



**CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE FIRST ASSISTANT  
Certification/Recertification Candidate Handbook**

## Purpose of the CRNFA Certification/Recertification Candidate Handbook

This handbook provides essential information about policies and procedures pertaining to CRNFA certification and recertification. If you have any questions after reviewing this handbook, you can contact NASC by email at [info@nascertification.org](mailto:info@nascertification.org) or by calling 866-681-NASC (6272). All information in this handbook including portfolio content, certification fees, and policies is subject to change without notice.

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## INTRODUCTION TO CERTIFICATION

### What is certification?

The American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) defines certification as formal recognition of the specialized knowledge, skills, and experience demonstrated by the achievement of standards identified by a nursing specialty to promote optimal health outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

CRNFA certification is a voluntary program that validates the specialized knowledge, skills, and experience of an individual RN practicing at a proficient or expert level as an RN first assistant (RNFA).

### Why obtain CRNFA certification?

Earning and maintaining CRNFA certification

- demonstrates accountability to the general public for providing safe nursing practice;
- enhances quality patient care;
- identifies RNs who have demonstrated specialized knowledge, skills, and experience in the RNFA expanded role;
- allows employing agencies to identify RNFAs who have obtained proficiency as an individual RNFA; and
- provides personal satisfaction for practitioners.

### What are the objectives of the CRNFA certification program?

According to the National Assistant at Surgery Certification (NASC) Board of Directors, objectives of the CRNFA certification program include

- promoting excellence in nursing and health care globally by enhancing the value of RNFA certification;
- establishing and promoting credentialing standards for RNFAs;
- recognizing individuals who achieve CRNFA certification;
- creating value for employers, employees, and the CRNFA;
- seeking inclusion by partnering with organizations who share the NASC vision and values; and
- promoting the art and science of assisting at surgery.

### How does an RNFA earn the CRNFA credential?

To earn the CRNFA credential, candidates must meet eligibility requirements, apply for certification, and successfully complete the CRNFA Professional Portfolio.

Successfully completing the CRNFA Professional Portfolio requires a thorough understanding of the knowledge and skills required for proficient or expert clinical practice in the RNFA role. Knowledge and skills can be obtained through work experience, independent learning, and/or educational programs. The experiential component of the portfolio requires an individual have a minimum of 2,000 hours of experience performing in the RNFA role. Thus, the CRNFA Professional Portfolio is based on the knowledge and skills an RN with 2,000 hours of RNFA practice in the perioperative setting is expected to know. The portfolio assesses both experiential and cognitive knowledge and skills, as together these form the foundation of clinical practice.

### How was the CRNFA Professional Portfolio developed?

The CRNFA Professional Portfolio was developed by NASC committees composed of active and emeritus CRNFAs, qualified CRNFA certification candidates, and subject matter experts. Appendix A provides additional information about the NASC Portfolio Task Force/Committees/Panel.

Under the expert guidance of Manny Straehle, PhD, President of Assessment, Education, and Research Experts (AERE), NASC conducted a Job Analysis intended to describe the functions, responsibilities, and underlying knowledge and skills essential for proficiency in the RNFA role. The domains and knowledge statements from the Job Analysis served as a guideline for development and content of the professional portfolio. See Appendix B for a list of the knowledge statements included in the CRNFA Job Analysis. Table 1 shows the seven domains of the CRNFA Job Analysis, the number of knowledge statements for each domain, and the percent of portfolio items for each domain.

DOMAIN	NUMBER OF KNOWLEDGE STATEMENTS	PERCENT OF PORTFOLIO
Preoperative Patient Assessment	25	10%
Intraoperative Patient Care Interventions	21	35%
Emergency Situations	6	9%
Postoperative Patient Care Interventions	6	5%
Infection Prevention	16	13%
Perioperative Workplace Safety	7	13%
Professional Practice	16	15%
Total	97	100%

### What are the subject areas addressed in the portfolio?

The CRNFA Professional Portfolio consists of three studies that address the seven domains identified during the Job Analysis. Table 2 provides an outline of the content of the CRNFA Professional Portfolio delineating the number of activities that must be completed in each study and the percent of the portfolio comprised by each study.

SUBJECT AREA	NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES	PERCENT OF PORTFOLIO
Clinical Case Study		
Preoperative	31	26%
Intraoperative	36	33%
Postoperative	13	9%
Workplace Safety Study	20	16%
Professional Practice Study	19	16%
Total	150	100%

## APPLYING FOR THE CRNFA PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

### What are the eligibility requirements to apply for CRNFA?

Based on whether the applicant is a registered nurse (RN) or an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN), candidates must meet one of two eligibility paths for CRNFA certification:

#### **RN applicants**

If the applicant is an RN, eligibility requirements for CRNFA certification include

- a bachelor's degree or higher in any field;
- current CNOR certification;
- current, unrestricted RN licensure in the state where currently practicing;
- completion of an acceptable RNFA program\* that meets AORN standards for RNFA education programs; and
- a minimum of 2,000 documented hours of practice as an RNFA.

\*For a list of acceptable RNFA programs, see <https://nascertification.com/resources/acceptable-rnfa-programs/>.

#### **APRN applicants**

If the applicant is an APRN (ie, clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, certified nurse midwife, or certified registered nurse anesthetist), eligibility requirements for CRNFA certification include

- certification as an APRN by an accredited certification program;
- current, unrestricted RN licensure in the state where currently practicing;
- completion of an acceptable RNFA program\* that meets AORN standards for RNFA education programs; and
- a minimum of 2,000 documented hours of practice as an RNFA.

\*For a list of acceptable RNFA programs, see <https://nascertification.com/resources/acceptable-rnfa-programs/>.

### How do I document 2,000 hours of practice as an RNFA?

At the time of application, all CRNFA candidates must have completed a minimum of 2,000 hours of practice as an RNFA. A practice hour log delineating your 2,000 hours of RNFA practice must accompany your application.

#### **How should I log my RNFA hours?**

Candidates should document their practice hours using the CRNFA Practice Hour Log provided in Appendix C. Appendix C also contains a link to the log in Excel format.

