



International Federation of Nurse Anesthetists

ANESTHESIA PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS (APAP)

OPERATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**(Applies to programs admitting nurses
and/or non-physicians)**

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International Federation of Nurse Anesthetists Anesthesia Program Approval Process (APAP) Operational Policies and Procedures

Philosophy of APAP

The International Federation of Nurse Anesthetists (IFNA) believes that it is possible to improve the health and welfare of humanity by promoting international educational standards for non-physician anesthesia programs. Based on this belief and for the purposes of program approval, it is the policy of IFNA to approve programs that admit students who are nurses or who are educated in another scientific area which prepares students to succeed in their anesthesia education. Although IFNA strongly supports a nursing background for admission, it also believes in an approval process that recognizes the differences that currently exist in the educational preparation of health professionals worldwide that have contributed to nurses and non-nurses being enrolled in anesthesia programs. IFNA believes that an inclusive process provides the greatest opportunity to improve anesthesia care to patients now and in the future.

Goal of APAP

The goal of the approval process is to encourage programs to comply with IFNA's *Educational Standards for Preparing Nurse Anesthetists* through an approval process that takes cultural, national or regional differences into consideration.

Categories of Approval

Three categories of approval are available. Only one type will be awarded to a program at any given time. Offering several categories of approval recognizes the (1) diversity of nurse anesthesia programs throughout the world; (2) the capacity of a program given its national or regional context; (3) the resources available to individual programs; (4) a commitment of diverse programs to a common standard of educational quality.

- **Registration:** A program pledges to comply with the IFNA *Educational Standards for Preparing Nurse Anesthetists* to the best of its ability. The pledge includes the signature of the anesthesia program director and the highest institutional official. The program is also required to submit its curriculum. The program's identity, title of award, and curriculum will be posted on IFNA's website with a statement that IFNA has not approved the curriculum but it is being posted for information only. Title of award: IFNA Anesthesia Education Program Registration.
- **Recognition:** A program pledges to meet the IFNA *Educational Standards for Preparing Nurse Anesthetists* to the best of its ability. The pledge includes the signature of the anesthesia program director and the highest institutional official. The program is also required to submit its curriculum and related material for review by the IFNA Education Committee. The curriculum is audited to determine if it complies with "Standard III, Curriculum", and substantially complies with "Standard IV, Graduate Competencies" in the Educational Standards. Following the auditing process, the program's identity, title of award and curriculum will be posted on IFNA's website with a statement that IFNA has audited

the curriculum and determined it substantially meets its requirements. Title of award: IFNA Anesthesia Education Program Recognition.

- **Accreditation:** A program pledges to meet the *IFNA Educational Standards for Preparing Nurse Anesthetists*. The program is also required to submit its curriculum and related material in a written self study for review by the Education Committee. The information is also evaluated by a team of on-site visitors to determine if it meets the Educational Standards. The curriculum must meet "Standard III, Curriculum", and substantially meet all other requirements in the Educational Standards. Following the accreditation process, the program's identity, title of award, and curriculum will be posted on IFNA's website with a statement that IFNA has reviewed the curriculum, reviewed a self study, conducted an on-site visit to the program and determined the program substantially meets all of the Educational Standards. The website will note that the program has substantially met the Educational Standards as determined by a full review of the program including a written self study and on-site review. Title of award: IFNA Anesthesia Education Program Accreditation.

Application Forms

Applications for all categories of approval must be in English. Application forms are located on the IFNA website so they can be downloaded by programs. Completed applications are to be forwarded by e-mail to the IFNA Executive Office: ifna.rod@wanadoo.fr

Eligibility

Eligibility for Approval

Applications will be received by anesthesia programs from IFNA member or non-member countries. For the purpose of program approval, an applicant program must meet the following requirements to be considered for registration, recognition or accreditation. The same criteria are required for continued approval:

- The anesthesia program educates non-physicians.
- The primary purpose of the program is to educate graduates to meet the needs of the country or region in which it resides.
- Admission requirements for *IFNA Registration* or *IFNA Recognition* include an education in nursing or another scientific background that prepares a student to succeed in the anesthesia education program.
- Admission requirements for *IFNA Accreditation* include an education in nursing that prepares a student to succeed in the program.
- There is official evidence from a governmental entity that the program is currently authorized, recognized, chartered, audited, accredited or has some equivalent official status in the country, if available.

