

AORN Position Statement on Perioperative Nursing Certification

POSITION STATEMENT

AORN believes that:

- The practice of perioperative nursing requires specialized knowledge, skills, and attitudes that contribute to optimal patient outcomes.
- Perioperative nursing certification bolsters the incorporation of evidence-based practice in a rapidly changing, highly technical perioperative environment.
- Obtaining perioperative nursing specialty certification from accredited credentialing providers is one key step to assuring patients, colleagues, and the public at large that they are receiving the highest quality perioperative nursing care.
- Maintaining certification is a demonstration of dedication to life-long learning, reflection of professionalism, and identification of opportunities for improvement that translate into proficient practice.
- Employers should support RNs in their certification and recertification activities, encourage the display of the certified RN's credentials, and recognize the professional accomplishments of certified RNs to the public.

RATIONALE

Specialty nursing certification is an objective measure that validates that a registered nurse (RN) possesses the knowledge needed to provide specialized nursing care. Certification provides formal recognition of the specialized knowledge, skills, and attitudes demonstrated by the achievement of identified standards.^{1, 3, 4}

As detailed in the report, *The Future of Nursing*, “The ultimate goal of licensure, accreditation, certification, and education is to promote patient safety and public protection.”^{2 (p320)} Professional certification is a mark of excellence on the part of the nurse, and it is an effective means for nurses to demonstrate proficiency and quality in nursing practice.^{5, 8} Attaining nursing certification connotes a commitment to professional development and lifelong learning^{8,9} and demonstrates dedication to providing the best quality of care based on the most current evidence as defined within the nurse’s scope of practice.^{6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12}

“Certification is time-limited, and maintenance of certification requires ongoing acquisition of both knowledge and experience in practice”^{2(p191)} to provide structure and guidance for the RN’s professional development processes. Certification requirements often exceed workplace and licensure requirements of state boards of nursing. Ongoing professional development provides a level of assurance that the RN possesses up-to-date knowledge of evidence-based practices that is required for safe, competent care.

Several positive effects of certification related nursing and patient outcomes have been noted. “Nursing certification contributes to staff development, decreases nurse vacancy and attrition rates, and improves personal satisfaction.”¹¹ Certification in perioperative nursing verifies what an expert perioperative nurse should know and do in the context of their daily work; all perioperative nurses are encouraged to pursue specialty certification to demonstrate mastery of nationally recognized nursing standards and evidence-based practices. In addition, perioperative RNs who complete their certification are excellent resources and are well-positioned to mentor future perioperative nurses in best practices through the knowledge and experiences they have gained in their specialty. Creating a culture which fosters commitment to lifelong learning, peer to peer support, and mastery of professional standards and evidence-based practices ultimately results in enhanced workplace satisfaction, confidence, and safer patient care.

References

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Additional Resources

AORN Position Statement on Entry into Practice

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