Steps to Becoming Certified and Licensed as a Nurse Practitioner

1. You **MUST** complete all degree requirements (course work and graduate project) prior to initiating the application process to sit for your certification exam.

2. While you are preparing to graduate, go to Student Services to request that your official transcript be sent directly to ANCC or AANP, as well as the IBON. Two requests need to be completed.

3. Determine which examination you want to sit for: American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP), American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), or American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANCC</th>
<th>AANP</th>
<th>AACN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer based</td>
<td>Computer based</td>
<td>Computer based or paper and pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available for ACNP, ANP, FNP, GNP, &amp; PMHNP</td>
<td>Available for ANP, FNP, &amp; GNP</td>
<td>Available for Acute Care only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175 questions (150 scored, 25 sample)</td>
<td>150 questions (135 scored, 15 sample)</td>
<td>175 questions (150 scored, 25 sample)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 hour time frame</td>
<td>3 hour time frame</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passing score =&gt;350/500</td>
<td>Passing score =&gt;500/800</td>
<td>Criterion based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporates scope of practice, ethics, reimbursement, clinical content and more</td>
<td>Incorporates clinical content only</td>
<td>Incorporates 73% clinical judgement, 27% non-clinical judgement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If fail: can reapply to take again after 90 days</td>
<td>If fail: can retake after 15 contact hours of continuing education</td>
<td>If Fail: can retake 4 times in 1 year</td>
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Timelines can be found on the respective websites:
AANP: [https://www.aanpcert.org/](https://www.aanpcert.org/)
AACN: [https://www.aacn.org/certification/get-certified/acnpc-ag](https://www.aacn.org/certification/get-certified/acnpc-ag)
4. Shortly after applying to take the exam, you will receive a letter from the organization stating they have received your application and information. If you do not receive this confirmation within two weeks, you may want to call to see if they are missing information. Once your application has been approved, you will also receive information from a testing center with details about the exam and how to schedule your exam and location.

5. Schedule your exam with the testing center. Most applicants test in Des Moines or Iowa City.

6. Prepare for the exam: Certification entities provide test content outlines, reference lists, and sample suggestions for each certification, free of charge. Additional review materials may be purchased separately. You should also consider enrolling in a nurse practitioner certification review course (e.g., Barkley and Associates, Fitzgerald Health Education Associates, and Advanced Practice Education Associates), some of which are offered electronically and/or in face-to-face sessions. The recommendation for attending a review course is 9-12 months prior to graduation.

7. Take the exam: Make sure you have the required ID to be admitted. You are not allowed to bring anything into the testing center: no pens/pencils, keys, good luck charms-NOTHING! At your desk you will have a variety of ear plugs or headsets and a white board and marker so that you can write items down as needed. You will have a chance to run through how to take the online exam. Then your test will begin. Once you have completed the exam you will take a survey. Following the survey, you will be given a Pass/Fail announcement to print out. A full report of your exam will be mailed to you within two weeks. This will display your score and pass confirmation. This certification is valid for five years.

8. Once you have passed the certification exam, you may apply for state licensure through the Iowa Board of Nursing. Instructions and the application for the IBON ARNP application can be found at this link: 
   [http://www.state.ia.us/nursing/licensure/advanced_reg_nurse.html](http://www.state.ia.us/nursing/licensure/advanced_reg_nurse.html)  
   Additional information for ARNPs through IBON can be found at the following link:  
   [http://www.state.ia.us/nursing/nursing_practice/arnp.html](http://www.state.ia.us/nursing/nursing_practice/arnp.html)

9. You must contact Enrollment Management requesting an official transcript sent to IBON, or whichever state you are applying for licensure.

10. AANP/ANCC will automatically send notification to the board of nursing if you indicated to do so in your application.

11. Within a few weeks you will receive your NP certificate and your IBON license.

12. Apply for your Iowa Controlled Substance Registration. You need your Iowa license to do this. Go to [www.state.ia.us/ibpe](http://www.state.ia.us/ibpe). Then click on “application forms”, “controlled substance registration”. When your application is processed you will get an email with your CSA number stating “pending PMP”.

13. After you have received the Iowa Controlled Substance (ICS) number, you can apply for your DEA number. Go to [www.DEAdversion.usdoj.gov](http://www.DEAdversion.usdoj.gov).
14. Obtain employment: After you have a place to practice, assistance obtaining your NPI number and insurance credentialing is common. You will also need to obtain liability insurance; again, most employers would help to obtain. Payment for these fees can be negotiated during the interviewing process.

15. When you get your DEA and NPI numbers, you will need to apply for a free account with the Iowa PMP (Prescription Monitoring Program) at: https://pharmacy.iowa.gov/iowa-pmp.awarxe. Once the account is approved by the Iowa Board of Pharmacy, you will get your CSA certificate mailed to you and it will be changed to an active status.

16. Renewal of your certification is presently every five years. Please see the website for specific requirements. IBON renewal varies. Please see the website for requirements.