- There is evidence that the program has not been denied approval, recognition or accreditation by a governmental or nongovernmental accreditation or quality assurance entity. (This requires the signature of a program official for confirmation.)
- The program is in operation and has graduated at least one student or class of students from the same curriculum.

Applications

Application Process to Become a Registered Program

An application form for eligibility as a Registered Program is on IFNA's website. It must be completed and submitted by e-mail to the IFNA Executive Office: ifna.rod@wanadoo.fr. The Education Committee will consider complete applications for IFNA Registration during its regularly scheduled in-person meeting or during its online meetings.

Application Process to Become a Recognized Program

An application form for eligibility as a Recognized Program is on IFNA's website. It must be completed and submitted by e-mail to the IFNA Executive Office: ifna.rod@wanadoo.fr. An audit form, student and faculty evaluations will be sent to an eligible program for completion. The Education Committee will consider complete applications for IFNA Recognition during its regularly scheduled in-person meeting or during its online meetings.

Application Process to Become an Accredited Program

An application form for eligibility as an Accredited Program is on IFNA's website. It must be completed and submitted to the IFNA Executive Office: ifna.rod@wanadoo.fr. A self study and student and faculty evaluations will be sent to an eligible program for completion. An on-site visit will be scheduled for a date that is agreeable to the program and the Education Committee. The Education Committee will consider complete applications for IFNA Accreditation during its regularly scheduled in-person meeting or during its online meetings.

Evaluations

Student and faculty evaluations must be completed for programs seeking initial ***IFNA Recognition*** and ***IFNA Accreditation***. Electronic survey forms are sent to the program director with instructions for completion and submission. Results of the surveys are available for review by the IFNA Education Committee and program director. Evaluation results will be considered in reaching a decision to award ***IFNA Recognition*** or ***IFNA Accreditation***. Additional evaluations may be required to assess any areas of concern prior to finalizing a decision.

Student and faculty evaluations will be conducted every 5 years by the Education Committee during a program's renewal process for recognition or accreditation. Programs receiving unsatisfactory evaluations will be asked to work on improving areas of concern, and to submit new evaluations to IFNA in one year following the date of notification. It is possible for a program to be dropped from IFNA's list of approved programs if evaluations continue to be unfavorable.

Fees

Fees

Registration or Recognition: There is no fee for applying for approval in either of these categories.

Accreditation: There is a fee of 1500 Swiss Francs payable on submission of an application for accreditation. Expenses for the costs of the site visit including travel, lodging, food and any other costs must also be paid by the program. A typical site visit requires six days including 2 days on site, 2 days travel, 1 day to review the self study prior to the visit and 1 day to write the report. Cost for an interpreter must also be paid by the program if necessary since the site visitors will be speaking in English.

Review of Applications

Decisions

The Education Committee will consider all available material before reaching a decision. The program may be asked for additional information if needed. The decision is forwarded to the IFNA President as a recommendation to the Board of Officers for consideration at a meeting or between meetings. (The IFNA Board of Officers can act for the Executive Committee and CNR between meetings.) Steps in the approval process are appended in addition to steps to resolve differences of decisions between groups (see Appendix).

Decisions that can be made based on the professional judgment of the Education Committee are:

- **Registration:** A status awarded to identify an anesthesia program that meets eligibility and registration requirements that has submitted a complete application and pledged to follow the Education Standards to the best of its ability.
- **Recognition:** A status awarded to identify an anesthesia program that meets eligibility and application requirements for recognition. The program has also undergone a successful audit of its curriculum to demonstrate compliance with "Standard III, Curriculum" and substantial compliance with "Standard IV, Graduate Competencies" in the Educational Standards.
- **Accreditation:** A status awarded to identify a nurse anesthesia program that meets eligibility and application requirements for accreditation. The program has completed a written self-study and on-site visit that found it meets "Standard III, Curriculum", and substantially meets all other requirements in the Educational Standards.
- **Denial:** A status that indicates an applicant program has not met eligibility or application requirements.
- **Withdrawal:** A status that indicates a program has voluntarily asked that it no longer be registered, recognized or accredited by IFNA. This status is also assigned to a program that does not meet the deadline to renew its approval.
- **Warning:** A message of warning may be sent to a program when revocation of a previous decision is being considered. Warning messages are confidential since the approval process is intended to help a program improve rather than to be punitive.

- **Revocation:** A status that indicates a program no longer meets eligibility or renewal requirements. This status may be assigned to programs that are seeking renewal of their registration, recognition or accreditation. It may also be assigned to a program as a result of unsatisfactory student and faculty evaluations.

