



## Guidelines for Completion of a Prior Approval Application

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### Continuing Education Program

These guidelines are intended to assist providers who are applying to the AANA for **prior approval of a continuing education (CE) program they want to present at a future date**. All AANA prior approved CE programs provide MAC Ed CE credit.

A CE Program may consist of a face-to face meeting or a synchronous webinar. Prior approval cannot be awarded to CE programs that have already been presented. Inservice and provider-directed independent study/home study 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](http://www.aana.com) or on the CE Portal homepage.

The content of CE activities for prior approval must be directly related to nurse anesthesia and relevant to one of the four areas of nurse anesthesia practice: Education, administration (work as an administrator), research, or clinical practice. The content provides knowledge, skills, and abilities beyond the basic level for preparation of CRNAs, while being mindful of the need to periodically relearn, refresh, or update those basic competencies or to adapt them to new practice situations or settings.

#### **Application Submission**

The prior approval application process is web-based via the CE Portal at [www.aana.com/ceportal](http://www.aana.com/ceportal). The program provider must have a User ID and Password that is specific to the program provider. Contact the AANA CE Department to request login in credentials at [continuingeducation@aana.com](mailto:continuingeducation@aana.com). Once logged in, progress through the online form at your own pace, completing the tabs in order. Required application materials can be attached to this application during the next steps. This application will not be submitted to AANA for review until the end of the application has been reached and any additional materials and associated application fee have been submitted. Until that time, the entered information will be stored on the site providing navigation instructions within the CE Portal are followed, and you will be able to move forward and backward throughout the application process until submission. This application is best used with Google Chrome or Internet Explorer. Mobile devices are not recommended.

Credit card payment is requested at the end of the application process. The fee applies to each application submitted.

## **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 requested contact information for the coordinator in the application, so the coordinator can be easily 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 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, email address, administrative structure, the individual responsible for coordinating the CE program and recordkeeping, or any other information pertinent to the program.

## **Materials to Submit with the Application**

- A. **Application fee.** The application fee is determined based on the number of MAC Ed CE credits requested and is automatically calculated in the CE portal. View [CE Fees](#). The payment is the last step in the application process before the application is submitted for review and is payable via credit card. If paying by check, select the pay by check option and an invoice will be immediately available to you in the CE portal. The invoice must accompany the check when submitting the payment to AANA. The fee is nonrefundable and nontransferable if the application does not meet the CE requirements or the provider withdraws the application.
- B. **Advertising Requests.** Program providers may request advertising in the **Event Calendar** tab when completing an application. Advertisements placed in the Calendar of Events appear in [nurseanesthesiology.aana.com](http://nurseanesthesiology.aana.com) every other month (September, November, January, March, May, and July) alternating months with the *AANA Journal* (October, December, February, April, June and August). The fee to advertise prior-approved CE Programs in the Calendar of Events is \$180 per listing, which includes hyperlinking of the web address in the advertisement, and a link directly to the [Calendar of Events](#) that is posted on [aana.com](http://aana.com) as well as in the bi-monthly *Anesthesia E-ssentials* that is emailed to the AANA Membership.

State Nurse Anesthesia Associations who plan and sponsor their meetings do not have to pay for a notice of their upcoming programs to be placed in the Calendar of Events, although the months to advertise must be selected during the prior approval application process in the CE Portal. However, if the state association outsourced the meeting planning to a commercial provider, the advertising fee is required from that provider.

Calendar of Events fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable.

For program providers wanting to advertise multiple instances of the course that have been included with the application, an addendum must be attached to the Additional Docs tab that includes the following for **each** instance of the course:

1. Begin and End Date of Program
2. Location of the Course: Include venue name, city, and state.
3. Months to run the advertisement

- C. **Program Outline I tab.** Progress through the Program Outline I tab providing the detailed information requested in each field. Attach the Certificate of Completion and the Learner Assessment and Program Evaluation form where requested.

**Requirements for 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 MAC Ed CE credits awarded to the individual;
8. AANA code number and expiration date;
9. Number of MAC Ed CE credits approved by AANA;
10. Provider signature verifying completion.
11. California Board of Registered Nursing (CABRN) provider statement. If the program provider does not have a CABRN number, the following AANA CABRN statement must be used.

AANA is an approved provider by the California Board of Registered Nursing, CEP #10862.

Note that items 8 and 9 above 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 Anesthesiology for XX MAC Ed CE Credits; Code Number XXXXXXXX; Expiration Date XX/XX/XX.

