These guidelines are intended to assist providers who are applying to AANA for prior approval of a **provider-directed independent study (PDIS) program** they want to present at a future date. All AANA prior approved PDIS programs provide class A CE credit. Additional information concerning PDIS programs is found in the Rationale for Provider-Directed Independent Study beginning on page 5 of this document.

Prior approval cannot be awarded to those programs that have already been published and mailed to the subscribers or placed on a website. Anesthesia inservice and CE programs each have their own specific application guidelines, which can be viewed along with the AANA Continuing Education Program on the AANA website at www.aana.com by going into CE and Education, Continuing Education, Prior Approval Applications.

**Program Coordinator**

The program coordinator is the individual who will be the liaison between the provider and the AANA. This individual receives the AANA approval notice and all correspondence related to the program. It is important to include the following information for the coordinator on the application form: a phone number, fax, or email address where the coordinator can easily be reached by the CE Department during the hours of 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Central Time.

The name, address, fax, email and phone numbers for the program coordinator will also be used for any paid advertisement in the AANA Calendar of Events unless the CE Department is otherwise notified. The coordinator should be sure to mark in the appropriate box if they want their phone, fax, email, or web information included in the paid advertisement. In addition, if the coordinator wants another name to be used as the contact for the advertisement, that information should be submitted with the application.

The CE Department must be notified of any changes affecting its communication with the provider or program coordinator such as a change in the mailing address, telephone number, administrative structure, the individual responsible for coordinating the CE program and recordkeeping, or any other information pertinent to the program.

**Application Submission**

Please progress through this online form at your own pace. Required application materials can be attached to this application during the next steps. This form will not be submitted to AANA until you have reached the end of the application and your additional materials and associated application fee have been submitted. Until that time, all of your entered information will be stored on the site, and you will be able to move forward and backward throughout the application process until submission. This application is best used on a PC or Mac—mobile devices are not recommended.

Credit card payment is requested at the end of the application process. The fee applies to each application submitted. NOTE: The fee is nonrefundable and nontransferable.

IMPORTANT: Before starting on the application, click here to read the full set of submission requirements.
Materials to Submit with the Application

A. **Application fee.** See the CE Payment form located on [www.aana.com](http://www.aana.com) for fee and payment information. Fees can be paid by credit card, check, or money order made payable to the AANA. The CE payment form must be completed and submitted with the application. The fee is nonrefundable and nontransferable if the application does not meet the CE requirements or the provider withdraws the application.

B. **Advertising fee for each month** an ad is requested for inclusion in the AANA Calendar of Events, with a duplicate listing on the AANA website. For an additional fee per month, program providers can have their web address hyperlinked directly to their websites allowing viewers access to company and program information for more exposure and target-directed traffic. See CE Payment form for fees. Calendar of Events fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable.

C. **Program Outline and Documentation Forms.** The interactive PDF files for the front and the back of this form can be downloaded directly from the AANA website at [www.aana.com](http://www.aana.com) by going into Professional Development, Continuing Education and Applications. Use the submit button in the lower right hand corner of each form to electronically forward the forms to the continuing education department. The required information, as described in the attachment (Standards for Provider-Directed Independent Study), may be submitted in any other documents as long as all the required information is included. The overall design of the independent study that is submitted for approval must include all of the items as listed in the Provider-Directed Independent Study (PDIS) Rationale beginning on page 4 of this document. These materials must be **typed**.

D. **Copy of the evaluation instrument** that will be issued which enables all participants to assess the following: (1) learner's achievement of each objective; (2) teaching effectiveness of each faculty member or presenter; (3) relevance of content to objectives; (4) effectiveness of teaching methods; (5) appropriateness of learning environment; (6) state one item learned that will improve participants nurse anesthesia practice; and (7) state any barriers to implement what is learned.

The evaluation instrument must also include a field for the participant's name and AANA ID#, as completion of the evaluation tool is required to receive CE credit.

E. Beginning August 1, 2016 the National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) will require 60 hours of Class A credits over a 4-year recertification cycle. Class A credits are earned from assessed continuing education. An assessment can take many forms, such as multiple choice questions, simulation demonstrations, case studies, or self-assessment.

For prior approved PDIS programs, the assessment method is a post-test (see Rationale on page 5).