Certificate of Approval: A certificate of approval will be awarded to approved programs in every category. Certificates will be signed by the IFNA President and Education Committee Chair.

On-Site Visits for IFNA Accreditation

A program applying for initial *IFNA Accreditation* must complete IFNA's Self Study in English in preparation for an on-site visit. The completed self study will be reviewed by the Education Committee to determine if any additional information is needed prior to authorizing a site visit. The program will be notified of the outcome of this review. Once a site visit is authorized, the on-site visit schedule will be developed cooperatively between IFNA and the anesthesia program.

There will be a minimum of two site visitors assigned to visit a program. One visitor will be a member of IFNA's Education Committee and one visitor will be from the country where the program is located (local expert). Visits requiring three visitors must include a local expert. Visitors from the program's country will be selected from: (1) names of anesthesia professionals provided by the CNR or (2) from a list of names of anesthesia professionals requested from the program. The Education Committee will review the list(s) and select an anesthesia professional who is fluent in the native language and knowledgeable about education and regulation in the country where the program is located. Arrangements for an interpreter must be made by the program if necessary since the visit will be conducted in English.

Coordination with Other Quality Assurance Agencies

A program seeking *IFNA Accreditation* may request that its on-site visit be coordinated with a visit by another accreditor or quality assurance agency. Examples of actions that might be taken to coordinate a visit are:

- IFNA on-site visitors might accompany another accrediting or quality assurance team during its site visit to the program with permission of both agencies.
- IFNA might approve a reasonable proposal from a program for a unique coordinated review process based on the program's explanation of its value.

The following steps are to guide the process for coordinating an on-site visit with another quality assurance agency:

1. The nurse anesthesia program submits a written request to the IFNA Executive Director for approval of an on-site visit to be scheduled at the same time as that of another accreditor or quality assurance agency (Agency). The request is forwarded to the Education Committee.

2. The nurse anesthesia program documents in writing that a coordinated on-site visit is acceptable to the other Agency.
3. The Education Committee approves the coordinated on-site visit or denies the request. If approved, an IFNA on-site visitor will be appointed.
4. A minimum of one IFNA on-site visitor from the program's country will be scheduled to accompany the visitor(s) from the other Agency. An on-site visitor from a foreign country may be approved for a valid reason.
5. The IFNA on-site visitor will need to observe all scheduled activities during the coordinated on-site visit to evaluate how the program is meeting IFNA Standards.
6. The program is responsible for paying fees associated with accreditation as required by IFNA and the other agency.

Appeals

Appeals

Since the primary purpose of APAP is to be collegial and improve education programs, IFNA does not anticipate very many appeals; however, the following procedure would be followed in the event of an appeal.

A program receiving a decision that it has been denied registration, recognition or accreditation can appeal that decision to an appeal panel within 60 days of the decision. This also applies to a program receiving a notice that its accreditation will be revoked. A program's approval status will not be altered during the time of appeal. Failure to file an appeal results in the Education Committee's decision being final.

After the Education Committee receives a written request from the program to appeal a decision, the program will be presented with a list of at least 5 anesthesia professionals from IFNA member countries. The program can select 3 to serve on the appeal panel who are free from conflicts of interest. The selected appeal panel will then be appointed by the IFNA Executive Committee. Both the program and Education Committee will be asked to submit written statements and supporting documentation to describe their cases. The appeal panel will consider the materials in a timely manner and make a decision. A decision by the appeal panel to uphold or reverse the decision of IFNA will be final. The program, the IFNA Education Committee Chair and the IFNA President will be notified of the decision.

Conflicts of interest

Anyone involved in the approval process should avoid situations where there is a potential conflict of interest. Education Committee members, site visitors, and IFNA's Board of Directors are to excuse themselves from reviewing: their own programs; programs where they have been paid for services; and programs where they have produced any work product alone or with program faculty during the last 5 years.

Public and Confidential Information

Some documents and meetings are considered public and some are considered confidential.

