

**2012**  
**SELF-EVALUATION**  
**EXAMINATION (NSEE)**  
**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**NBCR NA**  
National Board of Certification & Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists

# 2012 SELF-EVALUATION EXAMINATION (NSEE) STUDENT HANDBOOK

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## Examination Information

### Purpose of the NSEE

The Self-Evaluation Examination (NSEE), administered by the National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA), has three objectives: 1) to provide information to students about their progress in the nurse anesthesia program; 2) to provide information to program directors on how well their programs are preparing students with the knowledge they need for anesthesia practice; and 3) to prepare students for the National Certification Examination (NCE) experience.

To meet these objectives, the examination has specifications similar to those of the NCE, is administered under secure conditions, and has a reporting system designed to provide maximum feedback to students and program directors.

### Requirements

All students currently enrolled in an accredited nurse anesthesia program are eligible to be registered for the NSEE. All students registered by their program director will receive an official NBCRNA eligibility notification by e-mail which indicates the expiration date for their eligibility to take the NSEE; they must test prior to that date. If a student was enrolled in a nurse anesthesia program at the time he or she was registered to take the NSEE and subsequently is dismissed from the program, he or she is not eligible to take the NSEE. Students are not allowed to take the NSEE after their program completion date.

### Description of the NSEE

The NSEE is a computerized adaptive test that is intended to help both students and programs identify their respective strengths and weaknesses before students take the NCE. The NSEE includes multiple choice questions, with a stem and four distracters, and since the fall of 2011, alternative question formats such as multiple correct response, calculations, and drag and drop. The Certification page of the NBCRNA website contains an Exam Tutorial as well as two documents in PDF format with samples and frequently asked questions about the Alternative Question Format.

The questions are presented one at a time on a computer screen. Each question can be viewed for as long as the student wishes, but he or she cannot go back to previous questions once an answer has been recorded. All students must answer a total of 160 questions during the three-hour testing period. The examination will stop when all the questions have been presented or the three-hour time limit is reached.

The five content areas are: 1) Professional and Legal Aspects of Nurse Anesthesia; 2) Anatomy, Physiology and Pathophysiology; 3) Pharmacology; 4) Basic Principles of Anesthesia Practice; and 5) Advanced Principles of Anesthesia Practice.

The Self-Evaluation Examination subcommittee is appointed by the NBCRNA and is composed of nurse anesthetist members of the NBCRNA and an elected, representative group of practitioners. The subcommittee writes test questions and reviews all questions before they are used on the examination.

### Administration

The NBCRNA assumes responsibility for the examination content outline and test specifications, and maintains and approves an item bank of approved test questions for administration. The NBCRNA has contracted with Pearson VUE to provide administration of the examination.

## Examination Content Outline

The content outline for the NSEE reflects the curriculum requirements adopted in March 2004 by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA).

The content outline that follows is provided to assist students in preparing for the NSEE. It is only a guide that suggests topics and topic areas used to generate and categorize examination questions. It is not all-inclusive, because some elements apply to more than one area. The percentage of questions in each major content area is also noted.

### 1.0 Professional and Legal Aspects of Nurse Anesthesia

*(Percentage of Questions: 13%)*

- 4.5 Perioperative complications: assessment, management
- 4.6 Airway management
- 4.7 Other

### 2.0 Anatomy, Physiology and Pathophysiology

*(Percentage of Questions: 29%)*

- 2.1 Respiratory
- 2.2 Cardiovascular
- 2.3 Nervous system
  - 2.3.1 Central/Peripheral
  - 2.3.2 Autonomic
- 2.4 Hepatic, renal, gastrointestinal and genitourinary
- 2.5 Endocrine
- 2.6 Other

### 3.0 Pharmacology

*(Percentage of Questions: 25%)*

- 3.1 General principles, Pharmacokinetics, Pharmacodynamics
- 3.2 Inhalation agents
- 3.3 Intravenous agents and reversal agents
- 3.4 Local anesthetics
- 3.5 Muscle relaxants and reversal agents
- 3.6 Cardiac, vasoactive and antihypertensive drugs
- 3.7 Drugs acting on the CNS/ANS
- 3.8 Adjunct drugs
- 3.9 Other