F. **Copy of the certificate of completion** to be issued to all participants, including nurse anesthetists - both AANA members and nonmembers - who complete the program. The AANA logo cannot be used on any certificates for programs that are not sponsored by the AANA. Certificates must contain the following information:

1. Name of participant;
2. AANA ID number;
3. Name, city, and state of program provider;
4. Title of CE program;
5. Date of CE program;
6. City and state for location of CE program, if applicable;
7. Number of Class A CE credits awarded to the individual;
8. AANA code number and expiration date;
9. Number of Class A CE credits approved by AANA;

Note that items 8 and 9 need to appear in the AANA prior approval statement as shown in the following format:
This program has been prior approved by the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists for XX Class A CE credits; Code Number XXXXXXX; Expiration Date XX/XX/XX.

G. CE content areas on certificate of completion. Several state boards of nursing require documented credit in specific content areas in order for a nurse anesthetist to renew their APRN license. Although this is not mandatory, we do suggest that the number of CE credits earned during your program in content areas such as pharmacology, HIV/AIDS or legal issues be designated on the certificate of completion issued to the nurse anesthetist. This will provide the CRNAs with the documentation they are required to submit without the need to contact you after the program for this information. Note: While the AANA approves CE credit, the AANA does not designate content areas for program providers other than AANA.

Random Audits

The AANA CE Department will conduct random and targeted audits to determine compliance with AANA prior approval requirements and provider responsibilities. A program provider audited by the AANA must provide any or all of the documentation stated in Standard XI: Recordkeeping of the AANA CE Program as requested within 30 days of the request. Failure to meet the deadline may result in revocation of approval and no refunds will be made. The AANA reserves the right to deny, revoke or suspend approval based on non-compliance or non-responsiveness of the provider.

Receipt of Materials Verification

For verification of receipt of materials in the CE Department: use overnight mail service. The large volume of mail does not permit the CE Department to confirm receipt of materials by phone, fax, or email.

Application Processing

Applications for prior approval are reviewed thoroughly before approval is awarded. Providers will be notified within 30 working days if the application is not complete and given an opportunity to submit additional materials. The information must be received before publication and distribution of the independent study. Prior approval will not be awarded until the application is complete. The approval will be effective as of the date the application is complete, not the date the application was initially received by the CE Department. If the material is not received before the start of the program, processing will not continue and the application is considered inactive.

Prior Approval Notification

The notification that a CE program has been awarded prior approval contains the assigned AANA code number, the number of CE credits awarded, the date of AANA approval, the program approval and expiration dates, the provider’s recordkeeping and participation recording responsibilities, an AANA completion record and all other information pertinent to the approval.

The code number is assigned a specific date range with a maximum number of credits and can be used only for the date(s) and CE credits shown on the approval notice. The nurse anesthetist is eligible to receive the maximum number of credits only one time under the program’s code number.

The code number must appear on all correspondence, promotional materials, completion records and certificates of completion.
The beginning and ending dates for which the code number and volume are assigned can be changed only if the CE Department is notified and approval is granted before the publication of a particular volume. Prior approval will not exceed two years. Participants will receive monthly program materials the first year and have up to the expiration date to submit their lessons to the program provider.

**Prior Approval Announcement**

The AANA CE Program does not award CE units (CEUs), continuing medical education credits (CMEs), or continuing education points (CEPs). These designations are not interchangeable with the terms CE credit or contact hour and are not permitted for use on the certificates of completion.

The announcement of AANA prior approval that appears on the certificate of completion and all other materials must contain the following information:

> This program has been prior approved by the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists for XX Class A CE credits; Code Number XXXXXXX; Expiration Date XX/XX/XX.

The use of any statement such as “AANA approval pending” or “approval applied for,” is not permitted on any materials or promotional literature; it is misleading and can be considered false advertising.

**Provider Recordkeeping Responsibilities**

The provider is responsible for submitting the completion record and issuing certificates of completion to all registrants. Nurse anesthetists select AANA prior-approved programs with the expectation that their CE credits will be recorded in a timely, accurate manner so that their recertification renewal is not delayed. The process for recording participation and issuing certificates of completion is sent to the provider with their approval notice.

**Notice of Denial of Approval**

The CE Department will notify the applicant in writing if the CE program or any part of the program is denied. The notice will briefly state the reasons for the denial and will advise the applicant of the right to seek reconsideration by the CE Committee.

**Reconsideration**

An applicant may request reconsideration of a CE Committee decision by submitting a written request within 30 days after the date on the denial notice sent to the applicant. The applicant must provide the CE Committee with the reasons that he or she believes that the denial of approval was inappropriate and a description of modifications made to the program to correct any cited deficiencies. The applicant may appear before the CE Committee, or may submit written materials to the CE Committee to address the identified problem areas.