Public Information

Public information will be made available as follows:

- A final decision for registration, recognition or accreditation will be posted on IFNA's website. This includes decisions for approval, withdrawal and revocation.
- A decision to deny will not be published since the program was never approved.
- A list of programs and curriculums will be posted on IFNA's website

Confidential Information

Confidential information includes the following:

- The results of student and faculty evaluations; however, the evaluation results are sent to the program director who is expected to distribute the results to key individuals within the conducting institution.
- Correspondence on the results of an approval review is confidential and distributed to the director and program official(s); however, a program is encouraged to distribute correspondence within its university or conducting institution.
- A program's application, self study, or any other materials submitted to the Education Committee are considered confidential unless permission is granted to share them. For example, a program would be asked for permission for IFNA to share its application, self study, or any other material with other applicants.
- Meetings of the Education Committee, IFNA Executive Committee, Council of National Representatives, and appeals panel are not open to the public when programs are being considered for decisions.

Website Publication

A curriculum posted on the IFNA website will usually consist of admission requirements, course titles, length of program, and the degree or certificate awarded to graduates.

Program Directors

Program directors in Level #3-accredited programs must be nurse anesthetists. All program directors Levels #1- #3 must have consistent and regular:

- Contact with the program
- Involvement in the administration of the program and education of students.

Renewal

A program successfully completing the application process will be approved for 5 years. Approved programs will be notified in advance of their need to review. Renewal will consist of updating the program's application or self study to meet any new requirements or changes in the Education

Standards. Changes in the program that have occurred during the previous 5 years must be presented to IFNA at the time of renewal. Student and faculty evaluations will be conducted and assessed by the Education Committee at renewal for recognized and accredited programs. Accredited programs may be asked to complete a new self study and host an on-site visit as part of the renewal process if program evaluations or other information indicate a problem(s) with meeting the Education Standards.

Renewal of an application will be expected to show progress toward meeting the *IFNA Education Standards for Preparing Nurse Anesthetists* that were not met during the last review. Of particular interest is a program's efforts to implement any recommendations made by the IFNA Education Committee. Since the primary purpose of APAP is to be collegial and improve education programs, the ability or willingness of a program to implement recommendations for improvement may influence approval of a renewal application. Decisions for renewal will be based on a program's meeting current eligibility requirements, its ability to comply with the Education Standards, and its attempts to continually improve.

Decisions for renewal will be based on a program's meeting current eligibility requirements, its ability to comply with the Education Standards, and its attempts to continually improve.

Failure to Renew

Programs failing to renew by a stated deadline will be eliminated from the list of approved programs on IFNA's website.

Complaints

IFNA does not consider complaints against anesthesia programs, faculty or students. Due to the wide variation of institutional and governmental requirements, complaints should be addressed at the local level.

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Appendixes - Steps in Approval Processes

Appendix A

Level 1: Registration

Steps in IFNA Registration Process

The following steps are to guide the process leading to Level #1, IFNA Registration:

The sequence of registration review will normally be as follows:

- Nurse anesthesia program obtains an application for Registration from IFNA's website at www.ifna-int.org
- Nurse anesthesia program completes the application form and submits it by e-mail to the IFNA Executive Office ifna.rod@wanadoo.fr who distributes it to Education Committee, APAP Manger & IFNA President.
- The APAP Manager notifies the program director if the program is eligible or not according to established criteria
- After reviewing the application material, the Education Committee will make a decision to approve or not approve the program and assign the category of approval. A majority of Education Committee members must approve the decision. If a majority vote cannot be reached, the application will be forwarded to the IFNA President for a decision by the Board of Officers.
- The decision is forwarded to the IFNA President as a recommendation to the Board of Officers. (The IFNA Board of Officers can act for the Executive Committee and CNR between meetings.)
- The Board of Officers will either agree with the recommendation or send it back to the Education Committee to reconsider.
- Returned applications will be evaluated to determine if the Education Committee's original decision should be changed. If a new decision is made that agrees with the Board of Officer's recommendation, the disagreement is resolved. If the Education Committee does not change its original decision, the application is forwarded to the Executive Committee and/or CNR for a decision.
- Nurse anesthesia program is notified of final decision and effective dates of Registration in a letter signed by the APAP Manager.
- Certificate is signed by IFNA President and IFNA Education Chair and sent to program.
- Program's status and curriculum is posted on IFNA's website by IFNA Webmaster or as directed. .

Appendix B

Level 2: Recognition

Steps in IFNA Recognition Process

The following steps are to guide the process leading to Level #2, IFNA Recognition:

The sequence of recognition review will normally be as follows:

- Nurse anesthesia program obtains an eligibility application for Recognition from IFNA's website at www.ifna-int.org
- Nurse anesthesia program completes the application form and submits it by e-mail to the IFNA Executive Office ifna.rod@wanadoo.fr who distributes it to the Education Committee & IFNA President
- The APAP Manager notifies the program director if the program is eligible or not according to established criteria.

