint built following the survey phase from the Practice Analysis process. Next, exam item writing assignments are developed to meet any item bank needs. These exam items are drafted by subject matter experts (SMEs). Following this exercise, exam items go through multiple reviews:

- Exam items are reviewed for proper form, citation, and inclusion of any necessary graphics/videos.
- Each exam item is reviewed again by individual SMEs for content, accuracy, style, etc.
- Exam items are then reviewed by a panel of SMEs for inclusion within the exam item bank. At this stage, the SMEs are focusing on any revisions, deletions or inclusions.

After multiple reviews, the exam form is then developed utilizing the exam blueprint and target value for overall exam difficulty. The SMEs then review the final exam form a final time prior to approval for administration. Once the exam form receives final NCCAA Board approval, the exam is administered to CAAs.

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KEY VALIDATION & STANDARD SETTING

Once the exam is administered, the NCCAA begins the key validation process, which occurs within a week to 10 days following the exam. During this stage, content experts review the exam question statistics and remove questions with statistical anomalies that may render a question inaccurate or unfair. Any missed keyed questions are also removed from scoring.

Following key validation is the standard setting exercise process. This phase engages 10-15 subject matter experts who review each exam question individually and rank each question from 0-100% on what percentage of minimally competent individuals would answer the question correctly. This is called an Angoff analysis. These experts will also conduct a Hofstee analysis, where they will review the exam in total and then rank the percentage of correct answers on the exam that would be appropriate for passing. In tandem, a psychometrics analysis and statistical analysis take place.



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SCORE REPORTING

The NCCAA Board uses the results of the Angoff, Hofstee, psychometrics, and statistical analysis to determine a number correct on the exam that represents a passing score. Your individual score, the number of included items you answered correctly, is compared to the passing score for determination of pass/fail status. You will receive a score report that reflects your performance on the exam blueprint categories identified with incorrect item responses. This information is valuable in understanding knowledge strengths and gaps. Use this information as you plan your CME activities.

Name: _____

ID Number: _____

Listed below is a keyword phrase for each item you answered incorrectly. The keyword phrases are intended to help you plan your continuing education.

Percent Correct Score	Percentile Rank
92	100
91	99
90	98
89	97
88	96
87	95
86	94
85	93
84	92
83	91
82	90
81	89
80	88
79	87
78	86

Your Results Are Here!

Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants
JUNE 2020 CERTIFYING EXAMINATION
PERFORMANCE INTERPRETATION GUIDELINES

The Certifying Examination for Anesthesiologist Assistants was designed to assess the examinee's knowledge and skills related to the duties of a practicing anesthesiologist assistant. The final score for the current Certifying Examination was based on the content grid on relevance as determined by the NCCAA Board. The lower portion of the performance report provides feedback on your examination.

PERCENTILE RANK represents the percentage of scored items on the current examination you performed better than. The percentile rank is not a passing score and cannot be compared across administrations. The minimum passing score for the current examination is 62.

PERCENT CORRECT SCORE represents the percentage of scored items on the current examination you answered correctly. The percent correct score is not a passing score and cannot be compared across administrations. The minimum passing score for the current examination is 62.



Once I take the exam, how long will it take to receive my score?

It typically takes 8-10 weeks to receive your score.

Why does it take so long get results?

Key validation and standard setting occur after the last person has taken the test within that test administration. This must occur before score reporting is completed.

Does the exam include any test questions?

Yes. These questions are not scored. They are included for consideration in future exams. Therefore, the total number of questions scored does not equal the number of questions answered.

Will I receive any information that will help me understand what I missed?

Yes, you will receive a detailed score report, which digs deeper into your performance on the competency domains and subdomains through reporting of scoring in the exam blueprint content areas.

Does the NCCAA get “real-world” insight for the test? How can I be sure it covers how things are practiced today, since things evolve over time?

A major part in the exam development process includes extensive interviews with CAAs, employers, and educators. As well, a survey instrument is deployed via email to all CAAs to solicit additional feedback on the competencies, which is used to develop the test item bank.

In the future, I’d like to be involved in the process. How can I get more involved?

NCCAA sends the survey instrument to all CAAs. Practice analysis surveys are done every 5-8 years.

Please ensure your current email address is listed in the NCCAA portal. When you receive the survey, please ensure it is completed in the timeframe allotted. You will receive reminders.

We’d love to have you as a volunteer with NCCAA!

Visit the website at nccaa.org to learn more or contact us at contact@nccaa.org.

Your success in achieving and maintaining your certification through examination is a significant accomplishment. As this guide illustrates, the Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants is a multi-phased, comprehensive process. It is a continuous process that includes CAAs throughout each phase. The process begins through the survey of all CAAs, nationwide, to gain an understanding of your practice. The exam items are developed and extensively reviewed by SMEs which include your CAA peers. While administered by the NCCAA, it truly is ...

“Your Certification, Your Future”



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