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. All current programs are 24 to 28 months and graduates from all AA educational programs earn a Master's Degree. An average of 600 hours of classroom/laboratory education, 2600 hours of clinical anesthesia education, and more than 600 anesthetics administered, including all types of surgery, are typically required to successfully complete AA training.

Prerequisites

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

- English
- General Biology with lab
- General Chemistry with lab
- Human Anatomy with lab
- Human Physiology with lab
- Advanced Statistics
- Organic Chemistry with lab
- Biochemistry
- General Physics (lab recommended)
- Calculus

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/ (Table 17)

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

Training Programs

- Emory University (Atlanta, GA)
- Case Western Reserve University (Cleveland, OH; Houston, TX; Washington, DC)
- Indiana University (Indianapolis, IN)
- Medical College of Wisconsin (Milwaukee, WI)
- Northeast Ohio Medical University (Rootstown, OH)
- Nova Southeastern University (Jacksonville, FL; Fort Lauderdale, FL; Tampa, FL)
- South University (Savannah, GA. West Palm Beach, FL)
- University of Colorado (Denver, CO)
- University of Missouri-Kansas City (Kansas City, MO)

The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) accredits AA training 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 AAs in the United States. The NCCAA consists of commissioners representing the ASA and the American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants (AAAA) and includes physician and AA members (at-large). Graduates or senior students in the last semester of a CAAHEP-accredited AA educational program may apply for initial certification. Such a professional distinction is awarded to an AA who has successfully completed the Certifying Examination for Anesthesiologist Assistants administered by NCCAA in collaboration with the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). Certified AAs 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 anesthetist 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 AA's certification via a printed verification statement posted on the Verify Certification page of the NCCAA's web site, www.nccaatest.org/. The web site also contains additional information about the National Commission and about the certification process.

Recertification

AAs are granted a time-limited certificate after passing the initial examination. The process for recertification requires that a CAA 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). (Note: NCCAA has revised the CDQ exam schedule to phase in recertification from every 6 years to every 10 years.)

The CDQ examination was first administered in 1998, making CAAs 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 CAA's certification.