### 4.0 Basic principles of anesthesia practice

*(Percentage of Questions: 14%)*

- 4.1 Preoperative assessment/anesthetic plans
- 4.2 Monitoring
- 4.3 Positioning
- 4.4 Fluid therapy

### 5.0 Advanced principles of anesthesia practice

*(Percentage of Questions: 19%)*

- 5.1 Regional anesthesia
  - 5.1.1 Lower extremity
  - 5.1.2 Upper extremity
  - 5.1.3 Other
- 5.2 Pediatric anesthesia
  - 5.2.1 Anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology
  - 5.2.2 Anesthetic management
- 5.3 Obstetrical anesthesia
  - 5.3.1 Anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology
  - 5.3.2 Anesthetic management
- 5.4 Geriatric anesthesia
  - 5.4.1 Anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology
  - 5.4.2 Anesthetic management
- 5.5 Anesthetic management of surgical specialty procedures
  - 5.5.1 Thoracic
  - 5.5.2 Cardiac/Vascular
  - 5.5.3 Neurosurgical
  - 5.5.4 ENT/oromaxillofacial/ophthalmologic
  - 5.5.5 Genitourinary
  - 5.5.6 Orthopedic
  - 5.5.7 Abdominal/GYN
  - 5.5.8 Burns/Trauma
  - 5.5.9 Plastic/reconstructive/transplant
  - 5.5.10 Outpatient
    - 5.5.11 Pain management
    - 5.5.12 Other procedures: ECT, MRI, x-ray, cardioversion, MAC, conscious sedation, etc.

## References

The principal anesthesia textbooks used in anesthesia educational programs should provide information related to all the major content areas on the NSEE. Research articles and review books are not used as references.

## Registration Information

### Examination Dates and Application Deadlines

The NSEE is offered year round from January through November. **It is not offered during the month of December.** To be considered for the examination, the completed registration must be submitted directly by the program director.

Registrations and fees should be submitted no later than 60 days in advance of the time frame in which the program director would like the students to take the test. **Therefore, no registrations will be accepted in November.**

### Fees

The fee for the examination is **\$125 per applicant.** Only online payment of fees — through the NBCRNA Online Certification Portal — will be accepted. Checks or money orders will no longer be accepted from individuals or institutions.

### Application Process

All students must be currently *enrolled in a nurse anesthesia program.* The process for online registration and payment of fees is provided to program directors and in the Special Resources section of the Certification page on the NBCRNA website. It is the responsibility of the program director to provide this information to all students.

### Notification of Eligibility

Notification of eligibility is sent to each applicant via e-mail after the registration has been reviewed and processed. **There is a \$50 fee for sending duplicate eligibility notifications. This fee does not apply to missed or canceled appointments; it only applies to duplicate eligibility notifications.**

### Scheduling Information

When a student has been determined eligible to take the NSEE, he or she will receive an official notification of eligibility from the NBCRNA. Upon receipt of this notification from the NBCRNA, the student should make sure his or her first and last name is spelled correctly and matches his or her two forms of acceptable ID (e.g., driver's license, passport, nursing license, student ID or credit card). Contact the NBCRNA immediately by e-mail at **certification@nbcna.com** with any corrections. The receipt of the official NBCRNA eligibility notice is required **before** scheduling an appointment to take the NSEE.

The eligibility notification will contain detailed information about making a reservation to test with Pearson VUE either via its website or through its call center. A confirmation number for the scheduled appointment will be given to the student by Pearson VUE and should be retained until the NSEE has been taken. All scheduling must be done by the student directly with Pearson VUE. Students should be aware that not all test centers operate on the same schedule. The Pearson VUE Call Center usually schedules appointments at least two weeks in advance. **No refunds will be made if a student is unable to schedule the exam before his or her eligibility expiration date.**

**Senior students** must take the exam no later than the end of the month prior to completion of the program, or November 30, 2012, whichever comes first. **No students will be allowed to test after the completion date of their program.**

**First-year students** may take the NSEE anytime prior to November 30, 2012. However, they should check with their program director to see if there is a date by which the program director prefers that the NSEE be taken.

