

PANRE Pass Rates

The nation’s 123,000+ certified PAs are committed to providing the highest quality of care. To help assure the public that the PAs caring for them and their family are prepared to deliver effective care, certified PAs are required to pass the Physician Assistant National Recertifying Examination (PANRE) as part of ongoing certification maintenance requirements. To maintain certification, PAs must pass PANRE every 10 years¹ in addition to completing 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years. This emphasis on life-long learning and commitment to high standards demonstrates PAs’ dedication to their patients.

PAs have up to four attempts to pass PANRE during the last two years of the certification maintenance cycle. The data provided below is based on the year in which a PA was due to take and pass PANRE, and it includes those who took advantage of the opportunity to take the exam a year early. For example, the data for 2016 includes all PAs who were required to pass PANRE by the end of 2016, regardless of whether they took the exam in 2015 (a year early) or 2016 (certification expiration year).

Recent PANRE Pass Rates

Year due	Total due to recertify	PAs taking at least one PANRE in their recertification cycle		PAs passing PANRE on their first attempt		PAs taking more than one PANRE in the recertification cycle		PAs ultimately passing PANRE (including first and multiple attempts)	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
		2017	15,321	14,468	94%	13,673	95%	649	4%
2016	14,784	14,048	95%	12,847	92%	967	7%	13,568	97%
2015	13,616	13,018	96%	11,886	91%	846	6%	12,501	96%
2014	12,520	12,038	96%	10,949	91%	763	6%	11,493	96%
2013	12,256	11,677	95%	10,612	91%	740	6%	11,137	95%

% of PAs passing is based on the number of PAs who tested and not on the total population of PAs who were due to recertify

Exam Development and Passing Standards

The NCCPA content blueprint is based on a scientific analysis of PA practice conducted approximately every five years. Test questions are written and reviewed by committees of certified PAs and physicians who have experience working with PAs. The questions are professionally edited, and then pre-tested for validity on live exams prior to becoming scored questions on the exams. The passing standard is approved by the NCCPA Board of Directors based on the recommendation of a committee comprising a representative group of certified PAs who are recruited expressly for the purpose of engaging in the most prevalently used standard setting methodology for credentialing exams². NCCPA’s team of professionals, with doctoral training in measurement, utilize state of the art statistical models to ensure NCCPA’s exams meet high standards of reliability and validity and comport with industry standards.

¹ Certified PAs are currently transitioning from a six-year certification maintenance cycle to a 10-year certification maintenance cycle.

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