Facility printouts may be used to document practice hours. The candidate's name must be documented as RNFA or first assistant and the log must include the

- date of procedure;
- type of procedure;
- duration of procedure delineating pre-, intra-, and postoperative minutes; and
- name or initials of the surgeon assisted.

## What types of practice hours may I include in my documented 2,000 hours of RNFA practice?

Documented practice hours may include patient care provided while performing in the RNFA role during the preoperative, intraoperative, or postoperative phases.

- The *Preoperative Phase* includes care provided on the day of the procedure from the time the patient enters the surgical facility until the patient enters the operating room. The following may be documented as care performed during the Preoperative Phase:
  - conducting history and physical assessments;
  - providing patient, family, or caregiver education;
  - reviewing patient records in preparation for the surgical procedure;
  - participating in preoperative components of the Universal Protocol; and
  - communicating the plan of care, special needs of patient and/or surgeon, and other pertinent information with interdisciplinary and/or perioperative team members.
- The *Intraoperative Phase* includes care provided from the time the patient enters the operating room until the patient leaves the operating room. While performing in the intraoperative role the RNFA cannot be concurrently serving in any other perioperative role (eg, scrub person).
- The *Postoperative Phase* includes care provided from the time the patient leaves the operating room until the patient is discharged from Phase 1 post-anesthesia care. The following may be documented as care performed during the Postoperative Phase:
  - transporting patient to post-anesthesia care;
  - assisting with initial post-anesthesia care monitoring;
  - writing postoperative orders;
  - writing or dictating progress notes or discharge summaries;
  - implementing postoperative interventions (eg, changing dressings, checking and monitoring surgical drains, removing/inserting catheters or intravenous lines, providing nutritional support or electrolyte therapy);
  - providing patient, family, or caregiver education;
  - collaborating with facility and community resources for postdischarge care; and
  - administering medications.

## What are acceptable RNFA practice hours?

When documenting RNFA practice hours,

- the 2,000 hours must be completed during the five years immediately preceding the application;\*
- at least 500 of the required 2,000 hours must be completed during the two years immediately preceding application;
- at least 1,000 of the required 2,000 hours must be for RNFA practice performed during the intraoperative period;
- pre-, intra-, and postoperative hours do not have to be for the same patient;
- pre- and postoperative hours do not have to be from cases where the applicant assisted intraoperatively;
- the 2,000 hours may include practice hours performed while in an RNFA internship, practicum, or RNFA educational program, otherwise the hours must be completed after graduation from an RNFA program;



- practice hours completed while working in an RNFA role in a volunteer status may be included; and
- the 2,000 hours may not include time attending classes, programs or seminars.

\*If practice hours occurred more than five years before application, please contact NASC.

## How can I apply for CRNFA certification by portfolio?

You may apply for CRNFA certification by portfolio by completing the online application at [www.nascertification.org](http://www.nascertification.org). Click on the “Login” link at the top of the page. The first time you log in, you will need to click the orange “Register as an Applicant” button to register and create a profile.

To complete the online application for certification by portfolio, you will need

- contact information including your address, email, birth date, and home phone numbers; and
- contact information for your current employer and each employer with whom you have logged practice hours including the facility name, address, phone number and your supervisor’s name, address, email, and phone number.

### **RN applicants must include:**

- RN license,
- CNOR certification,
- diploma for bachelor’s degree or higher in any field,
- certificate of completion of an acceptable RNFA education program,\*
- CRNFA Practice Hour Log with a minimum of 2,000 documented hours of practice as an RNFA, and
- payment (you may use a credit card when submitting the application, or you may mail a check).

### **APRN applicants must include:**

- RN license,
- APRN certification,
- certificate of completion of an acceptable RNFA education program,\*
- CRNFA Practice Hour Log with a minimum of 2,000 documented hours of practice as an RNFA, and
- payment (you may use a credit card when submitting the application, or you may mail a check).

\*For a list of acceptable RNFA programs, see <https://nascertification.com/resources/acceptable-rnfa-programs/>.

## Does NASC verify the information I provide on my application?

Information provided by candidates on applications for CRNFA certification may be verified. Information that may be verified may include the applicant’s

- RN license (via Nursys),
- CNOR certification (via CCI website),
- professional nursing history (via contact with past employers), and/or
- practice hour logs (via contact with supervisor).

## How much does CRNFA certification by Professional Portfolio cost?

The CRNFA certification fee is \$550.

## COMPLETING THE CRNFA PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

### How much time do I have to complete the portfolio?

Once your application for CRNFA certification is approved, NASC will contact you to select a start date to begin working on your portfolio. You must begin working on the portfolio within two months from the date your application is approved.

On your start date, you will receive an email from NASC with login information for the CRNFA Professional Portfolio portal. The instructions and documents you need to complete the portfolio will be provided to you through the portal.

Your completed portfolio documents must be uploaded to the portal no later than three months after your start date.

### **What happens if I do not schedule a start date for the portfolio?**

If you fail to schedule a start date and do not contact NASC, your entire certification fee is forfeited. To reapply for certification, you must meet current eligibility criteria and pay the applicable certification fee.

### **What happens if I do not submit my portfolio documents by the due date?**

If you fail to submit your completed CRNFA Professional Portfolio documents within three months after your start date and you do not contact NASC, your entire certification fee is forfeited. To reapply for certification, you must meet current eligibility criteria and pay the applicable certification fee.

### **What if I need more time to begin or complete the portfolio?**

If you are unable to choose a start date and begin working on your portfolio within two months after your application is approved or to complete your portfolio within three months after your start date, please contact NASC. We may be able to provide a one-month extension. The administrative fee for a one-month extension is \$100.

### Are there specific references or materials I should use to prepare for the portfolio?

See Appendix D for a list of recommended reference materials for completing the CRNFA Professional Portfolio.

As a certification organization, NASC develops and administers the CRNFA Professional Portfolio. NASC does not promote or endorse any specific study guides, review products, and/or training courses.

