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# Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants

## AA Education and Training

### Educational Program Requirements

An accredited anesthesiologist assistant educational program must be supported by an anesthesiology department of a medical school that is accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education or its equivalent. The Anesthesiology department must have the educational resources internally or through educational affiliates that would qualify it to meet the criteria of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), or its equivalent, for sponsorship of an anesthesiology residency program

Although the standards recognize the importance of a basic science education within a clinically oriented academic setting, it is also recognized that some of the supervised clinical practice components of the curriculum may be carried out in affiliated community hospitals that have the appropriate affiliation agreements specifying the requisite teaching faculty and staffing ratios for the clinical experience.

The AA curriculum is based on an advanced graduate degree model and requires at least two full academic years. The current programs are 24 to 28 months. Graduates from all AA educational programs earn a Master's Degree.

### Prerequisites

Baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university in the US or Canada

English

General Biology with lab

General Chemistry with lab

Organic Chemistry with lab

Biochemistry

General Physics (lab recommended)

Calculus

Advanced Statistics

Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) or the Graduate Records Admission Test Examination (GRE).

\*Please review training program websites for specific information regarding prerequisites.

Master of Science in Anesthesia Average Matriculant GPA			U.S. Medical Schools Average Matriculant GPA		
	Overall	Science		Overall	Science
2014	3.48	3.56	2014	*	*
2013	3.42	3.51	2013	3.54	3.44
2012	3.50	3.57	2012	3.54	3.44
2011	3.52	3.63	2011	3.53	3.43
2010	3.48	3.56	2010	3.53	3.43
2009	3.49	3.65	2009	3.51	3.51

[www.aamc.org/data/facts/applicantmatriculant/](http://www.aamc.org/data/facts/applicantmatriculant/) (Table 17)

\*AAMC's GPA totals from 2014 are not yet available

## Educational Programs

- South University (Savannah, GA)
- Emory University (Atlanta, GA)
- University of Colorado (Denver, CO)
- Quinnipiac University (North Haven, CT)
- University of Missouri-Kansas City (Kansas City, MO)
- Nova Southeastern University (Tampa, FL; Fort Lauderdale, FL)
- Case Western Reserve University (Cleveland, OH; Houston, TX; Washington, DC)
- Medical College of Wisconsin (Milwaukee, WI)

The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) accredits Anesthesiologist Assistants educational programs. The American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) is a CAAHEP member and participates in the accreditation processes for three health professions: Anesthesiologist Assistants, Respiratory Therapy and Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic. CAAHEP is the largest accreditor in the health sciences field. In collaboration with its Committees on Accreditation, CAAHEP reviews and accredits over 2000 educational programs in 19 health science occupations and is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

## Certification

The National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants (NCCAA) was founded in July 1989 to develop and administer the certification process for Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants in the United States. The NCCAA consists of commissioners representing the ASA and the American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants (AAAA) and includes physician and Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants members (at-large). Graduates or senior students in the last semester of a CAAHEP- accredited AA educational program may apply for initial certification. The professional distinction of Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants is awarded to an one who has successfully completed the Certifying Examination for Anesthesiologist Assistants administered by NCCAA in collaboration with the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants are permitted to use the designation CAA to indicate that they are currently certified.

The content for the Certifying Examination for Anesthesiologist Assistants is based on knowledge and skills required for anesthesiologist practice. NCCAA has contracted with NBME to serve as a consultant for the development and ongoing administration of the Certifying Examination. A Test Committee of Anesthesiologists and AAs is responsible for writing and evaluating test questions for the examinations. The first Certifying Examination was administered in 1992.

NCCAA maintains a database of Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants for verification of individual practitioners. Hospitals, practice groups, state boards and others may verify an individual Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants' certification via a printed verification statement posted on the Verify Certification page of the NCCAA's web site, [www.aa-nccaa.org](http://www.aa-nccaa.org). The web site also contains additional information about the National Commission and about the certification process.

## Recertification

Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants are granted a time-limited certificate after passing the initial examination. The process for recertification requires that an AA submit documentation to NCCAA every two years that he/she has completed 40 hours of Continuing Medical Education (CME). In addition, every six years the practitioner must pass the examination for Continued Demonstration of Qualifications (CDQ).

The CDQ examination was first administered in 1998, making AAs the first anesthesia profession to require passage of a written examination as part of the recertification process. Failure to meet any of the above CME or examination requirements results in withdrawal of the Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants' certification.