

The NCCPA Exams and Maintaining Certification: Tips for Success

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June 4, 2013

UMDNJ PANCE/PANRE Review Course
(becoming Rutgers, The State University of NJ,
July 1, 2013)

Getting Started

- **Congratulations!** – You have already taken the first step – Attending a Review Course
- Set a study schedule for exam prep and stick to it.
- Use the NCCPA Blueprint (See Handouts) and the conference binder as guides for studying

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Preparation

- Use practice tests (see booklist handout) to determine relative strengths and weaknesses and to further guide studying
- **NCCPA Self-Assessment Exam** - 120 multiple choice - 2 sections - timed exam - 2 hours. Can access on-line for \$35

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Preparation

- Know how to get to the testing center and allow enough time for traffic, etc
- Get a good night's sleep, eat breakfast, dress comfortably (in layers)
- Bring snack food (it can be a long day)
- **STAY POSITIVE!**

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General Information

- **NCCPA website has Videos that are helpful**
- Computer-based exam administered at Pearson VUE - 200+ testing centers
(www.pearsonvue.com/nccpa)
- PANCE = 300 multiple-choice questions
- PANRE = 240 multiple choice questions
- **Assess basic medical and surgical knowledge**

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General Information

- Advance registration and payment is required
- PANCE: Six Years - Six Attempts Rule
- 90 day waiting period between exams
- Results posted in about 2 weeks - e-mail notification
- NCCPA complies with ADA - test takers in need of special accommodations can find more information on the NCCPA website

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The Day of the Exam

- Arrive Early
Plan to arrive at least 30 minutes before scheduled testing time
- Present 2 forms of valid and current ID - one ID with an affixed photo, printed name and signature (Passport or driver's license) and one ID with printed name and signature. Make sure names matches exactly with you name as listed with NCCPA
- *You will not be admitted without them*

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The Day of the Exam

- Security Check
- Depending on the site -may have Digital Fingerprint taken or Palm Scan
- A digital photo will be taken
- Required to have a security check each time you leave and reenter the testing room

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The Day of the Exam

- No Personal Belongings
No personal belongings (e.g. handbags, books, study materials, calculators, watches, electronic paging devices, cellular phones, or food and beverages) are allowed in the testing room - locker provided for your belongings
- Computer Instruction
Brief instructions on the use of the computer equipment will be provided and you'll have the opportunity to complete a brief demo before starting the testing session

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Limited Breaks

- Scheduled breaks:
 - 45 minutes for the day to be used between blocks of questions
 - Can access personal items in locker
- Unscheduled breaks:
 - Break taken during a block of questions - time taken will be deducted from exam time
 - Cannot access any items in locker

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The Exam

• Exam Blocks

PANCE= 5 blocks - 60 questions each - 5 hours

PANRE = 4 blocks - 60 questions each - 4 hours

After you exit a block of test questions - you won't be allowed to review the questions or change your answers.

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Testing

- Read questions completely before looking at the answers
- Use process of elimination to narrow your choices
- Answers are in alpha order - so strategies regarding the order of answers are not helpful
- Avoid "reading into" the question and second guessing yourself
- Do not change answers unless you have a very good reason

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Testing

- **Answer all items you are sure of**
- skip or give your best guess **and mark items** that are more difficult then go back before ending the block

In the end:

- **Answer all items** - score is based on the number of correct items - not what you got wrong

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Testing

- Pay attention to the Stem of the question - the information provided is usually needed to answer the question - **these are clues** to the answer
- Keep a positive attitude - Some questions are easy - some difficult and some are "experimental" pre-test items

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Exam Content

Knowledge and Skill areas:

- Each question you encounter will address an organ system and one of the following:
 - 18% Pharmaceutical therapeutics
 - 18% Formulating most likely diagnosis
 - 16% History taking & performing physical exams
 - 14% Using lab & diagnostic studies
 - 14% Clinical intervention
 - 10% Health maintenance
 - 10% Applying basic science concepts
- 100%

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Exam Content Organ System %

16%	Cardiovascular system
12%	Pulmonary system
10%	Gastrointestinal/ nutritional system
10%	Musculoskeletal system
9%	Eye, ear, nose & throat
8%	Reproductive system
6%	Neurologic system
6%	Urinary/renal system
6%	Psychiatric/behavioral system
6%	Endocrine system
5%	Dermatological system
3%	Hematological system
3%	Infection diseases
100%	

Note: Up to 20 percent of the questions on any exam may be related to surgery, and up to two percent may cover legal or ethical issues.