### Do I need a computer to complete the portfolio?

You will need an Internet connection to access the portal and some of the recommended references. You will need to complete the portfolio on a computer using a standard word processing program such as Microsoft Word or Apple Pages. The CRNFA Professional Portfolio documents are provided as Microsoft Word documents and your completed documents must be submitted in Microsoft Word format. If you complete your portfolio using an Apple computer, you will need to convert the documents to Microsoft Word format.

### How does my portfolio get evaluated?

The completed CRNFA Professional Portfolios are evaluated by two members of a NASC volunteer panel consisting of active and emeritus CRNFAs. The volunteers use a detailed rubric to evaluate and score each portfolio. If the two evaluators reach different conclusions (ie, one evaluator awards a passing score and one evaluator awards a failing score), a third evaluator will review the portfolio submission. The portfolio evaluation process is double-blind, meaning that the candidate does not know who evaluated their portfolio and the evaluators do not know the identity of the candidate.

## How long does it take to receive my results?

NASC is committed to notifying each applicant of their results in a timely manner while maintaining a high standard of accuracy, objectivity, and impartiality. Our goal is to notify all candidates of their pass or fail status within one month from the date the completed portfolio is submitted. However, based on the number of candidate submissions, Portfolio Evaluation Panel schedules, and the need for additional portfolio review, additional time may be required.

## What happens when I pass the portfolio?

If your portfolio submission earns a passing score, we will notify you that you are CRNFA certified. You will be able to log into your account and print your certificate immediately. You will also be able to verify your certification on our website. NASC will mail an official certificate to you within three weeks.

Because of the collaborative partnership between the Competency and Credentialing Institute (CCI) and NASC, if you hold CNOR certification, the CNOR certification will be renewed by CCI on the same five-year schedule as your CRNFA credential. When you recertify your CRNFA, NASC will send this information to CCI and they will recertify your CNOR credential.

## What happens if I fail the portfolio?

If you fail your portfolio submission, you will have one opportunity to revise and resubmit your documents. Revisions must be completed and submitted within 60 days and there is a \$100 fee. Your revised documents will be evaluated by the same committee members who originally evaluated your portfolio. If you earn a passing score on your revised documents, we will notify you that you are CRNFA certified.

If you do not earn a passing score on your revised documents, you fail to obtain certification. To become certified, you will need to apply again, pay the certification fee, and complete a new portfolio using a different patient for the Clinical Case Study.

## What happens if I cheat or share information from the portfolio with my colleagues?

When you submit your portfolio, you will sign a statement that you have maintained the confidentiality of the portfolio contents and that your portfolio submission is your own work. While we recognize that collaboration with your surgical team is an important aspect of interprofessional collegiality, your portfolio must be your own work and a demonstration of your personal knowledge, skills, and experience in the RNFA role.

## USING THE CRNFA CREDENTIAL

CRNFA is the official credential recognizing a nurse who has achieved certification as an RNFA. The CRNFA certification validates the specialized knowledge, skills, and experience of an individual RN practicing at a proficient or expert level in the expanded RNFA role.

The CRNFA mark is federally registered with the United States Patent and Trademark Office and may only be used in accordance with NASC policy by those who have achieved and maintain the designation.

## When can I begin using the CRNFA credential?

You may use the CRNFA credential as soon as you receive email notification from NASC that you have successfully completed the CRNFA Professional Portfolio with a passing score. You will be able to log into your account and print your certificate immediately. You will also be able to verify your certification on our website. NASC will mail an official certificate to you within three weeks.

## How long is the CRNFA credential active?

Certification status is granted for a period of five years. Unless you complete one of the recertification methods in effect at that time, your certification will expire on December 31st of the fifth year of the recertification cycle.

If your CRNFA certification lapses, you may no longer use the CRNFA designation. To reinstate your certification, you must meet the eligibility requirements, reapply, and complete the certification process by successfully completing the CRNFA Professional Portfolio. Any misuse or misrepresentation of the CRNFA credential by those not currently holding the credential shall be subject to legal action by NASC.

## How do I display the CRNFA credential after my name?

You should display your credentials as recommended by the American Nurses Association<sup>2</sup> and the American Nurses Credentialing Center<sup>3</sup> beginning with the highest degree earned and followed by licensure, state designations or requirements, national certifications, awards and honors, and other certifications. For example,

- Jane A. Doe, BSN, RN, CNOR, CRNFA
- John A. Doe, MSN, RN, ACNS-BC, CRNFA

## CRNFA RECERTIFICATION – MAINTAINING YOUR CREDENTIAL

### When do I recertify my CRNFA credential?

CRNFA certification is conferred by NASC for a period of five years, at which time a CRNFA may seek recertification. Table 3 shows the accrual and recertification periods for CRNFA certifications with expiration dates falling between December 31, 2021, and December 31, 2027.

IF YOUR CRNFA CERTIFICATION EXPIRES	PERIOD TO ACCRUE YOUR PRACTICE HOURS AND CONTACT HOURS/POINTS	PERIOD TO SUBMIT YOUR RECERTIFICATION APPLICATION
December 31, 2021	January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2020	January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021
December 31, 2022	January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2021	January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022
December 31, 2023	January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2022	January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023
December 31, 2024	January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2023	January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024
December 31, 2025	January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2024	January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025
December 31, 2026	January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2025	January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026
December 31, 2027	January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2026	January 1, 2027 to December 31, 2027

*Note.* The accrual period is the time period during which the certificant must complete professional development activities and practice hour requirements. Certificants have up to 5 years to complete their recertification activities and apply for recertification the following year.

### How do I recertify my CRNFA credential?

To recertify your CRNFA credential, you must

- meet the recertification eligibility requirements,
- choose a recertification method and complete recertification activities during your accrual period,
- submit the NASC application for CRNFA recertification during your recertification year, and
- pay the application fee.

If you hold both the CRNFA and CNOR credentials, you must meet recertification requirements for the CRNFA credential only. CCI will automatically renew your CNOR credential when you recertify your CRNFA credential.

## What are the eligibility requirements for CRNFA recertification?

At the time of application for CRNFA recertification, you must

- hold CRNFA certification;
- hold certification as a CNOR or APRN;
- hold current licensure, without provision or condition, as an RN or APRN in the state where currently practicing; and
- complete the minimum number of practice hours.