**Requirements for the Learner Assessment and Program 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) achievement of personal learning objectives; (6) state one item learned that will improve participants nurse anesthesia practice; and (7) state any barriers to implement what is learned.

The Learner Assessment and Program 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 MAC Ed CE credit.

The required form of measurement on the Learner Assessment and Program Evaluation instrument is a defined 5-point Likert scale or higher form of measurement.

- D. **Program Outline II tab.** A complete entry for each presentation within in the program must be created following the guidelines below.

1. The title of each presentation and the name, title and credential of each presenter. For associate (resident) member presenters, all educational programs seeking AANA CE approval must, a) list the associate member's proper professional and earned academic credentials (e.g. RN, BSN) in the program outline and documentation form as well as published program materials, and b) provide the name of a specific faculty sponsor or mentor, along with the professional credentials of each sponsor or mentor (i.e. CRNA, DNP, PhD or MD) for each associate member identified as delivering CE-earning content.
2. A description or outline of the content to be presented for each lecture.
  - a. Refer to the Content Section from the *AANA Continuing Education Program* located on [www.aana.com](http://www.aana.com) for information regarding content.
  - b. Tours. An itinerary and schedule should be submitted that show the locations, dates, and times of each presentation. CE credit will be awarded only for the discussion portion and *not for observation or a physical walk-through* of a hospital or other facility included on the tour.
3. An hour-by-hour breakdown of the program that specifies the start and end time for each presentation, including breaks. One CE credit is awarded per 60 minutes of educational content. Should programs be offered during a hybrid meeting, whereby an attendee may attend programs either live or via recorded sessions, CE credit may be awarded for one program offered during a given time slot. CE credit will not be awarded for multiple presentations occurring at overlapping times during a meeting. For each 60-minute increment, it is allowable to have up to, **but no more than** 10 minutes of combined discussion, Q/A and/or testing directly related to the 50 minutes of educational/learning content. Partial credits are awarded in 0.25 increments. Partial hours not listed in 0.25 increments are rounded down to the next 0.25 CE credit. The number of credits reflected in this program schedule **must** match the number of credits requested on the Basic Info tab and in the Program Detail tab.
4. All educational content must have a minimum of 1 associated learner objective for each 60 minutes of content. For content less than 60 minutes, 1 learner objective is required per topic. For partial credit greater than 1 credit, an additional learner objective is required. For example, if applying for 10.5 CE credits, 11 objectives are required. The terms "learner objectives" and "learner outcomes" are used interchangeably. The objectives are to be written as statements that identify the participant's expected mastery after attendance at the program.
  - *Example of a correctly written learner objective:* At the conclusion of this presentation, the participant should be able to calculate the appropriate drug dosage for the new anesthetic agent based on the patient's weight.
  - Presenter's goals are not acceptable learner objectives. For example, "To inform the nurse anesthetist about the latest trends in outpatient surgery" is the goal of the presenter; not a measurable learner objective.
5. Poster Sessions. Poster sessions are eligible for continuing education (CE) credit and can be categorized as assessed CE credits (MAC Ed) if the prior approval application meets the standards for Assessment (Standard VII) and Evaluation (Standard XIII) and following criteria are met:

- CEs can be awarded for poster sessions that focus on original research or evidence-based practice;
- Poster sessions must be one hour in length at a minimum, and have a minimum of 10 posters per scheduled hour;
- For example: a poster session that is scheduled for three hours and has a total of 50 posters will be awarded 3 CE credits;
- Another example: a poster session scheduled for three hours and has a total of 25 posters will be awarded 2 CE credits.

Attendees for poster sessions can only claim CE credit for each hourly session that they attend.

6. Teaching methods. Interactive video instruction or other similar materials, as well as participation in teleconferences and demonstrations, may be submitted as content **only** if a moderator or facilitator is present to lead a discussion, answer technical questions relative to the presentation, hand out evaluations, and record attendance. The materials may take the place of an in-person lecturer; they cannot be approved by themselves.
  7. All approved providers must ensure that their continuing education activities are free from bias and all presenters (faculty) must declare vested interests and any conflicts in interests (real or potential/perceived). A provider must ensure that the following decisions were made free of the control of a commercial interest: (a) Identification of educational needs; (b) Determination of educational objectives; (c) Selection and presentation of content; (d) Selection of all persons and organizations that will be in a position to control the content of the educational activity; (e) Selection of educational methods; (f) Assessment and Evaluation of the activity. Refer to the AANA CE Program on [www.aana.com](http://www.aana.com) for further information.
- E. The National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) requires 60 hours of MAC Ed CE credits over a 4-year MAC cycle. MAC Ed CE 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.

