

Programs' Transitions to the Doctoral Level

POLICY

In 2009, the AANA adopted a position statement supporting doctoral education for entry into nurse anesthesia practice by 2025. The COA adopted a requirement that any students accepted into an accredited program on January 1, 2022 and thereafter must graduate with doctoral degrees. At its October 2015 meeting, the COA revised this language to clarify that all accredited programs must offer a doctoral degree for entry into practice by January 1, 2022; all students matriculating into an accredited program on or after this date must be enrolled in a doctoral program.

PROCEDURE

1. Requirements for *applicant* programs

- a. The COA will not consider any new master's degree programs for accreditation beyond 2015. All prospective programs seeking COA accreditation after 2015 must offer a doctoral degree for entry into practice (see "Capability Review for Accreditation" and "Eligibility for Accreditation").

2. Requirements for *established* programs

- a. Programs are strongly encouraged to submit their doctoral applications in advance of the January 1, 2022 deadline to allow for the possible need for additional documentation. Any program not approved for a doctoral degree for entry into practice at or before the COA's fall 2021 meeting will be considered out of compliance with the Standards and could face adverse action.
- b. Complete the Application for Approval of a Practice-Oriented Doctoral Degree for Entry into Nurse Anesthesia Practice and submit it as instructed by the COA. All applications for approval of a doctoral degree for entry into practice must be submitted to and receive approval by the COA to meet the requirement that all students matriculating into the program on January 1, 2022 and thereafter are enrolled in a doctoral program.
 - 1) Notify the COA of the program's intent to complete an application and submit the completed application to meet the above requirement. Only completed applications will be reviewed by the COA.
 - 2) The fee for review of a doctoral degree for entry into nurse anesthesia practice application must be included with the fully completed application. Please note that as the 2022 deadline approaches, the COA will allocate additional resources in order to support programs' transitions to offering doctoral degrees for entry into nurse anesthesia practice. As a result, the COA has implemented an escalating fee schedule for review of entry into practice doctoral degree applications. Effective January 1, 2018, an additional surcharge of \$1,000 will be added to the existing fees for doctoral

- application review. This surcharge will increase by \$1,000 each year. The doctoral review fees and surcharge are subject to change. If denied, programs will be required to resubmit a complete application and submit both the doctoral application fee and surcharge.
- 3) Programs submitting doctoral degree applications for review at the same time the COA makes a continued accreditation decision may request a waiver of the surcharge if their onsite visit occurs between fall of 2017 and spring of 2021.
- c. In accordance with the Application for Approval of a Practice-Oriented Doctoral Degree for Entry into Nurse Anesthesia Practice, programs must describe the process by which the currently accredited degree program (i.e., the master's degree program) will be phased out.
- 1) All accredited programs must offer a doctoral degree for entry into practice by January 1, 2022; all students matriculating into an accredited nurse anesthesia program on or after this date must be enrolled in a doctoral program.
 - 2) Programs must inform students taking an approved leave of absence that failure to graduate from an accredited master's degree program before January 1, 2025 may have an adverse effect on students' ability to gain licensure or practice in certain states.
 - 3) Effective January 1, 2018, programs must demonstrate (via website posting) that they have informed potential applicants and students of the COA's doctoral transition requirements. Potential applicants and students must be notified that on January 1, 2022 and thereafter, all students matriculating into an accredited program must be enrolled in a doctoral program. This notification to potential applicants and students must be accompanied by an explanation of the program's plans to apply for COA approval to award a doctoral degree for entry into practice.
- d. On January 1, 2022, all accredited programs that have not received approval to award a doctoral degree for entry into practice will be considered out of compliance with Standard III, Criterion C2 and placed on probation.

3. COA Actions

- a. The COA will review doctoral applications submitted in accordance with its established deadlines.
- b. Assess a fee for review of a doctoral degree for entry into nurse anesthesia practice application.
- c. Assess an escalating surcharge for applications beginning January 1, 2018.
- d. Assess an additional fee for out-of-cycle reviews approved by the COA.

Effective: 01/21/16