In addition to the eligibility requirements all applicants must fulfill the requirements of the selected recertification method.

## What if I also hold CNOR certification?

Because of the collaborative partnership between the Competency and Credentialing Institute (CCI) and NASC, if you hold CNOR certification, you only need to meet the recertification requirements for CRNFA. The CNOR credential will be automatically renewed when you recertify your CRNFA.

## What are the methods for CRNFA recertification?

To recertify your CRNFA credential, you must choose a recertification method that includes a prescribed plan for continued professional development. CRNFA certificants may recertify by contact hours or points.

## How do I recertify by contact hours?

Recertification by contact hours recognizes that professional development may be accomplished by participation in a variety of educational activities.

## How many contact hours are required for CRNFA recertification?

The number of contact hours required for CRNFA recertification is based on the number of RNFA practice hours completed. Recertification by contact hours requires the accumulated hours be awarded within the five-year accrual period. Table 4 shows the number of contact hours required for recertification based on the number of clinical practice hours completed.

NUMBER OF RNFA CLINICAL PRACTICE HOURS	NUMBER OF RNFA/PERIOPERATIVE-RELATED CONTACT HOURS REQUIRED	TOTAL NUMBER OF CONTACT HOURS REQUIRED
Between 500 and 1,000	225	300
1,000 or more	150	200

When recertifying by contact hours, you are responsible for providing copies of the certificates of attendance for each activity. Note that certificates of attendance with handwritten accreditation statements or provider numbers, without an appropriate accreditation statement or acceptable provider number, or provider numbers that do not state Board of Registered Nursing are not acceptable for earning contact hours for CRNFA recertification. Likewise, contact hours earned before January 1 of the year certified are not acceptable.

## Accredited, approved providers of contact hours

Contact hours approved by any of the following are acceptable:

- American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)
- An agency, organization, or educational institution accredited by ANCC
- Any State Board of Nursing
- Any state nurses' association
- Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN)
- American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN)

- American Association of Neuroscience Nurses (AANN)
- American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA)
- Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN), formerly NAACOG)
- American Academy of Family Practitioners (AAFP)
- American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)
- American Academy of Physicians Assistants (AAPA)
- American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM)
- National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women’s Health (NPWH)
- National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associates and Practitioners (NAPNAP)

*Note:* Certificates from other groups deemed equivalent to those listed above may be accepted as determined by the NASC Executive Director.

### **Approved topics for RNFA-related contact hours**

To help ensure the validity of the CRNFA credential and its consistency with professional standards, the majority of contact hours earned for CRNFA recertification must be related to the RNFA role. Although the following is not an all-inclusive list, it provides a broad range of RNFA-related topics.

- Anatomy and physiology
- Critical thinking skills
- Communication
- Disease management
- Discharge planning
- Ethics
- Evidence-based practice
- Infection control
- Leadership/supervisory skills
- Legal issues
- Nursing process
- Pain management
- Patient assessment
- Perioperative scope of practice
- Perioperative technology
- Pharmacology
- Pre-, intra-, and postoperative patient care
- Professional development
- Professional guidelines
- Quality improvement/quality assurance
- Research posters
- Research
- Surgical procedures

### **Academic credit**

CRNFAs may use academic credits in partial fulfillment of the requirements for recertification by contact hours. 50% of the contact hours required for recertification may be earned through academic credits (eg, if 200 total contact hours are required, 100 contact hours may be academic credit). Academic credits used for CRNFA recertification must be relevant to clinical practice or must be courses required for a higher academic degree or an additional bachelor’s degree. CRNFAs do not need to be enrolled in a formal degree program at the time the course is taken. A grade of C or better must be earned for each course and courses must be sponsored by an accredited educational institution.

- 1 semester hour of academic credit = 15 contact hours
- 1 quarter hour of academic credit = 10 contact hours

## Continuing medical education (CME) credit

CRNFAs may submit Category 1 CME credits in partial fulfillment of the contact hour requirements for CRNFA recertification. Category 1 credits are those expected to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships used to provide services for patients, the public, or the profession.<sup>4</sup> 50% of the contact hours required for recertification may be earned through CME (eg, if 300 total contact hours are required, 150 contact hours may be CME).

- 1 Category 1 CME credit = 1 contact hour

## How do I recertify by points?

Recertification by points recognizes that professional development may be accomplished in a number of ways. The activities that qualify for recertification points are listed below.

### How many points are required for CRNFA recertification?

The number of points required for CRNFA recertification is based on the number of RNFA practice hours completed. Recertification by points requires the accumulated points be earned within the five-year accrual period.

When recertifying by points, you may choose from a list of approved activities to earn points for recertification. There are maximum numbers of points allowed for each activity with the exception of academic study, which has no points limits. Table 5 shows the number of points required for recertification based on the number of clinical practice hours completed.

<b>NUMBER OF RNFA CLINICAL PRACTICE HOURS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF POINTS REQUIRED</b>
Between 500 and 1,000	500
1,000 or more	400

### What types of activities may be used to earn points for CRNFA recertification?

Any of the following activities may be used to earn points for recertification:

- Continuing education through contact hours
- Academic study
- Teaching perioperative courses in an academic setting
- Presentation
- Service as a board or committee member
- Service as a mentor for the RNFA role
- Service as a coach for RNAS-C or CRNFA certification
- Perioperative volunteer service
- Perioperative-related certification
- Publication
- NASC Task Force/Committee member
- NASC Portfolio Evaluation Panel member
- Clinical inquiry

### Continuing education through contact hours

CRNFA recertification candidates can earn a maximum of 200 points (ie, 100 contact hours) from continuing education activities through an approved provider. A total of 100 points (ie, 50 contact hours) may be earned through Category 1 CMEs.

- 1 Contact hour = 2 points
- 1 CME Category 1 credit = 1 contact hour = 2 points

## Academic credit

CRNFA candidates can earn unlimited points through academic study. Academic credits used for CRNFA recertification must be relevant to clinical practice or must be courses required for a higher academic degree or an additional bachelor's degree. CRNFAs do not need to be enrolled in a formal degree program at the time the course is taken.