Eligible programs are sent an audit form by the APAP Manager to complete. .

- Student and faculty evaluations are sent to the program to complete.
- Nurse anesthesia program submits the completed audit form to the APAP Manager.
- Nurse anesthesia program submits completed evaluations to the APAP Manager or designee.
- The Education Committee reviews the completed application and evaluations. This includes an audit of the program's curriculum to demonstrate substantial compliance with the "Standard III, Curriculum" in the Educational Standards.
- After reviewing the material, the Education Committee will make a decision to approve or not approve the program and assign the category of approval. A majority of Education Committee members must approve the decision. If a majority vote cannot be reached, the application will be forwarded to the IFNA President for a decision by the Board of Officers.
- The decision is forwarded to the IFNA President as a recommendation to the Board of Officers. (The IFNA Board of Officers can act for the Executive Committee and CNR between meetings.)
- The Board of Officers will either agree with the recommendation or send it back to the Education Committee with a reason why it is to be reconsidered.
- Returned applications will be evaluated to determine if the Education Committee's original decision should be changed. If a new decision is made that agrees with the Board of Officer's recommendation, the disagreement is resolved. If the Education Committee does not change its original decision, the application is forwarded to the Executive Committee and/or CNR for a decision.

- Nurse anesthesia program is notified of final decision and effective dates of Registration in a letter signed by the APAP Manager.
- Certificate signed by IFNA President and IFNA Education Chair is sent to program.
- Program's status and curriculum is posted on IFNA's website by IFNA Webmaster or as directed..

Appendix C

Level 3: Accreditation

Steps in IFNA Accreditation Process

The following steps are to guide the process leading to Level #3, IFNA Accreditation:

The sequence of Accreditation review will normally be as follows:

- Nurse anesthesia program obtains an eligibility application for Accreditation from IFNA's website at www.ifna-int.org
- Nurse anesthesia program completes the application form and submits it by e-mail to the IFNA Executive Office ifna.rod@wanadoo.fr who distributes it to the Education Committee, APAP Manager & IFNA President.
- Education Committee reviews application and asks for additional information, if needed.
- The APAP Manager notifies the program director if the program is eligible or not according to established criteria.
- The APAP Manager sends an eligible program a self study document to complete.
- Student and faculty evaluations are sent to the program to complete.
- Nurse anesthesia program submits the completed self study and enclosures to the APAP Manager..
- Nurse anesthesia program submits completed evaluations to APAP Manager or designee.
- The APAP Manager assigns a team of on-site visitors, designates one as Team Chair, sets an appropriate number of days for the visit, and notifies the program.
- The Team Chair plans the on-site visit (dates & schedule) in collaboration with the Program Director.
- The program hosts the on-site visit and completes a post-visit evaluation upon request.
- The Team Chair leads the Team Member(s) in writing a summary report of the on-site visit. The summary report is reported verbally to the program on the last day of the visit, and sent as a written report to the APAP Manager.
- The APAP Manager sends the written summary report of the on-site visit to the Program Director and explains the steps leading up to an accreditation decision.
- After reviewing the summary report of the on-site visit and any related material, the Education Committee makes a decision to approve or not approve the program and assign the category of approval. A majority of Education Committee members must approve the

decision. If a majority vote cannot be reached, the application will be forwarded to the IFNA President for a decision by the Board of Officers.

- The decision is forwarded to the IFNA President as a recommendation to the Board of Officers. (The IFNA Board of Officers can act for the Executive Committee and CNR between meetings.)
- The Board of Officers will either agree with the recommendation or send it back to the Education Committee with a reason why it is to be reconsidered.
- Returned applications will be evaluated to determine if the Education Committee's original decision should be changed. If a new decision is made that agrees with the Board of Officer's recommendation, the disagreement is resolved. If the Education Committee does not change its original decision, the application is forwarded to the Executive Committee and/or CNR for a decision.
- The nurse anesthesia program is notified of the final decision, effective dates of Accreditation, and date of next review in a letter signed by the APAP Manager.
- A certificate signed by IFNA President and IFNA Education Chair is sent to program.
- Program's status and curriculum is posted on IFNA's website by the IFNA Webmaster or designee.

Note: The APAP Manager works in consultation with the Education Committee Chair in managing all three levels of the approval process.