The NBCRNA is not responsible for resolving scheduling difficulties; all scheduling is handled between Pearson VUE and the candidate.

## Change of Name or Address

The name that was used to register the student for the NSEE is the name that is submitted to Pearson VUE in the eligibility file. Therefore, when the student appears at the test center, the first and last name on the original NBCRNA eligibility notification and on two pieces of identification (one bearing a photo and both bearing a signature) must all match. Students will not be allowed to take the test if their identification does not have *the same first and last name* as on their eligibility file at the test center. Students are not able to record a name or address change at the test center; this must be done in writing with the NBCRNA.

## Special Services — Persons with Disabilities

A student with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation for the NSEE by submitting his or her request and supporting documentation in writing to the NBCRNA with the official registration or as soon thereafter as the student learns of the need for the accommodation. In addition to the documentation of the reason for the request from a recognized health care provider, an official letter from the program director documenting the types of accommodation provided during the nurse anesthesia educational program is required.

The NBCRNA will work directly with the student and Pearson VUE in an attempt to make reasonable modifications in the testing environment to make it possible for a student with a disability to take the examination under conditions that will accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level. The inability to read English is not considered a disability and it does not qualify an applicant to receive special services.

## Refunds for Student Cancellations and No-Shows

There are no refunds issued for **any of** the following reasons: 1) not scheduling the exam; 2) canceling a scheduled examination; 3) arriving more than 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time for the test; 4) failing to appear for the scheduled test; or 5) not taking the 2012 NSEE on or before November 30, 2012. A new registration and payment of the fee for the 2012 NSEE must be submitted to the NBCRNA. The previous application fee cannot be applied to another examination. If the student experiences an emergency, he or she must provide the NBCRNA with a written description and documentation for review. **NOTE: Recording the wrong date or time for the scheduled appointment or forgetting to bring required identification with the same first and last name as the official NBCRNA eligibility notification is not considered an emergency.**

# Examination Administration

## What to Bring to the Examination Center

Students who arrive at the examination center must present the following: two separate forms of **current** valid identification, one bearing a photograph and both bearing signatures (e.g., driver's license). Students who appear without the specified identification will not be permitted to take the examination and will be required to reapply and pay the full reapplication fee again.

Reference books, notes or other study materials cannot be brought into the test center. Personal belongings (including wristwatches) that are brought to the test center must be stored in designated areas. An erasable note board will be available at the test center for use during the examination; scratch paper is not supplied.

## Admission Procedures

After the initial verification of identity, the candidate will be asked to sign a roster, place both palms on a palm vein scanner and have their photo taken. The use of biometric technology at Pearson Professional Centers for added security is part of the admission procedures for all NBCRNA examination candidates.

## Taking the Test

At the beginning of the examination, a Statement of Confidentiality will appear that must be acknowledged and agreed to or the student will not be allowed to begin the NSEE and will have to contact the NBCRNA and pay the \$75 reauthorization fee. The content of the NSEE, and each individual question, is the property of the NBCRNA, is copyrighted and is strictly confidential information. The unauthorized retention, possession, copying, distribution, disclosure, discussion or receipt of any NSEE question, in whole or in part, by written, electronic, oral or other form of communication, including but not limited to e-mailing, copying or printing of electronic files, and reconstruction through memorization and/or dictation, before, during or after taking the NSEE is strictly prohibited.

Students should read the directions for entering responses carefully before beginning the test. There is no tutorial and there are no practice questions. The examination begins with the appearance of the first exam question. There is a “help” screen that can be referred to at any time during the examination to refresh the student’s memory as to how to enter responses.

## Improper Behavior at the Examination

The performance of all students taking the NSEE will be monitored. Any student who gives or receives assistance, or otherwise engages in dishonest or improper behavior during the NSEE, will be required to cease taking the NSEE and leave the test center. The test center personnel will notify the NBCRNA office of any improper behavior during the examination.