- 1 semester hour of academic credit = 15 points
- 1 quarter hour of academic credit = 10 points

## Teaching perioperative courses in an academic setting

CRNFA recertification candidates can earn a maximum of 200 points by teaching perioperative courses in an academic setting. Each perioperative class taught earns 30 points.

## Presentation

CRNFA recertification candidates can earn a maximum of 150 points by presenting. Each 60 minutes of presentation time earns 10 points.

## Service as a board or committee member

CRNFA recertification candidates can earn a maximum of 200 points by serving as a member of a board or committee whose work is related to perioperative care or the perioperative setting. Each board or committee membership earns 20 points per year. Attendance at a minimum of four meetings per year is required.

## Service as a mentor for the RNFA role

CRNFA recertification candidates can earn a maximum of 150 points by serving as a mentor for an RNFA student or new employee in the RNFA role. Each student or employee earns 25 points.

## Perioperative volunteer service

CRNFA recertification candidates can earn a maximum of 100 points for volunteer perioperative service. Examples include surgical mission trips or service at medically underserved clinics. Each incident of service earns 20 points.

## Perioperative-related certification

CRNFA recertification candidates can earn a maximum of 100 points for earning or recertifying an accredited perioperative-related certification. Examples of accredited perioperative-related certifications include CNOR, certified perianesthesia nurse (CPAN), certified ambulatory perianesthesia nurse (CAPA), certified registered central service technician (CRCST), certified gastroenterology registered nurse (CGRN) or certified plastic surgical nurse (CPSN). This list is not all-inclusive. Other accredited certifications deemed equivalent by the Executive Director of NASC may be accepted. Table 6 shows the points that may be earned for certification and recertification.

CERTIFICATION STAGE COMPLETED	POINT VALUE
Initial Certification	30 points
Recertification	20 points

## Publication

CRNFA recertification candidates can earn points for publication. Table 7 shows the points that may be earned for various types of publications.



TYPE OF PUBLICATION	ROLE	POINT VALUE
Doctoral dissertation	First author	100 points
DNP Capstone project	First author	75 points
Poster presentation	First author	40 points
Poster presentation	Second author	30 points
Book chapter	First author	50 points
Book chapter	Second author	40 points
Peer-reviewed journal article	First author	50 points
Peer-reviewed journal article	Second author	40 points
Peer-reviewed journal guest editorial	First author	30 points
Book review	First author	20 points
Patient education or other health care resource	First author	30 points
Patient education or other health care resource	Second author	20 points

### **NASC Task Force/Committee**

CRNFA recertification candidates can earn a maximum of 100 points for volunteer service on a NASC Task Force/Committee. Table 8 shows the points that may be earned for service.

TASK FORCE/COMMITTEE	POINT VALUE
Job Analysis Task Force	40 points
Standards Committee	30 points
Peer Review Committee	30 points

### **NASC Portfolio Evaluation Panel**

CRNFA recertification candidates can earn a maximum of 200 points for volunteer service on the NASC Portfolio Evaluation Panel. Each portfolio evaluated earns 10 points.

### **Clinical inquiry activities**

CRNFA recertification candidates can earn a maximum of 100 points for leading clinical inquiry. This category includes quality improvement (QI), quality assurance (QA), evidence-based practice (EBP) and research projects. To earn points, the candidate must have primary responsibility for developing, implementing, or evaluating QI, QA, EBP, or research projects that improve practice or patient outcomes. Table 9 shows the points that may be earned for leading clinical inquiry activities.

ROLE	POINT VALUE
Primary investigator or project lead	50 points per project
Secondary investigator or project lead	30 points per project

## How do I submit my CRNFA recertification application?

You may complete and submit your recertification application online by clicking the “Login” link at the top of the NASC web page ([www.nascertification.org](http://www.nascertification.org)). All CRNFAs have an existing account. The first time you log in, click the orange “Request a Password” button. If you have trouble logging in, please contact NASC at 1-888-681-6272.

Alternatively, you may submit your recertification application by downloading the application packet from the NASC website (<https://nascertification.com/crnfa/recertification/>) and mailing or faxing the completed CRNFA Recertification application to: National Assistant at Surgery Certification, 8547 E. Arapahoe Road, Suite J-262, Greenwood Village, Colorado 80112-1436, or 866-681-6272. Please call NASC at 866-681-6272 to confirm receipt of your application.

## What are the fees for CRNFA recertification?

CRNFA recertification fees are shown in Table 10.

CRNFA RECERTIFICATION METHODS	EARLY RECERTIFICATION FEES JANUARY 1 – JULY 1	STANDARD RECERTIFICATION FEES JULY 2 – DECEMBER 31
Contact Hours	\$450	\$500
Points	\$450	\$500
One-Year Extension	\$195	\$195
Emeritus (one-time fee)	\$125	\$125

## CRNFA EXPIRATION/ALTERNATIVES TO CRNFA RECERTIFICATION

### How do I reactivate my expired CRNFA credential?

Once expired, the CRNFA credential may only be reactivated by successfully meeting all current eligibility requirements and completing the CRNFA Professional Portfolio. Contact hours or points will not be accepted to regain certified status.

### How do I apply for a one-year extension?

If your CRNFA credential is nearing expiration and you are unable to meet the recertification requirements, you can apply for a one-year extension of your CRNFA certification. A one-year extension allows the candidate one additional calendar year to accrue the required contact hours or points for recertification. No additional extensions are allowed. If you hold CNOR certification, your CNOR will also be extended for one year. The fee for a one-year extension is \$195. Please contact NASC for more information.

To submit your application for a one-year extension:

- Download the application packet from the NASC website (<https://nascertification.com/crnfa/recertification/>)
- Complete the application and mail or fax to: National Assistant at Surgery Certification, 8547 E. Arapahoe Road, Suite J-262, Greenwood Village, Colorado 80112-1436, or 866-681-6272. Please call NASC at 866-681-6272 to confirm receipt of your application.

