



Five Year Pass Rates for Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE)

Year	Total Number of Exams Administered*	Percent Passing	Number of Candidates Taking Exam for First Time**	Percent Passing
2020	10,687	93%	9,990	95%
2019	10,469	91%	9,774	93%
2018	9,573	97%	9,220	98%
2017	9,250	95%	8,732	97%
2016	8,631	93%	8,082	96%

*Represents total number of exams administered, not the number of candidates since some candidates may take the exam more than once

**Represents the number of candidates taking the exam for their first attempt

Total Number of Certified PAs as of December 31, 2020: 148,560

Total Number of PAs Passing PANCE in 2020: 9,915

Exam Development and Passing Standards

The content blueprints for NCCPA’s exams are based on scientific analyses of PA practice conducted approximately every five years. Exam questions are written by clinically practicing Certified PAs and physicians. NCCPA strives to include diverse perspectives in its exam development processes by including individuals who reflect diversity in areas such as race, years in practice, gender, geographic region, and practice area. All exam content undergoes several rounds of extensive review and editing by the Certified PAs, physicians, and professional editors before the questions are available for pre-testing on an exam administration. All exams contain a small number of pre-test questions which are not included as part of a PA’s score. Pre-testing allows NCCPA to evaluate the statistical performance of each newly developed question to determine if it can be considered for future use on an exam. The passing standards for NCCPA’s exams are approved by the NCCPA Board of Directors based on the recommendations of committees comprising representative groups of Certified PAs who are recruited expressly for the purpose of engaging in the most prevalently used standard setting methodology for credentialing exams¹. NCCPA has a team of employees with extensive experience and specific education/training in psychometrics and exam development to ensure that all NCCPA exams meet high standards of reliability and validity and comport with industry standards. NCCPA is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies.

¹ Lane, S., Raymond, M., & Haladyna, T. (2016) *Handbook of Test Development 2nd Edition*. New York. Routledge.