The CE Committee will notify the applicant of its decision regarding reconsideration of the denial of the applicant’s CE program. If the CE Committee affirms the denial of the applicant’s CE program, the notice will briefly state the reasons for affirming the denial and will advise the applicant of the right to appeal the decision to the Continuing Education Appeals Panel (the “CEAP”). The applicant may appeal an Adverse Determination only after (a) the applicant has filed a timely request for reconsideration, and (b) the CE Committee has affirmed its initial decision to deny approval. The CEAP does not award CE credit.

**Failure to Comply with Provider Responsibilities**

If a CE provider fails to comply with the AANA’s Continuing Education Program standards, or fails to meet any of the recordkeeping responsibilities, the CE Committee may withdraw its approval of the CE activity. The provider will receive 30 days written notice of the specific charges and the reasons for withdrawal and will have a reasonable opportunity to respond and be heard by the committee. If the CE Committee
withdraws its approval, the provider may formally appeal the action to the AANA’s Continuing Education Appeals Panel within a 30-day period.

**Provider-Directed Independent Study (PDIS) Rationale**

Provider-Directed Independent Study (PDIS) is a self-paced learning activity developed for individual use in which the participant receives program materials through the mail, computer, or website, and completes the required activity outside a formal, organized learning environment. Provider-directed independent study is also known as home study. The PDIS cannot be approved for use in conjunction with or as an adjunct to another program that has received prior approval. The format requires that the program be able to meet the full criteria for PDIS approval. Each activity submitted for CE approval is evaluated individually to determine the number of Class A CE credits it will receive.

The CE Program definition assumes that the individual receives the information by mail or computer. There may be certain circumstances under which a provider will be given approval by the CE Committee to distribute an independent study on site, but the nurse anesthetist must mail the answer sheet back rather than return it to the provider on site. Each lesson must require at least 60 minutes (excluding testing) to complete. It is the intent of the format for independent study programs that the program be offered on a continual basis, and not for a single use. For example, to submit lectures for approval in a PDIS format to be used as a companion discussion program would not be in keeping with the intent of the independent study program.

The medium by which a CE program is presented does not alter the specific requirements established by the AANA CE Committee. The fact that an independent study is offered on a website does not diminish the necessity for submission of complete and substantive materials as part of an application for approval.

Providers who submit programs that have the same content, but which will be offered in more than one medium (e.g., on-line, teleconference education and self-directed study options) must send all materials for the program at the same time regardless of the types of medium. The program will receive one inclusive approval number for the approval period. Enduring content may have an expiration date of no longer than three years. It will be the program provider’s responsibility to keep their content current with science and technology.

The provider should refer to the content section of the AANA Continuing Education Program, located on www.aana.com, to ensure that the proposed content is within the approval criteria. If there is any question about topics to be presented, the provider should contact the AANA CE Department for confirmation of acceptable content; otherwise, there is a chance that an article in print or other learning material content may not be accepted for CE credit.

A completed application that meets the following criteria is required for consideration of prior approval for an independent study.

1. The overall design that is submitted for approval must include:
   a. One (1) complete packet of the instructional materials sent to a subscriber. The materials must be in a packet that is professionally prepared and printed.
   b. Content for the proposed independent study.
      • Outlines and power point presentations are not acceptable as sole content for an independent study. Outlines and short abstracts are not sufficient, except as supplemental materials.
      • Hard copy of what the subscriber will see in its entirety if the learning activity is transmitted by computer or is presented on a website.
      • The content must be in the form of articles that could be submitted for publication using the style that is acceptable for publication in the AANA Journal.
• The content must contain sufficient substantive information to provide the learner with all the essential information without reference to original articles. Each article must contain a bibliography.

c. A statement that describes the program and the materials required for completion, how to interact with the resources provided and complete the program, how the program reaches the subscriber, and a distribution schedule.

d. A statement that describes the testing mechanism and feedback for the learner. The description must demonstrate that the learner automatically receives feedback concerning correct answers; the material should not have to be requested by the participant.

The answers to the test questions cannot appear in the materials that the subscriber will see before completing the posttest. The feedback and answers can be provided to the CRNA when they receive their certificate of attendance. This must be part of the learning package.

e. A statement that the passing score is at least 80%.

f. A statement that there is no retesting for participants who score less than 80% on programs unless the programs are computer interactive or administered on a website (per guidelines identified in 2f).

g. A statement that describes the recordkeeping mechanism.

h. A copy of the evaluation form the subscriber will complete at the end of the study program.

i. A copy of the certificate of completion the subscriber will receive upon completion of the program.