## What is CRNFA Emeritus status?

If you are a CRNFA who is retiring from perioperative nursing, you may maintain your CRNFA credential in an Emeritus status. The CRNFA(E) credential was established to recognize the service and commitment of retiring CRNFAs to the perioperative profession as well as their achievement and maintenance of the CRNFA credential.

To apply for Emeritus status, you must currently hold the CRNFA credential in good standing. There is a one-time fee of \$125 for changing the credential to Emeritus status. Once NASC has received your CRNFA(E) application and fee, your CRNFA(E) certificate will be mailed to you within three weeks.

To submit your application for CRNFA(E):

- Download the application packet from the NASC website (<http://nascertification.com/crnfa/emeritus-status/>).
- Complete the application and mail or fax to: National Assistant at Surgery Certification, 8547 E. Arapahoe Road, Suite J-262, Greenwood Village, Colorado 80112-1436, or 866-681-6272. Please call NASC at 866-681-6272 to confirm receipt of your application.

If you also hold CNOR and would like to apply for Emeritus status of your CNOR credential, you will need to contact CCI ([cc-institute.org](http://cc-institute.org)).

## NASC CERTIFICATION/RECERTIFICATION POLICIES

NASC reserves the right to establish, review, and revise policies and procedures related to CRNFA certification/recertification as deemed appropriate.

### NASC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy

The leaders, employees, and governing bodies of NASC support the fair treatment and dignity of all human beings. The organization does not discriminate among candidates based on age, color, ethnicity, family or marital status, gender identity or expression, language, national origin, physical or mental ability, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, veteran status, or any other characteristics that contribute to the diversity of human individuals.

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations

NASC is committed to providing reasonable accommodations in its portfolio processes to otherwise qualified individuals with physical or mental disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Under the ADA, persons with disabilities may be entitled to accommodations

- if they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity (such as hearing, seeing, learning, reading, or concentrating) or
- a major bodily function (such as the neurological, endocrine, or digestive system).

During the online application process, candidates with disabilities who believe they need ADA accommodations will have the opportunity to notify NASC of the type of accommodation they require and to provide current and appropriate documentation of the disability. Because the provision of accommodations is based upon an assessment of the current impact of the individual's disabilities, the candidate must provide documentation based on an evaluation conducted within the past five years.

The documentation provided should include correspondence from a health care provider who has first-hand knowledge of the candidate's disability. Correspondence should describe the nature of the disability and make specific recommendations regarding the type of accommodation required to address the disability. The letter should be on the health care professional's letterhead stationery and include his or her title, address, phone number, and original signature.

All accommodation determinations will be made by NASC at its sole discretion. NASC is not obligated to provide accommodations that would fundamentally alter the measurement of the skills or knowledge the portfolio is intended to test, or that would impose an undue burden on NASC.

## Audit process for certification/recertification applications

As part of the accreditation process, each certification/recertification application has a 10% chance of being selected for audit. Additionally, if there is any reason to believe that an applicant does not meet eligibility requirements, or if an outside party informs NASC that an individual does not meet certain requirements, the application will be flagged for audit.

When an audit occurs, NASC will contact the individual in writing and provide instructions for uploading documentation to substantiate the information in question. Specific documents that may be required for verification are outlined in Appendix E.

All information gained through verification procedures will be kept confidential, except in instances where the law demands disclosure of facts. Under no circumstances will the reporting party be disclosed.

If any information on the certification application is found to be false, the applicant will be notified and declared ineligible for certification.

## Revoking or suspension of CRNFA certification

NASC may deny, suspend or revoke CRNFA certification for cause, including but not limited to

- failing to complete or provide evidence of completion of the requirements for initial certification, certification renewal, or reactivation of certification;
- failing to maintain the required RN or APRN professional licensure;
- finding that initial certification or certification renewal was improperly granted or improperly reactivated;
- providing false or misstated information on any CRNFA certification-related document;
- providing false or misleading information;
- misusing or misrepresenting the CRNFA credential or credential status;
- cheating or assisting others to cheat;
- assisting others to wrongfully obtain initial certification or to renew or reactivate certification;
- failing to comply with the scope and standards of practice in the area in which the certification is held;
- participating in the commission of a crime or gross negligence in the practice of nursing;
- violating NASC policy or procedure;
- failing to meet audit processes;
- failing to comply with the American Nurses Association *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements*<sup>5</sup>;
- demonstrating conduct unbecoming of the nursing profession; and/or
- not paying outstanding debts to NASC.

*Note.* If CRNFA status is revoked for any reason, NASC will inform the RNFA of the decision to revoke CRNFA status in writing. There will be no refund of any fees paid.

## NASC appeals process

An external Board of Appeals is available to CRNFA candidates seeking review of decisions made by NASC. Such Board will be appointed as needed. Candidates seeking appeal must submit a written request for review by the Board of Appeals within 30 days of receipt of the NASC decision in question. Supporting documentation should be included. Decisions of the external Board of Appeals shall be final and binding to all parties involved. All requests for amendment or appeal will be heard in accordance with the NASC policies in effect at the time.

## Maintaining confidentiality

NASC maintains a system for safeguarding confidential information provided by certification applicants. No outside agency or persons shall have access to individual certification records unless the records are required to be provided under applicable law or in conjunction with regulatory investigations.

## Publicity

NASC reserves the right to designate and approve national publicity concerning the certification program. National publicity may be authorized by NASC for purposes of marketing the program.

## REFERENCES

1. American Board of Nursing Specialties. *A position statement on the value of specialty nursing certification*. Approved 2005, March 5. <https://www.aaacn.org/sites/default/files/images/ABNS-cert-stat.pdf>. Accessed August 30, 2021.
2. American Nurses Association. *Position statement: credentials for the professional nurse: determining a standard order of credentials for the professional nurse*. Published December 11, 2009. <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/nursing-excellence/official-position-statements/id/determining-a-standard-order-of-credentials-for-the-professional-nurse/> Accessed September 9, 2021.
3. American Nurses Credentialing Center. *How to display your credentials: common questions and answers about displaying your credentials in the proper order*. 2013. <https://www.nursingworld.org/~48fdf9/globalassets/certification/renewals/how-to-display-your-credentials>. Accessed September 9, 2021.
4. American Medical Association. *AMA PRA credit system frequently asked questions*. 2018, December. <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2019-09/cme-provider-faq.pdf>. Accessed August 30, 2021.
5. American Nurses Association. *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements;2015*.