After reviewing a reported incident, the NBCRNA will determine whether there is reason to believe that a student has engaged in cheating or other improper behavior or has otherwise violated the security of the NSEE. If the NBCRNA determines that there is a reason to so believe, it may, at its discretion, after due and thorough deliberation, determine what action should be taken.

## Post Examination

### Improper Behavior After the Examination

Any individual who removes or attempts to remove materials from the test center or who reproduces, distributes, displays or otherwise misuses a test question or any part of a test question from the NSEE will be subject to legal action. Any student who engages in such improper behavior also may face denial or revocation of eligibility for certification.

### Problems with the Test Center

Students will have access to a proctor at the test center. As a rule, if a problem occurs with the computer and the student has to restart his or her test on their scheduled test day, the test will be resumed at the point of interruption since the questions and answers are saved. However, if the test cannot be resumed on the same day and the student has to reschedule his or her test, a new test will be administered. There will be no charge to the student for rescheduling a test if the problem was caused by circumstances at the test center.

Problems related to admission or administration of the test should be reported as soon as possible, by e-mail, to the NBCRNA office at **certification@nbcna.com**. Any other problems relating to the test or conditions at a test center must be reported in writing to the NBCRNA no later than three days after the examination date and must include the test taker’s full name, address and signature, as well as a description of the conditions that caused the problem(s) at the test center. After reviewing a report of a problem at a test center, the NBCRNA may, at its discretion, determine whether a new NSEE should be administered or what other action should be taken.

Reports submitted from a program director will be considered only if they are accompanied by the test taker’s report. Notice of test administration problems that are received after score reports have been mailed will not be considered by the NBCRNA.

## Report of Examination Results

**Students.** The student reports contain the following information: 1) the percentage of items from each content area; 2) a scaled score for the total test; and 3) a scaled score for all five content areas. Students may obtain an Interpretive Guide (PDF) with cumulative frequency distributions to determine their percentile rank in each area from the Certification Resources section on the Certification page of the NBCRNA website.

**Program Directors.** The following information is provided in the program director's semi-annual reports: the percentage of items from each content area; mean scaled scores on all takers, nationally and for their program; and mean scaled scores for Year I and Year II, nationally and for their program. Program directors also receive a list of all their students' scores (alphabetical by year) and Interpretive Guides containing cumulative frequency distributions for determining percentile ranks in each area.

## Notification of Examination Results

**Students.** Students will be notified of their test results by mail within 2-4 weeks after the day they took the examination.

Results will not be given over the telephone, by fax or via e-mail. The release of results to any other persons requires the written authorization of the examinee.

The only information available to students regarding the NSEE is that which is provided on the results report. The NBCRNA does not provide tests for review or a list of the questions answered incorrectly.

Results of the NSEE are not reported online at the test center, and not everyone who tests on the same day at the same center will receive their results at the same time because results are sent via USPS and may take differing amounts of time.

Failure to receive the report of test results within 4 weeks from the test date should be reported to the NBCRNA by e-mail at **certification@nbcna.com**.

**Program Directors.** Program directors will be sent a copy of the students results report monthly. Twice a year, in February and August, program directors will receive cumulative reports and demographic information for individuals who tested in the previous 6 months.

## Confidentiality

Except as provided above, any information or material that is received or generated by the NBCRNA in connection with the NSEE will be kept confidential and will not be released unless it is authorized by the applicant or required by law.

This publication contains information about the Self-Evaluation Examination (NSEE) administered by the NBCRNA. Please keep it available for reference. **Candidates are responsible for knowing the contents of this Handbook.**

Calling or sending e-mails to the NBCRNA office for information that is contained in the materials sent to all candidates and provided online delays the fulfillment of requests and the processing of exam results.

All correspondence and requests for information concerning the Self-Evaluation Examination should be sent by e-mail to **certification@nbcna.com** or by fax to (847) 825-2762.

The NBCRNA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, marital status, age, gender, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition or sexual orientation.