**Assessment Method.** Program providers should address their selection of assessment type/format as well and explain how it supports the learning objectives for the activity. Provide a description of the assessment method that will be used to measure the level of learning attained in the program. Examples include: self-assessment, skills check-off, discussion or question/answer session, or post-test. If a post-test is used, a copy must be provided with the prior-approval application.

**Criteria:**

- a. The assessment method must not only meet the needs of the participants but also support current practice for nurse anesthetists in education, administration, research, or clinical practice.
- b. Assessment methods must support and facilitate learner engagement and maximize the achievement of identified objectives.
- c. The assessment for the CE activity must be consistent with the learner objectives and appropriate to the content being presented.
- d. The minimum acceptable form of assessment identifies how the learning activity informs and/or improves practice is self-assessment and is built into the prior approval application requirements.

- F. **CE content areas on certificate of completion.** Several state boards of nursing require documented credit in specific content areas 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.
- G. **Pharmacology & Therapeutics Content.** The CE Provider submitting programs containing pharmacology and therapeutics content may request pharmacology designated credit when applying for AANA prior approval. Along with the core content requirements as mentioned in the Content section, pharmacology content will provide a means to integrate advanced knowledge of pharmacology, pharmacokinetics, and pharmacodynamics content across the lifespan and prepare the certified registered nurse anesthetist to initiate appropriate pharmacotherapeutics safely and effectively.

Examples of pharmacology content eligible for credit include the following:

- drug specific information
- safe prescribing practices
- safe medication administration
- prescribing methodologies
- new regulations

Learner objectives provided for pharmacology content must explicitly identify how the content will meet the learning objectives. An example of a pharmacology learner objective is, “Develop pharmacologic measures for administration to reverse neuromuscular blockade to industry standards and best practices.” Presenters of pharmacology content must have content expertise in pharmacology. When a program is prior approved with a pharmacology credit designation, the Certificate of Completion must include the following designation statement:

The American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology designates this program as meeting the criteria for up to XX CE Credits in Pharmacology & Therapeutics.

- H. **Pain Management Content.** The CE Provider submitting programs containing Pain Management content (inclusive of but not limited to acute surgical pain management, non-surgical pain management, chronic pain management) may request Pain Management designated credit when applying for AANA prior approval. Along with the core content requirements as mentioned in the Content section, Pain Management content will provide a means to integrate advanced knowledge of assessment, diagnosis, treatment and procedural safety involved in Pain Management therapies/procedures to prepare the CRNA to initiate appropriate Pain Management therapies safely and effectively throughout the lifespan. This content area should be developed to maintain and improve the knowledge, competency, and performance in the science and practice of the CRNA who provides care to patients with acute/surgical pain and/or chronic/nonsurgical pain.

Examples of pain management content eligible for credit include the following:

- Clinical Practice Guidelines related to pain management
- Current research findings related to pain management, pharmacology, anatomy and physiology
- Latest technologies and techniques related to pain management



- Concepts related to regional anesthesia and/or pain management therapies in the clinical setting
- Legal, ethical, and professional issues related to surgical and/or non-surgical pain management
- Psychosocial, spiritual, and cultural aspects of pain management
- Non-allopathic considerations for pain management
- Assessment and evaluation of the patient with acute surgical pain and/or chronic pain
- Foundations of initiating an acute pain service
- Business fundamentals in acute and/or chronic pain management

Acceptable activities/support materials include the following:

- Presentations (in person or virtual)
- Research abstracts/posters
- Journal access
- Consensus guidelines
- Video tutorials
- Simulation/Cadaver Labs

Learner objectives provided for pain management content must explicitly identify how the content will meet the learning objectives. Course/Activity objectives should use a general format, clearly stating the intended, measurable outcomes. The following are examples of a pain management learner objectives:

Describe and develop clinical practice measures for use of regional anesthesia in orthopedic surgery to industry standards and best practices.

In the simulated setting, demonstrate competence in the performance of advanced techniques of regional anesthesia.

Describe the psychosocial and cultural aspects of pain management among different groups of patients within the geographical area of Southwestern United States.

Create the basic elements of a business plan for establishing an acute and/or chronic pain service.

Presenters of pain management content must have content expertise in the specified aspect of pain management topic designated for the continuing education. Examples of content expertise include, but are not limited to, recent experience lecturing on the topic area, completion of a fellowship in acute/chronic pain management, active sub-specialty certification in Non-Surgical Pain Management (NSPM) from the NBCRNA, etc.