## APPENDIX A – NASC PORTFOLIO TASK FORCE/COMMITTEES/PANEL

A certification portfolio is the product of a scientifically rigorous process based on professional standards. This process is subject to accreditation oversight and approval. Participation of RNs providing perioperative care in the expanded RNFA role is essential for maintaining a portfolio program for certification. Nurses holding CRNFA certification may apply to serve on the NASC portfolio task force/committees/panel. A short description of each working group follows.

### **Job Analysis Task Force**

A job analysis is designed to obtain descriptive information about the tasks performed in a specific job and the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to support job performance. Members of the Job Analysis Task Force define the major tasks performed and the areas of knowledge necessary for an RN to function effectively and competently as an RNFA.

### **Standards Committee**

Members of the Standards Committee are responsible for designing portfolio activities based on the Knowledge and Task statements of the CRNFA job analysis and current best practices in the community.

### **Peer Review Committee**

Members of the Peer Review Committee are responsible for designing the rubric used for peer evaluation and scoring of the CRNFA portfolio. This group will also help establish inter-rater reliability in portfolio scoring.

### **Portfolio Evaluation Panel**

Members of the Portfolio Evaluation Panel evaluate candidate portfolios using the detailed rubric developed by the Peer Review committee.

## APPENDIX B – RNFA KNOWLEDGE STATEMENTS

### Domain A: Preoperative Patient Assessment

1. Anatomy and physiology
2. Chemistry
3. Microbiology
4. Pathophysiology
5. Pharmacology
6. Psychology
7. Sociology
8. Nutrition assessments and implications
9. Laboratory values
10. Indicators for laboratory studies
11. Diagnostic procedures (eg, imaging studies, invasive/non-invasive)
12. Indicators for diagnostic procedures
13. Hemodynamic monitoring (eg, fluid and electrolyte status)
14. Nursing assessment skills
15. History and physical examination
16. Interviewing techniques
17. Nursing process
18. Medical diagnoses
19. Age-specific care
20. Cultural, religious, and other diversity care considerations
21. BMI and implications
22. Pre-procedure verification protocols (eg, Universal Protocol)
23. Surgical procedures
24. Pain assessment and management
25. Discharge planning

### Domain B: Intraoperative Patient Care Interventions

1. Universal Protocol
2. Surgical procedures
3. Safe patient positioning (eg, alignment, devices, equipment)
4. Draping for specific procedures
5. Wound exposure techniques
6. Principles of hemostasis (eg, mechanical, manual, chemical)
7. Instrument handling (eg, identification, selection, use)
8. Sterile technique (eg, surgical conscience)
9. Sharps safety
10. Suture selection, suturing and knot-tying techniques
11. Tissue-handling and dissection techniques
12. Specimen management
13. Wound closure techniques
14. Wound dressings, drains, tubes, and immobilization devices
15. Surgical equipment, devices, supplies, implants, and instrumentation
16. Principles of anesthesia care
17. Body temperature regulation (eg, normo/hyper/hypothermia)
18. Transfer/transport techniques
19. Hemodynamic monitoring (eg, fluid and electrolyte management)
20. Pain assessment and management
21. Medication safety



**Domain C: Emergency Situations**

1. Pathophysiology of malignant hyperthermia (MH), anaphylaxis, perioperative cardiac arrest, trauma, hemorrhage, airway compromise, and local anesthesia systemic toxicity (LAST)
2. Management of MH, anaphylaxis, perioperative cardiac arrest, trauma, hemorrhage, airway compromise, and LAST
3. Environmental hazards and response protocols
4. Disaster response protocols
5. Terrorism response protocols
6. Fire safety and response protocols

**Domain D: Postoperative Patient Care Interventions**

1. Handoffs (eg, SBAR, IPASSBATON)
2. Psychosocial issues (eg, support systems, risks for harm, resources)
3. Postoperative assessments (eg, neurological, vascular, skin, visual)
4. Postoperative continuum of care (eg, rounding, discharge planning, postdischarge care)
5. Pain assessment and management
6. Indications and postoperative management of surgical complications

**Domain E: Infection Prevention**

1. Wound classifications
2. Environmental cleaning (eg, room turnover, terminal cleaning)
3. Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions (eg, personal protective equipment [PPE], hand hygiene, Airborne, Contact, Droplet, Enhanced)
4. Regulatory requirements (eg, Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA]), professional guidelines (eg, Association of periOperative Registered Nurses [AORN], Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology [APIC], Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation [AAMI]), and accreditation standards (eg, Joint Commission, Det Norske Veritas [DNV])
5. Cleaning, packaging, and processing of instruments and reusable items
6. Transportation and storage of instruments, reusable and single use items
7. Methods for handling and disposition of biohazard materials (eg, blood, prions)
8. Immediate use steam sterilization [IUSS] protocols
9. Surgical attire guidelines
10. Restricted, semi-restricted, and nonrestricted areas
11. Spaulding classification system
12. Sterile technique
13. Antibiotic management (eg, administration, selection, timing)
14. Patient skin antisepsis
15. Hand hygiene techniques
16. PPE

**Domain F: Perioperative Workplace Safety**

1. Body mechanics and ergonomic safety
2. Radiation safety
3. Handling and disposition of hazardous materials (eg, disinfectants, chemotherapy drugs, radioactive materials, formalin, chemicals)
4. Handling and disposition of biohazardous materials (eg, blood, prions)
5. PPE
6. Perioperative environmental safety (eg, fire, surgical plume, toxic fumes)
7. Workplace safety regulations (eg, OSHA) and guidelines