2. The instructional materials that the subscriber receives for each lesson must include:

a. Learning materials such as audio and video cassettes, CDs, DVDs, articles, study guides, written lessons, objectives and test questions, and any other information related to the experience.

b. A statement that describes the materials required to complete the independent study which includes the following information; a description of the program, the materials required to complete the study, how to interact with the resources provided, how to complete the program, how the program reaches the subscriber, description of the testing mechanism and feedback for the learner, notice that the passing score is at least 80% and that there is no retesting for participants who score less than 80% (unless the programs are computer interactive or administered on a website (per guidelines identified in 3c below), and a description of the recordkeeping mechanism.

c. Learner objectives and test questions for amount of CE credit requested as identified below:

- one (1) learner objective and ten (10) test questions for each whole CE credit requested.
- one (1) learner objective and three (3) test questions for a quarter (.25) of a CE credit requested.
- one (1) learner objective and five (5) test questions for a half (.50) of a CE credit requested.
- one (1) learner objective and eight (8) test questions for three-fourths (.75) of a CE credit requested.

d. The objectives must appear as part of the lesson regardless of the medium in which the study is conducted. Each lesson must start out with the objectives and conclude with the test questions.

e. The objectives cannot be included as an addendum on a separate sheet in the subscriber package, sent to the subscriber separately, or appear on the computer screen from a CD or DVD, etc., where the participant may fail to see them. If the course is offered online, the
objectives must be presented at the beginning of the lesson, not on a separate screen which the participant can bypass prior to starting the program.

f. For PDIS programs that are computer interactive or administered on a website, the program provider may allow for up to, but no more than, three testing opportunities for AANA approved PDIS programs as long as such programs include at a minimum the following four elements: 1) Development and maintenance of a test pool of questions at least two times the length of the test presented to candidates; 2) utilization of randomly assigned computer-generated test items where at least half of the test items used on the second and third attempts are different than the initial test items used on first attempt; 3) randomization of the order of any individual test items that are repeated on testing attempts (subsequent to the first attempt); and 4) randomization of both the key and the distracters within the individual test items repeated on additional testing attempts (subsequent to the first attempt). The correct answers to test questions, if revealed at all, cannot be shown until after the test is passed. However, following each of the three testing attempts, it is permissible to indicate if a question has been missed due to incorrect response so long as the correct answer is not provided.

3. If the learning activity is computer interactive or administered on a website, a hard copy of what the subscriber will see in its entirety must be submitted with the application for approval.

4. Programs that use learning materials such as video and audio cassettes, CDs, or DVDs, must provide the participant with a hard copy of the learner objectives, test questions, and content outline, as well as identify the instructional staff. Teleconferences must also provide the participant with a hard copy of the learner objectives, content outline, and data on the instructional staff.

5. Independent studies may use abridgments or condensations of previously published material that are relevant to achieving the learner objectives.

Such abridgments must contain sufficient information to provide the learner with all the essential information, without reference to the original article. Short abstracts of randomly published material are not acceptable, except as supplemental materials.

6. Although CE credit is awarded on the basis of the number of objectives and test questions, each lesson must require at least 60 minutes to complete for each whole CE credit. Partial CE credit in .25 increments requires at least 15 minutes to complete.

7. To receive CE credit, a participant must complete the independent study, the test must be received by the program provider, and the evaluation instrument must be completed no later than the expiration date of the program specified by the provider.

8. A certificate of completion must be forwarded to the participant upon successful completion of the program. It must contain the following non-handwritten information: (a) the name of the participant; (b) the AANA ID number; (c) the name of the CE activity; (d) the name and address of the provider; (e) city and state for location of activity, if applicable; (f) the date of the CE activity; (g) the number of Class A CE credits awarded; (h) the AANA code number, volume number, and expiration date; and (i) the signature of the provider who verifies participation in the program.

a. The certificate of completion must indicate the number of Class A CE credits earned monthly during an August 1 to July 31 time frame. The actual date(s) of completion of the CE activity must be shown on the certificate in an August to July time frame.

For example, issuing a certificate with the dates of lessons completed monthly from January 1 to September 30 is unacceptable. The correct way to assign credits is from January 1 to July 31 and from August 1 to September 30. Failure to issue certificates with dates of completion in the August to July time frame may result in withdrawal of approval.
b. The provider must be prepared to issue an interim certificate of completion for all nurse anesthetists who require the credits for recertification.

c. The date on the certificate must match the date on the completion record. For example, if a certificate of completion is issued in June, then the corresponding credit must appear on the June completion record.

9. Completion records must be submitted monthly. A contact person must be available to verify participation and to answer questions from the AANA and subscribers about CE credits and subscription.