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PANCE: Registration Information

Registration with payment of \$475 is required

- you may schedule anytime (depending on testing center availability) within the 180 day timeframe established based on your expected graduation date
- The earliest date is seven days after your program completion. This date will be reflected on your exam acknowledgement
- Go to www.pearsonvue.com/nccpa to schedule your exam date and for directions to testing centers in your area
- If you have any questions about your certification or recertification processes, go to NCCPA.net, Videos on website may be helpful
- email NCCPA at nccpa@nccpa.net, or call NCCPA at 678-417-8100.

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PANRE: Registration Information

- **Can take the PANRE in the 5th or 6th year of cycle -2 chances to pass in each year**
- Advance registration -\$350 payment required
- 180 days from the beginning of your exam timeframe to the end of your timeframe to take the exam. Dates reflected on exam acknowledgement.
- If you apply late in your sixth year, timeframe will be shorter than 180 days to ensure you take the test prior to your certification expiring.

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PANRE: Focused Exams

- Now offered in three practice-focused areas: 60% of exam is the generalist exam 40% is in one of the following:
 - Primary Care
 - Adult Medicine
 - Surgery

All exams follow the same blueprint

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New Recertification Cycle

- **Beginning in 2014** - certified PAs will transition to a 10-year cycle (a change from the current six-year cycle)
- **Will require** - new, more specific CME requirements: 20 of the 50 Category I CME credits required every two years **must** be earned through self-assessment CME or performance improvement CME (PI-CME)
- For more info go to: <http://www.nccpa.net/CertMain.aspx/>
- PAs who earn initial certification or who regain certification by passing an exam in 2014 will begin a 10-year cycle
- Others will transition to the new 10-year cycle over the following five years as they complete their final six-year certification maintenance cycle

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More on Self-Assessment CME

- involves a more active process of conducting a systematic review of one's performance, knowledge base or skill set. many of the self-assessment programs offered by their physician certification boards are also available to PAs.
- The American College of Physicians Medical Knowledge Self-Assessment Program (MKSAF), now in its 15th edition, is one well-established example.
- There are also self-assessment activities already offered by PA organizations (like the Society of Dermatology Physician Assistants Distance Learning Initiative)

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More on PI- CME

- Active learning and the application of learning to improve your practice. This can be done in partnership others in your practice; everyone can work on and get credit for together.
- **PI-CME** involves a three-step process:
- Compare some aspect of practice to national benchmarks, performance guidelines or other established evidence-based metric or standard.
- Based on the comparison, develop and implement a plan for improvement in that area.
- Evaluate the impact of the improvement effort by comparing the results of the original comparison with the new results or outcomes.

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Physician organizations are already offering this type of CME

- The American Academy of Pediatrics' EQIPP program is one such example. Topics including asthma, GERD and immunization.
- EQIPP modules are free to PAs who are members of the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- The American Academy of Family Physicians' METRIC program includes modules on asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, coronary artery disease, depression, diabetes, and more
- PAs can participate in a METRIC module (in partnership with a supervising physician, if desired) and fulfill the 20-credit requirement for just \$25.

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New CME 10 Year Cycle

1 st CME Cycle	During each cycle, earn 100 CME credits including 50 Cat. I credits with 20 earned through self-assessment or PI-CME activities.
2 nd CME Cycle	
3 rd CME Cycle	Complete at least two self-assessment and two PI-CME activities during this 8-year period.
4 th CME Cycle	
5 th CME Cycle	Earn 100 CME credits including 50 Category I, and pass PANRE.

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Specialty Certificates of Added Qualifications (CAQs)

- Emergency Medicine
- Orthopedic Surgery
- Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery
- Psychiatry
- Nephrology
- (Pediatrics and hospital medicine coming in 2014)

Each CAQ is a two-hour exam -120 multiple-choice questions in two blocks of 60 questions - no allotted break time.

Each year several hundred PAs get one or more CAQs

- **Note: These are in addition to PANCE/PANRE**

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Specialty Certificates of Added Qualifications (CAQs)

- **two basic pre-requisites:** (1) current PA-C certification and (2) possession of a valid, unrestricted license to practice as a PA
- **four core requirements:** (1) Category I specialty CME, (2) one to two years of experience, (3) procedures and patient case experience appropriate for the specialty, and (4) a specialty exam
- \$350, including a \$100 administrative fee and a \$250 exam registration fee.
- The exam date for all CAQ exams is **Sept. 9, 2013.**
- The final deadline for submitting the exam application is **September 5, 2013.**

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valid for a period of ten years (provided that licensure status and PA-C certification are maintained).

If Problems Arise

- If you believe that some unusual event or condition relating to the exam administration caused a significant adverse effect on your performance, you may submit a grievance regarding the exam administration
- To report a problem, contact NCCPA within **three business days** after the exam

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Sit back, Relax,
4 days of quality lectures
ahead!
Good Luck on your
Exam

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