When a program is prior approved with a Pain Management credit designation, the Certificate of Completion must include the following designation statement:

The American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology designates this program as meeting the criteria for up to XX CE Credits in Pain Management.

Disclaimer: There are education programs that were prior approved for continuing education credit (CE) that do not have explicit Pain Management credit designated by AANA, as the programs were either approved before AANA began designating Pain Management credit or the program provider opted to not apply for Pain Management credit. If the CRNA is required to submit Pain Management CE for authority to perform pain management therapies/procedures and the program does not appear in the Pain Management CE field on their AANA CE transcript, the CRNA should verify with their Board of Nursing or

regulatory body, it will accept Pain Management content approved for CE from the program description to meet the requirements for renewal of authority to perform Pain Management therapies/procedures.

I. **Recorded Webinars Held Synchronously.** In addition to the criteria required for CE activities that are in person or held via live webinar, the following must be met for CE to be awarded for recorded webinars held synchronously:

1. Content must align with the outlined course objectives and meet the program's learning outcomes.
2. The recorded webinar must utilize at least one interactive element to actively engage participants. Examples may include embedded questions/knowledge checks, polls, Q&A sessions, or breakout rooms.
3. Interactive elements including discussions, or Q&A sessions must be led by a moderator who is a content expert, ensuring that accurate information is provided, and learners are supported.
4. The name & credentials of each moderator who will be logged in with the participants while taking the on-demand and interactive portions of the course must be provided.
5. The moderator must verify and track attendance during both recorded and interactive portions of the webinar.
6. Post-webinar feedback collection must be conducted to assess effectiveness and improve future sessions.
7. A description of the program provider's availability with time limitations to offer the synchronous recorded webinar must be provided. For example, courses may be scheduled between 8:00am and 6:00pm.
8. Participants who complete portions of the program may only move forward in the recorded webinar and cannot replay.

### **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.

### **Application Processing**

Applications for prior approval are reviewed thoroughly before approval is awarded. Providers will be notified within 30 business days if the application is not complete and given an opportunity to revise and resubmit their application in the CE Portal for further review. Prior approval will not be awarded until the application is complete. Providers can check the status of the application in the CE Portal.

### **Prior Approval Notification**

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

Prior approval is granted only for the date(s) of the presentation the provider indicated on the application. The CE activity may not be presented at any other time unless the CE Department is notified, and approval



is granted before the start of the presentation. CE programs cannot be offered under the provider's code number once it has expired.

Prior approval will not exceed one year. If the CE activity is approved for more than one presentation within the year, the **identical program** (content, speakers, and format) must be used each time; there can be no substitutions in content and speakers.

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. It must appear on all correspondence, promotional materials, and certificates of completion. If a provider has a CE program approved for a year and it is offered in multiple locations, the nurse anesthetist will be eligible to receive the maximum number of credits **only one time** under the program's code number.

### **Changes in Prior-Approved Programs**

Minor changes in content can be undertaken without additional committee review, provided they involve improvement and comply with the standards for approval.

The number of CE credits originally prior approved cannot be changed unless the provider receives prior approval from the Continuing Education Department. A portion of a program, rather than the entire program, may not be presented unless prior approval is awarded. For example, if the activity was prior approved for 3 days and assigned 18 CE credits, the provider cannot shorten it to 1 day for 6 credits. Prior approval must be obtained for the shortened program because this is a major change and considered a new program.

### **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 or on any other program materials.

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 Anesthesiology for XX MAC Ed CE Credits; Code Number XXXXXXXX; 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.

If the program approval includes a pharmacology credit designation, include the following statement below the AANA prior approval statement:

The American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology designates this program as meeting the criteria for up to XX CE Credits in Pharmacology & Therapeutics.

If the program approval includes a pain management credit designation, include the following statement below the AANA prior approval statement:

The American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology designates this program as meeting the criteria for up to XX CE Credits in Pain Management.

### **Provider Recordkeeping Responsibilities**

The provider is responsible for recording CE credits via upload of an Excel or CSV file or manual entry and issuing certificates of completion to all attendees. Nurse anesthetists attend AANA prior-approved programs with the expectation that their CE credits will be recorded in a timely, accurate manner so that their MAC is not delayed. The guidelines for recording participation and issuing certificates of completion are sent to the provider with their approval notice and are available on [www.aana.com](http://www.aana.com).

All program records must be stored securely and be retrievable for at least 60 months.

### **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.