## **Domain G: Professional Practice**

1. Technology (eg, artificial intelligence, robotics, hybrid suites, electronic medical records, informatics)
2. Regulatory requirements (eg, Nurse Practice Act, Health Insurance and Portability Accountability Act [HIPAA]), professional guidelines (eg, American Nurses Association [ANA], AORN) and institutional policies
3. Resource management (eg, cost containment, sustainability)
4. Team communication and collaborative practice
5. Patient advocacy and rights
6. Professional advocacy and public policy development
7. Professional accountability and ethics
8. Credentialing and privileging processes
9. Principles of leadership and mentoring
10. Risk management, liability, and malpractice issues
11. Evidence-based practice and research evaluation
12. Negotiation techniques
13. Professional self-assessment (eg, reflection, competence)
14. Shared governance (eg, committees)
15. Impaired and disruptive behaviors
16. Nursing documentation

## APPENDIX C – CRNFA PRACTICE HOUR LOG

[Click here for an Excel spreadsheet to document your RNFA practice hours.](#)

<b>CRNFA Practice Hour Log</b>					
Name:					
Date	Surgeon's Name or Initials	Surgical Procedure	Pre-Op Minutes	Intra-Op Minutes	Post-Op Minutes
The minutes from each column on each page must be totaled and a grand total provided on the last page. The grand total of minutes on the last page must be converted to hours.	<b>Page Total</b>	0	0	0	
	<b>Grand Total (Minutes)</b>				
	<b>Grand Total (Hours)</b>				

## APPENDIX D – REFERENCE MATERIALS FOR THE CRNFA PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

You will find these reference materials extremely useful as you complete your CRNFA Professional Portfolio. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

### **Texts**

- AORN Guidelines for Perioperative Practice (most current version) (<https://aorn.org/guidelines/purchase-guidelines>)
- Alexander's Care of the Patient in Surgery (most current version) (<https://www.amazon.com/Alexanders-Care-Patient-Surgery-Rothrock/dp/0323479146>) OR
- Berry & Kohn's Operating Room Technique (most current version) ([https://www.amazon.com/Berry-Kohns-Operating-Room-Technique-dp-0323709141/dp/0323709141/ref=dp\\_ob\\_image\\_bk](https://www.amazon.com/Berry-Kohns-Operating-Room-Technique-dp-0323709141/dp/0323709141/ref=dp_ob_image_bk))

### **Resources**

- AORN Position Statement on RN First Assistants (<https://aorn.org/guidelines/clinical-resources/position-statements>)
- AORN Position Statement on Advanced Practice Registered Nurses in the Perioperative Environment (<https://aorn.org/guidelines/clinical-resources/position-statements>)
- AORN Universal Protocol Comprehensive Surgical Checklist (AORN Member's Only Tool Kit on Correct Site Surgery: <https://aorn.org/guidelines/clinical-resources/tool-kits/correct-site-surgery-tool-kit>)
- AORN Surgical Wound Classification Decision Tree (AORN *Guideline for Sterile Technique*) (AORN Member's Only: Guidelines and Clinical Resources > Clinical FAQs > Sterile Technique > How is the Surgical Wound Classification Determined > Surgical Wound Classification Decision Tree [pdf] <https://aorn.org/guidelines/clinical-resources/clinical-faqs/sterile-technique>)
- ANA. Position Statement: Incivility, Bullying, and Workplace Violence (<https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/nursing-excellence/official-position-statements/id/incivility-bullying-and-workplace-violence/>)
- ANA Code of Ethics with Interpretive Statements for Nurses (<https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/nursing-excellence/ethics/code-of-ethics-for-nurses/>)
- Perioperative Explications for the ANA Code of Ethics (AORN Member's Only Code of Ethics: <https://aorn.org/guidelines/clinical-resources/code-of-ethics>)
- ASA Physical Status Classification (<https://www.asahq.org/standards-and-guidelines/asa-physical-status-classification-system>)
- ERAS Protocols
  - <https://www.aana.com/practice/clinical-practice-resources/enhanced-recovery-after-surgery>
  - <https://erassociety.org/guidelines/list-of-guidelines/>
- HIPAA Regulation (<https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/privacy/laws-regulations/index.html>)
- State Nurse Practice Act (<https://www.ncsbn.org/npa.htm>)
- RNFA Regulations in Your State (AORN Member's Only: Government & Clinical Affairs > Government Affairs > My State > Select Your State > Registered Nurse First Assistants [RNFAs] <https://aorn.org/government-affairs/my-state>)
- Why you need your own malpractice insurance. <https://www.myamericannurse.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ant11-Malpractice-1023.pdf>
- What is the purpose of malpractice insurance? <https://allnurses.com/one-healthcare-risk-managers-view-t580070/>
- Should I carry nursing malpractice (liability) insurance? <https://allnurses.com/should-i-carry-nursing-malpractice-t278767/>

## APPENDIX E – AUDIT VERIFICATION DOCUMENTS

<b>Table E-1: Documents Potentially Required for Verification during an Audit.</b>	
ACTIVITY	VERIFYING DOCUMENT
Continuing education through contact hours	Certificate of Attendance from accepted provider
Academic credit	Unofficial transcript
Teaching perioperative courses in an academic setting	Course description, Course Syllabus
Presentation	Program brochure, Activity Documentation Form, Course Evaluation, or other document verifying title, date, objectives, audience, and location of presentation
Service as a board or committee member	Letter from board or committee officer verifying membership
Service as a mentor for the RNFA role	Letter from supervisor verifying service as RNFA preceptor or mentor
Perioperative volunteer service	Letter from supervisor or mission director on organization letterhead attesting to dates and contributions of volunteer
Perioperative-related certification/recertification	Copy of Certificate of Certification/Recertification, wallet card
Publication	Title page, Table of Contents, Abstract, or other document verifying authorship of the publication
NASC Task Force/Committee	Acceptance letter from NASC for task force or committee assignment
NASC Portfolio Evaluation Panel	Acceptance letter from NASC for panel assignment
Clinical inquiry	Letter from Project Chair verifying participation in a QI, QA, EBP, or research project
Practice hour log	Letter from surgeon or supervisor verifying certificant has met the practice hour requirement